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Conceiving Virtuality: From Art To Technology

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Chapter 9

The Reality of the Virtual in Deleuze's Transcendental Empiricism



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Abstract Is virtual related with transcendental empiricism? If so, how and why? The aim of this approach is to conceptualize and problematize the reality of the virtual (not virtual reality) as a transition or a changing process through signs/images, like Bacon's image-sensation. Following a theoretical research, this paper explores and questions Deleuze's perspective about virtual as a part extracted from real and embedded in real. Deleuze's transcendental empiricism is critical to the conditions of possibility of experience proposed by Kant. Deleuze's perspective goes further and admits the virtual must be defined as a strictly part of the real. The virtual is fully determined and necessary; a virtual field represents the necessary conditions to actualize the actual experience.

9.1 Introduction

Le virtuel ne s'oppose pas au réel, mais seulement à l'actuel. *Le virtuel possède une pleine réalité, en tant que virtuel.* [...]

Le virtuel doit même être défini comme une stricte partie de l'objet réel.

Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et Répétition*.

We are presently living in a full age of development and improvement of the technique. As in the etymological sense of the Greek word *techne*, the term "technique" commonly means an art or regular way of making or doing something, satisfying human needs and changing the way of seeing and thinking reality. Innovative ways of making or doing things emerge permanently and, therefore, human experiences also change.

In a global and increasingly technological culture, it wouldn't be necessary to mention the development and improvement of the technique to emphasize the way of seeing, thinking and feeling reality, namely through images. Considering that (i)

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there have always been images and images exist before the technological development; (ii) there are different kinds of images with sufficient realism or intensity to make reality and virtuality perceptibly indistinct; and (iii) there are not only ways of seeing, as Berger (1972) states, but also “ways of making worlds”, according to Goodman (1978)—“making” in the poetic sense of producing (from the Greek *poien*, to produce) or creating something from nothing (to make an image of the world is to produce a “world”), thus it is enough and relevant to mention an idiosyncratic case: the painted images that give rise to a torrent of life and perception about human experience, rather than reality itself. This idiosyncratic case is that of Francis Bacon’s image-sensation as an art or stylistic way of making or doing something (not just art), i.e. a way of making visible and sensible human experience. Bacon’s paintings allow viewers to see and feel strong sensations. The artist is not interested in reality or the reproduction of reality; he simply shapes reality through painted, fixed and intensive images.

Deleuze is the philosopher of the virtual, according to Žižek (2004). What matters to Deleuze is not virtual reality, but the reality of the virtual. While virtual reality implies the idea of imitating reality and reproducing its experiences in an artificial medium, the reality of the virtual “stands for the reality of the virtual as such, for its real effects and consequences” (Žižek 2004).

Bacon’s case is the best example of Deleuze’s perspective about virtual, visibility and transcendental empiricism, which is the focus of this paper. The justification for this focus is due to the gradual transformation of culture through techniques as ways of making or doing something. Culture is transformed by technique in a global, technological (digital), and more and more visual culture. In such culture, technique is not only omnipresent in everyday life, but also exerts influence, ranging from the micro-chip and the particle accelerator to the broader field of the internet, video games and digital TV. Technique brings more specifically an unprecedented range of virtual reality devices, possibilities and software to be experienced for the contemporary common citizen.

Considering Deleuze’s (1985) “civilization of image” as a civilization of cliché (as well the ubiquity of images in the contemporary visual cultures), the relevance of this subject is justified by the current tendency of global cultures to become more and more visual and digital, eventually concealing reality, rather than being a medium to uncover it. If we live in a “civilization of image” or in “the age of the world picture”, according to Heidegger, it is the modern age in which the world has become a picture, i.e. a systematized and representable object of techno-scientific rationality. The “world picture” does not mean a picture of the world, but the world conceived and grasped as a picture (Heidegger 1977). For Heidegger, this phenomenon (tendency or pictorial turn) is a historical transformation equivalent to the Modern Age: “The world picture does not change from an earlier medieval one into a modern one, but rather the fact that the world becomes picture at all is what distinguishes the essence of the modern age” (Heidegger 1977).

There are many research questions, but the starting-question of this paper is: Is virtual related with transcendental empiricism? If so, how and why? This question raises a host of other questions: How images and virtuality affect our perception of

reality? How we continue to experience and perceive reality (and what surrounds us: other people, objects, images and all data we receive daily in several ways and means) in a more and more visual and digital culture? Are the effects of images on people indifferent whether they are real or virtual images and based on real or unreal referents? In what way the experience may be real and yet not actual in Deleuze's perspective? Why does the virtual necessarily stand in opposition to something that is only possible? What is the reality of the virtual?

In addition to this questioning, which guides both the approach and the discussion, the aims of this paper are (a) to argue the contemporaneity of Deleuze's transcendental empiricism relating the conceptions about the virtual and experience; and (b) to demonstrate the relevance of Deleuze's approach concerning the virtual. These are two small and close goals, because this approach is restricted to Deleuze's perspective on the virtual.

The strategy to do this is conceptual and reflexive. Firstly, the option is to clarify the concept of "virtual" and relate it to other equally important concepts (image, image-sensation, crystal-image, time, being, becoming, dynamics, intensity); secondly, to underline Deleuze's perspective about the virtual as the opposite from the common sense (for whom the virtual is linked with the potential and opposed to the real). Following a reflexive methodology, this research assumes the aporias subjacent to the prior questioning. Working within the framework of the virtual, this paper reports on a theoretical approach and the method adopted is a critical discussion about the virtual connected to Deleuze's transcendental empiricism.

9.2 When Virtual Is Real

Virtual is an odd-job word. The etymology of the word "virtual" is polysemic and equivocal. The origin of the word reveals that virtual comes from the medieval Latin *virtualis*, meaning energy, strength, power (to produce an effect), but also from the Latin *virtus*, *virtutis*, meaning human quality, courage, value, merit (as in the case of "possessing certain virtues", i.e. moral excellence). But virtual also means what exists as a "possibility of something"; what only exists in potency or as a faculty; not existing in reality or with a real effect; what may be, what may exist, happen or be practiced (a simulation of something created by electronic means). The "possible" is what may become a fact, what is capable of being used (have a function) or put into exercise.

This paper does not intend to approach the virtual reality, but the virtuality as a transition or transformer process from the actual or real to the virtual, i.e. the virtualization of reality (Deleuze 1968; Žižek 2004; Lévy 1995).

In *Différence et Répétition*, Deleuze emphasizes that the virtual is extracted from the real and it is also incorporated into the real. The virtual is not the opposite of the real, because the virtual enjoys a full reality. "Le virtuel ne s'oppose pas au réel, mais seulement à l'actuel. Le virtuel possède une pleine réalité, en tant que virtuel", says Deleuze (1968). He adds: "Le virtuel doit même être défini comme une stricte

partie de l'objet réel—comme si l'objet avait une de ses parties dans le virtuel, et y plongeait comme dans une dimension objective” (Deleuze 1968). In Deleuze's perspective, the virtual is an integral part of the real. The reality of the virtual is composed of elements, differential relations and singular points that correspond to it. These elements and relations form a structure and this “structure is the reality of the virtual” (Deleuze 1968).

For Deleuze, virtual is characterized by being actualisable and not by being realizable or materialized. In the transition from the virtual to the actual, i.e. in the actualizing process, the nature of the virtual differs and the virtual differs even from itself. But virtual does not transcend the actual nor exist outside of it; the virtual inhabits and overflows the actual.

We could reasonably understand the possible as existing prior to the actual or the fact, i.e. the possible as a lack of reality. The possible is defined as something that may possibly become something else, something factual, real, concrete. Therefore, the possible is always before something, never after something; whatever exists now must have been possible before it was actual. However, Deleuze denies all this perspective, stating that the possible does not imply anything to which existence is added later. For Deleuze, the possible contains already the real, like the idea of inexistence contains already the idea of existence. Instead of the real as a resemblance of the possible, it is the possible that resembles the real. The possible is the reflected image of the real.

In *Différence et Répétition*, Deleuze distinguishes the virtual from the possible, saying that: first, the possible is opposed to the real; the virtual is not; second, the possible has a process of realization; the virtual is a process of actualization, because the virtual has a proper and fully reality. The existence is produced from the very reality of the virtual.

According to Deleuze (1968), “le seul danger, en tout ceci, c'est de confondre le virtuel avec le possible. Car le possible s'oppose au réel; le processus du possible est donc une 'réalisation'. Le virtuel, au contraire, ne s'oppose pas au réel; il possède une pleine réalité par lui-même. Son processus est l'actualisation.” As per Deleuze, there is a big difference between virtuals and possible forms: while the former define the immanence of the transcendental field, the latter actualize them (the virtuals: virtualities, events, singularities) and transform them into something transcendent (Deleuze 2001).

As per Lévy's *Qu'est-ce que le virtual?*, Deleuze's distinction between the virtual and the possible is fundamental. The possible is already constituted, but it remains in the limbo (Lévy 1995). The possible will be done without nothing changing in its determination or in its nature. It is a ghostly and latent real. The possible is identical to the real; it only lacks existence. The realization of a possible is not a creation, because the creation also implies the innovative production of an idea or a form (Lévy 1995). Therefore, the difference between real and possible is purely logic.

The virtual is not opposed to the real, but to the actual. Unlike the possible, the static and the already constituted, the virtual is the set of tendencies or forces that accompanies a situation, an event, an object, an entity, etc. that needs or demands an actualizing process.

9.2.1 *Transcendental Empiricism and Image-Sensation*

In Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, the most crucial is the experience and the conditions of a real experience (not the conditions of a possible experience). For Deleuze, the transcendental is related to describing the virtual and not, in opposition to Kant, to defining the conditions of experience. Virtual represents the necessary conditions under which real experience is actualized. Deleuze's transcendental empiricism is critical to the conditions of possible experience proposed by Kant and it goes further: it admits that the virtual must be defined as a narrow part of the real object. Therefore, instead of being undetermined, the virtual is, for Deleuze, fully determined and necessary.

Deleuze's transcendental empiricism is the apprehension of the thought of excessive differences, i.e. differences in intensity and strength as an immanent transcendental principle. That is why Bacon's image-sensation is perfect to show how, in an ontological perspective, the sense of being is expressed in the difference, as Deleuze demonstrates in Francis Bacon: *logique de la sensation*. Deleuze discusses the fundamental concepts of becoming and difference based on Bacon's images.

The transcendental empiricism means that the discovery of the experience supposes an experience in the strict sense; it does not mean the common or empirical exercise of a human faculty: living (or empirical) data do not inform the thought about their potentialities. The human faculty is driven to its limit and philosophy only fulfils its vocation rising itself to the transcendental.

The transcendental empiricism is based on the purpose of philosophy, which is not to rediscover the abstract, the eternal or the universal, but to find the natural conditions under which something new is produced. Philosophy is not intended to indicate the conditions of knowledge identified in nature or functioning as a representation; philosophy must find the conditions of creative production. This is a pragmatic perspective: philosophy should be a theory about what we do, not a theory of what exists.

The concept of transcendence does not mean, as Deleuze says, that the faculty is directed to objects outside the world, which is the common sense of the transcendent. On the contrary, the faculty apprehends in the world what concerns to it. The conditions are never generic; their decline is according to the particular case and we can never speak a priori of all experiences.

According to Deleuze's own words: "l'empirisme devient transcendantal [...] quand nous appréhendons directement dans le sensible ce qui ne peut être que senti, l'être même du sensible: la différence, la différence de potentiel, la différence d'intensité comme raison du divers qualitatif" (Deleuze 1968). He concludes saying that "le monde intense des différences est précisément l'objet d'un empirisme supérieur" (Deleuze 1968).

In Deleuze's perspective, the transcendental is separated from every idea of consciousness; it is an experience without either consciousness or subject: a transcendental empiricism, in Deleuze's paradoxical expression. "La forme transcendantale d'une faculté se confond avec son exercice disjoint, supérieur ou transcendant. Tran-

scendant ne signifie pas du tout que la faculté s'adresse à des objets hors du monde, mais au contraire qu'elle saisit dans le monde ce qui la concerne exclusivement, et qui la fait naître au monde" (Deleuze 1968).

The ordinary and everyday human experience may become transcendental. Overcoming the image-sensation due to its excesses and forces is an example, when the simple image and the deepest sensation contained in the image are connected.

A sensation is an immediate experience of direct contact with the world; it has the status of a "pure presence", an imprint of data. Deleuze opposes sensation and representation. He does it with Bacon's paintings. Bacon has repeatedly stated that he tried to overcome the narrative, the identifiable and the mere figurative painting. According to Lotz (2009), "what makes Bacon's art of painting so interesting is not that it establishes a non-intentional relation to the spectator (which it undoubtedly does too); rather, the interesting point is that his paintings in some sense are dealing with and are about this relation." Deleuze was looking for direct and factual effects of painting on the human nervous system and he found such effects in Bacon's paintings. The main characteristic of Bacon's painting is the connection between sensation and image. From this connection comes the so-called image-sensation.

The image-sensation is opposed to the image-representation. The paradoxical sense of Deleuze's approach is that a logic of sensation is antagonistic to a mimetic representation between the representative (the canvas) and the represented (the real). In this mimetic representation, signs reproduce the forms (features) of things in an image-sensation like Bacon's paintings. However, the immediate presentation (i.e. without mediation, unlike the representation) of forces is more privileged, rather than the representation or reproduction of forms. All representation follows the semantic transitivity *aliquid pro aliquo*. An image is a representation and it is also a sign. Thus, an image necessarily represents something. Although Bacon prefers sensation instead representation, his images can't avoid representation; they necessarily represent something and what is represented is always understandable by someone. Presupposing that all representations are virtual (because they follow the mentioned semantic transitivity *aliquid pro aliquo*) the virtual represents "another reality". Such "another reality" consists in signs, a form of language, a medium to represent something through something (a sign, an image), or a way of making or doing something ("another reality"), giving rise to the exploitation of the possibilities of language to be efficient and effective to represent with conviction (certainty) and criteria (features).

Deleuze emphasizes Bacon's way of making or doing images, i.e. images-sensations that make visible the excesses and the forces of representation. According to Deleuze (2003), this is the task of painting that Bacon materializes with his images: to produce signs that push us out of our pattern of perception about reality, according to the representations we create and that affect us as something that (e.g. in art) exists imperceptibly, as if it were there without being there, as if it were virtual. It is the sign that forces the thought as it is assumed as involuntary and unconscious, that is, transcendental. Thus, the violence of the signs on thought is in the genesis of the act of thinking (Deleuze 1968). The object of the sensibility (the sensible, what can be felt) is the intensity, which is in the sign.

For Deleuze, the act of thinking is provoked when the thought is stimulated by signs. The classic model of representation is refuted. The thought and the act of thinking are different. The sign forces us to think and this force correspond to the violence of the sign in provoking the act of thinking as a possibility of creation (Deleuze 2014).

For Bacon and Deleuze, the human experience is the most important. The virtual is the life and it is committed to the actualizing process of the immanent and the real. According to Deleuze, the virtual is already in life, i.e. in the reality itself. "A life contains only virtuals", because "it is made up of virtualities, events, singularities" and "what we call virtual is not something that lacks reality, but something that is engaged in a process of actualization following the plane that gives it its particular reality" (Deleuze 2001).

Bacon's images-sensations provide live sensations because they have a virtual nature. They are more than simple and ordinary artistic images; they are even more than signs-images representing something. In Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, Bacon's images-sensations are images that force thought to a virtual experience. This is a new concept of thinking or way of thinking, in which a new image of thought (the thought without image) is contrasted to the conception of thought as a representation.

Deleuze analyses the representational image of thought. He recognizes Plato as the origin of this representational image of thought, due to the distinction between the world of ideas (or essences) and the world of appearances. Deleuze (1969) develops the Platonic distinctions between essence and appearance, intelligible and sensible, idea and image, original and copy, model and simulacrum. The relation between the Platonic concepts of essence and identity determines the representational thought and relating the real and the virtual is to distinguish between the world of essences (what remains identical to itself over time) and the world of appearances.

In short, the transcendental empiricism is the logic of sense and sensations; it is an opponent of the Kantian transcendental philosophy. The transcendental empiricism is constructed and based on the immanence.

9.2.2 Francis Bacon's Aesthetic Experience Between the Lived and the Thought

The artistic objects (the images) created by Bacon are basically defined by deformed figures; a stylistic innovation of brush strokes and colors; and a rupture of expectations, thematic canons and patterns of representation. These artistic objects are in the frame of an idea or concept of art. However, this idea or concept of art is principally due to the ambiguity and, more paradoxically, referentiality (an indication of conformity between the image—which is not a mere image, but an image-sensation and image-thought—and reality).

We are not sure about what Bacon's images mean at first sight. Bacon's work has what Eco (1986) calls the "additional meaning". This additional meaning is due to the ambiguity of the images.

The ambiguity (from the Latin *ambiguu*, *amb* + *ago*, "between two", "to impel for both sides") arouses two or more interpretations. With ambiguity, images and signs, which can be taken in different senses, are ambiguous, vague, raise doubts and misunderstandings about what they mean.

Questioning the referentiality of Bacon's pictorial language, one wonders if it is really what it suggests, the designatum (what the sign refers to and can be a real object or just an idea). It is the reference that links the sign (which triggers the process of representation or signification) to its referent (what the symbol represents or replaces), according to Ogden and Richards (1923). The reference is the indirect relation between the symbol and what it means, which justifies that painting is an indirect language for Merleau-Ponty (1999). If language is a duplication of the whole structure of reality (Ogden and Richards 1923), the referentiality implies relations between thought, words and things or objects (reality) or just between expression (language and thought) and reference (reality). The example of different expressions or signs for the same referent or even for a non-existent referent is paradigmatic.

How the relation between Bacon's images and its referents (past events) is established? How perception and sensation of reality are created in the image? How does the transition from sign to meaning, from concept to perception/sensation happens? What exists in the image that operates this transition? What does the image do? What makes the image (as a sign) the image of something real? How can a virtual image of something inexistent legitimize the claim to serve as a reference of reality? Is there any relation between the real perceived in the world and the sensation provoked by Bacon's pictorial images (images-sensations not concerned to represent forms, but to create excesses or forces provoking sensations)? Is it possible to avoid or to surpass the representation in the image?

The excesses and forces of Bacon's images are in the ability to puncture our sensations in a direct and immediate way, as Barthes (1980) denominates by *punctum* that "something" in the photograph that leads the observer to have a stronger emotion when he sees the image. Bacon's images puncture those who observe them, because the painter expressed the tragedy, violence, anguish and crudity of the human condition through these images. He did it in a realistic way without being a realistic style painting. Bacon's painting is not subordinated to a representation of specific appearances or real situations. Bacon's images puncture not necessarily through a dramatic and abstract force. According to Ficacci (2007), these images mean, on the contrary, the hidden and unrepresentable sense of individualism and intimate existence, because the representation of the sense of existence inevitably results in an expression violently tragic. It is a sense transformed into an immanent and disturbing reality, more real than any realistic representation, while the objective reality of human life becomes an apparition, where only through the practice of painting it can become a flagrant and actual value (Ficacci 2007). The subjectivity of existential experience reaches the deep sensibilities of the observer. Bacon's images are

motivated by the real experience of empirical life, i.e. the reality of a past event is resolved in the reality of the artistic action (Ficacci 2007).

For example, Bacon's work *Three Studies for Pictures at the Base of a Crucifixion* corresponds to the expression of an excessive violence and feeling of horror that unites the three figures (each one with its canvas). This work does not represent any violent act; it represents an indefinite and inhuman violence that occurred in an invisible space and at a time outside the limits of the picture (Ficacci 2007). It is a triptych, a composition separated into three distinct canvases, but coordinated with forms and colors (orange color scattered in space, causing a sensation of blindness and making space perceived more at the psychic level than logical) disturbing the observer and imprinting the motive (the horror). According to Ficacci (2007), the observer is violently affected by this composition of shapes and colors.

The deformation of the three figures makes them ambiguous and enigmatic, preventing any particular understanding of its meanings. These meanings are not explicit, but implicit. This triptych corresponds to the lacerating and the incomprehensible expression of a cry. For Bacon, painting is not a medium to imitate the apparent reality; it is an independent and an artificial act emerging from the most intimate and instinctual human experience and need. The sensation has an obscure origin and it is impossible to identify the visible individual in the image. Therefore, the image invalidates, on the one hand, any type of representation and penetrates, on the other hand, at the faster and more intuitive level of the mind (Ficacci 2007). This level is that of sensation. Sensations are more deeply rooted and precede logical rationality. Bacon renounces the natural logic. Bacon's painting is the revelation of the unconscious and the individual existence. The deformed figures in *Three Studies for Pictures at the Base of a Crucifixion* are traumatic expressions of horror that have origin in the deepest feelings of human existence. The true subject of pictorial representation is the expression of horror, which is superior to any specific transitory cause (Ficacci 2007). In this perspective, Bacon conveys the most universal or transcendent expression of the horror experience through the expressive force of painting. Bacon attributes a form and an expression to subjective sensations and experiences. His figures do not show actions. It is the implicit expression of the figures that demonstrates the most essential of human nature and experience. It is the transcendental empiricism mentioned by Deleuze.

In the painting entitled *Study of a Baboon* (1953), Bacon explores a higher and more explicit level of violence in the image. This image shows a rude and grotesque figure, with monstrous proportions. The reactions are due more to the structural components of the work than to the figurative details. Bacon seeks to stimulate the sensation of existence in painting, transcending the normal state of human existence and experience and creating another state of hypersensitivity.

9.3 Conclusions

Answering the starting-question, virtual and transcendental empiricism are related. The ordinary and everyday human experience may become transcendental if (what Deleuze calls) the virtuals (i.e. virtualities, events, singularities) define the immanence of the transcendental field. The virtuals are different from the possible forms. These possible forms actualize the virtuals and transform them into something transcendent.

The experience is fundamental in Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, as well in Bacon's paintings. An experience is an accumulation of knowledge, practice or skill obtained from direct participation in events or activities. In this perspective, it is what Heidegger (1976) states when he explains the meaning of "to do an experience" as something that happens to us, strikes us, overcomes us, knocks us down and transforms us. For Deleuze, the most important is the experience (that may become transcendental) and the conditions of a real experience (not the conditions of a possible experience). That is why Deleuze's transcendental empiricism is critical to the conditions of possibility of experience proposed by Kant. The transcendental is related to describing the virtual and not to defining the conditions of experience. Virtual represents the necessary conditions under which real experience is actualized.

This approach conceptualizes and problematizes the virtual as a transition from the actual or real to the virtual, i.e. Deleuze's perspective presented in *Différence et Répétition* about the virtual as something extracted from the real and embedded in this real. Considering the profuse production and use of signs/images, reality and experience are both virtualized through these signs/images (like Bacon made in a non-digital and artistic way with his images-sensations). Such virtualization of reality and experience features a standard iconocracy of contemporary visual and technological (digital) cultures.

In Deleuze's "civilization of the image", the actual is not opposed to the virtual nor the virtual is opposed to the real, because the virtual enjoys a full reality as virtual. Deleuze admits that the virtual must be defined as a strict part of the real object. The virtual is fully determined and necessary; a virtual field represents the necessary conditions to actualize the actual experience.

Deleuze's approach is based on the idea that the virtual is something which is not given, i.e. the virtual is (the power of) what is not given, because only the actual is given. The actual is also given in the form of a possible (a substitute, an alternative) that divides the real and gives immediate experience to a possible field (possible under the transcendent form of the necessary). Therefore, the virtual shows that not everything is given, nor everything is likely to be given.

The virtual also means that everything (events, happenings or activities) can only come from the immanence of the world. There is only the actualization of the real. The virtual must be seen, therefore, as an actualization of something else which then can be confused with that of which it demarcates by definition: the transcendence. It is from what is given that the virtual is presented from the perspective of a thought about the experiment, i.e. the data.

The boundaries between reality and virtual, between what is real and what is unreal, between “being” and “appear to be” are increasingly tenuous in a visual and technological (digital) culture. Due to the above-mentioned development and improvement of the technique and the evolution of cultures towards the visual and the digital, the technique is indistinctly and imperceptibly everywhere. If the technique is so, so are its effects and consequences. There are more and more images everywhere; we perceive them daily without being able to distinguish if they are real or virtual, or if they are based on captures of the reality (like a photograph) or computer-generated virtual environments (someone or something unreal, that does not exist).

However, there are also images that are essentially sensory, not representative or significant, but capable of allowing a better understanding of reality and human experience than reality itself. These images are perceptively intense, like the so-called Bacon's image-sensations, paintings that break with the traditional representative field of art. An image-sensation is an image of a certain reality or everyday situation carrying sensations so vivid and strongly expressive that they can be revived by those who observe them. Bacon's paintings are an excellent example of these images-sensations and, therefore, an application of Deleuze's conception about the virtual as something that may transcend its own immanence.

An image-sensation evokes and actualizes reality, transforming the immanence into a transcendence. In this type of images, reality transcends the immanence. The actualization of the immanent is demonstrated through Bacon's paintings, where only the sensations recreated by this artist in his figurative paintings offer an experience that is transcendental and virtual; an experience barred in the proper experience of the real. It is because of this specificity of Bacon's images-sensations that Deleuze elected them as paradigms to question the dualities living/non-living, thought (thinkable)/unthought (unthinkable), speakable/unspeakable, visible/invisible, and virtual/actual.

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