Durham University

# Durham E-Theses

## *Brian Ferneyhough : the logic of the figure*

Lois Fitch

**How to cite:**

Fitch, Lois (2005) Brian Ferneyhough : the logic of the figure. Doctoral thesis, Durham University.

**Use policy**

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a https://etheses.durham.ac.uk/id/eprint/1770/ is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the full Durham E-Theses policy for further details.

Academic Support Office, The Palatine Centre, Durham University, Stockton Road, Durham, DH1 3LE
e-mail: e-theses.admin@durham.ac.uk Tel: +44 0191 334 6107
https://etheses.durham.ac.uk

# Brian Ferneyhough: The Logic of the Figure

Lois Fitch

(University of Durham)

Ph.D.

A copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without his prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

- 1 SEP 2005

**Lois Fitch – Brian Ferneyhough: The Logic of the Figure**

**Submitted for the degree of Ph.D (2004)**

**(Abstract)**

This thesis represents an interdisciplinary examination of the concept of the 'figure' in painting, music, philosophy and language. Focusing on the paintings of Francis Bacon (d. 1992), the theoretical writings of the composer Brian Ferneyhough (1943- ) and the art-criticism of theorist Gilles Deleuze (d. 1992), I attempt an aesthetic 'reading' of Ferneyhough's music through a critique of painting, French post-structuralist theory and critical theory (Theodor Adorno, d. 1969). Recent scholarship has concentrated on the Adorno-inspired aspects of Ferneyhough's thought. My thesis builds upon this, developing a critical appraisal of aspects of Ferneyhough's writings and music hitherto untouched by the musicological and compositional communities alike.

The thesis is in three parts. Part I introduces and examines analogies between Ferneyhough's and Bacon's works. I also explore Ferneyhough's writings on the 'figure' and 'force' in relation to Deleuze's critique of Bacon, and both of these, in turn, in relation to Adorno's musical aesthetics. Part II (on 'space' in the artwork) is a substantial study of the sources that inform Deleuze's monograph on Bacon, including Jean-François Lyotard's earliest poststructuralist work. I address the figure's rhetorical, linguistic heritage in terms of a theory of vision and corporeality, discovering Ferneyhough's remarkably visual, sensuous relationship to his material through musical analysis (Part IIa). Part III (on 'time' in the artwork) explores the tactility of experience, detailing Deleuze's theorisation of Bacon's triptychs: the resulting insights inspire my attempt to account for the presentation of the sensation of time itself in Ferneyhough's *Mnemosyne*.

**Acknowledgements**

The fulfilment of this project owes much to the financial assistance that I have received. I will always be indebted to the Arts and Humanities Research Board for a three-year doctoral award, without which my thesis would never even have been started. In addition I would like to extend my gratitude to the Francis Bacon Estate, who have given me permission to reproduce images and taken an interest in the content of my thesis, and to Peters Edition, for allowing me to reproduce parts of Ferneyhough scores.

I would also like to thank a number of individuals whose advice, encouragement and support have made the completion of this project possible. My research was greatly assisted in the early stages by Professor Daniel W. Smith and Professor Ronald Bogue, both of whom kindly provided me with draft copies of books (a translation and a critical study of Deleuze's art criticism respectively) two years in advance of publication. I remain indebted to them both. I am also grateful to Professor Robert Pascall (Bangor), whose suggestions on Ferneyhough and Stockhausen prompted aspects of Part III of this thesis. I have also been fortunate enough to discuss various aspects of my work with Dr. Rachel Jones (Dundee), Pierre Strauch (Ensemble InterContemporain), Phillip Weller (Nottingham) and Paul Archbold (Kingston). I owe John Black (sound recordings librarian, McGill University) thanks for providing me with research materials when I have been in Montreal, and the staff at the Music Library, Durham for four years of help and encouragement, as well as for the interest that they have shown in this project.

I have received advice and empathy from numerous members of the Ustinov College Graduate/Staff hockey teams over the years: I both appreciate the guidance in academic matters, and the lively social environment they create. My closest friends have been there throughout the highs and the lows, for which I am tremendously grateful. John Hails has proved to be an oracle on all matters Ferneyhough-related, and Richard Bruce has led the way and given me something to aspire to. Karen Scott has both listened when I have needed it, and ensured that I have met

deadlines and so on, all without my asking – I appreciate her generosity, and also that of Joyce Dent, Ron Berry and Martin Allison.

I have been fortunate enough to meet with Brian Ferneyhough on a number of occasions since 1997, and have enjoyed talking to him about shared interests – particularly Bacon's painting and, bizarrely, the regeneration of Coventry City centre! He has weathered the 'Big Brother' aspect of this thesis stoically, and has always enquired after its progress, for which I am grateful.

The staff at the Music Department (Durham) have been a support, both academically and personally, and it is thanks to their encouragement and expertise, demonstrated since I began my undergraduate degree, that this project has been realised, and that I have benefited so much from everything they have to offer. In particular I owe my supervisor Max Paddison a considerable debt of gratitude: it was an article of his that precipitated my interest in Ferneyhough and Adorno, and I am thankful for the faith he has shown in my ideas as I have developed my own aesthetic and musicological interests. I am lucky enough to have gained new family during my studies. My parents-in-law, Brian and Josette, have offered advice and love throughout, as have Sébastien and Rafaëlla, for which I thank them all sincerely, and my step-father Manny has helped to lift my spirits on a number of occasions.

Finally, I must thank two people who have done so much for me that my gratitude will always seem inadequate. My courageous mother, Karen Kawycz, and my husband, Fabrice Fitch, whose love, support and generosity continue to amaze me: this is for you both.

# Contents


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Abstract | | i |
| Acknowledgements | | ii |
| Contents | | iv |
| **Foreword** | | **1** |
| **Introduction** | | **3** |
| Figure 1 | *Study for a Self-Portrait – Triptych 1985-6* | 61 |
| **Part I** | **Figure, Gesture and Force** | **62** |
| | I.i The Body | 62 |
| | I.ii Gesture and Cliché | 75 |
| | I.iii Parameters of Composition | 86 |
| | I.iv Bacon's Figure | 93 |
| | I.v Force | 98 |
| | I.vi Ferneyhough's Figure | 104 |
| | I.vii Ferneyhough and Adorno | 109 |
| | I.viii Franco Donatoni and the Figure | 121 |
| | I.ix Concluding remarks | 136 |
| Figure 2 | Photograph of Isabel Rawsthorne | 138 |
| Figure 3 | Triptych, *Three Studies of Isabel Rawsthorne*, 1968 | 138 |
| Figure 5 | *Triptych August 1972* | 139 |
| Figure 4 | *Head VI*, 1949 | 140 |
| Figure 6 | *Pope No. II*, 1960 | 140 |
| Figure 7 | *Study after Velázquez's Portrait of 'Pope Innocent X'* | 141 |
| Figure 8 | *Figure at a Washbasin*, 1976 | 141 |
| **Part II** | **Space and the Artwork** | **142** |
| | II.i Lyotard and the Figure | 142 |
| | II.ii *Discours, Figure*, second stage | 159 |
| | II.iii Figural Space in the Work of Francis Bacon | 174 |
| | II.iv The Accident | 224 |
| | II.v The Diagram [*diagramme*] | 235 |
| | II.vi The Event | 274 |
| | II.vii Adorno on the Relationships between Music and Painting | 294 |
| | II.viii Concluding Remarks | 320 |
| Figure 11 | *Triptych Inspired by the Oresteia of Aeschylus*, 1981 (right panel) | 328 |
| Figure 14 | *Head I*, 1961 | 328 |
| Figure 12 | *Study from Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, 1965 | 329 |
| Figure 13 | *Painting*, 1946 | 330 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Figure 15+15a | *Triptych Inspired by the Oresteia of Aeschylus*, 1981 (left panel) | 331 |
| **Part IIa** | **Analysis of *Carceri d'Invenzione I*** | **332** |
| **Part III** | **Time and the Artwork** | **406** |
| | III.i From Space to Time | 406 |
| | III.ii The Profound Witness | 425 |
| | III.iii The Rhythm-Witness and Music | 437 |
| | III.iv Self-Awareness and *Mnemosyne* | 451 |
| | III.v Concluding Remarks | 459 |
| Figure 19 | *Triptych, May-June*, 1973 | 469 |
| Figure 20 | *Three Studies of the Male Back*, 1970 | 470 |
| Figure 23 | *Two Figures Lying on a Bed with Attendants*, 1968 | 471 |
| **Bibliography** | | **472** |
| Appendix 1* | Full Score, *Carceri d'Invenzione I* (pages labelled bottom centre, 1-38*) | 498 |
| Appendix 2* | Full Score, *Superscriptio* (pages labelled bottom centre, 1-8) | 498 (39*) |


*N.B. Not included in this version. For references, please see full published score as listed in the Bibliography.

## Foreword

As this project took shape, certain decisions were made regarding the structure and layout of material, which are explained below.

Due to the centrality of Gilles Deleuze's monograph *Francis Bacon: the Logic of Sensation* (see bibliography for original French and English references) which is reflected in the choice of title for this thesis, I have tried to preserve the style of his argument, insofar as the three parts of this thesis revisit several issues a number of times: each return of a topic builds upon previous discussion, culminating in Part III, which brings the strands together. I have not, however, retained the structure of Deleuze's monograph in my own work: his book comprises several short 'chapters', whereas this thesis is grouped into three larger sections (each is subdivided). The regular recurrence of topics inevitably means that certain quotations are used more than once, sometimes within the same chapter, although each re-appearance of quoted material is considered afresh from a new perspective. There is no conventional conclusion: the culmination of Part III itself fulfils this function, since it 'brings back' issues arising earlier in the dissertation and resolves them. Likewise, there is no conventional literature review at the beginning of the work: it is incorporated into the Introduction.

I have used a number of abbreviations of texts. They are as follows:

**Texts by Deleuze**
LS = *Francis Bacon: the Logic of Sensation*

**Texts by Brian Ferneyhough (essays)**
FFS = 'Form-Figure-Style: An Intermediate Assessment'
TF = 'Il Tempo della Figura'
NC = 'Aspects of Notational and Compositional Practice'
TT = 'The Tactility of Time'
QC = 'Responses to a Questionnaire on Complexity'
PU = 'Parallel Universes'

Cd'I = 'Carceri d'Invenzione'
SQ4 = 'String Quartet No. 4'

**Published Interviews**
Bons = 'Interview with Joël Bons'
PG = 'Interview with Paul Griffiths'
RT = 'Interview with Richard Toop'
CdRT = 'Carceri d'Invenzione: in Conversation with Richard Toop'
PA = 'Interview with Philippe Albèra'
JB = 'Shattering the Vessels of Received Wisdom: in Conversation with James Boros'
J-BB = 'Interview with Jean-Baptiste Barrière'
Boros = 'Interview with James Boros'
RF = 'A Verbal Crane Dance: Interview with Ross Feller'
JS = 'Leaps and Circuits to Trail: a Conversation on the Texts and Music with Jeremy Stadelman'
ADL = 'Interview with Antonio de Lisa'

**Texts by Jean-François Lyotard**
DF = 'Discours, figure'

**Texts by Theodor Adorno**
AGE = 'The Ageing of the New Music'
OSR = 'On Some Relationships Between Music and Aesthetics'
MI = 'Vers une musique informelle?'
ND = 'Negative Dialectics'
AT = 'Aesthetic Theory'

**Texts by Richard Toop**
PP = '"Prima le Parole…" (on the sketches for Ferneyhough's *Carceri d'Invenzione I-III*'
S = 'On Superscriptio: An Interview with Brian Ferneyhough, and an Analysis'
LIE = 'Brian Ferneyhough's *Lemma-Icon-Epigram*'

# INTRODUCTION

'At one point someone shouted out: 'Why does there have to be all this talk? Why can't we just go out and paint?'
'My dear', said Francis despairingly, 'if only we could!''[1]

Some time after Francis Bacon's death in 1992, his studio at 7, Reece Mews (South Kensington) was emptied, the contents transported and painstakingly reconstructed in Dublin[2]. The Irish had reclaimed their native painter in spite of his well documented[3] anxieties concerning his 'traumatic childhood'[4] there, and the fact that he had made London's Soho his own for much of his adult life: a life of alcoholic excess, astonishing largesse and yet intense solitary creativity. Commemorative blue plaques adorn the walls of some properties in London where Bacon lived and worked; Farson has written his biography and a film (*Love is the Devil - Study for a Portrait of Francis Bacon*, 1998[5]) has been made about his 'gilded gutter life'; he is remembered by many as one of the greatest British artists of the Twentieth-Century.

Bacon's origins, besides his Irish nationality, are complex. He embodies the paradox of a man whose grandfather was reputedly urged by Queen Victoria to resume the title 'First Viscount St. Albans', that had once belonged to the Seventeenth-Century philosopher and statesman Francis Bacon, whom Bacon claimed as an ancestor[6] and yet, he was forced to survive in London aged 15 or 16 on three pounds a week, sent by his mother. One must not mistake Bacon's ancestral claims however, for pride in his namesake's work, nor for aristocratic pretensions: the Francis Bacon who died in 1626

---

[1] Daniel Farson, *The Gilded Gutter Life of Francis Bacon* (London: Vintage, 1994) p. 84
[2] See the Francis Bacon Studio at the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin.
[3] See Farson 1994 in particular.
[4] Farson 1994: 16
[5] The film is directed by John Maybury and was produced with assistance from the British Film Institute, UK.

left debts of 22 000 pounds[7] earning him, albeit it three centuries later, the admiration of another whose capacity for spending money – on others as much as on himself – astonished some.

Aside from rare mentions in interview, programme notes or articles about the composer, Brian Ferneyhough's place of birth remains at some remove from his European and North American life, both geographically and in terms of the ambivalence with which he recalls it. Born in 1943 in wartime, post-blitz Coventry to a working-class family, one of the only sensations that Ferneyhough can have experienced in common with Bacon a generation earlier, is that of a great shadow – Bacon refers to the 'hangman's noose' across Ireland[8] - cast over his youthful environment. Both artists left home at a young age and both travelled (Ferneyhough still does) a great deal in their lives. Both were/are autodidacts, a fact that perhaps explains Bacon's sometimes crushing criticisms of other painters' work (occasionally in their presence[9]) and some of his short, monosyllabic answers, in interview, to questions that probe a little too deep.[10] Ferneyhough manages to 'cover his tracks' as it were, in musical works themselves, which give very little away in terms of their intricate structural design, and his writings follow suit[11]: the composer admits obliquely that 'I would never have made it big as a bookkeeper either'.[12] Importantly, something of the musical complexity for which he is

---

[6] Farson 1994: 15
[7] *Ibid.*,
[8] *Ibid.*, 14
[9] See Farson 1994 for several references to Bacon's temper, and reactions to the work of other painters.
[10] See later in this discussion (Parts I and II) for specific examples.
[11] Ferneyhough has produced a number of essays throughout his compositional career, which reveal his capacity to formulate compositional and aesthetic problems in written form. Those produced prior to 1995 have been included in a volume of his collected writings, which includes numerous interviews and some analytical papers relating to the work of other composers (for full reference, see note immediately below).
[12] Brian Ferneyhough, 'Interview with Philippe Albèra' in *Collected Writings* eds. James Boros and Richard Toop (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Press, 1995) p. 333

renowned is carried over into the essay form, resulting in a richly 'textured' written style. He simultaneously creates a decisive tone and yet withdraws his authorial voice to some extent into the density of the text, forcing the reader to interrogate that text and extrapolate ideas from it.

What is presented here results from an engagement with Ferneyhough's texts in this vein. My intention is not to clarify his words, or indeed his musical works, any more than one should wish a Francis Bacon painting without its smears and distortions; neither is my aim to 'reveal' a hidden source (i.e. Bacon) for Ferneyhough's own creativity, thus 'explaining' certain works or statements as though solving a riddle. My approach to Ferneyhough's music and writings (of the 1980s specifically) is as much a creative one as it is an attempt to understand his motivations and stylistic preferences.

There is no doubt that Ferneyhough's composition is a labour-intensive activity. In a 1983 interview he remarks that, 'on ideal days, I get seven or eight hours work done',[13] referring to the multiple, intricate layers of material that occupy him at any given stage of the compositional process.

It is not difficult to imagine this figure concentrating at his desk, endeavouring to harness, in musical language, the force-ridden mass of emotive energy – 'the drive which leads one to create anything at all'.[14] This figure is thoroughly Baconian: 'much of my 'inner dialogue' revolves around concepts derived from the physical world ('energy', 'force', 'directionality', 'perspective')....[15]

---

[13] Ferneyhough, 'Interview with Richard Toop' in 1995: 254
[14] Ferneyhough, 'Interview with Joël Bons' in 1995: 228

**Overview**

Historically, many relationships have been identified between two different art forms[16] - for example between painting and music, poetry and painting, or music and architecture. Such relationships are generally described on the basis of similarities that the two genres/works are thought to share, or as the result of both works' attempts to represent through their own form a common, externally-derived structure. This three-part thesis approaches the issue from a different perspective since, in the first instance, it considers the artists' 'aesthetic' writings and/or interviews, as well as some important third-party philosophical explorations of both the artworks and the ideas articulated 'around' them by their creators. Through the study of the latter, a particular idea emerges that forms the conceptual basis for this thesis: both of the artists in question foreground the notion of the figure in order to convey fundamental aspects of their respective approaches to artistic materials, idioms and techniques.

Bacon's work in particular has been the focus of a major philosophical study by the French theorist Gilles Deleuze, published in 1981 as *Francis Bacon*: *Logique de la sensation*.[17] Again the concept of the figure is central to the discussion, and it is in fact Deleuze's 'reading' of the figure in Bacon's paintings that appeals to Ferneyhough's own tendency to abstract concepts from the musical material itself, formulating them in terms of complex aesthetic issues.

---

[15] Ferneyhough, 'Interview with Jean-Baptiste Barrière' in 1995: 406

[16] See for example Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Laocoön* (full reference below). See also Guillaume Dufay's isorhythmic Motet *Nuper Rosarum Flores*, written for the inauguration of Brunelleschi's formidable dome which completed the Cathedral of Florence, 1436, and which takes the proportions of the biblical temple of Solomon (the archetype of Judeo-Christian places of worship). See Craig Wright, ''Dufay's *Nuper rosarum flores*, King Solomon's Temple, and the Veneration of the Virgin', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 47 (1994) pp. 395-441

This triangular situation is explored in detail in Part I, which considers each artist's attitude to his material, and then offers a reading of Ferneyhough's writings on the 'figure' in relation to concepts set out in Deleuze's monograph on Bacon. Several important concepts are introduced in addition to the notion of the figure, which will return in subsequent Parts (II and III) of the thesis, themselves abstracted and critiqued in an ever more speculative yet rigorous investigation of both Deleuze and Ferneyhough's ideas. Theodor Adorno's aesthetics of musical material are also important to Ferneyhough, many of whose fundamental creative endeavours owe their conceptual articulation (if not their genesis) to the German philosopher and sociologist. Part I also approaches this aspect of Ferneyhough's musical mindset, in an attempt to discover how the Deleuze-Bacon 'figure' might also usefully be articulated within the context of Adorno's theory of musical material.

The interdisciplinarity of this project, as well as the broad spectrum of theory that is considered essential to its proper and thoroughgoing exposition, poses an organisational problem insofar as the central issue – *viz*. the figure – is a very specific notion set within a much larger field of enquiry. The decision has therefore been taken to divide the material into three main, wide-ranging sections (themselves subdivided into chapters) which are nonetheless internally unified by a general principle. The first of these sections (Part I, referred to, briefly, above) also introduces the relationship that both Deleuze and Ferneyhough posit between the figure and the related concept of force, to be discussed below. Subsequent sections – on space in the artwork, and on time (Parts II and III respectively) – continue to explore this relationship, taking the 'special case' concepts

---

[17] Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation*, coll. 'La vue le texte', no. 1. 2 vol. (Paris: Éditions de la Différence, 1981). Translated as *Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation*, trans. Daniel W.

of the 'diagram' and the 'rhythm-witness' as their points of departure. They focus upon the issues of material in terms of a phenomenology – a space – of vision in language (Part II) and time as a sensuous force that striates material (Part III). Furthermore, Part II addresses the concept of the figure at the moment of its forceful eruption into the work of art: in this context, the 'diagram' is considered to be both the objective outcome of a demand made upon the artist by his material, and a technique necessary for the realisation of the figural in art. Part III approaches the figural from the opposite perspective (that is, not its realisation in musical material, but its effect upon that material), tracing the active, tactile force of time through the 'markers' left upon objective figural material.

As implied above, a number of curious pairings – of theorists, philosophers and artists – dominate the following discussion. One such pair, which can be considered the catalyst for all others that are explored, brings together Bacon, already the focus of this introduction, and Ferneyhough. Quite apart from the general and obvious differences between painting and music, the figurative nature of Bacon's work, involving him so readily with the conceptually determined world of objects, and the notorious complexity and abstraction of Ferneyhough's music, presupposing several degrees of mediation, seem, from the outset to be at odds with one another stylistically. If one were to select a style of painting to compare to Ferneyhough's intricate and dense, layered, scores based on the extent to which he embraces abstraction, one might opt for the likes of Jackson Pollock in whose complexes of interweaving lines and colours – in whose own abstraction – objects and levels of organization can only become perceptible after close and concentrated study. However, it is Ferneyhough himself who professes his interest in Deleuze's study of Bacon: the degree of resonance with the French text is remarkable in

---

Smith (London: Continuum Press, 2003)

the composer's *Collected Writings*, though the latter are no less idiosyncratic for it. This theoretical *rapprochement* is extended to a comparison of the paintings and compositions themselves throughout this thesis, although the greater 'distance' between Ferneyhough's concepts and materials given the extent of his predilection for the arcane, must be borne in mind. It will become clear that his musical thinking is, however, particularly tactile and object-focused, leading to the conclusion that the extreme tactility and objectivity of Bacon's figurative images have, by analogy, brought Ferneyhough closer to his own sound material. It is obvious to any reader of the *Collected Writings* that Ferneyhough enjoys an intensely visual relationship with that material, as well as an auditory one.

The particular aspect of Bacon's painting that is focused upon throughout what follows has, for the painter himself, no philosophical or conceptual significance: he paints the figure – most often the human figure – and delights in rendering the flesh as tactile and sensuous as possible. However he does adopt one consistent position in respect of what we might call 'traditional' or 'conventional representation', insisting that his paintings convey neither story, nor sensational horror: 'I have never tried to be horrific'.[18] Familiar preoccupations of his, including the painted scream, result from his early fascination with the colours and muscular contractions particular to the mouth, and not a taste for the shocking scene or event that induces one to scream: indeed, his ownership of a book on diseases of the mouth (complete with hand-coloured plates) testifies to this interest in the physiology of the face.[19] (A medical book among his possessions called *Positioning in Radiography* confirms that his interest extends from the face to the rest of the body. Along with Eadweard Muybridge's well-known sequential photographs of

---

[18] David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987) p. 47

wrestlers[20], these books suggest a scientific aspect to Bacon's work that balances the impression he gives, in interview, of the somewhat arbitrary and manual manner of his application of paint to the canvas).[21] In fact Bacon's approach marries this taste for the accuracy and detail of 'science' (of the body) – 'he…haunted medical bookshops in search of an ever greater precision in the portrayal of extreme states'[22] – with the perception of artistic 'beauty' – 'I always thought that I could make the scream as beautiful as a late Monet landscape…'[23] – recalling older attitudes towards painting and sculpture. 'Art was a superior science, like medicine, and there was an acknowledged hierarchy of accomplishment that ran all the way from apprenticeship to masterhood'.[24] Daniel Farson comments that 'towards the end his work was almost clinical in its dissection: 'I never think of my work as convulsive' [the artist's own admission]. 'I love very ordered work'.'[25]

Bacon's determination to paint the sensation and nothing else [i.e. to represent nothing] notwithstanding, his subject matter includes numerous iconic, religious staples of the history of painting. Most notable are his many Popes and crucifixion triptychs, which inescapably invoke tradition, even if it is then subverted through techniques such as the box-like enclosures that Bacon uses to isolate the figure, the *malerisch*-style[26] curtains that seem at once to cover and cut-through the figure (witness several of the

---

[19] *Ibid.*, 32

[20] See the reproductions in Sylvester 1987: 31, 33

[21] See Sylvester 1987, interviews 1 – 4 especially (pp. 8-125)

[22] John Russell, *Francis Bacon* rev. ed. (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1979) p. 56. 'He…kept one or two hand-coloured plates – for the incongruous beauty, above all, of the colouring and the magnificence and purity of the teeth'. (p. 56)

[23] Cited in Farson 1994: 6. For the second quotation, see Sylvester 1987: 48-50

[24] Russell 1979: 54

[25] Farson 1994: 9

[26] The term *malerisch* refers to the painterly treatment of texture, as opposed to a 'flat' (non) texture, such as the acrylic monochrome backgrounds on many of Bacon's larger canvases. A *malerisch* texture by contrast is one in which the brushstrokes remain visible, textured.

Popes) or the surrounding of the figure with carcasses of meat (see *Pope No. II*, 1960 and *Painting 1946* discussed in Part II), as if to bring out the textures and colours of meat in its own flesh. His espousal of the figurative form, and declared rejection of abstract art[27] has led some to suggest his art is stylistically postmodern[28], an assessment that is itself rejected in the following chapters, which consider his techniques to be thoroughly modern. In fact, in Part II I argue that in spite of his dismissal of the abstract as a viable form of expression, his method does indeed incorporate abstraction as a necessary means to expression, even in the most figurative of his works.

Further evidence that Bacon himself attaches no particular conceptual importance to the figure is provided if one traces the development of his career: he did not begin with the concentrated, boxed figures and 'biomorphs'[29] that characterize his work from the mid 1950s onwards, and neither towards the end of his life did he paint the figure exclusively. His first professional occupation involved designing and making furniture, and in his painting, to which he became seriously dedicated only in his thirties (he refers to himself as a latecomer[30]), he followed his 'obsessions' as they were at that moment. Thus his earliest paintings recall Picasso in their 'sculpted' figures, or Van Gogh's landscapes, and the canvases are generally much 'busier' with colours, textures and objects (flowers, grass, patterned coats) than is the case with the intensely honed, muscular, thoroughly plastic later figures and their economical surrounds. His 'Pope' phase results from a youthful absorption in works such as Velázquez' *Pope Innocent X*[31]; the paintings of coupled or multiple figures stem from his attraction to Cézanne's

---

[27] See Sylvester 1987: 30-67 (interview 2)
[28] See Ernst van Alphen, 'The Body Unbound: the Postmodern Aesthetics of Francis Bacon', *Word and Image*, vol. 7, no. 1 (London: January-March 1971) pp. 71-84
[29] David Sylvester, *Looking Back at Francis Bacon* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000) p. 144

*Baigneurs* [The Bathers][32] (which in his opinion, successfully portrays several figures on the same canvas without letting a narrative in[33]); and the relationship of tension between meat and bone (meat often appears to be escaping – sliding off – the bone) is, in part at least, a consequence of his observation of the spine and flesh in Degas' *Après le bain* [After the Bath].[34] 'You will find at the very top of the spine that the spine almost comes out of the skin altogether. And this gives it such a grip and a twist that you're more conscious of the vulnerability of the rest of the body....In my case these things have certainly been influenced by X-ray photographs'.[35] (Again, the meeting of science and art is striking). Later, in the late 1970s and 80s, Bacon evolved the plasticity of his figure still further into paintings like *Sand Dune* (1983) which, though it maintains an undeniable figurative likeness to a sand dune, at the same time conveys a sense of fleshliness, abstracted now from the body itself. David Sylvester argues that despite the lack of the figure-body in such paintings, the animal energy extorted from the material in the actual figural works is distilled onto the *Sand Dune* or *Jet of Water* (1979) nonetheless[36].

When asked why he had moved from the figural form towards these 'landscapes', Bacon responds laconically that 'inability to the figure'[37] had forced the change. He strongly implies that no significance should be attached to this. Rather his 'decision' has been dictated only by the practical situation in which he finds himself. Nevertheless, this comment does tell us one important fact: that the figure, once it is fastened on as a

---

[30] Sylvester 1987: 68
[31] Velázquez *Pope Innocent X*, 1650
[32] Paul Cézanne, *Baigneurs*, 1890-1892
[33] Sylvester 1987: 63-64
[34] Degas' painting dates from 1903.
[35] Sylvester 1987: 46-47
[36] See Sylvester 2000: 144

stylistic preoccupation, becomes the priority for Bacon in painting. It is, as has been suggested earlier, not Bacon who makes of the figure a concept, but Gilles Deleuze. To this extent, Ferneyhough is 'paired' with both Bacon and Deleuze in this thesis: with the one in terms of practice (the figure or body is evoked in artworks themselves), and with the other in terms of abstract conceptual argument.

Deleuze's ideas will be addressed in greater detail presently. At this stage, it is important only to note that it is he who abstracts and theorizes the notion of 'figure' based, it seems, upon multiple possible meanings of the French term (this is highly typical of his writing). However, even in his most abstract reckoning Deleuze does not forget the figure's rootedness in the *body*, doubtless due in part to the forcefulness of Bacon's own discussions of the issue with David Sylvester, his most regular and trusted interviewer. The term 'figure' refers (in French and English) both to the body, and to the rhetorical device that has occupied many linguists and philosophers for centuries.[38] The concept of the figure in terms of both body and language is fundamentally important to the remainder of the present work.

The same impression of the double relevance of the term 'figure' is given in Ferneyhough's written texts, and, by extension, in his musical language: nevertheless, as indicated previously, these phenomena are necessarily understood to be mediated in a (contemporary) musical context, which enjoys neither the visual immediacy of painting, nor the object-relatedness of figurative, representational artworks. This being the case, the level of abstraction to which Deleuze subjects the Baconian figure offers a way into

---

[37] Sylvester 1987: 63

[38] See discussion in Tzvetan Todorov, *Theories of the Symbol*, trans. Catherine Porter (New York: Cornell University Press, 1982). See also Michael Spitzer, *Metaphor and Musical Thought* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

the analogous material in Ferneyhough's music. However, rather than approach the issue from this angle straightaway, I intend firstly to strip away certain presuppositions surrounding the reception of Ferneyhough's music, as well as recast in an alternative perspective, some well-established, and by no means incorrect, current assessments of the composer's work.

**Ferneyhough and Tradition**

Typically, the first word to be associated with Ferneyhough's music is 'complex' or rather 'complexity'[39], which couched as 'New Complexity' has not only linked him with other composers of a similar attitude (Michael Finnissy, Chris Fox, Richard Barrett, Klaus K. Hubler, Chris Dench, James Dillon et al.[40]), but has unfortunately led to the treatment of what is purely, he insists, a *terminus technicus*[41], as though it were indicative of an aesthetic position, a stylistic conceit or worse still, a 'school'. Indeed, even as Ferneyhough explains that 'my own researches in the field of complex musical states reaches back at least to 1966'[42] in an attempt to distance himself from the 'so-called 'New Complexity''[43], his interviewer's question implies that he (as a proponent of 'Old Complexity') and the younger generation of composers (*viz.* the 'New Complexity') can be stylistically and aesthetically related precisely on this basis. In fact, if Ferneyhough is assimilable to any style or 'school' in music's history it is to another, much more historically established two 'generation' institution: the (second) Viennese school. Ferneyhough's own declaration of his stylistic preoccupations is summarised in the same

---

[39] Ferneyhough, 'Interview with Antonio de Lisa' in 1995: 422-430
[40] Ferneyhough himself names these composers in Ferneyhough (ADL) 1995: 425
[41] Ferneyhough, 'Responses to a Questionnaire on Complexity' in 1995: 67
[42] Ferneyhough (ADL) 1995: 425

interview: 'I see my development as a continuation (and reformulation) of the central concerns of Late Modernism….My attempt at continual re-evaluation of possible musical 'grammars of validation' is still broadly based on a flexible vision of function and linear process…I am constantly concerned with underlining dissonance (or disequilibrium) as a dynamic semantic quantum on all levels of compositional argument'.[44] Ferneyhough's *Collected Writings* and music also convey the importance, for him, of Arnold Schoenberg's work: recent public statements reveal the extent to which he has come to identify his own musical concerns with the 'father' of western atonality and serialism.[45] The parallels are striking indeed in life and music: both composers are autodidacts; both spent the early parts of their careers forced to supplement their negligible income from composition with other tasks (Schoenberg orchestrating other men's operettas, Ferneyhough copying other men's compositions)[46]; both spent/spend their later years in America, as university teachers (Schoenberg leaving Germany to escape the Nazi oppression of Jews, Ferneyhough leaving Europe because 'San Diego was the first institution ever to offer me a secure, permanent position, even though I had been actively searching for some ten years closer to home'[47]). Musically too, the resonances are clear: Ferneyhough's *Fourth String Quartet* (with soprano) and *String Trio* pay tribute, amongst other works, to Schoenberg's own choice of ensemble (his second, innovative, string

---

[43] *Ibid.*

[44] *Ibid.*, 425-426

[45] Ferneyhough has recently delivered a keynote address (Durham, Ferneyhough 60th Birthday Festival, January 2003) which contained the phrase 'Schoenberg and I', reflecting the degree to which he feels the parallels between them.

[46] Both men were equally frustrated by this. Whittall notes of Schoenberg that 'from his early years as an orchestrator of other men's operettas to his late years as a university teacher, Schoenberg suffered from the supreme frustration: the regular necessity to set his own work aside and perform other tasks in order to support his family'. (Arnold Whittall, *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) p.160). Ferneyhough recalls that 'over the years, juggling various secondary activities in order to make a living becomes somewhat debilitating'. (Ferneyhough (ADL) 1995: 422)

[47] Ferneyhough (ADL) 1995: 422

quartet includes the soprano voice). Even the links made by Ferneyhough between his music and painting recall a preoccupation of Schoenberg's own. Furthermore, both composers have produced paintings of their own. Arnold Whittall refers to Schoenberg's encounter with painting and also literature in his *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century*:

> It might be argued that, at least from the time of Edvard Munch's The Scream (1893) and the plays of August Strindberg, especially A Dream Play (1903)…a kind of expression existed in painting and literature which demonstrated a 'point of crisis' with regard to the relation between progressive and conservative that music could hardly fail to match, if not outdo, in the sense that the contrast between tonality and atonality was greater than anything literary language could provide and was only paralleled in painting with the appearance of Kandinsky's earliest abstracts in 1910-11. The friendship between Schoenberg and Kandinsky encourages this particular comparison, while also reinforcing the obvious and fundamental differences between technique and expression in painting and musical composition.[48]

The similarities here with Ferneyhough's situation are striking, despite the lapse of some 70 years between the two. In his essays of the early 1980s Ferneyhough identifies a renewed 'point of crisis' in musical composition, resulting from the extreme regression evident in some styles and the extreme 'mathematicisation' of others. It is arguable that Ferneyhough's personal resolution of this perceived crisis is in some measure indebted to his encounter with Deleuze's reading of Bacon, and more specifically with the notion of the figure. In any case, the parallel is as notable as that between Schoenberg and Kandinsky. Crucially, Deleuze argues that Bacon forges a unique path through his contemporaries' tendencies to either preserve figurative conventions at the cost of progress, even when, he insists that the camera has usurped that function, or to follow the course of pure abstraction. In fact, Bacon's inimitable style retains aspects of convention,

---

[48] Whittall 1999: 42. Ferneyhough acknowledges the influence of Bacon, and specifically Deleuze's monograph in interview, see Ferneyhough, 'Interview with Jean-Baptiste Barrière' in 1995: 415 and Joshua Cody, 'In Conversation with Brian Ferneyhough' (website: http://www.sospeso.com/contents/articles/ferneyhough_p1.html, 1996)

just as it incorporates the progressive – for example in its forays into the abstract (mentioned above). Ferneyhough's 'personal' stylistic choices carve, like Bacon's, their own route through the so-called 'crisis' in material and, to stop at calling Ferneyhough's music 'complex' (implying 'too abstract') is to miss the degree of conventionality that underscores even his most arcane procedures. The figure allows both the progressive and conservative to find expression in his music. Part I explains this, though by way of introduction, a short case-in-point may serve as preparation for a chapter of analysis later in the thesis.

It is in the musical material itself that Ferneyhough is at his most 'Schoenbergian', firstly at the microscopic level: witness his generation in the *Carceri d'Invenzione cycle* (1981) and *Lemma-Icon-Epigram* (1980) of the entire musical material from a certain number of chords (eight and seven respectively) which can be disposed either vertically or horizontally, and which develop linearly and moreover polyphonically as the pieces progress. (*Carceri I* also uses pitch material from Schoenberg's *Moses Und Aron*, though not conspicuously). The principles that sustain works by Schoenberg such as the *Three Piano Pieces*, opus 11 and *Chamber Symphony No.1* – indeed, many examples of Schoenberg's early atonal works – are brought to mind in Ferneyhough's musical language.

The present discussion, as it extends into the ensuing three parts, will set out and develop a theory of the gesture and figure as dynamic features of Ferneyhough's musical material, whereupon the gesture, as individual and personal a notion as Ferneyhough undoubtedly makes it, can be likened nonetheless to the principles of Schoenberg's 'developing variation', and the figure, as redolent of Bacon-Deleuze as it is, lends itself

to contrapuntal treatment. Like the vertically-expressed chords in Schoenberg's music[49] which are then developed, broken down – it is here that his music can be at its most expressive – and later re-articulated in a new, but related, developed and varied context, the gesture as Ferneyhough conceives it can 'topple' into linear figural, polyphonic expressive material. It is in the latter that Ferneyhough considers himself most 'free' creatively. It can be no coincidence that the more expressive aspects of his language are also the more dynamic, plastic aspects, enabled precisely through his domination of gestural material. A similar tension between the static or 'vertical' and the fluid or 'linear' pertains in Schoenberg's own material, in which the linear contextualisation of a chord often corresponds to its expressivity.

On the macroscopic level – the level of form – there is evidence once again of Ferneyhough's indebtedness to Schoenberg and indeed the Viennese School in general. The principles of horizontality and verticality are manifest on the larger-scale too insofar as the linear developmental consistency that Ferneyhough raises to a formal, as well as local, operation is organized through 'structural downbeats' similar in function – despite the historical lapse between them – to those in evidence even in Beethoven's music. To this extent, and contrary to the popular view, Ferneyhough can be considered a conservative composer: his formal constructs, though they might be hidden by layer upon layer of complex microscopic activity, are in some cases, deceptively simple. For instance, Ferneyhough might establish a three-part structure roughly analogous to an

---

[49] Ferneyhough's 'favourite' period of Schoenberg is around 1910, the same as Adorno (See Theodor Adorno, 'Vers une musique informelle' in *Quasi una fantasia*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1998, pp. 269-322). However, he also sees the positive in the serial explorations made by Schoenberg: even when the pitch parameter is regulated by the rules of the row, Ferneyhough argues that other parameters (rhythm, timbre and so on) can be used to contextualize and dynamize material. See Part II for a discussion of Ferneyhough's integration of pluralism into his own style, a style that does not merely revisit 1910, but takes account of developments in musical composition in the decades since.

exposition, development and recapitulation (he even adds codas in several pieces[50]), but articulate within that local retrogrades, inversions, processes and perhaps microtonal 'reductions' of chromatic material (as in *Superscriptio*) redolent of serial and post-serial techniques in the mid-twentieth century.

This thesis devotes a chapter of analysis to the study of his *Carceri d'Invenzione I* for chamber orchestra (the second piece of the *Carceri d'Invenzione* cycle). My analysis takes as its point of departure these observations regarding Ferneyhough's conservatism in terms of musical form, before focusing on the piece according to the perspectives suggested in Parts I and II of the present discussion (i.e. the figure, gesture and expression). My intention is not to suggest, in using certain formal analogies (e.g. the sonata) which have their own implications relating to musical history, that Ferneyhough 'adopts' these forms, retaining their diatonic structuring principles. Instead, I make certain comparisons based on features such as the 'arc' of traditional sonata form (the initial tonic, the (harmonic) distance travelled to the development in the dominant, and the return to the stability of the tonic), whose principle can be appropriated by Ferneyhough, even though his means of realising that principle are different.

*Carceri I* is divided into three substantial sections: the first bears witness to repeated materials, the trajectory of which moves from the exact to what Richard Toop calls 'arcane re-readings'[51] of the initial material. (This might involve using a pitch filter[52], for

---

[50] *Carceri d'Invenzione I* and *III* are examples of large-scale chamber orchestra pieces with codas.

[51] See Richard Toop, '"Prima le parole..." (on the sketches for Ferneyhough's *Carceri d'Invenzione I-III*)' in *Perspectives of New Music* 32, no. 1 (1994) pp. 155-175.

[52] A relatively simple pitch filter is used in *Superscriptio* where Ferneyhough uses a twelve tone row, which is of course chromatic, but 'filters' it microtonally (using quartertones), such that the original scale becomes considerably condensed, but its equi-distant intervallic identity is maintained in its new version. See Richard Toop, 'Brian Ferneyhough's *Superscriptio*: A Conversation and an Analysis', in *Contemporary Music Review* 13, no. 1 (London: 1995) pp. 3-17 for reproductions of the two scales in the semi- and quarter- tone identities. More complex uses of pitch filters in *Carceri d'Invenzione I* derived from

example, through which Ferneyhough's initial pitches are transformed, yet they remain relatives of the 'parent' pitches on account of the filter, and can legitimately become part of Ferneyhough's broadly conceived repetitive strategy). A striking structural feature of this first section is the several '*tutti* interventions': short but weighty 'breakthroughs' of the whole ensemble into an otherwise reduced texture (consisting most usually of small groups, such as a string or brass quartet for example). The interrupt*ive* material is markedly different from the interrupt*ed* material, most notably in terms of texture: the former is generally homophonic, the latter contrapuntal. The effect of these interventions is to unsteady the section progressively: it begins robustly and ends with depleted forces and 'chaotic' sounding material.

The second section is again substantial, and referred to as a 'central *tutti*'.[53] The *tuttis* can be considered to perform a formal role that is loosely analogous to the destabilizing move, in a sonata exposition, from the tonic towards the dominant (or its substitute). In the latter, the development then begins in the dominant, reinterpreting material from the exposition. In Ferneyhough's case, this is effected through the retrogradation, from the beginning of the central *tutti* onwards, of the textural character (in the form of ornaments) of the first section. Insofar as the whole of this central section is a *tutti*, it maintains the 'dominant' character (following the analogy with diatonicism) of the destabilizing *tuttis* in section one, but, having reversed the pattern of destabilization, tends towards the original orderliness and solidity of texture identified at the beginning of section one (my 'exposition'), in readiness for the 'recapitulation'. The

---

Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* are described in Cordula Pätzold's Doctoral Dissertation, *'Carceri d'Invenzione' von Brian Ferneyhough: kompositionstechnische und horanalytische Aspekte* from the University of Freiburg, available at the website http://www.freidok.uni-freiburg.de/volltexte/583 (2002).

[53] See Pätzold Diss. 2002

reversal of the tendency of the texture to depletion is one which stretches from the very beginning of the central *tutti*, to the end of the piece – hence, when the third section begins, it does so at a point that can still be considered relatively unstable, texturally. Thus, like a sonata form recapitulation, Ferneyhough's third section moves back to the stable 'tonic': indeed, the consistency and 'solidity' of sound familiar to the listener from the very beginning of Ferneyhough's piece returns to the texture by the end of this section. There follows a coda for which Ferneyhough selects representatives from each sub-group of the chamber ensemble, to explore low registers and percussive timbres. The technique of prescribing frequent *rallentandi* adds to the sense of closure created by the final transformation of Ferneyhough's melodic resources (which have been the wind and strings throughout the piece) into percussive instruments (the flute and viola are the chosen representatives of the respective families of instruments). The final bars including this pair and four additional, actual percussion instruments fade *ppp* to nothing. This percussive conclusion, filled with impulses (drum) and the metallic sonority of *ppppp* triangles, partakes of a cadential function for Ferneyhough.

*Carceri I* is not the only piece to end in this manner. *Carceri III* is 'terminated' (this rather clinical term expresses the fact that Ferneyhough's processual material has outworn its potential in that particular piece)[54] once the continuous 'stripping away' of textural forces reveals an impulse pattern which the composer has endeavoured to conceal throughout the piece. One is given the impression that Ferneyhough ended this composition in order to preserve its structural 'secrets'. Either way, a thoroughgoing transformation of a piece's textural character that is consolidated, intensified and revealed in a coda section, thus completing the arc of the work, is a typical Ferneyhough

mechanism for bringing the dynamic to a close. It is the kindling and the sustenance of this dynamic that most reflects Ferneyhough's self-conscious alignment with the Viennese 'line' of composers. The analysis of *Carceri I* presented later in this thesis will revisit some of what has been set out here, in order to extend it into the new context of the figure. For now, however, I remain concerned with the question of form in Ferneyhough's music, and more specifically, how it can be interpreted as a palpable link to the musical past.

To the extent that I have foregrounded the conservativism discoverable in this aspect of his music, I refine, and in some cases, challenge, some current assessments of the composer's priorities. Arnold Whittall's emphasis on the austerity and untraditional aspects of Ferneyhough's musical material is not incorrect. In fact, he focuses on Ferneyhough's 'conscious continuation of the earlier, romantic genre of the fragment, which he sees as a persistent twentieth-century force, not least in the later work of Nono'[55] in a manner that is consistent with my own appreciation of the interruptive *tutti* interventions in *Carceri I*. Nevertheless, one senses that he is content to accept Ferneyhough's own appraisal of a piece such as *Superscriptio* (for solo piccolo, 1981) as 'completely automated'[56], without probing deeper into the mechanisms which, while undoubtedly tending towards the extreme limit of musical-abstract possibility, arguably bear the traces of diatonic-formal principles. This trace does not reveal itself in any obvious, gauche way, but in terms of *shape*. One senses a familiar morphology in Ferneyhough's musical form, though one might add that the constitution of his music on the 'cellular' level is thoroughly new.

---

[54] See Toop (PP) 1994
[55] Whittall 1999: 380

The apparent contradiction embodied by certain traits in Ferneyhough's music and his own comments upon it set out in the *Collected Writings* is sometimes striking. His capacity to mislead a listener is not motivated by a deliberate and conscious urge to throw him/her off a 'correct' analytical course, so much as a requirement that the reader/listener reach an independent conclusion. It may also reflect the autodidact's need to 'cover his tracks'. Whittall suggests that 'the constantly evolving line [of *Superscriptio*] is more splintered that centred, and even though for most of the time it is not literally fragmented by the insistent use of rests between sounds, its feeling of ebb and flow does not coexist with any sense of gravity, of focus on a governing feature, whether a single pitch or a recurring motive'.[57] The latter part of his comment suggests that he approaches Ferneyhough's piece intending to measure its character against a traditional model of formal consistency, dependent on the identity and role of recurrent or developing motivic features. Against these parameters, Ferneyhough's piece flaunts its difference, its abstraction and apparent distance from tradition. The relationship of *Superscriptio* to tradition is arguably subtler. The pitch parameter (in which Whittall seeks such phenomena as repetition, or a focal pitch) is subordinated instead to interval, whilst the traditional primacy of the harmonic parameter (in which Whittall seems to seek motivic, 'gravity'-providing material) is displaced by a concern for register. From the beginning to the end of the piece, an interval series containing four thirds, three tones, two semitones and two fourths (and inversions of these intervals) is used to generate pitches. The series is counterpointed with itself five-fold in the final section (see Appendix 2, b.201-end) producing five distinctive registers for the flautist to articulate.

---

[56] See Toop (S) 1995: 5
[57] Whittall 1999: 381

Rather than foreground the moment-to-moment progress of pitch material, Ferneyhough raises his concern with interval to a formal principle. In partnership with the registral material, his architecture produces a form similar once again in conceit (though not detail) to the I-V-I of sonata form. Instead I maintain simply that the sense of movement away from- and return to expositionary material – the sense of an 'arc' – recalls the shape and the tension (distance and its resolution, or instability and stability) at the heart of sonata form.

The piece (in five sections overall) begins at the upper registral extreme of the piccolo, although it is not clear to either listener or analyst at this point that interval is considered superior to pitch. Section two (b. 60-118) contains several bars of rapid repeated notes, changing pitch frequently (precisely so as not to allow a 'focal' pitch to become prominent): any 'melodic' impression one might have formed after section one is replaced now by the insistent hammering of the repeated tones, which lessen melodic interest in favour of highlighting the intervals between the notes. Section three (b. 119-138) is the first to make counterpoint of the interval series (three-part) and is the most obviously fragmented, disjointed material, articulated in the middle registers of the piccolo (Whittall's 'splintered' line). Sections four (b. 139-200) and five are more consistent, despite the increase in contrapuntal parts, assimilating aspects of the material from sections one and two. Section four 'mirrors' section two in textural terms. The final section sees a return of the extreme(s) of the piccolo register (the upper register predominates) which recalls the very opening of the piece. The middle register is gradually phased out altogether due to the specificities of the intervals used: the piece ends on the highest possible pitch obtainable on the piccolo. This is somewhat symbolic:

a 'return' to the expositionary material, enforced through the contrivances of interval structure, which is used as a 'weighted' (quasi-harmonic) device; for example, it is converted into microtonal values which gravitate towards the extremes of the instrument. Not unlike Ferneyhough's own method of filtering pitches to create an abstraction of the original pitch material, the abstraction of his formal creativity in *Superscriptio* that is proposed here is filtered through an awareness of serial and atonal techniques which necessarily distorts the diatonic heritage of the musical forms one might identify in his compositions.

**Representation**

Nevertheless, Ferneyhough's music does betray a degree of object-relatedness which can be compared with that manifest in Bacon's painting: it is in order to pursue this point that lengthy explorations of background formal conventions have been made above. Further to this object-relatedness, Ferneyhough's piece for 'cello and live electronics/transformations which forms part of the *Time and Motion Study* cycle is a theatrical work[58], calls for the cellist to be constrained by a number of microphones and electrically operated equipment (to the throat, the body of the cello, foot pedals, the close proximity of loud speakers and so on) as well as flanked by two assistants.[59] Visually, this creates an impression of an instrumentalist imprisoned by his own means to expression, and yet he is on public display, scrutinized by onlookers who also have aural access to his body, to the sounds of his throat: the intimacy of this connection violates him. As the piece progresses, he becomes more defiant, agitated and neurotic. An aside of

---

[58] Although in the preface to the score, Ferneyhough instructs that the piece should not be performed as a theatre piece.

Ferneyhough's in an interview discloses an interesting figurative intent in this piece: 'I wanted to subtitle the cello piece "Electric Chair Music", but decided that that would be far too explicit...the cellist...is certainly tortured throughout. We have yet to see if he survives'.[60]

However, like Bacon, who rejects the traditional parameters of representation, Ferneyhough's writings of the 1980s present a polemical argument against the then popular use of iconic materials, whose specific emotive content or significative power is – according to Ferneyhough – prioritized over their immanent potential in a particular musical context. (Bacon's addition of a painted swastika armband to the left arm of the figure in the right hand panel of Crucifixion, 1965[61] is an example of the icon overpowering the context it is placed in: Bacon insists that he only wanted to break the texture of the arm by adding a band of colour, and it so happened that he had some photographs of Nazi soldiers, which planted the idea in his head. Nevertheless, he later admits to Sylvester that the inclusion of such an emotively charged object was a mistake[62] since the critical reception of the painting had focused largely on the symbolic properties of the armband, and what it might 'mean' for the painting, forgetting the detail of the figure itself). Ferneyhough identifies a similar problem in certain contemporary musical styles, juxtaposing other composers' attitudes to musical material with his own (he refers to an article of his – 'Form-Figure-Style: an Intermediate Assessment' – published the previous year, in 1982):

---

[59] The assistants operate electronic equipment.
[60] Ferneyhough, 'Interview with Andrew Clements' in 1995: 216. At the time of the interview (1977), the premiere of *Time and Motion Study II* had not yet taken place.
[61] Ironically preserved in the *Staatsgalerie moderner Kunst*, Munich.

My personal view of the necessity of continuity of personal style...was there contraposed to the various brands of neo-historicism now current. I suggested that the view of musical 'history' often implied in such music is a necessarily limited and limiting one, and that the view of musical gestures can effectively reflect the emotion of the composer in some sort of direct depictional manner leads to all sorts of problems when thinking of form, particularly when bound up with the now ageing polemic against the so-called 'serial' (in the sense of 'total serial') tendencies of the fifties. The main argument against most New Romantic phenomena is that the iconic representation theory (on whatever level) leaves the single gestural unit of significance on a rather isolated and formally ineffective island. Indeed, the more effective the depicting act, the less the resultant gesture is in need of continuation![63]

This argument will be followed closely throughout the remaining chapters of the present work (Part I considers these specific issues in detail), focusing particularly on the degree to which Ferneyhough criticises the misappropriation of the body in those styles of music against which he proposes his own highly physical concepts of figure and gesture. When he refers to the reflection of 'the emotion of the composer in some sort of direct depictional manner', he hints at the attempted integration of the bodily gesture in an unmediated fashion: a practice that he fully rejects in his own musical expression. Ferneyhough's musical relationship with the body operates not through the attempt to somehow 'capture' it in material, and reflect it back to the listener. Rather it is through his constant references to visual experiences, his phenomenologically related recognition of the eye as a corporeal, sensory object – as part of the world it surveys – and his perceived plasticity of historically handed-down musical forms and gestures that we might approach his thoroughgoing and immanent evocation of the body through musical material. Nevertheless, he readily acknowledges that music of his which 'refers explicitly to visual images' does so 'even though at one speculative remove'.[64]

The problematic relationship between Bacon's figurative paintings and Ferneyhough's more abstract musical compositions is brought to a head here. Ferneyhough's many

---

[62] Sylvester 1987: 64-65
[63] Ferneyhough, 'Interview with Paul Griffiths' in 1995: 248

references (scattered throughout the *Collected Writings*) to shadows, geological landscapes, sensation, sculpture, opacity, and numerous visual experiences, if one is to productively compare them with the 'live' relationship that Bacon shares with paint, must be understood to lie behind the dynamic, articulated musically, between gesture and figure. Like many of Bacon's figures, Ferneyhough's gesture can begin from a figurative representation: witness the opening extremities of register in *Carceri I* which recall the limits of Piranesi's etchings, and their sense of pushing outwards and breaking those limits. Once contextualised, linearised, the gestural material becomes expressive in its own right. The importance of context for Ferneyhough cannot be overstated – it also demonstrates his focus upon the individual work-in-itself, its 'essential composition'.[65] The figure-gesture dynamic is eminently fluid 'though at one speculative remove' from the body itself. However, in my reading of Bacon (following Deleuze), I too abstract a theoretical position from the figurative dimension of the work. It is not the body itself that is focused upon; this is not Deleuze's figure. Rather the figure is the fleshly, fluid material to which Bacon raises the figurative body; the former is overrun with forces acting on the flesh and issuing from it. There is something intrinsically musical about the rhythm of the flesh in a painting by Bacon.

Furthermore, the more abstracted from the human body Bacon's figure becomes (consider the wiped, scrubbed areas which bear little, if any resemblance to flesh or facial features, and witness the atomised head in the *Study for Self-Portrait – Triptych*, 1985-6 for example), the more sensuously the material is conveyed to the viewer. **(See Fig. 1)**

---

[64] Ferneyhough (PA) 1995: 332. On this occasion, Ferneyhough refers to his *Lemma-Icon-Epigram* for solo piano of 1980.

[65] Theodor Adorno, 'On Some Relationships Between Music and Painting', trans. Susan Gillespie in *Musical Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (Spring 1995) p. 75 and 79. The original German term here is *Durchgeformtes*

The second section of Part II of this thesis addresses these issues in detail. One might conclude that the represented body is conceived through intellectual means, whilst the figure is given over to the senses, and specifically to vision, though the two are shown to be dialectically related. Moreover, the figure itself will be described in more than one manner: as sensible (visible) and non-sensible (invisible) by turns. Part II provides a lengthy, detailed insight into the 'degrees of substantiality' of the figure, and its consequences for both painted and musical material.

**Ferneyhough and Visual Experience**

Whilst refuting the suggestion that he is synaesthesic[66], Ferneyhough conveys in his writings and interviews the extent to which his creativity is dependent on visual experience, not only in the form of stimuli such as Piranesi's *Carceri d'Invenzione* etchings, but in terms of conceiving his own, individual works: their structure, shape and expression. Ferneyhough argues that 'the reason, I suppose, that this occurs more at the very outset than at other junctures in the compositional process is that my inner eye (its horizon) is not obscured by closer-up matters of concrete musical specification'.[67] An example of this is found in the sketches for the tripartite piano piece *Lemma-Icon-Epigram* (about which Ferneyhough has written 'I wanted to find a way…of treating time in an immediately palpable, pictorial fashion'[68]). His sketches propose to

> Perhaps construct 'ICON' from disparate symbolic elements disposed in a FIELD? The field consists of a continuous "VALEDICTION" whose flow will be broken by isolated OBJECTS. Each object will throw one or more SHADOWS (the creation of perspective??) whose size and direction remains to be determined (shadows' dimensions result of "time of day" for each element?!).

---

[66] Ferneyhough, 'A Verbal Crane Dance: Interview with Ross Feller' in 1995: 457
[67] *Ibid.*
[68] Ferneyhough (RT) 1995: 264

The Valediction-material will be non-repetitive and processual (but static!) whilst the "Objects" whilst being distorted in their "shadow"-versions, remain essentially repetitive in internal structure. The objects to be kept functionally and morphologically separate: their interaction is reserved for the concluding Epigram.[69]

Elsewhere, Ferneyhough describes the 'Icon' section of the piece[70] as follows:

> The idea here was a temporal sun moving across an irregular but fixed landscape, with objects placed in it. The landscape is of course the bar structure; the temporal sun is the ticking (if I want to be over-literal for a moment) of these groups that gradually emerge, and the objects are the [seven] chords, which are scrunched up and expanded both in length (growing and getting shorter) and in density (register). …All these things together produce the feeling of an intensely but mysteriously temporal phenomenon.[71]

Presented here is a glimpse at the sketches – the 'before' of the compositional process – and a retrospective comment, the aftermath of dealing with 'closer-up matters of concrete musical specification'. The visual appeal of this material, for the composer, is sustained throughout his encounters with it: as the imaginative source of the images, the practical 'maker' of the objects and as the receptive audience. Interestingly, his research into the Baroque fascination with *emblema* leads Ferneyhough to comment that 'I…found them a rich source of speculation of a quite directly musical sort. Particularly in the second, middle section, the organization derives pretty directly from a visually-based scenario. I had the idea of very concrete objects (I ended up employing a series of seven chords) which would occupy, and thus to some extent define, a particular space. An imaginary sun would pass in an arc over this space…it is quite audible in general terms, I think'.[72] His own musical sensibility, in this case, is Baroque: highly ornate. The material is 'scrunched up and expanded' in folds: indeed, 'a flexible or an elastic body still has

---

[69] Cited in Toop (LIE) 1990: 78. All original underlining and capitalizations.

[70] The piece's structure is based on the Baroque concept of the *emblema* ('or *Denkbilder* as Walter Benjamin terms them') which consist of the *Lemma* – a superscription/title 'often in Latin, and often with arcane connotations', a second part 'the verbal description of a possible picture – *icon* – with various symbolic parts…like the dragon emerging from the alchemical egg, like the sun, like the moon…the third element [is] always a piece of verse called the *epigram*, in which…an attempt was made to relate the obscurity of the title to the intense symbolism of the image'. See Ferneyhough (RT) 1995: 263

cohering parts that form a fold, such that they are not separated into parts of parts but are rather divided to infinity in smaller and smaller folds that always retain a certain cohesion. Thus a continuous labyrinth is not a line dissolving into independent points, as flowing sand might dissolve into grains, but resembles a sheet of paper divided into infinite folds or separated into bending movements, each one determined by the consistent or conspiring surroundings'.[73]

*Lemma-Icon-Epigram* dates from 1980 and, written the year before the first of the seven-piece *Carceri d'Invenzione* cycle, signals a new departure for the composer after the darker style of the 1970s (encapsulated in the *Time and Motion Study II* mentioned above). Incidentally, theorists including Deleuze and writers after him have speculated upon the 'Baroque' in Bacon's work: 'it is interesting to note the parallel between Deleuze's reading of the Baroque, on the one hand, and of Francis Bacon's figural painting on the other. In both cases, one discerns the same aim, in opposition to figuration: to present the textures of matter, and the currents that traverse it. One and the same tension, one and the same movement towards the aformal is central to both'. [74]

*Lemma* precipitates an inherently 'visual' period of Ferneyhough's work, and its appearance just before the publication of Deleuze's monograph on the Baconian figure was arguably timely for the composer. The aforementioned long-standing tradition of the rhetorical figure, and its seventeenth-century manifestation in the German compositional tradition of *Figurenlehre* which 'originates with the mapping of rhetorical terminology

---

[71] Cited in Toop (LIE) 1990: 80
[72] Ferneyhough (PA) 1995: 332
[73] Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (London: Athlone Press, 2001) p. 6
[74] Mireille Buydens, *Sahara: L'Esthétique de Gilles Deleuze* (Paris: Librarie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1990) p. 115. Translation Fabrice Fitch.

onto musical material'[75] are roughly contemporaneous with the images that so impressed Ferneyhough at the beginning of his researches. Indeed, '*Figurenlehre*, by attending to the specificity of musical material, helps us "see" the musical figure as if it were a plastic image, by analogy to painting'.[76] Multiple interconnections emerge between the plasticity of the Baroque musical figure; Bacon's painted figure (likewise plastic); Deleuze's theorization of the figure which is indebted, in part at least, to rhetorical tradition via Jean-François Lyotard[77]; Ferneyhough's espousal of the figure in music (of whose history he is aware) and moreover its immanent plasticity; and finally the visual relationship that Ferneyhough enjoys with his material, carried over from the visual arena to the aural. (Piranesi's etchings, like the emblematic 'Icon', are native to the Baroque).

The decision to compare Ferneyhough's music with Deleuze's appreciation of Bacon's paintings (one must not forget that it is the French philosopher's interpretation, and (largely) not the artist's own views that are to be compared with Ferneyhough's ideas) and not Pollock is justified then, insofar as Deleuze's contemporary theory of the figure, absorbed by Ferneyhough, attends to the 'specificity of musical material', helping us "see" Ferneyhough's musical figure 'as if it were a plastic image, by analogy to [Bacon's] painting'. Ferneyhough himself seems aware of the phenomenological corporeality of this "seeing" eye. He characterizes a 'cityscape' – a metaphor for Postmodern consciousness – a communal 'urban configuration' in which the individual (observer) is nevertheless 'free to manoeuvre'[78] in a unique way. He remarks that 'the observing eye is not that of a disembodied alien, shuffling the holiday photos at will, but

---

[75] Spitzer 2004: 140
[76] *Ibid.*
[77] Jean-François Lyotard, *Discours, figure* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971). See Part II of this thesis for details of Deleuze's debt to Lyotard.

that of a socially committed entity, subordinated to, and in large part defined by, the nature and utilization of the *umwelt* inhabited'.[79]

## Lyotard and Phenomenology

Ferneyhough's attitude towards the 'postmodern' is addressed in Part II, in relation to Lyotard's earliest, phenomenologically-biased works which establish the roots of his own theory of the postmodern. And so to another pair of thinkers: Lyotard and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. The former's *Discours, figure* of 1971 – his first text in a post-structuralist vein – adopts a two-stage critical agenda, initially arguing from Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological standpoint against Ferdinand de Saussure and Structuralist Linguistics, against the view of language as a system that functions through oppositions. One scholar to have studied Lyotard's early work in detail – Bill Readings[80] – comments that 'for Lyotard, language is as much given to be phenomenologically seen as it is to be read or decoded'.[81] Along with critical appreciations of Lyotard by Peter Dews[82] and Geoffrey Bennington,[83] Readings' work is drawn upon extensively in Part II of this thesis: he successfully extrapolates Lyotard's most salient observations regarding visual art, language and politics, offering many invaluable interpretations of Lyotard's extremely difficult French (of which no translation exists, as yet)[84]. Nevertheless, those aspects of Lyotard's work which are most useful to the present thesis are his comments in

---

[78] Ferneyhough, 'Parallel Universes' in 1995: 81
[79] *Ibid.*
[80] Bill Readings, *Introducing Lyotard: Art and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1991)
[81] *Ibid.*, 12
[82] Peter Dews, *Logics of Disintegration: Post-Structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory* (London and New York: Verso, 1987)
[83] Geoffrey Bennington, *Lyotard: Writing the Event* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988)
[84] Part of *Discours, figure* is translated in *The Lyotard Reader*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1989) as 'The Dream Work Does Not Think', pp. 19-51

respect of Cézanne's painting. Lyotard's choice is motivated by Merleau-Ponty's work (specifically, 'Cézanne's Doubt'[85]), but given both Bacon and Deleuze's evident empathy with the post-impressionist painter, particularly in the matter of the figure[86], the parallels between the two French theorists – Deleuze on Bacon and Lyotard on Cézanne – are important, and all the more so for the centrality of the relationship between the figure and force in *Discours, figure*. Though Deleuze pays remarkably little tribute to Lyotard's theory of the figure, his own is indebted to it on so many levels that a parallel reading of the two works is highly advantageous to an interpretation of the *Logique*, written only ten years later.

However, Lyotard later critiques the phenomenological 'metaphysics of presence', 'the opacity or disturbance that marks the operation of representational interiorization [of knowledge] as an operation, a process',[87] arguing now against the view (and thereby critiquing Merleau-Ponty's position) that the phenomenologically visible 'reveals the expressive function of language, language's participation in the sensible world, as a pure alterity to signified meaning'.[88] The opacity to which Lyotard repeatedly refers is the rhetorical aspect of language, which, according to phenomenology, is seen as a plastic image in the linguistic sign itself and is irreducible to meaning, to knowledge. He insists upon the incommensurability of visible and textual space, displacing the figure from the domain of visibility and rhetoricity onto the clash between the two spaces. The figure is emergent, a force. Rhetoricity now becomes its *trace* in language, and distortion in the opaque object, the measure of its force. This model, developed in relation to

---

[85] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'Cézanne's Doubt' (1945) in *Sense and Non-Sense*, trans. Hubert L. and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1964) pp. 9-25
[86] See Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 34-43, 86-98, 111-121
[87] Readings 1991: 30

linguistic space is also articulated temporally by Lyotard, such that the postmodern becomes a figure for modernity (conceived as an ordered sequence of moments).

Lyotard does not regard the postmodern as the successor to Historical Modernism, as a period in historical time, but as a force, emergent through the order of modernism – considered to be the representation of History as a logical sequence of moments – itself. The postmodern is a disruptive event. Further interconnections between aspects of different theorists' ideas emerge in Part II: Lyotard's insistence on the Holocaust as an historical event that cannot be represented recalls Adorno's own ruminations on the fate of art in the aftermath of its horror. Although Deleuze does not explicitly address the same event, he does acknowledge the importance of Bacon's own rejection, as a painter, of horrific scenes that tell a story in preference to rendering the sheer force of an object in paint (as Bacon attempts to do throughout his career).

Deleuze's study of Bacon's work is as much a meditation on force as it is a critical phenomenology of the figure, and importantly, if the concept of 'force' is reinforced by any source other than Lyotard's *Discours, figure*, it is not through Bacon's interviews, but through Deleuze's earlier collaborative projects with Félix Guattari. Most notable amongst these is the two-part *Capitalisme et schizophrénie*, which is critical towards a number of disciplines and philosophical conceits including political ascetism, psychoanalysis (specifically the notion of desire based on lack), pure semiology and fascism.[89] The degree of philosophical abstraction evidenced by the majority of his oeuvre is at odds with the object-focused, incisive analysis of paintings in the *Logique de*

---

[88] *Ibid.*

[89] See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (London: Athlone Press, 1984) and by the same authors, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1988)

*la sensation*, although there are moments in *Mille Plateaux* (1980) – typically those dealing with art criticism – that foreshadow what was to come only a year later. Indeed, *Mille Plateaux* is divided into relatively short, intense 'chapters' (plateaux) that each consolidate the information contained in the previous one, and often circle through it again from a new perspective, furthering the argument by means of repetition and difference. New 'plateaux' consistently focus-down the detail of ideas and at the same time splinter the discourse in several possible directions, requiring of the reader a leap of faith with each new turn in a labyrinthine experience. Plateaux are, at times, a level-ground point of respite for the reader and, at times, unprotected, open spaces exposing him/her to the elements – to a deluge of virtually neurotic philosophical speculation. In *Capitalisme et schizophrénie*, force is opposed to systems of representation (Oedipal family, political, body, desire-as-lack and so on), particularly the hierarchical power structures of Capitalism. By contrast, 'force is not to be confused with power. Force arrives from the outside to break constraints and open new vistas. Power builds walls'.[90] If one abstracts from this social model the notion of force that issues from outside (from the Other) of the identity which it breaks, certain parallels with the characterization of force in the Bacon monograph become clear. In the latter, force is conceived as that which emerges – the 'Other' of representation – and opens the figurative body to the flows and sensations of the figure. This unmistakably Nietzschean tension between the Apollonian and the Dionysian underscores the majority of Deleuze's writings throughout his career.

Deleuze is one of the figures in the final pair of theorists proposed here (the other is Adorno, to be discussed presently). Given the importance of the *Logique de la*

---

[90] Brian Massumi, 'Translator's Foreword' in Deleuze and Guattari 1988, pp. xiii

*sensation* to this thesis, its most fundamental structure must be expanded upon in preparation for Part I, which compares Ferneyhough's concept of the figure with Deleuze's (formulated after his 'reading' of Bacon's oeuvre).

The *Logique de la Sensation* comprises seventeen short 'rubrics'[91], each having the same preoccupation with sensation that is variously explored in relation to art history (from Byzantine art to Cézanne), photography, film, the body (painter's and painted) and nature. Its structure recalls that of the *Logique du sens* (1969), another post-Nietzschean discourse disposed in series whose character is similar to the rubrics mentioned above, though whose content is rather more abstract than the later *Logique*, in spite of its being grounded in a critique of Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland.

The monograph on Bacon has received little critical attention, no doubt partly due to the lack of an English translation until very recently.[92] That which it has enjoyed has been largely on account of (generally American) theoreticians' wider interest in Deleuze *per se*. Critical comment directly related to the *Logique de la sensation* has generally been appropriated into the super-context of research into Deleuze's philosophy as a whole. Recent exceptions include Ronald Bogue's *Deleuze on Music, Painting and the Arts*[93], an analytical essay by Dana Polan[94] and selected essays in the multi-authored *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, which contains an essay by Daniel W. Smith, the translator

---

[91] 'Rubrics' is the term used by Dana Polan in her article 'Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation' in *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, eds. D. Olkowski and C.V. Boundas (New York and London: Routledge, 1994) pp. 229-254

[92] Daniel W. Smith's translation, though prepared some time ago for publication, was delayed on account of copyright issues raised by Deleuze's estate. It was finally published in 2003, although I have had the advantage of the use of an uncorrected draft in advance of publication, for which I am very grateful to Professor Smith.

[93] Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Music, Painting and the Arts* (London: Routledge, 2003). A completed draft of this manuscript was also provided for me in advance of publication by the author. My thanks to Professor Bogue for his generosity.

[94] See full reference above for Polan 1994

of the *Logique de la sensation* itself, amongst other works by Deleuze. Where the latter are translated into English, the quality is generally less than satisfactory, though this is due in part to the practical difficulties of transferring certain subtleties of French (such as puns) into English. In the ever-growing stock of secondary literature on Deleuze, where Bacon figures at all, he is generally treated as an incidental afterthought, particularly since the Adornoesque focus upon historically handed-down material and socially mediated techniques that informs the *Logique de la Sensation* is not typical of Deleuze's philosophical approach. The greater degree of approachability of the *Logique de la sensation* also tempts, one suspects, certain writers to explicate the more abstractly expressed concepts in Deleuze's other texts in terms of their object-related comprehensibility in the Bacon monograph. A case in point is the so-called 'Body without Organs,' a Deleuze-Guattari concept itself abstracted from another source.[95] In the jointly authored works, this is formulated in opposition to hierarchical systems of representation (of which one, as noted above, is the body), but it is more than 'just' a body: it is also, for example 'force' as opposed to a system of 'power' such as Capitalism that is also hierarchical. In the Bacon study, it is a body and, since Bacon renders the figure in a deformed manner, often with a smear or wipe obliterating certain features, one can appreciate that the formula 'Body without Organs' has a rather more literal interpretation in this context. Deleuze seems to have appropriated one of his and Guattari's favourite conceits for the purposes of illustrating, with unusual clarity, a specific technique of Bacon's. To the extent that Bacon deals with the human body, this particular appropriation on Deleuze's part is extremely convenient.

---

[95] The origin of the concept of a 'Body without Organs' is the work of Antonin Artaud, 'The body is the body', trans. Roger Mckeen in *Semiotext(e)* vol. 2, no. 3 (1977) pp. 38-39. This is considered in greater

Indeed, the appropriation of various philosophical conceits is practised by a number of the subjects of the present thesis. Deleuze appropriates Lyotard's discourse/figure opposition and Ferneyhough appropriates visual means for his own, musical, ends (and likewise elements of Deleuze's study which he understands to be a '(neo-) structuralist suppression of the subject…much of the conventional rhetoric of subjectivity [is] studiously avoided, being replaced by a sort of objective phenomenology of expressive force').[96] However, as Parts II and III reveal, the matter of the 'suppression of the subject' is neither as simple, or as thoroughgoing as Ferneyhough's comment, made in interview, suggests. In fact, it is precisely the avoidance of conventional rhetoric that allows Deleuze's own appropriation of Bacon's methods and thoughts to envisage a role for the subject even after it has been supplanted in the twentieth-century drive towards objectivity, most famously perhaps upon 'The Death of the Author'.[97] It is because Deleuze's Bacon monograph is conceived differently to many other works (it is closest perhaps to the *Cinema* studies) that assumptions regarding its philosophical position should not be hastily reached, as in Ernst van Alphen's *Francis Bacon and the Loss of Self*[98], which begins from a point of view very like that expressed by Ferneyhough, above. In fact Ferneyhough's comment can be interpreted along different lines that advocate only the suppression of subjective conventions, distilling the very impossibility of the subject back into the interstices of musical material itself, forcing contemporary music to confront the issue. Ferneyhough's own admissions regarding the persistence of the subject are considered in Part II, along with the notion of the artist's

---

detail in Parts I and II of this thesis.

[96] Cody 1996: 8

[97] Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author' in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977) pp. 142-148

irrepressible self, revealing the distance between Ferneyhough and those of van Alphen's opinion, in spite of the initial appearance of agreement.

If Deleuze's philosophical orientation is in fact towards post-structuralism as many suggest[99], then his Bacon study stands out awkwardly. It is true that it offers a critique of representation, analogous to that presented in the *Anti-Oedipe* with regard to structuralism and psychoanalysis principally. Nevertheless, there is irreducibly something of the modern about this work and its conception of material, not least under such rubrics as 'Every Painter Recapitulates the History of Painting in His or Her own Way'[100] ('chapter' 14), 'Note on Figuration in Past Painting' ('chapter 2') and 'The Painting before Painting' ('chapter' 11). In some respects the historical evolution of painting is presented sequentially but, after Lyotard's *Discours, figure*, Deleuze's text can simultaneously be read against this order, such that, as in Lyotard's presentation of the figure, certain forceful lines of argument emerge rather unexpectedly, disbalancing the impression of a progressive series of small chapters/rubrics in favour of a polyphony of interweaving ideas and counterpoints. Perhaps one of the most perceptive critiques of the *Logique de la sensation* has been made by the French writer Mireille Buydens.[101] This short work, which foregrounds its approach to Bacon through the lens of Deleuze's own study, argues for the modernity of Bacon's style, and emphasises the relationships between form and material, and material and force in the latter's paintings (relationships that I suggest, after Adorno, are dialectical in nature). Buydens explains that 'modernity in painting appears thus as a rupture in relation to what precedes, since the repetition of

---

[98] Ernst van Alphen, *Francis Bacon and the Loss of Self* (London: Reaktion Books, 1992)
[99] See Bogue 2003 and the 'Translator's Introduction' in Deleuze and Guattari, trans. Massumi 1988 in particular.

forms that had characterized western art…makes way for the presentation of forces which presents itself henceforth as the only possible way out. For Deleuze, this radical aesthetic upheaval 'is the post-romantic juncture : [in which] what matters is no longer form and material, but forces, densities, intensities'.'[102] However, Buydens' critique – which attempts to develop an aesthetic of force in painting *and* music – is problematic for reasons other than those identified in much anglophone scholarship concerning Deleuze and Bacon. Her bibliography is devoted exclusively to French language sources: even her interpretation of Bacon's interviews relies on a French translation. To this extent, her work presents the opposite problem to the Americans', since they regularly use English translations of the French works. Unfortunately, with Buydens, this francophone approach squanders her natural advantage: whilst she better appreciates the subtleties of Deleuze's language, the total absence of English-language resources in her study indicates a sizeable gap in her reading of secondary sources, most of which are produced by American academics.[103]

---

[100] '*Chaque peintre à sa manière résume l'histoire de la peinture*'. The 'his or her' in the English translation of this chapter title has been added by the translator.

[101] See full reference above for Buydens 1990

[102] Buydens 1990: 121. Citing Deleuze and Guattari, trans. Massumi 1988: 423. Translation modified by Fabrice Fitch. The French term 'intensitiés' is ambiguous in this context since it could also refer to 'dynamics', which is interesting from the point of view of a discussion of music.

[103] Exceptions include insightful critiques of Bacon's work by Michel Leiris, *Francis Bacon, face et profil* (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 2004) (French), David Sylvester, *Looking Back at Francis Bacon* (2000) and John Russell, *Francis Bacon* rev. ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1979), (both English). Furthermore, her attempt at synthesizing Deleuze's insights into music and painting (that is, Deleuze's less frequent references to music expressed in *Mille Plateaux*, *Le Pli*, the *Logique de la sensation* and his critique of painting in the latter) fails, in spite of her careful awareness of the greater degree of mediation and abstraction necessary when discussing musical phenomena. Her study inherits Deleuze's remarkable bias towards painting and his uninformed attitude in respect of (contemporary) music. Her choice of Pierre Boulez as featured composer (alongside Bacon the painter) follows comments made by Deleuze in *Le Pli*, predictably upon Boulez's *Pli selon pli*, although she herself refers only to his *Domaines* as an example of music that synthesises spatial and temporal structures. No specificities of the music are discussed, and no other piece is mentioned. She relies on Boulez's own writings (in particular his 'L'écriture du musicien, le regard du sourd?' in *Critique* no. 408 (1981), *Penser la musique aujourd'hui*, (Gonthier, 1963), *Par volonté et par hasard*, entretiens avec Célestin Deliège, (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1975)) to support her argument, though in the absence of any corroborative musical insight, these are greatly misinterpreted. Her own thesis

My choice of composer is motivated by his own admissions (or rather implicit admissions) concerning Deleuze in his *Collected Writings*, but also by a comment that Ferneyhough makes regarding his own creativity, which results, he insists, from situations of limitation. Hence, the mass of material that begins to evolve in his mind prior to beginning a composition must be restricted in some way – he devises 'geometric' stratagem such as 'grids' or 'sieves' for it to 'react against'. (These amount to some kind of formula through which unformed material – say, a collection of pitches – is filtered in order to yield a specific collection of pitches which Ferneyhough might then employ in the piece itself. He will also make use of the relationships pertaining between these notes such as at the beginning of *Superscriptio*, breaking them down into groups and using the resulting number patterns to generate further material, extending those patters to other parameters such as rhythm, timbre and dynamic. The vestiges of serialism are once more apparent in his practices). The methods adopted by Ferneyhough – not unlike Bacon's – verge upon the scientific and what is more, the use of grids and so forth (one imagines a

---

begins from a perfectly reasonable standpoint, already set out above: Bacon's painting deals more directly with material insofar as he works with oils and so on and moreover, (figurative) painting represents the object with a greater degree of 'proximity' than does music (p. 142). Music nevertheless assures this proximity through another manner (pp. 142-143): not thickness, not material, but through force, intensity. At this point, the potential for an interesting argument concerning music's superiority (p.146) in some respects becomes clear, since the force of rhythm, for example, can obviously be experienced in time, as can its effects upon musical objects in space. However, Buydens focuses upon rhythm or time to the exclusion of all other musical parameters, and (mis)appropriates Boulez's concepts of *temps strié* and *temps lisse* in order to force some rather crude oppositions between 'functional' and 'non-functional' music (her particular meaning here is never clearly explained); formal music (presumably meant in the sense of recognisable conventional forms, though again no explanation is forthcoming) and '*musique aformelle*'; and finally between rigorously pulsed music and that of fluid, plastic texture (p.146). Her claim that the bar/measure has been a feature of Western music since its very beginnings (p. 150) reveals the extent to which her musical analysis suffers through a lack of specifically musical knowledge. Her attempt to take Deleuze's arguments over into the domain of music, and further them there, are unsuccessful as a result.

geometric construct covered with horizontal and vertical lines, even if, in practical terms the grid must needs be a formula – which itself can be geometrical or arithmetic in the pure mathematical sense) recall Bacon's grid-like box-surrounds which he claims help one to see the figure more clearly, in a more focused way.[104] In this sense, the grid and the box focus down upon the detail of the (figural) material. Ferneyhough points out that Boulez at times operates a system rather of multiplication wherein small musical 'units' are expanded out. This is an interesting detail which actually highlights the distinction I have made between Deleuze's more 'typical' work and the *Logique de la sensation*. The former foregrounds concepts such as 'multiplicity' and the 'rhizome', a form of proliferation which we might usefully analogize with aspects of Boulez's methods of multiplication. The *Logique de la sensation* concentrates on the degree to which the artist is compelled by the material itself to work his way through constraints presented in the course of a piece's creation.

**Concepts from the *Logique de la sensation***

Two emergent ideas in the *Logique de la sensation* are encapsulated in Deleuze's concept of the 'diagram' – a phenomenon involving the extremes of abstract expressionist and figurative styles of painting, chance and calculation (and indeed forms of restriction) – and the 'rhythm-witness', discussed in the oddly titled chapter 'Note: What is a Triptych?' which gives the impression of an inserted afterthought, tangential to the main argument. In fact, in both cases, Deleuze is at once at his most speculative and analytically most specific: the concepts of diagram and rhythm-witness combine

---

(*Temps strié* refers to 'striated time' or pulsed time, i.e. time is parsed into segments of equi-distant length. *Temps lisse* refers to non-pulsed time, an archetypal example being György Ligeti's *Continuum*.)

philosophical abstraction with consideration of Bacon's practical technique as a painter. The diagram is proposed as a means by which the space of representation is worked over by the figure, and the rhythm-witness, as its name implies, involves the redisposal of the artwork's temporal element (clearly in painting's case this is more difficult to identify than its spatial manifestation, but Deleuze chooses the triptych form as that most obviously predisposed to a narratival or sequential interpretation and thus, he supposes, a temporal one).

The concept of the diagram represents Deleuze's interpretation and development to an extreme degree, of Bacon's own reference to the 'graph' in his painting. Part II of the present work considers Deleuze's concept, and possible analogous means in Ferneyhough's music: my own form of appropriation perhaps. The notion of musical space is focused upon: in particular Ferneyhough's project (as I perceive it, after Adorno[105]) of re-opening such a space in the aftermath of total serialism, and furthermore, of creating through that space a relevant context for musical objects within. The natural progression from this 'plateau' of spatial re-dynamization is towards the temporal dimension of art: hence the precepts behind Deleuze's rhythm-witness which form the basis for Part III of this thesis.

It may seem unusual to consider the ramifications, for music, of a temporal theory developed through the analysis of painting. Nevertheless, it is a temporal theory that is far less occupied with the notion that painting, or indeed any art form, unfolds in time, than it is in suggesting that time itself can emerge palpably from the relationships between objects within the work of art. Therefore, in Bacon's triptychs, the relationship between

---

[104] Sylvester 1987: 22
[105] See Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995

bodies is analyzed; in Ferneyhough's music, the relationship between musical 'objects' becomes the focus of my critical attention. My intention when distilling certain aspects of Deleuze's theory of temporality in painting onto Ferneyhough's musical material is to offer one possible way in which the 'standstill' of total serialism[106] can be overcome, and time itself regenerated from within that musical material. In terms of the very visual, tangible relationship that both Bacon and Ferneyhough share with their material – their 'objects' (Bacon's figures, Ferneyhough's gesture-figures) – each is aware of the spatial implications of the density, translucency, contortion, dilation and viscosity of those objects that they describe emphatically in interview. This materiality is raised to a temporal level when Ferneyhough argues that figural processes are 'the shadows of objects in time'.[107] Material that is overridden with forces is opaque (witness the thickenings of paint in Bacon's portraits, where the figure is the most deformed) but it also yields a vital pulse: if music's temporality can be re-galvanized through its encounter with painting, then the space of painting must likewise be reinterpreted according to the infusion of material with the sensation of time. Bacon esteems Cézanne's *The Bathers*, as acknowledged previously, precisely because the spatial arrangement of the figures refuses the possibility of representing time with a narrative, and instead draws time into the paint itself, '(in)to the allusive and tensile rhythm of the brush'.[108]

This vitality notwithstanding, the concept of the rhythm-witness allows for sufficient degrees of abstract calculation, enough to satisfy Ferneyhough's penchant for the arcane. Towards the end of Part III it becomes clear that there is provision within this

---

[106] Adorno, 'The Ageing of the New Music' in *Essays on Music: Theodor W. Adorno*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor and Frederic Will (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif.: University of California Press, 2002) pp. 181-202

[107] Ferneyhough, 'Interview with James Boros' in 1995: 435

concept for the (post-serial) addition and subtraction, multiplication and division of rhythmic, pitch, dynamic and timbral 'values' (amongst others) in the effort to 'reveal' time sensuously.[109]

The rhythm-witness seems to have evolved as a result of Deleuze's awareness of Eadweard Muybridge's photographic pursuits – most famously, breaking down the horse's gallop in split-second frames at the behest of Leland Stanford – and their influence on the painter. The result of Bacon's interest in Muybridge's series' was, Deleuze suggests, not to paint movement as though producing frames from a film (since the motion picture already fulfilled that particular brief). Rather the painter's appreciation of the images of wrestlers focuses on the contortions of the two bodies that are locked together. Indeed, two bodies together can result in one 'figure', one sensate mass of force-ridden flesh. Deleuze insists that the arrested image is most important to the painter. The missing split-second between images – the click of the camera shutter – is vital to break any perceived continuity or progression from image to image, and further to focus the attention on physiological changes in the body/bodies, for example in musculature. These changes are measurable and can involve the intensification of a force (say, a contraction of the body in terms of space/volume) or a relaxation (an expansion perhaps): hence the musical parallel of rhythmic/pitch/dynamic contraction and expansion relative to a basic pulse. In either case one senses a contrast between the idea of real, passing time, and time harnessed by objects (bodies) and thereby rendered tactile.

The artwork does not occur in time so much as time is brought to bear as an active force

---

[108] Michel Laclotte (dir.), *Dictionnaire des grandes peintres* (Paris: Librarie Larousse, 1976) p.130. Original French reads 'au rythme allusif et nerveux du pinceau'. Translated by Fabrice Fitch.
[109] Olivier Messiaen's *Mode de valeurs et d'intensitiés* of 1949 was the first piece to serialise multiple parameters. See Arnold Whittall 1999: 252-257

in the material of the artwork: this is Ferneyhough's compositional aim as much as, in Deleuze's view, it is Bacon's endeavour as a painter.

**Theodor Adorno**

The philosopher paired with Deleuze has already been mentioned above, albeit briefly: the discussion of material set out there implies his importance for this thesis. Indeed, Adorno's musical aesthetics proves to be an illuminating resource for what amounts to Deleuze's aesthetics of painting. Conversely, the French theorist's focus upon the body is used in the following chapters to probe Adorno's own, subtler exploration of the same, not least in two particular works – *Mahler*: *A Musical Physiognomy* and the late essay 'On Some Relationships Between Music and Painting' (1965). The latter returns us to the question of the differences between the two artistic media at issue here and, in a typically dialectical manner, Adorno argues that the more the two artforms diverge insofar as they pursue their own immanent principles[110] without attempting to imitate each other, the more they actually converge: 'the transition [is made] from each to the other by way of its own extremity'.[111] His essay considers the manifestation of space and time in the artwork. Not only does his argument insist that painting can evince the temporal and music the spatial, but ventures further still, suggesting that painted space is always already temporal and musical time 'is the very aspect through which [music] actually congeals into something that survives independently – an object, a thing, so to speak'.[112] Hence the temporal and the spatial are not merely inferred secondarily through the material of painting and music respectively, but condition the work from within.

---

[110] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 73
[111] *Ibid.*, 74

Adorno's focus on two different art forms as well as the specific elements of space and time recalls the approach made by Gotthald Ephraim Lessing in his *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*[113] exactly 200 years previously, in 1766. Adorno's argument is effectively a critique of Lessing's, though the latter receives only one direct mention. Both articulate a similar premise, before their differences become clear: the artforms (poetry, painting, music) must be distinguished from one another via the unique means that each has at its disposal (i.e. poetry – time, language; painting – figures, space; music – time, sound etc.). However, David Wellbery argues that 'all claims that Lessing strictly distinguished poetry and painting are misleading so long as they do not recall the proper level on which these arts are considered one, the level of aesthetic effect. This presumed unity of the two arts governs the entire argument of the *Laocoön'*.[114] Adorno concurs with Wellbery on this point of aesthetic effect, applied more generally to the classicist aesthetic tradition:

> The established boundaries that set the spatial and the temporal art in opposition to each other derive from the need to classify, to order; people are especially insistent on them in periods of classicist aesthetics.... [Classicist aesthetics] satisfies the culture's need to unify by establishing a realm within which limits are set whose internal division serves only to affirm the One, ruling concept from which its terms are derived.

Nevertheless, he continues

> Something in the individual arts has always rebelled against this simultaneously unifying and dividing thrust. Why, can be seen most clearly – as in Lessing's "Laocoön" – by extracting from the division the aesthetic criteria that are meant to decide the dignity of the artwork from on high, that is, in a way that transcends its individual constitution.[115]

By displacing the unifying decree that Lessing extracts from the division of painting and poetry, that 'they are imitative arts; the purpose of both is to awaken in us the liveliest,

---

[112] *Ibid.*, 66

[113] Lessing, *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, trans. with introduction & notes, Edward Allen McCormick (Baltimore, MD.: John Hopkins University Press, 1984)

most sensate representations of their objects',[116] Adorno is able to argue by contrast that 'the destruction of art's universals and their abandonment in favour of the essential composition [Durchbildung] of each individual work is consummated'.[117] He observes that recent progress in art bears witness to the departure from the object-relatedness of painting, and from the same, effectively, in music 'through the mortal contraction of all its imitative moments, not only its programmatically descriptive elements, but its traditional expressivity as well, which requires firm conventions linking what is expressed with its signifier'.[118] He characterizes this movement away from the object or 'thing-like idiom'[119] as *écriture* [writing].[120] Much of Parts II and III of this thesis is dedicated to the exploration of the concept of 'writing', which bears striking similarities to certain key notions debated in Deleuze's Bacon study, not least in the matters of force, energy and Lyotard's eruptive figural event. For Lessing, particular signs participate in the distinction between painting and poetry, insofar as their means of imitation differs: 'the signs of the former are natural. Those of the latter are arbitrary'.[121] Wellbery summarizes; 'the differences between poetry and the plastic arts are differences of method, means, technique ('Wege'); their unity is their shared aim ('Ziel'). Lessing

---

[114] David Wellbery, *Lessing's Laocoön: Semiotics and Aesthetics in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) p. 103
[115] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 75
[116] Lessing's sketches, cited in Wellbery 1984: 103
[117] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 76.
[118] *Ibid.*, 71
[119] *Ibid.*, 77
[120] Susan Gillespie argues that 'Adorno's systematic thinking about writing and language seems to have been guided by the ideas of Walter Benjamin, in particular by the essay on "The Task of the Translator" to which he habitually referred...Benjamin's early essay "On Language and the Language of Human Beings" also plays a key role in "On Some Relationships" (pp. 70, 71), where Adorno cites Benjamin's speculation about the languages of things, "nameless, nonacoustic languages from the material," as the basis for his introduction of the concept of *écriture*...'. See Gillespie, 'Translating Adorno: Language, Music, and Performance' in *Musical Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (Spring 1995) pp. 55-65. See also Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator' in Benjamin, trans. Zorn 1999: 70-82.
[121] Wellbery 1984: 103

distinguishes the arts in order to insist on their proper unity'.[122] This is, however, a unity of aesthetic effect imposed 'from above'. In response Adorno follows Benjamin's pronouncement that it 'is certain that the language of art can only be understood in the most profound relation to the theory of signs',[123] raising Lessing's concern with artistic means to one with socially mediated material: 'that the relationships of music and painting are not only relationships of their means, but also of their materials – and the two are always, inescapably mediated in each other – touches on the phenomenon of convergence'.[124] Where Lessing seeks to differentiate between the art forms and insist on their proper unity, Adorno, pursuing this difference to the extreme, finds convergence (dialectically) as écriture there. '[Painting and music] become writing, in [Daniel] Kahnweiler's terminology, by "déformation" – of the naturalistic content of the painting, on the one hand, and of the [musical] idiom on the other'.[125] Convergence, for Adorno, is enacted through the integral composition of individual works – 'from below'.

Nevertheless (and importantly) 'it is questionable whether, if the thinglike object and the thinglike idiom, have both utterly vanished, the *écriture*, and with it the convergence, remains'.[126] Indeed, neither Ferneyhough nor Bacon – as noted earlier – entirely disposes of the 'thinglike' aspect of the work, however much it is subverted (this is immediately clear in Bacon's case). It is perhaps on this point that Deleuze and Adorno most concur. Neither theorist risks the accusation that, in blind pursuit of discovering what it is to articulate the figure in art, the suppression of the figurative results only in a 'new' form of representation: of the 'other' of figuration.

---

[122] *Ibid.*, 105
[123] Cited in Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 70. See note 115 above.
[124] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 78

The two levels of artistic reception presented in Lessing's *Laocoön* – that of sensation (signs) and that of true aesthetic experience, the non-sensible imagination – ultimately bring-to-presence the absent (represented, imitated) object for the mind, for knowledge. A sensate experience is not an aesthetic one, and the imagination is considered to be an autonomous domain. This leads Lessing to conclude that 'what we find beautiful in a work of art is not found beautiful by the eye, but rather by the imagination through the eye'.[127] The phenomenology of perception collapses the absolute autonomy of the observing, distanced consciousness with its assertion that the observing body participates in the very world of which it is conscious. Ferneyhough himself argues that 'the listener needs to abandon the old fiction of being outside or above the work: rather, I envisage a complete 'biospheric englobement' of the perceiving spirit, the sense of being oneself in motion, not merely dispassionately observing from some mythic, fixed point in mental space. This sensation of fluctuating, mobile subject/object relationships is a key to the quality of expression that I seek'.[128] The eye moves – focuses – in order to see at the level of sensation: something of the preconceptual, of nature, endures in the visible sign as a disturbance or 'thickness'[129] upon which the eye fastens. The absent object is therefore brought-to-presence in this 'disturbance' at the level of sensation itself. Hence Lessing's belief that 'ugliness is inadmissible in the plastic arts because it necessarily asserts itself on the level of sensation; it is 'allezeit Natur, niemals

---

[125] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 77. Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler is the dedicatee of *On Some Relationships*. See Kahnweiler, *Confessions esthétiques* (Paris, 1963) p. 176
[126] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 77
[127] Cited in Wellbery 1984: 106
[128] Ferneyhough (ADL) 1995: 426
[129] Readings 1991: 12

Nachahmung' ('always nature, never imitation')'[130] is overturned in Bacon's work by the eruption of sensible figural deformations into figurative space.

Adorno makes an analogous argument to this one concerning Bacon, on the general level, incorporating his views on the convergence (through divergence) of the arts as *écriture*: for art too, like language in Lyotard and Deleuze's view, bears the traces of the preconceptual in its material. The objects of art, like the signs of language, no longer simply mark ideas for the imaginative intellect. Transformed, thickened into substances-in-themselves, the markers become the material at the centre of Adorno's aesthetic theory as well as Deleuze's study of the figure in painting, and by extension, in language. Adorno argues that

> As it reaches an extreme, the progressive tendency [of art] is transformed dialectically into an ancient one that is sharply opposed to the increasing domination over nature. If art is the recollection of nature in the midst of domination over nature, then it cannot be adequate to both in a pure, unbroken way; hence its imperfection....In [the phenomenon of convergence] we suddenly see how strongly, at one time, the mimetic impulse...must have resisted the neat separation [of the arts], the wound left by the rational order....With the current convergence, the radicalization of the concept of art as applied to the arts, we also glimpse a condition more advanced than the arts, one that also reaches back before art as a separate sphere of activity....The most extreme aesthetic progress is intertwined with regression. What art becomes, depends on whether its progress retains power over the regressive element....[131]

This thesis maintains that progress does retain its power: my differentiation in Part II between the sensible-figural and the invisible-figural is my response, after Lyotard, to Merleau-Ponty's promotion of the visible and its preconceptual bearing upon art and language at the expense of representation. A critic of Lyotard's work encapsulates this problem effectively: '[art] gives matter for speech, and supposes for its production someone who speaks; its does not speak itself, stricto sensu, but the link that it attempts is always threatened, critical, mediated, constructed. Nothing less natural'.[132] Adorno

---

[130] Wellbery 1984: 106-107
[131] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 78
[132] Readings 1991: 31

echoes this, suggesting that 'the concept of aesthetic construction…derives from the visual realm…. But it does have its nonsensual model in Schelling…insofar as he demands that a heterogeneous material…should be constructed in itself, according to its own nature'.[133]

Part III revisits the concept of the 'marker' and, recalling that laconic expression 'nothing less natural', considers the role of the body and Ferneyhough's musical gesture as temporal markers and signs that are substances-in-themselves.

It is this 'marker', through the exigencies of the French language, that is characterized as a 'witness' (recall the notion of the rhythm-witness mentioned above), and as such is saturated with the whole gamut of considerations germane to this thesis. Several concepts form a constellation: the sign (marker); visibility (phenomenology) and yet blindness (tactility); abstraction (measurement); mediation (what constitutes the body-marker in musical material?); history (the role of the 'witness' in earlier genres of painting) and finally interdisciplinarity (the 'witness' is explored as a possible figure for the expression of temporal forces in literature). The witness is proposed as that which both allows us to see the invisible – forces – at one extreme, and yet whose blindness in other respects forces the development of a superior sense of touch at the other extreme.

As I have suggested above, the witness is in some measure, a 'scientific' device: its Muybridge-derived character already presupposes this. The concept of the witness represents the degree of abstraction to which Deleuze takes the notion of the figure, which nevertheless reinforces the latter's sensuous properties, as if by making of it a 'science', the palpability of its elements is rendered more cleanly, with clinical precision. Bacon speaks of the intricate 'nervous system' as that energy which galvanizes layers of

---

[133] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 77

paint: Ferneyhough's 'science' remains his serial inheritance. The atomisation of musical sound that Adorno finds in the latter, however, has 'crystallized out' in Ferneyhough's music into rougher, granular structures with a capacity for semantic expression that is compromised in both the vulgar, kitsch gestures deplored by the composer and in certain extreme examples of abstract music. Both these criticized musics exemplify the reification of material: as an object it is devoid of the expressivity of the subject. Ferneyhough's gesture and figure, by contrast are plastic, sensuous and objective only insofar as they manifest the material traces or potentiality of lines of expressive force.

**Ferneyhough in context**

This thesis represents the first critical attempt to synthesize Ferneyhough's concept of the figure with the same abstract notion in Deleuze's monograph, with which it shares so many characteristics. Nevertheless, a number of important texts now exist that identify the significance of the figure for Ferneyhough, at least two of which go on to relate the issue to aspects of Adorno's theory of musical material, whilst another two make reference to the quotation from the *Logique de la sensation* with which Ferneyhough begins his 1982 essay 'Form-Figure-Style: An Intermediate Assessment'. Though not a quotation about the figure directly, it does introduce the 'partner' concept of force: 'in art, and in painting as in music, it is not a matter of reproducing or inventing forms, but of capturing/harnessing forces'.[134] However, the possible implications of Ferneyhough's self-declared interest in Deleuze's work at the time, and the prominence of the concepts of the figure and force in the composer's writings of the same period have not been

realised, probably for the same reason that the Bacon study is sidelined in many critical assessments of Deleuze's philosophical *oeuvre* in general.

Richard Toop refers to the figure in his essay '"Prima le Parole"... (on the sketches for *Carceri d'Invenzione* I-III)'[135], and notes the suitability of the Deleuze quotation to Ferneyhough's style of that time, but takes this no further since his approach seems largely to allow Ferneyhough's sketches to speak for themselves. Toop takes the opportunity to point out certain consistent features such as the use of geological metaphor, and to unravel some of the composer's notoriously difficult conceits in terms of metre, rhythm and pitch. Indeed, he takes one bar (b.144) of the first piece and reproduces Ferneyhough's 'rubric' sketches (effectively a set of rules for each stringed instrument, dictating the values of the metrical subdivision of the bar, and the number of articulated impulses per bar and so on). Certainly one is left with an impression of the intensive stratification of material in a Ferneyhough piece, demonstrable even in the relatively small 'test' area of a single bar. Another composer, Klaus K. Hubler, writing in the edition of the journal *Contrechamps* devoted to Ferneyhough in 1988, also notes the importance of Deleuze's statement on forces for Ferneyhough's work, and suggests that it expresses a trait already evident in the latter as early as the 1970s (witness *Time and Motion Study II*). Not surprisingly, given the decade in which the volume of *Contrechamps*, and indeed a 1987 edition of *Entretemps* appear (another French journal with a 'dossier Brian Ferneyhough' amongst its number), many essays make a study of the figure and gesture - dominant throughout Ferneyhough's own 1980s essays and

---

[134] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 56. Ferneyhough uses the original French quotation: 'en art, et en peinture comme en musique, il ne s'agit pas de reproduire ou d'inventer des formes, mais de capter des forces' (see Deleuze, *Francis Bacon : Logique de la sensation* (Paris : Éditions de la différence, 1981) p. 39

[135] Toop (PP) 1994: 162-163

interviews - as 'opposite' concepts. Authors of these studies include François Nicholas and Allessandro Melchiorre, and the latter in particular may have taken a special interest in the notion due to the popularity of the 'figure' in Italian musical thought and practice, even today. This 'baroque' interpretation of the figure informs the concept of figure as discussed by Ferneyhough: there may be resonances between the two to the extent that the figure is, for both, a rhetorical device. Typically, Ferneyhough's relationship to the rhetorical heritage of the figure, mentioned above, is highly complex, though the basic idea of the figure as an ornament, elaboration or expressive device – something 'more' than the essential, comprehensible aspect of the linguistic sign or musical structure – is inferred in his writings. This is the justification in Part I, for the discussion of the figure as explicated in the writings of the composer Franco Donatoni, especially on account of his references to 'gesture'. However, Donatoni's expectations of the concepts are much more utilitarian than Ferneyhough's, whose musical formulations of figures and gestures are not only the result of intense aesthetic speculation, but generate more still on account of their radiating out into the contexts of, at times, entire pieces.

Max Paddison has taken the apparent opposition between the figure and gesture a stage further, proposing their relationship in dialectical terms, after Adorno, in a recently published essay.[136] Paddison identifies Ferneyhough's dialectic as a material-immanent operation as well as a means of verbally articulating the striven-for dynamic that suggests the composer's conscious continuation of the musical avant-garde, towards an extreme autonomy of style. Although the link between Ferneyhough and Adorno is remarkable, specifically in terms of the former's conception of material, one must be careful of

forcing the issue too far, and making of Ferneyhough merely a 'proof' of Adorno's ideas. Paddison successfully avoids this, as does Alastair Williams (to whose work I will return shortly), but Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf's potentially insightful arguments suffer for this very reason. The initial parameters of his essay 'Vers une musique figurelle?'[137], based of course upon Adorno's own 'Vers une musique informelle' augur well to the extent that what is, for Adorno in 1961, a fervently hoped-for vision of how musical modernity might be regalvanized from out of the stasis induced by serialism,[138] seems 20 years later to be actualised in Ferneyhough's compositions. In fact, this is further supported by Ferneyhough's paper (produced much later than Mahnkopf's) on 'Vers une musique informelle', delivered as the key-note address at Goldsmith's in 1999.[139] Here the composer describes the rapport between his own ideas and Adorno's, but is careful to distance himself from the latter, precisely because of the lapse of 20 years between the respective essays. Mahnkopf ignores this mediation: Ferneyhough justifies Adorno's vision and Adorno is the source for Ferneyhough's compositional invention, making for a rather circular argument that offers no criticism of either Adorno or Ferneyhough, and implicitly suggests that the latter has superseded the former in terms of theoretical worth on the subject of new music. My analysis of Adorno's 'On Some Relationships between Music and Painting' in Part II of this thesis reveals the continued value of Adorno's

---

[136] Max Paddison, 'Considérations critiques sur la musique et les relations sociales: vers une théorie de la médiation' in *Musique Contemporaine: Perspectives théoriques et philosophiques* (Liège: Mardaga, 2001) p. 249.

[137] Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, 'Vers une musique figurelle?', trans. Carlo Russi, in *Contrechamps* no. 8 (February 1988) pp. 45-63

[138] Adorno's 'Vers une musique informelle' is more positive in its attitude towards the New Music, and serialism than the earlier 'Ageing of the New Music' (1956), which laments the stasis of music mentioned above.

[139] Brian Ferneyhough, 'La «musique informelle» (a partir d'une lecture d'Adorno)', trans. Peter Szendy, in *Brian Ferneyhough*, coll. 'Compositeurs d'aujourd'hui' (Paris: Éditions Ircam, 1999) pp. 109-117. I am grateful to Brian Ferneyhough for providing me with the unpublished English language version of this paper (read at Goldsmith's College, 1999).

aesthetic criticism in contemporary continental philosophical research. The study of Deleuze's work has increased exponentially in the last ten to 15 years, yet much of this thesis is based upon the argument that in order to properly appreciate his *Logique de la sensation*, one must be able to capitalize upon the rich detail of Adorno's aesthetic *oeuvre*. In the process, both Adorno and Deleuze's ideas are opened up to new interpretations. Furthermore, my reading of Ferneyhough and Bacon not only takes its lead from the two philosophers, but it repays the balance. Ferneyhough's articulation of the figure in musical terms that complement Deleuze's ideas on painting, matching their quality, remedies Deleuze's own failure to convincingly consolidate the theory of the figure at the musical level. At the same time, Bacon's refreshingly straightforward – even blunt – use of language expresses in starkly human terms what can, on occasion, seem perplexingly remote and abstract in the others' verbal expression. Bacon's vulnerability in this respect (especially when Sylvester's questions probe deeply) seems at odds with Ferneyhough's confident 'authorial voice'. Nevertheless, the same instinct for self-preservation is latent: when Bacon roundly dismisses abstract art as a form of decoration[140] that holds no interest for him as an artist, his matter of fact tone conceals the degree to which his conceits surrounding his own work necessarily embrace abstraction. The image of the Sahara that he often calls upon in interview, as a metaphor for distance, hints at his 'love-hate' relationship with forms of abstraction (see Part II). Ferneyhough persuades his reader of the distance between his own expressive musical gesture and that of composers such as Wolfgang Rihm in far more complex, aesthetically informed language, and yet his purpose is the same as Bacon's. Whilst Ferneyhough considers that his own concept of 'gesture' marks a departure from those he criticizes

---

[140] Sylvester 1987: 60-61

most, the emotive (semantic) aspect of his own musical language bears the traces, however obliquely, of those dramatic 'moments' foregrounded by the likes of Rihm and others. Alastair Williams[141] suggests that Ferneyhough is wrong to consider Rihm's music, and in particular its expressive intentions, so negatively (though it is worth bearing in mind that Ferneyhough's published comments in this respect are largely confined to the early 1980s, and similarly refer to a specific period in Rihm's output, *viz.* the late 1970s). Williams both proposes an alternative reading of Rihm's style (focusing on aspects of the third string quartet, 'Im Innersten') and discusses Ferneyhough's own style from the perspective of postmodernism as opposed to the more usual (high) modernism: witness Mahnkopf, Toop, Whittall and Paddison. Williams reveals the scope for a certain *flexibility* when reading Ferneyhough's writings or music, despite the received wisdom that both are utterly complex and impenetrable: the expanding body of literature engaging with both writings and music in innovative ways dispels this fiction.

Whether or not Ferneyhough's reading of Rihm – or indeed those composers at the opposite end of the perceived 'axis' whose efforts are concentrated upon abstraction for the sake of abstraction – is accurate does not interest me here so much as the extent to which Ferneyhough's distaste for these styles becomes the basis for the elaboration of an 'aesthetics of the figure' of his own. Both Paddison and Williams' researches (into the dialectical nature of the gesture-figure relationship and the approach that questions Ferneyhough-reception hitherto) can be understood to be undercurrents to this thesis, though its specific interest in the ramifications of the Deleuze-Bacon, Ferneyhough-Adorno 'encounter' is a new departure in the study of interdisciplinary aesthetics.

---

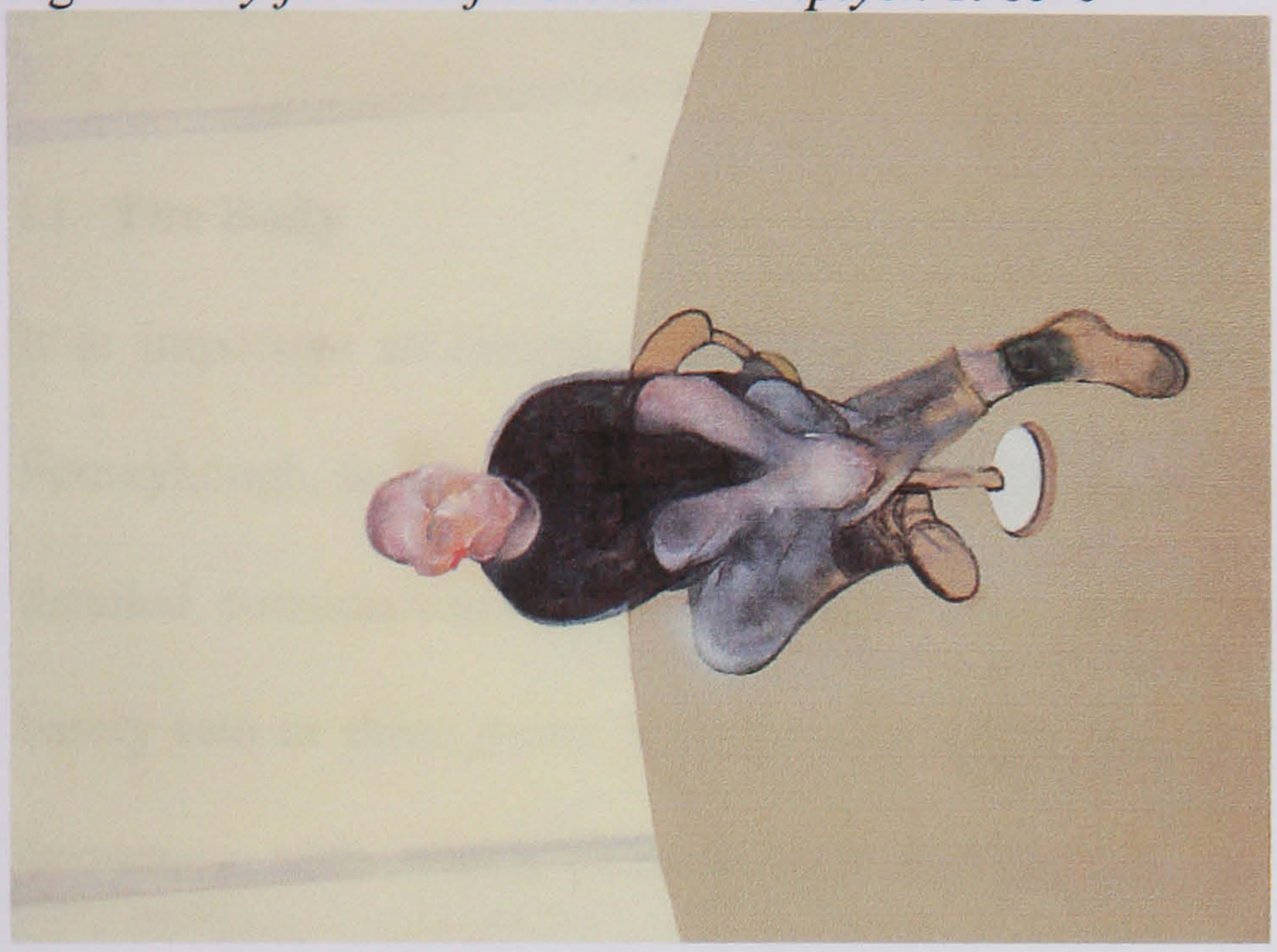
[141] Alastair Williams, 'Adorno and the Semantics of Modernism' in *Perspectives of New Music* 37, no. 2 (Summer 1999) pp. 29-50

A recent German doctoral thesis, now available on the internet,[142] provides an extensive and detailed analysis of the entire *Carceri d'Invenzione* cycle, derived from its author's experience of Ferneyhough's sketches.[143] Though it is an admirable project in terms of the complexity of the material with which it deals, it offers little in the way of interpretative commentary or speculation. If that thesis attends to the 'nuts and bolts' of one of Ferneyhough's most important works, then the present thesis, by contrast, attempts to provide an insight into what gives it life, flesh and how it is made to scream…

---

[142] See Cordula Pätzold. Diss (2002). Full reference given above
[143] These are retained by the Paul Sacher Foundation, Basle, Switzerland.

Fig. 1 *Study for a Self-Portrait – Triptych 1985-6*



# PART I – Figure, Gesture and Force

## I.i The Body

It is important to reiterate the significance of Gilles Deleuze's monograph for Brian Ferneyhough, as evidenced by the collected writings of the 1980s, before embarking on a detailed consideration of their parallel conceptual preoccupations. Although there are barely two or three direct references to either Bacon or Deleuze during this period, the frequency with which Ferneyhough foregrounds his particular appropriation of the concept of the figure, and his conscientious attempt to sustain figural discourse on many different levels (both the writings and the music) reveal the extent to which his own concerns parallel Deleuze's theoretical preoccupations. I will begin with a brief outline of the latter, specifically as they relate to Bacon, before turning my attention to the details of Ferneyhough's musical thought.

As a figurative painter, Bacon inherits an entire tradition that concerns itself with the representation of the human body. Although his treatment of material is rigorously self-consistent, this tradition is nevertheless invoked in every painting, leading some commentators (particularly those who emphasise the 'violence' done to Bacon's figures) to invent a kind of 'pathology' of the figure based on its 'injuries' or 'diseases'.[1] In this sense, Bacon's work often invites the same hostile reaction ('too graphic', 'too violent') as Ferneyhough's music ('too complex')[2]. Bacon consistently refutes such readings,

---

[1] See aspects of Sam Hunter's 'Francis Bacon: L'Anatomie de L'Horreur', trans. Annie Pérez in *Francis Bacon* (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 1996). [Exhibition Catalogue]

[2] See Jonathan Harvey, 'Foreword' in Ferneyhough's *Collected Writings*, eds. James Boros and Richard Toop (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Press, 1995) pp. ix-xii

arguing that his paintings are, in fact, anti-illustrational.[3] Deleuze takes this notion of Bacon's as his point of departure, turning the whole question of what Bacon's art means away from (narrative) interpretations of the figure as either the perpetrator or recipient of acts of violence, injuries and so on, towards an investigation of what Bacon's figure reveals as an index of unseen forces acting on the body, often in the most ordinary circumstances:[4] 'he avoids such myths of creativity tied intensely to the suffering body'.[5] The concept of force underpins the whole of Deleuze's exegesis. Although Bacon himself refers to 'unlocking areas of sensation other than simple illustration of the object',[6] the specific notion of force, and its role in relation to the figure emerges through Deleuze's particular abstraction of Bacon's 'attempt to bring the figurative thing up onto the nervous system more violently and more poignantly'.[7] It is the action of force that produces the sensation of violence in Bacon's work - its 'physical' impact - and not simply the 'story' of violence, told 'in a long diatribe through the brain'.[8]

As a further prelude to the comparison between composer and philosopher it is necessary (as it has been in the case of the painter) to understand something of Ferneyhough's historical and stylistic heritage.

Ferneyhough is a self-confessed inheritor of late Modernist musical praxis. For him there is no question of attempting to represent the human body in musical material:

---

[3] See interview 1 in David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987) pp. 8-29 for discussion of Bacon's use of the term 'illustration'.

[4] Exceptions to this include paintings such as the *Sweeney Agonistes* 1967 and the *Crucifixions* (such as the *Crucifixion* triptych 1965) in which the violent elements are more thematically obvious, although the treatment of the figures remains focused upon the flesh, and the forces issuing from and acting upon that body. More 'ordinary' situations include the *Study for Self-Portrait - Triptych*, 1985-6 in which the single figure in each panel is simply sitting on a stool. Such unremarkable situations prevent the spectacular in Bacon's work, and concentrate tension in the painting down into the figural body itself.

[5] Dana Polan, 'Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation' in *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, eds. D. Olkowski and V. Boundas (New York and London: Routledge, 1994) p. 230

[6] Sylvester 1987: 56

[7] *Ibid.*, 12

certainly his implementation of the figure in music is not to be understood anthropomorphically. In the first instance, Ferneyhough's musical material refers only to itself in an entirely, some might add obsessively, self-consistent way. He avoids positing 'species of bodily comportment'[9] through uncritical, emotionally 'illustrative' musical gestures; rather he moves *away* from bodily/gestural directness, in ever increasing degrees of complex – highly abstract – parametric activity in order to bring the body, as pulsating material, *back* more palpably, generating lines of force that drive his music beyond the alleged stasis[10] of material experienced during the height of integral serialism. (Adorno writes in 'The Ageing of the New Music' that 'the basis of this serialism is a static idea of music'.[11]) Ferneyhough's idiosyncratic adoption of the concept of the figure in his writings and its musical effectuation can be seen as an attempt to re-ignite and re-deploy the sensuous element of musical material in a post-serial, post 'degré-zero'[12] context, in a material-immanent fashion. Thus, as I imply immediately above, Ferneyhough's re-vitalisation of material does not reject, in its course towards sensitivity, the abstract heritage from which it necessarily emerges. To this extent, the degree to which Deleuze abstracts Bacon's work on the figure in paint, and devises a dialogue between the figure and force at the centre of the *Logique de la sensation*, is well suited to Ferneyhough's musical language or 'personal style' as it evolves in the early 1980s.

---

[8] *Ibid.*, 18.

[9] Brian Ferneyhough, 'Form-Figure-Style: an Intermediate Assessment' in *Collected Writings* eds. Boros and Toop, 1995: 21

[10] See Theodor W. Adorno, 'The Ageing of the New Music', trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor and Frederic Will in *Essays on Music: Theodor W. Adorno*, ed. Richard Leppert with new translations by Susan Gillespie (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif.: University of California Press, 2002) pp. 181-202

[11] *Ibid.*, 188

[12] See Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, trans. A. Lavers and C. Smith (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967). Andrew Ford remarks that Pierre Boulez wanted to subtitle the first book of *Structures* (1A) 'style reduced to the degree zero'. See Andrew Ford, Jonathan Cross *et al.* website: http://www.abc.net.au/rn/music/mshow/s1185633.htm

However, Deleuze's abstraction of the Baconian figure – his conceptualisation of the figure – does not forget its roots in the physicality of Bacon's art. In an essay (also) entitled *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*,[13] Dana Polan points out that 'for all his discussion of the arts as conceptual, Deleuze understands the concepts as quite physical operations, rather than as ideal abstractions'.[14] For Ferneyhough, Deleuze's argument in the *Logique* is sufficiently abstract that it can be applied to (or rather used to illuminate) musical thinking, while at the same time imparting the intensity of Bacon's corporeality of style to musical practice.

**Musical Notation and Mediation**

Indeed, whilst a comparison with certain conceptual approaches to Francis Bacon's painting yields valuable insights into Brian Ferneyhough's music, it is nevertheless important to understand something of the relationship of each artist to his own material, in terms of this physicality. At first glance the 'magnificent simplicity'[15] of Bacon's paintings of human figures seems to bear little obvious relation to Ferneyhough's apparently abstract, fiercely complex music. Nevertheless one can argue that a performance of Ferneyhough's 'uninhibitedly expressive'[16] music conveys (as one commentator has suggested of Bacon's painting) 'all the pulsations of a person'[17], but at the level of composition itself, the pulsating material that is (for Ferneyhough) always historically handed-down must, however sensuous, be filtered through complex notation

---

[13] See Polan 1994: Essay 12. This is not a translation of the book, either in full or in part, despite bearing the title of Deleuze's monograph in its English translation.
[14] Polan 1994: 232
[15] David Sylvester, *Looking Back at Francis Bacon* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000) p.144
[16] Arnold Whittall, *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) p. 381
[17] Sylvester 2000: 78

before it can be performed. Ferneyhough writes that 'no notation, whatever its degree of complexity, can aspire to approach the reality of the audible phenomenon...'.[18]

Ferneyhough's concern with mediation, at every musical level, is at the forefront of both his writings *and* his personal dealings with musical material, whereas Bacon's conception of the issue is always ambiguous. He often speaks of the immediacy of his experience of paint and the attempt to convey this experience directly to the viewer. Leaving aside (for the moment) Adorno-inspired objections to some of Bacon's views,[19] it is worth noting that whilst having to form or manipulate the paint into a recognisable[20] image undeniably constitutes a sort of 'filter', certain aspects of Bacon's technique (such as throwing or smearing paint onto the canvas with that very physical sense of immediacy he describes) can obviously not be transferred directly to the domain of musical composition. When, for example, Ferneyhough refers in a piece of his own to a musical texture that is 'wiped over, in the Baconian sense'[21] (in a rare reference to Bacon), one accepts that the composer's imagined 'wipe' in the aural material must be studiously notated.

In an interview dated 1971-3 between Bacon and David Sylvester, the following excerpt of conversation describes some of Bacon's methods:

FB ...I throw an awful lot of paint onto things, and I don't know what is going to happen to it. But I do it much more than I used to.

DS Do you throw it with a brush?

---

[18] Ferneyhough, 'Aspects of Notational and Compositional Practice' in 1995: 7
[19] In fact, in many discussions with Sylvester, Bacon seems very aware of historical issues, criticism, and technical issues.
[20] Bacon argues that no matter how much violence he does to an image, he nevertheless wants it to be recognisably *like* the model. He formulates a particular notion of 'appearance' in order to account for this distorted or irrational likeness, which is to be discussed below. See Sylvester 1987: 26ff.
[21] Ferneyhough, 'Interview with Richard Toop' in 1995: 251

FB No, I throw it with my hand. I just squeeze it onto my hand and throw it on.

DS I remember you used to use a rag a lot.

FB I do use it a lot too, still. I use anything. I use scrubbing brushes and sweeping brushes…[22]

For all Bacon's insistence that chance, spontaneity and intuition are fundamental aspects of his experience of painting - 'if the making is more instinctive, the image is more immediate'[23] - his interviews reveal his engagement (often in spite of himself) with the importance of historical developments, the technical accomplishments and needs of painters, and the indispensability of the self-critical impulse. Despite sometimes stubbornly upholding 'immediacy' as an ideal attribute or aim of his painting and technique, he admits in a long conversation with Sylvester that his intuitive instinct (which he often equates with the notion of 'immediacy') responds rather to particular artistic situations: it is stimulated by and enacted within the parameters set out above.[24]

He eventually acknowledges, after some prodding, that his paint is thrown in a highly skilled, experientially mediated manner, and furthermore, that the additional 'manipulation'[25] (read 'technical mediation') of this thrown paint with rags and brushes is not only essential, but that only he can carry it out in his specifically Baconian fashion. Although Adorno rejects the idea of immediate musical material (both technically and expressively), he does not deny the intuitive aspect of the artwork: 'wilfulness amid spontaneity – this is the vital element of art'.[26] The combination of conscious control of material and spontaneous elements of composition does not simply form 'one big logical

---

[22] Sylvester 1987: 90
[23] *Ibid.*,104
[24] *Ibid.*, 91-99
[25] *Ibid.*, 97
[26] Cited in Max Paddison, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) p.144

contradiction'[27] in a work. David Sylvester suggests as much to Bacon: '…the operations you think of as random are more an inspired kind of letting-go and…the difference between these [operations] and the manipulation is one of degree *rather than kind*'.[28] Though originating in analyses of musical material, Adorno's concept of *Formgefühl* - the intuitive understanding of form[29] - arguably applies in Bacon's case also. His paintings and technique discover, intuitively, 'all the pulsations of a person' in sensuous material, all the more so (the artist's apparent resistance notwithstanding) for their mediation through the painter's highly critical awareness of historical and technical issues, to be revisited below. It is in this physicality that Bacon's art resonates with Ferneyhough's music on every level, including the notational. Far from distancing the composer from the physicality of his material, in fact, Ferneyhough's notation embraces it.

For Ferneyhough, notation has always been more than a necessity of composition, more than merely a way of writing down imagined sounds.[30] That he absorbs a concern with notation into his aesthetic approach to compositional issues - 'notation seems to be

---

[27] *Ibid.,* 144 (citation of Adorno)
[28] Sylvester 1987: 99. My italics
[29] Discussed in Paddison 1993: 145. Paddison suggests that 'the notion of *Formgefühl* seems to have been taken over directly from Schoenberg'. For Paddison's reasoning, and further discussion of *Formgefühl*, see pp. 144-145
[30] Ferneyhough deliberately 'overnotates' his scores in order to force the performer to make selective or material-prioritizing decisions based upon their own technical capability at any one moment in a particular piece. Thus notation itself is more than a mere means to an end: it cannot be simply decoded, but involves a level of interpretative decision-making, and retains a certain opacity 'built-into' itself. Even the most able performers will find aspects of the impossible lodged in the frequently oppressive business of the score. One might consider a conventional attitude towards notation by analogy with a conventional (structural) attitude towards language. Hence the meaning of a certain sign (linguistic or notational) is defined by its difference from all other signs in the system, as though part of a code. However, as I discuss in Part Two of this thesis, if instead of merely reading the sign in order to decode it, one *sees* it phenomenologically, above and beyond its value within a linguistic/notational system, the sign remains veiled: not transparent, but opaque. Engagement with the sign at this level involves the corporeality of the observer: both observer and observed are part of the same phenomenological space, and there is a distance between them. Perception here involves effort on the part of the observer as the eye must see – must focus – upon the object.

the key to one possible area of musical auto-introspection'[31] - has been one of his most intriguing insights, and has attracted much interest from musicologists and composers alike (witness the many discussions of the issue in the *Collected Writings*); but it has added to the distaste some feel for his 'complex' music ('complexity' being used as a synonym for 'impenetrability', employed as a term of disparagement).[32] Jonathan Harvey writes simply that 'he is, for many, a bogeyman'.[33]

Ferneyhough's characterisation of the performer as a 'semi-permeable membrane'[34] faced with a notationally 'overloaded' score, and forced to discover the limits of his/her physical and technical capability[35] (as well as that of the instrument) is well documented.[36] Arnold Whittall describes the sheer 'complexity of thought (and notation) that presents performers with daunting, even unsurmountable challenges'.[37] What is interesting from the perspective of the present argument (at this stage of consideration of the composer and painter in the act of production particularly) is Ferneyhough's implication that dense, complex notation is sensuous, even when taken to arcane extremes: 'it has to do, I think, with aura, presence'.[38] Just as a performer of Ferneyhough's music feeds off the physicality of the notation in order to realise the inner pulsations of the piece, so the analyst finds in its sensuous quality a point of entry (in

---

Ferneyhough's requirement of effort on the part of his performer (and indeed listener) when confronted with his opaque notation can be understood in relation to the phenomenological approach to language.

[31] Ferneyhough (NC) 1995: 3

[32] See Ferneyhough's own response to this and his personal understanding of complexity in contemporary music in the 'Responses to a Questionnaire on Complexity' in Ferneyhough, 'Responses to a Questionnaire on 'Complexity' in 1995: 66-75

[33] See Jonathan Harvey's introduction to Ferneyhough 1995: ix

[34] Ferneyhough characterised the performer in this way during a lecture to students at the University of Durham in November 1997. The lecture focused on his recently completed piece *Incipits* for viola, percussion and chamber ensemble.

[35] Ferneyhough (NC) 1995: 4-5

[36] Ferneyhough (RT) 1995: 268-273

[37] Whittall 1999: 380

[38] Ferneyhough, 'Interview with Philippe Albèra' in 1995: 321

addition to the sounds themselves) into the material-immanent phenomena (such as gesture and figure) that will be the focus of the present study. Whilst it may not 'approach the reality of the audible phenomenon' in itself, Ferneyhough's notation is sensuously implicated in the audible result.

In fact, Bacon's technique of adding layer upon layer of paint (whether with brushes or by throwing and scrubbing it in order to 'manipulate this paint further into... a greater intensity')[39] does not seem quite so far removed from Ferneyhough's meticulously detailed manipulation of his own material (expressed in layers of notational complexity)[40] such that it acquires a 'presence' of its own. One might add to this Bacon's comment that when forming an image in paint, '[t]he more artificial you can make it, the greater chance you have of its looking real'.[41] Arguably, therefore, the more contrived Ferneyhough's notation appears to be the more its physical 'presence' becomes tangible, for the composer and analyst, as well as the performer. (This is how, after distancing himself from transparently emotive musical gestures, he brings the body back in his own post-serial music, more palpably, through complexity and artificiality). Bacon often refers to scrubbing over particular areas of the painted figure, and argues that 'half my painting activity is disrupting what I can do with ease'.[42] In a sense, Ferneyhough's technique of over-notation attempts the same thing. It would be very easy for him to produce a conventionally notated piece (and easier for the performer to manage), but using complex notation as another layer of sensuous compositional and 'aestheticised' material approaches the principle of Bacon's 'tactile' techniques of painting.

---

[39] Sylvester 1987: 90
[40] *Ibid.*
[41] *Ibid.*, 148. See Interview 6 for expanded discussion of this point.
[42] *Ibid.*, 91

**Theodor Adorno**

Whilst Ferneyhough's concepts of figure (and force, as I will demonstrate shortly) are arguably indebted to their Deleuzian namesakes, their meaning is additionally enriched through the influence of Adorno's theory of musical material. It is interesting that the notion of physicality or physiognomy (which I will continue to explore as this discussion develops) is central to *both* Adorno and Deleuze's thinking.[43] Ferneyhough's concept of gesture (to be outlined immediately below) is also remarkable for its Adorno-motivated qualities. Before returning to my critique of Deleuze's Bacon study, we must first consider the significance of Adorno's ideas for Ferneyhough's music and writings[44] in greater detail. Throughout the remainder of this chapter, I aim to engage certain aspects of Adorno's thought in dialogue with Deleuze's through a closer study of Ferneyhough's rich array of interrelated concepts, which include musical figure, gesture, force and tactility.

Throughout the *Collected Writings,* Ferneyhough emphasises in complex, quasi-Adornian terms his own awareness of, and interaction with, the historicity of his musical material. In recent years, Ferneyhough has become increasingly vocal about particular philosophical influences, notably Adorno (in papers given at Goldsmith's College in 1999 and 2001), and Walter Benjamin (especially in relation to his recent opera *Shadowtime*). In his earlier papers, reproduced in the *Collected Writings*, such influences

---

[43] Witness Adorno's *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1992) and Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003.

[44] Others have addressed this connection between Adorno and Ferneyhough in recent publications. See for example Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, 'Vers une musique figurelle?', trans. Carlo Russi in *Contrechamps* no. 8 (February 1988) pp. 45-63 and Max Paddison, 'Considérations critiques sur la musique et les relations sociales: vers une théorie de la médiation', trans. Marie-Isabelle Collart in *Musique Contemporaine:*

are guarded much more closely. However, it is difficult to read the essays of the 1980s and not be strongly reminded of Adorno's 'Vers une musique informelle' (1961).[45] Two of Ferneyhough's essays are of particular importance in this regard: 'Form-Figure-Style: An Intermediate Assessment' of 1982, and 'Il tempo della figura' of 1984. In the former, Ferneyhough puts forward his particular appropriation of the concept of musical gesture and the associated notion of figure (to which I will return later), and explains their integral role in the development of his own 'personal style'.

First, a word of caution: to consider Ferneyhough's music the definitive actualisation of *musique informelle*, and his writings as corroborative of Adorno's (as Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf does)[46], is to ignore the significant lapse of some 20 years between 1961 and 1982, when 'Form-Figure-Style' was written. In the rapidly changing context of the twentieth century, this is no inconsiderable time-span: what appear, superficially, to be remarkably similar arguments hail nevertheless from quite different musical perspectives; Adorno develops his aesthetics from the standpoint of the musical avant-garde, stylistically revering the events of around 1910; Ferneyhough, of course, examines musical history some two generations later. Furthermore, in his 'Adorno Presentation' cited above (written almost another 20 years later), Ferneyhough revisits his own writings from the 1980s self-critically, treating them as though they – like *musique*

---

*Perspectives théoriques et philosophiques*, eds. Irène Deliège and Max Paddison (Liège: Mardaga, 2001) pp. 293-301

[45] See Adorno's 'Vers une musique informelle' in *Quasi una fantasia*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1998) pp. 269-322. Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf has made the link between Ferneyhough's writings of the 1980s and Adorno's essay explicitly in his own article, trans. Carlo Russi, 1988 (see above for full reference). Subsequently, Ferneyhough himself has devoted a keynote address, delivered at Goldsmith's College in 1999 to the importance of Adorno's essay in relation to his own composition and musical thinking. This paper has been published only in French as 'La «musique informelle» (à partir d'une lecture d'Adorno)', trans. Peter Szendy, in *Brian Ferneyhough*, coll. 'Compositeurs d'aujourd'hui' (Paris: Éditions Ircam, 1999) pp. 109-117.

[46] See Introduction to this thesis for a critique of Mahnkopf's approach to the issue of the figure in his essay.

*informelle* – express an 'idea of something not fully imagined'.[47] To conceive of *musique informelle* as having an objective set of rules is to reject the fluidity that Adorno accords it, not least in some of his most speculative, suggestive language. Ferneyhough's continued involvement with and re-examination (and, at times confrontation) of the issues that preoccupy Adorno testifies to this fluidity, the openness of his thought. Ferneyhough's music and writings provide one way of returning to Adorno's theory with what Ferneyhough calls a 'responsible freedom',[48] to re-investigate and explore its embedded potential creatively. Whilst Ferneyhough's music and Adorno's essay cannot each be used to validate the existence and direction of the other[49], both undoubtedly shed light on each other despite each pursuing its own immanent course unswervingly. But it would be erroneous to assume that Ferneyhough is the greater beneficiary in this process merely because he follows Adorno historically; in reality, concepts of Ferneyhough's, like the gesture, illuminate Adorno's thinking as powerfully as the latter illuminates both Ferneyhough's writings and music.

In 'Vers une musique informelle', Adorno sums up some current compositional trends as follows: 'up to now, every composer who has...refused to compose in any way other than that suggested by his own spontaneous reactions...has failed. If, on the other hand, a composer wilfully ignores the pattern of his own reactions and succumbs to the illusion that he can roll up his sleeves and labour away at the material to hand he will find that he has surrendered to the philistinism of reified consciousness'.[50] In order to escape this 'double bind', Adorno envisages *musique informelle* as that which 'constitute[s]

---

[47] Adorno, trans. Livingstone (MI) 1998: 303
[48] Ferneyhough 1999: 109. The translation is taken from a personal copy of the original English text provided by Brian Ferneyhough in 2000.
[49] Mahnkopf's article ultimately takes this position, however.

itself in an objectively compelling way, in the musical substance itself'.[51] In 'Form-Figure-Style' (1982), Ferneyhough similarly formulates an opposition between 'a music distinguished and authenticated by... the rapidity and spontaneity of the associated creative act'[52] and its opposite, 'one-dimensional distillations of abstract material-bound strategies of generation such as are often purported to characterise that all-purpose scapegoat, Serialism...'[53]

Ferneyhough's apparent sympathy with Serialism can be attributed to the fact that his formative years as a composer coincided with the apogee of the serial and integral serial techniques, and as such, *his* musical consciousness might be said to be rooted *in* European Serial practice. Although Serialism is criticised both by Adorno for 'hypostatising the individual note',[54] and by Ferneyhough himself for whom the abstract parameters redolent of Serial music reduce the material to a 'series of contextless monads',[55] Ferneyhough nevertheless takes something positive from such criticism. He argues that 'one of the most far-reaching consequences [of Serialism] has been not so much the flawless establishment of some materially egalitarian utopia of authorless creation, but, rather, the almost incidental demonstration that any form of sonic unit is the potential focus of many lines of directional energy'.[56] It is in such 'sonic units' - no longer individual notes, but gestural complexes - that Ferneyhough locates both his own parametric *and* expressive materials.

---

[50] Adorno, trans. Livingstone (MI) 1998: 277-278
[51] *Ibid.*, 272.
[52] Ferneyhough, 'Form-Figure-Style: An Intermediate Assessment' in 1995: 22
[53] *Ibid.*,
[54] Adorno, trans. Livingstone (MI) 1998: 286
[55] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 26
[56] *Ibid.*

## I.ii Gesture and Cliché

Ferneyhough's greatest criticism is reserved for the opposite end of the 'spontaneity/pre-calculation'[57] axis. In his foreword to the *Collected Writings*, Jonathan Harvey notes that '[Ferneyhough] is as suspicious of the isolated expressive gesture which directly draws on well-established codes of signification, such as may be obtained through flirtations with tonality, as he is of dance-like body rhythms, rhythms which would be equally accepting of what has already been adequately developed by composers of earlier generations, in his view'.[58] These gestures, which Ferneyhough himself describes as 'false forms of directness', weather away the immanent expressive potential of music.[59]

Like Ferneyhough, Deleuze acknowledges the historicity of (Bacon's) artistic material. His study of Bacon's painting is possibly the most material-centric, historically aware critique in his output. Dana Polan recognises its unique status within the author's work while pointing out its relative critical neglect. For all its abstraction, the discussion of concepts is much more 'literal', and (as Polan suggests) physical than when Deleuze discusses the same, or similar concepts elsewhere. The famous 'Body Without Organs' referred to in the introduction to this thesis is one such example: 'Bacon has not ceased to paint bodies without organs.'[60] However, one must not underestimate Bacon's own engagement with the history of figurative painting, and his identification of those painters whose handling of material approaches the sensuous 'presence' of his own figures. Deleuze certainly takes this into consideration.

---

[57] *Ibid.*, 25
[58] Ferneyhough 1995: ix (See Jonathan Harvey's introduction)
[59] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 21
[60] Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum, 2003) p. 45

The paintings themselves resonate with this history. Bacon takes the tendency to '*de*-figure'[61] the human body to an extreme, but this tendency has a long pedigree. As Polan observes, 'Bacon is in lineage with El Greco and others',[62] and Bacon himself names Velázquez, Poussin, Degas and Cézanne among his antecedents. 'No painter', continues Polan, 'ever works apart from a tradition, a heritage, *an anxiety of influence'*.[63]

Bacon and Sylvester also discuss the artist's 'anxiety', recalling an extract from a lecture given by Marcel Duchamp: '[The artist's] struggle towards the realisation [of a work] is a series of efforts, pains, refusals, decisions, which also cannot and must not be fully self-conscious, at least on the aesthetic plane'.[64] The resonance with Adorno's notion of the composer struggling with the demands of musical material is obvious here. Duchamp's comment, and Bacon's response ('yes, they cannot be [fully self-conscious]. It's not that they must not be. They cannot be'[65]) also recall Adorno's ideas. Max Paddison argues that for Adorno, 'the form-giving aspects of the work are by no means to be regarded as mainly the result of 'conscious' processes of rationalisation and control of musical material',[66] and cites Arnold Schoenberg[67] in support of this: 'a true artist's inborn emotional and intellectual gifts have, by self-cultivation and culture, become a faultlessly functioning apparatus that does not need the spur of conscious thought…it is this that distinguishes the true artist from the others'.[68]

---

[61] Polan 1994: 231
[62] *Ibid.*, 234
[63] *Ibid.*, 245. Polan borrows this phrase from Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence: a theory of poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973). Polan's Italics
[64] Sylvester 1987: 104
[65] *Ibid.*
[66] Paddison 1993: 144
[67] *Ibid.*, 145
[68] Cited in Paddison 1993: 145.

Ferneyhough music is, amongst other things, post-serial, and post-gestural (in the 'isolated, expressive' sense of the *cliché*, critiqued by Harvey). By the same token, Bacon's painting is 'post-photographic'. The relationship between the painter and composer here becomes clear when Deleuze argues that for Bacon, 'a whole category of things that could be termed "clichés"…fills the canvas, before the beginning'[69]: such clichés populate the canvas in addition to – and sometimes as an aspect of – the work of painters before him, forming part of the handed-down material. The term 'cliché' has a double implication for Deleuze's argument, rooted in a pun on the French meaning of the word. It conveys both the extent to which the blank canvas is overloaded with the inherited, conventional 'figurative givens'[70] of painting, and emphasises the presence of the photographic print or exposure [Fr: *cliché*] 'already lodged on the canvas'.[71] Whilst a photograph offers 'ways of seeing',[72] it is merely, Deleuze suggests, 'what *is seen*, until finally one sees nothing else…[photographs] impose themselves upon sight and rule over the eye completely'.[73] The photograph can work in two ways: 'by resemblance or by convention'[74], but Deleuze insists that 'great painters know that it is not enough to mutilate, maul or parody the cliché in order to obtain…a true deformation'.[75] Any attempt at mutilation that fails to take into account the extent to which the material itself (the cliché(s) covering the canvas) embodies an historically-charged 'anxiety of

---

[69] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 87
[70] *Ibid.*
[71] *Ibid.*, 10
[72] *Ibid.*, 90. Bacon prefers working from a photograph to a live model because 'I find it less inhibiting'.(Sylvester 1987: 30, 40) although he would never paint anyone he didn't know, for they have no 'flesh' or 'contours' (*Ibid.*, 73-78).
[73] *Ibid.*, 91. Original Italics
[74] *Ibid.*
[75] *Ibid.*, 89

influence', or 'assaults'[76] the artist, can only result in an uncritical approach to deformation, and produce further clichés.

Rather than maintain a distance and attempt to control the material from above by mauling it, 'the painter himself must enter into the canvas before beginning…[He] enters into the cliché…because he knows what he wants to do, but what saves him is the fact that he does not know how to get there, he does not know how to do what he wants to do'.[77] Both the sensuous, historically imposing material and the artist's sense of self-criticism ('I think an awful lot of creation is made out of…the self-criticism of an artist')[78] lead him to discover the means of extracting 'the Figure from the figurative',[79] and creating 'a true deformation'. The figurative, though deformed into a figure, is not annihilated, as Deleuze observes, 'this first figuration cannot be completely eliminated; something of it is always conserved'.[80] Bacon's painting maintains a critical tension between the two. The opposition that Deleuze makes between the figurative and the figure will become my central concern in Part II.

In Bacon's case, the photographs from which he works often get damaged in his studio, 'and this does add other implications to a [photographed] image of Rembrandt's, for instance, which are not Rembrandt's'.[81] The folds, scratches and tears in Bacon's photographs allow him to enter into the photographic image, the cliché - that which is supposedly fixed and unalterable - with a degree of freedom when painting. For example,

---

[76] Sylvester 1987: 30
[77] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 96. Original italics.
[78] Sylvester 1987: 149
[79] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 8. See also discussion of Jean-François Lyotard's *Discours, figure* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971) in Part Two of this thesis.
[80] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 97
[81] Sylvester 1987: 38

the photograph of Isabel Rawsthorne[82] **(see Fig. 2)** is damaged about the neck and lower face. In actual portraits of Rawsthorne[83] **(see Fig. 3)**, it is the neck, and the lower right of the face which are noticeably more 'deformed', where the pulsating flesh is more tactile, more sensate. Paul Klee's formula 'not to render the visible, but to render visible'[84] is particularly applicable, given that Bacon is not so much interested in rendering what is seen by the camera lens, but rather what technology, for all its efficiency, cannot see: forces acting on the body.

In 'The Ageing of the New Music', Adorno recognises the importance of technology for art, which 'must fulfil its own immanent order even where it participates in technique'.[85] He uses the musical example of Edgard Varèse, 'an engineer who in fact really knows something about technology', and who has 'imported technological elements into his compositions', in order to '[use] technology for effects of panic that go far beyond run-of-the-mill musical resources'.[86] Technological achievements such as the Odessa Steps sequence (from Eisenstein's film *The Battleship Potemkin*)[87] are not – *cannot* be – directly 'imported into' Bacon's paintings; they are, rather, figured there. Their physical effect – certainly a sense of panic is induced – upon the artist is matched and conveyed through 'pulsating' paint. For Bacon, this palpable panic, technologically honed in the motion picture, is captured in the one, horrific, still of the screaming nurse.[88] It is the sensation of panic arising from this picture that interests Bacon, concentrated on the spasm of the open mouth, and issuing from a muscular contraction – in other words a

---

[82] *Ibid.*, 39
[83] Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation* (Paris : Éditions de la différence, 1981) p. 72
[84] Cited in Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 56
[85] Adorno, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor and Frederic Will (AGE) 2002: 193
[86] *Ibid.*, 194.
[87] Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein's *The Battleship Potemkin* dates from 1925.
[88] Bacon kept a copy of the still of the screaming nurse from the film. It is reproduced in Sylvester 1987: 34

purely physiological stimulus – and not the event or spectacle (something sensational) outside the body at which the nurse screams. In Bacon's paintings, the horrific motion and force of the sequence of which the nurse's scream forms a part is encapsulated within the single (human) image, specifically the head, which the screaming mouth seems to swallow into itself. One might argue that while Bacon does not literally include photographs in his work, the paintings reveal technologically intensified effects that apparently go beyond the generic resources of painting. Adorno would argue that Bacon's work is technically mediated, but all the more expressive for it. He makes this very point in relation to Varèse's music, suggesting that technology does not 'make [compositions] some kind of childish science', but rather 'make[s] room for the expression of…tension'[89] between technique and the creative impulse. By analogy, the cliché (in the photographic sense) in Bacon's painting is not mauled but raised to sensation.

Typically, we might accept that a photograph records appearance, whilst a painting can only illustrate 'true-to-life' appearance. However, in Bacon's work, this premise is inverted: Deleuze refers to photographs as 'illustrations'[90] whilst Bacon insists that in his paintings, 'I'm always trying to deform people into appearance'.[91] D. H. Lawrence identifies a similar preoccupation in Cézanne's work: 'once you have got photography, it is a very, very difficult thing to get representation *more* true-to-life'.[92] By 'true-to-life', neither Lawrence nor Deleuze suggest that the representation of a figure become more visibly realistic and attentive to detail, arguing instead that the figur*al*

---

[89] Adorno, trans. Hullot Kentor and Will (AGE) 2002: 194
[90] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 87
[91] Sylvester 1987: 146

painter acquires what Lawrence calls an 'intuitive awareness'[93] of the model, of its energy. 'There is', says Bacon, 'the appearance and there is the energy within the appearance. And this is an extremely difficult thing to trap…with their face you have to try and trap the energy that emanates from them'.[94] When Lawrence argues that Cézanne 'did at least know the appleyness'[95] of the apple, he attributes to Cézanne this same intuitive awareness of the unseen force and energy of the apple. Appearance has effectively become energic, tactile, textured and bodily: 'appley'. Moreover Deleuze and Lawrence insist that the quality of 'appleyness' in painting testifies to a figural condition beyond the capabilities of the photographic image.

Deleuze does not criticise the photograph for being *too* faithful, *too* visually exact a copy of its model: Bacon's project is not to corrupt this fidelity. If it were, then his painted figure would simply degenerate into uncritical, 'bad' photography-imitation. Instead (after Lawrence)[96] Deleuze criticises the photograph for not being faithful enough. He argues that it is a 'false-fidelity'[97] from which the Baconian Figure - truer, 'tactile' appearance - is extracted.

As I will shortly demonstrate, the resonance of Deleuze's theory of (Bacon's) art outlined above with Adorno's theory of musical material as historically pre-formed and handed-down from generation to generation is remarkable. In contradistinction to these 'theories of art' however, Ferneyhough's writings, always expressed through the lens of

---

[92] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 88. See D.H. Lawrence "Introduction to These Paintings" in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence* (1936) (New York: Viking Press, 1972) pp. 578-9
[93] Cited in Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 88
[94] Sylvester 1987: 175
[95] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 88
[96] *Ibid.*, 97
[97] *Ibid.*

his primary experience as a practitioner of art, explore the 'art of theory'[98] as a means of articulating compositional concerns. The writings should not be read as a commentary on the pieces, nor as a self-consistent theory which 'aestheticises' them. Rather, the writings add another 'layer' to Ferneyhough's notorious multiple layered musical textures: in effect, theory becomes another compositional parameter.

Like the 'false fidelity' with which Deleuze charges the photographic image (and uncritical figurative painting), the 'false' gestures to which Ferneyhough refers are examples of musical cliché, stereotypes: the equivalent of musical photographs 'deriving by means of abstraction and analogy, from species of bodily comportment'.[99] Despite his uncompromising attitude towards these 'offensive depredations',[100] Ferneyhough, like Bacon, does not advocate ignoring them completely, since they are irrevocably part of musical tradition. Before a composer can proceed critically with his own style, it is necessary 'to find out precisely what it is about these phenomena that makes them tick',[101] and to read between the lines[102] of gestural superficiality: 'with the inevitably fortuitous collection of impressions which he gets from the past, he should try to form some sort of critically aware synthesis'.[103] In fact, analogously to the illustration-appearance (cliché-figure) dialectic that might be said to form the basis of Bacon's work (and Deleuze's aesthetic interrogation of the same), Ferneyhough's music construes a similar tension between extremes. Such false and direct musical gestures, supposedly indexical of the body - perhaps even of the composer's own emotive personality - can, according to the direction of Ferneyhough's argument, only amount to the equivalent of

---

[98] Ferneyhough, 'Parallel Universes' in 1995: 76
[99] Ferneyhough, 'Il Tempo della Figura' in 1995: 33
[100] *Ibid.*
[101] Ferneyhough, 'Interview with Joël Bons' in 1995: 220

musical illustration. Rather it is Ferneyhough's own music, mediated at every stage by history, technique, notational practice and self-criticism, that represents the thoroughgoing example of musical embodiment, deforming inherited cliché into tactile and impactive musical 'appearance'. Echoing Bacon's famous remark that '[one] would love to be able in a portrait to make a Sahara of the appearance – to make it so like, yet seeming to have the distances of the Sahara'[104], Ferneyhough attempts in his music to break away, and establish a great physical and critical distance from the clichéd body – the false gesture – in order to return bodiliness to music more palpably and indeed, with a certain sense of immediacy that is remarkable (however much his gestural material is, in truth, thoroughly mediated).[105] Ferneyhough's gesture arguably becomes the more somatic, the further he ventures away from conventional attitudes to figurative representation. In addition to being a complex and labyrinthine maze of detail through which one struggles to navigate a path, each piece is also a desert – a Sahara – such is the vastness of the *difference* between convention and 'appearance': a difference that is marked when one considers Bacon's directive 'to make [appearance] so *like*'.

Ferneyhough roundly criticises 'much recent music [that] relies heavily on variants of a rather limited repertoire of gestural types calculated to energise the receptive and interpretational faculties of the listener in a culturally quite specific fashion'.[106] Recall Bacon's observation on current culture: 'one's sense of appearance is assaulted all

---

[102] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 23
[103] Ferneyhough (Bons) in 1995: 220
[104] Sylvester 1987: 56
[105] Ferneyhough subscribes to Adorno's view of handed-down musical material that is historically and socially mediated, though he strives to generate a sense of immediacy, such as that in *Superscriptio*, where the first section of the piece pushes constantly against the upper registral limit of the instrument, ensuring a physical sense of resistance becomes the primary experience of both listener and performer.
[106] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 23

the time by photography and by the film'.[107] Further to this, Ferneyhough identifies 'the *Neue Romantik* tendency (Rihm, von Bose, von Schweinitz et al.)'[108] as one of the chief perpetrators of gestural 'false forms of directness' in music from around 1975 onwards (remember that Ferneyhough himself is writing in 1982). In the sleeve notes accompanying a recording of some of Rihm's music, Ralf Kasper observes that 'that for Rihm absolute music always needs a physical aspect, the "body of the music" ought to be perceptible by the senses, can be seen in his *Klavierstuck Nr. 7*, which was written in 1980. Mercilessly, Rihm forces the pianist through the most difficult octave passages, demands abrupt dynamic shifts and insistently hammering rhythms: a virtuoso tour de force almost ten minutes long…'.[109] The difference between Rihm and Ferneyhough (according to the latter's perspective) is that for the Ferneyhough, the physical aspect of music is always the outcome of immanent, self-critical and, paradoxically, abstract musical procedures. Ferneyhough does not 'need' that physicality: he does not add it in to his music, as he implies of Rihm. Rather Ferneyhough composes it out - discovers it - through the dialogue between handed-down material, and his compositional technique: it inheres in his musical language of that language's own accord. Rihm, on the other hand

> feels able to utilise traditional gestures and usage when appropriate, yet *places them* in contexts that are anything but traditional. "Musical freedom" is a phrase that crops up frequently in [Rihm's] own discussions of his music…it means the freedom to pursue his own creative path, *removed from the burden of historical and aesthetic constraints*….Yet such an approach by no means excludes historical or programmatic associations and allusions, and the enormous list of Rihm's works is filled with titles (especially in his pieces from the late 1970s and early '80s) that *seem designed to evoke specific cultural or emotional references*, as if emphasising the intuitiveness of his methods. Similarly the music itself can contain moments, events, that rely heavily upon some external reference, perhaps tonal usage, to make a point…[110]

---

[107] Sylvester 1987: 30
[108] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 21
[109] Ralf Kasper, 'Rihm orchestral works and chamber music', trans. Steven Lindberg, CD insert text for *Rihm: Orchestral Works and Chamber Music*, Col Legno: LC 07909 (© Col Legno: 2000) pp. 4-5. Recording dates given in booklet.
[110] Andrew Clements, 'Without Maps' CD insert text for *Wolfgang Rihm: Streichquartette III, VIII, V*, Arditti String Quartet, Auvidis/Naïve MO 782134 (2000). My Italics.

Shortly, a specific example of Rihm's apparently self-authorised use of musical gesture will be considered in the light of what has been apprehended, in the meantime, of Ferneyhough's own rigorous approach to gesture, and importantly, the associated concepts from which it is, in many respects, inseparable. Against the kind of attitude to musical history demonstrated in the quotation immediately above, Ferneyhough argues that 'the unholy alliance of period reference and formal organisation often little more than noncommittal in nature, is founded, like many another flourishing aesthetic sectarianism, upon a falsified model of musical history. Being hypostatised into a massive totality…such model-building rapidly leads to a devaluation of the internal coherence of the individual work and its own specific criteria of auto-historical signifying'.[111] Crucial then to Ferneyhough's concept of gesture is his claim that individual gestures have their own history (of which the composer is aware even when he employs pre-calculated layers of processual material as, for example, in his own piece for solo piccolo, *Superscriptio* of 1981, the first of his *Carceri d'Invenzione* cycle). Unlike Rihm, Ferneyhough cannot ignore the 'burden' of history: he does not attempt to import gestural expression that originates in another context altogether, but instead cultivates the sedimented historicity of handed-down material. He suggests (with unmistakable overtones of Adorno) that 'elements do not simply appear, they emerge imbued with history – not only that vague shadow of the past, but also, more significantly, their very own 'autobiography', the scars of their own growth'.[112] Ferneyhough argues that no matter how abstractly calculated it may appear to be, the inner substance of a piece is nevertheless physically compelling: what is a burden to one composer, perceived to

---

[111] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 22

restrict his creativity, is another's creative liberation. The latter advocates a 'renew[ed] concentration on an intense investigation of the energy sources which invest gestural complexes with their propulsive drive': they constitute, he argues, '*expression in waiting*'.[113]

## I.iii The Parameters of Composition

Ferneyhough's gesture becomes a focal point of musical parameters such as dynamic level, timbre, pitch and so on, and is delimited by a physical border. As Ferneyhough suggests 'the gesture usually manifests clear-cut boundaries; it has certain object-like qualities'.[114] The boundaries can be found either in the material of the piece itself (such as the dotted lines that separate the gestures at the beginning of *Superscriptio*) or in the limitations of the instruments involved (those same opening gestures of *Superscriptio* have an upward motion as though pushing against the upper limit of the instrument).

At the start of *Superscriptio*, the various parameters are aligned[115]: the dynamic level changes only when the pitch contour and rhythmic grouping alters **(see Fig. 10)**. However, Ferneyhough pursues each of these parameters independently, often applying separate (precomposed) processes to each (this is by no means always the case –

---

[112] *Ibid.*, 25

[113] *Ibid.* Original italics.

[114] Ferneyhough, 'Shattering the Vessels of Received Wisdom: in Conversation with James Boros' in 1995: 386

[115] The initial unity and subsequent disalignment of the parameters such as dynamic level, rhythm and pitch direction is suggestive of the kind of prolational canon practised by early composers, specifically the *Missa Prolationum* of Johannes Ockeghem, in which each voice in the texture follows an independent metrical realisation of the same pitch material. In Ferneyhough's case, the treatment of the material is far less strict than Ockeghem's in this respect, though the principles behind it echo the early composer's techniques. Ferneyhough's interval series is iterated, more or less, over and over again, whilst other parameters mentioned above are developed beyond their initial synchrony. Of course, Ferneyhough's piece is for a monophonic solo instrument, which problematises the issue of parametric desynchronisation, especially when those parameters are considered to promote a quasi-polyphonic texture. Clearly, real polyphony is impossible due to the limitations of the instrument, although the implication is further consolidated in the third 'section' of the piece, in which the interval series splinters into three independent, registrally-defined lines. The notion of implied polyphony will be revisited in Part Three of the present work, in relation to

*Superscriptio* represents an extreme limit of Ferneyhough's capacity for processual methods of composing). The 'rates of change' of the different processual strands cause them gradually to de-synchronise, as happens in certain types of mensuration canon. Any one processual strand therefore has the potential to break through[116] the gestural 'wall', precipitating the breakdown of the original gestural complex. Jonathan Harvey argues that

> the integral serialists elevated all the parameters to self-sufficient form-making status, but none of them, except Ferneyhough, went on to develop the gestural, expressive independence of the parameters to such a high degree. Ferneyhough, I think, does not counterpoint his dynamics with his timbres (for instance) to articulate quasi-serial patterns; they are polyphonically employed in more basic intuitive developments. They have a life and history of their own and yet they are born of gestures and they reform to make new gestures.[117]

However, although Harvey is right to assert that Ferneyhough is the most ambitious and perhaps insightful in this regard, the notion of individual parametric autonomy and expressivity is not a new one. As Pierre Boulez implies in *On Music Today*,[118] although rhythm and pitch have the same physiological basis (impulses), that is no reason to treat each of these parameters in the same way (i.e. use 12 serial values in the durational parameter, because there are traditionally 12 chromatic pitches). In other words, he advocates an independence of the parameters beyond, for example, the 12 durations and 12 serialised attacks in Olivier Messiaen's *Mode de valeurs et d'intensités*. Messiaen's serialisation of fewer dynamic values from *ppp* to *fff* was motivated not, one suspects, by

---

another solo part: in Ferneyhough's *Mnemosyne*. The 'splintering' of texture and register in *Superscriptio* is discussed briefly in the introduction to this thesis.

[116] I use this term in the sense of Adorno's *Durchbruch* [breakthrough] or *Bruch* [rupture], meaning that the figure [like Adorno's 'spirit'] 'breaks up the objective form [gesture] through which it is constituted' as *appearance*, or '*apparition*'. These inter-related phenomena are discussed in greater detail in Part Two of this thesis. See Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. and trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Athlone Press, 1997); in particular see the section entitled 'Art Beauty', pp. 78-100

[117] Ferneyhough 1995: x. See Harvey's introduction.

[118] See *Boulez on Music Today*, trans. Susan Bradshaw and Richard Rodney Bennett (London: Faber & Faber, 1971).

choice so much as by necessity: although 12 dynamic markings from *ppppp* to *fffff* are, as Arnold Whittall suggests, technically possible, Messiaen's use of fewer is surely more audibly effective.[119] The principle however, of transferring the Second Viennese School's serialisation of 12 pitches across to the domain of other parameters holds nonetheless in Messiaen's piece. Boulez, and later Ferneyhough, reconceptualise parametric music. Whittall remarks that Boulez effects 'a virtuoso transformation of traditional serial practice to generate the material of a work in ways which, while not completely beyond the reach of determined analytical reconstruction, are more varied and sophisticated than anything found earlier in the century'.[120] Ferneyhough's approach is innovative in a number of ways. He argues that 'it's not useful to restrict oneself to the 'traditional' parameters; I myself treat anything as a parametric variable that (a) can be quantified sufficiently consistently as to permit stepwise modulation and (b) is a clear enough component of its parent gestalt to ensure its adequate perception in later contexts'.[121] Furthermore, Ferneyhough's parametric practice places the emphasis less on the move away from a strict *Mode de valeurs*-inspired inter-identity of the parameters towards a more varied, less dogmatic use of parametric devices (a move already, as Whittall observes, precipitated by Boulez), and more on the reining in of those 'false forms of directness' at the other end of the scale as it were, through his expressive reinterpretation of parametric style. It is essential to apprehend that his is not a 'loosening' of strict integral-serial procedure (in his implied view this amounts to as irresponsible an action as Rihm's in respect of gestural material) so much as a rigorous recasting of the uncritical

---

[119] Whittall 1999: 252-253
[120] *Ibid.*, 310. See Whittall's own reference to this comment: 'see Lev Koblyakov, *Pierre Boulez: A World of Harmony* (Chur, 1990)'
[121] Ferneyhough (JB) 1995: 387

use of gesture, in the light of lessons learned from the experiences of serialism. In effect, Ferneyhough employs and manipulates expressively that aspect of twentieth-century musical language [serialism] that is considered by some to have expelled the expressive subject from its operations,[122] in order to halt the erosion of the expressive potential of music[123] by the very gestural language that supposedly exemplifies it.

Rather than having the latter's immediate, superficial claim to expressivity, Ferneyhough's particular gesture only becomes truly expressive at the moment of dissolution. He proposes that 'the ideology of the holistic gesture... be dethroned in favour of a type of patterning which takes greater account of the transformative and energic potential of the subcomponents of which the gesture is composed'.[124] For Ferneyhough, the 'spilling out' of specific parameteric subcomponents reconnects the musical surface with its 'inner subcutaneous drives'[125]: each parameter possesses the potential for various recombinations (and thus the formation of future, different, gestural complexes). It is interesting to recall Adorno's assertion in 'Vers une musique informelle' that 'the materials will emerge from every successful work they enter as if newly born',[126] and note that in Ferneyhough's music, (parametric) materials emerge from every gesture as if newly born, taking the intensity of Adorno's vision to an extreme level. Adorno's subsequent claim that 'the secret of composition is the energy which moulds the material in processes of progressively greater appropriateness'[127] is also upheld by Ferneyhough's gesture, which is continuously dissolved parametrically, and

---

[122] Adorno, trans. Hullot-Kentor and Will (AGE) 2002: 189-190. Adorno does however revise this opinion in 'Vers une musique informelle' written some six years later, in which he appears to be altogether more sympathetic to the New Music.
[123] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 21
[124] *Ibid.*, 26
[125] *Ibid.*, 25
[126] Adorno, trans. Livingstone (MI) 1998: 282

then re-formed out of the independently developed parameters into new, but related gestures throughout a piece in processes of progressively greater appropriateness. Ferneyhough also accords 'energy' a key role in musical material. What he calls 'energy sources' and 'energic potential' are vital to musical material if it is to progress beyond isolated, clichéd gestures in order to restore the 'propulsive drive' necessary to the proper contextualisation of the gesture, as part of the 'objectively compelling', immanent structure of a work. Again, Ferneyhough's is an energy that *moulds* musical material, like a sculpture. The concept of *appropriateness* is suggestive of Bacon's particular notion of 'appearance', as something that is arrived at through deformations; the latter ensure the figural image becomes increasingly *vital*. In Ferneyhough's music, gestural 'appropriateness' is arrived at through the dissolution of gestures into further 'deformed' and tactile gestures by parametric activity. Bacon's comment that 'there is the appearance and there is the energy within the appearance'[128] also resonates with Adorno's association between appropriateness and energy in his essay. Furthermore, in Ferneyhough's music, one might argue that there is the gestural complex, and there is the propulsive, parametrically defined energy within, as 'expression in waiting'. He argues that 'it is…at the moment of dissolution, that the constrictive preforming of gestural material is able to be released as formal energy'.[129] An essential feature of Ferneyhough's compositional 'toolbox'[130] is the concept of the 'filter', which is also preformed, and usually employed as a means of filtering out certain impulses in a musical process, once that process is 'underway' in a piece. It acts as a constricting device, which results in the 'energisation'

---

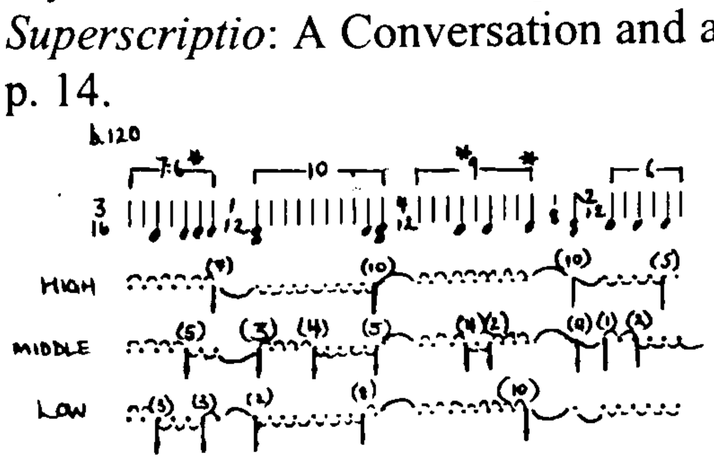
[127] *Ibid.*, 282-283
[128] Sylvester 1987: 175
[129] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 26
[130] Ferneyhough, 'Interview with Jean-Baptiste Barrière' in 1995: 421

of the processual elements that manage to pass through. Richard Toop refers to an example from *Carceri I* discovered in Ferneyhough's sketches.[131] (A very straightforward example would be shortening the value of every third note in a specifically rhythmic layer by, say, one demisemiquaver). Ferneyhough also imposes filters on some processual strands in *Superscriptio*, so that, in spite of the meticulous predetermination of the latter, their actual incarnation in the piece becomes somewhat distorted.[132] Regardless of the extent to which separate parametric processes are pre-calculated by the composer, if such a filter unexpectedly 'condenses' a process, the points at which it will recombine with other strands to make possible the emergence of new gestural entities, will become unpredicatable. Ferneyhough's music convincingly embodies the paradox of the pre-calculation of materials of composition (processes and filters) and the scope for material-immanent expression, wherein those same materials suggest, to some extent, what is composed[133]: their own gestural evolution.

---

[131] See Toop 1994: 162. This filter is reproduced in Part II.

[132] The final layer of filter in *Superscriptio* is very simple indeed, and involves filtering the already processually complex and calculated material through a much more intuitive device. Incredibly, after all the meticulous working-out of parameters in the third section of this piece (bars 120-139), in which three differently-registered versions of the row create a kind of polyphony for the performer to negotiate, Ferneyhough adds triplets in strategic (but intuitive nevertheless) places, an act which he refers to as 'figural enhancement'. He thus effects a slight speeding-up of the material, disrupting the exactitude of the three-part 'row-counterpoint' in which the precise timing of the three rows – in their different registers; high, middle and low – is precisely dictated by a strict number pattern itself derived from the original row of twelve notes (see bars 1-3). This disruption of exactitude using triplet 'enhancements', 'leads to slight rhythmic inflections at the points marked *'. See Toop diagram below, copied from, 'Brian Ferneyhough's *Superscriptio*: A Conversation and an Analysis' in *Contemporary Music Review* 13, no. 1 (London: 1995) p. 14.




[133] See Adorno, trans. Livingstone (MI) 1998

Ferneyhough suggests that composers should concentrate on the 'cumulative, developmental' aspects of style[134]: he effects this in his own music through his particular interpretation of gesture, in opposition to the uncritical use of gesture as an 'immediate holistic signifier.'[135] Adorno also distinguishes between the different roles that gesture can play in a piece of music. Max Paddison argues that in Wagner's music, for example, the gesture is seen as a pre-linguistic, 'mimetic' element that survives 'unsublimated' despite the 'increasingly rationalised structures of autonomous music'.[136] However, when understood (as Paddison proposes) in relation to Adorno's concept of form, gesture indeed participates in Adorno's dialectic between construction and expression.[137] Paddison argues that in the particular musical work, ''expression' is created through the subjection of handed-down musical gestures to the logic of construction through development', which 'may also seem to suggest that the gestures are not in themselves 'expressive'. Expression would therefore seem to be the product of development'.[138] This observation is important in this context for two reasons: first, because Adorno advocates the coming-to-expression of gestures through development, the very aspect of musical style in which Ferneyhough locates his own gestural language, and second, because gestures are apparently not, *prima facie*, expressive. As was noted earlier, it is only at the point of dissolution (in Ferneyhough's case, into separate parametric/processual strata),

---

[134] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 24. This comment is meant simultaneously on two levels, I believe. Not only does it refer to Ferneyhough's interest in piece-specific musical development (i.e. the development of a specific set of materials according to the formal demands of the piece), but to a larger notion of the historical development of musical material, and to the composer's career-long self-development. Jonathan Harvey argues in his foreword to the *Collected Writings* that Ferneyhough stands for 'the principles of evolution in music. He refuses to allow socio-economic pressures of rehearsal time, box-office viability, easy social-role messages and so on to dilute his push to ever greater musical development.' (Ferneyhough 1995: ix)

[135] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 22

[136] Paddison 1993: 247

[137] See Paddison 1993: 69 and Paul Valéry, 'The Idea of Art', trans. R. Manheim in *Aesthetics*, ed. Harold Osbourne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) pp. 25-31

and subsequent re-contextualisation into the internal logic of individual works that the gesture, 'imbued with history',[139] finds the full force of its expressive capability.

## I.iv Bacon's Figure

According to Ferneyhough, 'a gesture whose component defining features...display [this] tendency towards escaping from that specific context in order to become independently signifying radicals, free to recombine, to 'solidify' into further gestural forms may, for want of other nomenclature, be called a *figure*'.[140] The parametrically disposed subcomponents of the gesture that spill beyond its boundaries (discussed above) are developed figurally. In spite of Ferneyhough's apparently indifferent terminological decision, the specific choice of 'figure' is undoubtedly related to the use Gilles Deleuze makes of it in his Bacon study.

As I have noted, in the *Logique de la sensation*, Deleuze develops the central concept of the figure through a critical 'reading' of Bacon's *oeuvre*, abstracting Bacon's particular treatment of the human body in paint, and contrasting this with traditional figura*tive*[141] representations, which attempt to preserve a 'perfect' copy of the model, as in examples of conventional portraiture, where a model assumes a pose and is 'immortalised'. The resulting figurative representation never ages, nor does the painting ever betray the real discomfort of the sitter, forced to remain still during the painting process.[142] However, according to Deleuze, Bacon's figures harness human discomfort.

---

[138] Paddison 1993: 249
[139] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 25
[140] *Ibid.*, 26 Original Italics
[141] Deleuze's contrast between the 'figure' and the 'figurative' derives in fact from Jean-François Lyotard's *Discours, figure* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971). Lyotard's work is addressed in Part Two of this thesis.
[142] This is a comment made by Deleuze (trans. 2003: 12-26) but is ironic given that Bacon painted almost exclusively from photographs: the presence of the model made him uncomfortable, since by his own admission he did not want the model to witness the injury he did to them in paint. He also claims to be freer

They reveal the forces acting on the figure in the most mundane of circumstances (a more dramatic scene would, argues Bacon, create a 'story', and detract from the physical sensations that he conveys through the rendering of the body alone): in Bacon's own paintings of seated figures, for example, the chair (or stool) palpably constricts the figures, their discomfort resulting in the contortion of the figure's flesh and limbs. The figure itself, Deleuze points out, is immobile, but distorted from within. 'In the end' he argues, 'Bacon's Figures are not racked bodies at all, but ordinary bodies in ordinary situations of constraint and discomfort. A man ordered to sit still for hours on a narrow stool is bound to assume contorted postures...There is, before anything else, a force...that is of the flesh itself'.[143] This is often coupled with the restrictive force of a delimiting geometric frame, as in *Head VI*, 1949 **(see Fig. 4)**: the resulting figure represents nothing more than a precarious and momentary balance of forces, threatened with rupture from within the body itself. Deleuze argues that 'the figure is not simply the isolated body, but also the deformed body that escapes from itself'.[144] An example of this can be found in the *Triptych, August 1972* **(see Fig. 5)**.

The figures in the left and right-hand panels are partly erased, their facial features distorted, and each has sustained 'amputations' to one, or perhaps both, legs. The wounds are cavernous and hollow: the leg 'deformed by an aspiration'.[145] For Bacon, this is flesh in its most fluid, sensuous form. The melted flesh is ambiguous. In the left panel particularly, it seems to form a viscous, tactile shadow of the seated figure. There are two figures in the central panel, still more distorted, erased, and 'wiped over' with smears of

---

to 'drift' through the photographic image, than the restricting presence of the model him/herself. (see Sylvester 1987: 38, 41, 73)

[143] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: x

[144] *Ibid.*, 18

paint added over the figural image. This last effect is a particular favourite of Bacon's[146], and rather than serving to distort the image still further away from a conventional representation, the technique of wiping over actually enhances certain areas of the figure(s), indicating, as it were, a 'pressure point' where the internal convulsions of the body meet the limit of that body. We can compare Ferneyhough's image of the gesture, with its broken-down border through which rupture figural materials at 'the moment of their often violent release'[147], and Bacon's figures in this triptych whose skin (the organ that contains all others in their organisation) is similarly ruptured by the action of forces and the sensuous flesh mentioned above.

Bacon often refers, in interview, to his obsession with painting the scream, or human cry:[148] often the most notable feature of Bacon's paintings of the human head is the mouth. In *Pope No. II, 1960* **(see Fig. 6)**, the mouth is 'wiped' or even forcibly scrubbed over[149], indicating that the internal forces and spasms of the body are concentrated here. The figure may be chewing the meat in front of him, or he may be contorting his face/mouth in disgust at it. Either way, Bacon is not interested in any such 'story',[150] only in areas of force and sensation. In other, related, paintings such as the earlier *Study after Velázquez's portrait of Pope Innocent X, 1953* **(see Fig. 7)**, these forces prove too great to be contained by the body, and erupt into the scream. Whereas the 1960 *Pope* is in a small room, seated in a rectangular-backed chair, with a backdrop of rectangular shaped window blinds and a transparent – again rectangular – table

---

[145] *Ibid.*, xi
[146] See interview 3, Sylvester 1987: 68-107
[147] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 26
[148] See interview 2, Sylvester 1987: 30-67
[149] Deleuze refers to areas of 'local scrubbing' [*néttoyage local*], 'with a rag, handbroom, or brush, in which the thickness is spread out over a non-figurative zone'. (Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 5)
[150] Sylvester 1987: 63-64

supporting a cut of meat (to his side), the study after Velázquez's *Pope Innocent X* makes the oppressive presence of such a geometrical background into an imprisoning surround. In the 1953 study, the Pope is positioned within a number of different constraints – the chair and two parallel, curved pipes dominate – and he is seated on a stage or platform, behind a thick-textured curtain. The palpably intensified, constricting force of the background and foreground in this painting is necessary to meet, and attempt to contain, the force issuing from the screaming mouth of the figure. In both *Pope* paintings the figure is immobile, a fact again emphasised by the restrictive surround. In particular, the rigid upright posture of the figure gripping the arms of its chair in the 1953 study after Velázquez is suggestive of further restraints, as if the figure has been tied down to the chair by its wrists[151]. As Deleuze comments, 'what fascinates Bacon is not movement, but its effect on an immobile body: heads whipped by the wind, or deformed by an aspiration, but also all the interior forces that climb through the flesh. To make the spasm visible'.[152]

The painting titled *Figure at a washbasin* (1976) **(see Fig. 8)** succeeds in this. The figure is, once again, enclosed by a circular structure (both the surrounding pipe, and the rim of the sink). The figure is hardly standing (it is almost horizontal across the painting), and appears to be gripping the taps forcefully, the muscles in the arms tensed. Bacon includes a white arrow indicating the force that is pushing the head of the figure downwards, further into the sink, as it tries, on the contrary to stand, appearing to use the taps for support. Whilst it may be tempting to conjecture a story - that the figure is drunk, perhaps, or ill and vomiting – there are more interesting observations to be made in

---

[151] See *Study after Velázquez* (1950) which is found reproduced in colour on the cover of Sylvester 2000.
[152] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: xi

relation to this figure. Its position, standing on a dark, slightly raised platform, legs bent, head between two arms stretched out in front of it, suggests that of a diver. However, this is another misleading implication of Bacon's (in addition to the title). If the figure were to dive, then it would be in motion. Rather, Deleuze considers the figure to be absolutely motionless, attempting to dive down the plug-hole only in so far as the body will turn itself inside out in order to escape through the mouth: 'the body-Figure exerts an intense motionless effort upon itself in order to escape down the blackness of the drain'...The whole series of spasms in Bacon is of this type...the body attempts to escape from itself through one of its organs in order to rejoin the field or material structure'.[153] The scream, and Bacon's obsession with the mouth[154] is taken to another level: the scream releases entrapped forces, whilst the *Figure at a washbasin* releases the entire body from itself. Deleuze (in collaboration with Félix Guattari) often invokes Antonin Artaud's notion of the body without organs.[155] Artaud defines it thus (in as much as it is possible to define it): 'the body is the body/ it stands alone/ it has no need of organs/ the body is never an organism/ organisms are the enemies of bodies'.[156] In the *Logique de la sensation*, Deleuze argues that the concept is particularly applicable to Bacon's figures, if it is understood as being 'opposed less to organs than to that organisation of organs that we call an organism'.[157] He continues 'the Figure is the body without organs...flesh and nerve...cruelty will be linked less and less to the representation of something horrible, and

---

[153] *Ibid.*, 15-16
[154] See Sylvester 1987: 30-37
[155] See Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and* Schizophrenia, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (London: Athlone press, 1984) and *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (London: Athlone Press, 1988). Both contain considerable chapters/'plateaus' on the Body Without Organs.
[156] Antonin Artaud, 'The body is the body', trans. Roger Mckeon in *Semiotext(e)*, vol. 2, no.3 (1977) pp. 38-39
[157] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 44

will become nothing other than the action of forces upon the body, or sensation (the opposite of the sensational)'.[158] The various instantiations of forces discussed above (contained pressure as exemplified by the 1960 Pope, released pressure captured by the 1953 screaming Pope and the violent (or potential) explosion of the fleshy figure through the skin-boundary of its own material body) all capture the central issues that, through a comparison of the concept of the figure in Bacon's painting (as theorised by Deleuze) with certain aspects of Brian Ferneyhough's music, offer one way into the latter's extremely complex music.

## I.v Force

It is not merely in the explication of the concept of figure that Ferneyhough's writings resonate with Deleuze's Bacon study, but in the particular alliance between figure and force. Although Ferneyhough's music and writings prior to the 1980s might be said to evince certain traits that come to be associated, after 1980, with the particular notions of figure and force, the naming of these concepts, their pairing, and their association from the outset with 'energy', 'violence' and 'distortion' clearly betray Ferneyhough's debt to Deleuze nonetheless. Whereas with Adorno's 'Vers une musique informelle', it is Ferneyhough's style of argument and language (as well as the initial setting-up of a 'dilemma'[159] between extremes in 'Form-Figure-Style') that provokes the comparison, in the case of Deleuze's Bacon study, specific concepts are 'borrowed' from the domain of painting and are used to illuminate aspects of Ferneyhough's compositional practice. Ferneyhough uses Deleuze's abstraction of Bacon's figure and his physical account of

---

[158] *Ibid.*, 45.
[159] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 21

force to hone his own musically operative phenomena (and more directly, his writings) into the most consistently developed conceptual argument set out in the *Collected Writings*. It is no coincidence that Ferneyhough describes the initial stages of his compositional process as the combination of a 'tactile, visual and aural'[160] experience. The publication of Deleuze's monograph in 1981 (the year the *Carceri d'Invenzione* cycle was begun, and a year before 'Form-Figure-Style' was written), precipitating Ferneyhough's exploration of newly-focussed musical possibilities in terms of the figure-force dynamic, sustains his musical thought throughout the 1980s, particularly so in the first-half of that decade. For this reason, the *Carceri* cycle is foregrounded in this discussion, its dates of composition coinciding exactly with the most intense period of Ferneyhough's interest in Deleuze.

However, Ferneyhough's notion of force is not simply grounded in Deleuze's interpretation of the concept in Bacon's paintings. The title of Ferneyhough's *Carceri d'Invenzione* cycle [prisons/dungeons of invention or inventive dungeons] is taken from a series of etchings by Piranesi.[161] The insistence on the mutually dependent relationship between figure and force in the present discussion of the relationship between Ferneyhough's music and Deleuze's theory of the figure, is intended to distinguish force in Piranesi's work from the specifically figural force in Bacon's (as Deleuze understands it). Ferneyhough writes of Piranesi's work that 'after much…reflection it struck me that it was the masterly deployment of layering and perspective which gave rise to this impression of extraordinary immediacy and almost physical impact. At one and the same time, the observer is drawn ineluctably down towards the dark centre while forcibly

---

[160] Ferneyhough (RT) 1995: 260

thrust away along centrifugal rays of absolutely non-naturalistic, mutually conflicting lines of force'.[162] An untitled painting by Ferneyhough himself (reproduced on a compact disc cover of works from the *Carceri* cycle)[163] clearly attempts to capture the same conflict he describes in Piranesi's *Carceri d'Invenzione.*

Significantly, Ferneyhough associates force with – the use of logically impossible – perspective in Piranesi's etchings. This is not to suggest that he does not draw on Deleuze's analysis of force in Bacon's paintings equally, despite naming the cycle after Piranesi's works. The title 'Dungeons of Invention' implies the kind of labyrinthine depth that Ferneyhough seeks in his music, whereas Bacon's titles are quite mundane, besides which, they are far too specific for Ferneyhough's purposes.[164] When he does choose to name pieces after paintings, including Piranesi's etchings (as well as, for example Matta's *La terre est un homme*[165]), his choice is sufficiently ambiguous as to add to the intrigue of the musical 'labyrinth' itself and, importantly, to avoid 'programmatic' interpretations. The naming of the *Carceri* cycle after an example of visual art other than Bacon's work has led commentators on Ferneyhough to ignore the subtler connection with Deleuze, beyond recognising, as Richard Toop does, that 'a favourite quotation of Ferneyhough's[166] at the time he was working on the *Carceri* pieces was Gilles Deleuze's comment on the paintings of Francis Bacon: "En art, et en peinture comme en musique, il

---

[161] Giovanni Battista Piranesi's cycle of etchings entitled *Carceri d'Invenzione* (1760-61, 38 plates) are discussed on numerous occasions in Ferneyhough's *Collected Writings*, in relation to his own cycle.
[162] Ferneyhough, 'Carceri d'Invenzione' in 1995: 131
[163] See compact disc cover *Brian Ferneyhough*, performed by the Nieuw Ensemble (Etcetera KTC 1070). See also the compact disc cover for *Brian Ferneyhough: Solo works* performed by Elision (Etcetera KTC 1206).
[164] In his interviews, Bacon tells Sylvester that in any case, Malborough Fine Art generally chose his titles which seem, in the main to be labels of identification, e.g *Study for three Heads* 1962. Where the title is more 'creative', they are generally not Bacon's own choice: the *Triptych – inspired by T.S Eliot's poem 'Sweeney Agonistes'* was named by the Marlborough on the basis of a comment of Bacon's at the time, in which he claims he merely spoke of having read *Sweeney Agonistes*. See Sylvester 1987: 197
[165] Composed 1976-9

ne s'agit pas de reproduire ou d'inventer des formes mais de capter des forces".'[167] Toop also acknowledges that 'the notion of "capturing forces" is certainly critical to the *Carceri* cycle', but does not take this further with respect to Bacon and the figure, suggesting instead that 'it is precisely this notion of "forces" in Piranesi's *Carceri* etchings, rather than any illustrative intent, that suggested them as "title material".'[168]

The notion of force is therefore a factor common to Bacon's paintings (as critiqued by Deleuze) and Piranesi's etchings (as interpreted by Ferneyhough). Besides this, there is little ostensibly shared between the two: there are no figures in Piranesi's work, and there is no depth-perspective in Bacon's. However, this fundamental difference points out the existence of two types of force, or rather two operations of force in Ferneyhough's work. In the first case, the influence of Piranesi can be seen on a large, formal scale: the processes and textures are deeply embedded, many-layered and conflictual, and instrumental lines often seem to be trying to escape beyond the 'boundary' of the work or the limitation of the instrument (this premise is the *modus operandi* of *Superscriptio*). Ferneyhough often refers to his attempt to create depth-perspective in his work. Yet within this Piranesi-inspired environment, Ferneyhough introduces figures, gestures, and smaller-scale specifically figurally-oriented forces locally: figure and gesture are never intended to structure a piece supercontextually; rather they are the means by which musical forces generate forward momentum and, significantly, expression.[169] This level of force takes 'as [its] vehicular object the connective impetus established in the act of moving from one discrete musical event to

---

[166] Toop 1994: 156
[167] Cited in Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 21. Original reference in Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: logique de la sensation* (Paris: Éditions de la Différence, 1981) p. 39
[168] Toop 1994: 156

another'.[170] Ferneyhough describes expression as 'a sort of passage from one state to another, in which neither the presumptive beginning and end points are primary, but rather the 'no longer' and 'not yet' whose *impressum* they bear'.[171] Although musical forces are considered active on two levels, global and local, it is the latter which largely concerns Ferneyhough in the two essays focused on his own *Carceri* pieces, suggesting that the overt link with Piranesi notwithstanding, it is Deleuze's notion of forces directed at the body or object that preoccupies him principally.[172] Ferneyhough's suggestion that a composition should not '[aspire] implicitly to the status of a natural object [which] denies us entry into the crossplay of forces by which that very illusion is sustained'[173] resonates with his comments that Piranesi's etchings evince 'mutually conflicting lines of force' that are 'non-naturalistic'. However, it also recalls Deleuze's opposition of the figure (with its forces) to the figurative, or the attempt to produce a 'natural' object in painting. Elsewhere, Ferneyhough echoes Deleuze's notion of contrapuntal forces applied to, and issuing from, the body: 'force, as the liberation of entrapped energy, finds its counterpart in an energy definable as the application of a force to a resistant object'.[174] Furthermore, Ferneyhough considers the 'sonic event' to be the 'momentary fixing of a number of independently moving streams of information...the temporary focus of lines of organisational force'.[175] Recall my earlier characterisation of the immobile body in a painting of Bacon's as a momentary balance or locus of mobile forces.

---

[169] See Ferneyhough (JB) 1995: 386
[170] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 35
[171] *Ibid.*
[172] This is supported by Ferneyhough's concentration on the object in comments such as the following: 'parametric lines of force can be clearly perceived as infecting, damaging, or reconstituting their *carrier vehicles*'. See Ferneyhough (JB) 1995: 387. My italics
[173] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 26
[174] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 35
[175] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 26-27

The trajectory/trajectories of the architecturally proportioned forces in Piranesi's work pass(es) beyond the boundary of the page and into the 'conceptual' space beyond the work itself. For Ferneyhough, Bacon's bodies constitute objects that encounter such trajectories of force, becoming distorted in the process. Not only does Ferneyhough's description of this encounter recall Bacon's own awareness of the violence done to conventional appearance in paint through the figure, but also Adorno's conception of historically handed-down musical material as fragmented, damaged and sedimented subjectivity, as it is 'inherited' by each new composer. Ferneyhough writes that 'there are objects which resist distortion by the forces directed at them; their damaged violated integrity signals to us the measure of those same forces and energies deployed: it is their 'expressive history'. Just as some musical objects are comparatively more resilient, so the nature and power of the forces to which they are exposed need to be calculated with a view to gradual 'weathering', erosion, or their sudden, omnidirectional 'dematerialization''.[176] Here one encounters evidence of the two levels of force that are operative in Ferneyhough's music: the resistant objects that he describes are analogous to Bacon's figures; the 'omnidirectional dematerialization' arguably hints at the larger-scale perspectival forces discernible in Piranesi's works. In the latter, the concept of force is related to the notion of the boundary or 'frame'. This relationship is also evident in Bacon's paintings, again on a smaller, local scale. The human body in Bacon's paintings must be, as I have implied already, distinguished from its specific figural 'appearance', which can spill beyond the skin into what Deleuze calls the 'field' surrounding it. The ultimate consequence of such 'spillage' is the previously discussed 'Body Without Organs'. Other boundaries in Bacon's work include the geometrical parallelepiped and

[176] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 35

similar structures that surround the figure. Occasionally, this frame seems to be constricting the figure, and at other times, part of the figure protrudes, as in the *Triptych, Three Studies of the Male Back*[177] **(see Part III)**. The notion of force as pressure acting against a limiting structure (be it body-internal forces attempting to escape; surrounding forces attacking from outside the body in Bacon's work; forces pushing against the outer frame; or the 'dark centre' in the Piranesi examples) – force that is either resisted or submitted to – is clearly espoused by Ferneyhough in his writings. The music itself enacts those same contradictory forces. Ferneyhough argues that 'expressive energy derives, in large measure, from the impacting power of restriction'.[178] The relationship between Ferneyhough and Deleuze, though understated in the *Collected Writings*, is crucial in this respect because of the role of the figure as a means of 'capturing' or 'harnessing' these forces [*capter des forces*]. The relationship between the geometrical structures and the figure in Bacon's paintings – the fact that each intrudes into the space of the other – is important, and will become central to the arguments put forward in Part II of this thesis.

### I.vi Ferneyhough's Figure

As in Bacon's paintings, where the figurative body is, with effort, 'worked up' into a pulsating figure body (by adding textures, throwing and smearing paint, and concentrating on particularly 'sensate' areas such as the screaming mouth), Ferneyhough's properly figural gestures must be forged out of handed-down material that always already includes musical gestures. He argues that 'the idea of the figure is locked,

---

[177] See the triptych featured in Part III of this thesis.
[178] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 27

for me, precisely at the intersection of the defined, concretely apperceptible gesture and the estimation of its 'critical mass', its energic volatility'.[179] Arguably, the gesture and figure are dialectically related (as Mahnkopf and Paddison[180] both suggest). Ferneyhough argues that 'no figure is merely a figure, just as no gesture is ever devoid of its proper aura of figural connotations to be activated at will'.[181]

Ferneyhough's gesture is essentially, like Bacon's human body, immobile. Recall Bacon's figures on stools or in chairs: the apparent movement is created by the smears and scrubbed areas that are the traces of forces acting on the body. These evidential traces turn body into figure, which is an index of forces. Ferneyhough argues that 'arrested motion has a peculiar force of its own',[182] and elsewhere that ''lines of force' [are] destructive...to the extent that they are exclusively traceable through the observance of the path of distorted material left in their wake'.[183] Ferneyhough's gesture becomes figural once it is 'composed out' into 'autobiographical' parameters that, acquiring 'critical mass', reveal their potential to spill beyond the gestural boundaries. He proposes a 'mode of composition which enhances the affective gesture with the energy to productively dissolve itself in a quasi-analytical fashion'.[184] Deleuze implies that the bodies in a painting of Bacon's possess a similar auto-energetic quality: the ability to become figural and then to break through the limits of the body. He argues that 'the body is not simply waiting for something from the structure, it is waiting for something inside itself, it exerts an ['intense motionless'] effort upon itself in order to become a Figure...it

---

[179] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 37
[180] See Max Paddison, 2001
[181] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 37
[182] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 27
[183] Joshua Cody 'In Conversation with Brian Ferneyhough', (website: http://www.sospeso.com/contents/articles/ferneyhough_p1.html, 1996) p. 7
[184] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 41

is the body that attempts to escape from itself...'.[185] Recall Ferneyhough's description of the gesture (the correlative of Bacon's body) as 'expression in waiting'.

There is a somewhat larger-scale dialectical relationship between Ferneyhough's gestures and Bacon's bodies on the one hand and, on the other, the material structure of the self-consistent work: in Ferneyhough's case, because gestures are involved in, and mediated by, the immanent formal logic of the work (both as part of the handed-down material and as the emergence of new gestural complexes, participating in the work's expressive character through rigorous development). In Bacon's case, according to Deleuze, 'what makes deformation a destiny is that the body has a necessary relationship with the material structure: not only does the material structure curl around it, but the body must return to the material structure and dissipate into it...'.[186] The forces sustaining the tensional relationship between material structure and gesture/body are 'made visible' by the figure. These are often concentrated into small areas of the figure: that area which is most deformed. The tensions underpinning the whole work are thus focused down into intense localised patches which are, paradoxically, at once the most abstract (since smears and distortions efface the figurative) and yet the most sensuous domains to crystallise-out in the work. It is crucial to note the subtlety of Ferneyhough's distinction between a gesture, and a gesture that is figural (as discussed above). He emphasises that 'a *figure* does not exist, in material terms, in its own autonomous right; rather, it represents a way of perceiving, categorising and mobilising concrete gestural configurations, whatever the further purpose of these latter might be. It implies compositional attitudes, since it will be these attitudes which, by revealing themselves

---

[185] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 15
[186] *Ibid.*, 16

gradually, form the measure according to which we are enabled to perceptually ground the continuing flow of the discourse'.[187] (Therefore the localised instances of figural deformation noted immediately above can be seen to act in this role of a measure against which one might register the progress of musical time, the path of forces or the degree of tactility of those same forces).[188] Furthermore, 'the...dematerialization of the event, its radiation into, and illumination of its defining context, is an essential prerequisite for the establishment of those taut chains of mutually embedded perspectives without which the event must needs remain largely *incommunicado* in respect of larger formal concerns'.[189] Deleuze implies a similar 'movement of the figure toward the material structure, toward the field of colour'[190] in Bacon's work: the latter's point of departure, the body, assumes a figural appearance during the painting process: viscous shadows leak from the body, limbs dissolve to liquid and wipes and smears efface facial detail, always deforming and escaping the body. By evoking visual images ('field of colour', 'illumination'), both Ferneyhough and Deleuze reinforce the concept of the figure as a mode of seeing, of perceiving and *appearing* (in the special sense discussed previously). Ferneyhough also argues that 'it is more fruitful to speak of *figural aspects* of this or that concretely extant vocable, constellation or formal unit'.[191] For Ferneyhough, it is the figural dissipation of the gesture/body into its surroundings that defines that gesture. He suggests that 'only the conscious and systematic deconstruction of the gesture into semantically mobile figural constellations promises to overcome the former's inherent limitations, since it is the

---

[187] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 41. See the figure/ground opposition in Gestalt psychology (discussed in Part II). See *Gestalt Psychology: An Introduction to New Concepts in Modern Psychology* (New York: Liveright, reissue 1992)
[188] See Part Three of this thesis for a discussion of Time and the tactility of forces.
[189] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 27
[190] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 15
[191] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 37 Original italics

synthetic nature of the figure which permits the definition of the category through which it wishes to be heard, rather than vice-versa'.[192] Emptied of its forceful, compelling, substance the gesture/body becomes the 'evidential trace of a completed process'.[193] He suggests that 'it is the projection of figural energies which *make the pointer* [gesture] *visible* by means of which the motion is measured'.[194] Not only does the figural activity 'illuminate' the gesture in the sense that it 'lights it up', making it perceptible, sensate, but there is also an inferred sense of 'enlightenment': the figure becomes a critique of the gesture insofar as it breaks it down, mobilising it parametrically, reorganising these processually evolving parameters into derivative, but increasingly complex momentary gestural states. If the gesture is autohistorical, then as a figure it is also autocritical. This is what Ferneyhough refers to as self-reflexivity in his music: the gesture, perceived figurally, is armed with the potential to critically reformulate itself in the future of the musical work. The fact that Ferneyhough considers his musical devices aesthetically, that he is critical of his own compositional methods in essay form, is borne out through – and intensifies the 'autocriticism' of – the musical language itself, by way of the figure, a music-immanent 'way of seeing'. Nonetheless, the converse is also true. His essays are richer for their indebtedness to his specifically musical forms of expression; what Ferneyhough calls 'parametric thinking'[195] arguably results from his own parametric approach to composition.

---

[192] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 27
[193] *Ibid.*, 28
[194] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 36 Original italics
[195] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 26

## I.vii Ferneyhough and Adorno

In the essay 'Il Tempo della Figura' Ferneyhough observes that 'in certain interpretations of tonal music, the gesture rises to figural status via the specificities of its harmonic embedding; it is individuated by its evident contextual utility',[196] echoing much of the discussion of his own gesture-figure operations, immediately above. Ferneyhough certainly does not claim to have 'invented' musical figures or gestures that operate in something like the manner demanded by his own music. For him, the tonal gesture's 'rise to figural status', and its reciprocal definition through figural dissolution – the 'specificities of its harmonic embedding' – becomes part of the handed-down material which he then absorbs into the immanent principle of his own work, through his individual parametric technique. The role of the figure in the expressive development of Ferneyhough's material (and indeed, the role of development in his figural discourse) encourages comparison with certain tonal repertories, especially since his attitude towards large scale form is, by and large, 'traditional' (in the sense that his 'beginnings', 'middles', and 'ends' fulfil, on a basic level at least, conventional roles such as opening gesture, (figural) development, closure and so on).[197] Adorno's critical study *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy* is relevant here. Adorno argues that 'the thematic figure is no more indifferent to the symphonic flow than are the characters in a novel to the dimension of time within which they act. Driven on by impulses, as the same beings, they yet become different, shrink, expand, even age'.[198] Such shrinkage, expansiveness, impulses and drive recall both Deleuze's analysis of Bacon's paintings and Ferneyhough's writings,

---

[196] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 36

[197] Certainly Ferneyhough's *Carceri d'Invenzione* cycle displays relatively conventional formal properties. This is also implied in Harvey's foreword to the *Collected Writings*. My thanks to John Hails for discussions of this point, and the loan of his MA work on Ferneyhough's music.

which deal with the concepts of distortion, sensation and force. Moreover, both Ferneyhough and especially Bacon suggest that the emergence of the figure into the work testifies to the becoming different of the same: the inherited figurative image is brought back more palpably. Adorno's notion of 'character' in Mahler's work (Chapter Three of *Mahler*) also resonates with Ferneyhough's concept of the figure, and the idea of gestural dissolution into figurally mobilised parameters. Adorno argues that

> in [fields of disintegration] the thematic contours dissolve in a play of tones…The collapsing passages in Mahler…speak for themselves. While they are embedded in the overall progression of the form, at the same time they extend through it as something in their own right: negative fulfilment…A material theory of forms would always deal in Mahler with formal sections that, instead of being filled with characters, are by their nature formulated as characters…they decide the content of the music by the character elaborated in them.[199]

According to Max Paddison, the hermeneutic method that Adorno calls 'musical physiognomics' is developed from the 'deciphering of [the] relation between 'nature' and its historical meaning',[200] where 'nature' refers to the concept of 'second nature'[201], which Paddison describes as ''objective' conventions…made up…of previous subjectivity which has forgotten its origins in subjectivity'.[202] Although Ferneyhough avoids direct discussion of the nature-history dialectic in his writings, it is implicit in his own criticism of ossified, illustrative (in the Baconian sense) surface gestures such as the *Neue Romantik* composers claim as genuinely expressive materials. Of these attempts at direct expression, Ferneyhough writes 'the gesture *means*, for the most part, by virtue of

---

[198] Theodor Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1992) p.72
[199] *Ibid.*, 45
[200] Paddison 1993: 35
[201] Georg Lukács' *Theory of the Novel* is the origin of this concept. See Lukács, *Theory of the Novel*, trans. Anna Bostok (London: Merlin, 1971) and Paddison 1993: 31-34 for further details.
[202] Paddison 1993: 35

reference to specific hierarchies of symbolic convention',[203] devoid of the real historical meaning, of the immanent sensuousness, discovered in a true musical physiognomy.

Using Adorno's interpretation of Mahler's musical ideas, one gains another perspective on my earlier discussion (focused upon Bacon, Deleuze and Ferneyhough) in relation to immanent physiognomical features of the two artists' work. For example, the concepts of 'illustration' and 'appearance' (understood as phenomena that respectively suppress and reveal vital forces) also emerge in Adorno's argument. He observes that, in Mahler's music, one finds and confronts an 'incommensurable presence', and suggests that 'his symphonies assist such closeness by the compelling spirituality of their sensuous musical configurations. Instead of illustrating ideas, they are destined to concretely become the idea'.[204] Interestingly, Adorno also disparages music composed by one 'external to it' (naming the 'New Objectivity' as a style that promotes such 'distance' between composer and material), 'tirelessly toying with *clichés* such as that of the titanic late Romantic'.[205] Later, Adorno argues that it is necessary to 'drive the art-work beyond the *appearance* it has become under culture, and reinstate something of the corporeality…'[206] One senses here an opposition between the kind of culturally conditioned 'blind appearance' to which Adorno refers elsewhere[207] (compare this with the conventionally figurative, criticised by Bacon and Ferneyhough) and the corporeal 'appearance' which Bacon insists upon in his own work.

Often, Adorno refers to the 'face' in Mahler's music. Of course: this is what is meant by the title *A Musical Physiognomy*. But, like the notion of 'appearance', I suggest

---

[203] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 33. Original italics
[204] Adorno, trans. Jephcott (Mahler) 1992: 4.
[205] *Ibid.*
[206] *Ibid.*, 38 My italics

that in the context of the present argument, 'physiognomy' can be understood to convey two subtly differentiated implications. Adorno undoubtedly uses the term to suggest the expressivity of Mahler's music: it wears its expression like the face 'wears' expressions. However, Deleuze's contention that 'the Figure…does have a head, because the head is an integral part of the body…Bacon is a painter of heads, not faces…Bacon thus pursues a very peculiar project as a portrait painter: to dismantle the face, to rediscover the head or make it emerge from beneath the face',[208] displaces the notion of expression from the face to the dismantled face, to the fleshy figure – the head – lodged beneath it. Recall the proposed association between Adorno's use of the term 'character' in respect of Mahler's music, and Deleuze/Ferneyhough's 'figure', and also that the notion of 'physiognomy' not only refers to facial expression, but is equally indicative of character.[209] A second dimension to the term can be sensed: there is the figurative face and the figure pulsating within it. Adorno himself suggests as much when he argues that 'it is not so much that subjectivity is communicated or expressed by music as that in it, as in a theatre, something objective is enacted, the identifiable face of which has been obliterated'.[210] The last phrase could equally well describe the objectivity of Ferneyhough's gesture, the identity of which is dissolved into figurally animated subcomponents. Like the spasm made visible by Bacon's paintings of the scream, Mahler's music 'is a twitching at the corners of the mouth'.[211]

Ferneyhough's concept of gesture was compared earlier, with that of Wolfgang Rihm (a comparison that Ferneyhough's own comments precipitated). Rihm, as has been

---

[207] See Adorno, trans. Hullot-Kentor (AT) 1997: 86
[208] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 20-21
[209] See the definition of 'physiognomy' [trans. from the German *Physiognomik*] in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 10th ed., ed. Judy Pearsall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

pointed out, relies heavily upon external references, identifiable gestures and physical immediacy. A typical example of this is found in the appearance of the *Tristan* chord in the fourth movement ('äußerst gedehnt') his *Im Innersten*, the third string quartet (1976).[212] Rihm's use of the chord can be perceived to be problematic on account of its attempt to imitate the expressiveness of the original in its new context. Interpreting Ferneyhough's rather unspecific comments on Rihm and other *Neue Romantik* composers in terms of concrete examples, provides a clearer view of what it is in particular that Ferneyhough objects to in this music. A detailed argument has been made against Ferneyhough's assessment of Rihm by Alastair Williams, both in his book *New Music and the Claims of Modernity*[213] and in an article 'Adorno and the Semantics of Modernism'.[214] Williams does not dispute that 'sometimes Rihm's expressive directness is indeed crude, suggesting we can side-step modernity' but argues that Rihm 'has clearly learned from high modernism while seeking a more inclusive aesthetic'.[215] Furthermore, he proposes that Rihm's music 'can also be approached on an immanent level, suggesting that the advance of material remains a realistic strategy'[216] and that 'materials return as forms of memory, hence they refer to a stylistic horizon *but are not wholly dependent on it*. Such memories can be juxtaposed with unexpected materials, and subjected to a different logic. Accordingly, Rihm's references to tonal music often occur as islands in a

---

[210] Adorno, trans. Jephcott (Mahler) 1992: 25
[211] *Ibid.*, 147
[212] See Rihm, *Im Innersten*. CD reference: *Wolfgang Rihm: Streichquartette III, VIII, V*, Arditti String Quartet, Auvidis/Naïve MO 782134 (2000). The 'Tristan' chord is found exactly midway through movement four (CD: track 4, 2:25).
[213] See Williams, A. *New Music and the Claims of Modernity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997)
[214] See Williams, A. 'Adorno and the Semantics of Modernism' in *Perspectives of New Music* 37: 2 (Summer 1999) pp. 29-50
[215] *Ibid.*, 44
[216] *Ibid.*

modernist style'.[217] Compare Williams' positive use of the metaphor of the island with the following – negative – remark of Ferneyhough's: 'the main argument against most New Romantic phenomena is that the iconic representation theory (on whatever level) leaves the single gestural unit of significance on a rather isolated and formally ineffective island'.[218] Williams' proposal of Rihm as a modernist develops out of perceived similarities in approach to musical material between Rihm and Mahler: an approach, in the latter's case, that meets with Adorno's critical approval. (Williams refers to Adorno's 'insistence that construction should release subjectivity, or work from a semantic core').[219] Thus, the principle that 'Adorno's interpretation of Mahler tracks the memory traces and characterizations in his music, concluding that it releases materialized social codes *into a second dimension of signification*' is, though not directly discoverable in Rihm's work, the motivation behind Williams' assertion that 'by isolating objects [Rihm] does perhaps intensify their formal meaning for a contemporary audience'.[220]

Persuasive though Williams' argument might be, especially in its flexible approach to Adorno's ideas, the course of the present discussion focuses on Ferneyhough's own motivations with regard to the development of his musical gesture and figure. Therefore, Ferneyhough's comments on Rihm have been absorbed into the discussion presented here, given the degree to which they illuminate Ferneyhough's reasoning. One senses that Ferneyhough's own *theoretical* discussions on this point of expressive gestural immediacy are formulated not only in response to the *Neue Romantik* musical tendency, but to the latter's own collective theoretical statements. (Another reference in the

---

[217] *Ibid.*, 41
[218] Ferneyhough (RT) 1995: 248
[219] Williams 1999: 30
[220] *Ibid.*, 41

*Collected Writings* identifies 'statements by von Dadlesen, Febel, Müller-Siemens, Rihm, von Schweinitz et al.'.[221] An example is given as 'Fragen an junge Komponisten').[222] Ferneyhough, having listened the previous evening to Rihm's fifth string quartet, remarks that 'now I'm putting words into these people's mouths [Rihm has just been mentioned by the interviewer], and perhaps they could indeed confute me by saying, 'That's not what we meant at all.' But listening to their music and reading their writings, it seems to be the case that for them a gesture, belonging to whatever preconceived repertoire, has a semantic significance, a certain *constant semantic significance*, relating to the sort of emotion we are meant to recognize it as representing'.[223] The crux of Ferneyhough's argument against Rihm and others rests not on the issue of reusing 'old' semantically established materials in themselves, so much as on the contextual utility of such imported material. He argues that 'logically, the more this gesture is in itself an iconic representation of the emotion, and is therefore self-sufficient – either it represents this thing or it doesn't – the more it represents it, the more it is its own justification, via this representational connection, the less contact it needs, structurally speaking, with any other gestures placed in the same context'.[224] Ferneyhough's concept of gesture is Dionysian – it continuously dissolves and reforms throughout the course of a piece, such that any one gesture is fundamentally and indissolubly related to its neighbours, predecessors and successors, alike. For Ferneyhough, musical meaning is never marshalled through the importation of already extant semantic matter, nor even through the construction of gestures on his own terms. For him, a gesture only begins to *mean*, to

---

[221] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 23
[222] See *Musica* vol. 37/5 (September/October 1983) p. 405ff.
[223] Ferneyhough (RT) 1995: 282-283
[224] *Ibid.*, 283

express or to signify at the point at which it is '*de*composed' out into the future of the piece: to this extent contextual concerns are prioritized over the designation of what is to count as a musical object or gesture in-itself in Ferneyhough's compositional, and moreover *critical*, mindset. We can draw an analogy, for the purposes of this discussion, between Ferneyhough's emphasis on musical context and Adorno's insistence on the immanent level of self-critical material (Hence the reason that, for him, Rihm's gestures are not immanently anchored in the musical discourse – they do not, he claims, belong in the context into which Rihm (and others) transplant them).

One further point remains to be made: Ferneyhough's gesture and figure function in a highly physical manner in his music: one senses the sheer *bodiliness*, the energy which they impart to that immanent level of the musical discourse, in its very impulses. It is the perceived misappropriation of the 'body' in gestural material by composers such as Rihm that provokes Ferneyhough's sternest rebuke, and it is in this particular regard that Ferneyhough's deliberately polemical arguments are constantly foregrounded throughout this discussion, and the following chapters of the present work. Indeed, my own approach to Adorno's *Mahler* proceeds from this standpoint of the body (as will become clear), as I begin to explore the concept of the figure further. At present, although I address concerns relating to Ferneyhough, Mahler, Adorno and Rihm (each of whom features in Williams' article on modernism), it is not until Part II of the present work that I turn to the question of modernism, postmodernism and Ferneyhough's own relation to these two phenomena. Once again, my critical interrogation will revolve around the central concept of the figure which, in common with Williams' article, foregrounds the issue of musical material throughout.

It is important to note that Ferneyhough's references to the *Neue Romantik* tendency focus upon the period from 1975 onwards. Given that his own *Form-Figure-Style* was written in 1982, the period in question is very short in the context of both Rihm and Ferneyhough's compositional careers to date. Therefore, Ferneyhough's apparent distaste for Rihm's musical practices in the latter part of the 1970s must not be mistaken for a general dislike of his *oeuvre*: this may or may not be the case, but in this thesis, only the specific comments relating to Rihm's style of the late 1970s are considered germane to the figural issue in question.

Rihm's 'gesture' of actually quoting the *Tristan* chord wholesale is a 'loaded' one, whether or not the composer prepares for it, to some degree, stylistically in the piece. At this particular stage in musical history, quotations such as this cannot be anything other than deliberately provocative, and to this extent, the quotation that Rihm makes in this instance has the effect of 'coming out of the blue' – some may find it crass – due to the inevitable historical 'baggage' (not least of myriad other quotations) that it carries with it. Compare this with Max Paddison's 'immanent analysis'[225] of Berg's *Sonata Op. 1*, in which the *Tristan* chord also appears. A brief consideration of this analysis provides insight into what becomes, in Ferneyhough's music, the figure-gesture relationship/dialectic, enacted through parametric musical language. In Berg's case, as Paddison discovers,

> [the *Tristan* chord] appears at the end of the big climax at bar 95 in the 'development'...It *emerges* out of the 'tonal flux' and provides the most effortless *transition* to the passage in fourths which immediately follows it at bar 96. Adorno focuses on the way in which the climax is built up - indeed, it is a distinctly Wagnerian climax - and on the way it *dissolves* into the ensuing fourth-chord passage. Berg's tiny quotation - surely the most subtle of the many examples of *Tristan* quoting among composers it inevitably calls to mind... - passes unremarked by Adorno, doubtless because, although surely intended by the

[225] Paddison 1993: 279-284. Paddison's analysis realises Adorno's concept of 'immanent analysis', which Adorno fails to deliver in any substantiality in his own writings on music (as Paddison notes, p. 60).

composer to serve as a hidden reference, *it also performs its function as a transitional device so superbly, and thus seems to merge with its surroundings completely*.[226]

In Berg's practice one discovers an ongoing process of the emergence and dissolution of (Wagnerian) material: its actual quotation as such is arguably less important than the use Berg makes of it. In addition, Berg makes immanent structural use of this material at a moment (historically) that is much less distant from Wagner than Rihm's generation, later in the twentieth-century (and, in any case Berg is not, at this point in his career, playing with stylistics as he went on to do in *Lulu*, for example). Recalling Deleuze's characterisation of the figure as that which dissipates into its surrounding 'field',[227] one might consider that the figural subcomponents of Ferneyhough's gesture similarly dissipate into their surrounding musical field, or context. Such gestural 'spillage' in the form of figurally charged parameters, results in fact in a work-immanent 'force-field': an intense web of independent parametric activity is held together nonetheless through the shared gestural origins of that charge, or force. Once again, one detects in Adorno's ideas a possible link with the perspective on Deleuze presented in this thesis and through both, the essence of Ferneyhough's figure-gesture relationship. The latter is one of antagonism yet mutual dependency: in the same way as Bacon's figure brings back the 'figurative thing' differently, more palpably, Ferneyhough's figural material issues from the gesture and returns sensation to it. Since the figure introduces difference into sameness or likeness – in Ferneyhough's case the figure resembles the gesture insofar as it is (sensuously) different to it – then it also introduces a rupture into figurative or gestural

---

[226] Paddison 1993: 280. My italics.

[227] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 5. Deleuze uses the term *aplats*, which has been translated as 'field', although in French, the emphasis is on the flatness of the colour in Bacon's backgrounds. This means that the background is not textured, in a three-dimensional way, but also implies that the monochromaticism is

space, analogous to the disturbance noted by Deleuze that begins within the body itself in Bacon's paintings. The notion of figural difference will be pursued in some detail throughout the course of Part II.

I have compared and contrasted the immobility of Bacon's 'body' with the dynamic of the figure, the stasis of 'illustration' with the energy of 'appearance'; and perceived the same essentially static-dynamic relationship between Ferneyhough's gesture and figure. In his study of Berg's Sonata, Paddison also 'reads' Adorno's assessment of bars 95-101 which he calls 'a caesura' (implying stasis) dynamically. He emphasises the points made earlier with reference to the same section, suggesting that

> [Adorno] seems to be implying that this passage in the Berg...has a certain 'static' function within the Sonata. What Adorno does not really discuss, however, is the function of bars 95-100 in the Berg as a 'field of dissolution' (*Auflösungsfeld*), making use of motivic 'remnants'...to dispel the tension of the Tristan chord and the climax which led up to it, and to dissolve the material into the varied statement of the second subject which follows...The perfect fourths actually emerge out of the Tristan chord at bar 95...[228]

Other aspects of Berg's manipulation and 'redisposition' of the Wagnerian material can be compared with Ferneyhough's own technical manipulation of the handed-down gesture, using distorting forces in order immanently to critique it and make use of its potential energy in his own musical context. According to Paddison, 'Berg's adaptation has to be seen as complex, involving both contraction and expansion of the original at certain points...'[229] and later 'the Sonata op. 1 provides evidence of a relationship to the material which is at the same time both highly conscious (at times even self-conscious, in the sense of direct quotation or 're-composition') and highly intuitive...'.[230] Whilst

---

uneventful, which is precisely Bacon's aim: to preclude the possibility of creating a scene. He remarks that 'I want to isolate the image and take it away from the interior and the home'. (Sylvester 1987: 120)

[228] Paddison 1993: 282. My italics

[229] *Ibid.*, 282

[230] *Ibid.*, 283

Ferneyhough does not 'quote' pre-existent material[231] himself, the critical re-disposition of Rihm's 'false' notion of gesture through figural parametric and intuitive means in his own music can be compared with Berg's material-immanent engagement with Wagner's material. It is by now self-evident that Berg's importation of Wagner's *Tristan* chord must not be considered in the same way as Ferneyhough characterises Rihm's *Neue Romantik* 'false forms of directness': namely as one of the aforementioned 'offensive depredations'[232] of gestural forms of expression. Rather, of interest here is the use a composer makes of the material and stylistic possibilities available to him. Berg's manipulation of Wagner's *Tristan* chord regenerates its expressivity, and creates for it a context that becomes uniquely its own, in spite of its heritage; its use, conversely, by Rihm, supposedly rejects this heritage and squanders expressive potential in the very attempt to cannibalise the expressive qualities of the original, and point up the historical reference for the listener. Andrew Clements argues that 'Rihm has his compositional cake and eats it: he can preserve his freedom, while still feeling able to call upon the resources of the rich tradition from which he has escaped'.[233] At the very best, the attitude attributed to Rihm here is an example of what Ferneyhough refers to as 'self-congratulatory'[234] and 'convenient',[235] at worst it represents everything that is antithetical to the ideas of Adorno, Ferneyhough, Deleuze and Bacon. It is interesting to consider

---

[231] Other composers' material is used very rarely. One example is *Unsichtbare farben* for solo violin (1997-98) in which Ferneyhough makes use of the *Caput* plainchant. More usually, the influence of a work like Piranesi's *Carceri d'Invenzione*, Matta's *La terre est un homme* or Schoenberg's music is detectable in terms of stylistic similarities with Ferneyhough's own work. Witness the 'lines of force' that Ferneyhough creates in *Carceri d'Invenzione I*, which are inspired by those he detects in Piranesi's etchings of the same name, or the addition of the soprano to Ferneyhough's fourth string quartet which recalls Schoenberg's innovation in his own second quartet.

[232] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 33

[233] See Andrew Clements, 'Without Maps' 2000: 12

[234] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 21

[235] *Ibid.*,

Kasper's comments, cited earlier, which suggest that for Rihm 'the "body of the music" ought to be perceptible by the senses'[236] alongside Bacon's insistence that the sensation elicited by the figure be conveyed directly to the nervous system of the viewer. For all that, superficially, these two appear to be arguing the same point, it must be remembered that Bacon attempts to create that physical impact out of an historically charged, technically mediated, self-critical style: 'the greater the degree of artificiality', he proposes, 'the more real [the image] is'. By 'reality', Bacon means physical graspability, tactility. Rihm's music really does exemplify an attempt at a direct appeal to the senses, with (as Ferneyhough would view them) altogether unconvincing results. Perhaps the greatest difference between the two composers at issue here lies in their respective views on musical authority: Rihm, it seems, answers only to himself whereas we discover that for Ferneyhough 'material signals to us…what it itself desires'.[237]

### I.viii Franco Donatoni and the Figure

Although Ferneyhough is influenced by the philosophical thought of Adorno and Deleuze, and by the development of characteristics such as figure and force in Bacon's painting, there are further sources of specifically musical interest to the present discussion. Ferneyhough's writings often comment upon the music of other composers.[238] I will focus on the correspondences between Ferneyhough's thought and that of another contemporary composer who receives barely a mention in the *Collected Writings*: namely, Franco Donatoni.

---

[236] Kasper, trans. Lindberg 2000: 4
[237] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 41
[238] See the *Collected Writings* for examples, including Ferneyhough's essays on Anton Webern, Carl Ruggles and Michael Finnissy.

The dossier in the second issue of the journal *Entretemps* is devoted to this composer (the third, to Ferneyhough), and contains two essays of particular interest. The first, from 1981, is entitled 'Processus et figure'[239] and the second, from 1985, 'On compose pour se composer'[240]: both refer to the concept of the figure. The intention here is not to assess the influence, as such, of either composer upon the other: according to Ferneyhough, Donatoni and he rarely, if ever, spoke about composition[241] although, as rare mentions in their respective writings on music testify, each evidently knew at least something of the other's musical thought.[242] What is interesting here is the Italian connection: Ferneyhough's 'Il Tempo della Figura' was originally published in Italian translation.[243] He has remarked recently that a particular notion of 'figure' has been important to Italian composers for some time (and in fact, still is), Donatoni among them (along with Luca Francesconi and Alessandro Melchiorre, for example). For the Italians, the figure is understood primarily as an embellishment[244]: not necessarily as an ornament, but as an enhancement of a basic musical pattern or unit. Whilst this does not seem to have much in common with Ferneyhough's altogether more complex (and philosophically nuanced) concept, one finds in Donatoni's discussions of the figure several points of comparison with Ferneyhough's, not least because Donatoni also associates figure with gesture. The following discussion will compare the two concepts of figure, and attempt to bring together some aspects of the figure discussed earlier. The fact

---

[239] Franco Donatoni, 'Processus et figure', trans. Maria Cippolone in *Entretemps* no. 2 (November 1986) pp. 95-99

[240] 'One Composes to Composes Oneself'. Published as 'On compose pour se composer', resulting from an interview conducted by François Nicolas (propos recueillis et agencés par François Nicolas) in *Entretemps* no. 2 (November 1986) pp. 87-94

[241] Brian Ferneyhough, personal communication (January 2003).

[242] See Ferneyhough, 'Michael Finnissy: The Piano Music' and (J-BB) in 1995: 196, 421

[243] See Brian Ferneyhough, 'Il tempo della figura' in *I Quaderni della Civica Scuola di Musica* (Milan: 1985). Reprinted by permission of Alessandro Melchiorre

that Ferneyhough and Donatoni's accounts of it are exactly contemporaneous is important, since the similarities uncovered provide a wider context in which to consider the musical practices articulated through the concepts of figure and gesture as the means (in the early 1980s) of working through certain problems intrinsic to handed-down material. By the same token, the differences between these two notions of figure help us to appreciate just how unique Ferneyhough's understanding is, taking account as it does of Deleuze-inspired ideas of force, insights into Adorno and much more besides. Although Donatoni does refer to Adorno on one occasion, his concept of figure lacks something of the richness that Ferneyhough cultivates for his own.

Ferneyhough makes a point of observing that there are already so many extant definitions of figure (and here he may be thinking of Deleuze, as well as the extensively studied role of the figure in language[245]) that adding one more cannot be 'inherently objectionable' and, in any case, 'no better general term is available for the precise distinction I have in mind'.[246] He is extremely aware of the 'vast spectrum of nuance' that the term figure has accrued 'over the course of several centuries'[247] and, while his own definition is wholly idiosyncratic, it is nonetheless thoroughly 'nuanced' by its very conscious association with the Deleuzian use of the term in particular (not to mention the nuances imbibed by Deleuze's own use of the term[248], and so on). Ferneyhough's 'figure' is saturated with 'historically mediated usage'.[249] It arises out of this 'critical mass' of nuances: the more intensity invested in the concept of the figure, the more intricate and concentratedly forceful his own musical solution becomes.

---

[244] Brian Ferneyhough, personal communication (January 2003).
[245] See Part Two of this thesis
[246] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 33
[247] *Ibid.*

Donatoni, on the other hand, whilst clearly concerned with the history of material and technique in his written texts, devises his own concept of figure initially at least from what one would normally understand by 'figure' in music: in other words, a musical figuration (after the Italian 'tradition'). Donatoni defines the figure as 'any [musical] fragment where the level of articulation permits one to recognise its topological identity…as a singularity recognised by features/determinants that are proper to its generalised aspects/connotations'.[250] In order to support his ideas, Donatoni cites the 'basic figure' that extends from beginning to end in Bach's C major prelude'.[251] He then abstracts his own concept of the figure from this basis, envisaging it as a 'meeting place' of musical 'process', 'automatism' and 'combinatoriality', between which three Donatoni draws subtle distinctions. Although figural continuity is maintained throughout a piece (again consider the simple example of Bach's prelude), the figure nevertheless undergoes what Donatoni calls 'internal modifications' that are witnessed and controlled externally, by the larger-scale harmonic framework [*squelette harmonique*] of the piece.[252] Donatoni's figure is arguably as context-dependent as Ferneyhough's. Donatoni locates the musical process in this relationship between figure and framework. It is a process whereby the harmonic trajectory of the whole is revealed – illuminated – through instances of figural modification (the Italian tendency to view the figure as embellishment or modification of a basic unit is perhaps relevant here). However, one senses that aside from its local manipulation, Donatoni's figure is an index of this larger

---

[248] Consider the influence of Lyotard's *Discours, figure* on Deleuze's Bacon monograph, for example.
[249] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 33
[250] Donatoni 1986: 96. All Donatoni quotations in English are my own translations.
[251] *Ibid.*, 88.
[252] *Ibid.*,

harmonic trajectory, in the way that the figure is indexical of lines of force in Ferneyhough's music.

Donatoni's notion of combinatoriality [*combinatoire*] is also discoverable in the relationship between figure and framework, and refers to the ability of the figure to adapt itself to its local harmonic framework, whilst all the while maintaining its basic physiognomy.[253] Not only is the figure to some extent controlled, dependent upon and supported by its harmonic context but, like Ferneyhough's (and indeed Bacon's), it exerts an effort upon itself in order to engage or combine with that context.

Donatoni argues that it is the capacity to utilise the energy distilled in the process of figural change that makes one truly able to compose, and ultimately, to 'compose oneself' critically, by creating the reciprocal interaction between the 'micro' level of formal detail (figure) and the 'macro' level (overall process and harmonic trajectory).[254]

Donatoni's insistence on the physiognomy of the figure most likely reflects his knowledge of Adorno's *Mahler* study, to which he refers in his later essay. Adorno's description of the 'thematic figure' in Mahler's music resonates with Donatoni's own ideas, and helps to explain them more clearly. As described above, Adorno writes that 'driven on by impulses, as the same beings [thematic figures] yet become different, shrink, expand, even age'.[255] Similarly, Donatoni's figures 'shrink' and 'expand': this is the manner in which they are modified by the surrounding harmonic context. The 'impulses' to which Adorno refers may also be usefully compared with Donatoni's chameleon-like figure that adapts itself to its local environment: internal impulses – its 'character' – also cause expansion and shrinkage. Moreover, Donatoni's figure remains

---

[253] *Ibid.*,
[254] *Ibid.*, 89-90

basically 'the same being' throughout a piece: recall his description of the figure as a '[musical] fragment where the level of articulation permits one to recognise its topological identity'; yet it too becomes different.

Donatoni explains this 'becoming different' of the figure in relation to a concept of gesture: not only are figure and gesture the lynchpins of Ferneyhough's musical aesthetic of the 1980s, but Donatoni also upholds their tensional relationship as central to his own music-theoretical considerations. This relationship, in Donatoni's case, helps to explain what he understands by 'automatism'. This, he argues, 'is not a language, nor still a technique, but only a manner of being, an attitude which puts less emphasis on the object-result than on action [or: activation, function]. This is the difference in connotation in German between *Gestalt* (static notion) and *Gestaltung* (dynamic notion)'.[256] Already, it is possible to sense that for Donatoni, automatism involves more than a-subjectivity and schematisation, since his understanding of the concept incorporates a dynamic element. The opposition of static and dynamic here is also prescient of that between gesture and figure, respectively. Donatoni suggests that 'to consider [a musical object] as a gesture is to take it for what it is, and not for what it could be. To consider it, on the contrary, as a figure, is to envisage its capability/capacity to become something other than itself, to engender another gesture'.[257] This is redolent of Ferneyhough's observation that 'the gesture is 'frozen force' to the extent that it stands for expressive sentiment, for an absent exchange of expressive energies'.[258] He also argues elsewhere that 'the energy required to create the [false] gesture is consumed by the time its boundaries have been

---

[255] Adorno, trans. Jephcott (Mahler) 1992: 72
[256] Donatoni 1986: 89
[257] *Ibid.*, 89
[258] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 35

established, so that it's ability to exercise an influence on the category pertinent to it is insignificant. Such gestures remain, like strangely visible black holes at the still centre of their own burnt-out identity',[259] drawing a clear distinction between this uncritical use of gesture – 'expressive denotational monads negate their own potential internal power by evoking it in the act of signification itself'[260] – and the type of self-critical material he proposes: a gesture that, at a 'critical mass' of potential energy, is figural. As in Donatoni's case, Ferneyhough's figure participates in the formation of further gestures in a piece of music.

However – despite some remarkable similarities with Ferneyhough's eponymous concepts – Donatoni's figure and gesture differ from his contemporary's in certain fundamental ways. Whilst Ferneyhough's figure is 'a way of seeing' the gesture, and only objective in so far as it is always related to, and borne of the gesture, Donatoni's figure is both unambiguously objective and physiognomically recognisable. To that extent, it is actually better compared to Ferneyhough's concept of gesture which, in its successive incarnations, is always the same, yet reformulated differently through figural action: 'the idea of the figure [is] seen as a constructive and purposive reformulation of the gesture'.[261] Furthermore, Donatoni argues that 'the dynamic produces something that immediately becomes static', but within which, the dynamic must remain as a possibility.[262] He asks, 'can one then divide the figure into subcomponents?' and answers 'yes, into little gestures for example; in a process, the point of departure is a figure, but

---

[259] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 24
[260] *Ibid.*, 23
[261] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 41
[262] Donatoni 1986: 89

the point of arrival is always a gesture'.[263] Donatoni's ruminations further supports the notion that the role he accords the figure in his own music compares to that which Ferneyhough envisages for the gesture: Donatoni's suggestion that the figure can be divided into sub-components or 'little gestures' exactly mirrors Ferneyhough's notion of the gesture whose sub-components are developed figurally. For Ferneyhough, the point of departure is always the gesture, but only at the moment it reaches 'critical mass' and explodes, figurally, into the musical discourse.

As noted previously, Ferneyhough's gesture participates in the dialectic between construction and expression through development.[264] However, even though gestures arise through the contrivance of figural processes, parameters and forces, and dissolve through the same, expressively, they do not do so merely in order to consolidate previous (and prepare further) gestural complexes, without also bringing their particular individuality to notice: through the scars - the 'violated integrity' - that Ferneyhough perceives in them. These scars cannot be absorbed smoothly, and instead they chafe against the accretion of energy yielded by each successive gesture's internal spasms and dissolution: the figural gestures endure as indexes of the forces that have traversed, distorted and reinvented them afresh. An understanding of 'development' (and with it, expression) in Ferneyhough's music must invariably take account of this strenuous resistance. Recall his observation that 'expressive energy derives, in large measure, from the impacting power of restriction'.[265]

Donatoni, by contrast, insists that his music is entirely non-developmental and a-teleological, despite referring to points of departure and arrival: 'the point of departure is

---

[263] *Ibid.*, 90
[264] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 24

the figure but the point of arrival is always a gesture' (as detailed above). This insistence is likely a vestige of John Cage's earlier influence over Donatoni, which is remarked upon by a number of commentators on Donatoni's work.[266] In his insistence that a piece of his does not 'tell a story' (which is what he means in this context by 'development' and 'teleology') he opposes his concept of the figure to melody which, he maintains, 'as Adorno says *a propos* of Mahler, tells a story [*raconte*]'.[267]

Donatoni's figure-gesture relationship proceeds through a piece differently to Ferneyhough's, since one entity does not 'dissolve', as if into liquid, through the action of the other; rather the figure is subdivided – 'chopped' effectively – into smaller entities which can then be replicated, and added or subtracted from the basic figural unit. This procedure recalls Stravinsky's methods, where for example a metrical unit consisting of three components 3/8 + 2/8 + 2/8 can be recast as 3/8 + 2/8 without sacrificing its fundamental physiognomic identity. Figural expansion or shrinkage such as that described above is enacted through what Donatoni calls the 'energy of change'[268]. Compare, for example, the 'little gestures' from Donatoni's *Nidi* for solo piccolo **(see Fig. 9)** with the larger-scale gestures in Ferneyhough's *Superscriptio* **(see Fig. 10)**. Adorno's comment that figures in Mahler's music are 'driven on by impulses, as the same beings they yet become different, shrink, expand…' is pertinent once more. Despite Donatoni's avoidance of 'traditional' techniques of development[269], the fact that his

---

[265] *Ibid.*, 28
[266] See Antoine Bonnet and François Nicolas, 'Franco Donatoni, une figure' in *Entretemps* no. 2 (November 1986) pp. 63-68
[267] Donatoni 1986: 90
[268] *Ibid.*, 89
[269] Donatoni argues that traditionally, a theme's parts are developed, and eventually outgrow the 'whole' [presumably the theme] from which they began. By contrast, he suggests that his own figure be considered like an 'arabesque', whose internal changes must nevertheless be viewed only from the perspective of the whole. The former situation describes a dialectic between part and whole in a piece of music; the latter

figures, like Ferneyhough's 'violated' gestures, bear witness to the musical processes through their 'distortions' and modifications, recalls a passage from Adorno's *Mahler* study that encapsulates the essentials of both composers' figural and gestural operations. Adorno writes of Mahler that

> Unforeseen thematic components destroy the fiction that music is a pure tissue of deductions, in which everything that happens follows with unambiguous necessity. In this, too, Schoenberg and his school were truer to the classical ideal of the "obligatory," which is now showing its questionable elements, than was Mahler. In the latter, even figures that, as in the Fifth, were indeed motivically developed from what had gone before, become fresh entities removed from the machinery of the process. Where the dramatic symphony believes it takes hold of its idea with an inexorable rigour derived from the model of discursive logic, the novel-symphony seeks to escape that logic: it craves the open air. And in general, Mahler's themes are recognisable, like the characters in a novel, as *developing themes that retain their essence unchanged*.[270]

If one substitutes the word 'figure' for 'theme', the phrase highlighted above convincingly conveys Donatoni's figural principle. The latter is not, in fact, immune to development *per se*; rather it too rejects 'the fiction that music is a pure tissue of deductions'. In this sense, it has much in common with Ferneyhough's notion of development which, far from being such a 'pure tissue of deductions', includes that element of critical resistance described previously. Moreover, Ferneyhough's music also seeks to escape discursive logic: this principle will become fundamental to Part II. Donatoni's own criticism of the concept of development, based on his dislike of musical 'storytelling' is answered in Adorno's analogy between theme (figure) and a character - *not* story/plot - in a novel. It is also interesting to recall Bacon's understanding of the figure as a conveyer of sensation – of physical impact – as opposed to that which 'tells the story in a long diatribe through the brain'.[271] Adorno concludes his own argument on the subject with the remark that 'nothing…is ever entirely consumed by the dynamic, but

---

[Donatoni's] situation describes the domination of the whole over the part, in a non-dialectical relationship. See Donatoni 'On compose…' 1986: 90

[270] Adorno, trans. Jephcott (Mahler) 1992: 72

nothing ever remains what it was'.[272] In fact it is possible to sense a 'difference' arising out of the 'same': the same phenomenon has already been detected in Ferneyhough and Bacon's ideas. Adorno claims on the one hand that developing themes 'retain their essence unchanged' and on the other, that 'nothing ever remains what it was': the juxtaposition of these two statements recalls Ferneyhough's gesture and figure respectively as well as the tension at the heart of Donatoni's own figural conceit. Ferneyhough's gestures, damaged by the actions of figures and forces, are altered – violated – and yet they too retain their essence as a piece progresses: this provides the composer with one means of ensuring a sense of formal unity across a particular work.

**Figure 9. Franco Donatoni *Nidi* 'little gestures'**




**Figure 10. Brian Ferneyhough *Superscriptio***




Given his quasi-Stravinskian approach to material detailed above, Donatoni's use of process is more immediately obvious to the analyst than Ferneyhough's. The latter refers to forcing processual levels 'underground' to some extent, since certain processes are so utterly complex that they need to be notated at 'one step's remove', as it were,

---

[271] Sylvester 1987: 18
[272] Adorno, trans. Jephcott (Mahler) 1992: 72

after filter operations have been carried out in order to make them notationally accessible.[273] Nevertheless, what is important here is the significance of process and automatism for both composers, and the extent to which their criticism of historical instances of musical automatism is turned into a positive principle in their own essays and music. I have already described how Ferneyhough finds the convergence of multiple lines of force in the telescoping of all parameters into a single sonic unit. Likewise Donatoni, despite regarding the 1960s a 'negative' period[274] and holding 1950s Structuralism responsible for eradicating what he calls the 'compositional ego' [*moi*], draws nevertheless on these experiences in formulating his notion of 'figure'. The principles he gleans from the criticism of music of the recent past he then applies to music as wide-ranging as Bach's prelude and that of Cage's 'zen' period',[275] developing a personal and flexible understanding of musical automatism, and placing the emphasis on musical action and not the object-result of a process. This last point is reinforced again in 'Processus et figure', where Donatoni acknowledges that whilst 'it might seem that the figure not only emerges automatically from a series of codifiable operations and therefore poses itself as the end-product of this initial procedure, but that the initial procedure manifests itself as a succession of abstractly combinatorial relations, completely foreign to the notated, and heard reality of the figure',[276] this is by no means the case. His marriage of figure, process, combinatoriality and automatism in no way precludes intuition from the figure's genesis. He argues that 'the intuitive appearance of the figure, even in an imprecise or unclear state/image, can precede the realisation in one's

---

[273] Toop (S) 1995: 5
[274] Donatoni 1986: 88
[275] *Ibid.*, 89
[276] *Ibid.*, 97

consciousness of the process that is necessary for its definition',[277] with unmistakable shades of Ferneyhough's dictum (after Deleuze) that musical progress no longer requires the invention of forms, but the capturing of forces. Indeed, the resonance between Donatoni and Ferneyhough's ideas is never more forcefully felt than in this question of the dynamic between the intuitive and the rational. Through Ferneyhough's concept of the figural gesture one glimpses the paradox of a composer who uses parametric, processual and other quasi-serial devices to an apparently extreme degree, yet whose expressive musical language is not simply the fortuitous by-product of a purely systematised approach. In opposition to integral/total serialism's utopia of the 'authorless creation',[278] recall that Ferneyhough's parametric devices 'are polyphonically employed in more basic intuitive developments.'[279] 'Parametric thinking' is the means by which Ferneyhough harnesses the 'unformed mass of creative volition'[280] confronting him as he begins each new work.

Echoing this, Donatoni adds that the 'schematism with which one considers [figure and process]…is a conceptual fiction…I believe that a schematisation of this sort is absent at the moment of invention'.[281] In both cases, the figure is used to rein in the 'unformed mass of creative volition' or 'the moment of invention', but it is also something more than that: the interaction between process and figure (for Donatoni this is given up through instances of figural change, and for Ferneyhough, through successive instances of gestural (re)distortion) somehow 'verifies', critiques or 'analyses' the larger-scale musical structures. It has been demonstrated that, in Ferneyhough's music, the

---

[277] *Ibid.*
[278] Ferneyhough's implicit reference is to Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977) 142-148. See also Ferneyhough 1995: 26
[279] Harvey in Ferneyhough 1995: x. My italics.

gesture is defined only at the moment the figurally charged subcomponents spill over its boundaries 'in a quasi-analytical fashion', and in Donatoni's music, that the 'harmonic trajectory' is revealed in the active relationship between figure and process. Donatoni argues that

> the interaction of the rational and intuitive is such that each acts upon the other. If the process is put to the test by the figure, then so too is the figure put to the test by the process. Both of them (at times indissociable in their reciprocal interaction) undergo this test, this verification. Both suggest acceptance of the unexpected, bring forth the surprise of the unforseen and suggest unimagined consequences that allow the [musical] event to remain in an 'experimental' state, that is, to verify its own unrepeatable identity in the unity of figure and process that is borne of practice.[282]

The reciprocally critical interaction described by Donatoni effects the reunion he seeks between small- and large-scale structure. The relationship between the small, autonomous 'sonic unit' identified by Ferneyhough as the bearer of larger-scale parametric/processual responsibilities, and the piece's overall form (a multiplicity of such monadic units) in the total serialist style, is similarly reinvented in his own music, which makes of the figure a phenomenon whose local activities (such as the condensation of a process) have long term consequences (namely the progressive distortion of the piece's gestural language). If, as Ferneyhough suggests, the serialist prioritisation of the individual note can, in spite of its problems, be interpreted as the potential focus of 'many lines of directional energy', then he nevertheless proposes the figure - a gestural configuration of separate parametric potential(s) - and not the individual note for this role in his own music. Even Adorno writes that 'it would be wrong to believe in the critical function of the note as opposed to the configuration [*Gestalt*]'.[283] To this extent, Ferneyhough's gesture remains in an 'experimental' state too, since the gesture itself only comes alive, self-critically, at the

---

[280] Ferneyhough (RT) 1995: 253, 260
[281] Donatoni 1996: 97
[282] *Ibid.*

moment it is defined and given an identity (however distorted) in the interaction of figure and process through intuitive practice. If the gesture is critiqued in this way by the figure, then the figure is equally validated through its inseparability from the gesture in the music of both composers. However, both experience a special empathy with the figure in particular. For Donatoni, the figure is extremely personal: 'I could say, "the figure is me [*moi*]" more than "the style is me". Therefore, when I was [myself] in a bad period, the figure was unwell…finally, one composes to compose oneself'.[284] Donatoni's figure is arguably 'biographical' in that sense: the figure's journey, its life, is his own, whereas Ferneyhough's figure is *auto*biographical: its 'life history' is entirely *its* own. Recall once again that 'material signals to us - by means of the ordered freeing-up and redisposing of figural energies - what it itself desires'.[285] For Ferneyhough, musical style arguably corresponds to '*moi*' [ego], conveyed through his notion of 'personal style'[286], in which the figure, like Adorno's character in the 'novel-symphony', is Ferneyhough's main protagonist.

Aside from the obvious terminological correspondences, it is also important to consider Donatoni's concepts of figure and gesture in relation to Ferneyhough's since they are symptomatic of the attempts by many different composers to move beyond the 'stasis' of the so-called High-Modernist techniques of the 1950s and 60s, and the insubstantial gestural language of the 1970s[287], whilst remaining nevertheless, through immanent critique, rooted in that very same High Modernism. In Ferneyhough's case (following Adorno), the instinctual impulse - the emotive quotient of the gesture - is

---

[283] Adorno, trans. Livingstone (MI) 1998: 298
[284] Donatoni 1986: 90
[285] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 41
[286] Ferneyhough (PU) 1995: 76

sublimated into a work's constructional logic and socially mediated material, and flourishes there, immanently enacting figural distortions and liberating vectors of force. If he can be called 'High-Modernist' in any sense it is because, in his music, he pursues both automatism and expression to an extreme degree, as separate phenomena, whilst nevertheless engaging the automatic and the intuitive in a productive dialogue. Such a productive dialogue also emerges, for Donatoni, as the result of the 'reciprocal interaction'[288] of the intuitive and the rational, manifested through the relationship between figure, gesture and process.

Nevertheless, there remains an essential difference between the two composers' approach to the figure, and it is with this insight that I will both consolidate the identification of the figural link between the works of Ferneyhough and Bacon *and* prepare the ground for the following part of this thesis.

## I.ix Concluding Remarks

It is particularly apposite for the purposes of my own argument that Donatoni should refer to the *squelette harmonique* of his work, which forms the measure against which work-internal figural change might be gauged. One is given a sense of the strong 'backbone' supporting the fleshier figure. In contrast to this, we can return to one of the most fundamental observations put forward in Deleuze's study of Bacon's paintings regarding the relationship between flesh and bone, which is conceived not as one of support, but antagonism: bone pierces flesh as flesh falls or escapes from bone. One is left with the impression of a twisting mass, a thick viscosity. It is not the case that the

---

[287] Of course, I refer only to one particular strand of compositional activity here, which Ferneyhough chooses to consider 'insubstantial'.

figure, as a kind of flesh, is discernible against the constant skeleton. Rather the figure emerges from flesh, the human form appears as meat. In some of Bacon's paintings, the figure has no need of a skeleton (recall the central panel of the previously mentioned *Triptych, August 1972*). For Bacon, skeletal structure is a mark of convention: it is an ordering device for the flesh as much as the skin is a container for organised organs. If Donatoni's music draws us into its detail in order that we discover its flesh, Bacon's painting forces *its* flesh, and the emergent figure upon us, physically.

Returning, finally, to Ferneyhough's music, it is possible to make the analogy between its density and tortuousness and that manifest through meat and flesh in Bacon's work. More than that, however, – and this is perhaps the most straightforward way in which to conceive the relationship between this particular painter and composer pair – as Bacon's figure (renewed bodily, human form) emerges from the intense concentration of painted flesh, so out of Ferneyhough's similarly concentrated and charged 'black music' (to use a visual image that confronts performer and analyst alike) emerges his particular musical figure, itself purporting to renew the bodily and physiognomical in musical material.

---

[288] Donatoni 1986: 97



Fig. 2 Photograph of Isabel Rawsthorne (Sylvester 1987: 39)
© John Deakin



Fig. 3 Triptych, *Three Studies of Isabel Rawsthorne*, 1968

Fig. 5 *Triptych August 1972*





Fig. 4 *Head VI,* 1960

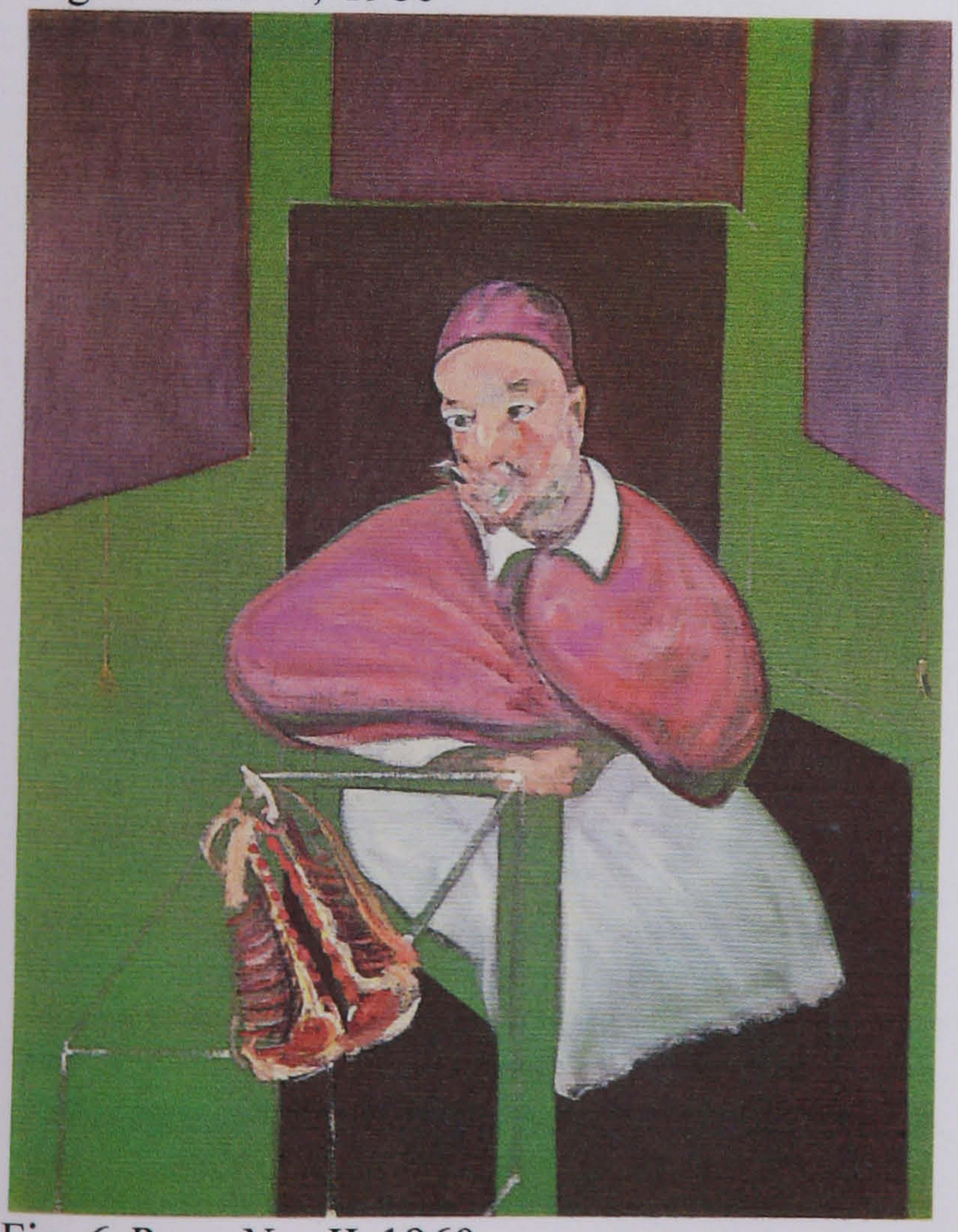


Fig. 6 *Pope No. II*, 1960



Fig. 7 *Study After Velázquez's Portrait of 'Pope Innocent X'*

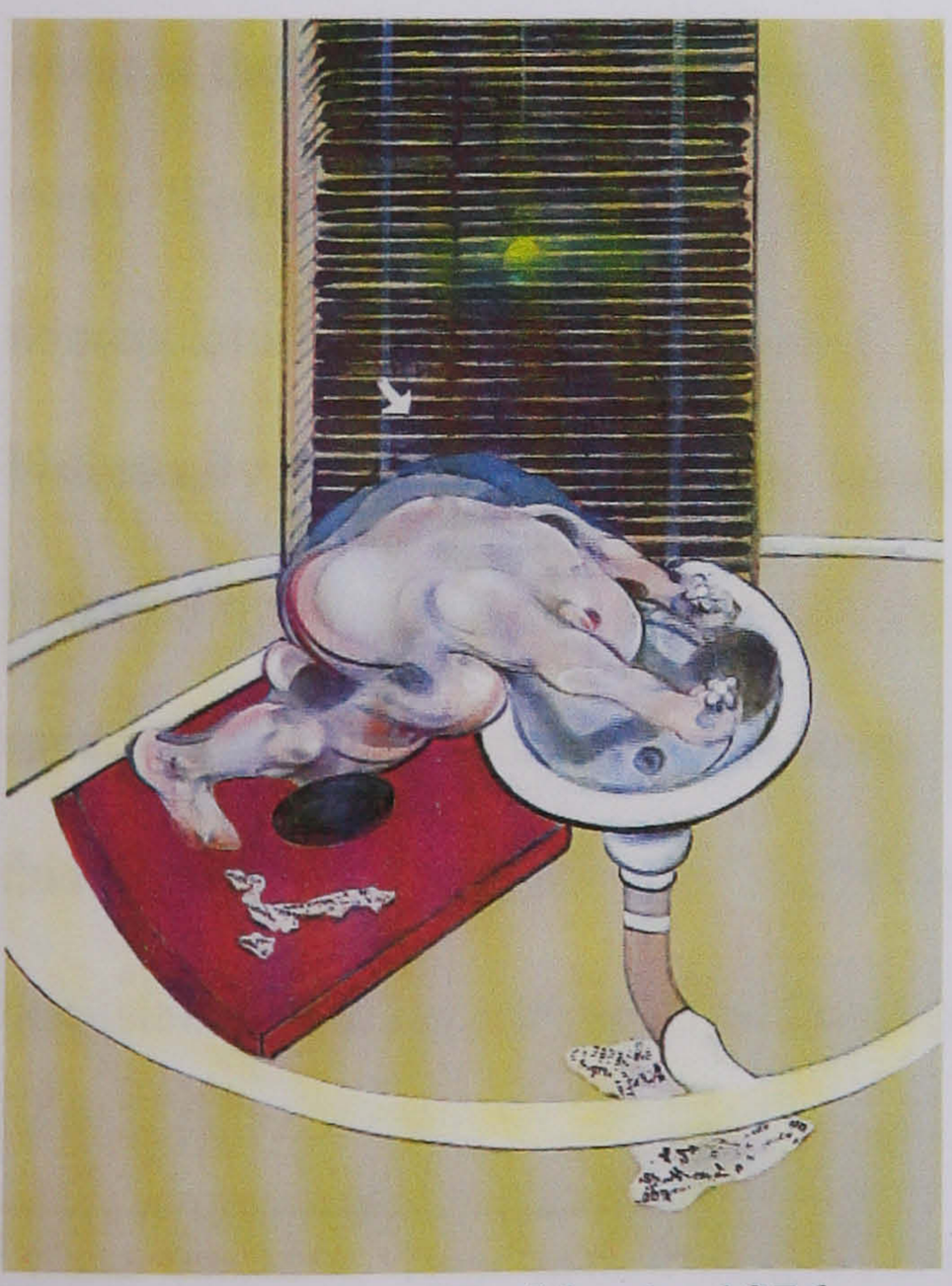


Fig. 8 *Figure at a Washbasin*, 1976

# PART II – Space and the Artwork

A Klee painting named 'Angelus Novus' shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet.[1]

## II.i Lyotard and the Figure

'The term *figure* has been employed with a vast spectrum of nuance over the course of several centuries: on the one hand, this renders its present day definition an all but impossible task; on the other, there would seem nothing inherently objectionable in adding one more definition to those already extant, especially since long searching has led me to conclude that no better general term is available for the precise distinction that I have in mind':[2] this is not the first time that Ferneyhough has expressed ambivalence towards the term figure. Here, he claims that 'no better…is available' and in the earlier essay 'Form-Figure-Style', the term is apparently decided upon 'for want of other nomenclature',[3] as noted in Part I. Despite his wish 'to avoid any examination of historically mediated usage',[4] it is arguable that the 'precise' and personal distinction that Ferneyhough intends is only possible, and indeed enriched, if one considers the 'vast spectrum of nuance' that accompanies the term. There are two main reasons to support this hypothesis. First, some of the 'themes' present in the two essays on the figure are unmistakably 'nuanced': anyone familiar with some historical interpretations of the term

---

[1] Walter Benjamin, 'These on the Philosophy of History' in *Illuminations* ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico Press, 1999) p. 249
[2] Ferneyhough, Brian. 'Il Tempo della Figura' in *Collected Writings*, eds. James Boros and Richard Toop (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Press, 1995) p. 33
[3] Ferneyhough, 'Form-Figure-Style: an Intermediate Assessment' in 1995: 26
[4] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 33

figure cannot fail to notice the frequency of his references to language, rhetoric, semantics and the body, or the physicality of the figure. A survey of the *Collected Writings*, the remit of which extends well beyond the 1980s (on either side) - the period of Ferneyhough's creativity with which I am primarily concerned here - reveals the particular concentration of these issues in the two 'figure' essays, in relation to the collection's other material. The coincidence of Ferneyhough's preoccupation with linguistic terminology and his development of musical figure suggests a further dimension to this undoubtedly multi-faceted concept, to add to the already-discovered relationship between Ferneyhough's figure and Deleuze's theorisation of the same in relation to Francis Bacon's paintings.

My second reason for exploring the possible historical nuances pertaining in Ferneyhough's musical understanding of the figure follows on from this relationship with Deleuze's text. Given that the latter is something of an anomaly in the philosopher's output, as noted earlier, one cannot merely be content with the conclusion that Ferneyhough's concept of figure is indebted to Deleuze, without first appreciating the context out of which Deleuze's own study arises. Although the approach taken in the Bacon monograph seems to be largely at odds with Deleuze's usually even more abstract philosophical criticism (since the former's discussions of painting are always anchored in detailed analyses of the works themselves), the theorisation of the figure nevertheless at times invokes some of Deleuze's more familiar pursuits. These include semiological criticism for example, which prompts further comparison of aspects of Deleuze's 'figure' (other than the literal reference to the human form or body) with Ferneyhough's specifically musical figure understood amongst other things, linguistically.

Deleuze too, then, is indebted to the figure's historical, centuries-old 'aura'. He establishes a fundamental tension that runs throughout the *Logique de la sensation*: between the *figure* on the one hand, and the *figurative* on the other. The latter might best be compared to Bacon's 'illustrational', encountered in Part I as that which is conventionally representational or tells a 'story'. Deleuze argues that 'the figurative (representation) implies the relationship of an image to an object that it is supposed to illustrate; but it also implies the relationship of an image to other images in a composite whole which assigns a specific object to each of them'.[5] By contrast, and following Bacon and Sylvester, Deleuze considers the figure to be a distortion of the figurative body, an index of the forces acting upon it, that does not represent a 'story', person or object outside the painting, but conveys the physical sensations and forces evoked through the manipulation and contortion of flesh in paint. Bacon's frequent isolation of the figure in a geometric structure - a cube, parallelepiped, circle and so on - reinforces the figure's own physicality through the restrictive force of the enclosing device, but importantly, it also prevents any relationship between the painted image and the 'object it is supposed to illustrate'. In this way the notion of figure achieves its independence from the figurative in painting.

A precedent for this fundamental tenet of Deleuze's monograph on Bacon is found in the early work of another French 'theorist'[6], Jean-François Lyotard. Similarly to

---

[5] Deleuze, Gilles. *Francis Bacon: The logic of sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London and New York: Continuum Press, 2003) p. 2. According to Deleuze 'painting has neither a model to represent nor a story to narrate. It thus has two possible ways of escaping the figurative: toward pure form, through abstraction; or toward the purely figural, through extraction or isolation. If the painter keeps to the Figure, if he or she opts for the second path, it will be to oppose the "figural" to the figurative' (p. 2) The opposition of the figure and the figurative is taken from Lyotard's *Discours, figure* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971).

[6] Bill Readings argues that '...Nor is Lyotard a 'theorist'; quite the contrary. Just as his postmodernity claims to make no temporal breaks, so his thought ceaselessly denies the pretensions of theoretical distancing, of epistemological breaks...Lyotard is not a theorist. Lyotard's decisive entry into the French

the *Logique de la sensation*, Lyotard's *Discours, figure* stands out against its author's other work, and specifically that for which he is best known: the theory of the postmodern. *Discours, figure* (1971) antedates Lyotard's most famous work although it arguably illuminates and prepares for the latter, in addition to serving as a corrective to some erroneous interpretations of what constitutes 'postmodernism'[7] (for Lyotard, in any case). Like Deleuze's *Logique de la sensation*, Lyotard's book has been largely neglected by critics, most probably (besides being overshadowed by more recent work such as *The Postmodern Condition*) because its language is often impenetrably difficult, the French inelegant and its scope seemingly impossibly large (it attempts a wide coverage of the history of art, politics, psychoanalysis, literature and critique several philosophies,

---

academic scene is an insistence that, after 1968, theory ought to be recognized as part of the problem, not as a potential solution. Theory, that is, is an order of discourse that acts to establish the exclusive rule of a network of oppositions between concepts or signifiers. His abiding interest in Freud places psychoanalysis as the opening of theory to a constitutive uncertainty, a founding hesitation concerning the certainty and closure of hermeneutic models. Lyotard's attacks on the negativity of theory and critique in de Saussure, Marx, Lacan and semiotic analysis do not represent a naïve affirmation of experience (itself a theoretical construct in reference to a subject), but a deconstructive disruption of conceptual reduction.' (Bill Readings. *Introducing Lyotard: Art and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1991) pp. xxviii-xxix). It is worth noting that in spite of its title '*Introducing* Lyotard...' this book is a substantial contribution to extant criticism of Lyotard's work. Readings includes two so-called 'mobile supplements' in the book, which as their name suggests, can be 'plugged in' (p. 2) between the chapters as the reader wishes. This is, he claims, 'to prevent reading from becoming resistant. [The mobile supplement] is a supplement, in Derrida's sense – it is both a part of each chapter and of the book as a whole, and yet apart, a foreign body for each' (p. 1) The author requires his reader to *work* at reading this text, and indeed one can approach aspect of this book as though it itself were a 'mobile supplement' to Lyotard's *Discours, figure*. If it is 'introductory', then, it is so only in the sense that it acts as a Derridean *supplément* to Lyotard's extremely difficult *Discours, figure*: as part of the latter, Readings' book draws out the essential points at the heart of Lyotard's argument; against Lyotard, Readings' text reveals the problematic aspects of the French author's lengthy work. Readings introduces us to an unknown Lyotard, and through this lens rethinks popular perception of Lyotard's later work, specifically that relating to his work on postmodernism. He writes that, '[there is a] threat that introductions, of any sort, may be descriptive rather than performative. By this I mean that their function as introductions may cover over the particularity of their subject-matter by offering a too easily accessible representation of it'. (p. xvii)

[7] See Readings 1991: 52-85, Dews 1987 (full reference below) and Bennington 1988 (full reference immediately below) for discussion of Lyotard's postmodernism.

contemporary and past).[8] Its critical reception in England and America also suffers due to the lack of a full English translation.[9]

An appreciation of the relationship between Deleuze's monograph and Lyotard's first major book reinforces the link already hypothesised between Deleuze (and arguably Ferneyhough) and the long-established history of the rhetorical 'figure', the latter proving the central concern of Lyotard's substantial study. What is more, Deleuze attributes the tension between the figure and figur*ative* that sustains the arguments made in his own monograph to Lyotard, observing that '[he] uses the word "figural" as a substantive in order to oppose it to the "figurative"'.[10]

In reality, Lyotard's argument is more complex than Deleuze's reference to an "opposition" leads his reader to believe. Rather, Lyotard conceives of the figural and the figurative as incommensurable terms that are yet absolutely necessary to one another, in art, in language, and in political life. It is the first two of these - art and language - that will occupy us in this chapter, as I undertake an investigation of Lyotard's 'figure', incorporating in due course a consideration of his critique of semiology and structural linguistics, the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and the importance of the 'visible', force and plasticity for the figure. Subsequently, this chapter will go on to study a possible interpretation of Adorno's late essay 'On Some Relationships Between Music and Painting' that is sympathetic to this discussion of the figure, paying particular attention to his exploration of the concept of *écriture* [writing]. In due course, I will also consolidate several ideas expounded in *Discours, figure* in a critique of Deleuze's notion

---

[8] See Bennington, Geoffrey. *Lyotard: Writing the Event* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) for a discussion of the difficulties of translation. See Introduction p. 9 and chapter entitled 'Discourse, Figure', pp. 56-102 in particular.

of the 'graph' or *diagramme* [diagram] in Bacon's painting, amongst other things. Part II is ultimately an attempt to add to the extant conceptualisations of the figure studied here,[11] placing them in dialogue with one another and distilling what is discovered into the thoroughgoing investigation of the figure in Ferneyhough's writings and music.

***Discours, figure***

Even within its own 'discipline' - Deconstruction[12], that is - Lyotard's book goes against the grain, in particular the deconstructive philosophy of Jacques Derrida. The latter

---

[9] Part exists in translation as 'The Dreamwork Does Not Think' in *The Lyotard Reader*, trans. Mary Lydon, ed. Andrew Benjamin (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1989) pp. 19-55

[10] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 173n.

[11] cf. Lyotard's *Discours, figure* and Paul Ricoeur's *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans. Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello, SJ (London: Routledge, 2003). See also Tzvetan Todorov, *Theories of the Symbol*, trans. Catherine Porter (New York: Cornell University Press, 1982) and Michael Spitzer, *Metaphor and Musical Thought* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2004). Both of the latter discuss the ancient rhetorical tradition and the development of figural language in detail. Aside from a few references, Lyotard's study takes this tradition to be understood; hence, approaching Lyotard's text without first having a knowledge of Western rhetorical practices will serve only to confuse the reader. In turn, Deleuze's monograph on Bacon implicitly assumes that the reader has some knowledge of figural tradition and theory, including Lyotard's *Discours, figure* written only ten years previously. Perhaps these assumptions proceed on the basis that theories of literary semiology populate a great deal of the French-language philosophical tradition: individuals who are or have been engaged with them include Julia Kristeva, Gérard Genette, Jacques Derrida, Pierre Fontanier, Tzvetan Todorov (the 1992 translation cited above is translated from the original French), Paul Ricoeur, Lyotard, Deleuze and Roland Barthes amongst many others. See the bibliography to this thesis for full references of works by authors referred to above, many of which are also the subjects of notes during the course of the thesis. There is a strong, but different, tradition in Germany as well. Paul de Man distinguishes between recent French and German 'debates in critical methodology' and, in doing so, explains the motivation behind developments in French theory in particular: 'one of the most controversial [developments]...coincides with a new approach to poetics or, as it is called in Germany, poetology, as a branch of general semiotics. In France, a semiology of literature comes about as the outcome of the long-deferred but all the more explosive encounter of the nimble French literary mind with the category of form. Semiology...does not ask what words mean but how they mean...The demystifying power of semiology, within the context of French historical and thematic criticism, has been considerable'. See Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1979) p. 5

[12] Bennington points out that the first half of the book – a critique of 'structuralism in its classical forms' (p. 56) – is more successful in its aims than the second half, the material of which depends a little too heavily on a certain reading of Freudian psychoanalysis and, in doing so, comes to promote a *theory* in spite of itself (which Bennington, like Readings, recognises as everything Lyotard despises). Bennington, who also discusses Lyotard's *Économie libidinale*, argues that 'in view of the assertions about theory on which such an economy rests, this reliance cannot simply take the form of *applying a theory*, insofar as theory is the name of only one, or a restricted set, of the *dispositifs* for which the economy is supposed to account'. (p. 47) *Discours, figure* rests on similar assertions regarding theory, and similarly, the reliance on

comes under heavy criticism from Lyotard 'for excessive 'textualism''[13]: 'for presuming that there is only language'.[14] Lyotard consigns 'textual space' to discourse: to the figura*tive* (in art). One of few critics[15] to produce a detailed and insightful analysis of Lyotard's book, Bill Readings, describes discourse in the following terms:

> The condition of representation to consciousness by a rational order or structure of concepts. Concepts or terms function as units oppositionally defined by their position and relation within the virtual textual space of a system or network, a space that Lyotard calls *textual* or perspectival. The calculation of such relational positions is the work of *ratio* or reason. The condition of discourse apprehends things solely in terms of the representability by or within its system, as *meanings* or significations that discourse may *speak*.[16]

The figure functions as 'other' to conceptual representation, which is not to suggest that it is merely another form of 'representation', this time of the *im*possibility of meaning. According to Lyotard, the figure is both absolutely independent from the figurative, from discourse, yet absolutely necessary to linguistic signification. The figure disrupts, distorts and undermines the discursive claim to representation. It functions both 'within and against the text',[17] thereby causing the chafing, the incommensurability, of the non-textual with textual, discursive space. Lyotard complains that Derrida reduces this 'otherness' of the figure - its 'deconstructive force'[18] - to an *aporia* that is nevertheless encircled within the rule of linguistic signification.[19] Another writer to address the issues

---

Freud cannot then take the form of applying a theory: in this case theory is the name of only one restricted *discourse* or representation that the figure is supposed to deconstruct or 'work over'.

[13] Readings 1991: 5

[14] *Ibid.*, 6

[15] The reference for Readings' book is given above. Much of his book is devoted to a study of *Discours, figure*. Other studies include a lengthy and critical chapter in Bennington 1988 (full reference above) and the same in Dews, Peter. *Logics of Disintegration: Post-Structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory* (London and New York: Verso, 1987). A less detailed approach, but one relating specifically to the relationship between Deleuze and Lyotard is Ronald Bogue's *Deleuze on Music, Painting and the Arts* (London: Routledge, 2003). His is a much shorter analysis, although it does make explicit the extent to which Deleuze's book on Bacon may be seen to be influenced by Lyotard, despite the single reference which Deleuze actually accords the latter in a footnote.

[16] Readings 1991: xxxi. Original italics.

[17] *Ibid.*, 5

[18] *Ibid.*, 6

[19] See also Christopher Norris, *Deconstruction* 3rd rev. ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), although Norris does not criticize Derrida for this, as Lyotard does.

central to *Discours, figure* is Peter Dews,[20] who argues that Derrida prioritises 'the non-signifying gap between signifier and signified to produce the shattered dialectic of *différance*' whilst he nevertheless 'remain[s] tied to the structuralist assumption of the primacy of the textual, the discursive, the symbolic, understood in a minimal sense as the differentially articulated'.[21] Lyotard cautions Derrida that 'one does not in the least break with metaphysics in putting language everywhere, on the contrary one fulfils metaphysics; one fulfils the repression of the sensible and of *jouissance*'.[22] Accordingly, Readings characterises Lyotard's notion of figure thus:

> The figural is an unspeakable other necessarily *at work* within and against *discourse*, disrupting the rule of representation. It is not opposed to discourse, but is the point at which the oppositions by which discourse works are opened to a radical heterogeneity or *singularity*. As such, the figural is the resistant or irreconcilable trace of a space or time that is radically incommensurable with that of discursive meaning.[23]

Far from repressing the sensible, Lyotard initially raises it to figural status (hereafter called the 'sensible-figural' level). His account of the 'visible', which relies heavily on his undertanding of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception functions (at the beginning of the book, in any case) as a figure for textual space, which Lyotard considers to be exemplified by structural linguistics. 'Discourse starts to be seen as patterned and disrupted by non-discursive forces'.[24]

However, the trajectory of *Discours, figure* continues beyond the theory of *conscious* perception and the visible into the realm of the unconscious and desire (hereafter called the 'invisible-figural' level), which in turn acts as a figure for Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology: were it not to, Lyotard could be accused of privileging the

---

[20] See Peter Dews, *Logics of disintegration* (1987). Full reference above.
[21] Dews 1987: 110
[22] Lyotard 1971: 14. Cited and translated in Readings 1991: 6
[23] Readings 1991: xxxi. Original italics.
[24] Dews 1987: 110

sensible over the conceptual, of advocating a perceptual 'domain of pure presences'[25]. In fact he argues that the textual functions just as much as a figure for the visible as vice-versa (as will be discovered presently). This cross-play is made clear later in Lyotard's book when he titles a chapter *Fiscours, digure* indicating the extent to which he has deconstructed the pair *Discours, figure* to reveal the figural in discourse (the text) and the discursive in the figural (the visible, plastic).[26] The developments of the second part of the book will be considered later on in this discussion. First, however, it will concentrate on Lyotard's initial ideas relating to the sensible-figural.[27]

**Textual Space**

Lyotard considers textual space to be the space of codes and of immobility. After Saussure, he refers to the functioning of language as a system of differences and to the connection between signifier and signified as arbitrary. Readings explains the structuralist position, observing that 'the totality of paradigmatic elements (lexis) and their syntagmatic possible relations (grammar) makes up the *langue*, the total structure of a language at any given point. The meaning of a given enunciation (*parole*) is determined by its differential relation to the *langue* rather than in direct reference. 'Fish' does not evoke [the concept] fish directly, it evokes the absence of all other possibilities of the *langue*, leaving only fish as its signification'.[28]

---

[25] *Ibid.*, 116
[26] Readings 1991: 7
[27] The distinction made between the 'sensible-figural' and the 'invisible-figural' is my own, in order to both reflect the two-part structure of Lyotard's book, which moves from an initial critique of Merleau-Ponty and the sensible in language, to a critique of psychoanalysis and the unconscious, as well as to allow for the distinction that Deleuze makes between the sensible (figural) traces left upon material by invisible (figural) forces.
[28] Readings 1991: 9

Despite, in his definition of discourse, having referred to virtual textual space as 'perspectival', leading one to assume its three-dimensionality - its depth - Readings later points out that Lyotard refers to textual space as flat: two-dimensional. In fact, the reference to perspective concerns the other domain besides language at issue here; that of visual art. In the latter, the straight lines of vanishing point perspective, which Lyotard calls 'Renaissance' perspective, assumes the equivalent role of textual space, of discourse: the viewing eye is immobilised, focused on the vanishing point. In conventional perspectival works, everything painted participates in the same space since everything falls under the rule of perspective. In the same way that one reads a text but does not see it (according to Lyotard's critique of Saussure), one views a perspectival painting, but the phenomenal eye does not engage with it corporeally. Lyotard considers the aforementioned straight lines of the conventionally perspectival artwork to be a kind of grid into which the representational elements of painting or drawing 'fit', much like the elements of structural linguistics - the signifiers and signifieds - 'fit' into the grid-like system of oppositions.

**The Space of the Visible – The Sensible-Figural**

With the introduction of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception to Lyotard's argument comes the first encounter with the body as a fundamental aspect of the workings of the figure. The phenomenal eye is not immobile and neither does it decode signifiers or expressions (*parole*) in relation to the *langue* (or perspective in painting) as though they were positioned on a transparent screen. The seeing-eye, so Lyotard understands from Merleau-Ponty, encounters a resistance from the language or artwork it

views, causing the eyeballs to struggle to focus. A frictional force occurs between the text or image and the mobile eye. Readings argues that 'visibility is not merely a matter of passive object and distanced subject. Instead, subject and object come together, bruise against each other, in an act of perception. Put another way, the world is not simply extended in flat virtual space, always already given as if it were a perspectival painting'.[29] Rather than transparency, the corporeal eye perceives a certain opacity in the signifier, problematising the decoding of the latter and instituting a radical difference in the sign, an incommensurability, that 'cannot be reduced to a matter of opposition within a structure or system'.[30] By the same token the opaque or 'thick'[31] signifier cannot be reduced to a meaning, without there remaining something 'other' to conceptual meaning: something of the body, of the world. The perceptible object occupies the same 'voluminous space as the eye and body of the perceiver'.[32] Merleau-Ponty himself expresses this:

> My body makes a difference in the visible world, being a part of it; that is why I can steer it through the visible. Conversely, it is just as true that vision is attached to movement. We see only what we look at. What would vision be without eye movement?[33]

The opaque signifier forces the eye to look at it, in contradistinction to the transparent, arbitrary signifier which is looked through. Lyotard's opening page 'protests: that the given is not a text, that there is within it a density, or rather a constitutive difference, which is not to be read, but to be seen…this difference…is what is continually forgotten in the process of signification'.[34] He argues that the thickness of the visible has become a

---

[29] *Ibid.*, 12
[30] *Ibid.*, 13
[31] The original French here is *épais* [thick] or *épaisseur* [thickness]. See Lyotard (DF) 1971: 91ff.
[32] Bennington 1988: 64
[33] Cited in Readings 1991: 11-12
[34] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 1. My translation.

(sensible)-figure for the discursive signifier; not merely opposed to it, but a coterminous yet at the same time thoroughly distinct space. In his recent monograph *Metaphor and Musical Thought*, Michael Spitzer discusses the concept of the figure, focusing amongst other things on Paul Ricoeur's *La Métaphore Vive*. Ricoeur deals with classical rhetorical tradition more conspicuously than Lyotard, a tradition in which the notion of figure is often associated with the body. Spitzer points out that 'Ricoeur, of course, was not the first to see the body in the figure. The word *figura*, according to Auerbach's classic study, is cognate with a group of words denoting "plastic shape"'.[35] Importantly (in the light of Lyotard's argument outlined above regarding the plastic opacity of the visible and the transparency of the readable), Spitzer goes on to observe that

> to this tradition, Ricoeur contributes the insight that a figure becomes "physical" to the degree that it infringes grammatical rules. A logically absurd or self-contradictory statement, such as "to live a living death", cannot be understood on a literal level, and so forces the reader to infer a second-order, metaphorical meaning. Once it is liberated from its first-order, referential, level, language can be appreciated as a material in its own right.[36]

Furthermore Ricoeur argues that 'the sign is looked at, not through. […] Instead of being a medium or route crossed on the way to reality, language itself becomes 'stuff', like the sculptor's marble'.[37]

Like Lyotard's understanding of figure, Ricoeur's theory of metaphor is indebted to phenomenological (and hermeneutical) tradition.[38] The notion of the impact of sensate material – the 'stuff' of language – on the eye is one that can be discovered in the work of Martin Heidegger who, in the lectures collectively entitled 'The Origin of the Work of

---

[35] Spitzer 2004: 94. Spitzer refers to Erich Auerbach, 'Figura' in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature: Six Essays*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1973) pp. 11-76
[36] Spitzer 2004: 95
[37] cited in Spitzer 2004: 95. Original reference in Ricoeur *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans. Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello, SJ 2003: 209.
[38] Spitzer 2004: 94

Art', counterpoints a discussion of rational interpretation and meaning with sensible perception. Focusing on Van Gogh's famous painting of a peasant's shoes – which has itself generated a good deal of philosophical debate[39] – Heidegger suggests that through the representation of the shoes one gains access the peasant's world, her toils, wants and anxieties: her story as it were. However, if one looks at the shoes, at their very physicality, one begins to perceive the forces of the earth (in contradistinction to the world of meanings). Heidegger argues that 'in the shoes vibrates the silent call of the earth'[40]: in Lyotard's terms, Heidegger's earth is an opaque, sensible-figure for the world of meaning, significance. The Greek temple of the second lecture similarly manifests the 'earth' in its physicality:

> In the temple…the stone does show itself in its stoniness. In works of art, metals come to glitter and shimmer, colours to glow, tones to sing, the word to say. The stone manifests itself in its massiveness and its heaviness, wood in its firmness and pliancy, metal in its hardness and lustre, colour in its brightening and darkening and so on.[41]

The temple houses a statue of a god. Heidegger argues that

> It is not a portrait whose purpose is to make it easier to realise how the god looks; rather it is a work that lets the god himself be present…the same holds for the linguistic work. In the tragedy nothing is staged or displayed theatrically, but the battle of the new gods against the old is being fought. The linguistic work, originating in the speech of the people, does not *refer* to this battle; it transforms the people's saying so that now every living word fights the battle.[42]

For Heidegger, language and artworks do not merely constitute transparent signs that provide (as Ricoeur expresses it) a 'medium or route' to reality. Rather, as Lyotard

---

[39] See for example Meyer Schapiro 'The Still life as Personal Object – a Note on Heidegger and Van Gogh' and 'Further Notes on Heidegger and Van Gogh' in *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist and Society (Selected Papers, vol. IV)* (New York: George Braziller: 1998) pp. 135–142 and 143–152 respectively. See also Jacques Derrida *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), Heidegger, Martin. 'The Origin of the Work of Art' in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Perennial, 2001) pp. 15-86. Also available in part in David Cooper (ed.) *Aesthetics: The Classic Readings* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1997) pp. 229-243.

[40] Cooper (ed.) 1997: 232

[41] Murray, Chris (ed.) *Key Writers on Art: the Twentieth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003) p. 164

[42] Heidegger, trans. Hofstadter 2001: 42. My italics

suggests after his reading of Merleau-Ponty, the linguistic sign, as well as the work of art reveals a tangible 'thickness', and for Lyotard this is the mark of the figural.

This detour from Lyotard towards Ricoeur and Heidegger (to whom the discussion will return presently) is useful not only for its reinforcement of Lyotard's understanding of sensible-figural opacity, of the condition of language's visibility, but also because it introduces other important aspects central to Lyotard's theorisation of the figure. (Moreover, many of the salient issues noted here also inform the forthcoming discussion of Bacon's work in particular). These aspects are firstly, the figure as it operates through metaphor and secondly, the notion of reference as a figure for Saussure's structural linguistics. These are both extremely complex issues for Lyotard and a closer inspection of them will aid appreciation of the sensible-figural level of language.

**Metaphor and Figural Behaviour**

Metaphor forms part of an elaborate argument that focuses on the 'irreducible figurality of rhetoric'[43]: 'the difference that rhetoric [say, metaphor] makes to signification cannot itself be reduced to another meaning'.[44] The force of the incursion of the opaque figure disrupts and distorts discourse: discursive meaning is disturbed, but importantly for Lyotard there is no emergence of a figural, second-order meaning in its place. This is not a denial of the possibility of rhetorical language such as metaphor, but rather the denial that such language replaces or modifies one meaning with another according to a code of usage, whereby we know or recognise that, to use Reading's example, a 'rose' stands for

---

[43] Readings 1991: 29
[44] *Ibid.*, 29-30

'love'.[45] With the concept of metaphor, Lyotard consolidates the domain of seeing in language that is already central to his theory of the figure (as indeed it is to Ricoeur) and his phenomenological critique of structural linguistics. The metaphor is neither a substituted meaning, nor a surplus of meaning in relation to literal meaning. It cannot, Lyotard contends, be reduced to an element within the *langue* and brought under the rule of discursive signification. Instead, he suggests that 'metaphor…is poetic not when it refers back to an already written *langue*, or to any code generally recognised by speakers, but when it transgresses it'.[46] Elsewhere, he reinforces this argument, adding that 'in the poetic metaphor, substitution is precisely not authorised by usage, is not inscribed in the paradigmatic network surrounding the supplanted term…The true metaphor, the trope, begins with the too-wide gap, the transgression of the range of acceptable substitutes sanctioned by usage'.[47] Readings argues that for Lyotard, metaphor must be understood as a poetic metamorphosis, and not as a reversible substitution: the metaphor's transgression over and above the supplanted signifier's literal meaning (concept) is too much to retranslate or channel back into the 'original' signification. This echoes the situation outlined above in relation to Ricoeur: freed from the referential function, rhetorical language is appreciable as material in-itself.

Metaphor is considered by Lyotard for its behavioural and not its functional characteristics. There is a subtle difference: the latter are inscribed, so Lyotard insists, within a system, within the same textual space that is governed by the oppositions between terms. Structural linguistics, he maintains, treats metaphor as nothing other than

---

[45] *Ibid.*, 33
[46] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 318. Cited and translated in Readings 1991: 31
[47] *Ibid.*, 254-5. Translated in 'The Dream-Work does not Think' in *The Lyotard Reader*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1989) p. 34

a functional 'swerve or displacement internal to the order of signification, a matter of stylistics as it were'.[48] Lyotard argues that the metaphor is not simply an alternative to the literal. There is no uncomplicated opposition between metaphor (as figural) and literal meaning, containable within textual space. The metaphor, for Lyotard, is not in-itself figural, for this would imply just such an opposition between the rhetorical and the literal (in the same way that one might be tempted to oppose the terms discourse and figure). Bennington confirms this, arguing that '[the figure] cannot in principle become an object of knowledge, insofar as, in Lyotard's account at least, knowledge presupposes precisely the neat separation of its own discourse from its object of knowledge'.[49] For Lyotard then, metaphor behaves figurally if by transgressing the code of usage, of recognised possible substitutions, it opens the 'unsuppressible gap'[50] between itself and literal meaning. Lyotard claims that rather than merely create another opposition between meaning and non-meaning, the poetic or figural metaphor, like anamorphosis in painting[51], forces the rhetorical excess over meaning and literal meaning into a heterogeneous co-existence. To the conceptual understanding, the signifier is transparent and meaningful yet to the eye, it is a thickening, an imagistic mass: the visible congealed energy of rhetorical excess.

**Linguistic Reference**

This phenomenologically visible thickness is non-linguistic. It is of the sensible world.

When a signifier or a word becomes opaque to the viewing eye, it is because the world –

---

[48] See Lyotard (DF) 1971: 311-316. Translated in Readings 1991: 30
[49] Bennington 1988: 69
[50] Dews 1987: 116
[51] Readings 1991: 25

the non-linguistic – has entered language, or more correctly (according to Lyotard), because the incursion of its radically heterogeneous space into that of language - discourse - manifests itself as a figural thickness in contradistinction to the transparency of discourse. The thing (world) becomes a word (language) and by the same token, through its thickness the word becomes a thing: an expressive thing. Nevertheless Lyotard points out that however opaque it becomes, however thing-like, language can neither capture nor express the non-linguistic (gesture, for example) directly. Dews summarises: 'Lyotard's objection is principally to the notion that there exists a 'co-naturality', or elective affinity between language and the world'.[52] The conceptual understanding and sensibility are not linked directly[53] nor still naturally, but only through their mediation within such phenomena as art: *artifice*. (It has already been noted in Part I that for Adorno, expression in art is always mediated through the construction of the artwork).

Moreover, the figure does not reveal 'the expressive function of language, language's participation in the sensible world, as a pure alterity to signified meaning'.[54] Rather the figural introduces the sensible to language as its heterogeneous other, it is 'something of another kind that is lodged within discourse and lends it its expressivity'.[55] Discourse is not in-itself expressive. For Lyotard, the expressivity of language is mediated in the figural. Dews recalls Merleau-Ponty's words, so influential for Lyotard: 'the world upon which perception opens is not a domain of pure presences and therefore, in structuralist terms, a domain of illusion – but 'an ambiguous field of horizons and

---

[52] Dews 1987: 117
[53] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 293
[54] Readings 1991: 30
[55] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 51

distances''.[56] The figural function has the effect of blurring the boundaries, of mediating (in the Adornian sense) the sensible field and the intellect in the 'unbridgeable hiatus'[57] between them. This is why one might best discover the work of the figural, so Lyotard concludes, in art, which mediates the natural and the rational in each other.

Therefore, clearly aware of, and anxious to offset the potential criticism against him – that he does not sufficiently distance himself from the claim that the figural implants the thickness of the visible directly into discourse, that the latter somehow reveals the 'pure expressivity of gesture'[58] – Lyotard focuses (as indicated above) on the artwork, 'critical, mediated, constructed. Nothing less natural',[59] as the locus of an 'aesthetics of the incommensurable'.[60]

### II.ii *Discours, figure*, second stage

Dews observes that Lyotard's 'continued defence of the distinction between language and the perceived world…should not be taken to imply that [his] understanding of language has remained at the phenomenological stage'.[61] In fact, he acknowledges that Saussure's structuralism has, in spite of its comprehensive repression of the sensible, nonetheless 'made a decisive advance in its account of the system of language as a pattern of differential relations which precedes and makes possible the speech of the individual

---

[56] Dews 1987: 116. Citing Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press) p. 38
[57] Dews 1987: 117
[58] Readings 1991: 30
[59] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 293. Translated in Readings 1991: 31
[60] Readings 1991: 23. Bennington confirms this: 'there runs throughout the book an insistent awareness of a danger of simply valorizing the apparent 'other' of discourse, and of identifying the figure too simply with the visual, however modified the description of that field'. (Bennington 1988: 75)
[61] Dews 1987: 113

speaking subject'.[62] In admitting this, Lyotard also understands such a 'pattern of differential relations' as a figure for 'any phenomenological attempt to ground linguistic meaning in a logically prior intentionality or gesture'.[63] Indeed, the very existence of the 'anonymous' linguistic system prompts Lyotard's denial that the world of things, human activity and gesture precede our efforts to represent them, yet neither does he claim the reverse, that those same social and linguistic representations inculcate human activity and awareness of the world.[64] Essentially, 'language may be seen as the *phenomenological*, but not the *ontological* ground of the perceived world'.[65]

***Parole***

Lyotard turns to *parole* – the dimension of language in use[66] in order to set forth his own position. Whilst he supports the structuralist standpoint which argues that speech cannot precede language (*langue*), he does recognise nevertheless that it is 'not true that the signification of discourse can gather up all the sense of the sayable. One can say that the tree is green, but the colour will not have been put into the sentence'.[67]

'How can we', asks Lyotard, 'explain this almost visual property of speaking on the basis of this object closed in principle, shut up on itself in a self-sufficient totality, which is the system of the *langue*?'[68] Lyotard argues that the speaker, whose language is

---

[62] *Ibid.*
[63] *Ibid.*
[64] This point is heavily emphasised by both Dews and Readings and can be considered the 'turning point' in *Discours, figure*, whereupon Lyotard begins to critique phenomenology, as he had originally done with structural linguistics.
[65] Cited in Dews 1987: 115. Original italics. Translation of Lyotard (DF) 1971: 129
[66] Dews 1987: 114
[67] Cited *Ibid.*, 115. Translation of Lyotard (DF) 1971: 52
[68] Cited *Ibid.*, 114. Translation of Lyotard (DF) 1971: 32

*de facto* 'in use', and that which is spoken of, are 'torn away'[69] from one another, the latter being held as an object of vision at a distance from the speaker. The object becomes visible - thick and opaque - at the outer edge of discourse. Furthermore the incommensurable constitutions of textual and visible space in discourse mean that, unlike the former, (which, as was noted earlier, Lyotard considers to be read by an immobile eye that decodes 'the diacritical relation between terms in the linguistic system'[70]), the latter is seen by a mobile eye. Thus insists Lyotard a motivation is established between terms in linguistic reference. Therefore, he concludes, linguistic reference is a sensible-figure for discursive space.

Analogously in paintings, the immobile eye focuses on say, a vanishing point, whereas Lyotard argues that the mobile seeing-eye perceives the focal zone as well as its surroundings which are manifested as a thick presence at the edge of vision. The eye both registers the focus and sees the peripheral opacity, effecting a movement between the two. This thickness at the edge of language (again demonstrable in the domain of the artwork) testifies to the figure of reference by means of which the distance between the subject and object - the phenomenological distance of seeing - remains resolutely wedged into discourse and figurative space[71]. Once again, Lyotard proposes an incommensurable co-presence of discrete (discursive) and motivated (sensible) space to replace the generic term 'linguistic space' and by implication, the latter's suppression of the visible.

---

[69] Cited *Ibid.* Translation of Lyotard (DF) 1971: 118
[70] *Ibid.*, 115
[71] See Lyotard (DF) 1971: 31 and Readings 1991: 13-17

By way of explanation of the figure of reference and, regarding the indication or designation of place - the 'here' that cannot be reduced to a signifiable location (Readings suggests 'point X on a map'[72]) - Lyotard argues that,

> the place indicated, the *here*, is grasped in a sensible field, without doubt as its focus, but not in such a way that its surroundings are eliminated, as is the case with the choices made by a speaker; they remain there, with the uncertain, undeniable, curvilinear presence of that which maintains itself on the borders of vision, a reference absolutely essential to the indication of place…but whose nature marks a complete break with that of a linguistic operation: the latter refers back to a discontinuous inventory, sight to a topological space….[73]

Lyotard's discussions of specific artworks similarly invokes the incommensurable co-presence of the focus and the curvilinear periphery of vision. In the thickness at the edge of language he discovers the depth of the visible[74], a different kind of depth to that which one might appreciate by means of perspective in artworks, however. The depth of the visible is dense like viscous liquid, or a thick fog. It can be thought of as 'sticky', as an impediment to the eye. The eye is forced to move in order to focus, to see: the density of the visible strenuously resists it. This 'thickness of the visible (as in the distance of reference)…is lost once viewing is understood in terms of vision, of the transparency of an object for a subject'.[75] Lyotard considers one such artwork - Paul Cézanne's *Montagne Sainte-Victoire*[76] - which is deemed to reveal the visible as incommensurably co-present with the painterly space of the figurative. Readings summarises: 'according to Lyotard, Cézanne's achievement is the simultaneous presentation of both the focal zone [*the* figurative] and the curved periphery of foveal vision [the sensible-figural] in *Mont.*

---

[72] Readings 1991: 14
[73] Cited in Dews 1987: 115. Translation of Lyotard (DF) 1971: 38
[74] See Bennington 1988: 'Analysis of the deictic and the process of designation has allowed us to trouble the apparently simple opposition of the series of reading and seeing, and lead to an awareness that the very discourse of linguistics, even if it attempts to discuss signification purely in terms of value, in fact depends on the 'deep' space of designation and reference in order to constitute the 'flat' structural space of its object'. (p. 66)
[75] Readings 1991: 23

*Sainte-Victoire*, which Lyotard claims amounts to showing the condition of visibility itself'.[77] An analogy can be made between Lyotard's use of the image of the mountain in the linguistic domain, and Walter Benjamin's use of the same image (that is, an unspecified mountain – not Cézanne's *Montagne* itself) to describe the 'unique phenomenon of a distance' brought to bear through the mountain's natural 'aura', 'however close it may be'.[78] He argues that 'this image makes it easy to comprehend the social bases of the contemporary decay of the aura'[79]: in Lyotard's case, the image is used in order to comprehend the social (linguistic) basis of the 'decay' (enacted by linguistic structuralism) of the visible or sensible in the sign. Thus, Benjamin suggests that 'if…you follow with your eyes a mountain range on the horizon…you experience the aura of those mountains'.[80] Like Lyotard (on the basis of his interpretation of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological account of language), Benjamin details the movement of the eye, which allows for the perception of the opaque, of aura – history (distance) – corporeally: the word 'experience' indicates the appeal to the senses (as opposed to the intellect) made by the presence of 'aura'.

It is worthwhile briefly returning to Martin Heidegger's lectures on the work of art at this point since they too address the question of 'reference'. Aspects of Heidegger's juxtaposition of world and earth compare very closely with the account of linguistic reference given by Lyotard (drawing heavily on Merleau-Ponty once again) in *Discours, figure*. Heidegger emphasises the Greek temple's 'stoniness', which Lyotard would call the density of the visible: it is palpable, as Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological seeing-eye

---

[76] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 204
[77] Readings 1991: 23
[78] Benjamin, 'The work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in Arendt (ed.) 1999: 216
[79] *Ibid.*

is corporeal. Importantly, Heidegger also situates the evocation of the visible (earth) and signification (world) in the artwork, which is also the desired locus, according to Lyotard, of the mediation of thing and word. If the earth is 'stoniness', the world for Heidegger is a 'whole of what [he] calls *Sinnbezuge*, of sense-relations, meaning-relations, significance-relations'.[81] Heidegger himself argues that 'on the path we must follow here, the nature of the world can only be indicated. What is more, this indication limits itself to warding off anything that might first distort our view of the world's nature'.[82] The space of the visible with all its distortions, density and curvature is apparently ostracised by both Lyotard's discursive, textual space and Heidegger's world of significance-relations. Yet the visible is, as previously noted, necessary to signification for Lyotard: it is evident that for Heidegger, the 'earth' is similarly indispensible for the functioning of the 'world'. However, the earth and world do not co-exist in a tension-less relationship. Earth, like Lyotard's domain of the visible, resists our knowing it conceptually; one sees and feels it as a density, an opacity in the work of art, but its 'special character is self-concealment (*Sichverschliessen*): self-closing-off…'[83] Heidegger argues that

> A stone presses downward and manifests its heaviness. But while this heaviness exerts an opposing pressure upon us it denies us any penetration into it. If we attempt such a penetration by breaking open the rock, it still does not display in its fragments anything inward that has been disclosed. The stone has instantly withdrawn again into the same dull pressure and bulk of its fragments.[84]

If, in other words, one attempts to know or conceptualise the stone, to reveal its 'transparency as an object for a subject [us]', its density and heaviness are lost. Heidegger adds that

---

[80] *Ibid.*
[81] Murray (ed.) 2003: 164
[82] Heidegger, trans. Hofstadter 2001: 43
[83] Murray (ed.) 2003: 165
[84] Heidegger, trans. Hofstadter 2001: 45

if we try to lay hold of the stone's heaviness in another way, by placing the stone on a balance, we merely bring the heaviness into the form of a calculated weight...the weight's *burden* has escaped us. Colour shines and wants only to shine. When we analyse it in rational terms by measuring its wavelengths, it is gone. It shows itself only when it remains undisclosed and unexplained.[85]

Recall Lyotard's observation that one can remark upon the green colour of the tree, but that the colour itself will not have been put into rational discourse: 'colour shines and wants only to shine'. Earth can only show itself within the world, not as part of that world, but as its heterogeneous 'other'. Heidegger's words imply that in the artwork, neither world nor earth can endure the other, and yet each has need of the other for its own being. The earth needs the world if it is to set forth its thing-ness, and the world 'as the horizon of sense (meaning, significance)...seeks to overcome the opaqueness of nature'.[86] The excess over meaning that Lyotard attributes to the metaphor and the figure of linguistic reference is also manifested as an opacity irreconcilable with literal meaning, irreducible to a value within the system of signification. One detects such an excess or opacity in Heidegger's observation that:

to be sure, the sculptor uses stone just as the mason uses it, in his own way. But he does not use it up. That happens in a certain way only where the work miscarries. To be sure, the painter also uses pigment, but in such a way that colour is not used up but rather only now comes to shine forth. To be sure the poet also uses the word – not, however, like ordinary speakers and writers who have to use them up, but rather in such a way that the word only now becomes and remains truly a word.[87]

His words resonate with Ricoeur and Lyotard's ideas. All three imply or suggest that, freed from its literal referential level, language encounters a second-order figural level (in Lyotard's case linguistic reference is itself considered to be figural) wherein it can be perceived as a material in its own right.

---

[85] *Ibid.*

**Towards the invisible-figural**

It has been pointed out earlier that the trajectory of *Discours, figure* continues beyond Lyotard's invocation of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the sensible as a critical, figure for structural linguistics. (Recall Dews' comment that Lyotard's understanding of language does not remain at the phenomenological stage). Dews also identifies the 'shift' in Lyotard's book that marks the departure from the realm of conscious perception as critical figure towards the exploration of conscious perception as the criticised itself. He explains that:

> This 'tenderness' towards the perceived world, a *parti pris* which lies at the heart of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, is clearly irreconcilable with structuralist and early post-structuralist thought, where there can be no doubt that, even granted the existence of a language-independent reality, it is language which segments it and determines its meaning. But significantly, it is also the point at which *Discours, figure*, which up to this point could almost have been read as a phenomenological critique of structuralism begins to question the work of Merleau-Ponty, and therefore may be said to mark the shift into a form of post-structuralism in Lyotard's thought.[88]

If, as was discovered earlier, Lyotard considers that 'language is the phenomenological ground of the perceived world', we must also, he insists, acknowledge that language itself is explosive, 'a tearing asunder of our original unity with the world'.[89] Language does not obligingly raise things to words, to meaning. Rather perceived 'things' become evasive, opaquely resistant figures chafing against the linguistic ground. Although Lyotard discovers in this opaque resistance the heterogeneous presence of the sensible in the linguistic system, the same opacity must also be felt as a trace of something absent, something not fully graspable by either textual or sensible space. To perceive the opaque as a figure on a ground introduces, he now contends, a mere 'secondary rationalisation of

---

[86] Murray (ed.) 2003: 165
[87] Heidegger, trans. Hofstadter 2001: 46
[88] Dews 1987: 117
[89] *Ibid.*, 118

space'[90] to the phenomenological experience of language: according to Lyotard, the notion of the figure must necessarily extend beyond discovering the visible in the text, to deconstruct both textual and visible space. It is here that Lyotard invokes what I have called the 'invisible-figural'. Bennington summarises: 'the figure disrupts this arrangement with a violence, as an event, which Lyotard does not hesitate to link to truth and not to knowledge'.[91] From here through to the conclusion of *Discours, figure*, Lyotard now carefully uses the term figure not to refer to a 'thing' - it has no existence as such - but instead it is at work within language, leaving only the trace of a space or time that is incommensurable with linguistic space. Thus one does not perceive the invisible-figure itself in linguistic signs, but its mark or trace – the space of the visible, sensible opacity or image and the heterogeneous simple transparency of the sign both bear distortions left in the wake of its violent breakthrough into discourse.

Indeed, one detects a subtle progression in Lyotard's argument from descriptions of the 'opacity', 'thickness' and general shadowy (sensible-figural) presence of the visible in conscious perception towards a much stronger insistence on the 'violence', 'attack' and 'threat' of the true figure against language. Bennington suggests that 'we need to stress that what is meant by figure is not just reference, designation, the depth of corporeal space…'[92] by way of explanation of Lyotard's assertion that

> The supposed doubling of the pre-world [by language] does not simply open up the distance in which the eye is installed on the edge of discourse. This tearing-away produces *in* discourse effects of distortion. A figure is installed in the depths of our speech, which operates as the matrix of these effects; which attacks our words in order to make them into forms and images.[93]

---

[90] Bennington 1988: 73
[91] *Ibid.*, 69
[92] *Ibid.*, 69-70
[93] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 129. Cited and translated in Dews 1987: 122

He continues this line of argument, which becomes the basis of the 'second phase' of *Discours, figure*:

> Signification does not exhaust meaning, but neither do signification and designation combined. We cannot remain with the alternative of these two spaces between which the discourse slips – the space of the system and that of the subject. There is another space, the figural. We must suppose it to be buried, *it does not allow itself to be seen*, nor thought, it is indicated laterally, fugitively at the heart of discourses *and perceptions*, as what disturbs them.[94]

Lyotard argues that 'language begins with the loss of nature'.[95] The visible - the opaque - at the very edge of discourse is the trace of this loss even as it testifies to the very presence of something other to discourse. Not only then is discursive signification unable to rationalise the visible, but doubly, it cannot bring the visible as 'lost object' under its rule. Readings (citing Lyotard) argues that 'the designated object is not simply the presence of the visible, with which signification cannot deal, it is 'the visible insofar as it is lost…which places the articulation of the designated or the image with discourse in the field of desire'.[96]

Since the opaque image at once testifies to the present of conscious perception, but also to the absent, to the linguistically and sensibly ungraspable, Lyotard concludes that the figure installed in its depths – attacking and deforming it – operates in the energy of the *un*conscious. The object or image of the world is 'lost' inasmuch as it is distorted beyond recognition, beyond the possibility of its being fully graspable to consciousness. It is a trace in the sense that it reveals to perception, through its damaged integrity, the disruptive activity of imperceptible (i.e. unconscious) forces upon it. In summary then:

> language itself is a 'deflagration'…the result of advance toward the object, of moving from the ideality of meaning to the reality of things, is simply the production of another proposition, the presentation of the object from a new viewpoint, which will in turn require verification. Thus language, far from articulating

---

[94] *Ibid.*, 135. Cited and translated in Bennington 1988: 70. My italics.
[95] *Ibid.*, 293. Cited and translated in Readings 1991: 30-31
[96] *Ibid.*, 284. Cited and translated in Readings 1991: 45

the implicit meaning of the world, perpetually excludes what it seeks to possess. It is in the gap left by this exclusion, Lyotard suggests, that there emerges what we call 'desire'.[97]

Lyotard characterises the figural unconscious as the domain of the 'dreamwork', after Freud.[98] The present discussion will not be too closely occupied with Lyotard's specific involvement of the dream in this discussion (particularly since it has very little in common with Deleuze's characterisation of the figure in the Bacon study) although it is important to appreciate the notion of work. The figure works: it does not exist as such and accordingly, what might be identified in a text as distortion, or in the artwork as a disruption of the rule of representation, is the trace of figural work[99], of figural difference exploding into the space of oppositions (between terms in the linguistic system, between image and ground) and not the presence of 'the figure' in-itself.

Bennington observes that for Lyotard, 'figural space, which will *work* against the perceptual just as much as against the linguistic, will work according to difference'.[100]

Lyotard himself argues that

we shall see that difference is neither the flat negation which holds apart the elements of the (linguistic) system, nor that profound denegation which opens the referential or representative field as over against discourse, and that it is the event...contrary to what happens in signification or designation, *the gap is not that of two terms* placed in the same plane, inscribed on the same support, and, possibly, reversible given certain operational conditions, but on the contrary is *the 'relation' of two 'states' which are heterogeneous yet juxtaposed in an irreversible anachrony.*[101]

---

[97] Dews 1987: 117-118

[98] See Freud, Sigmund. 'The Interpretation of Dreams', in *The standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey et al. (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-1974) and the section of *Discours, figure* translated as 'The Dreamwork does not Think' (see full reference above).

[99] 'For Lyotard the work of the dream is the clearest example of...an eruption of the primary process into the secondary process, of the manner in which a 'figure-matrix', by its twisting of the order of language, *traces - through the very distortions which it imposes* – a figuration of the unfigurable. 'The dream', he suggests, 'is not the speech of desire, but its *work*...it results from the application of a force to a text. Desire does *not* speak, it violates the order of speech'.' Dews 1987: 122. Includes translation of Lyotard (DF) 1971: 238. My italics

[100] Bennington 1988: 70. My Italics

[101] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 138-139. Cited and translated in Bennington 1988: 72. Original italics

In the spirit of the 'second phase' of *Discours, figure*, Lyotard appears to be contradicting his earlier insistence upon the incommensurability of sensible (perceptual) and linguistic (textual) space in favour of deconstructing the difference between them into an opposition, in order to allow the deformative force of the invisible-figural to emerge as the element of true difference in discourse.[102] Bennington suggests that 'at this further level of reflection (or *surréflexion*), it is precisely [the] aspect of perception, linked to the mobility of the eye, which has to be called into question, for it is just that mobility which allows the space of vision to be organised into recognisable objects, into figures on grounds, and thereby represses the possibility of difference'.[103] This is, however, not an overturning of Lyotard's earlier position, but as suggested above, a deconstruction of it in an attempt to evoke the 'invisible-figural'. Whereas he had originally argued that the phenomenal or mobile eye moved between the focus and sensible, thicker edge[104] of vision, he now refers to 'diffuse-vision', arguing that 'in so-called diffuse-vision, the periphery is not merely blurred, it is other, and any attempt to grasp it loses it. Here is difference within the visible'.[105] He therefore advocates the (re-)immobilisation of the eye that prohibits movement between focus and periphery, and as a result prevents any

---

[102] 'Having underlined the incommensurability of the experiences of perception and of reading or hearing language, Lyotard begins his discussion of the way the figure [that is, what I have called the invisible-figural] disrupts the space of perception by *assimilating* that space to the space of the text, from which he previously seemed so keen to distinguish it. But this is not an inconsistency: at this point in the argument, the apparent opposition between two spaces and their specific negativities has been to some extent called into question – we have dwelt at some length on how the 'depth' of perception in fact, via designation and the deictic, inhabits the very space which is supposed to exclude it: the first move in the discussion of the effect of the [invisible] figural on the space of perception argues that the space of language, of the opposition, of the system, also inhabits the space of perception, via the notion of *attention*: 'attention writes space, traces in it lines and triangles; for it, colours are like phonemes, units which work by opposition and not by motivation' See Lyotard (DF) 1971: 155. Attention already marks the incursion of the organisational negativity - hitherto associated with discourse - into perception'.(Bennington 1988: 72-73)

[103] Bennington 1988: 73

[104] Called 'recto' and 'verso' after Saussure's famous reference to the sign as the two sides of a piece of paper. See Bennington 1988: 65

[105] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 159

attempt to 'grasp' the opaque peripheral thickness of discourse, which immediately amounts to its loss. By thus re-immobilising the eye, Lyotard does not regress to a structuralist position but argues that 'it gives the qualitative discontinuity of the two spaces in their simultaneity, the curved, crepuscular, evanescent, lateral space of the first peripheral contact with something and the stabilised, constant, central rectangular space of the grasp in the foveal zone'.[106] It is here then, that figural difference is founded. Lyotard refers to the entry of the thing, of language's 'other', into the linguistic field as 'an invisibility of the visible' suggesting that 'this fragile, oblique tact gives the visual event which comes even before the sketch'.[107] His association of the invisible-figural with truth continues also, when he comments that 'the truthful is the unbalanced configuration of space before any construction: it demands that the movement of the eye be deconstructed'.[108]

**Figural Shifting**

In explanation of this violation, or explosion of the invisible-figural into language and art, the present discussion must return to an observation made earlier, when an analysis of Cézanne's landscape painting *Montagne Sainte-Victoire* was briefly considered. As I noted then, Lyotard argues that this work reveals the condition of visibility itself, by making visible the distance of reference as a thickness at the edge of the field of vision.[109] This thickness, he claims in the first part of his book, becomes perceptible to the mobile eye. As a mark of Lyotard's progression beyond the preoccupations of the book's earlier

---

[106] *Ibid.*, 158. Cited and translated in Bennington 1988: 73-74
[107] *Ibid.*, 158. Cited and translated in Bennington 1988: 74
[108] *Ibid.*, 159. Cited and translated in Bennington 1988: 74
[109] See above. Readings 1991: 13-17

pages, the same Cézanne painting is reintroduced to the later argument concerning the figural unconscious or invisible, and is treated to a new, heightened interpretation which again, importantly, does not discredit the first, but deconstructs it, in order to build upon it and penetrate deeper into the work's figural effect. The first appreciation of the painting was arrived at on account of the mobile eye, and so it is this mobility that is deconstructed, leading Lyotard to the somewhat paradoxical immobility[110] discussed above (ironic of course since it was the immobility in respect of the linguistic system at which so much of the book's earlier criticisms were levied). 'Immobilising the eye again allows the formulation of...difference at the heart of perceptual space'.[111] Bennington describes the experience of the painter, Cézanne...

> immobile for hours in front of the Sainte-Victoire, until not only colours and values shift as 'impressions', but the whole homogeneity of space begins to shift: this shifting is the event which even the phenomenological description can only jettison in the construction of coherent form; and this event is that of the irruption of the figural, of difference, into oppositional organisation, of the truth into the calm field of knowledge.[112]

Another central tenet of *Discours, figure* yet to be addressed is the expression of the so-called 'unsuppressible gap between the sensible and the intelligible...in terms of a contrast between the 'letter' and the 'line', between a graphic and a figural space'.[113] It is in this latest contrast that the resistant opacity of the visible at the centre of discourse is discoverable in the signifier itself (as opposed to the edge, as in linguistic reference) and the extent to which it is distorted by and brimming with the energy of invisible (Lyotard often calls them unconscious) forces. However, discussion of the tension between graphic letter and plastic line will be reserved until after the reintroduction of Bacon and

---

[110] Bennington 1988: 74
[111] *Ibid.*, 73
[112] Bennington 1988: 74-75
[113] Dews 1987: 116

Ferneyhough to this argument, and from there I will consider the aforementioned concepts of writing and the diagram, revisiting Adorno and Deleuze in the process.

**Space and the Figure**

If one point is to be taken forward into the discussion of Bacon and Ferneyhough above all others, in the light of this lengthy exposition of Lyotard's early thought, it is the consideration of the figure in spatial terms. This is not to claim that there are no temporal aspects to its workings; on the contrary, many suggest themselves in what is laid out previously. However, though Lyotard maintains that the figure does not exist in-itself (however close he comes to contradicting himself on numerous occasions in *Discours, figure*), it is undoubtedly conceived as operating in a space particular to it. By thinking of the figure spatially, Lyotard prepares the ground for its encounter with the spatiality of the linguistic system and the domain of the visible. Despite his insistence on the introduction of motivation or continuity to the relations between terms by the incursion of the visible into discourse, his preoccupation in the latter stages of the book with 'irruptions' and energies, and an elaborate discourse (which continues beyond the remit of *Discours, figure* into the remainder of his career) upon the postmodern as a figure for the modern, he nevertheless privileges figural spatiality over temporality. The true space of the figure is arguably an interstice between visible and linguistic space, from out of which emerges a figural force that disrupts and distorts both. One other important point concerns the notion of the figure as the trace of the action of invisible forces upon the textual/figurative and the visible. As a trace, it makes the invisible force visible, but not as it happens; the trace is always the aftermark, the trickle back into consciousness of

operations in the unconscious (so Lyotard has it). The force is not captured *en acte*, mobilised in time. The time of the 'event', which Bennington characterises as 'that of the irruption of the figural'[114], is imperceptible in-itself, leaving only its mark upon discursive or figurative space. This notion of the figural 'mark' is crucial both to the discussion immediately below and arguably even more so to Part III which follows.

The remainder of Part II will be largely concerned with the consideration of the figural in spatial terms, although the intended analysis of Adorno's essay 'On Some Relationships between Music and Painting', which addresses both the issues of space and time, will begin to pave the way towards thinking of the figure and its work temporally, again in readiness for Part III.

## II.iii Figural Space in the Work of Francis Bacon

Arguably both 'discursive' (textual) and 'figural' (as sensible-figural) spaces are discoverable in many of Bacon's paintings. In other words, elements of traditional figurative representation co-exist alongside the opacities of the 'figure' that defy convention. It is worth repeating that the second half of Lyotard's book does not negate the arguments of the first. It is perfectly acceptable to discover the figure in the sensible, criticising the figurative (and vice-versa), but in the vein of the second part of *Discours, figure*, it is also necessary to push what is uncovered in this way still further, towards an appreciation of the workings of invisible forces, deformation and irreconcilable difference within the space of the artwork: to find the so-called 'truth' of the visible in the very trace of the invisible-figural.

---

[114] Bennington 1988: 74-75

If, as Lyotard suggests, discursive space in paintings is manifest in the straight lines of perspective – in a geometricity – then Bacon's work regularly incorporates such a space by means of structures that include amongst others, cubes, parallelepipeds and circles. Admittedly, these structures (particularly the cubes) rarely conform strictly to the laws of perspective, but their function is analogous insofar as they delimit, usually with straight lines, a grid-like space within, or indeed against which one perceives the figure. Occasionally the figure and structure come into contact, whereupon the figure is most often distorted, and the structure is compromised as the figure transgresses it. This happens in the *Triptych Inspired by the Orestia of Aeschylus* of 1981 in the right-hand panel of which a fleshy protrusion or 'melt' escapes the containing structure and also spills under the door depicted in the centre of the painting **(see Fig. 11)**.[115]

In order to explore the clash between geometric structure and the figure in Bacon's work, as well as the presence of opacity and a certain transparency, a more detailed study of the 1965 *Study from Portrait of Pope Innocent X* will be set out below **(see Fig. 12)**. The importance of Velázquez' painting for Bacon is discussed in the first interview between the artist and David Sylvester. The image of the Pope is one that Bacon revisited a number of times throughout his painting career.[116]

Although it is not in the least prominent, a geometric cubic construction surrounds the seated Pope. Deleuze and Bacon both consider that the function of such a structure is to frame the figure in order that it be isolated, and thereby immobilised.[117] Many commentaries on Bacon's paintings assume the solidity of such structures, as though they

---

[115] (n. a.) *Francis Bacon* (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 1996). Catalogue for the exhibition 'Francis Bacon, Centre national d'art et de culture Georges Pompidou 27 Juin-14 Octobre, 1996'. p. 201

[116] *Ibid.,* 149. For a reproduction of the Velázquez *Pope Innocent X* see David Sylvester, *Looking Back at Francis Bacon* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987) p. 49

were panes of glass through which one might perceive the figure.[118] Others (most notably Deleuze, of course) characterise the 'glass' frame as an imprisoning device that exerts a pressure upon the figure and counteracts the force emanating from the figure itself. Of special interest here is the transparency of the framing 'box' that brings to mind Lyotard's insistence on the transparency of discursive and perspectival space as well as the geometric disposition of the frame (itself invoking Lyotard's description of perspective in visual art as geometrically disposed: composed according to a 'grid' of straight lines). It might be argued then that this structure demarcates a discursive – or rather a figurative – space in Bacon's painting. Bacon himself adds to the idea that the box is a 'glass' structure, arguing that 'I use that frame to see the image – for no other reason'.[119] However, it alone does not denote such a figurative space. Aside from the high-backed chair in which the Pope is sitting, there are aspects of the figure itself (in the generic sense of the term) that participate in figurative, textual space.

The Pope's skirts are rendered with particular attention to the intricate detail of the folds, each one of which is differentiable from the next. The hem is so lightly painted that is it virtually non-existent: in fact, from the waist to the floor the skirts become increasingly diaphanous. Through the white of the skirt one can see the lines of the chair and the curved rear base of the 'glass' surround. The fine detail and the intangibility of these skirts, not to mention the visibility of the lines through the folds conspire together in a figurative space. One can conceive of the skirts in this particular instance as though they were as transparent as the 'glass' of the geometric structure that surrounds the Pope.

---

[117] Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation*, vol. I (Paris: Éditions de la différence, 1981) p.1

[118] See Sylvester 1987: 37

[119] *Ibid.*, 22

They are not opaque: when looked at, they do not emerge as a figure against a ground; instead they are looked through. The folds are, of all the aspects of the figure in this painting, the only feature that is attempted in a manner as close to 'conventional' – to 'representational' – as one finds in Bacon's work.

As already emphasised in Part I, one should never assume that the 'figure' in Bacon's painting must by definition be merely the figure as we understand it in the generic sense: the human body. In this painting one finds the (sensible-) figural in the upper part of the Pope's body as well as in the deep red curtain that forms a backdrop to the entire scene. At first, one might assume that the curtain is intended to cover the back of the glass box within which the Pope is sitting. However, on closer inspection, the curtain extends to the left of the painting, and to the right, beyond the width of the box. It also begins above it. Moreover, towards the lower left hand corner of the painting (as one views it), the curtain extends below the bottom of the box which, as a result, appears to be suspended in air. The length of the curtain falls to another floor, textured reddish-green in contradistinction to the once again transparent 'floor' of the box-like structure. The hem of the curtain seems to outline a curve, which matches the rear base of the box. It is arguable that the curtain and the box define two different spaces that appear in many respects to be incommensurable: there is no rationalising the co-existence of the apparently floating box with the visibility of the curved surround through both the Pope's skirts and his (in other respects) solid-looking chair.

The rendering of the background curtain is an example of *malerisch* texture: the paint is treated layer-upon-layer and built up into a dense and tactile thickness. This immediately distinguishes it from the translucency of the Pope's skirts; and yet both

curtain and skirts, different as they are, issue from the same figurative form. Both are images of folded material. However, whereas the skirts' folds are delicate and occupy a figurative space, the folds of the curtain perform a sensible-figural function in this painting. They are opaque, less well-defined than the folds in the skirts and their sheer physicality rhymes with that at the centre of the painting, visible in the Pope's cape. (If one considers the Pope's right shoulder, the same red-black, light-shadow thickness is apparent as is conveyed in the background curtain). However, if one looks closely at the cape as it falls over the Pope's lower left arm and immediately above the waist on that side, the cape seems to have been originally much more well-defined than the majority of it now appears to be. Part of a neatly-finished hem is even visible. Nevertheless, with what are arguably thick wipes or smears made most probably with something other than a paintbrush, like a rag or sock (Bacon is known to have used a great variety of materials to condition the paint finish exactly as he wanted it)[120], the presumed original delicacy of the cape has been overlaid by manual gestures whose effect is to create a visible, tangible thickness about the cape. The cape is the third area to depict folds in Bacon's painting, in addition to the skirts and the curtain: the abrupt, unblended beginning and end-points of the smears add yet another layer of tactility (literally one might say, since Bacon has undoubtedly used manual methods to create such an effect) to the material. The folds of the cape can, unlike those in the skirts, be called 'visible'. They are opaque: to be looked at rather than through. They are figural – sensible – in relation to the 'figurative' skirts.

---

[120] Recall the excerpt of conversation between Sylvester and Bacon, used at the beginning of Part I of this thesis.

**Deformation of the Figure**

It is a strong possibility that Bacon has chosen those elements most likely to be symbolic or recognisable in some way (the cape, the face) and deliberately concentrated his project of figural – not figurative – deformation on them. The face is the most distorted aspect of this painting. The further up the dressed body the eye travels, the more opaque the vision it encounters becomes: the more resistance it experiences, the greater the struggle it has to focus. The experience of Bacon's painting, of the figure, becomes a corporeal one. Whilst one could argue that an eye, a mouth and an ear are discernible within the otherwise abstract commotion of smears, splatters and smudges of paint, it is impossible to reconstruct the face as such from the information we are 'given'. It is hinted at amongst the thicknesses, but it is deformed beyond recognition. In his collaboration with Félix Guattari in *Mille Plateaux* (the second of the *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie* pair), Deleuze discusses the notion of 'faciality' which he characterises as a kind of grid or map from beneath which emerges the head. The face is the domain or 'territory' of signification, whereas the head is that of figural energy and tactility. In the *Logique de la sensation*, he argues that Bacon is a 'painter of heads and not of faces' – the head is of the body, but the face is a 'structured spatial organisation that covers the head'.[121] The face, like the map or the closed system of signs and signifiers is to be decoded, whereas the meat or flesh of the head is visible and palpable: bodily. We might infer from this that the rendering of the head - opaque and fleshy - in the *Study from Portrait of Pope Innocent X* attests to the presence of the figural as opposed to the linguistic or figurative space of codes. In place of the face in this painting, we see the sensible-figural opacity upon which Lyotard insists in dark, impenetrable colours that seem to blend the usual space of

distinctive facial features into an amorphous mass. Yet this is of course not the whole truth – it is not merely the case that the figurative is 'criticised' by the sensible-figural. The face (figurative) is, although overcome by the thickness of the head, still partially there - obstinately distinguishable - in the mouth, eye and ear. The sensible-figural does not simply obliterate the figurative, but - as Lyotard and Deleuze both argue - the two are forced uncomfortably together: we *see* the figural where we logically '*read*' the face. The sensible-figural and figurative are incommensurably co-present.

There is likewise an incommensurability between the visibility of the cape, expressed as a thickness - a sort of presence - but not as a deformation as such, and the head whose distortion beyond recognition arguably manifests the traces of the action of invisible forces from within. The cape is visible as a sensible figure on a ground (the chair) and its visibility is compounded by the vibrancy of the *malerisch* curtain whose colour and texture it shares. The head on the contrary aspires to the 'truth' of the visible - paradoxically discovered in the very trace of the invisible - in its deformity.

**Deleuze and the 'invisible-figural'**

As has been ascertained, the visible (object) is present to consciousness in that it is opaquely there in discourse, but excluded by language and the sensible, according to Lyotard, since it is a deformed trace, a testimony to the desired absent. Much as the sensible is a figure for the linguistic insofar as it introduces heterogeneous vision to signification, the linguistic system is itself a constitutive figure for the sensible, the perceived object. Recall Dews' assessment of the situation that motivates Lyotard's exploration of what I have called the invisible-figural: 'perception is phenomenologically

---

[121] *Ibid.*, 19

grounded in language, but language itself is a 'deflagration', a tearing asunder of our original unity with the world'.[122] Lyotard insists that together, signification and designation, (as the evocation of the visible at the edge of discourse) do not exhaust meaning and furthermore, that which remains *in*exhausted threatens to slip through the gaps that their difference introduces into language.[123] According to Lyotard, it is out of these interstices that the force generated by the unconscious emerges, distorting language and sensible (conscious) vision and manifesting true figural difference in discourse. Moreover he insists that the work of the invisible-figural is violent. Readings argues that 'for Lyotard, the unconscious is the space of the figural transgression of the order of discourse, the transgression of the textual by the visible image as object of desire, of visible 'reality' by the deformations of desire'.[124]

Ronald Bogue, the only writer to provide a critical commentary, albeit brief, on *Discours, figure* specifically in relation to *Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation* acknowledges the importance of Lyotard's monograph for Deleuze's own development of the concept of figure, but roundly dismisses Lyotard's engagement with the theory of the unconscious as irrelevant to an appreciation of Deleuze's study. This is arguably premature. Bogue cites Deleuze and Guattari's criticism in *Anti-Oedipus* of Lyotard's 'stultifying' psychoanalytic orientation[125] (in fact, they are initially full of praise for Lyotard's 'very beautiful pages' although they proceed to effectively accuse him of being uncritical, of instituting desire as merely another discourse, as the alternative to linguistic

---

[122] Dews 1987: 118
[123] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 135. See Readings 1991: 13-16
[124] Readings 1991: 49
[125] Bogue, Ronald. 'Gilles Deleuze: The Aesthetics of Force' in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. Paul Patton (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996) p. 260

discourse). They argue that 'Lyotard reintroduces lack and absence into desire…at the risk of restoring the …signifier'.[126]

However, Lyotard's project is subtler, according to Dews. In Lyotard's view, as Dews suggests, 'the work of art reveals its continuity with the dream in so far as it disjoints the discursive in order to embody the figural, but…at the same time, the work of art has a 'critical' function which goes beyond such an embodiment…the work of art…stresses the gap between the discursive and the figural, laying bare the disorder of the unconscious rather than absorbing this disorder into a hallucinatory fulfilment'.[127]

Inasmuch as the notions of force, violence, invisibility and deformation are absolutely indispensible to Deleuze's theorisation of the figure (moreover, one that is attempted on the basis of an analysis of artworks with an immanently critical function), Bogue's assumption that simply because Deleuze does not conspicuously address the issue of the unconscious in the *Logique de la sensation*, Lyotard's engagement with it cannot prove informative in relation to both Deleuze and Bacon, can be disregarded. Indeed, one senses Lyotard's muted influence in this respect in the background of Deleuze's argument: nowhere more so than in the chapter entitled 'Painting Forces', wherein force is characterised as deformative. The quintessence of Bogue's comment that for Lyotard 'the figural forces of deformation that play through the artwork…invest the eye and hence engage the domain of the sensible, while at the same time manifest the operations of the unconscious'[128] is implicit in Deleuze's distinction between the

---

[126] Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix. *Anti Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (London: Athlone Press, 1984) pp. 243-244

[127] Dews 1987: 127. Thus Dews appears to contradict other interpretations of the second phase of Lyotard's book, which view it as less successful in its aims, due to its over-reliance on Freud's theory of the unconscious and dreams. See note 12 above for comparison.

[128] Ronald Bogue 2003: 61

'perceptible force of the scream and the imperceptible force that makes one scream',[129] the latter being manifest by means of the deformation or contortion of the mouth into a scream: a deformation that both Bacon and Deleuze insist has no relationship to conscious stimulation. Perhaps the point most consistently re-emphasised throughout Bacon's interviews with Sylvester, and therefore given much weight in Deleuze's arguments as well, is the artist's insistence that the scream is painted out of a fascination with the physical contortion of facial muscles one experiences, and never in response to, or in an attempt to depict, horror. In Bacon's work, [the artist] is adamant, only invisible spasms internal to, and pressures external to the body (such as the geometric enclosures, or angular furniture) result in the scream[130], in whose distortion one discovers the trace of those same forces – arguably the mark of the work of the invisible-figural.

The force of the unconscious may be characterised as deformative, but not in a destructive sense; rather it deforms visible opacity and figurative 'geometry' into 'truth'. We are now in a position to appreciate the fundamental implications of Lyotard's deconstructive account of language and phenomenology. He introduces the figural first as a means of upsetting the reduction of the sensible to linguistic signification (the textual). However, his intention is not simply to 'uphold the real'[131] over language since this approach merely inverts the attempt by structural linguistics to dismiss the real as 'illusion',[132] excluded from signification. Lyotard's first invocation of the sensible or visible (which I have called the sensible-figural) as a heterogeneous thickness within discourse is constantly under threat from language's endeavour to reduce it to, or inscribe

---

[129] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 61
[130] Sylvester 1987: 40-43
[131] Readings 1991: 40
[132] *Ibid.*

it within its system. The invisible-figural is therefore evoked 'as a kind of secondary re-affirmation of the sensible and the work of the unconscious after language's attempt to reduce the sensible to mere signification'.[133] 'Deconstruction', Lyotard argues 'is the work of affirmation…if one understands by it not a crude affirmation which would place itself before language, but a…reaffirmation which comes to cover again what language had placed in the open, to block together what it had separated, to confuse what it had made distinct'.[134]

One is put in mind here of Bacon's desire to deform the painted 'thing' into appearance.[135] Indeed, if one exchanges the word 'language' in the quotations above for 'representation', one gains a good idea of Bacon's project as a painter. His conversation with Sylvester conveys this (bearing in mind Bacon's tendency to paint in the absence of his model, which he finds inhibiting):

FB What I want to do is to distort the thing far beyond the appearance, but in the distortion to bring it back to a recording of the appearance.

DS Are you saying that painting is almost a way of bringing somebody back, that the process of painting is almost like the process of recalling?

FB I am saying it…tell me, who today has been able to record anything that comes across to us as a fact without causing deep injury to the image?

DS But do you not think…that what you are making may be both a caress and an assault?

FB I think that is too logical…I think it goes to a deeper thing: how do I feel I can make this image more immediately real to myself? That's all.

DS Would it not be making it more immediately real to objectify contradictory feelings towards the subject?

FB …[distortion] may be subconsciously involved with what you said, I don't think it is consciously involved at all.

DS Well, of course, if it were conscious it would be disastrous for the work. What I've been trying to suggest is that, when the sitter naïvely supposes that the painter is doing him an injury, he's instinctively recognising an unconscious desire in the painter to inflict damage.

---

[133] *Ibid.*
[134] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 296. Cited and translated in Readings 1991: 40
[135] See Part I of this thesis.

FB It may be. What you're really saying is what Wilde said: you kill the thing you love'.[136]

Additionally, Bacon argues that the images in his paintings are 'brought over' violently, though this is not so much to disrupt the rule of representation (although this is of course partly the case) as to bring the person back to appearance 'if you take it on the level of what I think of as art'.[137] Like Lyotard who charges the domain of art with the responsibility for bringing forth the figural, Bacon also specifies that the artwork is incontrovertibly the locus of profound figural activity.

The excerpt of conversation set out above touches on a number of the issues pertinent to the present discussion. Bacon specifically associates his particular notion of appearance with his wish to record 'fact' in a painting. What Lyotard calls the 'truth of the visible'[138] Bacon effectively refers to as 'the fact of the appearance'. He suggests that 'people tend to be offended by facts, or what used to be called truth'.[139] The question of unconscious desire is also raised both with Sylvester's suggestion that Bacon is making a 'caress' and Bacon's own invocation of Oscar Wilde. Subconsciously perhaps, Bacon distorts that which he desires, that which he wants to 'bring back'. Recall Lyotard's conclusion that the deformative forces of the invisible-figural re-affirm the sensible after language has attempted to reduce it to signification, and pursue the analogy with the head in Bacon's *Pope* discussed above: there, too the deformations re-affirm the sensible after the figurative attempt to reduce the head to representation – to the face.

Bacon and Sylvester's later discussions about the portraits of George Dyer painted after his death also imply Bacon's desire to 'bring back' what he has lost, to

---

[136] David Sylvester (ed.) *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon* 3rd. ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987) pp. 40-43.
[137] *Ibid.*, 43
[138] Readings 1991: 46

appearance, to visibility: ultimately, to presence. To this extent one discovers in Bacon's paintings the echo of Lyotard's suggestion that the 'truth' of the visible is brought to sensation through the work of unconscious, distorting desire, through its force. Furthermore, the association that Sylvester makes between the process of painting and the process of recalling is also important here in relation to the study of the 'figure'.[140]

A brief return to the aforementioned 'Body without Organs' (BwO) gives one further example of Deleuze's engagement with the unconscious in the *Logique de la sensation*. In the collaborative *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, the BwO, which has already been the subject of an analogy with the 'figure' in the Bacon study, is invoked in support of the principle of horizontality which marks Deleuze's critique of Freudian psychoanalysis[141]: desire in the former's case is not based on a lack, but 'is an affirmative process of flows and lines of flight'.[142] The BwO can be conceived (as demonstrated in Part I) as not so much organ*less* (lacking organs) as a disorganised domain of organs. Deleuze refers to the bodies in Bacon's paintings that wear aspects of their internal flesh and bone outside their skin, and in extreme cases, that appear to be ejecting the entirety of their inner constitution through, for example, the mouth. This ejection Deleuze likens to a kind of Dionysian horizontality, a zone of forces that disturbs the organisation of bodies (in Bacon's case literal bodies, in others, laws and systems or 'theatres' of representation). Recall his criticism of Lyotard, for dwelling on the notion of desire based on a lack: whilst Freudian psychoanalytical theory is undoubtedly Lyotard's point of departure, the forces of deformation with which he charges the unconscious and desire

---

[139] *Ibid.*, 48

[140] Given that Bacon calls the 'figure' the very aspect of his work that attempts the deformation-into-appearance of the (desired) object being painted.

are not merely negative – destructive – in their effect. Lyotard refers to the (invisible-) figural as the secondary reaffirmation of the sensible, whilst the Deleuze of the *Anti-Oedipus* characterises desire as perpetually in movement, deforming and reforming itself in a process of affirmation. For all that the *Logique de la sensation* posits the notion of the BwO at a lower level of abstraction than one finds in the Deleuze-Guattari works, there can be no doubt that its exposition in the latter, in terms of desire, the unconscious, force and horizontality is implicit in the Bacon study. Consequently, it is reasonable to assume a stronger link between Deleuze and Lyotard, on these accounts at least, than has previously been supposed (specifically by Bogue).

One final observation relating to Bacon's *Pope* concerns the awkward fall of the curtain to the right of the Pope's head (as one views it). At first one might assume that the back of the glass box or case is pushing into the curtain, causing the kink. However, the very faint outline of the upper rear edge of the box is too high to be responsible for it, leading to a possible conclusion that – since the kink occurs to the right of the head, which corresponds to the side of the face that is most disfigured (the same is true of the chair) – the indentation is the figural trace left in the material by the force of deformation that emanates from the head. Deleuze argues that figural distortion is occasioned by non-consciously motivated 'spasms' and forces from within the body that result, for example, in the contraction and expansion of flesh. Bacon's desire to 'assault' received notions of appearance is not, as he rightly suggests, a conscious one. Rather his conscious wish to render the 'appearance' or 'fact' of his subject more visible is predicated on his unconscious sensitivity to areas of their physiognomy that lend themselves to a level of

---

[141] John Lechte (ed.) *Fifty Key Contemporary Thinkers: From Structuralism to Postmodernity* (London: Routledge, 1994) p.104

figural distortion, through which *work* true 'appearance' emerges. Recall Lyotard's characterisation of true figural difference: it is, he suggests, 'indicated laterally, fugitively at the heart of discourses and perceptions, as what disturbs them'.[143]

The appearance of the head is revealed by way of the invisible-figural, through the action of forces, which reaffirms the sensible: 'in the distortion [I want to] bring it back to…appearance…One brings the sensation and the feeling of life over…at the most acute point one can'.[144] Almost every other important feature in this painting - the cape, the curtain and the skirts - are conveyed through folds in material (the latter participating in a figurative space, and the former two in the sensible space of the visible). Apart from the grid-like lines of the glass case, the 'folded' material is all effectively critiqued, even deconstructed, by the figurally deformed head in which every colour of these folded materials is found - deep reds, whites, black and so on - brought to 'appearance' as the colours of fleshy 'meat'[145]. A bluish tinge to parts of the face and neck reinforce this impression of meat.

Recall Lyotard's assessment of Cézanne's *Montagne Sainte-Victoire* which he initially describes (as Readings relates in his critique of *Discours, figure*) as revealing the condition of visibility itself due to its simultaneous presentation of both the focal zone and the sensible-visual field surrounding it. Importantly, he argues that the painting is appreciated thus when viewed with the mobile eye. It is likewise the mobility of the eye that allows us perceive the thickness of Bacon's papal cape in a sensible space as we conceive of the skirts as a representation of folded materials in a figurative space. Further

---

[142] *Ibid.*, 104
[143] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 135. My italics
[144] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 40-43
[145] Bacon often refers to 'meat'. See frequent references throughout Sylvester (ed.) 1987

along in his argument, Lyotard revisits Cézanne's painting to consider the action of the invisible-figural as that which renews the sensible through the work of the unconscious,[146] this time suggesting that the mobility of the eye is deconstructed by the staring re-immobilised eye, until 'not only colours and values begin to shift as 'impressions'', but space itself begins to shift. In Bacon's painting the upward movement of the eye, from the angular 'box', transparent skirts, thick cape and curtain to the abstract and yet palpably meaty head, encounters increasing degrees of resistance from the paint to the extent that the eye is arguably 'captured' by the head such that the paint and eye chafe against each other. The colours vibrate and shift similarly to the 'impressions' one encounters in Cézanne's *Montagne* and moreover, at the same time one perceives tangibility, one is tempted to 'read' images into the abstraction (an animalistic nose, a beast-like drooling mouth). Figurative and sensible space compete for attention, each deforming the other. Diffuse vision allows one to view the thick, curved presence of the curtain at the same time as one sees the rectangular, geometric framing device used by Bacon to immobilise and isolate the figure, analogous perhaps to Lyotard's 'constant, central rectangular space of the grasp in the foveal zone'.[147] As noted previously, the angular box and the thicker, softer curtain do not share the same space: one is disposed in figurative space; the other in the domain of the sensible. Lyotard identifies the irruption of the deformative force of the invisible-figural as responsible for the 'gap' between them. (I have traced the 'exit-trajectory' of this force in distorted material). The trace left by this line of force reveals the irruption of radical figural difference into Bacon's own painting insofar as both sensible and figurative space are disturbed and the difference

---

[146] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 296. Cited and translated in Readings 1991: 40
[147] *Ibid.*, 158. Cited and translated in Bennington 1988: 74

between them is then deconstructed or collapsed into an opposition, in order to make way for the emergence of the true heterogeneity of invisible-figural space into the painting. It is no accident that the trace of this force is seen issuing from the head – it reaffirms the sensible through the work of the invisible (unconscious), or in Bacon's terms, the Pope's head/face is deformed into appearance, 'bringing-back' the body all the more violently, the more palpably to sensation. The abstract-looking head – a swirl of contours and colours is constructed such that no single feature can be separated out from another and a continuity inheres within and between the physicality of the painted gestures, wipes, smears and splotches (the same is true of the Pope's left hand). Generally speaking, the remainder of the painting consists of folded materials and geometric structures (the chair, the glass box) – features that *are* separable from one another: folds can be counted; angles measured and so on. Although there are some ambiguous areas – not least the cape – the distinction between continuous and discrete materials is intended to demonstrate the incommensurable difference between the true figurality of the head, and figurative as well as sensible (visible) spaces wherein objects are discernible against a ground. After Lyotard, it is arguable that the two spaces - the figural and discursive - are not 'inscribed on the same support'. Bacon has charged his painting with bringing forth the condition of the invisible-figural, although he does not express his intentions to himself in these terms; my own notion of 'invisible-figurality' is derived from Lyotard, and from Deleuze's abstractions of Bacon's desire to bring forth 'sensation' through paint.

## II. iv Brian Ferneyhough and Figural Space

In spite of the fact that music is indisputably a temporal art, it is worth considering at this juncture the notion of 'figure' in Ferneyhough's *Carceri d'Invenzione* pieces and theoretical writings in primarily spatial terms. Part I argues that the gesture is elaborated through dynamic figural parameters, which suggests their temporal evolution in Ferneyhough's music. Nonetheless, it is important for the present to penetrate deeper into the relationship between the gestural and the figural: to consider them in terms of incommensurable yet co-present spaces analogous to Lyotard's discursive and figural spaces. I will deal with the *Collected Writings* initially.[148] (There will also be some discussion of musical time, intended to prepare for later in Part II when figural space and time will be considered in relation to Adorno's notion of *écriture*, before this discussion finally embarks on the more comprehensive study of temporal tactility in Ferneyhough's work that will form the basis of Part III).

At this stage it is also important to note Ferneyhough's predilection for visual imagery in the essays at issue here. Hence, throughout the following discussion, although he is obviously referring to music, more often than not he will turn to a visual description to convey his ideas. This aids my own argument insofar as it allows closer inspection of the relationship between Ferneyhough's thought and the linguistic, phenomenological and figural as they are expounded in both Lyotard and Deleuze's respective studies, since both these convey a great deal of their insight to the reader by appeal to visual, as well as intellectual, reception. Moreover, profuse with references to vision (often in preference to the aural), Ferneyhough's texts offer further evidence that his encounter with Deleuze's

study and with Lyotard's by proxy, has left its own trace at the heart of his writing. Most significant though is the extent to which Ferneyhough thinks and creates in the visual domain, in both his writings and music. One could read the references to visual imagery as mere aids in the explanation of his musical thought, but more pertinently it pays to consider that these writings actually detail his compositional experiences: he actually thinks, works, imagines and devises – though of course not exclusively – in visual terms, and from there material acquires tactile properties (in his view) which enrich the eventual musical product and in many cases, give rise to it. It is therefore no surprise that his writings and works lend themselves to such a thoroughgoing comparison with the issues germane to a critique of phenomena including the linguistic, conscious perception and visual art. Since the course of my own argument will ultimately lead (back) to the issues of tactility and the body in Ferneyhough and Bacon's works, which have already provided the point of departure for Part I, it is also possible to read Ferneyhough's continued emphasis on the eye and vision as a testimony to the importance, for him, of corporeality in the musical experience. His approach is not unlike those of Merleau-Ponty and Lyotard who also use the eye as a metonym for the body. In Ferneyhough's view, corporeality manifests itself as a property of musical material, through a listener or performer's self-awareness of his/her own body as a technically capable and perceptive instrument, and as a necessary means by which the composer can engage with material on an intuitive level, above and beyond his intellectual involvement.

---

[148] This involves revisiting many of the concepts and some of the quotations looked at in chapter one. The aim in repeating quotations encountered earlier is to relate them to the new context of Part II and to the

**Three Spaces**

For Ferneyhough, the figure is dialectically related to the concept of gesture (as acknowledged in Part I).[149] The gesture is deemed to be 'static' whilst the elaborated parametric material that issues from the gesture is considered mobile, and unfolds through time. Moreover, the gesture is called 'figural' if it exudes a 'critical mass' of potential figural energy, whilst the individually developed parameters are able to recombine into further gestural forms that are often considerably distorted [figural] in relation to previous incarnations of related gestures, all of which leads Ferneyhough to the conclusion that 'no figure is exclusively or merely a figure, just as no gesture is ever devoid of its proper aura of figural connotations to be activated at will'.[150]

The suggestion of their dialectical interaction through their extremes is an insightful one, but it is nonetheless possible to argue a case for the incommensurability (in Lyotard's sense) of gesture and figure: that it is precisely the mutual and absolute incompatibility or heterogeneity of their extremes which renders possible the emergence, activity and ultimately the palpability of imperceptible forces. Consider the association that Adorno makes between the parameter and music's tendency towards spatialisation[151]: not only is Ferneyhough's 'parameter' (his chosen locus of figural activity) installed in a spatial domain with which it now becomes possible to compare the gesture (also disposed in space), but one is now in a position to discover that it is not the parameter in-itself that Ferneyhough energises; in fact, it offers resistance to energetic

---

discussion of language, corporeality, visibility and force.

[149] After Max Paddison. See 'Considérations critiques sur la musique et les relations sociales: vers une théorie de la médiation' in *Musique Contemporaine: Perspectives théoriques et philosophiques*, eds. Irène Deliège and Max Paddison (Liège: Mardaga, 2001) p. 293ff.

[150] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 37

[151] See 'The Ageing of the New Music', trans. Susan H. Gillespie in *Essays on Music: Theodor W. Adorno*, ed. Richard Leppert (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif.: University of California Press, 2002) pp. 181-207

forces garnered in the interstices between gestural and parametric material. It is crucial, as Deleuze warns us, not to mistake the figural for a transformative process[152]. In Ferneyhough's case then, one must not be tempted to equate 'figurality' directly with the parameter insofar as the latter (which is abstractly – sometimes serially – deployed) cannot be seamlessly melded into something more 'organically' disposed through smooth musical transformation from within. It has seemed, since the discussion of Ferneyhough began in Part I, that there is a somewhat uncomfortable marriage between his avowedly abstract and arcane compositional methods and the focus in his writings on the body, force, energy and the subject. It is simply not possible to weave the two together such that the bodily is brought to bear immediately in the abstract and vice-versa; certain compositional decisions are taken abstractly, from 'above' or 'outside' the material in-itself. The figural, as the domain of forces, which I will argue can engender both the abstract and bodily, is always *de*formative: this is no less true for Ferneyhough than it is for Lyotard, for Deleuze and for Bacon respectively. Since neither the parameter as such deforms the gesture, nor the latter, the parameter, there must be, as Lyotard insists 'another space, the figural' – the space of invisible forces that is 'indicated laterally, fugitively at the *heart* of discourses and perceptions, as what disturbs them' from 'below' or 'within'. It is in this sense that Ferneyhough's notion of the figure is most analogous with Lyotard's. It is deconstructive: 'the constant creation of 'fuzzy parameters' of this sort is the primary purpose of the figure, to the extent that it supports the deconstruction and *subsequent opening up of the self-enclosed organism* in an indefinite number of possible directions'.[153]

---

[152] See Deleuze, trans. Smith 2003: 59
[153] Ferneyhough 1995 (TF): 39. My italics.

Until now, I have concentrated on two levels of musical manifestation in Ferneyhough's work: the gesture and the figure. At this stage, it is necessary to prepare the ground for the introduction of a third somewhat analogous to Lyotard's 'third space', as that in which the invisible-figural works. The gesture, described as belonging 'to a particular class of objects or states by virtue of all members of that class referring to a particular…semantic domain, a conventionally established signified'[154] and, early on in his essay 'Il Tempo della Figura' as 'the global delineation of a musical shape…the gesture *means*…by virtue of reference to specific hierarchies of symbolic convention',[155] is analogous to Lyotard's 'discourse': the gesture englobes textual space. In a statement that recalls Saussure's system of arbitrary signifiers, isolated through their 'differences without positive terms', Ferneyhough writes that 'the sense of arbitrariness of a gesture increases in direct proportion to its fundamental isolation'.[156]

However, the definition given immediately above does not satisfy or exhaust Ferneyhough's understanding of the concept of gesture. If it were to, his own music would not progress beyond that which he criticises so very heavily in his essay 'Form-Figure-Style'. In a sense, the type of gesture described above forms part of the 'handed-down' material with which Ferneyhough is confronted as he begins each new work. Ferneyhough's project is to absorb, immanently critique and build upon such material. Consequently, in addition to its 'global delineation' of shape or space (we might say as an element of musical *langue*), the gesture according to Ferneyhough must offer 'internal potential [i.e. from 'within'] for assisting in the creation of musical states *with which it is*

---

[154] Ferneyhough, 'Shattering the Vessels of Received Wisdom: in Conversation with James Boros' in Ferneyhough 1995: 386
[155] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 33. Original italics
[156] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 24

*not co-extant*'.[157] Thus Ferneyhough draws a distinction between 'the defined, concretely apperceptible gesture and the estimation of its 'critical mass', its energic volatility'.[158] The first, as determined above, is analogous to Lyotard's 'discourse': the gesture is looked (or listened) through since it refers like de Saussure's signifier, to a 'conventionally established signified'. The perception of its 'critical mass' on the other hand requires that the gesture be looked (or listened) at (or 'to'), like the opaque visibility of the sensible, the corporeal, that Lyotard suggests (after Merleau-Ponty) is heterogeneously present to discourse. (This discussion is occupied, at present, with the earlier part of Lyotard's *Discours, figure*). Ferneyhough's gesture is anamorphic. He argues that

> I invariably envisage a sonic event as fluctuating between two notional poles – that is, its immediate, identifiable, gestural gestalt, and its role as a launching pad for the…establishment of independent linear trajectories of the gestalt's constituent characteristics. The specifically figural aspect of an event is thus the degree to which these parametric quanta render themselves obviously amenable to such separation, exhaustion and re-combination….[159]

Furthermore, from one perspective, the gesture is 'to a significant degree, transparent to emotive intentionality. According to this view, the sign would…be analogous to a glass pane…'[160] and from another, 'over and beyond its referential, 'expressive' function…terms such as…friction, opacity' and so on 'immediately impose themselves'.[161] This latter might be identified, for the purposes of establishing continuity with both Lyotard and Bacon/Deleuze, as the sensible-figural level in Ferneyhough's musical discourse.

---

[157] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 33. My italics.
[158] *Ibid.*, 37
[159] Ferneyhough (JB) 1995: 387
[160] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 23
[161] Ferneyhough (JB) 1995: 386

So far the transparent gesture ('textual' space) has been considered as well as the opaque, 'critical mass' of the gesture ('sensible' space).[162] The apparent incommensurability between the two is also suggested in Ferneyhough's comment that the internal potential of a gesture participates in the creation of musical states [that is to say another gesture, and so on] 'with which it is not co-extant'. As Lyotard insists that the sensible is necessary to, yet excluded from, the system of linguistic signification, so the thick, critical mass of Ferneyhough's gesture is necessary to, and yet excluded from, the respective creation and manifestation of other ['globally delineated'] musical gestures, themselves a part of the system of musical signification.

Ferneyhough argues that 'figural activity thus consists, in part*, of devising means of ensuring that the latent volatility of the gesture burst through this contingent carapace in order to liberate that surplus of discursivity hitherto locked into the interstices of the sonic object'.[163] Such a surplus of discursivity acts as a (sensible) figure for the textual space of the holistic gesture. It becomes visible (or audible)[164] on account of the fact that it introduces mobility heterogeneously into the static space of the gesture, which Ferneyhough characterises as ''frozen force' to the extent that it stands for expressive sentiment, for an absent exchange of expressive energies. The gestural vocable is in many ways, comparable to the individual word, in that it may be usefully recognised in radically diverse contexts…'[165] Mobility or motivation is introduced when one considers

---

[162] In Part One the distinction was made (after Ferneyhough) between the two types of gesture. One was a basic signifier, and the other was called a 'gesture that is figural'. This distinction is maintained here.
* Ferneyhough's 'in part' is important: here I refer to the 'sensible-figural' level. The remainder of 'figural activity' is arguably the 'invisible-figural' activity, a discussion of which follows.
[163] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 36
[164] I put audible in brackets here: Ferneyhough himself almost without exception conceives of the figure in terms of visibility and not audibility. (See Introduction to this thesis for further discussion of this point).
[165] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 35

not the *de*notational sense of the gesture, but its 'specific connotational import'. Ferneyhough argues that

> if the individual gesture is perceived as the mere causal exemplification of, say, a particular rhetorical category, the individuation of its component elements degenerates to the status of incidental embellishment. If, on the other hand, this very same individuation assumes such particularised independence, the *topos* from which it emerges recedes beyond the 'recognition threshold....The moment itself is defined, not by any constancy of material substratum, but by its motion; it is the projection of figural energies which *make the pointer visible* by means of which the motion is measured.[166]

Note once again that it is not the parameters themselves that become 'mobile' or continuous (think of *Superscriptio* and the serial deployment of the notes, rests, subdivisions and intervals), but that these become the markers whose opacity and deformation reveal the action of figural forces or energies. A motivation is established between the self-contained gesture as a kind of 'focal zone' and the thickly resistant - particularised - charged parameters as they overcome the gestural boundary: here too a sensible-figural thickness is discernible at the edge of the discursive gesture. Ferneyhough's 'surplus of discursivity' recalls Lyotard's characterisations of metaphor (a rhetorical 'excess' that transgresses the code of acceptable substitutions authorised by the linguistic system) and reference (language's pointing to something outside itself) as thicknesses visible at the outer edge of discourse. In the similar case of designation, Lyotard argues that a motivation or continuity is established between terms, such that the terms or objects surrounding the focal point (the 'here and now'[167]) remain present to the mobile eye at the edge of vision. Readings argues that 'the designation works by a continuous or motivated differentiation of elements: 'here' may be opposed to 'there', but it is proximate to 'beside', 'below' or 'beyond''.[168] Lyotard himself notes that 'the indicated place, the here, is apprehended in a sensible field, as its focal point no doubt,

---

[166] *Ibid.,* 36. Original italics.
[167] Readings 1991: 15

but not so that its surroundings are eliminated'.[169] Similarly, Ferneyhough does not establish a discontinuity between the 'here and now' (in his musical case a temporal position)[170] and the past and the future of musical expression, described as 'the passage from one state to another'; instead 'neither the presumptive beginning and end points are primary, but rather the 'no longer' and 'not yet' whose *impressum* they bear'.[171] Therefore, grasping the present that a musical expression 'speaks' does not automatically eliminate its past and future from the 'sensible field'; the 'no longer' and the 'not yet' are proximate terms, leading Ferneyhough to speculate that 'our 'life-line' to reality might perhaps be interpreted as a special form of motion'.[172]

Moreover, one senses Ferneyhough's awareness of the need for a motivation between terms which acts as a figure for the discontinuous elements of discourse, in his claim that 'lines of force arise in the space between objects…at that moment of conceptual differentiation in which identity is born – and take as their vehicular object the connective impetus established in the act of moving from one discrete musical event to another'.[173] However, 'motivation' in Ferneyhough's music does not only obtain in a temporal-sensible field, but in a spatial-sensible field as well. Ferneyhough argues that the failure of much music articulated at one or other pole of the so-called 'spontaneity/precalculation' axis can be attributed to the inevitability or presupposition of

---

[168] *Ibid.*, 16
[169] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 38
[170] A deixis of reference: this is the function of the sign that points to 'point X on a map' (see above), but can also refer to a temporal position. Bronwen Martin and Felizitas Ringham's *Dictionary of Semiotics* (London: Cassell, 2000) defines it thus: 'Deixis is… used in a narrative as *deixis of reference*. In this context, temporal positions (now/then) or spatial positions (here/there) can be described as deixes of reference. Thus, for example, what is sometimes described as the 'time of the narrative' appears as a present identifiable with a 'then' deixis in relation to which a past and future can be installed.' (p. 48)
[171] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 35
[172] *Ibid.*, 35
[173] *Ibid.*,

certain 'channels of signification' arising from such stylistic extremities. Such music, and the 'expression' it purports to convey, is 'imprisoned' in its own 'one-dimensional *suddenness of surface*'[174] and hence there is no 'depth' – precisely no opacity at the borders of vision (or hearing) – with which such a surface might enter into a sensible field of tensions and motivations. Rather the sudden surface - the 'here' - becomes the focal point of this music, that excludes such proximities as 'below' or 'beyond'. In contrast, Ferneyhough's own musical thought attempts to rediscover the musical 'here' – the suddenness of gesture (whose validity he has never denied) – as the focal point of a sensible field which crucially does not exclude the proximity of depth, the musical 'below', 'beneath' or 'beyond': the sensate parametric opacity at the edge of the gestural space.

Contrary to the notion of a musical *langue* proposed earlier in relation to the 'discursive' gesture, we might now interpret Ferneyhough's insistence on the contextual importance of the sensible-figural, as a kind of musical *parole*. He argues that 'one possible counter to this pervasive problem [viz. The 'unimpaired semantic impact' of the gesture] is the return to a semanticity largely dependent on information resistant to concretisation in a super-contextual manner. It is on the basis of this consideration that the *figure* is proposed as an element of musical signification composed entirely of details defined by their contextual disposition rather than their innate, stylistically defined referential capacity'.[175] The kind of 'reference' he is concerned with in this last sentence is comparable to the *systematically* defined referential capacity of the signifier that Lyotard and others discover in Saussure's linguistic 'table' – namely that it points to the concept

---

[174] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 25
[175] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 34. Original italics.

or the signified, but ignores the sensible in an attempt to contain everything within the linguistic system.[176] By contrast, Ferneyhough's musical reference or designation indicates place spatially or temporally by deixis. Music, he argues, is a special case insofar as 'it is difficult to envision semantic units entirely divorced from the specific succession of processes engendering them': importantly in respect of our present discussion, he credits (sensible) elements of music specifically with 'a powerful capacity for undermining discursive identity'.[177]

**The Oblique**

The directness of musical gesture - which (as demonstrated throughout Part I) Ferneyhough both criticises for its falsity and yet incorporates into his own musical language in order that it be deconstructed through parametric activity into distorted indexes that reveal the work of figural forces - remains the most tellingly emotive, striking aspect of his music (cf. the opening of *Carceri d'Invenzione I*); and yet even as one receives this musical 'sign', one senses the disturbance of its signifying power, a thickness obscuring its transparency. Ferneyhough suggests that 'only the conscious and systematic deconstruction of the gesture into semantically mobile figural constellations promises to overcome the former's inherent limitations'.[178] The eye (ear) moves. It is no longer fixed upon the focal zone, the 'here', conceiving of the gesture by virtue of its place within a signifying system. Rather one can detect a number of inferences in Ferneyhough's use of the term 'oblique' in his essay, when he argues that 'a more

---

[176] Readings 1991: 14
[177] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 34
[178] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 27

differentiatedly oblique species of discourse would avoid [becoming imprisoned in the one-dimensional *suddenness of surface*]'.[179]

In the context of the current Lyotard-focused interpretation of Ferneyhough's writings, one might explain the need for a specifically 'oblique species of discourse' both in terms of the necessity of the heterogeneous incursion of the oblique - as the non-explicit, indirect - into transparent discourse as well as in the sense that the mobile eye might regard the thickening of discourse from an oblique angle or a number of oblique positions as in anamorphosis which allows the phenomenal eye to perceive at once the discursive and the sensible-figural in the musical gesture.

Thus one confusing aspect of Ferneyhough's writings in relation to the present discussion becomes clearer: his insistence on the introduction of 'depth perspective' to his music, and to the viewer/listener's experience does not indicate the establishment of some kind of deeper musical 'vanishing point' towards which the surface disposition of the music might ultimately tend. Instead, 'perspective' refers in Ferneyhough's case to the incommensurability of flat musical surfaces regarded 'head-on', with the oblique perception of deeper, thicker presences that trespass upon or poke through the surface.[180] Ferneyhough argues that 'the composer needs to attain some degree of control over this perspectival fluctuation if he aspires to master his means in anything like their full formal and expressive potential. Means must be determined to generate distinguishable degrees of purposive depth which in my view...gestural rhetoric is no longer...capable of assuring'.[181] Ferneyhough echoes Lyotard's description of the tension between the transparency of discourse and the opacity of the visible: the first constitutes a conceptual

---

[179] *Ibid.*, 25. Original italics.
[180] See note 115 in Part One of this thesis, referring to Adorno's notion of *Durchbruch* [breakthrough].

flat surface, whilst the second a perceptible depth, or 'the depth of the visible'.[182] Moreover, Lyotard too insists that the incursion of this sensible depth into transparent discursive space is an 'oblique' invasion.[183]

The Piranesi etchings after which Ferneyhough's *Carceri d'Invenzione* cycle is named are celebrated for their multi-perspectival design; not for their geometrical disposition and many vanishing (focal) points but for their fantastical element. Ferneyhough praises the transgression of the frame or edge of Piranesi's works by lines of force. Thus 'perspective' for Ferneyhough means in some respects the opposite to perspective as Lyotard makes (negative) use of it in his own theory. In the latter, the immobile eye is fixed towards the vanishing point whereas in the former, the many burstings forth beyond the boundaries of pictorial space each assert their claim on the eye: the eye is subject to a struggle, it moves furiously. Ferneyhough argues that 'one way of achieving 'depth perspective' will be to seek procedural modalities amenable to being transferred at will from one point of observation in the field to one or more others'.[184] Perspective in this case does not make the painting/etching more intelligible, fixing its details in rational figurative space, but rather less so, the more Ferneyhough's mobile eye encounters resistance. 'Perspective' as Ferneyhough intends it has rather more to do with the perspective *one gains* on an (opaque) object from a number of different viewpoints (as in anamorphosis) than it has to do with the laws of three-dimensional representation on a two-dimensional surface. If, analogously to Piranesi's etchings, lines of force emerge through Ferneyhough's musical surface, through gestural boundaries,

---

[181] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 37
[182] Readings 1991: 11-13
[183] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 158. Cited and translated in Bennington 1988: 74
[184] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 38

they do so obliquely. This can have interesting ramifications not only for the perception of gestural space but also for that of musical time. The incommensurability of figurative (gestural) and visible space is once again the issue:

> [these pictures] actually generate lines of force, or energies, which are not commensurable with one another on a realistic level. And these grating, scraping contradictions force us to reconstruct not just the fictional [discursive] space of the picture, but…force us to reperspectivise the world of everyday existence which confronts us beyond the limits of the work. This is exactly what I try to do in music. The work itself is meant to create the scraping, raw edges, the frictions and lines of force which project themselves, labyrinth-like, out beyond the limits of the actual duration of the work, to infect or colour our perspectives on the way in which the world is perceived.[185]

## The Oblique Perception of Time

The work of figural forces is also manifest through Ferneyhough's complex musical discourse by means of our perception of time. Time itself is used as a driving force by Ferneyhough and it, too, is perceived obliquely in his music. It is not the case that one is made to comprehend time in terms of duration. In other words, the fact that a certain 'section A' lasts longer than 'section B' is neither here nor there for Ferneyhough in relation to his listeners' musical experience of time. This is aptly demonstrated by the ending of *Carceri d'Invenzione III*, wherein Ferneyhough terminates a musical process prematurely without 'seeing out' its total duration, because as he admits in interview, the deadline for finishing the piece loomed large and he had no choice in the matter.[186] However, *Carceri III* is arguably one of the pieces in the cycle which most demonstrates Ferneyhough's interest in the manipulation of time as a fundamental compositional force.[187]

---

[185] Richard Toop 'Brian Ferneyhough's *Superscriptio*: A Conversation and an Analysis' in *Contemporary Music Review* vol. 13, no. 1 (London: 1995) p. 1

[186] My thanks to John Hails for the loan of part of his unpublished MA Diss. *A brief survey of temporal, metric and rhythmic practices within Brian Ferneyhough's Carceri d'Invenzione III* (University of Huddersfield, 2001).

[187] *Ibid.*

Time then, becomes sensible precisely once one accepts that it is not a given in Ferneyhough's music. Like the forces described above, time emerges obliquely from the musical depths, it resists the eye/body, making it work to engage with the music, rather than imprisoning it in the 'suddenness of surface' that is inimical to time, merely presenting conceptual meaning to the immobile eye without a struggle. Ferneyhough argues that the figure's

> capacity for generating multiple (simultaneous and/or successive) streams of directionality (allowing time to flow not only horizontally but also 'vertically' and 'obliquely') in the sense of forcing the attention to accelerate or retard scanning operations according to the degree of interlocking - and thus resistance - of figural elements, promotes the onward-flowing projection of multiple or ambiguous perspectives, of 'depth effect' in the prioritisation of the sonic objects themselves.[188]

The musical surface is deformed according to the exit trajectory of such forces, which leave behind a 'scar', the trace of their action. This scar testifies to Lyotard's 'third space': true invisible-figural space (involving the work of the unconscious, to which this discussion will return presently). Figural forces or drives in themselves are invisible. One perceives only the disturbance they occasion deep within discourse. Ferneyhough writes that 'elements do not simply appear, they emerge imbued with…their very own 'autobiography', the scars of their own growth…The re-integration of some form of depth perspective depends on re-establishing contact between the surface features of a work and its inner subcutaneous drives'.[189] The action of forces is oblique here insofar as force in-itself is not made musically explicit. One's perception of force is always indirect, through figural deformation, in the same way as perception of depth in Ferneyhough's music is always indirect – oblique – due to its layer-upon-layer opacity in contradistinction to the 'transparency' of the musical surface.

---

[188] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 41
[189] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 25

Ferneyhough often indicates[190] that the surface of his music is much simpler than deeper layers, some of which are so processually complex as to defy the possibility of notation altogether. What is presented at the work's surface then is something conceivable (however formidable it looks nevertheless), that the composer can actually write down, something gestural, which is heterogeneous to the deeper material, only discernible as an opaque presence which can never be fully captured in notational terms. Commenting once again on *Superscriptio*, his words recall Bacon's notion of 'fact', the figural 'truth of the visible' as that which emerges from the gap between sensible and discursive spaces: 'the relative simplicity of the notation: the fact that by drawing back, as it were, into the actual facture of the composition, into the interstices of material, rather than demonstrating a sort of open skeleton-work on the surface, deconstructed, I've pulled the processes back below the surface, which means that I can nearly always notate them by means of normal notational conventions'.[191]

**The Figural Unconscious**

In Lyotard's case, what I have called the 'invisible-figural' is associated with the unconscious and the dreamwork. More conspicuously than either Bacon or Deleuze, Ferneyhough also acknowledges the dream, the unconscious, as the locus of figural forces. He begins 'Il Tempo Della Figura' with an excerpt of a John Ashbery poem 'Self-portrait in a convex mirror'[192] which 'says of dreams':

They seemed strange only because we couldn't actually see them
And we realised this only at the point where they lapse
Like a wave breaking on a rock, giving up

---

[190] See Toop (S) 1995
[191] *Ibid.*, 3
[192] John Ashbery *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1977) p. 73

Its shape in a gesture that expresses that shape.[193]

These four short lines encapsulate several ideas that are recurrent throughout Ferneyhough's own writings: the invisibility of forces realised only as they encounter resistance from a musical object; the notion of gesture is also evoked in Ashbery's metaphor of the wave. It is the latter that Ferneyhough takes up in his essay: aspects of his own insights are strikingly similar to some of Lyotard's in respect of conscious perception, mobility and *im*mobility. For example, Ferneyhough argues that 'Ashbery employs the image of consciousness as the crest of the wave, always changing the material of which it is composed, always driven forward by the sea's restless energy but, in a certain sense (like all wave forms) not really moving'.[194] 'The function and nature of the figure', he insists 'are closely allied to this image'.[195] Earlier, I have argued that Ferneyhough's gesture, perceived as an opaque, critical mass - as a kind of anamorphosis between 'one-dimensional' surface signification and the sensible-figural as 'distinguishable degrees of purposive depth'[196] - encourages the movement of the eye (or body) in response. As a metaphor for musical consciousness, then, the specifically 'anamorphic' gesture is 'always changing the material of which it is composed,' both in the sense that, looked at from different viewpoints, it manifests incommensurable qualities (opacity/transparency) and also, considering the decomposition and (distorted) recomposition of the gesture by means of figural energies, it too appears to be 'driven forward', mobile. All this in spite of the very specific choice by Ferneyhough to deconstruct the gesture parametrically, by means of the very aspect of musical material so

---

[193] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 33
[194] *Ibid.*, 36
[195] *Ibid.*,

recently critically associated (mostly negatively) with musical stasis.[197] The implication of Ashbery's poem - that the wave is, 'in a certain sense...not really moving' - rings especially true for Ferneyhough's gesture, earlier described as 'frozen force', and its parametric undoing. The latter will, in a post- (total) serial context, always carry a certain 'baggage'. Jonathan Harvey's introduction to the *Collected Writings* makes this clear enough in its attempt to emphasise the degree of expressivity that Ferneyhough's parametric composition entails, over and beyond the integral serialists' elevation of all parameters to self-sufficient form-making status.[198] Nevertheless, the point should be reiterated that Ferneyhough's decision to create a material that, in spite of its capacity for expression, engenders and what is more promotes that sense of stasis, is a thoroughly deliberate one. Effectively, he has rendered the eye immobile once more, after the manner that Lyotard identifies in Cézanne's painting. In doing so, Ferneyhough collapses the apparent heterogeneity or difference between gesture and sensible-figure into an opposition in order that the true difference of the invisible-figural might emerge through the work of forces.

According to Lyotard, preventing the eye from moving between the focal point and elements situated in the surrounding sensible-field results in the 'shifting' of those two spaces with one another such that one gauges the 'irruption' of the (invisible) figural into discourse. As noted in relation to Bacon's *Pope* study, the area in which the two spaces shift together, becoming partially overlaid in the manner of tectonic plates, might be small (as is the head, relatively speaking, in Bacon's painting), but the large scale tendency of the material is directed toward that locus of emergent force. In Bacon's

---

[196] *Ibid.*, 37
[197] See Jonathan Harvey 'Foreword' in Ferneyhough 1995: ix-xii

painting, the eye is drawn towards, captured and re-immobilised by the Pope's head. Similarly in Ferneyhough's music, as Harvey suggests, 'however closely you listen to the details of these works there is a structure of roughly the same degree of sophistication as that which plans the large-scale events'.[199] Furthermore, Harvey argues that one can approach Ferneyhough's music with a mobile eye/ear, which permits one to perceive the level of the sensible-figural: 'you can', he claims, 'focus in and out at will'. Nonetheless, he also implies that having done this, one is in a position 'with greater familiarity [to] contain all focusing in the one integral perception'.[200] Arguably, this amounts to a similar re-immobilisation of the eye to that which Lyotard insists is necessary for a deeper appreciation of Cézanne's work. Moreover, Lyotard's assertion that the level of the invisible-figural and the unconscious manifests a secondary reaffirmation of the sensible also seems to apply in Ferneyhough's case. Ferneyhough himself consolidates the essence of both Harvey and Lyotard's comments, arguing that

> I should perhaps emphasise that the sort of focussing [Harvey] is talking about does not imply the consistency of structural correspondence or quantification on all levels (as, for instance, in some of Stockhausen's later total serial essays.)...It is better to resort to overlapping and intersecting systems of approximations, where common principles are modified to take account of the constraints of the layer of activity being treated.... The mind is a wonderful analogical instrument, and I try to operate with this fact constantly in mind.[201]

The reference to the analogical capacity of the mind is interesting here. The implication that Ferneyhough continuously varies physical quantities and qualities in his musical texture, in a spatial sense (cf. overlapping, intersecting layers) recalls Lyotard's notion of spatial 'shifting' which occurs before the immobile eye. If, as Harvey's text seems to

---

[198] *Ibid.*, x
[199] Jonathan Harvey, 'Brian Ferneyhough' in *Musical Times* 120 no. 1639 (1979) p. 725. Cited in Ferneyhough (JB) 1995: 390
[200] *Ibid.*, cited in Ferneyhough (JB) 1995: 390
[201] *Ibid.*, 390-391

imply, we immobilise the eye 'in the one integral perception' which, we might conjecture neither tries to grasp the sensible, nor eliminate it in favour of the figurative, a similar 'shifting' does indeed become perceptible in Ferneyhough's music. As with Lyotard, this marks the irruption of the invisible-figural forces into musical space; and again Ferneyhough echoes Lyotard when he calls this irruption the 'event'.

As to the figural 'shifting' described above, examples are discoverable in Ferneyhough's attitude to pitch and interval. In *Superscriptio* for example, he begins by defining the pitch parameter in a 'traditional' or historically-established fashion, as simply a series of the twelve chromatic pitches (not in order, but with no repeated pitches until the thirteenth note). However, as the piece progresses it is the intervals between these twelve notes that Ferneyhough pursues 'serially'. Towards the end, the interval series is 'compacted' proportionally such that it yields a series of twelve mictrotonal pitches. The point here is that pitch and interval are not to be considered as two measurable phenomena. It is possible to produce a 'graph' detailing the serial deployment of material throughout the piece but this assumes that every last pitch is 'registered precisely' in any given performance. This, according to Ferneyhough 'already implies a certain grammaticality of all intervals and their perceptibility – that one assigns a function to them in some way'.[202] In fact he insists that the qualitative perception of a certain interval is not predicated on the exactitude of the two pitches that give rise to it: in short, pitch and interval are not wholly co-dependent, but neither are they entirely separable from one another, by definition. Both cannot simply be given a constant, figurative value and neither are they perceptible as functional figures on a ground. Ferneyhough speculates 'I would say that there is a certain quality to a whole-tone plus

quarter-tone which is perceptible even with a certain degree of flexibility as to exactitude. I don't regard these things as functional, perceptible units'.[203] Furthermore, I suggest that pitch and interval disposed in this manner 'shift' together as 'impressions', something like the shifting of sensible and discursive spaces identified by Lyotard, which results from the irruption of invisible figural forces into language or the artwork. Ferneyhough continues, arguing that 'I regard [pitch and interval] as areas of sensation…sound is always the reflection of context, of contour…sensation as such is almost never abstract, so that this strange experience of seeing this extremely abstract space has already been conditioned by our previous expectations'.[204] Recall the previous encounter in this discussion with Bacon's Pope – the head specifically – and the abstract manner in which colourful contours 'shift' together, resulting nonetheless in a highly charged area of sensation, of impressions, and evidence of the work of figural forces: the sensate head marks the site of this irruption of force.

**Re-immobilisation of the Eye/Body**

Ferneyhough himself cautions against the attempt to grasp certain musical features whilst excluding others (as Lyotard warns against the eye that loses the sensible opacity at the edge of vision in the attempt to lay hold of it), recalling that 'I was once asked if I could 'hear' all the notes and rhythms occurring in a single beat of [a] large orchestral work…. The very formulation of the question seemed to me to underline how little of what was going on had been 'heard' by my interlocutor, since his approach eliminated *a*

---

[202] Ferneyhough, 'Interview with Richard Toop' in 1995: 281
[203] *Ibid.*
[204] *Ibid.*, 281-282

*priori*...everything, in short, that made the passage in question what it was'.[205] However, it is not simply a case of the composer insisting that every detail be registered by the listener; of course this would be impossible. Rather, Ferneyhough seems to be encouraging the listener to venture beyond his or her engagement with the sensible-figural level of the music (wherein the eye moves), toward the paradoxical immobility that permits the two spaces (textual and sensible) to 'shift' together. He argues that 'one should not hesistate to make instantaneous decisions as to listening direction; at the same time, though, every attempt should be made to retain the sensation of *multiple realities* which the layerings of process and texture provide. Musical logic is not necessarily based on an exclusive 'either-or' but on an inclusive 'both-and''.[206] Both sensible and textual space *and* a third: the invisible-figural. It is at this point that the listener can truly begin to appreciate the action of invisible forces, as the deformations they precipitate become perceptible in Ferneyhough's musical material.

The composer's response to the question '[is one] really expected to absorb everything that's going on [in Ferneyhough's music]?'[207] recalls Lyotard's suggestion that the attempt (of structuralism especially) to account for every aspect of discourse - including linguistic reference - rationally, by means of a system, ignores the opacity that reference introduces to discourse, at its edge. Ferneyhough echoes this in his own context insofar as the attempt to know, to 'absorb' everything, reduces musical experience to a system of accounting for elements; reduces it, in other words, to a text much like Saussure's linguistic system reduces reference to an element within the *langue*. Ferneyhough argues that

---

[205] Ferneyhough (JB) 1995: 391
[206] *Ibid.* My italics.

If we talk of 'everything' we are begging a lot of questions. Most Western art music has been based on the assumption of structural *priorities*, things that are more or less important on various direct or indirect levels of perception. The lack of expectations dogging a lot of contemporary music in this respect plus, perhaps, the experience of more literal-minded species of twelve-tone thinking, has indirectly engendered an odd egalitarianism *in which an event ceases to exist* if it is not projected onto the same two-dimensional, high-gloss screen as everything else.[208]

Ferneyhough's event (like his gesture) critiques 'high-gloss' musical 'events' in the work of certain other composers. In his view, the event is registered in the musical depths; that same 'event' may, some time later, break through the musical surface in the form of a 'trace, the evidence, of a finished musical process'.[209] Ferneyhough's 'event' distinguishes itself from its 'two-dimensional' cousin on two main counts: firstly it injects sensation, physicality into musical material – it exists corporeally; secondly it acquires duration – *durability* and opacity – since its irruption in the musical depths takes time to register on the musical surface. I will return to the 'event' as conceived by Ferneyhough and Lyotard throughout the remainder of this discussion.

**Musical Parole**

There is room neither for the personal nor the ambiguous in the 'high-gloss' context criticised above – what Ferneyhough might call the contemporary musical *langue* (of course there are exceptions, and Ferneyhough has simplified the matter) – but his comments are useful inasmuch as they might be compared with what I have called his own musical *parole*: specifically parameters *in use*. Ferneyhough's musical language exudes a 'personal style' and an engagement with the body (much as Merleau-Ponty advocates in respect of language proper) insofar as the musical object is sensible and

---

[207] *Ibid.*, 388
[208] *Ibid.* My italics

conveys a depth that cannot be reduced to a two-dimensional projection on a transparent screen. Importantly, Ferneyhough attributes the 'sensitive listener's concept of 'thingness' to the 'orientation which...each composition sets out to subliminally propose',[210] thus forging a link between the sensible and that of which we are not consciously aware. In his case this means the action of invisible forces upon the material. As Dews reminds us, 'the perceived object ['thingness'] - far from embodying semantic potential - is inherently resistant and opaque, it can never be grasped as it is 'in itself''.[211] For Lyotard, the same opacity that introduces the visible to discourse (or 'thingness' to Ferneyhough's musical language) also testifies to the absence of the linguistically non-graspable. Ferneyhough asks 'was it Richard Strauss who once, when told that a certain instrument could not be heard, replied "Maybe, but I'd notice if it were *not* there"?'[212]

**Present and Absent**

Returning to the Ashbery poem, Ferneyhough argues that it, too, offers the view that 'the present constitutes itself only as a *sensed absence*',[213] echoing Dews' insights into Lyotard's work referred to above. Ferneyhough's deductions regarding the simultaneous presence and absence of the (musical) object, after Ashbery (who focuses on the dream in the excerpt selected by the composer) also invoke the realm of the unconscious and desire, already explored in relation to *Discours, figure*.

Ferneyhough takes great care to distinguish his notion of musical force from that of musical energy in a long and complicated 'Adornoesque' passage in 'Il Tempo della

---

[209] Richard Toop 'Brian Ferneyhough's *Superscriptio*' 1995: 4
[210] Ferneyhough (JB) 1995: 388
[211] Dews 1987: 118
[212] Ferneyhough (JB) 1995: 388. Original italics

Figura'. At first glance this passage seems unnecessarily anfractuous, although it is possible to detect a similar distinction in the imagery of the poem itself, and interestingly, the same discrimination between energy and force is also discoverable in Lyotard's theory (after Freud) of the dreamwork.[214] Essentially, Ferneyhough suggests that the wave described in the poem be considered a form of entrapped energy, 'ejected into concrete form by the unyielding resistance of the rock'.[215] In this context, 'concrete form' refers to the gesture made by the wave, that expresses the shape of the rock, 'thereby', Ferneyhough argues, 'becoming invested…with symbolic stature'. However, it is possible to interpret this image of the crest of the wave as the locus of both symbol and - over and against it - sensible energy: it is at once 'fleetingly insubstantial' and yet the bearer of the 'moment of perception'. The physicality and weighty depth of the rock is made sensible, or visible. Ferneyhough's image, borrowed from Ashbery, encapsulates what I have called his 'anamorphic' gesture: both 'discursive' and sensible.

'Force', he insists, involves the liberation of entrapped energy. We might interpret such 'entrapped energy' in the context of Lyotard's study, as the sensible which the symbolic or textual has attempted to reduce to signification. 'Thus', maintains Ferneyhough, 'musical force and energy are not identical'.[216] Force emerges from what Lyotard terms the 'third space' (which Ferneyhough characterises as the interstices between the symbolic gesture and its sensible 'critical mass'), and is deconstructive. It 'upsets the representational seduction of language [*gesture*] in evoking the figural'.[217]

The action of invisible-figural forces effects, as I have noted previously, a secondary re-

---

[213] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 35
[214] Bennington 1988: 17
[215] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 35
[216] *Ibid.*

affirmation of the sensible: for Ferneyhough, this is enacted through the liberation of energy trapped in the musical object. One might further interpret Ferneyhough's surplus of discursivity in terms of such a freeing-up of energies. Recall Ferneyhough's own words: 'to some extent, the affective content of the gesture is only loosely related to its apperceptible surface; the figural activity thus consists, in part, of devising means of ensuring that the latent volatility of the gesture burst through this contingent carapace in order to liberate that surplus of discursivity hitherto locked into the interstices of the sonic object'.[218] These ideas resonate with the metaphor of the sea (which in fact runs throughout 'Il Tempo della Figura', seemingly both inspiring ideas and reining-in Ferneyhough's often circumlocutory discursive style). The composer imagines that the wave, once ejected into its gesture by the rock, inevitably crashes back into the sea and is reabsorbed into the current. For Ferneyhough, 'figural activity' might be likened to the action of the current, always seeking to destabilise gestural definition.

The wave sweeps over the rock as it returns to the undertow, damaging the rock in the process. Ferneyhough refers to the 'power of the forces' that can cause 'gradual 'weathering', erosion....'[219] However minute the change in the rock from the action of one wave to the next, each wave crest - each successive gesture - will be different. Once again in Ferneyhough and Ashbery's metaphor, the issue of figural depth and the symbolic surface is raised. Ferneyhough makes the connection himself, arguing that

> To the extent that the present stage of compositional ideology tends to favour surface interaction of sometimes only primitively related emotive signifiers, it inevitably encourages the acceptance of an 'all-over', one-dimensional rationale of the perception/reception connex. I do not believe that this assumption can ever adequately do justice to the mind's need for insightful re-ordering of the experientially given, even though it naturally forms one link in the chain whereby significance is assured. The subsuming of as many phenomena as possible to criteria of a dual nature - gestural as well as figural - allows for an infinity of

---

[217] Readings 1991: 40
[218] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 36
[219] *Ibid.*, 35

intermediate steps, of contextually determinable and evaluable relationships between the crest of the wave and the hidden forces investing the marine deep.[220]

Despite their separation into two 'trajectories', Ferneyhough nevertheless insists that force and energy do intersect 'in the musical discourse'. Furthermore, their point of intersection is identified as 'the locus of the present' - 'a unique balance of tensions'[221] - arguably both in the temporal and spatial senses of the term, but in either case (as noted above), according to Ferneyhough, the 'present constitutes itself only as sensed absence' (be that the 'no longer' or the 'not yet' of expression referred to earlier, or the 'trace of being', of thingness manifest in sensible perception). The musical object is impossibly present and absent, simultaneously, in musical discourse.

Ferneyhough's ideas share remarkable affinities with Lyotard's in this respect. Readings argues that 'the object is incommensurably both present and absent, in a way that parallels Lyotard's description of anamorphosis. The work of desire is to open this incommensurability in our discursive relation to objects, which are constituted (presented) as lost (absent)'.[222] The work of desire targets forces at language, thus liberating the energy of the unconscious in discourse, as the latter's figural 'other' or difference. Lyotard suggests that 'the dream is not the speech of desire, but its work…it results from the application of a force to a text'.[223]

Lyotard also argues that 'the manner in which meaning is present…(in any constituent of a figure) is felt as an opacity by the mind habituated to language. An almost endless

---

[220] *Ibid.*, 37.
[221] *Ibid.*, 35
[222] Readings 1991: 46.
[223] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 238. Translated in Dews 1987: 122.

effort is required in order for the eye to let itself be captured by the form, to receive the energy which it contains'.[224]

Earlier, it was noted that the affirmative nature of the deformation enacted by invisible forces upon sensible and discursive material. It is worth once more emphasising that, like the deconstructive trajectory taken by Lyotard's book, Ferneyhough's notions of gesture, figure and force undergo similar deconstructive operations. Ferneyhough is keen to offset the idea that his obstinate use of parametric mechanisms allies his material too closely with what we might understand by conventional serial practices. He argues (importantly, as will become clear) that

> In some forms of total serial practice, a (in my view largely just) criticism was that the serially-generated intersection of parametric strands produced a sound object which in no way clearly reflected the ordered nature of those same strands: the polyphony was generationally virtual whilst remaining perceptually latent. In my own recent pieces, I've tried to bypass this problem by allowing the individually manipulable parametric strata to begin life authenticated by means of functional embedding in a concrete gestural context.[225]

The emphasis is on the gestural as point of departure, as that which is *de*constructed, and not the coming-together of parameters to form gestural structures. Analogously to Lyotard then, Ferneyhough's 'compositional trajectory' begins from the textual or discursive level of material. The handed-down, conventional gesture (as that which attempts to reduce the sensible to representation) is absorbed into his own sensate concept of gesture. This latter in its turn – the gesture at 'critical mass' – is deconstructed into sensible-figural parameters which are finally themselves deconstructed by deformative invisible-figural forces that *re*-affirm, through deformations, the sensibleness of the parameters. (Recall that 'each composition sets out to subliminally…influence…the sensitive listener's concept of 'thingness''). Such a re-

---

[224] *Ibid.*, 218. Translated in Dews 1987: 116.

affirmation can only take place however, *after* language – the figurative – has first attempted to reduce the sensible to signification or representation.[226] This supports the assertion made earlier that Ferneyhough cannot simply ignore the attempt in recent compositional history to reduce the musically sensible to a 'one-dimensional', conventionally symbolic gestural language: he must absorb, deconstruct and re-affirm the sensible through deformation. He argues that 'I'm not really interested in an *imitatio naturae* as a processual injunction; I find it far more interesting to reflect nature back to herself via distorted mirrors, to allow her to re-enter via my own reactions to the arrays of constraints and opportunities I set up in advance'.[227] Ferneyhough echoes Lyotard and indeed Bacon insofar as deconstruction and deformation are critically affirmative actions. He attempts a 'mode of composition which enhances the affective gesture with the energy to productively dissolve itself in a quasi-analytical fashion'.[228]

Furthermore, as the body in Bacon's paintings is deformed into truth or 'appearance' (in his special sense of the term), so the gesture in Ferneyhough's music is violated by forces in order that it 'not simply appear' (in the generic sense of the term) but 'emerge imbued with...[its] very own 'autobiography', the scars of [its] own growth'.[229] Something of the attempt by representation to reduce the sensible to the textual, and the subsequent figural re-affirmation of the sensible is detectable in Ferneyhough's observation that

> Often, we shove things into categorical shoeboxes precisely in order to avoid the weird, perhaps frightening, feeling of sacrificing up some part of ourselves to an alien environment in order that we subsequently receive it back again, enriched and re-articulated.[230]

---

[225] Ferneyhough (JB) 1995: 387
[226] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 296. Discussed in Readings 1991: 40
[227] Ferneyhough (JB) 1995: 391
[228] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 27
[229] *Ibid.*, 25
[230] Ferneyhough (JB) 1995: 391

Several of the terms relating to the figural (that is, specifically the so-called invisible-figural) that are used by Lyotard in *Discours, figure* convey the same non-affirmative tone as the important notion of deformation, even though like the latter, they actually raise both the textual and sensible to 'truth'. The re-affirmed sensible is, once again, what Lyotard calls 'the truth of the visible'. He argues that truth emerges in the form of spatial distortion enacted through forces when textual and sensible spaces 'shift together'. He observes that

> everything is in place in the twin spaces of signification and designation, so that the effects of truth may appear simple errors, slips caused by carelessness, poor adjustments of the elements of discourse, poor accommodation of the eye. Everything is ready there for the erasure of the event, for the restoration of good form, of clear and distinct thought. Truth presents itself as a fall, as a slippage and an error: what the Latin *lapsus* means.[231]

Arguably, the 'event' is perceived by those who imagine that Bacon paints 'damaged' bodies and (mis)interpreted by the mind as an 'error' of some kind. The models that take offence at his paintings of them experience precisely this reaction.[232] They accuse Bacon of doing them an injury in paint, of presenting 'bad form' as it were. Bacon himself however, privileges physical sensation and flesh over a representation in which 'everything is in place': one has only to recall the head in the *Study after Pope Innocent X* to be assured of this. The face is displaced in favour of an emergent, deformed head. Once it is understood that Bacon's attempt to present the human body by way of the 'figure' involves assimilating the 'error' (the mark of the 'event') into a renewed, affirmative, notion of 'appearance' manifest through the heterogeneous co-presence of two spaces - representational and figural 'third' space - there can no longer remain any

---

[231] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 135. Cited and translated in Readings 1991: 46
[232] Sylvester 1987: 41

misinterpretation of Bacon's 'appearance' as a spectacle.[233] Essentially, 'bad form' is preferable, more truthful than the 'good form' to which the (mind's) eye is habituated.

Deleuze seems to concur with Lyotard's particular notion of the 'fall' as an affirmative event, relating it to his study of the intensity of sensation and levels of forces in Bacon's paintings. He begins by noting the occurrences in the latter of falling flesh, for example. He argues that 'it is like this in Bacon: the flesh descends from the bones, the body descends from the arms and the raised thighs. Sensation develops through the fall, by falling from one level to another. The idea of a positive and active reality of the fall is essential here'.[234] Note the levels of sensation that he is so careful to distinguish here. Lyotard's description of the 'fall' as an effect of truth - the irruption of the invisible-figural into discourse - is not necessarily, however, a fall in space. It is true that the event occurs in Lyotard's 'third space', but, in the same way that we must not assume that the terms 'lapse', 'error', 'slip' and 'fall' connote failure and non-affirmation, so too, we must not confine the notion of the fall to a spatial descent. Deleuze argues that

> This idea of a fall implies no context of misery, failure, or suffering, though it might be illustrated more easily in such a context. But just as the violence of a sensation must not be confused with the violence of a represented scene, the ever deeper fall of a sensation must not be confused with a fall represented in space....The fall is what is most alive in the sensation, that through which the sensation is experienced as living.[235]

Similarly, it is through the figural 'event' (the work of deformative forces) perceived as an 'error' in Bacon's painting that the figure is re-affirmed most profoundly: it is indeed experienced as a living sensation. Ferneyhough's conception of a piece of music, as will be discovered in greater detail presently, begins with the meticulous pre-composition of basic materials (such as rhythmic structure) which become, in the piece itself, the

---

[233] See Sylvester's discussions with Bacon, especially Interviews One and Two in Sylvester 1987
[234] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 81

fundamental material 'worked-up' into gestures. Through the latter they are manipulated into further figural, parametric trajectories of expression. Ferneyhough argues that 'the high density of pre-compositional preparation for a piece does not set out to define *a priori* each and every event: it is meant to provide a life-support system, a dispositive of constraints and delimitations with which it is meaningful to make decisions affecting other parts of the totality'.[236] Of interest here is the reference to the 'life-support system' that this pre-compositional material offers a piece of Ferneyhough's music. Contrast, for example, Deleuze's insistence that 'the fall is what is *most alive* in the sensation' with the implication, by means of the image of the 'life-support system', that what is *least alive* of all the sensate musical material, for Ferneyhough, is the pre-compositionally devised structure. Where, then, is the 'fall' (in Deleuze/Lyotard's sense) in Ferneyhough's music, the area of sensation that is the most alive, most intense? Ferneyhough views the geometricity of pre-compositional materials as the [preparation] of the ground for the intuition to function'.[237] For Deleuze, the 'fall' is realised in a Bacon painting, when the intensity of the sensation that it conveys to the viewer is at its greatest possible extreme. Thus the leaking bodies and erased features and areas of flesh in Bacon's work (particularly those that were earlier identified as manual wipes, smears and blots) testify to the 'fall' or event. Witness the Pope's head as opposed to his skirts. Ferneyhough generates levels of sensation in his own work. He regularly refers to his 'layered' approach to composition, and to the necessity of unlocking 'areas of sensation'.[238] In the same spirit that Bacon spills open the form of bodies and leaves empty areas like gaping

---

[235] *Ibid.*, 82
[236] Ferneyhough (JB) 1995: 383
[237] Ferneyhough, 'Interview with Jean-Baptiste Barrière' in 1995: 416
[238] Ferneyhough, 'Carceri d'Invenzione: in Conversation with Richard Toop' in 1995: 281

holes, Ferneyhough argues that 'rational processes are always better when incomplete or 'skewed', prioritised in some degree, since it gives them a 'torque' or inherent energising capacity'.[239] Moreover, 'to expect these things [rational processes] to be ready and active in their entirety at the outset would be to deny them their contribution to the metaphor of the '*form of life*' which underlies my compositional thinking…composing is work, and should be incorporated as such'.[240] Ferneyhough insists that a piece must evidence 'means of growth and accretion'[241]: often this is carried out through the intersection and collision of several layers of material, each one 'skewed' in its way. The complex of sensations coming together in this manner create even greater intensities, conveying the magnitude and depth of the 'form of life' to which Ferneyhough aspires. He places great importance on human intuition in these situations, much as Bacon claims that his wipes and smears, enacted after the painting of the figurative body has been initiated, are intuitive. Thus we might make an analogy between the skews and even 'wipes'[242] that Ferneyhough occasions in rational material and what Deleuze identifies as 'free manual traits' in Bacon's paintings. He suggests that 'the act of painting is the unity of these free manual traits and their effect upon and reinjection into the visual whole. By passing through these traits, figuration recovers and recreates, but does not resemble, the figuration from which it came. Hence Bacon's constant formula: create resemblance, but through accidental and nonresembling means'.[243]

---

[239] Ferneyhough (J-BB) 1995: 416
[240] *Ibid.*, 416-417. My italics.
[241] *Ibid.*, 417
[242] Ferneyhough (JB) 1995: 398

## II.iv The Accident

We return, through the exploration of the 'fall' and sensation, to Bacon's special notion of 'appearance' as affirmation. Deleuze (after Bacon) is quite explicit: resemblance - appearance - is made possible through the accident or fall (recall Lyotard's mention of 'error' and 'slip'). Deleuze argues that in Bacon's work, 'it is the rectilinear contour, or regular curve, that isolates the form as an essence, a closed unity that is shielded from all accident, change, deformation, and corruption; essence acquires a formal and linear [as in perspective] presence that dominates the flux of existence and representation'.[244] In other words, he confirms the assessment – made earlier – of Bacon's geometrical delimiting structures, which attempt to reduce the figural to the figurative, to signification. This is important in relation to Ferneyhough, who describes the gesture as an essence, an 'objective and material-bound presence'[245], and specifically one that is formal and symbolic (representational). However, beyond this Deleuze suggests that 'modern painting begins when man no longer experiences himself as an essence, but as an accident'.[246] (In fact, Deleuze's argument issues from Bacon himself: 'I think that man now realises he's an accident, that he is a completely futile being, that he has to play out the game without reason').[247] Ferneyhough adds credence to Bacon's attempt to 'create resemblance' through 'non-resembling means', and his assessment of man as a 'futile being', arguing that

> I tend to lose track of what I am doing, which means that if I can't manage to reconstruct what the generational principles were, I am forced to invent new ones, grafting them on to the extant stem in such a way as to *make it seem* that the previous principles were still in fact operative. That implies a rather striking reversal of the principle of variation…in my practice we see the surface remaining very much the same

---

[243] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 98
[244] *Ibid.*, 123
[245] Ferneyhough (CdRT) 1995: 285
[246] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 125
[247] *Ibid.*, 28. Bacon is also referring to the 'post-photographic' age of painting discussed in Part I.

while the background generative procedures are transformed or…superseded. What interests me in particular about this sort of thing is, that it underlines the extent to which the human factor is fundamentally fallible and weak, far from the usual image of perfection (or, at least, of perfectibility) and the godlike creator standing outside and above the work.[248]

Furthermore, Ferneyhough also concurs with Deleuze, suggesting that

The problem today is that, after the structuralist revolution of the sixties, it is almost impossible to hold onto the myth of the genial individual, since we all know that an individual is, first and foremost, more or less a creation of the society in which he finds himself. We scarcely ever experience ourselves as *whole personalities*, but rather as constantly changing kaleidoscopes of impressions, of tendencies, *of momentary accidentalia* and so on.[249]

In order to explore these complex notions, it is useful to return to Bacon's own ideas regarding his painterly technique. In conversation with Sylvester, Bacon regularly discusses the difference between illustrative and non-illustrative (that from which Deleuze abstracts his concept of the figure) painting. In their first interview, Bacon describes to Sylvester his attempt to capture an image in paint:

FB [Images] breed other images for me. And of course one's always hoping to renew them.

DS And they do get very transformed. But can you generalise about how far you foresee these transformations…before you begin a canvas and how far they happen in the course of painting?

FB You know in my case all painting - and the older I get the more it becomes so - is accident. So I foresee it in my mind, I foresee it, and yet I hardly ever carry it out as I foresee it. It transforms itself by the actual paint….[250]

Bacon's last comment recalls Adorno's theory of musical material, which is clearly very important to Ferneyhough's own appreciation of material. The paint itself transforms the image. To this extent, Bacon feels that his own role is 'accidental': the resultant image is an accident of the coming together of his own technique and the self-appropriation of the material (paint). He complains that '[the paint] does many things which are very much better than I could make it do. Is that an accident? Perhaps one could say it's

---

[248] Ferneyhough, 'Interview with Joël Bons' in 1995: 229
[249] Ferneyhough (Bons) 1995: 219
[250] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 14-16

not...because it becomes a selective process which part of this accident one chooses to preserve'.[251] In Ferneyhough's case, his belief that 'we, as composers, do not only manipulate material; it signals to us - by means of the ordered freeing up and redisposing of figural energies - what it itself desires'[252] has already been encountered. Bacon concurs, arguing that 'there are all sorts of possibilities in...bringing this thing that has happened by accident to a much further point by will'.[253]

However, the 'accident' is more than the artist's perception that the material he works with is loaded with its own impulses (Ferneyhough suggests 'autobiography'). The painter or composer experiences himself as an 'accident' as opposed to an 'essence'. Ferneyhough observes that 'the more you work on a large project, the more accidental things fall into place and give you things which you recognise yourself in, without having planned them in that fashion at all'.[254] It is perhaps in Deleuze's formulation (which posits modern man as an 'accident'), that one might begin to unlock the thread that unites Ferneyhough, Bacon, Deleuze and Lyotard – besides the 'figure', that is – on a theoretical level. How can the bringing-together of post-structuralism and modernism (and if some commentators are to be believed, postmodernism, in Bacon's case) be justified, when at times, the tenets of these 'movements' or 'paradigms' are so apparently divergent and thoroughly irreconcilable? Ferneyhough highlights the problem in the musical sphere, though distances himself from Deleuze and Guattari's position. Nevertheless, this move actually brings him closer to the Deleuze of the *Logique de la*

---

[251] *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17
[252] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 41
[253] Deleuze, trans. Smith 2003: 19
[254] Ferneyhough (CdRT) 1995: 293

*sensation*, adjudged earlier in this discussion to be virtually anomalous in the context of its author's other works (whether collaborative or not). Ferneyhough argues that

> New Music has…witnessed in its own body the catastrophic reversal wrought by the increasing through-rationalisation of means and the subsequent fetishisation of material predicted by Adorno, realised first by rejection of the primarily form-generating aspects of the Modernist tradition in favour of non-directional chains of local invention and/or aleatoric strategies and, later, by the schizophrenic fragmentation of experience described by Deleuze and Guattari and others as the free play of values on the dance floor of symbolic exchange.[255]

However, Ferneyhough also advocates stylistic pluralism[256] (to ignore it would be to impose a 'very totalising tendency' of modernist thinking which would merely replace the '*soi-disant* "postmodern" thinking' that he accuses of being the emergent 'repressive "metadiscourse" of our time'[257]), and arrives at the conclusion that 'the subject will not go away merely because its existence is an impossibility'.[258] Just as 'the composer faces the world, attempting to evoke and re-articulate aspects of it'[259] in and through his work, the material faces him (and his listener) and attempts to evoke and indeed re-articulate aspects of him - the composing subject[260] - in and through its physicality and the work of forces. The material allows the composer to experience himself as accident - the subject (as essence, gesture) disappears; rather, it is deconstructed, only to be brought back more strongly still as 'appearance' or 'form-of-life' - he is transformed, reflected back at himself more palpably (perhaps, as one portrayed in a convex mirror, recalling Ashbery's poem). Ferneyhough imagines 'the visionary ideal of a work entering into conversation with the listener [and composer] *as if it were another aware subject*'.[261] In this way, the

---

[255] *Ibid.*, 78
[256] *Ibid.*, 82
[257] *Ibid.*, 79
[258] *Ibid.*
[259] *Ibid.*
[260] *Ibid.*, 77
[261] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 41. Original italics.

artist or viewer/listener experiences a re-affirmation of their sense of self. Bacon would seem to agree, suggesting that

> What has never yet been analysed is why this particular way of painting is more poignant than illustration. I suppose it is because it has a life completely of its own. It lives on its own, like the image one's trying to trap; it lives on its own, and therefore transfers the *essence* of the image more poignantly. So that the artist may be able to open up or rather, should I say, unlock the valves of feeling and therefore return the onlooker to life more violently…there is a possibility that you get through this *accidental* thing something much more profound than what you really wanted…it has a hypnotic effect on me.[262]

Of course, Deleuze's analysis which attempts to discover precisely why Bacon's 'particular way of painting is more poignant than illustration' was begun sometime after this interview. What is so interesting about Deleuze's project on this occasion is the fact that it recasts Deleuze in a 'new' light, as much as it does Bacon. Deleuze by no means fundamentally changes his habitual (post-structuralist) theoretical position, but neither, as I have suggested in Part I, does he exclude the possibility of a 'reading' of the *Logique de la sensation* after a theorist such as Adorno; in other words the notion of Bacon as self-reflexive individual and moreover of his material as enjoying the selfsame condition, emerges as the defining principle of Deleuze's effort. In his pronouncement that the beginning of modern painting is marked by man's experience of himself as an accident, one senses not only that Bacon is resolutely included in the category (if there is such a definitive thing) of modern painters, but that the 'accident' (as put forward by Deleuze) is both a material-immanent phenomenon *and* the personal encounter of the artist with himself through work ['composing is work'].

The notions of 'accident', and the resurfacing of the BwO in the *Logique de la sensation* hint that Deleuze does not so much advocate the disappearance of the subject altogether as its thoroughgoing redescription: 'the subject will not go away merely because its existence is an impossibility'. Before the publication of Deleuze's *Logique*, he

and Guattari lay the groundwork for his insights into Bacon's work when they discuss the BwO in *Mille Plateaux*. 'Plateau Six', significantly entitled 'How do you make yourself a body without organs?' specifically emphasises (repeatedly, it must be added, as if to underline the fundamental importance of the point) that the BwO is not 'at all the opposite of the organs'[263] but rather it is their redisposition; not, this time in an organised whole, but cut-across a many-stratified surface, where furthermore 'behind each stratum, encasted in it, there is always another stratum'.[264] According to Deleuze-Guattari 'we are continually stratified…the subject no less than the organism belongs to and depends on a stratum…the BwO is that glacial reality where the alluvations, sedimentations, coagulations, foldings, and recoilings that compopse an organism - and also a signification and a subject – occur'.[265] The pair attempt to redefine the human body stating that 'organisms are the enemies of the body'.[266] What is more, the BwO is constituted on a heterogeneously different plane from the organism, or subject. It disturbs and deforms the subject, as the invisible-figural deforms signification. Both Deleuze and Ferneyhough conceive of the redefined, re-affirmed 'subject' as something that evolves linearly as well as vertically in artworks. Since Ferneyhough associates the former with temporality in the musical work, the present discussion will concentrate on the latter – verticality, spatiality - for the present. Ferneyhough, whose words resonate with Deleuze-Guattari's discussion of the BwO's 'many-stratified surface', comments that the autobiography of his ['re-affirmed'] subject

---

[262] Deleuze, trans. Smith 2003: 17-19. My italics
[263] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1988) p.158
[264] *Ibid.*, 158
[265] *Ibid.*, 159
[266] *Ibid.*, 158

unfolds vertically, as…the sudden awareness of many-dimensioned, striatedly interdependent opacities, the ever-changing perspectives of which at one and the same time demand, resist and, finally, contain as many Borgesian gardens of Forked Paths of perception as there are individuals to traverse them. New Music has…lived through and reflected the agony of the autonomous subject who…has now been summarily banished by the inability of…totalising Reason to invest it with the vital breath of self-validational grounding.[267]

He goes on to propose the image of 'parallel universes' as such a 'vital breath', which recalls the subject from its banishment without uncritically reinstating it as it was, 'created as a golem from the clay of Instrumental Reason during the Enlightenment'.[268] The parallel universes of Ferneyhough's musical structure come about by way of his speculation that 'what if…at some specific point in the chain of discretely distinguishable [historical] events, some particle had moved in a direction other than the one taken in the "real world" familiar to us? Whilst being mutually inaccessible…there would then exist at least two futures branching out from that one common stem, with no external observer….'[269] At this juncture, the present discussion is less concerned with his reference to history and futures, than with the implication that this model 'encompasses stylistic plurality without eradicating the plausibility of linearly-progressive, stylistically homogeneous linguistic categories…it is via this combination of stylistic continuity and the sharing of partially communal "personal vectors" that [the model] can pretend to reconcile the autonomy of the late-Modernist subject with the rhizomatic saturation of conceptual space [of postmodern plural styles]'.[270] Echoing now, rather than opposing Deleuze and Guattari, who argue that the BwO, a domain of forces and energies - in short, the realm of what I have called the invisible-figural - engages in a 'violent' combat with the subject and its 'organisation of organs', Ferneyhough suggests that

---

[267] Ferneyhough (PU) 1995: 78
[268] *Ibid.*
[269] *Ibid.*, 81

the shadowy, rationally-repressed "Other" is allowed to thrust a painful wedge into the monadic carapace of order...In concrete terms, this means the acceptance of irrational, locally-determined states which germinate, grow and disbalance *in the interstices* of the dominant paradigm of reason, taking their nourishment from it....If there is really a prospect of a further fruitfully recuperative role for the Modernist project, it must surely reside in the dynamic, and consciously critical, enunciation of the limits of self as a precondition for the age which lies ahead – no longer that of anxiety, but of availability.[271]

It is interesting to return, briefly, to Bacon's far less abstract and circuitous words which are, for all that, no less rich than Ferneyhough or Deleuze's, and certainly no less illuminating in respect of this complex discussion of the subject, accident, signification and radical difference. Towards the end of the interview cited above, Bacon is talking about his tendency to destroy his work. By this he means neither physically destroying the canvasses of paintings he dislikes (although he is famous for often doing this), nor the figural destruction or deformation of the image that has preoccupied us for a great deal of this chapter. Rather he admits to Sylvester that he often achieves a satisfactory result on the canvas but then continues to paint, and ruins the image by taking it too far, makes it too 'illustrational'. Their conversation proceeds as follows:

DS When you were talking earlier about this head you were doing the other day, you said that you tried to take it further and lost it...do you tend to destroy [paintings] precisely when they've been good and you're trying to make them better?

FB I try and take them further and they lose all their qualities, and they lose everything...

DS Can you never get it back once it's gone over the top?

FB Less and less. And the way I work...becomes more and more accidental, and doesn't seem to behave, as it were, unless it is accidental, how can I recreate an accident?[272]

Several important issues come to the fore in this discussion. Firstly, in trying to take the image further, to grasp it, Bacon complains that he loses everything: this phenomenon has been have encountered recently in a consideration of the attempt by the eye to grasp the opaquely sensible that resides at the very edge of discourse. Such an attempt results in

---

[270] *Ibid.*, 82
[271] *Ibid.*, 83. Original italics.

the loss of the object of perception, as Lyotard notes. Additionally, Bacon asks 'how can I recreate an accident?' According to Lyotard, an 'event' or 'error' is unrepeatable, and moreover imperceptible until it is perceived through the deformative traces left in affirmative sensible material: traces left in a figural space that is radically incommensurable with discursive space. Instead, both Lyotard and Deleuze insist that it is only through the forces of the 'error'/'event', 'fall' or 'accident' that the sensible can be re-affirmed, and brought to appearance. Sylvester continues his line of questioning, asking

DS Why do you prefer to begin again on another canvas?

FB Because sometimes it disappears completely and the canvas becomes completely clogged...and then you start to put on illustrational paint.[273]

It is tempting to draw parallels between the abstract coagulations 'that compose an organism...and also a signification and a subject' referred to by Deleuze-Guattari; the 'through-rationalisation of means and subsequent fetishisation of material' noted by Ferneyhough; and Bacon's association of clogged paint with illustration. In each case, Lyotard's discourse rears its head and each time this discursivity attempts to negate the sensible object: Bacon observes that as the canvas becomes clogged, the figural image disappears completely. Deleuze and Guattari exclaim that 'the BwO howls: "They've made me an organism! They've wrongfully folded me! They've stolen my body!"[274] while Ferneyhough, no less dramatically, invokes Foucault's criticism of 'a repressive, omnipresent ratio imposing its specific forms of order on the naturally chaotic structure of impulsive desire. [Foucault's] entire oeuvre', he suggests 'is haunted by the specter of

---

[272] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 17-18
[273] *Ibid.*, 18
[274] Deleuze and Guattari, trans. Massumi 1988: 159

this terrible, unblinking gaze in whose blinding surface of identity the Other, the Beyond Bounds Within bounds, fades to nothing'.[275]

However, just as readily as each of them recognises the attempt, by the discursive, 'illustrational' or 'ratio' to reduce the figural, 'Other' or BwO to signification through the imposition of 'specific forms of order', each of them nevertheless acknowledges, and attempts to harness in their own work, a second negation – that of discourse by the 'event', 'fall' or invisible-figural. In Lyotard's *Discours, figure*, the 'event' is encountered as the irruption of figural difference into discursive space, manifested as an 'error' to the eye that is habituated to the ordered space of the textual (and indeed the sensible, as 'figure-ground' organisation). In fact, the two heterogeneous spaces of discourse and figure 'shift' together, disturbing the eye and re-affirming sensible vision. In Bacon's case, he seems to recognise something of this 'shifting' in his own work, noting that prior to his 'taking the painting too far' in terms of adding destructive (first negation) illustrational paint, he encounters a unique 'accident' (second negation), one that, like Lyotard's event, cannot be recreated. Readings refers his reader to Lyotard's understanding of the event as the 'it happens', not the 'what happens'. It is a singularity[276]: 'the eventhood of the event is the force of sheer happening…which is lost when we try to say 'what happened', to turn the event into a signification by applying a concept to it'.[277] What is interesting here, and seems to be a logical impossibility, is the occurrence of the second negation - the accident or event that affirms the sensible - prior to the first: the attempted reduction of the figural to the textual, to signification. Recall

---

[275] Ferneyhough (PU) 1995: 78

[276] This term is a favourite of Deleuze-Guattari's as well, found throughout the Anti-Oedipus and A Thousand Plateaus. The French term is singularité.

[277] Readings 1991: 43. See Lyotard (DF) 1971: 154-5 for more detail

Readings' insistence that for Lyotard, the figural is necessary to, yet disruptive of, discourse. It is his discussion of the event that truly consolidates this argument, for he makes the claim that without the irruption of the event as the function of the figural, discourse would not be possible. Consider his characterisation of the so-called invisible-figural as 'the entry of something into the edge of the field, that's a visual alterity, an invisibility of the visible, and yet not simply the back of what is grasped face-on in the centre. This fragile, oblique tact gives the visual event *which comes even before the sketch*'.[278] Bacon is asked whether or not he works from sketches or drawings, and answers in the negative, musing 'I often think I should, but I don't. It's not very helpful in my kind of painting. As the actual texture, colour, the whole way the paint moves, are so accidental….'[279]

It is a similar sensibility that leads Ferneyhough to conclude that 'it is the synthetic nature of the figure which permits the definition of the category through which it wishes to be heard, rather than vice-versa'.[280] One might interpret the term 'synthetic' in this context to refer to the reformed gestural material in Ferneyhough's music insofar as it consists of the uneasy 'shifting' synthesis between sensible and figurative material described previously. I have suggested that the gap between sensible and figurative space makes the emergence of the invisible-figural possible, but it is equally the case, following Lyotard's example, that invisible-figural forces constitute rational space; in this sense the figural event 'comes even before the sketch' or rather in Ferneyhough's case, as he observes, 'permits the definition of the category through which it wishes to be heard'.

---

[278] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 158. Cited and translated in Bennington 1988: 74. My italics
[279] Sylvester 1987: 21
[280] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 27

This line of our argument will be continued and reinforced with further discussion in due course.

Returning to Bacon and Sylvester, one encounters the latter posing the question 'can you ever get [the image] back when it's gone over the top?' (This is noted above). Bacon's response is to point out the irreplaceability of the 'accident', and further to Sylvester's observation that 'you might get another accident on the same canvas', Bacon adds 'one might…but it would never be quite the same'.[281] Despite the various levels of abstraction that the present discussion revolves around - that is, Deleuze, Guattari and Lyotard on one level, Ferneyhough arguably not too far removed and Bacon demonstrating a marked preference for the literal (if not an aversion to the theoretical altogether!) - Bacon's comment that '[the accident] can probably happen only in oil paint, because it is so subtle that one tone, one piece of paint, that moves one thing into another completely changes the implications of the image'[282] resonates nevertheless with Lyotard's notion of 'shifting'. This is further consolidated in Bacon's comment that 'I see every image all the time in a shifting way and almost in shifting sequences. So that one can take it from more or less what is called ordinary figuration to a very, very far point'.[283]

## II.v The Diagram [*diagramme*]

It is undoubtedly rather easier to appreciate the notion of 'accident' in Bacon's work, than it is to acknowledge it as a crucial principle pertaining in Ferneyhough's musical composition. This is not only on account of the approachability of Bacon's language in

---

[281] Sylvester 1987: 18
[282] *Ibid.*,

interview (although this certainly helps. He, unlike Ferneyhough, makes no attempt to distance his ideas from any potential readership; the composer deliberately creates ambiguity about his concepts and provokes a critical and inventive response from his readership and audience, who must work to penetrate his prose and notational complexity alike): one hesitates to speak of the 'accident' in Ferneyhough's music precisely because of the great degree of control, orderliness and exactitude that both his scores and his *Collected Writings* engender. The reputation and indeed the 'classification' by some critics, of Ferneyhough as a 'New Complexicist'[284] (moreover a post-serial one, heavily bound-up in that 'tradition') has resulted in the frequent (though by no means absolute) reception of his music as analysable 'data', as though it were computer-generated, artificial and therefore inimical to accident, spontaneity, intuition and chaos. In reality, all four of these conditions are indispensable to his composition, so much so that, in the context of the present study, Bacon's awareness of accident, and affirmative deployment of it can be compared rather than contrasted as one might first expect, with the perceived mathematical character of Ferneyhough's musical style. Ferneyhough himself counters those who seek to 'pigeonhole' him, arguing that 'I would not say that I was a notably systematic composer. Most of my time is spent finding ways of allowing my natural tendencies to disorder find useful channels of expression commensurate with my…vision of the high compaction of abstract and concrete aspects which a work needs to embody in order to make it more than just one more thing to trip over'.[285] Likewise, Bacon who repeatedly insists on the role of 'chance' in his methods, nevertheless expresses a position

---

[283] *Ibid.*, 21
[284] See 'Responses to a Questionnaire on Complexity' (pp. 66-71), 'Interview with Joël Bons' (pp. 217-233) and 'Interview with Antonio de Lisa' (pp. 422-430) in Ferneyhough 1995
[285] Ferneyhough (J-BB) 1995: 407

really not too far removed from Ferneyhough's own: 'I think that great art is deeply ordered'.[286]

So far, I have explored the notion of the 'accident' - the 'creation of resemblance through non-resembling means' - in terms of its theoretical ramifications for the domains of figure and discourse. In addition, I have considered that the accident is perceived in a work (by the artist and viewer), and indeed how it might be squandered (by the over-manipulation of paint for example). However, this discussion has yet to appreciate exactly how the artist marshals it into a positive force in the work. How is the figurative (gesture, representation) raised to the figur*al*? How is the work-as-accident - 'just one more thing to trip over' - revived and critically re-disposed through the accident-as-work: through the so-called 'diagram', which I will argue is exemplified in both Bacon and Ferneyhough's works and methods?

The diagram, as conceived by Deleuze (after Bacon), and which issues from the 'accident', comes down to this: it is the place in the work where abstraction meets figuration: it is the moment that the artist's mastery of the material (what Deleuze calls the first figuration, such as Ferneyhough's pre-composed processual material, or the gesture perhaps), and the material's mastery of him (manifest to him as an accident) collide, resulting in the so-called second figuration: Lyotard's 'truth of the visible'. As was argued earlier, Ferneyhough's decision to decompose the figurative gesture parametrically is not simply a response to the demand of the musical material, that it absorb and critique its historical (post-serial) position. Nor is it only a case of choosing the most unlikely, seemingly static materials as the locus of figural, energetic activity. The extreme abstraction of musical parameters is a necessary counter to the figuration of

---

[286] Sylvester 1987: 59

the symbolic gesture: keeping them apart while rendering them absolutely necessary to one another is, it will be argued, the musical equivalent of an accident that produces the 'diagram', according to which the piece unfolds by means of sensate, figural, material.

Bacon gives a typically perspicacious account of what he calls the 'graph'[287] (which becomes Deleuze's *diagramme*). He recalls that 'one of the pictures I did in 1946, the one like a butcher's shop, came to me as an accident. I was attempting to make a bird alighting on a field…but suddenly the lines I'd drawn suggested something totally different, and out of this suggestion arose this picture'. The bird alighting 'suddenly suggested an opening-up into another area of feeling altogether'[288] **(see Fig. 13)**. According to Bacon, he begins a painting with the intention of producing a rational, ordered image tantamount to a figurative image, which Deleuze calls the 'first figuration'. However, rather than perfecting this image according to conventional standards of painterly representation, Bacon perceives in it the possibility of taking it further, into a new area of sensation that is 'more-than' figurative space: the space of Deleuze's 'second figuration', or figural space. Bacon adds, in relation to *Painting* 1946, that 'I had no intention to do this picture; I never thought of it in that way. It was like one continuous accident mounting on top of another'.[289] (Recall the words of Walter Benjamin, cited as a kind of 'preface' to many of the issues encountered in Part II). Referring to a second example, Bacon argues that 'the other day I painted a head of somebody and what made the sockets of the eyes, the nose, the mouth were, when you analysed them, just forms which had nothing to do with eyes, nose or mouth; but the paint moving from one contour into another made a likeness of this person I was trying to

---

[287] *Ibid.*, 56
[288] *Ibid.*, 11

paint'[290] **(see Fig. 14)**. Something of Lyotard's notion of 'shifting' is apparent: what constitute the diagram here are the ('accidental') abstract forms perceived by the artist - 'what made the sockets of the eyes' - in preference to recognisable facial features. This diagram 'opens-up' a new area of 'feeling' about the face; the head. The two spaces - of the face and head, the figurative and the abstract - are incommensurably co-present, as in anamorphosis. Bacon confirms that 'this image is a kind of tightrope walk between what is called figurative painting and abstraction. It will go right out from abstraction but will really have nothing to do with it. It's an attempt to bring the figurative thing up onto the nervous system more violently and more poignantly'[291]: this is Deleuze's 'second figuration'.

**The Catastrophe**

The diagram is both the catastrophic moment for the first figuration, sending it into an irrational, intuitive domain ('suddenly the lines I'd drawn suggested something totally different') and the ordering moment for the second ('the paint moving...made a likeness'). Deleuze argues that 'the diagram is a possibility of fact – it is not the fact itself. Not all the figurative givens have to disappear',[292] and, sensing a precedent in the work of Cézanne, adds that 'few painters have produced the experience of chaos and catastrophe as intensely [as Cézanne], while fighting to limit and control it at any price'.[293] Deleuze considers Bacon to be one of those few, and it is in relation to the

---

[289] *Ibid.*
[290] *Ibid.*, 12
[291] *Ibid.*, 12
[292] *Ibid.*, 110
[293] *Ibid.*, 111. Deleuze refers to both Cézanne and Bacon here.

latter's work – not Cézanne's – that Deleuze's 'diagram' evolves into the refined concept presented, persuasively, in the *Logique*.

At first glance, Ferneyhough's approach to a work appears very different, as was noted above: process and rationality apparently rule, and, amidst such complexly calculated strata, spontaneity, chaos and chance seem unlikely possibilities. One might argue that the abstraction that Bacon encounters as the diagram/graph (arising as if, he insists, by 'chance' out of his engagement with the first figurative image), is in fact Ferneyhough's methodological point of departure, and that chance does not enter into it. The implication of much of the 'New Complexity' debate[294] is precisely that, committed to abstraction and order, Ferneyhough and those designated New Complexicists along with him attempt to eliminate the possibility of arbitrary or spontaneous compositional occurrences by recourse to a thoroughgoing attention to multiple levels of arcane detail. 'Chaos' in this context is unthinkable; rather a certain sense of formidability and the superhuman control of material (by the performer no less than the composer) accompanies a Ferneyhough score or recital.

However, Ferneyhough himself maintains that the greater the degree of complexity and discipline manifest in one's approach to musical material, the greater the freedoms one 'buys back' for oneself, to be put to structurally effective and often unforseen uses in a particular composition. Such freedom is not merely a decorative afterthought to the uncompromising mathematicisation of structure, but a creative necessity at the very heart of the compositional process. And so, whilst the temptation might be to compare the outcome of Ferneyhough's compositional efforts to say, a

---

[294] Ferneyhough, 'Responses to a Questionnaire on Complexity' in 1995: 66-71

Jackson Pollock painting[295] on the basis that both are 'abstract' and consist of complexly interwoven rhythmic lines and textures, the artists' actual *modus operandi* are very different. The figurative appeal of Bacon's work on the other hand might at first seem far more readily approachable than the 'daunting, even unsurmountable challenges'[296] presented to performer and listener alike by Ferneyhough's music. Nevertheless, in their involvement with, and disposition of, the 'diagram' (or something equivalent[297]) and the intuitions and 'accidents' it invites and harnesses respectively, Bacon and Ferneyhough's working methods and indeed attitudes are remarkably alike, so much so that Bacon's artistry is as musical as it is painterly, as indeed, Ferneyhough's musicianship is thoroughly suffused with a painter's skill.[298]

It seems that for both Bacon and Ferneyhough, the 'diagram' provides a means of continuance, in a piece, beyond the first figuration. For both, this latter represents 'handed-down material' that, upon his engagement with it, makes demands of the artist which he must bring under his technical control. Bacon says of his initial response to such material that 'you could call it despair. Because [the figure] really comes out of an absolute feeling of it's impossible to do [the figurative representation precisely], so I might as well just do anything....'[299] Commencing with the idea of producing what Deleuze calls the first figuration, Bacon encounters the chaotic moment, 'despair', as a

---

[295] As indeed one observer did after I had given a paper at a conference on the subject of Bacon, Ferneyhough and the figure. Conference on Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art (University of Warwick, May 10-11th 2002).

[296] Arnold Whittall, *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) p. 380

[297] Ferneyhough never explicitly refers to a 'diagram', nor is there any direct evidence to suggest that any similar phenomenon in his musical creative approach is derived directly from either Bacon's 'graph' or Deleuze's 'diagram'.

[298] Ferneyhough is also a painter: the CD covers for *Brian Ferneyhough* performed by the Nieuw Ensemble (Etcetera KTC 1070) and *Brian Ferneyhough: Solo Works* performed by Elision (Etcetera KTC 1206) display two of his own works. (Yet another interest shared with Schoenberg!)

[299] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 13

result of which he suggests that anything becomes possible. He comments that 'if the thing [painting] seems to come off at all, it comes off because of a kind of darkness which the otherness of the shape which isn't known, as it were, conveys to it'.[300] (The relevance of this statement to the opaque 'sensible-figural', discussed above, is obvious). One can thus understand how he arrives at the conclusion that the figure emerges from the material somewhat by chance. The important point to register here is Bacon's initialisation of a structure, the establishment of an intention (the attempted bird alighting, for example), that leads nonetheless to the chaotic moment of the diagram, and beyond, to the figure.

Ferneyhough agrees with Bacon insofar as he acknowledges that 'a great deal [of creativity] is spontaneous generation'. However, he emphasises the important role of structure that sustains such spontaneity, arguing that '[Structure] enable[s] one to have a framework within which one can meaningfully work at any given moment, *so that one isn't faced with the totality of all possible worlds*, under which circumstance one does nothing, probably'.[301] The notion of 'chance' happenings in this context would have to be one that is nevertheless mediated by structure – something that is not clear from Bacon's assessment that he 'might as well do anything'. In fact, Bacon later refines his idea such that he also now emphasises the importance of structure for producing something meaningful. He argues that 'even if within the order, there may be enormously instinctive and accidental things, nevertheless I think they come out of a desire for ordering and for returning fact onto the nervous system in a more violent way',[302] thus reconciling his own notion of chance with his aforementioned belief that 'all art is deeply ordered'.

---

[300] Sylvester 1987: 106-107
[301] Ferneyhough (RT) 1995: 252. My italics, for contrast with Bacon's statement that *anything is possible*.

Importantly, this supports the argument that the sensate figure derives from the first figuration: it somehow returns something to us, accidentally perhaps, but as Deleuze reminds us 'not all the figurative givens have to disappear'. Recall Bacon's project, encountered in Part I: 'I want to…distort the thing far beyond the appearance, but in the distortion to bring it back to a recording of the appearance'.[303] The remainder of my discussion of the diagram or graph sets forth from this paradox: how does an artist make an accident, and indeed, how might an accident make a faithful resemblance of the figure?

**Non-proliferation**

Deleuze observes that 'Bacon will never stop speaking of the absolute necessity of preventing the diagram from proliferating, the necessity of confining it to certain areas of the painting and certain moments of the act of painting'. Moreover, it 'must remain operative and controlled'[304] lest it should be 'overworked' into what Bacon calls 'illustration': recall his confession regarding taking paint too far, causing it to clump together and eliminate the fortunes of appearance thrown up by the 'accident'. Since in the first instance it promotes chaos, it follows that, if the diagram proliferates, the canvas becomes covered in chaos. If so, the figure is lost either to illustration or pure abstraction. Since the diagram is also delimiting and ordering, the 'geometry' of the first figuration 'must…pass through the catastrophe in order for colors to arise'[305] by which Deleuze

---

[302] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 59
[303] *Ibid.*, 40
[304] *Ibid.*, 109-110. This refinement of the concept of diagram or graph comes in Bacon's later interviews.
[305] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 111

means the figure, the second figuration. The figurative or discursive is filtered, deconstructed, through the diagram; emphatically not 'proliferated'.

The diagram is perceptible to the artist as a different (abstract) articulation within the structural limits prescribed by the first figuration. A closer consideration of Ferneyhough's ideas on the subject of proliferation and differentiation will illuminate the issue here. In conversation with Joël Bons (1982), he argues that 'Boulez's systems (for instance) strike me as being rather tautological, because they base themselves on the multiplication of a basic number of elements, multiplied in various ways, in various directions…' at which point Bons interjects '"proliferation" as he calls it'.[306] Ferneyhough adds that 'it seems to me fundamentally wrong to reveal the basic essence of a work, and then multiply it. This is Boulez's idea, not mine'.[307] By contrast, Ferneyhough's own idea of a musical 'sound-world' (represented here by an ensemble) is one 'in which the internal differentiation and articulation of the sounds takes on extra, existential energy and suggestiveness, simply by deviating from the standard grey norm'.[308] Colours arise. He explains that 'my idea is to start with the…mass, and gradually…focus down'.[309] It is tempting to compare Bacon's special, heightened notion of appearance with Ferneyhough's implication that 'to reveal the basic essence of a work' at the start, leaves one with little scope to reveal (understood here in a sense akin to that of Bacon's 'appearance') a work's essence through the deconstruction of figurative material into the sensate figure. The diagram in this scenario is the means by which the artist is able to shift from the figurative domain toward the heterogeneity of the figural.

---

[306] Ferneyhough (Bons) 1995: 228
[307] Ferneyhough (CdRT) 1995: 264
[308] *Ibid.*, 251
[309] *Ibid.*, 264

In a passage that recalls Bacon's 'diagrammatic' procedures (not least because it is one of the rare occasions Ferneyhough himself refers to the painter), the composer argues that '[*Carceri I* is] deliberately 'somewhat 'wiped over' (in the Baconian sense) in the middle, so as to produce different trajectories of energy'.[310] The 'chaotic' wiped over passages then, give rise to Ferneyhough's own diagram yielding new directions - new trajectories of energy - that become the 'non-resembling means' through which the figure is created. Only by differentiating material in this way, are these artists able to 'bring back the figurative thing' more strongly.

In addition to the dual examination of linear and plural stylistic possibilities for the furtherance of the musically modern, 'Parallel Universes' deals with the question of what a specific musical material might yield stylistically and expressively if its 'direction' were to change, thus altering 'the chain of discretely distinguishable events'[311] and creating a kind of virtual world, that is nonetheless more tangible than the "real world". Ferneyhough imagines his model were operative historically (and thus temporally). 'What if', he asks, 'some particle had moved in a direction other than the one taken?'[312] One could explore the possibility of the 'diagram' functioning to create two incommensurable yet co-present temporalities in this case. Indeed, Ferneyhough's subsequent supposition that his model 'encompasses stylistic plurality without eradicating the plausibility of linearly-progressive, stylistically homogeneous…categories'[313] is especially interesting in light of Lyotard's reckoning that post-modernism does not follow modernism historically (but is in fact its heterogeneous

---

[310] *Ibid.*, 251
[311] Ferneyhough (PU) 1995: 81
[312] *Ibid.*
[313] *Ibid.*, 82

other). Lyotard, too, asks 'what if?' in relation to history; what if, contrary to received opinion, postmodernism precedes modernism, and furthermore, one can add to his question: what if 'modernism' were manifest as a 'direction change' with respect to 'post-modernism'? Perhaps what Ferneyhough calls 'local histories'[314], and Lyotard, 'little-narratives'[315] act as an historical 'diagram' to the extent that, in and through them the proliferative, 'rhizomatic-saturation'[316] of the post-modern is focused-down or 'shifted' so as to offer the 'prospect of a further fruitfully recuperative role for the Modernist project'.[317] For Ferneyhough, this so-called 'Modernist project' is recaptured in a more profound manner. He suggests that 'the age which lies ahead' is 'no longer that of anxiety' (witness Bacon's 'despair', and Adorno's 'surviving message of despair from the shipwrecked'[318], both examples of the first moment of the diagram), 'but of availability'[319] (the diagram's second, ordering, moment, so that one isn't faced with the totality of all possible worlds). Ultimately though, what is most telling in Ferneyhough's 'Parallel Universes' is the quotation that he has chosen as a forethought, drawn from Deleuze and Guattari's *Mille Plateaux*, already encountered in the course of the present discussion: 'chaos is not without its own directional components, which are its own ecstasies'.[320]

Ferneyhough insists that, at the end of *Carceri I*, the instrumental tasks assigned at the beginning of the piece (which had been 'wiped over' in the middle) - tasks which

---

[314] *Ibid.*
[315] See Foreword by Frederic Jameson to Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: a Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984) pp. vii-xxv and Readings 1991: 90
[316] Ferneyhough (PU) 1995: 82
[317] *Ibid.*, 83
[318] Theodor Adorno *Philosophy of Modern Music*, trans. Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster (London: Sheed and Ward, 1973) p. 133
[319] Ferneyhough (PU) 1995: 83

essentially determine the opening's gestural effectiveness - 'do return, and that's because of this cycle, which is again the journey of self-discovery, as it were, or self-investigation, the idea of seeing what for me are the fruitful extremes of the organisation of the external world in order to reveal the inchoate nature of the subjective sensation'.[321] The gestural extremes exposed at the beginning of this work encounter their diagrammatic moment, as their organisation is somewhat blurred - thrown into chaos - by the wiping-over of their specifically ordered roles.

At the same time however, it must not be forgotten that the diagram is also charged with the responsibility of limiting and controlling the very chaos that it elicits. Ferneyhough's *Carceri II* (the flute concerto) yields a good example of this control. As Bacon identifies contours and sockets in his painting of the head which mobilise a departure from the first figuration (the face), only to rearticulate appearance (as the second figuration, or fleshy, sensate figure), Ferneyhough notes that the 'inchoate' sensation, projected through musical material, offers the possibility that 'I may be able to see it more clearly in a 'gelled' form, like a bee in amber'.[322] The first figuration - in *Carceri II* this is once again the extreme registers of the solo flute[323] - is brought, through the 'wiping-over' of those extremes, and the textural exploration of the space between them, to a clearer 'appearance': a second figuration that is 'gelled'. Ferneyhough argues that

> At the beginning, only the extreme upper and lower registers of the flute are used; little by little other registers are blended in so as to finally focus on the central minor third of A and F#, all events and detailed elaborations suddenly being confined to that pitch band. [324]

---

[320] Deleuze and Guattari, trans. Massumi 1988: 313
[321] Ferneyhough (RT) 1995: 251
[322] *Ibid.*, 251-252
[323] Instantly one can appreciate the shared interest between *Superscriptio*, *Carceri I* and *Carceri II* in the pieces' opening extremes of register.
[324] Ferneyhough, 'Carceri d'Invenzione' in 1995: 135

The extreme pitch material evident at the beginning of the piece is ultimately consolidated and rendered with greater violence for the listener later on when, occasionally, odd pitches 'escape' the confines of the narrow band. Ferneyhough explains that '[all events are confined], with the exception of sudden outbursts in the original registral extremes'.[325] These sudden, explosive resurgences effect a 'recollection' – an 'appearance' – of the original extreme registers. The latter are made more sensuous on account of the 'non-resemblance' of the means (i.e. sporadic outbursts as opposed to registral consistency) through which they are newly articulated later in the piece.

Ferneyhough's reasoning resonates remarkably with Bacon's in respect of the 'diagram', though he never uses the term itself (nor is there ever a suggestion that this aspect of his work and ideas is in any way motivated by his interest in Bacon and Deleuze's study). One such example is provided in the 1983 interview with Richard Toop, when Ferneyhough uses imagery and metaphor to convey a compositional experience very like that in painting which Bacon himself describes to Sylvester. Ferneyhough argues that

> sound is never just sound. Sound is always the reflection of context, of contour. If we abstract any one of our sensations…then that sensation takes on a very strange quality. Like if you wake up in the middle of the night; we don't know where we are, we see a strange, pale square in front of us…is it an opening or an illuminated surface? And until we're worked this out - that it is actually an open door leading out into a moonlit area - we have gone through all sorts of permutations in our minds. The perception of a work of music, for me, is very much allied to this contextualisation of sensation…even this strange experience of seeing this seemingly abstract space has already been conditioned by our previous expectations….[326]

Consider his trajectory of thought here: sound is contoured, one can abstract such a contour, and it becomes strange and unfamiliar to our perception. Ferneyhough likens this

---

[325] *Ibid.*
[326] Ferneyhough (CdRT) 1995: 282

unfamiliarity to that which one experiences when awakened in the night: what the eye sees the mind cannot rationalise. Here one encounters both Bacon's moment of 'despair' - what is this, what might I make of it? - and the rule of irrationality that the diagram fosters in the hitherto gestural or figurative, rationally devised artwork. Ferneyhough's image brings another important point to his reader's attention, related to the fact that the arrival of the figural involves the focusing-down and the differentiation of the figurative; the abstraction pertaining in the diagram is nevertheless 'conditioned by our previous' [figurative] 'expectations'. It is on this basis that Bacon can insist that the figure is a return to the figurative, albeit a more violent one.

Ferneyhough's self-determined contrast with Boulez's 'proliferation' of material is telling in the context of the present discussion of Lyotard and Deleuze. The composer's own insistence on material that is differentiable brings many of the previously explored issues to the fore, not least the deconstructive nature of his compositional method. He also enters into debates, in interviews, about the musical roles of 'identity' and 'difference'. The aforementioned essay 'Parallel Universes' encapsulates his conviction that 'non-identity…rules'. In conversation with Ross Feller, Ferneyhough argues that

> 'difference' will be perceived via *an altered assessment* of the mutual interaction of [an] identity and its surroundings. Changing one's compositional means in order to produce a '*similarity*' in that layer's…texturation inevitably brings out a conscious or unconscious reorientation of one's approach to how the work at hand takes cognisance of that change and moves to absorb it…Sooner or later the awareness of that *vector-shift* will, one hopes, penetrate to the listener.[327]

All the highlighted phrases in the passage just cited suggest the function of something like the Deleuzian 'diagram' in Ferneyhough's music. It is also notable that the 'diagram' (sometimes referred to by Deleuze as the 'diagram-accident') is the means by which incommensurable figural difference enters the artwork. Ferneyhough's comments recall

---

[327] Ferneyhough, 'A Verbal Crane Dance: Interview with Ross Feller' in 1995: 452. My italics

Bacon, whose 'altered assessment' of facial features (identity) leads to the emergence of 'appearance' through the diagrammatically perceived contours of the sensate head. Like Bacon, Ferneyhough *moves away* from an identity by 'changing [his] compositional means', only to *bring back* the material more palpably: he creates resemblance ('similarity') through non-resembling means. The diagram effects a 'reorientation of one's approach' to the work: Ferneyhough's notion of a 'vector-shift' resonates with Lyotard's suggestion that the figurative and the figural 'shift' together, heterogeneously, as in Cézanne's painting of the *Montagne Sainte-Victoire*.

Deleuze is as anxious as Ferneyhough to emphasise the differential nature of the artistic material he is commenting upon. He argues that in Bacon's case

> we thus see how everything can be done inside the same form…Thus for a head, one starts with the intentional or sketched out figurative form. One scrambles it from one contour to the other, like a gray that spreads itself everywhere. But this gray is not the undifferentiated gray of white and black; it is the coloured gray, or rather the coloring gray, out of which new relations will emerge (broken tones) that are completely different from relations of resemblance. And these new relations of broken tones produce a more profound resemblance, a nonfigurative resemblance for the *same form*; that is, a uniquely figural image. Hence Bacon's program: to produce resemblance with non-resembling means.[328]

Ferneyhough also refers to his musical textures as consisting of something like the 'broken tones' that Deleuze identifies in Bacon's paintings: these too are contrasted with ''terminal grey' zones, the sort of non-color remaining on an artist's palette after all his paints have been thoroughly mixed at the end of the day'.[329] He continues, adding that 'it would be anti-productive to maintain this overall-ness for too long…I have tended to employ articulational stranding to enhance the specific sense of shaping of individual lines or texture-types at key moments, to increase their 'presence''.[330]

---

[328] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 158. My italics
[329] Ferneyhough (JB) 1995: 383
[330] *Ibid.*, 384

The importance of Bacon's notion that the figure somehow recalls the figurative - the same form according to Deleuze - but is radically different nonetheless, has been noted earlier. Recapturing the figurative (gesture) in the figural is also fundamental to Ferneyhough's conception of the relationship between the specifically figural gesture and the conventional gesture. He tells Toop in respect of one piece[331] that 'the figurational aspect of that initial material was less significant in the very first gestural appearance than in the second…because there we are already showing possible parametric expansional techniques, but at the same time we are demonstrating the actual construction of the original. So at the same time as freeing itself from this space, it is reminding us what the original space was'.[332] In another interview with Toop, the discussion turns to sensation. Ferneyhough's first experience of one of his own (potential) pieces is described as a 'cross between a tactile, a visual, and an aural [sensation]'[333] which 'buzzes around' until more specific ideas begin to occur to him. He notes the 'immediate sensibility offered by experiencing in my head (already formed, as it were) some sonorous image'.[334] This he calls 'the 'bodiliness' of intellectual activity'[335] which one might reasonably deduce becomes what is referred to, in the detail of an actual piece, as the ''abstractness' of bodily sensation'.[336] Between the two, Ferneyhough suppposes there is no limit: rather one might posit the diagram there as the meeting point of the figurative and the abstract. One must, insists Bacon, 'break the [self]-willed articulation of the image', 'get out of the

---

[331] Ferneyhough's 'Lemma-Icon-Epigram' for solo piano, composed 1980. See Richard Toop 'Brian Ferneyhough's *Lemma-Icon-Epigramme*' in *Perspectives of New Music* 28, no. 2 (1990) pp. 52-100
[332] Ferneyhough (CdRT) 1995: 288
[333] Ferneyhough (RT) 1995: 260
[334] *Ibid.*, 260-261
[335] *Ibid.*, 261
[336] *Ibid.*

formula'.[337] One must break out of the conventional gesture by throwing paint and wiping musical texture over: precisely by putting bodiliness into intellectual activity. And yet, it has been observed that this wiping and throwing of paint or texture results in an 'accident'. There appears to the artist the abstract diagram; contours and sockets, not eyes: sensation is prioritised over the intellect. What is this sensation that preoccupies Ferneyhough 'for some considerable time - it might be a year or 18 months - before it clicks together with whatever else…'?[338] It is a sensation of the self, a self-reflexivity: the self-critical impulse is just that – an impulse that is felt within the body, not exercised primarily by the mind. Ferneyhough and Bacon do not attempt to construct identities for themselves as a student of painting or composition might want to: their art is the autodidact's deconstruction of the self, a self-inspection or looking-inward. (Ferneyhough's admiration of Schoenberg's music may, in part at least, issue from a sense of affinity with the latter's own autodidacticism). The sensation within himself that 'lives with' Ferneyhough for many months prior to beginning a composition resembles the sensation that is ultimately brought to bear in the work of art through the figure; only in the latter it is more profound for the fact that it has been deconstructed, intensified and been filtered through despair and even insecurity. Bacon argues that 'certainly one is more relaxed when the image that one has within one's own sensations - you see, there is a kind of sensational image within the very, you could say, structure of your being, which is not to do with a mental image - when that image, through accident, begins to form…out of despair'.[339] Bacon hints at his insecurities regularly in interview (and this is

---

[337] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 160
[338] Ferneyhough (RT) 1995: 260
[339] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 160-161

not intended as a criticism; some of the best paintings[340] Bacon ever produced were those of which he was least sure self-critically), namely those having to do with his family, productivity, ability, his late-start as a painter and perhaps his lack of education. Ferneyhough's self-consciousness as a composer is also palpable in his own writings. He recalls that 'I studied the theoretical appendages of serial practice relatively late, and…worked for many years in complete isolation'.[341] The method of apparent mystification of (sometimes very simple) concepts, and the 'covering of traces' both in his writings (most obviously, in the context of the present discussion, the example of Bacon, Deleuze and the figure comes to mind, so rarely are these obviously heavily influential people referred to) and in his music (he admits to deliberately setting out to hide the 'how' of his methods on as many levels of possible, which is why his music is so notoriously difficult to analyse) supports this impression of his sense of self-preservation as a creative, self-taught, individual. The distortions of the figure are not only indexical of the forces directed at it, but are also metaphorical in the sense that they, too, obfuscate the issue (the image), as do Ferneyhough's words and musical procedures. Bacon observes that 'distortion is an elliptical way of coming to the appearance of [a] particular body',[342] as it is an elliptical way of the coming-to-sensation of the artist's selfhood.

A work is a means of consolidating and intensifying one's sensation of self, of making it more profound, and of reflecting it back to the body in the figure. Toop later

---

[340] For example the *Study after Velásquez* 1950, reproduced on the cover of David Sylvester's *Looking Back at Francis Bacon* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000) and discussed in the book pp. 42-46. This painting was found after Bacon's death, rolled-up in storage. The artist had instructed that the canvas be restretched for reuse after he became dissatisfied with the painting, but rather than destroy it, the art supplier in Chelsea carefully removed it from its stretcher and saved it. Sylvester speculates that it is unlikely that Bacon knew it had been kept, and recalls that the artist later expressed some regret at its presumed destruction.

[341] Ferneyhough (J-BB) 1995: 409

[342] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 118

asks Ferneyhough 'does that mean that for you composition often involves an element not just of creation but almost of recapturing…an attempt to 'reinvent' something which was…'buzzing around' in this plastic sort of way?'[343] Ferneyhough responds somewhat cautiously that 'a piece isn't something you 'draw from life'' and maintains that 'a piece creates itself': true, of course (in Adorno's view, for example), but arguably for Ferneyhough and also Bacon, life draws from a piece, so that the self might be recaptured more clearly, tangibly and perhaps even more violently through the experience. The following excerpt of a conversation between Toop and Ferneyhough seems to support this view:

RT: Is there an element of self-revelation in your work?

BF: No…I am what I am having gone through the experience of writing the work, and in the same process, the 'glasses' which construct it for me enable me to see that person created…

RT: Does that mean that your works inflect you, rather than you inflecting them?

BF: On the…level accessible to me – I would say that was true, yes.

RT: So the works are not just a voyage of self-discovery, but almost self-definition as well, or self-redefinition?

BF: I would say yes; it's the process of writing which is the vehicle of the self…My view of 'self-consciousness' (or 'self-observatory capacity'…) is essentially a dynamic one – it is always in movement.[344]

'Art', suggests Bacon, 'is an obsession with life and after all…our greatest obsession is with ourselves'.[345]

**Expression**

In a more recent interview with Joshua Cody (1996), the issue of Ferneyhough's 'differential gesture' is raised during a discussion of *Mille Plateaux*. Although

---

[343] Ferneyhough (RT) 1995: 261
[344] *Ibid.*, 250
[345] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 63

Ferneyhough rejects his interviewer's suggestion that the 'dynamic model' proposed in 'Il Tempo della Figura' can be compared with Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the 'machine assemblage',[346] Cody persists with his analogy, maintaining that Ferneyhough's essay expounds the 'idea of gesture as differential rather than expressive'.[347] Cody presents an 'either-or' situation, inimical to Ferneyhough's 'both-and' philosophy of musical logic that has already been encountered earlier in this discussion. Far from eschewing expression, Ferneyhough's work actively cultivates it: he argues that 'the 'too-muchness' of expression which my work deliberately aims at *is* the basic presupposition of creative activity, and one has to live with one's own innate sensations, one's own convictions, without necessarily negating those of others'.[348]

It is precisely on account of this 'too-muchness' of expression that Ferneyhough's musical gesture is capable of bursting its own boundaries, becoming differentiated into parametric materials (like strata), and re-forming into the specifically figural gesture – the 'same form', to borrow Deleuze's words, but a more 'profound resemblance'. The gesture is no longer an emotive signifier wherein 'a short-circuit arises when the one-to-one indexing of particular instantiations of conventional images feeds back with no remainder into a trivial confirmation of what had been assumed'.[349] Ferneyhough's point is that its expressive capability becomes much more than the assumptive capacity of the listening intelligence allows for: the figural gesture is brought about through the 'diagram-accident', and manifest through sensation rather than intellect. Ferneyhough refers to 'interference phenomena…these chaotic fluctuations are, I suppose, what my

---

[346] Cody 1996: 7
[347] *Ibid.*,
[348] Ferneyhough (RT) 1995: 259. Original italics
[349] Ferneyhough (RF) 452-453

music is really 'about''.[350] Examples include the clashing of strata, and the 'wiped-over' areas of a texture such as those in the middle of *Carceri I*. The 'diagram' is arguably perceptible in these 'phenomena' and is used, as it is by Bacon, as a device through which the work of art ventures away from the identity of the first figuration, but returns to it, as the second [figural] figuration more violently, as sensation, difference.

Ferneyhough describes this 'device' as 'artifice', or sometimes 'mediational artifice', arguing that it 'sets out to deconstruct or selectively hinder this self-confirming act of identification and, in consequence, activate the critical reflexive capability whereby monolithic perceptions are split up…[The] direct emotive weight of [conventional signs] can be absorbed into a higher-level apperceptional frame'.[351] The potential for analogy between this and Bacon's diagram is obvious. What is more, Ferneyhough elaborates his concept of 'artifice', suggesting that it 'acts as a 'transformer' to translate energy back to itself…which can be diversified, canalised and selectively tapped for various purposes'.[352] The implication that 'artifice' yields energic contours here recalls Bacon's reference to the contours of a head that, rather than give rise to conventional facial features, suggest instead the appearance of an individual more powerfully. Bacon also argues that the artist's critical faculty is activated once he perceives the diagram: '[the] image, through accident, begins to form. Then I think your critical side comes into play and you begin to construct on this basis which seems to have been…by chance, given to you'.[353] Ferneyhough echoes this, suggesting that 'there is a place for the continued

---

[350] Cody 1996: 7
[351] Ferneyhough (RF) 1995: 453
[352] *Ibid.*
[353] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 160

critical investigation of issues pertaining to the boundaries where perception, self-awareness, order and chaos collide….'[354]

According to Deleuze, as discovered earlier, the diagram makes possible the 'fact'; it is not the fact itself. Nevertheless, what ultimately transpires in a figural space in the work of art (that is, the space that is incommensurable with discursive or figurative space) is dependent upon the diagram for its coming-into-being. For example, Bacon, by his own admission, could not have produced *Painting 1946* had it not been for his sudden perception of the *ir*rationality of the lines produced in the attempt to create a perfectly 'rational' image: a bird alighting on a field. There is no single 'solution' to the diagram: this is the freedom that it brings with it. Bacon argues that 'you see within this graph the possibilities of all types of fact being planted…you suddenly see through this graph that the mouth could go right across the face. And in a way you would love to make a Sahara of the appearance – to make it so like, yet seeming to have the distances of the Sahara'.[355] His image here recalls the (incommensurable) entrance of the distance of reference at the edge of discourse, which, according to Readings' interpretation of Lyotard's *Discours, figure*, 'bruises' against the eye nevertheless. The suddenness of this sensation, the realisation that the mouth might spread right across the face, enhancing and not compromising likeness is the moment at which the diagrammatic 'possibility of fact' is translated into 'fact' itself. At one and the same time the viewer/listener is forcibly confronted with the impactive nearness of the sensate image, and yet the sheer immeasurability of the distance between themselves and the object in question.

---

[354] Ferneyhough (J-BB) 1995: 409
[355] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 56

Ferneyhough appropriates a quotation from Andre Breton's *L'Amour fou* when he argues that 'creativity will either be '*explosante fixe*' or it won't happen at all'.[356] The relationship between the diagram and expression is unmistakeable: that which makes radical difference possible in a work is precisely the means through which expression is intensified. It is important here to remember two points made earlier: firstly the diagram neither covers the entire painting (or, I suggest, overtakes a piece of music), nor does it create a second form, as though it multiplied the first figuration into nothing more than a second illustration; rather it causes what Ferneyhough calls a 'vector-shift', insofar as it provokes a more profound resemblance, but within the same form as the so-called first-figuration. In this context one might properly appreciate Ferneyhough's comment that 'it is precisely by isolating and dissonantly confronting discrepancies of discursive modality within one and the same constraining framework that a more powerful expressive focus is to be achieved'.[357]

It has been noted that for Bacon, a fine line exists between manipulating the image according to the suggestions made by the perceived 'graph' or 'diagram' (such as the wide smile) and overworking the image, so that the sought after figural appearance is lost. In a sense, the 'diagram' only exists if the artist is capable of realising its possibilities in the figure. If the figural image becomes 'clogged', as Bacon acknowledges is the case in some of his own attempts, then the wipes and smears that potentialise the figure remain at the chaotic stage, adding only to the general perception of dark, clogged and 'illustrational' paint. Bacon argues that 'I've got an obsession with

---

[356] See Ferneyhough (Bons) 1995: 228. The editors note that 'In fact, Breton's reference is to "convulsive beauty": "La beauté convulsive sera…explosante-fixe…ou ne sera pas" (André Breton, *L'amour fou*, Gallimard/Folio 1976, p.26).The comment is an elaboration of the last sentence of Breton's *Nadja*.'

[357] Ferneyhough (J-BB) 1995: 409

doing the one perfect image'[358] and yet accepts that at the moment of painting 'I'm thinking of nothing but how hopeless and impossible this thing is to achieve. And by making these [diagrammatic] marks without knowing how they will behave, suddenly there comes something which your instinct seizes on as being for a moment the thing which you could begin to develop'.[359] The diagram enjoys a momentary existence. It is there for the taking, or it is squandered, and the image is lost. Similarly, Bacon suggests that artistic expression is depleted once one allows the poignancy of the figural image to leak back into illustration by over-manipulating it. He insists that figural intensity is diluted by the boredom that illustration evokes.[360] He seeks the freshness and palpability of physical sensation. Ferneyhough echoes these sentiments, arguing that 'unless you've got this absolutely intense identification of expression with the possibility of expression (the possibility only exists in realisation, and the intensity of the explosive moment of realisation), then it's a lost cause right from the beginning'.[361] It would be wrong to interpret Ferneyhough's practices of over-notation and information-saturation as dark, 'clogged' (since scores appear quite black with noteheads) and overly rational exercises in an attempt to illustrate musical complexity. Rather, like Bacon, he emphasises the degree of pre-planning undertaken. Ferneyhough's particular quest is for 'the sensibility of intellectual excitement, the feeling of the infinite radiatory potential of a certain idea....'[362] This intellectual stimulation notwithstanding, in the compositional act itself Ferneyhough also relies on instinct: in this he clearly parallels Bacon. Of this compositional process, Toop suggests

---

[358] Sylvester 1987: 22
[359] *Ibid.*, 54
[360] *Ibid.*, 65
[361] Ferneyhough (RT) 1995: 259

[that it] is not a predetermined path, but a labyrinth, and the completed work is, in a sense, an arbitrary by-product of that labyrinth, to the extent that there is nothing predestined or predetermined about the outcome of any particular moment in it; each moment is, rather, the inspired momentary response to a...set of constraints, and in each case other solutions, equally compelling, would have been thinkable.[363]

Although Ferneyhough is known for producing sketches before a piece, they rarely consist, as Toop explains in his article 'Prima le Parole,'[364] in musical notation. Frequently they contain quotations of poetry and other literature, visual imagery and regularly a series of geological metaphors (layered 'strata' being one used often in the context of the present discussion). When the sketches do refer specifically to music, they tend to convey, again in word - not notated - form, the tactility of materials. For example, a bar is not conceived as 'a unit in a ¾ metre' but as densely packed, compacted or enlarged, regular (metrically) and therefore 'rational' (or irregular and 'irrational' as in the case of 'a unit in a 3/10 metre'), and is always considered in relation to the envisaged surrounding materials.

It is also the case that Bacon denies preparing sketches prior to beginning a painting.[365] What Deleuze calls the 'diagram' effectively becomes the artists' 'sketch', since it both scrambles the figurative material (in the way that sketches are often a mix of elements of the (envisaged) artistic product) and harnesses its energy towards the more profound figure. The diagram crystallises once the artist perceives 'something else' other than figuration in what he attempts to reproduce - an eye and nose become black, deep, shifting contours - figurative or discursive features are perceived as opaque, seize the eye and become operative as the diagram, through which true figural difference emerges.

---

[362] *Ibid.*, 260

[363] Cited in Ferneyhough (JB) 1995: 382. Richard Toop 'Lemma-Icon-Epigram' 1990: 53 for original reference.

[364] Richard Toop '"Prima le parole..." (on the sketches for Brian Ferneyhough's *Carceri d'Invenzione I-III*' in *Perspectives of New Music* 32, no. 1 (1994) pp. 155-175

The direction of the current discussion prompts a return to Lyotard's *Discours, figure*, and in particular, to an already noted excerpt which can now be considered in relation to the diagram in artworks. Lyotard argues that

> Spatial difference is still more paradoxical than the gap which 'gives' the invisibility of the other side of the thing in the gestaltist articulation, it is also more rudimentary, it is the ungraspable distance between the periphery of the visual field and its focus. This gap gives much more than the here and the elsewhere, than the recto and the verso, it gives the qualitative discontinuity of the two spaces in their simultaneity, the curved, crepuscular, evanescent, lateral space of the first peripheral contact with something and the stabilised, constant, central rectangular space of the grasp in the foveal zone.[366]

Recall here the image Bacon presents us with: the face and smile in one space, and the figural sahara-face, with its (lateral) smile that stretches right across that distance, from edge to edge, in another, radically heterogeneous space. What is more, Lyotard continues:

> this grasp is a taking, a prehension, a taking possession, it is of the order of the hunting, working, linguistic grasp; the first contact, the entry of something into the edge of the field, that's a visual alterity, an invisibility of the visible; and yet not simply the back of what is grasped face-on in the centre. This fragile, oblique tact gives the visual event which comes even before the sketch'.[367]

Deleuze himself adds to the idea of a 'sketch-diagram' arguing that 'the diagram ends the preparatory work and begins the act of painting'.[368]

**Instinct and discipline**

Throughout the discussion of the 'diagram', the role of the artist's instinct in the creative process has been emphasised. It is instinctive wipes and interpretations of presences on the canvas or within a musical texture that first gives rise to the diagram, and it is the instinctive response to that 'graph' that inspires features like the wide Sahara smile in Bacon's work. Both artists acknowledge the importance of handed-down traditions in their respective disciplines, and both emphasise their own development of artistic

---

[365] See Sylvester 1987: 20-21
[366] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 158. Translated in Bennington 1988: 73-74
[367] *Ibid.*

techniques that allow the potential offered by their material to be met and built upon. To this extent, the comparisons undertaken in Part I with Adorno's theory of musical material can be seen as richly informative in respect of fundamental artistic and methodological tenets espoused by both Bacon and Ferneyhough. Additionally, the necessity of compositional spontaneity and freedom for Adorno's critical appreciation of the creative process and of musical material has been noted previously. What is interesting in the case of the two artists here is their acknowledgement that material is conditioned by handed-down forms, that technique is shaped in response to this (as well as to social and critical demands, and to the availability and capability of certain resources) and furthermore that human instincts also change according to historical and social environments. In fact, Adorno's conception of a handed-down material composed of fragmented forms and sedimented subjectivity, that is then laboured with by a new artist and critically redisposed within the form of the individual work, is itself predicated on the notion that historical material is recaptured by each new 'authentic' work; but to a more profound, more economical and yet more expressive degree. Bacon argues that artworks have the power to return 'fact onto the nervous system in a more violent way'[369], perhaps explaining, at least in part, why it is that certain works (either new works or those that retain that quality of 'shocking newness'[370] even as they age) have the ability to shock their audience so effectively. Bacon continues with the question 'why, after the great artists, do people ever try to do anything again?' answering himself with the explanation that: 'only because from generation to generation, through what the great artists have done, the instincts change. And, as the instincts change, so there comes a

---

[368] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 102
[369] *Ibid.*, 59

renewal of the feeling of how can I remake this thing once again more clearly, more exactly, more violently'.[371] His directive recalls Adorno's in the essay 'Vers une musique informelle', wherein he envisages that 'the materials will emerge from every successful work they enter, as if newly born. The secret of composition is the energy which moulds the material in a process of progressively greater appropriateness'.[372]

The notions of energy, as well as the moulding and appropriateness of material occur together in Ferneyhough's (many) discussions of the 'grid' in his music. Anyone familiar with his *Collected Writings* might reasonably enquire, once acquainted with the description of the 'diagram' provided above, why a comparison between it and the 'grid' has not been undertaken thus far. In fact, the temptation to refer to the concept of the 'grid' has been resisted so far in this discussion, however ostensibly it might seem to share certain features with Deleuze's 'diagram' (or indeed Bacon's 'graph'): many of Ferneyhough's comments regarding the 'grid', including such references to it as 'the moment of contact between [creative] volition and resistance *device*'[373], lend themselves, superficially at least, to such a comparison. The reluctance to engage in the latter however, hails from an important difference in genesis: the 'diagram', as has been discovered, emerges from the initial material once the artist perceives a moment of abstraction - chaos - within the figurative, lodged as a 'possibility of fact'. The 'grid', according to Ferneyhough, is usually (although not always) a precompositional device through which unformed material can be channelled so that it might acquire greater definition. He refers to 'the sort of initial setup which interests me' as 'the one in which

---

[370] Cody 1996: 8
[371] Sylvester 1987: 59-60
[372] Theodor Adorno 'Vers une musique informelle' in *Quasi una fantasia, Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London and New York: Verso) 282-283.

the constellations of detail emerge from the monolithic mass or block of creative drive…by being channelled forcibly through the precompositional grid'.[374] The difference here is that the grid is imposed wilfully by the composer, and is devised externally in relation to the compositional material at hand. Similar devices include the 'filter' and the 'sieve'. All three tend to act in the manner of a medieval canon: re-ordering or reading material according to specific criteria. Ferneyhough suggests that

> I might say, for instance, given certain materials, A and B; in this section of the piece both A and B will be present, but the two may not be combined but only juxtaposed. That would be a very simple form of constraint; a more complex form might be: at each appearance, transpose A by an interval taken successively form the interval sequence x,y,z; B will never be transposed, but its component pitches will appear in different octave registers at each appearance.[375]

The 'diagram' comes into force after the operations described in such a rubric become operative: despite the apparent thoroughgoing rationality that the 'grid' represents, work-immanent situations arise through the agency of the diagram, which, if one subscribes to Deleuze/Bacon's view, are perceived as chaotic and abstract, and offer expressive possibilities. Deleuze argues that [the diagram] functions like a local "whiplash" that makes us emerge from the catastrophe rather than submerging us further'.[376]

Ferneyhough's notion of the 'grid' represents his attempt to dominate his musical material; the 'diagram' (which I have sought to discover) redresses the balance insofar as, for a moment at least, the artist is plunged into uncertainty, into a catastrophe through which 'accidents' arise. When Ferneyhough suggests that 'probably all great art finds itself in some way frozen in a momentary snapshot of that catastrophe'[377] he arguably refers to something very like the sensation of the diagram in artworks: 'it's the instant at

---

[373] Ferneyhough (Bons) 1995: 228. My italics
[374] *Ibid.*
[375] *Ibid.*, 229
[376] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 110

which the impaction of our will to order and the instinct…actually produces some sort of explosively volatile mixture'.[378] Ferneyhough's criticism of those musical 'channels of signification which remain imprisoned in the one-dimensional *suddenness of surface* which a more differentiatedly oblique species of discourse would avoid'[379] has been encountered previously. The diagram makes possible a musical suddenness that is neither imprisoned nor one-dimensional, but irrupts precisely from that differentiatedly oblique discourse that Ferneyhough envisages: earlier discussions have explored both the material-differentiating function of the diagram and the oblique 'vector-shift' experienced by the artist upon perceiving its possibilities. The painter or composer's effort to return the 'fact' more strongly to the nervous system (to borrow Bacon's phrase) brings forth a sudden violence through the figure, but paradoxically not before the artist's venture into the realm of the oblique precipitated by the diagram. Through the notion of diagram, then, this discussion returns once more to Adorno's theory of musical material: labour makes the sensation of immediacy, and the emergence of the unexpected, possible. In a comment redolent of Adorno on expression and labour, and indeed of Deleuze on the diagram, Ferneyhough argues that

> there is little point in one of the involved parties […] expression, or the composing will or volition…predominating. That would seem especially pointless, because it eliminates that very chaotic interplay and balance of forces through which the significantly new can suddenly be discerned – something coming at one from a place which had been ignored or repressed, offering unexpected perspectives on procedures or material, something that can, in short, be *worked with*.[380]

His words echo Deleuze who defines the diagram as that '*operative* set of asignifying and nonrepresentative lines and zones, line-strokes and colour-patches…Because they are

---

[377] Ferneyhough (Bons) 1995: 228
[378] *Ibid.*
[379] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 25
[380] Ferneyhough, 'String Quartet No. 4' in 1995: 155. My italics

destined to give us the Figure, it is all the more important for the traits and color-patches to break with figuration. This is why they are not sufficient in themselves, but must be *utilised*'.[381]

Another essential difference between the grid and the diagram involves their (lack of) 'visibility' within the artwork, or rather, how that low degree of 'visibility' comes about. In both cases, their 'tracks' are covered to some extent in the work: in respect of the grid, Ferneyhough admits that 'I am very careful to cover my tracks. I try not to leave unambiguous evidence of specific structuring strategies'.[382] Where the diagram (or Ferneyhough's musical equivalent) has been employed however, figural materials themselves attempt to hide the evidence of their emergence into the work. If the diagram was clearly perceptible in the finished item, then the same figure could be attempted a number of times, in different pieces of music, or on different canvases. The diagram occurs within the working-out of the artwork and cannot exist independently of it, whereas the grid can indeed be abstracted (and could logically be employed in any number of works, if the artist so wished). The uniqueness of the 'accident' that is insisted upon by Bacon would be neither unique nor accidental if it were able to be seized upon in a completed work, and subsequently replicated.[383] Ferneyhough can be quite forthcoming in his 'sketches' and in interview, regarding the types of grid, sieve or filter that he employs. For example, Toop reproduces one such instruction for a musical 'filter' (referring to particular measures of *Carceri d'Invenzione I*) in his essay 'Prima le

---

[381] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 101. My italics
[382] Ferneyhough (Bons) 1995: 228
[383] See earlier discussion and Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 18

Parole'.[384] Unlike the diagram, the grid is not necessarily restricted to local areas of a musical texture, and generally operates at a level of the music that is accessible through the musical notation, i.e. it can be 'tracked' (as in Pätzold's thesis) by the analyst.[385] Thus, as explained in Part I, a simple grid or filter which dictates that the composer erase every fourth semi-quaver in a rhythmic layer of material remains at one level's remove from the plasticity of the 'diagrammatic level' of the music.[386] Ferneyhough argues that 'the qualitative aspect of perception does not move in parallel to quantitative modification'.[387] It is true that Ferneyhough's notation itself is plastic and malleable – it is precisely through the use of grids and so on that he aims to make this palpable, but it remains the case that a great deal of intellectual control - indeed, domination - is necessary in order that the effects of the grid be rendered musically and sensibly effective. Beneath the notational level, Ferneyhough, like Bacon, conceives of material as mass, energy, thickness, compaction – as an essentially tactile entity powered by its own inner impulse: it is on this level that the two artists are most comparable.

One must inevitably accept the fundamental differences between painting and music, and a comparison between Ferneyhough's grid and Deleuze/Bacon's diagram-graph fails to take account of the difference in 'level' described above. This effectively amounts to the difference between Ferneyhough's insistence that 'I am very careful to

---

[384] Toop "Prima le parole…" 1994: 162. As an example, the first violin material 'filter' reads: 'number of impulses = length of 2 previous bars/ subdiv = 3 previous bars/ location = beginning, then starting number of impulses after begin = length of subsequent bar.' All underlinings and abbreviations are Ferneyhough's, reproduced in Toop's article.

[385] Toop and Pätzold both have the advantage of Ferneyhough's sketches to work with in their respective analyses of his music.

[386] Toop's most analytical and revealing article is that on 'Brian Ferneyhough's *Etudes Transcendentales*' in *Eonta*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1991) pp. 55-89. Here a number of levels of 'filter' are discussed, although what I refer to as the 'diagrammatic level' of composition is also in evidence in the sketch material that Toop discusses. For example, in relation to rhythmic organisation, Ferneyhough lists the following amongst his strategies: 'freely invented ("physiognomic") figures'. (p. 61)

[387] Ferneyhough (J-BB) 1995: 408

cover my tracks', and Bacon *and* Ferneyhough's suggestion that figural material itself leaves only an opaque trail - of material distorted by forces, a 'differentiatedly oblique species of discourse' - for the artist and audience alike. (Perhaps Adorno's words capture the issue succinctly when he concludes that 'the avant-garde…calls for a music [and, I suggest, a painting] which takes the composer by surprise').[388] Certainly, Adorno's comment - encountered previously - that 'the secret of composition is the energy which moulds the material…' rings true for both Bacon and Ferneyhough. Both engage in post-work analysis, arriving at similar conclusions: Bacon realises that 'I want to do very specific things like portraits, and they will be portraits of the people, but, when you come to analyse them, you just won't know - or it would be very hard to see - how the image is made up at all. And this is why it is very wearing, because it really is a complete accident'[389]; Ferneyhough agrees 'it's clear, I think, that the works themselves tend to cover their tracks pretty thoroughly, so that it is difficult, sometimes impossible to retrace…the steps of the generative process. When analysing my techniques…it all remains a little general'.[390] Furthermore, he notes the difficulty of attempting to 'trace once more a path now effectively blocked-off to me'.[391] In the figural work of both Bacon and Ferneyhough we encounter the paradox of the artist's revelatory self-rediscovery brought to bear through the figure, tempered with a kind of self-protective 'forgetfulness' as to how he arrived there. Nevertheless, music is particularly amenable to certain aspects of the diagram, perceived temporally: an observation of Bacon's introduces this temporal dimension to the debate. He refers to Michaux (a 'very, very

---

[388] Adorno (MI) 1961: 302-303
[389] Sylvester 1987: 11
[390] Ferneyhough, 'Interview with Philippe Albèra' in 1995: 332-333
[391] *Ibid.*, 333

intelligent and conscious man' who is regarded altogether more favourably than Pollock), arguing that 'most of his paintings have always been about delayed ways of remaking the human image, through a mark that is totally outside an illustrational mark but yet always conveys you back to the human image'.[392] The 'delay' of which he speaks recalls once again Ferneyhough's dictum that expression is 'a sort of passage from one state to another, in which neither the presumptive beginning and end points are primary, but rather the 'no longer' and the 'not yet' whose *impressum* they bear'. The diagram, in this context in which it represents a venture away from illustration towards abstract expression, manifests a passage from the figurative to the figural, the 'no longer' of the one, and the 'not yet' of the other: to the extent that it is effective temporally as well as spatially, it lends itself in particular to musical appropriation: the temporal unfolding of Ferneyhough's 'remade' figural gestures, each successively more sensate, bears this out.

**Abstract expressionism**

The abstraction encountered in Ferneyhough's complex notation is of another order than that experienced obliquely ['diagrammatically'], beyond what it alone is capable of conveying, or of capturing. In contradistinction, the perception of the abstract that leads to the emergence of the diagram forces the artists and their intentions (to create one 'perfect image' or to fulfil the 'will to order') to the edge of what both consider to be a kind of chaotic abyss: here I refer to an abstract expressionism.

Bacon is especially unsympathetic to the latter, labelling the style 'undisciplined', as lacking in tension, having 'nothing to do with what art is about' and 'weak'. Deleuze colludes with this on several occasions in the Bacon study, and is particularly critical of

---

[392] *Ibid.*, 61

Pollock, for example.[393] Sylvester prompts still further denigration from Bacon, asking 'if abstract paintings are no more than pattern-making, how do you explain the fact that there are people like myself who have the same visceral response to them at times as they have to figurative works?' His question receives a typically laconic answer: 'fashion',[394] although when encouraged to elaborate somewhat, Bacon adds that 'I think that most people enter a painting by the theory that has been formed about it and not by what it is. Fashion suggests that you should be moved by certain things and should not by others'.[395] This last view is held by Ferneyhough as well, as the first 'figure' essay reveals: he maintains that 'much recent music relies heavily on variants of a rather limited repertoire of gestural types calculated to energise the receptive and interpretative faculties of the listener in a culturally quite specific fashion'.[396] He also derides an 'undisciplined' type of musical expression as 'a form of 'expressive atomism',[397] although importantly there is no implication that he associates such indiscipline with the tenets of abstract expressionism. It is an unfortunate association that Bacon makes between abstract expressionism and 'weakness': 'there's nothing other than the painter and his few sensations. There's never any tension in it'.[398] It is important to distinguish between the perfectly valid observation that 'fashion' affects the perception of artistic styles, and the more questionable opinion that abstract expressionism specifically is guilty of appealing to such trends. Still more unfortunate is Deleuze's apparent agreement with Bacon on this subject, especially when his insights into the latter and other painters including Cézanne are usually both informed and perceptive. It is, in fact, my contention that Bacon's

---

[393] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 104-107
[394] *Ibid.*, 60
[395] *Ibid.*, 60-61
[396] Ferneyhough (FFS) 1995: 23

protestations notwithstanding, the importance of abstract expressionism for his unique style of painting cannot be underestimated: indeed, without the likes of Rothko, Newman and Pollock (towards whom he is especially unsympathetic), Bacon's particular notion of the figure would not be possible. Both Deleuze and Bacon consider that chaos proliferates in abstract expressionist art, hence their insistence that the diagram not be allowed to cover an entire work, lest it should descend into such a chaos. In Deleuze's monograph at least, an explicit link is made between diagrammatic chaos and abstract expressionism: limiting the former, therefore, 'disciplines' the latter. Nonetheless, the abstract chaos that Deleuze openly attributes to the diagram (it is a 'scrambling'), however it is redeployed through the work in order that it create the figure, cannot help but bring Bacon into contact with the much-criticised abstraction. Bacon himself, as already discovered, argues that the figural image 'will go right out from abstraction', but one senses that he intends by this comment to contrast abstraction with illustration, or the figurative image. The debt that his painting owes specifically to abstract expressionism is never explicitly addressed.

What is also so interesting about the work of these two artists is the sheer manual nature of aspects of their technique which manifests itself in Bacon's work through the use of socks and other rags to add roughness and smears to the texture. In this 'manual' technique Bacon's methods do indeed resemble Pollock's insofar as vision is somehow subordinated to the hand, as though the emergence of the diagram forces the painter to 'feel' his way towards the sensate figure. Once again the heterogeneity of the figurative and the figure is emphasised: the one appeals to the intellectual eye; the other to the

---

[397] *Ibid.*,
[398] Sylvester 1987: 60

'manual' eye that 'feels' opacities, energy and forces. The violence done to the eye by figural distortions 'blinds' the painter and viewer, forcing him to involve other senses - particularly touch - in the experience of painting. Deleuze suggests that it is 'as if the hand assumed an independence and began to be guided by other forces, making marks that no longer depend on either our will or our sight'.[399] The hanging creature depicted in the left-hand panel of Bacon's triptych *Orestia of Aeschylus*[400] **(see Fig. 15)** has a bloody secretion leaking from what appears to be an ear. In reproductions, it is impossible to appreciate the tactility of this congealed liquid, the thickness of the paint (which must have taken days to dry) and the fluidity of its dribbled, manually manipulated appearance. This feature is not unlike some of Pollock's viscous, raised textures, which give the paint an almost sculpted and rhythmical quality: in the presence of the actual painting, one undeniably experiences the 'return of fact' so central to Bacon's project. One initially views the panel and gradually becomes absorbed by this 'abstract expressionist' detail of the painting - the viewer is subsequently surprised when the eye encounters the creature afresh, by the sheer force of the figural image to which the fluid feature returns us. By distancing us from the image of the creature and drawing us towards a matted, abstract detail, which is yet fleshy and contoured, Bacon ensures that the body of the viewer is engaged, inducing a sensate, visceral response. Thus, through the detour away from the figurative (from a visual representation of blood), Bacon brings us, via the abstract, forcibly back to the appearance of blood; this can be considered the difference (Lyotard's figural difference) between appreciating paint that looks like blood, and paint that pulsates rhythmically, as blood does through the veins.

---

[399] *Ibid.*, 101
[400] See 'Francis Bacon' (Éditions du Centre Pompidou) 1996: 201

Ferneyhough, describing mannerisms redolent of Bacon's own, emphasises the 'at first crude…personal methods' involved in the compositional experience, which have the effect of 'intensifying and compacting' material.[401] One senses a similar 'manual' approach to the figure, which is made possible through the diagram's foray into abstract expressionism: the image of Pollock's hand guiding the dripping paint above the canvas (flat on the ground), creating lines in space and injecting them with a certain rhythm and texture is really not so far removed from the image of Bacon throwing paint at the canvas or wiping a sock across it, nor indeed from Ferneyhough's tactile textural imaginings. The extremeties heard at the beginning of *Carceri I* convey the sense that they are being forcibly pushed apart, not to mention the efforts of the performer who, faced with Ferneyhough's dense notation (and oftentimes his practice of 'overnotation') must be guided by the capabilities of his/her own hands, even at the expense of some detail visibly present in the score. This discussion of the disassociation between hand and eye will be pursued further in Part III.

What the discoveries relating to Ferneyhough's musical 'diagram' reveal above all, is that Deleuze's assertion that 'of all the arts, painting is undoubtedly the only one that necessarily, "hysterically," integrates its own catastrophe…painters pass through the catastrophe themselves, embrace the chaos, and attempt to emerge from it. Where painters differ [from other artists] is in their manner of embracing the nonfigurative chaos, and in their evaluation of the pictorial order to come, and the relation of this order with this chaos'[402] is surely questionable. This can be addressed on two levels: the first involves Ferneyhough, who embraces chaos in a musical context by engaging with sound

---

[401] Ferneyhough (J-BB)1995: 409
[402] Deleuze, trans., Smith (LS) 2003: 103

in a tactile manner and exploring the musically figural; the second refers to Adorno, and the implications of a section of one of his later works – namely 'After Auschwitz' – found in his *Negative Dialectics*.

## II.vi The Event

Adorno famously declared that there could be no poetry after Auschwitz, an opinion that he revises in *Negative Dialectics*, arguing there that 'perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems'.[403] Nonetheless, the implication remains that the approach to poetry, indeed art in general, will be different in the aftermath of such horror. Lyotard agrees, as he argues in *Heidegger et 'les Juifs'*, 'Adorno's greatness is to have recognised that, after Auschwitz, art can only be historically responsible as event, rather than representation'.[404]

The 'event' has been encountered earlier on in this discussion in relation to the irruption of the figure into discourse (the figurative), and it has been hypothesised that the 'diagram' marks the site of this irruption within artworks. It is possible now to add the suggestion that the diagram fulfils a historical, as well as local, work-specific role satisfying both Lyotard's directive that modern art (exclusively) be charged with the responsibility for evoking the figural, and Adorno's recognition of the fact that art can only be historically responsible as event. Furthermore, Adorno argues that 'if thought is not measured by the extremity that eludes the concept, it is from the outset in the nature

---

[403] Theodor Adorno *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973) p. 362

[404] Jean-François Lyotard, *Heidegger et 'les juifs'* (Paris: Galilée, 1988) p. 79. Translated in Readings 1991: 23

of the musical accompaniment with which the SS liked to drown out the screams of its victims'.[405] Regarding the latter, Adorno makes 'many references to the Holocaust as the ultimate catastrophe...he undertakes a philosophical treatment of catastrophe',[406] suggesting a historical function for the 'catastrophe' of the diagram not unlike that previously explored in a spatial sense in artworks. In the latter, the figurative, *discursive* – a representation by concepts – nevertheless gives rise to a catastrophe, out of which emerges the figure, violently sensate, nonrepresentative and emphatically not 'an object of a cognition'.[407] Analogously, Auschwitz introduces the catastrophic and the sensation of horror to historical rationality such that, if one attempts to conceptualise it, one suppresses the horror, as the SS drowned out its victims' screams. For this reason Auschwitz cannot be 'an object of cognition'.

Readings summarises: 'after Auschwitz, history is no longer a rational unfolding': 'the summit of reason, order, administration' encounters the catastrophe of genocide, 'the summit of terror'[408] at the same time. In history, and in 'historically responsible' artworks, 'the event is the occurrence after which nothing will ever be the same again'.[409] Since the argument has been made that the diagram marks the site of the irruptive event, of figural emergence in the artwork, and, since Adorno and Lyotard consider that the artistic event becomes a historical necessity 'after Auschwitz', one must conclude that the idea of the 'diagram' is modern. Thus Ferneyhough's own insistence, in 'Parallel Universes', that our perception of the trajectory of history can be reconsidered through artistic material and techniques (such as the very 'parallel universes' that he proposes)

---

[405] Adorno, trans. Ashton (ND) 1973: 365
[406] Brian O'Connor (ed.) *The Adorno Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000) 84-85
[407] Readings 1991: 22
[408] *Ibid.*, 22

and his desire that this form a basis for the furtherance of the 'Modernist project', as well as my own discoveries relating to the 'diagram' in his music, all resonate with this notion of historically responsible event-works. Ferneyhough's writings serve to reinforce the sense of responsibility fostered in the artworks themselves. This is implicit in several statements made in the selfsame essay, 'Parallel Universes', wherein he argues that 'the art of theory has become as destabilised as the theory of art. At best, we are still underway'.[410] Once again we can return to the notion of 'personal style', already encountered on several occasions, and draw an affinity between it and artistic 'responsibility': responsibility, that is, to the historical event and to the (artist's) self. Neither one must be 'watered down' such that it might be represented by concepts and rationalised. The paradox (noted earlier) is re-encountered between the necessary violence and palpability of the non-representational figure - the shock it must be capable of delivering to the nervous system - and the private, self-protective impulse of the artist, manifest in a forgetfulness after the event, thereby making it impossible for the artist to reveal himself, to know himself as an identity; instead he, too, experiences himself as an event, a creation or becoming. Recall Ferneyhough's admission that 'it's not a matter of going through the journey in order to arrive at a self-revelation of the kind many alchemists or mystics tend to point to, in which the revelation is then an essentially static quality. My view of 'self-consciousness' (or 'self-observatory capacity' in that sense) is essentially a dynamic one – it is always in movement'.[411]

Further to this, and continuing to interpret Adorno, after Lyotard, Readings argues that 'art must not exchange the affect of the Holocaust [as event], the emotion which

---

[409] *Ibid.*, 57
[410] Ferneyhough (PU) 1995: 76

moves us out of representation, for a representation that claims to give a cognitive signification to the Holocaust'.[412] In this Lyotard and Adorno are agreed – art must not exchange the figural for the figurative or discursive: as Adorno suggests, 'dealing discursively with it would be an outrage, for the new imperative gives us a bodily sensation of the moral addendum – bodily, because it is now the practical abhorrence of the unbearable physical agony to which individuals are exposed....'[413] Readings adds to the hypothesis (that the catastrophe of the diagram is operative historically) when he argues that 'it is an ethical necessity that the Holocaust haunt us, that [as an 'event'] it cannot be remembered but cannot be forgotten either'.[414] If one takes the artwork to be a (mediated) testimony to the historical event, it is possible to extrapolate a model for history from Bacon and Ferneyhough's experience of the 'shifting' between the figurative (representational) and the diagrammatic (abstract and catastrophic), which leads to the emergence of the figurally sensate. Thus one can map from the artwork onto the historical 'shift' from rationality to catastrophe, and thereafter, to the event. Moreover, as implied previously, both Bacon and Ferneyhough 'forget' - they cannot remember - the path (or diagram) that led them to the figural, which 'covers its tracks' in the artwork. Additionally, Bacon refers (in the extract of conversation with Sylvester reproduced above) to the function of 'recalling' the 'fact' or sensation that the figure fulfils in his paintings. It must be concluded that the figure is both a recollection and a forgetting: historically, 'the event must be immemorial'.[415] Readings argues that 'if

---

[411] Ferneyhough (RT) 1995: 250
[412] Readings 1991: 23
[413] Adorno, trans. Ashton (ND) 1973: 365
[414] Readings 1991: 22
[415] *Ibid.*

history could remember the Holocaust adequately, we would have forgotten its horror'[416]: again the artwork provides a microcosmic manifestation of this scenario. If the artwork, and the artist, could remember the path to the figure adequately (such that it might be reproduced for use in future works or become an object of a cognition), then he/we would forget and lose grasp of its violence and its effect on the nervous system. This would suppress the bodily sensation that Adorno suggests is 'a new categorical imperative'.[417] The artist cannot retrace (make 'the object of a present representation'[418]) the 'catastrophe' which gives rise to the figural event but, crucially, neither can he forget its impact: it courses through his body as a sensation. 'The figural is that which, in representation, makes us aware that there is something that cannot be represented, an other to representation'.[419]

**Graphic function of the letter and the plasticity of the line.**

For Lyotard, the Holocaust is an opaque signifier, and, along with the incursion of the figural at the edge of discourse, he argues that the visible and the discursive are incommensurably co-present at its centre. The signifier itself becomes 'thick' on account of the 'functioning of the visible'.[420] In Saussure's account of structural linguistics, not only is the relationship between the signifier and thing posited arbitrarily, but so too is the relationship between the text and the body of the reader.[421] Lyotard names this unmotivated relation the 'graphic' function of the letter.[422] Thus it is possible to refer to

---

[416] *Ibid.*
[417] Adorno, trans. Ashton (ND) 1973: 365
[418] Readings 1991: 22
[419] *Ibid.*
[420] *Ibid.*, 17
[421] *Ibid.*, 18
[422] *Ibid.*

textual or discursive space as graphic space, wherein the letter signifies by virtue of its opposition to all other forms of graphic letter (each letter is functionally distinguishable from 25 others in our own alphabet). Lyotard suggests that it is the reading eye that processes this information. The seeing eye (Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological eye), by contrast, perceives the plastic quality of the letter. On this level, the letter 'functions by appeal to corporeal resonance rather than to the code; it is a figure on a ground rather than an arbitrary mark…We can think of this resistance in the first place as simply phenomenological, as a friction on the retina constitutive of the act of seeing'.[423] For Saussure then, letters function by means of a code and are not seen: vision - difference - is suppressed by the system of oppositions. Against this, Lyotard argues that structural linguistics forgets that in order for the letter to be recognised, its plastic form - its line - must first be seen. Similarly in artworks, 'the line establishes the distances and contours of perspective, but the successful perspectival construction is one in which the plastic force of the line (its vibration – a function analogous to colour) is entirely lost in favour of the pure extension of objects in the three-dimensional space of their interrelation'.[424] Lyotard's discussion of the line and letter, and the figure in relation to these, follows a similar trajectory to that of *Discours, figure* in general, insofar as he begins by suggesting that the line functions as a figure in relation to the letter (apparently privileging the phenomenological over the textual), although he later rectifies this bias. Readings explains that 'Lyotard is not arguing that the plastic, corporeal or sensible is inherently figural, but that there is always a figural coexistence of the plastic and the textual, of the line and the letter. The figural is not the alternative to the textual…[it] is the blocking

---

[423] *Ibid.*
[424] *Ibid.*, 19

together of the incommensurable, the clash of heterogeneous plastic and graphic spaces'.[425] Moreover, in art, the figural is not simply the non-representational aspect of the work, which in effect is nothing more than an 'other' representation: when an artwork is deemed to be figural, it is so because both the spaces of representation and the visible 'shift' together, and deformations become perceptible. Just as Lyotard argues that Saussure is mistaken to assume that the signifier participates only in unmotivated, conceptual relationships with the signified and the reader - relationships that function only through oppositions between elements - assumptions must not be made regarding the plastic line: there is no pure somatic quality to it. Lyotard does not merely create yet another opposition between virtual and real space, for, as Readings informs us, 'Lyotard will remind us of the potentially arbitrary signifying function of the line (its work of demarcation)'.[426] The line and letter – plastic and graphic respectively – are particularly useful notions in the continued exploration of some of Adorno's ideas, as will be discovered shortly.

Unlike Deleuze and Lyotard, both of whom mainly address the issue of the (artistic) figural in painting, Adorno's insights are most often formed on the basis of musical material. In fact his 1965 essay 'On Some Relationships Between Music and Painting' considers both art-forms in some detail; consequently, for the purposes of the present critique of a painter, a composer and the theoretical discourses around them, this essay offers many opportunities to both consolidate and reinforce several issues pertinent to this chapter. At the same time as it essentially concludes Part II, what follows must

---

[425] *Ibid.*, 20
[426] *Ibid.*

also be read as a preparation for Part III, which will begin with further discussion of Adorno's discoveries in respect of musical time and painted space.

Adorno argues that painting and music do not converge 'through gradually becoming more similar',[427] as a result of a conscientious attempt by the artist to paint 'rhythmically' or by the musician to 'paint' with tones. He declares that 'the moment one art imitates another, it becomes more distant from it by repudiating the constraint of its own material, and falls into syncretism, in the vague notion of an undialectical continuum of the arts in general'.[428] Once Adorno has established this 'problem' as the focus of his essay, he sets about demonstrating how it is that music and painting do indeed share fundamental affinities, and it is this aspect of the essay that is of interest in relation to Lyotard and Deleuze, and, by extension, Bacon and Ferneyhough. 'If painting and music do not converge by means of growing similarity', Adorno suggests, 'they do meet in a third dimension: both are language'.[429] Thus, as with the French theory encountered at the very beginning of Part II, the discussion (which follows) of the figural, the diagram and representation relating to Adorno's work on artistic material takes place in the domain of language, a fact reinforced by Adorno's frequent use of the term 'writing' or its French equivalent *écriture*. More specifically then, for Adorno, painting and music converge in their manifestation of *écriture*. Further explanation of this concept must be sought in order to properly understand *écriture* as a 'third dimension' in which the two arts meet, and it will prove useful to bear in mind Lyotard's contrast between graphic letter and plastic line throughout the following discussion.

---

[427] Theodor Adorno, 'On Some Relationships between Music and Painting', trans. Susan H. Gillespie in *Musical Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (Spring 1995) p.67
[428] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 67
[429] *Ibid.*, 71

If painting is fundamentally a spatial art and music a temporal one, Adorno argues nonetheless that 'objectivisation and the balance of tensions in…painting are sedimented time'. Furthermore he continues that 'in the context of his chapter on schematisation [*q.v.*], Kant observes that even the pure act of thinking involves traversing the temporal series as a necessary condition of its possibility, and not only of its empirical realisation'.[430] According to Lyotard, of course, in spite of Saussure's assumption of the arbitrariness of the linguistic signifier, the plastic, motivated character of the line is, in fact, a necessary condition of its possibility. However, Lyotard's is not merely a phenomenological critique of structural linguistics: Readings points out that 'it is possible to see the letter functioning as a figure in the plastic value of the line: when in medieval illustrations the positions of the body are conventionally coded, when pictures offer themselves as texts for the unlettered'.[431] In this case, graphic space is constitutive of plasticity. Adorno argues that

> [painting's] spatial nature, for all that it appears to exist a priori, is not that alone, but is always, at the same time, also a result; the absolute space of the painting a temporal differential, the moment in which temporally disparate elements are concentrated. No simultaneity without time.[432]

Ever dialectical in his methods, with the claim that time constitutes painted space Adorno makes the suggestion that the relationship of music to space is 'equally constitutive', commenting that

> It suffices to recall that the act of notation is essential to art music, not incidental. Without writing [there can be] no highly organised music….This qualitative relationship of music to its visible insignia, without which it could neither possess nor construct out duration, points clearly to space as a condition of its objectification.[433]

---

[430] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 69
[431] Readings 1991: 20
[432] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 70
[433] *Ibid.*, 70

Adorno's heavy criticism of music that wilfully incorporates spatial relations (for example, in the manner of integral serialism), and of painting that attempts to portray rhythm unmediatedly, leads him towards a reconsideration of space in music, and time in painting as constitutive, figural events. Of course, Adorno does not use the word 'figural' himself, but his expression of ideas in this essay resonates with my discussion of Lyotard and Deleuze nevertheless. Adorno cites Walter Benjamin extremely aptly in relation to the context of my interpretations, arguing that it 'is certain that the language of art can only be understood in the most profound relation to the theory of signs'.[434] Indeed, it is just such a profound, figural, relation to the theory of signs that Lyotard discovers in the 'language of art': that is, the language of modern art.

Further evidence of an awareness on Adorno's part of a figural 'surplus of discursivity' (to borrow Ferneyhough's expression) is revealed in his observation that 'the graphic [notational] representation is never merely a sign for music, but also resembles it in some respects, as the neumes once did'.[435] Several important points converge here. In the first instance, his comment recalls the opening of Part I, wherein the plasticity and palpability of Ferneyhough's notational methods were discussed. Secondly, the term 'graphic' here recalls the importance attached to the term in Lyotard's own work, still more so when one considers the implication that Adorno makes concerning the neumes, whose notational plasticity - whose line - resembles the musical line. Notice the association between the graphic (and notational) and the 'mere' sign on the one hand; the neumatic line and the implicit 'excess' over the signifying function on the other. The neumes resemble musical lines, a motivation is established between the two and,

---

[434] Cited *Ibid.* Gillespie gives the original Benjamin reference as *Schriften* vol. 2 (Frankfurt, 1955) p. 418
[435] *Ibid.*, 70

moreover, between the neumatic line and the body of the reader/performer. In Lyotard's terms the neume amounts to an opaque signifier: the plastic sign is seen with a mobile, phenomenological eye.

The importance of the relationship between the reader/viewer and the work/material cannot be underestimated. Like Lyotard (after Merleau-Ponty), Adorno recognises the viewer's corporeal engagement with paint: it is not the case that 'when looked at intensely a painting, the flesh of a Rubens nude comes alive' but 'what is alive is rather the paintings themselves, what is painted, not what has been painted'.[436] The latter is still under the rule of representation. (This recalls my own distinction between material in Bacon's painting that resembles blood, and material that pulsates, as blood itself does). Thus Adorno also perceives two heterogeneous spaces in painting: the visible and the conceptual. This is made clear when he argues (quoting Benjamin again) that '"we have to do [in painting] with nameless, non-acoustic languages, languages from the material; here one should reflect on the material commonality of things in their communication"…But this is the opposite of linguistic gestures or speaking behaviour, or of music or painting, to the extent that they are about telling a story'.[437] Adorno's distinction between 'languages from the material' and 'telling a story' is remarkably similar to the contrast Bacon makes between material that conveys fact to the nervous system (figural material) and representational (Ferneyhough's 'gestural') material that tells a story 'in a long diatribe through the brain'. It is the incommensurable co-presence of these two spaces in artworks that I suggest testifies to the figural event.

---

[436] *Ibid.*, 71
[437] *Ibid.*

**Materiality of the signifier and event**

Lyotard's differentiation between discursivity and the materiality of the signifier is also of particular interest, and will become more so as the present discussion progresses towards its conclusion. This 'materiality' is not however the same concept 'which some cultural critics have sought to extract as the lesson of deconstruction', since this refers to the literal truth of the signifier, which in fact is its meaning – 'the grand transcendental signified'[438] – and moreover, since the literal eliminates the figural. Readings argues that 'the material differentiality of the signifier is reduced to pure indifference: all signifiers, without distinction, mean materiality'.[439] Lyotard follows the cultural critics insofar as he argues that the materiality of the signifier is resistant ('the 'materiality of the signifier' has been the banner under which deconstruction has been reinscribed within Marxism's struggle to uphold the material against the ideological'[440]), but makes this resistance a condition of the signifier's figurality. 'Materiality' is therefore reconceived. Lyotard explains that 'it is not by virtue of its "materiality" that language participates in the sensible, it is by its figural quality that it may come to the same level'.[441] By recasting materiality in the domain of the figural, Lyotard demonstrates that contrary to uncovering a pure truth somehow anterior to representation (in the manner of some cultural critics[442]), the materiality of the signifier testifies rather to the limits of representation. Its opacity ironically, bears 'witness to the unpresentable'.[443] The opacity of the signifier does not constitute an object external to language but acts like a marker, at the centre of

---

[438] Readings 1991: 21
[439] *Ibid.*
[440] *Ibid.*
[441] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 51. Translated in Readings 1991: 21
[442] Readings 1991: 21. Readings refers only to Colin MacCabe's *James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word* (London: Macmillan Press, 1978)
[443] Lyotard, trans. Bennington and Massumi (PMC) 1984: 82

language, of the event – of the irruption of the figural into discourse. The opacity is that aspect of language which resists being given up to a meaning: it is the plastic force of the line that is heterogeneous to the graphic letter. In Bacon's painting, this opacity is manifest in the flesh, the stark juxtaposition of blue and red colours that vibrate in the 'meat' of the human or animal form. Meat is not blue, and yet Bacon persuades us that it is, in *fact*.

In Ferneyhough's case, materiality or opacity is discoverable in the density of musical line, and can be contrasted with the rational deployment of numerical schemata. In the following example, these two spaces are not simply opposed, but are heterogeneously co-present to one another. The rhythmical composition of the oboe part in the first of the *Etudes Transcendentales* is an intricate, many-tiered complex that Richard Toop reproduces in an analytical essay[444] with the aid of Ferneyhough's notebooks and sketches. The reader is presented with a five-stage breakdown of the oboe's rhythm, where stage five is essentially the end result – the rhythm as one finds it in the published score. Stages one to four (progressively) represent the degree to which an original material (stage one) has been filtered.

This 'filtering' consists in the periodic 'erasure', or rather the tying together, of several pulses into one pulse of greater duration. Therefore in relation to stage three for example, stage four presents fewer pulses overall, since certain 'mini' pulses set out in the former are 'erased' in favour of one longer pulse, in places, in the latter **(see Fig. 16)**. Take, for example, the very opening of stages three and four: where the earlier stage begins with five bracketed pulses, in the subsequent stage of his procedure for rhythmic derivation, Ferneyhough collects these five into the one pulse evident at the beginning of

stage four. Moreover, this lengthier pulse is tied to the following one, resulting essentially in the exchange of six 'minor' pulses (stage three) for one 'major' pulse (stage four). For the purposes of the current discussion, I remain concerned for the moment with stage four of Toop's diagram and more specifically, with the distribution of pulses according to two numerical series.

**Fig. 16. oboe rhythm**[445]




To the material that constitutes stage three, Ferneyhough applies

> two interlocking number series. The first (6, 2, 7, 3, 8, repeated cyclically) determines the number of pulses to be erased (tied together), and is still statistical in its effect; but the second, which determines the gaps between these 'erasures' (ie. The number of pulses which are left intact) is almost simplistically directional (20 19 18 17 16 etc). This process continues to the mid-point of the song (end of bar 18), at which point the roles of the two number series are reversed.[446]

Thus stage four is calculated. Although the specific numbers themselves of course have a crucial bearing on the disposition of the oboe part throughout the 36 bars of this song, the important point to register is the mid-point role reversal of the numerical series. What is more, their internal order is reversed, such that, from bar 19 the cyclical sequence unfolds

---

[444] See Toop, 'Brian Ferneyhough's *Etudes Transcendentales*' 1991: 55-89
[445] *Ibid.*, 64
[446] *Ibid.*, 65

backwards (ie. 8, 3, 7, 2, 6), and the omnidirectional chain climbs progressively from 3, 4, 5 to 17 pulses.[447]

'Graphically' there is a kind of symmetry about this pulse distribution. One could even suggest a letter 'x' shape as a rationale for the deployment of the number patterns. At first glance, the reversal of the numerical schemata implies that the character of the oboe part will also reverse about the mid-point of the song. However, as Toop discovers, 'the 'density' of the oboe part will gradually decrease over the course of the song'.[448] Contrary to the 'graphic' space occupied by the number series, the diminishing density of the oboe part manifests the plastic force of the line, a 'materiality' that engages the body of the performer, composer or listener in a relationship of motivation. The two spaces 'shift' together: between them a third, figural space emerges. This is marked by the increasingly fragmentary nature of the oboe part that is concomitant to the gradual decrease in density (from an extreme to a lesser degree of opacity). The latter is felt and is present to the performer/listener/composer corporeally, whereas the figural force of the event manifests sensible after-traces, as deformations in the material, which are indexical of its irruption. The 'event' in this instance occurs as a result of the tension between the numerical series' reversal (and the discrete nature of each unit, which can be counted) and the forward momentum of continuous de-densification. The increasingly fragmentary character of the oboe part testifies to the distorting action of figural forces upon the material, to the incommensurable co-presence of graphic and plastic spaces at work

---

[447] *Ibid.*
[448] *Ibid.*

immanently within the piece. Toop argues that 'the oboe part could be regarded as the product [trace?] of a gradually eroded continuum'.[449]

Each of the graphic and plastic spaces can be considered to be the constitutive moment of the other in this situation. Without the numerical series, and the 'exquisite technical touch'[450] of reversing both their roles and iteration at the halfway point, the continuous plastic force, the 'weathering' of the oboe part, that has been identified as an opaque 'presence' perceived by the body, would not be possible. Nevertheless, following Lyotard, it is equally the case that the plastic 'line' here is 'constitutively invisible' to the number series that it renders opaque.[451] A good deal of what Toop calls ''spontaneous' flesh'[452] is added to the material yielded by the five-stage process of rhythmic derivation. Features such as grace notes, 'and all kinds of secondary articulations'[453] such as trills, glissandi and double trills are plentiful in the final score, and at stage five **(see Fig. 16)**, Ferneyhough effects some further triplet modifications[454]: these are instinctive – they are not controlled by a number regime. Each triplet modification includes a rest (this is the only rational 'condition' it seems, that the introduction of such triplets brings with it). The combination of the rests introduced through the triplets and the 'flesh' provided by the 'secondary articulations' referred to above has ramifications for the 'primary' material of the oboe part insofar as there seems to be more additional material towards the end of the song (thus having the effect of 'slowing down' or resisting the progressive erosion) and the high frequency of intuitively added rests at the beginning of the piece cuts into the heavy density, and threatens to destabilise it. Towards the very end of the

---

[449] *Ibid.*
[450] *Ibid.*
[451] Readings 1991: 59
[452] Toop 1991: 67

song, the "echo" and "*perdendosi*" of the primary material is fiercely interrupted by "subito brutto" grace notes; at the beginning, Ferneyhough's sudden, spontaneous silences break the continuity of the lyrical *grazioso* melody.

**Fig. 17**

| **Beginning of piece** | **End of piece** |
|---|---|
| Density of oboe part | Sparse primary material |
| High concentration of rests<br>Rests most effective | High concentration of<br>secondary material. |

The effect of the rests in particular (for example in bars four and seven) is to create a 'stutter', or stumble – a momentary lapse in the prevailing smooth, dense linearity of the oboe part. The secondary matter at the end of the piece brings with it an energy and agility to complement the rich intensity heard at the beginning. Essentially, the plastic force of the line, moving from higher to lower density is, like the opaque in language, present, but not fully graspable in-itself, lest it should become as representable as the numerical series that Toop draws to the attention in his study of the *Etudes*. The interruptive rests, and the increasingly frenetic secondary articulations thus obfuscate, or slightly distort – even deform – the trajectory of lessening density in the oboe part. Thus they mark the 'event': the irruption of figural forces into the piece. Being spontaneous, they are neither commensurate with the strictly rational numerical series; nor, being discontinuous, can they be inscribed in the same space as the continuum of density. As **Fig. 17** demonstrates, they even suggest an 'x' shape (which is, as has been suggested, the shape that most pertinently describes the deployment of Ferneyhough's chosen

---

[453] *Ibid.*
[454] *Ibid.*, 65

number series in the piece): thus it is that the plastic force of the line can be seen to be the constitutive moment of graphic space.

**Historical discourse.**

The mention of the lapse above recalls Lyotard's characterisation of the figural event as that which is perceived to be a lapse, error, or stutter in language.[455] This principle extends from language to the artwork, and also to historical paradigms. In particular, Lyotard points to the discourse of modernism in which the 'event' is similarly manifest as a 'lapse' in the prevailing rationality. According to his figural theory, we think modern history as a succession of moments; in fact, he argues, this is only possible due to the constitutive role, for the modern, of the postmodern. In other words, the postmodern functions as an 'event' for modernism. He explains further, suggesting that we perceive a lapse in the 'modernist concept of time as succession or progress'[456] and give this 'temporal *aporia*' the name 'postmodernism', where it *is in fact* constitutive of the very 'ordered sequence of moments'[457] that we term 'modernism'. Lyotard goes on to claim that figural 'materiality' is 'an effect of the temporality of language'[458], that it is a mark – in history, in language, in an artwork – 'of the time taken to arrest time and make it an object of knowledge'.[459] What the postmodern as 'event' reveals is the "End of History": the end of 'the modernist critical science'.[460] As has already been hinted at earlier, Ferneyhough himself identifies this '"End of History" in the Hegelian/Adornoesque

---

[455] See Deleuze, 'He Stuttered' in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) pp. 107-114
[456] Readings 1991: 53
[457] *Ibid.*
[458] Lyotard (DF) 1971: 51 ff. Translated in Reading 1991: 21
[459] Readings 1991: 59
[460] *Ibid.*, 60

sense'[461] with the need for a critically responsible theory of art 'in a period robbed of the nest-warmth of communally-accepted discursive value systems'.[462] His position, set out in 'Parallel Universes', resonates strongly with Lyotard's own. Readings confirms this, pointing to 'the absence of determinate criteria by which History may be constructed, once we have become incredulous concerning the discourse of History'.[463] Again, Ferneyhough, who seeks the 'prospect of a further fruitfully recuperative role for the Modernist project'[464] echoes Lyotard, for whom 'postmodernism is not a break with modernity but a radical rewriting, asking the question of what phrase to link to modernity, to put next'.[465] If this results in post-Historical, historically responsible criticism[466] then Ferneyhough grasps that art potentially offers the materials and techniques to bear out this "End of History", to survive it, and to re-articulate human self-awareness: to discover the 'phrase to link to modernity'. His is an attempt to realise the 'potential reinsertion of a critical (rather than purely ironic) self-reflexivity into the post-Historic pure contingency of the artwork'.[467] The 'event' is temporal in that it brings a happening from the past to sensate and non-representational (non-conceptual) presence, giving it a duration and tactility that are to be differentiated from rationally unfolding time and the notion of historical progress. That History unfolds in time is taken for granted; that time is self-evident for historical events is less certain. Adorno argues under the rubric 'detemporalisation of time' that 'to agree to the perpetuation of the status quo

---

[461] Ferneyhough (PU) 1995: 76
[462] *Ibid.*
[463] Readings 1991: 60
[464] Ferneyhough (PU) 1995: 83
[465] Cited in Readings 1991: 60. See Lyotard, 'Rewriting Modernity' in *Substance* no. 54 (1987)
[466] Readings 1991: 60
[467] Ferneyhough (PU) 1995: 76

is to discredit the protesting thought as ephemeral'.[468] His own perception of the temporality of historical events and the rational discourse of Historical progress closely parallels Lyotard's, since Adorno also recognises the constitutive role of each, for the other. A logical impossibility leads to the functioning of the event (he calls this the 'subjective time experience') as a temporal figure for conceptual 'clock' time. Like Lyotard, Adorno suggests that, perceived from the perspective of such 'clock' time, the sensate event manifests itself as an error (he uses the term 'delusion'). He argues that,

> in isolation, the time of subjective experience along with its content comes to be as accidental and mediated as its subject, and therefore, compared with chronometric time, is always "false" also. Sufficient to elucidate this is the triviality that, measured by clock time, subjective time experiences invite delusion, although there would be no clock time without the subjective time experience which the clock time objectifies.[469]

I will return to this question of temporality in relation to Adorno's 'On Some Relationships' presently. Ferneyhough is also correct to refer to the 'post-Historic pure contingency' of the artwork: the nature of the 'event' renders the future – indeed, future history – an uncertain and even unthinkable prospect. Recall once again Ferneyhough's model of parallel universes, where he replaces the 'chain of discretely distinguishable' happenings of rationally ordered historical discourse with the presence of the 'event', 'a critical reflective instance within the universe of its own making'. Ferneyhough refers to the latter as 'local histories' and 'locates the musical experience on the knife-edge separating perceived (if multiplex) order from the onset of chaotic turbulence'.[470] Like Lyotard (and indeed Adorno), Ferneyhough moves between a discussion of history and art, and the following lengthy quotation, some of which has been encountered earlier in a different context, refers to the former [history], although his insights here are formed on

---

[468] Adorno, trans. Ashton (ND) 1973: 331
[469] *Ibid.*, 334

the basis of his practical experience of musical material. Again like Lyotard, he recognises that Modernist discourse is the constitutive instance of the irrational, irruptive event, and by the same token, that the event constitutes the rational order of historical discourse – the highlighted phrases below convey this:

> In concrete terms, this means the acceptance of irrational, locally-determined states *which germinate, grow and disbalance in the interstices of the dominant paradigm of reason, taking their nourishment from it, adapting and subverting its vocables to illicit purposes* – purposes not directly responsible to the referential whole. By accepting and infolding this wounding presence of its Doppelgänger, its alter ego, the rationally-generated judgemental autonomy of the Enlightenment subject *is reinvested with a paradoxical and frangible legitimacy, its identity re-grounded* in the continued mediational potential of its own non-identity.[471]

This dialectical argument will be carried over into the next chapter of this thesis, and developed through the encounter with Adorno's aforementioned essay on painting and music.

### II.vii Adorno on the Relationship between Music and Painting

Adorno also explores the materiality of language, through painting and music. He argues that 'painting and music speak by virtue of the way they are constructed, not by the act of representing themselves; they speak all the more clearly, the more profoundly and thoroughly they are composed in themselves'.[472] Furthermore, he adds that 'the figures of this essential form are their writing'.[473] One cannot help but recall Bacon's wish to return the fact more profoundly through the figure: 'you get through this accidental thing something much more profound'. This is echoed in Deleuze's appreciation of the 'more profound resemblance' brought to bear in Bacon's best work. It is worth reinforcing the

---

[470] Ferneyhough (PU) 1995: 82
[471] *Ibid.*, 83
[472] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 71
[473] *Ibid.*, 71

point that, despite the integration of diagrammatic 'accident' in Bacon's paintings into the figure, this in no way suggests the acceptance of externally imposed material that exists independently of the work's own inner compulsion. The figure emerges only in works that are profoundly and thoroughly composed in themselves. There is a difference between material whose own course offers up the 'accident' to the artist (and so to this extent in his involvement, from the outset with the intricacies of such material, the artist can be said to have had a hand (quite literally) in precipitating the 'accident', thus recalling the debate set out above that notes the constitutive role of the 'lapse' or event for rational discourse, and the similarly constitutive role of discourse for the figural event), and material which evinces the kind of 'false forms of directness' castigated by Ferneyhough (which he perceives to be errors of judgement on the part of the composer). In the quality of artistic 'writing' Adorno also discovers the profound, self-consistent materiality of the figure. It is not presuming too much to draw significant similarities between the figures of this 'essential form' that Adorno calls 'writing', and the graphic and plastic characters that Lyotard situates at the centre of discourse in the signifier, and what is more, at the centre of his account of figurality in language and art.

By concentrating specifically on the figural materiality of the signifier, Lyotard separates it from its signified, concept or thing. It is not the relationship between signifier and signified/meaning that occupies him so much at this stage as that between the signifier and reader/viewer/artist. Adorno once again sets forth a similar argument, suggesting that 'the breaking off of intention through the creation of the artwork…is what lends the work its character as a sign. It becomes a sign by virtue of a break between it

and everything designated'.[474] One might conclude that what Adorno infers by 'sign' in this context is something very like Lyotard's redescription of the materiality of the signifier: in both cases the signifier is 'opaque'. Adorno makes an association between the 'sign-character' of the work and *écriture*, suggesting that '*écriture* in music and painting cannot be direct writing', and that 'the similarity [of painting and music] to language increases with the decrease in communication'.[475] The decrease in communication (such as 'storytelling') is proportional to the decrease in imitation, whilst the contrasting increase in the degree of opacity in a work of art reveals the historical character of *écriture*. According to Adorno, it is modern.

In fact, Bacon, Ferneyhough, Lyotard, Deleuze and Adorno are all concerned with the artistically modern. It has been suggested above that the 'diagram' in artworks is a modern phenomenon: indeed, Adorno's essay arguably supports this. It is tempting to draw a parallel between aspects of the concepts of *écriture* and *diagramme*, since both are borne of abstraction. Of *écriture* Adorno argues that 'it is set free on the strength of what in painting, with a devastating expression, people have taken to calling abstraction, through distraction of attention from its object-relatedness'.[476] Adorno also identifies 'abstraction' in music along similar lines to Ferneyhough, who calls for a musical material in which conventional conceptions of gesture are denied the possibility of functioning a-contextually, on account of their historically acquired signifying capacity alone. Instead he advocates the breakdown of handed-down gestural complexes into atomic, parametric, force-driven matter: his reconception of parameters in particular signals the potential for new expressive possibilities through the redirection of the

---

[474] *Ibid.*
[475] *Ibid.*

musically abstract towards reinforcing, and not compromising, the bodily impact ultimately aspired to, and delivered, through figural material. Adorno concurs, suggesting that *écriture* in music is enabled 'through the mortal contraction of all its imitative moments, not only its programmatically descriptive elements, but its traditional expressivity, as well, which requires firm conventions linking what is expressed with its signifier'.[477] The resonance between this and Ferneyhough's criticism that 'the gesture *means*...by virtue of reference to specific hierarchies of symbolic convention'[478] needs hardly be explained further – the similarities speak for themselves.

Mindful that Bacon perceives the abstraction of the 'graph' or diagram (like 'black sockets' where the eyes should be) by suddenly seeing through figurative material (eyes, nose, mouth – faciality) as if by 'accident', one can detect further similarities between the diagram and *écriture*: Adorno explains that 'music and painting become more closely related, the more thoroughly they alienate the naïve person's feelings by means of what he or she perceives as the abstract. [They] become writing through their renunciation of the communicative'.[479] It is undoubtedly the case that in Ferneyhough and Bacon's respective artworks the figural emerges on account of the renunciation of the communicative, the conventional, and that this emergence is made possible by the diagram.

The nature of the abstraction to which Adorno refers is of interest here. The abstract marks that Bacon identifies as the operative diagram in his paintings, I have supposed to be extremely abstractly expressionistic, both given Bacon's insistence that

---

[476] *Ibid.*
[477] *Ibid.*
[478] Ferneyhough (TF) and (JB) 1995: 33 and 386.
[479] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 71

they are 'accidental', 'free' and 'catastrophic', and in spite of his apparent dislike of the work of artists such as Jackson Pollock. In the latter's drip paintings, he perceives that the diagram covers the entire canvas, resulting in the rule of indiscipline, chaos, the consequent loss of focused sensation and precise *loci* of force. Bacon's protestations notwithstanding, the flirtation with abstract expression that the diagram induces in Bacon's paintings, and thereby the attendant flirtation with catastrophe, indiscipline and manual methods of painting cannot be ignored. I have argued (in relation to both Ferneyhough and Bacon) that the notion of the figure is one means by which the artistic and critically aware furtherance of the 'Modernist project' might be assured, but this cannot be at the expense of other viable routes chosen by equally determined, self-reflexive artists (Pollock is one such example). Deleuze's observation that 'we might perhaps distinguish three great paths, each of which groups together very different painters, but each of which designates a "modern" function of painting, or expresses what painting claims to bring to "modern man"'[480] promises, at first, a more sympathetic response to forms of abstraction than hitherto expressed by Bacon, and what is more, hints at the possibility of some kind of integration of the three 'great paths', such that Deleuze will acknowledge Bacon's debt to abstract art, as well as the constitutive role that the abstract plays in the formation of the figure. The three paths (perhaps predictably) are firstly abstraction – that is, less gestural, more ascetic forms of abstraction such as one finds in the squares of Piet Mondrian's work (and in Boulez's *Structures*), in which the 'diagram' - the manual and chaotic - enjoy only minimal exposure, if any.[481] Secondly Deleuze names abstract expressionism, 'the opposite

---

[480] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 103
[481] *Ibid.*

extreme of abstraction'[482] wherein the diagram is said to 'proliferate' and sprawl. Finally there is the figure, which forces the figuratively rational and the abstractly chaotic into an uncomfortable co-presence, such that each prevents the other from prevailing: the two domains 'shift' together. Although Deleuze discusses the degree to which the diagram prospers in each of the three styles (too little, too much and most effectively, respectively) he never actually identifies the style of abstract expressionism with the notion of the diagram *per se*. This is clear from his argument that the diagram covers the whole painting (and can therefore itself be abstracted, as a concept, from the abstract expressionist style), whereas I suggest that the tactile, expressive marks of abstract expressionism, to which I do not attach the (negative) value judgement of Deleuze, are the diagram or rather become what operates diagrammatically in Bacon's work (and also Ferneyhough's). Deleuze, despite warning against the selfsame problem, conceptualises the diagram as a self-consistent entity. In fact, Bacon's description of its *tachiste* character, and the suddenness of its advent upon the painter, suggests that it emerges only when potential trajectories of the material and the physical responsiveness of the artist collide as the work is created. Deleuze argues that Bacon's figural path is superior to the pursuit of either abstract 'extreme', whereas it is surely more informative in respect of the figural, if this is to be the favoured 'modern' route of both of the artists studied here, not to 'freeze out' the abstract paths, but to uncover their role in the profound impact realised through the figure. (Abstraction in a geometrical sense is manifest in the angular or curved structures in Bacon's painting that contrast so forcibly with the fleshiness of the figure. In Ferneyhough's case this form of abstraction is often called upon through the use of grid, sieve and filter structures as well as through the almost obsessive

---

[482] *Ibid.*, 104

preoccupation with musical parameters, which according to Serialist principles – Ferneyhough's point of departure – generate series of abstract spatial relations). Thus the figure can be seen to be fundamentally indebted to, and arguably predicated upon both so-called extremes of abstraction. In fact, to abstract the figural from these other two 'great paths' of modern art is to make it an 'other' to artistic abstraction, and push it precariously back towards the representational, figurative domain that it so emphatically wishes to escape. Rather, in its flirtation with extreme abstraction, the figure, ironically as I have suggested earlier, discovers pulsating flesh all the more forcefully.

In short, were it not for the contribution of the abstract (manifest in the diagram) to the making of the figure, it would not be possible for Deleuze to valorise the latter to the extent that he does, for it would not 'return' the fact (from the necessary detour into the abstract, the abyss) to the nervous system as palpably and as forcibly as Bacon's figure purports to do.

In 'Parallel Universes', Ferneyhough offers the model cited earlier, of a music that sustains both linearly consistent musical materials and yet a plurality of style seemingly inimical to self-consistency. It is my contention that the diagram makes possible something similar in Bacon's painting insofar as his work, too, tolerates stylistic plurality (I suggest figurative and abstract expressionist styles primarily) within the artist's consistent focus upon the deformations that lead him to the figure.

Adorno is also explicit regarding the role of what have earlier been referred to, after Deleuze, as the two extremes of abstraction, in *écriture*. He argues that 'one must not seek the convergence of painting and music exclusively in the constructive principle': that is, in an ascetic form of abstraction which 'divests itself of familiar objects in

painting and of the familiar idiom in music'. One must also take account of 'a changed form of the expressive...nonobjective painting, like atonal music that abandons itself to its impulse, has an affinity with pure expression; independent not only of its relation as a signifier to something that is meant to be expressed, but also of its kindred relation to an expressive subject that is identical with itself. This affinity reveals itself as a break between the sign and what it signifies'. [483] The 'pure expression' that he characterises here can be none other than the abstract expressionism which is referred to above. Adorno develops his discussion of the extremes of abstraction in terms of their role in the emergence of artistic *écriture*. However, his approach differs from Deleuze's insofar as *écriture* is not posited as a stylistically superior alternative to forms of abstraction (as is the figure in Deleuze's estimation): instead, Adorno understands that an artwork acquires the sought-after explosive quality precisely by virtue of the contributory role of abstraction – both in its formal and expressive extremes – to this ultimately 'seismographic'[484] character of 'writing'. Thus, his observations concerning 'nonobjective' art require some clarification: the phenomenon that is at first identified as a complete break between a work's pure expression (signifier) and the thing expressed (signified) is later revisited, and rethought by Adorno. Lyotard's conclusions regarding the 'potentially arbitrary signifying function of the line' (in other words, 'its work of demarcation')[485] must be borne in mind: to 'ignore' the signified in this way is tantamount to the suppression of the non-linguistic typical of structural linguistics. Thus Adorno concedes that 'if painting or music were simply lacking the expressive element, the element of an expression without anything concrete to be expressed, the work would

---

[483] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 72
[484] *Ibid.*

no longer intend toward something that is not its own phenomenon and that cannot be hidden in symbolic unity, either within it or anywhere outside it'.[486] This quite clearly recalls Lyotard's understanding of linguistic reference. He reminds us that the signifier points outside language to a thing, and that contrary to the suppressions perpetrated by a structural linguistics which 'hide' the non-linguistic nature of the thing in discursive, symbolic unity, the thing or object is grasped as a perceptible opacity, encroaching upon discursive space. In fact, visible and discursive spaces are blocked together, heterogeneously, giving rise to the figural condition of 'shifting'. Similarly, Adorno warns that, if art in fact does lack that tendency toward something that is not its own phenomenon 'then its character as writing would be lost':[487] thus one might conclude that 'writing' too involves a kind of 'shifting' between the discursive and the corporeal. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, the artwork's character as 'writing' can be seen to emerge, as does the figure, from its venture into the chaotic possibilities of extreme abstract expressionism. Like the figure, the character of 'writing' can be understood as that which wrests the work away from the brink of catastrophe, forcing it towards the physical sensation of expression conveyed through the deformations and opacities arising from the clash of incommensurable spaces, and the action of seismic forces upon the material. This is further consolidated when Adorno argues that nonobjective painting and music 'become schemata of a nonsubjective language'[488] (here is evidence of the encounter with extreme abstract expressionism) adding 'but…the latter is veiled, not immediately present and possible, it is possessed of [a] broken-off,

---

[485] See Readings 1991: 20
[486] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 72
[487] *Ibid.*
[488] *Ibid.*

hieroglyphic character....'[489] One senses an analogy here with deformations present in Bacon and Ferneyhough's figural material and what is more, it is possible to compare the notion of 'nonsubjective language' to Ferneyhough's observation that Deleuze effects a 'suppression of the subject....It [is] his Bacon book which approach[s] this issue most pressingly, in that much conventional rhetoric of subjectivity [is] studiously avoided, being replaced by a sort of objective phenomenology of expressive force'.[490] Indeed, it has been noted previously on a number of occasions that these forces leave their trace in musical or painted material, that they too are 'veiled, not immediately present and possible'.

Returning briefly to the complexity of Lyotard's earlier statement that 'it is not by virtue of its "materiality" that language participates in the sensible, it is by its figural quality that it may come to the same level': we are arguably now in a position both to fully appreciate this comment, and to proceed to critique the central preoccupations of Adorno's essay in the light of what it tells us. Essentially, Lyotard is distinguishing between a false notion of "materiality" that seeks a pure truth anterior to representation –

---

[489] *Ibid.* Interestingly, above the first system in the score of Ferneyhough's Lemma-Icon-Epigram, written only the year before the *Carceri d'invenzione* cycle, is the citation of Baudelaire's which reads '*Tout est hieroglyphique*'. This, says Jeffrey Stadelman (Ferneyhough's interviewer) 'seems to bespeak a belief that everything is a text, that anything can be "read". What happens when the source of this image, *language*, is itself transformed so that it can't be read in the usual way?...' to which Ferneyhough replies, 'But poetry is never, by definintion, read "in the usual way". At most, the substance of the text might be suggesting certain conventional ways of reading as a background against which various strategies of "poetic" reading may be essayed...Poetic texts do not deal directly with referential "reality", but with the specific event of their inscription. Different, incompatible spaces coincide... The particular composition to which I appended that Baudelaire citation was itself an extreme investigation of the dynamic act of writing, as opposed to the evocative potential of fixed sonic objects'. (Ferneyhough, 'Leaps and Circuits to Trail: a Conversation on the Texts and Music with Jeffrey Stadelman' in 1995: 467-468) In the context of the discussion in this chapter concerning Adorno's *écriture* and the plasticity of the line in the letter for Lyotard, Ferneyhough's remarks go to the very heart of the issues raised, particularly his observations that 'different, incompatible spaces coincide', and that the act of writing is dynamic.

[490] Cody 1996: 8

'the grand transcendental signified'[491] – and a deconstructive approach to representation that uncovers a co-extant, but incommensurable materiality at work within and against it, a materiality that does not yield a meaning. Whereas the former deposes Saussure's signified 'as merely the illusory or ideological effect of the combination of signifiers', and thus purports to reveal the mechanics of discursive representation[492] in which case materiality is conceived as an objective property (of the signifier) with a function, Lyotard makes materiality a function of the signifier – a 'resistance to conceptual representation'[493] – with a view to blocking the two spaces together and eliciting figural sensation. Thus language is rent with the traces – the objective properties – left in the wake of deformative figural forces. It is now by virtue of its figural quality that language – specifically the opaque signifier – does indeed come to participate in the sensible, as Lyotard suggests.

Lyotard's redescription of the materiality of the linguistic signifier suggests still further bases for likening *écriture*, by analogy, to the figural condition in art. The latter space is a charged one, a domain of forces: for Adorno, 'crackling with electricity is perhaps the most tolerable approximation to what should be understood by the work's character as writing and by the convergence of painting and music'.[494] This description of *écriture* prepares the ground for a more detailed exploration of the idea, in the form of a comparison with Lyotard's notion of the figural event in art – its irruption into the painting or piece of music – and with Deleuze's theorisation of the 'catastrophe', which itself constitutes an 'irruption' of sorts. The latter marks the irruption of the abstractly

---

[491] Readings 1991: 21
[492] *Ibid.*
[493] *Ibid.*
[494] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 72

perceptible diagram into rational, figurative, space that in turn yields a figural space in which the abstract and the figurative 'shift' together. Adorno's image seems particularly apt: figural space 'crackles with electricity'.

Adorno (not unlike Ferneyhough) is prone to using geological metaphors to explain and reinforce the most significant aspects of his argument. In what follows, he invokes the chaos and disruption created in the wake of an earthquake, which in itself adds to the vivid, somewhat physical impact of the essay and the notion of *écriture* for the reader. Beyond this, Adorno's specific choice of image is useful for the purposes of the present discussion, when one takes account firstly of the role of catastrophe in what he writes and furthermore, of the occurrence of the earthquake event in Lyotard's theory of the figure. Adorno argues that

> It would not be erroneous to term this character of writing seismographic. It is induced by the distant, similarly premonitory trembling during catastrophes. In reaction to it the arts are startled; the traces of these startle reflexes, retained in the works, are the graphic characters in them. As such seismograms of involuntary occurrences, they mark the incursion of early mimetic behaviours that precede all objectivised art....[495]

Readings recalls Lyotard's own appropriation of the image of the earthquake in the latter's experimental fiction *Récits Tremblants* (1977)[496]. Accordingly, Readings characterises the 'displacement of representational values' by such figural difference as one

> which is not the introduction of another kind of code, but which has itself the singular quality of an *event*, a kind of catastrophe, an earthquake as it were. The seismic event is the effect of the clash of two heterogeneous yet juxtaposed fields – the incommensurable...*Discours, figure* situates the event as the site at which the earthquake of the figural fractures discourse...in the space of discourse everything is in place, so that the event can be erased, so that it can seem a simple error.[497]

---

[495] *Ibid.*, 73
[496] Readings 1991: 42. See Lyotard, *Récits tremblants* (Paris: Galilée, 1977)
[497] *Ibid.*, 42-43. Original italics.

Like the figure, writing manifests the traces of the forces acting upon it, and, like the figure, it opens the artwork up to the 'distances of the Sahara' (Bacon is also prone to geological references) through the catastrophe – that which Deleuze names the 'diagram'. Moreover, Bacon's perception of the abstract 'graph' that suddenly, inexplicably, offers him the possibility of painting the figure ('you suddenly see that the smile could go right across the face') is, he insists, an 'accident'. Lyotard's characterisation of the figural 'event' (already been discussed in some detail) itself effects a sort of shock as it irrupts into the work. Here Adorno also argues that the work retains 'startle reflexes' precipitated by the catastrophe and, what is more, that 'writing' attests – as, it might be added, does Lyotard's figural event – to the involuntary in artworks, to [Bacon's] 'accident', without which the figural is impossible. Adorno's reference (evidently consolidating the notion of writing) to the 'graphic characters' manifest in artworks: 'graven characters, they retain the elusive responses, which are still perceptible in human beings in such reactions as blushing or goose-flesh, and lend them duration, without surrendering them to the seemingly objective rationality of the prevailing signs'[498] resonates once more with Lyotard's own understanding of the figural blocking together of the 'plastic' line and 'graphic' letter at the centre of discourse.

In Adorno's 'graphic characters' one senses a similar plastic force at work as is found in Lyotard's material, opaque signifier which cannot be given up to a meaning. Furthermore, since Lyotard finds such materiality to be a mark of the temporality of the figural event-irruption into language or the artwork, Adorno's claim that 'graven characters' retain bodily sensations and lend them duration within the work, crucially without making them an object of knowledge – 'surrendering them' – reveals the degree

---

[498] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 73

of affinity between the work-immanent functioning of Lyotard's event on the one hand, and that of Adorno's *écriture* on the other. Adorno argues that 'works of art are writing in their flashing forth, and this suddenness has a temporal quality'.[499] The event infuses the work with true spatial difference. The visible and the textual are not simply held apart by its force, but occupy different planes from one another altogether. Additionally, the event functions temporally insofar as it marks an *aporia* in the conceptual ordering of time as a sequence of successive moments. In as much as the figural event radically alters conceptual space and time, it therefore follows that, in artworks, conventional assumptions relating to painting as an artform concerned with space, and music with time can be overturned, from within the works themselves, without their having to forfeit or compromise their innermost maxims. In this, the character of the event is most like that of *écriture*: Adorno begins 'On Some Relationships' with the observation that 'the self-evident, that music is a temporal art, that it unfolds in time, means in the dual sense, that time is not self-evident for it, that it has time as its problem' and adds later that 'the arts converge only where each pursues its immanent principle in a pure way'.[500] His observation here relating to music as a temporal art form echoes, if one makes the analogy between musical time and historical time, the passage from *Negative Dialectics* cited earlier, in which he makes a distinction between the self-evident 'clock' time according to which we conceive Historical progress and the physically experienced temporality of the event. Time, he implies there, is not self-evident for the historical

---

[499] *Ibid.*, 77. This is echoed in Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Athlone Press, 1997). There, Adorno argues that 'The phenomenon of fireworks is prototypical for artworks, though because of its fleetingness and status as empty entertainment it has scarcely been acknowledged by theoretical consideration; only Valéry pursued ideas that are at least related. Fireworks are apparition… They appear empirically yet are liberated from the burden of the empirical, which is the obligation of duration; they are a sign from heaven yet artifactual, an ominous warning, a script that flashes up, vanishes, and indeed cannot be read for its meaning'. (p. 81)

event, and indeed, it too has time as its problem. Thus the bringing to sensation of the temporality of the event and thereby lending it a duration (as opposed to its being 'ephemeral') in the historical domain, as both Lyotard and Adorno suggest in relation to their example of the Holocaust, also becomes the prerogative of the individual artist at the level of the artwork. Ferneyhough differentiates between two temporalitites, much as Adorno does in the excerpt of *Negative Dialectics* reproduced previously, arguing that 'the time of the composition is a web of porous fractures seeping subjective time into the evolving…social temporality'.[501] One might propose that the Subject itself which, recall, 'will not go away merely because its existence is an impossibility' be recast as an event in terms of its historical and artistic role, rather than as a rationally progressive 'social construct' (as Ferneyhough terms it).[502] Indeed, the fact that Lyotard considers the non-rationally sensate to be impossibly present to rationally unfolding discourse has been discussed at length: thus, if history, and its 'responsible' proxy art are to be perceived now in terms of the figural event, then the Subject must be impossibly present to Historical rationality and also to artistic rationality. Hence Ferneyhough's characterisation of the Subject (thoroughly echoing Lyotard and Adorno's description of the 'event') as 'both successive mutual annihilations of past and future, and the sudden awareness of many-dimensioned, striatedly interdependent opacities….'[503] Like Adorno, Ferneyhough is conscious of the responsible role of surrogacy that art performs in relation to History, even suggesting that 'New Music has – arguably with a greater faithfulness than any other art form – lived through and reflected the agony of

---

[500] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 66-67
[501] Ferneyhough (PU) 1995: 77
[502] *Ibid.*
[503] *Ibid.*

the…subject'.[504] Once again, one can extrapolate from this the status of the subject as event, an impossible presence for history and art: the 'agony' to which Ferneyhough refers is analogous to the sensation that both Adorno and Lyotard charge art to deliver as an event 'After Auschwitz'. In fact, Adorno's 'aesthetics' takes on an interesting dimension in light of this: if one were tempted to make of it a model of social progress and historical rationality in which the subject is critically salvageable (albeit fractured), it is at the expense of accepting the *parallel universe* wherein Adorno acknowledges the impossibility of the subject – in common with the postmodernists and poststructuralists – and reveals a sensitivity to the limits of representation. Ferneyhough calls for 'a veritable renewal of aesthetic means and ends',[505] and Adorno's notion of *écriture* arguably delivers just that: he argues 'the more expression has been constrained by the semiotic systems of aesthetics, in the form of conventions, the more profoundly art's mimetic aspect is falsified….Even the return of an undistorted mimetic moment, however, is in thrall to the rational element of artistic progress'.[506] *Écriture* encourages a renewed aesthetic drive in art: the abandonment of the artwork 'to its mimetic impulse in a pure way'.[507] I propose that the notion of the diagram, in its flirtation with the involuntary, startle reflexes, 'pure' expression and the elusive (immemorial) sustains this abandonment, and that the ensuing figure does not, as Adorno's graven characters of *écriture* do not, 'surrender' this diagrammatic moment 'to the seemingly objective rationality of the prevailing signs'. Indeed, the examination of Bacon's Study after Velázquez' Pope above bears this out: the black eye sockets and plastic contours

---

[504] *Ibid.*
[505] *Ibid.*, 78
[506] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 73
[507] *Ibid.*

discernible in the figure testify to Bacon's experience of what I have argued is the moment of extreme abstract expressionism – the so-called 'graph' or *diagramme* **(see Fig. 12)**. This discussion will return to this notion of a renewed aesthetics presently.

Some time ago, the ambiguity of Lyotard's relationship to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology – particularly at the outset of *Discours, figure* – was noted. At times his text verges on the suggestion that 'phenomenology produces a metaphysics of presence by thinking the figural disruption as the pure expressivity of gesture…it is hard to see how he is distinguishing himself from a claim that the figural reveals the expressive function of language…as a pure alterity to signified meaning'.[508] Nevertheless, it has also been pointed out that Lyotard retreats from this implication with the argument that in order for nature to become language, a violence is necessary: thus violence is the figure for expression, expression the figure for signification.[509] For his part, Adorno argues that natural material 'precede[s] all objectivised art and that all art secretly dreams of objectifying' nature.[510] His words could be read as implying that the disruption of the 'prevailing signs' in an artwork is effected by the pure expressivity of gesture, and his emphasis on the desired pure pursuit of the mimetic impulse in art as suggesting an appeal to a pure alterity to signified meaning. However in a passage from *Aesthetic Theory* that is similarly conceived to 'On Some Relationships', Adorno assures his reader, much as Lyotard does in the 'second phase' of *Discours, figure* that what has been referred to as the 'sensible-figural' – roughly equivalent to Adorno's mimetic impulse – is itself the recipient of a thoroughgoing critique. Elements of Lyotard's suggestion that privileging the sensible over the conceptual results merely in a secondary

---

[508] Readings 1991: 30
[509] *Ibid.*, 31

rationalisation of space – the perception of a figure on a ground – are detectable in Adorno's assertions that

> Given their constitutive refractedness, pure intuitability cannot be attributed to artworks...If it were completely intuitable, it would become part of the empirical world that it resists....No analysis of important works could possibly prove their pure intuitability, for they are all pervaded by the conceptual....The word *Anschaulichkeit* [intuitability], itself borrowed from the theory of discursive knowledge, where it stipulates a formed content, testifies to the rational element in art as much as it conceals that element by dividing off the phenomenal element and hypostatising it.[511]

Furthermore, he adds that 'the more the work is said to be purely identical with its intuitability, the more its spirit is reified as an "idea," as an immutable content back of its appearance. The spiritual elements that are withdrawn from the structure of the phenomenon are hypostatised as its idea. The result usually is that intentions are exalted as the work's content, while correlatively intuition is allotted to sensuous satisfaction'.[512] Recall Lyotard's conclusion that the clash of figurative and sensible spaces in language or artworks results in a visual opacity at the edge of language which, without pursuing the heterogeneity of a third, figural, space leads to the perception of that opacity as simply 'the back of what is grasped face-on [discursively] in the centre'.[513] Adorno's ideas resonate with Lyotard's insofar as he too perceives the plastic, sensuous line in the graphic letter, but the letter in the line nonetheless: 'it is by way of concepts, however, that art sets free its mimetic, nonconceptual layer'.[514] What is more, in a move redolent of the latter's deconstructive approach to figural language, Adorno similarly reduces the antagonism between the sensible and conceptual to an opposition in order to make way for the sort of planar difference introduced by the irruption of the invisible-figural into discursive space. He points out that 'if, after the separation of knowledge into image and

---

[510] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 73
[511] Adorno, trans. Hullot-Kentor (AT) 1997: 96-97
[512] *Ibid.*, 97
[513] Bennington 1988: 74. See Lyotard (DF) 1971: 158.

sign, thought simply equates the image with truth, the untruth of the schism is in no way corrected but made all the worse, for *the image is no less affected by the schism than is the concept*'.[515] As one discovers from Ferneyhough, the figural domain is the life-force of the work. This is no less the case in Adorno's estimation: 'spirit, art's vital element, is bound up with art's truth content....With an ever increasing ruthlessness, spirit determines and pulls everything merely sensual and factual [i.e. conceptual] in artworks into its own sphere'.[516] He continues: 'what remains true in the doctrine of intuitability is that it emphasises the element of the incommensurable, that which in art is not exhausted by discursive logic'.[517] Lyotard's description of the 'shifting' in paintings which occurs when the incommensurable figural and figurative domains are blocked-together before a re-immobilised eye has been consistently foregrounded. Adorno is no less explicit: 'under patient contemplation artworks begin to move'.[518]

It is possible to read 'Art Beauty' (the section of *Aesthetic Theory* to which I refer) as a development of many of the ideas proposed in 'On Some Relationships'. It is also a useful text with which to reconsolidate the correspondences between Lyotard and Adorno's figural thought. For example, something of Lyotard's description of sensible-figural linguistic reference is discoverable in Adorno's discussion of a certain passage in Beethoven's *Kreutzer* Sonata.[519] He argues that

> The passage only gains significance through its place and function in the movement. It becomes crucially significant in that through its *hic et nunc* it points beyond itself and imparts the feeling of a critical situation over what precedes and follows it. This feeling cannot be grasped as an isolated sensual quality, yet through

---

[514] Adorno, trans. Hullot-Kentor (AT) 1997: 96
[515] *Ibid.*, 85. My italics
[516] *Ibid.*, 88
[517] *Ibid.*, 96
[518] *Ibid.*, 79
[519] The passage in question is just before the beginning of the reprise in the first movement and contains the secondary subdominant chord.

the sensual constellation of two chords at a critical point it becomes as irrefutable as only something sensual can be.[520]

One has only to recall Readings' explanation of the figure of designation – the 'here and now' – and moreover, Lyotard's insistence that the attempt to grasp the opacity visible at the edge of discourse results in its loss, forfeiting the quality of difference within the visible.[521] Adorno is particularly conscious of this: he suggests that 'if this fissure is concealed rather than that the work immerses itself in it, the work is lost'.[522] Ferneyhough's characterisation of expression as the passage from the musically 'no-longer' to the 'not yet', his considerable emphasis on the importance of context for the sensuous fulfilment of the elements of musical '*parole*' and his attempts to actuate these principles in the works themselves reveal their affinity with Adorno's insights in practice. Self-consistent as these works arguably are, Ferneyhough nevertheless seeks the '"shock-effect" demanded by W. Benjamin'[523] not, he makes clear, by recourse to the uncritical use of historically pre-established materials, but by raising their once sensuous 'concretisation' of a 'super-contextual' order[524] (for example as formal types) to a figurally re-affirmative level of sensation effected through work-immanent forces and the degree of resistance offered to those forces by musical materials. In one of his interviews with Ferneyhough, Toop observes that

'In fact, *Superscriptio* includes one or two really simple bars, which come almost as a shock in the general context of your music'

to which Ferneyhough replies

---

[520] Adorno, trans. Hullot-Kentor (AT) 1997: 88
[521] Bennington 1988: 74
[522] Adorno, trans. Hullot-Kentor (AT) 1997: 95
[523] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 34
[524] *Ibid.*

> Ah, but they arise through the conjunction of terrifically complex superpositions of processes. And it's one of my basic theories that …[a specified excerpt of musical material] can be one thing if it is the [figural] trace, the evidence of a finished process, and another if it is simply 'given ['discursive'] material' which has, as it were, potential creative substance.[525]

One might extrapolate from this that the so-called 'shock-effect' in fact marks the irruption of the invisible-figural event into Ferneyhough's musical discourse. What Adorno refers to as the 'striven-for shudder' similarly answers Benjamin's 'demand'. Still more interesting in the context of the present chapter – not least in the light of Bacon's special appropriation of the term 'appearance' – is Adorno's argument that 'the shocks inflicted by the most recent artworks are the explosion of their appearance. In them appearance [read: figurative], previously a self-evident *apriori* of art, dissolves in a catastrophe in which the essence of appearance [read: Bacon's special 'appearance'] is for the first time fully revealed…'[526] My reading of Bacon and Ferneyhough's attempt to return the figure to appearance, to re-affirm it through sensation (and what is more, to do this on the basis of an encounter with the catastrophic diagram, which first dissolves the figurative moment into the chaos of extreme abstract expressionism before returning the distance to the second, figural, moment) can only be reinforced by what Adorno's ideas offer. If Adorno parallels Lyotard insofar as he recognises that expression is a [sensible] figure for rationality then he consolidates this by also acknowledging, in the 'shudder', violence as a figure for expression: 'in the incineration of appearance, artworks break away in a glare from the empirical world and become the counterfigure of what lives there'.[527] Add to this the implication Dews discovers in Lyotard's work that 'language itself is a deflagration', and one senses something of the violence perpetrated by the

---

[525] Toop 'Brian Ferneyhough's *Superscriptio*' 1995: 4
[526] Adorno, trans. Hullot-Kentor (AT) 1997: 84
[527] *Ibid.*, 85

'invisible-figural' as it explodes into the artwork or linguistic space and 'burns away' material, deforming it. Anticipating this very point – and what is more making the connection between figural deformation and the dream – Adorno explains that

> artworks diverge from empirical reality, empiria through empirical deformation. This is the affinity of artworks to the dream....Only those artworks are enlightened that, vigilantly distant from the empirical [sensible-figural], evince true consciousness [invisible-figural, re-affirmed sensible].[528]

The suddenness of the perception of Bacon and Deleuze's diagram satisfies Adorno's wish for art to abandon itself to the purely expressive, as suggested above, but the figural condition necessarily forces return: one can travel the 'distances of the Sahara', but one *must travel back.* Bacon is adamant that the figure return or reaffirm 'appearance', sensation and fact the more palpably, violently and effectively for its experience of this distance. The figure brings the rationality of signs and the phenomenologically expressive into radical incompossible co-presence – graphic and plastic – and each constitutes the other. So for example, despite the extremity of expression to which Bacon's diagram takes him, despite its accidental character, he impossibly retains total control of the material whilst being utterly surprised by it at every turn. Adorno's thought even foreshadows the extremity to which Ferneyhough takes the principle of rationality, decreeing that 'it is evident that artworks can heal the wounds that abstraction inflicts on them only through the heightening of abstraction, which impedes the contamination of the conceptual ferment with empirical reality: The concept becomes a "parameter"'.[529] In Ferneyhough's case, the parameter then becomes plastic, sensuous and figurally active – vital – in the work, bearing out Adorno's vision of 'rationality [as] the immanent condition of the nonrationality of fully developed art'.[530]

---

[528] *Ibid.*, 87
[529] *Ibid.*, 99
[530] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 73

Early in the 'Art Beauty' passage Adorno calls upon the notion of 'script' – clearly evoking *écriture* – to explain the re-affirmative return to sensation of artistic material in the aftermath of the rationalistic attempt to reduce empirical sensation to figurative order. Discourse is heavily laden with the incursive opaque figure-ground structures of the empirical world: in *écriture*/script the violence in which the two are mediated explodes this heaviness in a sudden flash. Adorno suggests that 'the phenomenon of fireworks is prototypical for artworks…[fireworks] appear empirically yet are liberated from the burden of the empirical, which is the obligation of duration; they are a sign from heaven yet artifactual, an ominous warning, a script that flashes up, vanishes, and indeed cannot be read for its meaning'.[531] He implies a contrast between the duration and indeed the durability of figurative forms and the momentariness of what, in Lyotard's case is called the figural 'event'. The former brings to mind a rational conception of musical history. Handed-down material becomes progressively more 'sedimented' with previous forms, social and technical residues until even an individual note is so heavy that in it one can identify the entire nexus of a piece: parameter after parameter converges there. Nevertheless, Heidegger reminds us (as discussed in the early stages of Part II) that it is not by weighing the stone in a balance that one gains a sense of its substantiality. By the same token, it is not by measuring the cumulative effect of historical progress that one will come to 'know' it sensuously: rather – as noted above – the artwork is accorded the responsibility of conveying the 'event' which is itself historical: it is modern. Historical time is rendered sensible once one acknowledges history as a property of the work, rather than the work as a link in the chain of historical significance: it is not by breaking open the stone and discovering its crystalline structure

---

[531] Adorno, trans. Hullot-Kentor (AT) 1997: 81

that one can come to reckon with the quality of its morphology, its 'earthiness'. Colour and other characteristics of the figural artwork shine forth, says Heidegger – theirs is the duration that we ignore in the attempt to quantify artistic material and historical rationality. In the time taken to arrest time and make it an object of knowledge[532] the firework-script has vanished from the sky. We are blinded by its brightness but left to see the blackness of the sky the more intensely in its wake: this is the event, the immemorial figure for history. Adorno writes that

> appearance, however, and its explosion into the artwork are essentially historical. The artwork in itself is not, as historicism would have it – as if its history accords simply with its position in real history – Being absolved from Becoming. Rather, as something that exists, the artwork has its own development. What appears in the artwork is its own inner time: the explosion of appearance blasts open the continuity of this inner temporality…[533]

Furthermore, not only is the explosion of 'appearance' historical, but that which is supposed to be the facilitator of such an eruption – the 'diagram' – is also historical: it has been suggested earlier that it, too, is modern. On the basis that the artist's perception of the 'diagram' introduces chaos into the organisation of the intended figurative image, precipitating the emergence of the irrational figural, we find still stronger parallels between Adorno and Lyotard's thinking. The former argues that

> the relation of the process of spiritualisation to the chaotic is historical. It has often been said…that in society as a whole it is art that should introduce chaos into order rather than the reverse. The chaotic aspects of qualitatively new art are opposed to order – the spirit of order – only at first glance. They are the ciphers of a critique of a spurious second nature: Order is in truth this chaotic. The element of chaos and radical spiritualisation converge in the rejection of sleekly polished images of life.[534]

Recall Deleuze's insistence that Bacon and indeed Cézanne introduce chaos to their work while fighting to limit – to order – it at any price. In Adorno's 'ciphers of a critique' the work-immanent function of the Deleuzian 'diagram' is discernible. Once again

---

[532] Readings 1991: 59
[533] Adorno, trans. Hullot-Kentor (AT) 1997: 85
[534] *Ibid.*, 93-94

paralleling Lyotard's association between the figural event and dreamwork, Adorno refers to chaos as 'dream-chaos': in Bacon's experience, the shifting, abstract contours and the 'accidental' nature of his encounter with the diagram/graph has something of the quality of a dream to it. In Ferneyhough's case the involvement of the figure and its musical consequences with the dream is explicit: his invocation of Ashbery's poem and frequent reference to dream-like disorientation (not dissimilar to the experience of 'diagrammatic' accidentalia) in 'Parallel Universes' all testify to the significant role of the unconscious even in the most meticulously executed details of a work.

The artwork as event does not judge historical rationality: it must have no particular moral authority for then it would simply leave itself open to absorption directly into social power-relations. Rather it is, as previously suggested, afforded a responsibility rather like that of a courtroom's advocates: to present a fair and balanced account of fact (recall Bacon here), suppressing no material in order to manipulate proceedings. Adorno confirms this with the suggestion that 'what is conceptual in artworks involves judgement, and to judge is contrary to the artwork. Although judgements may occur in it, the work itself does not make judgements, perhaps because ever since Attic tragedy the work has been a hearing'.[535]

A comparison of the ideas of Deleuze and Lyotard, Bacon and Ferneyhough discovers in the diagram-event an *écriture* of its own. It is in the diagram that painting and music can 'converge' without either sacrificing its own 'immanent principle', to borrow Adorno's terminology. Like the diagram, Adorno's *écriture* 'comes even before the sketch': 'in [the phenomenon of convergence] we suddenly see how strongly, at one time, the mimetic impulse – related to the chaotic element at the source of art without

which it would not exist at all – must have resisted the neat separation, the wound left by the rational order'.[536]

If the rational order inflicts the wound of separation upon the arts, then *écriture*, like an earthquake-event, irrupts into each art form individually, displacing the rational order by its figural difference: once again 'the media are drawing closer to each other, as écriture', yet this remains 'motivated by their own determination as divergence'.[537] Given that the figural condition introduces radical difference to the artwork – indeed, this is its principle task – the fact that Adorno specifically suggests that '[music and painting's] character as writing is linked to the awareness they share of difference – a difference that is stark',[538] we can assume a strong link, forming a force-field of tensions, between écriture, figure, appearance, difference and shock (as well as others besides these). The convergence of these domains in such a force field and the inter-relatedness of each aspect to the others do not result in the individual heaviness of character afforded to the single musical note by the integral serialists, for example. The latter results from the modernists' belief in rational historical progress as a series of successive moments: thus from a single note, so the serialists have it, compound parametric information can be distilled. Ferneyhough himself assents to this, but there is a difference between his view of the single note and that attributed to his predecessors. The implication is that in integral serialist pieces in particular, in the fulfilment of its weighty role the note is 'used up', much as Heidegger suggests that the stonemason 'uses up' his material. Ferneyhough by contrast is like Heidegger's sculptor who expressly does not 'use up' the earthy stone

---

[535] *Ibid.*, 99
[536] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 78
[537] *Ibid.*, 76
[538] *Ibid.*, 77

in the artwork: for the composer, the individual note rises above a purely conceptual role, becoming additionally a domain of forces and sensations, and of the figural event. So it is, I suggest, with the individual components of the force-field described above. Writing is not 'used up' in the work such that it might be conceptualised, abstracted and applied methodologically to future compositions – I have already speculated that the same is true of the diagram, and Bacon struggles to explain 'appearance' to Sylvester precisely because his experience of it is both bodily and work-specific.

In the artwork writing shines forth: the figure is sensuously incisive in its effect. Bacon's 'appearance' liberates painting from figurative congealing; difference irrupts with vitality; the shock is profound. In the figurally charged artwork, the 'earthiness' of the stone is at last sensed: 'one of the paradoxes of artworks is that what they posit they are actually not permitted to posit; this is the measure of their substantiality…Artworks have the immanent character of being an act *even if they are carved in stone*'.[539]

## II.viii Concluding Remarks

Perhaps the most striking impression to emerge from the various encounters with the work of Adorno, Deleuze, Ferneyhough and Lyotard covered so far in this discussion is that of a dual-level, deconstructive figural operation in language and in the artwork. As already noted in Lyotard's case, the trajectory of deconstruction and critique proceeds from the textual/discursive to the sensible/visible and finally to the invisible-figural domain of deformative forces: this is the locus of the irruptive event. This 'model' has been mapped (although in practice we are dealing with a dynamic continuum) from the art-spatial to the historical-temporal, which has facilitated comparisons with

Ferneyhough's ideas, in particular those set out in his essay 'Parallel Universes'. Something of the two-stage figural process identified in Lyotard's thought is detectable in Adorno's own argument that 'enlightenment was always also the consciousness of the vanishing of what it wanted to seize without any residue of mystery; by penetrating the vanishing – the shudder – enlightenment not only is its critique but salvages it according to the measure of what provokes the shudder in reality itself'.[540] Echoes of Ferneyhough's characterisation of the present as a kind of 'sensed absence', a sensible [first stage] critique of textual space, as well as Bacon and Deleuze's notion that 'salvaging' the measure of invisible forces through the re-affirmative deformations they perpetrate in material [second stage] resound in Adorno's words. Furthermore 'by reading the spirit of artworks out of their configurations and confronting the elements with each other and with the spirit that appears in them, critique passes over into the truth of the spirit, which is located beyond the aesthetic configuration'.[541] I suggest the following parallelisms between Adorno and Lyotard: firstly, that the former's 'spirit' corresponds to the latter's (invisible-) 'figural' on account of the fact that both marshal 'appearance' in the work; both effect a work-immanent irruption;[542] in both, it is argued, truth inheres – the truth of the spirit and of the visible. Supposing this to be the case, it is possible to revisit and conclude this exploration of the modern 'subject' which was earlier posited as a figural event in relation to the artwork and rational historical progress: an impossible, deformative and accidental phenomenon. Adorno observes that 'society,

---

[539] Adorno, trans. Hullot-Kentor (AT) 1997: 79. My italics
[540] *Ibid.*, 84
[541] *Ibid.*, 88
[542] Adorno argues that 'spirit breaks up the objective form through which it is constituted'. See Adorno, trans. Hullot-Kentor (AT) 1997: 88

the determinant of experience, constitutes artworks as their [*sic.*] true subject'.[543] It is no coincidence that Adorno also charges artworks with the responsibility for rendering sensible the event. The subject is more than a fragmented essence that survives in critical opposition to the superficial 'blind appearance'[544] of social false consciousness manifest historically and artistically. What has been called the sensible-figural level of critique – a sensuous critique of rational discursive or figurative space – is reflected here. Beyond this remains the so-called invisible-figural level of critique: the subject as figural event. Adorno argues that 'art…registers objectively, however refractedly [through deformations, for example], the claim that because the non-existent appears it must indeed be possible…what spirit promises, not the sensual pleasure of the observer, is the locus of the sensual element in art'.[545] His words recall and clarify Ferneyhough's summarisation of Deleuze's monograph on Bacon, when the composer suggests that avoiding the traditional rhetoric of subjectivity (note the emphasis on 'traditional') results in Deleuze's theorisation of an 'objective phenomenology of expressive force'.[546] As for Adorno, in Ferneyhough and Bacon's work, expressive force appears once the trace it leaves in material is sensuously registered: re-affirmed. At this invisible-figural level (both sensible and discursive materials are critiqued here by a subject that is not only opposed, but heterogeneous to them), one encounters an 'aesthetics responsive to the limits of representation'[547]: this has been alluded to earlier.

However, it is possible now to develop this aspect of the discussion a little further. Readings characterises the artwork-event as producing an aesthetic that defies the

---

[543] Adorno, trans. Hullot-Kentor (AT) 1997: 86
[544] *Ibid.* Compare this notion of 'blind appearance' with Bacon's special interpretation of the term 'appearance'.
[545] *Ibid.*, 82

understanding and in which one senses 'that something is trying to be said which cannot be said'. He stipulates, after Lyotard, that 'after Auschwitz', 'an aesthetics of *pathos* is required'.[548] The latter observation is elucidated not only through Lyotard's own work, but in Adorno's comment that 'the sensual in artworks is artistic only if in itself mediated by spirit. Even the sensually most dazzling French works achieve their rank by the involuntary transformation of their sensual elements into bearers of a spirit whose experiential content is melancholic resignation to mortal, sensual existence'.[549]

Having concentrated on those aspects of *écriture* that can be illuminated by recourse to some of the ideas developed over the course of this chapter – notably the diagram, the figural event, plasticity, graphism and force – it remains to consider in greater detail the convergence of painting and music that Adorno discovers there. It is important to reiterate that this convergence cannot merely be conceived as a form of synaesthesia: it is not the case that painting can be approached through the arbitrary use of musical metaphor, and vice-versa. If one is to call a painting musical, this quality must be justifiable in terms of the immanent activity of the painted material itself. Moreover, I do not suggest that Bacon intends for his work to become 'musical'; he intends only to 'make the construction by which this thing will be caught raw and alive and left there [on the canvas]'.[550] Likewise, Ferneyhough's choice of Piranesi's *Carceri d'Invenzione* etchings as a basis for his own musical cycle of the same name neither testifies to an attempt to mimic the images of prisons, their dimensions and structures in musical 'equivalents', nor to a specifically visual or spectacular element pertaining in

---

[546] Cody 1996: 8
[547] Readings 1991: 23
[548] *Ibid.*
[549] Adorno, trans. Hullot-Kentor (AT) 1997: 87

Ferneyhough's material. The conflicting lines of force and composition of impossibly co-present spaces manifest in Piranesi's work in the visual domain are experienced bodily by Ferneyhough, who then brings about a certain tactile experience in and through his commitment to intricate and often process-driven, though invariably immanently self-consistent musical material. Ferneyhough's practice of 'overnotation' is one example of converging painterly and musical principles: this technique exposes the performer to an undeniably visual aspect of the work, which at its most fundamental level sets dense 'dark' patches of black notation against areas of comparatively lighter, more 'transparent' information. Nevertheless, it is once again the immanently pursued, thoroughly musical procedures that bring about this visual quality of the score.

The study of *écriture* has taught us that music and painting converge the more they actually diverge by remaining faithful to their own principles. Thus, Adorno's critique of musical space early in his essay is based on the spatial arbitrariness he perceives in Serialist attitudes to the deployment of musical material: this is space determined through criteria which fall outside the immanent rule of material, precisely that which results in the non self-evidence of time for music. Recall the opening sentence of 'On Some Relationships': music 'has time as its problem'. Thus one is prompted to conclude that, if the 'problem' of musical time is addressed, one might generate in the process a musical space that is not only permissible from within the bounds of musically-immanent rules of play, but necessary to the making-evident of time. When Adorno argues that '[music] must create temporal relationships among its constituent parts, justify their temporal relationship, synthesise them through time' and 'conversely, [music] itself must act upon time, not lose itself to it; must stem itself against the empty

---

[550] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 66

flood'[551] he hints at this very possibility. Time and space are not opposed here; they are constitutive of each other in precisely the manner proposed by *écriture* and the figural event. What might be called the post-serial re-justification of musical space desired by Adorno is that aspect of music that becomes most painterly, on account of the thoroughgoing concentration on the 'problem' of musical time. Ferneyhough focuses on the issue of musical time most explicitly in his essay 'The Tactility of Time,' and in the piece at the centre of this 1988 study: *Mnemosyne* for bass flute and pre-recorded tape, the seventh and final instalment of the *Carceri d'Invenzione* cycle. As the title of his essay suggests, it is the notion of temporal tactility that preoccupies Ferneyhough's endeavours in this piece. This will be explored in Part III and additionally, the methods that Ferneyhough employs, which make possible the inherence of painterly space and techniques within inner impulses of the musical matter itself, will be considered.

However, in order to appreciate what is meant by 'painterly space and techniques', it is initially necessary to turn the focus of the discussion back upon Deleuze's study of Bacon's paintings, and specifically his discourse on the latter's triptychs. Deleuze and Bacon's attitude towards the historically precedented arrangement of the three panels of the triptych parallels Adorno's concerns regarding the musical pursuit of 'the spatialisation of time in a merely fictitious manner, treating time without consideration, as if it were space'.[552] Deleuze suggests that both the assumption of a progression from the left, to the centre and finally to the right panel – the creation of a kind of narrative in effect – and the privileging of the centre panel over the two that flank it (as in early religious examples) are problematic. According to him, both of these

---

[551] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 66
[552] *Ibid.*, 67

arrangements are rationally formulaic and for a modern painter, to choose them would be a voluntary action, demonstrating little originality and (one might suppose, after Adorno) little consideration for space. In the case of the narratival deployment of panels, the ordered succession from left to right treats space as if it were unfolding time and recalls Lyotard's dispute with the similar sequence of moments that he maintains forms our conception of modernist Historical discourse. In the latter situation, Lyotard proposes that our perception of time be reworked in the encounter with the figural event and its non-rational temporality. In respect of Bacon's triptychs specifically Deleuze suggests, not unlike Adorno's more general comment, that the painter reworks space on the basis that each panel of the painting need not subscribe to a constant value (for example the outer panels of a medieval triptych often direct the viewer's gaze to the all-important, likely iconic centre piece).[553] Again Deleuze follows Adorno when he argues that the dynamisation of space in fact gives rise to a temporal quality which obtains in the visual material only when the internal-spatial concerns of the painting are pursued in a consistent way and with unmitigated determination on the part of the artist. Thus Bacon's panels in no sense sustain a narrative, but attempt merely to record the image: many of the triptychs feature a single individual in each panel, described by the artist as a motionless figure disturbed from within by spasm and inadequacy of the face and skin to contain the force-ridden head and fleshy meat. In a sense then, the images are absolutely simultaneous: the figure is motionless in all three panels, and, what the viewer becomes aware of are internal distortions (invisible to the eye that approaches the painting rationally, expecting each panel to perform a role within a larger project, such as the aforementioned narrative, or iconic affirmation). In the pursuit of his spatial revolution,

---

[553] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 83. See discussion of the triptych form in Part III.

Bacon fulfils Adorno's condition for painting that 'approaches transcendence towards time'. The latter argues that 'those pictures seem the most successful in which what is absolutely simultaneous seems like a passage of time that is holding its breath'.[554] The theory that Deleuze develops through his critique of the triptychs is not restricted to this form of painting only. Ultimately the dynamisation of space effected by Bacon in this medium can be seen to be active in single-panel paintings and diptychs. Deleuze concludes that 'in the end, there is nothing but triptychs in Bacon: even the isolated panels are, more or less visibly, composed like triptychs'.[555]

In short, through Bacon's obstinate commitment to the figural space of painting, he generates a temporality and importantly a musicality that satisfies, in its tactility, the requisite qualities for the rediscovery of musical time anticipated and pursued by Ferneyhough. Furthermore, the latter's thoroughgoing immersion in the issue of temporal tactility delivers, as a consequence, a renewal of essential musical space. The two arts converge neither conceptually, nor as a result of a sense-crossover wherein music becomes visual and painting becomes sound matter. They converge in their experience of tactility, and in a figural co-presence of space and time that can be termed the 'rhythm-witness'.[556]

---

[554] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 67
[555] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 85. Translation modified.
[556] *Ibid.*, chapter 10. See Part Three for discussion of the concept of the 'rhythm-witness'.

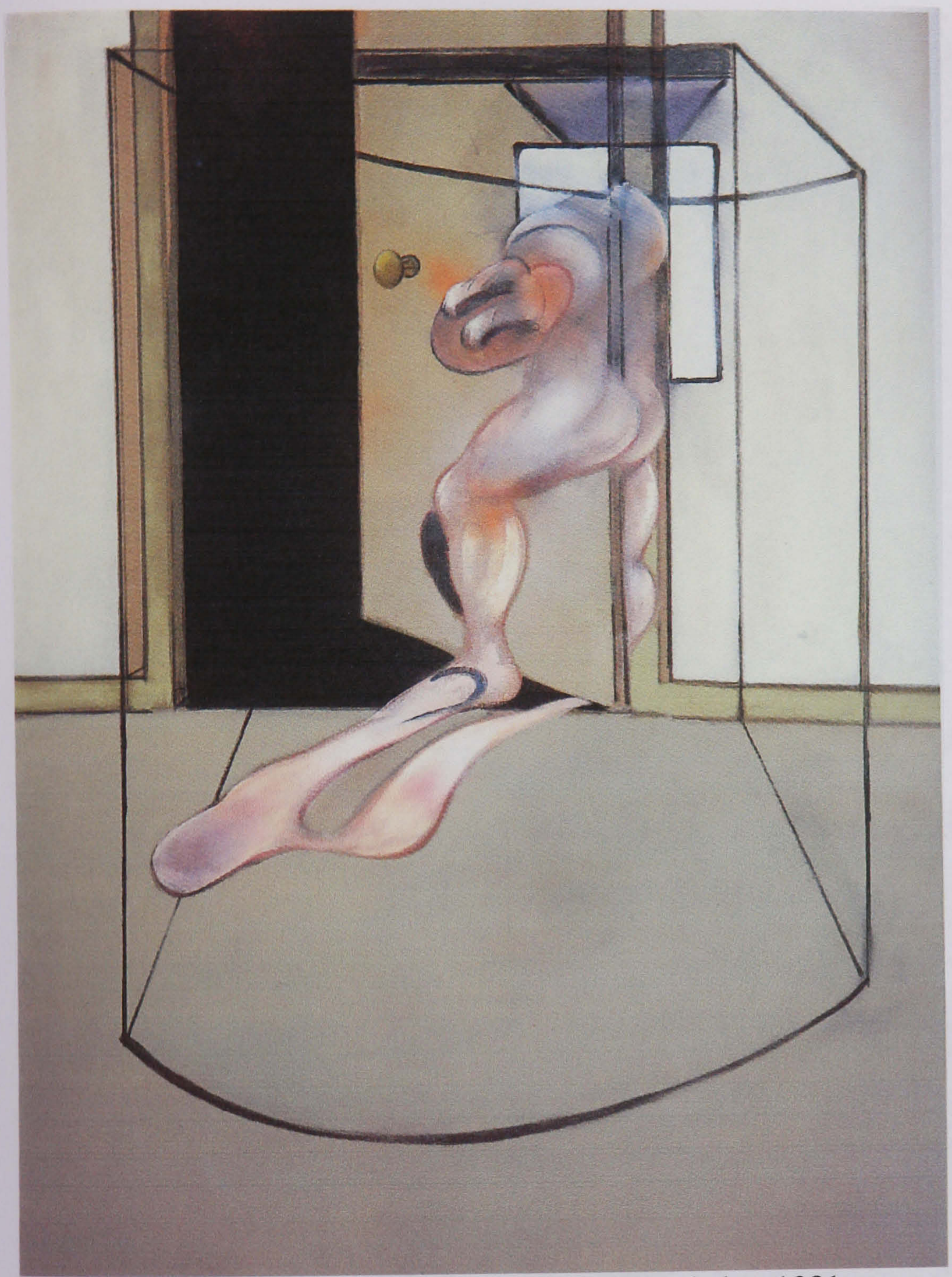


Fig. 11 *Triptych Inspired by the Oresteia of Aeschylus*, 1981



Fig. 14 *Head I*, 1961



Fig. 12 *Study from Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, 1965



Fig. 13 *Painting*, 1946

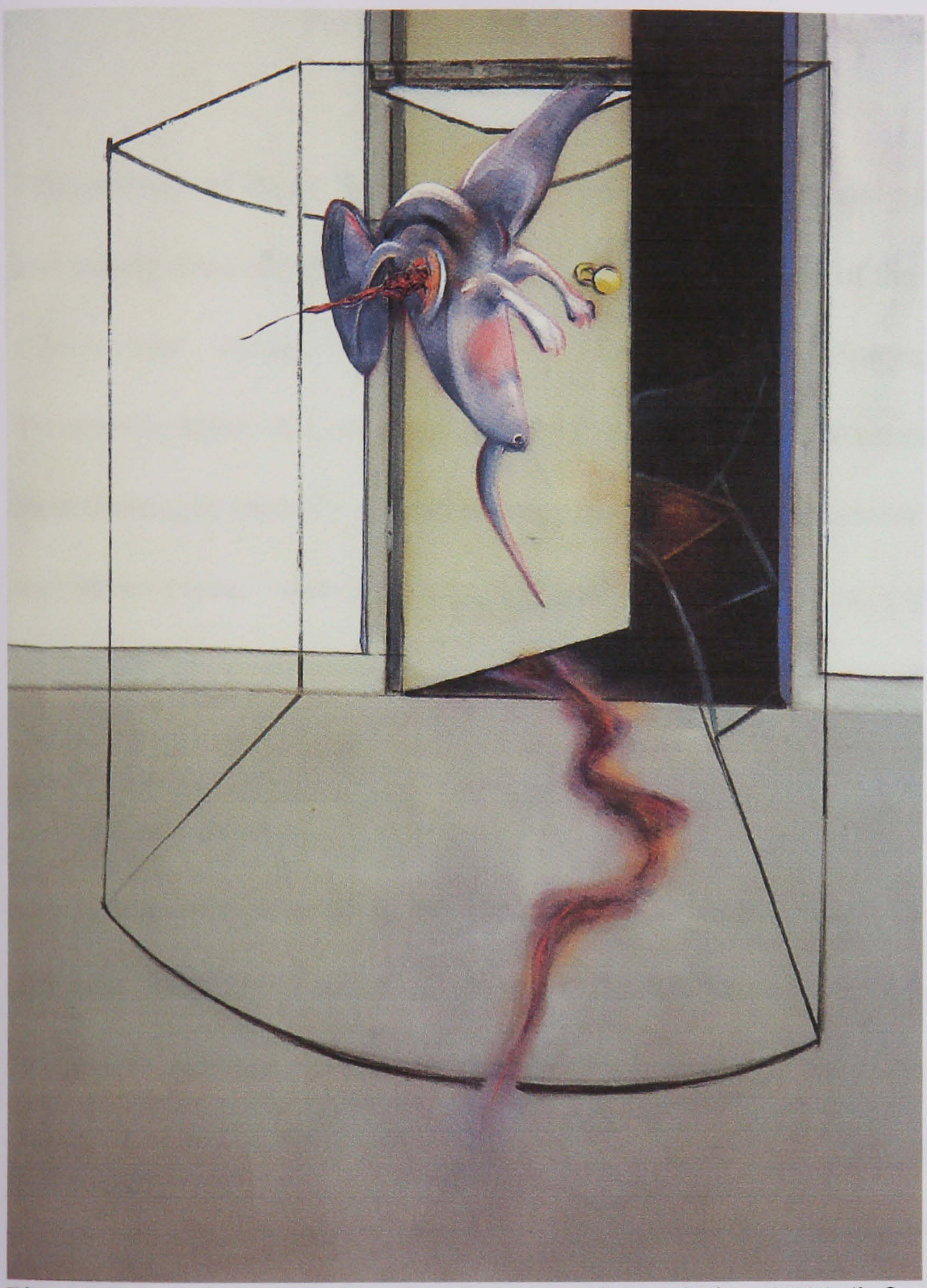


Fig. 15 *Triptych Inspired by the Oresteia of Aeschylus*, 1981 (left panel)

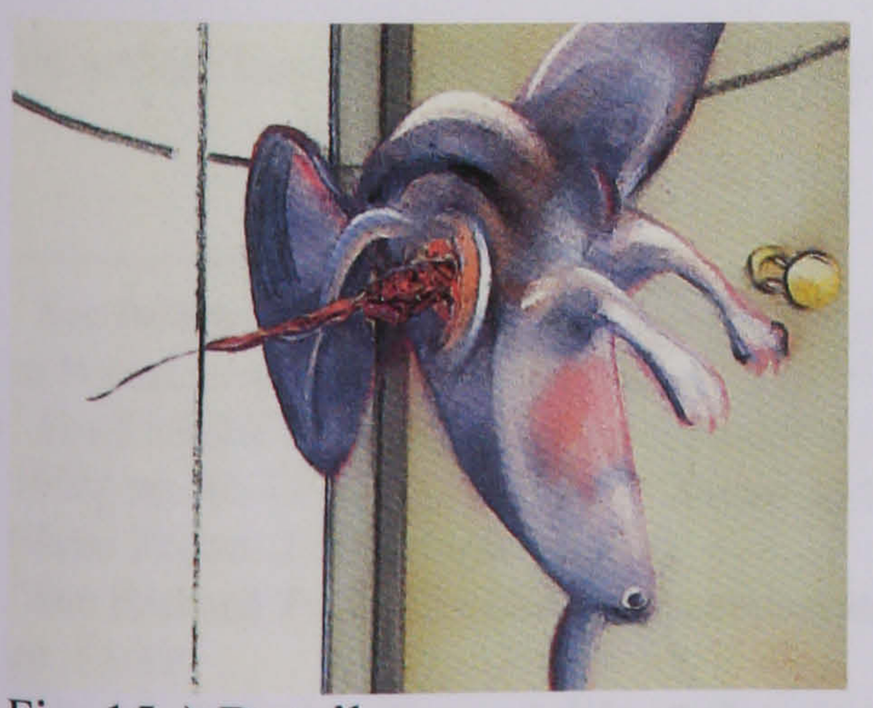


Fig. 15a) Detail

## Part IIa – Analysis of Carceri D'Invenzione I

Few analyses of Brian Ferneyhough's work exist in print, and probably the most notable and widely disseminated are Richard Toop's consideration of the sketches for the *Carceri d'Invenzione* cycle[1], his study of *Lemma Icon Epigram*[2] and his 'Etudes Transcendentales: A Composer's Diary Part One' (Part Two remains unpublished).[3] The most thorough, recently available exegesis – a German Doctoral dissertation[4] – again on the seven-piece, ninety-minute *Carceri* cycle, offers a comprehensive analytical breakdown of Ferneyhough's material, processes and sketches although there is minimal interpretative discussion besides extrapolating structural connections from pitch, rhythmic and metrical information.

My own approach to Ferneyhough's music takes the latter, interpretative, direction keeping in mind at all times the aesthetically-orientated explorations made hitherto in relation to Francis Bacon, Gilles Deleuze and others. (In this it ventures further than Toop, who makes 'no attempt…to analyze the works' concrete technical procedures on the basis of the words in the sketches, not least because they are often more of a guide to the thinking behind the eventual composition than a key to deciphering its actual handiwork').[5] Pätzold's analysis is the perfect counterbalance to Toop's; hers is

---

[1] See Richard Toop, '"Prima le parole…" (on the sketches for Ferneyhough's *Carceri d'Invenzione I-III*)' in *Perspectives of New Music* 32, no. 1 (1994) pp. 155-175

[2] See Richard Toop, 'Brian Ferneyhough's *Lemma-Icône-Epigramme*' in *Contrechamps* no. 8 (Geneva: 1988) pp. 86-127. Translated as: 'Brian Ferneyhough's *Lemma-Icon-Epigram*' in *Perspectives of New Music* 28, no. 2 (1990) pp. 52-100

[3] See Richard Toop, 'Etudes Transcendentales: A Composer's Diary (part 1)' in *Eonta*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1991) pp. 55-89

[4] Cordula Pätzold, *'Carceri d'Invenzione' von Brian Ferneyhough: kompositionstechnische und horanalytische Aspekte*. Diss. Universitat Freiburg, 2002. (Website Freiburger Dokumentenserver: http://www.freidok.uni-freiburg.de/volltexte/583, 2002)

[5] Toop (PP) 1994: 155

focused almost exclusively on technicalities, with very little, if any, interpretative commentary. She does occasionally overlook Toop's warning that 'those sketches which offer most insight into the composer's compositional thinking are not necessarily accurate guides to what was eventually done',[6] presenting her reader with an account of a piece's structure that is slightly different from the actual detail of the piece. This discrepancy between sketch material and the *Carceri* pieces notwithstanding, the sheer level of detail included in Pätzold's work, combined with the impression one gains from reading Toop's essay of 'Ferneyhough talk[ing] to himself'[7] – of images and plasticity – dynamically, provides a convenient point of departure for another analysis, which attempts to integrate the fluidity of concepts such as the 'diagram' with the abstraction of some of Ferneyhough's more arcane musical procedures. I begin this analysis with some technical details, but intend them to form the backdrop to an initial discussion (and worked example) of the gesture-figure complex (relating to my arguments in Part I). In the later part of this analysis, I will take these observations further, to incorporate a discussion of the 'diagram' (relating to my arguments in Part II). All comments will be supported with examples from *Carceri d'Invenzione I* for chamber orchestra (see Appendix 1 for full score).

Ferneyhough himself is aware of the mediation of the abstract and the dynamic, the one in the other, in his musical thought: 'an Italian Newspaper article recently [1982] referred to me as a "Dionysian structuralist" – something to which, at the time, I took a certain amount of exception. Thinking back on it, though, perhaps the view is not so wrong. The thing that most people object to in serial or pseudo-serial structures is that

---

[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*

they assume that mechanical or mathematical generative procedures produce a degree of coldness, objectivity or distance in the musical event'.[8] The following analysis is intended to overturn this assumption, whilst the comments made in the Introduction concerning the conventional (formal) aspects of *Carceri d'Invenzione I* must nevertheless be borne in mind throughout, and will be revisited during the course of this chapter.

***

There are a number of different organisational levels evident in *Carceri I*: some operate on a note-by-note basis and others according to groupings of texture-types, or metrical cycles, and strategies of 'interruption' whereupon one 'block' of material is cut into by another – characteristically very different – material. If one were to select the most prominent features of the piece, doubtless the disposition of the pitch material in eight 'chords' and various 're-readings' of these (in scale-wise, microtonal, complementary or distorted versions, some more obviously derivative than other, remoter guises) would be amongst them. Nevertheless the chords are never conspicuously stated (until the final piece of the cycle, *Mnemosyne*): more immediately striking features include the extremes of register (never more starkly felt than at the beginning of the piece), the use of 'repetition' (understood on a sliding scale ranging from the exact, to the creatively re-imagined) and *tutti* 'interventions' whose priority is to disturb the (linear) consistency of sub-group materials. I will shortly focus upon the activity of the string quartet which forms one of these smaller ensembles within the larger chamber orchestra itself.

---

[8] Ferneyhough, 'Interview with Joël Bons' in Ferneyhough 1995: 227

**Ex. a) Eight Chords**




AS = asymmestrical chords

S = symmetrical chords

**Metrical organisation and repetition**

The concept of repetition is itself found on multiple levels in this piece. The largest-scale repetition is discoverable in 11 cycles of 15 individually metered bars, the first of which unfolds as follows:

**CYCLE 1**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 5 |
| 8 | 12 | 16 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 16 | 12 | 16 | 8 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 8 | 16 |

The metric cycle is composed of regular and irregular metres (3/8 being an example of the former; the latter are calculated proportionately in relation to the regular quaver beat (value = 1): the denominator 10 indicates an irregular quaver beat four-fifths the value of the regular beat; denominator 12 indicates an irregular beat at two-thirds the value of the regular quaver beat). In other words, if a bar of 3/8 presents the regular metre, then a bar of 3/10 represents a quintuplet division of the regular bar, whilst a bar in 3/12 signals a triplet division of the regular metre.

In order to arrive at cycle two, Ferneyhough applies 'rules' of 'filters' to certain metres in cycle one, resulting in the following:

**CYCLE 2**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **7** | **3** | **2** | **9** | **4** | **5** | **3** | **5** | **3** | **9** | **3** | **5** | **3** | **5** | **3**[9] |
| **16** | **12** | **8** | **16** | **10** | **16** | **8** | **12** | **8** | **16** | **8** | **8** | **8** | **16** | **8** |

Thus, to metres with the denominator 8 in cycle one, Ferneyhough adds one sixteenth note (semi-quaver) whilst metres with the denominators 12 and 10 from cycle one remain unchanged in the second. Finally, metres with the denominator 16 undergo the greatest adjustment: Ferneyhough adds one semi-quaver and then divides both the numerator and denominator by two so that $\frac{9}{16}$ becomes $\frac{10}{16}$ and then $\frac{5}{8}$ etc.

Although there are the differences - described above - between the two cycles, the second cycle nevertheless satisfies Ferneyhough's broad definition of 'repetition': indeed, all 11 cycles do (some more closely than others) as the 'list' below demonstrates:

**CYCLE 3**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **3** | **7** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **2** | **5** | **11** | **5** | **4** | **5** | **9** | **5** | **2** | **5** |
| **8** | **24** | **16** | **8** | **20** | **8** | **16** | **24** | **16** | **8** | **16** | **16** | **16** | **8** | **16** |

---

[9] After this bar there is a bar of 4/8 which seems not to fit into Ferneyhough's metrical schema (cycles of 15 bars). It is, as far as I can discover, the only bar that cannot be accounted for in terms of the 15-bar cycles in the entire piece. However, later in the piece, one bar must be repeated from the end of one cycle to the beginning of the next in order to make up the numbers (maintaining the 15-bar cycle scheme). If the 4/8 bar is factored into the scheme, then the relationships from cycle-to-cycle that I have identified are immediately derailed. Therefore, I have chosen to regard this 4/8 bar as an anomaly for the purposes of the present analysis.

There is little difference between cycles one and three – only the former's irregular metres are altered in the latter, so that an original denominator of 12 is recast by adding one (triplet) semi-quaver with the result that

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **3** | becomes | **6** | and by adding 1, | becomes | **7** |
| **12** | | **24** | | | **24** |

Similarly, an original metre (from cycle one) with the denominator 10 is 're-read' in cycle three by subtracting three (quintuplet) semiquavers. Thus

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **4** | becomes | **8** | and by subtracting 3, | becomes | **5** |
| **10** | | **20** | | | **20** |

Alternatively, to calculate cycle three from cycle two, it is necessary to subtract one semiquaver from every regular metre in the latter, to add one (triplet) semiquaver to every irregular triplet metre and to subtract three (quintuplet) semiquavers from every irregular quintuplet metre (in fact, there is only one measure of 4/10 in the second cycle). This sets a precedent (with few exceptions) for the nine remaining metre cycles: each is calculable on the basis of applying a rule or rules to the *previous* cycle; in any case, by definition, all cycles derive from the first, since each successive cycle is a 'repetition' (of sorts).

The remaining cycles unfold as follows:

**CYCLE 4**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **5** | **3** | **2** | **5** | **2** | **3** | **6** | **5** | **3** | **5** | **3** | **5** | **3** | **3** | **3** |
| **10** | **8** | **10** | **10** | **12** | **10** | **12** | **8** | **10** | **10** | **10** | **10** | **10** | **10** | **10** |

When the metre is regular in cycle three, (i.e. when the denominator is 8 or 16) the corresponding denominator in cycle four becomes 10 thus effecting a shift from the regular quaver beat to quintuplet values. Similarly, when in cycle three the denominator is 12 or 24 (a triplet value), it becomes a regular 8 (quaver beat) in cycle four. Finally, a quintuplet denominator value of 10 or 20 in the third cycle becomes the triplet value 12 in the fourth. There is one anomalous result however: the seventh value of cycle three

$\frac{\mathbf{5}}{\mathbf{16}}$ becomes $\frac{\mathbf{6}}{\mathbf{12}}$ in cycle four.

A rule applying to the numerator is less easy to discover. Rather than attempting to calculate an abstract equation that satisfies the translation of cycle 3 numerators into cycle 4 numerators, I propose instead to consider the patterns of metrical values in both cycles as 'shapes', and that the 'shape' of each cycle is approximately the same, i.e. the larger metrical values in each cycle correspond in terms of their respective positions within the cycle, as do the smaller metrical values.

Therefore, for example, the last five values of cycle four are the same except for one that is noticeably greater than the rest. The last five values of cycle three are more varied, but looked at closely, there is only one sixteenth-note difference between $\frac{\mathbf{2}}{\mathbf{8}}$ and $\frac{\mathbf{5}}{\mathbf{16}}$

In essence, then, the pattern is the same, insofar as the fourth value from the end of each cycle is greater than the one previous to it and the three that follow. If the same 'approximations' are applied to the remaining metres in each of cycles three and four, then the overall 'shape' of each can be said to be (roughly) the same. This is an important observation: the issue of the exactitude of proportions, or adding and subtracting sixteenth-notes and so on (such as defines the relationship between cycles one and three, or one and two) between metres from one cycle to the next is subverted to a concern for the overall physical 'shape' of each metre cycle. I have chosen to consider the last five values of the cycles because they (and gradually the last seven or eight values) are those most amenable to identifying the presence of a pattern between consecutive cycles. For example, the alternation of the metre $\frac{5}{16}$ with other values that are similar amongst themselves (e.g. 5/12, 4/8, 9/16) at the end of cycle one, is traceable in cycle two as the alternation of $\frac{3}{8}$ with other metres, and it is the largest of those metres at the end of cycle two - $\frac{5}{8}$ and $\frac{9}{16}$ - which in turn map onto the largest metres at the end of cycle three - $\frac{9}{16}$ and $\frac{4}{8}$.

Cycle three concludes 5/16, 2/8, 5/16 (which are again three metres with only a sixteenth-note difference in value between them) whilst the larger values of 9/16 and 4/8 stand out

against them. The fourth cycle, although its conclusion seems different with only the repeated metrical values – 5/10 and 3/10 – present, it is clear that, in approximate terms, the smaller of these two values (repeated three times in succession) corresponds to the final 5/16, 2/8, 5/16 of cycle three, whilst the larger 5/10 refers to the 9/16 and 4/8 (see value 13, cycle three). It is the relationship between the last few values in the early cycles (one to seven) that helps one recognise the retrogradation of the fifteen values that constitute the metrical 'series' in cycle eight.

The comparable metrical 'shape' of each cycle can be traced ever more clearly with each new example:

**CYCLE 5**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **6** | **4** | **3** | **6** | **3** | **4** | **7** | **6** | **4** | **6** | **4** | **6** | **4** | **4** | **4** |
| **12** | **8** | **10** | **10** | **12** | **10** | **12** | **8** | **10** | **10** | **10** | **10** | **10** | **10** | **10** |

To every numerator in cycle four, Ferneyhough simply adds 1. All but two denominators are now irregular values (a feature which cycle five shares with its predecessor). Ferneyhough changes only one denominator – the first – from 10 in cycle four, to 12 here in the fifth. Once again the last three values are identical (as in cycle four) and, here in cycle five, the larger 6/10 corresponds to the position of the greater metrical values at the end of all previous cycles.

**CYCLE 6**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **7** | **3** | **6** | **3** | **4** | **7** | **11** | **4** | **6** | **4** | **6** | **4** | **7** | **3** |
| **16** | **8** | **8** | **8** | **8** | **8** | **16** | **8** | **8** | **8** | **8** | **8** | **16** | **8** |

In contradistinction to cycle five, cycle six consists entirely of regular metrical values. The numerators here remain largely the same as those in the previous cycle: only the second, eighth, fourteenth and fifteenth differ. Once again the values alternate towards the end: the 11/16 bar 'approximates' to 6/8, and the 7/16 bar to 4/8; Ferneyhough alters the 'pattern' established in cycles four and five, however, wherein the last three values of the series are the same. Here in cycle six, they are, as in cycle one, approximately the same, since both 4/8 and 3/8 are both one-sixteenth note different in value to the penultimate value of 7/16.

**CYCLE 7**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | **3** | **5** | **6** | **3** | **7** | **13** | **5** | **4** | **11** | **4** | **11** | **4** | **7** | **5** |
| 16 | **8** | **16** | **10** | **12** | **16** | **16** | **8** | **8** | **16** | **10** | **16** | **10** | **24** | **16** |

The seventh cycle is largely governed by a consistent rule. Firstly, the numerator and denominator of each metre in cycle six are doubled. Therefore

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **6** | becomes | **12** |
| **8** | | **16** |

A second stage involves subtracting one semiquaver:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **12** | becomes | **11** |
| **16** | | **16** |

There are, predictably, certain exceptions to the rule: Ferneyhough reintroduces some irregular metrical values into cycle seven. In doing so however, he retains the corresponding numerator from cycle six.

**CYCLE 8**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **3** | **4** | **9** | **6** | **9** | **6** | **9** | **11** | **7** | **4** | **7** | **13** | **3** | **7** | **6** |
| **8** | **10** | **20** | **8** | **20** | **8** | **20** | **16** | **8** | **8** | **24** | **20** | **8** | **16** | **8** |

The eighth cycle is the first retrograde version of the 15 bar series. More precisely, it is the mirror image of cycle six, with certain adjustments (approximations): a regular metre in cycle six such as **4** becomes **9** in the cycle eight.

**8** **20**

Although cycle eight is more recognisably related to cycle six, it also traces cycle seven in reverse. However, the relationship is one of approximation once again: in general, each value of cycle seven is one semiquaver's remove from the corresponding value in cycle eight. There is, typically, an exception – the fourteenth metre in cycle seven and the second in cycle eight do not 'approximate' to one another so readily. Nevertheless, the precedent is now set for the remaining three cycles, all of which are retrograde versions of the original series of 15 metres.

**CYCLE 9**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **5** | **5** | **11** | **9** | **11** | **5** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **4** | **11** | **3** | **4** | **3** |
| **10** | **12** | **16** | **20** | **16** | **10** | **8** | **8** | **16** | **10** | **16** | **8** | **8** | **8** |

Cycle nine is the most perplexing of all. There appears to be no rule discoverable that accounts for the deduction of the above values from the preceding cycle eight (or even some of them, bearing in mind Ferneyhough's previous use of exceptions to any 'rule' that applies to a particular metre cycle). The retrogradation of the values of cycle nine in relation to cycle one *is* detectable nevertheless: this is determinable on the basis of the pattern established in the first half of cycle nine (values that correspond to the latter half of earlier cycles one to seven). I have previously noted the alternation of metrical values in a discussion of the comparable physical shape of the metre cycles. This seems especially apposite here, given the difficulty of alighting upon an equation of some kind, by which means it might be possible to abstractly calculate some or all of the 15 values that comprise cycle nine. Consider the first half of cycle eight (also a retrograde cycle), and the alternation of 9/20 and 6/8 metres. In cycle nine, the value 11/16 appears alternately with 5/12, 9/20 and 5/10: the latter two are only one quintuplet semiquaver different in value. The irregular metre of 5/12 (value 3, cycle nine) has been exchanged with the neighbouring 5/10 (the second value in the cycle). Due to this pattern, it can at least be determined that the 'shape' of cycle nine parallels that of cycle eight, at least in its first half. Cycle nine is better compared with cycles one to three, since these begin and end (like cycle nine) with the value 3/8 or an *approximation* of it: namely 7/16 or 5/16.

Both the remaining cycles (ten and 11) also begin and end with a 3/8 metre or one of its approximate equivalents as do cycles one to three, thus creating a sense of symmetry not only within the particular cycles to share this feature, but across the entire 11-cycle disposition of metrical values.

**CYCLE 10**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **3** | **5** | **3** | **9** | **3** | **4** | **3** | **5** | **3** | **2** | **4** | **4** | **2** | **4** | **3** |
| **8** | **16** | **12** | **16** | **8** | **8** | **12** | **10** | **8** | **8** | **10** | **10** | **8** | **12** | **8** |

Cycle ten begins with the same metre that concludes cycle nine: in fact, the fifteenth term of the latter and the first of the former are the same bar. This overlap is necessary in order to account for the extra bar of 4/8 that effectively adds a superfluous sixteenth term to cycle 2 (see note above). It is no accident that Ferneyhough chooses cycle ten (the penultimate cycle) to 'correct' the imbalance of cycle two, according to the same sense of symmetry (i.e. where cycle one corresponds to 11, two to ten, three to nine and so on) referred to immediately above. If one considers cycle two backwards, it becomes possible to observe its relationship to cycle ten in terms of 'shape'.

CYCLE 2 in reverse

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 7 |
| 8 | 16 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 16 | 8 | 12 | 8 | 16 | 10 | 16 | 8 | 12 | 16 |

Ferneyhough replaces some of the values in cycle two with 'approximate' metres in cycle ten (e.g. 5/8 for 9/16 or 2/8 for 5/16). Certain regular denominators become irregular (some 3/8 bars change to 3/12), and some denominators that are already irregular in the second cycle remain so, but are transformed from triplet to quintuplet values in the tenth.

The majority of metres remain, in cycle ten, extremely close in value to the corresponding metre in the earlier series. An exception to this would be the twelfth term: what has become 4/10 in cycle ten was probably conceived as a bar of 4/8, which Ferneyhough has made irregular. A bar of 4/8 of course, is much closer in value to the bar

of 9/16 in the same position in the retrograded cycle two. A similar manoeuvre accounts for the 3/12 metres in the first half of cycle ten: if they are 3/8 bars rendered irregular by Ferneyhough's choice of a triplet denominator, then imagining them for a moment in their (presumably 'original') 3/8 form reveals the same pattern of metre alternation as observed previously in relation to other cycles. Thus '3/8' effectively appears five times alternately between other metres in the first half of cycle ten; in retrograded cycle two, 3/8 also appears five times, in locations that correspond exactly to cycle 10.

**CYCLE 11**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **5** | **2** | **5** | **5** | **9** | **4** | **5** | **5** | **5** | **2** | **4** | **4** | **3** | **3** | **3** |
| **16** | **8** | **16** | **16** | **16** | **8** | **16** | **12** | **16** | **8** | **10** | **8** | **16** | **12** | **8** |

Essentially cycle 11 is cycle one in reverse. There is only one adjustment – not of a particular value, but of its position in the series. Observe the neighbouring 5/16 bars above (values three and four of the cycle) and note that in the first cycle they are separated by the 9/16 metre which is in the 'wrong' place here (fifth value). It is typical of Ferneyhough's sense of intuitive manipulation that the pattern of alternation, established more visibly than any other such pattern through many of these cycles, is the very one he chooses to undermine in the last iteration of the 15 metres. Nevertheless, there is a sense of completion effected by the retrograde return to the beginning of the piece (in metrical terms at least), and it underlines the palindromic shape that Ferneyhough continuously hints at both within a particular cycle and across all 11 examples.

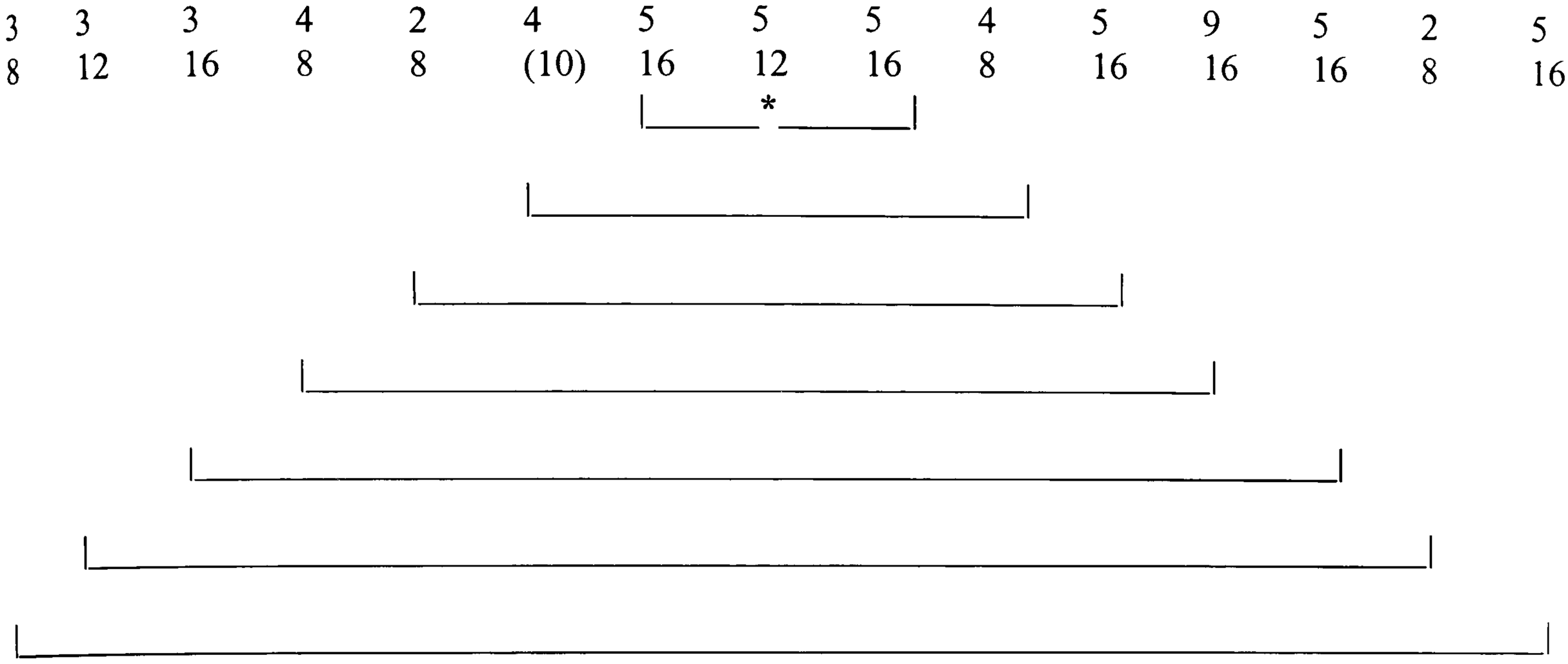
Consider cycle one from this (palidromic) perspective – corresponding terms are highlighted:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **3** | **3** | 3 | **4** | 4 | 2 | **5** | ***5** | **5** | 4 | 5 | **9** | 5 | **2** | **5** |
| **8** | **12** | 16 | **8** | 10 | 8 | **16** | **12** | **16** | 8 | 16 | **16** | 16 | **8** | **16** |

**Values that are proportionally the same (3/12 and 2/8 are ¼)**

**3/8 and 5/16, 'approximate values', one sixteenth note the difference between them**

The non-highlighted terms are also related, though less conspicuously so. For example, the third and thirteenth terms are both one regular semi-quaver's remove from 2/8: one above this value, one below. Also, if the fifth and sixth values are exchanged with one another, then the 'new' fifth metrical value (2/8) is now 'opposite' the eleventh term (5/16), and the 'new' sixth term (4/10) corresponds to the extant tenth term, (4/8). Both pairs now qualify as 'approximately' the same, under the pattern of approximations (where a regular metre can be rendered irregular, or a value slightly contracted or expanded according to the 'sixteenth-note rule') that has discovered to be fundamental to the disposition and distribution of metres throughout all 11 cycles. My 'reading' of the 'correct' first cycle (allowing for these approximations) is therefore




I assume, as before, that the 4/10 is a 'distortion' of a basic 4/8 – Ferneyhough has chosen to subtract $1/5^{th}$ of the value of the quaver beat. Such a subtraction from the regular quaver beat (of either $1/5^{th}$ or $1/3^{rd}$ its value) in order to arrive at an irregular metre is, of course, in keeping with my interpretation of those regular semi-quaver 'approximations' identified above, where the 'fractional disturbance' of an original metre is effected via the subtraction (or addition) of ½ the quaver beat (so 5/16 becomes 2/8 and so on). What becomes important here isn't so much the exactitude of the fractions, but the variety of possibilities with which Ferneyhough can manipulate the length of the basic quaver beat, contracting and expanding it plastically as he chooses.

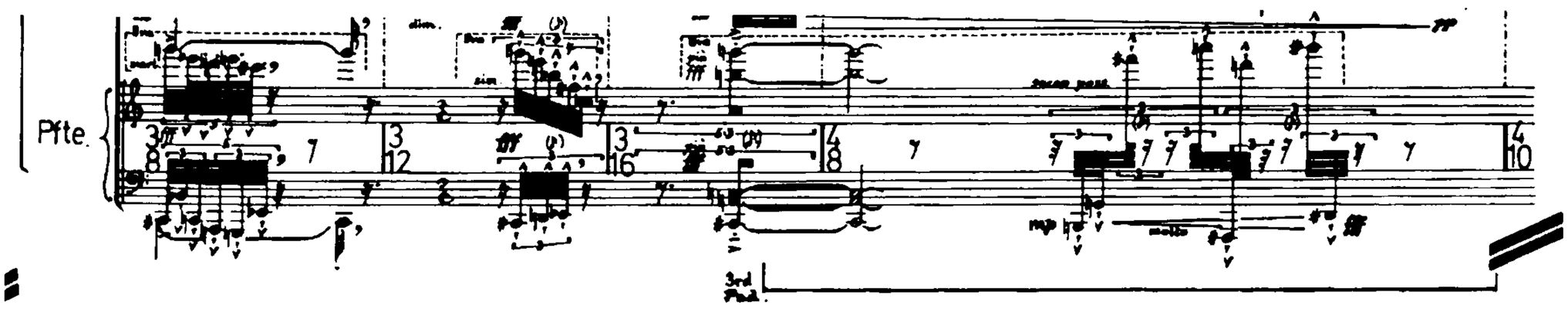
There is an (approximate) axis of 'symmetry' about the central term 5/12. Such symmetry and repetition may seem, at first only to confirm that Ferneyhough works abstractly or mathematically and leaves himself little scope for intuition. However, I suggest that these two 'devices' – *viz.* symmetry and repetition – act rather like organisational filters, though they are not nearly as complex and specific as what one

might normally understand by the term 'filter' in Ferneyhough's compositional lexicon. (The use of chordal material from Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* to filter pitches in *Carceri I* typifies the general standard of sophistication and complexity of Ferneyhough's filter technique: on the one hand, brilliantly carried out, revealing a richly intense attention to technical detail; on the other hand an eccentric choice, apparently random in its selection (if not its application) and wholly undetectable without the aid of the composer's sketches)[10].

**Pitch and Interval Symmetry**

The opening pitch material adds a third parameter to the two – symmetry and repetition – already identified: that is, extremes of register. The piece begins with the piccolo at the upper end of its range, the trombone towards the lower limit of its own range, and the pianist's right and left hands stretched more than three octaves apart. Within the first three measures, symmetry is detectable: Ferneyhough simultaneously puts this symmetry, repetition (metrical and pitch-wise) and the extremes of register into effect. The opening piano gesture (six notes in the left hand, five in the right) is clearly exploring extremes:

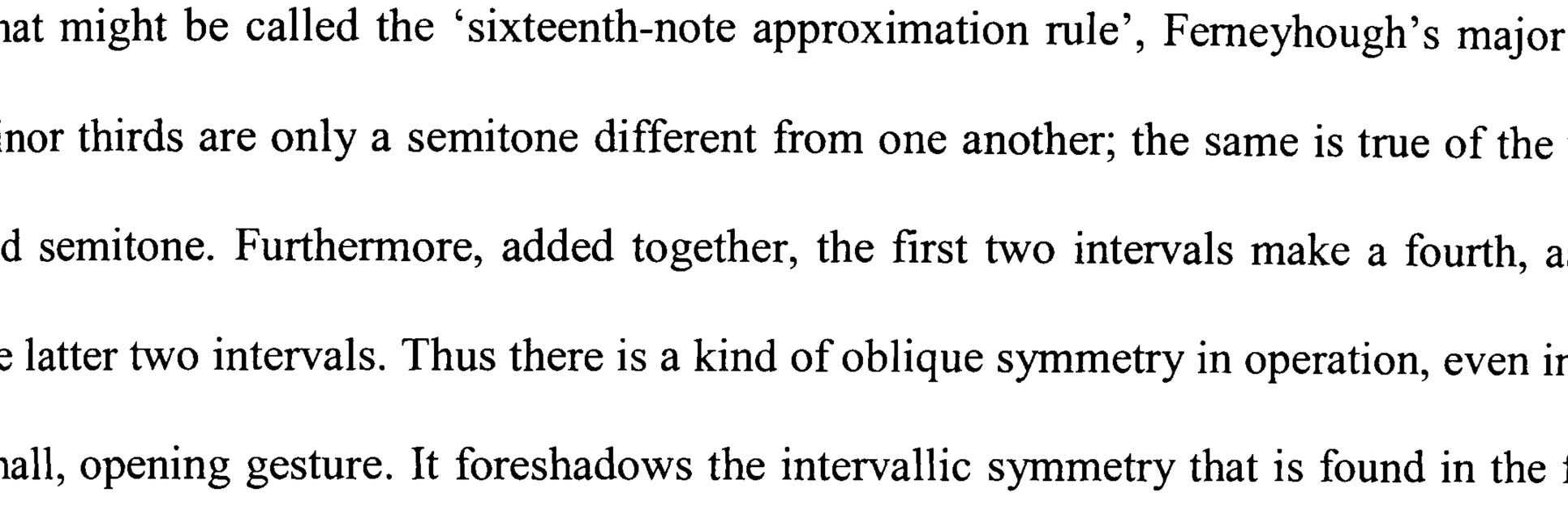
**Ex.b)**




[10] Toop refers to the use of Schoenberg's material (see Toop 1994). Cordula Pätzold demonstrates the application of Schoenberg's material in Ferneyhough's piece in her Doctoral Dissertation, 2002. See full website reference above.

Consider the four intervals that are constituted by the five right-hand notes (bar 1) – (major) third, semitone, tone, (minor) third – they don't initially seem to suggest symmetry. However, following the precedent set in the metrical parameter regarding what might be called the 'sixteenth-note approximation rule', Ferneyhough's major and minor thirds are only a semitone different from one another; the same is true of the tone and semitone. Furthermore, added together, the first two intervals make a fourth, as do the latter two intervals. Thus there is a kind of oblique symmetry in operation, even in the small, opening gesture. It foreshadows the intervallic symmetry that is found in the flute part of the fourth of the *Etudes Trancendentales*:

**Ex. c)**




In the piano part from *Carceri I* (Ex.b), the left-hand gesture consists of five intervals – diminished seventh, minor seventh, minor third, tone, minor sixth. Again, these do not seem to lend themselves to a pattern of symmetry at first glance. However, by inverting certain intervals, or enharmonically re-reading them, the five-interval series can be seen to be derived from a certain 'symmetrical thinking' on Ferneyhough's part. The

diminished seventh C# - Bb can be re-written C# - A# (a major sixth) and the inverse of the minor seventh C - Bb is the tone Bb - C. Therefore the left-hand re-read intervallically becomes: major sixth, tone/minor seventh, minor third, tone/minor seventh, minor sixth (again applying the 'rule of approximation' to the first and last intervals). Thus the gesture becomes 'symmetrical' about the minor third.

The pitches themselves are also of interest. The first two pitches (G and Eb) and the last pitch (C#) in the right hand are found as the first pitch (C#) and the last two pitches (G and Eb) in the left-hand. The C# (LH) and the G (RH) are the most important pitches (forming the interval of a tritone), since these double the opening note of the piccolo and the trombone. This establishes an important identity for these three instruments: each begins at the registral extremes, but very quickly, the piano gestures enter the space between: this is especially clear in the second bar. While generally remaining at the extremes of its range at this point, the movement of the piano within these limits suggests that the piano will have a defining role in respect of force throughout the piece, as Ferneyhough himself suggests.[11] At one and the same time, the piano's function is to try and push the piccolo and trombone further towards the 'edge' of the piece (the influence of Piranesi is unmistakeable here), whilst attempting to gradually fill the void between them: throughout the piece, the piano texture becomes progressively denser – chordal – as if it provides a foundation for the other chamber ensemble instruments to build upon – to strengthen – and to pull back the piccolo and trombone from the limits of some imagined abyss towards which they tend. I will revisit the idea of the piano as 'foundational' force shortly, and witness its 'note-giving' role: here again it

---

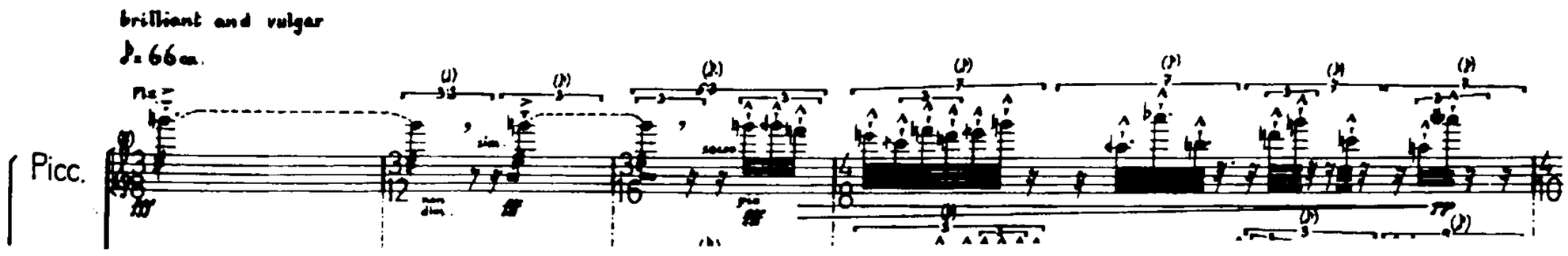
[11] See Brian Ferneyhough, 'Interview with Richard Toop' in *Collected Writings*, eds. James Boros and Richard Toop (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Press, 1995) p. 287

is possible to discover the influence of Piranesi. When Ferneyhough speaks of lines of force radiating out beyond the edges of the etchings, of those illogical perspectival lines[12], one senses that his imagined musical analogy is borne out in the role of the piano in *Carceri I.* However, generally, this analysis will not concentrate on issues of pitch – mainly because of the comprehensive nature of Pätzold's thesis, and since it is the *physicality* of features including gesture, shape, symmetry, repetition, expansion and contraction that interests me principally.

**Gesture**

Like the notion of an 'approximate' symmetry, Ferneyhough's use of the term 'repetition' to describe how much of the material in *Carceri I* unfolds, is to be understood loosely, or better still, as a sliding (qualitative) scale ranging from the extremes of exactitude to wholly abstruse re-interpretations of a particular material. In terms of the quantity of material repeated this, too, can vary between a single note and rather large blocks of polyphonic material. So, for example, the opening 'G' in the piccolo part obstinately persists throughout the first line of the piece: Ferneyhough introduces microtones (which of course the piano cannot play) 'around' the G as if the note itself were undergoing development.

**Ex. d)**




[12] See Ferneyhough, 'Form-Figure-Style: An Intermediate Assessment' in 1995: 21-28

'G' and the space around it are repeatedly explored. The fluttertongue articulation for most of the piccolo's opening line adds to the flickering sensation around the high G, as though it is not really present, only suggested.

From the beginning the piano and the two other instruments act simultaneously as forces in parallel (implied by the shared extremes) and yet also as contradictory forces: when the piano has a sustained chord (see bars three and four, **ex. b**), the piccolo and trombone produce forceful rapid gestures with no internal rests. However, when the piano becomes animate once again (later in bar four) the wind/brass gestures are 'broken' by internal rests. A hocket-like texture results. Later, in bars seven to nine, the piccolo and trombone articulate scales: all fluttertongued, some chromatic, some microtonal, and all focused around the G-C# tritone – here it is the piano that 'breaks down' texturally, due to inserted rests.

Despite the palpability of the action of forces (and tensions) from the outset, the trio opening of *Carceri I* is important as a structural unity between many parameters. Although I have already made reference to several 'gestures', these are to be understood as local gestural minutiae in relation to what might be called a 'structural gesture': the meeting point of parametric devices and activities, which will become figurally charged as the piece progresses. Thus, the parameters encountered so far include:

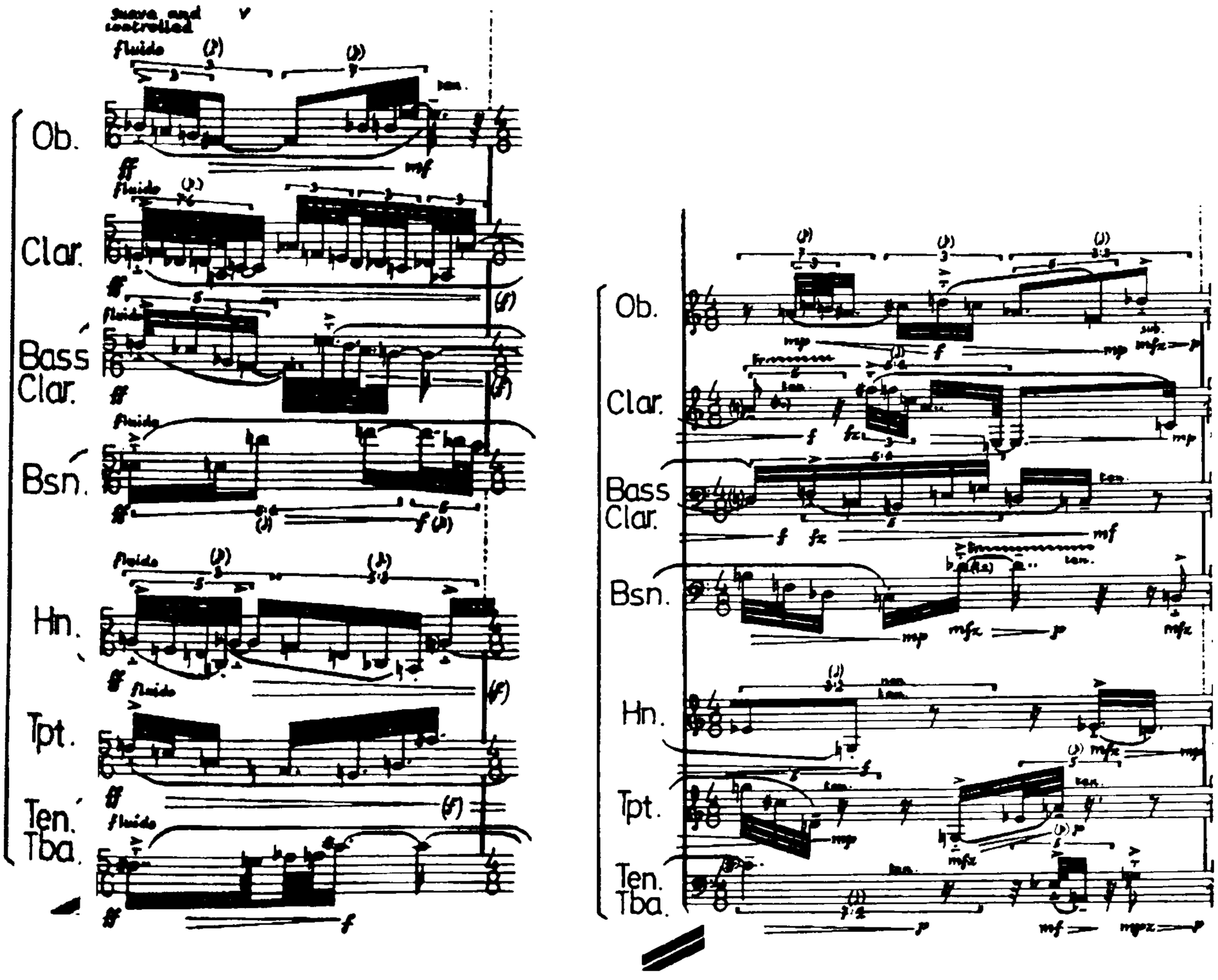
1. Registral extremes
2. Repetition of note and secondary (often microtonal) pitches around the note
3. Symmetry of intervals
4. Symmetry within 15 bar metrical cycle
5. Fluttertongue articulation in piccolo and trombone
6. Empty 'space' between registral extremes

7. Dynamic 'extremes' in all three instruments *ffff* and *sfffz* to *pp*

8. Instrumental sub-group of piano, trombone and piccolo established as a 'foundation', support or 'constant'.[13]

Even within the first system of the piece, the tensions referred to above in the material (flickering, opposing forces etc.) begin to test the 'boundaries' or the stability of this opening structural gesture. It is further strained with the introduction of ensemble wind and brass instruments at bar nine: 'they come in exactly that area which the piccolo and trombone did not fill, with suave and flowing material'.[14] Moreover, the new material is disposed in a two-bar segment that is repeated with varying degrees of accuracy until bar 19.

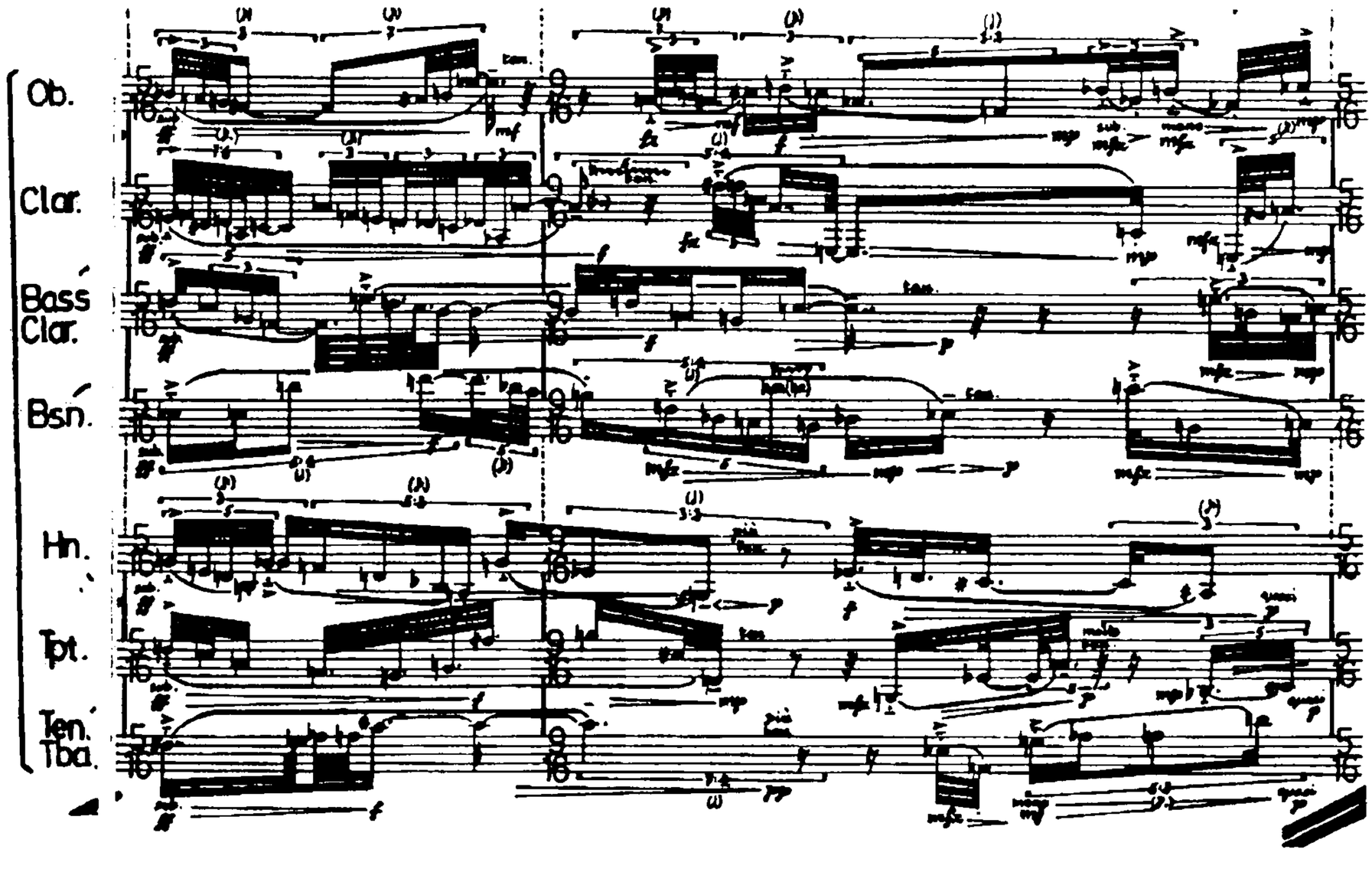
**Ex. e) Bar 9** **Bar 10**




[13] Ferneyhough (RT) 1995: 287
[14] *Ibid.*, 287

Bar 11 is identical to bar nine in every respect: pitch, rhythm, metre, dynamic markings, articulation markings and timbre. The only enharmonic change occurs in the clarinet part, from a Db in bar nine to a C# in bar 11. It is likely this change is made in order to 'rhyme' the clarinet pitch with the return of the C# in the trombone and piano parts, which re-enter in bar 11 (the piccolo retains its G). In bar 12 however, whilst the material 'expands' metrically, it nevertheless 'contracts' rhythmically **(see ex. f)**. It is worth noting that the staple articulatory device in the 'suave' wind and brass material is the trill, as opposed to the flutter tongue in the piccolo and trombone parts.

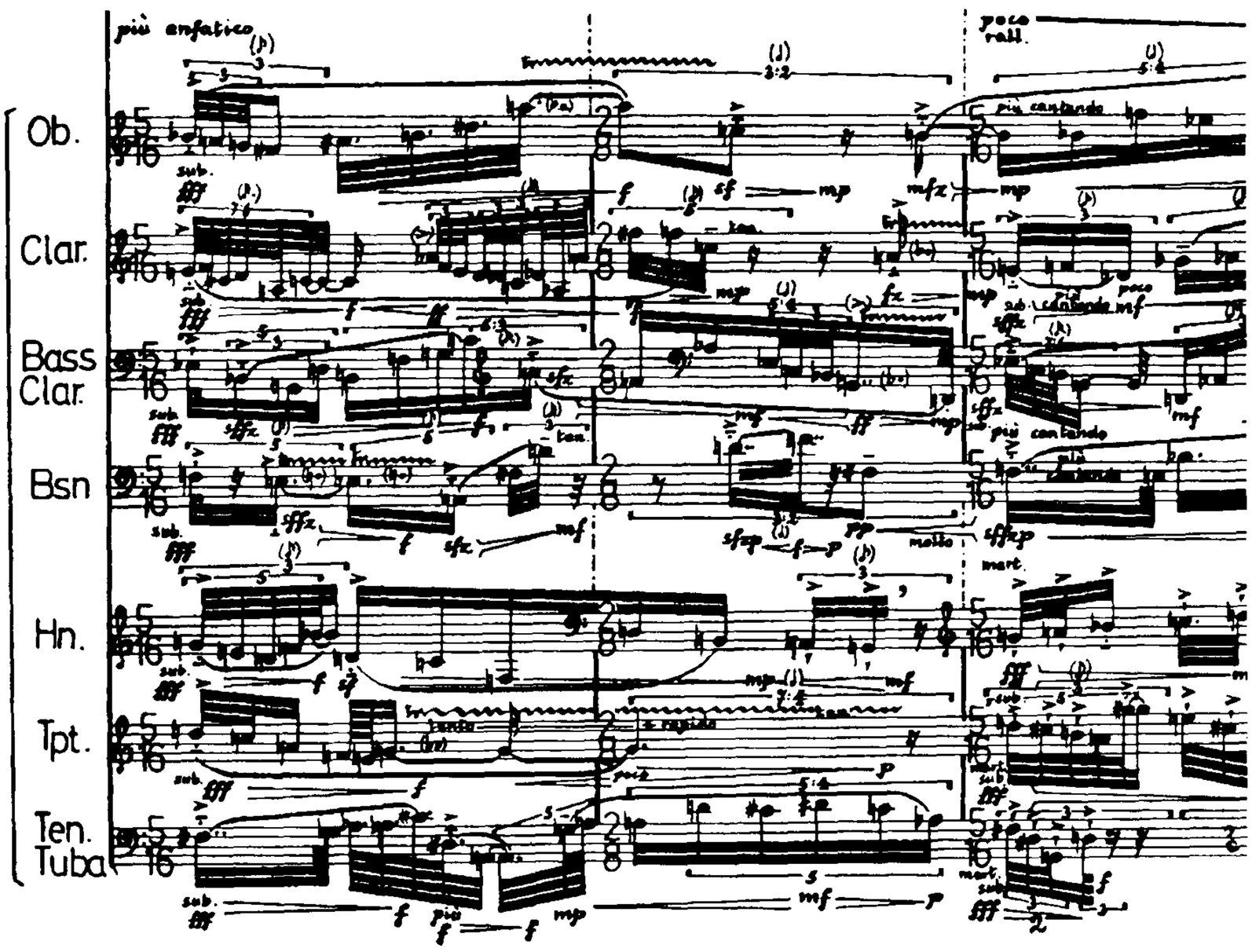
**Ex. f) Bars 11-12 as 'repetition' of bars 9-11**




Bar 13 begins, once again, to repeat the bar nine material strictly. In the oboe part at bar 13, Ferneyhough 'spells' the pitches enharmonically, but, with the exception of the last A-natural (with a trill to Bb), all the original pitches from bar nine are preserved. As for bar 14, the pitches A and C-natural are retained, as is the B-natural after a rest (these are

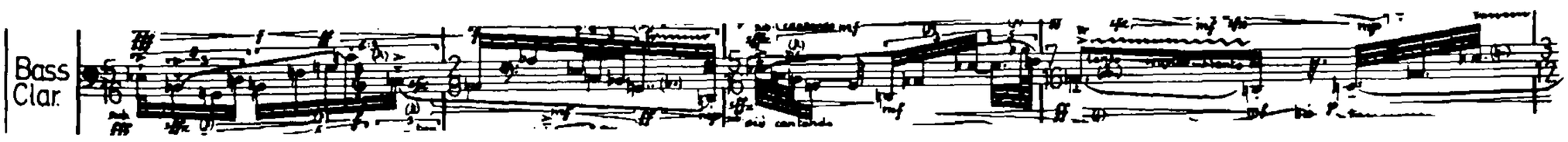
the first three notes from bar ten, and the *only* three notes in bar 14). It is no surprise that the pitch material from bar 14 'bleeds' into bar 15 since the 2/8 metre (b. 14) is only half the length of bars ten and 12, to which it corresponds **(see ex. g)**.

**Ex. g) Bars 13-15**




The bass clarinet part from bars 13 to 19 is the most conspicuously repetitive **(ex. h)**.

**Ex. h) Bars 13-16**




**Bars 17-19**



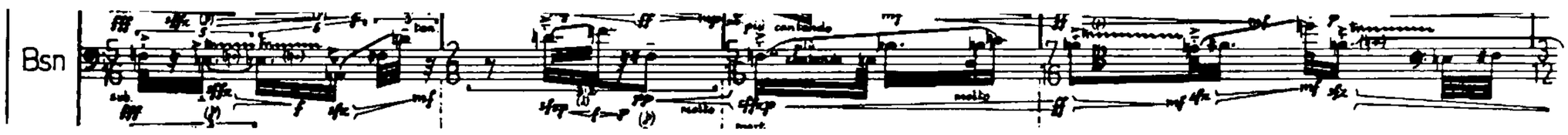

Note that Ferneyhough reduces the cycle of repetition from two measures down to one (approximately). In bar 14, the same motivic 'shape' - a falling gesture beginning on Eb and moving down to G (retaining the middle Bb) with D-natural following the G – is found as in bar 13. Furthermore, an important interval is established in measure 14: that between Eb and Ab (read either as a fourth or fifth). Bar 15 recalls both bar 13 and bar 14. Its first descending gesture maintains the pitches described above; the second half of the bar relates to material in bar 14: specifically the interval Ab – Eb. Bar 16 begins with the descending fifth A to D (the first and last notes of bar 14). The Ab and Eb also reappear in this bar (as an ascending fifth). Finally, in bar 17 the G and D are restated before a series of finger *tremolos* is begun between intervals that are all derived from the previous four bars' material (bars 17 and 18 are an 'elaboration' of the interval D-G, for example). The mirror image of the opening interval of bar 17 (short G, longer trill on D) is found in bar 14, wherein a longer G trill is suddenly brought to a halt by a short, *staccato* D.

Ferneyhough has begun to manipulate the repetition parameter: whereas he began by 'repeating' pitch material at two bar intervals (bars 9, 11, 13), at bar 13, the two bar interval shrinks to one bar only. The 'stretto' effect upon the repetitive unit of two bars, witnessed most effectively in the bass clarinet part, adds to the tension building within the structural gesture, described above as the parallel unfolding of several parametric strands (see list). The pitch repetition parameter is thus beginning to acquire an independence

from its generative gestural context, and furthermore, not only is the span between each repetition contracting, but the pitch material itself is distilling from motivic into intervallic identities: the notion of structurally important intervals is about to become pertinent to this analysis with the entry of the strings at bar 19, notably the same bar in which the bass clarinet temporarily drops out of the musical texture.

The bassoon parallels the bass clarinet between bars 13 and 19, insofar as its material becomes increasingly chromatic (rather than intervallic). Chromaticism, and the notion of close intervals will also become central to the development of the string material from bar 19 onwards, where it is taken to microtonal extremes. Consider the similarities in gestural shape between the bassoon material at bars 13 and 15. Also, there is a descending chromatic line at bar 13: F, E, Eb…D. The remaining two pitches from that bar (F#, A) become staples of the string material.

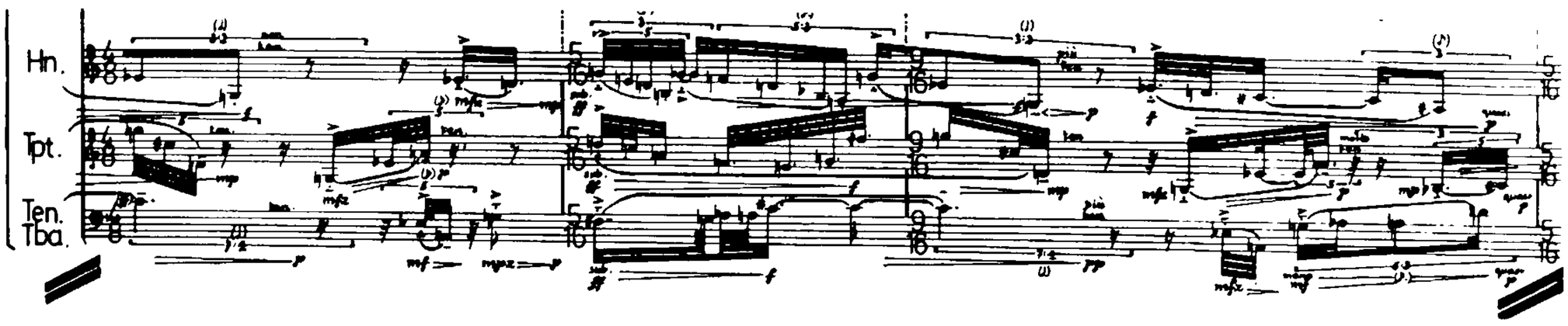
**Ex. i) Bassoon bars 13-16**



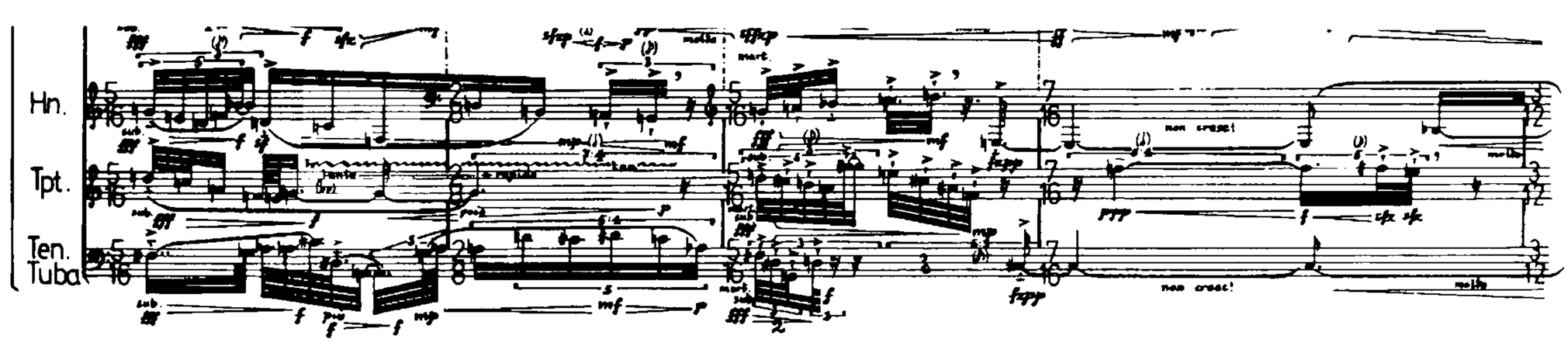

During the same passage, the brass instruments also evince particular 'characteristics': where the bass clarinet tends towards the intervallic, and the bassoon towards the chromatic, the horn part sets out scale-wise material (bars 15, 17), whilst the trumpet offers a combination of stepwise scale movement and gestures comprising chains of thirds (bar 15). The tenor tuba consolidates the contraction of the repetitive unit from two measures into one: bar 13 and the first two notes of bar 14 recast the complete pitch

material contained in measures 11 and 12 in 5/16 metre. These observations will become important to the development of this discussion, set out below.

**Ex. j) Brass material bars 11-12**




**Bars 13-16**




As the 'suave' (wind and brass) material develops from bar nine until it fades to a *pppp* conclusion at bar 19, the piano continues in partnership with the piccolo and trombone, although it is markedly less extreme in terms of its pitch content, and denser in texture than previously. This density is on account of six and seven part chords, whose effect is to 'colour' the space between pitch extremities. At bar 17 an interesting textural 'shift' comes into force: two members of the 'suave' brass and wind sub-group defect to the piano-trombone-piccolo counter-group (witness the clarinet and trumpet entries a bar

later). One (of many) technique(s) in Ferneyhough's compositional armoury involves a textural manipulation, intensification or arrest shortly before a structurally important juncture of the piece: the redisposition of ensemble sub-groups at bar 17 is, I suggest, one such moment. The 'new' groups are united internally by a shared texture and temperament of articulation.

The first group (piccolo, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, glock, piano, double bass) consists of the rapid, 'flickering' *marcato* texture encountered at the very beginning of the piece. From bar 16 onwards, the piano 'gives' each new instrument (entries are staggered) the pitch class upon which it enters. This forms an impression of a new line of force radiating out of the piano material, adding to an ever more complex polyphonic, rhythmically asynchronous, tremendously animated cacophony of layered sound.

The second group (oboe, bass clarinet, bassoon, horn, tenor tuba) is united by the use of embellishments such as trills, tremolos and lyrical phrasing, at odds with the 'tripping' texture in the piano group. Ferneyhough deliberately offsets the piano's *sempre staccatissimo* against the lengthy trills and *calmandosi* instruction given to the wind instruments. Nevertheless, there is contradiction within each group as well: despite its frenetic 'scattered' texture, the dynamic trajectory of the piano group follows a smooth line from *pp* – *mp* – *f* and then begins a gradual, steady *crescendo* to *fff* at the end of bar 19. On the other hand, the individual lines in the more coherent second group are not dynamically synchronised, and neither do they pursue (even each in their own terms) a smooth dynamic course.

**Becoming figural**

The changes at bar 17, which in fact have been latent since bar 11, indicate the beginnings of the parametric outgrowth (i.e. in terms of individual parameters) of the piece's opening gestural complex, which comprises the many parametric identities unfolding *in parallel*. These parameters have been outlined earlier (see list above). I consider the section comprising bars 17-19 to be the 'boundary' of such a gestural complex, and furthermore, I consider the material issuing from it – from bar 19 onwards – to be individually pursued parametric layers, which become subject to figural treatment by the composer. My hypothesis centres on the entry of a string quartet (a third ensemble sub-group) at bar 19. In this material, several previously simultaneously developed parameters are pursued independently of one another, colliding, interacting, degenerating and becoming rejuvenated in a new (figural) context.

Much of what follows in this analysis will focus upon the string quartet material, considering issues such as the 'erosion' of the 'body' of the quartet, as well as exploring the impact of several orchestral *tutti* 'interventions'[15] engineered by Ferneyhough to cause disruption to the initially cohesive string quartet unit.

**The string quartet (sub-ensemble)**

The string quartet in itself might be said to constitute a parameter, and the tutti interventions another. Within these larger-scale examples, there are then smaller, more intricately deployed parameters to which I will shortly turn my attention. Typically, the 'super' parameters such as the string quartet entries (conceived 'horizontally', as a

---

[15] Toop refers to these 'interventions' in 'Brian Ferneyhough's Dungeon's of Invention', *Musical Times* cxxviii, no. 1737 (1987) pp. 624-5

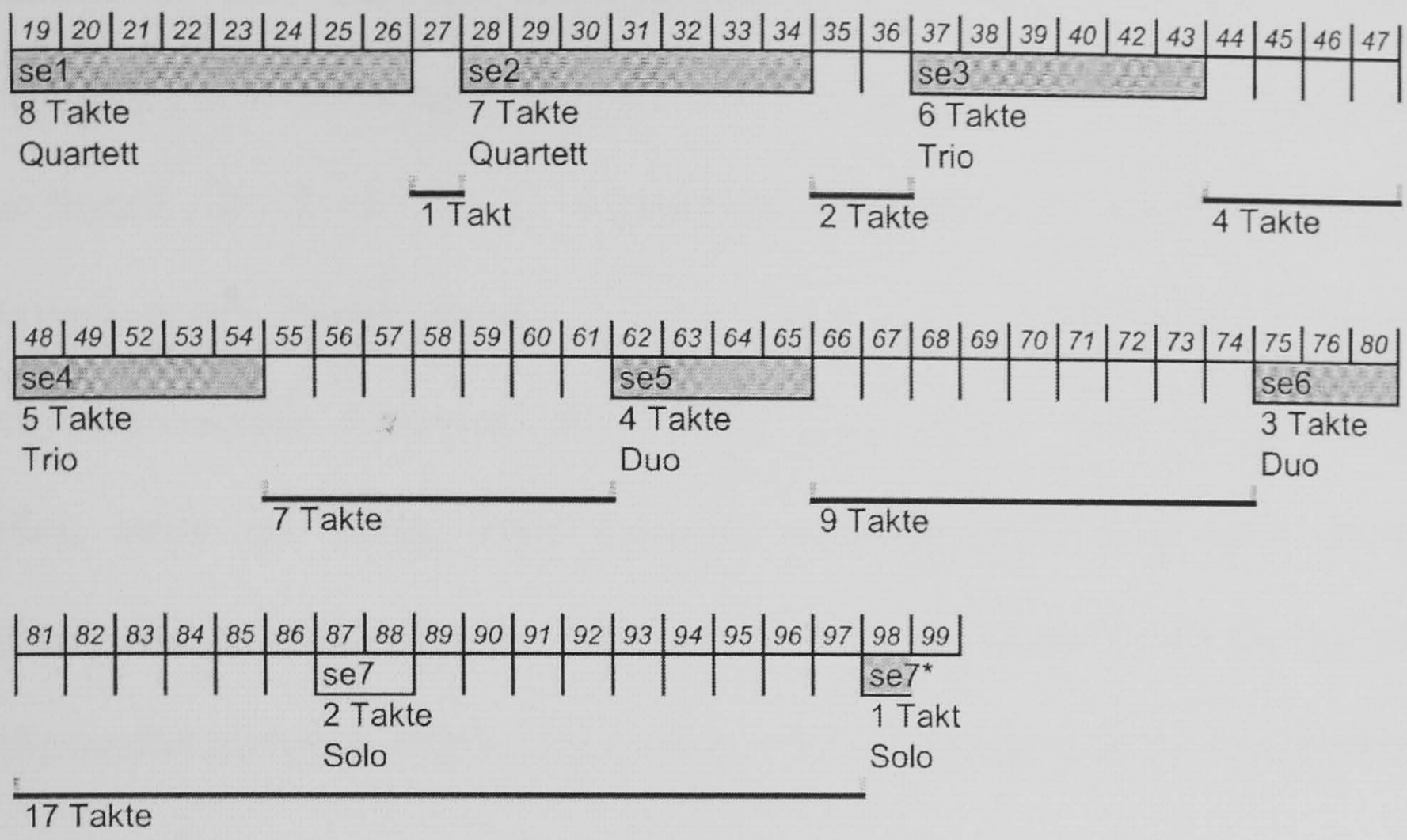
developing linear trajectory) and the *tutti* interventions (vertical, interruptive) are regulated according to number series, thus:

**Ex. k) String Quartet Entries (source: Pätzold 2002[16])**

[16] Pätzold 2002: 168. Pätzold's diagram shows the length of each string entry in bars (shaded); the numbers relate to bar numbers in the piece; the diagram also shows the number of instruments participating in each string entry (continually reduced).

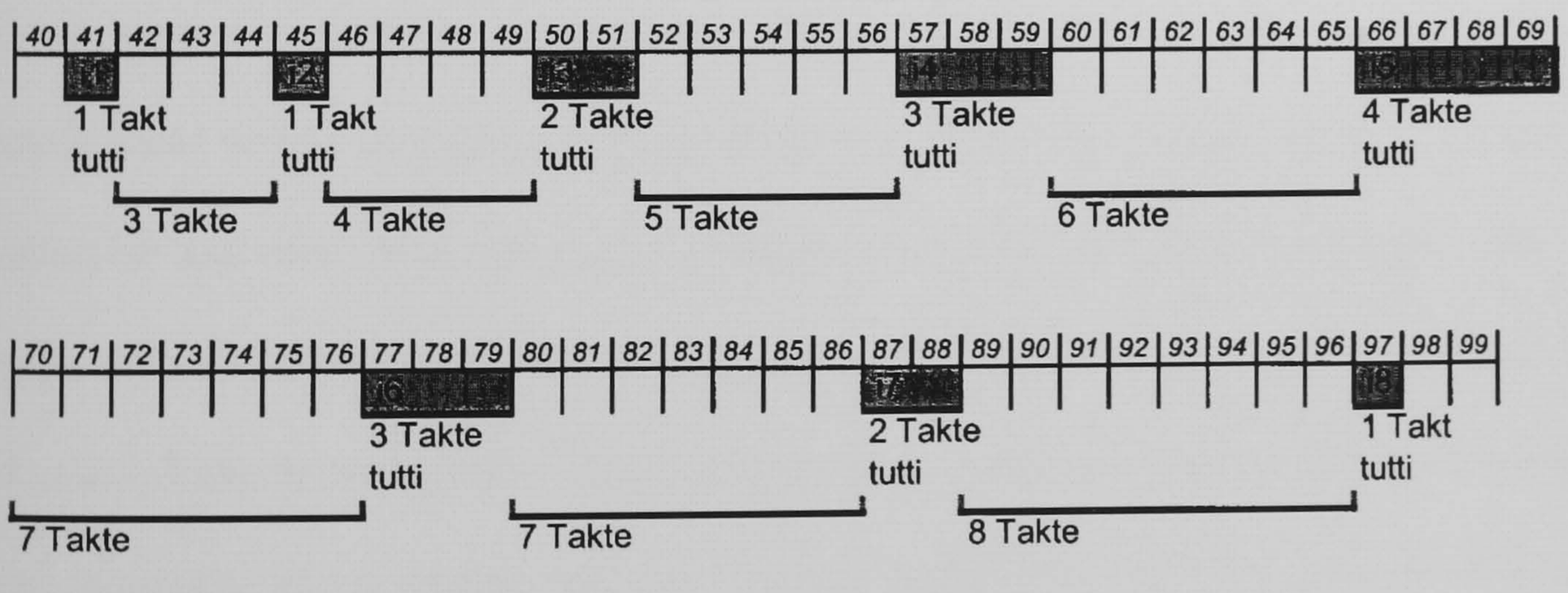
Between each string entry the number of measures increases according to a scheme derived from the Fibonnacci series. In the sketches, according to Pätzold, the series is set out as follows: 1-1-2-3-5-8-13-21 but appears in the score as 1-2-4-7-9-17 (as the numbers of bars to elapse between each entry). Once again, Pätzold only goes so far in her explanation of how the first yields the latter. The first series is 'conventional' Fibonacci – each number is the sum of the two preceding numbers. Ferneyhough's derivative series is calculated by beginning from the third term of the Fibonnaci series and subtracting one (giving the equation F – 1 where F is equal to the corresponding conventional Fibonacci term). Pätzold alerts us to this, but fails to note that the fifth and sixth terms of Ferneyhough's series do not comply with this rule, since 13 and 21 (from the Fibonacci series) do not give 9 and 17 respectively when one is subtracted from each: rather the equation must be amended to F – 4 for these two terms; Ferneyhough seemingly stretches the material here. The new number series is called the Lukas series.

As with the schematisation of the 15 bar metre cycles discussed above, there are relatively minor discrepancies between my own interpretation of the musical procedures and parametric disposition, and Pätzold's thesis. In particular, her description of each string entry according to the number of players involved (i.e. one of four possibilities from solo to quartet) in the table (ex. k) does not concur with the actual situation as represented in the score. For example, sting entry three at bar 37 is not a trio, but a quartet: in fact, the first trio string entry is number five, at bar 62. Certainly the texture at bar 48 – wherein the viola and cello are synchronised in terms of both rhythm and articulation, as if the two were one instrument – is trio-like in concept, but nevertheless, the entire quartet is present. If the string entry at bar 62 is a trio (and not a duo as Pätzold claims), then the first string duo occurs at bar 75 with the sixth string entry. Even then, there is some ambiguity since the 'cello and viola alternate with one another in partnership with violin one, and so in a sense create a trio. Pätzold identifies two seventh string entries, the first at bar 87 and the second at 98. Both, she labels 'solo'. In fact, bars 87 and 88 mark the seventh *tutti* intervention, and the presence, at this juncture, of the entire quartet must be interpreted as *tutti* material in contradistinction to the *string entry* material: the former, by definition, is not 'solo'. Finally, the seventh string entry proper, at bar 98 (lasting one measure only) is indeed scored for violin one solo: the general trajectory of decreasing string resources and entry lengths measured against the increasing number of bars between entries is clear, Pätzold's occasional inaccuracies notwithstanding. It is likely that, since Pätzold has worked extensively with Ferneyhough's sketches, what is reproduced in her own thesis is sketch-based material, which is typically subject to change in the compositional act itself.




**Se = string entry**

**Ex. l) *Tutti* interventions (source: Pätzold 2002[17])**




[17] Shaded area indicates length of intervention. '*Tutti*' refers to the whole chamber ensemble *except* for the string quartet material (one exception is bars 87-88 where the string quartet participates in the *tutti* material).

The number of bars between *tutti* interventions gradually increases, although no Fibonacci series is involved here. The interventions themselves increase, then decrease in duration from 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1 measures. Meanwhile, the number of bars between interventions grows steadily from 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 7 – 8 measures. As the distance between interventions increases, their effect (i.e. of the interventions themselves) intensifies, since the string entry material becomes more and more eroded and fragmented. The forceful, resonant interventions therefore contribute to the breakdown of the string quartet material, weathering it away whilst it simultaneously auto-destructs.

**A Summary of String Entries and Interventions**

The first string entry for full quartet at bar 19 is marked '*cold and metallic*' by Ferneyhough, in complete contrast from the 'suave and flowing' material beginning at bar nine. Striking features of this eight bar section include the absence of any rests, the double-stop material in each of the four string (quartet) parts, the sustained duration of notes (in marked contrast to the *staccato* 'piano group' at bar 19, for example) and an apparent 'rule' which is rarely, if ever, broken: of the two pitches in each string part sounding at any one time, only one changes when the articulation changes. So, for example, of two notes tied across the bar (see violin one, B-natural and D-natural tied across the barline between bars 19 and 20), only one pitch alters when the tie is broken, another is begun (which extends into bar 21) and the new pair of notes is accented (>). In this particular instance the D-natural remains, whilst the B is exchanged for G# (B – G# is another 'significant interval': here it is horizontally disposed). In bar 21, at the next accented change of pitch, the D is once again retained and the G# gives way to an F-

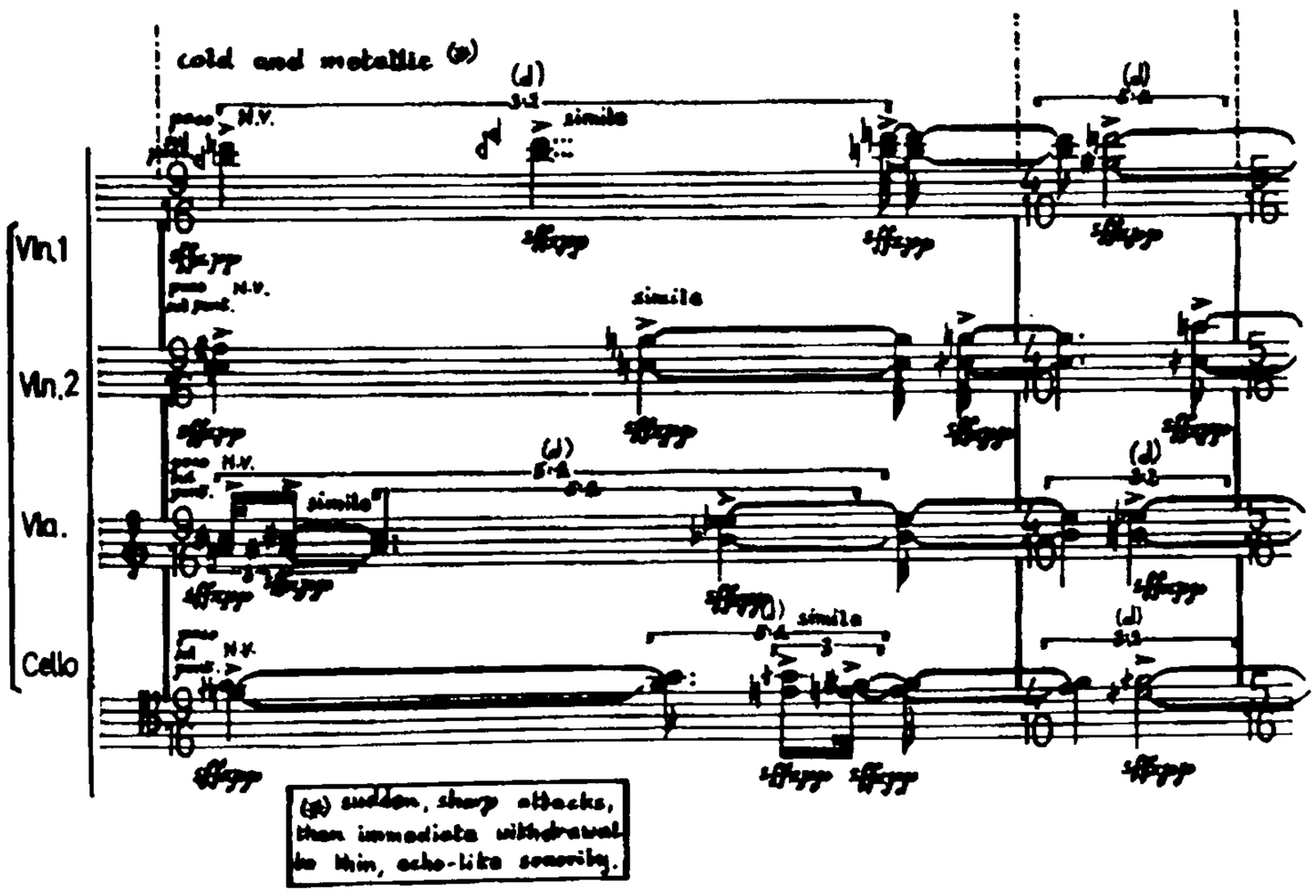
natural and so on: in its turn the F-natural becomes F quarter-tone sharp (the D persisting all the while). The D is finally the note to be replaced at bar 23, by an A-natural. The same 'rule' applies in each part, compounding the strangely static environment effected by the strings: in terms of rhythm the quartet is slow moving and inanimate, its articulation lends it an unbreakable and lingering air whilst the pitch movement is minimal. In addition it is dynamically self-consistent (*sffzpp* is the instruction at each accented pitch change) and articulated *sul ponticello*, all of which consolidates the original *cold and metallic* rubric. Some relief is provided in the form of the double bass (which obviously shares the string timbre, but is excluded from the quartet). Its material is in keeping with the wind and piano material from the beginning of the piece: this instrument becomes very important since it seems to consistently pre-empt the string entry material. In effect, Ferneyhough has inverted the notion of an echo – the great resonating capacity of the double bass is exploited to the full, its impact all the more striking for the fact that its immediate effect is to jettison the piccolo, lending a bottom-heavy feel to the previously light and treble clef biased material. There is no *tutti* intervention in this string entry: the latter's inviolate status at this point in the piece is not in question.

Some issues of pitch are worth mentioning briefly. Certain intervals readily come to notice throughout the various string entries. These are related to Ferneyhough's chords **(see ex.a)**, but are of interest in themselves because their regular appearances allow the analyst to measure the progress of the string material. For example, the opening double stop in violin two, bar 19 – F# and C-natural – occurs with such frequency that it is difficult not to notice the different dispositions of the interval throughout the successive

string entries. In other words, where that interval partakes of the current 'cold and metallic', sturdy and relatively simple string material in entry one, it might later be recast in a different articulation (such as tremolo, or *glissando*) or find itself subject to microtonal distortion. It is notable that all of Ferneyhough's symmetrical chords contain the pitch-class C-natural and moreover, at the exact pitch discovered in bar 19 (i.e. one octave above middle C). This adds further to the demonstrable stability of the string material.

The double bass solo between string entries one and two is of interest for several reasons. The first notable feature is its opening interval, the tritone C – F#, unusually high in the double bass register: the interval is deployed at the same pitch as it appears on the first beat of the first string quartet entry in violin two. In addition, the first few notes of the solo refer back, albeit obliquely, to the first appearance of the double bass at bar 19. Lastly, the first string *glissando* is introduced in the double bass at bar 25 – string *glissandi* will become an important parametric device later in the piece.

**Ex. m) Opening of String Entry One, b. 19**



**Ex. n) Double Bass solo b. 19**



**Double Bass solo, b. 25-27**




As if to foreshadow the importance of certain intervals which will come to saturate the string material, the re-entrance of a wind trio at bar 25 is remarkable for the presence of many small gestures which span such intervals, or close relatives (so for example, the clarinet plays G# - B quarter tone flat in bar 26: this is undoubtedly a slight microtonal distortion of the prolific interval G# - B-natural). The wind trio also adopts the almost continuous use of a trill articulation, carrying on the texture that was begun by a similar ensemble (which also included brass), at bar 17. Whereas the piano had previously acted as something of a 'pitch-distributor' for the wind and brass, its relationship with the string quartet material is the inverse of this. Virtually all the string quartet pitches present in bar 25 emerge, recast rhythmically, in the piano part at bar 26, a measure later. So for the strings, the piano performs a 'pitch-collector' role: it will become evident in due course that it nevertheless maintains its distributor function in respect of the wind instruments. It is, in fact, the double bass that relieves the piano of its role as pitch distributor in the case

of the strings. Its brief is slightly different: it pre-empts the various articulations, such as the *glissandi* mentioned above, that come to dominate the string material, as well as the pervasive use of significant intervals in the latter.

**Ex. o) Wind and Piano material, b. 25-26**




The second string entry is disposed similarly to the first, with two significant differences: first, rests are interspersed with the double-stop material for the first time, and second, although the 'rule' established in the first entry regarding the movement of only one pitch out of any two in each double stop still pertains, it is broken more often, and more noticeably. Consider for example, the leap in register in violin two, bar 30 – this extreme would not have been permissible in the first string entry, but here the rule is disregarded and both pitches which begin the bar change mid-measure. Nevertheless, certain

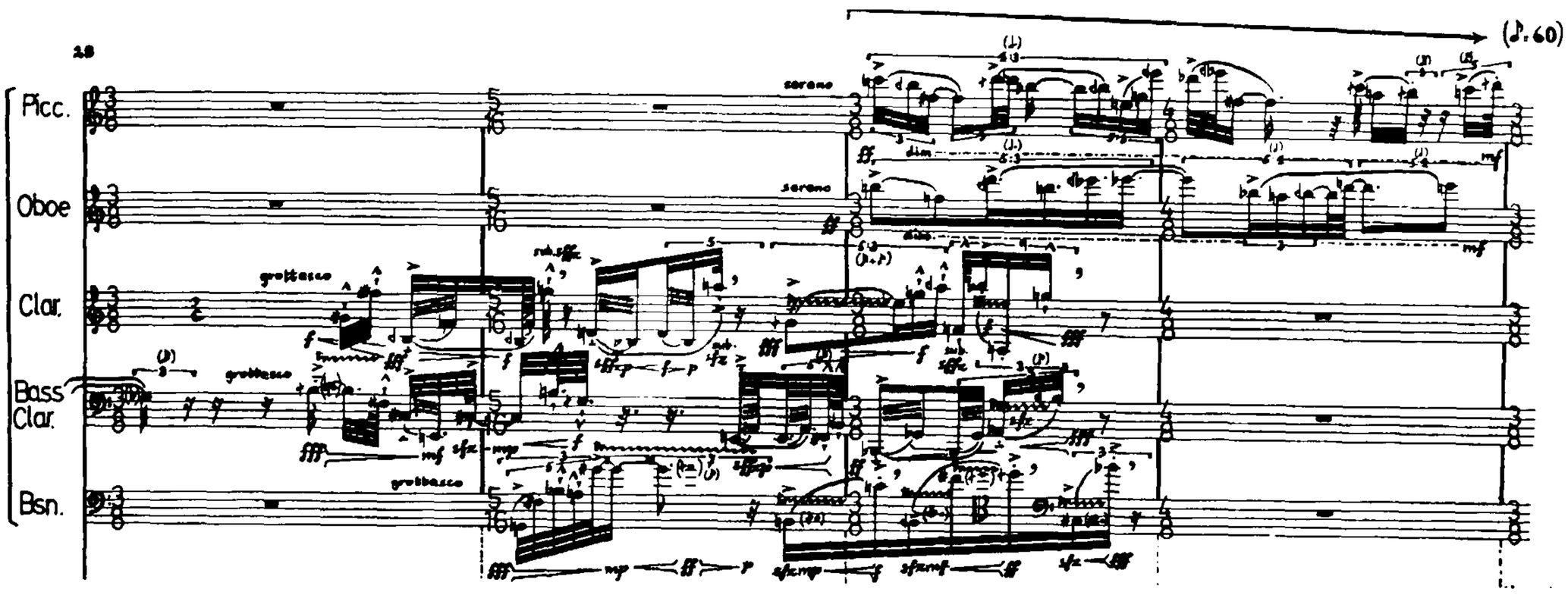
important intervals and their relatives appear (for example F# - A, b. 31 violin one and viola: A – C#, viola bars 25 and 26).

The accompanying double bass material continues to include these intervals itself (see F# - A, bar 30), intensifies its use of *glissandi* and also explores very close intervals, effecting a kind of quarter tone chromaticism as for example at bar 28. Both *glissandi* and close microtonal intervals populate the third string entry, to be discussed shortly. The corresponding wind material continues its exploration of certain intervallic values between bars 28 and 31, although much of the pitch material enclosed by the 'significant' intervals themselves in the previous measures (25 – 27) is removed by bar 28, and replaced instead by a *tremolo* between each interval's two constituent pitches. The trills are preserved however: this material refers back even more strongly to that at bar 17 – in particular recalling the dual use of trill and *tremolos* in the bass clarinet part. It is no coincidence that the bass clarinet features again at bar 28 with strikingly similar material to that at bar 17.

**Ex. p) String Entry Two b. 28 onwards, with double bass solo.**



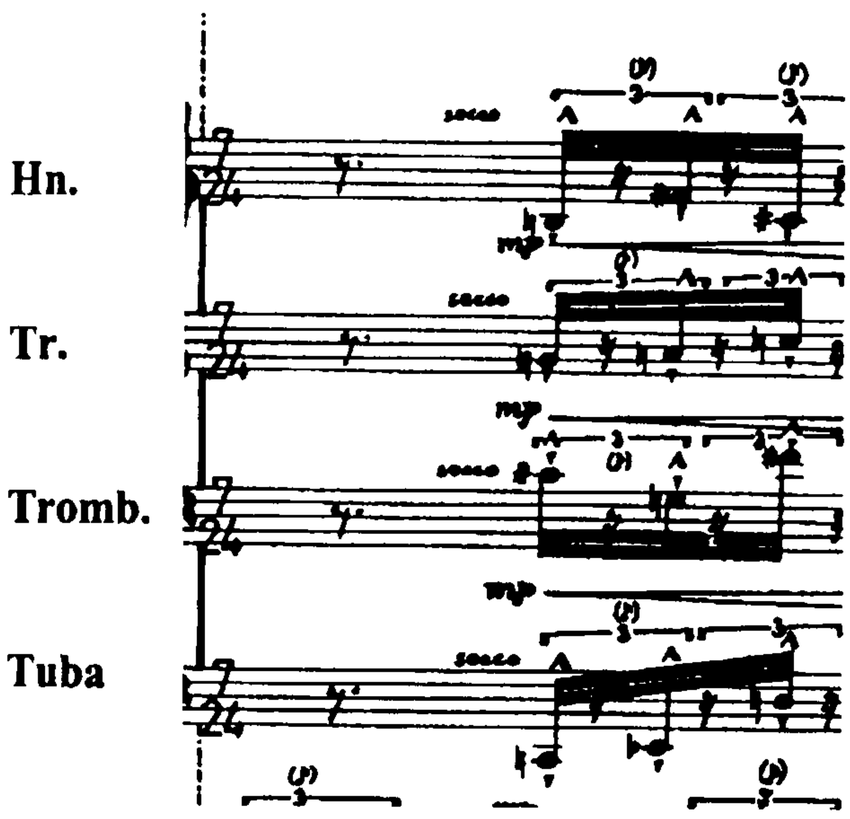
## Ex. q) Woodwind material at bar 28




Bar 31 signals the end of the second, and the beginning of the third metrical cycle. The ensemble's material noticeably falls into blocks at this point: piccolo, oboe and clarinet form one; bass clarinet and bassoon another; horn, trumpet, trombone and tenor tuba make a third; piano and glockenspiel a fourth; and finally the string quartet (and the double bass solo) a fifth group. Each block shares certain pitches with another block or blocks of material, so for example the notes comprising the fluttertongue chord in the four brass instruments at bar 31 can also be found in the string material ('cello, violin one) in the same measure. On a local level, certain symmetries are discernible which resemble the kind of note-manipulation techniques observable at the very beginning of the piece, such as the quasi-symmetry between the two hands of the piano in bar one. In the brass at bar 33, Ferneyhough effects several of the so-called 'significant' intervals mentioned above (such as the F# - A between horn and trumpet). Reading bar 33 from left to right, the intervals between horn and trumpet are as follows: third, third, semitone.

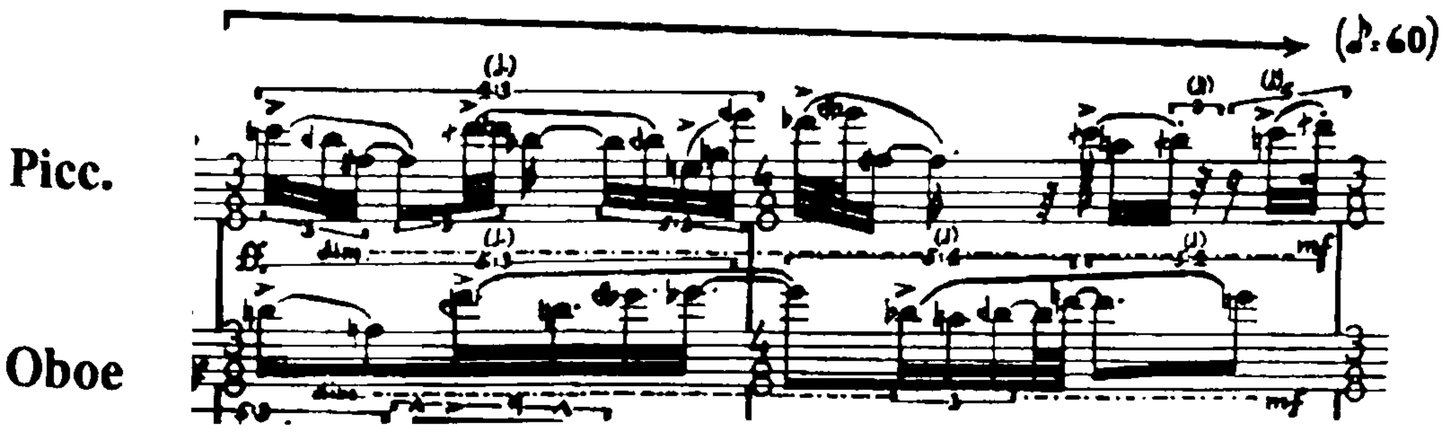
Reading from right to left, the intervals between trombone and tenor tuba are thus: third, third, semitone (the latter being the same semitone as found between the horn and trumpet - C/C#). Furthermore, the intervals between trumpet and trombone make a palindrome: tritone, tone, tritone (the latter is the frequently appearing F# - C).

**Ex. r) Brass, b. 33 (In descending order: horn, trumpet (both treble clef); trombone and tenor tuba (both bass clef)**

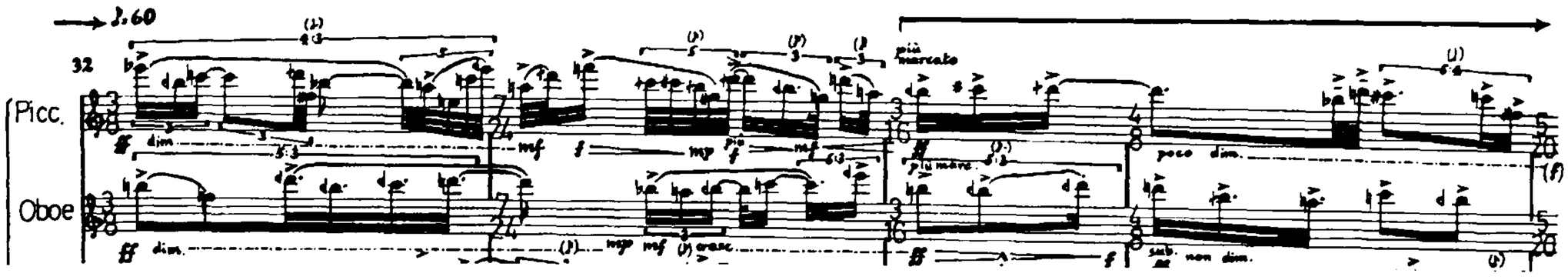



Conspicuous, though far from exact, repetition also resurfaces at bar 30 in the piccolo and oboe parts. As before, the 'unit of repetition' lasts for two bars:

**Ex. s) Piccolo and oboe, b. 30-31**



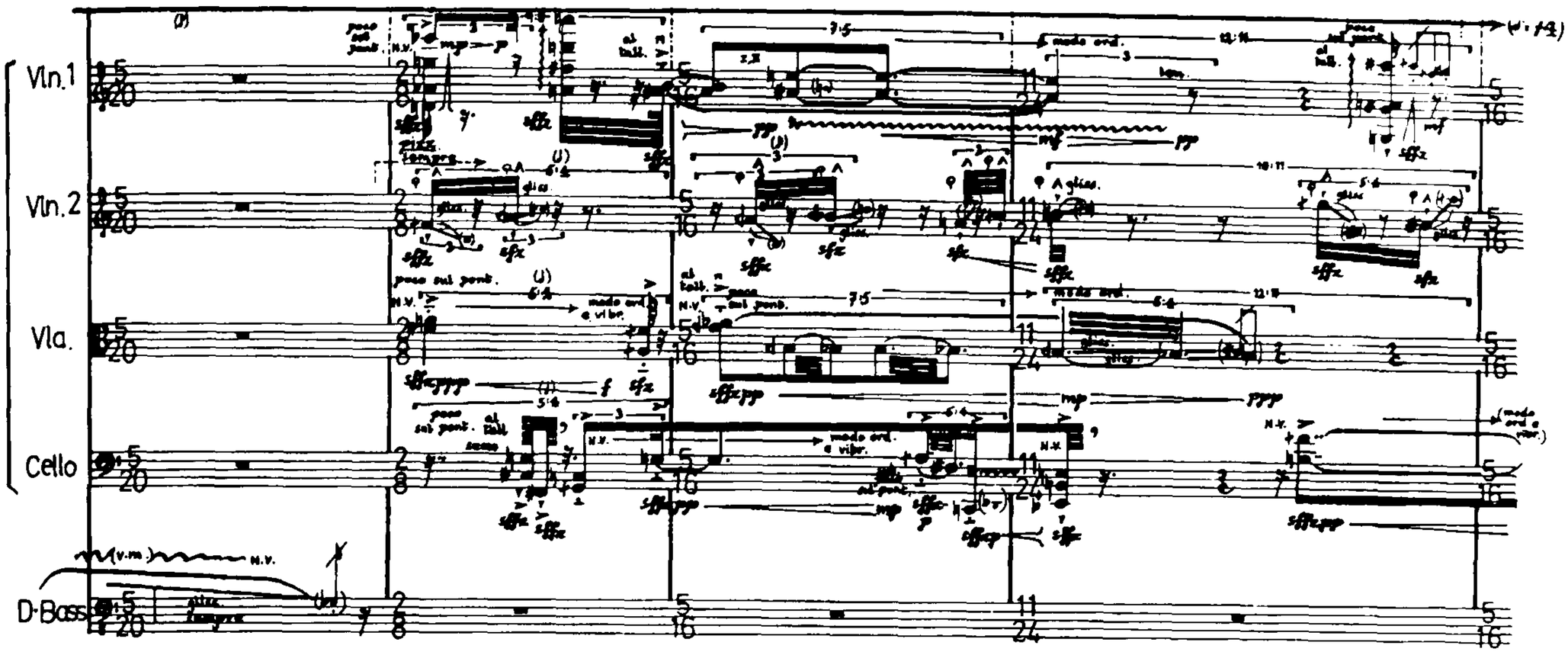
**Piccolo and oboe, b. 32-36**




The relationship between successive units (two bar segments, piccolo and oboe) becomes increasingly difficult to identify, the material becoming progressively sparser, until the first *tutti* intervention at bar 41.

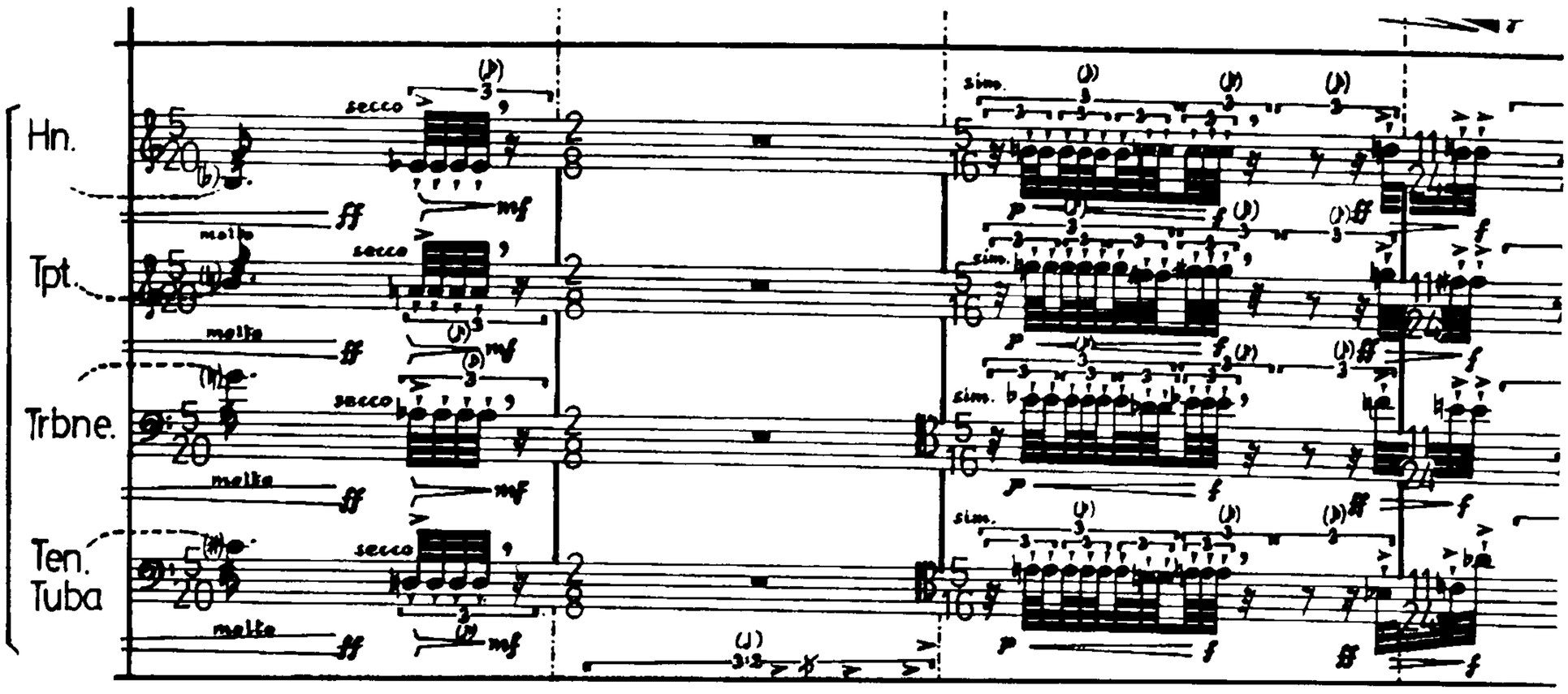
Overall, during this period of the piece, Ferneyhough continues to develop the block-like texture of the chamber orchestra, which in fact simply separates the instruments into families (wind, brass, percussion and strings). Within that remit, he alters a particular group's texture freely, so for example, although the identity of the brass is maintained within the orchestra as a whole, at bar 36 the fluttertongue gives way to *secco staccato* – in effect a kind of 'long-hand' fluttertongue. Similarly, the bass clarinet and bassoon *tremolos* disappear, to be replaced by 'melodic' - animated, staccato, hocket-like - material in keeping with the rest of the wind instrument family. These group-internal textural changes coincide with the beginning of string entry three at bar 37.

## Ex. t) String Entry Three




The double bass-'predicted' *glissandi* and close microtonal intervals (see viola bar 38 for example) are clearly audible, located mainly in the second violin and viola, whilst the first violin undertakes quadruple stops and trills, and the 'cello some triple stops and trills. The homogeneity of the string quartet unit is threatened: two pairings between violin one and 'cello on the one hand and violin two and viola on the other are hinted at, whilst the frequent *glissandi* and growing use of other ornaments including *tremolos*, trills and grace notes all add a certain fragility to the quartet timbre. Gone is the solidity – the *cold and metallic* sound-world – of the first quartet entry.

**Ex. u) Brass, b, 36-38**




Previously the string quartet stood out against the staccato and suave material of the other instruments, impervious to their idiosyncrasies such as ornaments. However, whilst the other instrument groups become ever more self-consistent (consider the brass here, **see ex. u**), the string quartet begins to self-destruct. It is also becoming noticeably more tightly imprisoned within a small register, each individual instrument compensating for this by turning to narrow *tessiturae* made up of microtonal pitch materials, and specific techniques of articulation, in order to distinguish itself within the quartet. The viola, for example, is the only string instrument at this point to employ *tremolos*. Previously, the static quality of the quartet texture precluded the possibility of any one instrument 'standing out': on the contrary, by the third string entry, each instrument pursues an individual identity, thus eroding the established stability of the group. Therefore, despite the persistence of the 'flickering' texture in the wind instruments, the self-consistency of the group acquires a stability nevertheless that now eludes the strings. Moreover, the intervals that are important to the pitch material, such as F# - A (see viola bar 37) begin to be compressed beyond immediate recognition. Rather than recast F# - A

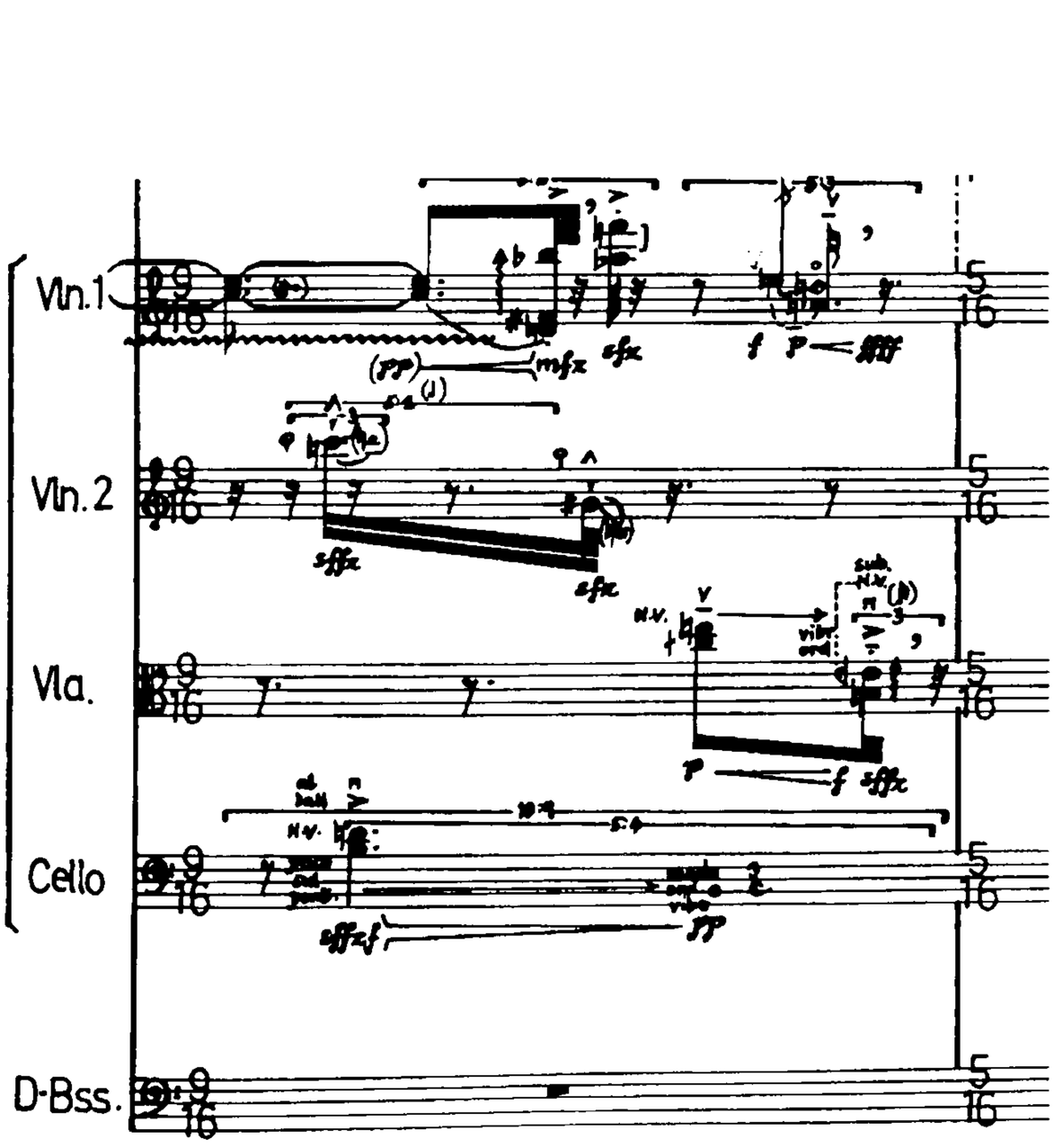
as F three quarter tone sharp – A, as he might have done previously, Ferneyhough now alters both constituents, such that the first viola interval of bar 38 becomes G quarter tone flat – Ab: this is a distortion of F# - A-natural, a contraction of the significant interval, that is then compounded by the viola's subsequent exploration of quarter tone intervallic space with *tremolos* and *glissandi*. In contrast to this, the second violin at bar 39 produces snap *pizzicato*, near-octave *glissandi*, as if to complement the intricacy of the viola part and re-open intervallic space.

**Tutti Intervention 1** (see page 8 of appended score: Appendix 1, b. 41)

The first *tutti* intervention arrives abruptly at bar 41. The material in every ensemble sub-group is altered: the wind texture becomes less of a flicker – marked *violente*, *fff* and there is suddenly a lyrical synchronicity between the five instruments; the brass dispenses with its fluttertongue timbre, issuing sparse, *ff* staccati instead; the percussion (including piano) is perhaps the least affected – the glockenspiel *crescendos* through a rhythmic ostinato from *pppp* (*violente* nonetheless) to *ff*; finally the strings revisit their previous solidity as a unit, albeit with a more animate, rhythmically united texture. The double stops return in each string quartet instrument, the dynamics in each part concur, effecting this time a steady *decrescendo* from *fff* to *mp*. The double bass solo, not unlike the glockenspiel, performs an ostinato which in its case takes the form of a rhythmicised *glissando* from D# - F#. The exact rhythmic synchronicity between the string quartet parts is utterly at odds with the quartet material before and after the intervention (bars 40 and 42): it is as if the stability of the *tutti* string material represents a concerted 'wiping

over' ('in the Baconian sense'[18]) of the string entry three material. Indeed, after the intervention, the latter continues to deplete, as it had been previously, but does so in four distinct directions. These include one parameter with quadruple stops and harmonics (violin one), another with *pizzicato glissandi* exploring the intervals of an octave and fifth (often with microtonal 'approximations') in particular (violin two), a third parameter comprises apparently sporadic intervallic gestures, where each particular interval is articulated in a different manner, perhaps *sul pont, al tall,* or *vibr. ord* and so on (viola). The fourth ('cello) parameter adopts the *tremolo* texture that was previously the province of the viola. Despite this individualism of the stringed instruments, the future possibility of partnerships is once again hinted at in bar 43, particularly between violin two and viola.

**Ex. v) String Quartet Material, b. 43**




[18] Ferneyhough 1995: 251

The texture in general at bar 42 is much reduced. Almost as though the *tutti* has the effect of a 'filter' upon the pitch material, only an F (oboe), E (bassoon) and the same in the piano 'survive' the intervention. These pitches are gradually taken up by the trumpet (*flz.* and trill) and clarinet (*flz.* and trill) whilst the bassoon and oboe break into a trill. The piano and glockenspiel both elaborate on their single notes before the former leads into the second intervention with a two-hand *tremolo* on E, and the latter on F.

**Tutti Intervention Two.** (see Appendix 1, b. 45)

The string material is so impoverished by bar 43 that by bar 44 it has ended temporarily. Thus intervention two at bar 45 has the curious effect of reviving the quartet for one short 2/8 measure only, before it becomes silent again. Within this measure, several of the significant intervals referred to previously are sounded: violin one articulates G# - B, violin two A – C#, A – F# and an approximation of C# - E. These can also be found in the piano part in the same bar (see F# - C, F# - A). This particular intervention recalls the beginning of the piece. The piccolo and trombone once again explore their registral extremes, the wind texture in general is 'flickering', and is now reinforced by the brass, there is some fluttertongue articulation as in the piece's opening measures and each note is accented as well as *staccato* in the piccolo (as in bar four), and *staccato* in the trombone (as in bar four). Both are specifically marked *secco poss.* as they were to begin with, and the trombone's dynamic range decreases from *fff* to *p* echoing bar four, where the *decrescendo* began *fff* and ended *pp*. Furthermore, consider the pitches that were noted at the very beginning: amongst them were G, E, C# in particular. In the second

intervention, the brass (represented only by the trombone at the start of the piece) re-articulates several of these opening pitches; C# (horn), E (trumpet), Bb (trombone), G (tenor tuba). The trumpet especially employs these notes for the entire bar: E, A, Eb, Bb, and G all recall the piano's opening pitches.

The piano however, unlike the extremes previously articulated, forms a five-pitch chord in the second intervention that spans a perfect fifth only (see last note, bar 45). The piano pitches that appear in the following bar, the chords both ranging an octave and perfect fourth on this occasion, are interesting for several reasons: both the right hand intervals are tritones (another significant interval that is fundamental to the whole piece; the interval F# - A is found in inversion (A – F#); the first significant interval noted earlier, F# - C, is also present. Once again, the wind and brass articulate only single pitches in the bar following the second intervention, and the significant intervals identified in the piano part are emphasised by the wind and brass (piccolo, oboe and trumpet). Intervention two performs an important local function, as well as general disruption to the texture: it brings back the piece's opening material, but with added instrumental resources, which seem to highlight the one fundamental difference – that the piano register is so constricted. It acts like a marker that measures the progress of the 'line of force' that Ferneyhough intends the piano part to be. The notion of imprisonment is tangible here: in abstract terms, the piano's range decreases, 'imprisoning' notes inside an ever smaller space; in physical terms, the performer's hands are entangled, imprisoning one another somewhat.

At bar 47 (incidentally, the first bar of the fourth metric cycle), the piano, still maintaining its multiple-pitch, narrow-range chords, also begins to pursue the grace note

gestures first observed at bar 43. The latter is an isolated incidence: bar 47 begins a whole new textural phase for the piano, and other instruments soon follow suit. Indeed, the role of the piano as 'pitch-provider' is restored at 47, although the effect is not the same as previous instantiations of this technique. Earlier, the piano played a central role, seemingly issuing pitches to launch other instrumental lines, effecting layer-upon-layer of dense material, and creating many new potential lines of force out of its own weighty presence, and forceful momentum (see bars 16 to 19 – wind, brass, glock and piano). Here at bar 47 instead, the piano's pitches *in relievo* are more a forethought in relation to material to come in the wind and brass. On the first occasion that the piano performed its role in relation to pitch distribution, the first string quartet entry soon followed. The same happens at bar 47: the piano, considerably less authoritatively, sounds the pitches that are then taken up in the wind and brass – the next measure bears witness to the fourth string entry. Two things are important to note here. Firstly, roles are reversed at bar 48: the wind and brass material is largely static, notated pitches change infrequently, there are very few rests, dynamics are consistent between parts and the instruments are reasonably close together in registral terms. Meanwhile, the string quartet is far from the homogeneous unit that it was at bar 19 (see discussion below), where the wind and brass materials were decidedly less self-consistent than they are at bar 48. Nevertheless the return – albeit oblique – of the piano to its former role, at a comparable juncture – *viz.* immediately prior to a string quartet entry – exemplifies the achievement of 'resemblance through non-resembling means' as discussed in detail in Part II.

**Towards the Diagram**

Intervention (two) 'converts' the pitches fed into it (see bars 43 and 44) into those that emerge (see bars 46 – 49): all of the latter are present in the piano part – in the grace-note gesture at bar 47, the same notes appear, with an additional seven part chord which details the new wind/brass pitches later in bar 47. I have already noted the 'wiping-over' of the texture that is effected by the intervention: it widens the registral range of the ensemble at both extremes, introducing the high flute and the double bass, as though to vertically stretch the string quartet and oboe/clarinet wind section. The flute then becomes an integral part of the texture from bar 46. This is the first appearance of the flute in this piece. The timbre of the wind sub-group is subtly altered, since the flute replaces the piccolo at its head. Thus intervention two acts something like the 'diagram' (the 'local whiplash'[19] to which I have previously referred): it has a solid, physical function in the piece – that is, to come as something of a shock in the unfolding context (wherein the string quartet is being eroded and the woodwind-force drastically reduced), and to this extent it resembles the bold physical action described by Francis Bacon, when making these wiping, smearing gestures himself – 'you suddenly see through this graph that the mouth could go right across the face'.[20] However, there is also an abstract aspect to the diagram. It facilitates the transformation of the figurative into the figural. Here at intervention two, the initially figurative element – the dramatic gesture of the piccolo/trombone and piano extremes that 'represents' a wide space with little in between, and then the 'suave and flowing material' that enters at bar nine, filling that space – is diagrammatically reinterpreted. Ferneyhough contrives to express, to render

---

[19] Deleuze, trans. Smith 2002: 110
[20] David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987) p. 56

sensate, the width between extremes, through technical means. Firstly the piccolo is withdrawn, the trombone is purposely submerged within a brass *fff marcato* texture and the piano becomes not only registrally constricted, but is also limited in terms of pitch (see its limited collection, bars 43 and 47). The previously truly 'empty middle' begins to be 'sketched-in': the latter term is chosen with good reason. The wind after bar 47 is static rhythm-wise, *piano* dynamically, and the ubiquitous trill precludes the possibility of fastening upon particular, stable, pitches. The piano, as I have noted, is occupied with grace note gestures *in relievo* and the string quartet entry four is still more ethereal than its predecessor: the introduction of harmonics, for example, adds to its almost ghostly presence. So, in short, Ferneyhough has removed all signs that, present at the beginning of the piece, would have, upon their return here, consolidated the dramatic - I suggest the *figurative* – force of the opening gesture. Furthermore, he has filled in the initial space between those registral extremes with sound so precarious that one is left aware, in retrospect, of the force (and indeed potential) that that original silence actually commanded.

Bars 46 – 49 constitute, I suggest, a properly *figural gesture*, typical of Ferneyhough: it refers back to the opening gestural complex of the piece (up to and including the first string quartet entry at bar 19), although this reference is not made straightforwardly, through any of its physical properties. In fact, its difference, its incommensurability with the opening on so many levels is what links the two junctures of the piece indisputably. Ferneyhough 'brings back' the piece's beginning, but does so that we might experience that beginning afresh, sensuously. Like Bacon's 'wide Sahara smile'[21] Ferneyhough's intervention two – a 2/8 measure, short, animate, incongruous: like something the

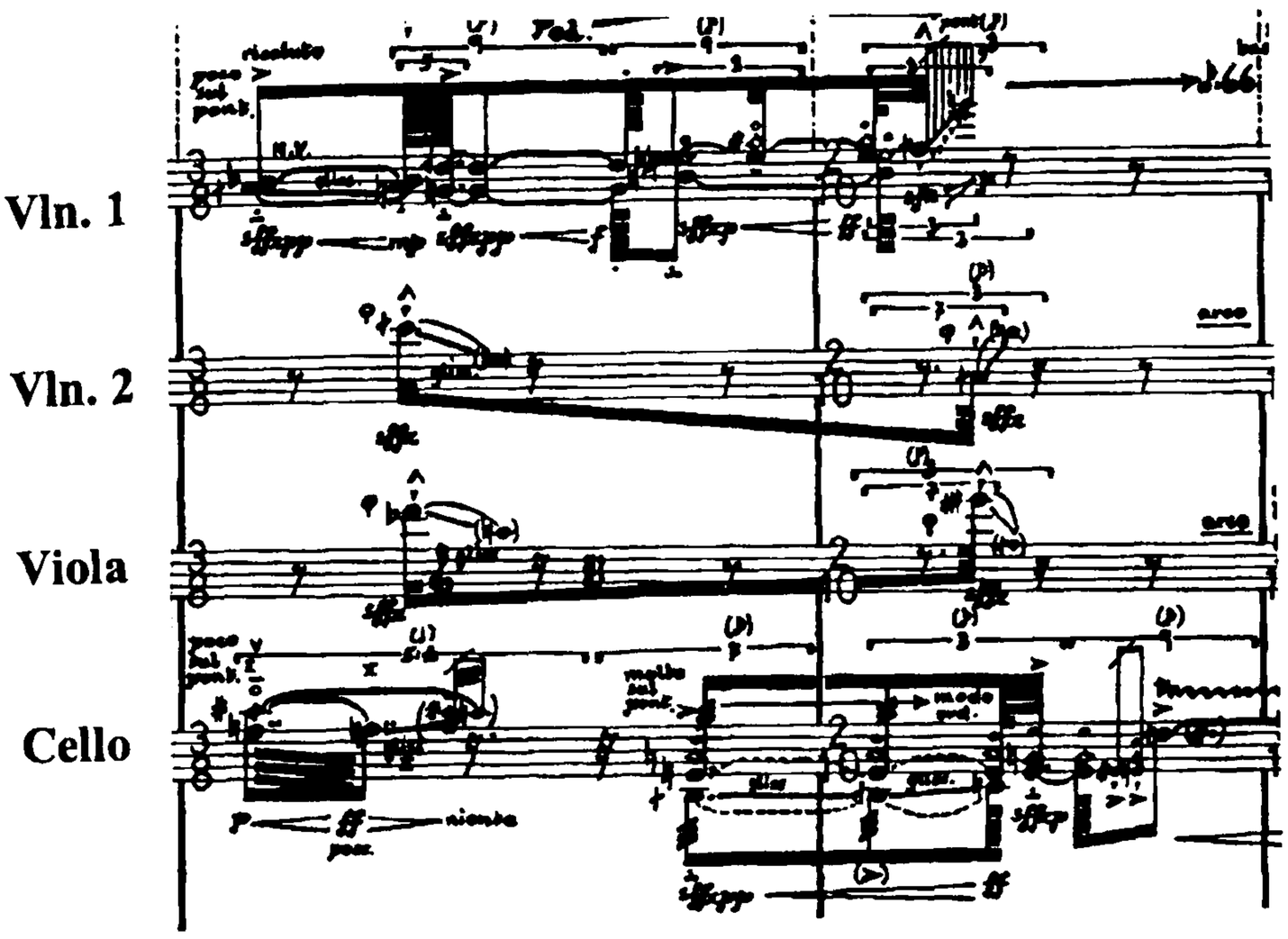
[21] *Ibid.*

ensemble stumbles over *accidentally*, and that fundamentally reshapes it – precipitates a new direction for the musical material.

| **Gesture Complex (bars 1-19)** | **Figural Complex (bars 43-49)** |
|---|---|
| **-Extreme range of piccolo, trombone and piano** | **-No piccolo (replaced by flute)**<br>**-Trombone submerged in intervention then absent afterwards** |
| **-Dramatic nature of the extreme ranges**<br>**-Filled in 'suave/flowing' material**<br>**Reveal the figurative intention** | **-Precarious nature of the material**<br>**-wind/brass trill (compare with wind/brass trill at bar 17)**<br>**-static wind/brass**<br>**-piano not at extremes, has grace notes, no *staccato* or *forte*** |
| **-First bar (16) of a metre cycle**<br>**-piano starts giving out pitches to wind and brass instruments** | **-First bar (47) of metre cycle**<br>**-piano gives out pitches to wind and brass** |
| **-String quartet entry one, first attack *sffzpp* and *poco sul pont.*** | **-String entry four, first attack *sffzpp* and *poco sul pont.*** |
| **-Trill material in wind and brass group including oboe** | **-Trill material in larger wind and brass group, and fluttertongue (from beginning of piece)** |
| **-Empty space (figurative)** | **-Makes us sensuously aware of space between extremes by the very sketchiness of the sound (strain to hear it)** |
| **-Parametric levels working together (e.g. piano and wind)** | **-Parametric levels develop independently** |
| **-Piano role as note-giver, at important juncture in piece (just before string entry one)** | **-Piano role as note-giver, at important juncture in piece (just before string entry four), string attack** |
| **-'Representation' as drama, 'suave', extremes of register etc. Gives the piece an *identity* at the start** | **-Figural gesture as sensation, subversion of extremes of register, space between is filled in (not 'suave' but precarious)**<br>**-Sensuous revisitation of earlier material** |

| | |
|---|---|
| | **-Intervention two acts as 'diagram'**<br>**-Role of flute - register stretched as if to make ready for a return to the beginning of the piece, but flute (replacing piccolo) subtly undercuts this**<br>**-Figural resemblance through non-resembling means** |

**Ex. w) String Entry Four b. 48-49**




String entry four realises the previously identified potential for sub-dividing the quartet unit into two duos – violin one and 'cello making one pair, violin two and viola the other.

After only two bars, it is interrupted by the third intervention, in which the *fluttertongue* articulation is ubiquitous. The piano momentarily reprises something of its previously commanding role: its texture comprises four-part counterpoint - accented and *marcato*, its 'outer voices' explore the extremes of range familiar from the opening of the piece. The

monophonic instruments' (wind and brass) material falls into two categories: *legato* descending gestures, and *legato* ascending gestures – the latter are much faster and begin in unison until the last three or four notes, wherein each instrument takes a slightly different path pitch-wise. The double bass is also part of this group. The string material in the intervention is of interest because of the staggered entries of ascending gestures, beginning with the 'cello, and ending with violin one (this recurs in later interventions). The fluttertongue in the wind is matched by bow *tremolos* in the strings after which there is a *tutti sfz.* chord, whose tight emphasis is slightly undermined by the necessarily arpeggiated nature of string triple stops and the broken chord in the piano.

The continuation of the fourth string entry at bar 52 is further eroded by the introduction of additional ornamental and articulational devices. It is these features – trills, *glissandi*, *tremolos* and so on – that, adopted by the string quartet instruments on an individual basis (or at this point, in duos), gradually efface the original *cold and metallic*, ornament free disposition of the string material. Recall the stability and self-consistency of the first string entry: as a unit the four instruments constituted one solid parameter – an outgrowth of the original, dramatic gestural complex. Subsequent string entries exchange this unitary consistency for as many as four individually pursued parametric layers – I have noted that entry three in particular (of those surveyed so far) constitutes these parameters in terms of the specific ornaments assigned to specific members of the quartet. Entry four goes so far as to counterpoint multiple ornaments *within* individual string parts. For example, from bar 52, violin one adopts a small echo of the piano's grace-note gestures, the trill, *vibrato molto*, harmonics and double-stop *glissandi*, whilst violin two (and viola) articulate *glissandi* with snap *pizzicati*. The 'cello is similarly busy,

employing *vibrato molto*, *tremolos*, trills, harmonics, double-stop *glissandi* and a *sul ponticello* timbre.

**Tutti Intervention Four** (see Appendix 1, b. 57)

The fourth *tutti* intervention consolidates the pattern already observed insofar as the 'conventional' role of each instrument – not only the strings – is subverted. Whereas ornaments erode or 'take over' the string material, here the *tutti* tends towards a *percussive* timbre. Consider the brass, for example, at bar 58 – the same note is rapidly repeated (horn, trumpet), and each note is both *marcato* and accented. The piano in the same bar plays *marcato*, rhythmic unison 'bangs' (to borrow Ferneyhough's own term from the sketches[22] referring to a similar texture in the brass, later in the piece (bar 103, for example)): it also revisits the extremes witnessed at the beginning of the piece. The strings reprise the staggered entry from the previous *tutti*, in reverse this time – from violin one down to the double bass: they also end their appearance in the intervention at bar 59 in stagger formation, violin one 'dropping out' of the texture first, followed by violin two and so on (the double bass rejoins the brass group after the *tutti*). Their texture recalls the first *tutti* intervention, with the double-stop, *fff* dynamic and accented repeated notes. This fourth intervention incorporates in the string material certain techniques such as the *glissando* seen in the string quartet material increasingly densely.

**Fifth String Entry**

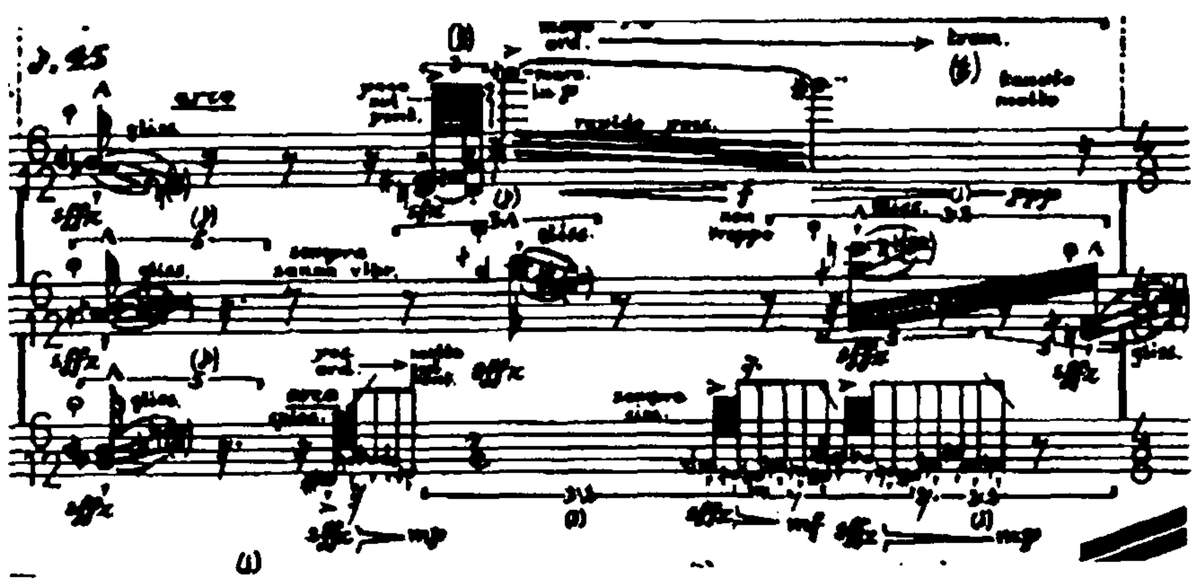
The percussive bent of the fourth *tutti* intervention, as well as emphasising the tendency of the material to that point in the piece, prepares the ground for the fifth string entry,

---

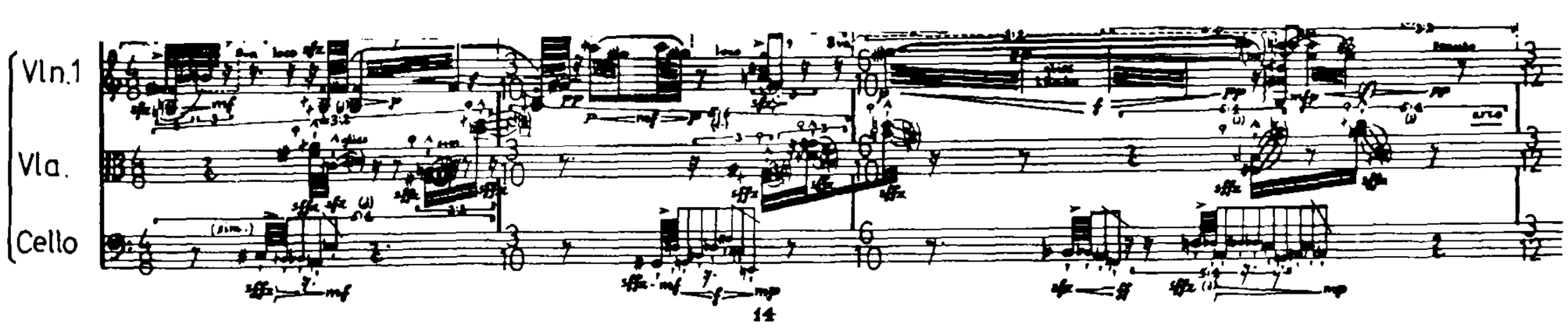
[22] Cited in Cordula Pätzold, 2002: 167

which, for the first time, reduces its forces from the quartet to a trio (violin two is absent). Apart from the first *glissando* gesture, in which all three instruments share, each carves out its own separate identity, once again on the basis of ornaments: violin one adopts harmonics, *tremolos* and the occasional quadruple stop; the viola persists with sporadic double-stop *glissandi*; finally the 'cello is occupied with grace note gestures, each effected like an elaboration or afterthought of the single note, echo-like. All three instruments alternate between the use of *arco* and *pizzicato* (including snap *pizz.*) adding to the percussive timbre.

**Ex.x) String Entry Five b. 62-63**




**String entry Five b. 64-65**



**Tutti Intervention Five** (see Apendix 1, b. 66-69)

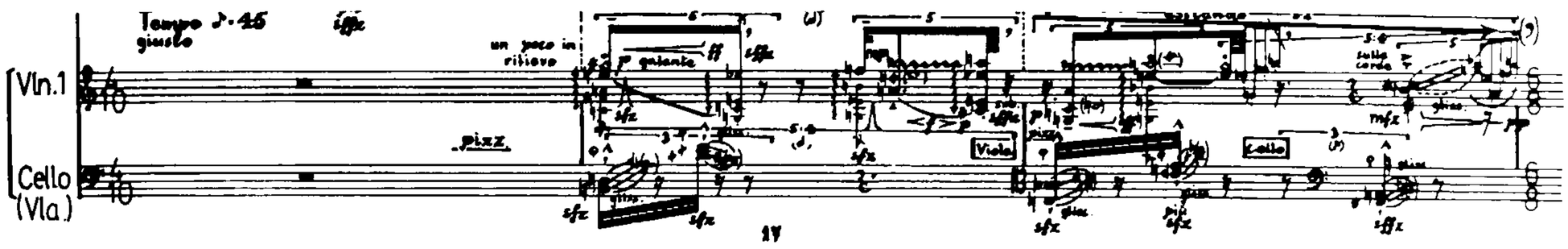
As this string entry ends, the fifth *tutti* intervention begins. For the first time, within the latter, the string quartet is split-up, the instruments joining different 'blocks' of material that together constitute the *tutti* ensemble. Group one (flute, bass clarinet and violin one) concentrates almost exclusively of ornaments and techniques of articulation; group two (oboe, horn and viola) explores a similar texture to the opening trio between piano, piccolo and trombone, though registral extremes do not apply in this instance – rather it is the accented, short notes and 'flickering' presence of the instruments that occasions the comparison. The third group (clarinet, violin two and 'cello) employs the trill and, alternately, *bene marcato* gestures that return repeatedly to the same pitches (one senses a quasi-recitative style, albeit speedily executed), and a lyrical style, represented by the upwardly flourishing gestures at bars 67-68, staggered in their entries, *legato* and neatly phrased. The penultimate group (reading downwards) comprises the trumpet, blocks and piano, beginning with material similar to the second group, but progressing through a sparse fluttertongue/tremolo measure (with the piano range constricted) before a rhythmic unison *secco marcato* eruption, whose dynamic endpoint is *ffff*. Notably, the piano has returned to the extremes of its register (8va and 8va *bassa* instructions accompany the pitches themselves). The final group (bassoon, trombone, tenor tuba and double bass) somewhat mimics the first two string entries: a relatively static, unchanging texture comprising long sustained notes, dynamic consistency and few rests all support the comparison with the earliest disposition of the strings.

**String Entry Six**

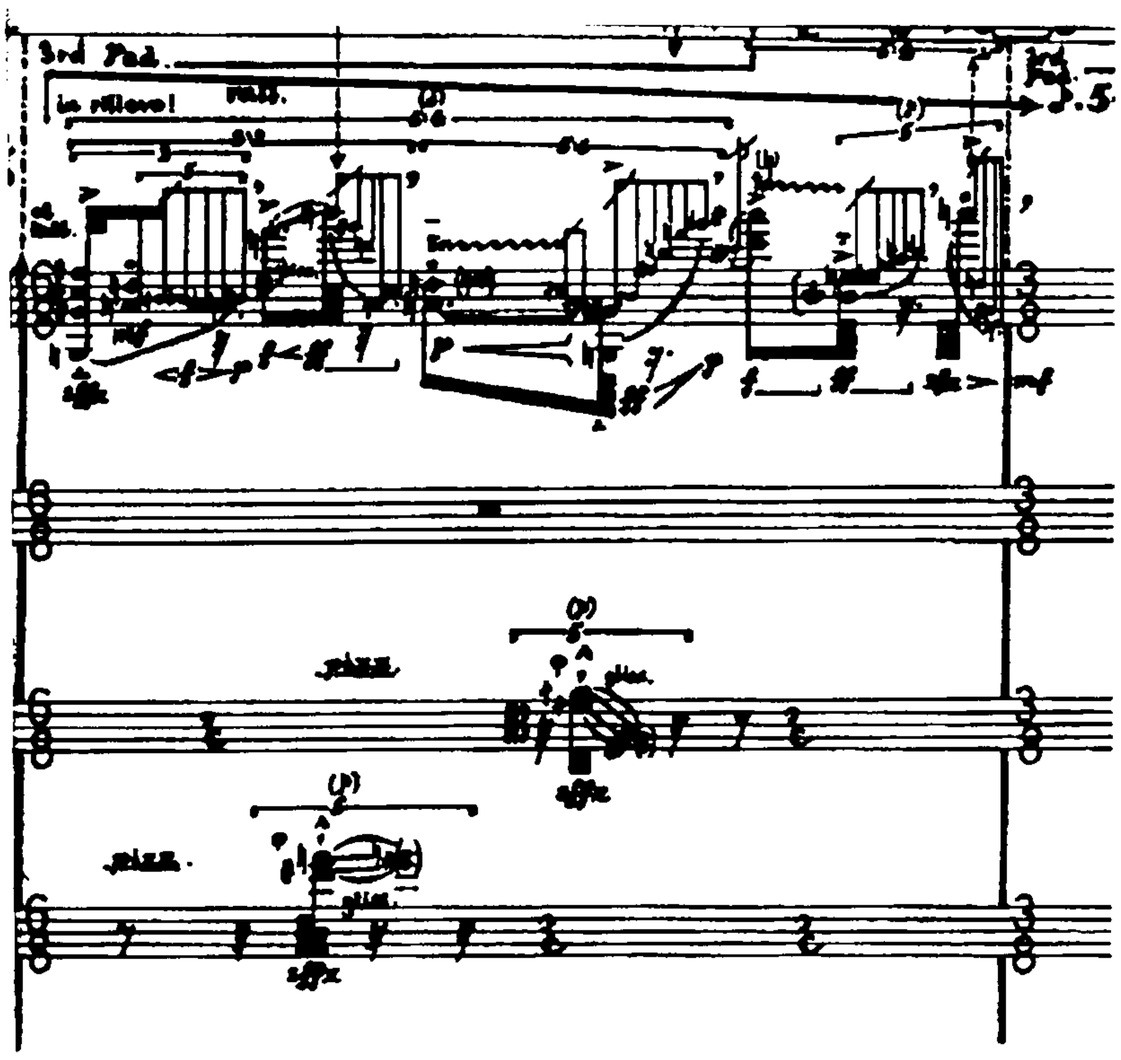
String entry six, a duo between violin one and 'cello/viola bears witness to the synthesis of ornamental/articualtional devices: for example, the grace note gesture is now combined with the arpeggiated quadruple stop and the use of harmonics. The trill and *glissandi* also feature in tandem with other techniques. The 'cello and viola alternately continue to explore double-stop *pizzicato glissandi*. Recall from the table reproduced above (**ex. k**) that by this stage of the piece, the string entries are getting shorter and further apart. This general architecture of the piece is borne out at a local level insofar as each successive string entry becomes progressively more 'ornamental' – arguably both in terms of the devices used by Ferneyhough to suffocate the basic, sturdy material (see entry one), and metaphorically speaking, in the sense that the string entries themselves become superfluous, just as an ornament like a trill can be superfluous - merely decorative - in relation to the note(s) it ornaments. Here the 'ornament' is both strong (as corrosive agent) and weak (as decorative agent). The same contrast between 'strength' and 'weakness' pertains between the previously noted flickering textures – perhaps these develop into the lyrical phrases present in several instruments – and the stronger percussive sounds that Ferneyhough cultivates in the *tutti* sections. The sixth *tutti* intervention (see Appendix 1, b. 77-79) falls into groups once again: strings, piano and brass initially account for the percussive sounds, whilst the wind alone is saturated with ornaments. However, roles change from bar to bar: the strings and brass lapse into *glissandi* and fluttertongue textures respectively, whilst the lyrical material from the previous *tutti* is restored to the clarinet and with it, the rest of the wind family. The remainder of the sixth string entry – bar 80 – is greatly eroded: a solitary snap *pizzicato*

*glissando* features in each of the viola and the 'cello parts, against a busy, but *in relievo*, first violin.

**Ex. y) String Entry Six, b. 75-76**




**String Entry Six, b. 80**




**Tutti Intervention Seven** (see Appendix 1, b. 87-88)

*Tutti* intervention seven is curious for the fact that it is not, in reality, a *tutti* at all: at bar 87, the flute, English horn, bassoon, trumpet, drums and piano are all silent, whilst the

strings – so reduced a force outside the *tuttis* – dominate with ascending, muted lyrical gestures that are underscored by the persistently percussive tendency of the double bass. The other prominent instrument is the horn which is also used percussively: in fact, Ferneyhough initiates a textural counterpoint, with the staggered entries, following the horn and double bass, of the drum blocks (bar 89), the bass clarinet (bar 91) and the clarinet (bar 93). All are deployed percussively, often using extended techniques such as finger 'slaps' in the bass clarinet. At bar 93 – incidentally the 'golden section' of the piece, at the beginning of the seventh metrical cycle – the piccolo makes its return to the texture with characteristically different, 'dandyish: exaggeratedly elegant, *grazioso*' material.

**Tutti Intervention Eight** (see Appendix 1, b. 97)

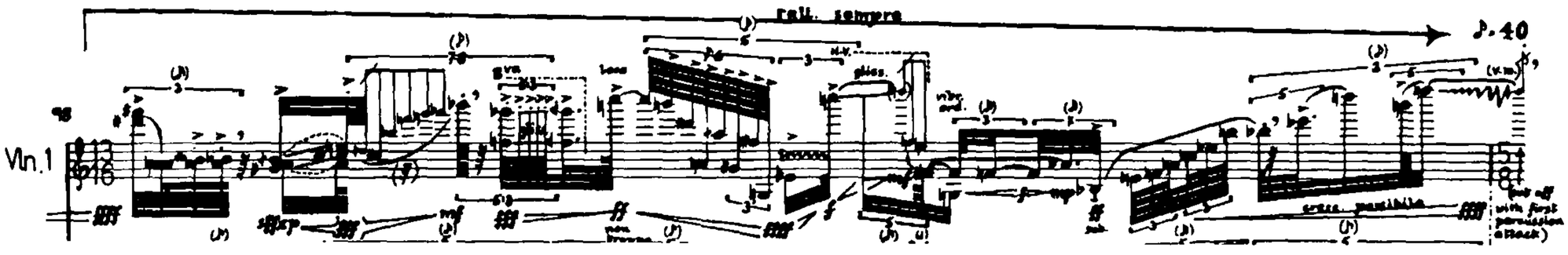
Bar 97 is the final *tutti* intervention. Insofar as I have been tracing the effect of such interventions upon the string quartet material specifically, this bar 'intervenes' in no such quartet entry (or even a reduced-force string ensemble such as a duo): nevertheless, its triple *forte* dynamic in the strings (with a *crescendo* to *fffff* in violin one) asserts rapid notes, '*violente pizzicato*' and *marcato*, without vibrato, in a now typically percussive manner, although staggered entries undermine the effectiveness of the previous use of rhythmic unisons to fortify the percussive character of the material.

**String Entry Seven b. 98**

The final string entry – a violin one solo – follows immediately. It is also, as is to be anticipated by now, typically replete with ornaments: Ferneyhough calls upon the

instrumentalist to produce a virtuosic display of extended technique, which lasts for one long bar. The solo string entry is supported by the use of extended techniques in the piccolo, oboe and clarinet, before all four instruments decay to nothing, ahead of an *explosivo* drum passage and the return of the piano to the registral extremities.

**Ex. z) Seventh String Entry, b. 98**




## Comments on the final intervention and string entry

The string components of the last two interventions (eight and seven) – a predominantly lyrical and a somewhat lacklustre, staggered percussive texture respectively – are less solid a presence than their predecessors, a decline in force that occurs perhaps in parallel with the reduction, at this stage, in the length of the interventions and the growing distance between them (**see ex. l**). In fact, the final string entry seems to erupt out of the 'intervention' at bar 97. Roles are arguably now reversed: the intervention proper, at bar 97 begins, in the piano, 'cello and viola pre-emptively at the end of bar 96, whilst the piccolo, oboe, clarinet, percussion and violins are late entrants to bar 97: essentially there is no *tutti* downbeat and its effectiveness is subverted. Violin one begins, at the end of bar 97 – still ostensibly part of the *tutti* – an *arco*, "*quasi-solo*", which develops into the final string entry solo. Neither the beginning nor the end of the so-called 'intervention' is

clearly defined, whilst the violin solo, emerging *ffff* intervenes *itself* upon the intervention material. The solo violin material is a composite of typical string entry ornaments, the occasional lyrical gesture and expansive *marcato* descending figures which recall the piano's grace-note material from earlier, and indeed foreshadow that to come at bar 100. The 'normal' (not grace-note) notation of these descents in the violin solo at bar 98, and their *ff* – *ffff* dynamic range represent the maturation and fortification of the otherwise sketch-like grace notes *in relievo* (typical of the piano part).

**Central Tutti**

The forces present in the piece continue to dissipate from this point: only brass, percussion and piano remain until the so-called 'central *tutti*' that begins at bar 107 and continues through to bar 124. This will not be considered here in special detail, except to note that the string component of this central *tutti* (since it is, fundamentally, the strings that interest me throughout this analysis) pursues a similar trajectory to the seven string entries remarked upon above: like them, it becomes progressively overrun with ornamental devices. Something of the piece in miniature is discoverable in these 18 bars – I suggest – although (roughly) *in reverse*. The double stop material with very few rests (none in some parts) is to be found at the end of the central *tutti*, and, reading *backwards* from that point, trills and *glissandi* are next, with additional *tremolos*. Apart from a lone example of a grace-note gesture towards the end of the passage, they are found in number, as are harmonics and snap *pizzicati*, much nearer the beginning of the central *tutti* (see bars 107 – 111, Appendix 1). Other notable features at this early juncture of the central *tutti* include the rapid repetition of the same pitch, and the differentiation between

each string part, whereby each instrument assumes a particular ornamental identity: violin one – grace-note gestures, lyrical material, rapidly repeated notes; violin two – harmonics, *glissandi*; viola – double-stop *glissandi*, grace-note gestures; 'cello – *pizzicato*, snap *pizzicato*, close microtonal double *glissandi* and *tremolo*. Again reading *backwards* from bar 124, the material begins solidly, double-stops saturate the texture and the (united) quartet's dynamics are self-consistent. Towards the middle of the central *tutti*, ornaments begin to prevail over the material (again, consistently): the identities of individual instruments subvert and erode the quartet as a unit. Nearer the beginning of the central *tutti*, the material is sparser, the differentiation between each instrument is more marked, and, in the 'cello in particular, the familiar solitary *glissandi* or trill gestures that signalled the utter breakdown of the quartet in the first section of the piece (before bar 106), resurface. (It is also worth noting the role of the double bass: it too reprises its role from the first part of the piece, insofar as it pre-empts the string quartet material's techniques of articulation and choice of ornament: however, once again in the central *tutti*, this (double bass) parameter operates *in reverse*, understood in relation to the first part of the piece.

**Ex. aa) First part of piece (bars 1-106)** **Central Tutti (bars 107-124)**



**Gradual increase in ornament density** **Gradual decrease in ornament density**

**N.B. Arrow *head* denotes greatest density of ornaments and thus the most texturally 'unstable' areas of the piece.**

The central *tutti*, therefore, acts as a truly central section, or pivot, since it looks back to earlier developments in the piece, but also looks forward to the remainder. In respect of the first of these two functions, the approximate retrogradation of the character of the first section string material in the central *tutti* effects a favourite device of Ferneyhough's – symmetry – on the larger structural scale, and, as to the second, forward-looking function that the *tutti* serves – this is a by-product of the symmetry just described. If the general erosion of the string material in the first section of the piece (by means of increasing use of ornaments) is *reversed* at bar 107, then it follows that, in the central *tutti*, the string material grows gradually stronger and more stable. As it does so, it prepares for the final section of the piece (bar 125 onwards) wherein the string material tends towards a final *scuro e secco*, *pizzicato*, conspicuously percussive and strong united, almost machine-like, timbre (see bars 139 – 146).

**Ex. bb) Section 1 (1-106)** **Central Tutti (bars 107-124)** **Section 2 (125-147)**



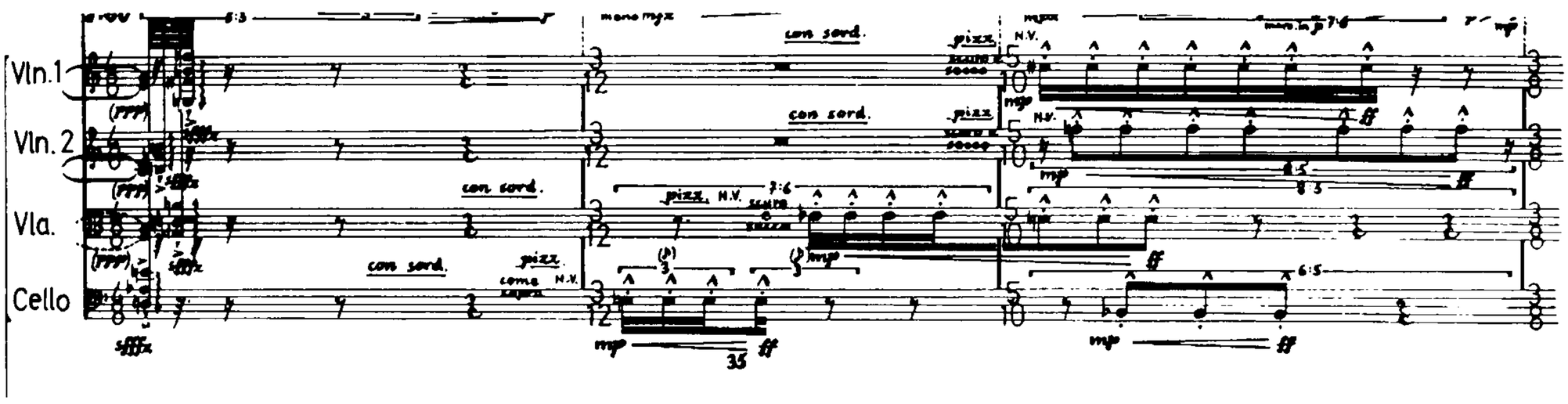
**Gradual increase in ornament density** **Gradual Decrease in ornament density**

**N.B. Once again, the arrow *head* denotes the greatest density of ornaments and thus the most texturally 'unstable' areas of the piece.**

It is now (in the second, final, section of the piece) the woodwind that becomes depleted through the corrosive proliferation of ornaments, the brass that adopts a lyrical *legatissimo* character and the strings that regain – that *resemble* – their opening 'cold and metallic' timbre through the 'non-resembling means' of a metallic, percussive timbre and a cold, rhythmically consistent '*scuro* [dark] *e secco* [dry]' articulation (just as the opening string quartet entry is rhythmically consistent in terms of long, 'thin' sustained

notes). Indeed, Ferneyhough adds the following as a kind of 'footnote' to the strings' original rubric 'cold and metallic': 'sudden sharp attacks, then immediate withdrawal to thin, echo-like sonority',[23] foreshadowing the eventual percussive, *secco* attack that the string quartet comes to embody in the final stages of the piece.

**Ex. cc) 'Scuro e secco' string material, bars 142-143** (compare with **ex. m** above)




Here, then, is yet another 'symmetry' between the first string quartet entry and the last sounds that the string quartet makes: 'cold and metallic' becomes the figurally reinterpreted 'dark and dry', through the development, erosion, revival and force of the timbre, articulation and ornament parameters throughout the piece. This is an example of Ferneyhough's ability to effect the figural on a long-term basis: the gestural energy from the opening material, up to and including the first string entry (i.e. bars 1-19) can be said to sustain the entire, substantial, piece. Other 'symmetries' consolidate this position: the very first significant interval in the string material, C - F# (violin two, bar 19), with the C-natural in a specific register – an octave above middle C – that features in all four symmetrical chords, reappears in the quartet at bar 145, the C in the same register as before. The first string quartet material begins in bar 19: the quartet makes its exit 19 bars

---

[23] See Ex. m) above

from the end of the piece. Again, a certain structural symmetry is effected by the composer.

I have noted, at the beginning of this discussion, another occurrence of retrogradation, of the 11 metrical cycles (15 bars each): the first seven unfold in parallel with the original (cycle one); however, cycles eight to eleven unfold in reverse in relation to the first. This metrical 'plan' is significant in two fundamental ways to the formal design of the piece: the beginning of the eighth metrical cycle coincides exactly with the beginning of the central *tutti*, which, as has recently been discovered, effects a retrogradation of its own *viz*. the ornaments and articulations from the first 106 bars (in the strings at least); secondly, in terms of *proportion*, the 'retrograded material' occupies the distance of only four metrical cycles, in contradistinction to the remaining seven that constitute the lengthier 'first section'. This 7:4 ratio of original:retrograde material indicates that the latter section presents elements of the earlier material more rapidly, or rather, in a contracted manner. Thus, the resemblance of the retrograde material to the original material is effected through the 'non-resemblance' of its 'expanded' original form and the 'contracted' retrograded form.

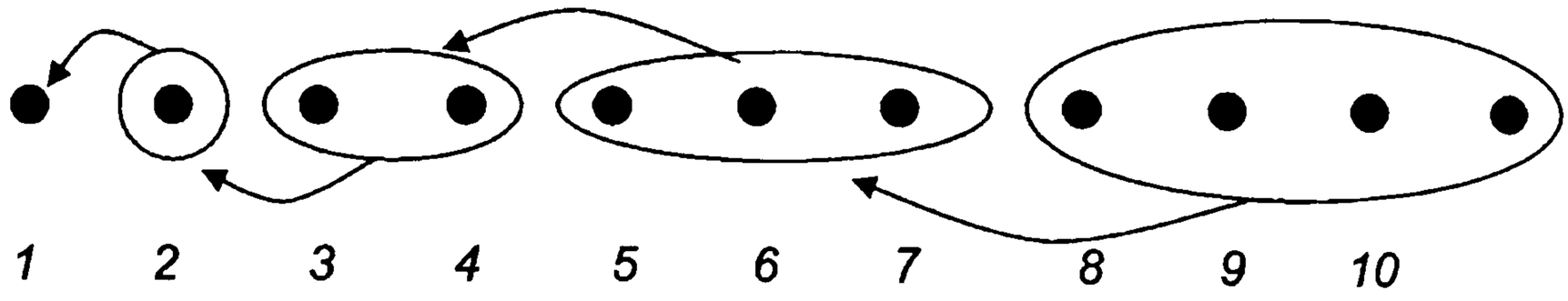
**Spiral form**

Interestingly, Ferneyhough refers in his sketches, to a 'spiral form' wherein 'a certain number of units refer back to a particular "world" earlier in the piece. E.g. 2 refers to 1, 3+4 to 2, 5+6+7 to 3 etc'.[24]

---

[24] Cited in Pätzold 2002: 167

**Ex. dd) Diagram (taken from Ferneyhough's sketches)[25]**

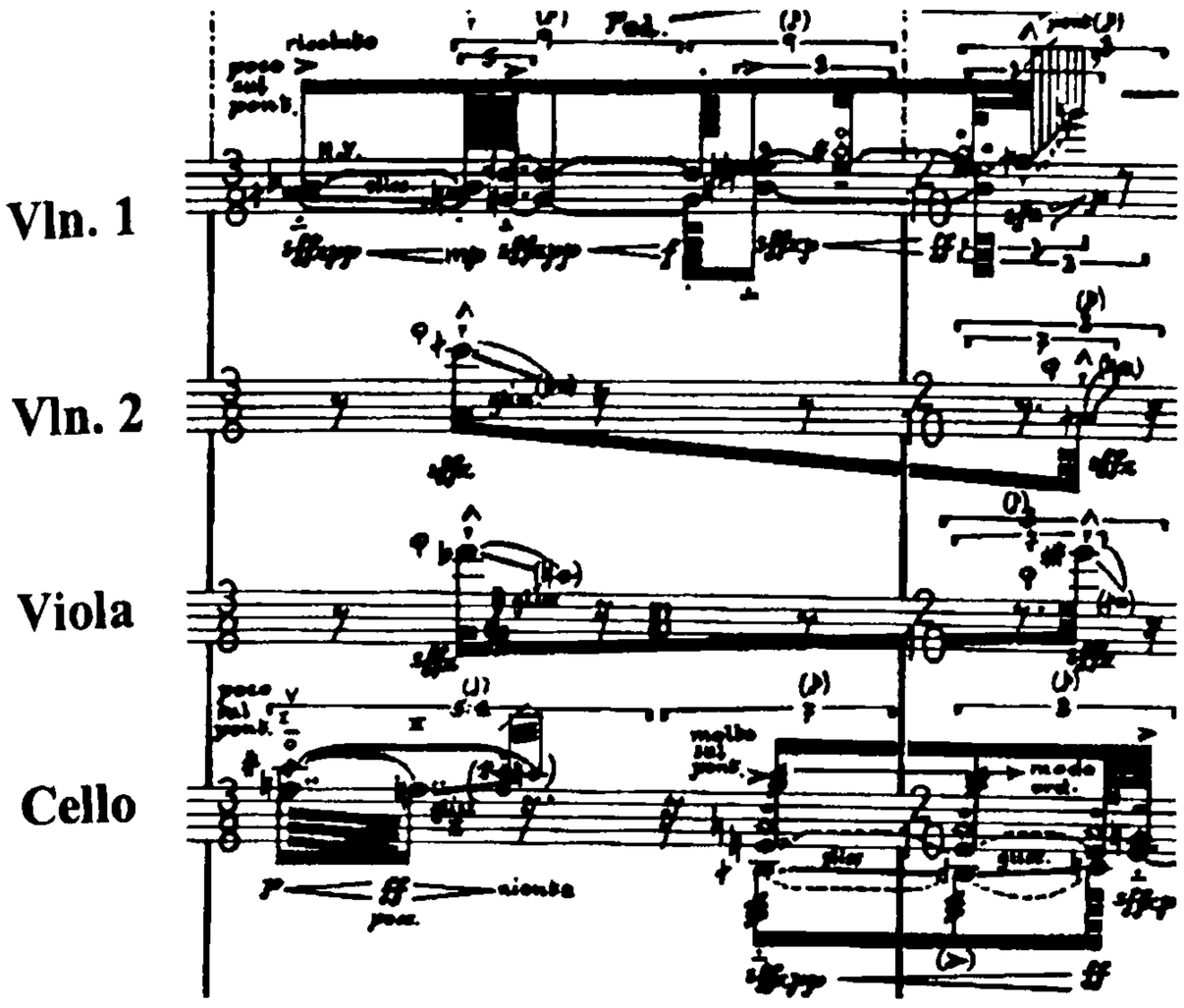



Each successive *tutti* intervention and each string entry seem to fulfil this: the later *tuttis*, far from being the consistent units that the first examples are, incorporate as many as three different 'style-changes' within each 'block' of instruments (the strings being the example most closely followed in this discussion), where each 'style' refers back to a 'particular world', as Ferneyhough suggests. The strings, adopting independent linearly elaborated identities on the basis of the ornaments they realise, refer back to previous 'worlds' that were perhaps, in their first manifestation, shared in by all four members of the string quartet – Ferneyhough effects a move from 'harmony' to 'counterpoint'.

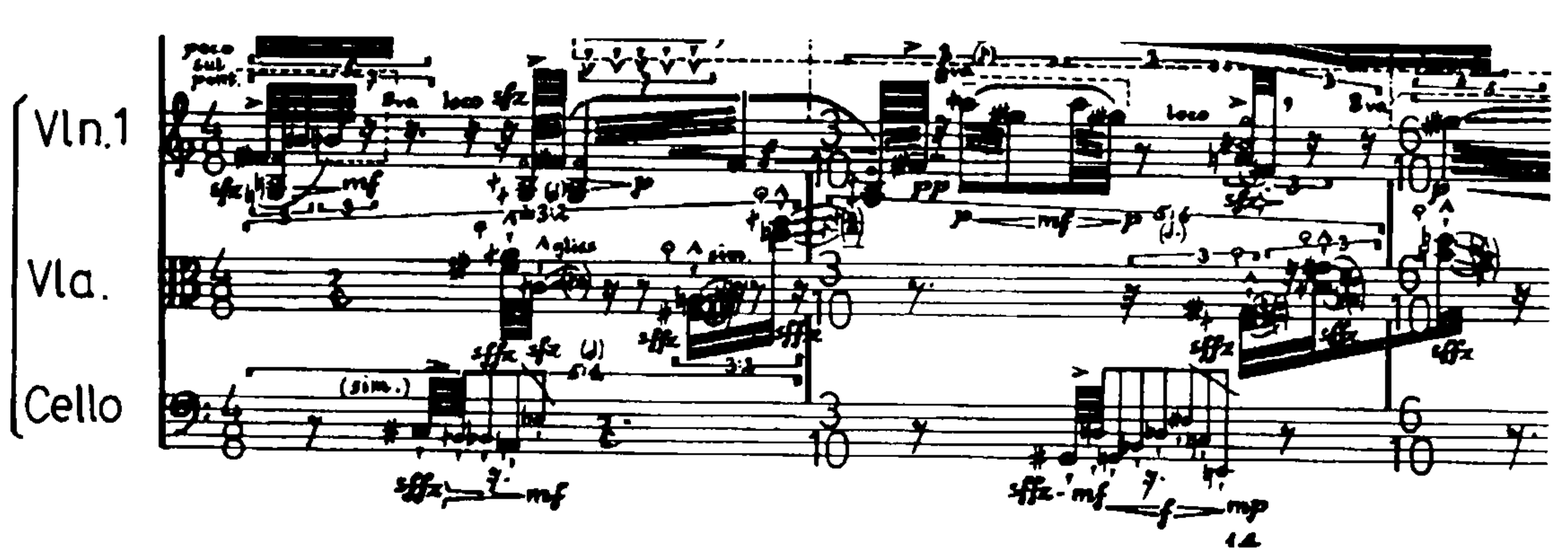
**Ex. ee) Glissandi in all four quartet instruments, bars 48-49**

---

[25] *Ibid.*




**Contrapuntal ornaments in string trio (violin one, viola, cello), bars 60-61**

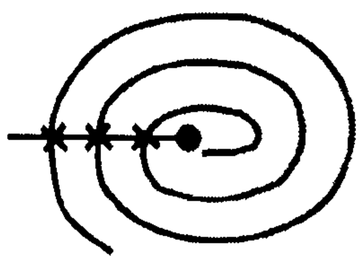



Once again the notion of return plays an important role in Ferneyhough's formal concerns. Indeed, the 'spiral-form' encapsulates several issues that have been central to this discussion; namely symmetry, resemblance/reference back to previous material and yet difference – the symmetry can be skewed (witness the retrogradation of ornament material in the strings, compacted into only four metrical cycles as opposed to seven). Resemblance need not necessarily be predicated on the revival of earlier-used means – in fact, it is through the contrivance of 'non-resembling means' that Ferneyhough effects the greatest degree of 'likeness' between the earlier 'cold and metallic' and the later 'dark

and dry' passages of material: a likeness of *character* as opposed to a figurative likeness. Recall Bacon's insistence that the personality and forces of flesh, of life, better convey the essence of a person than a painted representation that eradicates physicality in favour of a lifeless, and consequently distant, image.

As Pätzold points out[26], the course of the spiral at any one point is a 'return': if one traces a straight line from the centre or origin of the spiral towards its outermost fringe, the points where the line bisects the spiral will all be related. Any point outside another indicates a return, with the difference that it will be further from the spiral's point of origin, and thus an individual identity, even as its relation to the other points on the line is marked.

**Ex. ff) Spiral diagram (Ferneyhough's sketch)[27]**



To this extent, a local example of a particular straight line or 'path' taken from the origin, to the furthest periphery of the spiral might be the very first wind and brass entry at bar nine (discussed above), where the 'return' occurs at two bar intervals, but the repeated material becomes less and less faithful to the original two bars, as their distance from the spiral's centre increases. In the spiral form, each two bar 'repeat' is related to the original two bars (bars 9-10) and yet maintains an independent identity (as Pätzold's diagram demonstrates: each cross represents both a 'return' and an individual identity). The *curve*

---

[26] See Pätzold 2002: 167
[27] Cited in Pätzold 2002: 167

of the spiral marks a greater distance between returns, the further one travels from the centre: this image is analogous with Ferneyhough's rather broad definition of the term 'repetition' in the context of this piece, as demonstrated in the example given immediately above – one might say that bars 17-18 are far more distantly related to bars 9-10, than are the closely related bars 11-12.

However, this still doesn't capture everything that is special about the spiral in this context: what particular feature does it have that really inspires comparison with Bacon's ideas and practice? If one again traces the *curve* of the spiral from the central point of origin to the first 'return' marked on the straight line, or, say, from the third 'return' to the 'fourth', the course that the spiral initially takes is directed *away* from its destination – in the opposite direction, in fact – before the curve is *brought back* around to complete its circuit. I suggest that like Bacon, Ferneyhough combines the difference of each 'return' of material and the concomitant decay with each reappearance – greater decay precipitating greater sensuousness of material – with the necessary 'distance of the Sahara' that exists between each 'return', each resemblance, captured here in the curve of the spiral (the string quartet material is a case in point). Each 'return' marks the (re)appearance of the material more palpably: recall Bacon's principle that, the further one moves away from 'likeness', the more tangibly one is able to bring it back through sensuous paint. The further each 'return' is situated from the centre of the spiral, the greater the distance of the curve before the next 'return' is reached. Perhaps the most prominent example in Ferneyhough's piece of a move away from figurative 'likeness', only to bring figural likeness to sensuous 'appearance', is the departure, in the string quartet material from the initial 'cold and metallic', solid timbre, towards an increasingly

eroded, fragmented patchwork of ornaments which, by eschewing the original string texture, brings it back all the more convincingly, forcing the strings to adopt a percussive (metallic) timbre, and a non vibrato tone, devoid of warmth. By the end of the piece, the strings come to embody the metallic quality that the first string entry 'represents' figuratively, but not before a detour through some animate, at times almost cartoonish – (certainly *not* 'cold and metallic') – textures. Thus arriving at a likeness, for Ferneyhough as for Bacon, does not involve the conscious deployment of the artist's materials to achieve the desired end; rather the desired likeness – in the form of a sensation – becomes the catalyst for plasticity in their work: an at times brutal plasticity that opens up the figurative domain to the figural, a domain in-itself in which the traditional parameters by which one achieves figurative 'likeness' are radically rethought. Where, for example, previous figurative painters have sought to render the tone of the skin accurately, Bacon calls upon the plasticity of his material – the forces, the tensions and the pulsations that it embodies – to render the stark blue-red of meat: the colour blue here is analogous to the percussive sounds exploited by Ferneyhough in the string quartet material of Carceri I. Conventionally one neither expects meat to be blue, nor the string quartet to become percussion instruments (note that the quartet does not *represent* the percussion – Ferneyhough decomposes its 'traditional' qualities such as resonance and lyricism into metallic attacks and hard, object-like ornaments): the brutal timbre of both brings the bloody and the metallic respectively, to sensation, as figures.

The spiral can be seen to act like a diagram or graph insofar as Ferneyhough's original concern for the repetition of material – I suggest a 'figurative' concern, involving the re-presentation of material – is absorbed into the spiral principle: the equivalent (as I

have suggested immediately above) of Bacon's 'wide Sahara smile'. The diagram is the point of departure for the figural: the project of repetition is raised to the pursuit of resemblance through non-resembling means. In Ferneyhough's spiral form one encounters geometric constructions, the establishment of space (as 'distance') and the presence of forces – 'in art, in painting as in music, it is not a question of inventing or reproducing forms, but of harnessing forces'[28]. Although I have referred to the 'spiral-*form*', Ferneyhough certainly invents no forms: in many respects his approach is conservative to say the least. In the Introduction, I made an analogy between Ferneyhough's formal conceits and those of sonata form – not, it must be added, in terms of any direct, diatonic principles – but rather in terms of the formal 'arc' that is perceptible in both. Certainly, such an 'arc' in a sonata form derives from the diatonic structure, and especially the tension between the tonic and dominant keys. The idea that the development is (tonally) unstable, as opposed to the exposition and recapitulation can be abstracted from this diatonic environment, and appreciated in the post-diatonic context of Ferneyhough's own music. Furthermore, since there have been other significant musical styles and 'traditions' since, one must expect to discover not only the traces of nineteenth-century formal principles in Ferneyhough's music, but also such techniques as serialism: hence, his music must be considered to be 'post serial' as well. *Carceri I* proposes an interesting *rapprochement* between these inherited materials. One might identify, for example, an 'introduction' in the registral extremes at the beginning of the piece; an 'exposition' of the 'themes' of (broadly-conceived) repetition and ornamentation, and a second 'subject area' based on the tensions between *tutti* interventions and string quartet entries (themselves employing ornaments); a relatively

---

[28] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 56

unstable 'development' inscribed in the saturation of much of the central *tutti* with dense ornamentation and fragmentation of the *tutti* ensemble into separate sub-groups that militate against a proper *tutti*; a 'recapitulation' in which the decay of the string material tends no longer towards obliteration, but renewed strength and stability (e.g. rhythmically), and in which the original ideas of ornamentation and repetition are reinscribed in the more 'stable' home 'key'. There follows a 19 bar 'coda', which refers to the opening 19 bars (also without string quartet), which will be discussed below.

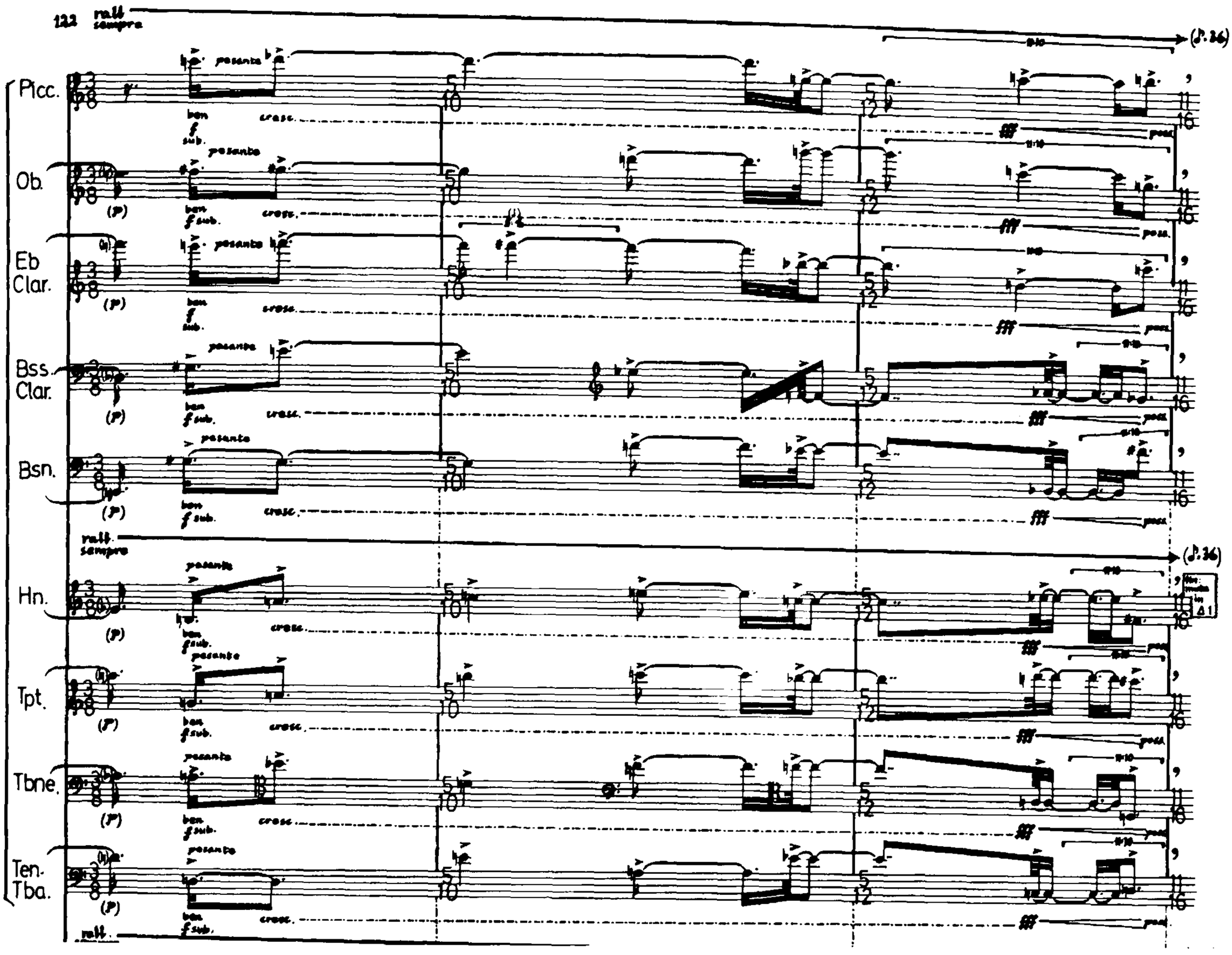
It is possible to identify the beginning of the eighth metrical cycle (bar 107, beginning of central *tutti*) as the start of the 'development'. This is the point at which ornamentation proliferates most in the piece, and, in retrograding the ornament material from the 'exposition' (bars 1-106), Ferneyhough fulfils the brief of a development: to retrace, and build upon exposition thematic material. Indeed, his 'development' raises the concern with ornamentation from individual sub-groups of instruments (as in the exposition) to the entire *tutti* ensemble, whilst nevertheless, as mentioned above, fragmenting the ensemble (thus recalling the earlier stages of the piece). However, as the 'development' continues, Ferneyhough engineers many of the instruments into a more united, stronger texture – more obviously a '*tutti*' (see **ex. gg**). Note the interesting return to the strings' opening texture (bar 19, from the 'exposition') here: this is developed by Ferneyhough into the woodwind and brass – the true 'metallic' instruments in the orchestra. The start of the 'recapitulation' falls in the 125$^{th}$ bar, and the analogy can be made with a sonata form recap on account of the heavily ornamented string material: this is what dominated the 'exposition'. However, rather than tend, as it did in the latter, from stability towards instability (the arc from 'tonic' to 'dominant'), the ornamented material

now tends towards rhythmic, timbral and textural stability (b. 142). The coda (147-end) is curious for the fact that it recalls, obliquely, the opening extremes of register: not by repeating them, but precisely by subverting them; Ferneyhough replaces the piccolo with the flute, and couples this with the viola, apparently to emphasise the *inability* of these instruments to articulate the registers of the opening instruments. One can thus perceive how the principles abstracted from sonata form and serialism (i.e. symmetry) can be overlaid in an attempt to appreciate the formal structure of this piece.

**Ex. hh)**

| **'exposition'** | **'development'** | **'recapitulation'** | **'coda'** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Bars: 1-106** | **107-124** | **125-141** | **142-165** |
| **7 metrical cycles** | **4 metrical cycles** | | |
| **'row' (ornaments)** | **'retrograded row' (retrograded ornaments)** | | |

**Ex. gg) Central Tutti (bars 122-124) Woodwind and Brass**




However, the spiral-diagram is not an invented form but a means of harnessing or capturing forces generated from the very beginning of the piece. Formally, Ferneyhough attempts nothing remarkably new: the form of *Carceri I* can be represented with straight lines – geometry. The spiral, on the other hand, introduces the plastic curve – the line in the letter – and is extracted from the material itself: it is a diagram, in Deleuze's sense.

Throughout the final stages of this analysis, I have attempted to bring together Ferneyhough's appropriation of the spiral and Bacon's project to create 'resemblance through non-resembling means'. The composer's practical application of the former in

his musical language is arguably the closest he comes to encapsulating and expressing, in his own terms, a conception at the heart of Bacon's ideas on painting: a principle, in fact, that underscores much of the logic of the figure.

# PART III – Time and the Artwork

## III.i From Space to Time

Karlheinz Stockhausen's 1956 essay 'How Time Passes'[1], and Adorno's 'On Some Relationships' written some nine years later, both address the issues of musical time and space, but with fundamental differences in their approach. The former, written in the same decade in which total serialism became, for many, a compositional preoccupation, begins remarkably similarly to Adorno's work: compare Stockhausen's opening statement, 'music consists of order-relationships in time'[2] with the aesthetician's proclamation regarding the 'self-evident, that music is a temporal art, that it unfolds in time'.[3] Nevertheless, the two diverge almost immediately, Stockhausen suggesting that 'this presupposes that one has a conception of such time'[4] and Adorno drawing the opposite conclusion: 'time is not self-evident for [music]' which 'has time as its problem'.[5] Stockhausen proceeds to discuss, in arcane detail, the proportional structure of musical durations, pitches and so on which, albeit in an attempt to refine what he considers the misguided serialist assumption that an analogue for the 12 chromatic pitches is discoverable in 12 'chromatic' durations,[6] arguably only bears out Adorno's observations concerning the tendency, in music, towards 'geometric' spatialization.

---

[1] Karlheinz Stockhausen, '…..How Time Passes…..', trans. Cornelius Cardew in *die Reihe* no. 3, 'Musical Craftsmanship' (Theodore Presser Co. in association with Universal Edition, 1959) pp. 10-40

[2] Stockhausen, trans. Cardew 1959: 10

[3] Theodor Adorno, 'On Some Relationships Between Music and Painting', trans. Susan H. Gillespie in *Musical Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (Spring 1995) p. 66

[4] Stockhausen, trans. Cardew 1959: 10

[5] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 66

[6] 'A scale of *twelve durations was then added*, which was intended to correspond to the chromatic scale of twelve pitches in [the octave]. This scale however, could neither be related to a system that already existed, nor could it be developed into one that would correspond. It was arrived at by the *multiplication of a smallest unit* from 1x demi-semi-quaver to 12 demi-semi-quavers/ one semi-quaver to 12 semi-quavers/one quaver to 12 quavers/ etc. What is such a scale?' See Stockhausen, trans. Cardew 1959: 12

Later, Stockhausen refers to the 'conditions imposed…on the representation of time (by instrumentalists)':[7] the difference between this and Adorno's 'problematisation' of time now becomes clear. It is precisely the representation of time that Adorno suggests must be displaced in favour of rendering time itself, through artistic material, as sensation. He argues that '[music] must create temporal relationships among its constituent parts…' but 'conversely, [music] itself must act upon time…must stem itself against the empty flood'.[8] His comments are redolent of Ferneyhough's own on the subject of sensually palpable time: the composer conceives of time as a force which in turn is met by the resistance of musical (material) objects that 'stem themselves', as Adorno argues, against such force. The resultant deformation sustained by a musical object on account of the force directed at it is, as discussed on numerous previous occasions, figurally sensate in nature: Ferneyhough writes that 'the more the internal integrity of a musical event suggests its autonomy, the less the capacity of the 'time arrow' to traverse it with impunity; it is 'bent' by the contact. By the same token…the impact of the time vector 'damages' the event-object, thus forcing it to reveal its own generative history…'.[9] This fundamental perception of Ferneyhough's (shared – indeed prepared – by Deleuze: 'for a sensation to exist, a force must be exerted on a body'[10]) has provided the basis for the thoroughgoing link that is proposed between his music and Bacon's painting (Part I), as well as the support for my discussion of the diagram and figural space (Part II). Once again, here in Part III the notions of figure, force and sensation will be central to my arguments concerning musical time and, once again, it is necessary to turn to Deleuze's

---

[7] Stockhausen, trans. Cardew 1959: 29
[8] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 66
[9] Brian Ferneyhough, 'The Tactility of Time' in *Collected Writings*, eds. James Boros and Richard Toop (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Press, 1995) p. 45

*Logique de la sensation* to discover the lynch-pin that sustains the discourse around Ferneyhough, Adorno, Bacon and of course, Deleuze himself.

Indeed, Deleuze's exploration of temporality in Bacon's work seems especially apt in this context: like Adorno he considers both music and painting and, like Ferneyhough, he foregrounds the issues of force and termporal tactility throughout his discussion. Take, for example, the similarity between this declaration of Deleuze's referring to Bacon's 'project' as a painter: 'paint the sensation, which is essentially rhythm…rhythm [read: 'time'] is…dependent on the Figure; it…flows through the body without organs, it is the vector of the sensation…',[11] and the earlier citation of Ferneyhough's which also characterises time as a vector that reveals sensation. Equally, Deleuze's ideas resonate with Adorno's on the subject of latent temporality in paintings. The latter's laconic pronouncement – 'no simultaneity without time'[12] – is echoed with somewhat greater prolixity in the *Logique*: 'the question thus concerns the possibility that there may exist relations between simultaneous Figures that are nonillustrative and nonnarrative (and not even logical), and which could be called, precisely; "matters of fact"…what is painted is the sensation',[13] and the sensation, as noted immediately above, 'is essentially rhythm'.

However, perhaps the most salient correspondence between Deleuze and Adorno on this issue of the relationship between music and painting is revealed on account of the former's comment that 'we are no longer concerned with the difference between music and painting. The important point is that the two sensations are coupled together like

---

[10] Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum Press, 2003) p. 56
[11] *Ibid.*, 72
[12] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 70

"wrestlers" and form a "combat of energies"...from which is extracted an ineffable essence, a resonance, an epiphany erected within the closed world [of the artistic work]'.[14] Here, Deleuze's imagined 'combat' between the sensations of space and time, of music and painting, recalls the convergence of the same in *écriture*, as characterised by Adorno. *Ecriture*, too, is energized: it is 'seismographic', it 'crackle[s] with electricity' and moreover 'both arts become schemata of a nonsubjective language'.[15] For Deleuze, the convergence of the two artforms in energetic combat yields an *ineffable* essence – something seismographic – too great to be expressed in words. With this in mind, the only quotation of Deleuze's ever to appear explicitly in Brian Ferneyhough's own *Collected Writings* can be revisited with renewed understanding: 'in art, and in painting as in music, it is not a matter of reproducing or inventing forms, but of capturing forces'.[16] This is no comparison of the different art-forms in order to discover a greater unity into which each is assimilated; rather, it describes the various manifestations of sensation. Painting and music become means of harnessing and gathering energies, of intensifying and distilling as concentrated sensations, such monumental forces as time itself, without forfeiting their own intrinsic qualities: this is a central tenet of Adorno's essay, as discussed in Part II.

---

[13] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 65-66
[14] *Ibid.*, 68. The phrases 'combat of energies' and 'wrestlers' are taken from Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu, La Prisonnière*, part 2, vol. 3 (Paris: Pléiade, 1954) p. 260. Translated as *In Search of Lost Time, The Captive*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, rev. D. J. Enright, vol. 5 (New York: Modern Library, 1993) pp. 346-347
[15] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 72
[16] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 56

## Dungeons of the *mémoire involontaire*

Insofar as *écriture* sets free art's mimetic impulse 'in a pure way'[17] (also described in Part II) it can be likened to the 'diagram', from which something emerges – a figure is liberated – through the wipe or smear, the wide Sahara smile. However, Deleuze's diagrammatic 'ineffable essence…erected within the closed world' is also a form of imprisonment, a force captured in the artwork. Deleuze draws on Marcel Proust who, he argues, 'knew very well how to imprison things and people: he did so…in order to capture their colours (Combray in a cup of tea, Albertine in a bedroom)'.[18] Deleuze is not the first to make an analogy between Bacon's invocation of the involuntary[19] (the 'accidental' or unconscious action) and Proust: John Russell[20] makes the same connection and, in turn, draws on Samuel Beckett's *Proust, and three dialogues with Georges Duthuit* (1965), arguing that 'involuntary memory is the prime factor in all this; and the material with which it can deal is 'stored' (Beckett again) 'in that ultimate and inaccessible *dungeon* of our being to which Habit does not possess the key….'[21]

Of course, Ferneyhough's *Carceri d'Invenzione* cycle takes its name from Piranesi's etchings, '*Dungeons* of Invention', and the piece upon which the discussion will focus in the present chapter – the last of the seven – is entitled *Mnemosyne* after 'the eponymous Greek goddess of memory'.[22] In light of this, it is worth pursuing, albeit briefly, the web of associations obtaining between Proust and Bacon, Bacon and Ferneyhough, and Deleuze and Ferneyhough in this matter of memory. Perhaps, along

---

[17] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 73
[18] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 68
[19] *Ibid.*, 67
[20] See John Russell, *Francis Bacon*, rev. ed. (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1979)
[21] Russell 1979: 30-31, citing Samuel Beckett, *Proust and three dialogues with Georges Duthuit* (London: Calder & Boyars, 1965)
[22] Ferneyhough, 'The Tactility of Time' in 1995: 42

with the title borrowed from Piranesi, the coming together of Ferneyhough's *Mnemosyne* and musical invention suggests a second, implicit title for his cycle: 'Dungeons of *Re*invention', where the latter notion aligns itself with Bacon's attempt to reinvent the figurative through the distorting resemblance of the figural. Ferneyhough effectively suggests this himself, referring not only to the composer's experience of reinvention, but also to the listener's:

> Whatever one actually experiences during a performance, the 'piece' that one subsequently retains in the memory is usually a complete recomposition – edited, filtered and re-ordered. That, in part, is why re-hearing a composition is extremely important: you have the chance to actively map real-time and memory-time experiences onto one another.[23]

Deleuze explains further that '[Proust] himself spoke of "truths written with the help of figures" (recall Bacon's attempt to render fact with the figure) – '[Proust] did not want an abstract literature that was too voluntary (philosophy), any more than he wanted a figurative, illustrative, or narrative literature that merely told a story. What he was striving for was a kind of Figure…stripped of every figurative function'.[24] Again the parallel with Bacon, who follows neither the figurative nor the abstract/expressionist 'path', but pursues the so-called 'third way' of the figure (see Part II) is striking. This 'third way' nevertheless requires elements of the abstract and figurative in order to sustain the incommensurability or difference endemic within the figural condition, though the latter preserves them in no recognizable or autonomous form. Similarly, according to Deleuze (after Proust), involuntary memory operates by fusing together two sensations, 'the present sensation and the past sensation, in order to make something

---

[23] Ferneyhough, 'Interview with James Boros' in 1995: 439

[24] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 67. See also Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu, Le temps retrouvé*, vol. 3 (Paris: Pléiade, 1954) p. 879. Translated as *In Search of Lost Time, Time Regained*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, rev. D. J. Enright, vol. 6 (New York: Modern Library, 1993) p. 274

appear that [is] irreducible to either of them'.[25] Earlier chapters have already referred to Bacon's desire to paint his model from a photograph (in his presence) in conjunction with a recent memory,[26] a recent sensation of their being which has little to do with their outward appearance (in the generic sense of the term). The result there, as with Ferneyhough's figurally charged musical objects, is an artistic material that is raised to sensation – to presence – in its deformity, and yet is indexical – a memory – of the precipitant force: there is something here, too, of the incommensurability effected by the incursion of the figural into the space of the artwork.

In this vein, Ferneyhough's *Mnemosyne* evokes both past and present sensations in its cycle-completing role: on the simplest level, the all-important (bass) flute reappears (contrast this with the extremely high piccolo in the cycle's opening piece, *Superscriptio*): the flute is present in all but one constituent of the cycle - namely, *Intermedio alla ciaccona* for solo violin. In fact, far from being thus disassociated with *Mnemosyne*, *Intermedio* is the most closely related to it of all the *Carceri* set, sharing as it does, 'identical rhythmic substructures' and an 'intervallic structure'[27] with its cousin, though ultimately its 'effect [is] very different'.[28] In contradistinction to the 'very withdrawn' expressive world of *Mnemosyne*, the violin piece is 'a deliberately 'overdrawn', ugly, direct, extrovert composition':[29] the extremity of the contrast can be attributed to the submersion of shared rhythmic structures under several layers of differently characterised material in each piece.

---

[25] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 67
[26] Russell 1979: 30
[27] Ferneyhough, 'Carceri d'Invenzione: in Conversation with Richard Toop' in 1995: 298
[28] Ferneyhough (TT) 1995: 46
[29] Ferneyhough (CdRT) 1995: 298

It is in the piece for bass flute that the eight chords on which the cycle is based[30] are revealed – brought to 'appearance' – explicitly for the first (and only) time: in both its pitch material and its internal temporal tactility – the 'concrete sensation of [time]'[31] – *Mnemosyne* engenders a presence quite unlike any other piece in the cycle; nevertheless, in its instrumentation, articulation and rhythmic foundations, the piece recalls elements from the cycle's past.

As it has been suggested in earlier chapters, it is sometimes difficult to see beyond procedural efficiency in Ferneyhough's music, and, although the relevance of memory to the fundamental material of the piece is indisputable, arguing for the involuntariness of that memory seems, at first, more of an abstruse proposition. However, the role of 'accident' in Ferneyhough's composition has already been discussed in the context of an exploration of the 'diagram' in Part II, wherein it was postulated that, in spite of the complex, abstract appearance (and often sound) of the musical score, intuition is irrefutably a conditioning element of that complexity. In the new context of the present chapter it is now possible to add a further hypothesis: in *Mnemosyne* and his essay/commentary upon it, the association between the diagram and the involuntary that has been mapped from Deleuze/Bacon onto Ferneyhough's music, can be convincingly extended to the specific realm of memory, on account of several noteworthy features in the bass flute solo and tape.

Ferneyhough refers the reader of 'The Tactility of Time' to 'the pendulum-like motion between various degrees of background flow criteria and the sudden emergence

---

[30] See the chapter of analysis in this thesis for the series of eight chords. *Superscriptio* is the one exception to this rule: it was composed before Ferneyhough decided to compose a cycle which would incorporate this piece amongst its number.
[31] Ferneyhough (TT) 1995: 42

of...relatively unpredicatable events'.[32] This, he suggests 'serves as the vehicle of 'temporal tactility'',[33] arguably both on the large- and local scales respectively: the technique produces cycle-wide memories (such as moments redolent of *Intermedio*, an unprepared burst of *glissandi*, or the rapid repeated notes which characterise the second section of *Superscriptio* and appear in *Mnemosyne* as well as most of the cycle's remaining pieces) and a piece-immanent sense of time suddenly 'tripping' ahead of itself, or perhaps dragging. Such unpredictable events do not only surprise the listener, but the composer too, it is implied. It is true that Ferneyhough does not attempt to conceal the intellectually determined or 'voluntary' aspects of the piece: the pitch structure is one such aspect, and the irregular metric values typical of all *Carceri* modules thoroughly suffuse the flute material; nonetheless, there is something of the involuntary about the composer's 'free reaction to the...compositionally predetermined substrata'.[34] The involuntary is manifest in the 'parameter' of density, through many intuitive phenomena including, for example, the distribution of ornamentation across the piece. Ferneyhough's comment that 'I think according to quite different parameters in [*Mnemosyne*]'[35] is revealing: in fact, in context, he intends to convey a sense of physicality. Focusing on various conditions of density in both the tape and solo allows him effectively to 'feel' his way through the material – this is the manner of his 'free reaction' to constraints in the flute piece. Essentially, the parameter of density is not defined according to quantifiable, discrete values (as a pitch parameter can be, in terms of twelve chromatic identities), but is a continuous, qualitative and fluid means of expression.

---

[32] *Ibid.*, 49
[33] *Ibid.*
[34] Ferneyhough (CdRT) 1995: 300
[35] *Ibid.*, 301

In my analysis of *Carceri d'Invenzione I*, I have noted the gradually increasing use of ornamentation, to the point of excess, and then a corresponding decrease in the second and final part of the piece (the latter itself recalls the structure of the first section, in reverse). In *Mnemosyne*, this density arc is repeated, again in terms of ornamentation. In fact, there are 11 subsections to this piece (determined according to tempo changes), the concentration of ornaments increasing from the first through to the fourth, where it peaks, and then diffusing through to the end of the tape **(see Fig. 18)**.

Recall the 'sectional' disposition of *Carceri I*: 11 metrical cycles, with the structural retrograde beginning four cyclic units from the end of the piece. *Mnemosyne* follows this (insofar as ornamentation is concerned – there is no structural retrograde) except for the reversal of the proportion of ornament increase to decrease.

**Fig. 18**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Carceri I** | **7 cycles**<br>**Ornamentation increases** | **4 cycles**<br>**Ornamentation decreases** |
| **Mnemosyne** | **4 'sections'**<br>**Ornamentation increases** | **7 'sections'**<br>**Ornamentation decreases** |

It could be argued that this is a deliberate act of 'recollection' on Ferneyhough's part, although the initial increase in ornament density in the case of *Mnemosyne* is a by-product of the staggered entrance of the eight bass flutes on the tape. Such a concentration of ornaments at section four prepares the ground for the entrance of all eight flutes for the first time at section five, when the intensity of ornamentation begins to deplete slightly. Ferneyhough thus 'balances' the first four sections' opacity of ornamention (shared between a maximum of six flutes) with the remaining seven

sections' compact, eight-layer intensity of bass flute timbre, wherein the degree of ornamentation is consistently lessened.

It will be suggested in the discussion below that the gradual build-up from one to eight flutes on the tape plays a fundamental role in rendering time tactile: the parallel accumulation of ornaments is intended to consolidate this increasing density of instrumentation, and Ferneyhough's attention is arguably, in this respect, directed only towards these piece-immanent concerns. In short, the sensuous presence of density values in *Mnemosyne*, though it has its own piece-specific relevance, recalls the past world of *Carceri I* incidentally. This recollection, too, is sensuous. The proportional similarity in respect of sectional distribution in the two pieces indicates the coupling together of these two sensations as 'wrestlers'. The initially 'cold and metallic', unbroken consistency of the string quartet in *Carceri I* (see analysis, Part IIa) is matched in the opening bass flute material of *Mnemosyne*, which similarly constitutes a sustained, slow moving texture. In the latter case, ornaments are superimposed upon this 'cathedral-under-the-sea type of sound' that is 'rather like the Debussy prelude',[36] whereas the initially cohesive quartet unit in the piece for chamber orchestra gradually breaks down into four independent trajectories. *Mnemosyne* thus marks out its individuality through the overlaying of these two textures in the tape – effectively a kind of tension between stasis (sustained texture) and movement (various ornament texture) – and through this 'non-resembling means', Ferneyhough creates a resemblance with *Carceri I*, in which the two textures occur successively, or rather one (stasis) metamorphoses – decays – into the other (movement). Crucially, his tactile interaction with the parameter of density in *Mnemosyne*, and the 'freedom' of his approach both suggest that its compositional development and

importantly, its expressive capacity, are guided by a sensuous engagement with material, to which the intellect, and with it the consciously manufactured elements of the piece, defer. Therefore, resonances with the cycle's other pieces such as *Carceri I* (and indeed with Debussy's prelude) are often the result of a physical reproposal of sensate material, rather than a figurative retracing of a previous event: the parallels with Bacon's painting and the tactile diagram in *Mnemosyne* specifically, are clear.

**Aura**

Further parallels are also explored by Ferneyhough: for example, he invokes Benjamin's concept of aura. Indeed, the recollection of the sensuous 'world' of *Carceri I* in the opening sections of *Mnemosyne* can be characterised thus, all the more so for the link made by Benjamin himself between aura and involuntary memory. He argues that '…we designate as aura the associations which, at home in the *mémoire involontaire*, tend to cluster around the object of a perception….'.[37] Compare this with Ferneyhough's proviso that 'it is important that the initial sounds of a piece will give…that sense of aura, that sense of magnetism, that sense of presence, indefinable in another way, which only a particular sort of aural sensation can achieve'.[38] Ferneyhough's recognition of the incommensurability between presence (sensation) and the perception of sound 'in another way' (i.e. intellectually) suggests implicitly his awareness of the importance of involuntary memory to the final piece of his cycle, particularly if one considers it in the context of Proust's summary, as drawn upon by Benjamin: 'the past is 'somewhere

---

[36] *Ibid.* The Debussy prelude to which Ferneyhough refers is *La Cathédrale engloutie*.
[37] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico, 1999). See 'On some motifs in Baudelaire' p. 182
[38] Ferneyhough (CdRT) 1995: 273

beyond the reach of the intellect, and unmistakably present in some material object (or in the sensation which such an object arouses in us)'.[39] The piece-specific generation of density in *Mnemosyne* – of sensate presence – acts, at the same time, as a kind of 'found object' whose earlier manifestations in the cycle, whose history, is reproposed in the new context of the bass flute piece.

Having considered density in its capacity as an aura-object of memory establishing interconnections amongst various components of the *Carceri* cycle, the remainder of this discussion will focus on the aforementioned piece-specific concern of temporal tactility. In this domain too, various degrees of density in the musical material perform an important function, the detail of which is considered, at length, in what follows.

**The lens of material**

In relation to the notion of 'dragging' time, Ferneyhough himself observes that 'as the piece progresses we are continually stumbling across further stages in this catastrophic obstacle race [between the force of the 'time arrow' and the integral musical event-object]. The energy accumulation and expenditure across and between these confrontational moments is perceived as a form of internalized metronome…this procedure…most clearly fuels the expressive world of *Mnemosyne*: the retardational and catastrophic timeline modifiers are employed equally to focus temporal awareness through the lens of material'.[40]

---

[39] Cited in Benjamin, trans. Zorn (I) 1999: 155
[40] Ferneyhough (TT) 1995: 45

As already pointed out in this discussion, Bacon's figures also focus an awareness of the force(s) acting upon them, through the 'lens' of material: it is in the triptychs, according to Deleuze, that the force of time is fastened upon by the figures. The notion of the figure as a 'lens' through which to view – to become sensually aware of – this force, is critical to the development of the remainder of this chapter, which will concentrate on Deleuze's identification of a phenomenon named the 'rhythm-witness' [*rythme-témoin*] that is brought to bear across the three panels of some of Bacon's most ambitious, most emphatic, works.

In the previous chapter, I have considered what might be called Ferneyhough's 'revolution in musical space': his serial inheritance is re-energized, figurally, and with the use of intuitive structures very like Bacon's 'graph' or 'diagram', he fuses the spontaneous, the unpredictable and the pre-planned into a productive and expressive dynamic. The same music that Ferneyhough accuses (at the beginning of 'Form-Figure-Style') of effectively taking the notion of 'musical space' for granted – that is, extreme serial music which reduces space to the monadic environment of the individual note, and the *Neue Romantik* disregard for gestural contextualisation – by denying its constituent parts a context, also negates the possibility of relations of tension obtaining between them. Instead, in Ferneyhough's own music, figurally charged parameters seek to escape the gesture, and the latter to recapture them, albeit incurring damage in the process. The continuous journey of the figural, from synthesis, to independence and 'back to' renewed synthesis (recall once again the principle of 'resemblance through non-resembling means' – Ferneyhough argues that the figure should be 'seen as a constructive and purposive

reformulation of the gesture'[41]) implies a temporal progression. It is, in short, only by pursuing concerns relating to musical space, that Ferneyhough creates an opportunity to similarly engage with the issue of temporality. The sheer physicality of the 'diagram' induces a spatial phenomenon: [the figure's] physicality is matched, I suggest, in the tactility of time, and specifically its sensate conveyance in musical language. Adorno shares Ferneyhough's concerns: he at no point suggests that music should not pursue and consolidate its spatial identity, exploited to such an extreme degree in the name of integral composition. Rather, he warns that

> if the tendency toward the spatialization of music defends itself, with good reason, against the dictum that insists on the invariant anthropological nature of the senses – as established by nature the eye is always an eye, the ear an ear – at the same time it must not refuse, in the rage for identity, to recognize its Other. Compositionally, this would seem to mean that music should not only organize itself from above [as some stylistically abstract or neo-romantic gestural devotees might advocate], from construction, but also from below, from the individual impulse in time. This is the intervention of the subject in music as a determination that belongs to it objectively.[42]

It is proposed, in what follows, to look into the issue of artistic space as a 'window' to that sensual awareness of musical time. In doing so the equally constitutive relationship of time to space will be discovered: as hinted above, they meet in their physicality. This can even be refined a stage further: figural artistic space and time meet in their bodiliness. Adorno's use of the turn of phrase 'impulse in time' is no coincidence – he refers to something as fundamental to the life of music as the pulse and flow of blood to human existence. As it is suggested that the pursuit of authentic musical space leads to an engagement with the issue of time, and its revival in Ferneyhough's music [the implication being that integral composition 'forgot' time – lost its pulse – disposing of it formulaically from above, serially], so in Bacon's painting, according to Deleuze, the

---

[41] *Ibid.*, 41
[42] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 69

awareness of time – of rhythm – refines spatial perception in the triptych. He argues further that the dual participation of space and time in evoking the body in artworks, results in a 'complex sensation':[43] this means more than that the sensation is complicated – too intricate or difficult to perceive – referring rather to an interconnected system or network of sensations disposed across and through a work. A triptych is thus an ideal forum for such a network, since the complex sensation can be distributed throughout three separate panels, each of which can contain more than one figure – multiple *loci* of sensation.

Indeed, Deleuze takes this principle one stage further: up to now, it has been argued that the figure in Bacon's work is a body, deformed, contorted and tangible, but a body nevertheless. By introducing multiple figures, and isolating them (not only with the familiar geometric constructions but with the frames between panels in addition), Bacon's triptychs offer the possibility of freeing up each individual body from what might be called the 'figural responsibility', and distilling it onto the relations *between* the various figures and panels. This is especially effective in a triptych where the figure(s) in each panel is/are the same individual. Adorno seems to recognize these two levels of temporal sensation in painting as well: that is, something very similar to Deleuze's characterization of the individual figure, which expresses sensation in its deformity and in the infrastructure of relationships between such figures. He argues that '[time] is incomparably more present in a picture where it has disappeared among the relationships on the surface or the expression of what has been painted'.[44] Arguably, the tactility of

---

[43] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 69
[44] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 67

time, rendered in this way in the artwork, presents the ultimate 'objective phenomenology of force'[45] as described by Ferneyhough.

Once the body-figure in any one panel is relieved of its status as a solo figure on account of its situation within the larger triptych, it becomes the 'lens' referred to above: through the body-figure, one gains 'access' to the complex sensation that flows through and around (Deleuze suggests 'circulates'[46]) the panels of the triptych. Rather than an individual body-figure revealing the action of a force upon it indexically, as an isolated memorial to that force, each can now only reveal the invisible in relation to the other body-figures across the entire triptych. Already two implications of Deleuze's term 'rhythm-witness' become clear. Concentrating, for the moment, on the word 'witness', one can detect Deleuze's practice of wordplay, and punning, at work. The French word *témoin* has a number of possible meanings, many of which become integral to Deleuze's concept of the 'rhythm-witness' as his argument develops. Most obviously perhaps, a witness *sees*: the viewer, or listener of the artwork who encounters the figures (in the triptych) as lenses through which to 'view' force, *sees* the invisible. Another implication refers to the figures as 'markers': no one figure enjoys a contract of exclusivity with a corresponding force – instead the force is 'parsed-out' between the body-figures, and each of the latter in turn comes to mark the status, progress or strength of the force, as it is at that point only. (Recall Ferneyhough's comments that the so-called 'time-arrow' is bent by the contact with a musical object – the object marks the degree of resistance it offers the force, whilst he implies that the force is deflected off one object onto another).

---

[45] Joshua Cody, 'In Conversation with Brian Ferneyhough' (website: http://www.sospeso.com/contents/articles/ferneyhough_p1.html) p. 8

[46] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 82

Deleuze summarizes, 'rhythm would cease to be attached to and dependent on a Figure: it is rhythm itself that would become the Figure, that would constitute the Figure'.[47]

Deleuze's insights in respect of Bacon's triptych paintings, and specifically this new information focused upon the distribution of body-figures as markers, 'witnessing' a 'super-force' (namely time) coursing through the work, can help clarify analogous situations in Ferneyhough's musical material, wherein he attempts to fulfil Adorno's directive: to make time self-evident for music. Firstly however, Deleuze's theorization of temporality must be explored in greater detail, before attempting to apply the same degree of critical inquiry to both Ferneyhough's composition and theory.

**History of the Triptych Form**

Deleuze recounts something of the history of the triptych form in painting, commenting that 'the triptych was traditionally a mobile painting or a piece of furniture…the wings of the triptych often included observers, priors, tutelaries',[48] asking then 'how does [Bacon] implement this total re-creation of the triptych?'[49] I suggest that this operation testifies, on the largest possible scale, to an example of Bacon's foremost principle of painting: to create resemblance through non-resembling means. The figurative element is the old, mobile altarpiece; the figur*al* refers to the 'deformation' – the bringing to 'appearance' – of former mobility, as the movement of time, as rhythm within the paintwork itself. One of the main differences between a Medieval or Renaissance religious triptych and Bacon's modern endeavours refers to the status of each panel in relation to the other two: in the case of the former, as is suggested by the presence of witnesses in the framing,

---

[47] *Ibid.*, 71
[48] *Ibid.*, 72

outer panels, the central panel is assigned a special role, perhaps representing a scene with the Virgin and child or the Annunciation, and so on. Most traditionally, the donors and their patron saint would appear in the lateral panels of the triptych, which could become a memorial to the donor(s), placed in the family chapel. In Bacon's case, Deleuze insists that 'there must be a relationship between the separated parts, but this relationship must be neither narrative nor logical. The triptych does not imply a progression, and it does not tell a story'.[50] Nevertheless, vestiges of the old figurative significance of the triptych survive even in Bacon's work: for example the paintings after the death of his lover, George Dyer, commemorate the man even as 'his' body is subject to gross figural distortion, in Bacon's typical manner. *Triptych*, May-June 1973 **(see Fig. 19)** depicts a man slumped over a sink and on a toilet in the outer panels, whilst 'the central panel shows a profile of Dyer in the shadow of death, trapped between the blackness of the background and a great black biomorphic-abstract silhouette, like the cast shadow of a large bird of prey or a bat',[51] suggesting that one cannot escape the implication of a narrative, recording the events surrounding Dyer's death. Furthermore, the figures in the outer panels face the central figure, a gesture that is suggestive of the traditional witness function performed by the lateral figures. Such figurative interpretations of Bacon's triptychs are, suggests Deleuze, perfectly valid: his theorisation of Bacon's work has never attempted to deny the figurative aspect altogether, for a denial would merely replace the figurative with the figural – precipitating a slip back into representation – in Lyotard's 'discursive' space. Rather, following the latter, Deleuze acknowledges the incommensurable co-presence of the figurative and the figural in Bacon's work, of

---

[49] *Ibid.*
[50] *Ibid.*, 69

representation and its other. Thus, whilst there is nothing inherently misguided about a figurative 'reading' of the kind of triptych described immediately above, it does not go far enough. As Deleuze observes, there is a more profound aspect to Bacon's work in triptych form,[52] beyond representation, that 'produces in us the impression of time: the limits of sensation are broken'.[53]

### III.ii The Profound Witness

The most remarkable departure from triptych tradition in Bacon's paintings involves the role and disposition of the witness(es). Whereas they are kneeling or standing (sometimes quite rigidly; for the purposes of the current argument special attention should be paid to their vertical poise) in the earliest (i.e. Medieval) triptychs, and occupy the outer panels, Bacon both raises their status from the figurative or representational - from contemplative, inactive observance - to the figural function of a 'constant, a measure or cadence in relation to which we can appraise a variation',[54] and situates this witness-function, or 'marker', in the central panel. Deleuze argues that 'the more profound witness [namely Bacon's figur*al* witness]…will not be one who observes or sees, but on the contrary, one whom is seen [by the figures in the outer panels]'.[55] Those figures of Bacon's which occupy the space of the traditional witnesses (or donors) still refer implicitly to that figurative convention, as described above.[56] (As Deleuze himself puts it:

---

[51] David Sylvester, *Looking Back at Francis Bacon* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000) p. 144
[52] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 71
[53] *Ibid.*, 73
[54] *Ibid.*, 71
[55] *Ibid.*, 75. Translation modified.
[56] See Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 'For the witness function can refer to [the outer] characters figuratively, since there is always a figuration that persists, even if only secondarily. Yet this same witness-function can suddenly refer [in Bacon] figurally to a completely different character [located in the central panel]. The witness in this second sense will not be the same as the witness in the first sense'. (pp. 74-75)

'there is always a figuration that persists, even if only secondarily'.[57]) He continues 'the more profound witness...who is not in a position to see...will be defined as a witness because of a completely different feature, namely, its horizontality, its almost constant level'.[58] (Further implications of the term *témoin* include, as an extension to its status as a marker, its 'constant' value). The 'blindness' of Bacon's witness in the central panel thoroughly undermines the traditional role of the witness as an observer. Nevertheless, a viewer of the triptych must consider it the figural 'lens' referred to above, and use it as a means to see – sensually – the force of time rendered visible in the work.

According to Deleuze, 'three basic rhythms' are distributed across Bacon's triptych.[59] These, he terms 'witness', 'active' and 'passive' rhythms, where the first is revealed through the figural rhythm-witness in the central panel. However, there can only be a witness – in the sense of a marker – if there are, as Deleuze suggests, variations to measure or appraise against that marker or constant value. He argues that 'the rhythmic-witness does not appear as such immediately; it comes into existence only when the function is passed on to it',[60] in the context of the work. Deleuze concludes that Bacon renders 'the force of changing time through the allotropic variation of bodies'.[61] In each panel of the *Three Studies of the Male Back*, 1970 **(see Fig. 20)**, the same figure – Dyer again – appears and the central figure, mirror and platform together act as rhythm-witness, manifesting in their uniform, all-pervasive blue colour, the necessary constant value (in other triptychs the central character is lying down, on a bed perhaps) to convey

---

[57] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 74-75.
[58] *Ibid.*, 75
[59] *Ibid.*, 72
[60] *Ibid.*, 76
[61] *Ibid.*, 63

the flattening force' of time[62]. Deleuze's commentary on this painting is limited to this observation. It is possible, however, to extend his reading of this triptych in order to develop a richer context in which to ground my own interpretation of the 'rhythm-witness' in painting, and to consolidate it with specifically musical insights.

In this triptych, the solid blue extends to the liquid-like, opaque shadow trailing from the figure's stool; its physicality seems at odds with a normally faint, intangible shadow; the latter is merely a trace, not a corporeal, fleshy extension as Bacon portrays it here. The mirror is similarly opaque, its role subverted: typically a viewing aid, it denotes in this case, the 'more profound witness…who is not in a position to see'. The use of blue even extends to the floor – subtly *malerisch* in texture. Colour, then, is a major determining factor in the identification of the other two rhythms in the triptych, as will be discovered below.

The rhythm-witness has one further defining feature, which is a direct consequence of its horizontality, or constant level: Deleuze notes that 'the horizontal defines a rhythm that is retrogradable in itself, thus without increase or decrease, without augmentation or diminution'.[63] Thus the pervasive blue in the central panel, as a constant value – blue is spread from the top of the mirror to the bottom of the shadow and between the extreme left and extreme right of the panel (covering the platform, back and stool in the process, as noted above) – is retrogradable in itself: the same colour predominates whichever approach one takes to it. This auto-retrogradability of the rhythm-witness consolidates its function as a marker in relation to the remaining two figures. However,

---

[62] *Ibid.*
[63] *Ibid.*, 75

before this is pursued further, it is necessary to consider the rhythmic function of the characters in the lateral panels: the 'allotropic' variations of the body.

**Active and Passive rhythm**

In addition to the witness-rhythm, Deleuze identifies an active rhythm 'with an increasing variation or amplification' and a passive rhythm 'with a decreasing variation or elimination'[64] characterised by the figures in the lateral panels of the triptych. The rhythmicization of the three figure-bodies in this manner, and the physicality of the sensation of time that Deleuze perceives in and through them, can be compared with the experienced time – called *temps durée* by Henri Bergson – that preoccupies Deleuze in a much earlier critical study, *Bergsonisme* (1966). Another commentator on Bergson explains something of 'duration' in terms that are remarkably similar to Deleuze's reading of Bacon's triptychs, and in particular, the 'force of changing time' rendered therein through differently disposed figure-bodies. It is suggested that 'physical nature would… be comprised of "rhythms" of duration; matter would be seen as "*modifications, peturbations,* changes of *tension* or of *energy* and nothing else"'.[65] Like Adorno, Bergson critiques time conceived as 'a geometrical dimension, analogous to space'[66] with his own concept of *temps durée*, but unlike the former, does not enter spatialized time and durational, lived, time into a dialectical relationship. Such a dialectic is also considered to be a point of departure for some of Deleuze's own ideas regarding the dynamic between

---

[64] *Ibid.*, 71

[65] See Simon Critchley and William R. Schroeder (eds.) *A Companion to Continental Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998) pp. 175-176. Includes citation from Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*. See Bibliography for full reference.

[66] Critchley and Schroeder 1998: 174

space and time in the artwork. The consequences of this dynamic for the sensuous artwork are explored below.

In the *Three studies of the Male Back*, the figure on the left is much more clearly defined than its opposite number; more comfortable, relaxed and expansive. A protrusion of thick orangey-red flesh disappears behind the mirror, like an extra limb. Deleuze refers to Bacon's use of 'mutilations and prostheses in a game of added and subtracted values'.[67] Nevertheless, the small, compact blue shadow (falling behind the stool) contrasts with the bulkiness of the expansive body, and with the opaque viscosity of the shadow in the central panel: here, the shadow is translucent, closer in texture at least, to a 'figurative' representation. The figure's reflection appears in the mirror, looking away from the central panel, as if to subvert the outer characters' conventional role in a triptych still further. In the panel on the right, by contrast, the figure's limbs are knotted together, the body apparently in an extreme position of discomfort. The sense of tension that this engenders is enhanced by the counterpoint of both blue and orangey-red skin covering the back. The rosy thickness of flesh that disappears behind the mirror in the left panel is replaced with a pale white, abstract shape – certainly not 'bodily' in appearance – in the corresponding position in the right-hand panel. The figure is so contorted – indeed so mutilated – that a limb appears to protrude from the centre of the back. The shadow that 'leaks' from this character is still more translucent than that in the left-hand panel, and more expansive than that in the central panel. It gives the impression of a spreading puddle, like ink on blotting paper.

Deleuze argues that rhythm in the outer panels is expressed according to vertical variations in the figures (thus recalling, figuratively, the vertical stance of the

observer/priors in early religious triptychs). However, Bacon's use of vertical variations (in relation to the horizontal constancy of the rhythm-witness) contributes *figurally* (as opposed to figuratively) to the perception of time in his triptych. He suggests that 'the two [lateral rhythms], which are vertical, are retrogradable only in relation to each other, each being the retrogradation of the other'.[68] I propose the following diagram, which represents the 'cross- current' established between them:

**Fig. 21**

| **Left Hand Panel** | **Right Hand Panel** |
|---|---|
| Figure expands **(active rhythm)** | Figure contracts **(passive rhythm)** |
| **Horizontal Measure** | |
| Shadow contracts **(passive rhythm)** | Shadow expands **(active rhythm)** |

In addition to colour, the observance of qualities such as thickness, fleshiness, amputations and physical distortion are valuable means of identifying the rhythmic distribution in Bacon's triptych. The rhythm-witness, as the measure of the other two rhythms, shares features in common with them both: both outer characters and/or their surroundings, although to a much lesser extent, are awash with blue and each has a liquid-like shadow, for example. Nevertheless, each dilates and contracts [vertically] in relation to the constant level of the central, witness, figure. In this context a dilation can manifest itself not only in terms of spatial expansion, but also through a thickening of fleshy paint or the addition of an extra limb, whilst a contraction can take the form of

---

[67] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 79
[68] *Ibid.*, 75

spatial reduction (bodies contorted into spaces too small for their proportions) as well as thinner paintwork and colourless patches.

**Union-Separation**

Deleuze begins and concludes his discussion of time in the triptych with reference to the 'union-separation' paradigm he discovers there. This notion will be explored in what follows, and in the process, the important concerns relating to temporality in Bacon's triptych will be revisited and taken further, before Ferneyhough's writings are reintroduced and considered in this context. In a kind of prologue to the exploration of the concept of the rhythm-witness, Deleuze poses several questions, as well as offering possible solutions:

> what is the mysterious force that can only be captured or detected by triptychs? It is at the same time a force (characteristic of light) that unites the whole, but also a force that separates the Figures and panels, a luminous separation that should not be confused with the preceding isolation [of a single figure in a delimiting geometric frame]. Can life, can time, be rendered sensible, rendered visible? To render time visible, to render the force of time visible – Bacon seems to have done this twice. There is the force of changing time, through the allotropic variation of bodies, "down to the tenth of the second"[69] which involves deformation [I have concentrated on this in my own discussion above]; and then there is the force of eternal time, the eternity of time, through the uniting-separating that reigns in the triptychs, a pure light. To render time sensible in itself is a task common to the painter, the musician and sometimes the writer.[70]

In single panel paintings, Deleuze identifies 'a double movement, from the structure to the Figure, and from the Figure to the structure: forces of isolation, deformation, dissipation'.[71] In paintings where two or more figures appear, in order to avoid the implication of a 'story' developing between them, he argues that Bacon renders a force of coupling: here, the two figures resonate together and bring together – 'confront and unite'

---

[69] This expression is a reference to Eadweard Muybridge's photography commissioned by Leland Stanford, which attempted to capture the movement of a running horse, frame by frame. Deleuze implies that the shutter of the camera, which closes between each exposure, does so at such a speed that individual photograph frames are captured at intervals of one tenth of a second.

[70] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 63-64

– 'the diverse levels of different sensations'.[72] They may thus be separate identities, but together, diagrammatically, they continue to experience the forces of deformation and dissipation, whereby the two bodies become indistinguishable, as a mass of contorted flesh, for example **(see central panel Fig. 5)**.[73] Deleuze calls the coupling of figures 'melodic': there are points (in common) and counterpoints, he suggests, between them.[74] The triptych can, of course, 'incorporate coupling as a phenomenon',[75] but, insists Deleuze, 'it is no longer the Figure that returns to the structure or field; rather it is the relations between Figures which are violently projected onto the field, and are now governed by the uniform colour....'[76] This last comment recalls the uniform blue distributed across the *Three studies of the Male Back*: in short, the colour unites the figures – it is a force of unity 'and universal colour... becomes the common fact of the Figures, their rhythmic being'.[77] However, even as they are united, the panels, the figures and the colours separate – according to Deleuze – on account of the force of light. As evidenced by the three rhythmic figures in the triptych – the active, passive and witness – rhythm follows 'separated directions'[78], forcing the 'strangest phenomenon of recomposition or redistribution'[79] amongst the characters in the three panels. Furthermore, the 'Figure-beings separate' he contends, 'while falling into the black light. The colour-fields separate while falling into the white light. Everything becomes aerial in

---

[71] *Ibid.*, 83
[72] *Ibid.*, 73
[73] Refer to Fig. 5, Part I, Central Panel. This is both an example of (melodic) figural 'coupling' and of the horizontalization of the body (the rhythm-witness') by the flattening force of time in the triptych.
[74] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 73
[75] *Ibid.*, 83
[76] *Ibid.*, 83-84
[77] *Ibid.*, 84
[78] *Ibid.*, 73
[79] *Ibid.*

these triptychs of light; the separation itself is in the air'.[80] Consider the *Three Studies of the Male Back* once again: the absence of depth perspective in Bacon's work assists in the creation of the 'black light' and the 'white light' characterised by Deleuze. The quasi-*malerisch* 'floor' in this painting can equally be interpreted, since it tapers back to no vanishing point, as a kind of darkness – indeed, a black light – that instead of supporting the figure, envelops it, like a fog or black night air. Thus the figure – which has the platform for support in place of a ground – is arguably 'aerial', falling into the black light around it. Thus one returns to the complex concept of the 'fall' referred to briefly in Part II: it is – Deleuze is emphatic on this point – *not* a fall in space, but an amplification, a movement from one level of sensation to another (which can therefore, be equally conveyed through a figure that *rises* in space). The figure 'falls' (recall for example the figure's flesh that disappears behind the mirror in the *Three Studies of the Male Back*) – into the black light – its intensity, a force, is such that it joins the field: each of the three figures is affected by this 'fall', Deleuze calls it a 'forced movement which gives [the figure] an autonomy, and produces in us the impression of time'.[81] Thus, in its autonomy, its particular level of sensation, each figure becomes separated from the two others, whilst all three remain united in their common fact – in this case, colour – nevertheless. In turn, the colour-fields themselves fall into a 'universal' light – the panels are separated by this *white* light. Deleuze argues that 'time is no longer in the chromaticism of bodies; it has become a monochromatic eternity. An immense space-time unites all things…the

---

[80] *Ibid.*, 84. 'Les êtres-Figures se séparent en tombant dans la lumière noire. Les coleurs-aplata se séparent en tombant dans la lumière blanche. Tout deviant aérien dans ces triptyques de lumière, la separation meme est dans les airs'. Deleuze 1981: 56

[81] *Ibid.*, 73

triptych and its separated panels'.[82] As a final comment on this issue, Deleuze remarks that 'in the end, there are nothing but triptychs in Bacon: even the isolated paintings are, more or less visibly, composed like triptychs'.[83] The implications of this statement are important: time, it is suggested, inhabits all the paintings, even those containing only a single figure. This is possible due to the raising of sensation from the figure-body which isolates force [a fact reinforced through Bacon's geometrical 'framing' or 'boxing' technique], to the figure of time, which opens the figure-body up to the surrounding field, replacing the restrictive box with vast surrounds of light: an amplitude, suggests Deleuze, whether black *or* white. Deleuze claims that Bacon owes something of this method in single-panel paintings (reduced from the triptych form) to Rembrandt, citing the latter's *Night Watch*[84] as an example containing active, passive and witness rhythms. One might venture to suggest in addition to Deleuze's own comments, that the black night behind and around the many figures is one into which they fall, separated by the radiant white light portrayed through two characters – a female and a male – towards the foreground of the painting. Consequently, the painting appears to divide – to separate – into three 'panels': the central, foremost figure (in the white ruff) and the four individuals in a horizontal line behind him (bearing flag and lance) denotes the rhythm-witness; whilst the groups either side turned inwards (suggesting the traditional witness role figuratively), display the characteristics of both active and passive rhythms, and are retrogradable in relation to one another. Indeed, Paul Claudel writes of the "disintegration

---

[82] *Ibid.*, 85
[83] *Ibid.*
[84] Michel Laclotte (dir.) *Dictionnaire des grands peintres* (Paris: Librarie Larousse, 1976) p. 696.

brought to a group by light", when commentating upon this very painting.[85] Rembrandt's blackness here functions similarly to that in Bacon's *Three Studies of the Male Back*: 'such [is] the lesson of Rembrandt: it is light that engenders rhythmic characters'.[86] One observation remains, which prompts further discussion of Ferneyhough's interest in sensate temporality: Deleuze argues that 'the triptych, in [Bacon's] sense, is indeed one way of going beyond "easel" painting; the three canvasses remain separated, but they are no longer isolated; and the frame or borders of a painting no longer refer to the limitative unity of each, but to the distributive unity of the three'.[87] Recall the fundamental premise of Ferneyhough's *Carceri d'Invenzione* cycle, and in particular his interpretation of the frame in Piranesi's etchings: the multiple lines of force – one might now refine this with reference instead to separated directions of rhythmic force – continue out, insists the composer, beyond the frame. He argues that 'it was the masterly deployment of layering…which gave rise to this impression of extraordinary immediacy and almost physical impact. *At one and the same time* the observer is drawn ineluctably *down towards the dark centre* while forcibly thrust away along centrifugal rays of absolutely non-naturalistic, mutually conflicting lines of force'.[88] There is a similar perception of the aerial, and the universal here too:

> The frail catwalks, the drawbridges *in midair*
> which almost everywhere double the galleries and the
> stone staircases, seem to correspond to the same desire to
> hurl into space all possible curves and parallels. This
> world closed over itself is mathematically infinite.[89]

---

[85] Cited in Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 182n. See Paul Claudel, *uvres en prose* (Paris: Pléiade, 1965) p. 1429
[86] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 84
[87] *Ibid.*, 85
[88] Ferneyhough, 'Carceri d'Invenzione' in 1995: 131. Original italics
[89] *Ibid.*, 132. Citing Margerite Yourcenar, *The Dark Brain of Piranesi* (Farrar, Strauss, Giroux: New York, 1984) p. 144

'To me', Ferneyhough summarises, 'this seems like one real way of making music "mean"'.[90] Like Deleuze, the composer sets out what can be considered a 'prologue' to the issues raised in 'The Tactility of Time' in another essay entitled *Carceri D'Invenzione* (1986). This preparation of the arguments to come two years later also resonates with Deleuze's approach to Bacon's triptychs: specifically Deleuze's contention that ultimately, rhythm itself becomes figure, relieving the figure-body of that particular role. Ferneyhough elaborates:

> in my compositions, I am always setting out to define momentary, transitory states of balance or conflict, which, albeit necessarily ambiguously, define the spaces which their own future comes to occupy. It is thus that the musical object comes to appear in the double role of emotively connotative, gestural entity and of figural constellation, whose particularized component sound qualities are constantly poised to independently launch themselves into (and thus define) subsequent stages of the discourse. I am particularly interested in the figure's capacity for creating multiple strands of directionality....[91]

Of interest here are the two levels of sensation apparent: firstly, the momentary states of balance or conflict are analogous to the figures in Bacon's triptychs – those 'allotropic variations of bodies...down to the tenth of a second'; secondly, Ferneyhough's interest in the multi-directionality of figural sensation, as well as its role in the future of the musical discourse in addition to the 'poise' of the present, is redolent of Deleuze's claim that the figure-body (or perhaps figure-object in Ferneyhough's case) gives up the sensation to rhythm itself, to the relationship between body-objects. Furthermore, the composer's understanding of the figure as an agent that comes to define stages of the discourse recalls the role of the rhythm-witness as 'marker' in Bacon's painting: that against which rhythm is measured; or defined through its relationship with.

---

[90] Ferneyhough (Cd'I) 1995: 132
[91] *Ibid.*, 132

## III.iii The Rhythm-Witness and Music

The 'Tactility of Time' marks no sudden revelation in Ferneyhough's thought, then; rather it consolidates, in relation to time and rhythm specifically, ideas already latent in the composer's musical creativity. Importantly, one again, there is no reference to either Deleuze or Bacon, although it is arguable that the influence of the two latter figures informs the substance of Ferneyhough's own theories and practice concerning the issue of musical time and its concrete presence. Having already begun, some time ago, to discuss Ferneyhough's essay in particular (it is he who provides the metaphor of the lens, which, in the context of the Deleuze/Bacon rhythm-witness discussion, has been drawn upon considerably) the task in what remains of this discussion, is to determine and subsequently justify this identification of the three basic rhythms – the active, the passive and the witness – in *Mnemosyne*. Indeed, the catalyst for the comparison between Bacon's triptychs and Ferneyhough's piece is the latter's characterisation of musical objects, referred to earlier and again immediately above. It is worth repeating once more, since so many of Ferneyhough's words could not cast more significance over the current rhythm-witness debate than they already do – perhaps it is here, of all moments, that Deleuze's description of Bacon's painted triptych figures and their resistance to forces most palpably resonates through the composer's conceit: 'the impact of the time vector 'damages' the event-object[s]…[which are] retardational and catastrophic timeline modifiers…employed…to focus temporal awareness through the lens of material'.[92] The characterisation of time as a vector is not only notable for its coincidence with Deleuze's own use of the term, but for the fact that it denotes the directionality, the magnitude and the spatial determination of one point in relation to another; Deleuze, as we know,

considers that 'rhythm becomes figure, according to its own separated directions', and furthermore that 'rhythm takes on an extraordinary amplitude in a forced movement which gives it an autonomy', which leads to the final point: the autonomy of Bacon's figures induces a space between them – *the distance of a Sahara* – a space which is discoverable in *Mnemosyne* (detailed below) and moreover, one that fulfils Adorno's brief, 'point[ing] clearly to space as a condition of [music's] objectification'.[93] There is a further relevant issue concerning space in this sense: the term *témoin*, amongst its various meanings, implies that a distance is observable between the witness and the witnessed, determining the position of one point in space relative to another. When the witness is a constant or horizontal measure, Deleuze suggests, the degree of expansion or contraction visited by the painter upon the lateral figures is determinable against that measure. The 'plotting' of these two positions in space (one a constant and, the other, say, extreme expansion) reveals both the direction, and magnitude, of the force of time – in other terms, the vector of that force. One can therefore deduce that space is also a condition of temporal sensation: Ferneyhough's decision to label his musical objects – spatial, definitive moments – 'catastrophic timeline modifiers', recalls the discussion of the diagram in Part II: a profoundly spatial phenomenon characterised as the catastrophe or 'accident' that precipitates the raising of the figurative to the figural.

---

[92] Ferneyhough (TT) 1995: 45
[93] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 70

**Fig. 22**

**Figurative (spatial) ---------- diagram (spatial) ----------Figural (spatial)**

It is possible now to suggest that the diagram can also have a temporal application:

**Figure-body (spatial) --------- diagram (spatial) ----------Figural (rhythmic)**

I have already supposed this to be the case, following Deleuze, who argues that two coupled bodies can, as one diagrammatic and crucially abstract entity, act as a single rhythm-witness in the central panel of a triptych (consider for example, the *Triptych, Two figures lying on a bed with attendants*, 1968 **(See Fig. 23)** in which an abstract smear of clotted paint stretches *horizontally* across the central characters). Ferneyhough, who establishes a fundamental sense of linear consistency through his deployment of materials in *Mnemosyne*, which sustains the entire piece (exactly how, will shortly be described), refers to ''grey zones' of destabilization'[94] which induce a 'shift in…assessment underlying the entire 'tactile' dimension of temporal flow':[95] like Bacon's intuitive smearing, these 'grey zones' seem to subvert the processual dimension of the solo part (which might be likened to the figurative), occasioning what Ferneyhough elsewhere calls 'disruptive astonishment'.[96] Recall the conditions necessary for the diagram to operate: Part II refers to the 'shifting' of the figurative with the figural, the processual with the intuitive. In Ferneyhough's case – in music's case – this 'shifting' can take place in a temporal as well as spatial domain. He argues that

---

[94] Ferneyhough (TT) 1995: 49
[95] *Ibid.*, 49

when we listen intensively to a piece of music there are moments when our consciousness detaches itself from the immediate flow of events and comes to stand apart, *measuring*, scanning, aware of itself operating in a 'speculative time-space' of dimensions different from those appropriate to the musical discourse in and of itself. We become aware of the passing of time as a physical, objectivized *presence*. There have been occasions when I have had the experience of time 'sliding' across the inner surface of the brain with a certain impetus: it seems to be the weight and sequential ordering of *resistances* offered by whatever evaluational model the mind is currently attuned to, combined perhaps with some form of *inertial energy* generated by this encounter...which creates an irregular segmentation of experiential continuity and, hence, of the awareness of time as a distinct affective entity.[97]

Several points are of importance here, not least the relevance of the various meanings of the word *témoin* – Ferneyhough's 'measuring', 'evaluational method', consciousness that 'detaches itself' or 'stands apart' and the objectivization of time that is made possible on account of that distance, all relate to previous discussions concerning the 'witness'. Furthermore, the 'segmentation of experiential continuity' recalls the experience of segmentation across Bacon's triptychs, 'down to the tenth of a second'. Indeed, echoing Deleuze's notion of allotropic figures that render sensate the 'force of changing time' through physical variations, Ferneyhough reveals his interest in 'the creation of fore-, middle- and background transformations which...evince different *somatic* densities'.[98] His deployment of these densities in *Mnemosyne* is strikingly redolent of Deleuze's identification of active, passive and witness figures and rhythms in Bacon's triptychs.

Both the pre-recorded tape and the solo part are involved in the creation of such somatic densities. The former's eight simultaneous bass flute tracks consist (primarily) of held pitches. The piece begins with a single pitch, c' on the tape, heard before the soloist begins to play: this is built up gradually into an eight-note texture as the piece progresses. The character of the tape material is generally very static, comprising *primary* pitches only (Ferneyhough designates two sets of pitches - primary and secondary - for the

---

[96] *Ibid.*, 50
[97] *Ibid.*, 43
[98] *Ibid.*, 44

piece). In contrast to the tape, the solo flute part, though it uses the same primary pitches as a base, is relatively mobile. This movement arises from a number of *secondary* pitches articulated around the primary pitches, creating a dense 'repertoire of intervals',[99] between secondary and primary pitch material. The soloist's opening c' (which it shares with the tape) is the first of the primary pitches. As the piece unfolds, the variety of intervals between primary and secondary material specifically in the solo is continuously reduced, leaving only *primary* pitches by the conclusion. It is now the tape that displays the greater variety of intervals, disposed between its eight flute lines.

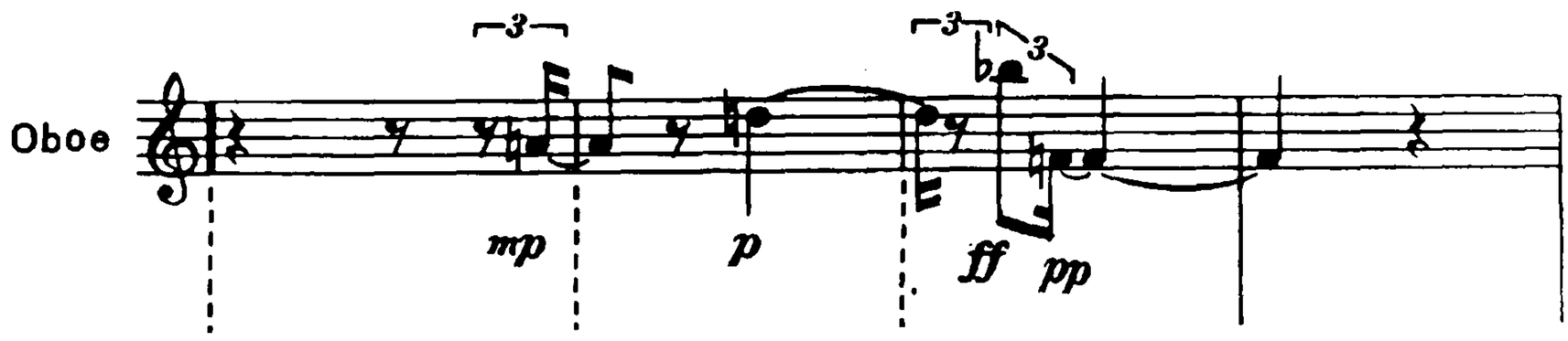
Between the beginning and end of *Mnemosyne*, I suggest that there is a movement from expansion to contraction, and the converse, resulting in a 'model' very close in nature to that set out above in relation to Bacon's triptychs. Ferneyhough's words support this: 'as the work progresses, the density of pitches in the bass flute diminishes, whilst that in the tape increases, effecting a sort of cross-play, an exchange of perceived physical presence'.[100] It can surely be no coincidence that the musical material of Stockhausen's *Kreuzspiel* for piano, oboe, bass clarinet and percussion is also, as its title suggests, disposed according to a similar cross-play incorporating certain symmetries. Even the position of the instruments on the stage for performance bears witness to this symmetry: the piano is central, oboe and clarinet are either side of it at the front, behind each of them is a percussion group which includes tom-toms and a cymbal and finally, behind the grand piano there is a single percussion group (tumbas/congos and cymbals). In the musical material itself, the first oboe entry (bar 32) realises the following pitches – A natural, D natural, B flat and F natural. The last notes to sound in the oboe are F

---

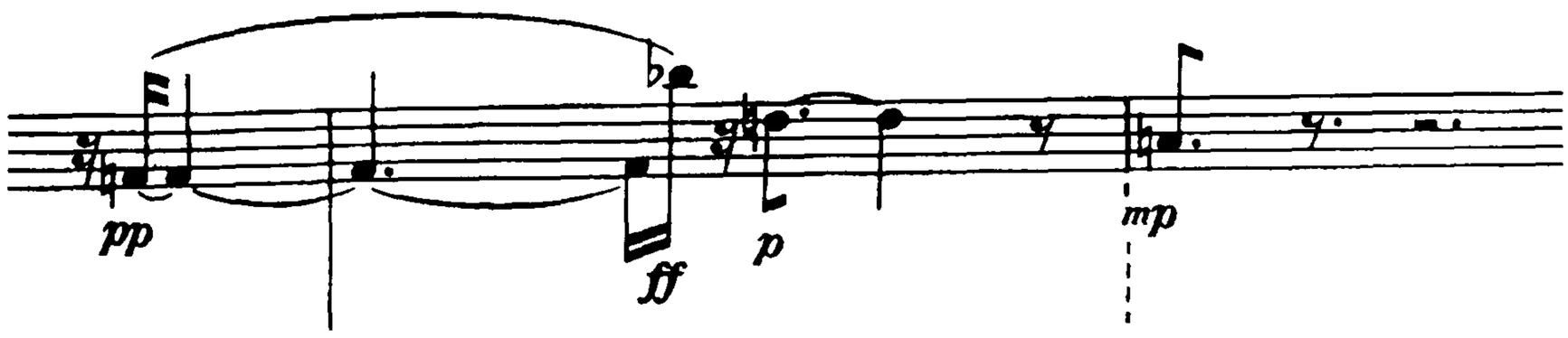
[99] *Ibid.*, 49

natural, B flat, D natural and A natural: in other words, the opening four pitches in reverse. In fact, apart from a central section that comprises repetition-variation material, the last third of the oboe part is virtually an exact retrograde of the first third. Additionally, the precise register employed at the beginning is preserved in the majority of the last oboe notes. The same mirroring is evident in the bass clarinet part and, although the rhythmic values of the opening material are not carried over into the retrograde section, the silences between certain oboe or clarinet gestures are observed when the material is reprised in reverse, such that one gains a sense of an approximate rhythmic retrograde as one listens to the piece **(see Fig. 24)**.

**Fig. 24 First oboe entry b. 32**




**Last oboe notes**




[100] Ferneyhough, 'Shattering the Vessels of Received Wisdom: in Conversation with James Boros' in 1995: 395

Written in 1951, *Kreuzspiel* is a prime example of Stockhausen's approach to integral serialism, tending to spatialize duration. As Philippe Albèra remarks, 'the conception of the autonomous moment gives rise to [Stockhausen's] conception of space: the cross-form of the disposition of the instruments in *Kreuzspiel*'.[101] Recall the observation made in Part I regarding Ferneyhough's musical heritage – he began to experience music seriously, with a view to becoming a composer, at the very height of 1960s total serialism; thus the basic premise of Stockhausen's cross-play, if not the serial means with which he chose to realise it, can certainly have become ingrained in Ferneyhough's compositional mindset very early on in his career. The greatest difference between his and Stockhausen's more abstract approach is revealed in the former's characterization of cross-play as 'an exchange of perceived physical presence'. As though heeding Adorno's stricture, Ferneyhough has taken a music – and from it, a particular spatial determination (Stockhausen's 'cross-play') – 'that has time as its problem', in order to bring forth its nascent pulse (recall that 'one of the most far-reaching consequences of the sometimes over-literal manipulations of the 'classical' serial period has been…the almost incidental demonstration that any form of sonic unit is the potential focus of many lines of directional *energy*').[102]

**Fig. 25 *Mnemosyne***

**<u>Beginning of piece</u>**
**Bass Flute Solo**
expanded intervallically **(active)**

**Pre-recorded Tape**
contracted intervallically **(passive)**

**<u>End of piece</u>**
**Bass Flute Solo**
contracted intervallically **(passive)**

**Pre-recorded Tape**
expanded intervallically **(active)**

---

[101] See *Contrechamps* no. spécial 'Karlheinz Stockhausen' (Paris: Réalisé avec le Festival d'Automne à Paris, 1988) p. 8
[102] Ferneyhough, 'Form-Figure-Style: An Intermediate Assessment' in 1995: 26

Ferneyhough's argument that 'large scale patterns of tendential flow are established against which specific conjunctions may momentarily give rise to non-linearly perceived events'[103] corresponds to Deleuze's suggestion that active and passive rhythms are vertical, and only retrogradable in relation to each other, as in the composer's 'exchange of perceived physical presence'. Furthermore, Ferneyhough insists on the intervallic relationship, in the solo part, between primary and secondary pitches and, although the primary pitches heard on the tape are the same primary pitches found in the live solo, Ferneyhough emphasises their vertical arrangement in the former case, referring to 'accretive tendencies in chordal density…moving gradually up to eight pitches',[104] all of which consolidates the verticality of the active and passive rhythms that have been identified. In fact, both the secondary pitch materials (in particular the intervals they make possible in the solo part) and the tape materials establish the kind of harmonic spectrum that Richard Toop notes in his analysis of *Supersciptio*, a spectrum that progressively contracts and expands, respectively.

It is important to appreciate that the rhythms addressed here – active and passive – do not necessarily relate, even in a piece of music, to the rhythmic parameter exclusively. I have identified so-called active and passive rhythms in *Mnemosyne* on the basis of intervallic density, verticality and the exchangeability – retrogradability in relation to one another – of the two extremes. Recall that the active and passive rhythms are, in fact, spatially defined (Adorno argues that 'music's temporality is the very aspect through which it actually congeals into something that survives independently – an object, a

---

[103] Ferneyhough (TT) 1995: 49
[104] *Ibid.*

thing, so to speak'[105]): it is the sensation of their magnitude or intensity – as a degree of vertical expansion or contraction – in relation to the horizontality of the witness, that induces a physical awareness of time. One registers the difference in level of the two sensations: witness, and either active or passive. Ferneyhough's decision to engineer a 'cross-play'[106] between extremes of intervallic density in two separate strata of the piece is therefore of as much value temporally to the character of *Mnemosyne* as the typically complex metrical and rhythmical layers that proliferate through the solo material especially.

Nevertheless, the cross-play is of little significance without the rhythm-witness to mark or measure the expansions and contractions that determine it as a large-scale formal structure for *Mnemosyne*. (Again Adorno reminds us that 'what one terms musical form is…its temporal order. The nomenclature "form" refers the temporal articulation of music to the ideal of its spatialization'[107], whilst Deleuze rules that 'there must be a witness-figure for the variation figure').[108] Although there are notionally two distinct components to *Mnemosyne* – solo and tape – I suggest there are in fact three: the tape (primary pitches), the *secondary* pitch material in the solo part, and finally the *primary* pitches in the solo. The latter are only permitted to sound after the same primary pitch has been heard in the tape. By the end of the piece, the accumulating intervallic 'thickness' on the tape, and the gradual erasure of the initially dense stock of secondary pitches (and thus intervals) in the live bass flute part 'has reduced the solo line to a mere demonstrative

---

[105] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 66
[106] Ferneyhough's choice of the term 'cross-play' here recalls the title of Stockhausen's *Kreuzspiel* [Crossplay]. Whether or not the implication is intended remains ambiguous, but it is difficult to imagine that Stockhausen's piece did not influence Ferneyhough during the composition of certain aspects of *Mnemosyne*.
[107] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (LS) 1995: 66
[108] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 71

horizontalization of that verticality....'[109]: it is therefore the primary pitches as they are disposed in the solo line that constitute the analogue of Bacon's – or rather Deleuze's – rhythm-witness. Recall in addition, Deleuze's suggestion that the rhythm-witness only becomes such when the function is passed onto it: Ferneyhough's observation that the tape and secondary interval material *reduce* the solo primary pitches to the horizontal clearly bears this out.

**Union-separation in music**

Whilst this consideration of the active, passive and witness figure-bodies in *Mnemosyne* identifies allotropes with the same feature in common – the primary pitches (the secondary pitches exist only to form intervals with primary pitches) – it is necessary to pursue the issue of tactile time beyond this level. Recall Deleuze's discovery that 'to render the force of time visible – Bacon seems to have done this twice. There is the force of changing time, through the allotropic variation of bodies...and then there is the force of eternal time'.[110] The latter he discerns in the triptychs, specifically in the 'uniting-separating' that 'reigns' over this form. Here, sensation is raised from the figure-body to rhythm itself: 'rhythm would cease to be attached to and dependent on a Figure [body]: it is rhythm itself that would become the Figure'.[111] I have already discussed the fall of Bacon's figure-bodies into the black light of the field, and the fall of the field into the white light beyond the frame of each panel: though *Ferneyhough's* piece is not in a triptych form, there are nevertheless frames of a sort – metric, in fact – internal to the work which might, in this context, be compared with those in Bacon's *Three Studies of*

---

[109] Ferneyhough (TT) 1995: 49
[110] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 63-64

*the Male Back*. The fact that these 'frames' are metrical (enclosing various concentrations of impulse-*densities*) does not advantage the composer over the painter by introducing another level of temporality inaccessible to the latter. Recall Adorno's caution to his reader at the beginning of 'On Some Relationships': 'time is not self-evident for [music]…it has time as its problem'.[112] I suggest that Ferneyhough's use of metric frames does not introduce a temporal element immediately to the piece; rather it is the transgression of these frames that creates the impression of time (just as the arrangement of Bacon's three panels does not presuppose narratival logic). A uniting-separating rhythm is thus detectable in *Mnemosyne*, not dissimilar to Deleuze's characterization of the same in Bacon's triptych. Compare Deleuze's insight: 'this amplitude of [white] light, an immense "stable and motionless background,"…will have a bizarre effect, assuring the extreme division of Figures'[113] with Ferneyhough's comment that 'at least for the performer, the overlaying of…metric frames on essentially homogeneous materials provides important clues as to the latter's structural segmentation characteristics'.[114] Something of Deleuze's 'white light' is detectable in the composer's 'homogenous' background materials – the metric frames are overlaid and lead to an understanding of the segmentation of that background, assuring the extreme division of figures. Ferneyhough continues, adding 'at the same time, one can imagine manipulating actual sonic density within this model in ways supportive of or subverting the information gleaned from the metric patterning. The aperiodic cycling with respect to one another of these two levels [i.e. metric frames and sonic densities] permits the projection of further macro-

---

[111] *Ibid.*, 71
[112] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 66
[113] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 73
[114] Ferneyhough (TT) 1995: 46

periodicities of great utility as regards large-scale formal articulation'.[115] His remarks lend themselves to an interpretation analogous to that offered by Deleuze in respect of Bacon's triptych: in effect, Ferneyhough, too, seems to have sought the tactility of time twice. Against a backdrop, then, of homogeneity, metric frames are posited within which sonic density – somatic density – is manipulated (expanded or contracted). These same sonic densities, like Bacon's figure-bodies can, it is implied, yield up their figural status to rhythm itself which (if one recalls Deleuze's formula wherein 'rhythm…becomes figure, according to its own separated directions') becomes capable of transgressing the frame of individual panels (recall likewise Ferneyhough's interest in Piranesi's etchings for the same reason, discussed briefly above). Deleuze suggests that the relations between figures are projected onto the 'field' (from sonic/somatic densities, across the metric frames, in the musical equivalent): there are movements between figure-body and colour-field, and the uniformity of the latter 'governs' the rhythmic sensation. There are additionally two levels of uniformity or constant: one each for the two levels of time – the rhythm-witness, a figure-body (or somatic density), and uniform colour-fields that unite the three panels (or various 'segments' of 'essentially homogeneous materials', if one makes the analogy with music), even as the multiple directions of rhythmic sensation effect their separation. Ferneyhough again comes remarkably close to a musical manifestation of these complex notions, implying the existence of two levels of temporal sensation: 'in each instance [metric frame and sonic density][116] we encounter 'threshold' values (of duration and/or density) beyond which the experiential function of that value trajectory – its status as…formal marker – undergoes radical transformation (e.g. from

---

[115] *Ibid.*

field to event-object or from primary process to secondary intervention)'.[117] It has already been suggested that the threshold values – the rhythm-witness, the active-rhythm and the passive-rhythm – in *Mnemosyne* are identifiable on account of the respective density of intervals particular to each: the primary pitch material in the solo part is horizontally disposed and thus acts as a 'control' relative to the extreme density of vertical intervals that characterises the active rhythm (the saturation of secondary pitches at the beginning of the solo, and the layered primary pitches at the end of the tape), and the reduced intervallic material – the contraction of intervals – that corresponds to the passive rhythm. The active and passive figure-bodies or somatic densities mark a value trajectory – one of expansion or contraction – again relative to the horizontal, retrogradable-within-itself 'trajectory' of the rhythm-witness. Nevertheless, Ferneyhough argues that beyond these embodied threshold values, whereby the force of time is attached to or dependent on a particular figure-density, the status of the latter as a marker 'undergoes radical transformation': it is here that one can identify Ferneyhough's awareness of a second level of sensate temporality. The 'radical transformation' to which he refers is akin to the giving-up of the figural sensation by the somatic-figure to duration, or to rhythm itself. His project in the flute piece is to '[render] immediate various degrees of temporal 'tactility''[118] and he, too, discerns a greater 'uniting-separating' rhythm, which, no longer attached to figure-bodies, is immense: indeed, as Deleuze describes, an 'immense space-time unites all things'.

---

[116] For which read, in order to make the analogy with Bacon's painting, 'colour-field and figure-body' [metric frame and sonic density] respectively.
[117] Ferneyhough (TT) 1995: 46
[118] *Ibid.*, 42

It is now possible to review Ferneyhough's closing comments in 'The Tactility of Time', set out earlier in this chapter, with a renewed understanding of their significance in the light of Deleuze's union-separation model of time. The composer remarks that his 'awareness of temporal flow as a sensually palpable and thus relatively independent given is in large part dependent on both the communal resonantial capabilities of these several levels of organization and the disruptive astonishment generated in the wake of their occasional…mutual subversion'.[119] Clearly there is an analogy to be made between 'union-separation' and 'community-disruption' at this level. Having also remained mindful of the fact that Deleuze's attention in the matter of the rhythm-witness is turned towards Bacon's triptych paintings specifically, I have sought to discover, at this stage in the discussion of the larger-scale pertinence of the rhythm-witness (raised to the model of 'union-separation'), a triptych form in Ferneyhough's *Carceri d'Invenzione* cycle. In other words, I too, have raised the concern with individual pieces and panels to a larger architecture: the cycle. Consider the registral extremeties with which one is confronted at the beginning of *Carceri d'Invenzione I* (between piccolo, trombone and piano) and indeed *Carceri d'Invenzione III* (in the clarinet part). Both of these pieces are scored for chamber orchestra, and form two lateral panels in relation to *Carceri d'Invenzione II*, for obbligato flute and chamber orchestra, which Ferneyhough himself suggests (not with any relation to Bacon in mind) 'occupies the central panel of the triptych'.[120] There is a point of symmetry about the confinement of pitches to a minor third 'band' in the middle of *Carceri II* (discussed in Part II): both the framing pieces explore extremes of register, without there being this *particular* kind of restriction imposed upon them. Moreover, the

---

[119] *Ibid.*, 50

flute, drawn out of the chamber ensemble texture as a soloist in *Carceri II*, acts as a constant, against which the use of the piccolo in both *Carceri I* and *III* can be measured, for example. The restriction of pitches into a specified, extremely 'thin' band in *Carceri II* could equally be interpreted as a horizontalization of the verticality that extreme registers convey, in the manner of a rhythm-witness. If the 'black light' ('the dark brain of Piranesi') into which these three pieces 'fall' [diffuse] amounts to the remaining, surrounding, pieces of the seven piece strong *Carceri* cycle, then the 'white light' – time itself – extends beyond the already substantial cycle: Ferneyhough 'brings back' his notion of personal style, arguing that 'many people today make the very simple mistake of equating style with the repertoire of surface elements which a particular work or group of works contains, whereas I would define style far more in terms of continuity in the employment of certain types of material from one work to another…Style [is] something always in progress within the corpus of one's own works'.[121] There is the body, and there is the flow of time – of progress – through the body, raised above and outside the body: time itself. Recall Yourcenar's words, when she refers to the 'desire to hurl into space all possible curves and parallels. This world closed over itself is mathematically infinite'.[122]

### III.iv Self-Awareness and *Mnemosyne*

Having addressed several structural and formal issues in *Mnemosyne,* one must remain mindful of Adorno's warning that music must also organize itself from below, 'from the

---

120 Ferneyhough 'Carceri d'Invenzione' in 1995: 133. My thanks to John Hails for raising the issue of the triptych in Ferneyhough's cycle.
121 Ferneyhough (RT) 1995: 255 and 271
122 Margaret Yourcenar, *The Dark Brain of Piranesi* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1984) p. 144. Cited in Ferneyhough 1995: 132

individual impulse in time':[123] looked at closely, the local detail of the piece bears witness in-itself, to larger-scale concerns, specifically the relationship between density and space explored above. Ferneyhough argues that

> we perceive discrete events as being of a certain density, translucency, as moving with a greater or lesser degree of dynamicism relative to the amount of information contained. If the perceived potential for informational substance is rather high, the time frame required for the efficient reception and absorption of that information is usually more expansive, so that if the time frame is deliberately compressed a sense of pressure, of 'too little time', emerges as a major factor conditioning reception…there is a sort of 'time-lag' zone located in the wake of the event itself which is the real arena of temporal sensation'[124]

The second section of *Mnemosyne*[125], '*piacevole*' (quaver = 60), consists entirely of regularly measured bars, all with the denominator eight: 4/8, 1/8, 6/8 and so on. The regularity is undermined however, by superimposed metric subdivisions (sometimes nested) over part, or all, of each bar, producing a sensation of destabilization and unpredictability. A bar of 4/8 will therefore contain four quaver impulses, and a bar of 5/8, five: in the case of these two values, one can observe that the number of impulses in the second bar is greater, but that the impulse-density is the same in each. However, if the first bar is subdivided 5:4, and the second 4:5, then despite the fact that the second (5/8) bar contains a greater number of metrical impulses, it now has the lower impulse-density of the pair. In the flute solo, bars six and eight (in 5/8 and 7/8 metres respectively) are subdivided 6:5 and 6:7, again respectively. Whilst it is clear that a bar of 7/8 contains more quaver impulses than the smaller 5/8, the former again has the lower impulse-density, each impulse having the value 7/6 relative to the regular-measured quaver beat (i.e. the basic measured impulse is expanded); whilst each impulse in the 5/8 bar has a 'density' value of 5/6 relative to the regular quaver beat (i.e. the basic measured impulse

---

[123] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 69
[124] Ferneyhough (TT) 1995: 44
[125] The first, short, section of the piece is *senza misura*.

contracts). Although the basic regular pulse is submerged in layers of superimposed divisions of the bar, for the performer it acts as a 'rhythm-witness'[126], against which he or she can measure the active dilations or passive contractions of impulse-density. Recall Deleuze's suggestion that 'Bacon uses mutilations and prostheses in a game of added and subtracted values':[127] and compare this technique of Ferneyhough's, adding metric divisions to the bar in order to effect mutilations of the basic pulse. Ferneyhough argues that 'if we postulate a metric structure and we project against it musical objects [densities] we have one specific frame of reference [i.e. the regular metric pulse as localised rhythm-witness]; it must also be born in mind, however, that there is a parallel, more subtle frame at work, i.e. the relationship established between the body's somatic condition and the mediating metric lattice'.[128] It seems as though there can be no coincidence here between Ferneyhough's choice of the basic pulse in this, and other sections of *Mnemosyne* at quaver = 60, and the average, healthy human pulse (60 beats per minute). Indeed, he remarks that 'it is clear that all involuntary and most voluntary bodily functions (heartbeat, rate of breathing, adrenalin flow etc.) ultimately contribute significantly to the temporal perspective adopted by the listener',[129] and, I suggest, the performer. The fact that the listener and performer experience *Mnemosyne* bodily presupposes that the composer has, to a considerable degree, devised the piece in mind of certain physiological stimuli in conjunction with the plastic force of the musical material itself. The first time a piece is 'heard' is not at its first performance, but as it is written: when Ferneyhough refers to the listener's experience of his music, he is also implicitly

---

[126] The click-track also arguably acts as a kind of 'rhythm-witness' that only the performer can hear: indeed, in the most literal sense, it is a 'marker' which allows the performer to navigate through some extremely difficult metrical material.
[127] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 79

recounting his own compositional encounter with the material, the experience of the 'mind's ear', as it were. The issue of the witness returns, finally, to the question of self-awareness (discussed in Parts I and II).

Ferneyhough observes that 'I reckon the process of constructing a viable, (if transitory) self to be extremely conflictual and chaotic in nature, so that the sort of desperate struggle to stay afloat in the turbulent 'delay wake' of listening which I envisage strikes me as a pretty adequate paradigm for the engenderment of self-awareness'.[130] Bergson, to whom this discussion briefly referred earlier, concurs, somewhat echoing Ferneyhough's experience of a 'free reaction' to compositionally and personally imposed restraints: the notion of the artist as witness to himself is hereby consolidated, not least in the light of comments made in Part II regarding the auto-didacticism of both Bacon and Ferneyhough. Bergson suggests that there is a 'self which lives and develops by means of its very hesitations, until the free action drops from it like an over-ripe fruit'.[131] This principle can be extended further to encompass involuntary memory, also discussed above: the self endures,[132] and, according to Bergson, involuntary memory retains our entire past.[133] Thus to witness is also to recollect. Any self-awareness engendered through the artist's interaction with material in the present, is always also an act of memory: 'memories…are our character…Our personal past…is a culmination of wider possibilities which funds our freedom'.[134] Bergson himself suggests

---

[128] Ferneyhough (TT) 1995: 43
[129] *Ibid.*
[130] Ferneyhough, 'Interview with James Boros' in 1995: 439
[131] Cited in Critchley and Schroeder (eds.) 1998: 175
[132] *Ibid.*
[133] *Ibid.*, 176. See also Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 2002)
[134] Cited in Critchley and Schroeder 1998: 177

that we 'organize [the past] with the present in a newer and richer decision'.[135] Indeed, Ferneyhough and Bacon's figures are shaped and distorted – indexes of forces that have already traversed them (they reveal their 'own generative history'[136]) – and yet the sensations they yield are manifestly present phenomena [presences].

The raising of sensation from the figure-body (or event-object) to rhythm itself – to the time vector – finally brings together space and time in a radical, immense,[137] manner. The notion of history as generative – an ordered sequence of moments – is itself raised to a higher order in which 'the figural force of the event disrupts the possibility of thinking history as a succession of moments'.[138] Recall Lyotard's theory of the disruptive figural event, and its implications for the modernist conception of history, encountered in Part II. The historical moment accedes to the time of the event[139] at this level: the situation is more complex than Bergson's formula ('organize [the past] with the present in newer and richer decision') suggests.

If the time vector itself, as rhythm, becomes sensate in the artwork, it nevertheless maintains something of the figurative vestiges and figural-bodies between and through which it is rendered sensate. They are 'sublated' into it. Importantly however, in the 'reverse direction' as it were, figural rhythm is irreducible to either the past sensation (represented figuratively) or the present sensation (captured in the figure-body as a sensuous presence). Figural rhythm is Lyotard's time of the 'immemorial', characterized as the incommensurability of the past with the present, and of the figural event with historical, ordered, time. It is in this respect that Lyotard ventures beyond Bergson, with a

---

[135] Bergson, trans. Paul and Palmer (MM) 2002: 249.
[136] Ferneyhough (TF) 1995: 41
[137] Recall Deleuze's suggestion that 'an immense space-time unites all things'. (See above)
[138] Bill Readings, *Introducing Lyotard: Art and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1991) p. 55

still newer and richer *imperative*: art can only be historically responsible as event, rather than representation.[140] In addition to rendering the force of changing time then, the figure-bodies perform a second role through which the witness-function (their 'marker-function') is consolidated: though they are raised to the level of figural rhythm, they can additionally be perceived as rupturing its continuity. As a figural event, they explode into 'appearance', in Bacon's special sense of the term. Recall this argument made with reference to Lyotard, set out in Part II:

> Modernism bases its claim to legitimacy on the distancing of the knowing subject from the paratactic succession of historical phrases ('and then…and then…and then…'). The event appears for this historicity as a figure marking the time it takes to arrest time and make it an object of knowledge, the noise of the distance that establishes the observer's silent detachment.[141]

The figure of the profound or rhythmic witness is especially apt in the context of Lyotard's 'immemorial': that which cannot be remembered, but cannot be forgotten either. Its 'blindness' becomes a figure in-itself for that which cannot be remembered but, paradoxically, brings time to appearance, to sensation, ensuring thereby that its sensuous presence cannot be forgotten either in the work of art. (The opening lines of Adorno's 'On Some Relationships' are brought to mind here). Furthermore, the objectification of time (made possible when the variation of lateral figures is measured against the witness) depends upon the *distance* [i.e. *témoin*] established between figures across the artwork. Lyotard's reference to the 'observer's silent detachment' recalls the old figurative function of lateral-panel observers in a triptych, a role never completely obliterated from Bacon's lateral figures, as Deleuze takes care to remind us.

---

[139] *Ibid.*, 53-63
[140] *Ibid.*, 23
[141] *Ibid.*, 59

**Hand and eye**

Bacon's *Three Studies of the Male Back* perhaps best encapsulates the transformations required to pass from the figurative beginning to the figural rhythm that both artists strive to convey. The superficiality of the Medieval painted witness/observer is transferred to the central panel, and its main characteristic – its capacity to *see* – is removed: 'the more profound witness will not be one who sees'. Recall the opacity of the mirror in the central panel: there is nothing left for this witness but to abandon the function of seeing, figuratively, for the experience of sensation, bodily, figurally. Bacon's more profound witness might not tell a story, but in its 'blindness' it does convey the painter's own experience: 'one might say that painters paint with their eyes, but only insofar as they touch with their eyes'.[142] The eye of the superficial witness corresponds to the eye that, according to Lyotard (as discussed in Part II) remains detached from experience, acknowledging only the graphic, the discursive and the perspectival rather than engaging corporeally with the plastic, the figural and the opaque as well. It is the 'diagram' that disrupts figurative and perspectival space, catastrophically. Deleuze refers to it as 'manual',[143] and Bacon's hand-made smears bear this out, in practice: 'the paintbrush and easel can express a general subordination of the hand';[144] but Deleuze's suggestion that Bacon's triptych form frees the artist from the constraints of the easel has already been noted, and we know of the painter's predilection for manual traits – smears, wipes and throwing paint – which render the paintbrush redundant. Thus the triptych, like the diagram, prefers the manual to the optical. The eye becomes subordinated to the hand,[145]

---

[142] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 155
[143] *Ibid.*
[144] *Ibid.*, 154
[145] *Ibid.*, 154-161

and the concept of the witness is apparently turned on its head. However, such a simple negation – the eye to the hand – satisfies neither Bacon nor Ferneyhough's self-reflexive impulse. Something of the eye, of vision, must be conserved in the work: it 'can be recreated in the "modern" eye, through violence and manual insubordination'.[146]

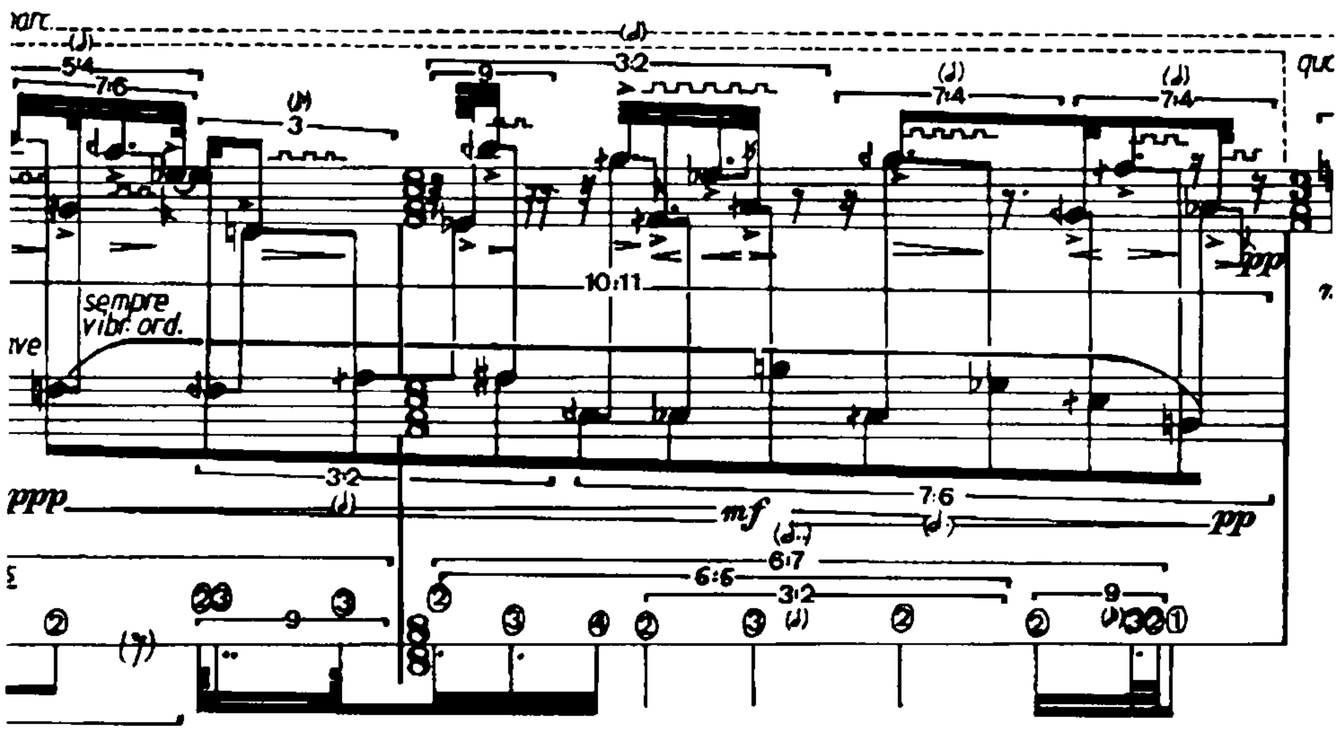
A discussion of the most immediately striking feature of *Mnemosyne* has been reserved until now, since it facilitates an understanding of this "modern" eye, an 'auto-witness', as it were. Ferneyhough scores three simultaneous, independent lines of music for the solo flute. The instrument's performative capability however, restricts it to monophony in practice. Ferneyhough devises the technique of 'interruptive polyphony' for the flautist to negotiate: although notationally a certain note in one line may be expressed (durationally) as overlapping another in either (or both) of the remaining lines of solo music, in practical terms, that note is broken off and interrupted by the newly prioritized material in another line. Although Ferneyhough indicates the interruption of one line by another with a horizontal line issuing from the note-head of the interrupted note and attached vertically to the notehead of the interrupting note **(see Fig. 26)**, it is left to the performer to articulate this interruptive strategy audibly, and, at times, to assign relative degrees of importance to each of the three lines. Effectively, the flautist is required to convey a latter-day *style brisé*, pushing the technical possibilities of the instrument to the limit. Beyond this, the performer is forced to confront the limits of his or her own virtuosity, and surpass it. To do this, Ferneyhough suggests, less emphasis must be placed on the ability of the eye to 'read' the score effectively, and contend with it mentally, than on the necessity of adjusting to the flesh of the music, as a malleable 'mass'. He remarks that 'it is interesting that what comes naturally to a keyboard player

---

[146] *Ibid.*, 155

encounters tremendous resistance in the minds of (say) woodwind soloists, who are not accustomed to freeing-up the 'natural' relationship between hands, or hand and embouchure'.[147] To this extent, they must, in a sense, approach the piece 'blindly' – absolutely not irresponsibly, but certainly without looking to compress the purposely independent trio of lines into one logical resolution: the performer must 'feel' the piece polyphonically, even if this defies learned technique.

**Fig. 26**




## III.v Concluding Remarks

Despite the prioritizing of the hand over the eye in both Bacon's triptych (and Ferneyhough's *Mnemosyne*), Deleuze insists that the self-discovery of the artist and viewer (to which might be added Ferneyhough's performer and listener) develops beyond the renewal of the manual aspect of artworks. Two facts have accompanied this discussion of figural sensation: firstly, the importance of forces that are generated across the surface of Bacon's paintings, which in turn [secondly] informs the layered texture of

---

[147] Ferneyhough (TT) 1995: 47

Ferneyhough's music, wherein sensation can also manifest itself at the musical surface, or move between layers. In any case, the point is that perspectival vanishing points have no role to play in figural expression, as suggested in Part I. In Part II, I have pursued the theory of the diagram, consistently referring to it as a spatial device: only in the present chapter has the opportunity arisen to consider its potential for making time emerge, sensuously, in the artwork. Deleuze, finally, unites these two figural conditions: 'if we consider the painting a process, there is instead a continual injection of the manual diagram into the visual whole, a "slow leak," a "coagulation," an "evolution," as if one were moving gradually from the hand to the haptic eye, from the manual diagram to haptic vision'.[148] Ferneyhough's 'interruptive polyphony' is one example of such a continuously injected diagrammatic force, redefining the monophony of the flute, just as the rejection of the easel (which can only support a single canvas) redefines the notion of the edge of the painting. James Boros observes to Ferneyhough in interview that '*Mnemosyne*…to me, is a frighteningly bizarre landscape, a slowly solidifying temporal ooze',[149] echoing Deleuze's perception of 'coagulation' across Bacon's work. Another of Deleuze's comments brings Adorno's theorization of *écriture* back into this discussion; the latter addressed, for the first time, from a temporal perspective. In Deleuze's conclusion that 'all [figurative] connections disappear in favour of a "matter of fact" or a properly pictorial (or sculptural) ligature',[150] the image of the neumes employed by Adorno as an example of music – of notes or objects joined together by a single force (such as the monosyllable) that approaches *écriture* – resurfaces. Adorno's essay emphasises both the visual and tactile importance of the neumes: 'this qualitative

---

[148] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 159-160
[149] Ferneyhough (Boros) 1995: 439

relationship of music to its visible insignia, without which it could neither possess nor construct out duration, points clearly to space as a condition of its objectification'.[151] As Adorno looks back to the earliest musical notation in the form of the neumes, Deleuze, following Bacon's own admission,[152] looks back to the art of the Egyptians, remarking that '*bas-relief* brings out the most rigid link between the eye and the hand because its element is the flat surface, which allows the eye to function like the sense of touch; furthermore, it confers, and indeed imposes, upon the eye a tactile, or rather *haptic*, function; it thereby ensures, in the Egyptian "will to art," the joining together of the two senses of touch and sight, like the soil and the horizon'.[153]

Like the diagram, which involves a venture into the abstract, the distance of a Sahara away from the figurative intention ('I was attempting to make a bird alighting on a field'), in order to bring it back to 'appearance' through the figural sensation, the witness must be blinded before it can see again, as a "modern", 'tactile' eye.

**Literature and the witness**

Walter Benjamin discovers something akin to the modern tactile eye in Edgar Allen Poe's *The Man of the Crowd* (in his own 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire'), which does not have a narrative as such: the man of the crowd and his observer are figures. In the story a man [observer] installs himself behind a glass window in a London café. As a bystander, he witnesses the movements of passers-by outside, initially perceiving them

---

[150] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 160
[151] Adorno, trans. Gillespie (OSR) 1995: 70
[152] Cited in Russell 1979: 99
[153] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 122

abstractly: 'at first my observations took an abstract and generalizing turn'.[154] However, the descriptions of people's dispositions become vivid and bodily, as the narrator's eye becomes 'tactile': '[an] inordinate vivacity…jarred discordantly upon the ear, and gave an aching sensation to the eye'.[155] Of the crowd, he remarks that 'their brows were knit and their eyes rolled quickly':[156] frequently the sensation is attached to various bodies – busy individuals – allotropes of each other.

However, before long the crowd merges into a blur: a tumultuous, opaque, flow – 'two dense and continuous tides'[157] – passes before the man's eyes, and, like Ferneyhough's listener, he struggles to 'stay afloat in the turbulent delay-wake' of viewing. He is effectively blinded, becoming in the process a more profound witness in the Baconian sense: I will return to the issue presently. However, it is worth noting Poe's opening lines - a metaphor for the 'man of the crowd' who figures later in the text. He remarks that 'it was well said of a certain German book that "*er lasst sich nicht lesen*" – it does not permit itself to be read'.[158]

The 'man of the crowd' upon whom the observer/narrator eventually fastens fulfils the role of both active and passive witness. He has contrasting demeanours: 'there arose confusedly and paradoxically within my [the observer's] mind, the ideas of vast mental power, of caution, of penuriousness, of avarice, of coolness, of malice, of blood-thirstiness, of triumph, of merriment, of excessive terror, of intense – of supreme despair'.[159] The man of the crowd is alternately assertive: 'the old man held his

---

[154] Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Man of the Crowd' in *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975) p. 475
[155] Poe 1975: 478
[156] Benjamin, trans. Zorn (MB) 1999: 170
[157] *Ibid.*
[158] Poe 1975: 475
[159] *Ibid.*, 478

way…along the great thoroughfare…his eyes rolled wildly…he urged his way steadily and perseveringly'[160] and quiescent; 'he walked more slowly and with less object before – more hesitatingly. He crossed and recrossed the way repeatedly, without apparent aim; and the press [of the crowd] was still so thick'.[161] What is important here is the role of the observer who, following the man of the crowd, measures his every move for the reader: the crowd is also measured, the observer referring to a 'scale' against which the various characters are considered. At each juncture the passing of time is emphasised – that which Deleuze calls the force of changing time. The observer regularly informs us that he has temporarily lost sight of the man, and recounts the physicality of the latter's journey through the crowd. This impression of pulsational time is consolidated with an abundance of information regarding the sometimes dense, sometimes sparse crowd, concomitant with the changing aspect of the day, from daybreak, morning, dusk, evening and full night fall[162] (the throng is greater in the morning and evening). The changing weather (fog, rain, dry, humidity and so on) and frequency of terms such as 'instant' or 'suddenly' add to this still further. In Part II, it has been noted that, for the figural to emerge in space, events must shift together as impressions before the eye. There is also a temporal dimension to this shifting, as there is to the movement in time of the city crowd.[163]

It is significant that the final event in Poe's account of the man in the crowd is the moment in which he and the observer/narrator turn to face each other. Though the latter gazes at the man 'figuratively', he does not see him in the figural sense: 'it will be in vain

---

[160] *Ibid.*, 479
[161] *Ibid.*
[162] *Ibid.*
[163] Benjamin, trans. Zorn (MB) 1999: 169

to follow; for I shall learn no more of him....'[164] The observer's abandonment of his pursuit does not indicate the end of the man of the crowd's journey; rather one is left with the impression of his endless meandering, of the eternity of his travels through London: indeed, Poe refers to him as 'the wanderer'.[165] In contradistinction to the brevity of the moments of changing time, Poe accentuates the extensiveness of rhythm itself – 'long years'[166] – and thus, like Bacon and Ferneyhough, he attempts to make time sensible twice.

For Poe and Benjamin, the very physical image of the crowd manifests a force, drawing one into the 'physiognomy of the big city'.[167] Benjamin remarks that Baudelaire 'speaks of a man who plunges into the crowd as into a reservoir of electric energy'.[168] Still at the level of the figure-body, Poe's narrator (and indeed, Baudelaire as a *flâneur*, according to Benjamin) '[is] drawn to [the crowd]...[is] made one of them, he [is[ nevertheless unable to rid himself of a sense of their essentially inhuman make-up. He becomes their accomplice even as he dissociates himself from them'.[169]

The observer's figurative position behind the glass, seeing, is raised to the status of a (blinded) figure-body and then raised again as he becomes part of the reservoir of force between figures. He initially encounters multiple instances of active and passive rhythms in the crowd: 'moving through this traffic involves the individual in a series of shocks and collisions. At dangerous intersections, nervous impulses flow through him in rapid succession, like the energy from a battery', and 'when impeded in their progress, these people suddenly ceased muttering, but redoubled their gesticulations and awaited,

---

[164] Poe 1975: 481
[165] *Ibid.*
[166] *Ibid.*, 478
[167] Benjamin, trans. Zorn (MB) 1999: 170

with an absent and overdone smile on their lips [passive], the course of the persons impeding them [active]'.[170] Recall Ferneyhough's references to musical event-objects that offer resistance to the forces directed at them, and the concentrated impulse density in certain measures of the '*piacevole*' section of *Mnemosyne*, which create 'a sense of pressure…provisionally erected frameworks are continually being violated by current events which invade them'.[171]

Nevertheless, it has been observed that the notion of passing time is very important to Poe's story, the inevitability of the all-consuming blackness of night that Deleuze characterizes as unbroken colour, a freedom from monochromatic time and a glimpse of the vastness of interminable 'eternal time' itself has an impact all its own. Poe's text regularly reminds us of the advance of night, a blackness into which the figures fall. Furthermore, there is a prevailing 'white' light to which the darkness defers: 'the rays of the gas-lamps…gained ascendancy, and threw over everything a fitful and garish lustre. All was dark yet splendid'.[172] The observer refers to 'the world of light'[173] conferred upon the scene. Poe's technique of creating opaque, homogeneous backgrounds (sheets of rain or thick humid fog that hangs over the city) against which the dilations and contractions of the man of the crowd are set, resembles that which yields the framed spaces of Bacon's triptych panels, or Ferneyhough's metrical frames which, in spite of their spatial separation (and that of the figures they contain), unite rhythmically. The disappearance of Poe's man of the crowd, a figure, into the night – his 'fall' – is intensified by the selfsame disappearance of the night (the 'colour-field') into the white

---

[168] *Ibid.*, 171
[169] *Ibid.*, 168
[170] Cited *Ibid.*, 167
[171] Ferneyhough (TT) 1995: 44

light of time itself, rhythm has become figure: 'a second turn brought us into a square, brilliantly lighted'.[174]

A musical equivalent of such blindness is deafness: Carolyn Abbate argues that operatic characters 'often suffer from deafness – they do not hear the music that is the ambient fluid of their music-drowned world'.[175] Music is a constant for them: we watch, or rather hear them – they themselves do not hear. Like Poe's narrator whose 'blindness' necessitates his physical, energic and tactile experience of the force of the crowd, the protagonist of Mahler's Second Symphony (third movement), described by Abbate as standing outside a room looking in at dancers waltzing, but unable to hear the music himself, registers the physicality of the rhythm, the gestures of the bodies, and measures them against his own motionlessness and constant position.

Of figurative images and their associated narratives, stories and illustrations, Bacon argues that 'they are what is seen, until finally one sees nothing else':[176] such is representation, which suppresses the figural. *This* is an experience of blindness that can be shared by the conventional figurative painter, the composer of clichés, the viewer, listener and performer. How is it then, that the "modern" eye regains the power of vision, how can we come to know time sensuously, and thus, as Ferneyhough suggests, know ourselves? Deleuze asserts that in the case of the rhythmic sensation that circulates through the triptych, 'the fact itself, this pictorial fact that has come from the hand, is the

---

[172] Poe 1975: 478
[173] *Ibid.*
[174] *Ibid.*, 479
[175] Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) p. 119
[176] David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987) p. 30

formation of a third eye, a haptic eye, a haptic vision of the eye, this new clarity'.[177] 'We will', he assures us, 'capture the fact, just as we will "seize hold of life".'[178] Two possible 'levels' at which the witness is vital to the concrete expression of time in Bacon and Ferneyhough's works have already been considered. These are, firstly, the rhythm-witness, a figure-body or event-object that marks the 'variable forces of flowing time'[179] (as well as the time of Lyotard's 'event'); and secondly, the uniting-witness, a uniform colour-field or homogeneous musical background that, along with the counter force of separation (between panels or metric frames), palpably sustains 'the eternal force of an unchanging time'.[180] I now propose a third level of witness, the 'third eye' that forces the painter and composer to seize hold of time – with manual means (Ferneyhough's interruptive polyphony, Bacon's thrown paint) – and which in turn 'invests and traverses the spectator',[181] listener or performer. One does not listen to this music detachedly, any more than one can perform it so: the composer's self-awareness, brought to bear through the tactility of his experience of time, extends to his audience, requiring of it the same intuitive and multisensible responses as the material demands of him.

If, in order to bring about a figural presence one must cover the distance of a Sahara by means of a diagram it follows that, in order to liberate the figure and raise the sensation to rhythm itself, one must experience the time of an *aeon*[182] by means of a hierarchy of witnesses. The last of these might be called the 'inner witness' – the third

---

[177] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 161.
[178] *Ibid.*
[179] *Ibid.*
[180] *Ibid.*
[181] *Ibid.*, 126. Citing Henri Maldiney, *Regard, Parole, Espace* (Lausanne: Éditions l'Age d'Homme, 1973) pp. 197-198
[182] Deleuze, trans. Smith (LS) 2003: 85

eye: 'it is as if the duality of the tactile and the optical were surpassed visually in this haptic function'.[183]

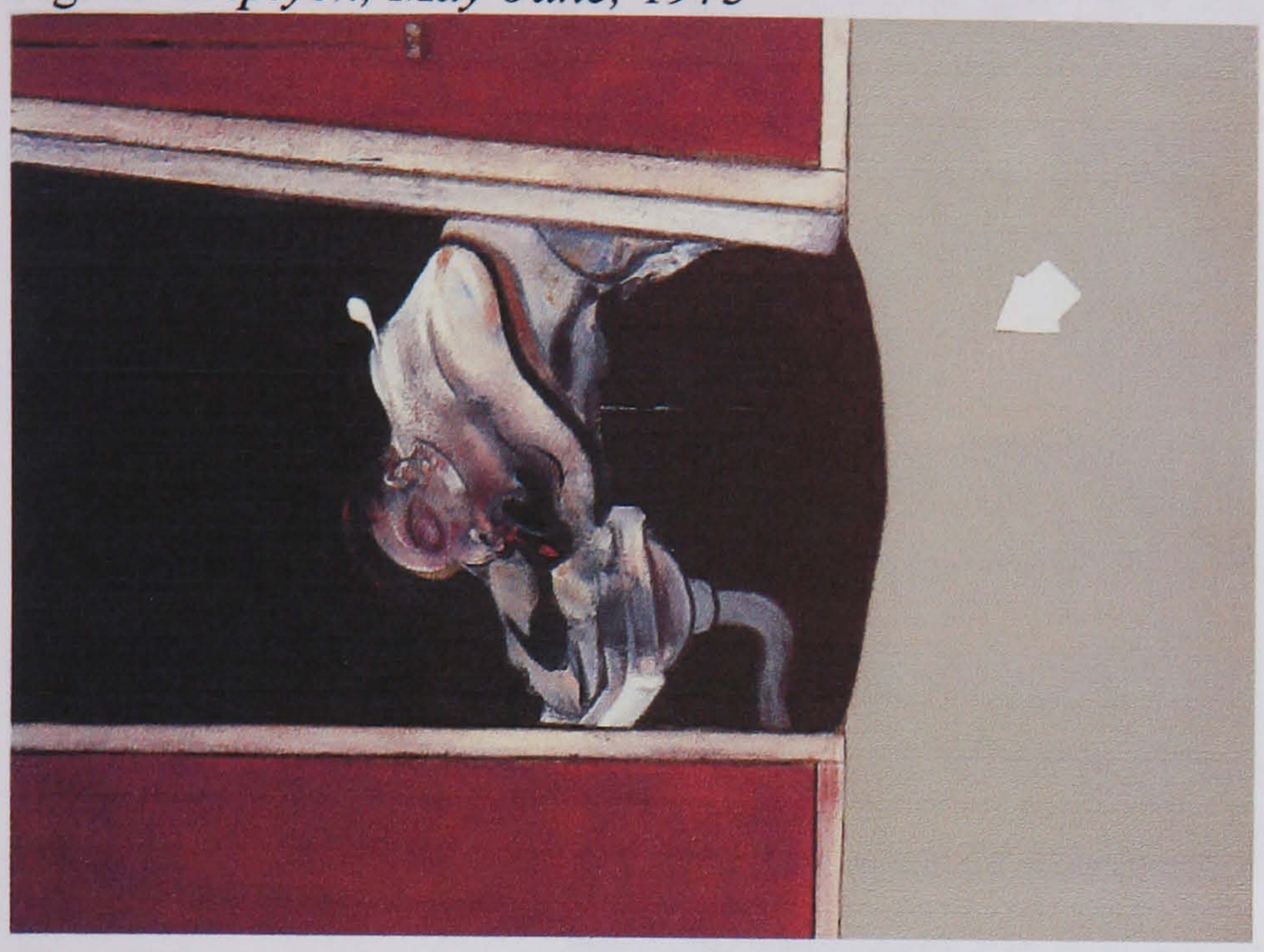
* * *

Deleuze's monograph begins from Bacon's own assertion that the viewer of his paintings must experience the sensation of the figure – of its flesh and energy – without first attempting to rationalise the image, to make sense of it other than viscerally. This thesis ends with the assertion that it is, in fact, the artwork that 'watches' us. It bears witness to the human body, the human experience of space, and marks time in terms of tactile rhythm – that same rhythm that sustains human life. Ultimately, it is not through the corporeal engagement of the eye with the artwork (in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's sense) that one perceives the body: the corporeality of the eye is 'returned' to us by the artwork – and functions all the more perceptively, profoundly – for its having been lodged deep with musical or painted material itself, the 'distance of a Sahara' and 'the time of an *aeon*' away.

---

[183] *Ibid.*, 161

Fig. 19 *Triptych, May-June,* 1973



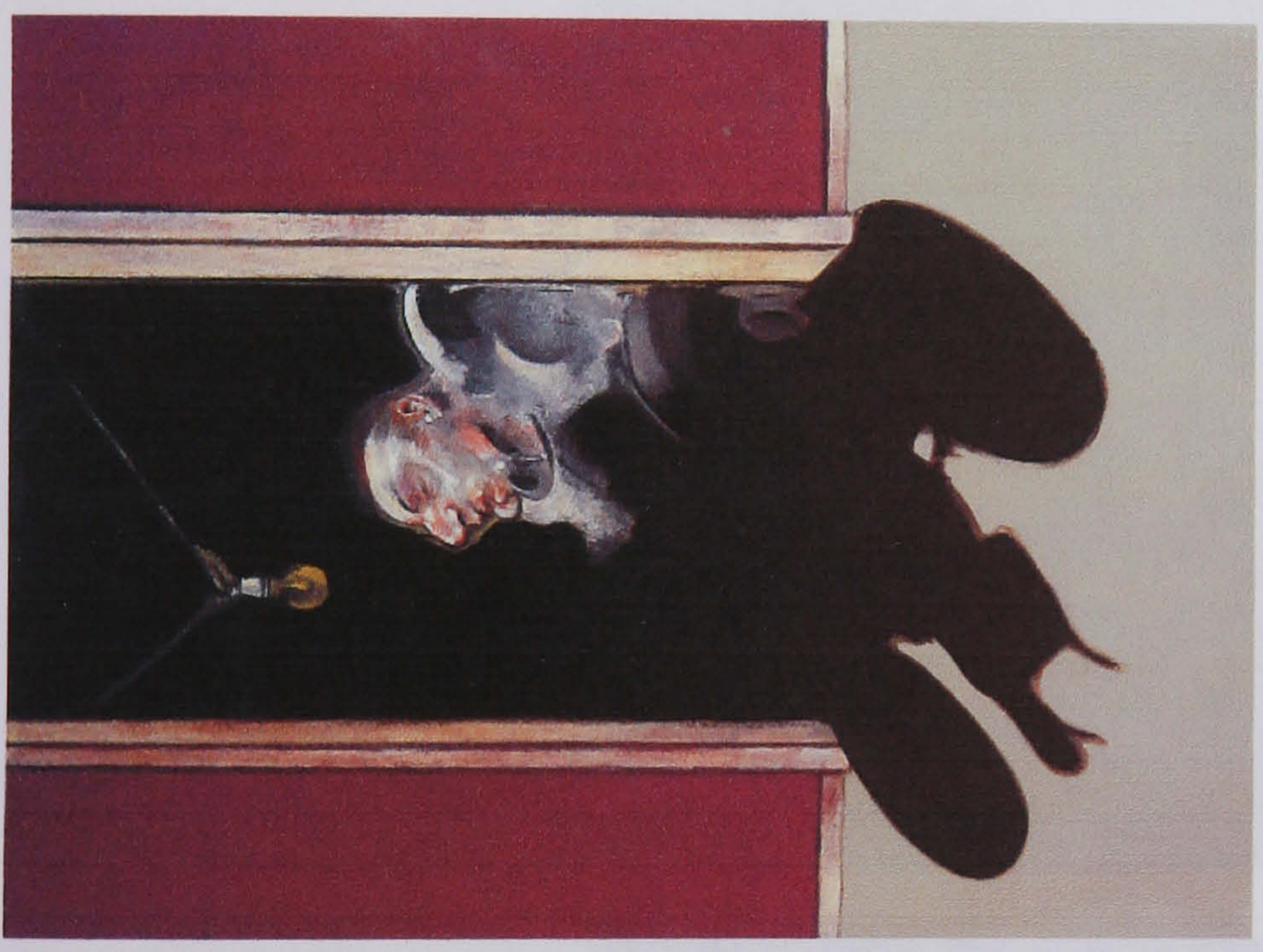






Fig. 20 *Three Studies of the Male Back*, 1970



Fig. 23 *Two Figures Lying on a Bed with Attendants,* 1968

# Bibliography


Abbate, Carolyn. *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991)

Adorno, Theodor W. *Aesthetic Theory*, ed. and trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Athlone Press, 1999)

_____*Essays on Music*, selected, with introduction, commentary, and notes by Richard Leppert and new translations by Susan H. Gillespie (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif.: University of California Press, 2002)

_____*Hegel: Three Studies* trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1999)

_____*Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1992)

_____*Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B Ashton (New York: Seabury Press, and London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973)

_____'On Some Relationships Between Music and Painting', trans. Susan Gillespie, *Musical Quarterly* 79 no.1 (Spring 1995) pp. 66-79

_____*Philosophy of Modern Music* trans. Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster (London: Sheed and Ward, 1973)

_____*Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997)

_____*Quasi una Fantasia, Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1998)

_____*Sound Figures*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999)

Andersson, Magnus. 'Considérations d'un interprète' in *Contrechamps* no. 8 (Paris: Éditions l'Age d'Homme, February 1988) pp. 128-138

Archimbaud, Michel. *Francis Bacon in Conversation with Michel Archimbaud* (London: Phaïdon Press, 1993). Translation of *Francis Bacon, entretiens avec Michel Archimbaud* (Paris: Jean-Claude Lattès, 1992)

Artaud, Antonin. 'The body is the body', trans. Roger McKeen, *Semiotext(e)* vol. 2, no. 3 (1977) pp. 38-39

Artaud, Pierre-Yves. 'Unity Capsule, une explosion de quinze minutes' in *Entretemps* no. 3 (Paris: February, 1987) pp. 107-114

Artaud, Pierre-Yves and Geay, Gérard. *Flûtes au present/Present Day Flutes*, introduced by Olivier Messiaen (Paris: Éditions Jobert and Éditions Musicales Transatlantiques-Paris, 1980). Bilingual edition.

Ashbery, John. *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1977)

Badiou, Alain. *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Oliver Feltham and Justin Clemens (London and New York: Continuum Press, n.d. [after 2001])

Barthes, Roland. *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977)

_____ *The Responsibility of Forms*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif.: University of California Press, 1991)

_____ *Writing Degree Zero*, trans. A. Lavers and C. Smith (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967)

Baudelaire, Charles. *Flowers of Evil and Other Works/Les Fleurs du mal et oeuvres choisies: A Dual-Language Book*, ed. and trans. Wallace Fowlie (New York: Dover Publications, 1992)

Bauer, Karin. *Adorno's Nietzschean Narratives: Critiques of Ideology, Readings of Wagner* (Albany, NJ.: State University of New York Press, 1999)

Beckett, Samuel. *Proust and three dialogues with Georges Duthuit* (London: Calder & Boyars, 1965)

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*, ed. with Introduction by Hannah Arendt and trans. Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico Press, 1999)

Bennington, Geoffrey. *Lyotard: Writing the Event* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988)

Bergson, Henri. *Duration and Simultaneity*, ed. with an introduction by Robin Durie. Supplementary appendices trans. Mark Lewis and Robin Durie (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 1999)

_____*Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 2002). Authorised translation made from the 5th (rev.) ed. of *Matière et mémoire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1908)

Bird, Madelaine. *Brian Ferneyhough: The Aesthetics of Complexity*, BA Diss. (Dartington College of Arts, 1987). Includes an unpublished interview with Brian Ferneyhough.

Bloom, Harold. 'Poetic origins and final phases' in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge (New York: Longman, 1988) pp. 240-252

_____*The Anxiety of Influence: a theory of poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

1973)

Bogue, Ronald. *Deleuze on Music, Painting and the Arts* (London: Routledge, 2003)

Bonnet, Antoine and Nicolas, François. 'Franco Donatoni, une figure' in *Entretemps* no. 2 (Paris: November 1986) pp. 63-68

Borges, Jorge Luis. *Labyrinths*, ed. Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby (London: Penguin Books, 1970)

Boulez, Pierre. 'L'écriture du musician, le regard du sourd?' *Critique* no. 408 (1981)

_____ *Penser la musique aujourd'hui* (Paris: Gonthier, 1963). Translated as *Boulez on Music Today*, trans. Susan Bradshaw and Richard Rodney Bennett (London: Faber & Faber, 1971)

Bowie, Andrew. *From Romanticism to Critical Theory: the Philosophy of German Literary Theory* (London: Routledge, 1997)

Brighton, Andrew. *Francis Bacon* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 2001)

Brower, Candace. 'A Cognitive Theory of Musical Meaning' in *Journal of Music Theory* no. 40-41 (1996-1997) pp. 323-379

Buchanan, Ian and Colebrook, Claire (eds.) *Deleuze and Feminist Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2000)

Buck-Morss, Susan. *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989)

_____ *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt Institute* (Hassocks, Eng.: Harvester Press, 1977)

Bürger, Peter. *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw, Foreword by Jochen Schulte-Sasse (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984)

Burke, Edmund. *A Philosophical Enquiry*, ed. Adam Phillips (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)

Buydens, Mireille. *Sahara: L'Esthétique de Gilles Deleuze* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1990)

Cahoone, Lawrence (ed.) *From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology*. Expanded 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003)

Changeux, Jean-Pierre and Ricoeur, Paul. *What Makes Us Think? A Neuroscientist and a Philosopher Argue about Ethics, Human Nature, and the Brain*, trans. M.B.DeBevoise (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000). Translation of *Ce qui nous fait penser: la nature et la regle* (Éditions Odile Jacob, 1998)

Clements, Andrew. 'Without Maps', CD insert text for *Wolfgang Rihm: Streichquartette III, VIII, V*, Arditti String Quartet, Auvidis/Naïve MO 782134 (2000). No rec. date.

Cody, Joshua. 'Brian Ferneyhough in Conversation with Joshua Cody' (Website: http://www.sospeso.com/contents/articles/ferneyhough_p1.html, 1996)

Cohen, Tom (ed.) *Jacques Derrida and the Humanities: A Critical Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

Colebrook, Claire. *Gilles Deleuze* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) [Volume in series 'Routledge Critical Thinkers' ed. Robert Eaglestone]

Connor, Steven. *Postmodernist Culture: An Introduction to Theories of the Contemporary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1989)

Cooper, David (ed.) *A Companion to Aesthetics* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992)

_____ (ed.) *Aesthetics: The Classic Readings* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1997)

Cottingham, John. *Reason, Will, and Sensation: Studies in Descartes' Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994)

Cresti, Renzo. *Franco Donatoni* (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 1982)

Critchley, Simon and Schroeder, William R (eds.) *A Companion to Continental Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998)

Dällenbach, Lucien. *The Mirror in the Text*, trans. Jeremy Whiteley with Emma Hughes (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1989)

Deleuze, Gilles. ''Appreciation' of Jean-François Lyotard's *Discours, figure*' in *La Quinzaine Littéraire* 140 (1st May, 1972) p. 19

_____'Books', trans. Lisa Liebmann in *Artforum* (January 1984) pp. 68-69. Reproduced as 'Author's Preface to the English Edition', *Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (see below).

_____'Boulez, Proust et les temps: "occuper sans compter"' in Claude Samuel ed. *Éclats/Boulez* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1986) pp. 98-100

_____*Cinema-1: L'Image-mouvement* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1983). Translated as: *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Athlone and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986)

_____*Cinema-2: L'Image-temps* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1985). Translated as: *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Athlone and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989)

_____*Critique et clinique* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1993). Translated as: *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco

(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997)

_____*Difference et repetition*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968).

Translated as: *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Athlone Press and New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)

_____*Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation*, coll. 'La vue le texte,' 1. 2 vol. (Paris: Éditions de la Différence, 1981 and revised edition, 1984). [Vol. 1 is text only. Vol. II contains only reproductions of Bacon's paintings. 1984 edition retains vol. 1 unchanged. Vol II contains more reproductions than original edition]. Translated as: *Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation*, (vol. 1 only) trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum Press, 2003). Translated extracts from chapters I, III, IV and VI published as 'Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation' in *Flash Art* 112 (May 1983) pp. 8-16. See also 'Interpretations of the Body: A New Power of Laughter for the Living' in *Art International* 8 (Autumn 1989) pp. 34-40. Extracts are also included in 'Figurabili Francis Bacon', XLV *Bienniale di Venezia* [catalogue], Museo Correr (Venice 13 June-10 October, 1993). Pages 27-31 and 65-71 of the original French edition translated by Constantin V. Boundas and Jaqueline R. Code in Boundas, ed. *The Deleuze Reader* (see above).

_____*Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation*, coll. 'L'ordre philosophique', dir. Alain Badiou and Barbara Cassin (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, May 2002). [Edition in 1 volume including reproductions of select paintings and Deleuze's text.]

_____ 'He Stuttered', *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) pp. 107-114

_____*La Philosophie critique de Kant: Doctrine des facultés*, (Paris: Presses

Universitaires de France, 1963). Translated as: *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Athlone Press and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984)

_____*Le Bergsonisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966). Translated as: *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1988, 2002)

_____*Le Pli. Leibniz et le baroque*, coll. 'critique'. (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1988). Translated as: *The Fold*: *Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (London: Athlone Press, 2001)

_____*Logique du Sens* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1969). Translated as: *The Logic of Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale (London: Athlone Press, 1990, 2001)

_____*Nietzsche et la philosophie*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962). Translated as: *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (London: Athlone Press and New York: Columbia University Press, 1983 and London: Continuum, 2002)

_____*Proust et les signes* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970). Translated as: *Proust and Signs*, rev. ed. and trans. Richard Howard (London: Athlone Press, 2000)

_____'L'Épuisé', with Samuel Beckett, *Quad et autre pieces pour la television, suivi de L'Épuisé* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1992). Translated as: 'The Exhausted', trans. Anthony Uhlmann in *Substance* vol. 24, no. 3 (1995) pp. 3-28. Also in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco

(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) pp. 152-174

_____*The Deleuze Reader*, ed. With an introduction by Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993)

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix. *Capitalisme et schizophrénie tome I: l'Anti-Oedipe* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1972 1st ed.) 2nd ed. 1973 adds appendix 'Bilan Programme pour machines-désirantes' from *Minuit 2* (January 1973) pp. 1-25. Book translated as: *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane with a Preface by Michel Foucault (New York: Viking Press, 1977 and London: Athlone Press, 1984). Appendix translated as: 'Balance Sheet-Program for Desiring Machines' in *Semiotext(e): Anti-Oedipus* vol. 2, no. 3 (1977) pp. 117-135

_____*Capitalisme et schizophrénie tome 2: Mille plateaux* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1980). Translated as: *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987 and London: Athlone Press, 1988)

_____*Qu'est-ce-que la philosophie?* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1991). Translated as: *What is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)

Deleuze, Gilles and Parnet, Claire. *Dialogues* (Paris: Flammarion, 1977). Translated as: *Dialogues*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987)

Deliège, Célestin (& Pierre Boulez) *Par volonté et par hasard,* entretiens avec Célestin Deliège (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1975)

de Man, Paul. *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1979)

_____'The resistance to theory' in *Modern criticism and Theory: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge (New York: Longman, 1988) pp. 354-371

Derrida, Jacques. *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1967). Translated as: *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago Ill.: University of Chicago Press and London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978)

_____*De la Grammatologie* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1967). Translated as: *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, Maryland and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1976)

_____*The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1987)

Des Chene, Dennis. *Physiologia: Natural Philosophy in Late Aristotelian and Cartesian Thought* (New York: Cornell Paperbacks, 2000)

Descombes, Vincent. *Le Même et L'Autre* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1979). Translated as *Modern French Philosophy*, trans. L. Scott-Fox and J.M.Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980)

Dews, Peter. *Logics of Disintegration: Post-Structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory* (London and New York: Verso, 1987)

Donatoni, Franco speaking to François Nicolas. 'On compose pour se composer' in *Entretemps* no. 2 (Paris: November 1986) pp. 87-94

Donatoni, Franco. 'Processus et figure', trans. Maria Cippolone in *Entretemps* no. 2 (Paris: November 1986) pp. 95-99

Elliott, Brian. 'The Critical Space of Modern Art – Rilke, Heidegger & Husserl'. Special Presentations 2. *Conference on Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art* (University of Warwick, May 11th 2002)

Elster, Jon. *Karl Marx: A Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)

Esslin, Martin. *Artaud* (Great Britain: Fontana/Collins, 1976)

Farson, Daniel. *The Gilded Gutter Life of Francis Bacon* (London: Vintage, 1994)

Ferneyhough, Brian. 'Barbarians at the Gates'. Keynote Address. *Second Biennial International Conference on Twentieth-Century Music* (Goldsmith's College London, 28 June-1 July, 2001)

_____*Collected Writings*, eds. James Boros and Richard Toop (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995)

_____'La «musique informelle» (à partir d'une lecture d'Adorno)', trans. Peter Szendy, in *Brian Ferneyhough*, coll. 'Compositeurs d'aujourd'hui' (Paris: Éditions Ircam, 1999) pp. 109-117. Originally delivered (in English) as 'Adorno Presentation', as keynote address to the International Conference on Twentieth Century Music, Goldsmith's College, London on 21 February 1998.

_____'Presentation du *Trio à cordes*', trans. Peter Szendy, in *Brian Ferneyhough*, coll. 'Compositeurs d'aujourd'hui' (Paris: Éditions Ircam, 1999). Originally delivered as a lecture (in English) during the composition course at l'abbaye de Royaumont, 1996) pp. 49-59

Ferrari, Enrique Lafuente. *Velàzquez: Étude Biographique et Critique*, trans. Jacques Lassaigne (Geneva: Éditions d'Art Albert Skira, 1960)

Ficacci, Luigi. *Bacon* (Cologne: Taschen, 2003)

Garnett JR. Christopher Browne. *The Kantian Philosophy of Space* (Port Washington, NY.: Kennikat Press/ Columbia University Press, 1965)

Genette, Gérard. *Figures I*, coll. 'Tel Quel' dir. Philippe Sollers (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966)

_____*Figures II: essais*, coll. 'Tel Quel' dir. Philippe Sollers (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1969)

_____*Figures III*, coll. 'Poétique' dir. Hélène Cixous, Gérard Genette and Tzvetan Todorov (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972)

_____'Structuralism and Literary Criticism' in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Longman, 1988) pp. 62-78

Gillespie, Susan H. 'Translating Adorno: Language, Music, and Performance', *The Musical Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (Spring 1995) pp. 55-65

Glusberg, Jorge (ed.) 'Deconstruction: a Student Guide', an issue of the *Journal of Architectural Theory and Criticism*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1991).

Gombrich, Ernst Hans. *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, 5th ed. (London: Phaïdon, 1977)

Goodman, Nelson. *Languages of Art: an Approach to a Theory of Symbols*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1976)

Gottwald, Clytus. 'Brian Ferneyhough ou la métaphysique du positivisme', trans. Carlo Russi in *Contrechamps* no. 8 (February 1988). See entry under author Magnus Andersson for publisher details.

Grosz, Elizabeth. 'A Thousand Tiny Sexes: Feminism and Rhizomatics' in Boundas

V. and Olkowski D eds. *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 1994) pp. 187-210

Hails, John. *A brief survey of temporal, metric, and rhythmic practices within Brian Ferneyhough's Carceri d'Invenzione III*. MA Diss. University of Huddersfield, 2001

Harrison, Charles and Wood, Paul (eds.) *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992)

Harvey, Jonathan. 'Brian Ferneyhough', *Musical Times* 120 no. 1639 (1979)

Hatten, Robert S. 'Musical Gesture', eight lectures available from the *Cyber Semiotic Institute* (Website: http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/epc/srb/cyber/hat1.html, Summer 2003). [N.B. where 1 appears in url, substitute no.s 2-8 for the remaining lectures in series]

Hayman, Ronald. *Artaud and After* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977)

Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Perennial, 2001)

Hübler, Klaus K. 'Images de la pensée, en mouvement' in *Contrechamps* no. 8 (February 1988) pp. 41-45.

Jencks, Charles. *What is Post-Modernism?* 3rd rev. ed. (London: Academy Éditions, 1989)

Johnson, Mark. *The Body in the Mind* (Chicago Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1987)

Jones, Rachel. '"Viral Landscapes": Lyotard, Chadwick and the Logic of Dissimulation', Special Presentation, *Conference on Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art* (University of Warwick, May 11th 2002)

Jones, Rachel and Rehberg, Andrea (eds.) *Readings in Kant's Philosophy* (Manchester:

Clinamen Press, 2000)

Kahnweiler, Daniel-Henry. *Confessions esthétiques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1963)

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Judgement*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing, 1987)

Kaspar, Ralf. 'Rihm orchestral works and chamber music', trans. Steven Lindberg. CD insert text for *Rihm: Orchestral Works and Chamber Music*, Col Legno: LC 07909 (2000) pp. 4-5

Kennedy, Barbara M. *Deleuze and Cinema: The Aesthetics of Sensation* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2000)

Köhler, Wolfgang. *Gestalt Psychology: An Introduction to New Concepts in Modern Psychology*, reissue (New York: Liveright, 1992)

Köhler, W & Wallach, H. 'Figural After-Effects: An Investigation of Visual Processes', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 88 (1944) pp. 269-357

Kristeva, Julia. *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller with an introduction by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984)

_____*The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986)

Lacan, Jacques. 'The Insistence of the letter in the Unconscious' in *Modern Criticism and Theory*, ed. David Lodge, trans. Jan Miel (New York: Longman, 1988) pp. 79-106

Laclotte, Michel (dir.) *Dictionnaire des grandes peintres* (Paris: Librarie Larousse, 1976). [Vol. I from Aachen to Lucas de Leyde. Vol. II from Luini to Zurbarán]

Lakoff, George. *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1987)

Lakoff, George and Johnson, Mark. *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1980)

_____*Philosophy in the Flesh: the Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999)

Lawrence, D.H. "Introduction to These Paintings", *Phoenix: the Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence, 1936*, ed. Edward McDonald (New York: Viking Press, 1972) pp. 578-9

Lechte, John. *Julia Kristeva* (London: Routledge, 1990)

_____*Fifty Key Contemporary Thinkers: from Structuralism to Postmodernity* (London: Routledge, 1994) [Book in a series: 'Critics of the Twentieth Century', general ed. Christopher Norris]

Leiris, Michel. *Francis Bacon, face et profil* (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 2004)

Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim. *Laocoön: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, trans. with introduction & notes, Edward Allen McCormick (Baltimore, MD.: John Hopkins University Press, 1984)

Lyotard, Jean-François. 'A Few Words to Sing', trans. Leonard R. Lawlor in *Music/Ideology: Resisting the Aesthetic*, ed. Adam Krims (Amsterdam: G & B Arts International, 1998) pp. 15-36

_____'Defining the Postmodern', ed. L. Appignanesi in *Postmodernism: ICA documents* 4 (1986) pp. 6-7

_____*Des dispositifs pulsionnels* (Paris: Galilee, 1994)

_____*Discours, figure* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971). A section of this work, 'Le Travail du rêve ne pense pas' translated as: 'The Dream Work does not Think', in Andrew

Benjamin (ed.) *The Lyotard Reader* (see below) pp. 19-55.

_____*Heidegger et 'les juifs'* (Paris: Galilée, 1988)

_____*La Condition postmoderne: rapport sur le savoir* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1979). Translated as: *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi with a foreword by Frederic Jameson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984)

_____*L'économie libidinale* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1974). Translated as: *Libidinal Economy*, trans. Iain Hamilton Grant (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1993)

_____*Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime: Kant's Critique of Judgement* trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994)

_____*Phenomenology*, trans. Brian Beakley with a foreword by Gayle L. Ormiston (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991)

_____*The Lyotard Reader*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989)

_____'The Sublime and the Avant-Garde' in *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988) pp. 89-107

Maldiney, Henri. *Regard, Parole, Espace* (Lausanne: Éditions I'Age d'Homme, 1973)

Magee, Brian. *Wagner and Philosophy* (London and New York: Penguin Press, 2000)

Mahnkopf, Claus-Steffen. 'Vers une musique figurelle?' trans. Carlo Russi, in *Contrechamps* no. 8 (February 1988) pp. 45-63.

Massumi, Brian (ed.) *A Shock to Thought: Expression after Deleuze and Guattari*

(London and New York: Routledge, 2002)

_____*Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC.: Duke University Press, 2002) [Volume in a series: 'Post-Contemporary Interventions' eds. Stanley Fish and Frederic Jameson]

McLellan, David. *Ideology*, 2nd ed. (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1995). [Book in a series, 'Concepts in the Social Sciences', series ed. Frank Parkin]

_____*Marxism After Marx*, 3rd ed. (London: Macmillan Press, 1998)

Melchiorre, Alessandro. 'Le labyrinthe de Ferneyhough' in *Entretemps* no. 3 (Paris: February 1987) pp. 69-89

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 'Cézanne's Doubt' (1945) in *Sense and Non-Sense*, trans. Hubert L and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1964). Also in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*, ed. G. A. Johnson (Evanston Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1994)

_____'Eye and Mind' (1945) in *The Primacy of Perception*: *and Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1964)

_____*The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1968)

_____*Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945). Translated as: *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962)

Monelle, Raymond. *Linguistics and Semiotics in Music* (Harwood Academic Publishers, 1992). [Book in a series, 'Contemporary Music Studies: Vol 5', ed. Nigel

Osborne]

_____*The Sense of Music: Semiotic Essays* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 2000)

Moore, F.C.T. *Bergson: Thinking Backwards* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Moore, Gregory. 'Art and Evolution: Nietzsche's Physiological Aesthetics' in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* vol. 10, no. 1 (Routledge: 2002) pp. 109-126

Murphy, Timothy S. 'Bibliography of the works of Gilles Deleuze' in Paul Patton ed. *Deleuze: A Critical Reader* (See Below)

Murray, Chris (ed.) *Key Writers on Art: the Twentieth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003)

(n. a.). *Aesthetics and Politics*, translations ed. Ronald Taylor, with an afterword by Frederic Jameson (London: NLB, 1977). Essays and letters by Ernst Bloch, Georg Lukàcs, Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno.

(n. a.) *Francis Bacon* (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 1996). Catalogue for the exhibition 'Francis Bacon, Centre national d'art et de culture Georges Pompidou 27 Juin-14 Octobre, 1996'. Includes 'Avant-propos', 'Essais' (various authors), 'Catalogue des oeuvres', 'Anthologie' (short critiques, various authors) and 'Bibliographie' of works on Bacon.

(n. a.). 'Karlheinz Stockhausen', *Contrechamps* no. special (Paris: Realisé avec le Festival d'Automne à Paris, 1988). Stockhausen: *textes et entretiens*,

*correspondance avec Boulez. Études de* Albèra, Nunes, Ferneyhough, Heidsieck, Kurtz, Piencikovski, Nicolas.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Hegel: The Restlessness of the Negative*, trans. Jason Smith and Steven Miller (Minneapolis, MN.: University of Minnesota Press, 2002). Translation of *Hegel: L'inquiétitude du négatif* (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 1997)

Nicolas, François. 'L'éloge de la complexité' in *Entretemps* no. 3 (Paris: February 1987) pp. 55-68

_____'Une écoute *à l'oeuvre*: d'un moment favori dans *La Chûte d'Icare*' in *Brian Ferneyhough*, coll. 'Compositeurs d'aujourd'hui' (Paris: Éditions Ircam, 1999) pp. 27-45

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Douglas Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Norris, Christopher. *Deconstruction* 3rd rev. ed. (London: Routledge, 2002)

O'Connor, Brian (ed.) *The Adorno Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000)

Olkowski, Dorothea. *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1999)

Paddison, Max. *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

_____*Adorno, Modernism and Mass Culture* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1996)

_____'Considérations critiques sur la musique et les relations sociales: vers une théorie de la médiation' in Irène Deliège and Max Paddison eds. *Musique Contemporaine: Perspectives théoriques et philosophiques* (Liège: Mardaga, 2001)

_____ 'The Language-Character of Music: Some Motifs in Adorno,' *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 116 (1991) pp.267-279

Patton, Paul (ed.) *Deleuze: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996)

Pätzold, Cordula. *'Carceri d'Invenzione' von Brian Ferneyhough: kompositionstechnische und höranalytische Aspekte*. Diss. Universität Freiburg, 2002. (Website Freiburger Dokumentenserver: http://www.freidok.uni-freiburg.de/volltexte/583, 2002)

Plato. *The Republic,* 2nd rev. ed., trans. Desmond Lee (London: Penguin Books, 1974)

Poe, Edgar Allen. 'The Man of the Crowd' in *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975) pp. 475-481

Poirier, Alain. 'Trajectoires' in *Entretemps* no. 2 (Paris: November, 1986) pp. 69-74

Polan, Dana. 'Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation', *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy,* eds. V Boundas and D Olkowski, (New York: Routledge, 1994) pp. 229-254

Potter, Keith. 'Brian Ferneyhough' in *Contact* no. 20 (1979) pp. 4-5

_____'Sonatas for String Quartet' in *Contact* no. 20 (1979) pp. 5-9x

Prat, Jean-Louis. *Bacon-Freud: Expressions* (Paris: Fondation Maeght, 1995)

Rainbow, Paul (ed.) *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought* (London: Penguin Books, 1991)

Rajchman, John. *The Deleuze Connections* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000)

Readings, Bill. *Introducing Lyotard: Art and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1991) [Book in a series: 'Critics of the Twentieth Century', general ed. Christopher Norris]

Redgate, Roger. 'Ferneyhough as Teacher' in *Contemporary Music Review* vol. 13, no. 1

(1995) pp. 19-21

Ricoeur, Paul. *La métaphore vive* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1975). Translated as: *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans. Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello, SJ (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1977 and London: Routledge, 2003)

Rochlitz, Rainer. *The Disenchantment of Art: The Philosophy of Walter Benjamin*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (London: Guilford Press, 1998)

Russell, John. *Francis Bacon* rev. ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1979) [Volume in series: 'World of Art', 1979)]

Saslaw, Janna. 'Forces, Containers, and Paths: The Role of Body-Derived Image Schemas in the Conceptualization of Music' in *Journal of Musical Theory* no. 40-41 (1996-1997) pp. 217-243

Saussure, Ferdinand de. 'Nature of the Linguistic Sign' in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge, trans. Roy Harris (New York: Longman, 1988) pp. 1-14

Schick, Steven. 'Developing an Interpretative Context: Learning Brian Ferneyhough's *Bone Alphabet*' in *Perspectives of New Music* vol. 32 no. 1 (1994) pp. 132-153

Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The World as Will and Idea*. Abridged in One Volume, ed. David Berman, trans. Jill Berman (London: Everyman, 1995). [Book in a series, 'Everyman Philosophy series', general ed. David Berman]

Schulte, Joachim. *Experience and Expression: Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). Translation from the German by the author.

Sebeok, Thomas. *Signs: An Introduction to Semiotics* 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of

Toronto Press, 2001)

Shlovsky, Victor. 'Art as Technique' in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge, trans. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (New York: Longman, 1988) pp. 15-30

Simmons, Alison. 'Changing the Cartesian Mind: Leibniz on Sensation, Representation and Consciousness', *The Philosophical Review* vol. 110 (2001) pp. 31-75

Soll, Ivan. *An Introduction to Hegel's Metaphysics* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1969)

Solomon, Robert C. *Continental Philosophy since 1750: the Rise and Fall of the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). [Volume in a series, 'A History of Western Philosophy: 7', general eds. Christopher Butler, Robert Evans and John Skorupski]

Spinoza, Benedict de. *Ethics*, ed. and trans. Edwin Curley (New York: Penguin Books, 1996)

Spitzer, Michael. *Metaphor and Musical Thought* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2004)

_____ 'The Metaphor of Musical Space' in *Musicae Scientiae* vol. VII, no. 1 (Spring 2003) pp. 101-117

Stockhausen, Karlheinz. 'How Time Passes', trans. Cornelius Cardew, *Die Reihe* no. 3, 'Musical Craftsmanship' (Theodore Presser Co. in association with Universal Edition, 1959) pp. 10-40

Sylvester, David. *Looking back at Francis Bacon* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000)

_____*The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon* 3rd ed. (London: Thames

and Hudson, 1987)

Texier, Marc. 'Le dernier des modernes' in *Brian Ferneyhough*, coll. 'Compositeurs d'aujourd'hui' (Paris: Éditions Ircam, 1999) pp. 9-25

Todorov, Tzvetan. *Theories of the Symbol*, trans. Catherine Porter (New York: Cornell University Press, 1982)

Toop, Richard. 'Brian Ferneyhough's Dungeon's of Invention', *Musical Times* cxxviii, No. 1737 (1987) 624-628

_____'Brian Ferneyhough's *Etudes Transcendentales*: A Composer's Diary (Part 1)', *Eonta*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1991) pp. 55-89

_____'Brian Ferneyhough's *Lemma-Icon-Epigram*', *Perspectives of New Music* 28, no. 2 (1990) pp. 52-100. Originally published as: 'Brian Ferneyhough's *Lemma-Icône-Epigramme*', *Contrechamps* no. 8, (Geneva: 1988) pp. 86-127

_____'Brian Ferneyhough's *Superscriptio*: A Conversation and an Analysis', *Contemporary Music Review* 13, no. 1 (London: 1995) pp. 3-17. Originally published as 'A propos de '*Superscriptio*': entretien avec Brian Ferneyhough; - *Superscriptio* pour flute piccolo solo: analyse', *Entretemps* no. 3 (Paris: February 1987) pp. 89-106

_____'Contre une théorie de la (nouvelle) complexité musicale', *Musique Contemporaine: Perspectives théoriques et philosophiques*, eds. Irène Deliège and Max Paddison (Liège: Mardaga, 2001)

_____'Four Facets of the New Complexity', *Contact* no. 32 (London: 1988) pp. 4-50

_____*Gyorgy Ligeti* (London: Phaïdon, 1999)

_____'J'ouvre et referme'?, *Musique Contemporaine: Perspectives théoriques et*

*philosophiques*, eds. Irène Deliège and Max Paddison (Liège: Mardaga, 2001) pp. 179-90

_____'Karlheinz Stockhausen: Da Kreuzspiel a Trans', *Atti dal terzo e quarto seminario di studi e ricerche sul linguaggio musicale* (Padua: 1975) pp. 58-86

_____'On Complexity', *Perspectives of New Music* 31, no. 1 (1993) pp. 42-57.
Originally published as: 'Mehr Uberzeugung als Theorie', *MusikTexte* vol. 35 (Cologne: 1990) pp. 6-12

_____'"Prima le parole…" (on the sketches for Ferneyhough's *Carceri d'Invenzione I-III*)', *Perspectives of New Music* 32, no. 1 (1994) pp. 155-175

Valéry, Paul. 'The Idea of Art', trans. R. Manheim in *Aesthetics*, ed. Harold Osborne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) pp. 25-31

van Alphen, Ernst. *Francis Bacon and the Loss of Self* (London: Reaktion Books, 1992)

_____ 'The Body Unbound: the Postmodern Aesthetics of Francis Bacon', *Word and Image*, vol. 7, no. 1 (London: January-March 1971) pp. 71-84

Wellbery, David. *Lessing's Laocoön: Semiotics and Aesthetics in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984)

Whittall, Arnold. *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999)

Williams, Alastair. 'Adorno and the Semantics of Modernism' in *Perspectives of New Music* 37, no. 2 (Summer 1999) pp. 29-50

_____*New Music and the Claims of Modernity* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1997)

Williams, Caroline. *Contemporary French Philosophy*: *Modernity and the Persistence of the Subject* (London and New Brunswick, NJ: Athlone Press, 2001)

Wright, Craig. 'Dufay's *Nuper rosarum flores*, King Solomon's Temple, and the Veneration of the Virgin', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 47 (1994) pp. 395-441

Yourcenar, Margaret. *The Dark Brain of Piranesi* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 1984)

**Scores Consulted**

Donatoni, Franco. *Nidi*, due pezzi per ottavino (Milan: Ristampa 1985, © G. Ricordi & C., 1979)

Ferneyhough, Brian. *Carceri d'Invenzione* (1980-1986). Seven works given in order of performance in the cycle.

_____*Superscriptio* for solo piccolo (London: Edition Peters no. 7289, © Hinrichsen Edition, Peters Edition Ltd., 1982)

_____*Carceri d'Invenzione I* for chamber orchestra (London: Edition Peters no. 7291, © Hinrichsen Edition, Peters Edition Ltd., 1983)

_____*INTERMEDIO alla ciaccona* for solo violin (London: Edition Peters no. 7346, © Hinrichsen Edition, Peters Edition Ltd., 1986)

_____*Carceri d'Invenzione IIa*, for obbligato flute and chamber orchestra (London: Edition Peters no. 7292a, © Hinrichsen Edition, Peters Edition Ltd., 1985). Two Further versions of this piece exist: *Carceri d'Invenzione IIb* for solo flute (1985), and *Carceri d'Invenzione IIc* for solo flute and pre-recorded tape (1987).

_____*Etudes transcendentales/Intermedio II* for flute, oboe, soprano, harpsichord and violoncello (London: Edition Peters no. 7310, © Hinrichsen Edition, Peters

Edition Ltd., 1987)

_____*Carceri d'Invenzione III* for fifteen wind instruments and percussion (London: Edition Peters no. 7293, © Hinrichsen Edition, Peters Edition Ltd., 1993)

_____*Mnemosyne* for bass flute and pre-recorded tape (London: Edition Peters no. 7347, © Hinrichsen Edition, Peters Edition Ltd., 1996)

_____*Mnemosyne*, version for nine bass flutes (London: Edition Peters no. 7347, © Hinrichsen Edition, Peters Edition Ltd., 1986)

_____*Fourth String Quartet* (London: Edition Peters no. 7367, © Hinrichsen Edition, Peters Edition Ltd., 1990)

_____*Lemma-Icon-Epigram* for solo piano (London: Edition Peters no. 7233, © Hinrichsen Edition, Peters Edition Ltd., 1981)

_____*Time and Motion Study II* for solo 'cello, delay tapes, modulation and extensive amplification (3 assistants) (London: Edition Peters no. 7223, © Hinrichsen Edition, Peters Edition Ltd., 1977)

Stockhausen, Karlheinz. *Kreuzspiel* for oboe, bass clarinet, piano and percussion (London: Universal Edition no. 13117 LW, © Universal Edition Ltd., 1960)