

Chaos, Territory, Art. Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth

Elizabeth Grosz, Women's and Gender Studies, Rutgers University, New York

The art of sensation

This paper is about the ontology, the materiality and logical structure of art. While I am not trained in the visual arts or architecture, nonetheless I see there are many points of overlap, regions of co-occupation, that concern art and philosophy, and it is these shared concerns that I want to explore. I want to discuss the 'origins' of art and architecture, but not the historical, evolutionary or material origins of art – an origin confirmable by some kind of material evidence or research – but rather, the conceptual origins of art, what concepts art entails, assumes and elaborates. These of course are linked to historical, evolutionary and material forces, but are nevertheless conceptually, that is to say, metaphysically or ontologically separable from them. Art, according to Deleuze, does not produce concepts, though it does address problems and provocations. It produces sensations, affects, intensities, as its mode of addressing problems, which sometimes align with and link to concepts, the object of philosophical production, the way philosophy deals with problems. Thus philosophy may have a place, not in assessing art, but in addressing the same provocations or incitements to production as art faces, through different means and with different effects and consequences.

In my previous work, I focused on the ways in which bodies, and the forces of space, time and materiality, that is, nature, have enabled rather than inhibited cultural and political production.¹ In this paper, I would like to address how these forces cohere to enable the productive explosion of the arts from the provocations posed by the forces of the earth, (cosmological forces which we must understand as chaos or material and organic indeterminacy) with the forces of living bodies, bodies by no means exclusively human, which exert their energy or force through the production of the new, and which create through their efforts, networks, fields, territories that temporarily and provisionally slow down chaos enough to extract from it something not so much useful as intensifying, a performance, a refrain, an organisation of colour or movement. The arts produce and generate intensity, that which directly impacts the nervous system and intensifies sensation. Art is the art of affect more than representation, a system of dynamised and impacting forces rather than a system of unique images.² By arts, I am concerned here with all forms of creativity or production that generate intensity, sensation or affect: music, painting, sculpture, literature, architecture, design, landscape, dance and so on. What distinguishes the arts from other forms of cultural production are the ways in which artistic production merges with, intensifies and eternalises,

monumentalises, sensation. Material production – the production of commodities – while it may generate sensation is nevertheless directed to the accomplishment of activity, tasks, goals or ends. Art is the submission of aims and ends to intensity, the subordination of intentions to sensation. This is not to say that art is without concepts; simply that concepts are a by-product or effect rather than the very material of art. Art is the submission of its materials – paint, canvas, concrete, steel, marble, words, sounds, bodily movements, indeed any materials – to those constraints and forms through which these materials generate and intensify sensation, through which they impact on bodies, nervous systems, organs.

What can philosophy contribute to an understanding of art other than an aesthetics, that is, a theory *of* art, a reflection *on* art? Instead of supervening from above, taking art as its object, how can philosophy work *with* art or perhaps as and alongside art? Only by seeking what it shares with art, what common origin they share in the earth and the living body, what ways they divide and organise chaos to create a plane of coherence, a field of consistency on which to think and to create. In other words, what common debt do art and philosophy share to those forces, chaos, that each in their own ways must slow down, decompose, harness and develop (through the construction of the plane of immanence in philosophy, and the construction of the plane of composition in the arts)? How, in other words, do the arts and philosophy ('theory') create? With what resources? Techniques? Counterforces?

I want to start at the 'beginning'. In the beginning is chaos, the whirling, unpredictable movement of forces, vibratory oscillations that constitute the universe. Somewhere in this universe, in a relatively rare occurrence, this chaos, through chance, generates organic proteins, cells, proto-life. Such life can only exist and perpetuate itself to the extent that it can extract from the whirling chaos that is nature, materiality and force, those elements, substances, processes that it requires, that it can somehow bracket out or cast into shadow that profusion of forces that engulf and surround it so that it can incorporate what it needs. And such life can only evolve, become more, develop and elaborate itself to the extent that there is something fundamentally unstable about both its milieu and its organic constitution. The evolution of life can be seen not only in the increasing specialisation, elaboration and bifurcation or differentiation of life forms, but above all, in their becoming-artistic, in their self-transformations which exceed the bare requirements of existence. Sexual selection, the consequence of sexual difference or bifurcation – one of the earliest evolutionary upheavals in the evolution of life on earth – is the opening up of life to the indeterminacy of taste, pleasure and sensation.³ Life comes to elaborate itself through making its bodily forms and its archaic territories, pleasing, or annoying, performative, which is to say, intensified through their integration into form and their impact on bodies.

There is much 'art' in the natural world, from the moment there is sexual selection, from the moment there are two sexes which attract each other's interest and taste through visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile and gustatory sensations. The haunting beauty of birdsongs, the provocative performance of erotic display in primates, the attraction of insects to the perfume of plants, are all in excess of mere survival: each attests to the excessiveness of the body and the natural order, their capacity to bring out in each other what surprises, what is of no use but nevertheless attracts and appeals. Each attests to an overabundance of resources beyond the need for mere survival, which is to say, to the capacity of both matter and life to exchange with each other, to enter into becomings which transform each other. They attest to the artistic impact of sexual attraction, the becoming-other that seduction entails. This is not a homeostatic relation of stabilisation, but a fundamentally dynamic, awkward, mal-adaptation that enables the production of the frivolous, the unnecessary, the pleasing, the sensory for their own sake.

Art-proper, in other words, emerges when sensation can detach itself and gain an autonomy from its creator and its perceiver, when something of the chaos from which it is drawn can breathe and have a life of its own.⁴ Philosophy, like art and like science, draws on and over chaos. The chaotic indeterminacy of the real, its impulses to ceaseless variation, give rise to the creation of networks, planes, zones of cohesion, which do not map this chaos so much as draw strength, force, material, from it for such provisional and open-ended cohesion. If philosophy, through the plane of immanence or consistency, gives life to concepts that live independent of the philosopher who created them yet participate in, cut across and attest to the chaos from which they are drawn; so too art, through the plane of composition it throws over chaos, gives life to sensation which, disconnected from its origins or any destination or reception, maintains its connections with the infinite from which it is drawn and which it expresses.⁵

The various arts are a consequence of the (historical) construction of a plane of composition, a plane of shared and differentiating techniques, methods and resources, a plane transformed and reoriented through the upheavals in art production, the revolutions in sensation that art history has wrought. Art is only possible insofar as such a plane precedes any particular work; and each particular work of art finds its place, even the place of disruption, within this plane, without which it could not function as a being of sensation, a sensory variety. The plane of composition, which cuts across, and thus both plunges into and filters and coheres chaos through the being of sensation is thus both an immersion in chaos, in nature and materiality, but also a mode of disruption and ordering of chaos through the extraction of that which life can glean for itself from this whirling materiality – sensations, affects, percepts, intensities

– blocs of bodily becoming that always co-evolve with blocs of the becoming of matter or events.

Art and nature share a common structure: that of excessive and useless production, production for its own sake, production for the sake of profusion and differentiation. Art takes what it needs – the excess of colours, forms, materials – from the earth to produce its own excesses, sensations with a life of their own, sensation as ‘non-organic life’. Art, like nature itself, is always a strange coupling, the coming together of two orders, one chaotic, the other ordered, one folding and the other unfolding, and it is because art is the inversion and transformation of nature’s profusion that it too must participate in, and precipitate, further couplings:

...if nature is like art, this is always because it combines these two living elements in every way: House and Universe, Heimlich and Unheimlich, territory and deterritorialization, finite melodic compounds and the great infinite plane of composition, the small and the large refrain (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 186).

Thus the first gesture of art is not, as Nietzsche believed, the exteriorisation of one’s own bodily forces and energies, the transformation of flesh and blood into canvas and oil but a more primary gesture that requires the body’s prior separation from the earth, from nature, from its world. Deleuze understands, and on this point is in remarkable agreement with Derrida, that the first gesture of art, its metaphysical condition and universal expression, is the construction or fabrication of the frame: ‘Art takes a bit of chaos in a frame in order to form a composed chaos that becomes sensory, or from which it extracts a chaotic sensation as variety...’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 206).

Architecture and the frame

The first artistic impulse in this metaphysical reconstruction is thus not body-art but architecture-art. Art is, for Deleuze, the extension of the architectural imperative to organise the space of the earth. Art, developed alongside of the territory-house system, and the house-territory system, is what enables the emergence of pure sensory qualities, the data or material of art. This roots art, not in the creativity of mankind but rather in a superfluosity of nature, in the capacity of the earth to render the sensory superabundant, in the bird’s courtship song and dance, or in the field of lilies swaying in the breeze under a blue sky. It roots art in the natural and in the animal, in the most primitive and sexualised of evolutionary residues in man’s animal heritage. Art is evolutionary, in the sense that it coincides with and harnesses evolutionary accomplishments into avenues of expression that no longer have

anything to do with survival. Art is the sexualisation of survival; or equally sexuality is the rendering artistic of nature.⁶

Art is linked not to some intrinsic relation to one's own body but to the processes of distancing and the production of a plane of composition which abstracts sensation from the body. The emergence of the 'frame' is the condition of all the arts and is the particular contribution of architecture to the taming of the virtual, the territorialisation of the earth. It is the frame that constitutes painting and cinema just as readily as architecture.⁷ The frame is what establishes territory from out of the chaos that is the earth. The frame is thus the first construction, the corners, of the plane of composition. Territories here may be understood as surfaces of variable curvature or inflection which bear upon them singularities, eruptions or events.⁸ It is to this extent that architecture, and all the arts that follow from it, are linked to the bird's song, the dance of insects, the performative displays of vertebrates, including humans: they are each the constitution of a territory, a sexualised territory, the space that is one's own in which one can enact sexual seduction and extract sexual satisfaction. But perhaps more significantly, the constitution of territory is the fabrication of the space in which sensations may emerge, from which a rhythm, a tone, colouring, weight, texture may be extracted. And equally, insofar as its primordial impulse is the creation of territory in both the natural and human worlds, art is also capable of that destruction and deformation that destroys territories and enables them to revert to the chaos from which they were wrenched. Framing and deframing become art's modes of territorialisation and deterritorialisation through sensation, framing becomes the means by which the plane of composition composes, deframing its modes of upheaval and transformation.

At its most elementary, architecture does little other than design and construct frames; these are its basic forms of expression. Even in its most sophisticated contemporary forms, architecture is the constitution of interlocking frames, frames that can connect with, contain and be contained by other frames: architecture is the creation of frames as cubes, interconnecting cubes, cubes respected or distorted, cubes opened up, inflected or cut open.⁹ The frame separates. It cuts into a milieu or space. This cutting links it to the constitution of the plane of composition, to the provisional ordering of chaos through the laying down of a grid or order that entraps chaotic shards, chaotic states, to arrest or slow them into a space and a time, a structure and a form where they can affect bodies. This cutting of the space of the earth through the fabrication of the frame is the very gesture that composes both house and territory, inside and outside, interior and landscape at once, and as the points of maximal variation, the two sides, of the space of the earth. Qualities are now loosened onto

the world, no longer anchored in their 'natural' place, but put into the play of sensations that departs from mere survival to celebrate its means.

This is why the frame's most elementary form is the partition which, projected downward generates the smoothness of a floor, which 'rarefies' and smooths over the surface of the earth, creating a first (human) territorialisation. The floor, ever acquiring smoothness, suppleness and consistency makes of the earth and of horizontality a resource for the unleashing of new and more sensations, for the exploration of the excesses of gravity and movement.¹⁰ The partition projected forward induces the wall, which constitutes an inside and an outside, dividing the inhabitable from the natural (the chaotic), transforming the earth itself into a delimitable space, a shelter or home. The wall divides us from the world on one side, though it provides new connections, new relations, social and interpersonal relations, with those on its other side ('The wall is the basis of our co-existence' (Cache, 1996, p. 24)). The wall destabilises and reinfects the territory created by the floor; yet within and through the wall, another reterritorialisation of the earth is always immanent.

While its most direct and perceptible function is to separate or divide, the wall equally functions to select and bring in. In this case the frame can be converted into the window, which selectively envisions its natural exterior, now a 'landscape', no longer beyond its partition but within the enframed space of the room. The wall darkens, keeps out light and natural forces; the window selectively enframes them again to return them to the interior, to bring illumination inside. The wall, floor and windows each enframe, that is, divide and select both each other and their collective outside; and together – ever approaching the form of the cube even as they eventually come to deform it – they entail a final partition, a roof. The roof, like the floor, though, is more than a horizontal wall, more than a box presented in any orientation whatever. As Cache argues, the roof follows a logic of form more than function: it belongs to a formal, even geometric register – prism, dome, cone or pyramid (1996, p. 26), each with their own lines, figures and singularity, with their modes of inflection and curvature.¹¹

Within the architectural frame, in miniaturised form, the frame re-enacts itself and its territorialising function through furniture, an architecture on the inside of architecture: 'Though classified as objects in our everyday language, furniture can be seen as an interior replication of architecture. The closet is a box in the box, the mirror a window onto the outside, the table another floor on the ground' (Cache, 1995, p. 30).

It is hardly surprising though, that, as Cache emphasises, because furniture is that which most intimately touches the body, it is the mediating of the architectural frame into

direct contiguity with the body and its activities: 'For our most intimate or most abstract endeavours, whether they occur in bed or on a chair, furniture supplies the immediate physical environment in which our bodies act and react; for us, urban animals, furniture is thus our primary territory. Architecture, object, geography – furniture is that image where forms are fused together...' (Cache, 1995, p. 30).

The real, the outside, nature, matter, the cosmos, geography – all terms that we can understand as more or less stable expressions of chaos – are that which incites, from the outside, the productive proliferation of resources that reveals, envisions, an element, force or section of the chaotic in the form of sensation. This real, the outside, chaos, demarcated through the constitution of a (finite and provisional) territory, the marking of eruptions on the closed surface of the plane of composition, makes possible the more calculable, measurable and mappable features that characterise a site; and the built frame, produced through a regulation and partitioning of orientations in the site, divides and selects that which of the territory, now configured as landscape, a view, can directly mark, and illuminate, the inside, the divisions and selections of a community. And within the built frame, as a frame within a frame within a frame, is the co-existence of our bodies and their bodily supports, furnishings that make of our bodies an abundance of sensations and actions. Furniture brings the outside in, but only to the extent that it is itself from this outside, yet stripped down, reworked, refined, in short, constructed. In this process of territorialisation, deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, the body becomes intimately connected to and informed by the peristaltic movements, systole and diastole, contraction and expansion, of the universe itself. Body and universe, entwined in mutual concavity/ convexity, floating/ falling, folding/ unfolding are directly touched by that outside it enframes, creating sensation from their coming together.¹²

Art and the earth

Architectural framing produces the very possibility of the screen, the screen functioning as a plane for virtual projection, a hybrid of wall, window and mirror. Painting can be understood as the transitional passage from the frame to the screen, a movement of growing dematerialisation, a movement where the image becomes less and less dependent on a milieu and location, and is itself the complex and enfolded second-order constitution of the frame, this time no longer for the mixed purpose of usefulness and pleasure, but for the generation (and never the reproduction or representation) of sensations.

Like architecture, art is not only the movement of territorialisation, the movement of joining the body to the chaos of the universe itself according to the body's needs and interests; it is also the converse movement, that of deterritorialisation, of cutting through territories,

breaking up systems of enclosure and performance, traversing territory in order to retouch chaos, enabling something mad, asystematic, something of the chaotic outside to reassert and restore itself in and through the body, in works and events that impact the body. If framing creates the very condition for the plane of composition and thus of any particular works of art, equally art itself is a project that disjars frames, that focuses on the intervals and conjunctions between frames. In this sense, the history of painting, and of art after painting, can be seen as the action of leaving the frame, of moving beyond, and pressing against the frame. Art thus captures an element, a fragment, of chaos in the frame and creates or extracts from it, not an image or representation but a sensation, or rather, a compound of a multiplicity of sensations, not the repetition of sensations already experienced or available beyond or outside the work of art, but those very sensations generated and proliferated only by art.

This is, precisely, the task of all art and, from colors and sounds, both music and painting similarly extract new harmonies, new plastic or melodic landscapes, and new rhythmic characters that raise them to the height of the earth's sound and the cry of humanity: that which constitutes tone, health, becoming, a visual and sonorous bloc. A monument does not commemorate or celebrate something that happened but confides to the ear of the future the persistent sensations that embody the event... (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 176).

The artistic release and propagation of sensation, which is itself always a mode of resonance or harmonious vibration, an oscillation extracted from the fluctuating, self-differentiating structure of the universe itself in which nothing is self-identical, all substance is a mode of contraction/dilation or difference/repetition, does not just generate perceptions, that is auditory and visual images, but above all, rhythm. Rhythm explodes auditorily in and as music, and visually, in and as painting and the visual arts. Rhythm is what connects the most elementary and primitive bodily structures to the movements of the universe itself: art, as music, as sculpture, as painting resonates force through every structure, and this force is a non-human 'unliveable Power' (Deleuze, 2003, p. 39) that runs through all of life and connects it to the non-organic forces of materiality itself (Darwin discusses the soothing effects of music on crustaceans which have no auditory apparatus; Lingis (1984) outlines the dazzling coloured luminosity of fish who are blind and inhabit only the darkest regions of the ocean). 'Sensation is vibration' (Deleuze, 2003, p. 39).

The visual and sonorous arts capture something of the vibratory structure of matter itself; they extract colour, rhythm, movement from chaos in order to slow down and delimit within

them a territory that is now capable of undergoing a reshaping and a new harmonics that will give it independence, a plane of stabilisation on which to sustain itself. The refrain is how rhythm stakes out a territory from chaos which resonates with and intensifies the body. Territory is always the coming together both of spatiotemporal coordinates (and thus the possibilities of measurement, precise location, concreteness) and qualities (which are immeasurable, indeterminate and open-ended), that is, it is the coupling of a milieu and a rhythm. A refrain is the movement by which the qualities of a specific territory or habitat resonate and return to form it as a delimited space, a space nonetheless always open to the chaos from which it draws its force.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that music, and literature, can be represented as readily on the model of territorialisation and framing as the visual and architectural arts. Music too is framed, and involves the extraction of a vibratory rhythm from chaos which is then placed into the frame constructed of the interchange between the harmonic and the melodic. Vibration becomes harmonic; melody comes to regulate the bringing together, the construction of a 'sonorous' house, of an interchange of vibratory movements:

The situation of music seems no different and perhaps embodies the frame even more powerfully [than in the visual arts]. Yet it is said that sound has no frame. But compounds of sensation, sonorous blocs, equally possess sections or framing forms each of which must join together to secure a certain closing-off. The simplest cases are the melodic air, which is a monophonic refrain; the motif, which is already polyphonic, an element of melody entering into the development of another and creating counterpoint; and the theme, as the object of harmonic modifications through melodic lines. These three elementary forms construct the sonorous house and its territory (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 189).

A territory is established only once qualities/ properties come to have their own resonances, their own forms of repetition and reconstruction; territory is the spatio-temporal configuration and containment of these rhythms and forces. Territorialisation is 'the act of rhythm that has become expressive, or of milieu components that have become qualitative' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 315). At one and the same time, a quality comes to be abstracted from its milieu and a geography comes to be defined as property or habitat: in the constitution of the frame, the cosmos is directed, through constructed planes of cohesion, to material transformations and becomings, to remaking the body, intensifying its forces, investing its milieu in a new configuration of closure and opening.¹³ Chaos is forestalled, framed and welcomed within in a regulated dose.

If painting aims to make every organ function as an eye, if it aims to make the very entrails see and look, and if music makes every organ and pore of the body function as an ear attuned to rhythm and melody, if, as Deleuze suggests, painting ever more deeply materialises the body while music spiritualises it, this is because, through the various arts, the body is, for a moment at least, directly touched by the forces of chaos from which it so carefully shields itself in habit, cliché and doxa.¹⁴ What painting, music and literature elicit are not so much representations, perceptions, images that are readily at hand, recognisable, directly interpretable, identifiable: rather, they produce and generate sensations never before experienced, perceptions of what has never been perceived before. The visual arts render visible forces that are themselves invisible; the musical arts 'render non-sonorous forces sonorous' (Deleuze, 2003, p. 48), in short, they extract something imperceptible from the cosmos and dress it as in the sensible materials that the cosmos provides in order to create sensation, not a sensation of something, but pure intensity, a direct impact on the body.

Painting is about rendering the invisible in visible form, and music about sounding the inaudible, each the expression and exploration of the unrepresentable.¹⁵ Art is not the activation of the perceptions and sensations of the lived body – the merging and undecidability of subject and object, seer and seen in a common flesh as suggested by Erwin Straus (1963) and later elaborated by Merleau-Ponty (1968), but about transforming the lived body into an unliveable power, an unleashed force that transforms the body along with the world.¹⁶ Cosmological imponderables – among the most obvious, the forces of temporality, gravity, magnetism – which are equally the objects of scientific, philosophical and artistic exploration are among the invisible, unheard, imperceptible forces of the earth, forces beyond the control of life that animate and extend life beyond itself. Art engenders becomings, not imaginative becomings – the elaboration of images and narratives in which a subject might recognise itself – but material becomings, in which these imponderable universal forces touch and become enveloped in life, in which life folds over itself to embrace its contact with materiality, in which each exchanges some elements or particles with the other to become more and other. It is for this reason that art is not frivolous, an indulgence of luxury, an embellishment of what is most central: it is the most vital and direct form of impact on and through the body, the generation of vibratory waves, rhythms, that traverse the body and make of the body a link with forces it cannot otherwise perceive and act upon. This explains art's cultural or human universality and ubiquity: it is culture's most direct mode of enhancement of the body.

Art is the opening up of the universe to becoming-other, just as science is the opening up of the universe to practical action, to becoming-useful and philosophy is the opening up of the

universe to thought-becoming. Art is the most direct intensification of the resonance, and dissonance, between bodies and the cosmos, between one milieu or rhythm and another. It is that which impacts the body most directly, that which intensifies and affects most viscerally, from the lowliest crustacean body to the human body. Through the plane of composition it casts, art is the way that the universe most directly intensifies life, enervates organs, mobilises forces. It is the passage from the house to the universe, from territory to deterritorialisation, 'from the finite to the infinite' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 180). What philosophy can offer art is not a theory of art, an elaboration of its silent or undeveloped concepts, but what philosophy and art share in common – their rootedness in chaos, their capacity to ride the waves of a vibratory universe without direction or purpose, in short, their capacity to enlarge the universe by enabling its potential to be otherwise, to be framed through concepts and affects. They are among the most forceful ways in which culture generates a small space of chaos within chaos, where chaos can be elaborated, felt, thought.

References

- Bogue, R. (2003). *Deleuze on Music, Painting and the Arts*. Routledge: New York.
- Cache, B. (1995). Boyman, A. (Trans.). *Earth Moves. The Furnishing of Territories*. The MIT Press: Cambridge.
- Deleuze, G. (2003). Smith, D. W. (Trans.). *Francis Bacon. The Logic of Sensation*, University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.
- Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1987). Massumi, B. (Trans.). *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. (Vol. 2). University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.
- Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1994). Tomlinson, H. & Burchell, G. (Trans.). *What is Philosophy?* Columbia University Press: New York.
- Focillon, H. (1992). Hogan, C. B. & Kubler, G. (Trans.). *The Life of Forms in Art*. Zone Books: New York.
- Grosz, E. (2004). *The Nick of Time. Politics, Evolution and the Untimely*. Durham NC: Duke University Press; Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Grosz, E. (2005). *Time Travels. Feminism, Nature, Power*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press; Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Lingis, A. (1984). *Excesses. Eros and Culture*. New York: State University of New York.
- Leroi-Gourhan, A. (1993). Bostock Berger, A. (Trans.). *Gesture and Speech*. The MIT Press: Cambridge.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968). Lingis, A. (Trans.). *The Visible and The Invisible*. Chicago: Northwestern University Press.
- Straus, E. (1963). Needleman, N. (Trans.). *The Primary World of the Senses. A Vindication of Sensory Experience*. London: Collier-MacMillan.

Endnotes

- ¹ See in particular, Grosz (2004) and Grosz (2005).
- ² *Sensations, affects and intensities, while not identifiable, are clearly closely connected with forces, and particularly bodily forces, and their qualitative transformations. What differentiates them from experience, or from any phenomenological framework, is the fact that they link the lived or phenomenological body with cosmological forces, forces of the outside that the body itself can never experience directly. Affects and intensities attest to the body's immersion and participation in nature, chaos, materiality: Affects are precisely these nonhuman becomings of man, just as percepts – including the town – are nonhuman landscapes of nature (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 169, emphasis in the original).*
- ³ See Chapter Three of Grosz (2004) for a discussion of the indeterminate, sometimes even deranging, effects sexual selection has on the relentless operations of natural selection, and its place in the generation of music, language and the arts.
- ⁴ Deleuze elaborates the concept of sensation as it was developed in Erwin Straus's *The Primary World of the Senses* (1963), where it designates a primary relation between a subject and the world, preceding rationality and knowledge, perception and intellection, in which there is always a mutual transformation between them:

The sensing subject does not have sensations, but, rather, in his sensing he has first himself. In sensory experience, there unfolds both the becoming of the subject and the happening of the world. I become insofar as something happens, and something happens (for me) only insofar as I become. The Now of sensing belongs neither to objectivity nor to subjectivity alone, but necessarily to both together. In sensing, both self and world unfold simultaneously for the sensing subject; the sensing being experiences himself and the world, himself in the world, himself with the world (p. 351).

Following Straus in seeing sensation as that which becomes and that which forms one of the links between the subject and the world, Deleuze takes sensation as that which subject and object share yet which is not reducible to either subject or object or their relation. He differs from Straus's more directly phenomenological reading by insisting that the subject side or face of sensation is not the phenomenological subject of lived experience, but the neurological and physiological subject of action and passion, and the object side or face is not a pure thing-in-itself but a complex event:

Sensation is the opposite of the facile and the ready-made, the cliché, but also of the 'sensational', the spontaneous, etc. Sensation has one face turned toward the subject (the nervous system, vital movement, 'instinct', 'temperament' – a whole vocabulary common to both Naturalism and Cézanne), and one face turned toward the object (the 'fact', the place, the event). Or rather, it has no faces at all, it is both things indissolubly, it is Being-in-the-world as the phenomenologists say: at one and the same time I become in the sensation and something happens through the sensation, one through the other, one in the other. And at the limit, it is the same body that, being both subject and object, gives and receives the sensation. As a spectator, I experience the sensation only by entering the painting, by reaching the unity of the sensing and the sensed (Deleuze, 2003, p. 31).

Sensation, for Deleuze, is the zone of indeterminacy between subject and object, the bloc that erupts from the encounter of the one with the other.

- ⁵ *Art indeed struggles with chaos, but it does so in order to bring forth a vision that illuminates it for an instant, a Sensation... Art is not chaos but a composition of chaos that yields the vision or sensation, so that it constitutes, as Joyce says, a chaosmos, a composed chaos – neither foreseen nor preconceived... Art struggles with chaos but it does so in order to render it sensory... (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, pp. 204–205).*
- ⁶ *Perhaps art begins within the animal, at least with the animal that carves out a territory and constructs a house (both are correlative, or even one and the same, in what is called a habitat). The territory-house system transforms a number of organic functions – sexuality, procreation, aggression, feeding. But this transformation does not explain the appearance of the territory and the house; rather, it is the other way around: the territory implies the emergence of pure sensory qualities, of sensibilia that cease to be merely functional and become expressive features, making possible a transformation of function (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 183).*

- ⁷ Deleuze & Guattari follow Bernard Cache in seeing architecture as the primordial impulse or form of all of the arts, their modes of forming a plane:

...it is possible to define architecture as the manipulation of ...the frame. Architecture, the art of the frame, would then not only concern those specific objects that are buildings, but would refer to any image involving any element of framing, which is to say painting as well as cinema, and certainly many other things (Cache, 1995, p. 2).

- ⁸ Deleuze & Guattari illustrate the carving out, or framing, of territory through ethological examples as much as through cultural and representational illustrations. For example, territory is that which is produced by the elaborate, if apparently useless activity, of construction, attention grabbing and display that marks most of sexual selection:

Every morning the Scenopoetes dentirostris, a bird of the Australian rain forests, cuts leaves, makes them fall to the ground, and turns them over so that the paler internal side contrasts with the earth. In this way it constructs a stage for itself like a ready-made; and directly above, on a creeper or branch, while fluffing its feathers beneath its beak to reveal their yellow roots, it sings a complex song made up from its own notes and, at intervals, those of other birds that it imitates; it is a complete artist. This is not a synesthesia of the flesh but blocs of sensations in the territory – colors, postures, and sounds that sketch out a total work of art. These sonorous blocs are refrains; but there are also refrains of posture and color, and postures and colors are always being introduced into refrains: bowing low, straightening up, dancing in a circle and a line of colors. The whole of the refrain is the being of sensation. Monuments are refrains. In this respect, art is continually haunted by the animal (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 184).

- ⁹ ...strictly speaking, architects design frames. This can be easily verified by consulting architectural plans, which are nothing but the interlocking of frames in every dimension: plans, sections and elevations. Cubes, nothing but cubes... In a text called 'Déblaiements d'art', Henry Van de Velde pointed to a parallelism between the historical evolution of the shapes of the frames and that of architectural forms. Paintings would finalise, as it were, the series of frames that make up a building. Through successive unframings, we would pass from the canvas of the painting to the fresco on the wall, to the mosaic on the ground, and finally to the stained glass window in the window frame. Thus the frame of a painting would be residual, or better yet, a rudiment of architectural framing (Cache, 1995, p. 22).

- ¹⁰ It is the flatness of the stage that makes choreography probable, just as it is the flatness of the stadium that increases the probability of athletics. The ground plane rarefies the surface of the earth in order to allow human activities to take shape (Cache, 1995, p. 25).

- ¹¹ The wall delimits and the window selects: such is the frame of probability within which we find the rarefied interval of the floor. It belongs to the regime of causes and of the interval. The roof is of another order: it envelops an event; it is the effect of singularization (Cache, 1995, p. 28).

- ¹² Cache makes it clear that although what is described above may be regarded as a kind of genealogy of the plane of composition and the art-events that erupt on its surface, it is not the only genealogy, nor the only (historical, cultural) reconstruction of the origins of art. If Western architecture and art, following the claims made by Wöflin and Worringer, observe this genealogy of planar construction, the construction of order from substance, then it may be that the genealogy of non-Western art follows an entirely different logic:

The first architectural gesture is acted upon the earth: it is our grave or our foundation. A plane against a surface of variable curvature, the first frame is an excavation. But perhaps this is just the bedrock of Western thought. Unlike our Western architecture whose first frame confronts the earth, Japanese architecture raises its screens to the wind, the light, and the rain. Partitions and parasols rather than excavations: screens emphasize the void (1995, p. 64).

- ¹³ As Bogue suggests, 'Art, as the disposition of expressive qualities, is the active agent in the formation of territory and the establishment of the occupant's proprietary identity' (2003, p. 20).

¹⁴ *[Music] strips bodies of their inertia, of the materiality of their presence: it disembodies bodies ... In a sense, music begins where painting ends, and this is what is meant when one speaks of the superiority of music. It is lodged on the lines of flight that pass through bodies, but which find their consistency elsewhere, whereas painting is lodged farther up, where the body escapes from itself. But in escaping, the body discovers the materiality of which it is composed, the pure presence of which it is made, and which it would not discover otherwise. Painting, in short, discovers the material reality of bodies with its line-color systems and its polyvalent organ, the eye ... When music sets up its sonorous systems and its polyvalent organ, the ear, it addresses itself to something very different from the material reality of bodies. It gives a disembodied and dramatized body to the most spiritual of entities (Deleuze, 2003, p. 47).*

¹⁵ *...artists are like philosophers. What little health they possess is often too fragile, not because of their illnesses or neuroses but because they have seen something in life that is too much for anyone, too much for themselves, and that has put on them the quiet mark of death. But this something is also the source or breath that supports them through the illnesses of the lived (what Nietzsche called health) (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, pp. 172–173).*

¹⁶ Deleuze's response to phenomenological readings of the lived body as the site for art production is highly critical, although it is clear that he owes a debt, not so much to Merleau-Ponty but to Uexküll and his understanding of nature as the patterned counterpointing of phenomenologically selected environments: the spider carries within its web a complex picture of the prey it is to capture. Nevertheless his criticism of phenomenology is clear:

...in short, the being of sensation is not the flesh but the compound of nonhuman forces of the cosmos, of man's nonhuman becomings, and of the ambiguous house that exchanges and adjusts them, makes them whirl around like winds. Flesh is only the developer which disappears in what it develops: the compound of sensation (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 183).