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PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE THIN PRESENT: BARTHES, DELEUZE AND THE TIME OF PORTRAYAL

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This article emerges from an exploration of practices of performance in cinema and their informed reading via contemporary events. After writing previously on Gary Oldman's performance as George Smiley in Tomas Alfredson's adaptation of John Le Carré's *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (2012), I had started to consider his performance as Winston Churchill in Joe Wright's *Darkest Hour* (2017). I had been working with a pragmatic or *diagrammatic* methodology discussed here in order to explore how scholars understand portrayal to be reliant upon cultural understandings of Churchill, his background and his legacy, as well as previous and contemporary portraits of Churchill, for example John Lithgow in Netflix and Sony's *The Crown* (2016-), Brian Cox in Jonathan Teplitzky's *Churchill* (2017), as well as many previous interpretations. Churchill, of course, is invoked in contemporary British culture by politicians and populists seeking a distinct separation from the European Union (called at the time a "hard Brexit"). A famous example of this is British Foreign Secretary and later Prime Minister Boris Johnson, a biographer of Churchill and described in newspapers as having a Churchill fetish.

ABSTRACT

The temporal relationship we have with a portrait, its photographer and sitter, is a phenomenology of the pose – as both portrayal and self-portrayal – in photographic media. The portrait preserves the present on behalf of the future, which looks back at its past. The catastrophe of photography is its emptying out of time, noted most famously in Barthes' reading of a portrait by Alexander Gardner. However, the recorded, remembered, and shared image practices in contemporary visual culture reveal an attenuation of time that is at once 'now' and 'then' as a distinct affective experience that is understandable, legible, and exchangeable. It is full, not empty, but thinned rather than lost. This thin present needs a phenomenology that accounts for combination and duplication, as well as the sensation of loss and separation, as direct experience. I propose that a dialogue between Barthes' work and Deleuze's pragmatics allows us to read the time of portrayal as *haecceity*, where we describe, remember, and reproduce affect as a thing in itself, with its own uniqueness.

KEYWORDS: BARTHES, DELEUZE, PORTRAITURE, PHOTOGRAPHY, HAECCEITY



I N D E X



E D I T O R I A L



D O S S I E R



P R I N T

Haecceity and the thin present

In contemporary visual culture we are surrounded by portraits and self-portraits. Whilst the phenomenon of the “selfie” has captured the attention of scholars in media and communications, the humanist and deadpan portrait has become a staple of editorial, photojournalist, and fine art photography, given attention by scholars of photography history, as well as art history more generally. At the same time, the biopic in cinema and television is in rude health, to the extent that some characters from history – especially figures of political populism – are so attractive in our time of economic, nationalistic and globalist crises that we can enjoy the task of comparing multiple portrayals by esteemed actors to our conceptions of historical and cultural usefulness. As a consequence of these cultural practices and commonplaces, we readily understand that portrayal speaks across time and history, and is always in dialogue with the spectatorial present. Portraiture, and here we will focus on photographic portraiture, is the specific portrayal not only of character but also of time, that speaks to myth but also to an uncertainty of spectatorship. Compare, for instance, two photographs: one is a portrait of US President Abraham Lincoln, one of the last ever taken and which has been mishandled and cracked; the other is that of one of the conspirators in the plot to assassinate Lincoln and his colleagues. Each is a portrayal in terms of the address to the camera, but each is also a portrayal of a moment in parallel with our moment of spectatorship. Such moments of the portrait can appear disjointed, in conflict or contradiction, sometimes collapsing together or renting apart *two discrete moments* as past and present, each of which is in turn attempting to address a future moment of viewing. Rarely are moments of portrayal understood as the *same moment* of creative production that has and will continue to exist. This article seeks to propose and explore this concept. Primarily engaged with the photographic portrait, I wish to explore the time of portrayal as a thing in itself, and give it substance through the notion of the *thin present*. In so doing, I wish also to consider at the end of the article a key moment in the history of photography theory, when the idea of portrayal as

a thing in itself, with a time of its own, seemed to emerge in argument whilst remaining maddeningly elusive.

This relationship between the moments of sitting and that of spectatorship is commonly understood as a defeat or collapse of temporalities, introduced into theory by Roland Barthes in his essay *Camera Lucida* that is produced by a mechanical effect of photography without a time of its own. ([1980] 1993). The portrait preserves the present on behalf of the future, which looks back at its past. In such a reading all these temporalities co-exist as conflicting, emptying forces. The catastrophe of photography is its emptying out of time. Yet in Barthes’ own analysis – of both his role as sitter and viewer – this moment of affect is clearly always in the present and is an attenuation of, and not limited to, this present. He eventually resolves this by considering the notion of a person’s “air”, when photographed, as a form of present absence, or form of affect (109). At this juncture in Barthes’ essay, the notion of portrayal as a single moment, stretched across all apparently discrete temporalities, reveals itself yet seems impossible to contemplate fully. Portrayal as a productive moment of creative mark-making seems an absurd prospect within a technology of temporal extraction/subtraction, whose very nature appears bound to a sense of loss of the person and their time. And yet it exists, and invites a conceptual exploration in light of the abundance of portraits and self-portraits in social media.

When he himself is photographed, Barthes poses, and will be seen posing (1993, 10-15). He presents himself for the camera and understands this as a self-portrayal (if not necessarily a self-portrait, since he is not the camera’s operator), whilst recognising the portrayal of others and their address to him in their portrait. The temporal relationship we have with a portrait, its photographer and sitter, is a phenomenology of the pose – as both portrayal and self-portrayal – in photographic media. This has become, perhaps, a classical definition, and one which is supported, rather than counteracted, in contemporary visual culture and the modern ubiquity of portraits and *selfies*. The recorded, remembered, and

shared image practices of the selfie generation continue to present this attenuation of time that is at once “now” and “then”, but its relationship to a commodification of the photographic transaction reveals that it is a distinct affective experience that is understandable, legible, and exchangeable. This subordination to exchange, in terms of sharing, sending, and “likes”, reveals that the time of the pose should not be seen as an emptying of time. Instead I want to explore it here as the *thin present*, taking a cue from what Nigel Thrift has proposed as “thick time” (Thrift 2004). Thrift asserts that “time has to be seen as composed in and of a set of practices (often crystallized in objects) that limit difference and so allow directed action to take place.” One of these, as clock time,

may be tighter or looser in character according to the demands of the particular situation. Instead of a metrical strait-jacket, then, it is a commonly held toolbox of pragmatic short-cuts, made up of particular forms of intuition, some limited forms of cognition, and a relevant array of instruments, some of which may count as forms of thinking in their own right, which are continually developing and reframing what counts as the world (875).

Thrift appears to take model this understanding on the notion of *thick description* in human geography by which deliberative observation of small practices allows for an understanding of how we think and frame (and reframe) the world. By contrast, by proposing the *thin present* we might explore the apparent evanescence of time in the photographic portrait as something that is still, nevertheless, *there* as a framing practice. It may be emptied of the physical, mechanical processes of portraiture, but the time of portrayal remains as a thing in itself: a thin present, for want of another description. We often notice this when “what counts as the world” clings to the present, such as when portrayal announces itself. Consider for a moment the film actor playing a cultural icon, Oldman as Churchill for instance. Such a portrayal is a shared intimacy that relies upon a concept of shared presence and shared *present*, no matter how distant the sitter, actor, or

viewer are from each other. Life and live-ness remains. The actor’s portrayal relies upon a shared moment of suspended disbelief that is retained as the moment of pro-filmic production retreats. This thin present needs a phenomenology that accounts for combination and duplication (as the physical image is reproduced, distributed, combined, extracted for consumption), as well as the accounting for the sensation of loss and separation of classical theory. It must account for them both as direct experience that has meaning but which escapes straightforward representation of the sitter within the context of spectatorial understanding.

This is a phenomenology of *haecceity*, described by Gilles Deleuze as “degrees of power which combine, to which correspond a power to affect and be affected, active or passive affects, intensities.” (Deleuze and Parnet [1977] 1987, 92). *Haecceities* are experiences of glimpses, sensations, and passions that escape or defeat the quantifiable whilst shaped by it. *Haecceity* is where we describe, remember, and reproduce affect as a thing in itself, with its own uniqueness. Through a Deleuzian pragmatic methodology – understanding process as diagrammatic – we can determine how we think through portrayal in film, for instance, but also how we can think through portrayal in contemporary and social photography.

A Deleuzian pragmatic methodology is used here to understand production and reception of photographic media as an assemblage from which we can extrapolate a study of portrayal as mark-making. It can be challenging to establish a phenomenology which can be understood from the perspective of the material (the photographic act) as well as the performative, in which the fact of performance or portrayal escapes the explicit temporality of the film or photographic production. As in all photographic media, the context of viewing can be far removed from the context of manufacture, and portrayal exists in the Deleuzian virtual image that is a crystallization of production and reception or viewing as an assemblage (the crystal-image) (Deleuze 1989, 68-98).

In cinema, for instance, portrayal inheres not only the physical performance of actors, its editing, post-production, and incorporation into the film text, but also our ideas of the performed and the performer, our expectations and memories, voluntary and involuntary as dream. Portrayal is at once an awareness of manufacturing the image and of its reception not as two discrete identities in contradiction, but in a relationship as a thing in itself. Following this, we can look to the time of portrayal as something linked to the photographic – the sensory-motor situation – but which nonetheless escapes it, is attenuated or *thinned*. Haecceity offers an answer to the simplest of questions in this regard: “what is the time of portrayal?”

Through a pragmatic methodology we can, firstly, reintroduce ourselves to a particular idea of time in the portrait – that of the pose – and characterise it as *haecceity*. Secondly we can propose a time of portrayal that is not solely located in the material, nor merely in the experience of the beholder, but in the Figural (as transcendental affect). This involves exploring the effectiveness of the pragmatic methodology by looking at Deleuze’s writing on the diagrammatic in art, and in so doing put Barthes and Deleuze in dialogue with each other. This is an imagined conversation that is provoked by a breakaway comment from Deleuze at his most thoughtful on the relationship between structures of meaning and of experience, but one which offers some resolution to the paradox that ends Barthes’ seminal essay on photography in *Camera Lucida*.

The Time of the Pose

Let us consider a famous problem that emerges in *Camera Lucida* as Barthes works towards his theory of photography’s *eidos*, its distinctive expression that he eventually finds rooted in a kind of facticity or “that-has-been”. In this project Barthes moves away from the semiotic and structural analysis of photographs within a wider visual culture and instead focuses on the visceral impression photographs leave on him (which we might call an example of *affect*) as the sole mediator. He separates out the historically

or artistically contingent knowledge that can be understood as intention (whether culturally or specifically the act of the photographer as operator) as *studium*, which can also amount to a general “order of liking” (27). From this is separated the ability of photographic details within the image to create *affect* that is not within the photographer’s intention (nor the general understanding of meaning) and which is, instead, only in the relationship with the individual viewer. This is the *punctum*, an affect which punctures or pierces the relationship of viewer to *studium* and which can appear aleatory, consequential or inconsequential, and which in effect reminds the viewer that the photograph makes meaning beyond representation.

In the book, Barthes addresses historically significant photographic work largely completed by photographic documentarians or artists (including Alfred Stieglitz, Nadar, Robert Mapplethorpe, Richard Avedon, and André Kertesz).¹ But at one point, Barthes’ turns to an historical portrait by Alexander Gardner, a portrait of an ex-Confederate soldier Lewis Payne (real name Lewis Powell) who had attempted to murder US secretary of state William H Seward as part of the conspiracy in which John Wilkes Booth assassinated Abraham Lincoln.² This shift, from the artistic and humanist photography to the historical and archival, serves to allow Barthes to illustrate a new *punctum* “which is no longer of form [detail] but of intensity, is Time, the lacerating emphasis of the noeme (“that-has-been”), its pure representation” (96). He has reached this point due to a faltering in his analysis of the *punctum* when he looks upon the photograph of his mother as a child. It is this photograph by Gardner that allows him to understand this faltering, this wound:

¹ In this regard the essay echoes the genesis of Walter Benjamin’s “Small History of Photography”, which began as a request to review a series of photography books, and for which the author becomes the (somewhat) self-acknowledged link between seemingly disparate artists ([1931] 2015). Benjamin connects Karl Blossfeldt with Eugène Atget and Hill and Adamson, largely due to his having to review their books together, whereas I think Barthes remains within a fairly discrete corpus of widely acknowledge photography “greats” through a longer-term engagement with gallery photography. In this way Barthes’ approach echoes that of Deleuze in his cinema books or his appreciation of Francis Bacon – always led by what he sees as a viewer, an appreciator, rather than an art or film critic or historian engaged in a specific task.

² This photograph is one of a sequence of photographs of Payne taken at the same time. Payne is being held on a US Navy ship during the trial, and is seated against a smokestack or bulkhead. He has been kept hooded for much of the time before this photograph. The passage in Barthes’ writing that refers to this image is commonly interpreted to infer that the photograph was taken immediately prior to Payne’s execution, and is effectively an “about-to-die” photograph from the condemned cell. Gardner, Alexander, photographer. *Washington Navy Yard, District of Columbia. Lewis Payne in sweater, seated and manacled*. United States, 1865. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018672091/> [accessed 25th March 2019].

In 1865, young Lewis Payne tried to assassinate Secretary of State W. H. Seward. Alexander Gardner photographed him in his cell, where he was waiting to be hanged. The photograph is handsome, as is the boy: that is the *studium*. But the *punctum* is: *he is going to die*. I read at the time: *This will be and this has been*; I observe with horror an anterior future of which death is the stake. By giving me the absolute past of the pose the photograph tells me death in the future. (ibid)

For Barthes this anterior future can be read into all photographs, and the anterior future of the death of the sitter is a reminder of the viewer's own death.

What pricks me is the discovery of this equivalence. In front of the photograph of my mother as a child, I tell myself: she is going to die: I shudder, like Winnicott's psychotic patient, over a catastrophe which has already occurred. Whether or not the subject is already dead, every photograph is this catastrophe. (ibid)

For Barthes this affect surely hangs on the "absolute past" of the photograph confirmed not by the mechanical (all photographs are past) but on the contingent knowledge of Payne and his subsequent execution. The photograph was taken on a prison ship, some time before trial, and although this does not serve to complicate Barthes' reading of the image – Payne could not have hoped for much other than a guilty verdict at the time – it does complicate the pose which Payne strikes and which, for Barthes, lends urgency to his analysis. It is an image Barthes *wants* to be urgent, wants to be instantaneous, because in our cultural understanding the photograph *wants* to be located in time, located in the temporal. I want to explore this a little further, and say that the pose in the portrait is always already happening in a manner which robs it of its future. The sitter poses for the photographer and this moment does not end but remains unending for the viewer or spectator. The time between taking the photograph and viewing is irrelevant except in the diagrammatic sense, which we will come to later.

We can add to this Barthes' notion that the photograph is always already past – "he is dead" – but it is robbed of its *pastness* because of its projection into a future it cannot imagine. The sitter looks into the camera into a virtual future only.

As I have previously argued (Sutton 2009), our apparently physical, tangible apprehension of time is one created from duration and produced as a moment. Now I want to start to define how long this moment is or, rather, how thin it is. I want to shift our sense of time away from chronology and extensity towards intensity, and give it a phenomenology. The moment of photography and the moment of viewing are not connected, nor are they emptied out. They are instead the same moment as *haecceity*.

The concept of *haecceity* appears in Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, and again in the *Dialogues* with Claire Parnet, as the phenomenology of deixis in which movements, experiences, aggregates of particles are individualized as non-subjective affects (Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1996; Deleuze and Parnet, [1977] 1987). Haecceity is the way that we individualize that which does not easily identify itself but which we need to give form and shape to in order to exchange it as affect. Identity, for instance, is haecceity in that it is an aggregate of particles given individuality, but that individuality may change as we ourselves become part of a convocation: "You have the individuality of a day, a season, a year, a life (regardless of its duration) – a climate, a wind, a fog, a swarm, a pack (regardless of its regularity)" (Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1996, 262).

So the sitter and the photographer are haecceity in the portrait sitting (or pro-filmic moment) but the assemblage does not stop there: haecceity also inheres the viewing situation and all that informs both intention and reception. Haecceity in the Gardner photograph inheres other assemblages: the portrait apparatus, the gallery, the cell, the fear, the hood of the condemned man. But the haecceity also has a temporal feature. In *Dialogues*, Deleuze elaborates further that haecceity explains "An hour, a day, a season, a climate,

one or several years - a degree of heat, an intensity, very different intensities which combine - have a perfect individuality which should not be confused with that of a thing or of a formed subject.” He continues: “It is hecceities that are being expressed in indefinite, but not indeterminate articles and pronouns; in proper names which do not designate people but mark events, in verbs in the infinitive which are not undifferentiated but constitute becomings or processes. It is hecceity which needs this kind of enunciation. HECCEITY = EVENT” (1987, 92).

In terms of consequentiality we might say that 9/11 or the Gulf War are haecceities, or #metoo as a movement and *moment*, but to focus on this misses the fact that haecceities are individuations that defeat intention and emerge as the figural. Haecceity defies the conditions that it intersects to produce something else. This is why the pose is one moment, as haecceity, stretched or thinned across apparently diverse times of Barthes’ Operator and Spectator.

How does the figural - a visual feature emerging from the picture - become this event, this haecceity? The answer to this question has a lot to do with what is held back (or hidden) from Barthes’ gaze toward Payne in the Gardner photograph, in the sense that his/our inability to read the image reminds us that to pose for the photograph is to choose between what to show and what to hide, in the manner that photographic portraits are always a portrayal. In this manner the pose is a form of mark-making in the manner of the diagram or the figural, and which can be analysed using Deleuze and Guattari’s diagrammatic or pragmatic method.

The Pragmatic Method

The concept of the diagram, or diagrammatic, has re-emerged recently in writings on contemporary art and cinema that develop the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (O’Sullivan 2009; O’Sullivan 2010; Conley 2011; Rotas and Springgay 2015). This is perhaps because of the prominence in Deleuze and Guattari’s exploration in both volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* of the abstract machine;

this is a mechanism or agency that is immanent to any signifying system or structure (assemblage) that has the effect of destabilizing or deterritorializing meaning (in Deleuze and Guattari’s terms) in order to produce new formations (Deleuze and Guattari [1972] 1984). It is taken up in a closer, more focused example in Deleuze’s work on the painter Francis Bacon in which the role of the diagram has considerable importance ([1981] 2010).

In their discussion on language and the regime of signs in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari describe the abstract machine as that which makes the regime of signs simultaneously less and more than language ([1980] 1996, 140). In a regime of signs there exists a point at which operations (of signification) and meanings are divided between formalized expression and formalized content, and it is in observing this point that we recognise the breakdown of symbolic correspondence and causal relations between the two. This is the point in any signification system where meaning and expression become dislocated, leading to transformation, mutation, and to the evolution of signification. In our common understanding, we recognise how words and meanings become dislocated through misuse (deterritorialized) and the later meanings that form in discourse become accepted as self-evident (reterritorialized).

In their discussion, Deleuze and Guattari suppose a functioning agent within a regime of signs that makes expression and content work reciprocally. There must be an agency, they surmise, a mechanism within language, that makes expression the partner of content but which exploits their differences in the production of the new. This is the “pure Matter-Function—a diagram independent of the forms and substances, and expressions and contents it will distribute” (141). The diagram is an act or writing, drawing, speaking, or other plastic articulation - an artifact - that rents meaning apart, in order for new meanings to emerge. As I will argue it can be schematic - like a mapping of meaning - or it can be a physical insertion, twisting, or attenuation. It is the latter that allows us to conceptualise the phenomenology of

time in portrayal as one of mark-making. First though, it is important to understand how the diagram can be conceived as both a mapping of forces and a creative act of production in itself.

Seemingly at odds with the artifact, the diagram at this stage lacks any specific corporeal agency, since it is described by Deleuze and Guattari in terms of the wider semiotic. Neither is it referential, representational nor even “real, but rather constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality” (142). The diagram is a force that knows “only traits and cutting edges that are still elements of content insofar as they are material and of expression insofar as they are functional, but which draw one another along, form relays, and meld in a shared deterritorialization” (ibid). The problem that emerges is how to relate this to actions, texts and discourses.

Deleuze and Guattari prepare for this in their discussion of “Pragmatics”, their name for the study of the regime of signs which must necessarily take into account both the diagrammatic (the action that disrupts or innovates) and the programmatic (the forces that incorporate innovation). Pragmatics is the study of how innovation becomes orthodoxy, an often cyclical and politically engaged process.

Whilst political readings of Deleuze and Guattari naturally focus on the revolutionary potential of the diagrammatic, what is significant about their approach is Deleuze’s and Guattari’s interest in how order is restored within any system that is disrupted. In order to remain a productive force, the abstract machine has to avoid two potential outcomes. On the one hand, it has to avoid total deterritorialization or total abstraction, and on the other hand it has to avoid a reterritorialization or return to the same figurative state. To avoid this the machinic assemblage has four components or phases which correspondingly must be studied using four strategies of Pragmatics, whilst these in turn correspond with phases of artistic creation and analysis. Paraphrasing Deleuze and Guattari we can say that these

are: 1) A generative phase of concrete semiotics (the mixing of signs) which must be traced; 2) a transformational phase of potential similarity which must be mapped; 3) a diagrammatic phase of forces of signification (Matter-Function); and 4) a machinic phase which outlines the “program of the assemblages that distribute everything and bring a circulation of movement with alternatives, jumps and mutations” (146-147). Artistic function (Matter-Function) therefore exists in a process that neatly parallels viewing and reception: one perceives the act of mark-making and immediately locates it in discourse and memory, but one is also affected by the force of signification which escapes or disrupts this. Nevertheless, one immediately seeks to incorporate it into new paradigms of creative action.

The *diagram* or *graph* appears as a kind of catastrophe, or threat of catastrophe, which must be harnessed or controlled as a process of innovation. Deleuze had developed this independently in his book on the painter Francis Bacon, and this gives us a further insight into the role of the creative act, as a kind of destructive rewriting of the figurative. In Deleuze’s analysis of Bacon’s process of painting (now rolled into three phases), the artist begins with figuration, and is surrounded by cliché, so that the preparatory work is an encounter between the artist and “all the figurative and probabilistic givens that occupy and preoccupy the canvas ([1981] 2010, 70)”. Whether these ‘givens’ exist as marks on the canvas or only within the artist’s head, the second phase act of mark-making (the diagram) begins the process of clearing out, opening up, so that in the third phase the Figure will emerge.

Deleuze bases this “law of the diagram” from an interview Bacon gave to David Sylvester in 1966:

[David Sylvester]:

Are you aware of the moment when you find that you are becoming free and the thing [the painting] is taking you over?

[Francis Bacon]:

Well, very often the involuntary marks are much more deeply suggestive than others, and those are the moments when you feel that anything can happen.

[DS]:

You feel it while you're making those marks?

[FB]:

No, the marks are made, and you survey the thing like you would a sort of graph. And you see within this graph the possibilities of all types of fact being planted [...] if you think of a portrait, you maybe at one time have put the mouth somewhere, but you suddenly see through this graph that the mouth could go right across the face. And in a way you 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 (Sylvester 1987, 56).

In this analysis, the diagram is a moment of smearing, scraping, opening, renting asunder the figurative both virtual (every figurative possibility in the artist's head) and actual (the marks made already, which may be in thrall to the environment of images within which the artist works). Deleuze draws on Bacon's description of this as a "graph", employing the term's mathematical connotations as a series of lines, as well as a drawing or act of writing, and which in Deleuze's work becomes "diagramme" (rather than "graphique" for example) in French. It's not always clear that Deleuze doesn't mistranslate graph as a map for graph as a *stroke*.³

Nevertheless what we have is what Deleuze later describes as Bacon's "law of the diagram": "one starts with a figurative form, a diagram intervenes and scrambles it, and a form of a completely different nature emerges from the diagram, which is called the Figure" (109). Bacon draws from his visual experiences and is, like so many artists, in an anguished relationship with all the possibilities of what a painting might look like (the clichés). He describes being "assaulted all the time by photography and by the film". He starts with figurative drawing and, stepping back to survey the work, sees how other ("anti-illustrational") sensations, other percepts nonetheless emerging from the drawing, are made by marks that stretch, contort, or thin out, the figurative.

Barthes' pragmatic adventure

Let us return to Barthes' essay on photography, taking with us this "law of the diagram" from Deleuze and Bacon. In this regard it's perhaps appropriate to see Barthes' approach to the *studium* as Pragmatic in the Deleuzian sense, perhaps also because it is an almost avowed departure from semiology and its restrictions on the study of how photographic images *affect*, and the intensely autobiographical nature of Barthes' work. The *punctum* would therefore be the diagram or graph that inheres "possibilities of all types of fact". This is the point that Deleuze makes on Barthes in *Dialogues*: "He appears to explain himself; in reality he is creating a pragmatics of language" ([1977] 1987, 116). The *studium* corresponds with the generative and transformational phase of analysis - understanding intentions and mapping these against patterns and discourses. The photographer raises the camera, a contract is arranged with the sitter - they will both struggle with the multiple images and identities that they do or do not want to present. Not too theatrical, not too reserved. The shutter goes. The *punctum* emerges as the diagram - the detail that punctures the image and speaks across distance, but which also provides the map across which one must traverse in order to re-read the image. The punctum can now be seen to inhere the intentional aspects of mark-making without compromising the aleatory quality it has a direct experience for the spectator alone. Once the punctum exists for the spectator, as with Bacon's graph, the work can only ever be seen through it. Portrayal as a gesture in time, as a mark-making of the actor or as a contracted performance from the photographic sitter, exists in the same way. But at this point in Barthes' exploration he falters, and it is not altogether easy to see why. In this last section I wish to explore this with the aid of art historian Michael Fried's reading of this moment in his landmark writing on photography and art.

In his essay on Barthes and the *punctum*, Fried points to the struggle Barthes appears to have to get beyond the Gardner image and what it means for his analysis of the *eidōs* of

³ The traces of this adoption of "diagram" need to be carefully unpicked. Daniel Smith's translation of Deleuze is as follows: "...the marks are made, and you survey the thing like you would a sort of graph [diagramme]. And you see within this graph the possibilities of all types of fact being planted." (Francis Bacon in Sylvester, 56) See also Deleuze [1981] 2010, 134n. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer of this article for pointing out Deleuze's reliance on C. S. Peirce's graph theory which is likely to underpin his understanding of Bacon's comment.

photography (Fried 2005).⁴ The problem is that Payne is clearly posing, retaining some interiority, and portraying a version of himself for (or perhaps in agreement with) Gardner. This complicates Barthes' argument since the *punctum* is a feature of the photograph and its relation to the viewer only. It cannot be intended by the photographer.

Fried puts Barthes' work into the context of his own art historical project of surveying the shift from theatrical tableau painting to anti-theatrical painting as an aesthetic and political practice. Art after Diderot in the Eighteenth Century refuses to engage the beholder and moves away from theatrical tableau presentation until, according to Fried, it emerges again in minimalist art. Barthes' work corresponds with Fried's because the *punctum* is profoundly antitheatrical. Fried alights on Barthes' discussion of a Koen Wessing photograph that captures two nuns in shot with some soldiers on the street in Nicaragua. For Barthes, such a contrast is a *punctum* only if there is sufficient reason not to see it as juxtaposition intended by the photographer. Such an intention would be seen as theatrical in the pejorative sense, and unable to produce the kind of effect that can only be created in Spectatorial affect. The shift from punctum as detail to punctum as Time occurs because the photograph is always an event in the present.

Fried says:

Time, in Barthes's sense of the term, functions as a punctum for him precisely because the sense of something being past, being historical, cannot be perceived by the photographer or indeed by anyone else in the present (560).

The pose thus creates a problem, since it is an explicit acknowledgement that the photograph will be seen in the future, and in the case of the Gardner portrait of Payne the historical significance of the portrait was likely not lost on both. Compare this with the "cracked plate" portrait of Lincoln by Gardner, which significance as one of the last photographs of the president could not have been known at the time.⁵

Fried also points out that the pose in a portrait is both fundamentally theatrical, as a Matter-Function, but also the foundation of the photographic act, as Barthes attests: "The physical duration of this pose is of little consequence; even in the interval of a millionth of a second (Edgerton's drop of milk) there has still been a pose, for the pose is not, here, the attitude of the target or even a technique of the *Operator*, but the term of an 'intention' of reading: looking at a photograph." (Barthes [1980] 1993, 78). Thus, Barthes stretches the pose from the intention of the photographer to the act of reading and viewing on the part of the viewer. The pose is singular and filled with significance, even if apparently emptied by the collapse of temporalities. This is what we may call *thinned*, an apparent absence of materiality, due to its long reach across the virtual presents of material and spectatorial, that belies a sinewy strength.

Barthes resolves this in the idea of the photographic portrait as having an "air" that "exorbitant thing which induces from body to soul" and the "intractable supplement of identity". "The air [he says] expresses the subject, insofar as that subject assigns itself no importance" (109). Fried is not convinced, saying that at this point "the impetus of his discourse gives out". (Fried 2005, 571). However, I do think something emerges in the *affective* here that is as close to the figural as we will ever see in the photograph as compared to painting – as in Bacon – though Barthes perhaps struggles with it. Barthes reaches *haecceity* via a different route – that of defining "air" – in his attempt to understand the catastrophic element of the photograph ("that-has-been") which nonetheless has something that remains within it of the intention of portrayal as a single, shared moment.

⁴ For this discussion I refer to Fried's article for *Critical Inquiry*, published prior to (and informing) his landmark text on photography and contemporary art (Fried 2008).

⁵ Gardner, Alexander, photographer. *Portrait of Abraham Lincoln, 5th February 1865*. United States, 1865. Photograph <https://www.si.edu/exhibitions/cracked-plate-photograph-lincoln%3Aevent-exhib-5760> [accessed 25th March 2019].

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