

Art, Philosophy and Cinematography: A Note on the Aesthetics Beyond Representation and Figuration

Abstract: In his book *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, Gilles Deleuze explores certain art techniques in the paintings of Francis Bacon to illuminate the politics of aesthetics. He demonstrates how some of those paintings allow us to move from the problematic field of (political) representation to the conditions of representations and from the field of reason to that of the logic of sensation. He demonstrates this by way of bridging the gap between modern art and philosophy. In my paper, I follow Deleuze's method and try to search for some more artistic techniques in Francis Bacon. Then I draw some parallels between these art techniques with the politics of aesthetics in the film genre by focusing on Tom Tykwer's 1998 film *Lola Rennt*.

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Introduction

In *Lola Rennt*, we notice that Manni calls Lola from a local phone booth across the street from Spirale bar. In his frenzy, Manni writhes and wriggles inside the yellow telephone booth that isolates him temporarily from the external world. The writhing and wriggling movements of his body in the face of yet unknown forces and consequence of violence experience pure sensation; it is the "logic of sensation" that the love story narrative of violence takes a *fortiori* position in this scene. The telephone set inside the booth not only acts as an instrument of communicating the experienced sensation but also acts as a "prosthesis-organ" for an already escaping/vanishing body ([Deleuze 2003, 17](#)). And

outside the telephone booth stands an elderly woman who is not meant to be a spectator (partly because of her impaired eye-sight) but an "attendant" to that logic of sensation. As Manni comes out of the booth after disappointing calls to some of his family and friends, the camera fixes on this somewhat unkempt elderly woman, who is dressed in a white overcoat with a black cap, a pair of black glasses and a walking cane. It turns out that Manni borrowed her phone card, but afterwards, she does not want to take it back. This very scene has parallels in some of Bacon's paintings, especially as interpreted by Deleuze in his 1981 masterpiece *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. I want to approach this scene by drawing parallels from some of those paintings with added emphasis on at least three Deleuzian

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concepts— isolation of the Figure, derisory athleticism, and the attendant.

Deleuze on the Logic of Sensation

Deleuze writes, "A story always slips into, or tends to slip into, the space between two figures in order to animate the illustrated whole. Isolation is thus the simplest means, necessary though not sufficient, to break with representation, to disrupt narration, to escape illustration, to liberate the Figure: to stick to the fact" (2002 [1981], 6). Accordingly, one of the "rudimentary" techniques to isolate the Figure in Bacon is to "delimit the place where the person—that is to say, the Figure—is seated, lying down, doubled over, or in some other position" (1). For this reason, Bacon typically positions his Figures in a round area, a gyratory spiral, inside a cube, a parallelepiped, or onto a bar. It is the technique of positioning the Figure in a parallelepiped that interests me at the moment for the purposes of paralleling it with Manni's position in the telephone booth. I will shortly take up the technique of gyratory spiral with reference to another character, Lola.

One of Bacon's paintings, in which the Figure is positioned in the parallelepiped, is the 1969 triptych *Three Studies of Lucian Freud*. A parallelepiped is a geometrical structure of coordinates that consists of six faces, each of which is like a parallelogram positioned exactly opposite to the other. In Bacon, a parallelepiped is a structure of fine coordinating lines that barely follow the geometry of a regular parallelepiped (since, like the Figure itself, they are prone to distortions) and do not meet each other at fixed lengths from their points of origin. As a result, the six transparent faces that enclose the Figure and isolate it from the field remain unequal and distorted.

Breaking with Figuration, Film Technique

The telephone booth in which Manni is positioned is neither much of a regular geometrical parallelepiped nor a deformed parallelepiped of Bacon. Although standing halfway from geometry and non-regularity, it fairly performs the role that Bacon assigns to his parallelepipeds—to isolate the Figure and break

with the figuration. Its glass panes register transparency like that of Bacon's parallelepiped and render Manni visible inside it. The bars of its yellow frame act like coordinating lines. More importantly, the frame of the booth performs a fractionating function like that of Bacon's: at least one of the perpendicular lines in Bacon's *Three Studies of Lucian Freud* cuts the Figure into two halves. Similarly, the bars of the frame of the telephone booth, in a way, fractionate the body and person of Manni into distinct halves and pieces from different angles (depending on the position of the camera). In this sense, the isolating "place" of the parallelepiped of telephone booth becomes "an operative field" in itself" (6).

In Tykwer, the parallelepiped of the telephone booth performs, at the minimum, three important functions that Deleuze suggests about parallelepiped or, for that matter, any other "place" in Bacon: it "produces" space ("takes up more or less space"), it "delimits" space, and it correlates space place ("the haptic view"), i.e., correlates/connects the protagonist with the *mise en scene* or in case of painting the Figure with the field (6-8). The telephone booth is located on the sidewalk of a wide intersection. The sidewalk, the streets and the intersection remain quiet, serene and uncrowded. They constitute the *mise en scene*, the public space. Consequently, the location of a booth in this public space is quite telling, especially from the sense that it "takes up more or less space" and renders it private. The telephone booth usurps, carves and produces a parallelepiped of private space in the heart of public space. It is the space of a person, in this case, the protagonist, inside. Now whether it enacts a sanctuary or confinement for the protagonist/figure does not matter much; what matters is the fact of drawing of lines, boundaries, and/or frontiers between the spaces whereby "depth" is determined depending upon the geometries involved. It is these lines/boundaries/frontiers on which the whole scheme of "structuring and spatializing function" of spaces, public and private, takes place. Again whether the lines/boundaries/frontier acts as separating or meeting systems does not matter much; what matters is how they mark the fact of *the existence* of two spaces, public and private, on the same plane, since some of us always already

do not want to see and/or accept that existence. These lines/boundaries/frontiers demonstrate, in the words of Deleuze, "*the correlation of two sectors on a single Plane, equally close*" (8). Interestingly, the correlation itself points to the production of yet another space that Deleuze and Guattari call "haptic space" (a space produced by the side-by-side existence of place and field on one plane). It is this haptic space (as in Bacon's paintings) that assumes a new role in producing the cinematic images.

Camera in the Haptic Space

The cinematic technology has successfully tapped into this hitherto inaccessible space by inventing a significant technique of placing the camera in it. Now the camera moves carefully back and forth between the *mise en scene* (the field) and the protagonist (the Figure) without violating their respective spaces. For instance, in the scene under discussion, in which Manni is positioned inside the telephone booth, at one point, when the camera, which is now placed close to the booth, pans the *mise en scene* around it, it registers the fact that it is neither placed in the *mise en scene* nor inside the booth. On the other hand, when it moves closer to or away from the protagonist in the booth, it in a way moves within this haptic space, exposing it and scaling its depth. However, this facility of movement does not stop the camera from entering the space of *the mise en scene* or that of the booth. Hence, as the camera focuses from outside the parallelepiped of the telephone booth, it gives an external perspective, that of the "attendants," and as it enters the booth and focuses from inside (facing outward), it gives an internal perspective, that of the protagonist or the Figure.

Another delimiting and isolating structure that Tom Tyker employs is even more powerful than the parallelepiped of the telephone booth. It is that of the spiral (or *spirale*) that spins the whole *mise en scene* into a gigantic vortex and encircles another protagonist, Lola. It parallels the "gyratory spiral" in Bacon that spins the entire field to envelop and imprison the Figure in many paintings. As Deleuze puts it, "In many paintings, the field is caught up in a movement that forms it into a cylinder: it curls around the contour, around the place; and it envelops and

imprisons the Figure" (14). Furthermore, since this spinning "accompanies the movement of all the structure's forces," it enacts a powerful isolating system, which is characterized as an "extreme solitude of the Figures, the extreme confinement of the bodies" (15). In Tyker, the *mise en scene* enacts this extreme solitude and confinement in regard to Lola. From the very beginning, as the opening credit sequence rolls on the screen, animated Lola is shown endlessly running through a vortex. It appears as if Lola's run is static movement, just as the vortex keeps opening on her.

There is yet a third isolating tool that enacts the technique of isolation. It is the colour screen/filter employed in the last scenes of the first two divisions of the film in which the protagonists are shown recalling the past promises of love. After Lola gets shot in her chest, seemingly by the mistake of a cop who is looking at the falling bag of money, and after Manni is run down by an ambulance, seemingly by the mistake of a driver, the red colour screen drops in as the final memory scenes are played in which Manni and Lola lay in a bed smoking. There is little if any movement in the bodies except for some movement of the heads.

Cinematic Color Regime

In their form and functioning, a degree of parallel can be established between Bacon's isolating devices and Tyker's colour screen. Tyker's isolation structure is placed between the protagonists and the viewers. The colour screen is a powerful isolating device that appears to have deformed a pre-existing isolating device like that of a parallelepiped, a gyratory spiral, a round area, a bar, or a cube into a flattened dispersed screen. It has, in fact, deformed the coordinates or coordinating lines of all pre-existing isolating devices. With this deformation, it has been set free to assume all three functions hitherto performed by the place, the contour and the field. For instance, in Bacon, "the place," i.e., the round area or the oval or the bar, sometimes extends beyond the edges of the painting. On the other hand, in Tykwer, the colour screen spreads and extends beyond the edges of the cinema screen (a screen above a screen). In this context, the colour screen functions like "the place" in Bacon that

isolates the protagonists. In Bacon, the contour lines are meant to separate the Figures and the place where the fact takes place from the monochromatic field where the eternity lingers. On the other hand, in Tykwer, the colour screen separates the past from the present. In this context, the colour screen functions as a contour. In Bacon, the field gets "caught up in a movement that forms it into a cylinder" that curls around the protagonists enveloping and imprisoning them. On the other hand, in Tykwer, the flattened colour screen is about to get caught up in a movement that will set it into a spiral (which, of course, occurs in the ensuing scene in which Lola is caught in the spiral of the stairwell) to imprison the protagonists. In this context, it functions as a field.

Enacting Motion and Motionlessness

The technique of isolation in Bacon apparently seems to render the Figure motionless, but in effect, it conversely renders it highly mobile onto itself and in relation to its isolating "place." Deleuze writes that since all these are "places" that take "more or less space,"

"[t]he important point is that they do not consign the Figure to immobility but, on the contrary, render sensible a kind of progression, an exploration of the Figure within the place, or upon itself.." (5-6)

In the static plane of the painting, one of the ways Bacon renders the motion visible is by inscribing forms of deformations in the body. Different organs of the body attain the capability to move independently by maintaining a loose connection with other organs and unity with the whole. This renders the body as if an assortment of "prostheses." The inscription of this prosthetic quality in the painted bodies then achieves for the painting what montage achieves for the cinema, the motion. In the case of painting, motion is enacted as different moments of temporality are inscribed in a single spatial fact, while in the case of films, different moments of spatiality are inscribed in a single extended temporal fact. This significant difference registers itself in the act of viewing in order to reach a cognitive perception of the painted or imaged body as the viewers of the former themselves squirm with the squirming painted body while the viewers of the latter

remain stiff as all squirming is done by the imaged body; in fact, using montage, camera successively tunes the different planes of the image with the viewer's plane. After all, motion is, at least from the cognitive point of view, "our interpretation of this sequence of forms as being 'a body' which creates the effect of motion" ([Betancourt 2002](#), 6). Therefore, when the viewers fail to see the motion in the painting, in fact, they fail to follow "this sequence of forms." In Bacon, the body's individual parts are stretched on different angles, producing different forms that need sequencing, which is itself provided by relations of tonality, to observe the motion.

In the *Three Studies of Lucian Freud*, the body parts of the Figure are pulled at different angles not to display a deforming body but also to give a sense of how deformation takes place. Since the painting has to show all these movements that take place at different times on a single spatio-temporal plane, the sense of deformation can only arise if one temporal moment of each part during the process of deformation is captured and painted. The sequence can be then registered (arbitrarily) by the broken tones, scrubbing the areas on the body or using other techniques. Now, if we could spread this single spatio-temporal plane of painting on multiple temporal planes of cinema or inject time into it, then it should show the process of deformation in motion like a film scene. On the other hand, if we take out the multiple moments of time (note that the spatial plane remains the same since the protagonist/Figure does not move in the spatial plane but in time) from the telephone booth scene in *Lola Rennt*, and condense it on a single spatio-temporal plane, then the process of deformation in Manni would not be much different from that of Bacon's Figure. Enclosed in the parallelepiped of the telephone booth and tormented by the imagination of imminent violence, Manni's body experience a volley of deforming movements. As he talks to Lola, blaming her for bungling the deal, gradually, the sensation of violence builds in him, and he starts yelling at her. At this point camera zooms in, taking face shots that display the subtleties of the process of facial deformation—swelling blood vessels, an exploding throat, a creasing forehead and a disfiguring mouth. In

another scene, he is shown calling his friends and family for help, and since he feels like he is being let down by everyone, his helplessness comes out in the form of cold sighs and nods. Toward the end, when he has tried all his contacts to no avail, he goes mad smashing the telephone set, but finally, out of utter frustration, he droops his head on it. At this point, the sensation of violence seems to have imploded in him, forcing his body to droop and escape itself like the shadow in Bacon escapes from the body and spreads on the floor.

Manni, like the Figure in Bacon, experiences a sort of static bodily movements that Deleuze calls "derisory athleticism"—"a violent comedy in which the bodily organs are prostheses" (2002, 15). This type of movement is not produced without but within the body, as the body becomes "the source of movement" (15). It surges in the form of a "spasm" inside the body that stretches the various organs in different directions and gets inscribed in the deformed shapes/forms of organs. It registers the duality of existence in the Figure/protagonist by causing a schism between the person and body, immaterial and material, conscious and unconscious, *I* and *my*. For instance, when Lola suggests to Manni to run away, while Manni persists that "no one escapes Ronnie," at this point, Manni (i.e., I) gives in, but *his* body continuously generates spasms in order to escape manifests the moment of a dual existence. Deleuze writes:

The body exerts itself in a very precise manner or waits to escape from itself in a very precise manner. It is not I who attempts to escape from my body. It is the body that attempts to escape from itself by means of...in short, a spasm: the body as plexus, and its effort or waiting for a spasm. Perhaps this is Bacon's approximation of horror or abjection (15).

Manni's body undergoes spasms to escape him from his mouth and diffuse through the minute holes of the telephone handset to an unknown but safer spot in the *mise en scene*. This scene of bodily effort to escape from itself is one of the basic themes inscribed in Tom Tykwer. Manni's escaping body displays rich parallels with Bacon's *Figure at a Washbasin* (1976) and Joseph Conrad's *Narcissus*. Like the *Figure at Washbasin*, another painting that carries this

theme is *Lying Figure with Hypodermic Syringe* (1963). Here the possibility of escape from the body takes place through various prosthetic instruments. This painting shows a "body attempting to pass through the syringe and to escape through this hole or vanishing point functioning as a prosthesis-organ" (17). Much like the hypodermic syringe, the telephone set acts as a prostheses organ from whose minute holes Manni's body struggles to escape.

Body and the Escape

The body's struggle to escape from itself might be trivialization and hysteria for the person, as Deleuze puts it, but might not be for the body. The body is quite earnest about the possibility of escape since *a part* of itself is already escaping from it. Like the shadow in the Bacon, which is a part of the body but has already escaped from the body through some localized point in the contour, the voice of Manni has already been escaping from the body into the minute holes of the telephone voice-piece. Then carried on the electromagnetic waves through the wires, it escapes the parallelepiped of the telephone booth and reaches the other end of the *mise en scene*. The difference in the escape of a part of the body and the whole body is the quantum of difference between means of communication and of transportation. The means of communication can localize the escape of a part of the body but not the whole it, which can escape only through means of transportation. Here is the body's predicament that it earnestly believes that since its part can escape, it might escape as well. We have some science fiction genres, for instance, the *Matrix* trilogy, giving imagery that renders the possibility of escape of the whole body through a telephone set. This is one of the areas of fascination with technology: how possibly enable and use the means of communication for that of transportation? In this connection, to ensure escape, an altogether different approach might achieve some success. Since our age is fast transforming from the age of transportation to the age of communication, the need for transportation for whole bodies will minimize, and on the other hand, the parts will be set free; formless and shapeless, they will not only be able to escape and vanish easily but in doing so will

break with the figuration which stubbornly resides in the whole (body).

We noted that Manni's squirming movements constitute derisory athleticism, yet there is one more significant aspect to his movements without which the athleticism does not reach its fulfilling meaning. This is the aspect of the singularity of movements, which not only points to the protagonist's isolation but also shuts out all the spectators and spectacles. Deleuze calls it "singular athleticism" since it works to "eliminate the spectator." In Bacon, there are neither spectacles nor any room for spectators. "The sole spectacle," writes Deleuze, "is, in fact, the spectacle of waiting or effort, but these are produced only when there are no longer any spectators" (14). Under this impression, Manni's and Lola's struggle throughout the film seems to be "the spectacle of waiting or effort" for only 20 minutes. There are no spectators in it. The elderly woman standing outside the telephone booth or the group of nuns in the black, or any other characters (except the bum) Lola encounters on her way do not make spectators. They are attendants since they have "no narrative relationship to the central figure;" they either determine or provide the "facticity" of the event (Shapiro 2009, 100). In the words of Deleuze, they establish "the fact," which is "the relationship of the Figure to its isolating place." Their very existence is significant primarily because they determine the "taking place" (Deleuze 2002, 6) of the fact, the movement, and the athleticism since they constitute "constant[s] or point[s] of reference in relation to which a variation is assessed" (14).

Figuration and Color Regime

The break with figuration in Bacon and Tykwer does not take place by the workings of isolating devices alone but also with the systematic use of colour. In effect, the colour plays a double role; it helps break with the figuration and goes a long way in enacting sensation. Deleuze observes, in relation to Bacon's Figures, that colour usage predicates on sustaining the sensation of the body/figure rather than representing it: "Colour is in the body, the sensation is in the body, and not in the air. The sensation is what is painted.

What is painted on the canvas is the body, not insofar as it is represented as an object. Still, insofar as it is experienced as sustaining *this* sensation" (32). Deleuze's reflection informs about a deep connection between colour and sensation. The latter is enacted through a careful and precise system of the former, which he calls "the colour regime" (121).

A colour regime is instituted by employing certain colouring techniques, that of, the colour preference, the colour investment, and the colour relations. Deleuze uses one basic term equivalent to these techniques, "modulation" (and replaces it sometimes with "colourism") (116,122). Modulation is a complex concept involving a series of functions, for instance, distribution of colour, variations of intensities or saturation, relations between various colours, and relations between various regimes of colours. It not only tells about the individual character and functioning of colour in a colour regime but also the collective character and functioning of all colours in a colour regime. Or, according to Deleuze, it "explains the unity of the whole" (116). In Tykwer, we notice the constitution of a colour regime by the employment of modulation. At times it appears as if Tykwer's primary concern is perhaps this mediated dispersal of colours in the *mise en scene* or rather on the big screen. For the purpose of approaching the Tykwer colour regime, I take the three colouring techniques separately. The technique of preference entails that a) specific colours and specific sensations are not inherently connected to each other and that; b) the connection arises through arbitrary assignment or consistent usage by the colourist. For instance, the same sensation of violence is enacted in two different colours in two different films—in Coen Brothers' Miller's Crossing the brown and in Lola Rennt by the red. Since the different colours can enact the same sensation, the arbitrary control of the colourist in preferring and selecting process becomes obvious. However, the extent of arbitrariness remains in doubt for at least two reasons. First, the colourist might seek to dovetail his preferred colour, which Deleuze calls "dominant colour" (120), with an underlying theme, setting, timing etc., which can be telling regarding his choice. For instance, in Hong Kong director Wong Kar-wai's

films, we notice such a tendency. In his *Mood for Love* (2000), blues constitute the underlying theme, and its sensation is enacted by blue colour; in his time-travel *2046* (2004), glamour and modernity of the future constitute the timing, and its sensation is enacted by crimson red; in his *Ashes of Time Redux* (2008) desert is the setting and its sensation is enacted by yellow colour. Second, certain professional colourists show consistency in the use of specific colours for enacting specific sensations throughout their oeuvre. For instance, Bacon consistently uses blue and red tones to enact the sensation of meat (120). In short, colours are preferred, whether arbitrarily or consistently, so that they convey the sensation directly in that particular system. The reason for preferring is evident in the following remark of Bacon: "It is a very, very close and difficult thing to know why some paint comes across directly onto the nervous system and other paint tells you the story in a long diatribe through the brain" (Sylvester 1987: 18).

After the preferences are established, the process of investing the colour in the canvas or the screen begins. It is a highly precise process that requires skill on the part of the colourist, or in the words of Michael Fried, a "good taste" (1965, 245; quoted in Deleuze 2002, 122). It not only enacts a "decorative regime of colour"—the dispersal of colour in an aesthetic pattern—but also inflects the relations of colour, and eventually determines the sensation (Deleuze 2002, 122). In simple terms, it is the intensity and density as well as the proportionality of dominant colour (s) on the canvas or the screen. Whereas the intensity is the concentration levels, the convergence on and divergence from the dominant colour; the density is the spatial and temporal spread of the dominant colour on the canvas or the screen, and; the proportionality is the relationship between intensity and density.

In order to enact a decorative regime of colour, Tykwer carries out precise colour investment in the protagonist and the *mise en scene*. Lola is invested with three colours, the red in her hair, the blue in her blouse, and the green in her pants. However, it is the striking brilliance of the red colour that not only abstracts her from the *mise en scene* but also gives her a central position in the scenes. It is a unique way of

making her the protagonist, not by the action or narrative of the film but by a mere concentration of color in her hair. With the preferred red colour residing in her hair, the whole colour system seems to converge on or diverge from her. All other characters and objects are arranged around her with matching or contrasting investments of colour according to the desired proportionality. For instance, in the very first scene, in which she has a nervous conversation with Manni, the telephone she holds is invested with red colour, which appears to merge with her hair. Here the colour is in the process of dissolving the boundaries between her body and prosthetic organ (telephone), allowing the two to interpenetrate or else allowing Lola's spastic body to dissipate into it in order to escape. Besides the telephone, there are other red colour articles sitting on the table. In fact, the setting of the entire room is a mosaic of red colour articles. As the camera takes Lola's shots from different angles and positions, the *mise en scene* of her room appears soaking in the dark with traces of red colour flashing from different objects, including a bright red lamp. It appears as if the intensity and density of the red colour have increased to the extent that it turned dark, only leaving behind some red traces to inform about the origin of this darkness. As the conversation between the two ends, on Manni's side, the camera zooms out from the telephone booth toward the street wall-clock making visible a streak of red colour passing through it in the form of a second hand beside a dapple of another red in the form of a red traffic signal. The scene cuts to Lola, and the camera zooms in on the wall-clock in her room that also has second-hand red running on digits enclosed in green squares. On a closer look, it appears that the zoom is not as much meant to show the remaining time (that is, the figuration) as it is meant to denote the forces of colour that traverse through almost every object in *mise en scene*, connecting and weaving the latter into a unified system. This way of camera zooming means, using Paul Klee's words by inflecting their context, "Not to render the visible, but to render visible" (48).

It becomes more obvious in the next scene when Lola begins to think about who she should ask for the money. In this scene, the camera

revolving around her like roulette generates a spin in the *mise en scene*, which takes on the shape of a gyratory spiral displaying various objects invested with red colour flashing by at speed. And as the speed of the revolving camera increases, the red flashes are drawn into circular lines of the gyratory spiral, making a contour of isolation around Lola. Meanwhile, the potential helpers who flash on her mind appear silhouetted against either red or dark background, in a way establishing the origin of coloured sensation, which seems to be arising from the "nervous system" whose screen has turned red. The subsequent scenes shoot the cityscape of Berlin, in which Lola runs, which Tykwer mediates with colour density. It is carefully invested with red colour, in the form of red cars, red ambulances, red traffic signals, red signposts, red costumes, red advertising signs and so forth. In order to shoot the cityscape, the camera takes different shots of her run, like panning shots, tracking shots and overhead shots, as well as zoom-in-and-out from the front, side and behind. These shots are not only meant to show her "athleticism" but also to show how the red colour in *mise en scene* reflects her hair. It renders visible the dynamic flow of forces and movements from the *mise en scene* (cityscape) to her hair and then from her hair back to the *mise en scene*. Deleuze calls these kinds of flow systolic and diastolic rhythm. Drawing on Bacon's 1978 *Painting*, DeleuzeDeleuze notes:

Everything [in Bacon's paintings] is divided into diastole and systole, with repercussions at each level... The coexistence of all these movements in the painting...is rhythm. (29-30)

The systole arises as the colour contour drawn by the spiral contracts around Lola. At the same time, we have noticed that the colour contour itself is generated by either the speedy revolution of the camera or by the virtual spiral drawn around the animated Lola. The diastole arises as Lola's body undergoes violent athleticism extending itself to escape from her hair. One of the scenes stands out in this connection. As she runs through the red-brick arched structure that draws a half contour around her, the camera cross-cuts the fast-tracking shots with slow motion and depth-of-focus shots in which Lola's hair waving like flames seem to

dissipate into the *mise en scene*. The red colour exudes from her hair and diffuses into the arched building, localizing the point of escape on her body. It is a point from which the rhythm traverses from the body to the surroundings and back again. Typically, in a regime of colour, the relations of colour converge and diverge on this point. Their proportionality defines this rhythm which is a "vital power" (37) "almost unlivable power" that traverses like "a wave that traces levels or thresholds in the body according to the variations of its amplitude" and relates them. In doing so, it informs about the organization in an otherwise featureless screen (or "organless body"). It causes sensation which is "neither rational nor cerebral," neither "qualitative" nor "qualified" but "only intensive reality" which acts directly on "the nervous system" (39).

According to Deleuze, there are "two ways of going beyond figuration: either toward abstract form or toward the Figure" (31). Though colour can perform a vital role in both ways, it is the latter way that Bacon and Tykwer employ. By enacting a colour regime, they take the viewers closer to the Figure/protagonist who takes hold of their gaze rather than taking them to the story (figuration). Then at least, at first sight, the colour regime causes a sensation if, later on, it loses into some figuration. Moreover, the colour regime determines the point of the centrality of gaze. Allow me the liberty to take a detour to approach this point.

The painters and filmmakers think, at least on a basic level, in terms of colours and forms (or lines in the case of abstract art). The colours work through intensities, while forms work through geometries. One of the prime functions of intensities of colour and geometries of form in any image/painting is to raise or raze the figures—abstract them from the field/*mise en scene* or let them dissolve them into it. In this sense, all the figures emerge from the field (the monochromatic eternity as in Bacon)/*mise en scene* and merge back into it (119). The maximum degree of their striking emergence and presence is marked by the maximum level of their abstraction from the field/*mise en scene*. The abstraction does not entail cutting off the figures from field/*mise en scene* since that will amount to no separation at all (as the relative coordinates

or geometry collapses), rather producing a centrality for them. This is what the contour, the place, the round area does. For instance, Bacon's Figures are placed inside the contour (for instance, a parallelepiped), which itself is placed inside the field/*mise en scene*. In this way, they are able to produce their centrality or invent the centre of the painting. This is how geometry produces centrality, while the colour produces it in different ways, by investments in the place, in the Figure/protagonist, and in the field/*mise en scene*. The point of centrality produced by the colour is, in effect, the working of visibility. It is the point of the centrality of gaze, in the sense that either the gaze diverges or converges, starts or ends on it. If it is the concentration of dominant colour, the gaze starts from there, then moves to survey the rest of the screen, and is finally drawn back to the centre before exiting. It is then also the point of entry and exit of the gaze, the door to the screen or painting. In this way, it takes the viewer closer to the painting/image (i.e., toward the figure). In Cezanne's experience, it is "entering the painting, by reaching the unity of the sensing and the sensed" (31). For instance, the striking concentration of preferred colour in Lola's hair takes viewers closer to Lola herself rather than her anxiety (figural) or her problem (figuration). From her hair, the viewer's gaze runs to the presence of red colour elsewhere on the screen and finally returns to her again. In this way, it informs not only about the flows of colouring rhythms on the screen but also informs about the pattern of rhythmic gaze.

Towards Concluding

In place of abstracting a conclusion from what I have mentioned above, I want to draw a conclusion by turning to a third dimension or technique, that of multiplicity, involved in the breaking with the figuration in both Bacon and Tykwer. According to [Smith \(2003\)](#), Deleuze "treats Bacon's work as a *multiplicity* and attempts to isolate and identify the components of that multiplicity" (xii). Similarly, I treated Tykwer's work as a multiplicity and attempted to isolate its components by focusing on geometry and colour. However, there are two other levels on which multiplicity is registered in Tykwer: first, the multiplicity of interpretations regarding

the film and the character Lola, and second, the multiplicity in the plot. In order to approach the multiplicity of interpretation, I turn to Bacon's 1963 *Man and Child*. Regarding this painting, John Russell raises several interpretations but finally refuses them all: "Is the girl standing in disgrace before her unforgiving father? Is she the man's jailor, outfacing him with folded arms as he writhes in his chair and looks the other way? Is she an abnormality, a physical freak returned to haunt him or is he a man set on high, a judge who shall shortly pass sentence... We shall never know, and we shouldn't even ask to know." According to Deleuze, "the possibility of all these hypotheses or narrations at the same time" and their rejection is "because the painting itself is beyond all narration" (59). Tykwer's *Lola Rennt* and its protagonist, Lola, have also received many interpretations. For instance, Thom Holbrook, in his essay *Good God Run Lola Run*, interprets the film as a Christian redemption narrative in which Lola is a Christ-like figure. Barrie Wilson, in her article *What's it About? Reflections on Tom Tykwer's Run Lola Run* gives four possible narratives: it is about timing, wish fulfilment and dream-like situation, life as a game, and ignorance about life. A common interpretation has been that it is a love story and what young lovers can do for each other. There is no denying the fact that each of these narratives is possible and resides in the film in the form of cognitive clichés. As Deleuze says, "the Figure is still figurative; it still represents some (a screaming man, a smiling man, a seated man), it still narrates something...The first figuration cannot completely be eliminated; something of it is always conserved" (79). However, the mere fact that each narrative remains incomplete in interpreting the film and thus invoking more narratives informs that at the base lies something real, the Figure itself, which refuses every attempt of over-coding. "The painter obtains" it, writes Deleuze, "as an effect of the pictorial act" (79), and by corollary, the director obtains it through the effect of the cinematic act. This is why Tykwer explains his film as "possibilities of cinema" (cited in [Whalen 2000](#)).

Another way of introducing multiplicity and breaking the figuration is to intensify the figuration. Tykwer does this by introducing

multiple plots (narratives or figurations). The film is divided into three episodes, each having a different end. Since there can be many more possible ends (though Tykwer plays only three), the film gives a feeling as if it has no end, no result; it is still open and invites the audience to think about more possible ends. Interestingly, toward the end of the film, the viewers do not know which episode they want to take home. With each episode nullified by the subsequent episode, retroactively, the whole weave of narratives disintegrates or at least is sucked of force. And since all the narratives are realized in the film, it is not the narrative that remains anymore effective for the viewers. Those who want to see a tragedy get a tragic ending, but they are also made to see a melodramatic ending and vice versa. Thus what remains effective is the effect, the sensation that the film enacts by the workings of its colour regimes and geometric forms. According to Deleuze, "Multiplicity has neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes, and dimension" (1988: 8). It is a pre-subjective and pre-objective condition, a process that determines subjects and objects. We encounter this condition, this process in Tykwer and find that there are neither subjects nor objects in his but protagonists and their athleticism. A similar vein can be seen in Bacon, where we have Figures and the facts instead of subjects or objects. The difference between the subject and the protagonist/Figure (at least in the context of Tykwer and Bacon) is that the former exists on a fulfilled stage, enacts a determined object and completes a process, while the latter exists on a fulfilling stage, a becoming of the

subject, and determining an object. Lola is a protagonist in the sense that she does not enact any object but displays only a process, a becoming, a fulfilling—the run. Since the film is always becoming, therefore, there is a whole gamut of figurations, narrations, and illustrations regarding itself as well as Lola. The way Tykwer breaks with figuration is first by focusing on the process, the becoming, and second by isolating its components. He uses Baconian geometry and colour to isolate the protagonists from their *mise en scene* and then connects the whole with the colouring rhythms.

The regimes of colour and dimensions of geometry in Tykwer establish a multiplicity which provides "an object not of recognition but of fundamental encounter" (Deleuze 1994, 139). This object of encounter ruptures the cliché, our already present images, beliefs, and knowledge, and forces us to think. In fact, it ruptures our habitual modes of being and sparks new thoughts initiating a process of becoming. With this multiplicity in the film, then what we, in fact, the encounter is a *new image of thought*, in which "process and becoming, invention and creativity, are privileged over stasis, identity and recognition" (Sullivan 2006, 2). The colour, geometry and plots are employed as "modes of individuation beyond those of things, persons or subjects" (Deleuze 1995, 26). They enable us to take a *line of flight* from our representational way of thinking to the individuation of the multiplicity involved in the film for arriving at new *facts*, new composites and assemblages; or, in the wake of Michel Serres, we can call this film a project in *freeing* the diversity involved in it.

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