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MOVING PICTURES:
FRANCIS BACON AND THE MOVEMENT-IMAGE

by

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ABSTRACT

Moving Pictures: Francis Bacon and the Movement-Image

by

Molly Rogers

The English painter Francis Bacon had a specific interest in the cinema. From this interest, though not independent of his other artistic concerns, arises two aspects of Bacon's images that relate to the cinematic medium: the sense of movement that the paintings engender, and the strong affect that they have on spectators. Bacon conceived of his images cinematically, that is, in series, and employed the technique of Eisensteinian montage with each panel of his triptychs functioning as a shot. Further, the spectator experiences Bacon's imagery both as presenting and representing movement, a condition of all cinema, and in a deeply affective manner, characteristic of certain film images such as the close-up. In short, Bacon's paintings are experienced phenomenologically in a manner similar to motion pictures.
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This work is dedicated to the memory of Eileen Hession.
"There is an excitement that is not quite identifiable; it is as hard to deal with as desire or fear."
-- Lawrence Gowing\textsuperscript{1}

"There are many faces which move, and as they move they give the impression of pain."
-- John Berger\textsuperscript{2}

"Seeing a work by Francis Bacon hurts."
-- Ernst van Alphen\textsuperscript{3}

To the left and to the right a man sits in a chair, in a restful pose that ordinarily would indicate ease (fig. 1). The men, however, are greatly disfigured and seemingly at odds with their environments. The physiognomy of these figures contorts in an expression of unspecified primal emotion -- perhaps desire, possibly fear -- that betrays their casual attitudes. The bodies themselves likewise contradict the positions of rest through their fragmentary state; whole portions of anatomy are missing as if huge bites had been ruthlessly taken out. The black portal-like background and bare flooring that surround each man encroach upon him in a dynamic and menacing fashion, while the odd bubble-gum-colored shadows similarly take on lives of their own. At center, two figures grapple on the threshold of darkness, their coupled shadows having an inexplicably perverse form as well.

When standing before Francis Bacon's \textit{Triptych, August 1972}, the painting just described, one is not presented with three images to be passively acknowledged or even

\textsuperscript{1}Lawrence Gowing, "Pigment Pigment," \textit{Art News}, December 1968, p. 42.
admired. Rather, one is confronted by the images in a deeply affective manner, for Bacon's paintings do not rest within their frames and upon the wall but play an assertive role in the spectatorial experience. Figures not only appear to be suffering a violation, but also, in their presentation, turn to assault the viewer's own sense of well being. As spectators who record their impressions, critics and scholars of Bacon provide more than ample evidence of this effect. As one writer put it, "A kind of shudder is inseparable from the direct response that he demands from his paint." Bacon was well aware of this sense of injury that his images both possess and produce, and an affective image that comes "up onto the nervous system more violently and more poignantly" was precisely what he sought.

Henri Bergson's definition of affection as "a kind of motor tendency on a sensible nerve." corresponds perfectly with the intention Bacon had for his work. Though the term "affection" does not figure in Vivian Sobchack's phenomenological study of the cinema, her description of the film experience seems an even more precise definition of affection and is in perfect accord with the experience of Bacon's paintings. Sobchack writes that

the film experience is a system of communication based on bodily perception as a vehicle of conscious expression. It entails the visible, audible, kinetic aspects of sensible experience to make sense visibly, audibly, and haptically. The film experience not only represents and reflects upon the prior direct perceptual experience of the filmmaker... but also presents the direct and reflexive experience of a perceptual and expressive existence as the film.

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Bacon's paintings are likewise systems of communication utilizing a pragmatics of perception and expression that at once gives us presentation and representation. An encounter with *Triptych, August 1972* is both direct and reflexive insofar as the perceiving subject is incapable of distancing herself from the panels' intense and immediately felt, though prelinguistic, communication. Much like moving pictures, the triptych "makes itself sensuously and sensibly manifest as the expression of experience by experience." A condition of this situation, Sobchack points out, is that such an experience is not one between subject and object -- spectator and film, or spectator and painting -- but is intersubjectively dialogical: "There are always two embodied acts of vision at work in the theatre, two embodied views constituting the intelligibility and significance of the film experience." The work and the spectator are mutually engaged in the construction of meaning that is both perceptual and expressive.

The temporal and kinetic aspect of the cinema plays a significant role in how the medium is capable of the effect described by Sobchack. That Bacon's images are experienced in a similar way derives, I suggest, from the artist's conjoined interest in movement and the cinema. Through the years Bacon's paintings have frequently been likened to the cinema and, indeed, Bacon himself remarked that had he not become a painter, his vocation may well have been filmmaker. Yet this correlation for the most part has critically been explored only on formalistic grounds; the way in which both sets of images function and are experienced has been overlooked in favor of ferreting out Bacon's source material. Despite the cinematic qualities of Bacon's imagery, scholars have generally gone only so far as to record that Bacon's work is in some ways *like* the cinema and that certain paintings refer to certain film-stills. While these comparisons acknowledge Bacon's debt to cinema and the sense of movement in his

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8Sobchack, p. 3.
9Sobchack, p. 24.
imagery, they likewise deny this very sense with the limitations inherent in simple analogy. Bacon's paintings are not just like the cinema, they are phenomenologically cinematic.

This paper presents a discussion of the relationship between Francis Bacon's paintings and the cinema. I will determine in what way we may call the works cinematic and what this means to their affective function. As a foundation, the first part will consider Bacon's personal attitude to the cinema including but not limited to its uses for his work and his evident identification with the Soviet film director Sergei Eisenstein. I will then undertake the analysis of Bacon's paintings as cinematic imagery, as "moving pictures." The double meaning of this term will assert itself as the conjoined kinetic and affective aspects of Bacon's work is explored.

These forms of motion -- kinetic and affective -- contribute to the dynamic push/pull of the paintings. Likewise among the contrasting, yet vacillating sets that comprise the dynamic experience of Bacon's work are the sensation of movement from a static image, the attraction of something repulsive, and the play between figure and ground. Encompassing these aspects is the pair artist's intent and spectatorial experience, and it is between these two that this paper shall relay. Schematizing the push/pull of Bacon's paintings, one moment I shall highlight the painter and his aims as the assertive figure of the tableau, the next taking the viewer's reaction as the object of greater import, subordinating artistic intent to the background. It is a condition of Bacon's work that nothing deigns to hold still, and hence I make no claim that one position, artist or spectator, is most authoritative.
"The painter's medium, the filmmaker's medium, is less paint or film than it is sight. Indeed, at their most rigorous, both painter and filmmaker practice a phenomenology of vision."
-- Vivian Sobchack

Cinema was of instrumental value to Bacon. This instrumentality was related to his interest in still-photography and in the mechanics of motion. The photographic work of Eadweard Muybridge, including both his serial images that breakdown the motions of humans and animals and his zoopraxiscope, a precursor to the cinema, provide a synthesis of these interests and hence was one of Bacon's more renown fascinations. In conversation with Michel Archimbaud, Bacon discussed the instrumental nature of photography and cinema to his painting, touching on several points that will be addressed in this paper:

MA  Nevertheless, you have often used photography in your work, haven't you?

FB  Not exactly. I know people think I've often used it, but that isn't true. It's only because I've been the first to admit to using photographs that people think I have used it a lot. But when I say that to me photographs are merely records, I mean that I don't use them at all as a model. Do you understand? A photograph, basically, is a means of illustrating something and illustration doesn't interest me.

In his response Bacon appears to want to distance himself from the idea of photographs as visual sources, a formal connection that critics and scholars have often forced. It is perhaps to be taken as a qualification of his interest; the form found in photographs in

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11Sobchack, p. 91.
12Archimbaud, p. 12.
and of itself was not his concern. To merely recreate the form of an object, whether from a photograph or from the object itself, is a mechanical, mimetic act that produces nothing new. Photographs could, nevertheless, assist Bacon in the act of creation, whereupon an additional, original element would be conjoined with an aspect of the recorded object. The interview continued thus:

MA I understand, though, that at one period photography was important to you?

FB Yes. At one time I did look at many photographs, all sorts of photographs.

MA Which struck you most?

FB Oh, I don't know... news photographs, photographs of wild animals, Muybridge's photographs, scientific photographs, like those in this book on diseases of the mouth, which I found in Paris a long time ago, and which I found enormously interesting...

MA And photographs by Muybridge?

FB Yes, the ones showing the elements of motion. They really did interest me greatly. At one time I spent a lot of time looking at those pictures.

MA As evidence of the distortion of bodies in motion?

FB Oh no. I do that myself. That's not taken from photographs.

MA Nevertheless, the analysis of movement through photography has been very helpful to painters, such as Degas, hasn't it? For example, in studying the way horses gallop?

FB Yes, but not to me. You know, since the invention of photography, painting really has changed completely. We no longer have the same reasons for painting as before. The problem is that each generation has to find its own way of working. You see here in my studio, there are these photographs scattered about on the floor, all damaged. I've used them to paint portraits of friends, and then kept them. It's easier for me to work from these records than from the people themselves; that way I can work alone and feel much freer. When I work, I don't want to see anyone, not
even models. These photographs are my *aide-mémoire*, they helped me convey certain features, certain details. They were useful to me simply as a tool.\textsuperscript{13}

There are three points to consider here. First, there is Bacon's further qualification regarding the extent of his use of still photography, that is, its use not only as a practical *aide-mémoire*, but its value "at one time." Second, it is evident that Muybridge did indeed hold an interest for him regarding motion, yet not, as has been supposed, in the visual effects of motion as captured in the still image. The so-called distortion of Bacon's figures is then not simply analogous to or modeled on the unnatural effect of motion arrested, but finds it's motivation elsewhere. Lastly, there is his response to the question, "the analysis of movement through photography has been very helpful to painters, such as Degas, hasn't it?" Upon first encountering Bacon's "Yes, but not to me," we may think that here he is *denying* an interest in the analysis of movement through photography, contradicting his earlier remark of how really interesting Muybridge's breakdown of movement was to him at one time. But the response "not to me" suggests another meaning as well. Perhaps it is that the photographs fail to fulfill their purpose in so far as what they actually present are the isolated postures of a figure in motion, not an analysis of movement. The paradox of Muybridge's photographs is that movement, the very subject under study, is precisely what is missing. For this reason Bacon, as an artist interested in movement and one who sought to present motion in paint, had only limited use for still photographs. Cinema, on the other hand, could provide what Muybridge missed, that is, it could fill the space between isolated images with movement.

**MA** Would you say the same of the cinema? Has it been of any use to you?

**FB** Oh yes, but it's a little different. There are some films that I've liked a lot. Perhaps they've had an influence on me. *The Battleship*

\textsuperscript{13}Archimbaud, pp. 14-16.
Potemkin by Eisenstein, for example, made a great impact on me when I saw it. You remember that scene where the child's pram rolls down the steps, that screaming woman, and the rest of the film ... Oh, yes, cinema is great art! Of course, during the silent era, the image had tremendous force. The images of silent films were sometimes very powerful, very beautiful. You know, I've often said to myself that I would have liked to have been a film director if I hadn't been a painter.14

Bacon then proceeded to speak of Sergei Eisenstein's production difficulties, demonstrating substantial knowledge of the Soviet film director's career. How Bacon's use of the cinema differs from that of photography is never made clear in this instance. What is clear in this statement is the value Bacon placed on the cinematic medium -- enough that, even if fancifully, he viewed it a feasible medium for his own artistic purposes. To consider how cinema was useful to Bacon in a manner different from photography we must turn to another occasion on which he spoke of the different creative media. In a remark to David Sylvester, Bacon allied painting with cinema as malleable forms with great communicative potential; still photography, on the other hand, was deemed principally a method of record. In the artist's own words:

I think that now, with the mechanical methods of recording there, such as the film and the camera and the tape recorder, you have to come down in painting to something more basic and fundamental. Because it can be done better by other means on what I think is a more superficial level -- I'm not talking about the film, which is cut and remade into all sorts of different things, but I'm thinking about the direct photograph and direct recording.15

All three media may record objects and events, yet to Bacon it was painting and cinema that have the potential to surpass mimetic representation and communicate with greater impact, in short, to function on the level of affection.

Writing of the difference between the photograph and film, Vivian Sobchack designates the former as the "essential structure of vision," and the latter as the

14Archimbaud, p. 16.
15Sylvester, pp. 65-66.
"existential act of viewing."\(^{16}\) The addition of movement to an image elevates the use of vision to experience by experience, and

Thus, in existence, the body's finitude and situation and its power of movement transform the abstractions of time and space, informing them with the weight of choice and the thickness of movement, with \textit{value and dimension}.\(^{17}\)

Unlike the photograph, there is in the moving picture -- by virtue of its motion -- a greater quality that requires the spectator to engage with its form on an existential level.

Bacon was well aware of movement's greater implications, of how movement is something more than figures in time and space. As he once pointed out, "Every movement of the body has another intimation. Because every way that a person moves, stands, lowers their arms or anything else, has not only its movement, but may say all the implications of that movement as well."\(^{18}\) These greater implications, the thickness of movement that is endemic to the cinema, Bacon considered feasible for painting. But movement alone was not sufficient to sustain Bacon's interest in cinema as a medium useful to his art. That film's affect derives from how it "is cut and remade into all sorts of different things" indicates that Bacon sought in moving pictures a certain evocative form. Perhaps even -- to extrapolate from the artist's remark above -- given modern methods of recording, modern painting's hope for distinction lies precisely in what it can take from that youngest of art forms, the cinema.

Bacon was by no means an aficionado of the cinema. It seems his interest was limited to well-known films that shared an overt affinity with his own work. On the occasion of Bacon's 1985 retrospective at the Tate Gallery in London, a series of films

\(^{16}\)Sobchack, p. 58.
\(^{17}\)Sobchack, p. 59.
was programmed, evidently under the artist's direction. The following tongue-in-cheek notice from *The Evening Standard* makes clear a trend in the films selected:

As you stagger round the Francis Bacon exhibition which opens at the Tate on Wednesday, you may think that you've seen enough terror and torment on canvas. There is more to come -- on film, in the complementary season of cinema connected with Bacon.

*Battleship Potemkin* (violent crowd scenes and blood), *Blackmail* (suspense and blood), *The Wild Bunch* (blood in Mexico), *Oedipus Rex* (suicide and blood), and *Le Sang des Bêtes* (just blood), will all be shown while the exhibition runs.

These are personal favorites of our great artist, the only British painter to be honored with two major retrospective exhibitions in his lifetime.

"He's been much involved in choosing the films," says the Tate.

There will also be three films about the man, I hear. One of them is *Francis Bacon and the Brutality of Fact*, which speaks for itself.20

The strong theme of violence in the program notwithstanding, *The Standard*’s list fails to mention those films shown that are not reducible to the description of "bloodbath": *Strike* (Eisenstein, 1925); *Vivre sa Vie* (Godard, 1962); *Long Good Friday* (MacKenzie, 1979); *Eadweard Muybridge* (Andersen, 1975); *Chant d'Amour* (Genet, 1950); and Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) and *L'Age d'Or* (1930). This list may be taken as illustrative of two related points. First, though these films vary greatly in terms of genre, purpose, and place in the history of cinema, they all in some manner relate formally or thematically to Bacon's work; what all these films share is their relation to Bacon's paintings. Second, and moreover, Bacon's interest in the cinema extended only as far as it was pertinent to his own production of imagery.

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19 Aside from the remark in *The Standard* I have found no documentation supporting the idea that Bacon was personally involved in the selection of films; no such evidence resides with the Tate at present. While I see no particular reason to object to the claim, it is worth questioning in light of how little is known about Bacon's specific interest in specific films.

Regardless of his estimation of cinema as a whole, however, Eisenstein held for Bacon a certain privileged status. Bacon first saw Eisenstein's *The Battleship Potemkin* in 1935\(^{21}\) and had numerous occasions to re-view the film in the years he lived in London.\(^{22}\) His quotation in *Study for the Nurse in the Film "Battleship Potemkin"* 1957 (fig. 2) of the screaming nurse from the Odessa Steps sequence (fig. 3) is notorious, as is his repeated use of the scream as a motif. There are myriad other formal affinities as well, but direct quotation was limited and occurred early in Bacon's career. Furthermore, I believe that Eisenstein's films were more to Bacon than simply tools or *aides-memoire*, as was the case with Muybridge, in that Eisenstein may have been something of a role model for Bacon, another artist with whom he came to identify on a personal level.

Late in his life Bacon demonstrated a more detailed understanding of Eisenstein's difficulties as a filmmaker. Speaking with Archimbaud, Bacon indicated the possession of specific knowledge that had not previously been divulged -- though it may be that the opportunity to speak fully on the matter had never before occurred, or at least never published. In a 1985 interview, however, he gave nearly the same response to a question, but was by far more vague in discussing Eisenstein's life and work.\(^{23}\) The implication, then, is that Bacon's interest in Eisenstein grew and became more involved over the years.

Another indication that Bacon perhaps came to identify with Eisenstein is found in an unusual remark he made to Richard Cork. The question posed by Cork was regarding the disturbing nature of Bacon's imagery, and how "it deals with an

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\(^{22}\)As is evidenced from the Nation Film Theatre's programs, *Potemkin* was routinely screened there throughout the years Bacon resided in London. Most notably there were retrospectives on Eisenstein held March 1978 and the winter of 1988-89.

experience of violence which plays no part in the work of an artist like Seurat." Bacon replied:

Yes, but I was born in 1909, and I lived through the first World War, and then the Russian Revolution, and the Second World War. One's lived through a time of chaos, in a sense, and that does affect one's way of going about things.24

For Bacon to cite the Russian Revolution on par with the two World Wars as events he "lived through" is unusual. Bacon never visited the Soviet Union and even missed his 1988 exhibition in Moscow for rather mysterious reasons.25 In a conversation with Sylvester that took place sometime between 1971 and 1973, Bacon similarly referred to the violence he had lived through, and though the explanation is more detailed, Russia is not mentioned; in this and other interviews, all reference is to war and violence he actually experienced is in Britain or on the European continent.26 Bacon's interest in Soviet events and personages has a long history -- in 1964 a photograph of a panicked crowd in St. Petersburg during the Russian Revolution hung in Bacon's studio and was noted as "one of the clippings he values most"27 -- but evidently grew over time. His fascination with the Revolution to the point of casting it as an experience of his own was linked to his identification with one of the Soviet Union's greatest film directors.

There are in fact numerous actual biographical commonalities linking Bacon and Eisenstein that could have supported or facilitated personal identification. For instance, both men were homosexual, though Eisenstein's homosexuality was not nearly as well-known or freely expressed as Bacon's due to the different milieux in which they

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moved. Eisenstein reportedly said that "if it were not for Marx and Lenin ... he would have ended up as another Oscar Wilde."28 Furthermore, a homoerotic aspect has been traced through the work of both artists. Bacon's coupled male figures, as found in the center panel of Triptych, August 1972 (fig. 1) or more legibly in Two Figures 1953 (fig. 4), were derived from Muybridge's wrestlers (fig. 5) with specific recognition of the sexual implications of the pose.29 We find a similar double entendre in the first scene of Battleship Potemkin where, as one writer noted, "Eisenstein's camera lingers on the rough, splendidly built men, in a series of shots that anticipate the sensuality of Mapplethorpe."30 In the same sequence from Potemkin one of the young sailors, while asleep in his hammock, is pointlessly lashed across the shoulder by a boatswain (fig. 6). While this image may or may not have a direct relationship to the left panel of Bacon's Triptych, Studies of the Human Body 1979 (fig. 7), wherein the broad back of a man is turned to expose an elongated, bloodied wound, the kinship of the two images nevertheless illustrates that there is a sado-masochistic as well as a homo-erotic aspect to both artist's work. The interest in sado-masochism that has been noted in their work also occurs in both men's biographies.31

29The most famous, or infamous, [borrowing from Muybridge] was the Two Figures of 1953, known to friends as 'The Buggers,' based on the Muybridge study of two naked wrestlers. The different activities may be obvious, but their positions are similar. 'Of course we don't know what the wrestlers were thinking,' Bacon pointed out with careful emphasis." Daniel Farson, The Gilded Gutter Life of Francis Bacon, pp. 5-6.
30Almendros, p. 58.
Additionally, as Bacon and Eisenstein grew up, each found the greater portion of nurturing love and attention from their nurses, not from their natural parents.32 And as mature artists each was on a lone crusade: Bacon as a figurative painter in an era that praised abstraction and in a country that, comparatively speaking, rarely values its living artists; and Eisenstein who came from the world theatre to change the form of cinema, whose ideas often outdistanced the realities of production in a politically mutating republic.

My purpose in outlining these few biographical commonalities between Bacon and Eisenstein is not to create the basis for a session of group psychoanalysis. Rather, I want to show that Bacon's identification with Eisenstein is perfectly understandable and that the accord between them as human beings also extends into their work regardless of the media they utilized. The indications that Bacon's interest in Eisenstein and his work was intimate and grew over time suggest that Eisenstein's ideas on cinema -- particularly regarding montage -- were not unknown to the painter. Regardless of whether Bacon found in those ideas affirmation or inspiration, his interest in the cinema was both personal and professional and plainly holds a significant place in the analysis of his painting.

MOVING PICTURES

"Movement is not an external thing with him, as it was with the Futurists or with Degas, but is completely interior, or so one feels."

-- Andrew Forge33

To determine just how it is that Bacon's paintings are cinematic requires first an examination of the sense of movement they engender. The search for a means of depicting movement in art has a long history in which various devices have been employed to represent motion. Twisted perspective, blurred contours and the depiction of sequential positions are three such devices -- and all, incidentally, may in some fashion be found in Bacon's oeuvre. These methods, however, are of limited effect and generally convey movement as a "freeze-frame" image; movement is not presented for the senses to perceive, but merely represented by forms evocative of motion.

Bacon was known to have collected "a whole literature on the mechanics of motion," and had so much as "a Bergsonian horror of the static."34 Not surprisingly then, Bacon recognized the distinction between movement presented and movement represented, as his opinion on Gericault demonstrates:

The impressive thing about Gericault is the sense of movement in everything. Especially the representation of the human body and of horses; everything is captured in an incredible sense of movement. But when I speak of movement, I don't mean the representation of speed, that's not what it's about at all. Gericault somehow had movement pinned to the body.35

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35 Archimbaud, p. 41.
Opposed to the representation of physical motion, such as we find in the photographs of Muybridge and Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* (fig. 8), is the appearance of motion, movement that is fully sensed, not just seen in a frozen attitude.

Though photography is better equipped to *arrest* movement, it is no more an effective medium for conveying or giving the appearance of motion than painting had been prior to the invention of mechanical reproduction. Not until the invention of cinema did we have such a medium. The cinema is an unusual medium in that it both presents and represents movement; the image both moves in the course of its own running time, and exists as a record of movement that once occurred. Due to its kinetic nature, according to Sobchack, the cinema is an activity of becoming. To posit cinema as such she contrasts the medium with photography wherein that "Although it [photography] announces the possibility of becoming, it never presents itself as the coming into being of being. It is a presence without past, present, future."36 Cinema, on the other hand, by virtue of its temporality is capable of presenting the experience of becoming for a spectator to likewise experience. Roland Barthes similarly identifies the specifically filmic as dependent upon possession of a "diegetic horizon."37 In addition, Sobchack notes how photography, "like painting before it, has often thickened its representations by producing narrative and temporality in a succession of images that, nonetheless, are perceived as static and discreetly atemporal."38 Presently I want to consider how Bacon's paintings convey a sense of movement within each image, how they do indeed possess a diegetic horizon, and how this together with their serial configuration lends them an authentic cinematic sensibility, not just a "thickened representation."

36Sobchack, p. 59.
38Sobchack, pp. 59-60.
Bacon's early paintings suggested movement through blurred or indistinct contours. *Man with Dog* (fig. 9) exemplifies this method, the figures and pavement slightly out of focus to denote a slow shutter speed or wobbly camera. Photographs of Bacon have often depicted him in just this manner, caught in motion and partially blurred. The monochromatic palette and smudgy aspect of the early work also indicates a link with newspaper photographs, with their "you were there as the event happened" sort of hurried quality and adrenal dynamism.

Blurred contours, however, only go so far as to represent movement two-dimensionally. In 1953 one critic for *The Times* of London made the following observation regarding Bacon's Popes:

> The affect of these, as so often with Mr. Bacon's recent work, is to suggest that one is in the cinema but that the film has suddenly stopped being wound; the dramatic tension is at its height, and then suddenly frozen, fixed.39

This remark acknowledges the tension between movement and the static in Bacon's work. Although the comparison is with the cinema, the writer concludes that all activity has stopped. Relatively speaking, early works such as *Man with Dog* are static and while the technique used does suggest movement, it nonetheless retains a two-dimensional aspect; the man and dog appear caught in movement as if by a still photograph rather than appear to be in the actual process of three-dimensional displacement. A three-dimensional motion, a movement through space and time as presented in the cinema, rarely gives us blurred images (focus problems excepted); blurred contours merely re-present movement.

Bacon's mature work still effects a play with contours, but it does so in a much more sophisticated manner. In *Three Studies for a Portrait of Lucian Freud* (fig. 10) there is a suggestion of dynamism to the figure, an impression that one face "fades in"

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to the next. As Gilles Deleuze put it, "The case is such that even when contour moves, one has to look for movement less in its displacement than in the Figure's amoeba-like exploration of the contour."40 Whereas the blurred figures in Man with Dog appear to change little as a whole despite their ambiguous contour, Bacon's more amoeba-like figures seem to be experiencing a profound disturbance. Similarly, whereas Duchamp's Nude Descending a Staircase (fig. 8) is caught in successive poses, the man seated in Bacon's Study for Portrait (fig. 11) appears to be passing from one state to another without rest, without being arrested. Regardless of whether this is a bodily transition or an incarnation of inner experience, the expression of movement, the experience of becoming, is indicated by the figure -- pinned to the body -- where it may be perceived by all who look.

**THE MOVEMENT-IMAGE**

As August Rodin put it, "Movement is the transition from one attitude to another."41 Eisenstein similarly exclaimed, "The essence of cinema does not lie in the images, but in the relation between the images!"42 Though Eisenstein was referring to montage, to the technique of manually juxtaposing images, his remark is equally descriptive of all cinematic film; the sequential recording of images over time is the most elemental definition of the cinema.

In his study of the cinema, Deleuze takes this definition to a more detailed level by means of a three point thesis on movement.43 This thesis provides the basis for his definition and exploration of the "movement-image." As his first point, Deleuze

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43Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*. 
recognizes the interval between filmed images as a function of time. This is to say that immobile sections, the individually recorded frames that are comparable to Muybridge's photos, cannot alone reconstitute movement, but require "the abstract idea of a succession, of a time which is mechanical, homogeneous, universal and copied from space, identical for all movements." Due to this condition, the actual perception of movement will invariably be missed in one of two ways. On the one hand, two positions may be brought infinitely close together in time, but movement will nevertheless occur in the interval between them; movement will always occur "behind your back." On the other hand, Deleuze notes that, "however much you divide and subdivide time, movement will always occur in a concrete duration." There are thus two irreducible formulas in opposition: the addition of abstract time to immobile sections, and real movement with its concrete duration.

The first formula, in which abstract time figures, is the cinematographic illusion and is plainly demonstrated with the animation of Muybridge's photographs by his own invention, the zoopraxiscope. Due to the phenomenon known as "persistence of vision," each image is seen individually, but perceived as fading into the next owing to the condition that the image is briefly retained in memory after the photo has passed from sight. With this in mind, Deleuze points out that although the cinema is composed of photogrammes, individually photographed images, what it gives us is not the photogramme but something else: "it is an intermediate image, to which movement is not appended or added; the movement on the contrary belongs to the intermediate image as immediate given." This image situated at the interval, the persistent image, is the "movement-image" that characterizes cinema.

47Deleuze, Cinema 1: The Movement-Image, p. 2.
In the second part of his thesis Deleuze describes the reconstitution of movement in cinema as a sequence of "any-instant-whatsoever." With modern mechanics, movement is no longer represented by privileged instants or poses, such as the "flying gallop," in which the most descriptive position is selected to convey motion. Instead, "the cinema is a system which reproduces movement as a function of any-instant-whatsoever that is, as a function of equidistant instants, selected so as to create the impression of continuity." While the any-instant-whatever may indeed be a remarkable image, such as Eisenstein's screaming nurse, this is an incidental characteristic and not what is specifically cinematic. Because a figure on film is "always in the process of being formed or dissolving through the movement of lines and points taken at any-instant-whatsoever of their course," there is no qualitative hierarchical organization of the images.

The third and final point in Deleuze's thesis on movement states that, "movement expresses something more profound, which is change in duration or in the whole." As a "translation in space," movement presupposes a qualitative change in the whole and in this there are three levels to consider:

(1) the sets or closed systems which are defined by discernible objects or distinct parts; (2) the movement of translation which is established between these objects and modifies their respective positions; (3) the duration or the whole, a spiritual reality which constantly changes according to its own relations.

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48Deleuze, Cinema 1: The Movement-Image, p. 5.
49Deleuze, Cinema 1: The Movement-Image, p. 5.
50Deleuze notes how, nevertheless, the privileging of a single position to represent a sequence of images has persisted even throughout the development of cinema; the flying gallop may no longer be in standard use, but the use of a film-still to represent shots or sequences is common. Bacon's critics, for a relevant example, have persistently fixated on his use of Eisenstein's screaming nurse, citing it without fail while overlooking its place in the entire Odessa steps sequence and Bacon's interest in Battleship Potemkin as a whole.
52Deleuze, Cinema 1: The Movement-Image, p. 11.
Movement thus has two aspects: the relationship between parts, and the change that occurs in duration or the whole. From this Deleuze concludes that, "Through movement the whole is divided up into objects, and objects are re-united in the whole, and indeed between the two 'the whole' changes." 53

Another way of viewing this whole is as the diegetic horizon of a film. Temporal diegesis, the before and after that accompany the present scene, is typically considered a defining factor of the cinematic form. A form of diegesis, however, is endemic to all images, manually and mechanically produced alike, although it is not necessarily evident in the image at hand and may depend upon the viewer to recognize its implicit existence. A photographic-still is recorded in exactly the same manner as a single image from a cinematically-filmed sequence, only in the latter case temporally adjacent images are recorded as well. The world does not stop and pose for a still-camera on the one hand and remain in perpetual motion for a cine camera on the other; the still-camera merely isolates one image from the passage of an infinite possibility of images. Thus the photograph possesses a diegetic horizon, only it is implicit rather than explicit. Instead of lacking a past, present and future, as Sobchack claims, the photographic image calls upon the spectator to recall or imagine the broader temporality of its existence; in the intersubjective communication between a spectator and a still photograph, the spectator's role is here the greater of the two, though no less interdependent.

The diegetic horizon in painting, rather than existing to either side of the image -- as "past" in the image recorded before and "future" in the image that follows -- resides within the image in a teleological continuity. Painting, even more than still photography, is likewise diegetic in nature in that the single painted image is created over time. The figure's face in Bacon's Self-Portrait 1971 (fig. 12) is not only the

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53Deleuze, Cinema I: The Movement-Image, p. 11.
record of many individual "frames," as Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* (fig. 8) is a chronophotographic record of movement, but is also the record of the image as it transpires, as it passes through the frames, so to speak. Because the figure does not appear arrested in time as if by the quick shutter speed of a camera, but does appear to be in the act of moving and becoming, the spectator is made subtly aware of temporality in the image. The diegetic horizon therefore exists within the painted image as it does in the film.

Given the temporality or becoming of the image perceptible in Bacon's paintings, it seems reasonable to consider each image as a moving picture, as something comparable to the cinematic "shot." "The shot," Deleuze tells us, "is the movement-image insofar as it relates movement to a whole which changes, it is the mobile section of a duration."\(^{54}\) As "painting-shots," Bacon's imagery is easily described by Deleuze's thesis on movement: each painting is made up of sets and their parts, there is an apparent translation between parts, and from this translation a change in the whole occurs. Applying this to Bacon's work we could view the "parts" on two different levels.\(^{55}\) First, the brushstrokes are dynamic parts that interact to (de)form a whole of the figure. Second, the various things in each image, that is, the figures, objects and architectural components, are each parts of the image. Regarding this second level, there is a very strong interaction that occurs between the figures and their environments. This relationship between figure and ground in Bacon's work has been noted,\(^{56}\) both as isolating the figures and as interacting with them -- and these are not necessarily at odds if we take Deleuze's amoeba analogy further to view the ground as the fluid around the amoeba that both affects and is affected by its change of contour.

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\(^{54}\)Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, p. 22.

\(^{55}\)A third level could state that the separate canvases in a triptych are also "parts," but as I cast each canvas as a shot, this would amount to montage -- which will be discussed shortly.

\(^{56}\)See for example Deleuze, "Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation," p. 9
FRAGMENTATION

The sort of dynamic that is found in Bacon's work, the translation between parts, I believe to be a function of his interest in fragments. The idea of fragmentation recurs so often in Bacon's oeuvre that it is tempting to see it as a method. This, however, would be contrary to bacon's manner of working and his own ideas about art. It is, rather, more a means of describing what resurfaces in his oeuvre. The London art dealer Helen Lessore once called Bacon, "a painter of beautiful fragments emerging from vagueness."57 The fragment, both as an object and as a concept, occurs repeatedly in relation to Bacon and his work. Indeed, the fragment was a specific concern of his. To Sylvester he remarked that the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum were important to him, but perhaps only because they are fragments; as whole images they would lose their poignancy.58 The fragmented image holds a special quality, perhaps due to the mystery surrounding its missing parts.

Bacon's interest in the fragment appears to have grown with time. In 1985 he was invited by the National Gallery in London to participate in their "Artist's Eye" program, a program in which the Gallery periodically asks well-known artists to select work form their collection for a small exhibition. In a short prefatory note to the catalog of his selection, Bacon wrote the following:

The Manet I have chosen [Fragments of the Execution of Maximillian (fig. 13)] I know is completely changed from what Manet painted but I very much like the montage that has been made from the fragments. The question of fragments is a fascinating and endless subject. Would the Elgin Marbles have been so beautiful to us if we had them

57 Helen Lessore, Francis Bacon, catalog for an exhibit held at the Department of Fine Art, Nottingham University, England, 16 February - 12 March 1961.
58 Sylvester, p. 114.
now in their original state?  

A fascination with "the question of fragments" seems to have informed Bacon's choice of works for the exhibit. Of the eighteen paintings selected, four may be perceived as fragments, though each in a slightly different manner.

Speaking of Michelangelo's drawings, Bacon remarked, "And I think perhaps because they're not completely finished ... that they're more suggestive and that is one of the reasons that they've always been a very, very, strong -- a marvelous thing to use for me from a formal point of view." Though Bacon tempers his initial "very, very strong" with the more benign "a marvelous thing," it is clear that in fragments he had something more than simply a formalistic fascination, something perhaps related to his interest in the violence of reality. This, however, is not an explicit violence, as he elucidated:

When talking about the violence of paint, it's nothing to do with the violence of war. It's to do with an attempt to remake the violence of reality itself. And the violence of reality is not only the simple violence meant when you say that a rose or something is violent, but it's the violence also of the suggestions within the

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60 Aside from the Manet there is Michelangelo's The Entombment which, like a two-dimensional counterpart to the Elgin Marbles, may be included for its piecemeal, seemingly unfinished state. In Velázquez's The Toilet of Venus ("The Rokeby Venus") and Degas' Woman Drying Herself, however, the figures' bodies themselves may be seen as damaged, thus rendering the images fragmented in a fashion. Velázquez's painting was damaged in a notorious incident, an incident that Bacon likely knew of. Unlike "The Rokeby Venus," Degas' pastel was not knifed in the back, yet Bacon's own perception of the image amounts to much the same thing: "You must know the beautiful Degas pastel in the National Gallery of a woman sponging her back. And you will find at the very top of the spine that the spine almost comes out of the skin altogether. And this gives it such a grip and a twist that you're more conscious of the vulnerability of the rest of the body that if he had drawn the spine naturally up to the neck. He breaks it so that this thing seems to protrude from the flesh." (Sylvester, pp. 46-7) Bacon acknowledges that such an effect may not have been Degas' intention, and clearly it is like the singular conception. But here again, as in "The Rokeby Venus," we find a kind of damage being done first of all to the flesh of the figure, and second to the surface of the canvas. This damage, I suggest, is a fragmentation to the body not less than that found in the Elgin Marbles or Michelangelo's Entombment. In all cases there is at once a violence done in the works and a violence done to the works.

image itself which can only be conveyed through paint.\textsuperscript{62}

It is an extremely subtle form of violence that Bacon was after, a violence not always --
though possibly -- made visible through representation. Fragmented images convey the
violence of reality in two ways: explicitly in the broken forms, and implicitly in the
"bodily" damage wrought upon represented figures, such as we find in the Elgin
Marbles (fig. 14). While on the one hand appreciated for their existing form,
fragmented images possess an undercurrent of violence that has a greater affect than
would explicit representations or depictions of brutality.

Returning to the dynamic contour of Bacon's figures, the fragment, more so
than an intact object, is by virtue of its partiality allowed to interact with its
surroundings, to be completed, as it were, by the ground against which it abuts.
Indeed, the fragment has a more direct relationship with its environment than a whole
object. In viewing the Elgin Marbles, for example, the lost bits of sculpture are
"replaced" by background, whether it be the walls of the British Museum or the
sculptural ground of a metope slab (figs. 14-6). Ground thus becomes figure wherein
the fragmented object is recomposed by the fluidity between a figure's broken contour
and the surrounding ground. We find this effect in Bacon's Triptych, August 1972 (fig.
1), particularly in the left panel, where the stained black canvas and the human figure
appear to vie for the more assertive place in the image; ground becomes figure as
figure becomes ground. It has been remarked that Bacon's work lacks a sense of
"push/pull,"	extsuperscript{63} but I strongly contest this; Bacon's work is nearly all push and pull, and
this is essential to its kind of motion and how the parts interact to change the whole.

\textsuperscript{62}Sylvester, pp. 81-2.
\textsuperscript{63}Andrew Brighton, "Why Bacon is a Great Artist," lecture given at the Tate Gallery, London, 17 July
1985.
ONE IMAGE AFTER ANOTHER

It is not surprising that numerous critics and scholars have likened Bacon's works to the cinema in various ways. One writer observed regarding five (of a total of eight) Studies for a Portrait (fig. 17) that "Technically, Bacon has been audacious enough to try for one continuous cinematic impression in his five Popes..."64 Another scholar was more specific in his analogy between Bacon's work and the cinema, describing Triptych, May - June 1973 (fig. 18) as "showing sequential views of a single subject performing sequential actions, like still shots from a film."65 Although the term "still shots" is oxymoronic, and the implication likely is that each painting is one frame in a shot -- a still image rather than a moving sequence itself -- Bacon's work clearly achieves an effect that inspires formal association with the cinema.

In point of fact Bacon conceived his images cinematically, that is, serially. Since his seminal 1944 painting Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion (fig. 19), Bacon has more often than not painted in series. Though he typically keeps to the triptych format, he conceives of the images in un-numbered sequences, not in self-contained triads. As he once remarked,

Actually, I don't know if one should talk about a triptych in my case...as far as my work is concerned, a triptych corresponds more to the idea of a succession of images on film. There are frequently three canvases, but there is no reason why I couldn't continue and add more.66

Acknowledging a formal kinship between his paintings and strips of film, Bacon indicates that his imagery was conceived cinematically.

64Sam Hunter, "Francis Bacon: 'An Acute Sense of Impasse,'" Art Digest, 15 October 1953, p. 16.
65Hugh M. Davies, "Bacon's Black Triptychs," p. 66.
66Archimbaud, p. 165.
In *Four Studies for a Self Portrait* 1967 (fig. 20) the formal affiliation between film and painting is more pronounced than in any other work of Bacon's. Looking as if four frames were spliced from a shot, one almost expects to see sprocket holes running along the left- and right-hand sides of the painting. In its vertical stacking and four times repeated figure, this is an unusual composition for the artist; more typically his portraits and self portraits are comprised of three images situated horizontally. If we look closely, however, what at first appears to be four images pressed flush against each other -- a technique unheard of in Bacon's oeuvre, his panels being hung spaced apart, but more reminiscent of film's appearance -- reveals itself to be a single image containing four figures. The figures head's even bleed over the faux frame lines, creating a tension between isolation and communication. Rather than diminish the cinematic effect of the configuration, this further reinforces the notion that Bacon's images are shots, for not only does each face have a dynamic aspect of its own, but each face "fades in" to the next -- to apply a cinematic term. In *Four Studies for a Self Portrait*, then, we have a single image that exemplifies the cinematographic aspect of Bacon's paintings.

In the small portrait triptychs that Bacon produced there is a sense of continuity conveyed in that seeing the same figure successively suggests temporal progression. Reading left to right, as if scanning the print of a text, is the most natural way to visually apprehend something horizontal. Moreover, we tend to expect the components of such a configuration to build upon one another, as words follow each other to form a meaningful sentence. Thus when faced with *Three Studies for a Portrait of Lucian*

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67It bears noting that as well as resembling a strip of motion picture film, *Four Studies for a Self Portrait* is comparable to the strips of photos easily and quickly taken and processed in public booths. These booths are fairly ubiquitous in London, and it is well known that Bacon worked from such images, particularly for his self portraits. (See for example the examples reproduced on the inside cover of the catalog Francis Bacon, 1909-1992: Small Portrait Studies, Loan Exhibition, 21 October - 3 December 1993, Marlborough Fine Art, London.) Also noteworthy, however, is the resemblance photo-booth portraits bear to strips of motion picture film, bringing us back to a consideration of the four stacked images as suggestive of the cinema.
Freud 1965 (fig. 10) a spectator is likely to view the small panels from left to right, expecting a resolution -- or punctuation -- of some kind to be found in the last image.

Regarding early works such as Three Studies of the Human Head 1953 (fig. 21) and the pope series (fig. 17) critics have remarked how the figures appear to grow progressively more agitated. Yet Bacon did not paint the images in such order and never arranged them thus. Later in his career Bacon purposefully composed the large triptychs against this sort of interpretation, for these readings that construct temporal continuity make illustrations of the paintings, seeking a unifying narrative in explanation. This was not the artist's intention. In Bacon's words, the images "don't relate to one another but they play off against one another."  

In the cinema there are two principal methods of arranging shots, that is, editing techniques. On the one hand there is continuity cutting that constructs temporal continuity, and on the other hand montage that works against it. Continuity cutting, the technique popularized by D. W. Griffith, facilitates the construction of a readily understandable narrative and has since Griffith's time become standard Hollywood technique. The method, however, finds its roots in the early films of Georges Méliès and the Lumière brothers, and indeed cinema's history with storytelling is tantamount to the history of its own technical development.

Eisenstein's "montage of attractions" resists the simple mimesis that continuity editing creates and seeks to thwart illustrational narrative in favor of communicating concepts with greater immediacy. Montage, in its most general definition, is the juxtaposition of individual parts to form a whole. More specifically, the parts are autonomous and thus when juxtaposed produce a different whole, not something

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70 Interview with Francis and Morrison.
reconstructed. The autonomy of each fragment is its crucial aspect, for when two such disparate parts are brought together something unexpected is communicated in their association. In Eisenstein's words, "The juxtaposition of two fragments resembles their product more than it does their sum." Put another way, two plus two equals five. The atypicality of this algebra resides in the "attraction," the incongruous shot inserted.

It is with the inserted shot that the cinematic whole is changed through montage. In this translation between part and whole, the technique resonates with the fundamental concept of the movement-image. Deleuze relates montage to his thesis on movement in the following way: "Montage is the operation which bears on the movement-images to release the whole from them, that is, the image of time."71 This whole, an "indirect" image insofar as it derives from movement-images and their relationships,72 is essentially the sum total of the images, or rather, the product created when images collide in Eisenstein's manner of editing. Eisenstein's own words confirm the practice of this:

What does such a conception of montage actually involve? In this instance, each fragment of montage no longer exists as something autonomous, not as one of the particular figurations of a single general theme which permeates all of the fragments equally. The juxtaposition of such particular details in a given structure of montage inaugurates and foregrounds within perception this general quality that is the source of each detail which unifies them, namely, the global image in which the author, and the spectator in turn, experience the theme of the film.73

It is significant that Eisenstein acknowledged both positions of experience, namely that of the filmmaker and that of the spectator. The whole is thus also a global image made up through two subject positions.

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71 Deleuze, Cinema 1: The Movement-Image, p. 29.
72 Deleuze, Cinema 1: The Movement-Image, p. 29.
73 Aumont, p. 173.
In his film *Strike* (1924) Eisenstein inserts shots of animals -- fox, owl, marmoset, bulldog -- into shots of men who spy against the workers in the film. In each case the image of the animal "collides" against the image of the man to create new meaning, namely that each man possesses the character of a certain animal. Also in *Strike*, Eisenstein juxtaposes the workers being incited to riot with animals being led to the slaughter, communicating the fate of the workers most economically. Greatly different from Griffith's manner of editing, montage is characterized, as Eisenstein emphasized, "By collision. By the conflict of two fragments placed side by side. By conflict. By collision."74 The two sets of images, those of animals and those of humans, are not inherently or necessarily related. When the general quality of their common doom, however, is made the theme of their juxtaposition and of the film as a whole, we then see how "the whole is divided up into objects, and objects are re-united in the whole, and indeed between the two "the whole" changes."75

Rather than a seamless and naturalistic representation of events, Eisenstein's insertion of seemingly incongruous images is an affective system of imagery that assaults the viewer's sensitivity. Bacon worked in series precisely because the juxtaposition of images creates a greater, more affective whole -- Eisenstein's "global image." As he stated:

But actually in the series one picture reflects on the other continually, and sometimes they're better in series than they are separate because, unfortunately, I've never yet been able to make the one image that sums up all the others. So one image against the other seems to be able to say the thing more.76

On another occasion Bacon remarked: "One image, another, then another with the frame adding a certain rhythm to the progression of images."77

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74Quoted in Aumont, p. 40.
75Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, p. 11.
76Sylvestor, p. 22.
77Archimbaud, p. 165.
arrangement of separate panels is equitable to the rhythm of film editing.\footnote{To qualify this notion that Bacon's paintings are montaged painting-shots, it bears keeping in mind that paintings are experienced differently from the cinema so far as temporality is concerned. In film the temporal experience of the image is determined by the filmmaker; the viewer relinquishes control over what she will see and consumes the images as they come across the screen without warning. Painted images to the contrary are experienced with control on the spectator's part. In a museum one may view the panels of a triptych or the forms in an image in whatever order or disorder one chooses as there is no mechanically determined format to the exhibition of images. (This of course excludes the museum installations that employ such things as slide projectors, video screens and so forth.) There are, however, culturally determined factors that blur the distinctions between the traditional experience of these two media. In western cultures we are conditioned to read horizontally from left to right, and this practice, when automatically and consistently enacted, temporally determines the experience of paintings in a manner akin to viewing the fixed order of projected film images. Likewise, in light of the home video industry, one may rewind, freeze frame, fast forward, and generally play with the order of cinematic images in numerous ways. Film is thus not necessarily experienced as temporally determined, but may for those with the proper equipment be rearranged by an active viewer. How similar or dissimilar these two media are experienced therefore depends upon ones specific and culturally determined circumstances surrounding each encounter with the forms.} Bacon's insistence that the panels of a triptych be framed independently\footnote{Sylvester, p. 86.} is an insistence on the autonomy of each image. The insertion of a singular image between two images that resemble each other, as we so often find in Bacon's large triptychs (fig. 1), is then the utilization of Eisenstein's montage technique. Collision to create a more immediate communication, and not an illusionistic continuity, was the painter's concern.

There are cases in Bacon's work where a single panel contains elements that are comparable to close-ups inserted within a shot. In such cases, rather than the montage being neatly effected through the juxtaposition of painting-shots in the triptych format, there is a different view inserted within the frame of a single image. For example, in \textit{Three Figures and Portrait} (fig. 22) -- borrowing the circles from a well-known source of his, K.C. Clark's medical book \textit{Positioning in Radiography} -- Bacon delimits a space around the heads of two figures. While the scale of these heads is not obviously altered, as one would expect from a close-up view that appears to hold a magnifying glass up to the figure, there is a sense of greater focus on the region enclosed by the circles. The head and neck of the figure on the left is attached to the body without a discrepancy between the form within the circle and the form without. And yet, because
of the circle's perfect shape and relative emptiness, it appears that what is contained therein is another view of what lies behind, or a view of something else altogether. Hence the circles function within a panel as a close-up inserted within a shot, giving the spectator a closer or contrasting look.

In works such as *Triptych, August 1972* (fig. 1) and *Three Figures and Portrait*, nevertheless, the idea communicated by the insertion and collision of images is not at all explicit. Unlike Eisenstein's juxtaposition of people and animals in *Strike*, the significance of the inserted "attraction" -- the coupled figures or inserted close-ups -- is not revealed by the surrounding images or figures. This lack of an intellectual explanation of meaning is due to the two artists' different targets, the spectator's intellect on Eisenstein's part and the nervous system on Bacon's. Though both methods produce an immediately communicated and affective message, in Bacon's case we find a greater distance between image and illustration, between purely visual communication and linguistic narration.

In the absence of identifiable meaning, however, there is nonetheless a whole released from the montaged elements and this whole is the interactive experience of affect. In *Triptych, August 1972* the center panel acts as a foil to the other two, signifying something by their arrangement, thought we are hard pressed to articulate exactly what. Were the two outer panels hung side by side, exclusive of the other image, the spectatorial impression would be altered. In such a case the images would simply appear to be two portraits, comparable to a work like *Two Studies for a Portrait of Richard Chopping* (fig. 23). With the inclusion of the center panel, however, the coupled figures therein contrasting and isolating the two seated men, some meaning seems intended. This intent that is like a question asked but deliberately left unanswered is a vehicle for the affection that strikes the spectator. We thus find a greater whole -- an affective whole -- released through montage.
THE AFFECTION-IMAGE

Bacon is, above all, a portrait painter. That the close-ups inserted into Three Figures and Portrait are head-shots is fitting. Yet the close-ups of heads that Bacon inserts in this panel as well as the heads in his small portrait triptychs have a function of their own, a function independent of how the attraction behaves in montage. The close-up, according to Deleuze's typology, is one variety of the affection-image, itself a more specified form of the movement-image, and this distinguishes it from other, more generalized shots.

Of the affection-image Deleuze writes, "It is a coincidence of subject and object, or the way in which the subject perceives itself, or rather experiences itself or feels itself 'from the inside'... It relates movement to 'quality' as lived state (adjective)."\textsuperscript{80} Such a description finds little obstacle in being applied to Bacon's imagery; between painting and spectator is a communication wherein the latter experiences herself in an intensely personal manner. In addition, the movement that Bacon sought to depict, bodily movement but with all its implications, is, surely, "quality" as a lived state. Deleuze further describes two sorts of affection-images: "On the one hand the power-quality expressed by a face or an equivalent; but on the other hand the power-quality presented in an any-space-whatever."\textsuperscript{81} It is the first variety that concerns us presently.

The concept of affect has a deep relationship with the human face. Deleuze writes of affect as "this combination of a reflecting, immobile unity and of intensive expressive movements," and then remarks, "But is this not the same as a Face itself?"\textsuperscript{82} He writes that

\textsuperscript{80}Deleuze, Cinema 1: The Movement-Image, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{81}Deleuze, Cinema 1: The Movement-Image, p. 110.
\textsuperscript{82}Deleuze, Cinema 1: The Movement-Image, p. 87.
The affect is the entity, that is Power or Quality. It is something expressed: the affect does not exist independently of something which expresses it, although it is completely distinct from it. What expresses it is a face, or a facial equivalent (a faceified object)…

The face may be treated in one of two ways, faceification of faceicity -- but in either case, "there is no close-up of the face, the face is in itself close-up, the close-up is by itself face and both are affect, affection-image." Interestingly, Deleuze defines faceification and faceicity in terms of painting:

Sometimes painting grasps the face as an outline, by an encircling line which traces the nose, the mouth, the edge of the eyelids, and even the beard and the cap: it is a surface of faceification. Sometimes, however, it works through dispersed features taken globally fragmentary and broken lines which indicate here the quivering of the lips, there the brilliance of a look, and which involve a content which to a greater or lesser extent rebels against the outline: these are the traits of faceicity.

When we look at a work such as Three Studies for a Portrait of Lucian Freud (fig. 10), this description of faceicity seems to have been contrived specifically with Bacon's imagery in mind, and indeed this may have been the case given Deleuze's writings on Bacon. As close-ups of the human face, Bacon's portraits are affection-images; in the fluidity of his brushwork, the deformation of contour, the figures display faceicity. Bacon's earlier work, however -- for example Three Studies of the Human Head (fig. 21) -- where the contours are more blurred than truly distorted, tends more towards faceification.

There is one peculiar and completely unique work, Reclining Figure (fig. 24), in which Bacon cut out a figure from one canvas and pasted it to another canvas. He then painted around the figure, including an emphatic line that traces the cut-out form. Through such construction (an attempt at some sort of montage?) this odd image loses

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83 Deleuze, Cinema 1: The Movement-Image, p. 97.
84 Deleuze, Cinema 1: The Movement-Image, p. 88.
an element of its affect. Compositionally similar images (fig. 25) possess a greater intensity than the cut-out version; the restriction of contour, the suggestion that the figure cannot actively rebel against the outline, lessens the affect. In this vein, I am of the opinion that faceicity conveys a greater affection than does faceification. Deleuze's description of faceicity -- with mention of quivering, looking and rebellion -- implies a greater or more intense activity. This is what we find in Bacon's mature work, as compared with the earlier images that emulate news photographs, and surely we can see how a greater sense of movement corresponds to a greater affect.

Deleuze relates faceification and faceicity to the cinema through two figureheads, D.W. Griffith in the case of the former, Eisenstein in the case of the latter -- underscoring once again the close alliance between Bacon and Eisenstein and their opposition to naturalistic uses of creative media. Deleuze points out that in the faceicity of Eisenstein's close-ups there is often a serial aspect, an ascendancy of emotion or, as Eisenstein put it, "the rising line of annoyance."86 This serial aspect can be presented through simultaneous or successive faces, or even in a single face that moves through a sequence of expressions. In each case, "Here the intensive series discloses its function, which is to pass from one quality to another, to emerge onto a new quality."87 As an example Deleuze mentions Eisenstein's stone lion from Potemkin that in a three-part montage appears to sit up and roar (fig. 26). Bacon's Three Studies of the Human Head (fig. 21) -- though not ordered thus by the artist -- achieves an effect very like this sequence of Eisenstein's. While few of Bacon's triptychs present a clear escalation or progression of emotion, his use of serial imagery contributes to the faceicity of the affection-image and lends itself to such an interpretation if not the actual ordering of the images in exhibition or publication.

86Quoted in Deleuze, Cinema 1: The Movement-Image, p. 89.
87Deleuze, Cinema 1: The Movement-Image, p. 89.
The preceding application of Deleuze's discussion of the face from *Cinema I* needs to be reconciled with how he relates the face to Bacon in his essay on the painter, "The Logic of Sensation." In the latter text he writes that, "As a portrait painter, Bacon gives us heads rather than faces." The distinction is crucial in that Bacon is a painter of figures, not characters. "The body is Figure, not structure. Conversely, the Figure, being body, isn't a face, doesn't even have a face." And so by reducing the figure to heads, Bacon gets closer to the figure, closer to the "animal spirit of man." How, then, if they don't have faces, can Bacon's portraits demonstrate faceicity? It is true that the face demonstrates faceicity, lends itself as the vehicle for affect, but it is through faceicity that Bacon goes beyond the face to achieve the head or body of the figure; faceicity releases the head in all its affect; it is through the affection-image that Bacon presents the animal spirit of man. Seeking to "deform people into appearance," in his own words, Bacon shows us our appearance as human animals.

The correlation between man and animal in Bacon's work was highly self-conscious on the artist's part. As he told Sylvester, "animal movement and human movement are continually linked in my imagery of human movement." This is not to say that he paints humans caught in animal-like gestures or that he anthropomorphizes animals. The affinity is much deeper and more essential. Bacon is recorded as having looked closely at photographs of animals while painting Sylvester's portrait, and in *Chimpanzee* (fig. 27) and *Study for a Portrait* (fig. 28) Bacon treats the animal and human figures identically; both are seemingly trapped by the environment and by some existential crisis, the only difference being that the man wears a suit. Eisenstein likewise made this equation of species in *Strike* by juxtaposing images of men and

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88 Deleuze, "Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation," p. 11.  
89 Deleuze, "Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation," p. 11.  
90 Sylvester, p. 148.  
91 Sylvester, p. 116.  
92 Sylvester, p. 32.
animals in numerous instance. In these examples, animals become human as humans become animal in a sort of universality of being.

Deleuze refers to this confusion of species as the "zone of indiscernibility or undecidability" and it relates to his ideas on the affection-image as close-up insofar as in close-up the face loses its individuation. He writes that, "The close-up is the face, but the face precisely insofar as it has destroyed its triple function [individuating, socializing and communicating] -- a nudity of the face much greater than that of the body, an inhumanity much greater than that of animals." In the close-up, individuation is suspended, and Deleuze's description of this zone of indiscernibility resonates both with what the figures in Bacon's imagery seem to be experiencing and with what the spectator experiences upon viewing the imagery:

The close-up does not divide one individual, any more than it reunites two: it suspends individuation. Then the single and ravaged face unites a part of one to a part of another. At this point it no longer reflects nor feels anything, but merely experiences a mute fear. It absorbs two beings, and absorbs them in the void. And in the void it is itself the photogramme which burns, with Fear as its only affect. The facial close-up is both the face and its effacement.

While at one time Bacon sought to project this fear through the scream, he later dispensed with what was perhaps too explicit a reference to other images, namely Poussin's *Massacre of the Innocents* and Eisenstein's nanny and other screaming figures. In his later work the affect is more subtly conveyed wherein the fearful scream is displaced and thus resonates mutely. The greater power of this silence finds its analog in the silent cinema that Bacon esteemed; "Oh, yes, cinema is a great art! Of

93Deleuze, "Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation," p. 11.
95Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, p. 100.
96Sylvester, pp. 34-5.
course, during the silent era, the image had tremendous force. The images of silent
films were sometimes very powerful, very beautiful.  

As well as the affection-image characterized by the close-up, there is another
variety wherein affect is conveyed through space. When an image of space is non-
specific, when it is fragmented into "any-space-whatevers" or cast with shadows, then
it is an affection-image.  Fragmentation removes the illustrative specificity of location
and permits it to function as a vehicle for affective perceptual and sensual experience.
The use of shadow also constructs the any-space-whatever, for a space in shadow is

A "Gothic" world, which drowns and breaks the contours, which
endows things with a non-organic life in which they lose their
individuality, and which potentializes space, whilst making it
something unlimited. Depth is the location of the struggle, which
sometimes draws space into the bottomlessness of a black hole,
and sometimes draws it toward the light.  

In the center panel of Triptych May-June 1973 (fig. 18) a shadow spills forth from the
dark, ominous because it does not appear to be a shadow cast by the panel's figure, but
of its own independent form. There is a substance to Bacon's shadows; they are never
properly cast by their accompanying figures and do indeed appear capable of killing, or
at least of living autonomously. Bacon thought of them as flesh rather than as pooled
blood or some other fluid such as they resemble; they are extensions of the figures.
Neither independent nor indexical to the figure, Bacon's shadows are something like
unnamed appendages. In Two Studies of George Dyer with Dog (fig. 29) we find this
appendage in the form of an animal, the dog that shares equal billing in the title,
reinforcing the connection between man and animal in an ominous manner.

97Archimbaud, p. 16.
100Interview with Francis and Morrison.
Shadows have long been associated with death, and Bacon often referred to shadows when expounding the bleaker aspects of his philosophy of life. When asked about the shadow in *Crucifixion* 1965 (fig. 30) Bacon replied, "...it's supposed to be killing something, I should think." *Triptych May-June 1973* (fig. 18) has an exact relationship with death in that the figure is George Dyer and that was painted after Dyer's suicide on the eve of Bacon's 1972 retrospective at the Grand Palais, Paris. Sam Hunter has written of this and two other triptychs -- *Triptych, August 1972* (fig. 1) and *Three Portraits: Posthumous Portrait of George Dyer, Self-Portrait, Portrait of Lucian Freud* (fig. 31) -- as the "black paintings," casting them as Bacon's response to Dyer's death. Regardless of the biographical details, however, *Triptych May-June 1973* is rather a "gothic" image, the shadow lending its affect to the non-specified location of the series and creating the aura of mortal threat. In Eisenstein's *Potemkin* there are shadows that function similarly. In certain shots of the Odessa Steps sequence we find the location fragmented into an any-space-whatever and the shadow employed as agent of death: the Cossacks that march on the citizens with guns drawn are outside the picture frame while what is shown on film is a row of shadows descending upon the people (fig. 32). In Bacon's paintings as in *Potemkin*, we see what Deleuze means when he writes that, "Shadow then exercises all its anticipatory function, and presents the affect of Menace in its purest state..." 

In addition to shadow, the any-space-whatever may be constructed through the use of color. Deleuze distinguishes three types of color: "the surface-color of the great uniform tints, the atmospheric color which pervades all others, movement-color which passes from one tone to another." Movement-color has the additional property of being "absorbent," that is, "In opposition to a simply colored image, the color-image

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101 "...if life excites you, its opposite, like a shadow, death must excite you." (Sylvester, p. 78)
102 Interview with Francis and Morrison.
103 Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*, p. 112.
does not refer to a particular object, but absorbs all that it can: it is the power which
seizes all that happens within its range, or the quality common to completely different
objects." While there is a certain correspondence between color and object, it is
neither fixed nor hierarchical. As an example of the color-image Deleuze quotes
Godard's remark that "it's not blood, it's red."  

Of the three forms of color, Deleuze claims that "...it is only movement-color
which seems to belong to the cinema, the others already being entirely part of the
powers of painting." This assertion I contest for the color of a painter such as Mark
Rothko is surely an example of movement-color -- absorbent and transitory, although
non-figurative, Rothko's color-field paintings are purely affection-images. Bacon's
work, as figurative but non-illusionistic painting, likewise gives us movement-color.
Deleuze takes Godard's remark as "the formula of colorism," and for an explicit
analogy we find the equation of red paint and blood well-defined in Bacon's early work
Study After Velasquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X (fig. 33). According to one
scholar, Bacon's source for the red drips of paint -- that are, on the one hand, simply
that, red drips of paint -- was the blood that spurted from the Nurse's eye in
Eisenstein's Potemkin -- which, ironically, was a black and white film (fig. 3).  

Whether or not Eisenstein was the source, Bacon's handling of red paint in such a
manner as part of a discomforting image certainly plays with the commonalties between
red paint and blood. And indeed, in all of Bacon's figures from his later, more mature
work, color is absorbent in this fashion. In Three Studies for a Portrait of Lucian
Freud (fig. 10) the brushstrokes are assertive as applications of pigment and transitory
in depth and color. Bacon, nevertheless, constructs an identifiable likeness of the

105Deleuze, Cinema 1: The Movement-Image, p. 118.
106Quoted in Deleuze, Cinema 1: The Movement-Image, p. 118.
subject. While his backgrounds and environments are made with surface color, Bacon "deforms [figures] back into appearance"\textsuperscript{110} through movement-color where blood, sinew, paint, flesh and canvas all dance about each other.

\textit{NARRATIVE, FOR AND AGAINST}

Returning to the subject of montage, it is conceivable that Bacon adopted this method, at least in part, for the express purpose of thwarting narrative. In cinema montage is a technique contrary to simple mimetic representation, with Eisenstein the polar opposite of Griffith, and Bacon himself remarked, "It helps to avoid story-telling if the figures are painted on three different canvases."\textsuperscript{111} The frames create a rhythm to the progression of images, but they likewise create an uncertain relationship between figures and this uncertainty is felt by the spectator.

In his study on Bacon, Ernst van Alphen investigates how the artist's paintings work against story conveyance, while at the same time stimulate the viewer to read them narratively. Despite Bacon's use of devices to counter narrative readings, such as the triptych format with no obvious continuity between images, van Alphen writes, "the paintings are nevertheless experienced as intensely narrative, because they appear to be in motion."\textsuperscript{112} The kinetic aspect of the images therefore stimulates the viewer to have a certain experience of them. Van Alphen discusses this under the hypothesis that Bacon's work "proposes a pragmatics of vision as the narrative of perception."\textsuperscript{113} The peculiar form of narrative found in Bacon's work thus has a double status: on the one

\textsuperscript{110}Interview with Francis and Morrison.
\textsuperscript{111}Sylvester, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{112}van Alphen, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{113}van Alphen, p. 46.
hand the events in the painting are events of perception, while on the other hand they are experienced by and affect the viewer.\textsuperscript{114}

Van Alphen's analysis of Bacon's images rings like a paraphrase of Sobchack's phenomenological study of the cinema. The object's of both writers' interest, to borrow Sobchack's terminology, are intersubjective and directly felt expressions of experience by experience. Yet van Alphen was not mindful of the cinema's close relationship to Bacon's œuvre, and so, with due respect to the kinship between mediums, I shall here touch on the more salient points of his ideas regarding Bacon and narrativity.

In Bacon's painting Van Alphen identifies three aspects that lend themselves to the illusion of narration. First, in numerous paintings there is the presence of multiple characters, suggesting an exchange or interaction between figures is taking place in these images. Second, as previously noted, the triptych format traditionally suggests a relationship of spatial or temporal continuity between panels. Third, van Alphen identifies Bacon's application of paint as a stimulation towards narrative reading; compared to the architectural settings, Bacon's figures are composed of fluid, gestural strokes that suggest activity. In this third aspect, van Alphen specifically ascribes narrativity to a sense of movement conveyed in the images. As he put it, "Movement, seen as a development in time, or as a sequence of events, is a crucial characteristic of narrative. Without movement in time there is no narrative."\textsuperscript{115} Movement is indeed a crucial characteristic of narrative, however we find it not only in Bacon's painting style but in each of the three aspects listed above; the interaction between figures and between panels likewise is a movement suggestive of narrative events.

Apropos of discussing how Bacon's images work against narrative interpretations, Van Alphen proposes that Bacon conceives of "an opposition between

\textsuperscript{114}van Alphen, p. 56.
\textsuperscript{115}van Alphen, p. 24.
narrative as a product that can be endlessly reproduced, as re-presentation ... and narrative as process, as sensation."\textsuperscript{116} Bacon's remark that he wants "to give the sensation without the boredom of its conveyance"\textsuperscript{117} indicates that what he is telling in his images is sensation itself. This is not a narrative story in the usual sense, for "the moment the story enters, the boredom comes upon you,"\textsuperscript{118} but an immediate, non-replicable activity or process that is expressed as it occurs.

The narrative-as-process that van Alphen suggests was Bacon's aim finds its analog in cinematic narrative, but most particularly in the narrative told through the "montage of attractions." As pointed out above, Eisenstein, too, worked against traditional story-telling. Jacques Aumont has noted how Eisenstein's attraction is "anti-literary" in nature, and is "a highly commendable means of escaping from something of which Eisenstein has a holy terror, namely naturalism, the theatrical illusion, Aristotelian verisimilitude"\textsuperscript{119} In general, the film experience, in which perceptual experience is both presented and represented, is a process of becoming that the spectator is party to simply by virtue of seeing the images. Eisensteinian montage takes the intersubjectivity of this process to a greater degree of immediacy. Through montage a story is told, such as the events surrounding the workers' strike in \textit{Strike}, but ideas are expressed more directly in the juxtaposition of images, rather than through prolonged exposition. As was Bacon's goal, the story is thus immediately told without undue conveyance, it is simultaneously explained and experienced. Indeed, the "attraction" -- the inserted shot in montage -- is selected for its very ability to attract and disrupt instead of bore the viewer.

There are four ways, according to van Alphen, in which Bacon's paintings work against traditional narrative. In the first place, within the space of each image, Bacon

\textsuperscript{116}Van Alphen, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{117}Sylvester, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{118}Sylvester, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{119}Aumont, p. 42.
often used framing devices to isolate his figures. Circles, parallelepipeds and frames create borders between figures within a single canvas, effectively denying interaction between them. Second, a similar result is produced by the individual frames for each canvas of a triptych. Third, the figures do not interact in any readily understandable way; the figures do not have a natural relation.\textsuperscript{120} And fourth, van Alphen again cites Bacon's technique, only this time describing how the contrast between "roughly" painted figures and the color-field backgrounds serve to isolate the figures in space.

That Bacon's triptychs function as a montage, with each canvas working as one shot, is related to van Alphen's second point; the frames that define each painting-shot not only isolate the events within each image, but permit the montage of different sorts of images, both of which work against traditional storytelling. Now Bacon, as noted above, specifically meant for the triptych to have this anti-narrative effect. Van Alphen takes the artist at his word, but falters in his explanation of how the effect is produced insofar as he sees this as working against the usual function of the triptych. Indeed, van Alphen previously cited the triptych format as \textit{stimulation} to narrative interpretations. He writes,

\begin{quote}
Of course, this is not how the panels of triptychs traditionally function. But Bacon avoids the expected, because conventional, temporal or spatial continuities between the panels by depicting isolated figures or figural events on the panels.\textsuperscript{121}
\end{quote}

If, however, we view the triptych configuration as three shots in a cinematic montage, rather than as three paintings on a wall, then the discrepancy between the presentation of the images and how they function vanishes altogether.

\textsuperscript{120}I am assuming here that van Alphen means \textit{figures within a single image}, rather than between panels. Two things support my assumption: that he cites Andrew Forge's comments on \textit{Oedipus and the Sphinx after Ingres} 1983, a work of one panel only, and that otherwise this third point would be a function of the second.

\textsuperscript{121}van Alphen, p. 29.
Both Bacon and Eisenstein sought to depict their themes in a manner more visceral, more affective, that would force the spectator to feel and experience their imagery, not simply view it with an impassive eye. Paintings and films are then predicated on the spectator, and in Bacon's case we could even say that he has no theme other than the interaction between painted canvas and viewing subject; the spectator is as much a "character" in the stories Bacon tells as any figures on canvas or even the canvases themselves. As an intersubjective experience between image and spectator, the story Bacon tells with each painting or triptych is plainly not a usual sort of narrative. The devices that make this communication so unusual in the conflict between traditional narrative and anti-narrative, are the devices that call upon the viewer to participate.

The first and second means of thwarting narrative that van Alphen lists, the frames that isolate, not only confound narrative readings, but the devices likewise engage with the spectator as semiotically meaningful objects, namely indices. The index, according to the semiotic theory of Charles Sanders Pierce, is a system wherein there is a relationship of "existential contiguity" between the indexical sign and its object; the index's function is predicated on the existence of the object.  

"Such, for example," as Pierce explains, "is a piece of mould with a bullet-hole in it as a sign of a shot; for without the shot there would have been no hole; but the hole is there, whether anybody has the sense to attribute it to a shot or not." Furthermore, as a sign the index addresses somebody, for all signs call upon someone to fulfill their function of signification.

In Bacon's paintings there are numerous indexical signs that not only address the viewer, but index the viewer as well. This unusual function of an index is peculiar

123Quoted in Bal and Bryson, p. 189.
124Bal and Bryson, p. 188.
to a certain variety of sign, the pointing device. Arrows are the most obvious form of pointing device that occurs in Bacon's work, but framing devices such as the parallelepiped function similarly. The arrow, first of all, indexes that to which it points in a contiguous relationship. In Bacon's work, however, it is not clear just what the arrows are indicating. The left and right panels of *Triptych May-June 1973* (fig. 18) contain wide, stubby arrows positioned identically. Perhaps indexing the figures, or the bodily motion implied by their positions at a toilet and wash basin, or possibly indexing something else altogether -- such as the painting itself, an idea to which I shall return -- it is not at all clear what the arrows are doing there. The object being pointed out, being indexed, is undetermined, leaving the spectator to sniff around the end of a pointing finger like a dog incapable of seeing the trajectory indicated by its master. It is not that no object is being indexed by the arrows in *Triptych May-June 1973*, for to an indexical sign the object is always implicit -- something always falls in the line of an arrow -- but that in this case what object the arrow is specifically there to indicate is unclear.

The arrow, however, effectively makes an object of the spectator. As signs, pointing devices *address* the spectator, call upon the spectator to fulfill their indexical function. In such a case the arrow does not so much point *for* the spectator as point *at* the spectator with direct address. Furthermore, when the object being indexed within the image cannot be determined, the viewer, with dissatisfied look, finds herself returning to the pointing device for guidance. The arrow then re-addresses her and this re-address firmly *locates* her at the arrow's point, rather like the arrows reading "You Are Here" in maps. The arrow thus points, in direct address, not only to the viewer as standing in front of the painting, but also as located at the arrow's end, within the image itself. The spectator has, therefore, and on two dimensions, become the object of the indexical sign.
Bacon's arrows send the spectator on a wild goose chase, the look traversing the canvas in search of the proper object to rest upon. This purposeless, unstructured activity of the gaze is a metaphor for the fluid, undetermined state of the figures within the image. The spectator is also split in being positioned, by the arrow, both in front of the image and within the image. This complex disturbance of the spectator is comparable to the disturbance of Bacon's painted subjects. As indexical signs, arrows in Bacon's paintings thus function to incite the viewer to experience the images interactively in a manner that frustrates normal understanding and typical interpretation. The arrows are in this way one source of affect.

The simultaneous address to and inscription of the viewer that is achieved by Bacon's arrows is akin to the doubled, intersubjective nature of the cinema. Sobchack writes how "In the film experience, all signification and all communication start from the 'affinity' that is the act of viewing, coterminously but uniquely performed by both film and spectator."¹²⁵ This "address of the eye" is comparable to the address made by arrows in Bacon's paintings; the index and spectator share a vision of sorts. This situation presupposes two active parties. In Sobchack's words:

Cinematic vision, then, is never monocular, is always doubled, is always the vision of two viewing subjects materially and consciously inhabiting, signifying and sharing a world in a manner at once universal and particular...¹²⁶

When film addresses spectator the two share on equal terms a peculiar world wherein the film enters the spectator's space just as the spectator enters the film's space. We may rightly claim that it is this cinematic vision one uses to view Bacon's paintings, in as much as the indexical image and the spectator likewise meet to interact in a peculiar and doubled world.

¹²⁵Sobchack, p. 23.
The arrows in the outer panels of *Triptych May-June 1973*, as mentioned above, may be seen as indexing the image as a whole -- but is this not the function of the picture frame? Indeed, frames are likewise indices and both the frames around each panel and the framing devices within the images function as such. Like its indexical mate the arrow, the frame necessarily signifies something, and that something is the work of art. When a painting or some such object is framed, that object becomes "art"; that which is outside the frame is "not art." Furthermore, the frame behaves as a pointing device, one that says "here is art." Even should the frame be empty of a painting, framing "nothing," there is still "something" being framed. In this case the frame then poses this "not art" something, be it a surface of stucco or manufactured wallpaper, as art. Just as something invariably falls within the line of a pointing device, something invariably falls within the space of a frame.

The framing devices within the images function more specifically, indexing the objects they circumspect. Doorways, parallelepipeds, ellipses, circles and frames all index the objects -- typically human figures -- that they contain. In *Study for Portrait* 1971 (fig. 11) we find a man on a chair in an ill-defined space. The man is encased in a complex framework that looks as if it were made of metal piping. The geometry of this parallelepiped is unusual if not altogether irrational. The edge of the canvas (including the frame not reproduced here) implies that the space continues, that the pink wall and salmon-colored floor continue beyond the limits of the image. Were it not for the parallelepiped, this condition would detract from the figure, would perhaps lead the spectator's eye to wander (and wonder) about the space surrounding the image; the parallelepiped points to the seated figure as the subject of the painting, effectively focusing spectatorial perception. According to Bacon he used the parallelepiped and like
devices to "concentrate the image,"\textsuperscript{127} and indeed they do just this with the aplomb of an index saying, "here is something to look at"

In addition to pointing out the figure as an object to be noted, the parallelepiped in \textit{Study for Portrait}, as with other framing devices, makes the spectator aware of the act of perception. With regard to cinema Gilles Deleuze refers to this as "camera-self-consciousness."\textsuperscript{128} Insistent framing, zoom shots, changes of lens and excessive camera movement are all cinematically self-conscious mannerisms that extend to the spectator, making the viewer of the film aware of her role as an actively perceiving subject. Bacon similarly compels the viewer before the painting into a relationship with the image on sensual and perceptual level, generalizing the cinematic term of camera-self-consciousness into the idea of "image-making-self-consciousness." We can identify in Bacon's work three variants of reflexivity: an awareness of the image-field through exposed areas of canvas; an awareness of a painting's status as image through framing devices, creating or giving the impression of pictures within pictures; and, to a much lesser extent, the representation of photographic devices in certain paintings.

With broad spaces of unpainted, unprimed canvas confronting the viewer, it is difficult not to be sensitive to the media of painting, to what a painting is made of if not how it is actually made. Bacon primed his canvases but painted on the reverse side. He did this, he said, because, "I like the absorption that the raw canvas has for the image."\textsuperscript{129} The arrows in \textit{Triptych May-June 1973} are surrounded by bare canvas, and in fact, with rare exception Bacon has left some portion of the canvas bare in every painting. These exposed areas serve in the construction of an architectonic space for the figures, but they also bring the spectator into direct contact with the painter's tools,

\textsuperscript{127}Interview with Francis and Morrison.
\textsuperscript{128}Deleuze, \textit{Cinema 1: The Movement-Image}, p. 76.
\textsuperscript{129}Sylvester, p. 195.
just as explicit camera work draws attention to the cinematic image as the product of filmmaking.

The subtle reminder that one is looking at a canvas is also effected through the presence of a picture within the picture. A most explicit example of this is in Bacon's *Self-Portrait* 1970 (fig. 34) where we find a playful treatment of painted image upon painted surface. The "canvas" behind the sitter, Bacon himself, is essentially one and the same as the canvas of the painting itself; the sizes of the two canvases just don't quite match, though we are, in a sense, closer to the actual canvas, and so perhaps the virtual canvas is the same size after all. The effect of painting a figure sitting before an unpainted canvas has the same perceptual giddiness of a cinematic shot that pulls back to reveal the lights, electrical rigging and all the acoutrements of a film set; the means of production are not only brazenly displayed in an act of image-making-self-reflexivity, but the experience of this is vertiginous, comparable to holding one mirror up to another. Other of Bacon's paintings do this as well, though none so beautifully as the *Self-Portrait* with it's strict frontality and conflation of subject and object -- Bacon is in both positions as painter and painted.

Correlative to the method of pictures within pictures is the use of framing devices -- parallelepipeds, circles, ellipses, doorways, and color fields. Just as the picture frame within *Three Figures and Portrait* 1975 (fig. 22) visually rhymes with the frame of the image itself, the other framing devices likewise act "insistently," calling attention to the construction of the painting. Arrows, too, function in this way in their role as indices, framing the work with a self-conscious artificiality.

In the outer panels of *Three Portraits, Posthumous Portrait of George Dyer*,

*Self-Portrait, Portrait of Lucian Freud* 1973 (fig. 31) we find, in addition to the color-

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130There is, of course, a long tradition of painters representing themselves with their tools in this self-reflexive manner. Velasquez's *Las Meninas* is perhaps the pinnacle of this tradition and Bacon's marked admiration for Velasquez begs the question of whether *Self-Portrait* 1970 -- Bacon's only image in this genre -- isn't, like the popes, in emulation of the Baroque master.
fields that frame, the inclusion of small, illusionistic pictures representing photographs. These colorless and comparatively static depictions that are so different from Bacon's style of painting, provide a contrast of imagery that heightens the awareness that the image is a construct. This is taken still further in the two triptychs in which Bacon has included photographic mechanisms, cameras as reformed as the figures, identifiable but certainly not realistic. Bacon once remarked that the cameras in "Triptych, March 1974" (fig. 35) and "Studies from the Human Body 1970" (fig. 36) were not painted in relation to his acknowledged interest in becoming a filmmaker himself. They are, nevertheless, in addition to being highly image-making-conscious, startling reminders that the paintings view us as much as we view the paintings.

"MOVING SEQUENCES"

On several occasions Bacon referred to sensation as having "orders," "levels," and "domains." In the same context Bacon used the term "moving sequences," clearly indicating the cinematic quality of his conception of sensation. Gilles Deleuze proposes four interpretations of what Bacon may have meant by "levels of sensation." Deleuze, however, neglects the role cinema may have had in forming Bacon's ideas, and though he approaches posing cinema as a model, he stops short of actually doing so. Therefore I will reconsider Bacon's conception of sensation and Deleuze's interpretations in light of cinematic experience. In the interest of avoiding unnecessary explication, I will summarize each interpretation briefly, but elaborate further only on those directly pertinent to this study.

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131 Interview with Francis and Morrison.
132 "I'll tell you how I think of my own work: It unlocks the valves of sensation at different levels." (Interview with Peter Beard in Francis Bacon, recent paintings, 1968-1974, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975, p. 18.)
Deleuze uses the term sensation to indicate the consciousness of perception. He writes that, "As a spectator, I don't experience sensation until I enter the painting and become myself an example of the unity of the feeler and the felt." Sensation is an interactive process, but one that is self-reflexive and closely bound with perception; "It is the body, but not in the sense that the body is represented as an object; rather in the sense that the body is experienced as experiencing such sensation." To consider what Bacon may have meant when he spoke of sensation as having different orders, levels and so forth, Deleuze proffers four interpretations, though he dismisses the first two as unviable. First, each level corresponds to a single, specific sensation which Bacon represents in a single image, sequences of paintings then composing the individual sensations to achieve a plurality; second, each sensation has different levels; third, the levels are like recomposed snapshots of movement; and fourth, each level refers to a different sense organ, sensation being the cumulative, organic response.

Deleuze considers the first an unacceptable explanation in that such a "synthetic material unity of a sensation as a function of the represented object, the thing that is 'figured,'" amounts to the illustrational representation of an object. Each frame is not any single thing, be it a physical object or abstract sensation. In Deleuze's terminology, Bacon is not a figurative painter, but a "figural" painter. By this he means that, for example, *Study for a Portrait* (fig. 11) recognizably portrays a man, a figure, but does so in a way that is not representational in a conventional manner; Deleuze equates figurative representation with illustrational representation. Bacon's figural technique is a means of depicting figures that, in the artist's own words, "is a kind of tightrope walk between what is called figurative painting and abstraction."  

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134 Deleuze, "Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation," p. 15.
136 Sylvester, p. 12.
Thus Deleuze's first hypothesis is not viable because to equate each canvas with a particular sensation is to claim each image represents a sensation as an object.

Ernst van Alphen also points out that Deleuze's first interpretation poses each painting as a term in a sequence, and this is not the case. "Each painting and each figure," he writes, "is itself a moving sequence." Stopping just short of calling each image a cinematic shot, van Alphen nonetheless rightly claims that the kinetic aspect of Bacon's imagery is instrumental in figural representation; because the single image called *Study for a Portrait* appears to be moving, it can hardly be expected to hold still enough to maintain the presentation of a single sensation.

The third of Deleuze's interpretations is most relevant to our concerns here in that it implicitly defines Bacon's paintings as cinematic images. Deleuze suggests that:

Levels of sensation would be like arrests or snapshots of movement, and when recomposed they would restore the synthetic movement in all its continuity, violence and speed... 

Levels of sensation are found in movement arrested, as in Muybridge's photographs, but when recomposed produce a synthetic whole. This whole, in its ideal form, is

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137 van Alphen, p. 31.
138 Regarding this third hypothesis, van Alphen appears to misinterpret Deleuze's meaning. He points out that, "When we read the 'levels of sensation' as snapshots of movement, the movement defines the object of perception, rather than the subject or process of perceiving." (p. 31) Consequently, says van Alphen, Deleuze is here posing sensation in the same fashion as in the first interpretation, that is as motion "figured." By not dismissing this interpretation along with the first, because it likewise defines Bacon's work as illustrational, Deleuze is therefore inconsistent in his reasoning. Van Alphen, however, evidently reads Deleuze's third hypothesis as analogous to the first, that is as suggesting each canvas is one of these snapshots and the series of paintings the recomposition of sensation. In short, van Alphen sees Deleuze as equating Bacon's work with Muybridge's. While Deleuze uses the Cubists and the Futurists as examples of his third hypothesis, however, as examples akin to Bacon, he does not in this way discuss Muybridge. Where he does mention the photographer it is apparently just to underscore Bacon's interest in movement: "And it is true that Bacon is fascinated with Muybridge's decompositions of movement and that he has made them a part of his subject matter." (pp. 15-16) Deleuze, it would seem, does not mean to equate individual images by Bacon with individual images by Muybridge. Levels of sensation then are not found in actual snapshots of movement arrested, as in Muybridge's photographs, but would be like such snapshots when recomposed into a synthetic whole, like Duchamp's *Nude Descending*. This, in any case, is how I understand Deleuze's third hypothesis.
139 Deleuze, "Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation," p. 15.
essentially a moving snapshot -- the cinematic painting-shot. Here Deleuze seems to account for the very dynamism that van Alphen cites against the first interpretation, and indeed perhaps this hypothesis is in response to Bacon's term "moving sequences," rather than "levels of sensation."

As demonstrative of this interpretation, Deleuze cites synthetic Cubism, Futurism and Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* (fig. 8). Muybridge, too, is mentioned, presumably to situate Bacon among the other artists insofar as Bacon's interest in the photographer's analyses of motion allies him with the other artists' similar interests; that Duchamp and the Futurists looked to the photography of Muybridge and Etienne Marey, popular imagery of their time, is well-known. The commonalty among these artists is their attempt to present moving sequences through representation.

One critic contemporary of the Futurists remarked that their work "is a desperate attempt to introduce the sensation of duration into space, and this work reveals the cinematographic tendency of painting." As a "desperate attempt," it was hardly thought a noble effort to seek such an effect with traditional media, particularly as the cinema was a popular form, and indeed the comparison with cinema was at that time meant as an insult against such painters. Aaron Scharf notes that Cubist supporters berated the Futurists for being motivated by the cinema. It was the greatest folly, one said, to depict movement, analyse gestures and create the illusion of rhythm by reducing plastic matter to formulae of broken lines and volumes.

Cinema, however, has since matured as an art form, explored its affective potentialities beyond the simple record of movement. With the work of Francis Bacon we see that painting has likewise matured, surpassing the mimetic *representations* of bodies in motion to cause in the viewer a deeply felt sense of movement, both kinetic and

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affective. What was one but a desperate attempt of the greatest folly has become, with Bacon, a real achievement and a tremendous accomplishment in the history of painting.
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APPENDIX A: ILLUSTRATIONS
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS
(All works are by Francis Bacon unless otherwise credited.)

   Oil on canvas, each 78 x 58"
   Tate Gallery, London

2. *Study for the Nurse in the Film Battleship Potemkin* (1957)
   Oil on canvas, 78 x 56"
   Stadelisches Kunstinstitut und Stadtische Galerie, Frankfurt

3. Sergei Eisenstein, director
   Film-still from *Battleship Potemkin* (1925)

4. *Two Figures* (1953)
   Oil on canvas, 60 x 46"
   Private collection

5. Eadweard Muybridge
   *Wrestlers*, photograph (1887)

6. Sergei Eisenstein, director
   Film-still from *Battleship Potemkin* (1925)

   Oil on canvas, each 78 x 58"
   Private collection

8. Marcel Duchamp
   *Nude Descending a Staircase No. 2* (1912)
   Oil on canvas, 57.5 x 35"
   Philadelphia Museum of Art

   Oil on canvas, 60 x 46"
   Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo

    Oil on canvas, each 14 x 12"
    Private collection
   Oil on canvas, 78 x 58"
   Private collection

   Oil on canvas, 35.5 x 30.5"
   Musee National s'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

13. Edouard Manet
   *Fragments of the Execution of Maximillian*
   Oil on canvas
   National Gallery, London

14. Herakles or Dionysos, from the east pediment of the Parthenon
   c. 438 - 432 B.C.
   British Museum, London

15. Lapith triumphing over a wounded Centaur, from the south side of the Parthenon
   c. 447-442 B.C.
   British Museum, London

16. Hermes, Dionysos, Demeter and Ares, from the east frieze of the Parthenon
   c. 440 B.C.
   British Museum, London

17. *Study for Portrait*, numbers 1, 5, 7 and 8 (1953)
   Oil on canvas

18. *Triptych, May-June 1973*
   Oil on canvas, each 78 x 58"
   Private collection

19. *Three Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* (1944)
   Oil and pastel on hardboard, each 37 x 29"
   Tate Gallery, London

20. *Four Studies for a Self-Portrait* (1967)
   Oil on canvas
   Private collection

   Oil on canvas, each 24 x 20"
   Private collection
   Oil and pastel on canvas, 78 x 58"  
   Tate Gallery, London

   Oil on canvas, each 14 x 12"  
   Private collection

24. *Reclining Figure* (1961)  
   Oil on canvas, 78 x 56"  
   Tate Gallery, London

25. *Lying Figure* (1959)  
   Oil on canvas, 78 x 56"  
   Private collection

26. Sergei Eisenstein, director  
   Film-still from *Battleship Potemkin* (1925)

27. *Chimpanzee* (1955)  
   Oil on canvas, 60 x 46"  
   Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart

28. *Study for a Portrait* (1953)  
   Oil on canvas, 60 x 46.5"  
   Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg

   Oil on canvas, 78 x 56  
   Private collection

30. *Crucifixion* (1965)  
   Oil on canvas, each 78 x 58"  
   Bayerische Staatsgemaldesammlungen, Munich

   Oil on canvas, each 78 x 58"  
   Private collection

32. Sergei Eisenstein, director  
   Film-still from *Battleship Potemkin* (1925)
33. *Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X* (1953)
   Oil on canvas, 60.5 x 46.5"
   Des Moines Art Center

   Oil on canvas, 59 x 58"
   Private collection

35. *Triptych - March 1974*
   *Oil and acrylic on canvas, each 78 x 58"
   Private collection

   Oil on canvas, each 78 x 58"
   Private collection
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Figure 27: Chimpanzee (1955)
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Figure 32: Still from the film *Battleship Potemkin* (1925); Sergei Eisenstein, director
Figure 33: Study after Velazquez’s Portrait of Pope Innocent X (1953)
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