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An Ontology of Images and Painterly Subjectivity Towards a Bergsonian Philosophy of Art

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

**An Ontology of Images & Painterly
Subjectivity:**
Towards a Bergsonian Philosophy of Art

Ryan D. Lewis

PhD

University of Dundee December 2013



**An Ontology of Images & Painterly Subjectivity:
Towards a Bergsonian Philosophy of Art**

RYAN D. LEWIS

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy.

DECEMBER 2013

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Declaration

I, Ryan D. Lewis, hereby declare that this submission is my own work, that all the references cited have been consulted by myself, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been submitted or accepted for the awarding of another degree or diploma of the university or any other institute of higher learning.

Signature,

Date

Ryan D. Lewis

Abstract

This investigation attempts to consider the identity of the contemporary Bergsonian philosophy of immanence by reflection on key conceptualisations from the work of Henri Bergson. From the view that thinking Bergsonian is an attitude of philosophy that anticipates the metaphysics of a philosophy of process, the demands of the emergence of thinking in art plays a role the directions of philosophical development. It is by this concern that key Bergsonian concepts serve as grounding of philosophical reflections of the related themes of time, images, and movement, and the change of thinking, towards an encounter of the practice of philosophy through the process of painting. Under the rubric of contemporary process metaphysics in art, we will attempt to establish a conceptual framework from principle Bergsonian conceptualizations, to acknowledge the process of painting as a different methodology of philosophy. This study of philosophy through painting then becomes a corresponding philosophy of the difference of thinking and the challenges to go beyond its identity. Proceeding by Bergsonian conceptualisations, to frame the context for a philosophy of painting, the question of the identity of painting is situated according to the didactic philosophies of Wassily Kandinsky. The comparisons and philosophical engagement between Bergsonian thinking and Kandinskian painting will be mediated by the counter interpretations of the philosophy of Michel Henry. The motivation to return to Bergsonian, exercised by a synthesis of Bergson's concepts and Kandinsky's theoretical practice, is situated according to an understanding of the identity of painting according to the terms of an ontology of images. In terms of a Bergsonian account of image, supported by a Kandinskian perspective, the focus will be towards the possibilities of philosophy and the metaphysics of becoming through the process of painting.

List of Abbreviations

The Works of Henri Bergson

CE	Creative Evolution
CM	Creative Mind
DS Theory	Duration and Simultaneity, with Reference to Einstein's
L	Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic
M	Mélanges
MM	Matter and Memory
TSMR	The Two Sources of Morality and Religion
TFW	Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness

Introduction:

An Ontology of Images & Painterly Subjectivity

The aim of this work is to advance a Bergsonian theory of art by presenting a philosophy of painting in terms of an ontology of images, whereby thinking and perceiving are not definitive conditions but continuously changing realities immanent to a manifold world of becoming in which the expressions and experiences of change are encountered and actualised through the process of painting. In this way, we are arguing from the nature of the Bergsonian philosophy of *philosophizing*, as a relational experience of thinking in time, to extend the project of philosophy and the questions of our understanding in relation to painting and the prospects of its process. Painting is firstly an activity and process of creativity. It is the effort towards the creative composition of images from either the painter's view in the activity or the reception of the painted image according to the viewer's experience of image as sensuous encounter. It is this manner of regarding painting as a different mode of thinking, as thinking through the development and extension of perceptual faculties immediate to the becoming of perception, that we view the process of painting as itself philosophical. Because Bergsonian philosophy offers us the conception of the world as a vast and dynamic plurality of differing temporalities, so that everything is no less and no more than a duration of images in flux, we may then view painting as a philosophy because of its particular articulation of images and the proximation of the process to the ceaseless becoming and flux of perception. By the effort of its compositional qualities, forms of experience and expression encountered through the activity that defines the process of painting, means that the attention of painting so far as the result of the differences and generative expressions of painted images are respective of the process of perceptual images, continuous with experience, durational and immanent to the world.

Much consideration has been given to the impact of Bergson's philosophy in the work of modernist painting and literature and the distinction of his

influence in the early period of the twentieth century. For instance, in Mark Antliff's study *Inventing Bergson: Cultural Politics and the Parisian Avant-Garde*, (1993) ¹we are given a thorough account of the force of Bergson's thought within the avante-garde movements and diffusion of Bergsonism in the last century of art history. Antliff's work serves as a definitive historical account, and is regarded as part of the more recent reintegration of Bergsonian philosophies in contemporary philosophy. When coupled with the renowned critical reappraisal of Bergsonian thinking in John Mullarkey's, *The New Bergson* (1999)², in which another of Antliff's studies in the essay, 'The Rhythms of Duration: Bergson and the Art of Matisse', the direction of scholarship on Bergsonian philosophy, has been moving towards the present application and continued activity. The establishment of Bergson's philosophy and its legacy, as yet a reevaluation of a system of a process philosophy of time and the acceleration of theories of difference and changing modes of thinking from its inspiration, allow us to understand the justification for its continuance.

However, it is here that we argue to move beyond an account of Bergson's thinking and the work of the identification of Bergsonian theories in art history. While Antliff examines Bergson's influence within the modernist avant-garde circles of art by a 'Metaphysics of rhythmic duration', and this in turn leads to Antliff's argument to consider 'the re-opening of aesthetic closure by Bergsonian aesthetics and its philosophical legacy', we are more interested in how this legacy is to proceed. In this respect, we are going beyond the survey and examinations of Bergson's influence, as these surveys have served to reinforce the philosophical enterprise of Bergson's original notion of the corporeal temporality of duration, which, by its very nature, incites philosophy's self-appraisal in its ubiquitous realisation in the concreteness of reality. Hence, we wish to consider the extension and time of

¹ M. Antliff, *Inventing Bergson: Cultural politics and the Parisian avant-garde* (Princeton University Press Princeton, 1993).

² J. Mullarkey, *The New Bergson* (Manchester University Press, 1999).

a Bergsonian inspired sense of the process of thinking, in which the current activity of philosophy is enhanced by the attendance of such a thinking in terms of the immediacy and presence of philosophical genetic relations in painting. By this we are inclined to consider that such a thinking contributes to a philosophy situated in the process of painting, and thereby, understood through the living experiences of the painter, the immediate encounters with the material and concrete forms of perception enacted in the rendering of the painted image, and the ongoing activity of the progress of painting in the discovery of new expression and visual forms through the articulation of the process.

This is not a radical departure from other systems of philosophy that have regarded the identity of philosophy in terms of an ontology of becoming and which occasions the being of perception or the activity of thinking analogously to the changing nature of painting. Recently, Nicholas de Warren's study, 'Flesh Made Paint'³, begins with the question of 'What is Painting?' to then continue elaboration upon Merleau-Ponty's system of thinking on painting and thought. In particular, De Warren's study, as a contribution to the contemporary phenomenological approach to painting, upholds the principle insights of Merleau-Ponty's definitive essay, *Eye and Mind*⁴, explaining that painting is a form of thinking and is necessarily evidence of the relationship between philosophy and art. We recognize that Merleau-Ponty's research and its present continuation through the evaluation and study of his aesthetics in the current developments of phenomenology may not be fully appreciated without the recognition of the intellectual influence of Bergson's philosophy. From Merleau-Ponty's own admission in 'The Philosophy of Existence', from the study, *Text and Dialogues*, and from his inaugural address for his election to the chair of philosophy at the College de France, 'In Praise of Philosophy', we see the importance of the influence

³ N. de Warren, 'Tamino's Eyes, Pamina's Gaze: Husserl's phenomenology of image-consciousness refashioned', *Philosophy, Phenomenology, Sciences*, (Springer, 2010).

⁴ M. Merleau-Ponty, 'Eye and mind (C. Dallery, Trans.)', *The primacy of perception*.

of Bergson's philosophy, but more so, the capacity of Bergsonian thinking to affect the development of other currents of thinking within established traditions of thought. This is most clearly articulated in Gary Gutting's comprehensive work, *French Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*⁵. Gutting's sketches the major trends of French philosophy, dedicating an entire chapter to establish that Bergson's influence, most notably on his commitment to a metaphysics of 'individual agency and creativity', remains not simply as a longstanding tradition, but as a diffusion of philosophical influence with its own retrospective activity concerning notions of differing modes of individuality and questions of the locus of originality, and thereby, spurring towards a progress and continuation of the possibilities of process thinking in current debate.

For our purpose, we recognize the direction concluded by Gutting's scholarship, and assume the 'interludes' of philosophy are the movements of philosophy in the contact with the arts. Most importantly, however, as with De Warren's recent study⁶, the contemporary turn of philosophical examination of the arts in relation to philosophy highlights two important themes: art is now currently regarded as related to research and argument and tantamount to the claims of this present writing, namely, the specificity of the medium of painting as enacting subjective conditions of perception, and, the changing relationship between the process of painting and the process of thinking through visual forms and the living express. The contemporaneous nature of the question of painting, such as in the case of De Warren's study, is evidence of the need to continue the project of philosophies of painting, and to pursue the advancement of the broader project of philosophy through the process of painting. However, this is also a question of the process of philosophy, a question that is driven by the principle Bergsonian notion of

⁵ G. Gutting, *French philosophy in the twentieth century* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁶ N. de Warren, 'Tamino's Eyes, Pamina's Gaze: Husserl's phenomenology of image-consciousness refashioned', *Philosophy, Phenomenology, Sciences*, (Springer, 2010).

philosophy as thinking difference by virtue of the becoming of all reality, to include the reality of thinking in the temporality of painting. The effort to think Bergsonian, and to apply this understanding of thinking to different phenomena of thinking processes has been recently addressed in the works of John Mullarkey's and Charlotte De Mille's edited collection of essays, *'Bergson and the Art of Immanence: Painting, Photography, Film'*⁷. What has been ventured in this collection is an effort towards 'recuperating Bergson', and according to the authors' own descriptions, this has been through the approaches of a variety of perspectives from the differing authors on the lineage of Bergsonian theory in art history. The studies that address the relation of painting and philosophy, in particular, highlight the pervasive and diffuse nature of Bergson's charge to turn away from the conventional systems of thinking, and this 'turning' made evident in the response of artist movements in the modernist period. For example, and more specific to our concerns of this Bergsonian turn extended to philosophy in the practice of painting, in Eric Alliez's study, 'Matisse, Bergson, Oiticica, etc.', he evaluates the impact of Bergsonian philosophy on the work of Henri Matisse and indicates the tracing of Bergsonian philosophical thinking in the Matissean development of art. According to Alliez, the development of Matisse's work was for Bergsonian philosophy, a projection of 'it's very first inscription'. By this, we see that Alliez's study argues for the insight of Matissean art as being more than a philosophy represented in painting, as a stylized Bergson-ism, but instead, the Matissean development was demonstrably the work of Bergsonian philosophy, as the work of the painter going beyond the convention of painterly practice through the enactment and constitutive nature of duration in painting. This does not dissuade our argument, but rather, compels us to look further into the exchange of philosophy and painting. Paired with Alliez's essay, and what we consider as compelling our argument forward, is the work of Brendan Prendeville's study, concerning the relation

⁷ J. Mullarkey and C. de Mille, *Bergson and the art of immanence: painting, photography, film* (Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

of painting and phenomenology, 'Painting the Invisible: Time, Matter, and the Image in Bergson and Michel Henry'. Alliez's study highlights the work of Matisse as a precedent of the turn of Bergsonian thinking in painting, and doubling as a turn from the conventionally views of the identity of painting distinct from the work of philosophy.

However, and more specifically, Predeville's study invites us to consider the proximity of parallels between Bergson's thought and the more recent addition to the tradition of phenomenology, through the 'unorthodox phenomenologist' Michel Henry. What is particular to the content of our argument is that Predeville's study works in the area of the exchange and dialogue between Bergsonian thought and Henry's philosophy. However, Predeville's critical assessment of Henry's reading and understanding of the writings and paintings of Wassily Kandinsky are more pronounced than any actual connections derived between Bergsonian philosophy and Kandinskian theory. It is our view that even though Predeville's study brings Kandinskian theory into the broader study of Bergsonian immanence philosophy and its application in the vocations of art history and theory, it is lacking because the relation between Bergson's philosophy and Kandinsky's theory is presented as no more than an approximation. As both figures were contemporaries, there has not been an adequate survey or investigation, respective to the projects of Bergsonian philosophy and correlations of the radical change of painting in the twentieth century in terms of the development of abstraction through painting, according to the foundations of the conceptualization in the Kandinskian theories and practice of painting. In this regard, we see Alliez's study as itself a tacit argument for the augmentation of contemporary Bergsonian scholarship with precedents of the Bergsonian turn of Matissean painting, as the instantiation of original thought by the enactment of the exchange of thinking and expression of duration through painting. Likewise, we are interested in both the comparisons and the potential for the continuation of a philosophy through painting founded on the direct

connections between Bergsonian and Kandinskian models. Because Kandinsky was regarded as a significant figure in the advancement of the abstract movement in painting, but more particularly, because he is a recognisable precedent of the practice of immanent art, by examples of his synthesizing the novelty of visual experiences in painting in cooperation with the theoretical and philosophical writings, his work will contribute to the conceptual analysis that is the contemporary exchange defining Bergsonian thinking.

Many artists have been researched to further this exchange, particularly highlighted through the studies offered by Antliff and Alliez. However, though we have seen the theorisation of Bergson effective through the analysis of art as a possibility of possible conditions of philosophical thinking, for example, of Matisse, the Cubists, The Italian Futurists, all of whom were contemporaneous with Kandinsky, the reception of Kandinsky in this regard is lacking. This warrants the investigation of his theories as they may offer insight into the methodological accounts of philosophy in painting purview the contemporary Bergsonian philosophy of thinking immanence. However, even though Kandinsky was contemporaries with Bergson, unlike other artists who responded to Bergson's thinking, there is limited mentions of the connections or correlations of Kandinsky's philosophy and practice of painting as intentionally relational or comparative to Bergsonian thinking. This is a strong signally for the concentration of our investigation. This is accentuated when we regard Kenneth Lindsay's renowned studies of Kandinsky, in which he explains, 'Characteristic of Kandinsky's writing is the technique of breaking up the given topic into opposites or alternatives, [...], the dominating relativity of the thought process contrasts strongly with conclusions, which are often positively stated'.⁸ Though Lindsay is explaining the Kandinsky's theoretical writings as expressing a tension of difference, suggests a characterization that we association with Kandinskian

⁸ W. Kandinsky, *Kandinsky, complete writings on art* (Da Capo Press, 1994).p. 11-15

painting, that of the abstraction of the image from the experience, i.e. the force of change active in the expression of the process of painting. In this sense, we see strong correlations from a Kandinskian quality of the departure from the signification of meaning or the signifying of emotion in the sense differential of painting, with the Bergsonian concern of philosophising differently, i.e. philosophy adjusting itself to the world of becoming.

However, despite the anticipation of the potential of abstraction of thinking through his cooperative working of painting and theory towards expressions of abstraction, his insights have been largely dismissed to the classification of ‘idioms of abstraction’ in art history.⁹ Contrary to this latter perspective we regard the ‘idiomatic’ of Kandinskian abstraction as the source of possibility to engage with the contemporary identity of painting. Similar to the diffusion of Bergson’s thinking, which some have commented as contributing to its absorption and the eventual flight of its return, this passing over Kandinsky, and Kandinskian theory, despite its having profoundly affected the development of art theory, leaves a deficiency in the appraisals of painting as philosophy, which our research hopes to correct.

In light of his theory of abstraction, Kandinskian theory anticipated the voice of contemporary philosophy, in its challenge to go beyond its modes of thinking, and with this charge extended to philosophies of art, we can see the Kandinskian principles still resonates with the more specific claims in the discourse of philosophies of immanence.¹⁰ My objective in this regard, is not to follow Kandinskian theory in order to revive a primer for abstract painting practice to communicate a system of philosophy. Instead, by process of the explication of Kandinskian notions of expression through painting and the change of visual experience as an abstractive process, this presented interchangeably with Bergsonian thought and conceptualisations, both offer a

⁹ P. Crowther, *The language of twentieth-century art: a conceptual history* (Yale University Press New Haven, CT, 1997).

¹⁰ J. Mullarkey and C. de Mille, *Bergson and the art of immanence: painting, photography, film* (Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

grounding for the contextualization of the limits and the problem of the identity of painting as a philosophy. Though Bergson's work challenged the nature of philosophy by directing its investigations according to how philosophy is to encounter a world of a plurality of images subject through change in time, he did not directly confront the nature of image application, composition, and development as it would be understood in the visual arts. Bergson did not publish any distinct work on aesthetics or a philosophy of art, and though the philosophies he offers on the subjects of time, memory, and the image are altogether relevant to the thinking of art, Bergson did not confront art directly.

It is this deficiency that compels this research, and recognizing the parallels with Kandinsky's thinking, we see the continuance of Bergsonian scholarship concerning the arts to be attainable. Here we understand Kandinsky's paintings to be an exemplar of a philosophy becoming realised in the process of painting, but more specifically, it is the Kandinsky's theoretical writings which engaged with the enterprise of announcing the potential of abstraction as a visual philosophy. Therefore, Kandinskian theory operates as much as a practical example of Bergsonian thinking, by evidence of the paradigmatic shift caused by his paintings in the history of painting, as well as their continuing legacy through their reception in modern collections, but more so, by the accessibility of the painter's thinking and reflections proceeding with the origination of his work. It is then towards his writing that I rely, since accepting the creativity of Kandinskian outlook, as reinforcing the Bergsonian challenge to the creativity of thought. We wish to explore the interchangeability of Bergson's key concept that demand of philosophy and abstraction of its thinking from its own process, with Kandinsky's view of the expression of the forces intrinsic to the 'inner sounds' of the material world requiring a view of the continuous creative overture in atmosphere of painting. By shifting our focus from the imaged examples of abstraction in painting, to the tensions of his struggle with thinking philosophically through

his practice towards abstraction, it is a reliance of inquiry through his writings that we may understand the possibilities of philosophical expression mirroring its attendance to the devices of its process. Because of this, we will consider Henry's attendance to Kandinsky's theory not only as functioning for the conveyance of another system of thinking, but by its return to an inspirational source, it offers a grounding for the reappraisal of both Kandinsky and Bergson, to return to the practice of thinking to benefit thinking's challenge to understand its alterity. So we aim for not only comparison, but a synthesis of Kandinskian theory towards the principle of Bergsonian views.

Our objective is firstly, to mediate between Bergson and Kandinsky, in the reverse order of Predeville's study, so as to indicate that in the first order, the relation of Bergsonian philosophy and Kandinskian theory of painting is to be struck, where the bridging of the two is justified in part by the Henrian return to Bergsonian thinking. Rather than simply returning to Kandinsky's theories, we argue for the continuation of a Bergsonian immanence philosophy of painting with a view of painting in terms of the Kandinskian sense of the creative and transformative potential of painting sourced from the apprehension of the creative content 'revolving' from the living experience of the 'concrete reality' towards its material expression. Though Predeville's work considers the themes of Bergson's philosophy primarily in comparison to Henry's conceptualisations, these conceptualisations are marginally indicated through the lens of Henry's interpretations and loosely connected Kandinsky's work. Inadvertently, the interpretive focus and critical assessment remains upon Henry's phenomenology, and thus, Predeville's study elaborates upon consonance of Bergsonian philosophy with Henry's apprehension of life. This leads us to consider the reappraisal of Henrian philosophy, to contend that Henrian phenomenology is itself an example of the process of thinking, as the novelty of thinking that goes beyond the 'conventions' of its tradition and contemporary philosophical basis.

However, though Prendeville's study demonstrates the postmodern legacy of Bergsonian thinking, most notably through the post-phenomenological turn of Henry, what is lacking is the address of the correlation of the legacy of Bergsonian philosophy with the revolution of modernist painting by Bergson's contemporary Kandinsky. Therefore, we propose a Bergsonian and Kandinskian synthesis, as a model for the continuation of philosophy as a creative process, oriented to the role of the practice of painting, such that the Kandinskian theory of painting offers the methodological parameters by which a philosophy of process may be investigated by the necessary abstraction of painting.

This brings us to the second element of our argument, which is to regard the rendering of philosophy through the process of painting, such that the process of painting is the practice of philosophy immanent to its encounter and experience through time.

This situates our line of investigation closer to the terms of the ontologisation of the process of the painting, intrinsic to its immanent identity, and away from the subjectivisation of the object of painting. This will be a key position that frames the context for the investigation of the identity of painting and philosophy as also indicative of the philosophical movements of thinking immanence. Regarded in this way, our questioning the identity of painting, aligns the philosophical interaction of painting and thinking to the current research and studies relating to Bergson's philosophy of time and the history of art and visual culture. Here, the difference of our consideration is that it is given to the operation of the process of Bergsonian thinking upon itself, such that the thought of painting as a mode of philosophizing, anticipates the continuous questioning of the identity of painting as a system of thinking embedded in our living experiences of time.¹¹ Our advancement is a response to what we formulate as a tripartite problem. The first objective is the present

¹¹ P. Crowther, *The language of twentieth-century art: a conceptual history* (Yale University Press New Haven, CT, 1997).

Bergsonian challenge to our philosophical assumptions of thinking and the descriptive and ontological methods of its outlook. This is prompted by the challenge of contemporary Bergsonian scholarship, particularly as Bergson's thinking is identified as a process philosophy and thus, regarded as a metaphilosophy. We take this challenge to consider the orientation of philosophy through painting, and thereby, extend the challenge to the orientation of painting beyond the economy of its visual knowledge and conditions of established aesthetic theory of painterly creativity. In this sense, we recognize the significance of Bergson's philosophy in its regard of the multifarious possibilities of thinking through philosophical efforts. The varieties of philosophies and the difference of our methods of philosophizing are as numerous and as frequent as the attitudes and perspectives of such efforts, as they are the collective assertions and projections of expressions from some original and simple insight into reality. Here we see the role of the painter as the philosopher, so that a Bergsonian philosophy is then already, a philosophical view of the ways and means of doing philosophy, and thereby, a philosophy towards methods of philosophizing. It is precisely this thinking through philosophy as a philosophical anticipation of novelty through experience that we consider painting as itself a philosophical system.

Applied as an extension of Bergsonian philosophy to the metaphysical essence of painting in terms of the becoming of images, and as a genuine mode of thinking by approximation of experience to the materialization of images, we regard direct investigation into the differences of painting, as also the catalyst for Bergsonian philosophies immediate to the profusion of visual change and the understanding of life through the projections of painterly thinking. Our argument is a reaction to the present plurality of art theory, and in particular, an assertion of a Bergsonian conceptualisation of painting as a thinking from the continuity of expressions, as a philosophy of the 'concrete' that is attentive through duration of images and thus, the living experience of images becoming and revealing to us the movements and change of reality.

Arguing about the unlimited potential of philosophy to enlarge the scope of our perceptions and the unbounded nature of our intuitive thinking to progress a philosophy of change, Bergson specifically refers to painting as an example, stating,

What is the aim of art if not to show us, in nature and in the mind, outside of us and within us, things which did not explicitly strike our senses and consciousness?[...] But nowhere is the function of the artist shown as clearly in that art which gives the most importance place to imitation, I mean painting. The great painters are men who possess a certain vision of things which has or will become the vision of all men.¹²

From this context, we argue for a Bergsonian philosophy of painting, as a philosophy that regards the present and plural dynamism of ‘the inner life of things’, via the events of expressive originality and moments of visual diversity in the processes of painting. From this sense of doing philosophy as a philosophy of painting, we regard the relation of the living experience and duration of the painter, and the image of the painter’s expression as joined directly and simultaneously, as a process of painting, whereby the indivisible flow of reality may be experienced and expressed through images.

Our view is against the reduction of philosophical understanding and properties of philosophical speculation to a series of formal ideas, to symbols, and the beguiling qualities of linguistic inertness, and ultimately the stalemate of our philosophical outlooks according to established conceptual systems. Our view accepts that the practice of philosophy entails conceptual precision, explanatory analysis, and establishes modes of thought. However, further to the point of the role of philosophy in terms of its relation to the duration and continuous becoming of reality, we understand philosophy to be self-differentiating. By claiming that philosophy is most acute to its understanding when it is attuned to its empirical encounter with experience, thinking must

¹² J. Mullarkey, *The New Bergson* (Manchester University Press, 1999).

mediate its identity from between the proximity to living experience and the distinction given by conscious reflection. Bergson's claim is clear in this regard. His critique suggests that rather than rely on the localization of thinking compelled by the habits of thought according to pragmatic orientations to action, by an effort of intuitive and immediate reflection the reception of our philosophical understandings become more approximate and continuous with living experience. In this regard, as reality is unfolding unceasingly, thinking that attends to the immediacy of the becoming of experience encounters the creative. Extending this further to the identity of painting, the context of immediacy remains the same, so that the sense of the painted image as 'meaning', as reducible to an iconological analysis, or expounding a 'truth of painting, is to also admit to a distancing of philosophical thinking. From the reality of its encounter. According to this line of thinking, rather than relegating Bergsonian philosophy to a historical account of French Philosophy, consigning Bergson's philosophy to a genealogical account of twentieth-century philosophies of process, we will maintain Bergsonian philosophy as the orientation of the activity of philosophy in terms of a philosophy of duration.¹³ By this, we also regard painting analogically as a link between philosophy and art, as a method of philosophizing that entails differing modes of thinking, and thereby, diverges from habits of thinking which rely upon the crystallization of concepts and the analytical distortion of reality in terms of an 'objective order'. The challenge of Bergsonian thinking according to its principle of the duration of all things, is to continue thinking beyond its reflection. With our investigation we are asking how this is not only equal with the creativity of painting, but how the project of Bergsonian philosophy integrated in the identity of painting.

Mullarkey's charge to consider Michel Henry, differently by thinking through

¹³ S. Guerlac, *Thinking in time: an introduction to Henri Bergson* (Cornell University Press, 2006).

Henry's philosophy contra the orientation of his immanent categories of 'manifestation', 'affectivity', and the revealing of life through art, is a guidepost for our work.¹⁴ How is the relation of Henry's philosophy to phenomenology, also an extension of a Bergsonian philosophy? We address this question through analysis of Henry's study of Kandinsky, where the different outlook towards phenomenology gains traction. Henry's unorthodox phenomenology signals the differing directions of thought, and as reflected more specifically through the topic of painting, this brings Kandinsky into the broader dialogue of the difference of thinking. For Bergson the difference of thinking is the impetus towards a metaphysics of thinking, for Henry the difference is the effort to think phenomenology by radicalizing the concept of life, and in a similar tone, for Kandinsky's the difference of thinking is essential to the abstraction of painting. Here, the three thinkers are brought full circle, and this is the staging for the work of our research, i.e. to exercise Bergsonian philosophy with a view towards the differences of processes of understanding through visual properties of the painted image. Because we believe that the silence between Bergson's original philosophy and its uptake with Kandinsky's original thinking is evident by the lack of contemporary philosophical research, this is the potential for the turning of Bergsonian philosophy, specifically in the understanding of Bergson's thinking in painting. In recent years the contemporary resurgence and return of Bergsonian philosophy, was most notably advanced by Deleuze's *Bergsonism*. But as the voice of Bergsonian thinking echoes in the potential to become many philosophies, the encounter of Deleuzian-Bergsonian influences of research within a postmodern condition of continental philosophy has been surpassed by accounts of Bergsonian immanence, as new philosophies becoming from the immanence of multiple modes of thinking from the plural conditions of thinking in duration. Such has been the case, with such reassertions of Bergson through

¹⁴ J. Mullarkey, *Post-continental philosophy: An outline* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006).p. 75 & 82

the anthological resurgence of his philosophy in Ansell-Pearson's and Mullarkey's, *Henri Bergson: Key Writings*, or Mullarkey's edited compilation, *The New Bergson*, heralding the 'new' philosophies of Bergson by thinking Bergsonian through research and appraisal of his originary concepts. Other titles have emerged lately now firming the establishment of the new advent of thinking via Bergson, but what has been lacking after the clear announcements of Bergson's principle convictions in terms of the 'change' of reality and its relation to our perception, or the movement of thinking in relation to the multiple durations of time, has been the exacting of philosophical extensions to other modes of its practice. Throughout this investigation we will attempt to offer comprehensive descriptions and explanations where we find the work towards the continuation of a Bergsonian philosophy of painting.

In order to engage in the present context of Bergsonian philosophy, we set out from the context of contemporary postmodernist debates, and in particular, we turn to the process of Bergsonian thought in regards to the increasing encounter with a diaspora of theories of the image, and in particular, from the effects of a prolonged engagement with deconstruction in relation to the identity of painting. The varieties of these theories and their total divergences from one another allows us to read Bergson not for a renewal of his concepts alone, nor to establish a rigorous discourse by which all theories are evaluated, but instead, for the thinking from Bergsonian philosophy into the question of the image. In this sense, this present work is a Bergsonian philosophy, situated from within post-continental philosophies. To a greater extent, from the current views of meta-philosophical explorations of contemporary continental philosophies, this work aims to establish Bergsonian theory as a consistent challenge to our thinking through our experience of contemporary philosophy in its application and development with the medium of painting.¹⁵

¹⁵ J. Mullarkey, *The New Bergson* (Manchester University Press, 1999).

The work of Michel Henry is a recent direction in the development of the French poststructuralist, existentialist, and phenomenological traditions of thought. More specifically, his work is classified and generally regarded as a continuation of the phenomenological projects of Husserl, to a greater extent, via a philosophical outlook of the transcendental reduction of 'Being' in terms of an auto-generative and auto-affective relation of life. But also, and to a lesser extent, Henry's philosophy continues from the Heideggerian sense of 'Being', but in terms of the 'manifestation of life', by which life is 'invisible' and 'Being' as such, affects its own disclosure. Henry's philosophical projects aim to conceptualise life as an essence of its own becoming, that is, he considers life as the phenomena issuing from the force of its own invisible and originating affect. It is from this context that he applies his philosophy to the philosophical significance of the work and theories of Wassily Kandinsky's understanding that the Kandinskian turn in the history of painting and its methodology towards abstraction confirms Henry's own philosophical project of the essence of life as 'Being' affectively encountering its own becoming. Regardless of Henry's philosophical system as a continuance and yet an alterity from within the phenomenological traditions, it is our belief that elements of the Henrian philosophical system suggests the implementation of a counter philosophy, that is, a philosophy of different philosophizing in current of philosophical thinking, and thus, a contemporary instance of Bergsonian thinking. Recent studies regarding the appropriation of Bergson's philosophy and the incorporation of his thinking within phenomenology, and more specifically, studies highlighting the parallels of Bergson's thought with Henry's may compel further comparisons and excises of concepts of commonality.

However, recognizing the complexity of Bergson's philosophical influence in contemporary debate is beyond our interest here. Rather, we wish to affirm that Bergsonian thinking is the source of alterity for Henrian phenomenology from within the broader project of phenomenology. And furthermore, by approximating Henrian philosophy to Bergsonian thinking, we are inclined to acknowledge the affinity of Kandinsky's philosophical and methodological outlook in painting to Bergsonian philosophy. In this sense we see the radical

nature of Bergsonian thinking, as a philosophy that upholds the multiplicity of thinking beyond a definitive philosophy, as exemplified in Henry's thinking differently within the phenomenological project, coupled with Kandinskian theory of painting in terms of abstraction, exemplified in the radical turn of the identity of painting from the convention of the painted image in terms of formal configurations of representation. Kandinsky's work¹⁶ in the modernist period anticipated the crisis of modernism, by regarding abstraction as a property of painting, painting as part of the spiritual evolution of our visual experiences beyond the reciprocity of the paradigms of form and matter, Kandinskian philosophy of painting understood the potential of a myriad of images reflecting the ever changing nature of experience.

In light of this, as with Bergsonian thinking, we do not wish to retrace Kandinskian theory to its origins or redeem it from the notations of art theory and the history of the philosophy of painting. Instead we wish to continue Bergsonian thinking in terms of the multiplicity of thought, by reading Kandinskian theory and regarding Kandinskian painting in terms of the abstraction of painting, painting as a source of the radical indeterminacy of perception. In this way, we will think Bergsonian regarding Kandinsky's emphasis on the 'inner' and 'outer' of the painted image in which painting is the occasion of the images of the material elements of painting and the images of the spiritual elements of the painter mutually reflecting each other upon the surface of consciousness, and we will think Kandinskian considering Bergson's concept of images in terms of the durational nature of consciousness and the apprehension of change through lived experience. With Bergsonian thinking and Kandinskian painting, we are given a framework for a philosophy of painting, in which the thinking of painting may be regarded by the situation of painting, and the formulation of thinking may be recognised as the critical encounter of philosophy with the agency of perception in painting.

Thus, we will argue for an extension of Bergsonian philosophy, through the

¹⁶ W. Kandinsky, *Kandinsky, complete writings on art* (Da Capo Press, 1994).

Kandinskian view of painting as philosophy, a visual thinking prompted by the abstraction of its own identity. We will argue for the extension of Bergsonian philosophy to the extent that the synthesis of the two processes of philosophy, firstly to a Bergsonian process of thought, a process which precedes a definitive conceptual grounding, and secondly to an understanding of painting as a becoming from the Kandinskian process of painting by ‘inner necessity’. In one instance we are acknowledging the process of Bergsonian thinking contributing to the process view of philosophy in painting, and in the other instance, we are taking up the question of painting in terms of Kandinsky’s outlook of painting that is painting as the evolution of visual expression. Like the Bergsonian turn of philosophical thinking, that thinking is a continuous sounding of the durational qualities of reality, the Kandinskian turn of painting is the charge in painting to continuously reveal the organic and evolutionary nature of the perceptual world.

However, this is not a discursive account of all of Bergson’s original concepts, nor is this an attempt towards a comprehensive explanation of the original Bergsonian corpus. Instead, under the rubric of a contemporary Bergsonian philosophy of art, we will attempt to establish a conceptual framework from fundamental Bergsonian conceptualizations. This will allow for our own evaluations of those aspects of Bergson’s philosophy which may be regarded as each a philosophical system, but collectively, they offer a simple vision by which the continual appropriation and continuing philosophical discourses in the living and experientially based practices of painting may proceed. In this manner, though the fecundity of Bergsonian philosophical principles is presently evident, we wish to add to Bergsonian formulations by maintaining a process metaphysics in art practice that regards Kandinskian works and theory present the philosophical expressions of duration that establish the conditions that go beyond the origination of the intuitions and experiences. Because of this, we regard a Bergsonian and Kandinskian synthesis of thinking through painting, as the potential for the continuity of painting as a process of philosophizing the living experiences of duration, as well as returning us to the trajectories of philosophies of change, understanding the boundless pursuits of the understanding of reality through

inexhaustible expressions, compelled by the encounter of painting and its manifestation with the provocation of philosophical intuition.

We understand that much of the philosophical discourse surrounding questions concerning the relation of art and philosophy are being worked through in the traditions of phenomenology. Merleau-Pontian theories continue to make advancements in this regard. However, these theories have already radicalized the notion of perceptualisms from the Husserlian trajectories of thinking, in the sense that emphasis has been placed on the incarnate body in its motility to the material world, and thus, the ontology of the ‘chiasm’, in which the ‘intertwined’ self is regarded in terms of the kinesthetic interaction with its environment.¹⁷ We are now seeing that by these developments, by the extension of the considerations of philosophies of the phenomenology of art, the convictions to acknowledge a line of consideration of phenomenological perspectivalism are being blurred. Rather, this is most notably seen in terms of the unorthodox phenomenology espoused by Michel Henry. His theories are regarded as contributing to the notion of a post-phenomenology, in so far as Henry’s theories attempt to extend the phenomenological tradition, they have disrupted and perhaps departed from the variational framework. In this respect, regardless of Henry’s apparent intention, his philosophy demonstrates the operation of philosophical thinking, a philosophy in duration, as was understood and advocated by Bergson. Here we take support from Mullarkey’s study, ‘*Post-Continental Philosophy*’ in our consideration of not only the affinity of Bergsonian philosophical conceptualisations within the advent of developments in contemporary continental philosophy, but more specifically, from the article, ‘Henry and the Effects of Actual Immanence’¹⁸, we recognise the proximity of Henrian turn of phenomenology with the nature of

¹⁷ D. Ihde, *Postphenomenology: Essays in the postmodern context* (Northwestern University Press, 1995).

Though Ihde’s analysis considers the departure of Phenomenology from its Husserlian foundations, it is his assertion of a ‘nonfoundational phenomenology which suggests the radical departure of philosophical thinking from any sense of its center. We see this as indicating the Bergsonian philosophy of philosophical thinking, as itself disruptive and by its own projections, continuously going beyond its present identity.

¹⁸ J. Mullarkey, *Post-continental philosophy: An outline* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2006).

Bergsonian thinking. From Henry's theories of immanence, affectivity, and the emphasis of the duration of consciousness, we see Henrian thought as Bergsonian, to the extent that 'Bergsonian' is applied to mean a continuity of philosophical thinking, changing as it approximates its investigations through its experiences in time.

In Michael Kelly's text, *'Bergson and Phenomenology'*, we see the scholarly deliberation for dialogue between Bergson's thought and Phenomenology. However, though our interest of Henry's connection to Bergsonian philosophy may be further supported by this text, it does not go far enough in the outlook of Bergsonian philosophy by its iteration of Bergson's concepts and the reappraisal of perennial phenomenological views. In particular, however, because of the challenge to go beyond any establishment of thinking, or any, we also understand the tension between the commitments to the projects of phenomenology and the Bergsonian studies of duration. However, it may be contested, but it cannot be denied that Bergsonian philosophy and its conceptualizations have affected many of the major figures in the phenomenological tradition. In this regard, in this project, aside from the dual workings of Bergsonian and Kandinskian theory, we will consider the views of Michel Henry, particularly from his interpretations of Kandinsky's theories. However, this does not mean that we are adapting a Bergsonian view towards a phenomenology, but quite the opposite, we are bridging Bergson directly to Kandinsky, so that we may compare and contrast the theoretical positions more clearly.

In the following seven chapters of this study, we will offer an outline of concepts as a type of Bergsonian conceptual framework for a philosophy of art. We will follow from close readings of Bergson and those theories most relevant from our readings of Kandinsky, so as to establish links between the philosopher and the painter, and as a precedent for a continuing Bergsonian philosophical approach to art, to painting, and the possibilities of philosophy immanent to the process of art. This Bergsonian-Kandinskian connection is

an alternative to contemporary Bergsonian scholarship, a scholarship which affirms a commitment to consider the difference of thinking, and to contemporary visual theories of painting, which has included the dialect of Kandinsky's theory of abstraction. What this connection offers is the insight of Bergson's philosophy, with the charge of its claim to the nature of philosophizing regarding the nature of the world, but its lack of the specific appraisal of the role of the philosophy painting, taken up and supported by Kandinsky's regard of painting as a vehicle of the expression of understanding, and as a nuanced manifestation of the living immediacy to time. We will argue that from this basis of an ontology of images, the material and physical forms of painterly expressions conditions the subjective experiences of the process, through which the inexhaustible differences of living expression occur. Moreover, this work attends to a philosophy of becoming, so that in regards to the process of painting, our focus will be on the dual anticipation of philosophy and art most immediate to the change of thinking and the difference of visual experience. Though critical assessment and commentary on the nature of the projection of art history would be expected with any admission of the novelty of art and what it contributes to the work of philosophy, our argument does not entail theories of the receptivity of painting. Our concern is with the most immediate identity of the process of philosophy through the process oriented view of philosophy immanent to painting. To that end, we are concerned with a philosophy that goes beyond philosophy. We are concerned with the becoming of philosophy in the durational mattering of the images of painting, by which the reciprocity of painting towards philosophy, is also a continuous evaluation of visual experience, and challenges the extent of our sense of 'immediacy' in the processual flux of things. Thinking is made creative in term of the proximity of thinking to the unfolding of images. In this regard, our view is towards the continuity of thinking through painting, understood by the proximity of experience to the immediacy of the process. This contrasts with the views that uphold the reflection of thought in painting, and the sense that painting is

an afterthought, at first a conceptual origin then realised through ‘works of art’. This manner of thinking is pervasive with the innumerable contemporary theories of art, and furthered by sophisticated pronouncements of ‘critiques’ of art development historical and attending to originality of thinking and expression through the limitations of retrospective interpretation.

In, chapter one we will begin with Bergson’s conceptualization of reality in terms of images, with a view that the concept of image is fundamental to a metaphysical discourse made explicit through exchange and activity in the actualisation of painting.¹⁹ We will maintain a close reading of Bergson’s ‘Matter and Memory’, because it is the most explicit text towards the theory of an ontology of images, asserting that durational reality is a continuous ‘presence of images’, an equality of images in process, i.e. an equality of multiple rhythms of images and differing states of change continuous with the movement of images in time.²⁰ We are primarily interested in Bergson’s concept of image, because its conceptualisation entails the embodiment of perception and experience, matter and mind. It is from the resonance of the image, that we will consider Bergson’s ontology of duration as the context for the concept of image, in order to explore the practice of images and the process of images within painting. By this, we will argue that reality is a process of images, so as to claim that within this reality, the process of painting is a mode of activities from the *contents of life* with the effect of these activities towards *forms of life* in material events. This will call into question the general descriptions that formulate a theory of painting in terms of the interactions of the painter, as the vector of images and the subjective occurrences of painterly activities, and the painting medium, as an objective continuity of images. Instead we proceed from an evaluation of the ontological conditions of reality in terms of images, as an understanding of images in time, to reverse the order of painterly expression as the definitive

¹⁹ H. Bergson, *Matter and memory* (New York: Zone books, 1999).

source of subjectivity in the process of painting. Here we will rely on the Henrian analysis of affectivity in Kandinsky's work, to turn from a view of subjectivity oriented by a situated center of sensation and perception to the painter. Instead, taking lead from Henry's view of the resonance of life from the material world, we will argue that the subjectivity in the process of painting is 'painterly' by the designation of images in the process of change. This is to say that the total constellation of images enact and embody the condition of subjectivity, such that the instances of change are individuated occurrences, but fleeting with the implicit mattering of images in the actualisation of the painted image. By this we wish to move away from the rhetoric of 'intentionality' in the art practice, and instead posit the notion that the medium specificity allows for the differentiation of images, as well as the distinction of the subject through the event of the creative and generational image. This follows from a re-assertion of Henrian theory into a Bergsonian ontology of images applied to a process view of painting. However, by our uptake and application of Henry's notion of affectivity, by which life's affective relation is directed towards its own realisation, we re-orient this view of the ordering of life. Instead, we see the diffusion of images in the process of painting, so that the actual, material, and visible are not subordinated to an internalisation of life's discovery, but are the creation of new images through the force of becoming of all things, by which life's activity is a participation of perceptual experience.

We will move from the concept of image towards the conceptualization of a process of painting, by which we assume the *time of painting*. However, from this context of process, and in terms of Bergson's concept of image, we will regard the activities of the painter and the painting medium as identities of painting through a *process of images*. From this perspective, we will be placing focus on the nature of painting as activity, by which the continuous events of the objects are the result of the uniting of the activities of images. From a Bergsonian notion of image, this would mean that in terms of the

events of painting, the images held in this relation embody processes of perception. We will attempt to establish a clear connection of Bergson's concept of image to a Kandinskian theory of painting, so as to consider the conceptualization of images given to expression through time. In this respect, we argue that as Bergson's concept of 'image', as principally, a conception that remains as a basis of inquiry in a contemporary process metaphysics, this may equally remain as a conceptual basis of a philosophy of painting. Bergson's concept of image is the basis for an ontology of images, and a principle for theoretical and practical engagements with painting.

In chapter two we will look to Bergson's theory of intuition. By considering the reality of paintings as experience, (i.e. in terms of the continuity of the activity of images and the events of images, as a process, the relation of its contents as differing states of sense and apprehension), we will argue that painting is a temporal system immanent to its process in time. In this manner, we are concerned with the becoming of images, expressed through intuitive thought, but intuiting as an active immediacy of expression through the creation of new images and images that are participation in the movement of the unique condition of images in the process of painting. This claim is to establish the continuity of Bergsonian philosophy in art, but more so, that the perceptions and intellectual attitudes in the process of painting become actual through the intuitive condition in painting, i.e. the dynamic experience of a direct vision from within medium specificity of the painting process. This is given added support by Kandinsky's view of painting as a transformation of visual experience by mode of perceptual concentrations, that is 'inner sounds' emanating from things and the artifact of the painted image. Here, a Bergsonian philosophy of intuition coupled with a Kandinskian elucidation of approaches to painting to contribute to painterly thinking, is a matter of theoretical synthesis necessary to advance further a process philosophy of painting. We will rely on a close reading of Kandinsky's renowned study, *On the Spiritual in Art*, and draw connections to Bergson's theory of intuition to confront the question of the identity of contemporary painting and

philosophy, by positing the intuitive thinking in painting as also a re-orientation of thought, and the necessary abstraction of philosophical experience from thinker and painter, to painting towards thinking. In addition, by considering intuition as a faculty for the translation of the activity of painting, this points towards the continuity of the process of painting. Therefore, we will consider intuition in terms of the interpenetration of immediate experience and conscious reflection, as temporal relations expressed into spatial terms. We will continue from the previous analysis of Bergson's concept of 'image' to consider his theory of intuition. We will argue that intuition is an engagement with reality in terms of *an attention of life* and an *immediacy of experience* to perception. From this perspective, applied to the process of painting, this will mean that intuition is an inner form of experience originating from the painter's direct relation with the painting medium. Moreover, this experience is then a compulsion for the painter's activity and driving force for the diversity of painterly expressions. We will argue then, that the intuitive vision within the process of painting is not produced by the selective properties of the painter's intellect, but rather occurs as a thinking from within the painting medium, as an 'intellectual sympathy', whereby the painter places himself in perceptual relation to perception and sensation given by the painting medium.

In Chapter 3, we will consider the classification of the difference of movements of reality, so that we may consider the movements of painting as the force of becoming visual. Whether we consider movement in terms of the processes towards the origination of a painted image, such as the painter's gestures and the bodily activity towards painterly expression, or the material placement and the counter effects of the medium's resilience, such designations imply that within the process of painting there are multiple occurrences and relations of movements. In the context of the painted image's temporalization, the processes leading to the image are no less of a continuity of movements, so that the art-object, as a material image in its entirety, is the culmination and event of the passage of movements. Nonetheless, the

movements of reality are relations, (i.e. connections in time) and as such, are not experienced in terms of their divisibility, but rather, by the experience of the total projection. In other words, the extent of these relations are dynamic, so that when we consider movement in terms of the specific artistic creation of painting, we associate our notion of movement to the processes of perception, processes of thinking, and the material processes. Our association of movement to these processes will concern the actualization of the painted image in terms of the force of painterly movements, i.e. the dilation of movement through the forms developing in the activity of painting. By maintaining that the nature of reality is considered in terms of a *plurality of images in ceaseless movement* and indefinite change, our understanding of the occurrence of painted imagery will in turn, follow from the conception of reality as an aggregate of images in process, and hence, an ontology of the *multiplicities of movement*. In this chapter we will have continued the theme of Bergson's image ontology, but applying it to the 'image' in the states of becoming through the process of painting. This chapter will argue in terms of the movement of painting, so that the ontology of image in the painting process is no longer restricted to the identity of painting as a static, imagined, and representational surfaces, but instead, by 'movements of images' painting encompasses the entire state of becoming in the ever-expanding flow of material and mental changes. All things are durational, so that the movements of the painting process are the relation of movements of images embodied by the experience of the transitions of images with the becoming of the expression of these images in the event of their process.

In Chapter 4, from the previous sense of movement ontology we will consider the condition of abstraction in the process of painting as being some form of a *schematization*.²¹ However, we will relate the concept of *abstraction* to the nature of thinking in terms of a schema, but we will argue that abstraction means a quality of *invention continuous with the becoming of images*. We

²¹ J. Golding, 'Paths to the Absolute', *Mondrian, Malevich, Kandinsky, Pollock, Newman, Rothko and Still*, London.

will consider Bergson's concept of abstraction to mean that as perceiving occurs in things themselves, then the transitions of images from within the process of painting entail the dynamic selections and discernments of life from its experience in contact with matter. That is to say that, thought as an abstractive quality of living, is both a distillation of images and an extraction of images from the flow of reality. Furthermore, by considering abstraction in relation to the continuity of the flow of images, and in particular, with the process of painting, we will argue that the emergence of novel forms in painting, are the effects of physical processes. Therefore, abstract thinking is physical in its origins. Just as the concepts of the *image*, *intuition*, and *movement* have been maintained with a view towards Bergsonian philosophy of painting, these will allow us to consider the concept of abstraction as we elaborate further on the temporality of the process of painting and the ontology of images.

In Chapter 5, we will consider a dual meaning of the concept of frame, as one that signifies the tension inherent with the other, that is, the literal device that marks out an *other* spatial plane, and as an epistemological state, so that the frame is type of attention of thought or a designation and boundary for the origin and operation of a concept. Because of this it will be necessary to question both of these distinctions of the frame, as being at once, a material object, and an epistemic condition. Together they are both suggestive of an aesthetic means. Furthermore, it will be necessary to question the literal, physical, superimposition of material images from the visual field, but also, the architectonic characteristic of thinking that precedes painting, that is, the *framing* of the painter's perception considered as a process of the delimiting and selecting of images. In this regard, we will consider the processual view of the activity of *framing*, by which the planar surface of the painting is transfixed from the materiality of the real, pronouncing the movement of consciousness to the contact of concrete perceptions. We will then consider the frame and framing as a directional characterization of the movement of consciousness, so that framing involves the tensions of activity, the differing

degrees of concentration of thinking, and the direction of conscious attention toward the planar surface. Our aim in this chapter is to connect Bergson's ontology of images, with the process of painting, by which process of framing is already in the planar surface, and in turn, this conditions the subjectivity of the painter, by way of the embodiment of expressive and creative extensions as given by the process of its event.

In Chapter 6, we will consider the nature of colour. We will consider colour first in terms of 'intensity' and in terms of qualitative sensations, and then, by following from Bergson's conceptual negotiation of the difference of interior life and the purely qualitative states of consciousness, we will consider colour as material and creative rhythmic extensity. We will maintain that in the process of painting, colour is the embodiment of rhythmic extensity towards the quantitative dimension of the material surface. However, we will also consider the psychical intensity permeating the expressions through the painter's conscious experience as given by the dimension of colour from the materiality of the process of painting. From this context, we will consider colour from the context of Bergson's theory of duration of reality, so that colour is itself a qualitative change in time, and as it is given through perceptions, as an unfolding of states of consciousness as temporal multiplicities. This is to argue that colour as a 'pure change', the underlying basis for an ontological theory of painting, such that colour is at once qualitative *intensities of material reality*, and in the process of painting, by its own rhythmic potential, colour is then, an affective force of the becoming of discrete forms and quantitative *magnitudes of its visual affect*. We will consider Kandinsky's theory of colour to further a Bergsonian view of colour beyond the description in terms of its duration and heterogeneous quality and emphasize its forceful presence in the change of painterly experience and the spiritual progression resonating from its affect. From Bergson to Kandinsky, we will argue for a conception of colour by which colour is regarded as affective force and an intermediary of activities of experience towards

expression.

In Chapter 7 we will argue that the actualisation of the line in the process of painting is creative expression, as it is the occurrence of both the realization of images and indication of the prompt of images from the kinesthetic experience immanent to the process. In this regard, this is at once the most stable translation of the experience of life and simultaneously, by its origin, it is a rupturing of conditions of deviations of experience, and thereby, modes of expression enacting the experiences that also portend the becoming of visual experiences in the process of painting. The specific question that arises here is easily seen. Because the identity of the line in painting has been considered in terms of its ‘function’, this conventional value of the line has limited our understanding of the possibility of the experience of linearity, beyond such notions as arrangement, foundation, outline, and contour. In other words, we have reduced the originaive expression of line to intellectual conceptualisations of structure, and lending to the ‘figurative’ in painting, so that representing becomes the definitive mode of thinking, i.e. thinking as spatial configuration of lines. However, what are the alternatives of thinking through the line, and what can we make of the identity of the line in the process of painting when we consider the line according to its ontological nature, and thereby, towards an account of a Bergsonian theory of linear thinking as creative and the difference of experience through time. We will argue that the line is an affectively present form of coalescence of contacts of the painter’s rhythm with the rhythms of the painting medium, and to extend this theory we will adopt the Kandinskian view of the line as the becoming of thinking through the necessary difference of thought according to the freedom and liberation immanent to the identity of the line. Here, it is the Kandinskian extension of Bergsonian philosophy that gives us an alternative philosophy of the line in practice-led research of painting as philosophy. Furthermore, we will argue that the line is an occurrence of visible formulations from the contouring process in time. We will consider the line and the linear quality of

its movement, so that in both senses of the word, the force attributed to linear movement precedes its articulation, and the movement of lines, is both in the course of its marking, and yet, in the potential of that course for creative direction. In this latter sense, we will argue that lines are vital movements, both of mind and matter, as intentionally and consciously being rendered, but in the same instant, through their own discursive movements, lines are also self-actualizing means of non-intentional, unconscious, and continuously divergent activities. As with the line itself, the qualitative change of painting is one of processes of continual movement, differing degrees of tensions of consciousness, and the durational rhythms of visual expression. We will consider painting in itself as a material process, but a material towards forms of living. Therefore, we will attempt to argue that as the process of painting embodies both material and mental activities, in the same sense, the line in painting signifies the 'living' process most immediate to the activities in painting, and not merely mind intending towards and uniting with material, but moving from its own embodiment and continuously opening towards its endless creation.

In the Conclusion, we consider what is at stake for the argument of a contemporary Bergsonian philosophy in the actualisation of painting. According to the momentum of contemporary Bergsonian scholarship, the definition of philosophy that regards its own process as it attempts to understand multiple movements of reality, by also appraising its own means of philosophizing beyond philosophy, this doubles a compounding problems in the identifications of the process of painting. Therefore painting may serve as a philosophical effort in the investigation of duration and the world of images. Towards the more recent contemporary evaluations and theoretical applications of Bergsonian thinking to process-oriented art, the practices and projects of technologically-based art have been the main focus. By our account we have considered painting, not simply because of the more recent investigations of the identity of painting, but because the 'tradition' of painting has not been exhausted in terms of the potential of its ontological

status. From the context of a philosophy of becoming that regards the identity of painting in terms of process, the problem with the philosophy of painting is the medium by which we call into question its identity. If we accept the Henrian influenced re-introduction of Kandinsky into the dialogue of Bergsonian philosophy of immanence, then what are we to ask about the knowledge of painting that is not referential to its object, the considers the process so as to consider the process? This does not only challenge an immanence based theorization of painting but calls into question the orientation of the questions. In painting is the philosophy occurring in the location of the expression, or immediate to the experience recognizable by the devices that enact the philosophical orientation towards the process? These questions frame the currents of questioning that aim towards the claim of philosophy becoming, connected to painting becoming, and then addressed as thinking becoming. As these questions are not driving to explicit answers but are poised to further their philosophical character, these chapters are not meant to be taken as a discursive, comprehensive, and ordered evaluation of a philosophy of painting or a metaphysics of art. Rather, these chapters are meant to highlight principle Bergsonian concepts and the comparative correspondences with Kandinskian theory, so as to be offered as workable thesis for the continuing philosophy in painting. From the interchange, crossovers, and even conjoining of any chapter, one to another, the philosopher and the painter, the thinker and the artist, may draw comparisons or establish dichotomies from principle Bergsonian conceptualisations to continue the metaphysics of painting, a view of the embodiment of thinking in process of visual experience and expression and increase the ever-expanding development of philosophies of art. The creative expression through the proliferation of images within the durational and evolving processes of painting, demonstrates that a process-oriented philosophy of painting must attend to the various forms of the development of visual experiences in painting, as these are constantly unfolding and convertible to the opening of thinking and philosophical reflection.

Chapter 1 – Image

Matter, in our view, is an aggregate of ‘images.’ And by ‘image’ we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a representation, but less than that which the realist calls a thing - an existence place halfway between the ‘thing’ and the ‘representation.’ This conception of matter is simply that of common sense.¹

Across the yellow sand walked a small, thin, red man. He kept slipping. He looked as if he were walking on ice. But it was the yellow sand of the unbounded plain.²

Introduction

Our concern in this chapter is to establish Bergson’s concept of image as the basis for a philosophy of painting, a *philosophy* concerning the relation of the object of images and the form of images continuously actualised and elaborated in the *creative process* of painting. We wish to proceed towards a philosophy of painting from the perspective of Bergson to simplify our terminology, and to advance our argument we consider painting as a creative process, to mean that painting is a mode of apprehending images in time, and the experience of images intuitively through the living encounter of the painter’s activity and the material object. This suggests a diffusion of visual experiences in relation to the potential of painting, such that the realisations of novel imagery occurs through the differing conditions of the process, and thereby, originating the difference of perceptual faculties through the multiple realities of living experience. By situating our claim this way, we are opposed to the view of the developments of painting in terms of the ‘progress of painting’, which mistakes that which has been communicated through the medium for the potential of the medium specificity towards continual visual experience. This is often seen with accounts of painting, in which painting is considered in terms of the historical lineage of static objects, which is then applied in efforts of its current appraisal and classification. In this sense, we

¹ H. Bergson, *Matter and memory* (New York: Zone books, 1999).

² W. Kandinsky, *Kandinsky, complete writings on art* (Da Capo Press, 1994).

are opposed to the supplanting of the identity of painting in terms of an ‘order’ of the understanding of painting, or a ‘paradigm’ of painting from a genealogical view of art, and thereby, the character of painting reduced to a systematic account of the succession of visual ideations. Rather, by situating the argument of the nature of philosophy and metaphysics of becoming enacted through the process of painting, we are already anticipating the multivalent philosophies of an ontology of images specific to the process of painting. Our understanding is in the activity of images, continuously individuating the identity of painting in the making. Therefore, we base our question of painting according to Bergson’s view of reality as a ceaseless becoming of an ever-present multiplicity of images. As Leonard Lawlor’s study of Bergson’s concept of image indicates, that for Bergson’s thinking, ‘Art and Image are virtually identical’. As a marker for the direction of our line of thinking, we will therefore, proceed with our analysis of the concept of image, with view of towards in context in the identification of the process of painting. By this ‘foundation of image’, we will consider the process of painting in terms of a situation of images. By regarding painting according to an engagement and activity within the world of images, this anticipates the differentiated philosophy of images from the movement of images enacting philosophical thinking. In this sense, questioning the image first in relation to creative conditions of experience, is a projection of thinking that anticipates the ontological nature of painting, as it participates in the world of images, as a mode of sensuous experience and mutable thinking embodied in the modality of its own constellation of images. Where Bergson’s philosophy praises the emergence of creative thinking, and regards artistic perception as one such mode of philosophical discovery, we look to the very mattering of the image, its realization through concentrations of living attention. In this regard, from Bergson’s view of the world as a process of images, we will maintain our approach to the question of the activity of philosophy in painting, and how painting is philosophical through its specific attentions of life. Painting and the enhancement of perceptions connected to a context of

images allows us to reflect from the atmosphere of creation itself as an engaging creative process.

In Maria Fernandez's study, 'Historicizing Process and Responsiveness in Digital Art'³, we are offered an account of the more recent character of art's development, specifically through the experimentation directed by a conceptualisation in tandem with art practice, 'absorbed into new medium'. We are told that the understanding of art as process is most apparent in the digital and technological developments of art. However, we believe that the consideration of 'process', or even, the representation of 'process' is distinct from the realisation of process and the actual projections of the process of images. In this sense, we wish to enlarge the scope of philosophical grasp within the world, by an extension of a Bergsonian theory of image in order to advance the question of painting, firstly, as a means of philosophical activity concerning its own evolution, and thereby, the articulation of visual knowledge in contemporary image making. However second to this, regarding the identity of painting as a philosophy of image in a post-structuralist context, we will acknowledge the level of mistrust to concepts of the image, particularly related to painting as both painting and the process of images intrinsic to its creative enterprise require a spatialised framing structure to reference its identity. We will visit this challenge in the later chapter on the 'Frame' through a reading of Derrida, to consider how painting must overcome its own spatial identity to address the very nature of the projection of images inherent to its process. To this end, a Bergsonian theory of image allows us to consider from among the diverse theories of contemporary painting, a conceptual basis of painting in terms of a process of images as activities and as the duration of images bound to the imaged content, but this is not only beset by the problems of identity it also contends with an array of issues from the postmodern context. In particular, by

³ M. Fernández, *'Life-like': Historicizing Process and Responsiveness in Digital Art* (na, 2006).

proposing a philosophy of painting in terms of the thinking and painting as a mutual becoming, we believe this provokes philosophical and painterly projections, which scatters thought in the gestural and material embodiment in the images of painting. A point to be taken from this, as this is evident in Kandinsky's paintings, is that the description of philosophy as also the description of painting is secondary to the multiplicity of images immediate to the reciprocity of thinking through the process of painting. As Crowther has argued, Kandinskian theory and practice of painting was concerned with its 'immediate conditions of creation and reception', indicating for us, in terms of the shared concern with the metaphysics of immediacy, the connection with a Bergsonian principle of philosophy.⁴ According to this analysis, our argument is also opposed to the limitations of phenomenology in the recognition of the modes of philosophical thinking, by which the traditions foists the meditation of consciousness, and the ontological appraisal of images in process in terms of the occasion of conscious reception of the image. Though the appeal and the question of consciousness in the role of the creative process is not being denied, rather, the reduction of the creative process of painting and the generative forms of images is a limitation of the processual qualities of images which preceded our articulation through reflective thinking. In this sense, our opposition is against exclusive phenomenological evaluations of painting, not only because of the limitation of the scope of its investigation by its own conceptual constraints, but also because it is lacking in the engagement with the multiple dimensions of the temporal identity of painting. What is then asserted as the difference of thinking investigated and understood through the thinking of painting, is the recognition of the process of philosophy contingent upon the medium of painting and this very difference, as palpable in the emerging through the durational qualities of the forms of perceptual images.

⁴ P. Crowther, *The language of twentieth-century art: a conceptual history* (Yale University Press New Haven, CT, 1997).

However, we must first consider the dual nature of the image, the differences of mental and material images are immediate to the reification of the becoming of images inherent to the experiences of the painter and to our apprehension of reality as viewer. The question of the 'image' that this raises, particular towards a Bergsonian basis of a philosophy of painting, anticipates many trajectories of philosophical conveyance from the conceptualising of the notion of 'image'. It is towards Kandinsky's opposition to the view of painting as solely a representational construct that we turn our Bergsonian analysis of the painted image to expand further our understanding of painting as the lived experience of images in time, as a mode of expression of a discontinuity of images, and according to the Kandinskian view of painting as that of the free composition of images and the analogue of visual and aesthetic becoming that goes beyond the distinction of spirit and matter.

To this extent we take a Bergsonian perspective, to articulate that the activity of the painter, the distinctions of painterly activities, and the affective condition of the painting medium towards the event of the painted image, are all occurrences within a process. Henceforth, from our use of the terms '*process of painting*', we assume the time of painting, and by this we mean that painting is the collective experiences of the painter, as the situated and lived agency of painting activity, in direct relation to the *painting as an art-object*, and the reciprocity of these marks the event of the possibilities of painting becoming material form.⁵ From this context of process, and in terms of Bergson's concept of image, we will regard the activities of the painter and the painting medium as identities of painting through a process of images.⁶ It is to Bergson's ontology of duration that we will first consider the concept of

⁵ L. Lawlor, *The challenge of Bergsonism* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2003).

⁶ N. Wolterstorff, 'Works and worlds of art'. I take support from Wolterstorff's view of the distinction of art works in terms of 'occurrence-works or object-works'. In so far as this distinction complements a Bergsonian approach, by emphasizing the ontological status of art works by the activity or the taking-place of something, from his interpretation we recognize an implicit time of art. See also his theory of 'occurrences of states of affairs', which suggest the 'event' of art. p. 192

image. By this, we will argue that reality is a process of images, so as to claim that within this reality, the process of painting is a mode of activities from the *contents of life* with the affective relations of these activities towards *forms of life* in material events.⁷ This will call into question the general descriptions that formulate a theory of painting in terms of the interactions of the painter, as subject, and painting, as an object. Instead, we will argue from the basis of Bergson's concept of image, towards a notion of a *process of painting*, by which we regard painting in terms of the differing durations of images to account for the continuity of its vital experience in material expressions. To this end, in keeping with a Bergsonian outlook, we will attempt to connect Bergson's concept of image, as it implies the durational nature of consciousness and the dynamics of perception, with Kandinsky's theory of a non-representational painting, as it suggests a visionary becoming, a 'spiritual' change, and a visual evolution of the elements and forms of painting.

From Bergson's concept of image, there is no distinct boundary between internal and external domains of reality, no separations of consciousness and things, but only a continuity of images immanent to time. From this immanence philosophy of processual nature of images, there is proximity of Bergson's theory to Kandinsky's thought. Where Kandinsky's theories of painting aspired for painting to be of a *pure abstraction*, to mean that painting is emancipated from the function of representation and considered as a means for the conveyance of perceptual faculties understood as 'objective' and given to the appearance of the world. Although Kandinsky's theory maintains that the elements of painting are towards the force of expression in *external*

⁷ H. Focillon, C. B. Hogan and G. Kubler, *The life of forms in art* (Zone Books New York, 1989). Bergson's influence in the work of Focillon's is clear where he states, 'And a work of art is (to hold for the moment an obvious contraction) both matter and mind, both form and content'. Focillon central thesis is the concept of 'form' in the arts, emphasizes the constitution of art in terms of life, and therefore, offers further theoretical support for a Bergsonian theory of painting. See also, . Herbert Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*. (Horizon Press. New York, 1960). pp. 49-75. Read offers further comparative commentary on the concept of form that suggests a Bergsonist position.

objects issuing from *inner sounds*, he admits that the attempts towards expression of purely abstract forms require a grasping of the purely indefinite. Similar to Bergson's view of the necessity of philosophical effort to break from the habits of thinking, and thereby, an active intuitive reflection attending to the most immediate encounter of living experiences, Kandinsky's approach to painting emphasizes a concentration of upon the 'tonal' content of the material and objective, which is regarded in terms of the 'immaterial' emergence and the resonance of impulses within reality.⁸ Here we wish to bridge a Kandinskian theoretical outlook with a Bergsonian philosophy of painting, with the connection of the philosophical view of Michel Henry.

In terms of Bergson's ontology of image, and ontological outlook that regards the material world by the variation of images, from among a flow of differences of images, as a processual nature of images, this grants a philosophy of painting a grounding to consider the nature its imagistic duration and the difference of images from the contingency of the multiplicity of images in duration. Here the most immediate point of connection with a Kandinskian theory of painting is the reconciling of the materiality of expressions and the dematerialization of the force of abstraction, the very force of change that encounters the sensuous image are from among a continuous reality.⁹ It is with a view of the parallels of Bergson's concept and Kandinsky's theory, that we aim to replace the question of the distinctions of inner psychological reality from external material in painting, by arguing towards a theory of painting in which the presence of the process is the totality of its activities and material events, and hence, an ontological grounding implicit in the temporality of images. We will argue towards this ontology by considering the interpenetration and mutual exchange of vital and material designations of images in process.¹⁰ This will entail elaboration on the notions of experience of philosophy reflected in the concrete embodiment of the

⁸ W. Grohmann and W. Kandinsky, 'Life and Work', *New York*.144-145

⁹ W. Kandinsky, *Concerning the spiritual in art* (Courier Dover Publications, 2012).

¹⁰ H. Bergson, *Matter and memory* (New York: Zone books, 1999).

painted image, the differentiation of expressions from the affect of intuition, and the creation of visual forms, so that in terms of images, painting is a creative process of images in time.¹¹

This continues the Bergsonian view of thinking in terms of duration, by extending the horizon of thinking through the possibilities of artistic creation in the activity of painting. Thus, Bergson's concept of image is a key notion in the understanding of the process of painting as a continuous multiplicity of images, as a process of creation of qualitative differences through extended and material images.¹² Supported by a Kandinskian view of the spiritual development of painting in relation to images and movement, we will argue that the process of painting is a progression of the *images from its content and images towards its forms*. From the Kandinskian outlook of the unfolding of painting by force of its own impulse, and by this elucidation, that the painting is a process of liberation from its own denotation, we can reconsider Bergson's formulation of 'reflective perception'. According to Bergson's account of the image, perceptual awareness is by way of a 'circuit' of images in which the activity of perceiving and that which is being perceived, are held in a 'mutual relation'.¹³ Implying that the flow of images in this circuit emanate from the object into the source of the sensory perception, this serves as a Bergsonian model from which we can further by adapting to the Kandinskian view. In other words, it is the view of the revelatory immediacy of images, as described in Bergson's theory, that we extend to the images in the process of painting, regarding these as issuing from the medium, such that the materiality is the basis of a perceptual self-presentation to the painter, through which philosophical investigation may focus attention to the extent that the focusing and thinking, painting as perceiving, proceed as an active engagement according to the difference of material and figural enactments from issuing from the rhythm of the process.

¹¹ H. Bergson, *Henri Bergson: key writings* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002).

¹² J. Mullarkey, *Bergson and philosophy* (Edinburgh University Press Edinburgh, 1999).

¹³ H. Bergson, *Matter and memory* (New York: Zone books, 1999).

An Ontology of Duration: Images Immanent to Reality

Matter, in our view, is an aggregate of 'images'. And by 'image' we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a representation, but less than that which the realist calls a thing - an existence placed halfway between the 'thing' and the 'representation'.¹⁴

Bergson's concept of 'image' is a development from within his philosophy of process metaphysics.¹⁵ However, it is his theory of change which is fundamental to his philosophy, so that, from the context of a philosophy of process and change, Bergson's theory conceives reality as a unity of multiplicities of images in duration. For Bergson, the material world is equivalent to a system of images, as immanent and continuous with reality. To argue from this towards a theory of painting as a process of images will require us to consider Bergson's theory of pure perception and pure memory.

We argue that the function of the living body in the image-world is towards action and affected by sensation. Bergson suggests that the affection as the occurrence in the body from external stimulus, is the result of the surrounding 'images' acting upon it. It is the reciprocal exchange, the influence of these affections as informed by sensations that not only enables the execution of the body's movements but also effects the reactions. The movement of the physical stimulus, as an affective stimulus, is a movement from the external images to the internal image centre, which is then exchanged by a reaction as a movement from the internally situated images to the external and surrounding images. Bergson explains that this 'movement' is the relation of consciousness and sensation. For him, consciousness is 'present indeed' in the sensation or feeling.¹⁶ However, consciousness is present in the movement of reality, as continuously assessing and initiating movement.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ J. Mullarkey, *The New Bergson* (Manchester University Press, 1999).p. 31 I take support from Mullarkey's argument of the issue of 'novelty' in view of Bergson's theory of duree. Specifically, I proceed with my argument from the principle that time is novel, as time is the affect of its continuity, and by the notion of immanent and internal temporalisation, by which the heterogeneous and differentiated reality of time is 'full of structure'.

¹⁶ H. Bergson, *Matter and memory* (New York: Zone books, 1999). p.2

Hence, the movement of images is also a movement of consciousness from the regime of actions and deliberate reactions, voluntary movements in response to the continuous movements of the reality.

However, as with Bergson's concept of image, we must also regard the images of painting in terms of a plurality of activities towards pictorial configuration, by which consciousness is made more vivid through a continuity of experience in time.

Bergson argues in terms of reality as a process of images, in which we then understand the art-object of painting as itself an event of images.¹⁷ That is, in terms of the becoming-present of painterly forms and expressive images, the process of painting involves activities of images and the actualizations of these images in concrete and extended form. In other words, according to Bergson's concept of image, reality is presented as a constellation of images in process, so that, in regards to the process of painting, the process of its images are modes of actualizations and realizations immanent to its *activities and events*.¹⁸ Here we argue that the process of painting, is processual, to mean that the very nature of the image is not stable, it is a fluid form, and the process of these images in the reality of painting is the transitional and progressive forms we recognize in the expressions and exchanges of visual

¹⁷ B. Sandywell, *Dictionary of Visual Discourse: A Dialectical Lexicon of Terms* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2012). p. 277 Within Sandywell's definition there is reference to the definition of 'event' according to John Dewey's claim that 'every existence is event-like'. I hold a similar view in the sense that the experiential condition of time is based on what is actualised in the present.

¹⁸ J. Hornsby, *Concise Routledge encyclopedia of philosophy* (Psychology Press, 2000).p. 5 see entry for 'Action'. I see this entry as begging the question, because it combines the notion of action or 'bodily movements' with events. By first proposing that Action theory is specific to metaphysics and philosophies of mind, I accept that Bergsonian theory contributes in a significant way. In this entry questions of the distinction between actions and events are said to be based on view of 'purposiveness', or even, 'intentionality'. From a Bergsonian context these would be considered the as the content of consciousness, and as consciousness flows in time, they are part of the real as they are actualized through time. In other words, I am not denying the entry's description; I am considering the assumptions of the entry, i.e. 'having done with purpose', 'volitional notions', and how they either may be taken as supportive for Bergson's view of action or how they may counterbalance a Bergsonian view. For the reader, I mean to frame an argument from a Bergsonian view of action, the regards actions of a painter, or painterly activities as those preceding the material event of the painted image. This would suggest that painted image accommodates the experience of the actions, and during its rendering, proceeds with the process of painting.

experiences. By taking the activities of images in relation to their experience as differing durations according to differing activities and distinct occurrences of expression in time, we understand the experiences of the duration of matter. Hence, the process of painting is the progression of multiple modes of (re)-presentation of images affecting the passage of activities towards the material embodiment of a condensing of durations, by which the expediency of our visualisations regard as a unified contraction of movements of expression.

Painting, as involving the perceptual modes of experience, should no longer be regarded in terms of an object and subject orientation of mind, as this distinction becomes irrelevant in terms of the plurality of images in duration, and as we consider a view of the totality of reality as processual.¹⁹ This implies further, a concomitance of images, images of mind and of matter, differing in degree and not of kind, as a unity, and relational within the changing process of time.²⁰ In this regard, Bergson's concept of image is the basis for an ontology of images, in which the continuous flow of reality is made up of images considered as *contents of change* and mutually, images as *forms of process*.²¹ The concept of image figures into a theory that considers reality as a continuity of duration and material extensity.²² Mullarkey explains that Bergson's concept of image, suggests a pluralism of reality, by which matter is the lowest form of mind and mind is the highest state of matter.²³ He indicates that for Bergson, the significance of 'image' is that it does not privilege mind over matter or vice versa, but rather, it is posited so as to 'pre-exist any bifurcation between inside and outside, subject and object'.²⁴

¹⁹ J. Mullarkey, *Bergson and philosophy* (Edinburgh University Press Edinburgh, 1999).

²⁰ S. Guerlac, *Thinking in time: an introduction to Henri Bergson* (Cornell University Press, 2006).p.106

²¹ L. Lawlor, *The challenge of Bergsonism* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2003). p. 117 I take support from Lawlor's commentary, so that towards an application of Bergson's theory to a theory of painting, I agree that Bergson is a 'continuist', (i.e. the continuity of Images in time), but that this means that the difference of images, as differences in the evolution of life, are discontinuous. However, because of life, these 'forms of life' are relational.

²² H. Bergson, *Henri Bergson: key writings* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002).

²³ J. Mullarkey, *Bergson and philosophy* (Edinburgh University Press Edinburgh, 1999).p. 165-185

²⁴ H. Bergson, *Matter and memory* (New York: Zone books, 1999). p. 181

Furthermore, Bergson explains that perceptions are ‘in the object’. Our perceptions are not states of our mind, but instead, they are part of the existence of the reality independent of our own. Because of this, he explains that it is by ‘common sense’, from the most literal meaning, that the object exists itself, and, in itself, it is ‘pictorial’. Therefore, by this notion of pictorial sense, perceiving is common to the field of perception, to mean that what we perceive is what is given by the images, so that our perceiving is in itself from the field of self-existing images.²⁵ In other words, the concept of ‘image’ is meant to suggest that the field of perception in reality, is given to differing points of view of mind, but given just as it is perceived, as images from among images. Here, Bergson’s strategy is not to examine reality by presuming the differences of mind from matter, but rather, by assuming their value in terms of images, he considers the connection of mind in matter. The relation of mind to matter is then, not so much to do with the difference of internal or external orientations of images, but rather, with the differences of images immanent to time. To this extent, Bergson’s theory conceives of time in terms of duration so that duration itself is not reducible to space, and therefore, the concern of the relations of mind and matter are based solely on a primacy of time. From the outset of *Matter and Memory*, Bergson’s thesis is presented in terms of a ‘presence of images’, and thereby, begins by situating a notion of the self-according to a temporal horizon, open to the occurrences of images.

Here I am in the presence of images, in the vaguest sense of the word, images perceived when my senses are opened to them, unperceived when they are closed. All these images act and react upon one another in all their elementary parts according to constant laws which I call laws of nature [...].²⁶

From this formulation, the relation of the self and the world is in terms of perceiving, but perceiving as accounted by the activity from the whole of ‘images’. Immediately, by this, the concept of the image indicates ‘presence’,

²⁵ Ibid. p. 10

²⁶ Ibid. p. 17

but only a situated sense of self, a field of perception. Whether open or closed to the perception, the world is an activity of images. By perceiving, the body becomes situated to the activity of the real. Already, the world is given as a dynamic process of images, so that by the relation of perception to action, reality is more than 'things' or 'appearances', it is the perceptual and the sensorial experiences given by the movement of images, as qualities of movement among images.

Moreover, Bergson argues that perception is the present condition as a plurality of differing activity, and the continuous interface from among all stimuli to responses. This suggests both a condition of the world, and, a specific mode of activity. To perceive as such, is to be from among 'centres of action' in a world of perception. In this way, Bergson's notion of perception describes a notion of presence as well as reflection. On the one hand, perception is a dynamic complexity of indefinite images, continuous in the present, but on the other, perception as given to the perceiving and living centre of images, is reflected by response, reaction, and the overall interchange among the differing images. Mullarkey explain this in terms of the diminutive nature of perception, that is, as the whole of present reality perception is then given to the specific centres active in perceiving. In this way, he suggests that 'each individual's perceptual organs inevitably diminish the greater complexity in more various and so apparently subjective ways'.²⁷ In other words, in terms of painting, we can relate this to the painter, by which the painter is a canalization of primary qualities, that of activities of reality. Here, the conditions for subjectivity are situated in terms of the processes of perception, processes of perceiving from within a world of perception, and therefore, situated centres of perception that are themselves a type of condensing of duration.²⁸

In a similar sense, Kandinskian theory suggests that in the process of painting

²⁷ J. Mullarkey, *The New Bergson* (Manchester University Press, 1999).

²⁸ H. Bergson, *Matter and memory* (New York: Zone books, 1999). p. 12-14

there occurs a localisation of activity, that is, from the inner self there emerges a force of origination of painterly forms.²⁹ In this sense, for Kandinsky, the question of painting is not directed towards the specification of its nature, but rather, to the means and the modes of its continuity. Here we have a correlation with Bergsonian philosophy, in that a philosophy of becoming is concerned with the proximity of the orientations of the philosophical reflection, and the ascertaining of philosophical insight in the depths of durational rhythms of reality. In *Point and Line to Plane*, Explaining the problem of our understanding of the nature of art, and perhaps more importantly, the relation of the painter to the painting, Kandinsky questions the force that specifies the process of painting, the 'content which only art can contain'.³⁰ He suggests that this force is immanent to the process of painting, and through the process of painting, 'can give clear expression through the means available to it.'³¹ This suggests a type of mutual interaction, that between painter and painting medium, between perceiver and the system of perception in which the reciprocity of images, i.e. the interface of perceptions, is facilitated by the strictures of the material images towards the movement of the compositional process and the impulse of images experienced in the registration as physical and painted images.

²⁹ Wassily Kandinsky, *Point and Line to Plane*, Dover Publications, London, 1979, pp. 17-19. The particular point of correlation with Bergson's thinking of the nature of perception in terms of the 'reflecting' that occurs in perceiving, i.e. that when we perceive, this is a reflection back towards the possibility of courses of action, is elaborated by Kandinsky in terms of the work of painting which, 'mirrors itself upon the surface...its image extends beyond...Here, too, exists the possibility of entering art's message'.

³⁰ Will Grohman, *Wassily Kandinsky: Life and Work*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1959, p. 131. From Grohman's description of Kandinsky's realisation of the influence of the graphical elements of the painting upon the very process of the paintings process, we see this in the change of his paintings style particularly in the 'Improvisation' paintings between 1910-1914, after the publication of 'On the Spiritual in Art'. What is significant about these paintings, are the force of the images which may not be appreciated in the contemporaneous viewing of these, but at the time of their exhibition they marked the sense of Kandinskian 'abstraction' defined as the outcome of struggling with elements of the painting, and ultimately, a reliance on the painting process to convey the 'inner sounds' of its expression. See also, p. 146

³¹ W. Kandinsky, *Concerning the spiritual in art* (Courier Dover Publications, 2012). p. 29

In comparison, Alexander explains that by Bergson's 'doctrine of images', we are given a universe that is 'present' to itself. In other words, by proposing that the real is a process of a plurality of images, Bergson relates everything to a dynamism of activities, so that the totality of the material world is the whole of images becoming present continuously.³² Furthermore, Bergson situates the body within this continuity, as an image like other images, but with the exception that it is able to exact different actions and reactions, and thereby, is regarded as a 'zone of indeterminacy' from among the transmissions of movement of images. Here, to be more exact towards an application of painting, this means that the painter's body is a source of voluntary action, and by its activity, in terms of the choice of the body and the selection of images from the world of images around it, the body is a force of influence on the images around it, and through contact of the painting medium, is an effective impact within the field of perception.

The Painter: Living Centre of Images

My body is, then, in the aggregate of the material world, an image which acts like other images, receiving and giving back movement, with perhaps, this difference only, that my body appears to choose, within certain limits, the manner in which it shall restore what it receives.³³

According to Bergson, the differences from among perceptions is not that of distinctions from among the representations of the surrounding images, but rather, that the difference of perception is by an increase of the 'horizon of choice'. In other words, for Bergson, the difference of perception and representation is more of a question of the possibility of actions and the activities that precede the degree of choice from among these actions.³⁴ In this sense, from among a system of images given in perception, the variability of

³² I. W. Alexander, 'Bergson, philosopher of reflection'. pp. 30

³³ H. Bergson, *Matter and memory* (New York: Zone books, 1999). p. 19

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 25

coordination and conduct of activities is conditioned by the body. The movement of the body is the situated occurrence of perception, which is to say, as perception is given to a 'centre of images', the body is affected by activities, and the body reflects perception by acting and reacting among the images and interacting within the field of perception. The degree of variability of perception, according to a body as a living centre of images, implies that perception, as a field of activity, is what is given to a painter's consciousness.

From this context then, we can say that the painter's body is an activity of selection in terms of the need to act specific to the conditions of the activity. In this sense, the painter is embedded in the material world (i.e. image-world), and the change of the painter's activity is relational within the world of activity.³⁵ However, as a potential for changes of activity, the painter is an 'eventual influence' from within a dynamic process of images. Bergson explains that the objects which surround the body 'reflect its possible action upon them'. For us this means that the painter is within a 'dynamic energy system'. This is to say that the painter's body, as a living centre of images, is a relational condition of images from among a field of perception in the image-world.³⁶ In this respect, there is not an isolation of images but rather, a constant change from the variation of activities issuing from among a relation of images. Here again, we relate the painter's activities, as the activities actualized through the body as active 'reflections' of change. That is, the painter is source of action within a convergence of images, and hence, a reaction of activity towards the surrounding images relative to the body in the field of perception.

Moore argues that Bergson's theory implies a 'preferred metaphor', one

³⁵ Ibid. p. 19

³⁶ S. Guerlac, *Thinking in time: an introduction to Henri Bergson* (Cornell University Press, 2006). p. 109 . Guerlac's suggests constant activity, change, vitality, as relational connections with the complex whole constant activity, change, vitality, as relational connections with the complex whole of reality. I take this as an accurate

which emphasizes the pragmatic functions of perception.³⁷ He explains that when the 'body reflects its possible action' this reflection is the 'choice' of the body, that is, the 'selection of images' from the image-world. In this regard, the possibility of the painter's actions deemed as the 'eventual influence' of the painter's body, are conditioned by the surrounding images. As a centre of actions, the painter is a 'privileged' image, in so far as the body is a 'living' centre, responding to the perceptions interposed from the process of painting. Those images that environ the painter are reflected from the centre or concentration of movements. From this, we argue that because the image-world is continuous movement, and all 'things' are regarded as possible actions, then the painting medium must also be regarded as the active influence from within a processual occurrence of images. In this case, the painter's activity is active reflection from among the movement of images issuing from the painting medium. Hence, the activities that occur from among a living centre of images and the painting medium, as itself part of the material images ranged round

this centre, are all variable, as the process of painting is the continuous actualization from among a system of closely linked images. This suggest that the process of painting as such, is a proximity of movements issuing from the images specific to its material medium, and encountered by the reciprocity of painter, vectorising the perceptual possibilities according to the living centre among the vortical mass of image present to the painterly experience. This view is similar to Henry's philosophy of art, suggesting the painting is the instance of the 'movement of the interior becoming life', which suggests that the process of painting is a feeling through reflection, experience through expression, and the expanding of the painter's perception solicited by the

³⁷ F.C.T. Moore, *Bergson: Thinking Backwards*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 29. This is an insightful description of Bergson's theory of perception, which allows us to engage with painting in a philosophical manner, where the painter to painting, painter to canvas already models the environ of perception Bergson's theory elaborates. Summary of Bergson's theory of perception, form within the context of his philosophy of process. Guearlac's view further supports the view of reality as an 'image-world', which I take as added support for a 'Bergsonian' ontology of images.

medium of painting and the images that compose its occurrence.³⁸ In this sense, viewed from Bergson's theory of perceptual relations of images, we are suggesting that the process of painting is a process dynamic exchange of movements, and the modifications and changes of images according to the activity of images from between the painter, as a living centre of images that is environed by extended images, and, the images selected according to the exchange of activity and reactions. This is to say that, as perception is actualized in the painter's activities, the painter's activity in the field of perception registers in terms of the movement of materiality. According to our concern with the process of painting, this closely linked system of images is a complexity of the interchange of images, such that, the living centre of images encounters the affective activity issuing from the continuity of images in the real, and in turn, must react to this activity of images. Hence, the living centre of images, as the sensuous and experiential occurrences of images, is active in such a way that the painting medium is already a determination according to the needs of activity that proceed with the painter's body.

My perception, in its pure state, isolated from memory, does not go on from my body to other bodies, it is, to begin with, in the aggregate of bodies, then gradually limits itself and adopts my body as a centre. And it is led to do so precisely by experience of the double faculty, which this body possesses, of performing actions and feeling affections;[...].³⁹

From the above passage, we apply Bergson's explanation to the process of painting, to then mean that, as the painter's activity is a coordination of the projection of activity with the continuous encounter of activity. And in the terms of 'selection', the activities are a filtering from all possible activities, so that the painter's body retains the 'double faculty', i.e. that of feeling interwoven with acting. In this respect, the painter's body is both an encounter

³⁸ Michel Henry, *La barbarie*, Paris, PUF, 2001, p. 4. Here we bring Henry into our attempts to connect Kandinsky and Bergson, since Henry's theory of life suggests life as being more than consciousness, connects well to the Kandinskian outlook of the material and living form of painting, and then Henry's theory of life as being the encounter of its own possibility with matter, which resounds with Bergsonian theory of perception.

³⁹ H. Bergson, *Matter and memory* (New York: Zone books, 1999), p. 61

within the field of images, but an active transmission of activities as an expression of the movements of images. However, by the sensorial basis of conscious experience, the painter's body coincides with the influence of activities given by the painting medium. In other words, what we refer to as the painter's perceptions, can be termed as such, because from an indefinite field of images, the painter's activities issue from a living centre of activities relative to other activity and environed by conditions of activity from material images. And as the issuing of action is the actualization of affects from perceptions given by material objects, this means that the painter is a singularity of activities, that is, an operative image according to the actualizations of perceptions given from the total of reality. In this sense we are relying on Bergson's view that perception is not simply original to the painter's activity, but rather, the activities of the painter are modeled by the activities of the material world. In this way, the painting medium are themselves influential forces of images that exercise upon the painter and are already perceptions given to the perceptual experience and sensations of the painter. From the principle that perception is reality itself, Bergson's theory supports our consideration of the painter. As a living centre of activities, and situated according to a relation to the painting medium, the painter's interaction becomes a closely linked system of images and activities.⁴⁰

Here we look at Bergson's hypothesis of a *pure perception*, by which he suggests a pre-reflective notion of perception - perception as 'an immediate and instantaneous vision of matter'.⁴¹ Bergson argues that perception always includes memory, so by this hypothesis of *pure perception*, he is indicating that perception is not relative to a perceiver. Rather, perception is an impersonal system of images. 'Without being perceived' matter as the totality of perception, and the totality of what may be given to perceptual experience,

⁴⁰ John Mullarkey, 'Philosophy of mind' in Bergson and Philosophy. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 45

⁴¹ MM p. 34

and therefore, a pure objectivity.⁴² Accordingly, from this objective reality of images we are then able to regard reality as more than what is articulated by the activity of a 'privileged' image, and instead, as a totality of images identical to the whole of matter.⁴³ Bergson claims that the concept of image itself implies a philosophy of mind that regards a *simultaneity of perception*. This means that images are perceived as parts of the whole of images, but images are also continuous, as a condition of the totality of perception.

In this regard a *pure perception* is a total instantaneous continuity of images without experience, so that it is only by the experience of becoming perceived, through the actions and movements of living bodies does the imprinting of experience from among perceptions occur. Here, perception becomes the basis of consciousness, as the images of perception are given to a convergence of movements towards the contact of experience. This suggests an intrinsic movement of activities within the total field of perception, which are then reflected without, and externalised in the continuous and ever present extensity of images. In this sense, perception is not an interior or subjective vision, but rather, perception is the whole of reality, from which objects of matter and the world as images have the potential to be perceived. From this theory, we consider the painter as the potential to effect change from among images, as his experience is necessarily, a convergence of perceptions. His modes of activity are the actualizations of experience. From these experiences then, conscious perception is the occurrence of memory, continuous with the interchange of activities and the movements from living centres of images within the duration and ever-present extended material world. Moore explains that for Bergson the philosophical difficulties with this understanding of perception, is that we immediately consider the process of perceiving to be equal with representation.⁴⁴ However, we want to indicate by our reading that

⁴² MM p. 35

⁴³ K. Ansell-Pearson, *Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual* (Routledge, 2002). p. 13

⁴⁴ F.C.T. Moore, *Bergson: Thinking Backwards*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 33-34.

Bergson's theory of pure perception disconnects representation from the properties of perception. By proposing a 'pure perception' he establishes a position in which perceiving is not considered immediately joined to particular kind of thought, or to a representation of consciousness. Instead, Bergson breaks with any 'representational' definition of perception, establishing that our perceptual experiences are the encounters with the properties of an object as related to our possible actions, so that it is the affection or sensation of the world that precedes any 'idea' of the world.

Pure Perception: The Contact of Painting

[...] we start from action, that is to say from our faculty of effecting changes in things, a faculty attested to by consciousness and toward which all the powers of the organized body are seen to converge. So we place ourselves at once in the midst of extended images, and in this material universe we perceive centres of indetermination, characteristic of life.⁴⁵

From the above passage, Bergson's concept of image suggests that the image is a moving material continuity of images, but, also in terms of 'the powers of organized body', the image is regarded as 'characteristics of life'.⁴⁶ In this sense, because the field of perception is regarded as an 'aggregate of images', it is to the differences from among perception and sensation that we see the difference in kind of a pure material reality of perception, or the distinction of an unconscious perception from conscious perception occurring in the body. It is here that Bergson's hypothesis of pure perception, allows us to understand perception as being an impersonal foundation of experience, by which an absolute exteriority is continuous and occurs as an ever present plane of matter.⁴⁷ And as such, a pure perception would mean that perception is non-relational, atemporal, and as an instantaneous totality of images, by

⁴⁵ MM pp. 63-64

⁴⁶ K. Ansell-Pearson, *Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual* (Routledge, 2002), p. 144

⁴⁷ MM. pp. 65-66. I ask the reader to consider Bergson's theoretical pure perception as an indication of an instantaneous present, and thereby a 'complete perception' as an absolute vision of images.

which the whole of all activities and ‘all the influences of all the points’ are a continuous material extensity. Moore explains that Bergson’s theory of image, suggests ‘a form of ‘ultra-externalism’, in which mind is founded wholly on matter. In consideration of the theory of pure perception we take this point, to understand that the purpose of Bergson’s theoretical invention is to indicate a field of perception without difference, without variance, and as continuity of images coinciding with matter itself.⁴⁸ However, according to Bergson, such a ‘vision’ of the totality of extended images, would mean to be embedded in the real, without affect and memory.⁴⁹ In this way, pure perception is meant to abstract affect and memory from the consideration of perception in order to indicate that rather than this ideal perception, true perception is that which is full of memories and thereby, a continuity of experience.

Bergson’s concept of image is meant to mediate between the domains of mind and matter. To this extent, Bergson argues that the material world is made up of objects, that he terms material images, which act and react upon one another by conditions of continuous movement. Again by the notion of pure perception what is meant is the becoming of action, or the appearing of actions, in so far as this continuity of images is also a totality of perception, ‘prefigured in those images’. In other words, as Bergson argues that the *actuality* of our perceptions is situated according to *activity of perceptions*, this means that perception is ever enduring in the present. Perception is then the continuity of material extensity, continuously changing, but always present as a field of perception-images. According to this view of an ever-present and continuously changing materiality, Bergson explains the pure perception is not ‘that which acts no longer’, but rather, it is ‘that which is acting’.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ F.C.T. Moore, *Bergson: Thinking Backwards*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 33-34.

⁴⁹ MM p. 5

⁵⁰ Lawlor, Leonard, *The Challenge of Bergsonism: Phenomenology, Ontology, Ethics*, (London and New York: Continuum, 2003). p. xiii

This indicates a significant turn for the identity of painting, as a pure perception is ever-present and continuous, this means that in the continuum of affect and sensation are continuous with movement and change. Applied to our theory of painting, this is a radical departure from theories of painting based on the notion of representation. Here the Kandinskian theory of painting makes this a more specific application, where the artist envisioned a sense of 'free composition' in painting as an analogue of musical form, he was suggesting the content of the painting as 'inner sound', and therefore, the transformative qualities of painting originating from the sensuous and the emotional centre of experiences, which becomes the creative force of the painterly expressions. This may be argued further by reinforcement of Henry's view that suggests that painting is the specific incarnation of life which continues in the creation of forms by the very *becoming* of the inner life, regarded in terms of the change of the interiority of living experience.⁵¹ The varieties of expressions in painting, and the difference of response to the experiences of painting are not only driven by 'reflection' of perception, as regarded in Bergsonian terms, but also the concretisation of the force of images and the impact to sensation by what is given in the experience and action of painting. For a Bergsonian view extended by a Kandinskian outlook of the creative 'sounds' of painting, we must rely on Henry's theory of the affect and sensation operative in perception, as a distinguishing dyad of life's becoming, to convey the Bergsonian imperative of the common experience in perception to the practice of painting as philosophy. In other words, the process of painting is the activity that is prompted by the experience granted by the constellation of images environing its process.

From Bergson's theory of pure perception alone, we are able to reconsider the question of painting, first in terms of the becoming of perception through a continuity of activity, and second, the experience of activity through the

⁵¹ Michel Henry, *See the Invisible: On Kandinsky*, Paris, PUF, 2005.

actualisations of the painter's movements. In this sense, we argue that it is by the perceptions given to the painter as a living centre of activity, the condition of the painter's *subjectivity* occurs. It is the condition of experience occurring from within the ever-present field of perception, that perception given continuously is actualization through its encounter. By this we mean to say that as perception is the field of continuous change, from its change there is the condition of *possibilities* for the painter's activity to actualize movements from among a field of indefinite movement. Furthermore, as perceptions occur as a continuous present, the potential of painting medium inheres within the materiality of the process of painting. In short, this means that prior to any notions of the painter's intention, or the consideration of the painter's activity in terms of the contemplation of an ideal and hence, a pre-given pictorial representation, we argue rather, that the painter's activity consigned to the immediacy of experience towards the actualization of images environed by the painting medium, and as given by the material world.

For it is possible to sum up our conclusions as to pure perception by saying that there is in matter something more than, but not something different from, that which is actually given. Undoubtedly, conscious perception does not compass the whole of matter, since it consists, in as far as it is conscious, in the separation, or the 'discernment', of that which, in matter, interests our various needs.⁵²

Bergson explains that in matter there is something more, 'but not something different from, that which is actually given', to mean that though conscious perception is not able to grasp the whole of reality, it is a 'discernment' from the totality of images. By this, he means to argue that matter is what is given in perception, and that memory is a 'phenomenon of spirit as a dependent reality'. To take this a step further, Bergson means that conscious perception is itself the experience of difference from within a world of pure perception because it involves the manifold occurrences of the living encounters of movements and duration.

⁵² MM. p 71

Within a world of absolute movement, and furthermore, this encounter is a conscious perception by the importing of the past into an ever continuous present. In other words, contact between consciousness and things imply an expansion of perception by a temporal synthesis. For Bergson, conscious perception is a type of temporal delay because of the circuitous movements of sensory information from the cerebra complex of the body, and therefore, a conservation of perceived images.⁵³

What this suggests in terms of the painter and the particular activities that issue from

the painter's body, is that, because of the delay in the transmission of activities, and the relaying from stimulus back to the cerebral reactions in response to the affects received from other images, it is by virtue of the body's sensorial system that the activities are retained and kept from being instantaneous with the material reality. In this sense, these activities are inhibited as they are processed through the bodily and cerebral complex of the centre of images. In this way, the body becomes a process of selection and choice and hence, the 'indeterminations of acts'. Bergson suggests that it is because of the duration of activities, that we regard consciousness as a 'dawning of action', as nascency of activity by the interpenetration of memory and perceptions.⁵⁴ In this regard, in terms of the painter's activity and effects upon the change of the painted image the visual difference of images through the painting medium are firstly attributable to the temporal identity of perceptions in relation to the painter's body. For instance, where Bergson argues that the occurrences of change in the field of perception is 'through the medium of certain particular images', in this regard, the painter's activity, as conditions of consciousness in terms of the degree of selection from the image-world, is the intervention of activity towards material extensity. In other words, from a view of Bergson's notion of pure perception, we regard

⁵³ MM. p. 65

⁵⁴ MM. p. 67

the painter as the source of incipient movements within the process of painting, in which conscious perception is a situated centre of images that receives, inhibits, and transmits movements of images that correspond to the material world.⁵⁵

In review we see that Bergson's argument based on a concept of image, thus far, has suggested that the body is a centre of action, and is active in terms of a situated encounter with what is given by perception presently. However, Bergson argues that memory as the past, does not act, and is therefore purely idea. By this, the past and the present are held as different, such that memory is considered independent. From Bergson's concept of image, thus far, we have considered a broader conception, in which reality is a unity of mind and matter, and more specifically, that perception corresponds with matter, (i.e. pure perception) and that memory corresponds with consciousness, (i.e. *l'esprit* or mind). Applied toward a theory of painting, this means that although distinct, the painter is the occurrence of perception and memory intertwined in conscious perception. Furthermore, the physical body and mind interact in such a way that, the painter as a living centre of images, is a medium of selection, and reacts as a living image towards the material world. At this point our argument of Bergson's concept of image as the basis for a theory of painting has developed according to the crucial distinction of Bergson's notion of a pure perception from the role of memory. Accordingly, we assert then, that a model of a process of painting is based on this distinction. The process of painting involves a contact of the material world with consciousness, which is to say that as perception is the material extensity of reality, the painter is the point of active reflection from what is given in things. And here we can make the connection with Kandinskian theory,

⁵⁵ MM. pp. 10-11, I note that here in the text, Bergson's subtitle, 'Real and Virtual Action', itself expounds the notion of 'activity' as the sole condition of perception. In other words, with this notion of 'perception' there are many things at stake. For Bergson, the concept of 'perception' is the means to drive a position between Realism and Idealism, making 'thing' and 'representation' subordinate notions to a world of image activity.

particularly in these terms of 'reflection'. Kandinsky claims that the work of art is 'reflected on the surface of one's consciousness. However, he explains that 'once the stimulus has gone, it vanishes from the surface without trace'.⁵⁶ That is to say, that similar to Bergson's theory of perception, the materiality of the art-object is perception given to the painter's consciousness, such that the painter's conscious perception is an involvement within the perceptual activities of the painting medium, and an active reflection of images from a continuity of images.

Forms of Memory: Painting as Recognition

We now consider from Bergson's development his theory of pure memory which is reasoned to be the direct opposite of pure perception. By his theory of pure perception Bergson offers a hypothetical notion of an atemporal and instantaneous totality of the images of the material plane. As its opposite he puts forward the notion of a pure memory which suggests a spontaneous occurrence of the total experience of all that is given in perceptions. However, according to Bergson a 'pure' memory as well as a 'pure' perception, are not possible, since there is a continuous interpenetration of memory and perceptions. In terms of their interpenetration, Bergson explains that they are 'always exchanging something of their substance as by a process of endosmosis'.⁵⁷ For Bergson, real perception implies the duration of activities. Since conscious perception is a process of selection and choice in response to the nascency of movements and present activities in the material world of perception, this process involves the past through the prolonging of activities, activities being actualized as experiences, and hence, the becoming of memory. In this sense memory is a negotiation of experience from the duration of images in the present, and thereby, is a mediating condition between the planes of pure matter and pure memory. This is to say that though

⁵⁶ W. Kandinsky, *Point and line to plane* (Courier Dover Publications, 1947).p. 253

⁵⁷ MM. p. 67

perception is a continuous and present existence of activities, Bergson argues that it is different by degree, that is, the living and immediate encounter within this field of activity and ‘that which is acting’, is only different by the experiences of activity and ‘that which acts no longer’, then informing the conditions of active engagement. In other words, Bergson is arguing that the distinct of perception and memory is only by degree of time, stating:

Restore, on the contrary, the true character of perception; recognize in pure perception a system of nascent acts which plunges roots deep into the real; and at once perception is seen to be radically distinct from recollection; the reality of things is no more constructed or reconstructed, but touched, penetrated, lived [...].⁵⁸

Here the ‘nascency’ of action is a clear indication of Bergson’s theory of pure perception. By situating perception in terms of the activity as the reality of things

Bergson then asks us to understand in terms of activity, the activity of experience. From this view of a context of action, Bergson explains that memory is considered as an element of consciousness, such that, conscious perception implies an activity within activity, as a condition of experienc-ing. That is, perceiving is a living activity, and by virtue of its continuity, conscious perception is also as a continuous actualization of activity, and implicitly, a continuity of experience from the activities which have been lived. As we follow Bergson’s development further, we see that in a world of images, memory serves the living centre of images more than perception because it allows for consciousness to anticipate, and thereby, endows conscious perception with modes of activity from its reflection given by the experience of images from the material world. When applied to a context of painting, we may assert that memory situates the painter’s perception in the presence of the activities of painting. Taken a step further, we can argue that as perception is given through the materiality of the painting medium the

⁵⁸ MM. p. 69

painter's activity with this medium is a process of actualization and experiencing of specific activities, by which, the experiential qualities of these activities solicit perceptions further.

This aside, we understand the distinction of perceptions and memory and regard the relation in terms of the duration of activities but are confronted with the issue of their connection and how the past survives in the present. One of Bergson's approaches to this issue is to consider the relation of the body to the past in terms of memories occurring through movements.

We must now add that, as pure perception gives us the whole or at least the essential part of matter (since the rest comes from memory and is super added to matter), it follows that memory must be, in principle, a power absolutely independent of matter. If then, spirit is a reality, it is here, in the phenomenon of memory that we may come into touch with it experimentally.⁵⁹

Because memories are internalized by the body, by the immediate actualization of activities from among the dynamism of an action to reaction complex from the confluence of the body in the image-world, it is by the repetition of occurrences of movements that 'contrive a mechanism for themselves, grow into habit, and determine in us an attitude which automatically follows ours perception of things'.⁶⁰ Bergson is indicating that it is by a condition of activities of bodily repetition that memories, themselves the experience of the actualization of activity, become habit, and thereby, as a movement imprinted in the body, these become spontaneous and recurrent to activities. Because the body, as a living centre of images, inhibits, relays, and transmits movement, to speak of memory in such a way is to indicate that the body is a point in which the past is continuous from among the activity in the present. Furthermore, this suggests not only that the body is an occurrence for memory, but also, because the body transmits elements of the past, it is as

⁵⁹ MM. p. 127

⁶⁰ MM. p. 84

a 'moving limit between the past and future'.⁶¹ The condition of memory emerges from a quality of experience so that movements are adapted and activities are selected so as to be best suited and most appropriate in terms of a 'the general aim of life'. In this way, the past is a type of recording of experiences, imprinted in the body as motor-habit. However, Bergson suggests that by being as such, this type of memory is an Impoverishment of the original occurrences from which experiences emerged. By habit, the body operates more immediate to activities, as a type of automatism. Such body-memory is then, an adaptation in which lived-experience becomes more pronounced in the immediate encounter of the body to the real than the body as anticipatory and, hence living as a difference of reactions and activity to the world. Though we would expect a level of motor-habit to develop with time, for the painter, this form of memory would affect the process of painting, to the extent that it would be discontinuous with creative life and nothing more than mechanical actions in immediate response to the medium.

In contrast to this, Bergson suggests the other memory, that of image memory or, *memory of imagination*, which involves images and their occurrence as a return to the present and immediate perceiving as representations of perception. In this regard, as habit-memory implies a lack of effort for selection, with this notion of memory of imagination Bergson is indicating an effort of attention, that is, a register of memory continuously growing as a type of picturing of all past events to include the total details of one's experiences from 'their contour, their colour and their place in time'.⁶² This image-memory, unlike habit or body-memory, is not repeatable; it is specific to the events of things and place as occurrences in time. The difference then is that image-memory does not serve in the manner of necessities of life and as it is not towards the immediate demands of life within the continuity of action, it is not instantaneous with perception. However, unlike the automatic response of movement that body-memory instantiates, image-memory acts as

⁶¹ MM. p. 83

⁶² MM. p. 88

a store of experience by which there is a possibility of choice and a potential of adaption of reactions to the world. Unlike habit memory, which is automatic to the body and allows the body to be most immediate to the given activities of the world, image-memory has nothing to do with immediate actions, but rather, as it does not involve the present, it is entirely virtual. Bergson suggests that except in theory, these forms of memory are not completely separate, since in reality, image-memory which operates as mind, and motor-memory as an imperative condition of body, overlap as faculties of recognition and attention. This type of collaboration, regarded as a doubling of memory, suggests the previous distinctions of an ideal and real gradient of reality, i.e. pure memory and pure perception. In this instance, habit memory is more oriented towards the actual and instantaneous qualities of matter, whereas, image-memory implies a pure experience denuded of present activity. From this comparison we see that the image-memory is based on the notion of a pure memory, in that, though seemingly *pure* or *ideal*, it still operates in relation to perceptions through the body.

This brings us to consider further, the interaction of motor-memory and image- memory. Bergson explains this interaction as, ‘the concrete act by which we grasp the past again in the present’, meaning by ‘recognition’ and by this process of the articulation of the past in the present. In this sense Bergson indicates that recognition implies actions and representations, such that it occurs automatically according to the physicality of the body in the present, but also, as organized, to the extent that it is a ‘gradual passage of recollections’, and becoming part of an informed response extends perception.⁶³ However Bergson adds another form of recognition and suggests that by ‘attentive recognition’ specific images of memory, as ‘pictures’ of events from the continuity of the occurrences of experiences, these insert themselves into the activities of perception. In this sense, he

⁶³ MM. p. 91

explains in terms of attentive recognition that image-memories inserted into the present perception expand the perception as it is 'strengthened and enriched by images'.⁶⁴ In this regard, by considering these differences of recognition, Bergson is articulating a theory of memory in terms of the most immediate response of the body, and its pragmatic condition in a world of continuous activity, as well as the re-joining of memories in the present perception. The crucial turn from this distinction of an automatic recognition from attentive recognition is that the automatic recognition 'removes us from the perceived object', whereas, the attentive, brings us back to the object to underscore its contours'.⁶⁵ In other words, by 'recognition', Bergson implies the immediate utility of memory to life in the sense that memory serves life's interest as immediate and continuous with the world, but with the notion of attentive recognition, he is suggesting that memory is a constituting effect towards cognition.⁶⁶

This is to say memory in terms of attentive recognition means that memory constitutes an 'understanding' or a 'knowing' of the world. Bergson's point of these distinctions is to suggest a reciprocal relation of memories to perceptions. The more memory is inserted in the present activity of perception, the deeper the experience of the perceptions, and hence the more elaborate image-memories. However, along this same line, memories can only occur through the experiences of perception to the extent that perceiving is the actualization of images, such that the activities of images is the contact and experiential grounding from which memory occurs. Applied to our theory of painting, what we may consider in terms of the 'depth' unique to the process of painting, is to mean a 'depth' from a menagerie of images limited to the process. This means that the 'percept-image', as a pictorial or painterly form, is the event of an image occurring from an ever expanding painterly

⁶⁴ MM. p. 101

⁶⁵ MM. p. 107

⁶⁶ MM. p. 107

experience in contact with the movements suggested by the painting medium, and therefore, material images creative an active, 'upon each other into a system.'⁶⁷ Here we can compare an aspect of Kandinsky's view that runs parallel to Bergson's. By relating the 'spiritual life' to a notion of movement and in turn, regarding movement to the process of experience, Kandinsky's notion of movement appears to closely resemble Bergson's theory of memory, stating:

The spiritual life, to which art belongs and of which she is one of the mightiest elements, is a complicated but definite and easily definable movement forwards and upwards. The movement is the movement of experience.⁶⁸

By this we see, from both Kandinsky and Bergson, the emphasis of the notion of spirit as a living process, itself developing in terms of experience and of movements. Grounding this to a Bergsonian view, we understand at this point that for Bergson the actualizations of activity are the continuity of experience and the consistent operation of memory. Mullarkey explains that Bergson's theory suggests a type of build-up of images, (i.e. images upon image), as a process of abstraction and indicates the possibilities of images themselves as worlds, 'to become a container for some 'new' content-meaning'.⁶⁹ We will come to the question of this content next as we follow Bergson's development further. However, we assert that at this point Bergson's theory situates all things in terms of activity and by this, that the objective activity is the condition from which a subjective actualization and experiential interchange from among a world of images occur. As we have seen so far, the material continuity of perception is an extrinsic course of activity, from which an inner unity of images from the convergent nature of living centres of activity becomes a contact of experience, and hence, reflective of images as 'understanding'.

⁶⁷ J. Mullarkey, *The New Bergson* (Manchester University Press, 1999). p. 7

⁶⁸ W. Kandinsky, *Concerning the spiritual in art* (Courier Dover Publications, 2012), p. 4

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* p. 8

However, we return to Bergson to consider further the nature of ‘attention’ so as to understand dynamic relation of perception, attention, and memory. Keeping this in mind, Bergson introduces us to consideration of attention in terms of consciousness. He suggests that by a condition of attention this renders perceptions in terms of ‘the turning back of the mind’. This means that from the movement of memory away from present perception, consciousness is an effort from experience to think otherwise.⁷⁰ In this sense, attentive recognition as attentive perception is the reflection of experience, which is to say that, as perception is already an awareness and immediate to a contouring of objects by the insertion of memory, conscious perception becomes an attention of memory. Bergson suggests that by attention, there is an effort to summon former experiences to bring back to the focus of the attentive perceiving and to reinsert in the activity of selecting and bringing together images from among images a recollection of memory-images. Bergson sees this as consciousness, such that

Whenever we are trying to recover the recollection, to call up some period of our history, we become conscious of an act sui generis by which we detach ourselves from the present in order to replace ourselves, first, in the past in general, then, in a certain region of the past - a work of adjustment, something like the focusing of a camera. But our recollection still remains virtual; we simply prepare ourselves to receive it by adopting the appropriate attitude.⁷¹

In this regard, memory fortifies the very process of perceiving, and reciprocally, expands and grows experiences through the localizations of memories to perceptions. Hence, the experience of images is the becoming of image-memories. What is obvious here is the *tension* between the actual perceptions and the virtual and non-substantial memory. We are reminded by Bergson’s claim,

Memory, inseparable in practice from perception, imports the past in to the present, contracts

⁷⁰ MM. p. 110

⁷¹ MM. p. 133-134

into a single intuition many moments of duration [...].⁷²

Between memory and perception there is a dynamic interplay, such that between these is based the ontological aspect of images, as that of the occurrences of images in terms of duration. For this reason, both the virtual and actual are not to be regarded in terms of space or being somewhere, but rather, in terms of images in time, so that their duration is the condition of variability from among the immediacy of the actual perception and instantaneity of virtual experience.

Bergson's cone diagrams help to illustrate this theoretical formulation.⁷³ What they show is a diagram of an inverted cone, in which the point of the apex touching a plane represents the body in relation to the theoretical pure perception 'which indicate at all times my present' as an unceasing contact with the material plane. From the apex as the point of immediate contact, towards the base, which represents the theoretical pure memory, Bergson is attempting to show the dynamic relationship of memory to perception. That is, by the doubling of the movements of perception to memory and from the view of memories reinserting themselves in the process of the actualization of activities, Bergson's diagram is meant to model the circularity of these relations and the interchanges, and hence, 'an indefinite multitude of possible states of memory'.⁷⁴ Here Bergson diagrammatizes the terms of the movement in the materialisation of memory-images among the differing levels of possibility, and thereby, indicates the differences in degrees of consciousness. This to say that, the occurrences of difference is from among the interaction of activities and experiences, such that there are distinctions in the present from the demands of the immediacy of living and to the encounter of reality as a conscious effort. This means that the demands for the attention of life become less immediate because of consciousness, so that through conscious effort life engages reality from reflections of its experience. In

⁷² MM. p. 73

⁷³ MM. pp. 152 & 162

⁷⁴ MM. p. 168

turn, conscious perceptions affect the actualization of activities and the further development of experiences. Here we may draw connections between Bergson's theory and Kandinsky's, particularly concerning this notion of an oscillation between the situated immediacy of perceiving in the world of perception, to the increase of experiences from the affectivity of what is given by perception.

[...] Our point of departure is the belief that the artist, apart from those impressions that he receives from the world of external appearances, continually accumulates experiences within his own inner world.⁷⁵

Here Kandinsky's view presents the artist as that which wavers between the impressions of the external and experiences attributed to an internal domain. We read this from Bergson's perspective, however, with the added notion that to live as immediate and only in the present, to attend only to the most immediate actions of life, is to be a 'man of impulse'. Whereas, by effort of consciousness, reflecting on experiences 'without any advantage for the present situation', this makes one a 'dreamer'. Here again, we may apply not only the development of Bergson's theory thus far to a theory of painting, but consider the point illustrated by the diagram. We argue, that the painter is both a living body of 'impulse', but also, by mediation of the painting medium, considered as a threshold of the actualizations of activity. In addition, by the origination of experience, the painter's consciousness in the attention specific to the material medium is where the contingency of the plurality of images interact with bodily interests towards the eventual action on things, and by its encounter affords the occurrences of the actioning images specific to the painting process through perceptual reflection. In Kandinskian terms, the artist is only a wavering partition between the permeations of actions given by the medium and the reciprocal movements of experiences while engaging the medium during the process of image rendering. This paralleled with more specific notion of the dynamism between memory and perception, according to Bergson's concept of image, we understand the process of painting to be

⁷⁵ W. Kandinsky, *Kandinsky, complete writings on art* (Da Capo Press, 1994), p. 52

specific to the immediacy of activity, and to the actualization of experience from the materiality of the painting medium. The material objectivity of painting medium conditions the activity of the painter, and the continuous actualization of activity between painter and material medium generates subjective experiences. But in accord with the experience, reciprocally and therefore, necessarily, the selection of its activities informed by the virtuality of experiences means that the subjective condition of the painter originates from the reflection of memory-images and the projections into the realizations of images by modes of imagination. In this regard, the perceptions given in the materiality of painting, allows for conscious perception to be directed towards the painter's activity in such a way, that the active reflection of images is also a selective activity and a projection of images back into the material continuity of images . Here again, Kandinsky suggests that the painter's activity should assume activities that convey the experiences from affective qualities of perception, stating,

We seek artistic forms that should express the reciprocal permeation of all these experiences forms that must be freed from everything incidental, in order powerfully to pronounce only that which is necessary - in short, artistic synthesis.⁷⁶

From this passage, we approach Kandinsky's view from Bergson's theoretical development to integrate the two in the sense that by 'artistic synthesis' we understand the process of painting to be a process of activity responding to what is given by perception and the experience of this effecting the becoming of experiences, the growing of memory. Moreover, by this we understand how the painter's body directs memory-images back towards the activity of painting medium, how the experiences from painting medium are the actualization of conscious efforts of the painter, and therefore, how imagination is realized in the continuous present. In other words, we regard the materiality of the painting process to be the existential basis for experience of painting. But, in turn, we understand these experiences through the

⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 53

becoming and presenting activities of painting medium, as the events occurring from the reflective nature of the experiences from what is given by perception.

In this way, the occurrence of the painter's activity is also the recurrence of the painter's experience, and conditioned by the materiality of the body in relation to the painting medium, the painter's consciousness is the directing of memory-images in relation to a the realization of movement and the further affectivity through material actualization.

This implies further, in Bergsonian terms, the dynamic movement between memory and perception as relations in terms of activity. However, at this point in Bergson's development thus far, we are specifically concerned with how memory is realized in the real and how the condition of imagination suggests memory-images 'settle within matter'.⁷⁷ Here again we can draw close comparisons of Bergson's theory of the relation of memory and matter, to Kandinsky's theory of painting. Where Bergson regards the activity of the body as derivative of a physical and material continuity of images, similarly, Kandinsky suggests that, that which evokes the painter's abstraction is from the world, stating,

The abstract painter derives his 'stimulus' not from some part or other of nature, but from nature as a whole, from its multiplicity of manifestations, which accumulate within him and lead to the work of art.⁷⁸

Here we are comparing Kandinsky's claim of the painter's activity being affected from the 'whole' of nature, from 'its multiplicity of manifestations', to Bergson's theory of the whole of reality as a continuous activity of images, and these images affecting living centres of perception. More specifically, if we compare Kandinsky's notion of the accumulation of these 'manifestations', as also, a type of build-up of activities from experience in terms of the differing memories, we see how this accords with Bergson's

⁷⁷ MM. p. 177

⁷⁸ W. Kandinsky, *Kandinsky, complete writings on art* (Da Capo Press, 1994)..p. 789

sense of the actualization of activities as experiences and these experiences affective to conscious perception. In other words, similar to Kandinsky's claim that nature 'accumulates' within the painter and directs his work, this parallels with Bergson's theory of the body as an actualization of experience, and hence, as a continuous accumulation of memories. Moreover, Bergson's theory explains that through the attentive recognition of conscious perception, memories reinsert themselves as representations of experience, being materialized through the body and made present in the continuing contacts of movement within the material continuity of reality. Similarly, Kandinsky claims that the whole of nature accumulates in the painter, and as the occurrence of the return of this nature to itself, the process of painting is an abstraction of nature, an immanence of transition determined by the reciprocity of nature's reflection. We argue that what is most important in this similarity, is that as Bergson claims that attention of perception requires memory to complete it, and memory needs the process of actualization from what is given in the total activities of perceptions to become realized, both Kandinskian and Bergsonian theory are complementary in regards to nature's reciprocity of becoming. Accordingly, both Bergson and Kandinsky regard the interaction of 'images' in the flux of reality as continuous, and because of the paradigm of continuity of images in time, they are transformative by the rhythm of their movement.

However, thus far, we have considered Bergson's notion the body, perception and the relation to memory, but now, we return to the most important question of Bergson's thesis, which is that of the difference of perception and matter and how the soul and the body, respectively, are joined. He reminds us that as the body is always turned towards action, it must limit 'the life of the spirit'. However, he explains that in terms of representation, the body is selective from the possibilities of differing courses of action, and thereby, an 'instrument of choice'.⁷⁹ In this sense, the body involves a selective system

⁷⁹ MM. p. 179

of memory, not simply storing recollections, but instead, bringing into perception memories to enhance the perceiving, whereby the body is able to 'choose' from pictured-images, i.e. memory-images, to fit into the specific activity and the contoured field of attention of conscious perception. Together then, both perception and memory, are regarded as a relation in terms of an interaction. Bergson affirms this relation by suggesting that in terms of 'the orientation of our consciousness toward action', this is the fundamental law of our psychical life'. However, at this point, though the body is oriented towards the plane of pure perception and by experience and memory of consciousness the body turns in the direction of pure memory, this double distinction only reaffirms the duality of perception and memory. Applied to our concern with the process of painting, we understand this to mean that a dynamic relation of memory and perception, that is, the mutual affects of mind and matter, coming to bear on the role of the painter and the interchange with painting medium.

The Actual painter and The Possible painting: Delimiting and Fixing Images

To this point, Bergson has considered the relation of matter and memory in terms of their interaction and the interchange of images from either domain. However, he returns to the problem of their 'union', considering that matter and memory are radically different in kind, this means that the answer is situated according to the encounters of one to the other. For Bergson the dual operations of body and mind are oriented according to the continuous interchanges between the planes of pure perception and the levels of a pure memory, as differing metaphysical entities of matter and soul, to the extent that, 'within matter that pure perception places us, and it is really into spirit that we penetrate by means of memory'.⁸⁰ In this regard, Bergson is reaffirming his position against the doctrines of materialism, which would

⁸⁰ MM. p. 180

attribute mind solely to the body and representations as emergent from matter and against idealism, which would maintain that mind generates the world and our understanding 'constructs the contours of nature'. Contrary to these, Bergson argues, that it is with the view of consciousness that we regard the body as images among a world of images, and that the comprehension of the world is by 'a faculty of dissociating'. That is to say, conscious perception is the result of sensation in a world of activity, by which recognition of experience, (as experience is also the persistence of memory), is the impetus for choice, and the distinction and selection of activities from a continuity of indefinite activity. In this regard, it is this testimony of experience, by which consciousness opens to an ever-expanding field of perception, that Bergson bases his psychological analysis. In this regard, it is Bergson's ontology of memory which explores the complexity of experience, and the realisation of novel activity in the context of the general metaphysical problem of the separation of mind and matter. However, he suggests that this also allows us to consider reconciliation between the problems of the unextended and qualitative nature of mind, and the extended nature of matter related to in terms of quantitative distinctions. By this turn, Bergson is also referring to his previous works, in which we are introduced to his theory of duration, which argues for a dynamic temporality of becoming. In this sense, the theory of pure perception already assumes a view of reality as process and durational, such that perceived images are not something occurring in the body, but are located as a continuous occurrence in the external world. In this sense, images are not exclusive to an internal state or a privileged mind, but rather, images are occurring in the external world, as a continuity of material extensity in process.

Furthermore, what we regard as the images of concrete perception, that is, what is given to conscious perception, according to Bergson, these are 'already a synthesis' because of memory. However, Bergson argues that because an 'infinity' of perceptions may be given by the material plane of reality, we should consider the diversity of sensorial experience in the body

the result of the actualizations of images becoming ‘contracted in our memory’, and therefore, considered as tension between states of pure extensity and pure intensity.⁸¹ This suggestion orients Bergson’s theory of the relation between body and mind to a question of tensions between extended and unextended, that is, to the contingency of continuous adaptations from the mind to the body and vice versa. By considering degrees of tensions between body and mind, so as to consider the difference from among a type of continuous movement of oscillation between the polar opposites of pure memory and a pure perception, is ‘to seek experience at its source’.⁸²

In other words, for Bergson the relation of mind to matter, is based on the differentiation of experience in the duration of sensations and conscious perception in time, which means that differences of the experiential condition occur from direct and immediate contact with the real. Hence, by levels of immediacy, a thereby, degrees of the proximity of consciousness, the modalities of perception are affected within the duration of things. In terms of the process of painting, this implies that as the painter and the painting medium are regarded as a system of closely linked images of memory and perception, from between the interaction of bodily life and materiality, the difference of experiences as occurrences in time is then the difference of consciousness as occurrences in time. In Bergsonian terms, from this consideration of the relation of the mind to the body, applied to a theory painting, is to regard the process as a totality of the actualization of a painter’s movements, and the realization of experiences immediate to the condition of perceptions given by painting medium, as a continuity from the confluence of extended and unextended images, and hence, as living continuity of gradations of consciousness.

However, this is to return to Bergson’s underlying principle that the relation of mind and matter are questions of time not space. Accordingly, the painter

⁸¹ MM. p. 183

⁸² MM. p. 184

and the painting medium are themselves of differing forms of images, images given to perception, images as experience and becoming memory, and ultimately, images continuous in

the flow of time. In this sense, we are able to argue that there is the duration of the activities of the painter as a complexity of images in juxtaposition with the painting medium, as a movement of material images, and the duration of experiences of this activity as conscious perception continuously realized in the painting medium.

The Passage of Painting

In this regard we look to Bergson's claim that the occurrences of fixed images, that is, the holding fast and hence, delimitation of images, are qualities of matter so that matter itself is regarded differing movements relative to the continuity of time.⁸³ With the first point, he asserts, that 'Every movement, as passage from rest to rest, is absolutely indivisible', and by this Bergson reaffirms his view that the division of reality, in terms of constituent parts to a whole, is an illusion. He explains that to regard reality is to reduce reality to extension, and thereby, represent movement in terms of spatial positions. Moreover, in attempts to articulate the perception of real movement we assume that the progress of reality coincides with the seemingly immobile nature of things. In this way, movement is mapped in terms of spatial arrangements and thereby, seemingly held fast to the extent that reality is then regarded as a succession of immobile segments. Bergson explains that this makes time and movement as phenomena that coincide with a stable substrate, whereby, this very notion of stability is attributed to the subdividing of time and movement. In this way, the real continuity of the occurrences of images is then re-presented accordingly, and with view towards the utility of things, the images of reality are taken as delimited, succinct and discontinuous. Instead, Bergson maintains that in terms of 'the living movement itself' we are to regard reality as a duration of movements. By regarding all movement

⁸³ MM. p. 188

as continuous passage, we are then able to recognize the demands of the body in the continuity of movement. In this respect, the function of mind is as an ‘artificial reorganization of movement’.

This leads us to Bergson’s second point in which he asserts that movement is absolute. Regardless of the habits of thinking movement in terms of space, by which we reduce movement to a sense of distance relative to points of reference and hold views of variation and difference of movements by regards to positioning and immobilizations of activity, what remains is concrete movement as *real movement*. For Bergson, movement is then an ‘indisputable reality’.⁸⁴ From this context, we may apply this to our concerns with painting, to argue that in terms of Bergson’s notion of real movement, the process of painting is at once, a contact of movement with movement, such that the present movement of images of the painting medium are immediate to change of qualities of movement from within the painter, i.e. sensorial perceptions and feelings. In addition, Bergson suggests that if we regard concrete perception in terms of external movement, such as that ‘between light and darkness, between colours, between shades’, these are also changes of qualities from among movements. To then understand real movement in the process of painting we must understand that the painter’s body is an individuality of movements from that of the external material substances of the painting medium. And from this, we see that the distinction of these movements is relative to the movement of the whole of the process, and that is to say that, the change of aspects of movement between painter and painting medium are relative to the qualities of change from among the whole of movements. The Bergsonian discussion may be seen similarly in Henry’s philosophical themes emphasizing, the live-body, and the pathos of life, that is, the auto-affection of life from its living, or, in terms of the materiality that life encounters, the self-discovery of life from the reflection of its own activity and impressions. Though Henry’s intention is to present a his own account

⁸⁴ MM. p. 196

of phenomenology, we see correlations of Bergsonian thinking, and particular to the consideration of process thinking in painting, the bodily movements of the painter as the expressions of the movements also encountering the experience and actualisations of these movements. It is this patho-genetic sense that we see in Bergson's account of the movement, in which Henry elaborates in terms of the 'becoming of life'.⁸⁵ For Bergson creativity is considered in terms of the novelty of movements, for Henry creativity is a necessary correlate of life's experiential encounter.⁸⁶

Let us consider Bergson's third point, as we see this to be more conducive to our application, particularly regarding the distinction of bodily movements and the painter's application from the activity of the painting medium and the change of movement of painting substances. He argues that it is by an artificial view that we to consider the 'division of matter into independent bodies with absolutely determined outlines'.⁸⁷ And by this he is indicating further that all of reality is a duration of movements, such that the moving continuity of perception is constantly changing and yet remains. Here the question becomes something other than the difference of real movement from our common sense's mode of the immobilization of movement. Instead, Bergson argues that we consider change in terms of permanence by representing permanence with the sense of bodies and objects, and in turn, by regarding these as independent bodies, we consider their change in terms of 'homogenous movements in space'. What occurs is an articulation of reality in terms of the artificial carving out of bodies, which means that space is already and automatically assumed as the universal continuity from which all things can be measured and ascertained.

⁸⁵ Michel Henry, *See the invisible: On Kandinsky*, trans. by Scott Davidson, Continuum Publishing, London, 2005, p. 11

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* p. 124, See also, Antonio Calcagno's study, 'Reclaiming the Possibility of an Interior Human Culture? Michel Henry and La Barbarie', *Journal of the British Society for the Phenomenology*, Vol. 44, No. 3, October 2013, p. 252

⁸⁷ *MM.* p. 196

For Bergson, intuition is a means of immediate data of consciousness by which we are able to grasp the movement of reality as absolute, and thereby, view the things and bodies of the world as themselves qualities of movement relative to the world of movement. However, he admits that in terms of the biological imperatives in a world of movement, and the pragmatic nature of our conscious perception bent towards the necessity of living, it is life which turns toward the discontinuity of reality by carving out bodies and delimiting the relations among things. In other words, it is by demands of real movement that the necessity of life appears in the organization and establishments of 'specific relations between portions of sensible reality', and hence, the piecemeal cuttings and contouring of reality as a process 'we call living'.⁸⁸ It is for life, that we see a connection from a biological basis to an epistemology.

Painting as Living Encounter

The necessity of life to construct, to organize, and in this sense, to establish, all this comes from the most immediate encountering with the world of activity. Hence, from the experiences of living the actualizations of activity become the basis from which further activity and further experiences are derived. To understand reality in this way means to 'prolong the vital movement', to continue with useful action, and deemed as such, to continue living according to experientially derived knowledge. However, Bergson maintains, that we will never understand matter according to bodies or things. Instead, he indicates that we are to consider the inner life of things, to go beyond the individuated identities of materiality this would mean to work with the experiences given by matter. Bergson argues that as the experiences given by matter also correspond with the articulations of life, it is through the representations of reality originating from experience that we may 'reconnect with experience'.⁸⁹ Here again, applied to painting, were we to agree that the

⁸⁸ MM. p. 198

⁸⁹ MM. p. 201

art object corresponds with the absolute movement of reality in which the experience of the painter and the perceptions given by the painting medium were relative movements, then process of painting is a process of living in which images of experience move in the directions of activity, and through the double effect of projecting actualizations as also conditions of representations, pursuant to the experience of life to the real.

But to conceive of life in this way, is to assume a harmonious exchange of the heterogeneous and qualitative nature of reality with a homogenous view of reality in terms of the reduction of movements to movements of things. To this end, Bergson's final point claim is that reality as real movement is 'rather the transference of a state than of a thing'.⁹⁰ Here, as a crucial turn, he attributes the whole of the plurality of qualities and indefinite diversity of reality as the contents of duration, and this pertains to matter itself. Here, particularly important towards our theory of painting, Bergson maintains an ontology of duration. Specific to the consideration of the processual nature of reality in terms of the durations of image, we are now able to argue an ontology of images in duration, by which we understand the process of painting in this context. Hence, the process of painting is a differential process of movements of images in duration.

However, what must be noted here is that Bergson identifies a duration of consciousness as a living duration and as a duration of 'its own determined rhythm'.⁹¹ This is in contrast to the duration of all images. From this, Bergson argues that the duration of consciousness coincides with the duration of images as these are all of variable and qualitatively differences of durations. This implies that as there are pluralities of images and multiple movements and activity there are also many different rhythms of duration.

In reality there is no one rhythm of duration; it is possible to imagine many different rhythms

⁹⁰ MM. pp. 203-204

⁹¹ MM. p. 205

which, slower or faster, measure the degree of tension or relaxation of different kinds of consciousness and thereby fix their respective places in the scale of being.⁹²

In terms of duration, matter as concrete extension is a graduated range of durational values, so that consciousness is also conceived as differing tensions from among the continuity of extended reality. Moreover, Bergson explains that these tensions are differing states of time, such that differing times correlate to differing contractions or expansions of consciousness. He suggests that to perceive then, ‘consists in condensing enormous periods of an infinitely diluted existence into a few more differentiated moments of an intenser life’. In other words, as perceiving also means to apprehend the world through a sense of immobilization from among continuous movement, conscious perception is then a continuous division of the real continuity of matter according to differing rhythms of activity. This also means that depending on the tensions of consciousness, what we ‘seize’ by perceiving ‘outruns perception itself’, even though, as Bergson asserts, ‘the material universe is not essentially different or distinct from the representation which we have of it’. Applied to our view of the process of painting, this is taken to mean that from among the reciprocal movements between painter and painting medium, these movements do not exhaust the possibility of experiences of perception.

From this double effect of our conscious perception, consciousness as characteristic of life is towards the rendering of distinct objects and things for the sense of expanding experience and developing knowledge. However, we must consider the process of painting in terms of Bergson’s argument that there are no such clear cut separations of thing and objects from the environment, but rather, ‘a passage by insensible gradations from the one to the other’.⁹³ This is to say that all things are in a continuous unity to the extent that it is only by the living centre of images, reacting to the material world by

⁹² MM. p. 207

⁹³ MM. pp. 207-208

outlining other images towards the possible action upon them. However, this offers a clear framework from which to model a theory of the process of painting, to suggest the division of painter from the art object in terms of the mutual activity of the painter's gestures and the applications of the painting medium. By this we argue, that in terms of the perpetual conditions of the painter's actions, a continuity of experiences occur from the perceptions given by the painting medium. Therefore, the actualization of experiences through mutual engagement is a bivalent condition of movements relative to movements, by which the solidarity of the process occurs.

The Memory of Painting

Moreover, Bergson explains that our perceiving is instantaneous to the immediate actualization of activity effecting the division of matter and the contouring of objects, but also, it is memory which 'solidifies into sensible qualities the continuous flow of things'.⁹⁴ In other words, as our perception is immediate to the material extensity of reality, memory is the prolongation of the experiences of perception into the present. In contrast, he asserts that to react immediate to the activity of perception, this would mean that we have adopted the duration of material extensity, and hence, ever present and continuous with the present again. In this sense, Bergson argues that, such an operation consists only of 'necessity', by which the reaction to action dynamic would be of the same duration of matter, as always present always given, instantaneous and without choice. Whereas for actions to be free or 'indeterminate', these require differing rhythms of duration and hence, changes of rhythms of duration 'belong to beings able to fix, at long intervals, that becoming to which their own becoming clings'.⁹⁵ For Bergson, the

⁹⁴ MM. pp. 209, 232. In particular, we are most interested in Bergson's description of perceptions, as those which 'outlines the forms of their nucleus', and, terminates them at the point where our possible action upon them ceases', and on p. 232, relating to the delimiting role of the body, he states that 'our body in matter, will carve out distinct bodies in the surrounding medium'. In both statements we understand perception in terms of a virtual action and the bodies function as action already in its present movements.

⁹⁵ MM. p. 210

independence of action and the sense of anticipation of actions come from the condensing of the durations of matter. Therefore, the degree of the contraction of the present by conscious perception, and thereby, the greater or lesser intensity of life, means that the differing tensions of consciousness allows for differing activity and the possibilities to enact change.

Bergson's theory argues against the Kantian view that we cannot know things in themselves but only through our representations. For Bergson, our ordering of things in terms of our representations emerges from mind. In other words, Bergson does not deny the operations of mind but considers real duration as real time, and real extension as real material continuity, as both things in themselves. In this way, the durations of reality are immediate and 'directly manifest to mind', so that the difference of qualities of mind and matter are only distinctions from the relation of consciousness with matter. Bergson argues that by immediate experience, in which 'everything is always being born anew', there is no difference between movement and quality between the images of perception and the images perceived, 'between quality and movement'.⁹⁶

This returns Bergson's conceptualization of the images in terms of the relation of consciousness and matter, body and soul. According to his view that perception is originally in things rather than mind, it is in 'concrete perception' in which memory intervenes, and persistence of the past allows for the prolongation of 'a plurality of movements'. This indicates that perception is not relegated to a detached condition of mind. Instead, consciousness and matter, notions of body and soul, all 'meet each other in perception'. In other words, consciousness is not different from matter, but only made distinct by space. However, space is itself an abstraction, imposed by the requirements of action, by which memory from the occurrences of experience is the prolongation of the past continuing in the present. This

⁹⁶ MM. p. 218

means that from the duration of perception and the living experiences relative to our actions we find the relations of mind and matter. In the dynamism of activity, mind touches matter at the moments of the actualizations of activity. From this we understand mind as distinct from matter in terms of the difference of temporalities. This is to say that, as memory is the result of a temporal synthesis, that of ‘past and present with a view to the future’, by which memory is then the result of actualizations of activity, it is thereby, the contraction of moments of matter that is the activity by which experience is manifest.⁹⁷ However, by this temporal synthesis, matter and mind are in contact in terms of ‘linking the successive moments of the duration of things’. Accordingly, there are two meanings from the notion of memory. With this point, we can draw another parallel; that from Bergson’s notions of the psychology of memory and the metaphysics of matter, with Kandinsky’s claim of the coinciding of life and the materiality of art. Kandinsky argues that the soul grows in the context of a continuous movement, suggesting:

Like the body the soul grows by exercise. Like the body, it grows by movement. Movement is life; life is movement. It is in this that the meaning, the sense and the aim of art is manifested. The whole of nature, the whole world acts ceaselessly on the soul.⁹⁸

Like Bergson, starting from the context of a pure perception as a continuity of movement, Kandinsky also suggests a similar orientation to the ‘meaning’ of life, situating the living encounter in terms of the affective nature of the world, such that the movement of the world is relative to the growth of the soul. In Bergson’s terms, we mean that in terms of ‘spirit in perception’, already as memory from experiences, declaring itself more and more, this means that like Kandinsky’s notion of the soul’s growth through art, the process of painting is part of ‘a progress, a true evolution’.

However, from Bergson’s theory of the relation of body and mind, in terms of time, the temporal synthesis of matter implies two types of memory. On

⁹⁷ MM. p. 220

⁹⁸ W. Kandinsky, *Kandinsky, complete writings on art* (Da Capo Press, 1994). p.101

the one hand, there is the lowest degree of mind, which is a pure perception, to mean matter as ‘mind without memory’. In this sense the most fundamental mode of contact and interchange from an indefinite flow of images as a continuity of material extensity, necessarily implies infinite degrees of contact and reflections from among images. With a higher tension of conscious perception through more concentrated forms of living images, the actualizations of perceptions as the experiences of contacts increases the capacity of memory. However, matter is different by degree or by its contractions or expansions as differing durations. Accordingly, memory is not something absolutely distinct from matter, but rather, memory is relative to the material conditions of reality by which it unites as a synthesis of past with the present, ‘with a view to the future’.⁹⁹ In other words, memory emerges from the actualizations of perceptions, but in terms of a pure perception, that is, matter as ever present and yet continuously changing flow of image, matter is a continuity of the repetition of the totality of images. In contrast to this notion of ever unfolding series of images, ‘equivalent of the preceding moment’, for Bergson, images are living by their creative effect, that is, by a freedom of images to be possible, to become new movements by the experiences of living, to manifest new actions in the continuous pressing advancement towards the future.

Conclusion

In a world of images there is difference of actions, the differing movements in the image-world are contingent upon consciousness as a ‘variable relation’, and that of the interchange of sensation to affection, perception to consciousness. We have been interested in Bergson’s ontology of images as a basis for a philosophy of painting, specifically, by orienting the process of painting to its own temporality from among the temporal relations of images. Bergson’s argument would say that what perception is to space, action is to

⁹⁹ MM. p. 220

time, and following Bergson's theory we would have to say that as everything passes via the images, the physical reality and the psychic reality of the process of painting is a temporal system: the relations of processes of movement and change, activity and perception, towards rhythmical abstraction of visual forms.¹⁰⁰ For Bergson, the 'real time' of duration means the flow and progression of reality. In reality what is immediately perceived is 'multiplicity without divisibility and succession without separation', so that in terms of painting, it is the being of the painter, which is the source of the evolving of images. As Bergson insists that the consciousness of living bodies is capable of spontaneous movements, from among the repetition of the 'material universe', *painting coincides with the intensification of life, that is, involving the restoring of a duration of images, and the contraction of a greater number of differing rhythms of time, within forms of matter as the expressive content issuing from experience.*⁸⁷ The experience of the painter is given by the medium of the painting, through which the perceptual becoming is then returned through expressions back to the mattered and painted image. It is, therefore, our view that the process of painting is a continuity of *painterly activity* considered in terms of the degrees of attention of consciousness, and the *continuum of painted images* as the return of the experience of consciousness through multiple events unfolding as forms of the movements of matter in the mattered image. Accordingly, we argue that the process of painting is *a duration of the durations of activities and the processes of painterly events.*¹⁰¹

According to our argument, we are presenting a Bergsonian theory of painting which is opposed to the phenomenological view of consciousness as a transcendent occurrence in connection with the world. This phenomenological view, carries over into theories of art, and more specifically, the practice of painting, to substantiate the 'intentionality' of

¹⁰⁰ MM. p. 9

¹⁰¹ MM. p. 63

perception, and thereby, granting a distinct existential condition, i.e. the 'being' of painting attended by the 'Being' of consciousness. However, Henry's thinking contributes to a turn in phenomenology in this regard. Though Henrian thought considers intentionality in the process of painting, and regards the identity of the painter as a living and individuated sources of life, the expressions and actions are not made possible by a subjectivism of intent, but by the manifestation of life to itself.¹⁰² This is strikingly similar to Bergson's sense of perception issuing from the material world, and by the situated conditions of sensation, return to the material universe as differing compositions of movement. Here, the Henrian notion of the immanence of living to the processes of life, dissolves the classical subjectivism of phenomenology, and bridges with the Bergsonian view of the process of painting, in which the painter is a living centre of images, a vital medium within a constellation of images original to the activities and the events of the painting's becoming.

Furthermore, from the context of Bergson's philosophy of time we have argued that the painter is creative, because of the *temporal* condition of consciousness. Lawlor and Mullarkey both argue that by Bergson's concept of image, we understand the reality of images as activity and temporal. We take their collective point as added support to suggest that by the notion of painter and painting medium as activities, we already assume temporal relations intrinsic to the process of painting. And from a notion of the *time of the process of painting, we understand the total process of these relations.*¹⁰³

¹⁰² Antonio Calcagno, 'Reclaiming the possible of an interior human culture? Michel Henry and La Barbarie', in the Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology, Vol. 44, No. 3, October 2013, p. 255. Calcagno's study shows seems to pass over the transition of Henry's 'intentionality' to a 'non-intentional' orientation of Life. This is highly contentious for traditional views, particularly as Henry's theory 'immanent phenomenology' in the post-phenomenology era, resonates with Bergson's original conceptualisation of living as immanent to duration.

¹⁰³ H. Bergson, 'Duration and Simultaneity, with Reference to Einstein's Theory, trans', *Leon Jacobson (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965)* 44. p. 49 'Duration therefore implies consciousness; and we place consciousness at the heart of things for the

In this way the activities of painting refer to the multiple modes of consciousness unfolding and multiplying from among an indefinite variation of projections, and the events of painting refer to the material image and may even be applied to the whole of material imagery as new fields of visual experience, embodying the unity of multiple activities and physical effects. The process of painting is a flowing process, in which occurs the unity of dual aspects of occurring as conditions of perception, or multiple modes of perceiving, and occurrences as translations of the creative impetus of these experiences, effective towards material forms and images as apprehensions.

That is to say, painting is a process between the rhythm of the painter's duration and that of the flow of the images of things, so that the process is the difference of consciousness as a difference of activity from among the 'neutralised' and repetitive continuum of the totality of images. By the experiences of the painter, painting is itself a continuity of images, but by the expressions, as themselves difference of the perceptual conditions of the material existence, the painting process is the enlarging of perception by the approximation of the experiences with the increase of the activity. For where the painter is also regarded as a 'living centre of images', the experience of this living centre is actualized through the projection of activity, that is, through the gestures and movement of the painter and the expressions of the painter through the painting medium are immanent to the change necessarily issuing from the process. In this sense, the activities and movements toward expressions, are also the culmination of the event of the creation of material images, which embody the enduring actualization of a materiality as the process of life's attention and perceptual growth. In this regard, the eventuality of images from the field of perception is not exhausted by the continuous events of the art-objects. We have argued that Bergson's concept of images supports a philosophy of painting, and equally indicating that a

very reason that we credit them with a time that endures.'

living process immanent to time, the practice of painting is an instance of the practice of philosophy which assumes the germinal affect of an 'image ontology'. As Bergson uses the term 'image', 'because it suggests vision', the 'image' of duration implies two senses of the aesthetic qualities of the process of images and modes of the experiences of images. In this sense, the 'image' is the most substantive description of the flux of perception as well as implying the constant rendering of reality, i.e. the continual movement of becoming perceptible. Our purview from Bergson's ontology of images, to continue thinking in painting, as the process of painting is a constitutive duration. In this way, from the concept of 'image', we are required to consider the metaphysics of painting as process, in terms of the encounter of the immediacy of our experience with the world and our evaluation of the world through the living expressions of images.

Chapter 2 - Method of Intuition

A fish went deep and deeper into the water. It was silver. The water blue. I followed it with my eyes. The fish went deeper and deeper. But I could still see it. I could see it no more. I could still see it, even when I could not see it.¹

By intuition is meant the kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible.²

Introduction

In this chapter we will continue from the previous analysis of Bergson's concept of 'image' to consider his theory of intuition. We will argue that intuition is an engagement with reality in terms of an attention of life and an immediacy of experience to perception. From this perspective, applied to the process of painting, this would mean that intuition is an inner form of experience originating from the painter's direct relation with the painting medium. With painting, as with philosophy, there are innumerable 'levels' and differences of images in duration, so that it is the role of intuitive thinking, as an activity that is itself a mode of experience encountering multiple sensations, multiple durations, intuition compels both philosophical introspection and reciprocally, prompts the compositional qualities in painting. Bergson's theory of intuition, suggests an interaction between the occasion of philosophical glimpses of the more profound and expanded perceptions of the world, and how this 'sight', becomes essential to the numerous possibilities of its application in philosophical and painterly expressions. Through the process of painting, this 'depth of life' explores the world according to consciousness being 'launched into matter', say Bergson in *Creative Evolution*. And by this type of grasping from the encounter is

¹ Wassily Kandinsky, 'Something', *Sounds [Klänge]*, Munich, [1912] in *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*, ed. by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994), p. 313.

² Henri Bergson *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Trans. T.E. Hulme. ed. by John Mullarkey and Michael Kolkman. (Palgrave Macmillan. New York. 2007), p. 5

mediated by the becoming of images enacted in the material images. Moreover, the intuitive experience becomes the compulsion for the painter's activity and driving force for the diversity of painterly expressions. Caygill's study begins with an elaboration of Bergson's theory in terms of the expansion of perception.³ More specifically, we take support from his direction of thinking, to advance our consideration that painting is the process by which the material medium of painting enacts the intuitive condition of experience. In this regard, the intuitive vision within the process of painting is not produced by the selective properties of the painter's intellect, but rather occurs as a thinking from within the painting medium, as an 'intellectual sympathy', whereby the painter places himself in perceptual relation to perception and sensation impelled by the painting medium. In this sense, we will argue that the composition of painting is creative, in which the intuitive encounter of painting is a continuity of a diffusion of activities struck by the differing trajectories of material and psychical images in time. The painter's activity endures with the activity of the painting medium, so as to coincide with the indefinite and continuous flow of reality, by which there occurs multiple co-ordinations of various modes of perceptions to experiences and expressions of feeling towards material form. Here it is difficult to separate visual and plastic experiences as these are intrinsic to the unified modes of experience and apprehensions within the total process of painting.⁴ However, this is to say that the painter's experience is a mutual occurrence to that of the painting medium, and hence, the painting medium is the perceptual means given to the painter. By considering comparisons between Bergson's theory and Kandinsky's theory, we will argue that by exploring the modes and methods of intuition, the painter's expressions proceed from experiences of the painter's perceptual and sensorial awareness as given to and affected by the painting medium. In Bergsonian terms, intuition is a type of vision

³ Howard Caygill, *Hyperaesthesia and the Virtual*, in *Bergson and the Art of Immanence: Painting, Photography, Film*. edited by John Mullarkey and Charlotte De Mille, Edinburgh University Press, 2013, p. 247

⁴ H. Read, *Education through art* (Faber & Faber London, 1958). p. 9

from within things, given by the immediacy of one's durational rhythm to the durations of things. However, in Kandinskian terms, it is the inner tensions of the painter in relation to the creative impulses of the world by which painting becomes a process of the mediation of expressions and the diversity of pictorial forms. However, to bridge a Bergsonian view with Kandinsky's, we look to Henry's elaboration of Kandinsky's theory of expression towards abstraction, specifically as he ascribes the evolution of painting, 'By listening to the inner resonance dwelling in each particular object-from pure elements like the point or the line to colours...'.⁵ This is similar to Bergson's account of intuition as an induction of understanding from an immediacy to perception, that is, towards a more approximate attention to the flow of reality. In this regard we wish to extend a Bergsonian theory of intuition, with a Kandinskian view of expression and abstraction, towards a philosophy of painting which regards the changing definitions of visual experience according to the expressions in the process of painting generated by an attitude of attention in the dynamic of painter to painting medium. We will argue that within the process of painting, as a process of many durations of activity and images, the painter's conscious expressions inheres within differing durations of images. By arguing that the intuitive experiences is fundamental to the process of painting, we mean to acknowledge a method by which the painting medium is the impetus for the painter's sensation such that the painter's direct and most immediate sensorial experience with the materiality is an experience of differing images. Moreover, this experience then generates differing expressions and creative visual forms through the process, such that the inner tension of the painter is affected by the immediate correspondences with the material and plastic experiences of the process. The intuition in painting is a prompting of the painter's activity, such that the painter's expression proceeds from the insistence of the intuition as continuous explications through activities, movements, and the enlargement

⁵ Michel Henry, *Seeing the Invisible: On Kandinsky*, Continuum Publishing, 2005, p. 134

of consciousness through visual forms.⁶

Intuition and Perception

The intuitive experience in the process of painting occurs as source of knowledge and as insight from within the materiality of the process. In this sense, the painter's consciousness, having concentrated and exerted an attention towards the durations of things, consciousness becomes an immediate harmony of durational rhythm to the differing durations. However, as Bergson's theory maintains, it is only by an effort of consciousness, itself a multiplicity of images that the painter's perception converges with the multiplicity of images from the present as an extended continuity of images. This is then an attitude of consciousness to move beyond bodily habits and the habits of conscious articulation, and to touch the most immediate experience of its living centre. Applied to the process of painting, we argue then that the painter's conscious perception is itself a tension of images, converges with the extended tension of the painting medium, and hence, the tensions between the differing durations of images both of memory-images and perception-images, is that of the object's perception.⁷ Lawlor explains intuition inverts the customary direction of thinking towards actions so that the self coincides within the true perception of matter, that is, with the ever-present and extended continuity of movement of the painting medium.⁸ In this case, as the painter is immediate to the change coordinated with and through the painting medium, this in itself situates the occurrence of intuition not with a process of thinking, or with any particular thought of the painter. Rather, intuition is within the direct perceptual situation given to the painter's experience and reciprocally affects the actualization of material contours and

⁶ L. Lawlor, *The challenge of Bergsonism* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2003). pp. 64-65

⁷ Mullarkey, John, and Charlotte De Mille, (eds.), 'For We Will Have shown it nothing': Bergson as non-philosopher (of) Art', in *Bergson and the Art of Immanence: Painting, Photography, Film*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 207

⁸ Leonard Lawlor, *The Challenge of Bergsonism: Phenomenology, Ontology, Ethics*, (Continuum. London/New York, 2003), p. 65

forms as themselves, expressions originating from the intuition. Therefore, intuition in the process of painting may be considered in terms of the painter's immediacy of attention, in terms of a contact within the durational rhythms of the materiality of the painting medium.

However, this is then a question of intuition being different from intellection, and, then, particular to painting, a difference of direct presentations of expressions from representational articulations. We argue that this is considered by affirming Bergson's conception of reality as a process of time. T. E. Hulme argues that Bergson did not establish a new theory of art, but rather, he enabled philosophers and theoreticians to make more clear and concise 'the qualities which we feel in art'.⁹ He suggests that Bergson's philosophy, by the meanings of its very conceptualization is able to guide the work of artists and to function in the advancement of artistic movements. In this regard, Hulme argues that there are two parts of Bergson's philosophy that establish a theory of aesthetics. He suggests that from Bergson's conception of reality as a flux of interpenetrated elements, as unseizable by the intellect, and the definition mind in terms of its orientation towards action, these theories indicate a notion of creative intuition as fundamental to Bergson's philosophy of art.

What Hulme indicates as being such influence is that from Bergson's philosophy the theory of intuition has more to do with the theory of duration, in the sense that it insists upon an attempt to experience directly the flowing nature of the self as an interiority of life in the flux of time. For the painter to have intuition and to be immediate to the flow of reality, as Bergson suggests in terms of an immediate consciousness of duration, this means that intuition is an enlarging of the artist's perception to include the whole of the totality of perception. As all things are in the continuous movement of time, for a painter

⁹ T. E. Hulme, *Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art*, [1924], Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1960, pp. 143-169.

to have an intuition is to experience the movement of time within the movements of materiality of the process. Bergson affirms this notion of an 'absolute' movement, stating,

But when I speak of an absolute movement, I am attributing to the moving object and interior and, so to speak, states of mind; I also imply that I am in sympathy with those states, and that I insert myself in them by an effort of imagination.¹⁰

Bergson suggests that perceptions are relative in the sense that they may vary from the point of view of either things or movement itself. However, in the above passage he regards a type of perception that is an absolute movement as the flux of all things and the continuous movements of 'states of mind' as qualities of movement from the whole of duration. This is to say that our knowledge of things is relative to the movement of things, but alternatively, with intuition there are varying degrees of awareness. From this relative position our encounter with the present perceptual experience may be sympathetic and consistent with the movements of thing so that there occurs a mutual condition of the self and object. This is to consider the intuition as more than simply an empathy of things, and instead as direct awareness within things. Bergson suggests this view of a unity of self and world in his introduction to a theory of intuition, stating

There is one reality, at least, which we all seize from within, by intuition and not by simple analysis. It is our own personality in its flowing through time - our self which endures.¹¹

Bergson explains that intuition is not simply an inner feeling or an attitude of thinking, but instead, we are being directed to consider intuition as a combination of both intellectual and sympathetic qualities that emerge from a conscious exertion. Intuition is a relational condition of consciousness, such that in the painting process, intuition is an awareness of the painter through

¹⁰ Henri Bergson, trans by T.E. Hulme, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, ed. by John Mullarkey and Michael Kolkman, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007),

¹¹ Henri Bergson, trans by T.E. Hulme, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, ed. by John Mullarkey and Michael Kolkman, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 7

the becoming of experience, a heightened perception encountered at the point of contact of expressions and the mediums localization of the experiences of consciousness to its own expansion.¹² From the centre of the multiple activities painting process progresses by an interpenetration of sensations and perceptions, so that painterly activities pass to sensible forms as external images in space. Here there is an agreement between consciousness as immediate to, and reflective within the activities of painting. Bergson's theory of intuition maintains a dual nature of reality, in which we understand from *within* our personality, itself a flowing through time and as it endures, we may sympathize intellectually with our own selves.¹³ Moreover, in terms of the process of painting, the painter's activities are relative to continuous views taken in perception. The variability of these activities reflects the variability of consciousness, so that the painter's activity is variable in response to the material means of expression. However, for the painter, the reality confronted from within the process of painting is an indefinite flow of images. The material becoming of painted imagery as forms of expressions emerge from inner relations to external appearances.

When I direct my attention inward to contemplate my own self (supposed for the moment to be inactive), I perceive at first, as a crust solidified on the surface, all the perceptions which come to it from the material world.¹⁴

Here the term 'image' designates a bifurcated process occurring from among the differing modes of perceptual consciousness within the process of painting. For Bergson intuition is a perception that is a direct and immediate experience of reality. In this sense, the intuitive experience is a simple *sight*, and therefore, superior to any abstracted reasoning or schematic

¹² John Mullarkey, *Bergson and Philosophy*, Edinburgh University Press, 1999, p. 158. Mullarkey's summation affirms the connection of Bergson's metaphysics with a philosophy of intuition, to suggest more clearly that intuition is not a mystical or ethereal condition, but rather, a radical empiricism as it implies the attenuation of philosophy to its experience and its experience grounded in the sense of an 'originality' of reality.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 6-7

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 7

demonstrations of a reality. In other words, intuition is the means by which one becomes most immediate to the force of change, and is thereby, inspired by a contact with this type of vision. From it the painter's expression proceeds from things to the actualization of the expression in the living experiences of the body. This is not to suggest an intersubjective condition and to mean some form of 'gaze' of ourselves from a conscious perceptive of 'other'. Rather, for Bergson, intuition is a duration of the self by which the self's experience is grounded in the experience of other things.¹⁵ According to Bergson, intuition has an intellectual character as well as it also being a type of sympathetic union within things. In this sense, intuition is a direct attention inwards from a contemplation of the self and concentration of consciousness to an experience from within an ever present and continuous flux of reality. However, having an intuition will then affect the continuity of perceptual formulations so that in the case of the painter, the inner life is then a type of generative force towards the conceptualization of what is given by being immediate to the continuity of reality. It is with this view that we regard the role of intuition in the process of painting, specific to the attention of the painter's consciousness as a type of sounding from within the self, and reflected by an immersion into the flow of things.

The inner life is all this at once: variety of qualities, continuity of progress, and unity of direction. It cannot be represented by images. But it is even less possible to represent it by concepts, that is, by abstract, general or simple ideas.¹⁶

Bergson concedes that we should aim to promote the effort to get back to the original feeling of the duration of the flow of life. To do so, he admits, even though an image cannot replace or represent such an intuitive experience of duration by 'diverse images' and consciousness coinciding with differing

¹⁵ Leonard Lawlor. *The Challenge of Bergsonism: Phenomenology, Ontology, Ethics*. (Continuum. London/New York. 2003). p. 67

¹⁶ Henri Bergson, trans by T.E. Hulme, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, ed. by John Mullarkey and Michael Kolkman, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 10

orders of movements, this may allow for a convergence and seizing of a certain intuitive encounter.¹⁷ Intuition is a type of faculty of visualization, a process originating from an expansive ‘vision’ given by a direct experience with reality, but is an creative encounter continuing through a flow of differing images and thereby, generating a plurality of images, by efforts to return to the original experience. In the process of painting, the intuitive experience is conditioned by the materiality of the process, and in the same instant, becomes the capacity for the changing content of the activities within the process. In other words, the intuitive vision is to be had in the painting medium, as the medium is itself an indefinite material condition, but its experience as part of the process of painting generates further activities, and the compulsion to express different images.¹⁸ We see a striking similarity of this Bergsonian contextualization of painting with the Henrian view of Kandinsky’s abstraction painting in which Henry elaborates, ‘Nature could not provide either the content or the form of art. The entire substance of the painted work came from life and it alone [...] and leads to more alive and intense experiences’.¹⁹ For Bergson and, as it would seem Henry, the ability to understand reality more acutely is the realization of reality through the intensity of the intuitive experience, which returns to furthering more accentuations of living.

However, in terms of the Bergsonian ‘image’ in relation to the intuitive practice, it is a question of the images of experience, that is, conscious experience is an apprehension of reality by which the form of these experiences is given by the duration of images. Intuition gives us the experience of images becoming visible, and the visual object as a form of the experience of sensory phenomena. In this way, intuition is an interaction of

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 10

¹⁸ John Mullarkey, *Post-Continental Philosophy: An Outline*, Continuum Publishing, 2006, p. 34. From Mullarkey’s summation of the notion of ‘infinite’, we regard the on-going movements and ceaseless creation of reality, as also becoming in the modes of actualisations of visual experience and bodily expressions in the in the process of painting.

¹⁹ Michel Henry, *See the Invisible: On Kandinsky*, trans. by Scott Davidson, Continuum Publishing, 2005, p. 135.

the images given in the field of perception, and, a relation of sensation to this experience conveyed through a diffusion of activities and expressions. In other words, intuition is a practice that occurs from a mass of images as an encountering from among the flow of images, and in turn, as an isolating activity of images, dissolving into a comprehensive image.²⁰ Accordingly, the intuitive practice in the painting process allows for the unity of the intelligible, as the experience of images according to conscious reasoning and ideas, with the sensible, or the experience of images according to an immediacy of conscious experience. Similarly, Kandinsky indicates a similar notion of the role of intuition in painting in terms of differing ‘paths’, stating, How this takes place is a complicated question. I can say only one thing: To my mind this creative path must be a synthetic one. That is to say, feeling (‘intuition’) and thought (‘calculation’) work under mutual ‘supervision’.²¹

Like Bergson’s description of intuition as an immediacy and feeling of consciousness with the flow of things, and, as an intellectual sympathy, this is paralleled by Kandinsky’s characterization of painting in terms of a dual action of observation and participation, that is, of both a sensation of expression and thinking through the expressions. This is most obvious in Kandinsky’s discussion of the possibilities of spontaneous and impulsive expressions in painting. Suggesting a foundation of spiritual evolution, he claims that the creation of expressions is from a ‘slowly formed inner feeling, tested and worked over repeatedly and almost pedantically.’²² Considering

²⁰ Benedetto Croce. Trans. by Douglas Ainslie, *The Essence of Aesthetic*, (William Heinemann, London, 1978), p. 24. Cf. From the theoretical context of his query ‘What is Art?’, Croce argues that ‘the intuition is certainly the production of an image,...’, but only in so far as this sense of production means a ‘unity in variety’, which adds to our consideration of the intuitive practice in the process of painting as a force of production or as a condition of creation from among the images in duration. Furthermore, Croce’s deliberation on the nature of art leads to a final claim of the relation of intuition, and this compares closely to a Bergsonian position, stating, ‘and art is perfectly, defined when simply defined as intuition’. see pp. 33-34.

²¹ Wassily Kandinsky, ‘Abstract or Concrete?’ [‘Abstract of Concrete?’], *Tentoonstelling abstracte kunst* (Amsterdam), (1938), in *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*, ed. by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo (Da Capo Press. New York, 1994). p. 832

²² Will Grohman, *Wassily Kandinsky: Life and Work*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1959, p.128

this claim, we can understand how his series of ‘Improvisations’ painting were the result of an investigation of procedural intuitions and the intensive work resulting, according to his view, as ‘largely unconscious, spontaneous expression of inner character, non-material nature’. The choice of idiomatic expressions in this statement aside, we can recognise the force of creative painterly expressions that resulted from Kandinsky’s own experience of the intuitive encounters in the process of painting. From both Bergson and Kandinsky’s view, we can argue that having an intuitive experience effects the process of painting in such a way that an intrinsic experience of the flow of images sustains the activities of painting. Therefore, the intuition is also the impulse of the projection that emanate from its experience, and these coincide with the movements of the painter and the painting medium as explicit expressions of living images in duration. This is to say that, the intuition defines the intrinsic qualities of the painter in contact with the painting medium, and thereby, compels the expression towards the extrinsic qualities of painterly expressions. That is to say then, the immediacy of the painter’s perceptual experience effects the instantaneous discharge of activity in the form of material change.²³

Different Kinds of Images, Difference of Creative Intuition

Bergson argues that our abstract ideas of reality ‘render service to analysis’, to mean that our study and examination of the world proceeds with the distinctions of objects and a view of relations from among these identities. In the sense, our thinking exists in ideas but not in the concrete existence of duration.²⁴ This is because our thinking is a result of our adaptation to the world of continuous activity. Hence, the requirements of living demand a

²³ R. Arnheim, *Art and visual perception: A psychology of the creative eye* (Univ of California Press, 1954). p. 412. Cf. Arnheim’s description of a theory of ‘Dynamics’ in art, and here, he specifically cites Bergson’s theory as a grounding by which to argue for a dynamics of perception.

²⁴ Henri Bergson, trans by T.E. Hulme, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, ed. by John Mullarkey and Michael Kolkman, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 12

fragmentation of an absolute knowledge, that is, for the facility of living, more and more complex divisions are required of what is otherwise a continuous and ever present plurality of activity in duration. These divisions as ideas and concepts, however, require the reflective nature of consciousness, and thereby, a turning away from the continuous and ever present immediacy of experience. However, with intuition, there is the 'turning of experience' to which the consciousness bends back on itself, as a retrograde effort against the pragmatic directions of thinking, and to the original source of experience and the essential and unique nature of reality.²⁵ In this regard, Bergson explains that concepts only offer us a reconstruction of the objects, offering only general and impersonal aspects of reality, rather than a living experience present to the world. In addition, though the concept is general, from the concepts we abstract even further, so that reality becomes symbolized and distorted through the increased complexity of the conceptualizations. Bergson suggests that in this way, the concept becomes an extraction from the metaphysical objects of reality to the extent that even though the concept is moulded about the objects and adopts the contouring, the concepts grow beyond the object itself. Because the concepts are extracted from the objects of reality, there occur many different systems of thought to accommodate the many external points of view of reality. In this sense, Bergson points out that the 'concrete unity' of the object, itself as an aspect of a continuous material extensity of reality is divided according to symbolic expressions and by the furthering abstractions of concepts adding to the growth of systems of thought.²⁶

However, Bergson does not dismiss the operations of thinking and the expressibility of the concept, but rather, suggests that if we are to consider the metaphysical pursuits of reality we must go beyond the concept to attain the intuition of reality. But in the same token, for the expression of our

²⁵ Leonard Lawlor, *The Challenge of Bergsonism: Phenomenology, Ontology, Ethics*, (Continuum. London/New York. 2003), p. 68

²⁶ Henri Bergson, trans by T.E. Hulme, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, ed. by John Mullarkey and Michael Kolkman, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 13

metaphysical occupations, and in particular, from our encounter of intuitive experiences, this means that we require a different type of concept. For Bergson, to express the intuitive experience we must create ‘supple, mobile and almost fluid representations’, by which our thinking becomes itself as an expressive movement, easily adapting and changing concepts on the ‘fleeting forms of intuition’. In other words, our duration can be presented directly within an intuition of reality, but, the expression of its experience can only be indirectly conveyed by ideas and conceptual representation. In this regard, Bergson claims that despite the increasing complexity and manipulation of concepts, we can never obtain the original intuitive experience. Rather the intuitive experience as a momentary vision of a changing reality, challenges thinking and reflection, requiring a transformation of thought to adjust to the alterity of the experience. Simply, the order of thinking and habits of thought are altered, shifted to approach the objective world again, with extension of the intuitive experience expressibly in the renewal of concepts and the invention of differing perspectives. Simply, by the order of thinking and habits of thought, we approach the objective world by concepts and ideas rather than consider the world from our direct and immediate duration among the duration of images then conveyed through concepts.²⁷

However, when we replace ourselves in duration by an effort of intuition we perceive the essential nature of things, and, by this turn of experience, we invert the customary course of thought and turn to a total vision from among the multiplicity of images in the unity of duration. This effort of

²⁷ E. Panofsky, ‘Comparison to commentary’ in *Idea: A Concept in Art Theory*, trans. J.S.J. Peake, (Harper and Row, 1968) Panofsky offers an insight on the nature of the ‘Idea’ in Platonic thought, in terms of its relation to the notions of ‘icon’ or ‘image’. In regards to these terms, a comparison may be drawn which supports the distinction of the Bergsonian notion ‘image’ and its implication for a philosophy of art, from the ‘image’ in the Platonist sense, and the aesthetic theories that have followed from it. I take support from Panofsky’s thesis to assert that the Bergsonian notion of ‘image’, when considered in light of the rendering of artwork, is not secondary to the notion of Form, i.e. as an impoverished representation, or as an imitation. Rather, in regards to painting, the image is the continuity of the process of its presentation, and therefore, the image is of quantity and quality, of materiality and incorporeality, as a becoming in time.

consciousness to intuition is then a return to what is given by the intuitive experience, and thereby, a knowledge of the absolute duration in which experience of ‘the self by the self is possible’.²⁸ Let us compare what we have considered so far from Bergson’s theory of intuition, with a view towards painting. Particularly with Kandinsky’s view of creative intuition, though not stated as a theory as such, is implied in his views of the creative process involved in painting. When questioned about the nature of the mental processes that give birth to the ‘idea’ and ‘conception’ of a painting, Kandinsky claims,

My first idea is formed in various ways: sometimes it is an external impression (some natural occurrence, natural phenomenon, a street scene, a ‘chance’ effect of light, [...]), that gives the first impulse to some new idea [...]. These are all external impressions transmitted through the eye.²⁹

From this we can compare that similar to Bergson’s theory of intuition, particularly as Kandinsky suggests by the juxtaposed notion of ‘external impression’, there is implied relation of concepts and ideas to an original impulse. Moreover, this original impulse is itself given from the perceptual experience of the world. We find this to admit closely to a Bergson’s theory that intuition is to be had by a coinciding of the self within the duration of things, such that the creative impulse of the experience originates the diversity of concepts and, in the case of painting, painterly expressions and pictorial formulations. This is to say that, for both Bergson and Kandinsky, the intuitive experience is a duration of the self-immediate to the duration of things, and ‘external impressions’, expressing themselves through differing forms given by a direct relation of painter to the world. Kandinsky also suggests a similar notion of the relation of intuition to differing durations in

²⁸ Henri Bergson, trans by T.E. Hulme, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, ed. by John Mullarkey and Michael Kolkman, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 15

²⁹ Wassily Kandinsky, ‘Kandinsky’s response to ‘The Psychology of the Productive Personality’, by Paul Plaut, [Stuttgart] (1929) in *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*. ed. by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo. (Da Capo Press. New York, 1994). pp. 737-738

terms of the impulse of painter and the external dimension of painting and as between an internal and external exchange, suggesting,

I wish to assert that there exist, apart from these external impulses, other internal ones, which have little or nothing to do with the external; [...], to put it in simple terms, being in a good or bad ‘mood’, a powerful inner tension whose origin I am unable to explain, which discharges itself in the different ways. [...] I only mean to say that one’s ‘conception’ is not just an external, ‘pictorial’ idea of beauty, but is bound up inextricably with these tensions within different elements.³⁰

Like Bergson, Kandinsky is describing a notion of intuition in terms of an interchange from internal and external domains of reality. However, Kandinsky’s view suggests a seemingly ambiguous origin of creative impulses, such that these are considered to arise within the tensions from among inner experiences and external impressions. His view also indicates that the ‘conception’ and forms of expressions are bound to these tensions. Hence, from among the inner and external tensions the creative impulse emerges, and from this the developments of conceptualization and forms of expression are given. This is to say that, similar to Bergson’s notion that intuition occurs as a coinciding affect from the differing tensions and rhythms of time, Kandinsky’s view suggests that for the painter, such a ‘vision’ encountered in the intuitive experience is an impulse that arises as the occurrence of correspondence among these tensions. This type of impulse and intuitive vision, explained by Lawlor, is likened to ‘a mystical rupture’ from the depths of duration. Lawlor adds that this rupturing upsets conventions of thinking, creating a ‘disequilibrium’, which is then approached by the counterbalance of thinking, effectively prompting thinking to think otherwise.³¹ In other words, the intuitive vision is necessary for the transition of philosophical thinking, and in the case of painting, the creation of novel

³⁰ Ibid. p. 739

³¹ Leonard Lawlor, *The Challenge of Bergsonism*, Continuum Publishing, 2003, p. 79. This is an important detail as it characterizes not only the force of Bergsonian intuition in the process of philosophy, but also regarded in Kandinsky’s radical departure from the historical conventions of painting, we see that intuitive experiences as ‘disruptions’ qua ‘revolutions’ incite further activity and the evolution of experience and perception.

visual experience, to keep pace with the reality of duration. Whether the 'vision' is of a complete pictorial realization that the painter must work towards, or only a subtle impression or faint feeling that the painter pursues as a basic character of the process, it is nonetheless given by an original experience as being intrinsically bound up within the elements of the process. Kandinsky claims that this experience from the differing tensions (i.e. conscious perception from the materiality of painting), from which the original impulse arises, these discharge through differing forms. However, he explains that after the given impulse, if the artist proceeds with too much concentration towards its expression, then an 'order' of expression may occur in such a way that it leads the painter's expression to something completely different. Whereas with the painter's expression there may develop a 'theme' of feeling. In other words, from an imprecise sense of the 'vision', the painter's inner tensions may become resolved in the articulation, in the sense that his feelings become agreeable with the expressions given.³² In both instances, we see comparatively, that Bergson's theory how the complexity of concepts adopting an ever-expanding 'mould' upon an object, may also become a distortion of the original view and expressibly something else. But also, with Kandinsky's notion of the painter's expression being led by a compulsion from the inner tension towards its being resolved, we see similar to Bergson's view, that the intuition must be something that confers itself to expression. Nevertheless, with Kandinsky and Bergson, the intuitive experience as a persisting influence in the painter's activity towards expression is only authentic to its origin by holding on to the vision or the unique image given. From the original intuition there occurs a potential for the diversity of expressions. And even through the process of expressing, there occurs constant shifting and changing of feelings that were once oriented towards some initial sense of expression. Hence, the intuitive experience is an encounter, but not a guarantee of its translation, and as such, the philosopher and painter are driven by the experience, compelled by the

³² Ibid. 739

experience immanent to the projections of the activities of its expression.

In terms of the expression of an intuition in painting following as both concept and intuition, Kandinsky argues that the world may be encountered in diverse ways, given according to its inner or external domains, stating,

Every phenomenon can be experienced in two ways. These two ways are not random, but bound up with the phenomena—they are derived from the nature of the phenomena, from the characteristics of the same: External-Internal.³³

What is significant here is that he is admitting to a world in which the inner and external domains are mutually bound and reciprocally derived from each other. By asserting this view, we understand his explanation of inner tensions originating by way of external impressions. More specifically, we see how a Kandinskian view of intuition would maintain that both the conceptual developments that follow an intuition and the immediacy of a diversity of feelings that continue along with the expressions of the intuition, these are given by a vision from within the painter as the painter is an occurrence of changing perceptual experience bound to a continuity of ever-changing perception.

Henry explains that for Kandinsky, the notion of ‘forms of expression’ already assumes a prior existence, a type of abstract content of the tensions of experience, which affects the painter and seeks through the painterly elements a means of external conveyance.³⁴ Though Henry places more emphasis on his reading of Kandinsky in terms of the true perception, and that is, an abstract vision of life, we argue that Kandinsky may be read closer to a Bergsonian perspective to mean that the intuition is the nearest to a total vision

³³ Wassily Kandinsky, ‘Abstract or Concrete?’ [‘Abstract of Concrete?’], *Tentoonstelling abstracte kunst* [Amsterdam], (1938) in *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*. ed. by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo. (Da Capo Press. New York, 1994). p. 832

³⁴ Michel Henry, *Seeing the Invisible: On Kandinsky*. trans. by Scott Davidson. (London Continuum, 2009), p. 22

of reality that compels expression by its experience. This notion of the intuitive vision for both Kandinsky and Bergson, would mean a type of detachment of the painter's reference to his own perception, and instead, to encounter a vision within the objects of reality. Applied to a theory of the philosophizing in the process of painting, this implies that as the activities of the process of painting are durational the intuitive experience is an encounter situated by the painter and the painting medium as coinciding means to convey the very 'mobility of durations'. Moreover, the resulting imagery and designated art-objects are the material conditions that have occurred by compulsion of the intuitive experience. In other words, within the process of painting, as the painter's expressions proceed from an intuition, the intuitive experience influences the discharge of movement, and continues as an affective 'inner pulse', as a force of the becoming of images to express the force of their origin. Hence, as Kandinsky claims that phenomenon can be experienced in two ways, we admit that painting is a metaphysical undertaking in terms of the material conditions of its activity affective towards an intuitive vision, and the collective activity of painting as differing modes of experience given to the expressions of differing degrees of duration in process. Bergson's theory of intuition implies that the intuitive experience is an unmediated contraction of differing durations from among multiple perceptions. From this perspective we argue, that in the process of painting, the immediacy of the painter to the perceptions given by the painting medium allows for continual differences of seeing into reality, and thereby, from the unity of the duration of the process, the differing articulations of these visions are the many expressions proceeding from the multiple and successive states of consciousness through the activities of painting.³⁵ The activities of painting are activities of consciousness itself, and thereby, consciousness attending to the expression from the experiences of perceptions. From within this dynamic, intuition is the affective vision

³⁵ J. Mullarkey, *Bergson and philosophy* (Edinburgh University Press Edinburgh, 1999).. p. 34

towards the expression and composition within the process, and a conscious realization through the activities actuated by the material form. Kandinsky suggests a notion of intuition in a similar sense, stating,

This can happen in various ways. As for me, I prefer not to 'think' while working. It is not entirely unknown that I once did some work on the theory of art. But woe to the artist whose reason interferes with his 'inner dictates' while he is working.³⁶

In other words, for Kandinsky, the experience of conscious reflection in tandem with the feeling of an 'inner dictate' is considered conflictive. Though he does not deny the intellectual faculty in the expression, he warns against interfering with the inner compulsion. In this sense, intuition is the main operation that makes consciousness projective. However, if we consider the painter the centre of activity, the force of this centre, the affect of its activities extends through the painting medium. We compare this to Kandinsky's theory, in which he suggested that the experiences of the painter are not random activities, but are bound up with the phenomena of the process of painting. In other words, the painter and the painting medium are an amalgam of the process; they are 'derived from the nature of the phenomena'.³⁷

However, by regarding such phenomena, in Bergsonian terms, as themselves a plurality of images in process, the process of painting involves the material unconscious of reality in which every image of matter is in contact with all the others, and consciousness, in which certain images are active towards the selection and reaction from among images. In this regard then, whether we consider the movement of images in terms of phenomena this consideration of intuition in the process of painting is the experience of life towards forms

³⁶ Wassily Kandinsky, 'Abstract or Concrete?' ['Abstract of Concrete?'], *Tentoonstelling abstracte kunst* (Amsterdam, 1938) in *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*, ed. by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo. (Da Capo Press. New York, 1994). p. 832

³⁷ Wassily Kandinsky, 'Point Line and Plane, [Punkt und Linie zur Fläche]' (Munich, 1926) in *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*, ed. by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo. (Da Capo Press. New York, 1994). pp. 524-700, p. 532

of life. Worms explains that Bergson's theory maintained a view of the mutual condition of unity and divergence from among life and consciousness. Worms states that this 'double unity' is in consciousness, and therefore, it is the 'genesis of spatial consciousness from temporal consciousness', so that *intuition* of consciousness is a spatial gaze in time.³⁸

In other words, Worms explains that the intuitive experience is understood as a unification of both temporal and spatial identities of consciousness. The experience of consciousness is of a two part mode: that of *projection* and of *formation* by an immediate spatial orientation. This suggests a deeper sense of experience of visualization, in that, the experience of consciousness in time is affective of the reflective consciousness which already assumes a spatial 'gaze'. Accordingly, we argue that intuition in the process of painting is the unification of the experience of the painter's consciousness becoming through the activity of consciousness in the painting medium. From the intuitive experience, consciousness is creative from the immediacy with the givens of perception through the painting medium in time. However, this complicates the relation of the intuitive experience within the dynamic of the process of painting. Therefore, what we see lacking in Worm's analysis, by way of the application of intuition to the practice of painting is the understanding of intuition as a creative faculty generated by the experiences specific to the painting medium. By taking into account the immanence of living experience in the material forms of painting, we recognize multiple activities in of the flow of time, and thereby, bringing consciousness immediate to the becoming of material things without their distinction.

In terms of duration, painting is both an experience of the undulations of becoming and the visual forms of the expressive conditions that actuate and concretize these lived experiences. Here again, we are maintaining from a Bergsonian theory of intuition, that painting is a mode of recasting the

³⁸ M. R. Kelly, 'Bergson and Phenomenology'. p. 256

ceaselessly changing perceptions as given from the multiple movements and differing directions of activity in the flow of duration. However, the painter's intuition is conditioned by a *direct attention* and immediate experience of the continuous progress of consciousness to the processes of life.³⁹

Particular to the process of painting, intuition is then, a sympathetic engagement operating within the process of painting. Such 'sympathy' is the relation of consciousness and life. In the process of painting, we can say that there occur an indefinite duration of images (images as differing degrees of perceptions) from among the activities of sense, feeling, thinking, bodily movement, material movement, etc. There are durations of images immediate to consciousness. It is through the attention of consciousness and to the varying degrees of images, that the life of matter and the life of mind are held in a relation of differing degrees or of differing rhythms of duration itself. Accordingly, consciousness as a process of life, also durational with the process of painting, is made malleable by the changing images to which intuition attends. From among the differing domains of either the activity of painting, the perception of the painter, or the field of painted imagery, the intuitive encounter in the process of painting is the means by which the painter, as the perceptual centre of the activity of painting, expands the perceptual experience in the encounter of the alterity of the painting medium.⁴⁰ As a method, this would mean that the projection of intuitive vision in painting serves to directly apprehend the qualities of things, and reciprocally, affects the efforts of painterly experience towards conveyance of visual forms. Intuition is a type of *effort* or *force* in terms of the generative quality of development within painting's activity, but also, the intuitive experience is a type of *grasping* or *seizing* in terms of the conceptualization

³⁹ J.-P. Sartre and F. Williams, *Imagination: A psychological critique* (University of Michigan Press Ann Arbor, 1962).p. 146

⁴⁰ Rudolf Arnheim, 'Abstract Language and The Metaphor' in *Toward a Psychology of Art: Collected Essays*, (University of California Press. Berkeley. 1966), pp. 104-105. Arnheim's essay begins with a reference to Bergson's theory and offers a clear distinction of intuition as a direct 'vision of the nature of the object', from the experience of an object in which we 'turn about it', and hence, reduce to an external reference or suitable representation.

of visual forms. In this regard, intuition is a methodological element of creativity and thereby as the dynamic capacity towards the becoming of perceptual development and the expansion of visual experience. In this regard, it is the intuitive 'vision' which sustains the creative qualities of the activities of painting, affects the opening of perception, and generates novel painted imagery.⁴¹

This means that there is necessary tension between the intuitive experience within the painting activity as a counterpart to the process of actualization, and the intuitive experience realized through its becoming as a counterpart to the actualized painted imagery. This becomes a question of the variability of perceiving from the differing tensions of perception from among the subject and object relation in the process of painting. Intuition is then a concentration of temporal rhythms of perception, which are at once occurring as events in time and occupying space as activities of images. In this sense intuition is a condition of the unification of differing temporal rhythms.⁴² And though intuition is an inner quality, experience is given to an external expression of the quality of perceptions. In either case, intuition is an influence and creative force among painterly activity and material formulations.⁴³

⁴¹ Rob Pope, *Creativity: Theory, History, Practice*. (Routledge, New York. 2005). p. 43. Pope's description of Bergson's theory of creative evolution in terms of conceptualisation of life, is supportive of my claim of the intuition as the connection of life to matter, through the 'self-generating' activity of painting.

⁴² Anton Ehrenzweig, *The Hidden Order of Art: A Study in the Psychology of Artistic Imagination*. (Granada Publishing, Paladin. London. 1967). p. 146. Here Ehrenzweig is considering the 'potency' of abstraction in both scientific thinking and modern art, by way of its 'full emptiness', which he attributes to the 'inner eye'. He explains that intuition as a mode of the relaxing of attention, such that 'several incompatible images' may occupy the same spot, to mean, no separation of imagery, no distinction of time and space.

⁴³ Rudolf Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception: a Psychology of the Creative Eye*, (Berkeley:University of California Press, 1966) . pp. 314-315. Arnheim explains that intuition is a feeling, and attributes it to a type of judgment in 'what guides the artist', but also it is in expression responding to the object of perception, the compositional process, or even the painted image.

According to the framing of Bergson's theory of intuition, we have described the reality of painting as an oscillation between the qualitative plurality of painterly activities and the effect of temporality of this process towards a material translation and the structuring of material and pictorial forms. This oscillation involves modes of *sensible apprehension*. These modes are the occasion for intuition, which serves as the impetus of activity, and as intervening mode of variability affecting the actualization of painted imagery. That is when intuition is practiced in the process of painting the painter's experience becomes an affective force within the process, a fathoming among the differing currents of duration as given by the painting medium, which in turn is articulated through the painterly exchange. In this way, intuition is not simply a passive condition of apprehension, but rather, a creative force, compelling movement towards its reification, and thereby, the enabling effect of a simple inner vision to vary the painter's activities, in response to the events of the art-object.

The Painter Intensity and Contact

With this perspective, Bergson regards intuition as a type of contact. This of course, implies that through an intuitive experience there occur generative types of 'movement', such that the intuitive vision is as a central point of rhythm from among a confluence of sensorial and intellectual activity. For Bergson, an *original intuition* is an experience of 'perception' in which perception exceeds the patterns of its experience, and is thereby, the impetus of its transformation towards conceptualizations. Because consciousness is consciousness to something, perception issues from the world. Bergson's notion of intuition regards the intuitive experience as a process of dilation, as an ever increasing awareness and opening to perception emanating from world. In line with this, Gooding describes Kandinsky's painting as 'a kind of intuitive metaphysics, intimating another dimension of reality, accessible

only to the imagination, made visible only by art'.⁴⁴

Referring to the course of his own development, Kandinsky suggested a similar notion of the creative force as the emergence of forms in painting, stating,

One's inner impulse, i.e. the creating spirit, will inexorably create at the right moment the form it finds necessary. One can philosophize about form; it can be analysed, even calculated. It must, however, enter into the work of art of its own accord, and moreover, at the level of completeness which corresponds to the development of the creative spirit.⁴⁵

Here we see that Kandinsky's theory of the development of painterly forms and expressions are based on a principle of 'natural growth'. This is similar to Bergson's view, in which the forms of thought that proceed from a type of metaphysical disposition are then described as a 'spontaneous aspect' of thought. Accordingly, these types of thought tend toward the simplification of metaphysics, since it will 'draw closer to life'.⁴⁶ Similarly, Kandinsky claims that conceptualization is part of the approach to painting, that exercising thought occurs during the process, but the content of painting is derived by experience, stating,

I always emphasize with particular force that this theoretical path, this theoretical point of view is only a way of arriving at the 'content', which is why I place particular value upon the living experience of 'tensions'. Theory is (especially today) indispensable and fruitful. But woe betide him who would create a 'work' in this way alone.⁴⁷

For Kandinsky, painting is not to proceed according to an order of conceptualization, but rather, by allowing theoretical and thoughtful exercise

⁴⁴ MM. p. 17

⁴⁵ Wassily Kandinsky, 'Cologne Lecture', 'Kandinsky uber seine Entwicklung'. (Munich, 1957), Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art. ed. by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo. (Da Capo Press. New York, 1994), p. 396

⁴⁶ Henri Bergson, 'Philosophical Intuition' in *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, (1908), trans. Mabelle L. Andison, (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946), p. 107, henceforth CM.

⁴⁷ Wassily Kandinsky, 'Kandinsky's response to 'The Psychology of the Productive Personality', by Paul Plaut, (Stuttgart, 1929), *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*, ed. by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo. (Da Capo Press. New York, 1994), p. 740

to progress with painting, it is the sensitivity of an ‘inner force’ that allows for the variations and development of the process. Likewise, Bergson suggests that the intuitive experience is a direct apprehension of reality without intellectual mediation. Accordingly, there are two directions of movement of thought in terms of the intuitive experience. He explains that these forms of consciousness, what he also terms as ‘visions’, are of differing kinds.⁴⁸

I mean a vision of reality ‘in itself’-that Plotinus had imagined, as those who have appealed to metaphysical intuition have imagined it. By that they all understood a faculty of knowing which would differ radically from consciousness as well as from the senses, which would even be orientated in the opposite direction. They have all believed that to break away from practical life was to turn one’s back upon it.⁴⁹

The one to which the type of thought as in ordinary knowledge or scientific knowledge belongs is of a direction that ‘takes things in a time broken up into an infinity of particles’.⁵⁰ This would explain the exponential unfolding of ideas and concepts. The other form of consciousness or ‘vision’, the one to which intuition and in this case philosophical thought belong is of a direction in which we ‘perceive the continuous fluidity of real time which flows along, indivisible’.⁵¹ Let us consider some of the details of the above passage, as what they entail is yet again a subtle critique of the form of thought and the kind of ‘vision’ which does not admit of degrees of depth.⁵² Accordingly, the form of ordinary thought is of ‘surface states’ where everything is considered ‘neutral’, immobile and divisible, and this contrasts with intuition, which is

⁴⁸ CM ‘Philosophical Intuition’, p. 126, the use of the term ‘vision’ reinforces the perspectival nature of Bergson’s model of intuition, consciousness, and thought. The ‘image’, the concept that follows from it as a type of ‘captioning’, and the dual nature of the notion of perception as being both of the thought of becoming of ideas (divergence and multiplicity from abstraction) and of the sense of sight as a form of awareness, all coincide with Bergson’s theorization of mind in terms of the pictorial qualities of matter.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 140

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 126

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 127

⁵² Ibid. p. 127, Bergson suggests that intuition ‘admits of degrees of intensity’ as well as ‘degrees of depth’. As I have detailed, the increase of depth corresponds with the increase in tension. Here Bergson has termed this as a state of intensity, which is opposite of extensity, that is, the unfolding and spatialization of thoughts.

of a ‘vision’ that perceives through the depth of reality, which is a type of seeing into ‘all things *sub specie durationis*’.⁵³ However for Bergson, when practiced, the acuity that results from intuition, means that there is potential to grasp hold of reality, a mode of placing oneself ‘within an object’, and thereby, coinciding within the differing rhythms of duration.

The notion of ‘effort’, albeit a specificity of attention as implicit in intuition, suggests that it is something universal, not exclusively a unilateral thinking of our consciousness, but rather a movement of consciousness to consciousness, since all occur within the unity of change. In this sense Mullarkey argues that the effort of intuition is essential to the creative force in the becoming of all things. He explains

that by ‘effort’, intuition is the effort of the ‘object’ and the ‘subject’, an effort to reintegrate each other through movement or differentiation.⁵⁴ On the contrary, Bergson argues that the novelty of concepts is generated first, by a perception attained through the intuitive experience. He claims that a conception has a starting point in perception, so that the intellect only operates to arrange and disarrange, and even co-ordinate among concept, but these are originally given through intuition.⁵⁵

From Sensation to Scheme

However, first he begins by offering an inverse consideration of how the ‘simpler idea which is able to develop into multiple images’.⁵⁶ He admits that such meaning may not be distinct to a given series, and if detached from the

⁵³ Ibid. p. 129 As this translates to ‘under the aspect of duration’ Bergson is associating this ‘seeing’ with how the external world really is, that is, a mobility of life in which all things are becoming as reality is mobility. This contrasts with *sub specie aeternitatis*, ‘under the aspect of eternity’, which is to say a perception of things considered as an infinity of mental images, arranged one after another in a successive ordering, which presumes a stability of reality, and hence ‘covering successively some neutral stuff’.

⁵⁴ Henri Bergson trans by T.E. Hulme, ‘The Very Life of Things’ in *An introduction to Metaphysics*, ed. by John Mullarkey and Michael Kolkman, (Palgrave Macmillan 2007), pp. xx-xxi

⁵⁵ *CM*, p. 133

⁵⁶ ‘Introduction to Metaphysics’. p. 157

images ‘indicated’, may also be associated to a different series of images, and thus regarding idea as the meaning of images is inconsistent. Bergson suggests that this scheme is ‘something not easy to define’, and though we may not be able to easily articulate a definition of it, ‘each of us has the feeling’.⁵⁷

Bergson offers the examples of ‘technical’ or ‘professional’ memories such as those employed in the game of chess to describe this notion the schematic idea (relation of image to idea). With the exercise of these memories coupled with a quantitative and geometric envisioning of the pieces of the game results as more of a hindrance than if the player were to allow a more automatic response. Bergson explains that such a response would be the result from a conditioning, like the memorization of poetry or the learning of a language. The player’s execution of learned moves becomes automatic, and issues more from the plane of sensation. Rather than from the reflexion of consciousness and by an ‘external aspect’ the movements would be based on a ‘value’ or an ‘oblique force’.⁵⁸ With this type of mental view the entire game is then a ‘composition of forces’. Bergson suggests that this is an ‘ideal scheme of the whole’, and this schematic idea is neither a summary or a meaning, or an extraction of a series of images. Rather the idea is a concise image, or a composition of images that are elements that may ‘evolve into parts external to one another’.⁵⁹

Thinking In Reverse

Nonetheless, Bergson’s point is that intuitive knowledge is prior to this movement towards conceptualization, a movement to structuring and hence, exteriorization. Intuition as a metaphysical method requires a type of

⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 158

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 159

⁵⁹ Henri Bergson, ‘Philosophical Intuition’, in *Henri Bergson: Key Writings*, edited by Keith Ansell Pearson and John Mullarkey, Continuum Publishing, London, 2002, p. 234

backwards thinking, an *unthinking* from our habits of thought. This means that intuitive experience in the development of philosophical systems, proceeds discrete ideas. The whole of a philosophical system should stem initially from what Bergson refers to as ‘a single point’, to the ‘simple, infinitely simple’ source of a thought. And it is from this point that a philosopher is so moved that his efforts and formulations of thinking are generated by this encounter, and the inspiration compels him and directs his thinking through his living experiences effecting his entire philosophical outlook.⁶⁰

In the painting process, here the intuited image is a vital element of the interchange from painter to painting medium. It is itself a creative experience that endures as complexity of concepts, and a possible multiplicity of symbols to unfold. Bergson insists that the intuited image, ‘cannot be enclosed by representation’, that it is more than a representation, and not reducible to any conceptual scheme. As far as the image as an ‘indirect suggestion’ of the intuition, this would seem to suggest both characteristics of agency and mediation. It does not simply reflect or imitate what was presented in an intuition, but as it retains something of the intuition, it relays and even conducts according to what seems to be its own selection.

The intuited image is a simple vision and an origin from what may become a complexity of concepts, and ever growing pursuit of expressions, and in the case of the painter, a sensitivity with the activities and gestures to resolve the force of the creative impulse. Bergson maintains that philosophy should strive for simplification, that it should avoid complication, by returning what was given by a simple intuition.

If not the original and ‘simple vision’, he claims that philosophy should consider the most approximate image which translates it.⁶¹ Deleuze explains that Bergson often presents intuition as a simple act. However, Deleuze

⁶⁰ CM p. 108-109

⁶¹ Ibid. p. 110

indicates that Bergson's view of the simplicity of intuition, 'does not exclude a qualitative and virtual multiplicity', but rather, as it is original and creative, it is a source of a variability of expressions.⁶² From the notions of depth and surface, Bergson's theory of intuition suggests that reality is an evolution of images, a collective mass, as an image itself, in which the images have an affective relation upon one another, and 'interpenetrate, as in a living being'.⁶³ The body is a coordination of sensation and movement according to the correlational affectivity of pure memory to matter. Therefore the body is a point of actualization of images, as it is situated between matter and memory, through which one meets the other.⁶⁴ Bergson claims that the actualization of memory characterizes the mental effort by eliciting a difference in the functions of recalling memory.⁶⁵ Interestingly, he terms this difference as that 'between the spontaneous and the voluntary idea'.⁶⁶ So, at this point Bergson's concept of *memory* is analogous with *idea*. Since the notion of image is equivalent with *distinct* memories, then it follows from this development that on one hand memory is *idea* when actualized in the body, but on the other hand memory is indistinct *image* or an indistinct *idea* in the plane of pure memory. The plane of pure memory is the progenitor of images. Therefore, pure memory is the source of affectivity upon matter, manifesting sensation and movement, whilst becoming 'translated into distinct images'.⁶⁷

For Bergson intuitive thought is a type of penetrative thought that touches at the surface of the turbid mass of images, even though, what lies beneath remains inaccessible.⁶⁸ The 'image' is a point of confluence for the intuitive experience, as a type of connection from the immediacy of the sympathetic

⁶² Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam, (New York: Zone Books, 1991), p. 14

⁶³ CM 'Philosophical Intuition' p. 118

⁶⁴ Henri Berson, 'Intellectual effort' in *Mind-Energy: Lectures and Essays*, trans. H. Wildon Carr, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1929), p. 151

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 151

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p. 151

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p. 151

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 159-160

quality of consciousness with the formulation, and conceptualization of reflective consciousness. For the painter, the evolving and shifting image from the intuitive experience is the possibility for the multiplicity of activities towards its expression. In the process of painting the painter is the inner content of a philosophical schema, and thereby, the painter's activities are inspired by the intuition and then proceed towards expression driven by the intuitive experience. Bergson highlights this, suggesting the intuition is like, 'a point where the multiplicity of the images seems to be condensed into a single, simple and undivided idea'.⁶⁹

The Vertical and Horizontal: Movements of Intuition

Bergson suggests that from the intuitive experience we have just two means of expression, that of the concept and the image. He explains that through concepts a system develops in which what was given by the intuitive experience is contracted. In this sense, by attempting to express the fullness of the experience of our elaboration, 'necessarily falls back on concepts'. In other words, from the expression of concepts to concepts, what was given in the intuitive experience becomes more vague, and the expressions less approximate to the original vision given in intuition.⁷⁰ Bergson indicates that a philosopher's original intuition is diminished and perhaps even lost in the efforts of consciousness. The modes of our expressions, therefore, have to be as immediate to the original experience as possible. There are expressions through the efforts of the formulations of abstract ideas, as expressions in concepts, and as there are expressions of *percepts*, that is, expressions 'into an image'.

In Bergsonian terms, let us then consider that this form of movement is that of process of expansion and contraction. From the impetus of the intuition, the philosopher attempts to express its fullness, postulates abstract ideas,

⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 156

⁷⁰ CM. 'Philosophical Intuition'. p. 119

notions, or concepts, which in a sense, may be regarded as types of captions. Bergson has indicated, such a systemization of ideas, all of its detail and even its extraneous components, are then condensed, compacted, as it ‘contracts’ into an image. Though the image may be characterized as a contracted system of concepts, i.e. ‘captions’, it may be just as well to consider these as ‘concept-images’ or ‘image-captions’, and by doing so we may clearly understand this particular model.⁷¹

An impression or vague idea compelled the eventual articulation of a specific memory, but only through processes by which a ‘reciprocal implication’ was evident among the play of image. By this, the schematic idea is the distillation of image as an idea, whereby, the activity of recollection may invoke any one of the compositional elements or distinct images of such a series, which in turn may itself be a ‘simple idea’ in which an additional plethora or series of subordinate images may be condensed. Hence, recollection as characterized by the schematic idea is a reciprocal movement with no designation of the one in the many (image), to the many evoking the one (series of images or idea). According to Bergson, the ‘effort of memory appears to have, as its essence, the evolving pattern of the scheme’.⁷² In contrast, with reduced effort of memory, relaxation, or operating according to basic sensory perceptions, the mind is situated among the lower planes of consciousness, and hence, associating images with images or moving horizontally.⁷³

Through the horizontal movement the mind passes through successive image

⁷¹ Henri Bergson, trans. T. E. Hulme, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, [1913], ed. by Mullarkey, John, and Michael Kolkman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), Following Mullarkey’s commentary, I chose to use this term ‘caption’ in order identify with this ‘concept-percept’ nature of the image. In the sense of ‘seizing’ or capturing’ from the Latin *capere*, I think ‘caption’ is a relevant choice of term, since thus far, Bergson’s exposition on the nature of intuition has revealed that from the original intuitive perception, concepts are advanced and appended upon other concepts, in the struggle to return, and by that, to lay hold to a sensed-vision that is fleeting. Though to some this may not be accurate, but my intention is to adopt a term for the sake of clarity.

⁷² Henri Berson, ‘Intellectual effort’ in *Mind-Energy: Lectures and Essays*, trans. H. Wildon Carr, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1929), p. 162

⁷³ *Ibid.* p. 162

upon image. Though ‘the objects represented by the images are different’, and since this occurs within a ‘single plane’ they are ‘homogenous among themselves’.⁷⁴ Through a vertical movement, the mind passes through ‘heterogeneous intellectual states’ which represent just one object. This representation is in part the product of the condensed, distilled, ‘imaged idea’.⁷⁵ Bergson suggests that ‘sometimes the schemes and sometimes the images, the scheme striving towards the image’.⁷⁶ Accordingly, though intellectual effort is a vertical movement, eventually the operation of the mind is a ‘striving’ towards images, or a moving of the mind as an ‘extension’ among the successive, and penetrating images.⁷⁷

Intuition to Painting Medium

This leads to a second point, one that is congruent with Bergson’s overall model of movement. In the above passage, he mentions a rising and descending of ideas from images and from this there seems to be an implicit notion of depth and surface. Of the latter, these will gain greater emphasis throughout the remainder his discussion.

The more living was the reality touched, the more profound had been the sounding. But the sounding made on the sea floor brings up a fluid mass, which the sun very quickly dries into solid and discontinuous grains of sand. And the intuition of duration, when exposed to the rays of understanding, also quickly congeals into fixed, distinct, and immobile concepts.⁷⁸

By identifying intuition as ‘immediate’ and as the showing of motion within duration, implies that in the process of painting the intuitive experience is an

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 162

⁷⁵ Ibid. pp. 162-163

⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 162, Here Bergson uses the terms ‘extension’ in regards to what he entails as the horizontal movement, in contrast to the notion of ‘intensity’ and ‘in depth’ in regards to the vertical movement. See also, MM. p.181. However, I am highlighting this description as it not only implies Bergson’s theory of matter in terms of pure perception, and mind in terms of pure memory, but in this context, these expound the concept of intuition to the extent that it becomes descriptive of the literalisation of to the picture plane of painting and the material, physical surface as the situated site for the activity of painting.

⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 162

⁷⁸ Henri Berson, ‘Intellectual effort’ in *Mind-Energy: Lectures and Essays*, trans. H. Wildon Carr, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1929), p. 193, henceforth ME

activity and material form. From Bergson's description of the intuitive process, this suggests that intuition is a connection of a plurality of ideas, but ideas, 'enclosed' in an image. For Bergson, ideas or concepts are particulars from the reflective nature of consciousness, but from this notion of idea being 'enclosed', and brought 'into an image', this suggests that the showing, and vision of intuition is a composite of captions, a condensed and unified stratum of images. Hence, it is in this reciprocation, the process of incorporeal becoming corporeal that intellectual effort may be felt. Having presented the invention as a particular example in which intellectual effort is felt, Bergson describes the effort to move beyond the intuition as the movement of the mind.⁷⁹

Bergson's description of the concept-images as expressions from an originating source, suggests that the intuitive experience is an unfolding of consciousness. However, he explains that there is another experience in which consciousness 'turns back within itself'. This supports our understanding of painting as a process that unfolds visual forms. But also allowing for the simultaneous affect of creation and its presentation, painting is the interchange of the material images affecting the painter's continued engagement with their rendering. Adding further emphasis to this, Bergson explains that this consciousness 'takes possession of itself and develops in depth'. Consciousness is now something other than the subject, suggesting a strata of durations, 'space in itself' or 'duration outside space'. Bergson asserts that this internal and infolding consciousness, is a 'probing of its own depth', and from this it penetrates 'into the interior of matter'. According to Bergson's cosmology, in which there are levels of reality, higher and lower degrees of mind and matter, such probing or penetrating involved in the stratified imagery requires effort and a specific concentrated attention.

From the influence of the work of Ribot, Bergson claims that there are 'two

⁷⁹ CM p. 172

forms of creative imagination'.⁸⁰ Accordingly, intuitive imagination 'proceeds from the unity to the details', and reflective imagination is the return from the parts or details back to the whole of the abstract idea.⁸¹ By this consideration, the imagination is the operation of the scheme, which is 'elastic or mobile' in that the affectivity of the idea upon the images is reciprocated by the images the idea has evoked.⁸²

That is, philosophy begins as a personal movement inward, 'in the spirit of simplicity', and consequently what results from this process of sounding is a type of contact, whereby a transition from the 'impulsion' of what is otherwise a depersonalized centre of force, results in a disbursement of thought and an array of images. According to this, the intuitive experience in the painting process is the impetus of images, images expressed through events of composition and formulation towards the material image. Thus, the painting as a material object, is an individuation of an immensity of images, images that are themselves indefinite flows from among the absolute movement of duration. However, through the intuitive experience, the material becoming of the painting is the bursting forth of actual forms from the depths of duration. Bergson's explanation of intuition as a type of sounding of the depth of the inner essence of reality means that for the painter, contact with the material of painting combined with the effort of imagination requires a balance of an inner impulsion and concentrated expression.

From the intuitive experience, the painter explored a sense of his own interiority, beyond the concept of self through his own ideas, so that his thoughts contracted into a simple image. And the more approximate the painter is to his own inner experience, the more approximate to the experience of the life of things and the simpler the vision to coincide with the indefinite field of the total flow of images in duration. Contrary to the way some may regard intuition versus intellection in respect to a viable metaphysics, Bergson

⁸⁰ *ME*. 'Intellectual Effort', p. 172

⁸¹ *Ibid.* p. 172

⁸² *Ibid.* p. 172

states,

This composition takes effort. The ‘attention’ needed to discern and then compound (but not synthesize) such differences is exhausting. Whereas concepts ‘demands no effort’, no patience on our part, metaphysical attention is literally a ‘degree of tension’, an effort of grasping together, not under a higher conceptual category (by association), but as the affective re-creation of the movement of dissociation, the feeling-movement that dissociates itself into these very images.⁸³

The greater the depth, the greater the tension, and yet, the simpler the image, the more concentrated the point, the deeper the penetration into the centre of force and consequently the more forceful the reciprocal movement, i.e. the force to move back to the surface affecting the expression and development of thought.

Conclusion

We have maintained that intuition in the process of painting, concerns the qualities of the painter’s contact and experience through the immediacy with the becoming of the painterly process. We considered that from the depth of this contact, from beyond the level of conscious perception and within the strata of durations of things, this characterization of the sounding of intuition suggests that the intuitive experience is as itself the origination of the radical forces towards physical projections of images, and the expressions of pictorial movements. According to the terms of this analysis, we have argued that the interchange of activity between the painter and the painting medium is the condition for the occurrence of an intuitive experience. We indicated that Kandinsky adopted a method of intuition in his practice of painting, and because of this, his paintings not only contributed to the historical paradigm of art, but opened the experience of painting and compelled the advocacy of our visual understanding in terms of the evolution

⁸³ 74 Henri Bergson, trans. by T.E. Hulmes, ‘The Very Life of Things’ in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, [1913], ed. by Mullarkey, John, and Michael Kolkman, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. xx

of expression and abstractions of life. From this, we considered Bergson's theory of intuition with a view towards its application to the practice of painting, to indicate that that when informed by a willed empathy, the painter's awareness is a diastolic experience from among the flow of durations, which in turn, becomes a systolic concentration of images, directing activity and expression towards pictorial depiction. By having an intuition, this means that the painter has a simple 'vision', but from this 'vision' a novel paradigm of visual experience may occur. However, this vision becomes a type of inculturation by the direct coinciding of the painter's inner duration with the durations of the material and extended continuity of the images of the process. Therefore, we argued that the intuition is a perception that occurs as a mode of the disinterest of life or the break of consciousness from pragmatic views towards living. To this extent, the painter's intuition is an immediacy with the painting medium, and in Kandinskian terms, as a result the inner 'tension' of the painter is itself a rhythmical alternation, from the seizing of 'sound', or, the grasping of a simple 'vision' then corresponding to the painting's expression. From Bergson's notion of the schema of intuition, we have argued that we must recognize a dual movement of intuition, as that of an initial empathy of the painter through the haptic encounter of the tonality of the painting medium reflecting the inner sounding of the self towards the enlargement of this experience by the elaboration of psychic activity in material expressions. As such the intuition is both contact and action, a dual movement mediated by reflective thinking and sensorial awareness through the interaction of the painter's body and the painting medium, so that a sympathetic communication establishes an interchange from experience to expression. Cultivated in the process of painting, the intuitive experience is then an immersion into the interiority of its objects, and from the atmosphere of the interchange of the physical activity of the painter and material change, it is a resurfacing and force or exteriority towards the extension of activities and the creation of novel expressions in the formulations of the painting. In this sense, intuition

becomes the creative force towards material expression and visual expression. Accordingly, we have argued from Bergson's theory of intuition, towards a contemporary application of Bergsonian philosophy, conveyed by a Kandinskian outlook in terms of the 'inner necessity', that intuitive thinking in painting is the active engagement with the course of expressions and the trajectory of thinking. Therefore, the intuitive experience is the potential to intervene, to rearrange, to upset the order of experience in the process of painting, and allow for the standard of change to become encountered in the process.

Chapter 3 - Order of Movement

Why resort to a metaphysical hypothesis, however ingenious, about the nature of space, time, and motion, when immediate intuition shows us motion within duration, and duration outside space?¹

There the blue wave rocks. The torn red cloth. Red rags. Blue waves. The old book closed up. Gaze in silence at the distance. Wander blindly in the wood. The blue waves deeper grow. The red cloth soon sinks below.²

Introduction

The concept of movement is a principle theme of Bergsonian Philosophy. As such, this chapter takes as its point of development, a Bergsonian based conceptualization of movement to be applied to the theoretical development of the process of painting. In the first chapter we were primarily concerned with Bergson's ontology of images, as we are concerned with the understanding of a philosophy of painting, particularly in terms of the potentiality of images in duration. From this following chapter, we considered the methodological attitude of intuition in the process of a painting. In this regard, we are concerned with the creative engagement of perception within the reality of images, in terms of an attention of life and an immediacy of experience to perception. From this conceptualisation of intuition, applied to the process of painting, we highlighted the movement of thinking, the movements of experience, and the movements towards creative expression as all contributing to the 'decentering' of thinking and the 'rupturing' of visual experience through the novelty of painterly expressions. This chapter is also a response to the post-structuralist adaptation of the

¹ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, [1889], trans. F. L. Pogson, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1910), p. 114, henceforth TFW

² Wassily Kandinsky, 'Hymn', *Sounds [Klänge]*, (Munich, 1912).in *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*, ed.by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo, (New York: Da Capo Press), pp. 323-331.

Bergsonian view of creative movement with the notion of ‘decentering’.³ Accordingly, the Bergsonian conviction of philosophy as process, and the difference of philosophy by the diffusion of thinking in the differing modes of philosophizing, leads us to consider the process of painting, as a philosophy of difference because of the movements immanent to its process and the change of its own identity. In this sense we are interested in the creativity of movement in the process of painting, as a process of images. However, our investigations in pervious chapters did not attend to the specifics of the indefinite nature of movement, that is, the duration of movements in the process of painting. Because there are innumerable ‘levels’ and differences of images in duration, so that it is the role of intuitive thinking, as an activity that is itself a mode of experience encountering multiple sensations, multiple durations, we are interested in the onotologising of movement as it is the effect of becoming in the field of images. Here again, we see correlations with Henry’s philosophy of the ‘movement of the interior life’, in terms of the living movements within the subjectivity of life, that is, the innumerable movements according to the affect of life moving within the individuated living experiences of life. However, more specifically, Henry’s study of Kandinsky relates this theory of the interiors movements of life with the artist’s view of the proto-element in painting, the point. For Kandinsky, the point is the prototype of pictorial expression, it is a ‘single sound’, and by its material application, ‘completely embodies the pictorial aim’.⁴

In this chapter, we will consider the conceptual concomitant of Bergson’s theory of reality as a duration of images, and the understanding of movement with the process of painting. In terms of the movement of painting, there will be a necessary engagement with the series of creative activities, and looking to Kandinsky’s example of the potency of movement from the movement of an individual application in the painting process, we will argue for creativity

³ Frederick Burwick and Paul Douglas, *The crisis in modernism: Bergson and the vitalist controversy*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 11, 371

⁴ Wassily Kandinsky, *Point and Line to Plane*, Dover Publications, London, 1979, p. 37

possibility immediate to the real actions of the body. This to consider the immanent movements in the process of painting as full of ‘tones’ of movement, such that (in Kandinskian terms) the tonality of the process of painting is incipient to the modes of its experience . However, with this movement there are also the effects of its becoming, compelled by the affective qualities of perceptions from the material heterogeneity. Therefore, we are considering the double movement of the process of painting, first in terms of the painter’s body, as itself a series of temporalities, but then secondly, from the corresponding and coinciding with the exteriorized perception of the painting medium in its change of spatialized images and physical effect. In this regard, we are considering the movement of the body, the movement of the material image, and the reality of movements is in the totality of the processes in duration. In other words, by maintaining that the nature of reality is considered in terms of a plurality of images in ceaseless movement, the processual moments of change, so that our understanding of the occurrence of painted imagery as also the living creation of indefinite creation, will in turn follow from the conception of reality as an aggregate of images in process, i.e. as multiple *multiplicities of movement*.⁵

Duration and the Movements of Painting

It is from this relation that we will maintain that process of painting is a plurality of images. And as these images are themselves a multiplicity of movements, a theoretical application specific to the process of the movement of images in painting will unfold.⁶ By situating the concept of movement to a central position, this will emphasize the understanding for an ontology of actions and movements. This extends our previous argument from Bergson’s concept of image further, to mean suggest that fundamental to the process of

⁵ Marie-Luise Angerer, ‘Feeling the Image: Some Critical Notes on Affect’, *Imagery in the 21st Century*, ed. by Oliver Grau, and Thomas Viegl (The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2011), pp. 224-226.

⁶ MM, p. 9

painting is an ontology of images, but with the added characterization of continuous change. In other words, fundamental to a Bergsonian philosophy of painting is a theory of an ontology of images, but, considered immanent to their process, the formation and creation of images implies an ontology of movement itself. From Mullarkey's commentary we find added support to further our considerations of Bergson's philosophy of duration, so that as a contextual background for a theory of painting, we understand 'processes are the fundamental constituents of reality'. However, Mullarkey also claims that for Bergson 'movement is different from space'. We ask the reader to take both these claims as mainstays by which this chapter will proceed. Specifically, we are interested considering movement, but maintaining the irreducibility of the multiplicity of movements of painting, whereby painting is itself, a significant process.⁷

However, for such a philosophical development, what is required is a typological account of movement that is not only relevant to painting, but also one that recognizes movement as the 'intersection of mind and matter'.⁸ In this sense, we will progress with a view towards an analysis of the kinesis of the process of painting in which the movements of the painter and the painted medium are both, immediate and reflective, mental and physical. We will consider the difference of movements from that of the painter's gestures and bodily articulations, in terms of the difference of the painter's activities. These activities are themselves influenced by the painter's conscious reflection. In this sense, the interchange of mental and sensorial experiences is mediated by the bodily movements towards a direct action with the painting medium, and manifesting instantaneous material change. In this way, to define the nature of the painting as an art-object, we must consider the intrinsic and extrinsic movements towards its expression as a unified process. In the process of painting, the multiple qualitative changes that occur from among its activities are the result of the temporal presence of the painter coinciding with the

⁷ John Mullarkey, *Bergson and Philosophy*, (Edinburgh Press, Edinburgh, 1999), p. 12.
John Mullarkey, *Bergson and Philosophy*, (Edinburgh Press, Edinburgh, 1999), p. 12.

⁸ MM, p. 13

undifferentiated continuity of the painting medium. Accordingly, the changes that occur then, condition its own variability in the indefinite unfolding of its movements towards distinct, discrete images and the existential experience of its becoming.

We argue that movement, taken as a whole in terms of its metaphysical relation to the unity of time, is as a definitive principle of the nature of reality. Accordingly, duration is the collective flux of the universe, (i.e. a composite of innumerable heterogeneous elements and the coalescence of many different 'rhythms'), in which what may be regarded as 'stable' or 'objective' of reality is the constancy of movement itself.⁹ Here we are reasserting Bergson's main conceptualization of the 'image' in terms of the relation of matter and perception as the undifferentiated flow and aggregate of 'images'. In this sense both perception and matter are different kinds of images, and collectively in the duration of all things, these elements of reality are in continuous states of multiple variations of change by combinations or 'intersections' of these elements. We take as further support Bergson's implied sense of movement as he describes thinking as that which unrolls itself in a chain of abstract reasoning. As we have considered already, thought is both an immediacy of conscious perception to the flow of reality and is accompanied by virtual images from the experiences, which already suggests movement of movements, i.e. a dynamic system of the movements of images. Bergson relates the passage of images as 'divers tones of mental life', or 'degrees of our attention to life', to suggest that the changing states of mental and psychical movement occurs in terms of the progressions from intensive to extensive conditions of images, and hence, the continuity of change from the psychical to physical movements. Therefore, applied to the process of painting, our concern with the varieties of movement must aim to go beyond the general ideas and abstracted senses of the term.¹⁰ Of course, our penchant

⁹ *MM*, p. 207

¹⁰ Henri Bergson. *Mélanges* ed. by André Robinet (Presses Universitaires de France. Paris. 1972). p. 1058.

for the conceptual articulation of the real means that for both the thinker and the painter movement will be regarded through the lens of conceptualization and the re-presenting of the world. As with Kandinsky, the influence of the ‘impulse to abstraction’ is difficult to assess without reducing it to formulations and stabilizations of our own schematic thinking. However, towards a consideration of movement in the process of painting, as with Kandinsky’s own sense of the ‘inner impulse’, we must reach for this by a sense of continual adjustment to the continuity of experience. Bergson anticipates the possibility of our faculties of thought to make the concept of movement redundant even in our most strident efforts to express the difference of movement from mobility, particularly with a theory of duration. He explains that we may objectify movement as a thing serving as support to movements and change, and consequently, not as something in itself to be regarded as changing. He concedes then that the movement of all things in terms of the unity of a plurality of movement may be simply ‘movement of movements’.¹¹

In view of this perspective, by stressing ‘types’ of movement particular to painting, we mean a unity of a plurality of movements as a primary ontological reality for the process of painting.¹² Here we are drawing the connection between Bergson’s sense of time as ‘Duration’ and the relation of multiplicity of movements in time. Bergson argues that we consider a non-linear structure of time, and as applied to the arts, a non-linear mode of artistic practice and production. By this, I am adopting a Bergsonian sense of the modes of temporality, whereby the multiplicity of movement in the process of painting considers the material things of painting, the bodily activity, and the movement of thought of the painter, as involving a dynamism of images. In this sense, we are following Bergson’s development of a ‘method of multiplicity’, so as to consider reality as

¹¹ CM. p. 72, see also ‘The Perception of Change’, p. 147.

¹² TFW. p. xxi.

processes of movements.

However, rather than regard reality as a 'One' or 'singularity' of movement, in terms of difference of movement, we regard reality of painting as participating within a unity of a plurality of qualitative progresses.¹³ In this sense, we are claiming that the *individuality* of a painted image presupposes a process of a multiplicity of movements, albeit, an event of this multiplicity by which multiple movements become the conditions for the continuous unfolding of discrete painterly imagery.

The extended, material, and mattered image is not a thing, but rather, from among a flow of difference, it is the event and temporal register of a progression of movements. Therefore, from the process of painting, we mean in toto, the painter's activities as experiences of multiple movements, and the force of movement through the painting medium, towards the event of the painted image. We take support from Bergson's critique of Plotinus' metaphysical formulation. In this sense, Bergson claims that 'we must invert his point of view'. In this way, by paraphrasing Bergson, a theory of painting supported by such an inverted metaphysics, makes explicit that contemplation is less than action, movement is more than immobility that duration is heterogeneous and indivisible, and change and alteration of substances are within time. These ideas serve as the basis for this formulation of painting. In this respect, painting may then be regarded as a continuity of movement. But there is a twofold consideration from this. Firstly, the process of painting entails a complexity of movements continually converging towards the constitution of distinct images and discrete materializations. That is, the process of painting is a relation of these complexities by virtue of it being itself, a movement towards material creation. Kandinsky offers us an example for comparison. By referring to the internal necessity or inner compulsion of the painter, he suggests,

At a particular time, necessities come to fruition. I.e., the creating spirit (which once can call

¹³ TFW. Pp. 10-14

the abstract spirit) finds access to the individuated soul, subsequently to [many] souls, and calls forth a longing, an inner compulsion. [...] then this longing, this inner compulsion is empowered to create a new value in the human mind, which consciously or unconsciously, begins to live in man.[...] Consciously or unconsciously, from the moment man seeks a material form for this new value that lives in spiritual form within him.¹⁴

And though this comment places emphasis on the artist's sensibilities, it is similar to Bergson's conceptualization in that, from this notion 'compulsion' there is an implied reverberation of movements of the *spiritual* kind to the *material* kind, i.e. as movement *towards* movements. Nonetheless, to our second point, we claim that although a painted image is itself a singularity from among a multiplicity of movements, (i.e. the effect of differential variations from multiple movements), painting is not determined by the immobilizations of its activity. Rather it is the continuity of continual creation of singularities, as well as the proliferation of changes through painting in terms of the difference from among the painted images. In the latter sense, painting is continuous change, and by the constant creation from the difference of its multiple movements, the continuity is itself the 'permanence' of painting, i.e. painting as process. In this way, painting as a process means the procession of movements in terms of the multiplicity of movement, and the collation of these movements and substantiality in terms of the unity of movements. Furthermore, painting is a 'unity' in the sense that painting is a continual activity of difference, i.e. painting differs from itself continually as it is the activity of multiple movements towards expressions. The painted images as extended materializations are the synthesis of differing movements in time. These art-objects are the concretized changes and transformations of movements made distinct by conditions from the multiplicity of these movements. And moreover, the process of painting is a 'multiplicity' in the sense that, the continual activity of painting is a permeation of the continuity of its movements in time. In this sense, the distinct materializations in painting

¹⁴ ,Wassily Kandinsky 'The Blaue Reiter Almanac' [Der Blaue Reiter] (Munich, 1912),in Kandinsky:

are subjects within the process of painting, (i.e. compositions of movements), and thereby, subjects of visual change and novel imagery expanding the creative process.

A conceptualization of movement applied to the process of painting implies that change is an ontological quality of reality.¹⁵ In particular, based on Bergson's notion of a 'stratified series of temporalities' we may consider the process of painting as a process of unfolding in time. Mullarkey explains that 'movement' for Bergson 'encompasses many other notions of change' to which we find suited for the dynamics of the change involved in the process of painting.¹⁶

According to the Bergsonian notion of the 'becoming' of movements, which considers change as fundamental to reality, in this context, the movements of the activity of painting, and movements attributed to the substance of painting are the cohering of a *spirituality* and *materiality*. So, we argue in terms of the *difference* of movements in the process of painting as a primary view of the *duration of reality*, as a *becoming*. In other words, from this context, we consider the process of painting as a complex of movements and a continuity of the change from their process, the process of formation and creation from the interaction of differing experiences by the composition movements in time.

Perhaps the most immediate consequence of this doubling of the concept of movement is with the question of whether painting is to be regarded either as a process of multiple movements occurring in time, or painting as the collective establishment of a constellation of images occupying space. An alternative view, would have been held by Kandinsky's contemporaries, particularly to the influence of Malevich, and Mondrian on the legacy of

¹⁵ John Mullarkey, *Bergson and Philosophy*, (Edinburgh Press, Edinburgh, 1999). p. 13.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 140

abstraction in painting.¹⁷ Accordingly, Kandinsky's emphasis on tonality and the movement of expression imbued by psychical growth as the force of painting's evolving elements, this was contrasted by Mondrian's abstraction in painting as a spiritual purity, a transcendence from the material and expressive forms. Other alternatives would be the tradition of Cubism, assuming that the abstract form is itself a codification of conceptualisations of visuality. This this tradition was an initial force of modernist painting, its emphasis on the communications of movement through painting did not lend itself in the same as Kandinskian painting does on the ever-increasing and continuous growth of visual experience. Art history often traces the lines of development of the conceptualisation of abstraction from these differing traditions of painting, but particular to our concern, the Kandinskian understanding of painting indicated a resonance with Bergsonian thinking of art, as evident in the painting, as expressing the evolution of the expression through creative movements of living, immanent to the world. From this example, we see that concept of movement applied to painting requires the sum of the differing movements. To speak of painting as a meaningful activity, not as an indiscernible movement from among the total movement of reality, but rather, as a significant activity with its own implicit movements, this is to regard painting as the continuous occurrence of expression from the 'interior organization' of its movements.¹⁸ And by this notion of organization we mean that from among the process the movements of the painter's body, the movement particular to the painter's application, and even, the movement of these as interactions with the movement of the painting medium, these movements yielding the change of expressions and difference among figurations, are an order of growth. Kandinsky held a similar view with his work, in which he considers music as itself something to model the aspirations of painting upon. In this way, he considered the painter as able to discover

¹⁷ See Paul Wood, 'Cubism and Abstract Art Revisited', in *Art & Visual Culture, 1850-2010: Modernity to Globalisation*, edited by Steve Edwards and Paul Wood, pp. 91-113

¹⁸ John Mullarkey, *Bergson and Philosophy*, (Edinburgh Press, Edinburgh, 1999). p. 195

similar means for his own art. In other words, like music, the painter searches through his own melodic being for the movements and tonality of painting, so that, in terms of the repetition of colour tones, and the motions of forms, these are collectively the expressive sounds of the painting's composition.¹⁹ Similarly, according to Bergson, we find aesthetic pleasure in the grace of movements, because like music and rhythm we consider movements to effortlessly flow one from the other. This flowing engages us to the extent that we respond to it with a felt sympathy by its eliciting our sense of anticipation and participation. For the painter, this also occurs with the painting medium, as the movement of the painter is not only in response to the movement of the medium, but also the continuous change of the painter's experience, as a flow and variance of feelings. In this sense, the movement of the painter is also a qualitative progress from among the experiences of the painter's sensation in the activity of painting and from the dynamic unfolding of differing visual forms. In other words, like the grace of music, the painter feels the rhythms of his own movement as entering into the rhythms of the painting medium. It is the qualities of the painting medium which elicits responses of movements from the painter whilst the painter participates by actualizing further movements towards the objective horizon of expression.

In this sense, it is not a question of the objects in relation to the painter, or the painter's movement towards the painting medium, but rather a question of the progress of the process.²⁰ To consider the process of painting as more than a deliberate articulation of the painter, and the representational character of the painter's intellect, we must consider intrinsic quality movement to all things, even to processes of movement. Like the continuity of music, Bergson held principle of growth to mean that there is a continuance of change of form, suggesting a process by different kinds in which there is a continual recording of duration. As we have asserted, the process of painting is also a continuity

¹⁹ Wassily Kandinsky, *Wassily Kandinsky: A Colourful Life*. Vivian Endicott Barnett. The Collection of the Lenbachhaus.. ed. by Helmut Friedel and Harry N. Abrams (Inc. New York. 1996), p. 17.

²⁰ TFW, pp. 110-111

of the organization of movements, from which further movements are effected, to mean a qualitative difference of movements from among movements.

We have considered in Bergsonian terms, and from the insistence of Kandinsky's view of painting that the process of painting is a rhythmical process of movement flowing in time, to suggest that the visual experience of painting is ongoing and immediate to the change of its expression. In its entirety, the process of painting is a sort of singular creation of forms of time. In other words, from the temporalization of the movements of process of painting, the qualitative passage of the process, as a kinesis in time, is creative towards the continuous aesthetic projections. This is to situate the concept of movement, from within a broader context of a philosophy of *duration* (*'durée'*) to imply that movements are of a relation of movements. Again, relating this to the process of painting, we must consider not only the activities of the painter in terms of gestural movement, but also the movement and change of the materiality of the process. Bergson claims that differing traditions of philosophy have considered the notions of movement and substance as incompatible. However, he argues that these notions are mutually inclusive. For Bergson, the difficulties raised by the ancients around the question of movement is comparable to the question of substance in the modern period, in that, both considered either movement and change as substantial, or that substance is movement and change.²¹ Bergson's analysis suggests the difference of movements is the results of the duration of a multiplicity of movements. However, specific to the process of painting, from this sense of reality as a 'range of differentiation', we can claim that the differing movements of expression are as a composite of differing processes of images in duration.²² So then, from the materiality of painting to the physical activities of the painter, this reciprocal and necessary condition

²¹ CM. p. 156

²² John Mullarkey. *Bergson and Philosophy*. (Edinburgh Press, Edinburgh 1999). pp. 182-183

of movements entails differing movements that collectively endure through time.

This is to say that the ontological conditions of the process of painting, whether it be in terms of painting as a *process*, or, painting as a material *thing in duration*, suggests differing *kinds* of movements.²³ And since the material images are themselves compositions from the relation of the painter and the painting medium activities, we say that there is a multiplicity of movements which condition the process of painting. If we were to casually treat the images as themselves the repository of the painting process, this would be a return to the ‘problematic of representation’.²⁴ More specifically, this would make the painted image a secondary effect, and temporally misaligned with the continual state of the presence of painting. Instead we argue that as a metaphysical pursuit, the process of painting involves the intuitive experience, so that the image is part of a movement of images mutually reflecting upon the experience of its expressions, and relative to the immediate to its own becoming, progressing towards the novelty of its expressions.²⁵

²³ Ibid. p. 6. Here, by explaining the notion of change in Bergsonian Philosophy, Mullarkey comments on the process philosophy of Nicholas Rescher, indicating that a process philosophy by virtue of its principles, would not accept classifications of its ontological categories. Mullarkey’s response to this comparison is to suggest that for Bergson, ‘the notion of movement that lies at the heart of his metaphysic’, this is the nearest to a ontological basis that we may derive.

²⁴ Andrew Benjamin, *Object Painting*. (Academy Editions. London. 1994), p. 8. I am following Benjamin’s account of the ontological conditions of ‘questioning’ in painting and the art object. He suggests that it is the nature of painting as ‘insistently and effectively’ coming into being which makes the question of painting, and, the question of identification of the painted image insufficient. This is because of the continuity of becoming, implicit in art (i.e. the continuous as process with painting). However, it is what Benjamin terms as the ‘becoming-object’, so as to move his development away from an ontology of substance, that I regard as comparable to the investigation of this chapter, and supportive as a contemporary theory. In particular, he suggests a ‘strategy of movement’ to explain that the categories of painting, (e.g. multiplicity of movements), these necessarily demand concepts that ‘affirm’ the present condition of painting as well as concepts that ‘differentiate’ with the continual becoming of painting, i.e. conceptual movement, perceptual movement to move with the multiple movements and multiple appearances of painting.

²⁵ Henri Bergson *Creative Evolution*, [1911], trans. Arthur Mitchell, Centennial Series ed. by Ansell Pearson, Keith, Michael Kolkman & Michael Vaughan, (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2007), p. 14. Henceforth CE

Continuity and Succession

However, as Mullarkey has indicated, we argue that the substantiality of the painted images is themselves the *result* of the continual dispersal of movements in time. A painted image may be regarded as the material result, and by this identified as a physical *register* of the kinetic becoming of painting. But we argue instead that the painted images are not necessarily anterior to the multiplicity of movements. Popper suggests that there has been an expression of the nature of movement through different traditions in development of art. He explains, for example, that the Impressionists aimed to express the movements particular to the innermost recesses of the human personality, and thereby, depict those movements that affected an unconscious.²⁶ However, unlike this notion of stylization and hence a conceptualization of movement, we argue that the process of painting is a continuity of expression. Rather, instead of a view towards a pictorial content of painting, (i.e. what the painting is meant to represent), we argue that by the nature of movement inherent in the process, painting is itself a process that reveals the becoming of visual experience in time. Concerning the role of painting as a mode of philosophical thinking, painting is the potential for the continuous elaboration of visual knowledge, knowledge that is ever-increasing by its practice. Painting is a philosophical understanding as the expressions of its movements, go beyond the initial experiences of the process, and is thereby, a creative process by virtue of its expressive instability. The process of painting, is a dynamic reciprocity as it both depicts visual experience and the change of experience immanent to its expression.²⁷

As Bergson considered the continuity of movements in terms of life being expressed outwardly by the intellect, and felt inwardly by our senses, and the

²⁶ Frank Popper. *Origins and development of Kinetic Art.*, trans. by Stephen Bann. (Studio Vista. London. 1968). p. 17

²⁷ R. G. Collingwood, *The principles of art* (Oxford University Press, 1938). p. 134

body as a source of action in the flow of reality, this implies a dynamic of movements that exceeds the activity of conscious perception. As Bergson suggests, for the individual to act upon an object, the object is perceived as 'divisible and discontinuous'. However, we understand that Bergson's argument that the continuity of life cannot be thought by the intellect, and that the intellect carves life out from the reality of perception, according to the division of continuous and natural movement. Hence, the multiplicity of movements and the interpenetration of life from among the movements of reality, means that the conditions of consciousness can never fully express the movement of reality through the movements of activity deliberated by intellect alone.²⁸

And as with the continuity of reality, as the flowing, the passage of all things, so too with painting, there is continual change and novelty.²⁹ In other words, by virtue of the elements of movement inherent in its process, painting is the activity of dynamic properties and the creation of physical images. In the widest sense, painting considered as creative activity would mean that the process of painting is an ensemble of movements. The movements are themselves of a multiplicity of movements, such that the movements are successions of different intensities of movement from within the whole of the process.³⁰ In this sense, we consider the process of painting in view of the

²⁸ CE, p. 105.

²⁹ Joseph Solomon. *Bergson*. (Constable & Company, Ltd. London. 1912). p. 9. Solomon opens his chapter on the topic of change in Bergsonian thought, describing the world as 'constant change'. In his description of Bergson's concept, of how both living things and the inanimate elements of reality undergo continuous change, he connects the notion of change with movement, stating that all things of the world are, 'constantly undergoing alteration or at least movement'. I wish to draw the reader's attention to this association of change and alteration to movement and action, to not only indicate the synonymy of terms from among Bergsonian studies, but to also add support to a conceptualisation of movement in terms of 'flux' as a universal and 'process' as a constant of reality.

³⁰ Suzanne Guerlac. *Thinking In Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson*. (Cornell University Press. Ithaca. 2006). pp. 47-50. Following Guerlac's analysis of Bergson's TFW, (pp. 11-13), I find that her translation of the 'qualitative intervention' of different elements of movement, in the context of Bergson's description of the movement of a dancer, as also supportive of the movement of painting. In painting, for instance, the intervening 'things' of painting, (i.e. applied to both the movement of its activity as well as the material effect of its physical basis), contributes further to the complexity of the becoming movements. In this

collective nature of the multiplicity of movements, the mutual interpenetrating elements of its progression, and through time, 'obeying the laws of rhythm'.³¹

Kandinsky's Musical Rhythm and Bergson's Rhythm of Change

Kandinsky's theory maintains a view of painting in terms of rhythmic development. Similarly, Bergson's theory of movement argues that reality is a rhythm of durations. In Antliff's study, the idiom of rhythm is reappraised from the early modernist period of art, particularly with the Cubists and Rhythmists.³² His commentary supports the notion that as the Bergsonian percept of rhythm influenced art developments during its contemporary reception, so to may we consider the notion of rhythm as a theoretical connection to contemporary Bergsonian philosophy of painting. By appropriating Bergsonian and Kandinskian views of the nature of reality in terms of rhythms, we are able to maintain that the process of painting is a rhythmical plurality of movements. In this sense, the movements of the process are also an assemblage of rhythmic movements, such that the painter's movements and the movements of the painting medium coincide as total unity of movement.³³ This process is distinct in the flow of reality as it

way, the form of movement is not becoming according to a linear succession, but becoming to form in the sense of the growth of movements and images as a continuity of the synthesis of movements and images.

³¹ *TFW*, p. 15. Here, is one of the few times Bergson offers direct comments on the nature of art. However, he is comparing the sense of rhythm that both poetry and the plastic arts effect in us.

³² Mark Antliff. *Inventing Bergson: Cultural Politics and The Parisian Avant-Garde*. (Princeton University Press. Princeton, New Jersey.1993).

³³ Albert C. Barnes and Violette De Mazia *The Art of Henri-Matisse*. (The Barnes Foundation Press. Merion, Pennsylvania. 1933). 2nd Printing 1959. p. 158. Barnes early recognition and admiration for the work of Matisse is notable, but more importantly is the author's own theoretical interest implied in such chapters as 'The psychology of Matisse' and 'Transferred Value'. Explaining the artist in such terms as, 'a man who is fully alive finds himself in a state of constant change, in an environment also constantly changing', Barnes' conveyance of the 'interrelationships' of art extends throughout the work, suggestive and comparable to the broader theme of the the interrelation of music and art. See p. 24, 'Here as everywhere the two general principles of design and rhythm contrast.' See Also, pp. 19-20, 30-42, on the exposition of these principles in terms the variety of compositional unity.

is a source of the coming to presence of images, such that the accord of movements within the process is the tonality of the living experiences and the experiential compositions of matter.³⁴ In other words, the process of painting is a continuity of the movements of the painter's activities towards an expressive content, and the movements of the painting medium towards the event of a pictorial form, and thereby, a unity of diverse elements and form emerging from the movement of life.

It is from the relational field of the categories of movements in painting, i.e. bodily movements (e.g. gestures of the painter, brush strokes, etc.), compositional movements, that the activities which manifest the emergence of visual imagery and the unfolding of painted images occurs.³⁵ Regardless of the movements attributed to any given material image, it is the dynamic synthesis of multiple movements, merging and diverging, which allows for variations of imagery. In other words, qualitative difference from within the continual change of the entire process of painting results in the creation of new image types.

Our faculties of thought relate to time in terms of structure, (i.e. the temporal

³⁴ Brian Massumi. *Semblance and Event: Activist Philosophy and the Occurrent Arts* (The MIT Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts. 2011). p. 1. Massumi opens with commentary on William James, to expand on the notion of activity. He argues that it is the experience of activity which is the immediacy of 'event or change'. Though based more strongly on Whiteheadian terminology, here I am taking from Massumi's schema: activity to event and change, to potential and production, to process of becoming. I have approached this by suggesting that painting as process is immediate to its movements.

³⁵ Mark Antliff. 'The Rhythms of Duration: Bergson and the Art of Matisse'. In *The New Bergson*. ed. by John Mullarkey. (Manchester University Press. Manchester, 1999). pp. 184-208. I aim to draw from Antliff's analysis of the work of Henri Matisse in relation to Bergson's thought, particularly, as he points out the influence of the Bergsonian concept of duration. More specifically, it is with the Matisse's stylization of the frame, that the artist investigated the sense of 'opening' or unfolding of the pictorial image. I think this bears strong similarities to Henry's theorization of Kandinsky in terms of the artist's process as a 'disclosure' of creative forms. See pp.35-39. That is, for Henry the internal, the invisible, the profound nature of reality, so that as painting as its expression is the the process of the resonance of movements, transformative by an inner tonality towards the form and content of the external expression, i.e. the condition of 'pictoriality'. Also, See. p. 43, Henry's comment on a passage of Kandinsky's theoretical writings, in which he suggests that the artist's comments on the nature of painterly 'movement', implies that the inner tonality, (i.e. the invisible), is 'becoming conscious of itself'. In this latter sense, movement's relation to time as a becoming, and relation to life as its becoming

as measurable, time held in terms of instants or isolable moments). Rather, Bergson argues that the reality of time is more closely understood in terms of *duration*: the succession of experiences as continuous, and the whole of reality as a coalescing, and continuously flowing movement. If the painter were to consider the continuity of his experience, and moreover, the experience of his inner temporal rhythm, as the whole of temporality over spatial identities and discrete parts, then the real would be painting as its expression is the process of the resonance of movements, transformative by an inner tonality towards the form and content of the external expression, i.e. the condition of 'pictoriality' regarded in terms of a holistic account of temporal process and activity. And, as a result of this prioritization of time, duration would then become the ontological basis for the multiple and complex processes and the recognizable activities of reality. Painting must be regarded as one such multi-dimensional process, so that as a process, the multiple movements in painting are within the whole of a temporal continuity, that is, the *durée* of the painterly experience.³⁶ To this end, our consideration of explicit properties of movement within the process of painting, in terms of the experiences of bodily activity and the changing qualities of the materiality, are underscored by Bergson's ontology of a dynamic temporality. In this way, any particular movement or aggregate of movements, are themselves occurrences of movement, and as such, progressions of movement moving through the flow of time.³⁷

Progression and Succession

For Bergson, the idea of mobility is distinct from the idea of the continuity and progression of reality. Although the concept of movement is connected to the idea of mobility, and, it may be taken to suggest the passage of reality, this does not mean that the idea of mobility can be transposed with the concept

³⁶ *TFW*, p. 58

³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 58. Moore argues for the use of the English term 'durance', as opposed to the term 'duration', since, he claims, the former term suggests the 'property of going through time', whereas the latter suggests a measurable time or fixed time of a particular occurrence. Noting the difference of meanings these English terms convey, despite the intention to translate from the French term 'durée', I will continue to use 'duration' particularly in this context of Bergson's conceptualisation of movement, because of the sense of 'continuity' that the term expresses.

of movement. In terms of Bergson's account of reality as change, understanding that movement inheres in the continuity of reality, the world is not itself a divisible whole, but a progression by difference. However, for Bergson, the continual passage of reality is an indefinite multiplicity of progressions expressing a heterogeneous quality of duration. Of course, as Bergson indicates, these require the presupposition of space as a homogenous milieu for experiences to be situated. In addition, such is the inclination of our thinking, i.e. towards the immobilization of reality by which things are fixed and placed.

Might it not be said that, even if these notes succeed one another, yet we perceived them in one another, and that their totality may be compared to a living being whose parts, although distinct, permeate one another just because they are so closely connected? [...] We can thus conceive of succession without distinction, and think of it as a mutual penetration, an interconnexion and organization of elements, each one of which represents the whole, and cannot be distinguished or isolated from it except by abstract thought.³⁸

However, from a Bergsonian view, we must regard reality in terms of *durée*, that is to say, envisaging reality in terms of temporal flux and conceding that is change fundamental to reality. In this sense, Bergson argued that we could 'grasp the inner life beneath the juxtaposition of our states that we effect in a spatialized time'. This is to say that, in regards to painting, the activity and substantiality held in terms of duration, become more than the thing, (i.e. the painted image both regarded as subsumed within the whole of the process). Instead, painting is a process of multiple movements, originating differing rhythmic conditions of its elements, and as such, is continuously present to the content of its temporality. Similarly, Kandinsky argues that unlike music, which is itself a durational activity in time, painting presents to the whole content of its expression at one moment.³⁹

³⁸ TFW. p. 100

³⁹ Wassily Kandinsky Concerning The Spiritual In Art. Trans. by M.T.H. Sadler. (Dover Publications. New York. 1977). p. 20

Movement and Tonality

In order to advance with the moving reality, you must replace yourself within it. Install yourself within change, and you will grasp at once both change itself and the successive states in which it might at any instant be immobilized [...]A perpetuity of mobility is possible only if it is backed by an eternity of immutability, which it unwinds in a chain without beginning or end.⁴⁰

Recognizing Bergson's critique leads us to the second instance of our conceptualization of movement. That is, despite the actual and material structure produced by painting, this is not to confuse the process of painting according to a sequence of structural forms. Instead, painting as an artistic and aesthetic creation is to be understood as a process of the progression of the interpenetrating movements.

Similarly, Kandinsky's theory of painting considers the world in terms of visual tones from among visual forms, arguing that the painted image is constantly emerging from *rhythmic tensions* and is inherent to the painting process. What he termed as a *rhythmic law* in the painting process meant that both the *continuity* of visual expression and the multiplicity of expressions are original to the composition of the painted images.⁴¹ Taken further, this suggested a view of the world in terms of *flux*, hence, characterizing the process of painting as a *tonality*. However, in terms of the tonality of movements, the theory of the process of painting becomes more complex. From the sense of a sonorous materiality and tactile visual art forms the movements of painting in relation to sensation suggests a 'structural' aesthetic, i.e. plane, line, colour, material. In other words, from the basis of Bergson's concept of *durée*, painting as continuous activity, as entailing multiple elements, and as a mode by which images emerge and change, arguably, suggests that painting is of a field of rhythms, rhythms of depth and

⁴⁰ CE. pp. 308, 325

⁴¹ Wassily Kandinsky. *Point and Line to Plane*. (Dover Publications. New York. 1979). p. 83

of flux. Likewise, Kandinsky's theoretical development proceeds from a recognition of an absolute temporal quality of reality, and consequently, his conceptualization of painting regards its activity and material forms according to vital and melodic attributes.

The spatial elements in sculpture and architecture, the tonal elements in music, the elements of movement in the dance, and the word elements in poetry, all have need of a similar uncovering and a similar elementary comparison with respect to their external and their inner characteristic, which I call 'sounds'.⁴²

Like Bergson's theory, Kandinsky links aesthetic elements to movement. For him movements are inner 'sounds', as vibratory movements radiating externally. In this sense, the process of painting involves a feeling, and empathetic attunement to this movement, as a type of inner resonance from an inner sounding, as a descent from among movements towards the realization of the potential of movements. In either regard, the process of painting is an order of movements, in the sense that these movements are transformative within the continuity of the process, and the affects of their actualization in the painted object.⁴³

Painterly Experience: Consciousness and Movement

With the view that considers reality as a unity of movements, and this view correlated with the concept of painting as an activity of movement, then requires a demarcation from among the movements. In other words, as movement in general implicates reality as duration this must be distinguished from painting as movements of specific kind. Because the concept of movement in relation to painting places painting in time, the concept of movement is most fundamentally a concept of qualitative difference. For

⁴² Ibid. pp. 8-9, reference to the Preface by Hilla Rebay, however, expounded upon by Kandinsky, p. 32 following the margin heading of 'Tension', and, pp. 34-35 in which Kandinsky addresses the relation of time and painting, suggesting that the visual forms themselves are 'elements' of time.

⁴³ CM. p. 147

Bergson, the question of the process of painting would be that of the 'substantiality of change' becoming visible. He argues that change is most palpable from within the inner domain of life. This is to say that the painter is the immediate contact with the change of movements, by which the painter's consciousness is itself a continuous melody of an internal rhythm. In this respect, Bergson is suggesting that life is the indivisible experience of the continuity of change, and in the process of painting, through the painter, this change constitutes the duration of the expressions.⁴⁴ Bergson argues that movement is also the *potential* of continuous change. From the collective flow of the multiplicity of movements the qualitative change from multiple directions is preceded by the conditions for variations, and thereby, the predication of painting itself. In this sense, we are asserting that because of the alterity of movement, there are modes of movement: movement of activity and movement of substantiality. For on the one hand there is painting as itself a vital activity, through the living experience of the painter, but on the other hand, there is the activity of painting as expression through matter.⁴⁵ However, these movements are not so clearly distinct. As we have maintained in terms of the notion of the theories of *pure perception* and a *pure memory*, the real is a continuity of its actual and virtual domains. Moreover, Bergson suggests that perception is both of a psychical domain and a material exteriority, stating,

Let us no longer say, then, that our perceptions depend simply upon the molecular movements of the cerebral mass. We must say rather that they vary with them, but that these movements themselves remain inseparably bound up with the rest of the material world.⁴⁶

In this regard, the movements of the painter to painting medium, in terms of the movement of experience to expression, or from memory-images to ever present images of material extensity, movements of the process of painting,

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 149

⁴⁵ A.E. Pilkington. *Bergson and His Influence: A Reassessment*. (Cambridge University Press, 1976)

⁴⁶ MM. p. 25

are immanent to the continuity of change. We have argued that the movements of painting in time allow for the creation and emergence of visual form and imagery, and the content is furthered instantiated by the material extension of these elements of painting.⁴⁷ To that end, painting is an activity, by which multiple movements in time are the source of visual form. In regards to the content of painting, content is the experience of the painter and the encounter with the painting medium, such the process of painting is the movement of the contents of the living experiences towards the application and enactment of visual imagery. Hence, the process involves the projection of movements of consciousness, consciousness presenting through physical extension and spatial materialization of its own visual imagery. In terms of the process, that is, throughout the duration of the multiplicity of painterly movements towards the singularity of composition, multiple movements proceed towards the creation and proliferation of images.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ J. Bell, *What is painting?: representation and modern art* (Thames and Hudson, 1999). pp.

112-113. From among Bell's discussion of Modernity in the context of history, she explains the twofold shifts of both the content of modern painting and the ideas or attitudes of modernism in painting. She notes that the historical age underlying the modernist movement was presented in terms of transience, so that the painting of that time was an engagement with themes of all things transitory. She identifies three 'phases' of development from this theme: Process impression and sequence. I find her analysis supportive, not only by its identification of theories of the relation of form and time throughout the historical survey of modernist painting and to which Kandinsky's work was certainly contributory, but also, supportive of the idea that painting is itself an engagement with time, as a 'fixing' of change. In this way, within the modernist period, 'time' is a new content of painting. Furthermore, as Bell indicates that by presenting the flow of change, and engaging with the process of reality, painting was regarded as also an activity towards the formatting of time. Bell explains that an attitude of the modernist period was to allow the image to 'emerge nakedly from visible brushwork', and by this she is indicating the specific consideration of physical tracing, i.e. the marking of both bodily and material movements, as being valued in the sense that the movements were thought to be the creative energy of imagery.

⁴⁸ John Golding. *Paths to the Absolute: Mondrian, Malevich, Kandinsky, Pollock, Newman, Rothko and Still.* (Thames & Hudson. London. 2000). p. 83. In Golding's account of the early developments of Kandinsky's work, after highlighting the influence of the Russian Vologda region and its folk art upon the artist, He offers a telling comparison of Kandinsky's work in contrast to the works of Piet Mondrian and Kasimir Malevich. He claims that the modes of abstraction for both of latter artists was principled towards processes of distillation, towards the minimal, or with a view to express some essence of nature. However, Golding indicates that for Kandinsky, he 'achieved abstraction through the proliferation of imagery, through the endowing his pictures with such a multiplicity of

The Life of Movement

In other words, consciousness is creative, and by its continual movement in time, from either orientation of its interior or exterior sphere, there is invention, production, and variation of expressive forms. This is to first agree that states of consciousness are ever-changing, interposing, and hence, a multiplicity of interpenetrating relations. In this sense, consciousness is the movement of mediations between the vital perceiving and the process of becoming perceived. This indicates that the potential of movement is the central principle of these relations, and where we attempt to define the contours of those relations specific to painting we must rely on the sense of sight and its mediations with the relative constancy of the materiality of painting. Bergson explains that perception itself is not consistent, it is variable, and is relative to movement and change. He claims that perception

images...'. See p. 87 for another in text comparison, notably, of Kandinsky's development from the early 'Russian' Period up to the time of his publication *On The Spiritual In Art*. From abstraction regarded as a 'proliferation of imagery', to abstraction understood as the attempts of the 'musicalization' of painting, I am taking Goldings commentary as a support for the notion that with either themes and theoretical developments of Kandinsky's work, a conception of movement is implicit. In chapter eight I will consider the notion of abstraction in terms of Bergsonian conceptualisation. However, here I ask the reader to consider the relation between the process of abstraction, a painterly process, and the 'proliferation of imagery'. In so doing, I think there is reason to consider that a process of a multiplication of images indicates an equivalency of a multiplicity of movements. However, where Golding's explains Kandinsky's view of abstraction, suggesting that from among the multiple images within a picture, 'eventually one image cancels out another and the canvas surface becomes a single, throbbing whole', I cannot agree with this wording. Rather, in terms of duration, the process of painting is continuous, so that the multiplicity of movements are only dissociated by the substantiality of the painted image. In this sense, I am arguing against what I see here as a condition of negation, suggested to occur with the multiplicity of movements in painting. And Instead, I mean to suggest that from among the proliferation of movements, and therefore, from among the proliferation of images, there is progressive intervention of movement to movement, image to image, with the effect that there emerges painted imagery. By this, there is a rapid exchange, and dynamic tumult of painterly movements and painted imagery, which, is itself a condition of unity during these changes. In this sense, the process of painting is a course of events, movements, movements colliding, alterations of movement by other movement, eruptions of movement by effect of other movements. In other words, the process of paintings, overall, as a continuous process, is towards the shaping and shifting of images, connected by the advancement of the creative condition from the differential relations of movements.

given to thought and language, and more generally, given to the activities of mind, are as movements of the real. Furthermore, he explains that by the mind's activity, the envisaging of movement and change may be expressed in the immediacy of reality to itself.⁴⁹ Bergson explains that perception is then a relative condition by which the possibility of varying 'images' results from the differing processes of movement within a unified reality of movement. Whether it is relative to the activity of visualization, to thinking, or to the flow of conscious events, the forces of perception within reality would mean that perception is relative among the continually diverging movements of perception. In other words, there is a multiplicity of processes of perception, such that, the living events of perception are not a singular, homogenous condition of being, but rather a plurality of movements effective towards continuous differentiation.

Conclusion

We have considered Bergson's theory of the conceptualisation of movement, as part of his metaphysical argument of the reality of duration. We see that according to Bergson's thought, movement is an independent reality, and in terms of the qualities of change immanent to reality, the material universe is considered more in terms of force and the ongoing process of difference. We see how Bergson's view is concerned with the totality of movements, a view that contributes to his philosophy. Prompted further by continuous flux of with time. From this context, we considered how Bergson regards consciousness, not as thing, but the movement of its experience. This offered us insight into the creative nature of the process of painting. By considering perception as relative to movement, i.e. a carving out from the external viewing of things, we considered perception to be relational and even

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 70

formative to the expressions that follow from it. Bergson explains that perception is contiguous with the inner dimension of reality. In other words, there are perceptions that are of a harmonious relation as a constant succession from within all things and not simply the appearance of a constancy as the form of substantial thing. Again, this prioritizes a view of time as durational over the conception of time as successional. As for the interest of the conceptualization of movement as phenomenon within the process of painting, rather than regard these movements as finite steps connected together and relative, instead, movements are regarded as continuous and interpenetrating into one another. Hence, from this ontological determination of movement, whereby the conception of movement entails the activity of painting and is also attributed to the materiality of painting, a unity is maintained. We see how this ontologization of movement is implicit in Henry's philosophy, expressed in relation to Kandinskian theory. In particular the predicated 'living' of life, is what Henry considers as the pathological movement that compels the feeling and experience of life from itself. Here, what he regards as the condition of life's auto-affective drive, and its becoming through the soliciting of its encounter from among its bodily encounters, does not rely on an explicit concept of the kinesthetic relation of life to its living process. Regardless, we see the nuance of an ontology of movement, within his philosophical view of the reflexivity of consciousness and the moving of life towards its manifestation. Here, for Henry, movement becomes an ontological basis, in terms of the life's profound pathos, that is, through the 'incarnation' of life through its living. For our concerns toward the continuation of Bergsonian thinking, Henry's implicit reliance upon movement as immanent to the immanence of life, draws a closer connection to the Kandinskian theory of the essence of life moving through the expressions of painterly forms. Here, the concept of movement in the context of painting, means the continuity of change towards visual experience. This brings Kandinskian theory back to an original Bergsonian view, by which we regarded the movement of all things, to include the entire process of painting

as the ongoing processes and, therefore, multiple tonalities of differing rhythms of time.

We proceeded from our consideration of the movement of the process of painting in terms of rhythms of duration. Following this we considered an isolation of the properties of movement, so that, regarded in terms of life and consciousness, we argued that there are vital and 'living' movements essential to painterly activity. Finally, we will then be able to evaluate movement as an affect of time, and thereby, an element of the process of painting that by its force of creative expression it may be regarded as a vital and pictorial activity of formation. This is to highlight that, whether it be the relation of physical, psychological, or biological elements, (as these are also modes of multiple movements towards the particular movements of the activity of painting), those isolable movements of either the mental process of painting or the processes of the materiality of painting entail a plurality of movements toward the composition of multiple movements, and overall, towards the continual genesis of images. We argued that movement is the prevailing condition of even life itself, and therefore, is more than relations of succession in time. In terms of the process of painting, there are infinitely possible forms from among its totality, by which the human mind regards it.⁵⁰

We have considered that the concept of movement is a principle theme of Bergsonian Philosophy. Therefore, we proceeded with an analysis of the concept with a view towards a Bergsonian theory of painting. By maintaining Bergson's theory of the duration of reality as a duration of images, we argued that this implies an absolute quality of movement of the real in which the process of painting is a further occurrence. So then, in terms of the process of painting as itself a unity of a plurality of movements, the change of the painter's activities as an interaction with the painting medium, these are the changes of states of the activities and the qualitative effects of art-object.

⁵⁰ CE. p. 58.

However, with this movement there is also the becoming effects from the affective qualities of perceptions from the material heterogeneity. Therefore we are considering the double movement of the process of painting first in terms of the painter's body as itself a series of temporalities, but then secondly, from the corresponding and coinciding with the exteriorized perception of the painting medium in its change of spatialized images and physical effect. In this regard, we have argued from Bergson's conception of movement, that in terms of the painting, the movement of the body, the movement of the material image, and the movement in between, comprise the passage of the process. Therefore, by maintaining that the nature of reality is considered in terms of a plurality of images in ceaseless movement and indefinite change, our understanding of the occurrence of painted imagery will in turn follow from the conception of reality as an aggregate of images in process, i.e. as multiple *multiplicities of movement*.⁵¹

⁵¹ Marie-Luise Angerer, 'Feeling the Image: Some Critical Notes on Affect', in *Imagery in the 21st Century*, ed. by Oliver Grau, and Thomas Viegl, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 2011), pp. 224-226.

Chapter 4 - Abstraction

A mass of hills in every conceivable, imaginable colour. Of all different sizes, but always the same shape, i.e.: Broad at the bottom, with swollen sides and rounded tops. Simple, ordinary hills, of the kind one always imagines and never sees.¹

Let us try to see, no longer with the eyes of the intellect alone, which grasps only the already made and which looks from the outside, but with the spirit, I mean with that faculty of seeing which is immanent in the faculty of acting and which springs up, somehow, by the twisting of the will on itself, when action is turned into knowledge, like heat, so to say, into light. To movement, then, everything will be restored, and into movement everything will be resolved. Where the understanding, working on the image supposed to be fixed of the progressing action, shows us parts infinitely manifold and an order infinitely well contrived, we catch a glimpse of a simple process, an action which is making itself [...]²

Introduction

Abstraction may generally refer to any amalgam of conceptualizations and interposed theories applied broadly in the fields of philosophy and art.³ The Latin definition of abstraction, ‘*abstractio*’, means to *lead* or to *draw away* from some phenomenon. From its continual elaboration in differing fields of philosophy and in theories of art practices, this root definition of *abstraction* has been assumed through varying interpretations to the effect that to *abstract* has meant some process of *separateness* and *independence* from that of reality.⁴ In some instances it is considered as a process of ideas and as a

¹ Wassily Kandinsky, ‘Hills’, Sounds [Klänge], Munich, [1912], Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art, ed. by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo, (Da Capo Press, New York 1994), p. 295.

² CE. p. 264

³ I. Chilvers, *The Oxford dictionary of art* (Oxford University Press, 2004). p. 3-4, Chilvers explains that throughout art history the emergence of differing stylizations and the theoretical courses of particular art groups and movements indicated a direction towards the formal sense of abstract art, culminating at the beginning of the 20th century. However, more specifically, with the second reference, Sandywell begins the statement by describing the Latin definition of abstraction, ‘*abstractio*: to lead or draw away from some phenomenon’.

⁴ Barry Sandywell, ‘Abstraction’ in *Dictionary of Visual Discourse*, (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), pp. 107-110. The definition that is given details the notion of abstract from the context of art history focusing on the changing meanings of the term from among the progress and developments of art. However, more specifically, by describing the Latin

condition being beyond the natural world. In this sense, the concept of abstraction has meant a renunciation of the material world, by the assumption of an essential and pure intellectualization, and therefore, a process that is necessarily divorced from the existential world of things.⁵ This has contributed to many views and contexts based on its usage, but in general, most concede to a condition of abstraction as being of some form of a schematization.⁶ However, in this chapter we wish to relate a conceptualisation of abstraction to the immanent nature of thinking in terms of a schema. We will argue that by ‘abstraction’ we mean a quality of *invention continuous with the becoming of images*. We will consider Bergson’s concept of abstraction to mean that as perceiving occurs in things themselves, then the transitions of images from within the process of painting entail the dynamic selections and discernments of life from its experience in contact with matter. That is to say that thought as an abstractive quality of living, is both a distillation of images and an extraction of images from the flow of reality, and it is generated by the living experiences of perception.⁷ However, in agreement with Bergson’s theory of abstraction, the order of our schemas, i.e. the attitude of our ideations, and the systematic developments of our concepts, these are all occurrences within the continuous change of perceptions. This is to say, that abstraction is immanent to the material world and the plane of pure perception. Furthermore, by considering abstraction in relation to the continuity of the flow images, and in particular, with the process of painting, we will argue that the emergence of novel forms in painting, are physical processes. Therefore, abstract thinking is physical in its origins. For Bergson, abstraction occurs from the tendency of thought to isolate the movement of reality, so as to conceive of things, and quantify the states of things, as an ordering of reality in terms of formation.⁸ According to

definition of abstraction, ‘abstractio’, in terms of something being drawn away, we take this as a root definition to work from.

⁵ J. Maritain, *Creative intuition in art and poetry* (Pantheon books, 1953). pp. 214-222

⁶ J. Golding, ‘Paths to the Absolute’, *Mondrian, Malevich, Kandinsky, Pollock, Newman, Rothko and Still*, London.p. 7-8

⁷ H. Bergson, ‘The two sources of morality and religion’. p. 180, Henceforth TSMR

⁸ J. Mullarkey, *Bergson and philosophy* (Edinburgh University Press Edinburgh, 1999).

this view we will argue that in the process of painting abstraction is a quality of movement of thinking as conditioned by the duration of the process itself. We will consider Kandinsky's theory of 'Abstract Painting', to argue that it is only by physical effort directed through the painting medium, and, by the actualization of perceptions given in total to the process, that abstraction is from the living inclination of expression and the accumulation of images from the whole of reality.⁹ Combined with a Bergson's concept of abstraction, we will argue that with the process of painting, from the progressive and consolidated experiences of the real, the passage of its activities and events allow for changes in the direction of thinking. In other words, the painter's thinking and perceptual awareness as a coinciding taking place within the movement of the painting medium becomes a refraction of perception towards the event of visual and conceptual images. Continuing from the previous chapter's emphasis on the intuitive experience, and added by the ontology of movement implicit in the process of painting, we will now argue that the occurrence of creative thinking and the invention of visual forms and their expression in painting, these are the variabilities of philosophical realisations as the abstractions of living from its efficacious becoming. Here Bergson's view of the work of philosophy in terms of philosophizing as an activity continuing towards the investigation of the 'concrete' becoming of reality, resonates with consideration of the diffusion and plurality of the becoming of the real, as termed abstraction. This is seconded by Henry's challenge to philosophy to consider the actual conditions by which reality proceeds. Henry's philosophy based on his interpretation of Kandinsky, by which Henry implies through Kandinskian theory that the abstraction of life is through its self-realisation immanent to the revelation of living in the world. We wish to reconsider Kandinsky, through a direct comparison to Bergson, so as to further radicalize the notion of abstraction, and as a consequence, to expound the philosophical outlook of the process of painting.

From the intuitive experience, the painter's activity is inspired, and as his

⁹ W. Kandinsky, *Kandinsky, complete writings on art* (Da Capo Press, 1994). p. 789

movement is compelled by the articulation of this 'vision', the activities become inventive through the direction of thinking towards forms of expression. However, this is to claim that thinking in the process of painting opposes the tendency of the immediacy of action to the continuous activities of images, and fixes in visible form the expressions of experience, by which the experience of thinking develops formulation and selectively constructs, reifies and then inhabits its own abstraction. By ballasting this concept with a Bergsonian view, and more specifically, by relating it to the specific medium of painting, we will argue that abstraction is a condition that corresponds with the qualities of perception and direct (re)presentation, as creative movements within the field of painting as a process. This is to bring the concept of abstraction back to a process view of reality, and to regard abstraction from within the philosophical dialogues concerned with difference and the evolution of philosophizing immanent to the becoming of reality. By arguing for an immanence philosophy of the condition of abstraction, we reaffirm the necessity of the process of painting, as a living encounter with itself, towards philosophies of difference. Therefore, we are opposing the definition of abstraction as a transcendent ideation, and as a purity of thinking divorced from the experience of living. Instead, we are reorienting the conceptualisation, to suggest that abstraction is the concretization of the novelty of change, and as a condition of the creative process in painting by the revelatory and differing durations of life by art.

Time and Abstraction

We argue that abstraction is a condition within the process of painting, such that in terms of the mediation of the painter and the instrumental function of the painter's body, conscious perception involves a virtuality of nascent actions and the actualization of expressions as a realization of concrete perception. We regard abstraction as an effect of painting, original to the

temporality of the process. We consider abstraction, as a condition of time, as the creation of difference through the painter's activity, the painting medium, and the presentation of the painted image. Abstraction relates to the field of perception, perceptions given to consciousness, but affected by the concentration of life in duration. In this sense, abstraction is the condition from the 'double experience' of life, life evolving from its content to its forms. The condition of abstraction within the process of painting, originates from movements of *dissociation* in the flow of duration. Hence, with abstraction there is a dynamic relations of movements, and by the *change* of these movements affected by the progression in time, the physicality of the activities and the visible expressions in the process of painting become something else. For Bergson, abstraction is regarded in terms of a broader metaphysical view, as part of the continuous ongoing change of a reality that is itself change. For Bergson, abstraction is related to the creative unfolding of the whole of reality. It is a dynamic condition within reality which Bergson often refers to with such terms as 'delimitation, condensation, contraction'.¹⁰ These terms are derivations from a general meaning of abstraction, and conflate a notion of abstraction, in terms of conditions of inner life of consciousness, with a notion of abstraction in terms of the conditions of external forms. However, we argue in terms of Bergson's view, that abstraction concerns the movements of consciousness, and this specifically applies to the experience towards expression dynamism of images in the process of painting.

Individuation

Our concern with the abstraction is then the relation of the inner and external domains of reality. However, as Kandinsky describes the 'inner necessity' of

¹⁰ CE. p. 6

the painter, the condition of abstraction is not a condition detached from the body, or exclusive of the external world, but as with the movement of thought being compelled by an intuition, it is the interchange of corporeal responses to thought, visual formulations responding to experience in the making. We have previously considered the role of intuition and its relation to the movements of thinking, and now extending from this context, we consider abstraction as a process of forming concepts on the basis of experience. In this sense, with abstraction in the process of painting, there are no clear divisions existing between the internal or the external domains, and the past or present. That is, the correspondence of the painter to the painting medium is the interactions oriented by a living centre of images and the multiplicity of images given by the painting medium, and from the manifold of this exchange, the condition of abstraction images is produced. From this view we maintain that the process of painting, from the initial stages of contact between painter and painting medium, the process lends itself to the activity of abstracting from itself. From the original conscious reflection, and from the immediacy of the painter's sensorial and perceptual experience, this contact is the presence of a living experience with the potential to change environed by the fields of perception given by the painting medium. Mullarkey explains rather concisely that Bergson's concept of abstraction suggests the occurrence of extraction.¹¹ Accordingly, in the process of painting, abstraction is then not a stylization or a development from a particular method that seeks the rarefaction of visual elements towards an inner purity, but rather, it is itself a process of *individuation from among the potential course of expressions in the process of painting*. This is to say that in regards to the painter's activity, images are individuated from the flow of psychical and material images, extracted from the exertion of intellectual effort through reflective consciousness, to the extent that the image is visual change from variable realisations of the composition of the painted image. If process of painting is to be regarded as a process of creation, then we argue

¹¹ John Mullarkey. *Bergson and Philosophy*. (Edinburgh Press, Edinburgh. 1999). p. 6.

that abstraction is an intrinsic condition from the continuity of the painting process. Abstraction is at once a condition of disruption and a dissociation of images, and is a quality of exchange and fragmentation from among the movements of perceptual visual content expressed in material forms.¹² In other words, the process of painting is a twofold process, one of continuous activity of formulation and expression, and the other of the material and structural compositions. In both definitions of the process, we see that these embodies the condition of abstraction in the activities of thought, the immediacy to the given perception, and in the movements of expression in the painting.

In terms of the Bergsonian concept of *abstraction* defined in terms of *extraction*, this indicates a condition of the nascency of images, of the force particular to the becoming of visual forms. Abstraction does not only inhere within the field of painting, but more specifically, it is characteristic of the vital qualities of the activity particular to the event of painting. Abstraction is a mode of difference occurring from among the process of painterly activity and the emerging of the material image. In a word, abstraction attributed to the force of the *élan* in time, as effecting the non- discursive transformation of painterly expressions. Similarly, Henry's theory of abstraction via Kandinsky, was an attempt to redefine phenomenology by suggesting that abstract art was a way to be free from the appearance of the external world. From his formulation of the 'materiality of life', Henry suggests that abstraction is related to the embodiment of life in material, and the mutual and affective relation of life to material life.¹³ Though, Henry's theory relates

¹² A. Ehrenzweig, *The hidden order of art: A study in the psychology of artistic imagination* (Univ of California Press, 1967). pp. 70-71. I take Ehrenzweig's point describing 'Basic-design' methods of art, to include such exercises as 'fragmentation', as initially a means of organic and intuitive expressions leading to the 'disruptive power' of abstract art, so as to further my claims according to lexical similarities.

¹³ Michel Henry, *Seeing the Invisible: On Kandinsky*, trans. by Scott Davidson, Continuum Publishing, London, 2009, p. ix.

to Kandinsky's theory of abstraction, to argue for the material embodiment of vital affects means that Henry is elaborating from a Bergsonian view of life as a self-initiating change and as continuously affective to its own experiences.¹⁴

The Foundations of Abstraction

Henry claims that Kandinsky's work corresponds with a particular philosophical conceptualization, and from the perspective of a phenomenological position, what he regards as the condition of the 'invisible' connected to the abstraction, is the emergence of life from the intertwining of the subject and object.¹⁵ Gombrich identifies Kandinsky's work and the artist's line of theory as part of a larger progression of art history.¹⁶ Gombrich remarks that from the first half of the twentieth century, the nature of 'Modern Art' was an attempt to break with the long held traditions of art but also with the conventions of expression and theories of design. He claims that the attempts of the art movements of this period were driven by efforts to develop new ways of seeing, new ways and means of aesthetic experience, and more significantly, towards the expansion of apprehension.¹⁷ However, for Henry, it was Kandinsky who demonstrated not only a proficiency in the development of painting within this movement, but who also provided the most clearly developed writings elaborating the principles of art towards a

¹⁴ J. Mullarkey and C. de Mille, *Bergson and the art of immanence: painting, photography, film* (Edinburgh University Press, 2013). See Brendan Predeville's essay, 'Painting the Invisible: Time, Matter and the Image in Bergson and Michel Henry'. pp.247-266. I will cite this text often as Predeville's essay offers some preliminary analysis of Henry on Kandinsky adding comparisons to Bergson. Here, Predeville highlights the distinction to be made between and Henrian reading of Kandinsky and Kandinskian theory as established by Kandinsky's concepts and practice.

¹⁵ M. Henry and S. Davidson, *Seeing the invisible: on Kandinsky* (Continuum Intl Pub Group, 2009). p. 3-7

¹⁶ E. H. Gombrich, 'The story of art. Phaidon', *Chapters 7*. pp. 443-475

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 446. Remarking on the interconnection of seeing and knowing, Gombrich explains that 'what we call seeing is invariably coloured and shaped by our knowledge (or belief) of what we see'. According to the thesis of this chapter, here I read Gombrich as admission to a theory of abstraction, by which the exchange or interchange of sense and apprehension is condition for abstractive processes.

theory of abstraction. Kandinsky's approach in theory and in painting was one of several artists and thinkers to move towards abstract art. However, he considered abstraction in terms of *a nonobjective or nonrepresentational* mode of expression.¹⁸

For Kandinsky, painting towards abstraction was compelled by a strong principle of a direct expression of inner necessity and only satisfied when corresponding with the reverberations of forms or de-materialized objects. In previous chapters we have indicated how this sense of 'necessity' corresponds to Bergson's articulation of the creative compulsion from the intuitive vision, that is, the impetus of images emerging from a single intuitive experience. Similarly with a Kandinskian method, the freer the abstract form from a representation or depiction of a thing, the greater its appeal to the feeling of the painter through his activity.

For Kandinsky this was the *spiritual* expression, as that of the movement of the paintings development expressibly through the inner tension involved with the corresponding reverbs of *nonobjective* forms.¹⁹ This amounts to a mode of expression in the painting process that originates from internal sensations, having a basis in the painter's consciousness and psychological conditions, as affected by the painting medium, but not without a simultaneous crystallization of the images to be expressed with the animated physical occurrence of the forms of its content. It is the modification of images in which the condition of the expressions involves profound changes, that is, the becoming of a spiritual development, original to its resonance with the material correspondence. Within this interchange, there occurs abstraction. In comparison, Bergson relates the durational nature of psychical states, suggesting that from the continual becoming of the inner life an extraction is made of a certain quality by the localization of an image. This is similar to Kandinsky's view of the notion of pure expression as that which

¹⁸ L. Dickerman and M. Affron, *Inventing Abstraction, 1910-1925: How a Radical Idea Changed Modern Art* (The Museum of Modern Art, 2012).

¹⁹ W. Kandinsky, *Concerning the spiritual in art* (Courier Dover Publications, 2012). pp. 20, 25, 35, 51-52

proceeds from an immediacy of sensorial experience with the evolution of the inner self.

Stratum of Expression

Henry claims that Kandinsky's theory is fundamental to the 'essence of painting', and this supports his theoretical studies, particularly as the artist felt that the intellectual elaborations offer the means 'to enter into the expanded life of aesthetic experience'.²⁰ Henry explains that abstract painting is both a return to the motivational origin of painting, but also a return to the root of painting throughout history. The question of abstraction has led to broader questions of the nature of painting, considering the abstractive principle as the 'ever-present and active foundation' of painting and original to the 'source' of painting, of image-rendering, and of art in general.²¹ According to Gooding's assessment of the history of abstract art he claims that the notion of abstraction had no fixed starting point in time or place, but rather, its original sense emerged from different premises as its practice was made elaborate through varying directions of practice. In other words, the initial conceptualizations of abstraction in the practices of abstract art were expressibly diverging and converging, crossing and overlapping.²¹ Moreover, for many theorists, Kandinsky's theory of abstraction offers a new picture type. His paintings disregard representational and referential forms of the world, and instead, present difference from within the world by a simultaneous expression of the inner tonal qualities of the world through the articulation of the material and visual forms.

Henry argues that the condition of abstraction underlies 'the rationality of all painting', to the extent that all painting is abstract, and even the 'possibility'

²⁰ Michel Henry. *Seeing The Invisible: On Kandinsky (Voir L'Invisible)*, trans. by Scott Davidson, (London Continuum 2009), p. 2. By quoting these passages, I am highlighting what is to become more clear as definitive principles of Henry's overall thesis, that is, a relation of a notion of the essence of things and the pathos of life towards a philosophy of life.

²¹ Ibid. p. 3

of all art forms is abstract. By this, Henry means an interrelation of the notions of *abstraction* and *possibility*. For Henry, the ‘possibility’ of painting is related to the ‘potentiality’ of the artist. However, he argues that by abstraction in painting the potential of the nature of human being is due to the nature of ‘Being’ itself.²² In other words, according to Henry’s phenomenological account of the nature of ‘Being’, he relates the *potential of Being to the possibility* of ‘Being’, so that potential and possible are mutual coefficients of the abstraction of ‘Being’.²³ Though Henry’s insistence is towards a phenomenological notion of ‘Being’ in relation to existence, Bergson’s philosophy maintains that consciousness is a rhythm among the unbroken melody of duration, which is to say, that life is endlessly continued change immanent to reality. For Bergson then, life is a radical process of change that characterizes its existence, and is a continual growth and development. Similar to Kandinsky’s view of the tonality of painting, we argue that it is life’s immediacy to its own experience, and that is, experience situated by the process of painting, as a stratum of images given by perception and exerting a direct influence through its modes of expression.

For Gooding, since all art is abstract, as all art is an engagement with the world, in this engagement art abstracts aspects of the world, ‘in order to present us with an object or an event that enlivens or enlightens our apprehension of it.’²⁴ Gooding’s explanation of our ‘apprehension’ with art, as a type of ‘understanding’, strikes closely to Henry’s theory, particularly in terms of the phenomena of the world as being experienced via the immediacy of the self internally. Henry claims that this internal immediacy is ‘pure subjectivity’, and the relation of the body is an external reality to itself. In

²² M. Gooding, *Abstract Art (Movements in Modern Art Series)* (Tate Publishing, 2001). p. 3

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 3, In this passage of the introduction, Henry does not directly state that within the work or theory of painting such knowledge is retained. Rather he puts this in the form of question, as expected in the context of an introduction, so as to entice the reader to follow his explication and thesis development. However, this is would seem to be a grounding of the notion of abstraction; a theory of painting doubling as a theory of knowledge.

²⁴ Mel Gooding, *Abstract Art*, (London: Tate Publishing, 2001) p. 6

other words, for Henry the body's orientation to the world is not the immediacy of our apprehension of the world, but instead, the body is analogous to other objects.²⁵

Internal and External: The Invisible and the Body

Similar to Kandinsky's theory, Henry regards the body as being something external, and yet the situated centre of an internal and profound Being. In the same regards, the body is given externally as it is an object open to the possibility of phenomena. Gooding explains that the development of abstract art included a particular tone on a distinct intuitive research, one undertaken by artists to employ a respective abstract visual language to express the 'dynamic relations between objects'.²⁶ Bergson theorized this clearly, maintaining that perception given by the material world is related to the representational images that are then reflected back to the world of images. From within this process, as the faculty of intellect is oriented to choice of actions, it enables a selectivity from among perceptions, a reflective analysis of perceptions, and thereby, the distilling of images from the perceptual field of images. For Bergson, abstraction occurs from the interchange of perceptions from the experience of consciousness with matter, whereby images, as cut out from the continuity of images by the process of articulation of consciousness, are then recomposed according to conscious reflection upon the real. Bergson explains that

Then setting out from ideas, -that is to say, from abstract relations, -we materialize them imaginatively in hypothetical words which try whether they can cover exactly what we see and hear. Interpretation is therefore, in reality, reconstruction. A slight contact with images actually perceived throws abstract thinking into a definite direction. The abstract thought then develops into complete images, merely represented, which in their turn come and touch the perceived images, follow them as they go along, endeavor to coalesce with them. Where coincidence is perfect, the perception is perfectly interpreted.²⁷

²⁵ Michel Henry. *Seeing The Invisible: On Kandinsky*(Voir L'Invisible), trans. by Scott Davidson, (London Continuum 2009), p. 5

²⁶ Mel Gooding, *Abstract Art*, (London: Tate Publishing, 2001) p. 7

²⁷ *ME*. pp. 207-208. This offers a theoretical basis for comparison with the theoretical perspective adopted with Cubist painting.

Here, Bergson is relating abstract relations to processes of imagination. Similarly, both Kandinsky's and Henry's view of the internal/external dichotomy of experience, also parallels Bergson's view of reality. However, Henry's analysis suggests that Kandinsky's meaning of the term 'external' is synonymous with the notion of how things appear or even 'manifests itself to us'. It is with an outlook of the immanence of life that Henry regards the predication of life in terms of manifesting itself. By this Henry claims that the external experience of a thing is due to being exterior and positioned 'before our regard'.²⁸ Gooding holds a similar view stating that, 'Abstract art, even more than representational art, demands the actual encounter, the sensation of the thing itself.'²⁹

Bergson insists that the representational element of our engagement with the world may betray the immediacy and direct contact of the world as through the intuitive

experience. This offers a conceptual view with linkage to Kandinsky's sense of the non-representational in painting. For both Bergson and Kandinsky, representation is a function of consciousness in the field of perception. For Bergson, representation is the work of the intellect, to carve out an image from among the indefinite and continuous images given in perception. It is the arrangement of an image to reflect the isolation of images from the continuous flow of images. In a word, for Bergson ideas and representation result from the selection of consciousness, and reflection of consciousness, from within the flow of reality. Thinking is an engagement with the flow of reality, it is the movement of reflective consciousness, so that, the representational and schematic quality of a thing is by the contraction of images, from the apprehension and distillation of reality. For Bergson, it is through a type of expulsion of thought that the intuitive experience can be actualised.

²⁸ Michel Henry, *Seeing the Invisible*, (London Continuum, 2009), p. 6, here Henry seems to be equating a type of knowing to visibility.

²⁹ Mel Gooding, *Abstract Art*, (London: Tate Publishing, 2001), p. 11

According to his theory, the effort of intellect can move a particular ordered system or arrangement of ideas through different planes of consciousness to a final image. In other words, through effort the intellect selects and extracts images from the flow of reality, and by the concentration of arrangement and formulation from different tensions of consciousness, the intellect abstracts from within the images of the reality.³⁰

Abstraction as Presentation

Gooding explains that, in the practice of the early developments of abstract art, the work of abstraction was not based on what could be seen, but aimed at expressing the vibratory ‘energy’ within things. He suggests that this energy was considered as a higher order of connectivity between phenomena, and not explicitly invisible, it was regarded as an ever-present spiritual energy, which ‘animates the universe

Independent of the objects through which it moves.’³¹ Whether in terms of ‘a Spiritual energy’ or as ‘the invisible life’, both Gooding and Henry, highlight the theoretical developments of abstraction that suggest the interconnectivity of phenomena, and the immediate relation of subjects to objects. We take both perspectives to return to a Bergsonian view, that it is life that is compared to an impulsion or to the impetus of things. He regarded life in itself to be an immensity of potentiality from which its own growth was to overcome repetition, to proceed from change to evolving change.

In this sense, for Bergson, life is the progression of multiple tendencies, but only regarded by consciousness as outside of each other. In this sense, life is a creative force, such that the movements of this force are made distinct, articulated, and spatialized, by the contact with matter. However, as life is continuously creative and developing from itself in contact with matter, its

³⁰ ME. pp. 210-214.

³¹ Mel Gooding, *Abstract Art*, (London: Tate Publishing, 2001), p. 15

evolution proceeds through matter, but, its energy is expended on matter. For Bergson, matter determines the dissociation of life, and though it is that which makes evident the divisions and discrete expressions of the forces of life, its changing nature requires the change of matter. In other words, the potential of life is the individuation of perception by the encounter of activity with the material world. However, as consciousness is the content of life, affecting the expressions of its experiences, the division of life is also from its own inclination.³²

Furthermore, according to some of the earliest paintings and theories that followed from the abstract designation, painting is regarded as a 'showing', i.e. 'showing' that allows for us to see that which is 'not seen and cannot be seen'. He suggests that if the 'means' of painting are 'objective determinations', and by this he means that since lines, colour, and planes are of 'real being' (external, visible reality), but as they are also referred to from the internal, invisible subjectivity, then 'the ontological homogeneity' of both 'content' and the 'means' of painting may be re-established.³³ Henry indicates that by the notion of 'abstraction' in Kandinsky's work, the content of painting is thought to be derived from an internal domain. For Henry, as the dimension of interiority is equitable with life, this means that life, by its living, is itself 'abstract'.³⁴

Abstraction as Representation

For Henry, the 'content' and 'means' are the essence of painting, as these are from the 'dimension of 'Being' itself'. The concept of 'abstraction' in painting has been equated to an activity of life. Henry's notion of 'abstract' has a broader meaning from which an application of the concept of abstraction

³² CE, p. 273

³³ Michel Henry, *Seeing the Invisible* (London Continuum, 2009) p. 11

³⁴ Ibid. p. 11, Henry presents this as a 'Kandinskian equation', that is 'Interior=Interiority=invisible=life=pathos=abstract. This is as much of conceptual equation as it is diagrammatic model, illustrative of Henry's phenomenology.

is given to the process of painting. And though, recent developments of painting continue to presume abstraction as a conceptual reduction or as a departure from the physicality of the painting mediate, 'abstract painting' like other painting is based on the outlook of painting as a mode of presentation, i.e. as a means of offering a view of reality back to the world. This is the Henrian elucidation of what Kandinsky meant by abstraction. However, Kandinsky's view of the process of painting, suggests that it was the visual means of an *elaboration of the non-representational*. In this sense, Kandinsky considered painting as a mode of spiritual expansion through material means, a way of visual experience to be an encounter with the more profound depth of reality.

From Kandinsky's theory we may argue that through painting *abstraction proceeds from the world*. We maintain by this abstraction as a condition that emerges from the painter's activity and the painting medium is a derivation from processes within the world. His theory of abstraction seeks to move against the view of painting as purely representational, and to coincide with a Bergsonian view, that by a condition of abstraction, the process of painting is at once the potential for a painter's activity and the painting medium to occur uniquely, as simultaneous presenting of life's experience to material change. Though, Henry argues that the emphasis has remained on external reality in painting, so that the 'object dictates the rules of its deconstruction as well as its reconstruction', in Bergsonian terms, we consider the living presence of the process to be an engagement of the experiences of sensation immediate the perceptions given by the medium. In other words, as abstractive qualities in painting have been regarded as a view of an object in terms of either increased or diminished perspective, we regard the condition of abstractions as offering the simultaneous experience of thinking differently, and the reality of life's change through the encounter of the actuality in its expressions. We argue that modes of abstraction in painting allow for the unfolding of life through intellectual structuring articulated by the reflections of consciousness

in the painting medium.

Kandinsky's concept of abstraction was not based on the relation of the visible experiences, or the pursuits of an 'object's true nature', or a sense of the essential,

i.e. 'true nature of visibility'. Henry explains that Kandinsky's view of abstraction held that painting is the pursuit of a visible 'objectivity' of the world, and hence, 'a return to pure perception'. Accordingly, for Kandinsky the problem of painting is pictorial representation, to the extent that his conception of abstraction begins not with the problems of objectivity, or with *the world to be represented*, but instead with the problem of *the object in itself*. Henry claims that the work of Kandinsky's abstraction was of the 'abstract content', that is, the 'ceaseless' invisible life and its continual emergence 'into itself' is the 'living essence' provided in the content of painting.³⁵ By this, Henry is suggesting that to be 'abstract', does not simply refer to a process of simplification, isolation, or complication, but instead, it refers to the expressing of the 'pathetic profusion of 'Being''. Here again, Henry's commitment to a Phenomenological view of the world means that his interpretation of Kandinsky is cast in terms of life as a subject to life as its own object. In other words, Henry's ontological approach to Kandinsky's theory of abstraction already assumes a self-affective realisation of life through its experience towards its expression.

However, this is not so different from Bergson's view of the *élan vital* of life, that is, from the endlessly creative change that necessarily defines the passage, progression, and ultimately, the evolution of life. Nonetheless, for Bergson abstraction already assumes a complexity of life, that is, a dynamic development of consciousness from the degree of dilation of images or expansion of images, from the conscious orientation to a pure memory or pure perception. From the following passage, we can see Bergson's articulation of

³⁵ Michel Henry, *Seeing the Invisible* (London Continuum, 2009). p. 16

the complexity of the intellect and representation with the function of memory, i.e. past experience, as a means of generating novel ideas, he explains,

The scheme is tentatively what the image is decisively. It presents in terms of becoming, dynamically, what the images give us statically as already made. Present and acting in the work of calling up images, it draws back and disappears behind the images once evoked, its work being then accomplished. The image, with its fixed outline, pictures what has been. A mind working only with images could but recommence its past or arrange the congealed elements of the past, like pieces of mosaic, in another order. But for a flexible mind, capable of utilizing its past experience by bending it back along the lines of the present, there must, besides the image, be an idea of a different kind, always capable of being realized into images, but distinct from them. The scheme is nothing else.³⁶

Here Bergson is elaborating on the becoming of images in terms of the modes of arrangements, the faculties of mental organisation, and the process of reflective consciousness towards conceptualization. He explains accordingly, that it is a type of ‘bending back’ of memory and the images of experience within the present situation of conscious perception, that a difference of images occurs within the real as a realisation of the ‘flexible mind’, so that a difference of images is brought into an immediacy of the present occurrence of the continuity of images. We regard this description of the schematic form of mind in relation to present images, in terms of Bergson’s theory of the abstraction of intellectual reflection, as a model for occurrences of abstraction in the process of painting. I see this similar to Henry’s claim, where he suggests that the greatest of painters and artists in general, have both lived and presented art to the extent that it conveyed a ‘mode of metaphysical knowledge’.³⁷ In these instances art was regarded as a means to acquire knowledge by passing beyond or looking into the visible and the appearance of things and in doing so, ‘passing behind’ the material surface of reality. In this sense the individual discovers the ‘mystery of things, the secret of the

³⁶ ME. pp. 227-228

³⁷ Ibid., p. 18

universe'.³⁸ However, in the above passage, Bergson explains that intuition is a process of consciousness 'bending back' from its course of attention towards the immediacy of action, and thereby allowing for the reflection of experience, and the virtual image to be reinserted into the present, actualised as novel images made different and distinct from an initial representation.

Explaining the difference of Kandinsky's early abstract expressionist works to the different developments during his career at the Bauhaus, Gooding states, 'A painting is more than a picture of those forces that shape external reality and that make the world and the universe what it is; it is, rather, an enactment of them'.³⁹ According to this notion of 'enactment', Gooding suggests that Kandinsky thinks these 'forces' should not only be identified by aesthetic value and aesthetic considerations, but more so, aesthetics and aesthetic production should be considered as the result from the affective process of these 'forces' becoming. Here again we may draw comparisons to Bergson's notion of the abstraction of thought from the context of the progression and evolutionary passage of life. Where Kandinsky describes the 'inner necessity' of the painter towards expression of painting, and this in relation to abstraction, he is not suggesting a transcendental and immaterial process detached from the body, but rather, the living emotions, the continuity of memory, and the bodily and sensorial responses immediate to the materiality of the world. As Henry regards 'the essential truth' to be that the true reality is the invisible, our 'radical subjectivity is this reality', and therefore, that this reality is the content of art from which art is the constant attempt to express the abstraction of life itself.⁴⁰ Henry then restates that the means of representing the abstract content, as both external and visible, may be understood as an externalization, namely, a 'materialization' of the invisible.⁴¹ This is similar to Bergson's view of the movement and evolution of life as a gradual passage, proceeding from the actual and material to the

³⁸ Mel Gooding, *Abstract Art*, (London: Tate Publishing, 2001), p. 26

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 18

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 21

⁴¹ Michel Henry, *Seeing the Invisible*, (London Continuum, 2009) p. 21

experience and states,

This operation, which is the very operation of life, consists in the gradual passage from the less realized to the more realized, from the intensive to the extensive, from a reciprocal implication of parts to their juxtaposition. Intellectual effort is something of this kind. In analyzing it, I have pressed as far as I could, on the simplest and at the same time the most abstract example, the growing materialization of the immaterial which is characteristic of vital activity.⁴²

Here, Bergson's explanation is clearly elaborating on the psychological growth of life in relation to the material universe. This description resounds with Kandinsky's notion of the spiritual evolution through art. Henry explains that Kandinsky's view of abstraction held that life is an increasing realisation of itself through material means, and hence, a spiritual development through the materialisation of painting. And this brings us back to Bergson, who suggests that the operation of life from the inner domain to the projection of its expression in the outer domain, is a process of the actualisation of its influence, and the continuous change of evolution.

For Henry argues that the definition of a work of art is the externalization, the visible manifestation of the invisible, abstract content. Hence, the artwork is the confluence, and 'the inseparable joining together' of the first and second elements, the content and the means, the internal and the external. Henry suggests that this 'fusion' of the 'internal' and 'external' may be made clearer.⁴³ Though this view privileges the external, material form of artwork, this is one way of understanding the fusion of the 'content' and the 'means'. Henry explains that, in this regard, Kandinsky is in opposition. Kandinsky does not regard the 'radical interiority of subjectivity' as a 'virtuality', 'abstract' in the sense that it is devoid of reality, and therefore dependent upon external elements to become real. Rather, Henry explains that Kandinsky

⁴² *ME*, p. 230

⁴³ Michel Henry, *Seeing the Invisible* (London Continuum 2009), p. 23, Note: This may be an place for the insertion of Brian Massumi's analysis of virtuality, and pending further research, commentary on a Hegelian position in regards to interiority vs. exteriority, and the value of subjectivity.

would hold that 'subjectivity defines this reality', that is, there is a plenitude of being, through which the growth, and thereby expression of life is total. Still, Henry furthers the notion of the centrality of subjectivity, suggesting that the exteriority of the art work 'borrows its content' from the subjectivity of life, that is, the exteriority of the artwork is the concentration of the determinant interiority. Here, Henry has radicalised Kandinsky's theories to mean that the inner tension as a spiritual reserve in the painter, as a means for perceiving and sensorial experience to be one in the same, is the occurrence of an individual manifestation of life.

We do not follow Henry's interpretation to its fullest extent, particularly as he admits that the subjective condition is an 'interiority'. Rather, in Bergsonian terms, we understand that a particular sense of subjectivity may be attributed to the painter, but only in so far as the painter is a living centre of images, and thereby a 'conditional' subjectivity by the actualisation of experience from the condition of images given by the materiality of the process. In Bergsonian terms the totality of images in duration as an ever occurring present is anterior to the being of the subject? In other words, Henry's notion of subjectivity particular to the process of painting is resolutely a notion of life referring to its own self through the medium. Whereas, from Bergson's perspective, the consciousness of the painter is an individuated process of life, and as a living centre of images, is subjective, in so far as this subjectivity is subject to the conditions of the material images.⁴⁴

Intellectual Effort of Abstraction

We now turn back to Bergson's discussion of the effort of *intellection*. Though intellection is 'the effort we have to put forward in order to comprehend and interpret', it is also the continuous condition of the overall operations of mental life. Whether the degree of exertion of such effort is either that of the lower order, such as simple motor functions, or of the higher

⁴⁴ J. Mullarkey, 'The psycho-physics of phenomenology: Bergson and Henry'.

order, such that the condition of mind is a concentration on the higher planes of consciousness as that in 'imaged idea', intellection is of both kinds. Of the former of these, intellection is a basic form of Interpreting confronted perception, and is usually manifest in some automatic response.⁴⁵ For example, an object perceived is immediately associated with its function or the custom of its use, and as this occurs with little or no delay, it would seem to be innate and therefore an automatic form of intellection. Language in conversation is another example by which the mind 'remains on one and the same 'plane of consciousness', and this is demonstrated when we speak. The word order and compatibility flow with ease as the intelligence is not concerned with the distinction and assemblage of each word to the letter, but is rather relaxed, and so speaking comes as a successive movement.

However, what Bergson regards as 'true intellection', is the dual movement of the mind between images of perception and the meaning, or the association of idea.⁴⁶ By this he means that the specific direction or even point of origin for this movement between image and meaning begins with the abstract idea.⁴⁷ For example, by reading a text, we follow the parts of a sentence to obtain its expression. From a correlation of expressions we derive an abstract idea. The abstraction is of the collective parts in relation to the assemblage of expressions conveyed.⁴⁸ In a similar sense, Bergson maintains that perceptions, such as hearing and seeing, are given form only through the preceding of ideas.⁴⁹ Hence, pure memory as a higher plane of consciousness is not of distinct images but, through the vertical or descending movement of mind to the attention of perception, 'slips into it and supplies most of its content'.⁵⁰ In this sense, the effort of intellection is characterized as a type of interpretation, a process of understanding, and the dual or reciprocal movement between memory and concrete perceptions to abstract ideas.

⁴⁵ Ibid. pp. 163-164

⁴⁶ Ibid. pp. 164-165

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 165

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 165

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 165

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 166

Furthermore, since the idea or the meaning is 'before everything', the operation of intellection is primarily the descending of mind as compelled by the force of pure memory. Hence, intellection is the engagement of abstract ideas, as a process of dissociation of images from the content of the continuity of images, to be reintegrated back to the immediacy of images. This suggests that image-ideas are extractions from the flow of reality, but by their very abstraction, they are formations of percept-image and concept images that enhance the mutual reverberation and reconstruction of images as a dynamic process of thinking and perceiving affected by the perceptual field and returning to the flow of perception-images.

Image of an Image

Bergson claims that the abstraction of thought is the result of pure memory, as this is represented or is 'imaged idea'. In other words, intellection is a type of medium, by which we, 'come and touch the perceived images'.⁵¹ Accordingly, the mind is a dynamic component in the flux of images as it is a conduit, receptor, or agent for the direction of further contact of abstract thought (hypothetically disembodied) with the images of sensory perception. In short, Bergson maintains that intellection is interpretation, interpretation is reconstruction, and in the process of these, the mind *within* and *of* abstract ideas descends through planes of consciousness, and then makes contact with sensory perception. Hence the essence of Bergson's broader thesis, that of the *relation* of mind to matter, is predicated on the presence of memory, as immanent to living.

Voluntary attention or mental effort is accompanied by a type of 'pre-perception', that is, an anticipated 'image' and the precedent of meaning prior to the perceived images to which such meaning would be ascribed. It is to say then, that attention in general is a result of the 'projection of images' emanating from a pre-image impulse. This impulse affectively coalesces with

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 167

images in such a manner that a descension through a strata of consciousness occurs towards perception.⁵² In other words, attention is effective insofar as it serves to ‘intensify the image’, or as it is an ‘enrichment of perception’.⁵³ Perception is then, not simply the process of receiving images in succession, but rather, the rapid oscillation of attention. From this movement of images there is the issuing of the schematic idea, wherein the relations of the images is designated a meaning. Hence, comprehension of what is perceived, or paying attention to what is perceived, is the development of the idea through the images.⁵⁴ Bergson reaffirms this by explaining that towards schematic idea the feeling of intellectual effort comes from the concentration of consciousness and the process of the formulation from images as a ‘continuous transformation of abstract relations’.⁵⁵

In order to verify this claim, Bergson maintains that invention is an example of the ‘highest forms of intellectual effort’.⁵⁶ Influenced by Ribot’s theories, Bergson suggests that effort toward the invention of ideas and concepts may be characterized as a retrograde of mind. He describes this as the movement from an entire system of images, maintained over a ‘thread of means’ so as to discover the ‘composition of elements’, that is, the differing images that compose the whole. However, such a preconception is not entirely whole or complete without the parts or the individual images. Therefore the art of invention is the affirming of the function of abstract thinking, and hence, the effort of intellectual work, in terms of the struggle to convert the whole or the scheme, into the subordinate parts or the concrete images. According to Bergson, invention is no less than a dynamic process whereby, the schematic idea becomes an imaged idea. In other words from the example of invention, the preconception of the inventor evokes in the mind, through trial and error, the discovery of those pieces that will ‘realize’ the whole, the resultant form

⁵² Ibid. p. 169

⁵³ Ibid. p. 169

⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 169

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 169

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 170

of what was initially abstract thinking.⁵⁷ The same may be said about the compositional works of musicians or writers. In both cases the artists are compelled by an otherwise abstract idea or ‘impression’. However, Bergson claims that this initial impression does not remain unchanged. Through the schematic idea, the operation by which the incorporeal becomes materialized, the idea is ‘modified by the very images which it endeavors to be filled in’.⁵⁸ By this, Bergson maintains that a pure memory is the impetus of invention, creativity, inspiration, etc., and the artists or the agent of intellectual effort, is the vehicle through which scheme affects image and in turn the image reverberates and modifies the process of the vertical movement.

Inner Necessity and Abstraction

Though, Bergson’s view of abstraction is related to the development of mind through the efforts of the consciousness of the individual, this situationism of consciousness, is also important for Kandinsky’s claims of the role of the painter in the abstraction. Kandinsky suggests a similar descriptor of the subjective condition in terms of the ‘unalterable law of art’. Accordingly, by ‘inner necessity’ means that it is the necessity of the living form to be determined by the invisible forces of its own becoming, so that internal conditions (i.e. conditions of life individuated), are relational to the totality of movements of life. In this way, it follows that the construction of the external world, the ‘material elements’, as these are dependent and subordinate in relation to the form, are located in a ‘spiritual reality, situated within our being’.⁵⁹ In other words, the internal is the experience of art, returning to the continuum of life, and by the determinative and recognizant nature of the process of art, it is therefore, the sole principle of aesthetic creation. Furthermore, this ‘inner necessity’ is an ‘absolute necessity’ for the freedom of form in art. Kandinsky indicates this interrelation of an inner necessity with

⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 170 -171

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 171

⁵⁹ Michel Henry, *Seeing the Invisible*, (London Continuum, 2009) p. 25

an outward manifestation of spiritual growth, stating,

Consciously or unconsciously, artists turn gradually toward and emphasis on their materials, examining them spiritually, weighing in the balance the inner worth of those elements out of which their art is best suited to create.⁶⁰

Here Kandinsky expresses the notion of the creative drive of artists, and the spiritual view of the material means for the expression, and thereby, conflating the view of an inner domain to the spiritual elements in both the artist and the material, and thereby, a dual relation of interiorities affective to each other for spiritual growth.

Abstraction and Progression

This is consistent with Gooding's overall analysis of the history of abstract art, suggesting that it is not only art moving from representation to abstraction so as to reveal aspects of reality that seems inaccessible to earlier forms. But instead, abstraction is the affective relation of life, by way of internal necessity and hence, the subjective condition to the appearance of things, the visible, and in relation to the external world. It is for this matter that abstraction may be regarded as a progression of art, in terms of the turn of experience, marked by its expressions that reveal through the activities charged by the proximity to the source of experience. The result is the creation of new forms, issuing from the deeper relations between the inner nature of the artist, and the material things of the painting process. This is closely related with Bergson, where difference in nature occur only on the side of duration, by which duration is itself is the process of continuous presence-ing in which all things vary qualitatively through time. However, Henry claims that Kandinsky's theory of abstraction resolved the subordination of the object to subject, or of a subjective condition of the painter to his objective depiction of the world. Instead, he claims that

⁶⁰ Wassily Kandinsky. *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*, ed. by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo, (Da Capo Press, New York: 1994), p. 153

Kandinsky not only resisted the measurement of art according to the visible world and its laws, but his inventions contradicted representation, such that the distinction of the painter to the materiality of painting began gradually to dissolve more and more.⁶¹ Simply put, the material becoming of painting is itself the immediate expression emerging first from the subjective condition, the inner necessity of abstraction, the movement of life. Here again, we argue that this is in accord with Bergson's view of consciousness as its object immediate to the continuity of images in duration.

Abstraction through Time

Now we turn our attention to more recent theoretical considerations of abstraction so that we further our comparisons that indicate the importance of a Bergsonian philosophy of process that emphasizes the 'turn of experience' with Kandinskian theories of abstraction. It is to Greenberg's theory of abstraction, that Benjamin asserts that abstraction is more philosophically privileged than other conceptualisations because of its link with the iteration of becoming.⁶² Although, abstraction is not a break with traditional representational painting, in that, the space of abstraction is irreducible to representational space, Benjamin claims that because painting and time are of a complex relationship, questions of the development of art, are themselves of the process of abstraction, and reveal the nature of the present.⁶³ However, Benjamin also indicates that according to Greenberg's general conception, contextualising abstraction in terms of modernism may be a limited interpretation of abstraction in art. For Greenberg, the development of theories of abstraction in terms of the non-representational, stemmed from the rejection of the modernist view of both the 'aesthetic autonomy' and the role of painting as a material analogue to visual change. His commentary places

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31

⁶² Andrew Benjamin, *Art, Mimesis, and The Avant-Garde*, Routledge, London and New York, 1991, pp. 1, 29, 32-38.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 8 More detail will be given particularly in terms of Benjamin's theory of 'presence' and 'givenness'

emphasis on the process of engagement with the material, and thereby, the turn of conceptual priorities to the process as itself the conditions of communication and exchange oriented to the medium specificity.⁶⁴ Benjamin argues that contrary to Greenbergian analysis, we should extend abstraction beyond its contextualisation of conceptual change in modernism, and to consider the understanding of abstraction by recognising its present interarticulation with claims about time. For our concern about the nature of abstraction related to the turn of painterly experience, Benjamin's claims offer support, particularly as his analysis argues for the ontologization of abstraction such that it is a primordial connection of painting with time. This is not only a supportive detail from a contemporary philosophical view that may be folded into a Bergsonian interpretation, but it also coincides with the Henrian view of the pathos life, as necessarily a condition of living experience, so that a condition of abstraction is the revealing of life to its own encounter. In other words, abstraction is a specific quality of experience, so that in a philosophy of painting we must continue the question of abstraction in terms of the process of painting, as an experiential process, continuous with the material actualisations the expressions of activities revealing difference to the present.⁶⁵ In short, the developments of abstraction as a process within the development of art are situated in relation to an interrelation of processes of time, such that the process of painting, as itself a means for the difference of life through its expressions, is abstraction immanent to its becoming.⁶⁶

However, within Greenberg's analysis, there is the connection made between

⁶⁴ Z. Kocur and S. Leung, 'Theory in contemporary art since 1985'.pp. 279-280

⁶⁵ Wassily Kandinsky. *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*, ed. by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo, (Da Capo Press, New York: 1994), p. 153 'Temporality' and 'historical time', are pivot concepts for Benjamin, in the sense that they situate abstraction in a material ontology of becoming. For our concerns, we compare evaluate this according to Bergson's notion of abstraction, that is as the emergence of difference of images of thought, from the bending of mind back on itself, as an inflection of life towards its creative and endless change.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9 More detail to come on this notion of an 'economy of abstraction' following Benjamin's preliminary developments.

the sensuous and the ‘at-onceness’ of abstract art. The consequence of this is the claim that with the encounter with work of art the viewer is ‘summoned and gathered into one point in the continuum of duration. ‘In other words, for Benjamin, the art object maintains and contains a ‘singular temporality’, one that is linked to the activity of viewing, so that it also satisfies the demand ‘to be given immediately. However, for Greenberg, this means linking this identification of another source of signification to ‘the immediacy, or ‘at-onceness’, of the object’.⁶⁷ Although, Greenberg’s view from this notion of the ‘co-presence’ of the art work in time, his view is that the art work is ‘singular and thus received as a singularity at one and the same time’. For Benjamin, the work of art, that is, the ontic qualities of being and doing, allow the work of art to be subsumed in a temporal context, as an object of becoming, that is, as that which opens up ‘the economy of abstraction’.⁶⁸

In view of this, Osbourne turns to the content of each perspective, asking of ‘the relationship of abstraction to expression’.⁶⁹ He explains that the early movement of abstraction was rooted on ‘Neo-Platonic metaphysical realism’, based on the search for spiritual values, and because of this, he claims that the ‘act of painting’ was regarded as ‘the expression of spiritual values’.⁷⁰ Through this continual exploration, experimentation, and development of painting based on a ‘spiritual’ emphasis, the quality of the ‘spiritual’, as Osbourne suggests, progressively becomes weaker. Overall, Osbourne indicates that according to this multifaceted perspective with the early perspectives of abstract art, ‘Abstraction pre-figuratively expresses an ideal transcendence, through, but not, in the act of painting’. However this is a distinction between the abstraction of Mondrian and Malevich, and this differs from Kandinsky’s in the sense of the spiritual categorization of abstraction.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 13. cf. Michel Henry’s theory of the ‘invisible’ as a condition of life.

⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 13

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 63

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 63

Concerning singularity, though it appears that ‘single texture’ and ‘at once-ness’ are solely temporal terms, Benjamin explains that they are spatial designations with a temporal correlate. He suggests that the time in question is the instant; the time in which what there is ‘all there at once’. And still, what allows for giving and receiving to take place at this point in time is the interior of the frame containing a ‘single texture’. In short, singularity is the presence of a singular space, so that, singularity of space interplays with the singularity of time. A move against, what he regards as the conflation of space and time, Benjamin claims that the former is the precondition that governs the latter.⁷¹ Furthermore, recalling Greenberg’s reference to an ontology of painting, according to his formulation of ‘being and doing’, Benjamin suggests that art works have a greater complexity than that which is given in the simultaneity of giving and receiving. That is to say, the presence of this complexity means that the possibility of immediacy is an occurring secondary effect of a ‘more complex set-up’.⁷²

Beyond Reduction: Abstraction as Growth and Event

The consequence that follows from this is the recasting of notions of ‘mind’ and the redefinition of the ‘eye’. In the first place, abstraction having been freed from the work of negation, but now we are presented with the necessity to hold to the presence of a complex ontology, as this is the basis for any description of the art work, and the singularity of the activity and work of art. Benjamin states, ‘Once the question of painting-here abstraction- is posed beyond the hold of simple reductions, then the inherent difficulty of the question ‘what is abstraction’, must be allowed to endure’. What can be seen from this, as touched upon throughout the preceding development of his position, is that Benjamin must remain faithful to this ‘complex’ material ontology, one that seems to engender a sense of the autonomy of abstraction,

⁷¹ Ibid. p. 22

⁷² Ibid. p. 27

a non-personal and subjectively devoid process of becoming. The resistance to any consideration of the subjective role of the artist, viewer, critic in the activity of art, the identifying as such as ‘simple reduction’ which close down the possibility of art, these seem to stem from a rather unorthodox view. Where he regards abstraction as a ‘staged encounter’, we understand this to mean that abstraction is itself a reflexive becoming in the process of painting. Here, we take the points of both Osbourne and Benjamin as not only paralleling Henry’s theory of material phenomenology, but more specifically, complementing his notion of ‘content’ and ‘forms’ of abstraction.

However, for Benjamin ‘time’ is the lynchpin in the sense that it is involved in the movement of both elements, time at work in the work of interpretation of the painting, as well as time at work in immediate work of painting. In view of this, Benjamin’s theory of the work of art, suggests the painting process is a temporal context, from which forms of thinking emerge. According to Benjamin, abstraction is the activity of the process of painting, such that the ‘art’s work’, is an impersonal, non-subjective, pluralistic movement of the process. Moreover, Benjamin’s most direct claim to his own question ‘what is abstraction?’ is that painting activities are continuously given in the process, and therefore, abstractions ‘have been given’, within its own becoming.⁷³ We take Benjamin’s analysis as support to further a Bergsonian theory of abstraction, by which we mean, a quality of the continuously becoming nature of painting, immanent to the turn of its experience, through its process in time.

Conclusion

Art history and the projections of contemporary art theory are testament to the conceptual developments in the Modernist period. It is no less excessive, to highlight the importance of the theories and philosophical considerations of

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 27 Here Benjamin offers an endnote indicating that he has developed a theory of the event, but this is presented in another work, ‘The Plural Event’.

the concept of abstraction. We have considered the concept from Bergson's philosophy of the becoming of reality according to a plurality of levels of existence and the ontology of images to designate the existential significance of images in abstraction within the process of painting. We argued that what is most significant about the concept, is that it may be investigated in the philosophical attendance to the experiences most immediate to the expressive practices in painting, as well as being regarded in terms of the temporal rhythms of occasion the change of the visual and actual painted image. Art theory records 'abstract painting' as a style of art that sees form and colour as full expressions, and regards the notion of abstraction as an idiom and equally as an aesthetic value of a period in the history of painting in which painting becomes distinct from the naturalistic portrayal of the world. What history records supports our view, looking towards the identification of philosophies of becoming in the process of painting, that painting is the potential for the abstraction of life, and the capacity for differentiation of visual and painterly developments. From this context, in this chapter we advanced further from the underlying development of a process based image ontology to argue that abstraction is a progression of images, as equally a psychological evolution through conscious reflection and a material differentiation in the enactment of abstractive experience in the painting application. In this regard, we considered a Bergsonian theory of abstraction as an extension of Bergson's ontology of images, describing abstraction as dynamic property of immediate to the expansion of experience, and particular to painting, immanent to the expressions of the process. By this we considered an extension of a Bergsonian theory of abstraction in connection with Kandinskian informed notion of abstraction, namely that by abstract, we are dealing with a 'spiritual' growth, as a development of the living and vital forces of reality', such that these emerge from the actualisation of painterly experiences through the intertwining of the painter's 'inner tonality' with the reverberations and harmonic effect of the materiality of painting. In both instances of Bergsonian and Kandinskian approaches to abstraction, we see abstraction as the

atmosphere of change, immanent to the becoming of the life in the living visual forms of painting.

In the previous chapter, we dealt with Bergson's concept of movement, so that in this chapter the concept of abstraction is regarded as literally a natural progression, to that extent that Bergson describes both abstraction and the evolution of consciousness as a complex interchange of patterns of thought in terms of the divergence generated by the movement of thinking bending back to thoughts of experience.⁷⁴ However, it is through a reading of Henry, and his consideration of the role of abstraction in Kandinsky's painting, that we are able to bring the view of the 'animation of painting' in terms of the experience of life experiencing itself back towards a Bergsonian conception of change and evolving nature of life as immanent to time. In other words, through a mediation of Henry's theory, a theory that rejects notions of 'intentionality' and privileges the 'object', we regarded abstraction from both Bergson and Kandinsky as a principle of change, a radical shift of difference from the affective resonance of experience immediate to the living contact of expression.⁷⁵ For Bergson, abstraction is a mode of extraction of images, and the impoverishment of perception, but only in so far as it is the potential of conscious reflection to bring the experience to bear on the immediacy of the material world, and thereby, the difference of expressions according to experience continuously adapting to flux of duration. Here movement is considered as a relation to the series of thoughts in the process of thinking, a process which 'unrolls itself in a chain of abstract reasoning'. From the previous chapter's discussion of the concept of movement, we see the kinesthetic quality of abstraction evident in painting, such that movement and thinking are necessary in the activity of rendering paintings.

⁷⁴ John Mullarkey, *Bergson and Philosophy*, Edinburgh University Press, 1999, pp. 181-183

⁷⁵ M. O'Sullivan, *Michel Henry: Incarnation, Barbarism, and Belief: an Introduction to the Work of Michel Henry* (Peter Lang, 2006). pp. 174-175

Here, the abstraction is at once an occurrence from among the development of thought and the coming into being of images. In this sense we are considering abstraction in terms of modes of differentiation among a process of images. This means that the condition of abstraction in painting is as much to do with the relation between the ‘unrolling’ of a painter’s thoughts as it is with the painting’s composition as ‘movements of locomotion’. Equally, and more specifically from a Bergsonian context the condition of abstraction is also with the relation between the painter’s acuity of perception in terms of difference of degrees of ‘attention to life’, (as Bergson states), and taken to support the activity of pictorial formulation. Bergsonian theory of painting must insist that by abstraction, the activities of the painter and the event of the art-image are as a mutual affect of the dissociation of images from the total strata of the flow of images, and the immobilisation of thoughts and bound to a concept of that involves the becoming of conceptual and perceptual forms. We have considered the concept of abstraction from Bergson’s philosophy, to then compare this view with the concept of abstraction in Kandinsky’s theory, in order to argue that from the process of painting, abstraction is a condition of *thinking as a difference of thought in the painting*. From Bergson’s view of the process of conceptualisation and percept-formulation emerging from the relation of movements of thinking in process, applied to the thinking in the context of painting, the correlation is the painter’s activity with the painting medium. We see how this view resonates with Kandinsky’s understanding of the indefinable appearance of the elements of painting proceeding from expressions in the painting process that echo ‘inner sounds’. Having developed our argument from the basis of Bergson’s theory of image, we argued that abstraction related to Bergson’s philosophy of change, by which the abstractive nature of the process of painting is immanent to its continuously changing forms. In other words, from the endlessly changing content of life, the process of painting as a living process necessarily changes by difference of movements occurring within passage of movements. However, we also argued that in the process of painting, the painter’s

perceptual experience together with the immediacy of his activity is the subjectivisation of movement and the concomitant immobilisations of images as an interstitial condition within time. This implies that the physical composition and plastic processes of painting are the result of reciprocal affects: from the correlating modes of perception and activity to the expressive content of material objects and the painted visual experience.⁷⁶ In this sense, we have argued that abstraction is a double movement of both the perception of consciousness and the material correspondence as mutually affective to each other. Specific to the activity of the process of painting, and that is from both psychical and material images becoming, the painted images, are as differing images persisting in a material expression. Here the double movements of perception related to painting are attributed to the immediate presence of perception, as the temporal quality of the activity, and the representation of the activity of the states of perception, as the spatial quality of the material objecthood of painting. With this double movement, in terms of painting as process continuously coming into being, as such the correlation of the perception in the activity and perception in the material image is an intersubjective state for abstraction. Furthermore, we indicated that the individuality of processes with the total reality of painting assumes abstraction, as the perception given to the activity is non- systematic growth of images *from the activity of painting and paintings as material compositions*.⁷⁷ And finally we argued that abstraction is then, of the creative *occurrences within the process*, resulting in the event of the painted image as a visual novelty. Therefore, from a principle view of an ontology of images, abstraction is the time of variation in the process of painting. Painting as a process of living experiences encountering the difference and change among the material application and the medium's actualisation of

⁷⁶ MM. p. 147. I base this claim on Bergson's explanation of the differing philosophical elaborations of existence in terms of a time, that is, reality as a self-sufficient flow or passage. In this way, all things are durations, coming-into-being, as opposed to the view of the continuity of qualities of mind and matter as a heterogenous flowing time.

⁷⁷ MM. p. 5

images, becomes through the abstraction of its identity, by force of the change immanent to the experience of its activities and the movement of its expressions.

Chapter 5 -Theory of Frame & Picture Plane

When a ray of light passes from one medium into another, it usually traverses it with a change of direction. [...] But, if we suppose centers of real, that is to say of spontaneous, activity, the rays which reach it, and which interest that activity, instead of passing through those centers, will appear to be reflected and thus indicate the outlines of the object which emits them. [...] This is as much to say that there is for images merely a difference of degree, and not of kind, between being and being consciously perceived.¹

A mass of hills in every conceivable, imaginable colour. Of all different sizes, but always the same shape, i.e.: Broad at the bottom, with swollen sides and rounded tops. Simple, ordinary hills, of the kind one always imagines and never sees. [...] I observed all this from above and request you likewise to look down on it from above.²

Introduction

In the process of painting the frame establishes a distinction, functions as an analogic device, and in the most literal sense, is a material boundary of the applications of the activities. The frame delimits a specific pictorial space which is otherwise envired by other non-specific material surfaces for the process of painting. The presence of the *frame* is itself a continual perspective, as it is an embodiment of an attitude of attention, directing experience towards the process of painting, and maintains a visual horizon for painterly activity and events. More often than not, the frame or the activity of fram-ing is regarded as a figurative or metaphorical expression of the direction of sight or see-ing. However idiomatic the notion of frame has become, we understand its specific definition as an actual, real thing, as the basis it's becoming source of philosophical speculation. The 'frame' is already the predication of the activities and the identities that we understand by it. In this regard, the frame is indicates something, and by doing so, it is the signification of something

¹ *MM*. p. 37

² Wassily Kandsinky, 'Hills', Sounds [Klänge]', (Munich, 1912), Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art. Ed. by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo. (Da Capo Press. New York 1994). pp. 295-296..

other than itself. In this chapter we will consider Bergson's theory of perception as a basis for a theory of contemporary theory of frame and its relation to a philosophy of duration attended by the practice of painting. However, it is from Derrida's theory of the frame that that we will ground our Bergsonian interpretation. Our strategy is to compare Bergson's theory of perception in terms of framing, with Kandinsky's view of the non-representational quality of painting, so that by this comparison we see that the becoming of painterly experience and the creation of novel expressive forms as being independent actualisations of becoming, immanent to the orientation of process of painting. Because Derrida's philosophy was concerned with the iterability of being, that is, the capacity of modes of signification of meaning according to the syntactically linked groups of signs without a dependence upon any specific reference or link to a codifying context, we see comparisons of Derridian thinking with the Bergsonian view of the indeterminate nature of thinking in process. More specifically, however, is that as Derrida regards the condition of iterability as the condition of any systematic activity that signifies, we consider the view of the difference of thinking, as already operating in our argument of the differing modes of philosophy (i.e. philosophy through painting). In painting, the process is and the reciprocity of its expressions are also a relation to the frame, such that the process is a proceeds according to the identity of the frame, an identification of painting which signifies its open and ever-evolving activity. In other words, the frame implies the becoming activity immanent to its own expression.

In this chapter, we will we will be using the gerundive expression of the term 'frame', to elaborate the consideration of the physical frame as a material structure that distinguishes the material planar surface, but also as a perceptual selection that orients the visual and attentive centrality of the actualizations of activities. The question of becoming in painting, furthered by the admission of the different modes of philosophy, compels us to question the frame's identity with the process of painting. In this way, our theory of the frame

supports a processual view of the activity of framing, by which the planar surface of the painting is transfixed from the materiality of the real, pronouncing the movement of consciousness to the contact of concrete perceptions. The framing process is embodied in the event and the expressions of the art-object, and though the physical frame marks the culmination and completion of the process of painting, the planar surface itself is intrinsically imbued with the qualities of situatedness, that is to say, the planar surface is the embodiment of the enframing of perceptual experience and the movement of conscious expressions as an embedding of images.³

Here we will rely on our reading of Derrida's study, *The Truth in Painting*, to understand the 'inframing of a frame', as this follows his elaboration of the logic of 'parergon'. Accordingly, we will attempt to return to a Bergsonian view of the painting process, by consideration of Derrida's insight of how the identity of the frame is related to both the activity of the contouring, selection, and delimiting of perception towards the painting, as well as the frame becoming part of the activity of the perception towards the process of painting.⁴ Follow his line of thought we will argue that the frame indicates multiple views, the varying perceptual takes of the material world, and the concentration of process of the painter's bodily activity in response to the conditions of perceptual selections. According to the view, we will regard the frame and its activity in terms of an ontological cut for the registering of the images projected by the painter's bodily presence and affected by the painting medium.⁵ In this regard, we will argue that the frame is a condition of mediation from among the flow of perceptions. Either as a physical boundary or as a mode of the activity perception, and that is to say, perceiving as a continuous process of framing, we will consider this dual nature of the frame. So in terms of both its physical and perceptual qualities, we will suggest that the frame is a particular threshold. As an actual or virtual 'windows', the

³ M. B. Hansen, *New philosophy for new media* (MIT press, 2004). p. 11-13

⁴ Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. by Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod, University of Chicago Press, 2nd ed., 1987

⁵ A. Friedberg, *The virtual window: from Alberti to Microsoft* (Taylor & Francis, 2008).p. 9

frame is the occurrence through which the possibility of a multiplicity of images are concentrated and presented. We recognize that the term frame operates in both literal and metaphoric registers. For on the one hand, a frame is the physical parameter of a pictorial image, regarded as a material boundary. On the other hand, the activity we associate with the frame, framing, is a discursive device, as a descriptor of our epistemic engagement with the visual field: as a caption, selection, and hence, directed attention. We will argue from Bergson's theory of perception towards a theory of frame, so as to argue that the demarcation of a surface is an ontological condition of the perception to affectivity in the process of painting. This is then necessarily connected to the planar surface. The frame and surface of the art-object, parallels the shifting of movements and the difference of durations. The frame is a material boundary and typically an adornment to indicate and highlight the static surface. However the actual activity of perceptions, as themselves a continuous enframing of images from the painter's activity, indicates the surface as already the site of affectivity and the occurrence of perceptions given by the painting medium. The aim of this conceptualisation is to connect Bergson's ontology of images, with the process of painting, by which this quality of framing is already in the surface, and that this activity inversely conditions the subjectivity of the painter by way of the, embodiment of expressive and creative extensions as given by the process of its event. Therefore, we regard the frame as both liminal activity of perception and spatial orientations by its materiality, so that the frame and the activity of framing are differences of degree of the realization of perceptions between the tension of material and mental processes, to the extent that the becoming-image is a corollary of the element of frame. Furthermore, the planar surface, the relation of the painter to the painting, is also the relation of a frame as an object, to the content of the framing image.

By considering the frame in terms of *process*, this already means that the frame is not only regarded according to a discourse of two-dimensional representation. Rather, concerned with framing as an active property of

visuality (i.e. *coming-to-see*, as a type of *seizing* through perception and comprehension), it is more accurate to think of in terms of unique material and conceptual qualities. Unique in the sense that it's material nature 'indicates' or 'marks the limits', and by showing as such, it is also a conceptual device marking transition. The qualities in tandem, suggests that the frame is to be considered in terms of both mental and material realities. Because of its unique qualities, we also regard the possibilities of the frame. In other words, with the frame regarded as a process of denotation, (i.e. an object and activity of focus), this implies that the frame is part of process towards actualization. For example, in the process of painting, the material frame grasps and thereby allows the occurrence of an affective 'open' for expression and the continual activity in painting.

The frame is regarded as both a characteristic of *mind* and material, and as a condition of images asserts an ontological identity. According to Bergson's theory of image, we associate the frame with the localizing of movements of the painting image, as something more than a description of single-point perspective. Therefore, we maintain a theory of frame within this context, beyond characterizations such as 'perspectival windows', or as, 'symbolic systems', as these only suggest a secondary field, a place that is more or less than the whole and undivided immanent plane.

An Active Boundary

Therefore, 'framing', is a term referring to the activity of consciousness, and the contouring of the event of the painted image. This leads us to then consider the physical frame as a material boundary: as a signifier of distinction, between that of perceptual attention, conceptual concentration, and the consequent condensing of images. The process of painting includes the activity of 'framing', which is a mode of *enclosing*, and *extraction*, from among the field of perception. However, because painting is creative, the activity of framing is also mode of *revealing* and *disclosing*. Minnisale argues

that the visual and pictorial quality of consciousness is intertwined with characteristics of direction and organization within visual conscious. From Minnisale's point, we argue that among the processes in painting the activity of framing is the evidence of the activity of consciousness.

In this respect, according to a Bergsonian analysis, such a movement in terms of 'frame to frame', would involve a consideration of 'shifts of attention', that is, the merging of thinking and perceiving by varying degrees, the shifting of images from images. From the 'framed' and immediate image, with the activity of consciousness, there is then indefinite potential of framing from the inherent oscillating movement. This movement is the movement of consciousness from the activity of the selection of images. It is a process of contraction and condensing, and ultimately, it is movement towards the singularizing of images that are themselves the events of a multiplicity of images. Although, from within the frame visual consciousness is a series of selection (i.e. framing towards frames), this means that the initial delimited material surface is not reducible to other singular frames by a specific ordering. In other words, the frame indicates to the painter's conscious perception the direction of consciousness' arrangements, which results in the compounding of views. The frame indicates visual movement and correlates attention of consciousness.

The Movement of Frame: Selection and Perception

'We maintain, as against materialism, that perception overflows infinitely the cerebral state; but we have endeavored to establish, as against idealism, that matter goes in every direction beyond our representation of it, a representation which the mind has gathered out of it, so to speak, by an intelligent choice.'⁶

First, if we were to suggest that by *mind* in the sense of Bergson's terms, we meant 'perception', then we would take this to also mean that mental or

⁶ *MM*, p. 187

cerebral activity does not originate from *matter*, but is *active* from within matter. In the same turn, we understand Bergson to mean that matter is not solely subsumed within an array of mental correspondences, but rather, matter is given to the dynamic characterization of mental and material processes. In either case, in Bergsonian terms, this is a necessary binary from which to characterize the conceptual quality of the frame and the activity of ‘framing’. In this sense framing is an active creation of perception. What is perceived by the painter is a choice, a selection, an extraction by a subjectively oriented activity of consciousness according to the affects given to its experience and the occurrence of actualization from the materiality of the process of painting. Bergson identifies this as ‘intelligent choice’, and this indicates that perception mutually coincides with the movement and variability of the materiality of the painting medium, there also occurs site-specific activities of mind, in which the states of perception vary according to coordinates of attention. In other words, Bergson indicates a particular process of perception that is at once a denotation of the material plane as well as an immediate limit of attention, i.e. the incisive, selective activity of thought. For that reason, such notions as *selection*, *choice*, and *gathering*, all indicate types of mental states. These states differ from the immediate, present oriented sensations, and Bergson explains,

‘But we must not confound the data of the senses, which perceive the moment, with the artifice of the mind, which recomposes it. [...] The division is the work of our imagination, of which indeed the office is to fix the moving images of our ordinary experience, like the instantaneous flash which illuminates a stormy landscape by night.’⁷

Here the perception of the senses differs from thought-perception. Sensing is continuous, and hence, indistinguishable from the activity and movement of the material plane, whereas thought (i.e. ‘the artifice of the mind’) is a reworking, a secondary ordering, and therefore a constitutive element

⁷ *MM*. p. 189

operating in terms of formations, structuring, composition, etc. Thought is regarded as a type of ordering, as an attitude to codify, it breaks from the flow of things, and as such, it is a division of the unified becoming-image. Bergson explains this as the imagination: the retrograde activity of thought, thinking as a condition that divides an otherwise continuous whole. Imagination, properly termed, is quality of *imag-ing*, which is a condition delimiting or fixing images from the mobile image spectrum. This is a condition in which the painter is engaged. As a creative process, painting is also a process that is reflective, thoughtful, accented by deliberate pause of bodily movement followed by its exertions of activity. In this atmosphere of differing activities and movements, varying choices and applications are made. It is the sense of varying choice coupled with thinking that we argue as being characteristic of framing activity, implicit in the process of painting.

Thinking Frame and Giving Toward Space

Minnisale also claims that painting is a philosophical engagement, a type of thinking which is manifest through the ‘marks’ of expression. Similarly, in Bergsonian terms, painting as a type of thinking is evident in the choice of movements and the projection of activities within the process. That is, reflective consciousness affects the selecting and the ‘fixing’ of images from among the continuum of moving images. The result of the painter’s brush, the notational marking is itself a transfixing of an image. This is relevant to Bergson’s thesis of the ‘delimiting and selection of images’.⁸ However, though perception is continuous with the image-world, for Bergson, the process of visualizing, or the condition of visualization, imply extraction, (i.e. ‘diminution’), and furthermore, the individuation of perception from ‘living centres of image’, and the condition of subjective selection from the total image spectrum. In this respect, visual imagery is already a reduction and as such, it is the consequence of the representational attitude of the intellectual nature of consciousness. In other words, unique movement of the intellect,

⁸ MM. pp. 179-190

characterized here as a type of demarcation, (i.e. the limiting and bounding of images), already assume an enframing movement of perception. Because all of reality is a relation in terms of the totality of duration, the articulating affect of reflective thought, as a continuous image parsing condition, is also a process of re-integration into the indefinite, unified, and yet heterogeneous whole of nature. What we want to argue by this, that framing is a mode of thinking, a continuous filtering of images that then relays the experience of images back towards spatial extension, such that the selection of images as the transposing of experience towards expression is spacing of images in coordination with a situated object.

Visual Consciousness: Framing and Thinking

From the contraction of images to the expansion into the image, for Bergson, there is an inherent tension between the interpenetration of material images and the continual juxtaposition of images of perception. Furthermore, this juxtaposing of perception (namely the quality of conscious reflection), differs from ordinary experience.

Visual consciousness is a form of thinking that is active towards the sequencing of images, in the ordering of images, but, by which images are carved out from the flow of images and rendered immobile in thought. This means that our apprehension is conditioned by a perspective of stability, such that, thinking entails immobilizing, and hence, visualization is a prolonging of a pattern of images particular to an attitude of consciousness. According to Bergson the field of perception is given from the material conditions of reality. Hence, the material site of conscious reflection, the body, is a means of movement which facilitates the extraction of images, and in the case of the artist, the generating of specific material-images. Bergson distils this notion further, considering the individuation of consciousness, he states,

Already the power conferred on the individual consciousness of manifesting itself in acts requires the formation of distinct material zones, which correspond respectively to living bodies: in this sense, my own body and, by analogy with it, all other living bodies are those

which I have the most right to distinguish in the continuity of the universe. But this body itself, as soon as it is constituted and distinguished, is led by its various needs to distinguish a constitute other bodies.⁹

We argue from Bergson's theory of 'distinct material zones' that the planar structure, as indicated by the physical frame, is also delimited, rendered immobile by thought, and regarded as significant as it is conceptually isolated and situated as the site for continuity of the activity of conscious perception. However, what he has indicated here is that because of the active nature of consciousness, it is drawn by its own necessity, to the extent that the manifestation of consciousness, and ultimately its expression, necessitates the 'formation' of regions with definite limits. In other words, consciousness, which goes beyond the body, requires the partition of the material continuum, so that the physical body, itself a material 'zone', is a 'distinguished' aspect of the world. Here Bergson's statement, offers a descriptive basis for the delimiting quality of conscious reflection, and hence, a basis for the characterization of the process of the frame.

Material Zones – Delimiting and Ordering

We have argued that the 'frame' is the notation of the delimiting activity of consciousness. Though this is a figurative usage of the term, it is only so because it represents a material derived formation, constructed by consciousness. In this sense, the frame is also a form that is derived from consciousness itself. However, the frame is a physical, concrete constitution, in which the abstract activity of consciousness is made distinct.¹⁰ From this, we argue that framing is a quality of perception, such that framing is the medial interchange from the immediacy of conscious perception to the perception given by the painting media, allowing for the movement from the

⁹ MM. p. 198

¹⁰ MM. p. 208

selection of images to be transformed into the physical and extended material images. As Bergson's theory maintains that the body's perception is a subtractive and delimiting activity of images from the field of perception, and that consciousness thought is a further 'condensing' of these selected images, here we assert that the bounding and limitations of conscious perception is necessarily the condition of framing intrinsic to the process of painting. However, by considering the frame in terms of the conscious reflection and the becoming of conscious expression, we are concerned with how the images of conscious perception are different from world of images. To put this in Bergsonian terms, for our encounter with the frame, the images are of the frame, in the sense that by the attitude of conscious experience, the images are subordinated from the flow of totality of images of the real by the framing referent. In view of Bergson's analysis of the image in terms of durations of time, it is interesting that where it is ostensibly a question of a Bergsonian philosophy of time in relation to the concerns of contemporary discourses of philosophy in painting, limited comparisons and connections have been made to Derrida's work. By considering how Derrida's philosophy is similar to Bergson's, as both share a fundamental concern with the relations of time to writing, the visual arts, and the devices of potential for thinking and towards the expanding of possibilities of philosophy.¹¹ In particular, Derrida's analysis here, compared to Bergson's helps us understand this confrontation of an ontology of images with the processes enacted by the frame, a device that for Bergsonian thinking is a relation of the contractions of perception, as engendered by the movements of the bodily activity, towards the becoming of incipient action, and summarily in the Derridean sense, the significance of movement for movement to come. As with the Bergsonian concern of the differing modes of philosophy to engage in the ever-changing flow reality, and thereby as continuous activity of exerting itself toward a perpetual

¹¹ For a consideration of Bergson's analysis of writing in relation to the expressions of philosophical experience, and with a view to Derrida's commitment to a semiological formulation of the question of difference, see, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. by M. L. Andison.

movement of the grounding of its experience, this philosophical outlook resonates with Derrida's sense of the ever-changing elaboration of thinking and expression, by the demands of the difference of thinking that is mirrored in its activity. According to Derrida's view, the 'deconstruction' of philosophical thinking is a method immanent to its investigations and what it derives by the expressions of its realisations. Though philosophical thinking does not wish to deny the potential of its expression, but rather, questions the modes of its reasoning. Similarly with the process of painting, the frame and the picture plane, as seemingly encounters of the limitations of the process and devices by which the identity of the process must proceed from, these also indicate by the situated conditions of painterly expressions, that the 'limits' of painting are the origination of the potential to go beyond the certainty of visual experience.

In *The Truth in Painting*, Derrida's analysis of framing device in painting in terms of the 'parergon', indicates the infinite and potential nature of possibility, such that in the case of the frame as an 'indicia' of perception, the condition of the indefinite and continuous quality of perception in time exceeds the occasion of its actualisation. Here, the frame is signify-ing, and thereby showing more than what is being shown. And rather than the frame encasing the picture plane, and the plane as itself, a bound-ing the limitation of painting, the frame's activity is active towards the becoming of perception. The frame and the picture plane are themselves, active through the indicating of what has been actualised through the process of painting and in this doubling, reflect the depth of images beyond its appearance, the permeation of a plurality of images. In this regard, Derrida's theory of the frame is a theory of the conveyance of the material devices in the visual arts, to be understood in terms of the movements immanent to them in time, and thereby to reconsider the happening or the becoming of existence beyond its own end. In the instance of painting, the process is prompted by its own encounter, an encounter with its becoming that is self-differentiating. It may be argued that

the frame indicates ‘what is’ and the picture plane reveals ‘what is’, by this inward referencing the visual experience is opening the possibility of what is different by engaging the encounter of experience with the alternative or counter experiential conditions. As with Bergson’s insistence of a philosophical outlook towards its identity in relation to the ever-present flow of reality, Derrida’s interest by the device of the frame is to assert a critique of our own habits of thinking, to challenge the static nature of conscious reflection. In other words, applied to a Bergsonian advancement of the philosophy of painting in process, Derrida’s connection of the frame as signifying the projections of change immanent to its own process, allows us to consider how the signifying conditions of the identity of painting are immediate to its temporality. The frame identified by its activity and its reference to the picture plane, are reflexive of the excess of time and the immanence of change in the processes of images.

In *The Truth in Painting*, as he is driven by a concern for the visual arts, that we wish to couple his view with the challenge of a contemporary Bergsonian philosophy of painting. In the manner of the Bergsonian outlook of philosophy through its process, the appropriation of Derrida’s insight helps us think the frame, and thereby, continuing through all the elements of the painting process, to think through the process of painting. For example, Antliff’s study of Bergson’s thought and Matisse’s painting, pivots on the review of a Derridian critique of aesthetic autonomy, to advance the Bergsonian philosophical view the corporeal temporality, and by comparison, to reaffirm a metaphysics of a rhythmic duration.¹² Here, Derrida’s analysis carries with it the elements of such metaphysical outlook. More specifically, it is with the ‘significance of frame’, per Derridian theory, that the identity of painting as a temporal process may be fully understood. In terms of the *parergon*, Derrida’s analysis question the nature of the boundaries or the limits

¹² Mark Antliff, ‘The Rhythms of duration: Bergson and the art of Matisse’, in *The New Bergson*, edited by John Mullarkey, p. 12

that indicate aesthetic activity. Derrida's question of the identification of the work of art, is poised as a question of whether the frame and the picture plane, are presented or presenting, as an 'opening' or a 'closing' of the frames content. He states, although apparently opposed - or because opposed - these two bordering determinations of what the parergon is working against (the operation of free energy and of pure productivity or the operation of the essential lack) are the same (metaphysical).¹³

According to this elaboration, we see how Derrida's description of the frame, termed as a 'parergon', furthers its characterisation as a Mobius-like boundary, marking a content within, directing the visual experience to move inwards, and thereby, furthering the interiorization of conscious perception. Llewelyn's commentary suggests that Derrida's analysis is both an understanding and a questioning of our understanding of the logic of the signification of the parergon.¹⁴ From this view, we see from the above passage that the parergonal characterisation of the frame, and of our own understanding referenced by the frame, are amorphous and unqualified denotations of place, presence, and appearance. Derrida's concern in his analysis is the broaching of the grounding identity of the frame, while also, opening the possibility of the frame, through the philosophy of frame to think beyond and through its identity. In this regard, we can understand how Derrida's philosophy of frame, was a thinking reframed by its own subject. Here the challenge to philosophical understanding is made clear, which is how to overcome the limitations of what it has established as the limitations of its meaning. What are the borders of thinking through painting?

This question is instigated by the Derridian theory and echoes the Bergsonian concern with the narrowing of thought by the limitations imposed according

¹³ Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod, The University of Chicago Press, p. 81

¹⁴ John Llewelyn, *Derrida on the threshold of Sense*, The Macmillan Press, London, 1986, p. 120

to the intellectual mirroring of the becoming of reality. It is by our thinking of the world in terms of the experience we have of it that concerns Bergson, because we prioritize the reflection in reference to the experience rather than the approximation of attention, and a concentration of thinking in the immediacy of experience towards its own becoming. Similarly with Derrida's challenge to the tradition of phenomenology, he questions not the interest of phenomenology to seek the presence of phenomena, or to venture the impossible investigation of the source of being, but rather, how to extend our experience towards its most full experience, and thereby continuing our opening towards the impossibility of experience.¹⁵ Here again we find the Derridian imperative towards experience integrated with the Bergsonian charge to do philosophy that overcomes its own identity, applicable to the process of painting as the potential for the 'opening' of experience by the reciprocity of expressions and the conditions of its difference through time. Echoing Bergson's sense of the contingency of and ever-present totality of images in duration, Derrida's expression of the possibility of framing to differentiate from the structures of thinking through the frame, he states,

So only a certain practice of theoretical fiction can work (against) the frame, (make or let it) play (it) (against) itself. Don't forget, nonetheless, that the content, the object of this theoretical fiction (the free energy of the originary process, its pure productivity) is metaphysics, onto-theology itself.¹⁶

We see Derrida's conviction towards the differentiation (differance) of thinking from itself, expressed in the above passage, in terms of the 'working' of the content, and 'playing' of the object, as involving the process of being identified through its signification. The frame is working, as it is both the

¹⁵ Gary Gutting, *Thinking the Impossible*, Oxford University Press, pp. 157-169

¹⁶ Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod, The University of Chicago Press, p. 81

identification of its work and the action of anticipating something more than what it marks. Here it is the impetus of the difference of perception that the production of the painting extends to its 'origin', by the production that makes the productivity possible, i.e. the distinguishing marks of its identity heralding the becoming of its identity. What Derrida regards as the 'originary process' is only understood by the thinking of the frame and its activity towards the picture plane. And by the 'content', the process of painting reveals the is immanent to it, that is, the multiplicity of visual experiences and the plurality of expressions of living forms. This view contextualized in a Bergsonian metaphysics of duration, would mean that Derrida's critique of the ontologization of sense, according to the frame and picture plane as indicia of the stasis of thought, this is the projection of perceptual and contributes to habits thinking that we must overcome to express more, that is, to go beyond the limits of our expressions. This reinforces the immanence view of the actual and creative process in painting. But as the same instant, the frame as a demarcation of the content from the otherwise, external reality, excites the process of painting by directing the attention of expression to go beyond its own sense, and constitutes the expansion of perception that its content conveys.

Here we argue from a Derridian informed perspective, that a Bergsonian theory of perception defines a theory of frame in the process of painting as the movements of conscious perception in relation to the framing movements of its selection, by which the activity of the process occurs. In other words, the frame is at once the demarcation of perception, and by its movement the inner transfer of painterly experiences given by the painting media as mutually situated by the site of occurrence. Therefore, the frame is both a literal device that indicates this site of exchange from the mutual correspondence of painter to painting media, but also, in Derridian terms, framing is a 'discourse' of perceptions and the interface of realised and experiential images with actual and expressive material images. This also

suggest the potential for shifts in the attitudes of attention in the activity of the painting process. Moreover, this constant framing, as an enframing of image through the actualisation of their expression in the physical painting media, is embodied as it is embedded in the process.

In this sense, we concede to a Derridian ‘discourse of the frame’, to the extent that the perceptual and sensorial activities of the painter are themselves a framing and visual system. However a philosophy of painting that engages with the metaphysics of painting, demands that we recognise the duplicity of the frame and the picture plane so that at once the painter in the process understands the de-limitation of the devices of its materialisation, experiences the demarcation as the encounter with the realisation, so as to advance to the alterity of what is demarcated and attune the attention of expression in accordance with the creative and novel emergence of painted imagery. Bergsonian philosophy requires that philosophising in the process of painting is to make our contact of perceptions most immediate to the experiential encounters of the process. This requires an attentive recognition and must appeal to a sense of memory that is regulated according to various degrees of tensions of images, opening to the scope for choice and the indetermination of activities towards the incipency of action. In this sense, perception does not occur in the service of ‘knowledge’, but is relation to differentials of action. Because of this, philosophy is radically ‘empirical’ when philosophy is active in its efforts to align thinking through the approximations of its reflection, i.e. philosophizing as becoming most immediate to its experiential encounter. We see the lucidity of the Bergsonian challenge to philosophy, as philosophical thinking pertaining to its own process in time, with Derrida’s question in which he asks, ‘Is not the idea of knowledge and of the theory of knowledge, in itself metaphysical’.¹⁷ Here, we see that question challenges conscious perception, by considering the continuous presence of perception

¹⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl’s Theory of Signs*, Northwestern University Press, 1973, p. 3

as a field of change in duration, the material universe is always in process, but regarded as presenting through modes of presence. Therefore, as with the Bergsonian outlook towards the creativity of thinking, extended to the continuous origination of visual experience the expression of images becoming in painting, Derrida's question also challenge our presupposition of fixed relations in modes of expressions and allows us to understand the determinate orientations of our thinking in terms of a constancy of being present. Specific to the question of the frame and the picture plane, we assume the challenge of Bergson's outlook of the becoming of thinking, coupled with Derrida's elaborations of the deliberation of differance issuing from identities of fixity and constancy, to suggest the borders and surfaces of that identify painting are also enacting the possibilities of its process. In this sense, the frame and picture plane may be regarded as the approximation of activity necessary for potential of creation immanent to their identities. Because the material continuum is an indefinite whole within duration, Bergson claims that by perceiving, conscious perception is a process of fixing, selecting, and ultimately, immobilizing images. The frame and the picture plane are those 'placeholders' and equally, by the dynamic's of their materialisation they are the opening for expansions of expression to proceed. Relating consciousness specifically to visual perception, 'framing' is a condition of condensing the duration of perceptions.

Conscious perception is necessarily an enclosing or a taking in of 'long intervals', that is, a discontinuous view (i.e. 'quasi-instantaneous'), from the continual flow of the becoming image-world, for the purpose of continual movement and anticipated activity. By this notion of 'long intervals', Bergson is describing the vibrational character of reality. All images are of varying durational degrees, some of a more dense existence, and some of a lesser, dissolved, or 'diluted' existence. What is enclosed by the immediate viewing of perception, as Bergson claims, consists of an infinity of elements, an indefinite multitude of pictorial possibilities, all subject to a

condensing into single and successive, instantaneous images. In this respect, suggesting that the frame is itself a specific activity, uniquely material and mental, we can see that Bergson's notion of the differentiated characterization of perception applies, so that to frame 'means to immobilize', but the degree of this immobilisation is dependent upon the duration of the consciousness, so that the process of framing is also a durational activity of perception in time.

In the process of painting, the arrangement, compositions, and all degrees of material applications and productions through the painting media operate by way of the influence of perceptions given to conscious perception itself. Hence, the condition of framing is an affectivity of the materiality of painting, so that the enclosing of images is registered in the painter's conscious perception according to the influence of the continuity of images of reality. However, Bergson elaborates further on the nature of our perception, indicating that our imagination, that is our faculty of forming images, operates in the same way. For our perception engages the world as immobile, rendering the world as a serial procession of views, and in a similar way, our faculty of imagination invents images as fixed, following one from another. He states,

But our imagination, which is pre-occupied above all by the convenience of expression and the exigencies of material life, prefers to invent the natural order of the terms. Accustomed to seek its fulcrum in a world of ready-made motionless images, of which the apparent fixity is hardly anything else but the outward reflection of the stability of our lower needs, it cannot help believing that rest is anterior to motion, cannot avoid taking rest as its point of reference and its abiding place.¹⁸

Bergson continues to highlight this distinctive nature of our perception, and consequently of our imagination, both as tending to spatialize the material world, grasping the world as 'ready-made', and thereby, delimiting the material continuum according to successive 'motionless images'. What this

¹⁸ MM. p. 217

means for the process of painting is that the delimited images, become the images in the painting process, expounding the imagination and its vital expression. In this respect, the physical art image is a specific surface where the material continuum and the activity of conscious perception merge. Minnisale speaks of art production in a similar sense, suggesting that the activity of art is an organizing process of consciousness that proceeds by ‘framed thoughts’.¹⁹

Here Minnisale is initially describing the expositional nature of consciousness through the process of delimitation. Similar to what Bergson has indicated, that is, that with the ‘symbolic attitude’ and ‘expression’ typical of imagination, the contoured image, as a constructed image, exposes to attention, to the concentration of perception, a specific image, an isolable image, from the material continuum.

According to Minnisale, art is not simply reproduction, rather it is the activity of consciousness, as he terms it an ‘unfolding’. This parallels closely with a Bergsonian view in that the nature of the art image, is a becoming process, a process of ordering, for both incipient formulation of other images and the designation of spatial ‘zones’, and made distinct from the material continuum.

For the viewer’s conscious perception this arrangement serves as guide as well as an established structure, such that framing is an ordering of perception, at once an embracing structure directing the focus of attention and a structure that also

instigates further activity by compelling the viewer’s visual investigations towards continual framing.¹⁴ Here Minnisale offers the rather strong suggestion that the frame-in-the-frame is the initial scope of meaning and definition of the nature of consciousness. He indirectly points out that the ‘form of points and lines’ are also instances of frames-in-the-frames. The

¹⁹ Gregory Minnisale, *Framing Consciousness in Art: Transcultural Perspectives*, (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2009). p. 11

effect of frame-in-the-frame is a quality of visual perception, but it is also the occurrence of the materialization of consciousness, that is, the total process of painting, i.e. gestural marks, painted applications, plastic elements.

Deleuze: Concept of Frame

However, on this topic of the ‘form’ of the frame and the nature of its activity, it is to Deleuze that we should turn. Deleuze offers us a specific analysis of the frame, one that elaborates more on the quality of its nature. From a Bergsonian position, Deleuze comments on the attitude of the framed image, elaborating on the implicit dual quality, that is, the articulated and hence, immobilized image as well as the continuity and movement of the image.

We will call the determination of a closed system a relatively closed system which includes everything which is present in the image- sets, characters and props- framing.²⁰

With this comment on the frame Deleuze conceptualises the frame beyond the ‘enclosing’ of images. For Deleuze the frame also forms a complex whole of active elements so that by the notion of ‘framing’ he regards an inherent activity that precedes the frame. According to Deleuze’s theory, the frame is not a specific ordering or an embedded schema to be unfolded, rather, though he indicates there are ‘sets’, these are specified, yet indeterminate states of a plurality of images.²¹ Deleuze is echoing Bergson’s insistence of the ‘immense multiplicity’ of movements within the depths of the framed image, and therefore, the indefinite possibilities of arrangements and compositions of images-innumerable parts within a closed ‘system’. Deleuze indicates, that the ‘tendencies’ (i.e. activity) of the frame is to move from the whole to its parts, that is, the focus of conscious attention which is both a condensing of the material continuum and a differentiating of ‘moments of an intenser life’.

²⁰ G. Deleuze, 'Cinema 1: the movement-image, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam', *Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Originally published as Cinéma* **1**, p.12

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 12

In other words, depending on the direction of the framing movement of consciousness, there is a qualitative distinction of the *frame*: either of a greater magnitude of the intensity of conscious perception (ie. towards *saturation*) or a lesser magnitude of intensity (towards *rarefaction*). Deleuze couples this dynamism, implicit in the nature of the frame, with its physicality. Although it is a material apparatus that is visually distinct and therefore marking a separate image from the visual field it also functions in a symbolic role and, hence, is of a signifying activity. Deleuze claims that the frame as a ‘closed system’ is conceived as ‘spatial compositions’, such that it serves as a receptacle.²²

Though this comment entails the distinction of the material frame according to ‘geometrical or physical’ dimensions, perhaps more significantly, what is also indicated is the qualitative nature of the frame in terms of spatialization. As with Bergson matter is defined in terms of extension, and, since the world is the unity of disparate images (i.e. a pluralistic whole), the image-world as also the material continuum, is referred to in terms of extension. Deleuze maintains that the frame is a ‘composition’, and by this, suggests that it is an activity of formation that is at once a selective process that ‘takes from’ as well as a formative process that unifies. This process results in a physical object, and thereby, a defined spatial distinction that also contains other images. This is supportive of a Bergsonian view, whereby the frame may be considered the designation of a particular surface, itself a singular image, by the thought of the surface immediate to conscious perception. In this sense we are arguing that the planar surface becomes both the idea of the experience of the process of painting, but also a site for the potential of expression as given by the multiplicity of images through the painting medium. However, aside from the active movement of consciousness in framing, Deleuze also indicates that it is a ‘limitation’.²³

²² Ibid. p. 13

²³ Ibid. p. 13

From this comment there are two points to highlight.²⁴ The first is that the action of framing, the selective activity of visual consciousness, is also a delimiting process. In this sense, though the framed image is also a multiplicity of images, it has a terminal point or a frontier beyond which the selective activity of consciousness is retained. However, the selective activity of consciousness is not altogether limited. Instead, as the 'legible' frame refers to conscious attention, framing as 'limitation' is a twofold meaning. Firstly, by limitation this means that the frame is the furthest boundary of the plurality of images. But secondly, it is a separation or division from the indefinite images of the material continuum. Deleuze explains that conscious framing, the selective nature of perceptual consciousness, is also affected by the image that is framed. From the framing of the image, the frame is either an abstract form which separates, or, rather in terms of the totality of the movement of images it distinguishes, these images as images becoming expanded.²⁵ The frame is at once a specific form that functions to define and limit its subject, but equally, it also stages 'zones' or 'bands' that are active with movement, movement continually towards successive changes (i.e. a plurality of images). Deleuze concedes that the movement from frame to frame is a constant qualitative shifting of properties, so that, by the inexorable activity of movement, frames are not a fixing design. Rather, frames are to be considered, in terms of positions, or attitudes of marking out and enclosures. In view of this, we argue that framing is a direction of activity and a movement that entails the becoming of qualitative differences, and therefore, in the process of painting, the frame is a non-specific isolation of an image,

²⁴ Ibid. p. 13 Here Deleuze is referring to Kant's philosophy of the sublime detailed in *The Critique of Judgement*. Kant's claim of the subjective position in relation to the sublime, the faculty of reason in relation to that which surpasses its ability to measure or calculate, is correlated with the forms of the objects distinct from the formless quality of the sublime. Accordingly, beauty is in relation to the forms of objects, so that, it is contingent on the limitation of objects - the designation of boundaries to separate things. In short, this bounding orientation of the beautiful means that it is of a mathematical understanding, that to know beauty is to necessity 'limitation' as an element of aesthetic comprehension. Whereas, the Sublime is that which is boundless, a non-designated form, dynamic insofar as it is that which goes beyond reason.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 13

itself a collected whole of multiple elements.

The Frame and Framing's Affect: Differentiating Subjects

The frame is more than a relational materiality. Deleuze claims that the process of framing is a 'relation to the data that it communicates to the spectators'. In this sense, the frame is, 'informatic', which means that is its as process in itself, containing a multiplicity of images, but 'rarefied' from the flux of images.²⁶ According to Deleuze's analysis, the frame entails a process of systematization of 'parts', an ordering of images from among a myriad of images. Hence, with the frame there is potential of a movement of images to become distinct images, to become actualized as a 'closed system'. But, even though the framed image is a designated system, in the sense that it is 'closed', it remains in connection, and continuous with the total image spectrum. This is to say that, from the enclosure of frame, the image(s) is continuous as an affective relation among the properties of the parts.

For Deleuze, the frame is both an originating system, 'saturated' with 'sets' and 'parts' relative and hence in potential affective relation to the viewer or other systems, as well as, a distinct and specific system relating to its own order, and of a 'dynamic-physical' quality. In both senses, it retains a force that stimulates change within its own system or process of becoming. According to Deleuze, the frame determines, the frame chooses, the frame selects, the frame affects, etc. and as such, we must consider the frame and framing activity in terms of consciousness, insofar as the material presence as well as the predicative attitude of the frame originates an order of images.

For Minnisale, the frame is not solely consciousness, nor is the activity of framing exclusive of mental projection.²⁷ Though he argues for the connection of the physical frame to consciousness, Minnisale's theory like Deleuze's notion of the frame's, suggests that the frame is a 'limitation' but

²⁶ Ibid. p. 18

²⁷ Gregory Minnisale. *Framing Consciousness in Art* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2009). pp. 21-22

it is also a tendency. For Deleuze, as there is no separation of consciousness for the world, towards the world, from the world, etc. the frame is paradigmatic of the differentiating whole. Though it may be said that an immanent-ontological system is the context for Deleuze's conception, Minnisale's orientation with phenomenology, with a concentration on a specific study of consciousness offers a comparative theory of the frame.

In this sense, we may be able to extend Minnisale's notions of frame and framing as figuring in art works and with the experience of art, as a creative element and a conduit of novelty. But even further, this conception of the frame conveys in ontological terms, the correlation of the dynamic-physical becoming of material and the sensual and perspectival becoming of ideas. The frame, as an activity has more to do with a process of movement in regards to the relation of materiality and perception, than with distinctions between materiality and perception. That is to say, framing is a specific activity within duration, whereby movement instigated by the frame (i.e. a material condition affecting consciousness) is an instance of the 'transference of a state'.²⁸ According to Bergson, we argue that the frame is an ontological condition. The frame is the resultant activity from a source of 'being' that is 'able to fix'

From Frame to Plane

Moreover, this state of 'fixing' can be further evaluated by its degree of tension registered according to an 'intensity of life'.²⁹ In the process of painting, this would mean that as the painter's body and the substance of

²⁸ *MM*. p. 202. This is phrase is the heading of section four in the third chapter of the text. It is in this section that I have garnered a Bergsonian perspective to not only clarify Minnisale's position, but to insist on the resolution of the problematic binary, 'sensations and movements', or more specific to the 'frame' and consciousness, 'unextended heterogeneity and extended homogeneity'.

²⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 17-19 Here I refer the reader back to chapter one in which I elaborate on Bergson's theory of intuition in regards to his conception of the image-world.

painting are in movement, perception and consciousness are of a process of division, by which the frame is a mode of condensing and delimiting a period of activity of consciousness and the event of its expression.³⁰ And here, Kandinsky's exuberant claim in defense of the work of painting immediate to surfaces, suggests that the active space for painting activity is not limited to a rigid conception of planar surface or of a specified framed medium for paintings expression, stating,

He who is able to experience the bare wall is best prepared to experience a work of painting: the two-dimensional, immaculately smooth, vertical, well-proportioned, 'reticent', assertive, introspective wall, its limits externally determined, radiating outwards is virtually a primary 'element'.³¹

Here Kandinsky's praise is of the openness of painting, exclaiming that painting goes beyond the format of the easel, and for that matter, extending the 'framing' of the process of painting beyond the idea of its presentation and the traditional thought of its modes of appearance. We argue here that from our view of Bergson's theory of perception, in which the frame is a characteristic of the perceptual contact and the transitional encounter of the painter's activity with the perceptions given by the painting medium, it is the surficial physicality by which expressions are given force towards becoming. Kandinsky's description suggests that the primary 'element' of painting is also a force of the experience of the work of painting. By this we see how the spiritual element of Kandinsky's theory has extended beyond the inner tonality of the painter, and rather suggests a mutual correspondence of tones,

³⁰ Ibid. pp. 135, 200, and 202. cf. Bergson's theory of 'imagination', chapter 1. Here I am drawing comparison with Minnisale's word choice, 'Embedding', which means a selected object fixed deeply in a surrounding mass, to the activity of mind upon matter, that is the 'carving' of images, the selection of a portion from a greater whole. With Bergson's conception of the image, this notion of 'embedding' may be adopted to convey the idea that despite the body as predisposed to action, the potential of representations from the activity of imagination registers with the divisible multiplicity of the material world that 'goes in every direction beyond our representation of it'.

³¹ Wassily Kandinsky, 'Bare Wall' ['Die kahle Wand], (Dessau, 1929) Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art, ed. by Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo (Da Capo Press, New York 1994), p. 732

that is, rhythms of life radiating from the surface of paintings situated occurrence.

Expression and Planar Tendency

Here we transition to the consideration of both the material and the primary conceptual structures of painting, the most fundamental material facet of the event of the process of painting, the material surface. From the frame we move to the surface made distinct, a surface having existential qualities of both perception and conceptuality - the picture plane. By orienting a theoretical ontology from a Bergsonian perspective, I will consider the claims made by Kandinsky. We will consider the picture plane according to its materiality in relation to perception and its 'pictorial form' in relation to representation. This will come to bear on the affirmation of the existential nature of the picture plane and hence, its relevance to the condition of creative expression and *image-becoming* unique to painting. We will argue that the picture plane material presence of the process of painting, which inducts painterly activity, and is the extension of the event of the painted image.

In the most literal sense, the picture plane is usually taken to be canvas, wood, stone, or any other 'surface'. However, it corresponds with an imaginary plane, the abstracted perspective of images from the images of the field of perception. In this regard, material surface as the situated occurrence of the process of painting, whether it is a two dimensional planar object, a canvas, a piece of wood, etc., becomes a *distinguished surface*. The picture plane is actualised by the material surface, making the planar object a differentiated surface among all surfaces. Therefore, the picture plane is an ontologically distinct surface according to tendencies: *tendencies* towards *organization*, tendencies towards *arrangement*, and the tendency towards the situating of

expression. Either way, the picture plane may be regarded in terms that suggest a movement of *repetition*: for the expedience of nascent action and the prolongation of movement, but also, movement towards *thought*. In this sense, by way of its material and conceptual recurrence, there is the allowance for an inattentive quality of reflection, so that the picture plane becomes the content of life, a material surface that yields to the difference of vital expressions. The picture plane is both a material pattern and a vital activity. It is the location of consciousness, by way of conscious perception situating the activity of its expression towards an extended material location. In turn, this surface becomes a site of the progression of the painter's activity. Bergson describes this type of transition of consciousness towards its externalisation, stating,

Watching this progressive materialization, marking the steps by which consciousness externalizes itself, at least he would obtain a vague intuition of what the insertion of mind in matter, the relation of the body to soul, may be.³²

However, according to Bergson, such tendencies are not of a linear movement, but rather entail divergence, variance that arises from the effective tensions between that of the force of memory, (i.e. the prolongation of the past and the reinsertion of experience into the present), and the demands of life to react, to act, to move in coordination with the immediate present. However, creation and expression in this respect are derivatives of life's content. The picture plane is an instance of the merging, and interdependent connection, that of a material 'form', (i.e. a perception engendered from the object), and necessarily linked to a vital 'content'. In more general terms, the picture plane is an example of the interpenetration of material and mental properties. The picture plane is an instance of the very *oscillation* between these domains; it is a process of movement between the mental and material in duration. In a similar accord, Kandinsky's concern with the 'dematerialization' of art underpins to his theory of the picture plane, in which

³² ME 'The Soul and The Body', , pp. 35-36

the material plane is the site of painting, and hence, ‘receives the content of the work of art’.³³ Kandinsky’s theory there develops from the principle of ‘inner necessity’. Artistic creation, by virtue of its ‘spiritual’ qualities, inevitably exudes its expression transforming base matter. By identifying the ‘Basic Plane’ with the ‘material plane’, Kandinsky’s view of the picture plane is that matter is subject to a process of ‘designation’. And, though the content of the planar object issues from the work of art, the work is itself an activity of life. In this respect, the ‘content’ is dependent upon the material plane, but the material plane (i.e. the picture plane) is specified or designated by the necessity of the content. Henry explains that for Kandinsky the inner or invisible nature of life is the source of the picture plane’s content. Compared to Bergson’s theory, this would mean that the picture plane is an object selected by consciousness for the activity of creative projections, and therein, part of the content of life. In other words, regardless of the material *objecthood* of the picture plane, it originates from a process of selection and arrangement. In this regard, the picture plane is an elementary ‘form’, because it is a catalyst for perception, a means of life towards its representations.

In this respect, the picture plane is more than an artistic object, it is an origination of a derived attitude of life. As a pattern repeated for its efficacy towards anticipated action, we maintain that the picture plane, considered from the perspective of Bergson’s theory of *memory-image*, is the actualised occurrence for potential. That is, though the picture plane is a physical material thing to which perception readily experiences, it also incites intellectual reflection. In addition, from the scope of Bergsonian analysis, the picture plane is both spatial and temporal. Furthermore, the picture plane is fundamental to the intuitive experience. It is the material object itself by which the painter’s subjective involution is conditioned, resulting in an

³³ Wassily Kandinsky, *Point And Line to Plane*, (New York: Guggenheim Foundation, 1947) p. 115, here Kandinsky terms the ‘Basic Plane’, and later abbreviates as ‘B.P.’ to which Henry will abbreviate as P.P. However, for the purposes of this section, we will take ‘B.P.’ to be equal with ‘P.P.’ as both indicate the concept of this present analysis, ‘picture plane’.

externalisation of the perceptions given in relation to the painting medium active and situated by a distinct material reality. It is this special interface of the picture plane, its bounded surface, and its existential quality lying between matter and life that we must consider. To regard the picture plane as significant to life's activity as well as being a material 'pattern' is to consider the picture plane in the context of a physical and object relation of perceptions.

Material Schema

For Bergson, perception is continuous with images in matter, and by considering the picture plane in terms of perception, it would have to be a particular image, a continual and recurring image, one that perception consistently isolates, identifies, and through repetition becomes an intelligible *percept*. Hence, perception 'thinks' the physical picture plane so that the incorporeal quality of perceiving and the material plane as object to be seen are one and the same. And, as such, the picture plane is immediately associated with 'forms' of seeing or thinking, i.e. a *placeholder* for expression.³⁴

Kandinsky describes the arrangement of the picture plane as formulaic in character. Recognizing its material configuration, he describes the picture plane as 'set off as an individual thing in the realm of its surroundings'.³⁵ Following Kandinsky's theoretical claims, Henry emphasizes the picture planes in terms of its material 'selfhood'. Rather than a 'thing', the picture plane is described in terms of qualities that constitute an individual identity, an 'autonomous reality', and something that is more akin to a living being. In

³⁴ Anne Friedberg. *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2006) pp. 141-146. By this notion of 'placeholder', I mean to suggest to the ontological distinction between the duration of conscious and the duration of the actual physical world. I used the term 'placeholder' here, according to mean something that is expressively limited, symbolically neutral, but in itself, is required by the constraints of perception, and facilitates the purposes of creative activity.

³⁵ Wassily Kandinsky, *Point And Line to Plane*, (New York: Guggenheim Foundation, 1947). p. 115

this regard, the picture plane is living material, as it is the situated contact of consciousness with the extensity of continuous images, as a confrontation of the living image with the images of perception. However, for both Henry and Kandinsky, the painter and the plane are ‘inhabited by secret forces’.³⁶

In so far as the picture plane is the result of perceptual selection, material composition, and processes of fabrication, it is a ‘marked’ material image, and therefore, an *individual* identity in time. In other words, as termed both perceptual and *conceptual*, the picture plane is an epistemically specified *surface*, an image for the equal contact of mental activity and material forces, but in terms of the continuity of activity, it is the occurrence of consciousness in contact with matter. However, it is not simply an object that consciousness comes in contact with, rather, it is in the surficial object and the planar surface that the experience to consciousness is given. So, considered in terms of a confluence of vital energy and material energy, the picture plane becomes more of a ‘continuity’ than an object or a ‘thing’. Here we want to argue that the picture plane is ontologically significant because it is at once the situation of the coinciding of images, and from this process, a tactile and embodied form of aesthetic projections. This means that the picture plane is a surface that responds to the movement of conscious perception, and is altogether immanent to the continuity of the processes of activities from among the painting medium. Because painting is a mode of action in response to perceptions, then picture plane is a situated experience of consciousness. In short, the picture plane is a remarkable ‘form’, i.e. an actual object that enables actualisation. From this it may be said that the picture plane is a dynamic image in itself retaining a degree of perception, but also considered as a conceptualisation, it retains a conceptual vitality. Henry suggests that in terms of a ‘living thing’ the picture plane engenders experience by its material composition, particular to the expression of painting that follows its

³⁶ Michel Henry, *Seeing The Invisible*, (London Continuum. 2009) p. 58

arrangement, i.e. gesture, mark making.³⁷ From within the process of painting it is a material presence for representation, and enables the movement of life. This is to say that the picture plane is not simply a material device for the efforts of consciousness for production alone, rather, considering the picture plane on the basis of Bergson's theory of 'pure perception', whereby the activity of life is said to be generally oriented towards action, the picture plane's material arrangement is the result of the immediacy of conscious engagement to the field of perception and the concrete realisation of life.

Sequence and Surface: Material Movement of Life

Because matter is an aggregate of images, and the representations we have are always of the image virtually, the experience of the picture plane marks the significant transition of the intellectual 'choice' from material becoming(s). It may be said that the picture plane is a *placeholder* for the oscillation of material potential affecting intellectual schema. In other words, the picture plane is first a movement of life, a movement characterized by the activity of continual discernment (i.e. conscious arrangement or tendency) and, it is a repetitive appearance as a type of pattern in the deliberations of consciousness.

In view of the history of painting, the planar image-surface appears to have become a pattern, a framed territory, a carved out 'zone' as a dynamic system, for the engagement of artistic practice, and the diversion of creative energy. According to Bergson, reality is the relation of the *actual* and material with the virtual and mental. In this sense, the picture plane's material qualities as a relation to life, are such

because it *endures* as it is connected with consciousness, it is living because it is the content of life.³⁸ Bergson places emphasis on the *enduring* state of matter conditioned upon and correlative with the concentration of life. In a

³⁷ Ibid. 51

³⁸ CE. p. 390

similar line of thought, Kandinsky emphasizes the affective quality of the picture plane's material reality as important because it is an independent element, in which the power of the artist is dependent.³⁹ In other words, by calling attention to the 'nature of the BP itself', Kandinsky is suggesting that there is a creative energy within the material conditions of the process of painting.⁴⁰ He elaborates further on this 'autonomous quality of the picture plane', suggesting that it is a 'living being'. Aside from Kandinsky ascribing to the material surface 'breath' and even 'life', there is the connection he makes with the picture plane's seemingly autonomous nature and the 'transference of one's own observation'. It is here that Kandinskian theory closely parallels Bergson's theory of perception, that 'life' of the picture plane is the possibility of its becoming, that is, through its vital characterisation, by its 'breathing', the virtual quality of the plane is to be realized through life, through conscious perception, and the action of the artist.

Again, Kandinsky's theory comparably follows Bergson's. Here, he places specific emphasis on the picture plane as 'fundamental', but it is fundamentally simple in so far as it is diagrammatic, and representative.⁴¹ This is similar to Bergson's theory of intuition. For Kandinsky, the picture plane is an intuitive composition (i.e. both actual and conceptual), and therefore it is simple. And by its simplicity it directs consciousness towards the deeper durations of the materiality and within an immediate experience with reality. By redirecting thought which is generally attending towards action, the picture plane re-directs thought towards a surface, so as to open upon, to become reflective, and thereby, to move towards the inactive, the virtual. In a similar line of thought, Bergson explains that all of reality 'endures', and the more immediate our conscious awareness comes to the duration of things, our own duration will involve 'the creation of forms, the

³⁹ Wassily Kandinsky, *Point and Line to Plane*, (New York: Guggenheim Foundation, 1947) p. 116

⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 116-125., Kandinsky uses the acronym 'BP' to indicate the most 'basic plane', that is any surface to resonate with the spiritual expressions of the process of painting.

⁴¹ Wassily Kandinsky, *Point And Line to Plane*, (New York: Guggenheim Foundation, 1947), p. 143

continual elaboration of the absolutely new'.⁴²

Through the stages of the change in consciousness the movement from its contraction in the depths of life and equally in the concentration of the psychic self, there is the movement towards its surfacing and hence, extension in the expanse of spatial homogeneity, in which the attitude of consciousness is not only translated but affectively transforms its material localization. However, as with all of matter, more than simply a surface as a spatial origin, the picture plane is to also be considered in terms of depth surging fluctuation of movements. Kandinsky termed as the 'inner tensions' of reality, those experiences that are not given as immediately to consciousness, but rather are situated *beneath*, internally, beyond the limits of perceived objects. Paralleling Bergson's theory of intuition, both thinkers are relating to an experience that is more than that which is generally given in perception. Bergson explains that with intuition the perception given is not limited to 'action on things', or 'on the surface of reality', but below and within.⁴³ This is closely parallels Bergson's elaborations on the nature of intuition, in that the intuition is an exertion or effort to think beyond that of intellectual thought, to think in the things themselves, towards the possibilities of action. In relation to Kandinsky's theory, in which Kandinsky attributes the surfacing of 'inner tensions', (i.e. those forces beneath the surface of reality becoming towards perceptual experience), to the composition and arrangement of the picture plane, he also suggests a 'depth' of the planar surface.

Relations of the Surface

We have maintained a notion of the picture plane as a movement, as a direction towards actualization originating from an intensive experience, (i.e. simply as a pictorial 'form'). As the picture plane is a distinct surface in relation to other nondescript material surfaces, it is a perspectival relation, and

⁴² Ibid. p. 11

⁴³ Ibid. p. 49

in this sense, a ‘form’ of perceiving, a ‘form’ of knowing. Furthermore, the picture plane is more than a thing experienced in relation to other things, but perhaps it is a ‘habit we have contracted’, i.e. a slicing out of, or a delimitation from among the visual field. Grosz compares painting with architecture and suggests that what is similar to both forms of construction is the *territorializing* of reality in which reality is a plurality of ‘surfaces’. These are of variable, and ‘bear upon them singularities, eruptions, or events’. For Grosz, the process of territorializing in reality is a mode towards the ‘fabrication of space’, from which events ‘resonate for the sake of intensity alone’.⁴⁴ This relates directly to our theory of the picture plane. Though not specifically in terms of territorialisation, Bergson suggests that the process of emerging ‘forms’ in reality, occurs through the distinction and outlining of objects from among the visual field of reality. This comes from the influence of conscious perception, as the influence of the intellect towards the orientation of action to certain points of space’.⁴⁵

Thinking and Expressing Difference

However, that is not to say that the picture plane is a completed reality, but rather, it is a process of repetition from the activity of perception. And as the entire ‘vital properties ‘of life are not actualized in full, the ‘form’ of picture plane is a significant juncture for the becoming of life’s expressions. Bergson’s explains, we may suggest that the picture plane is a ‘form’ by virtue of the exertion of perception to organize and to individualize, and as this material composition has been and continues to be repeated, it is both an inclination of perception and a material ‘tendency’ for life. Again, in terms of the ‘individuality and therefore what we have attempted to recognize as

⁴⁴ E. A. Grosz, *Chaos, territory, art: Deleuze and the framing of the earth* (Columbia University Press, 2008). p.10-12

⁴⁵ CE. p. 12

indicative of the ‘delimitation’ implicit in the picture plane.⁴⁶ What is most significant is that Bergson concedes that it is through the continual efforts of life tending towards ‘individuality’, that the resultant coming-to- be of life is from ‘constituted systems’. In a more specific example, we direct this theory to the picture plane, itself a design, an individuated surface anticipating creative movement, and repetitively perceived, as a ‘tendency’ towards systems (i.e. ones that are ‘isolated, naturally closed’). From Bergson’s theory, the picture plane is then both a conscious selection of a physical surface and a conscious formation, and therefore, a particular material arrangement, and a particular form from the content of life’s efforts.⁴⁷

However, life itself is also part of the whole of reality, so that according to Bergson’s theory the ontological characterizations of the picture plane ought to follow from its existential qualities, that is, those qualities that are attributive to life and in total to expression of living through material reality. In a similar sense, Henry explains that the picture plane is animated, and is a living material presence to perception, and thereby, is ‘alive in an original metaphysical and ontological sense’.⁴⁸ From a Bergsonian view, we argue that since perception is not of a different order than matter, the picture plane is then regarded as both *form* and *content of concrete consciousness*, and hence, as a medium for the means of life to experience its activity and the reflection of its change upon matter. However, we regard the picture plane first as a ‘configuration’ resulting from the exertion of life. Secondly we regard affect of the picture plane as a material presentation of the activity and movement of conscious perception and sensation. Hence, we maintain a theory in which the picture plane is both a life ‘form’ and a materiality towards ‘life’.⁴⁹

Conclusion

We have argued from the concept of the frame and its relation to the picture

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 15

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 99

⁴⁸ Michel Henry, *Seeing The Invisible*, (London Continuum, 2009). pp. 58-59

⁴⁹ *CE*. p. 318

plane in the process of painting to suggest that both are psychological and material elements of the process. From the frame the process of painting is like a window and a threshold: a window through which a concentration of perceptions and the activities of many images are occurring, and a threshold, in which the painter's duration merges with the differing durations of the painting medium, that is, by the encounters of the living centre of images, the transition of images from the conditions of experience and expression enframed by the 'significance' of the conscious transition of experience. This experience is itself a subjectivisation of the process of painting as its activity and the occurrences of its expression are conditioned by the given site of the process. The picture plane is a surface and at once, the site for the art-object's becoming, the pre-qualification of the process as the gerundive form for the activity of the painter, and the making visual the material becoming of the images as the event of the painting process. In this sense, we have maintained a theory of the frame that suggest the frame as an activity of perception, as immanent function of the force of consciousness towards its expression, and thereby intrinsic to expressions becoming visible in the process of painting. However, as framing is an activity in the creation of painting, it necessarily inheres within the perceptions given by the picture plane, and bounds the planar surface as an ontological cut of the event of art-object from the continuity of other images. In this sense, we have argued that the frame, as also framing, is a double identity of a material and spatial extension as well as an embedded process within the transitions and interchanges of images from painter to painting medium.

Through our appraisal and evaluation of Derrida's notion of the 'parergon', we have extended a Bergsonian theory of frame to mean an expanding ontological identity grounded by its own process of creation via limitation, becoming via bordering. The reception of Derridian notion of the frame, allows us to further convey the challenge to the traditional thinking significant to the frames identity. This culminates further into the investigation of the picture plane, as an equally a limitation of potential and

the isolation of the difference of experience beyond its encounter. Therefore, our theory of frame maintains that framing is itself the differential of the expressive and material process from the experiential encounter of perception. The frame coexists with the picture plane, as both are actualisations of the contractive qualities of perception, hence offering a representational quality of perceptual experience, immediate to the active actualisation of conscious perceptions expressing images.

And finally we argued that the framed-image is always, virtually, in the material world, in so far as perception is an activity continuous with the indefinite and repetitive images of the material plane. In this respect, by the notion of frame or the activity of the frame as a process of framing, we have regarded it as an ontological condition, but more specifically, a creative affect of images towards material development and the manifestation of life. We then considered the planar surface more specifically as the situated site and occurrence of the actualization of the forms of perceptions, and as a spatial medium given to movements of thoughts, and affecting the expressions of conscious perception coinciding with its presence. Though this comparison may be taken to be more relevant to discussions of the 'representational' or 'pictorial' form of the picture plane and the intuitive content inherent to its composition, what is most important is that either in terms of its position within the correlation of the 'internal and external', or its actualization as a process from sensation to perception, the ontological character of the picture plane is based on its embodiment of movements by its virtual capacity. According to Bergson's theorization of the interpenetration of movements, the interchange of vital and material occur within the picture plane. We argued that although the material surface as the picture plane is occurrence for the manifestation of movement as a thing of its own differentiated duration, it is both the mediation of thought and the givenness of images as 'embodiment' of process of painting. However, according to the theoretical notion of the interrelation of mind and matter, referring to the picture plane as 'embodiment' (i.e. the movement from the 'intensive force', the 'intensive

origin' from the depths of reality, to the surficial, material 'individuality') would be less accurate, than if the picture plane were conceived of and termed as an ontologically distinct process. We argued from Bergson's elaboration of 'living beings' that, this description applied to the picture plane, mean that the picture plane is the 'organization' that occurs because of its mediation between activity and thinking. This means that the picture plane is a 'content' of material reality, but also as a 'form' given to vital activity. We compared our theory of frame and the relation to the picture plane to Kandinsky's view of painting, and in particular his view of the rigour of painting in terms of the planarity of the material surface as issuing towards the experience of the painter. We see that with Kandinsky, the picture plane is metaphysical in the sense that it is a living element of expressing itself through the formative process of painting. Therefore, for Kandinsky, the element of planarity before the painter is the condition for spiritual growth, and is at once the physical and material possibility of painting, so that its content becomes the means for abstraction. In either case, from Bergson to a Kandinskian reading, we argue that the ontological significance of the picture plane as the surficial content for expression is based on its definition in terms of conceptual *tendencies* (i.e. towards life) and material *processes* (i.e. intuitive and creative movements). Therefore, by its 'form' given in perception, and its intrinsic content towards perception as it both affects, isolates, and is a reflection of the painter's consciousness, the surface of painting is given to intensive attitude of thought, and gives rise to sensation. In this way, as much as the picture plane is a surface, it is a material process towards further movement, and thereby, surficial occurrence for the delving of intellectual attention, the emerging of intuitive experience, and the event for the process of painting.

Chapter 6 - Theory of Colour

The wood grew denser and denser. The red trunks thicker and thicker. The green foliage heavier and heavier. The air darker and darker. The bushes more and more profuse. The toadstools more and more numerous. In the end one found oneself treading on nothing but toadstools. The man found it more and more difficult to walk, to push his way through without slipping. But he went on, repeating more and more quickly the same sentence: - Healing scars. Corresponding Colors.¹

For example, an obscure desire gradually becomes a deep passion. Now, you will see that the feeble intensity of this desire consisted at first in its appearing to be isolated and, as it were, foreign to the remainder of your inner life. But little by little, it permeates a larger number of psychic elements, tingeing them, so to speak, with its own colour.²

Introduction

In this chapter we consider the basic problem of colour to be that of the ontological nature of colour itself. The Bauhaus artist Josef Albers said, 'colour deceives continuously'. This may be the reason that discourses on the theory of colour in the visual arts and in philosophical circles have been irregular, inconsistent, and have not been maintained respective of the continuous experience and encounter of colour throughout the differing facets of life, fragmentary.³ Rather than attempt to overcome this with a Bergsonian reading towards an explicit identification of colour from the complexity of the modernist period of art, we will argue that from a Bergsonian perspective the philosophy of colour is to be encountered through the experience of its rhythmic duration, and this experience conditioned within the process of painting, allows thinking to be more immediate to the material and concrete reality of colour. This is to serve the purpose of bringing Bergsonian

¹ W. Kandinsky, *Kandinsky, complete writings on art* (Da Capo Press, 1994). p. 323

² TFW. p. 8

³ David Batchelor, ed., *Colour: Documents of Contemporary Art*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2008, p.15

thinking into contact with the realisation of the terms of the philosophy of becoming, as a philosophy that regards the novelty of thought through its experience. Based on Bergson's claim of the difference from the rhythm of our own duration and the duration of matter, colour is the vibratory quality of matter that affects our sensation, and thereby altering the rhythmic pulse of consciousness.

In this sense, we will aim to develop a theory of colour from the broader development of Bergson's theory. In particular, from Bergson's notion of the immediacy of conscious states in duration, we will suggest that colour is an independent ontological reality, to mean that colour is a fundamental medium of expression, by which its durational and qualitative status is an affective element in the process of a painting. We will consider colour first in terms of 'intensity' and of qualitative sensations, and by following from Bergson's conceptual negotiation of the difference of interior life and the purely qualitative states of consciousness, we will consider colour as material and creative extension of reality. We will maintain that in the process of painting, colour is the embodiment of rhythmic extensity towards the quantitative dimension of the material surface. However, it is also a psychical intensity permeating the expressions through the painter's conscious experience as given by the dimension of colour from the materiality of the process of painting. From this context, we will consider colour from the context of Bergson's theory of duration of reality, so that colour is itself a qualitative change in time, and as it is given through perceptions, as an unfolding of states of consciousness as temporal multiplicities. This is to argue that colour as a 'pure change' is the underlying basis for an ontological theory of painting, such that colour is at once qualitative intensities of material reality, and in the process of painting, by its own rhythmic potential, colour is also an affective force of the becoming of discrete forms and quantitative *magnitudes of its visual affect*. We will then consider Kandinsky's theory of colour to further Bergson's view of colour beyond the description in terms of its duration and heterogeneous quality and emphasize its forceful presence in the change of

painterly experience and the spiritual progression resonating from its affect. From Bergson to Kandinsky, we will argue for a conception of colour to by which colour is regarded as the intermediary of the activities of experience towards expression. Primarily, we will argue from a Bergsonian perspective, as advanced by Kandinskian theory, that colour is an element of reality that is part of the field of visual experience, but as an affective force it is intrinsically spiritual. For Bergson colour is associated with music, and by this analogy Bergson's view is that colour as with music are of differing durations, and are as flowing and distinct rhythms of time. Similarly for Kandinsky, colour is expression, proceeding from inward to outward manifestations, as a seamless continuity of organic passage and spiritual evolution. From our reading of Bergson and comparative considerations with Kandinskian theory, we will then argue that colour is feeling, or rather, an attitude that is a real succession, an element of real concrete duration. According to both lines of argument, we are considering colour as metaphysical property of reality, as a vital force, and hence, as a creative reality towards psychical and material phenomena. We will highlight how Kandinskian theory will further elaborate the dynamic and generative role of colour, as this will add support to a Bergsonian conceptual basis for a theory of colour. Kandinsky's theory adds emphasis to the non-physical 'life' of colour, that is, as a force that persists, and as movements that endure. This complements a Bergsonian perspective that regards colour as sensation and experience, as a transformative and creative element of reality, and as itself an immediate and ever changing qualitative melody of time.

A Goethean Approach

From the early theoretical studies of colour, and particularly from the broad emphasis of its 'subjective experience', it was Goethe's three part theory of colour, *Farbenlehre*, which influenced the studies of colour phenomenon. His account regarded colour according to the physical and psychological, and thereby, predominately influencing nineteenth and early twentieth century

advancements in these areas. There are many reasons for this, but perhaps the most important reason for the influence of Goethe's theory was his insistence on the necessity of the eye in relation to colour. In other words, Goethean theory of colour emphasizes an understanding of the total experience of vision as a means for the study of colour- phenomena. Therefore, the Goethean account of colour is one of subjective considerations, such that, the eye is regarded as the receiver of light and the stimulated source of the immediate reception of colour. Whereas the Newtonian account suggests that through a process of divisibility, in accordance with the practices of the physics of optics, colour is a quantifiable and objective phenomenon not dependent on the basis of its physical perception. Of course, from these disparate views, that of *qualia* from that of an objectivity of colour, we may understand the inheritance of theories that continue to inform contemporary discourse on the nature of colour. Gage argues that since Goethe's theory is primarily concerned with the physical and psychological effects, this in turn directs further analysis towards the immediate effects of colour within the individual. And, though the *Farbenlehre* was initially received and further expounded upon by other thinkers and scientific developments through the early nineteenth century, it was not until the beginning of the twentieth century, particularly through the work of the German Expressionist artists with emphasis on the psycho-physiological nature of colour, that the Goethean approach to colour had a resurgence of interest.⁴ Here we have the connection to Kandinsky, whose own theory emphasises the subjective experience of the synesthesia of colour, from the tone of colours towards new visual forms, as bridge towards spiritual evolution. Moreover, Gage suggests that through German expressionist paintings the traditional notion of colour identified with objects was jettisoned and instead the artists were interested in capturing the sole effects of colour without the conjunctive or associationist perspectives by which colour is linked to object relations. Here again, relating to the work

⁴ Ibid. p. 207

of Kandinsky, Gage suggests that though the artist offered perhaps the most ‘thoroughgoing Expressionist theory’, as formulated in the manifesto, it was only after its publication that Kandinsky was introduced to Goethe’s Theory.⁵ To that end, Gage explains that although Kandinsky’s theory emphasized colour and its effects according to spiritualist elements, it was from the artist description of the visible manifestations of such invisible elements, forces, rhythms, etc., by which the detailed and defined notion of abstraction was offered in terms of a non-associative psychological effects of colours.⁶ In this respect, as Gage has highlighted the connection from a Goethean theoretical basis towards its influence in the Kandinskian account of colour, there is an empirical and spiritual experience with colour. That is to say, colour is regarded as a binary movement, constantly subject to change as physical and material, but reciprocally effecting change from within the subject’s experience as an inner and psychological process.

Colour and Materiality

Bergson speaks of perception in terms of *pre-reflective experiences*, that is, movements affective and immediate to consciousness, so that sensations that are given are both the translations of these affective states and the conscious expressions from among the possible mental states. From this context, colour is both a physical property occupying space, as well as states of consciousness actualizing the perceptions of the given colour. . Because it is physical but also translates as psychical movements, we argue that colour is immanent

⁵ Ibid. p. 207

⁶ Ibid. p. 207. Three points of clarification are to be made here. The first is that Gage suggests that it ‘seems’ as though Kandinsky’s reading of Goethe’s *Fablenlehre* occurred only after his writing of the manifesto. Secondly, Gage also explains that the Theosophist, Rudolph Steiner was instrumental in Kandinsky’s introduction to the Goethean theory, its analysis, and hence, as an influencing factor towards the occultist or spiritualist emphasis in his colour theory. And finally, though Kandinsky’s terminology and argument present the glazing of spiritualist elements, as Gage rightly explains, not only was Kandinsky’s theorization informed and perhaps indebted to the contemporary psychological debates of his time, but advanced these ideas in as much as it introduced them to art theory and practice.

to the experience of mind as it is a potential that issues from the field of matter. In other words, we are suggesting that colour is a rhythm of reality, as a synthesis of the temporal and spatial qualities of duration. In *Time and Freewill*, Bergson develops a thesis suggesting the unity of consciousness in duration, i.e. qualitative multiplicity misconstrued by the habitual thinking of spatialized time. Because of the developments of psychology and the contemporary experimentation under the auspices of psychophysics with particular emphasis on the theory of psychological parallelism, Bergson's thesis was necessary.⁷ He explains that the experience of perceiving colour and the shifting of our impressions from the experience are generally regarded as reducible to the correlation of the differential of colours, that is, differing intensities of light with the change of states of consciousness. In other words, according to a physicalist view, colour is considered invariable and definite to objects and places, as a spatial and discrete property of things. This means that the possibility of variation is dependent upon our sense of things, to include our sense of light. However, Bergson explains that there are differing sensations, differing intensities of our perceptual experience, and hence, continually changing states of consciousness. He argues that the total of reality is a continuous flow of duration, and as with light and colour, their experience is a continuous spectrum of change immanent to the flux of reality. This is the basis for a Bergsonian theory of colour. Hence, we maintain that the sensation of colour, by our sensorial perceptual encounters is also a type of absorption of the rhythmic qualities of colour, and thereby, a coinciding of our consciousness with the given durations of colour. Here, we want to argue that by applying this to the process of painting, it is the living sensation of the painter that is also the movement of colour as present to consciousness. In other words, the immediacy consciousness to colour is a change of relations between the potential of colour from the vibratory matter to affect sensations

⁷ J. Mullarkey, 'The psycho-physics of phenomenology: Bergson and Henry'. p. 201-220, for a specified analysis of Bergson compared to M. Henry with Psycho-Physical and its subsequent theoretical influences as a backdrop.

and the perceptual experience, and therefore, a harmony of colour experience and the painterly expressions.

By this we are arguing that colour is not a passive phenomenon of the material world, but rather a force of experience permeating the psychical and intensive qualities of the painter and the intrinsic potential of the materiality of the painting medium. We are admitting that colour is at once part of the psychical variations in the activities of the painter, and the non-measurable, ever-changing quality of duration within the materiality of the painting medium. Bergson's example of the sensation of light, develops from the broader context of his argument which distinguishes temporal intensive experiences as distinct from spatial and extensive experiences, and it is from this that we are attempting to navigate a theory of colour, as Bergson suggests that the intensive experiences of colour and its variations affect the unfolding multiplicity of states of consciousness. This draws further the lines of inquiry from the psychical or mental nature of colour to the material, physical, and actual qualities of colour.⁸ The notion of affect is a key term since it is used here to mean a quality of colour as well as the operative of change in the relation of colour to its own experience. Bergson challenges the notion that sensation, particularly that of the actual experience of light, is regarded primarily through a mediation of thought.⁹ However, Bergson questions the mode by which we evaluate the nature of our experience of light, that is, the 'intensity of light', in terms of a quantitative measure of a qualitative value. This marks out direction for our theory of colour. By considering colour in terms of the intensity of experience, a Bergsonian conceptualisation of colour is based on questions of the psychogenic relations to material or external conditions. The sensation of light and the experience of colour in terms of the immateriality, movements, and force, means that our theory of colour is based on the living experiences of colour in time. That is to say, the sensations of light, the experiences of colour, are continuous and durational with conscious

⁸ TFW. pp. 50-61

⁹ Ibid. p. 50

experience.

Colour and Change

Bergson's conceptualization of light and sensation suggest that the continuing differentiation of psychical states proceeding from an experience cannot be solely interpreted in terms of degree, measure, or magnitude. We apply the habit of our intellectual calculus to reality, so that our experience is thought according to varying 'amounts', and in terms of summation. This occurs even with our experience of

light. Bergson explains that by considering luminous sources as either increasing or in terms of 'reductions' of measures of magnitudes of light, our sense of the definition of objects and the outlines of things, already presume that light is quantifiable. By thinking light, we consider our experience of it according to distinct gradients, clear cut divisions of 'tonal values', to the extent that even though the colours of the environment and of the things themselves continuously change, we regard change as incremental.¹⁰ Here, Bergson is most critical of the assumption that the reduction of sensation is according to our habits of thinking and the analysis and numbering of reality from the reflective thought. In particular his concern with our experience of colour is that our notions of quantifiability are so aptly attributed to the experience of light, that the 'measure' of change, particularly, a measure of colour change is assumed in terms of static measurements. Though that this may be the case, he explains that the 'changes' of the hues of colour coinciding with 'changes' of luminosity are attentively perceived by the majority of people. The change of light as with colour is an indivisible movement, and as such, by the nature of their change, the isolation of their transition, or the 'seizing' of this change by perception is difficult to accomplish. However, when we attempt to isolate the shift and change, the analytic attitude of conscious reflection is focused upon incremental specifics

¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 50-51

of change. Bergson argues, as we ‘interpret changes of quality as changes of quantity’, this is from the attitude of intellect, by which we suppose that colours remain definite, invariable, particular to the surfaces of objects and fixed in the ambient environment.

We assume that ‘change’ of colour is not change of the colour itself, but rather, we regard its ‘change’ to be the fluctuation with our own sensation of the changing light.¹¹ Bergson indicates that instead of considering the qualitative change, in terms of our immediate nascent impressions of changing colour, instead we interpret ‘change of colour’ according to the quantitative and formulaic character of our understanding. In this latter instance, the consideration of the intensive sensation of colour is marginalized if not completely disregarded. We consider the intensive and affective experience of colour to consciousness to be reducible to an exteriority of reality. Bergson claims that when we consider the changes of light equal in measure to our sensation of that change, particularly our sensation of the colour of surrounding objects, then colour is only relative to the differing degrees of our sensation of luminosity. However, if we are to evaluate by quantity, by degree, how the variations of luminous intensity differ from one moment to the next based on the relative variations of colour hue, we find difficulty in reconciling a direct measurement of our sensations of luminosity with a definite succession of colour. Bergson is not directly questioning the accuracy of the photometric processes of his contemporaries in the early fields of psychology, namely, those from within the research and experimental work of psychophysics. Rather, he was questioning the means of interpretation. Bergson was concerned about the influence models of analysis, such as Weber’s Law and the work of ‘psychophysics’, as titled by Gustav Fechner. Bergson was concerned with the underlying epistemic view that the operations of the human mind are to be considered solely in terms of material agency. That the occurrences of thinking and sensation are regarded as commensurate to the spatialized character of reality, this reduces the

¹¹ Ibid. p. 51

experiences of consciousness in terms of spatial modifications, and thereby, reinforces the prioritization of spatial dimensionality of reality over the duration of reality.

Bergson asks us to consider the reality of colour as immediate to our consciousness. Directly put, colours are more than a phenomenal affect upon consciousness - colours are intrinsically different, not to be designated according to a view of a relationality of objects to subjects' perception existing within a general substrate, but rather, taken as immediate givens in a constantly changing and therefore, heterogeneous reality which is contingent upon a continuous temporality.

Intensity and Colour

In this respect, under the term 'colours' there are a multiplicity of unique and individual qualities of the experience of light. This means, that our sensations of colour are of the multiple experiences given by colour and the actualization of these experiences. Bergson explains that the brightness or intensities of colour are to be attributed to the qualitative changes of colour as the affect of change in duration. In

other words, the variations of a given colour are what is given immediately, a changing reality first affecting our impressions. By this, Bergson is critiquing the direction of our interpretation, upon the immediate effects of perception, and the immediacy of change to consciousness. Bergson claims that it is with the immediate experience of colour that the changes in sensation are discontinuous.¹² From one hue to another, attempting to establish a definitive point or a place of equal shade for one colour from among the indefinite and continual intermediate colour possibilities would require a calculus of 'sudden leaps'. If we identified the transition of one colour to another, the question arises as to the notions of the intermediaries of colour,

¹² Ibid. p. 57

the greater or lesser qualities of shades and hues, or total variations from among colours.¹³ Bergson argues that in the case of psychophysics, the measure of sensation results in more complex formulations because of the inaccuracy of the means of measure, but more so, by the modeling of the immediate experience on the basis of a spatial and quantifiable terms of thinking.

Bergson discusses the indefinite, qualitative and variable psychological states given by our experiences of colour in terms of the notion of intensity. Whether by presentation to our perception, or, by the immediate impression given to our states of consciousness, according to Bergson there are two different approaches to a discussion of intensity. ‘Intensity’ is regarded in terms of an external cause or means of the affective perceptual sensation, or we may consider intensity in terms of ‘simple psychic phenomena’ involved in psychological states.¹⁴ According to Bergson, our investigation of the notion of intensity presents us the idea ‘of extensive magnitude from without’, as well as compelling research into, ‘the very depths of consciousness, the image of an inner multiplicity’.¹⁵

Colour and Images

Bergson’s exposition coupled to that of his theory of image, gives us a clearer line of direction of the relation of colour to the image.¹⁶ Lawlor explains that the total of Bergson’s theoretical developments and the underpinning of his theses revolved around the use of the term ‘image’. He suggests that Bergson’s continual use of the term was because it suggested vision. Lawlor explains that as Bergson’s theories prioritize vision, the

¹³ Ibid. p. 59

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 73

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 73

¹⁶ MM. p. 207, I am implying that from Bergson’s notion of the real movement contra ‘the transference of thing’, the difference of colour irreducible between the quality of rhythm and the quantity of colour in terms of common measure of consciousness.

theories concentrate on the nature of light itself. Lawlor adds that aside from the dependency of vision upon light, according to the Bergsonian notion, the image is likened to a 'picture' - a 'picture' that emits light.¹⁷ Bergson's concept of 'image' privileges vision from among the nature of perception. Bergson argues that what is 'given to see primarily', and by the intrinsic light of the image to vision, is colour.¹⁸ Lawlor is suggesting that according to the terminology of modern philosophy, Bergson's emphasis on light, colour, and vision as distinctive to the nature of the image, indicates his ranking 'secondary qualities' as more definitive of reality than the geometric, spatial, extended, or 'primary qualities' of things. Because the 'image' is light, and illumination gives colour toward vision, colour is a particular and special characteristic of the image and hence, of reality in total. Lawlor explains that with this emphasis and even prioritization of colour in the definition of the image, in a manner similar to a definition of the nature of colour itself, this describes the image as, 'at once simple or one, complex or different, and continuous or successive'.¹⁹

However, the specific concentration of colour in the nature of the image means that within the unity of reality there is also a multiplicity of colours. Bergson's theory, as a whole, maintains that reality is changing, it is continually differentiating, and, as a unity in movement, the element of colour is itself a multiplicity within the flow of reality, continually differing from among itself.²⁰ Lawlor explains that in Bergsonian terms, there are 'natural articulations' of colour, that is, absolute or non- relative distinctions from

¹⁷ L. Lawlor, *The challenge of Bergsonism* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2003). p. 186

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 5

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 6. I think that Lawlor's summary in this quoted passage, though brief, characterizes Bergson's explication of the intensity of conscious states found in *Time and Freewill*, more specifically, Bergson's analysis of the operation of quantitative judgments compared to qualitative impressions, as either discrete and measurable experiences or discontinuous and continually differentiating sensations. I say this because, in this quotation of Lawlor's explanation, the dialectical terms he uses to describe Bergson's theory of image may be traced full circle, to be also found in the conceptual operations of Bergson's investigation into the experience and/or sensation of light and colour.

²⁰ *MM.* p. 197

among the compository and qualitative nature of the colours. Considering an ‘artistic picture’, (using Lawlor’s term) there is an implicit unity, a visual continuity of the painting itself. However, colours flow from one hue or shade to another, and in this sense, we cannot disregard the differing tones, distinct hues, and the separate timbre of colours. Bergson explains there are no intervals with vision. When the eyes are open, immediately light flows in, and we perceive a continuous and unified ‘picture’, albeit, one of a multiplicity of elements, as a constellation of elements undergoing constant change.

Deleuzian theory of Colour and Sensation

Deleuze’s philosophy of colour and the related theoretical corollary implicit in his theory of sensation are developed further and made more specific through the particular study and analysis of the work and thoughts of painters Francis Bacon and Paul Cezanne. Describing the work of Cezanne, Deleuze claimed that the painter opted for a way of painting that moved ‘beyond both the illustrative and the figurative’.²¹ According to Deleuze sensation is as a totalizing domain of reality. The experience of colour is an experience by which the painter and the painting coalesce. The process of painting affects the visible rendering, and hence, the manifestation of the sensible experiences in ‘forms’ of the sensations. In other words, the experiences from among the process of painting conditioned the sensible experiences, and given to sensible forms, the experiences become sensations themselves. Deleuze explains that the painter, the painter’s sensation, the sensible world, and sensation in the world, are all things ‘indissolubly, it is Being-in-the- World’. By this he means that the subject ‘becomes’ in the sensation, and in to, sensations constitute fields or levels of reality in which the subject’s sensible experiences translate through objective reality. By this, objective reality is also sensible ‘Being’, as object is through the subject. This means that sense

²¹ G. Deleuze and F. Bacon, *Francis Bacon: The logic of sensation* (U of Minnesota Press, 2003), p. 25

and sensing are of a unity, as 'Being' is considered mutually inclusive of the subject and object.²² In this respect, Deleuze argues that Cezanne considered sensation to not be exclusive to the atmosphere, and 'disembodied' activity of light and colour. For Cezanne, sensation was to be located in the body, as well as in the material, static objects.

In terms of 'colour' synonymous with 'sensation', Deleuze expresses that in the process of painting, to 'become' is a condition of the subject, as well as the material objects. This affirms the processual or event nature of painting, so that sensation 'happens' in paintings. To the latter point, Deleuze clearly states, 'sensation is what is painted', and this is not to be taken to mean as a form of representation of the objective, but rather, sensation is the object, colour is the immediate sensible form, from which their existence and experience persists. Deleuze suggests that Cezanne rendered the world in terms of Nature, i.e. landscapes and still lifes, whereas Bacon considered the world as artefact, i.e. being made and constantly unmade.²³ Deleuze explains that this difference reinforces the conception that links the two painters, that is, that the sensation is the painting whereby, the sensation(s) sustained and affected by the sensible form are given through painting. However, both painters were interested in addressing the world in terms of sensation, and both considered sensible forms as a relation to the sensation in painting. In other words, the process of painting is a process of sensation, so that with both painter and painting object, the field of colour perception the field through which the mutual interchange of becoming occurs. In this, for

²² Ibid. p. 25. From the reading of this particular designation on the notion of sensation, I believe Deleuze offers a means of compatibility between the Bergsonian position and the phenomenological position on the nature of sensation, to include the theories of Merleau-Ponty, and, to refer the reader to the later part of this text, also towards the specific theories of colour from Michel Henry.

²³ Ibid. p. 26. Here I further specified Deleuze use of the term 'artefact', so as to further his previous description of Bacon's manner of painting as a type of recording, by way of considering the world as indisputable through observation and deservedly, to be investigated and surveyed as 'facts'. In this sense, colour is 'made' in painting by its own means, as colour is the making of colour, as sensible form is given by sensation.

Deleuze, the sensation of colour is the force of its translation in the process of painting. In this sense, the nature of the process of painting, is also a continuous transmission of sensation affected by the material medium.²³

Deleuze argues that within each painting, of all the possible figures, and of all the sensations, each and all 'is itself a shifting sequence or series'.²⁴ Moreover, this reverses the fixity of these terms in the sense for each claim there is said to exist differing orders, differing series, or differing sequences. That is, with each process of painting, with each incipient figure towards the accumulation of sensible forms, rather than a relation of sensations of different degrees we have differing orders, different domains from 'one and the same sensation'.

For Deleuze asserts that with each sensation, with each figure, there is a plurality of constitutive values. From this unity and coexisting nature we are able to say that the sensation transmitted in the painting, the 'affective material sensation' of the painting - the sensation derived from the sensible forms, and the figure itself, are all of a synthetic character. Without reservation Deleuze rejects the view that the source of the 'material synthetic unity' can be found in the represented object or isolated to the 'figured thing'. Because of this reversal of the primary figuration for the secondary, the 'sensational' nature of the painting 'provokes' the nascency of sensation, that is, for what is given as actual, as perceived, or as 'sensed' in the painting is also the counterpoint for the force of becoming sensations.²⁵ Instead, the possibilities of sensing, and thereby, the potential to experience differing levels of a sensation is more than what is given by or beyond any represented object.²⁶

²⁴ Ibid. p. 27

²⁵ C. Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (Routledge, 2001). p. 59-61

²⁶ Ibid. p. 28

Deleuze identifies Bacon's paintings according to three theoretical elements, i.e. structure, the figure, and the contour, of which he claims that 'all three of these converge on colour, in colour'.²⁷ Moreover, he adds, it is the modulation of colour - the variance and oscillation that constitute the relation among colours. But this modulation is also the reason for the convergence of these elements, the force of the movement from one to another, (i.e. what he suggests as their 'distribution') and more importantly, for 'the unity of the whole'.²⁸

Colour Fields

Deleuze suggests that by the 'Figure' element, there are forms or shapes that are dynamic, active within the painting, and, to the extent that they affect the viewer in such a way that the viewing is compelled to move from one to another, they are described in the manner of 'a flow of broken tones'.²⁹ However, all of these elements operate within the entire painting, and though there is a background or general 'field of colour', the relation of all the elements on one and the same plane is based on the resonance and transitions of tones and figures, and fundamentally, to be found in the movement and exchange from among all the colours. This suggests a modulation of the painting, particularly to the 'mode' of variations in tone, and thereby the oscillating movement implicit in the self-differentiating field of colours. From this, Deleuze claims that the altering of tone and differentiating of value 'consists of internal variations of intensity or saturation'.³⁰

Deleuze explains that the relational aspect of colours in a painting and the

²⁷ Ibid. p. 101. I intend to draw out the distinctions implicit in Deleuze's word use here. Here he uses two prepositions to suggesting a mutual governance of the activity or movement among the elements of the painting, their 'convergence'. That is, with 'on colour, in colour' we need to refer back to the analysis of his reference to a phenomenological position that offers a clearer position on the nature of sensation, whereby, insisting on the 'unity of the senses', he considers this to be relevant in claims of the relation of sensation and the vital rhythm.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 101

²⁹ Ibid. p. 102

³⁰ Ibid. p. 103

variability of their intensity is predicated by some quality of movement, such that, from lines and bands crossing over and through sections of colour, this alone generates differing fields of colour, as fields are made subordinate or ‘accentuated’ by others.³¹ Referring to the work of abstract expressionist painter Barnett Newman, whose colour-field paintings juxtaposed a dominant colour field with narrow strips or marginal bands of contrasting colours, Deleuze asserts that the variations of the total colour field depend on the relations of the proximity from among the spatial and temporal values of differing colours. As the case with Newman’s work, Deleuze claims that what is produced is a perception of succession or perception of movement in time. He explains that with more or less contour and hence, variation among the differing colour values, the colour field becomes an object that is then regarded according to a ‘temporal perception’. In this way, the colour field itself becomes an unending moment, perceived as without difference, and as a ‘form of time’.³² In other words, the uniform colour field perceived as a ‘form of time’, is the means for structure, shapes, and movements to emerge, and hence, is an ‘active presence’ for the relations of zones and shifting colour values. The time of colour is the source of change, the means of variance, and difference of colour is from among the movement given by the entire painting.

On Possibility and Forces of Colour

Colebrook explains that for Deleuze the affect of colour is among the forces of becoming, so that the force of colour through the process of painting is demonstrably a creative force. She adds that according to Deleuze these forces and the potential for their becoming, is ‘the incorporeal world of sense’.³³ In this respect, for Deleuze’s theory of colour, the notion of ‘colour-force’ means that our perception is not according to how any colour is actually, but instead, how colour is becoming to perception differently. Colour is a force as it is an

³¹ Ibid. p. 103

³² Ibid. p. 104

³³ Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (Routledge Critical Thinkers, New York, 2002), pp. 59-61

affect towards its own forms, it is the expression of the becoming of sensation, and hence, active towards its own distinction. Colour is a disruption from its own flow, and yet, transformative from among its own relations. Colebrook explains that for Deleuze, the actual world as made aware by the senses is a ‘composite of virtual tendencies’.³⁴ The colour perceived is what the eye has actualized. Given to the eye, the flow of light is perceived as colours. Colour is then, an actualization of perception, a form of perceiving from the continuous flow of difference in time. Colebrook explains that there are indefinite possibilities for seeing, but these may not be actualized, that is, what is possible may not become actual by being perceived. In the process of painting, though there are colours actual to our perception, what is given has the potential to be more than what may be seen. This is to say that there are possibilities for differing perceptions of colour.³⁵ Colebrook suggests that for Deleuze, life is pure difference and the world is constantly becoming, so that the differences of painting are actualized by differing perceptions. She explains that every perception, as points of actualisation or contraction from the indefinite possibilities to perceive, have their own duration. She describes the Deleuzian notion of perception in terms of ‘a contraction of flows of becoming’. Accordingly, she explains that for seeing, it is necessary for a ‘virtual synthesis of time’. In the process of painting, what is said to be perceived is a unity of past perceptions, expectation of perception, and the connection to becoming perceptions.³⁶

This three-fold temporal quality of perceptions means that the creative force of colour in painting is at once the present affect of colour upon perception and immediately the possible variations of colour to differ from themselves as perceived. In other words, the nature of perception is such that perceiving colour is a means towards the qualitative possibilities of vision, and hence, towards the virtual and potential of any colour. In a word, to perceive colours

³⁴ Ibid. p. 126

³⁵ Ibid. p. 126

³⁶ Ibid. p. 127

is to go beyond its existential condition of experience (i.e. continual reference to past experience), and it is by this that colour may be said to be becoming sensible towards possibilities. Deleuze refers to the process of these perceptions as ‘singularities’, to which Colebrook comments that ‘certain works of art can present this potential’.³⁷ However, she adds that singularities are not to be thought of in terms of notable moments according to a sequential progression, or a coherent order following the developments or abilities to perceive. For singularities are not within time, (i.e. to have been experienced, or being experienced) but instead, they are ‘events’: turning points or movements of transition from as-yet-possible to becoming. In terms of colour, singularities may be regarded in terms of the ‘movement’ of shade or tonal difference, and thereby, the concentrations from among the relation of the actual colour shift the position of sections, or focus of forms. Deleuze’s specific explication of the ‘relation of proximity of colours’ follows his theory of the modulation of colours, in which the singularities are the exertion of colour affecting the becoming of another tone or value.

In a similar line of thought to Colebrook’s theory, Megan Craig argues that Deleuze’s theory of colour is based on the theory that time is the innermost nature. This is a theoretical consequence that originates from Bergson’s theories and that challenges the dominant notions of the spatialization of sensation, as it situates sensation in time and experience in duration. She indicates that by theorizing about the ‘temporal dimension of colour in Bacon’s work’, Deleuze is highlighting the variable intensities and the differing movements that are possible within painting. In this sense, Craig claims that Deleuze’s theory of colour emphasizes the concept of a ‘living body’, wherein the difference of life from art, or even, bodies from colour, is made ambiguous.³⁸ She argues that Deleuze’s theory is a three part development: first, the meaning of the term ‘sensation’, second, this notion of sensation applied to painting (particularly to the work of Bacon), and finally,

³⁷ Ibid. p. 127

³⁸ M. Craig, ‘Deleuze and the Force of Color’, *Philosophy Today* 54. p. 177

through painting the use of colour may evoke sensation and hence, precipitate the potential of painting towards difference. In view of this, Craig claims that Deleuze's theory not only asserts a theory of colour but rather a colour within the context of a theory of the embodiment of difference. This resounds with Colebrook's description of the complexities of Deleuze's theory of painting, and in doing so amplifies the more significant Bergsonian turn towards temporal dimension of experience and the vitality of becoming. Craig suggests that what is crucial for understanding Deleuze's theories of painting, is the relationship between sensitive bodies and the forces of becoming, i.e. sensation subject to colour. To such notion of bodies she explains that unlike the emphasis of Merleau-Ponty or Levinas on the receptive possibilities of physical touch and hence, the visceral nature of touch, Deleuze considered them as 'complex vitalities'. For him these bodies are not simply reducible to categories of outside or inside, but rather, they are places of events and things in time, which all undergo continuous change. In this way, Craig points out that Deleuze has taken the phenomenological theory of embodiment further.³⁹ Craig suggests that similar to Bergson's distinction of creative instinct or expression of immediacy versus static intellection, Deleuze also recognizes the differences in the transitions of sensation through their expression from the re-presentation and articulation as an 'afterthought' of sensation.

Kandinsky on Colour

Like Bacon's work, Kandinsky argues for the expressive nature of painting, and rather than an objectivist's view of reality, his is one that considers the nature of art in terms of inner life, the psychology of colour, and the language of forms and colour that flow from their source. Kandinsky explained that when our eyes move over a palette of colour we have 'a purely physical

³⁹ Ibid. p. 178

impression' in which one feels pleasure, happiness, and satisfaction as the eye is also 'warmed, or else soothed and cooled'. His emphasis on these impressions is more to do with difference of feelings given by tangible presence of the activity of the eye and the colour palette, than having with the stimulus immediately translated as idea. Kandinsky's theory argues that the painter expounds on such notions of impressions, physical sensations, and hence, the psychological workings of colour, and he does so by situating all of these in terms of the process of painting as being part of an indefinite temporal progression.⁴⁰ He suggests that though the continuation of these impressions and their effect may be short lived, such that the 'soul is unaffected', the enduring affect from a glancing experience is to be found in the possibilities of painting - in the series of sensations and the emerging events in the work of painting to continue after. For Kandinsky, there are many 'purely superficial' impressions that are experienced from among the more familiar and ordinary objects of the world, but he argues it is with 'a first encounter with any new phenomenon', which is the resounding affect upon the soul. The consequence of these first affects that are direct upon the soul, is a foundational movement in which what were once first, immediate impressions, become the compositional qualities of knowledge. In other words, the intensive experience is no longer identified with objects or phenomenon, but instead, what is lasting of the affective sensation becomes the meaning of the totalized and diluted composite from which traces of the enduring affects of the soul may be attributed.

Kandinsky suggests that as an individual develops and comes to knowledge by the growth of experience, though impressions given are not likely to have as an intensive affect as was had by first encounters, the experiences of objects and phenomenon 'acquire an inner meaning and eventually a spiritual

⁴⁰ Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, trans. by M.T.H. Sadler, (Dover Publications, New York, 1977), p. 23.

harmony'.⁴¹ However, he claims that the impression of a colour may register differently with an individual who has developed a more 'sensitive soul', that is, one who is more aware of the potency and possible impressions of colour so as to be attuned to the impressionable variations of colours' affect. He argues that for an individual whose senses are so directed by virtue of a trained disposition the effects of colours are to be considered in terms of 'their psychic effect'.⁴² From a first encounter and then onto individual impression of colour over a period of time these gradually contribute towards the development of a conceptualization of colour. For the attentive individual, this process of the transition from the immediate intensive sensation to the extension of ideas in conscious reflection results in an interchange from the developed concepts returning to the immediacy of colour's effect. However, this passage and direction of concepts towards impressions, suggest a direction of thinking colour towards the immediacy of colour. In this transition, there occurs the culturing of colour's inner meaning. For Kandinsky, by this process the individual is more inclined towards colour and therefore, tends to be more sensitive and moved by it. He explains that this process of development of sensitivity to a colour's impression, a sensitivity that is prompted by experience, this leads to an widening of the sensitivity and an acute attunement in terms of an intensive receptivity. In this regard, learning to think the colour and feel the colour is to experience colour in terms of its 'corresponding spiritual vibration'.

He explains that those first encounters or elementary physical impressions are only steps, steps towards a 'meaning' of colour through which one returns to colour. That is to say, that with colour there is type of communication in which the exchange is an interchangeable process of taking and giving, feeling and thought. Moreover, according to Kandinsky, what is most

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 24

⁴² Ibid. p. 24

significant with this exchange is the psychic effects of colour over the purely psychological impressions from colour. Rather, colours effect the inner feeling in so far as those feelings coalesce towards primary meanings and thought, and as such, knowledge returns to impressions given by colour so as to further affect feelings. Kandinsky leaves open the question of whether it is possible for a 'direct' psychic effect of colour to produce an immediate intensive affect, or an attitude of knowing in the individual. Because of the overlap of physical, mental, and sensational properties belonging to both colour and the individual equally, Kandinsky regards the process of painting as the intertwining of the subjective condition of the painter and the objective manifestations of the painterly elements. He explains that because the individual's psychological and intensive states are situated within the body, the physical impressions and sense experiences given by colour may be of such a kind or degree, that they also occur simultaneously as a 'psychic shock' and an intensive feeling.

Kandinsky assumes a conceptually vague boundary, separating the physical domain and the psychological domain, by suggesting that colour has the potential to affect physical sensations to the extent that colour may 'awaken' other deep sensations. In other words, the psychic effect of colour becoming realised is a co-occurrence of inner 'feeling' and inner 'meaning'. In terms of a psychology of colours then, Kandinsky explains that colour exercises influences on the body by affecting sensations and influencing expression. Colour acts as a type of medium by which external forces reverberate or 'echo' with internal movements, such that the material elements of painting cause intensive sensations. Colour is not simply an external stimulus, but rather, in terms of Kandinsky's non-objectivist account, it is a condition of the psychic effects emanating from the world, and in resonance with the painter's inner tension, it is expressibly more than any register of vision or the senses. Instead Kandinsky directly relates this notion of the 'necessity' of the painter, with the inner and spiritual compulsion towards painterly

expression. It is the impression of colour that requires the external orientation of its experience. This is similar to Bergson's theory of the coinciding of colour perception with the extensity of colour in material things. For Kandinsky, colour is a compulsory and complementary inner movement that returns to the force of its experience through the expressions met by the painting media. This 'inner need' is not a particular condition that arises from the correspondence of sensations, but rather, it is towards an unequivocal core of vital expression. For Kandinsky, as with Bergson, colour is regarded in terms of its affective condition, and by its continual movement it is also understood as an experience of change. Hence in the process of painting, the engagement with colour is integral to the harmony of expression in the painting.

The Bauhaus Complement to a Kandinskian Theory of Colour

During his time as teacher and organizer of the 'Basic Course' at the Bauhaus, Johannes Itten maintained a similar view with Kandinsky, theorizing that the understanding of the qualities of colour and the possibilities of the effects of colour are primarily questions of the psychological, of conditions of the individual, and foremost, concerning the subjective experience. Though he suggests that there is a need for 'objective principles and rules', or simply a conceptual formulation of colour, for Itten, this is only to assist with the 'subjective predicament', i.e. one's own appreciation for any given colour that results from the expressive effects of colour.⁴³ For Itten, colours are forces in the sense that they are 'radiant energies that affect us positively and negatively'.⁴⁴ According to Itten, the sum of these effects can be studied not by direct visual comprehension, but more broadly, by either consideration from psychological perspectives or according to symbolisms. Light in itself is not considered coloured, but rather, colour is attributed to its discrimination

⁴³ J. Itten and F. Birren, *The Elements of Color: A Treatise on the Color System of J. Itten, based on His Book the Art of Color. Edited and with a Foreword and Evaluation by F. Birren. Transl. by Ernst Van Hagen* (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1970). p. 7

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 12

from its arising from the visual and mental processes. Itten explains that colour taken as a secondary or emergent property from the reception of light, helps us understand how recognition colour and apprehension arises. But what we understand is that ‘several colours arise from qualitative differences in photosensitivity’.⁴⁵ From the analysis of colour in substances, Itten explains that our understanding accords with the form of a chemical variant or agent that colour is considered. Hence, colour is seen as definable as much as the analysable pigment or colourant, or simply, material of which it is a property. In this respect, Itten explains that colour is given meaning and takes on a content by way of its optical register, as well as its ‘cerebral perception’.⁴⁶ For Itten, the eye and the mind come to different perceptions of colour. In respect to optical perception, and certainly in the interests of both the chemical and physiological analysis of colour, colour perception is more in terms of a ‘physiochemical reality’. By this, colour is recognized only according to its physically and/or chemically definable agency. Whereas, with cerebral perception, this would be the focus of a psychological theorization of colour, and Itten terms this as ‘the psycho-physiological reality’ of colour. In this sense, Itten claims that when the agency of colour and the physical medium for colour encounter the mental or cerebral nature of colour, and these do not coincide as a co-occurrence of one to the other, then there is the opportunity for novelty in expression. For Itten, this is not a matter of how, but rather, a question of when such discordance occurs between physical and psychical properties of colour. The artist, when driven by aesthetic pursuits, is concerned when the physical and the mental nature of colour are discordant. Itten explains that for the artist, when this occurs, there is the possibility of ‘discordant, dynamic, unreal, and fugitive expression’.⁴⁷ In other words, whether by approach of colour based on its physicality or in terms of its effective or mental register, by the merging of its concrete nature and its mental nature, colour as a phenomena generates ‘unreal vibrations’.

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 16

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 17

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 18

In this sense, by studying the differing perspectives of theories of colour perception, from the position of the artist, Itten suggests that it is with contrast effects that we may more fully approach the ‘problems of colour’ (i.e. the ‘subjectively conditioned colour perception’), and hence, further the study of colour aesthetics. Indeed, further study leading to further practice, eventually leads to possibilities ‘that affords the artist his opportunity to express the ineffable’ For Itten, with any other mixture in which the combination is considered discordant, non-harmonious, or one-sided, as such, this proceeds from the application of subjective combinations and, therefore, ‘its expression has an exciting and provocative effect’.⁴⁸ Furthermore, towards this subjective colouring, Itten claims that not only the subjective combinations of hues but also the subject’s orientation of the colour applied and the size of its application suggests modes of thought or feeling.

The ‘subjective timbre’ is the subjective quality and characteristics of the individual that are the possibilities of expressions through colour. But, by considering the ‘individual temperament and disposition’, and hence, the potential of the subject’s mode of thought, feelings, and actions, the ‘subjective timbre’ is then expressed through the subject’s choice of combinations and overall use of colour. In this respect, Itten claims that colour serves as a medium for the inner being of the individual. By which he means that the ‘intrinsic constitution and structures’ emerge from and are unique to the psychophysical state of the individual. For Itten, the objective principles of colour are to be recognized, understood, and practiced. However, this does not mean to disregard the subjective timbre which precedes the subjective use of colour. Instead, like Kandinsky, Itten argues that the principles of colour may be empirically derived, but from the impressions of colour, the painter’s intensive and felt experience precedes any plan, design, or any calculated composition.

⁴⁸ Ibid. pp. 20-24

Conclusion

In this chapter we have argued for attempted a continuation of a philosophy of colour, by thinking colour in terms of its relation to a Bergsonian philosophical view of the process of painting. We evaluated Bergson's thinking that colour is part of the real movement and continuously changing nature of reality, so that by thinking through the encounter with colour, the experience is an encounter with the indivisible rhythms occurring within duration. From this view we argued that the nature of the colour experience is variable according to the occurrences of colour coinciding with the continuity of our own consciousness. In this sense, we continued a Bergsonian interpretation of colour to argue that colour is a heterogeneous and qualitative movement in time. However, by the contracting of the rhythms of colour into the durations lived by our consciousness, we are affected by what is given through the experience of colour. Therefore colour is a continuous possibility for the experiences of conscious perception, as a continuity of difference with the movement of the living and sensing body, and thereby, the potential for differing levels of sensation.⁴⁹ This is to say that for the painter, the experience of colour as an experience through sensorial and perceptual contact with the painting media is an affective force because of its real duration. Furthermore, we argued against the Fechnerian principle of colour that extends to contemporary psychological, and continues to uphold the view that colour is a deterministic force registered by the psyche as independent and distinct encounters. Rather we regarded colour, not according to the rhetoric of the causal relations, but in terms of the immediate experience of colour, an approximation of temporal conditions as occurrences of qualitative change. And therefore, colour as an indivisible, multifarious, and heterogeneous quality of real duration, coincides with the pure duration of the inner states of consciousness. We conceded that colour is a force towards

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 28

expressions and is immanent to the process of painting. Therefore, we argued that colour is given to the painter, through the painting media, such that the qualitative range of the differences of light also correspond with the feelings of the painter, affecting his activity, and influencing the continuous experience of the painterly activities towards the expression of living visual forms. From this context we argued that colour is affective towards conscious perception to the extent that its variability, occurring through the mediation of conscious perception is then the subjective mode of its experience. Colour is immanent to the change in the world. Hence, we argued that the sensations given by colour are the qualitative manifestation of its rhythmic passage. In this sense, the expression of colour proceeds from the harmony of the painter's intensive experience with the rhythmic extensity of colour in the world, and in particular with the forms of colour. Therefore, we have considered colour as the perceptual experience of the painter and as an intrinsic property of the materiality of the painting media. In this way, colour is a type of medium by which the differing durational rhythms of material reality reverberate or 'echo' with internal rhythms of consciousness. From this perspective, we attempted to extend a Bergsonian theoretical orientation of colour to Kandinsky's theory of colour by comparing Bergson's descriptions of the melodic and qualitative nature of colour to Kandinsky's view of colour in terms of the impulse for spiritual expression by way of the harmony of colour. In Bergsonian terms, colour not reducible to codifications of degrees of external stimuli, but rather, in terms of Kandinsky's non-objectivist account, it is a condition of the psychic effects emanating from the world. Though Kandinsky's theory considers a rationalisation of the psychological effects of colour, he understands that the investigations towards a logic of colour, are immanent to the relation of its resonances with the painter's, as inner tensions, and the reciprocity to the tones and rhythms of colour in the world. Moreover, the double movements of colour, from the sensorial encounter and experience towards the influence of colour in the expression of its experience, this is the

exacting of the spiritual experience through process of painting. In this sense, similar to Bergson's theory of the coinciding of colour perception with the extensity of colour in material things, the peculiar differentiation of colour from its internal experience towards its externalizations is an interpenetration of subjective states that are at once conditioned by the material and extensive quality of colour. In the process of painting, the experience of colour is the most fundamental element of its expression, such that the painter's experience of colour is part of the living activity of its expression, as a rhythm of difference then projected into the material becoming of the painting media towards the event of the art-object.

Chapter 7 - Line and Divergence

There is, in Leonardo da Vinci's *Treatise on Painting*, a page that Ravaisson loved to quote. It is the one where the author says that the living being is characterized by the undulous or serpentine line, that each being has its own way of undulating, and that the object of art is to render this undulation distinctive.¹

Now vanishing slowly in the green grass. Now sticking in the gray mud. Now vanishing slowly in the white snow. Now sticking in the gray mud. Lay long: thick long black reeds. Lay long. Long reeds. Reeds. Reeds.²

Introduction

The line is a trace of movement, but perhaps, even more so, the line is movement itself. Rather than consider the line in terms of a 'thing', as a visual apparatus, as geometrical schema, as a plastic element, or even as a distinct material orientation, in this chapter, we will argue that the line is the most stable translation of the experience of life in the process of painting. In this regard, we will consider the line according to its ontological nature. We will argue that the line is an affectively present form of coalescence of contacts of the painter's rhythm with the rhythms of the painting medium, occurring as visible formulations of a contouring process in time. By considering the ontic qualities of linearity, we will argue that the lines are tangible 'possibilities', through which occurrences of expression and experience are embodied in its true movement. We will maintain that there is a linear aspect to consciousness. And since the continual experience of consciousness is particular to its linear expression, we will argue that by movement of lines, lines are not reducible to their apprehended figures. Instead, we will argue that lines are vital processes in themselves, as immediate expressions from the force of duration divulging life's movements. In this way, we will claim that in the process of painting, linearity is the progression of living expression

¹ CM. p. 229

² W. Kandinsky, *Kandinsky, complete writings on art* (Da Capo Press, 1994).p. 301

immediate to its unfolding, so that lines are the marking out of forms of expression before it is a figure or a graphic form. However, by the diversity of linear movements in the process of painting, we will argue that lines are affective actions, by which creative movements are implicit in the extension of lines, but they are also genetic movements becoming visual and reflective to the immediacy of conscious perception. The tangible and visual forms of line as a continuity of becoming through living linearity implies the embodiment of images, and the durational qualities of living experience. In this sense, we will then argue beyond the line, to suggest that linearity is immanent within the process of painting, so that the corporeal and expressive materiality of painting are productive movements generated by the affective and intensive qualities of life. Painting is a material process, a material form of living, and a spiritual process, a unique manner of sensation and thinking affecting visual and pictorial projections. Therefore, we will attempt to argue that as the process of painting embodies both material and mental activities, as with the line itself, the qualitative change of painting is one of processes of continual movement, differing degrees of tensions of consciousness, and the durational rhythms of visual expression. In this sense, the line in painting signifies the 'living' process most immediate to the activities in painting, as not merely mind intending towards and uniting with material, but moving from its own embodiment and continuously opening towards its endless creation.

The Vitality of Line

Lines are simultaneously affective, by which their quality of continuity is immediate to the sensations arising from their markings so that the forms that extend from the contouring, become part of the visual intuitions. However, what is at stake here is the equivalence of thought and visual object, that is, similar value given to painting as physical process as well as a psychological process. In other words, for painting to be both, the continual process of rendering thought and the continual thing-ness of thought constantly in

movement, proceeding towards its own realization, this implies that painting is solely reducible to processes of becoming.³ Here we recall the notion of becoming with Bergson's theory intuition, so that there is an indissoluble relation of thing and thought, as both domains are themselves differing movements of images, and changing within the continuity of duration. From this motion of a multiplicity of movements, as a principal quality of reality, we argued that the condition of constant change in the process of painting, in terms of the material and mental variability, implies movements of thinking things towards things thinking. In other words, painting is a process in which the movement of its expression is towards its material becoming.

We see this duration of becoming signified in the visual and progressive existence of the line, such that its qualitative linearity exhibits a process of self-creation, both, developing from the force of its movement and the force of the linear movement continuing from itself. In other words, the line is movement, and because movement is fundamental to any mark making in the process of painting, whether we regard the movement as original to the painter's body or the physical manifestation of the object in motion, this means that lines are both actual and potential. Continuing with his exposition of Ravaisson, Bergson quotes da Vinci, affirming that art offers unique visions of reality, and this in connection with his view of life's potentials through its passage as in terms of continuous movements of dissociation and division, stating,

The secret of the art of drawing is to discover in each object the particular way in which a certain flexuous line which is, so to speak, its generating axis, is directed through its whole extent, like one main wave which spreads out in little surface waves.' It is possible, moreover, that this line is not any one the visible lines of the figure. It is not in one place any more than in another, but it gives the key to the whole. It is less perceived through the eye than thought by mind.⁴

³ *Ibid.* xii

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 229

Here Bergson elaborates on the notion of lines as particular modes of life and thereby, linear processes immediate to sensorial experience and then apparent and open to conscious reflection. In this sense, linearity is analogous to the renderings of vital forces, particular to their movement, as a continuity of their opening and growing. Lines are creative experiences, wherein, their markings concretize and affirm their movements, and from the necessity of their generating movement, they move beyond their actual designation. There is a schematic workings of lines in which lines are the precondition for the continuity of thought original to their own generation. According to Bergson, this sense of a ‘generating’ or originative nature of line suggests a similarity with the course and progression of life, by which linearity is also a characteristic of living movements that proceed from conscious deliberation. In other words, the line is invisible as a continuous quality of realization to mind, as it is the continuous activity of consciousness, before, it is the visible articulation taken up by perception.

Painting,’ said Leonardo da Vinci, ‘is a mental thing’. And he added that it is the soul which creates the body in its image. [...] That is where the painter has placed himself. It is in developing a mental vision, simple and direct, concentrated on this point, that he found, trait for trait, the model he had before his eyes, reproducing in his own way the generating effort of nature.⁵

By this account, Bergson again, elucidates the connection of the ‘generating’ activity of material reality, to the perception of consciousness apprehending it. To this we might add, that in the process of painting then, the linear movements of the painter’s gesture and the applied line are physical applications and contact to the planar surface through the painting medium, but the indefinite qualities of lines and the activity of linear movements are originating within the objects themselves. We argue from this point that, the conscious activity of drawing out lines in the process of painting is the development from a non-particular influence of the generative forces of the

⁵ Ibid., pp. 229-230

objects of perception. In both cases, the activities of painting and drawing are processes of forceful seizure in which, the generation of the movement of a particular painterly gesture or linear expression is also the force originating in its material relation. Bergson emphasizes the movement of art and the perceptions in the activities of its rendering as already present to the painting medium, the forms emerge from the materiality, stating,

True art aims at portraying the individuality of the model and to that end it will seek behind the lines one sees the movement the eye does not see, behind the movement itself something even more secret, the original intention, the fundamental aspiration of the person: a simple thought equivalent to all the indefinite richness of form and colour.⁶

What we want to argue here is that the line becomes a contouring of other content from the exertion of life in response to its contact with the material world. The line is then, among the conscious activities in the process of painting, activities that are given by perception. Hence, towards the advancement of a Bergsonian theory of line, we argue that the line in the process of painting emphasizes the ontological quality of the gesture, of the mark making of the painter as both, an immediate and aesthetic experience, originating from the reception of consciousness to the affects of materiality. Other contemporary philosophies offer theories of the line, establishing a conception of line in terms of movement, thinking, and altogether, as an expressive and hence, creative force. In Bergsonian terms however, we argue that the movements of life in the process of painting, are expressibly the condition of linearity, as the mutual affect of the materiality and the effect of a 'reintegration' of thought and the images of reflective consciousness into the material world.⁷ So far, with our present consideration of the concept of line, we argue that linear processes and the characteristic operations of linearity are the movements of consciousness towards the images given by perception. For Bergson the line and the condition of linearity in the process

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 230

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 238

of painting, is a dual movement of the immediacy of consciousness to the field of perception, and the turn to intellectual reflection, which projects the force of line. In this sense, the total linear expression is also a means of consciousness, and is the content of life.⁸

Contour and Expression

From the individuality of the lines both, life's expressions and life's experience of its own creativity are attained. This is not to say that the line derives a creative effect from a representative attitude towards nature, but rather, the line as a movement of the activity of presenting consciousness through linear expression is continuous to the field of perception. According to Ravaissou's method of drawing and its relation to his philosophical views, Bergson argues the distinction of the mechanical or imitative processes of 'guide marks', from the spiritual or originating and creative processes, explaining,

What counts above all in these circumstances is, in fact, the 'good judgement of the eye.' The student who begins by providing himself with guide marks, who then links them together by means of a continuous line, drawing his inspiration as far as possible from geometric curves, can only learn to see falsely. He never grasps the characteristic movement of the form to be drawn. 'The spirit of the form' always eludes him. The result is entirely different when one begins with the characteristic curves of life.⁹

From the above, the obvious distinction made is between the mechanical and geometric linear processes from the 'characteristic movement' and continuous changing contour of life. By 'curves of life', Bergson is appealing to notion of the direct and immediate influence of nature upon the artist's

⁸ Ibid. p. 238

⁹ Ibid. p. 241

perception and the perception of the life shifting in relation to its attended object. It is the influence of our intelligence which produces lines, but, according to an analysis of the visible and in the direction of geometric composition. To that extent, Bergson suggests that,

By starting from geometry one can go as far as one wishes in the direction of complication without ever drawing any closer to the curves by which life expresses itself.¹⁰

The ‘curves’ of the line is synonymous with the deviating qualities and the continuous movement of life. Bergson’s claim is directed to life’s linear expression as a means of revealing the origin of perception within things. In this sense, the work of life is true to itself, when it moves towards the continuous revealing of nature. Again, Bergson intimates the creative and vital movement of the line resulting in beauty to life’s efforts and effect from nature, stating,

Perhaps—that is, if we consider that beauty itself is only an effect, and if we go back to the cause. Beauty belongs to form, and all form has its origin in a movement which outlines it: form is only recorded movement.¹¹

This is not to speak of life’s expression through drawing as equivalent to the compositional forms, but instead, it is from the movement of life’s continuous effort that forms are continually expressed. For Bergson, the line is a movement of consciousness, but this movement is from the actualization of life’s effort. Through linearity, we argue, life is expressing the effort to express from a vision ‘beneath the sensible intuition’. To do this, the line is the individual and concrete effort of consciousness to enclose, and to embrace the experiences immediate to the materiality that ‘unrolls and manifests ‘from life’s expression.¹² From this view of line and linearity as a contouring which embodies the confluence of living experience and the affect of materiality, we

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 241

¹¹ Ibid. p. 243

¹² CM, pp. 223-224

now shift to a Kandinskian perspective to understand further this notion of line as a force of moving expression.

Kandinsky's Potential of 'Point' and Bergson's Force of 'Line'

We have demonstrated in many instances that Kandinskian theorization corresponds or at least, parallels with Bergson's theory of consciousness and life, expression and matter. Henry's analysis has given us a bridge from Kandinsky, by the recasting of Bergsonian theory, namely in terms of the affective exchanges of life as it is both continuous with its experience, and expressive from this encounter, and becoming difference in duration. Nonetheless, we see that Kandinskian theory is able to stand on its own with the interjection of a phenomenological perspective. Such that we can see with Kandinsky's theory of line, a notion of linear expression develops from within a broader exposition of material and elemental forces corresponding to spiritual growth. Most importantly for our concerns in this chapter, he claims that the work of art follows from the potential of its contents, and in terms of life as the dynamic of artistic expression, the force for the originating of painting is from an inner source. From this view, we argue that Kandinsky's theory of non-objective painting is most aptly to his theory of line, in that he regards the line as not being a pictorial or referential element, but rather, it is of the dual nature of force and activity, a becoming and expressive opening.

Kandinsky claims that the two basic elements of painting are the point and the line. The point has dual properties that of a non-corporeal thing and, as a material form. He explains that the point is a 'proto-element' that serves as a bridging of both the inner and outer dimensions of reality. In terms of being both invisible and visible, the point is at once, within the depth of consciousness, as an affective feeling, as well as occurring on the material surface, as an external gesturing of conscious perception. Where, Bergson considers the problem of metaphysical speculation, by first suggesting that it is an attempt to understand life's origins, we compare this to Kandinsky's

theory of point, here, specifically to connect Bergson's notion of the 'origin' of metaphysics with the Kandinskian theory of the 'point'. In terms of Bergson and Kandinsky, these realities correlate according to the nature of systematic approaches of our thinking, and the methods that develop in both painting and philosophy. Bergson encourages continual philosophical reflection, but is critical of the 'mechanism of thinking'. Our epistemological nature attempts to analyse its own means of analysis before expanding thought to the whole of the experience of reality. For Bergson this indicates a 'premature reflection of the mind on itself', which does not allow for the expansion of knowledge. Bergson's tacit use of a notion of linearity, figuratively expresses the difference of conditions for abstracted thinking.

That is, the nature of reflective speculation, that of an immediacy of thinking that is mobile in terms of moving along with experience, continually expanding, and hence, as a continually expanding reasoning. However, Bergson argues that such knowledge does not follow 'the sinuous and mobile contours of reality'.¹³ By suggesting that the mind's abstraction from experience in attempts to articulate the essence of experience results in the illusion of a metaphysical order, he describes such forms of thinking in terms of a representation of reality as being formulaic, and therefore, they do not apprehend the dynamic qualities of reality. Similarly, Kandinsky explains that the 'most basic graphic elements' in painting such as the point and the line are abstracted, when thought of as being isolated from 'the real of the material surface', whereas, 'upon the material' surface, the effects of lines and points, the overall expressions of the painter's activity become characteristics of the materiality of the painting medium itself. In other words, though relatively fleeting, the application of the point and line is an original expression most approximate to the experience and perceptions given by the materiality.

In this context, the line is a figure of composition, a definite graphic form that contributes to the sense of the fixity of reality, and all the while, betraying this

¹³ ME, pg. 3

sense by the very movement and intrinsic change of its trace. Moreover, when applied to a schematic for metaphysical thinking, what is already presumed is whole of reality is certain and fixed. However, in linear terms Bergson suggests that the metaphysician's ideas may be schematic, simplified and formulaic, but these are not sufficient to evaluate reality in terms of its 'sinuous and mobile contours'. In terms commensurate with qualities of lines, Bergson describes the nature of reality, in which its essence is thought of as continually bending and continually shaping flow. We argue that this offers a basis for a concept of the line in the process of painting. Linearity in the process of painting is the effort to conceptualize towards rigid forms of thinking, but also, actualizes the continuity of expression as a mode of life towards an openness of reality, and the continuity of change from the immediacy of its experience. Conditions of linearity are ascribed to distinct forms of reasoning and to qualities of reality. However, I am not attempting to decontextualize what may be regarded as only a metaphorical usage of the notion of line. Rather, considering Bergson's own admission of the difficulty to articulate a philosophy of time, his argument for a type of thinking that is immediate to existence, we maintain that Bergson's theory analogous to notions of linearity is the basis for a concept of line. In his attempts to elucidate a radically empirical metaphysics, Bergson's theory of the 'linearity' of thinking suggests that the line in the process of painting is a means of conveyance of the durational nature of reality. In other words, the line is a material activity, and by experience of its expression, the event of a conceptual becoming is made apparent. Hence the condition of linearity in painting, as a term for a broader process of life, means that the line is a process present to its living experience.

The Thinking Line

Bergson's philosophy introduced a 'reversal' of philosophy, a transformative approach to metaphysics in which, not only the origin but the orientation of

thinking changes. From this, thinking is not according to a referential direction ‘from concepts to things’, but that processes of mind belongs to things themselves.¹⁴ In this respect, we maintain that painting is thinking. The material painting is a painted thing, and as painting is also a process towards rendering, the objects of these process become yet other variants of becoming things, other changes in the lived experiences of painting. Moreover, the thing-ness of the process of painting are the possibilities for multiple directions of thinking further affecting its continual becoming. This is not to say that the thinking in painting is to consider paintings as thinking things. This is to say that thinking is a mode of life that inheres within the multiple processes unique to painting, preceding the material conditions of painting, the thing-ness of painting. Though modes of thinking are continuous towards objects, and in the reflection of perceptions back upon the process, the modes of thought unique to painting indicate the multiple processes of becoming thought, the ongoing realizations of thought, through the actualizations of the process.¹⁵ In other words, thinking is simultaneously the materiality of painting, i.e. the painted thing itself, as well as the process of its becoming. In this regard we maintain that as painting is a continuous process, thinking is also an innate variability in modes of painting. Regardless of the metaphoric or analogistic notions of linearity occurring in Bergson’s work, we extended a notion of linearity from the context of his theory to mean that aside from the linearity of thinking and the linear development of schemas, the actual concrete line also expresses conceptual development as a form of thinking in progress. However as we have articulated above, the line is more than its actualization. Rather, by its movement it is at once a virtual concept as the condition of linearity is continuity of movement from the potential of

¹⁴ H. Bergson, *An introduction to metaphysics* (Hackett Publishing, 1949). p. x

¹⁵ *Ibid.* xi, Here I am not considering the ‘object as non-reducible to thinking, but instead, commensurate with objects. In this sense, there is not a relation to something that gives rise to the action of thinking or a constitutive orientation for the directions of thought such as a thinking subject. Rather, thinking is a set of processes, occurrences from the movement of continual movement of reality. This is to say that, things are the potential for variances of mind.

movement continuously actualizing by its experience. That is to say that linearity is significant, not solely in terms of a pictorial identity, but by the movement of its traces the movement of the line is already becoming represented. Equally, it is a conceptual state in which a quality of expression is nearest the qualities of material reality. This may be furthered by considering that the qualities of linearity then convey the interposing of somatic qualities and intellectual qualities of reality. Bergson suggests a view supportive of this, stating,

But it seems to me that in different groups of facts, each of which, without giving us the desired knowledge, points out to us the direction in which we may find it. Now to have only a direction is something. And it is still more to have several, for these directions will naturally converge towards one and the same point, and it is that point we are seeking.¹⁶

Moreover, it is the convergence of linear qualities of mind, (i.e. as either symbolic in linguistic operations or in conceptual expression), and linear qualities of material realities (i.e. contouring, bending, movement, directional, etc.) that a 'line of thought', that is, a linear model of thinking, may be considered equal to lines as sensuous qualities of reality. For Bergson, there are 'different regions of experience', by which our knowledge is not given inclusively in full, but instead, relative to the distinct facts that correspond to these regions accordingly. There is an implicit sense of movement, as Bergson suggests, in which they are given as courses of action, as 'directions' given toward knowledge. Hence, there are indefinite multiplicities of movements, pluralities of action and variable correlations of experience as differing 'directions' of fact. Bergson's use of the term 'direction' suggests the multiple possibilities of experience, and thereby, (in a linear sense), implies that experience is a multiplicity of directions of experiences along which the duration of becoming prolonged. By our attempts toward a comprehensive understanding, we reflect on these

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 4

experiences and from the ‘facts’ gathered, we have ‘a certain number of lines of facts’.¹⁷ In other words, experience is itself a linear progression and facts are then the ‘directional’ nature of experience. For Bergson, despite all the variable directions and different facts of individual ‘directions’ of experience, when all of these progressions are considered as constituting a whole, as a ‘convergence’ of lines, then there occurs a ‘accumulation of possibilities’.¹⁸ The possibilities of philosophy are increased, as ‘lines’ of experientially derived facts are brought into a process of collation. These differing and yet, continuing ‘directions’ of experience, are collectively likened to the efforts of philosophical speculation. Our metaphysics, and hence the practice of our speculations through the process of painting are not only formations of abstracted ideas, but instead, like the course of the line, they are an unceasing progression, a growth of experiences, varying contours as they endure in time.

In this way, Lines of fact, lines of experience, and hence, lines of thinking are implicitly unfolding forces in immediate relation to time. Bergson suggests that these tend to meet towards a point. This is not in the sense of a fixed, static position, or in terms of a spatial dimension. Rather, as a change of the movement from the processes particular to their course, their convergence is the result of an ever

Increasing approximation, and therefore, an eventual accumulation by necessity of their mutual and gradual growth.¹⁹ Bergson explains that the convergence is the natural outcome of continually growing experiences, so

¹⁷ Ibid. p 4, this is Bergson use of Italics, in which we may assume that by emphasizing the words themselves, he is indicating the distinction of experiences as linear occurrences not as a following after of experience but of the continual progression of immediacy of knowledge within its own temporal event, and hence, a ‘fact’ as unabated duration of thinking, living, feeling, etc.

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 4, I wish to evaluate this passage very carefully as I see Bergson articulating the notion of mind as immediate to itself in reality, as then also durational, this is synonymous to the meaning that we give to lines. That our thinking is linear, that our speech and expression is linear based, are all indicated by the metaphor of linearity in Bergson’s writings, but, a concept of line is as an abstracted form of thinking is unique to these descriptions as also recognizably derived from life.

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 4

that the point to which the lines converge, may also be said to be a growth of change, i.e. a concentration of experiences, a collection of differing directions of lines of thinking, and hence, a moment of creative inertia. From the durative nature of experiences, and the Variability of thinking, Bergson attributes characteristics of linearity to the progression of mind.²⁰

Force of Line

Here we return to a Kandinskian view, comparative to Bergson, by the assertion that the point in the visual application of movements is to be regarded in terms of a silence and speech. For Kandinsky, this implies that the first mark, the inertial beginnings of the linear gesture is both inactive, according to its concrete application, but active in terms of its communication and affect from among the other forms of expression. However, having established the most primary of the basic elements, Kandinsky claims that from the point as an inactive, self-contained, and 'stationary' state of being, the line is then activated, develops, and hence, is a necessary force that proceeds from 'without'. Here he explains that the physical and geometric line is an invisible thing, as it is a tracing made by the moving point. This is to suggest that the point is itself an initial and inertial movement of expression, so that the most primary of the basic elements as a force in itself, develops from its own energy, resulting in the line. Kandinsky attributes the affect of the one to the other as a reciprocal exchange of force, claiming that greatest anti-thesis to the point is the line. In so far as the line originates from external forces, it is the activity that proceeds from a static point. The point is the origin of the line as motion, and through the line's movement becomes a continual and dynamic movement itself. For Kandinsky the line occurs from the application of force upon the point or the application of multiple forces. In other words, he is careful to describe the line primarily in terms of force

²⁰ Ibid. p. 4

and motion. In this sense, line is not only regarded as a transformative movement from static to dynamic states, but also, a motion that undergoes transformation from forces that are affective towards multiple and diverse kinesis. For Kandinsky, the movement of lines and the diversification of lines is the result of the forces applied.²¹ He specifies that there are two instances of forms of lines. There is the line as a continual movement, affected by a force 'from without', and 'straight' in the sense that it remains in a singular and continuous succession. Then there is the line that is initially a single direction of movement but, affected by an alternating pattern of force, or affected by the 'simultaneous action' of more than one force, it changes direction in repetitive turn.²²

Kandinsky uses 'tension' as a substitute for the term 'movement'. He reasons that 'movement' is 'inexact' and leads to misconceptions in which the term may suggest the act or process of force. Instead, the notion of 'tension' expresses the vital, 'living' element within the line. He suggests that because of the inherent 'tension' of the straight line, there is the implicit quality of life, 'the most concise form of the potentiality for endless movement'.²³ He points towards an impetus of the line, that is, an essential energy that precedes the course and continuity of the line. We argue that such energy from this tension of line is already a momentum itself, so that the line is a capacity for limitless continuity and progression. Kandinsky further qualifies his description by suggesting that the 'tension' of the line is only one aspect of its creative capacity. The Kandinskian theory of line is more broadly positioned in the context of a theory of the elements of painting, and is fundamentally defined in terms of movement. Although the element of line is regarded as a material thing, its physicality proceeds firstly from particular forms of 'tension' and

²¹ W. Kandinsky, *Point and line to plane* (Courier Dover Publications, 1947).

²² *Ibid.* p. 55

²³ *Ibid.* p. 57, I will continue further with comparisons to Bergson's theory of life, but for here the most significant point is that Kandinsky is attributing to a fundamental element of art, properties of potentiality, continuity, temporality and existence. That is to say, the line as a form, arguably a kind of life-form, is latent with energy.

‘direction’.

Kandinsky suggests that unlike the point, the various differences for a line is to be attributed to the ‘three typical straight lines’: the horizontal, vertical, and diagonal.²⁴ He explains that these lines are themselves phenomena, but, phenomena of experience. In other words, in terms of ‘The Outer and the Inner’ designations of phenomena, Kandinsky argues that the external and internal development of phenomena are similar to our experience of pictorial elements. Therefore, the development of points and lines are essential to the nature of the pictorial elements in themselves. For instance, the straight line, ‘corresponds to the line or the plane upon which the human being stands or moves’.²⁵ The line expresses the qualities of our sense of spatial orientation, and for that matter, the existential sense of our being, of being somewhere, and relative to a temporal or physical direction. By claiming that the horizontal line ‘corresponds’ in such a way to the ‘human imagination’, Kandinsky argues that it is related to the senses. For example, he explains that the straight, horizontal line has the tonal attributes of coldness and flatness, and argues that it is then the expression of the possibility of ‘endless cold movement. In other words, Kandinsky regards the potential of the line as a plastic element in painting, in terms of its differing grades as then differing modes of the ‘elements’, and differing inner-pulsations extending to external activity and experience. From the designation of three types of lines, Kandinsky is suggesting an ontological identification of lines, by which the senses of the pictorial elements expresses as senses of material tonality.

The Divergent Line

For Kandinsky the movement of lines, regarded as a ‘potential’ of lines, generate sensuous and tonal identifications, towards a specific creative outcome. He argues that the line has the creative quality of being able to

²⁴ Ibid. p. 58

²⁵ Ibid. p. 58

generate a plane. As a continuity of movement, the line is a creative force that affects the generation of other forms of movement. The line is a living form, a force itself, that resounds through its inertial nature, affects change through its temporal and spatial identities. Kandinsky claims that the lines expression, auto-affective, such that ‘this power expresses itself’.²⁶ However, he does not give preference to the direction of either the material opening into the internal (i.e. invisible) or, the inner, vital force rupturing upon the physical and external. Instead Kandinsky maintains a view of the immanence of art with life, so that the inherent movements in pictorial elements of point and lines suggest the constantly changing grades of reality. Where the difference of external or inward properties of lines may suggest the spatial operations of enclosing, disclosing, outlining, etc., these instead, should be regarded in terms of the continuous enveloping from the different durational grades from the potential of these elements regarded as various tones of life. Kandinsky claims the ‘life’ within the ‘sound’ of line, ‘seeks the appropriate external means to enable it to attain the shape necessary’.²⁷

The forms of line as outward aspects of inward conditions are underscored by totalizing and interpenetrating courses of change. The line considered in terms of force, and more specifically, as a ‘tension’ of energy, is attributed to qualities of the movements of life. In this sense, the line is not simply a ‘linear’ progression that is a becoming trajectory, or a movement according to pre-established conditions for a set of possibilities, but rather, because of the ‘internal’ and immanent force to become, with the movement of line there is also the continual expansion of the lines possibilities. Hence, the line is not ‘linear’, it is divergent. Therefore, we argue that the line is not ‘linear’, to affirm the Kandinskian concept of line, and to argue a Bergsonian view, we assert that the line is a striving form. In terms of both Kandinskian and Bergsonian readings, we maintain that the linearity as a condition of the

²⁶ Ibid. p. 60

²⁷ Ibid. p. 109

process of painting, occurs as a creative activity, continuous and changing in time, and thereby, the possibility for divergence and the actualizations of divergent experiences to life.

In this sense, painting is not to be regarded as a process about a given subject or experience, but rather, as a 'reversal of the work of Metaphysics'. The process of painting is a process in time before it is a discrete, painted object. It is an activity relative to the expression of vital movements and the impetus towards pictorial projections. By this we may say then that painting is mutually, a process of life, through its activities of thinking and feeling, affecting its realization in the concrete actualizing of the painted image. From the process of painting we see that life is not simply active in the enterprise of gesture and mark making, but, it is radically opened by perceptions taken from paintings' material basis.

Painting 'Image' and Living 'Being'

From this consideration of the graphic and material nature of line, we extend this further to consider the living processes affecting the physical and plastic renderings in the process of painting. In this regard it is from life that we consider the movements of expression specific to the process of painting. In particular, it is the set of movements that are provoked from the interchange of conscious perceptions experiencing what is given by the materiality of the painting medium and continuous affect from the actualisation of its experience in the activity. In other words, by its expression, the experiences of consciousness are further articulated. The process of painting is then a continuous dilation and expansion of images, between the immediacy of feeling and sensation to the real duration of matter, and the contraction and intensive isolation of images, from the reflective nature of consciousness and thinking. Between mind and matter and then, the opening of perception as a reciprocal process of conscious acts provoked by the material basis means that the process of painting is a particular attention of life. It is a mode of

living creativity by which a material basis imposes on its own effects towards its continued activity, toward its own variability, and thereby working through differing movement, towards a unity of endless material and visual registers of change. In other words, the processes in painting are the enacting of both materiality and thought towards creation. With this view, the metaphysical consideration of painting begins with the physicality of the painter and the medium of painting, with the dynamic formulation of painting with the 'thingness' and expression of painting, all in terms of processes of change.

'Living' Painting & The Perception of Life

In comparison to Kandinsky's view of the expressivity of painting, linear expression in particular proceeds from a situated subject, from an inner self relative to external phenomena. In this sense expression is both inherent in the force of the line, and in the movements. Therefore, initially lines are not representational, but are immediate conveyances of the impulses and desires self-affecting their visual becoming. Lines are then, the linear tracings of the content of life emerging as forms continuous with the movement of life. This compares to a Bergsonian account, by which we argue that the line is a creative movement, an expression of the progression and development of living. Henry elaborates this more fully, considering lines as ontological demarcations, and thereby, attributing to line both the 'linear content' of life particular to subjective realities, as well as, the consummate emergences of these differing linear forms with the infinite linear varieties of the whole of life. In other words, the identity of lines as subjective movements is the result of the individuation of the expressions they embody. In this sense, linear forms are living movements, proceeding from the infinite varieties of life's becomings.

However for Bergson, it is from the 'inner life' that sensation is also a qualitative change, and from this change, the individual is 'willed' to action or conscious reflection and the deliberation of thought. The novelty of consciousness, whether willed in anticipation of a prefiguration, engaged in a mode of thought, or caught up in a direct activity, occurs from its continuous change and the continuity of its becoming in duration. In this way, as perception is to be found in things themselves the 'direction' of thinking is from things to their conceptualization, so that from the directions of expression such as the multiple and variable directions of the movement, the concepts are of these movements.²⁸ However, in keeping with the notion that in the flux of consciousness, consciousness is neither a thing nor a substance, then with painting regarded in terms of an event of consciousness, means that it is a mode qualitative change - a mode of psychological existence. As such, through painting, life is a presenting of itself, a synthesis of consciousness as an interpenetrative multiplicity of material and psychological elements that endure. By this I mean to suggest that painting is the relation of temporal processes, and thereby, the merging of particular movements, the encounters of these movements from the crystallization of images of both mental and material motions towards the continuity of painterly creation. In other words it is the vicissitudes of the materiality of painting, by which the psychical nature of reality coincides with this change. From this Bergsonian aspect, we may consider a notion of the tendency of painting, that is, the activity and imagery as modes of perceiving and thinking, collective movements as altogether, attributes of life. In other words, life is a multiplicity of continuous transformation, such that in the process of painting, the expressions of line and other material expressions are in themselves the progression of life, experience of its own becoming as a living form, and as an evolution of continual development.

Time is the creative potential unique to painting, as images of becoming

²⁸ H. Bergson, *An introduction to metaphysics* (Hackett Publishing, 1949). pp. xi-xii.

perceptual, as becoming conceptual, painting is thereby, a means for the divergence of life affecting the whole of life's experience through its process.²⁹ This highlights an ontology of painting. In terms of the abstraction and divergence of image from among a flow of images, life is the quality of change affecting differences from matter. It is from among the actualisations of perceptions in painting that difference opens further the possibilities of conscious experiences and the continued growth of life's expressions. Bergson attributes existential qualities of change and continuity as themselves properties of life. In this sense, life is durational, and as such, the element of linearity is a dual conversion of durations of thought and durations of substance in the process of painting, such that lines originate from activities of the experiences and events of expression, through the coefficient of a living duration. Like the line then, the living body rendering the line is a continuity of existence, and in the process of painting, mutually occur as an expression of the continuance of life. This is to say that, the process of painting is a vitality situated by their temporality, retains the force of inventiveness and is the origin novelty towards perception. Moreover, painting is a particular movement of life in duration, and its material basis, that 'of the inorganic world', is immediate to the rhythm of its flow. This correlation allows for the engendering of the continuity of the visible and perceptible. According to Bergson the 'living being' has duration, and its duration is evident because it is continuously elaborating what is new. For Bergson the process of living is a process of elaboration, and this process entails a complexity of thought and feeling, as described in terms of a 'searching' and 'groping'.³⁰ In other words, as

Bergson describes the continuous unfolding of life, the unbroken 'unwinding' of things, and as such, the development of life as intervals of continuity, he then adds to this that this process is not without uncertainty. Rather, reaffirming what Bergson articulates above, the processes of painting considered in terms of developments of life, are likened to processes of

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 92-93

³⁰ Ibid. p. 39

discovery, not in the sense of directed intention, or as a type of linear progress respectively, but as results of indefinite deviation associated with continual movement. These processes as an unfolding of experience are essentially dynamic.

We regard painting as a particular process from among the progressions of life, to say that the possibilities of perception are unique to painting. As a means of life, painting ‘renders visible’, as an autonomous process in itself. It is an ever-changing agency of perceiving, self-creating and conceiving its identity from among its own expressions. The movements unique to painting’s existence and experience are the active adaptations constituted from its own ontological differences and situated in a process of becoming. Therefore, the ontological, and thereby, philosophical considerations of painting extend beyond assessments of material origins, and beyond notions of development and historical placements. Rather, in terms of a process ontology, painting is a metaphysical activity and a creative force enacting modes of life and the unity of consciousness in the experiences of the painted object.

Conclusion

We have argued that the line is a creative movement, before it is a representation, to mean that the condition of linearity in the process of painting is the immediacy of expressions through which the actualisations is the form of its becoming. By this we argued that the process of painting is a living process. It is the continual relation of activities of consciousness from the perceptions given by the materiality of the painting medium, towards the actualisation of expressions as a continuity of change from the intrinsic change of the modes of experience. However, the process of painting is not only a sense of the exploration and crystallization of sensation, nor, as only

the articulation of feeling or thinking. Rather, painting is a process of growth from among the turbulence of the continuous reabsorbing of perceptions and the persistent reasserting of perceptions. We argued this implies that the line is a materiality and the condition of linearity is the movement of its expression immanent to the process of painting. Therefore, the line is the becoming generated by the creative temporalizing movement of life. Linearity is then the variability of living expression through the different kinds of movement of life. We argued that variability of expressions intrinsic to the form of the movement, is the difference from the tendency of the living expression. Hence, by considering the line as a condition of expression, and linearity as mode of living movements, we argued that the materiality of the painting medium is a tendency towards expression, an inclination to become different from its movement. In terms of the activities of the painter, we argued that the movement of the medium, the substantive change of materials in the presenting of a pictorial projection, and the event of the painted object are all immanent to the living elaboration and divergence of life. However, becoming as a condition of the process of painting, is only so, because of the creative movements and the continuous force towards projection by the living temporality. In this sense, painting must be regarded as a series of creative movements, as continual divergence from these movements by virtue of the continual opening of perception, and the affects of the durations of consciousness.³¹ From this perspective we furthered our view according to Kandinsky's principle of inner necessity. We attempted to bridge a Kandinskian theory of line to Bergson's theory of the extended existence of the passage of life, so as to argue for a process of painting in which the linear qualities of the painter's expression are the means for vital forces immanent to the interchange of the living experience and the given perceptions of the materiality. Accordingly, we argued that in terms of the line and the visual and graphical elements of expression, the painter is at once the means towards

³¹ Ibid. p. 92

expression and subject to the experiences of these expressions.³² In this way, the line and the linearity of expression condition the subjective modes of conveyance, affecting their experience, and thereby, are the unfolding and continuously creative modes of life. By encountering the immediacy of his expression, the painter becomes a potent content of life's expressivity, so that the first mark of the point, the initial gesture of the line, is already the presence of the experience of life's creative power.

³² Ibid. p. 54

Conclusion

Towards a Bergsonian Philosophy of Painting

This study was set out from a double perspective of a contemporary Bergsonian philosophy - to investigate the extension of Bergsonian conceptualizations from the context of the themes of time-duration, image-memory, perception-action, as subjects of Bergson's original philosophy, and to then exercise these concepts in their interaction with other currents of thinking to contribute to the continuation of Bergson's philosophical outlook in the context of the present Bergsonian thinking. By considering the background of our research in terms of the recent scholarship of continental philosophy, and the movements of its thought towards attitudes of increasing complexities of thinking from motivations of thinking towards its own self-appraisal within the divergences of its traditions, this prompted our questioning of the recent return to Bergson. By considering this pattern of development in terms of return resulting in archeologic orientations of the questions of contemporary continental philosophy, we regarded this as having contributed to the increasing momentum and furthering assertions of philosophy to go 'beyond' itself. In this sense, the turn of thinking towards the question of the possibilities of thought and the renewal of considerations of how we must think, we have added focus to the research of philosophy regarding its process and prompted a return to the new philosophies of immanence. By orienting our questions of philosophy to the key ideas of Bergsonian philosophy, and applying these concepts as they also imply the continuation of metaphysical thinking through the activities of philosophy via movements of thinking, our questions have been aimed towards the elucidation of a Bergsonian immanence philosophy and the possibility of its thinking through the process of painting. We have heeded the investigations of more recent Bergsonian scholarship, acknowledging the insight of figures such as Lawlor, Mullarkey, Ansell-Pearson, and more specific, to the interaction of Bergsonian thinking on art, Antliff and Alliez. Though we have

seen that these figures have contributed to the contextual framing of the questions of our investigation, as they have been prompted to extend Bergsonian thinking and have offered lines from this continuation, we have been challenged by the limited scholarship directing Bergsonian thinking to the practice of painting and the exploration of its process as a way of doing philosophy. Because Bergson's philosophy, as a philosophy of images in process, and as a philosophy that anticipates its difference according to the statutes of the becoming of all images in time, our research objective worked with the question and the philosophical operative of what is at stake with thinking in painting, how is it most significant to a philosophy immanent to art. According to this line of thought, we acknowledged that Bergson made limited references to art, even though the influence of his original thinking had profound impacts in the theoretical and visual developments in the arts and effectively resounded in the cultural milieu of the modernist period and throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Through this frame of history we see how the reception of Bergson's initial philosophy waned, but it was not solely because of the eclipsing of trends of thinking and currents of culture. Rather by the impetus of the thinking, it became diffuse, being absorbed in the tumult of transitions of philosophical perspectives, and no less excessive than inspirational in the developments and expansions in the lines of philosophies of time, perception, and art. From our view, what was most significant in Bergson's thinking, was the force and vision of his ontology of images, itself generating the lines of Jean-Paul Sartre's thinking of Imagination, and being poised as a counter-position, from which Maurice Merleau-Ponty would make advancements towards a phenomenology of the materialisation of perception as the basis for the establishment of thinking towards the possibilities of philosophy in painting. We mentioned this tracing of the historical lineage of Bergsonian thinking to reaffirm our investigation as being at once the relation of Bergson's conceptualisations coming to bear on the efforts of a philosophy of metaphysics towards the thinking of time, and graduating to the differing fields of as a philosophical conviction and as

an attitude of difference in philosophical inquiry, now evident with its present return as Bergsonian thinking in time. In both senses, it has been the conceptualisation of philosophy as process that has been a resolutely multidirectional impetus towards philosophies identifications in all potential modes of its process. From this context we understood Bergson's philosophy to be an invention of philosophical thinking to overturn the mistakes of philosophy according to traditional conceptions of method and philosophical identity. It is from here that we looked for other shifts of thinking philosophical or otherwise, which were contemporaneous with Bergson's original philosophy, and regarded the work of Wassily Kandinsky. It is not only because of his own theories being in proximity to Bergson's but, as with the effects of Bergson's theoretical influence throughout the post-modernism directions of continental philosophy, so to with the effects of Kandinsky's theory exercising itself through the difference of painting in terms of 'abstraction', and the change of its methodology, but also in the identity of the visual experience of painting to exceed its own modality, to enact the expression that invokes creative thinking, occasioned by its process. In view of the post-developments of these mirroring philosophies, we were guided by the initial question of Bergson's concept of image, through our attempts to elaborate a theory of the ontological nature of painting. Our consideration of principle concept and theories gave us conceptual forms, material structures, and the dynamic elements of the processes and forces originating in the painted image, we concluded that the process of painting, as a process of images is conditioned by for the further elaboration of life. In this sense, painting is regarded as a mode of life's expressions, the becoming of difference in the world. It is a practical activity of externalisation, compelled by the force of expression by the vitality of its own process. The process of painting involves the forces of life, so that painting is the activities of consciousness through the living events of the rhythmic extensity of art-objects. We concluded that the process of painting is continual and effects its own experience in the growing and diverging qualities immanent to its

expression.

Our initial consideration of Bergson's concept of image, provided a theory of an ontology of images to serve as a formulation and theoretical application to other elements of the process of painting, and a grounding for the comparison and mining of Kandinsky's didactic conceptualisations. According to our view of a process ontology of images, applied to the process of painting, the implication is that of continual unfolding of time as a process of durations. From the nature of painting in these terms of images, we see the impersonal force of time, the impersonal force of its expression as a pure becoming, and becoming, regarded in its substantive and resonating basis. Reality is then considered as continual change and flux of images, and as continuity of occurrences of activity and the events of divergent change. Here we relied on our concurrent analysis with Kandinsky's theory to establish further resonance of his sense of abstract painting with a Bergsonian reflection of painting towards the practice of philosophy immanent to painting. For this regarded the identity of philosophy's translation according to the essential differences of durations within the process of painting, encompassing the objective forms and materiality of the painting media, which conditions the subjective experiences of painter and the individuation of his expressions. It follows that the process of painting, as a process of images, is a possibility to experience and express time because of its originating activities. From the Kandinskian orientation of our analysis we understood Henry's challenge of the immanence of painting, as echoing the Bergsonian turn of thinking, according to theories of embodiment and affectivity Henry interpreted and distinguished in the Kandinsky's work. From this we considered Mullarkey's call for immanence philosophy to continue in new directions by orientation of dialogues of thinking from Henry's, with the consideration of the currents of contemporary research towards Bergsonian thinking. Because of this we regarded the complexity of a triune return of Bergsonian thinking, through the thinking of Kandinsky, for the thinking of Henry's thinking counter to the

directions of thought established in the course of phenomenology. The dialogue of Bergsonian philosophy is opened and active here with Henry, but independent of the Henrian adoption of Kandinsky, the emergence of the dialogue of Bergsonian philosophy towards philosophies of painting may be encouraged by approximations of Kandinsky's. By this we recognised the potential of Bergsonian thinking towards other modes of thinking, as witnessed in the recent turn of thinking of Henrian perspectives, but obvious in the historical developments of painting preceding Henry, the turn of Kandinsky's work as defining a new era in the domain of philosophical possibilities in painting, towards an abstraction of art. From this we argued that by continuing practice of philosophy in painting, we must insist on the continuing practice of painting with the anticipation for the further understanding of images. However, we also concluded that by broadening the scope of philosophies of images, and by the concern that also drives the exploration of different modes of image making, the discourse of philosophies of change and the process will continue, but from our view of Kandinsky on painting via Henry, we recognise the turn of thinking that is most notably and significant towards Bergsonian philosophy. In this sense the immanence of the process of painting means that the process is transformational and never permanent.

Nonetheless, we oriented the process of thinking to the complexity of the process of images, in the Bergsonian context of differing durations in the unfolding in time. Because of this, we considered Bergson's theory of intuition, so as to offer a method of philosophy in the practice of painting. More specifically, we considered the intuitive experience as provoked by the process of painting. In this regard, we claimed that by a painterly intuition, it is the processes of the painting media that evokes the vision in things. We considered Bergson's theory of intuition, applied to painting, to underscore our claim of the creative and affective order of immediate reflection. To this end, and from the basis of Bergson's theory of intuition, we considered

painting as an activity of sensible apprehension. This was found to be equal with Kandinsky's, by ascribing this notion of intuition to process of painting we understood this to mean the role of intuitive experience within the activities of painting as an intervening mode of conscious reflection affecting the whole of the painting process. In this sense, intuition is staged as a medium for processes of origination in painting, and a means of difference towards visual forms. For intuition to be utilised as a practice, its method in the process of painting, we argued, is also a metaphysics, signaling a Kandinskian turn in the identity of the painting, and that this requires a level of immediate attention as configured by painter's bodily movement and gestural activity in continual response to the affective qualities of the painting media, further signals the Bergsonian turn to thinking through difference. In other words, the synthesis of Kandinskian and Bergsonian views on intuitive experience, allows us to consider the Henrian operative of the 'manifestation' of images, from a correlation of the painter's activity in response to the painting medium. We considered that the painter's perceptual situation is present to the state of the durational presence of the painting medium, to mean that the intuitive experience is engendered by the materiality of the process. The implications of this are a renewal of philosophical discourse on the role of painting towards its own 'revealing' potential. Here is the situation of thinking, towards the further investigations of the philosophy of painting, as the working towards the difference of philosophical thinking inscribed in painting medium, but extending to the expressions furthering the motives of the philosophizing process. Again, the question remains present towards the thinking encounter of its process, so that the identity of painting, is the duplicitous creativity source, towards its philosophy through image and its becoming through images.

We considered the process of painting, specific to the emphasis of painting as events of experiences attentive to the becoming of images, and through the encounter of these images, difference of the realizations of life through the

force of material forms. By encountering Kandinsky, again, by return of Bergsonian thinking to the question of thinking, we argued that the painter is the contact of activities which assume the germinal affect of perception towards difference of thinking from an ontological condition of images in process. By thinking Bergsonian, the transverse of Kandinskian theorisation with Bergsonian was elaborated, so that the renewal of painting as thinking, and the investigation of thinking through painting may be reconsidered. From these spatialized views of experience, our intellect affirms a sense of permanence and substantiality equally effecting a division of continual processes of being. This assumes a plurality of images, images differentiating from among a totality of images in movement. The theoretical implications of this is that movement is directly related to the development of consciousness, and the investigations of the experience of movement in process of painting may offer philosophical expressions immediate to the novel changes of conscious perception. We considered that painting as multiple events of movements and must now admit that the different images created from within the continuity of a multiplicity of movements within the process of painting are limited by the capacity of the painting media. Therefore, we wish to consider other painterly means that may challenge the modes of expression in the process of painting, and perhaps even, discover modes of expressions through novel experiences of movement. This concern will always remain where a philosophy of duration and philosophies of process continue. For us, this question of movement and change may be continuously approached in the process of painting. Its resolve, however, is open by the processes of its investigation.

We then considered a concept of abstraction, to regard the unique property of difference from among the change and movements of images in process. We considered abstraction in terms of a disruptive force, with qualities of fragmentation and derived from intuitive and organic experiences of creativity. Towards a Bergsonian theory of painting, we insisted that by

abstraction the activities of the painter and the event of the art-image are a mutual affect of the dissociation of images from the total strata of the flow of images. It is to this end that we considered abstraction to be the condition of an interruption of images, from the immobilisation of thinking and thought then binding concepts to images, involving the becoming of conceptual and perceptual forms. We have considered the concept of abstraction from Bergson's philosophy, and then compared this with the concept of abstraction in Kandinsky's theory, to argue that from the process of painting, abstraction is a condition of thinking in the painting. We argued that the process of conceptualization and percept formulation emerges from the relation of movements of the painter's activity with the painting media. Having developed our argument from the basis of Bergson's theory of image, we argued that abstraction related to Bergson's philosophy of change, by which the abstractive nature of the process of painting is immanent to its continuously changing forms. In other words, from the endlessly changing content of life, the process of painting as a living process necessarily changes by difference of movements occurring within the passage of movements. This implies that the physical composition and plastic processes of painting are the result of reciprocal. The reciprocal affects from the correlating modes of perception and activity to the expressive content of material objects and the painted visual experience. In this sense, we have argued that abstraction is the occurrence of both the perception of consciousness and the material correspondence as mutually affecting each other. The implications of this are that the concept of abstraction is necessarily encountered in the process of painting. Therefore, the discourses of philosophy and painting, continuing with the process, are abstractive. We insist then, that a continuing philosophy of art considers its unfolding as a simultaneous experience of abstraction, and thereby immediate to its understanding.

We considered frame in a broader ontological view, one that suggests a distinct material boundary, as well as a unique process of conceptualizing the

world, processes of contouring and outline, affecting visualization. We argued that the present challenge for the development of a Bergsonian theory of the frame in the process of painting is to consider the first described frame or the activity of framing as being systemic with the force of motion that precedes space, and therefore, consider framing according to the processes of conscious selection and the delimiting nature of imagination. We argued that ‘frame’ is an ontological condition of the expression of life and material becoming of the affective transition from perception to becoming-perceived. We considered the frame in connection with the surface of paintings activity to argue that the picture plane is an identity from a process of framing. We argued that in Bergsonian terms, it can be said that the picture plane is both a recurring pattern of material arrangement marking the creative ‘ascension’ of life. But also, it is a spontaneous reproduction, the memory-image of a pattern of experience, and thereby, a literal surface-image by its natural delimitation from the material world. Framing is intrinsic to the surface of the picture plane, as reasserted through the experience of concentration, reflection, and thinking that orients conscious perception. We argued from Bergson’s concept of movement, to suggest that the picture plane is the situated interpenetration of movements, the interchange of vital and material occur within the picture plane. We compared our theory of frame and the relation to the picture plane to Kandinsky’s view of painting, and in particular his view of the rigors of painting in terms of the planarity of the material surface and its intrinsic force of movement issuing towards the experience of the painter. It is by Kandinsky’s theory that we see a turn in the identity of painting, by rejecting figuration and the privileging of the object of painting, his view and the outlook incorporated in his paintings align a conceptualisation of process with the immanence of the creative force intrinsic to its identity. We see how this brings Kandinskian theory in close proximity to Bergsonian, and by this orientation in the uptake of Henry’s aesthetic theories, challenges the institution of phenomenology by the replacement of ‘consciousness of form’ with ‘every form is in reality a force’. Furthermore, we discovered that with

Kandinsky, the picture plane is metaphysical in the sense that it is a living element of expressing itself through the formative process of painting. Therefore, for Kandinsky, the element of planarity before the painter is the condition for spiritual growth, and is at once the physical and material possibility of painting, so that its content becomes the means for abstraction. The consequence of this is that the picture plane is to become itself a topic for further philosophical discourse. By approaching the surface, as a designation for the originating of activity, we consider this as the beginning of method of philosophy.

We considered colour as a material force from the notion that its material movement is also the probability for its own difference. From this, we were interested in the external application of colour and its intermediation for the possibilities of difference in colour expression in the process of painting. We considered Bergson's view that colour is part of the real movement and continuously changing nature of reality, so that concerning the nature of colour in itself, we understood colour to be an indivisible rhythm occurring within duration. From this view we argued that the nature of the colour experience is variable according to the occurrences of colour coinciding with the continuity of our own consciousness. In this sense, we continued a Bergsonian interpretation of colour to argue that colour is a heterogeneous and qualitative movement in time. However, we then considered that through the contracting of the rhythms of colour into the durations lived by our consciousness, we are affected by what is given through the experience of colour. Therefore with our view towards the expression of colour in the process of painting, we argued that colour is a continuous possibility for the experiences of conscious perception as a continuity of difference within the movements of the painter's body, and thereby, the potential for differing levels of sensation in its expression. Compared to Kandinsky's account in either terms of the impressionable or affective nature of colour upon the body and the mind, we discovered that colour is yet one of many indicia of the multiple

and dynamic impulses of life. What this meant to us is that the use of colour in the process of painting is an immediate engagement with the flux of reality, and therefore, a means for philosophical introspection and metaphysical expression. In other words, because life is considered in terms of force and movement, colour as a force and movement is a means to understand the variabilities of experience in the passage of time. Philosophical discussions of colour take many forms, generally elaborating on either notions of a subjective experience as relational properties, or as objective and a 'thing' of objects. From the implications of our view of the process of colour we concede that all of these options adhere in some degree. Therefore, the conclusion we draw from this towards a continuing philosophy is that the direct contact with colour in the modes of art media may allow for those experiences of colour to expand our philosophies of colour. A consensus of the experience and expression of colour is open towards art's investigations and philosophical understanding. Through a view of colour in terms of both Bergson and Kandinsky, we now see that what is at stake for a philosophy of colour applied to the broader outlook of the philosophy through painting, is the ideogrammatic identification of colour according to the its infusion into the variational definitions of the whole of painting. The challenge remains, to encounter colour without the terms of painting, without the identification preceding its experience, without its understanding based on a pictorial language. How to overcome the referential obligations of colour in the broader project of the philosophy of painting remains as a testament to the longstanding problem of how to think colour without inaugurating its reference. This marks a challenge for Bergsonian theory towards painting, and prompts further reading of Kandinsky to investigate the 'rhythm' of colour before its inevitable deferment to the semiotic element of the picture.

From our considerations of affect of colour from within the living experience of the painter, we then argued that the line as a materiality and, condition of linearity as the movement, are processes of expression. The line as a mark and

as a movement of marking is a movement that translates the experience of other movements but it expresses movements beyond itself. We considered the concept of line and its derivation of linearity, as immanent to the process of painting. Therefore, we understood the line as a quality of becoming, generated by the creative temporalizing movement of life. Linearity is then the variability of living expression through the different kinds of movement of life. We argued that the variability of expressions intrinsic to the form of linear movement is also potential towards difference as a tendency of living expressions. We considered the Kandinskian theory that suggested the line in terms of continuous motion and as energetic rhythms. By its gestured material manifestation it is a form of movement that is immediate to its own actualisation. Compared to a Bergsonian view we considered the line in terms of a vitality, so that, as a form given by its own movement, it is also the tracing of living experience. From a philosophy of immanence, I think that the linearity of the line is evidence of the possible affects and the actual material modulations of forces of life. We attempted to bridge a Kandinskian theory of line to Bergson's theory of the extended existence of the passage of life, so as to argue towards an ontology of

linearity. Accordingly, we argued that in terms of the line and the visual and graphical elements of expression, the painter is at once the means towards expression and subject to the experiences of these expressions. In this way, the line and the linearity of expression condition the subjective modes of its conveyance, affecting its experience, and thereby, is an unfolding of expression but also a continuous possibility and a creative mode of life.

From Bergson's view of the endless and ever changing activity of time, we have maintained that painting is a process immanent to time and is therefore, an elaboration of activity through movement, imagination, and projection. Because of the temporality of painting, the total process of reality may be encountered, and experienced through the indeterminate nature of its continuous presentations. Time is a creative force unceasing its elaboration

through divergences of perspective as indeterminate movements resulting in unforeseen expressions. From Bergson's notion that time is something that acts, that time itself is elaborative, by this we maintain that the painterly qualities of the process are creative because of the indefinite variability of the painter or the painting medium. Therefore, painting is the process in which philosophy may experience the inexhaustible possibilities of thinking and the continuous change of time in things. From our evaluations of those aspects of Bergson's philosophy which may be regarded as each a philosophical system, but collectively, they offer a simple vision by which the continual appropriation and continuing philosophical discourses in the living and experientially based practices of painting may proceed. To this end we admit to the inexhaustible process of images, through which the becoming of painterly experience and its thinking continues.

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