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TRACING THE LINE: A DELEUZIAN READING OF IRVINE WELSH’S MARABOU STORK NIGHTMARES

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: Signed by candidate Date: July 3, 2009
Abstract: Using Gilles Deleuze’s Baconian aesthetic theory to explore how feminism might rely on Deleuze’s "becoming-woman" to express the feminine, this dissertation analyzes the expression of sexual violence—an experience gendered feminine—in Irvine Welsh’s Marabou Stork Nightmares. I begin by establishing Welsh’s work as what Deleuze terms a “minor literature.” I argue, however, that it is largely the novel’s visual nature (its acrobatic typography) that both establishes it as a minor literature and demands its exploration through Deleuze’s text on painting rather than literature. Turning to Deleuze’s study of Francis Bacon paintings in Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation, I explore the expression of sexual violence in Marabou Stork Nightmares through Deleuze’s concept of becoming-woman. Put simply, this is a reading of a minor literature through Deleuze’s Baconian lens. In doing so, this dissertation relies on an implicit connection between all the arts. An interdisciplinary endeavor, this project strives toward dismantling the illusory demarcations between the arts and toward reaffirming their interdependency.
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

On December 6, 2005, South Africa’s current president, then deputy president, Jacob Zuma was charged with raping an HIV activist, a close family friend, at his home in Johannesburg. Unearthing South Africa’s associations with rape—from its “baby rape” phenomenon to the highest per capita rate of rape in the world in 1998—the Zuma rape trial provoked questions of Africanness, masculinity, victimhood, and nationhood.¹ And from the trial there emerged a particular discourse on rape: in the language of Jacob Zuma, his supporters, protestors, the South African legal system, and the myriad voices from the media-driven trial. Supporters of Zuma termed him the “good Zulu boy.” Singing the nationalist song Lethu Mshini Wami (bring me my machine gun), Zuma evoked his Africanness. Meanwhile, trial lawyers and the juridical system composed legal understandings of rape through sexual history, mental health, and ambiguous consent. These voices juggled what to be raped meant, creating a rape discourse.

Khwezi, the Zuma rape plaintiff, confronting allegations of her own sanity and the discourse circulating about her, responded:

I am not mad. I am not incapable of understanding the difference between consensual and non-consensual sex. The fact that I have been raped multiple times does not make me mad. It means there is something very wrong with our world and our society.²

Khwezi’s response points to a way of speaking about, and in turn constructing, rape that limits the act itself and, in limiting the act—who rapes, where one is raped, who can be raped—also robs the victim of representing his or her experience. For instance,

when Khwezi speaks of rape in the plural, she defies the discourse that positions rape as a fluke, a random instance, rather than a series of experiences. Khwezi’s experiences pointed to a familiar rapist, rather than a stranger: to the father, the uncle, and grandfather and the penetrable home.

Positioning Zuma as a rapist, the State adopted this perhaps all too threatening script of the familiar rapist, arguing that Khwezi would never willingly have sex with Zuma because he was a father figure. She referred to Zuma as malume, or uncle, and he, her father’s comrade in the African National Congress and fellow prisoner on Robben Island, recounted to her stories about his and her father’s youth. But as the Zuma trial revealed, the link between the home and its opportunities for a history of rape is not easily made. In turn, referring to being raped multiple times can only be mad.

Now, years later, the impression that the defense counsel (with the court's acquiescence) exploited Khwezi’s mental-health to characterize her as unrapable has not diminished. The defense evoked her mental history and her previous allegations of rape, as evidence of her (un)rapability. In the judgment that freed Zuma, Judge Van der Merwe noted that these multiple experiences had to be accounted for. In the end, such experiences could only mean madness. As this madness smothered her story, the rape discourse of the trial increasingly pointed to the limits of speaking of rape in terms of the feminized victim.

Spurred by the discourse deployed in and around the Zuma rape trial, I began with the questions that lingered when the trial ended: Why does this crime face such a particular struggle in juridical systems? Why do raped subjects suffer inadequate representation? Indeed, many courts have now identified the need to redefine the act—pointing to the

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3 State v. Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma May 08, 2006, p. 8.
very uncertainty of the word, an uncertainty not limited to South Africa, nor to courtroom reportage.4

My investigation into this uncertainty first sent me to theory of representation, specifically Irigaray’s linguistic unrepresentability. Irigaray’s project begins in *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1985) in which she questions whom the Western tradition of philosophy, psychoanalysis, and linguistics continually reproduces as its subject. Representation, she argues, is founded on a universal subject who is male; thus any reproduction of the subject is always based on the *same*.5 Monique Plaza in turn describes rape as a “social sexing,”6 an act in which one body is gendered a social woman against a social man. Rape emasculates, or feminizes, its victim, regardless of sex. Always a social woman, victims of rape lack representation within a masculine symbolic.7

This dissertation acknowledges this Irigarayian foundation—concluding that rape’s struggle for representation is due to its gendered nature. In my search of rape literature, however, I arrived at Irvine Welsh’s *Marabou Stork Nightmares*, a novel that seemed to engage with the interplay between the representation of rape and the expression of rape—“what is left over, when representation has been subtracted.”8 Expression is immediate and preverbal. It is, as Wittgenstein explains, the *cry* rather than the *ouch*.9 In our most immediate and overwhelming instances of sensation, such as in some experiences of pain, we return to the cry.

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4 For example, in 2008 the Scottish Law Commission offered recommendations for reforming the rape law in Scotland, and in 2007 South Africa extended the definition of their rape law to include men.
6 Plaza 1981, p. 29, emphasis in original.
7 Irigaray 1985. The term “symbolic” refers to Lacan’s symbolic order. With the abandonment of Oedipal aggression, comes the submission to the rules and dictates of society, or what Lacan terms the acceptance of the Name-of-the-Father. Part of this is accepting the rules of language. The symbolic links our desire to language and enables the subject to make their desire realizable through signifiers (for more detail, see Lacan 1973, pp. 42-50 and 149-62).
9 Wittgenstein 1978, §244.
Irvine Welsh’s *Marabou Stork Nightmares*—a novel composed of typographical acrobatics and Scottish dialect—provokes a literary experience of returning to such expression. As Welsh weaves his experimental typography through the novel, the impact is an inarticulable “reading” of expression. Through space and movement, sensible aggregates, *Marabou Stork* conveys a sensible experience of the gendered, lived body:

- One could think of other uses for that, Roy, he smirked
- - - - - - - -
- - - - - -
- -
- his eyes
- Sandy and I
- urnae like that it wis
- jist mates muckin about
- - - - - - - DEEPER
- DEEPER
- DEEPER --- he quickly got
- into his clothes.

Because *Marabou Stork* is not merely a representation of rape—because it constructs meaning through a nonverbal medium—it cannot be read solely in terms of Irigarayan theory. For this reason I turned to Deleuzian aesthetic theory on paintings, which rejects representation and explores how the visual arts express pre-personal experience (such as the cry or the scream).

A contemporary Scottish dialect author, Irvine Welsh is known for his gloowering humor, raw idiom, and self-loathing nationalism. Critics have noted the improvisational tone and chaotic nature of his novels. For example, in his review of Welsh’s *Trainspotting*, James Lasdun of the *Village Voice* called the work “less a plotted novel than a set of loosely linked improvisations....that startles you with its sudden swerves between wit, rage, cynicism, and unexpected tenderness.”11 His stories are physical and at once both sadistic and compassionate; he sprinkles them with a sadness

10 Welsh, p. 56.
and anger so ineluctably tied to their locale that all characters bear a weight to their being.

*Marabou Stork Nightmares*, though a lesser-known work, is sprinkled throughout with Welsh’s typical acidic, cringe-worthy humor. It is a novel largely about pain and the violence that emanates from it. Both anti-hero and protagonist, Roy Strang is confused and confusing. He grows up among the violence and poverty of a Scottish housing project (or "scheme") until he moves to South Africa, where he falls victim to his pedophilic Uncle Gordon. Welsh positions Roy as both victim and perpetrator: a victim to Uncle Gordon’s molestations and later a perpetrator himself of various sexual violations. Guilt-ridden, self-hating, and coma-beset after a failed attempt at suicide, Roy narrates the nightmares of his “schemie” childhood in Scotland, his at once scarring and liberating experience of South Africa, and his violent past of football hooliganism in order to come to terms with his malevolence. The typography transports the reader between these narrative worlds, skillfully fragmenting the narrative into multiple voices—seen, as Roy runs into himself both physically and psychically, in the physical violence of Lexo (his football hooligan pal), the adventurism of Jamieson (his psychic double) that echoes of his South African childhood, and the ultimate revenge of Kirsty (his rape victim).

Typography rather than content reveals narrative voices and their perceptions. Roy’s traditional Times New Roman narrative is interrupted by the smaller Arial present of his family and the hospital staff, and sometimes distorted into an ALL CAPS screaming that renders visible the violent forces within the body. In the hospital world Roy narrates from the position of a conscious and hearing observer in the present who reacts to his visitors and doctors. At times this interaction involves escaping: either to his unconscious, a dream world in South Africa where he hunts the Marabou Stork, or to the memory of the life he tried to escape through suicide. Such escapes are written through typographical journeys of alignment, spacing, and font, which signal
movement between these worlds, usually triggered by a repressed memory. For instance, in his South African dream world Roy watches Dawson, his Uncle Gordon’s doppelganger, masturbate onto a row of plants. Roy describes Dawson as “looking like a man going into cardiac seizure, gasping like...

Dawson triggers the repressed pain of Roy’s own sexual assault as a child. Roy moves between worlds to escape the painful forces of guilt that haunt him as both victim and perpetrator. The massacre of flamingos by Marabou Storks that Roy witnesses as a child in the Kruger Park, and the nightmares that follow, are thus a metaphor for the violence to which Roy falls victim and in which he participates throughout his life.

This dissertation analyzes the expression of sexual assault\(^\text{13}\) using Deleuzian aesthetic theory to explore how feminism might rely on an experience of “becoming-woman,” which is explored later in this chapter, to gain political expression for the feminine.\(^\text{14}\)

My argument begins by establishing Welsh’s *Marabou Stork* as what Deleuze terms a “minor literature.” Due to the novel’s visual nature, however, I heavily rely on Deleuze’s study of Francis Bacon paintings in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. Here he applies many of his core theoretical concepts (which also appear in his work on

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\(^{12}\) Welsh, p. 70.

\(^{13}\) Sexual assault is understood as anything that “forces a person to join in unwanted sexual contact or attention” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women’s Health 2005). This links Roy’s childhood molestations to Kirsty’s rape and the sexual violence of his community.

\(^{14}\) Recent feminists have embraced Deleuzian theory. For feminists who use Deleuze’s nomadic thinking to overcome the mind/body dualism and binary logic of man/woman, see Lorraine (1999), Braidotti (1994), and Grosz (1994). Also, for more on the history of the term *women* and its representational capabilities as a category, see Denis Riley (1988) who, in *Am I that Name?*, attempts to trace a history of the word “women.” She concludes that there is an inevitable instability to the term, that it has an “inherent shakiness...which is reflected in the spasmodic and striking coincidences of leftist and rightist propositions about the family or female nature” (98).
minor literatures) to Bacon paintings. Deleuze’s work on Bacon uncovers an aesthetic framework—the logic of sensation—that better applies the how, rather than the what, of Deleuze’s core concepts to Welsh’s text. Put simply, this is a reading of a minor literature through Deleuze’s Baconian lens.

Deleuze looks to Bacon’s paintings to translate sensible aggregates—space, line, color—to concepts, particularly the process of becoming-other. Welsh’s typography, like Bacon’s paintings, also deals with sensible aggregates, through space, alignment, font, and point size. For this reason and the similarities that exist between Bacon’s chaotic and nearly grotesque style and Welsh’s own style, I apply Deleuze’s aesthetic theory of the logic of sensation to Marabou Stork. In reading Marabou Stork, I uncover some of Deleuze’s Baconian elements at work and how they reveal a process of becoming-woman through the expression of sexual violence. Through Marabou Stork this dissertation explores Deleuze’s concepts as they materialize on the page. And it is with a feminist aim that I argue Marabou Stork expresses a process of becoming-woman through the logic of sensation.

This chapter offers a background on Deleuze’s philosophy, examining his conception of the subject and his self-attributed label of transcendental empiricist. His ontology is that of becoming—and it is from here that I investigate a central Deleuzian concept, becoming-other. Deleuze understands the subject as always in flux composed of continual becomeings, never being. Through such a conception, I read the protagonist of Marabou Stork as in a process of becoming-woman. This background also conceptualizes other key Deleuzian terms, such as lines of flight, rhizome, multiplicities, and the Body without Organs. Next, heralding the chapter to follow, I provide a background on the tradition of painting that Deleuze expands on in Bacon. He marks the starting point of this tradition in Cézanne. This chapter investigates what this tradition is and what it means for Deleuze’s philosophy. Finally, it explores Deleuze’s “take” on literature and establishes Marabou Stork as a minor literature.
Serving as a roadmap, this chapter guides the reader through the fundamentals of Deleuzian theory and the tradition of painting he evokes in *Francis Bacon*. In its exploration of *Francis Bacon*, chapter 2 relies on many of the terms explored in this chapter, such as lines of flight and becoming-other. The third and final chapter provides a critical analysis of Welsh’s *Marabou Stork Nightmares* using the Deleuzian theory here and in chapter 2. This first chapter, however, is no short journey. Daniel Smith describes Deleuze’s work on Bacon as a highly complex musical composition, “divided into seventeen sequences that each develop concepts as if they were melodic lines, which in turn enter into increasingly complex contrapuntal relations and together form a kind of conceptual composition...”\(^{15}\) Such complexity evolves from the interconnected nature of his concepts; thus, I ask the reader to bear with me as I attempt to elucidate these concepts, which will too demand a lengthy build up.

**Deleuze’s Ontology—Toward a Becoming-Woman**

Gilles Deleuze’s insistence on becoming (rather than being) and rejection of basing knowledge on personal experience or a structure is a typical poststructuralist response to the earlier philosophical movements of structuralism and phenomenology. The problem with turning to structures is that in order to describe such a structure, one would have to be outside it. In addition, it leaves one forever dependent on an abstracted system disconnected from materiality.\(^{16}\) The problem with turning to experience, or with traditional empiricism, is that this experience is grounded on a standard model of experience—such as human experience— which relies on a subjective presupposition.

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\(^{15}\) Daniel Smith in “Translator’s Introduction” in Deleuze 2003, p. viii.

\(^{16}\) See Elizabeth Hart (2006) who partially rejects Butler’s cultural embodiment due to its lack of materiality. Using cognitive linguistic criticism, she argues instead for a notion of mind-embodiment.
Deleuze instead establishes himself as a transcendental empiricist: empiricism because concepts can only be created "from the standpoint of transcendental sensibility," and transcendental because rather than describe the actual world, these concepts describe conditions of being (that is, they require no ultimate outside or ground from which to start).\textsuperscript{17} Transcendence refers to that which lies outside. For philosophy, this ground or outside has varied—from God or truth to the thinking subject, from the thinking subject to the structure—but for Deleuze life is multiplicities, or flows of difference (flows of experience), that transcend that illusion of an outside. A Thousand Plateaus is partly a history of what Deleuze and Guattari understand as the many planes of transcendence on which life seems to be grounded.\textsuperscript{18} For instance, social systems seem to be grounded on man, juridical systems on law, economies on tradable material, science on the empirical, and of particular interest to Deleuze, difference seems to be grounded on identity. In Difference and Repetition Deleuze attacks the notion of grounding philosophy on a subject who thinks, and who in turn dictates the standard model of experience. Descartes defines his Cogito as without presuppositions—but he abandons only the objective presuppositions, argues Deleuze.\textsuperscript{19} "[It] is presumed," he explains, "that everyone knows, independently of concepts, what is meant by self, thinking, and being. The pure self of 'I think' thus appears to be a beginning only because it has referred all its presuppositions back to the empirical self."\textsuperscript{20} This presupposition of thinking or common sense that produces such phrases as everyone knows that is what Deleuze terms the "Image of thought," which is philosophy's own presupposition.\textsuperscript{21} Thus, the subject as a plane of transcendence is an illusion that must be transcended to arrive at pure pre-personal perception.

\textsuperscript{17} Deleuze 1994, p. 144, emphasis mine.
\textsuperscript{18} Many of Deleuze's key texts were written with the psychoanalyst and philosopher Félix Guattari. Such texts include Anti-Oedipus (1972), Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature (1975), A Thousand Plateaus (1980), and What is Philosophy (1991) among others.
\textsuperscript{19} Deleuze 1994, p. 129.
\textsuperscript{20} Deleuze 1994, p. 129.
\textsuperscript{21} Deleuze 1994, p. 131.
In *What is Philosophy* Deleuze and Guattari detail the boundaries of their transcendental empiricism: “When immanence is no longer immanent to something other than itself it is possible to speak of a plane of immanence. Such a plane is, perhaps, a radical empiricism.”22 An “immanence...no longer immanent to something other than itself” is what Deleuze means when he talks of transcending the subject to arrive at pre-personal perception. He wishes to liberate immanence from not only the subject but the culture and institutions that hinder pre-personal perception through clichés. Clichés, according to Deleuze, are “anonymous, floating” images.23 They are, he writes,

[images] which circulate in the external world, but which also penetrate each of us and constitute our internal world, so that everyone possesses only psychic clichés by which we think and feel, are thought and felt, being ourselves one cliché among others in the world that surrounds us.24

In *Francis Bacon*, Deleuze confronts the cliché of the scream; Bacon attempts to escape the story behind the scream and instead express the forces, the experience, of the scream.

In *Marabou Stork*, the cliché arises in the recordings of Winston Churchill Roy’s father meditates to as well as the karaoke recordings of Roy’s mother that he is forced to endure in his coma. The continual reverberation of a state of being, these recordings function as a cliché—a process of closed repetition. They represent an anti-becoming. The father, meditating to Winston Churchill’s words, is Roy’s antithesis. And this is why Roy reacts so forcefully to the recordings. He screams: “FUCK OFF AND TURN THAT SHITE OFF....”25 and “SOME CUNT SWITCH OAF THAT FUCKING TAPE”.26 The full caps, which expose the forces behind sensation, reveal Roy as the Figure

22 Deleuze and Guattari 1994, p. 47.
23 Deleuze 1986, p. 208.
25 Welsh, p. 83.
26 Welsh, p. 124.
responding to the forces of the field by turning on his own body. As Deleuze describes Bacon’s scream as revealing the body trying to escape itself, so too can we describe Welsh’s Roy as the recordings inspire movement from one level of consciousness (the hospital) to another (the South African dream world).

Deleuze questions the subjective center of philosophy’s production of concepts, and though attracted to the empirical, demands to be independent of the subject who experiences. He suggests that it is not the subject who structures experience; rather, the subject, continuously reacting to difference (or becoming-other), is formed by experience.27 Life for Deleuze is the production of effects that result from an interaction of flows of difference or experience. Experience is a series of becomings, rather than states of being, that extends to all forms of being, such as in becoming-bird, -wolf, -plant, and so on. Deleuze predicates knowledge on events of becoming. His ontology can be understood as continuous series of experiences that are not confined to “man”: the experience of a plant absorbing water or light, the experience of the tongue tasting, the experience of the ant working.

Deleuze argues for pre-personal perceptions: a sense “of the human as [a product] of life and difference, not as the ground from which life is perceived.”28 This, one might say, is Deleuze’s epistemological starting point. It is from here that we must begin in order to understand his ontology of becoming-other.

**Becoming-other**

Deleuze’s philosophy demands conceptualizing from other points of perception, including inhuman, thus his emphasis on becoming-animal. In *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Deleuze and Guattari describe Franz Kafka’s telling of becoming-animal in

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28 Colebrook, p. 83.
The Metamorphosis. The story begins with Gregor Samsa, a travelling salesman and breadwinner for his family, awaking to find himself transformed into a beetle. Deleuze and Guattari read Gregor’s metamorphosis as an escape from the Oedipal triangle and a process of deterritorialization through anti-Oedipal flows. They explain that

Gregor becomes a cockroach not to flee his father but rather to find an escape where his father didn’t know to find one, in order to flee the director, the business, and the bureaucrats, to reach that region where the voice no longer does anything but hum: “Did you hear him? It was an animal’s voice,” said the chief clerk.

Gregor becomes inaccessible within the Oedipal condition of his relationship with his father and manager. What Kafka writes then is not a metaphor of man as beetle; he writes an escape from the juridical, familial, and bureaucratic inscriptions of Gregor’s own identity, which is reflected, in addition to the humming, in his physical shrinkage.

Contrary to Kafka’s portrayal, becoming-other is never a representation of the other, never mere imitation. “Do not,” instruct Deleuze and Guattari, “imitate a dog, but make your organism enter into composition with something else in such a way that the particles emitted from the aggregated thus composed will be canine as a function of the relation of movement and rest, or of molecular proximity, into which they enter.” In other words, becoming-other is less physical than it is entering a new (different) awareness or even cognitive state, an interaction which produces desire in relation to the other and disrupts your organism (in the sense of disrupting a unified and organized being). Becoming-other is largely a matter of function—to confront the material world, perceive it, and respond to it so that that which you produce (your desire) is canine not in what it is but how it is. Becoming-other is largely a matter of consciousness, essaying to perceive difference rather than imitate it.

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29 Deleuze and Guattari 1986, p. 19.
31 Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 274, emphasis in original.
A good, though imperfect, parallel is method acting. Method actors become their character as much physically as they do mentally, attempting to engender the thoughts and emotions of their characters. It is an interaction with between their self and the other. In contrast, traditional acting often attempts to represent those thoughts and emotions to an audience, rather than become them. Becoming-other engages subjects at their utmost limits of their being, destabilizing consciousness and creating new abilities to perceive difference. Unlike method acting, however, there is no final state of achieving other. The actor attempts to become the character, but to become anything is to be reterritorialized, to inherit another set of cultural inscriptions. Becoming-other is always a process of deterritorialization, or rupturing those inscriptions. Tamsin Lorraine defines becoming-other as “encounters that engage the subject at the limits of the corporeal and conceptual logics already formed and so bring on the destabilization of conscious awareness that forces the subject to a genuinely creative response.”\(^3\) These becomings engage with subjects “at the limits of [their] corporeal and conceptual logics” because they “involve destabilizing recognizable patterns of organization” at the levels of social and linguistic structures.\(^3\)

“To become animal,” explain Deleuze and Guattari, “is to participate in movement, to stake out the path of escape...”\(^3\) Becoming-other is a practice of staking out what Deleuze and Guattari term “lines of flight”—a “rhizomatic” practice.\(^5\) In the *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* series (1983 and 1987), Deleuze and Guattari develop the concept of the rhizome, which relies heavily on notions of lines of flight, using six principles.\(^3\)

The first two principles are connection and heterogeneity.\(^3\) These principles demand that a rhizome is not just interconnected but that any point in the rhizome can be

\(^{32}\) Lorraine 1999, p. 182.

\(^{33}\) Lorraine 1999, p. 181.

\(^{34}\) Deleuze and Guattari 1986, p. 13.

\(^{35}\) Deleuze and Guattari 1987, pp. 3-25.

\(^{36}\) Deleuze and Guattari 1987, pp. 3-25, see “Introduction: Rhizome.”

\(^{37}\) Deleuze and Guattari 1987, pp. 7-8.
connected to any other point. The rhizome is thus anti-hierarchical and heterogeneous: "any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be."38

The third principle is that of multiplicity. Deleuze and Guattari explain this principle through the relationship between the actions of a puppet and those of its master. When thinking rhizomatically, it is the points of contact between the strings (the lines) and the puppet or the wooden handles and the puppeteer that are crucial, not the puppet or puppeteer himself. According to Deleuze and Guattari, a "multiplicity has neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions.... Puppet strings, as a rhizome or multiplicity, are tied not to the supposed will of an artist or puppeteer but to a multiplicity of nerve fibers...."39 That is, they are tied to lines of connectivity. The puppeteer is thus also a puppet of this multiplicity of strings (lines) acting on him.

The fourth principle is termed the "principle of asignifying rupture." The rhizome might be "broken, shattered at a given spot" but "will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines."40 It can "rebound time and again after most of it has been destroyed."41 The final principles (fifth and sixth) are those of "cartography" and "decalcomania."42 They explain the rhizome as a map with multiple entry and exit points that exist outside of being traced—quite like the unconscious, which exists prior to being psychoanalyzed, a process of tracing the unconscious. They insist that it is a "map and not a tracing."43 The map exists before the tracing—"It is tracings that must be put on the map, not the opposite."44

38 Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 7, emphasis mine.
40 Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 9.
41 Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 9.
43 Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 12, emphasis in original.
44 Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 21.
Rhizomes and their multiplicity of lines are central to my reading of *Marabou Stork* because becoming-woman is a rhizomatic process that involves continual lines of flight or escape from the closed standard. Explain Deleuze and Guattari, “In contrast to centered...systems with hierarchical modes of communication and preestablished paths, the rhizome is an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system...defined solely by a circulation of states.”45 It is this sense of openness and transmogrification that is invoked when describing certain terms as “rhizomatic.” Such terms are composed of multiplicities and lines, some of which take flight.

Lines of flight are not merely the lines connecting multiplicities but those that spark change in these multiplicities through new connections—and it is impossible to tell where their newly formed abstract lines start and begin.46 They are responsible for the rhizome’s constant metamorphosis (the constant “circulation of states”) and in turn its destabilization of meaning. They blur typical entry and exit points and the demarcations between one entity and another. Becoming-other is a process of escaping through lines of flight.

Becoming-other entails a line of flight from one’s set social identity, a challenging of personal identity. Judith Butler describes her book, *Undoing Gender*, as a compilation of essays on “the experience of becoming undone.”47 In a world where gender and its desires are largely socially determined and where gender is always a performative act that we are “doing,” undoing gender identity can affect one’s very livability: how one is recognized as human, what one can desire, what can be mourned, and so on. Through becoming-woman, *Marabou Stork* reveals something similar to this undoing, shattering the conceptual organization of essentialist group identity.

45 Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 21.
46 Deleuze and Guattari 1987, pp. 8-9.
47 Butler 2004, p. 1, emphasis in original.
Becoming-woman

While there are various becomings—becoming-animal, -child, -vegetable, -mineral, -molecular, -imperceptible—there is no becoming-man. According to Deleuze and Guattari, "[M]an is majoritarian par excellence."48 He is the universal subject, the default, that stymies thought because he limits thought: all knowledge can only come from his (human) experience. Becoming is always becoming minoritarian. Becoming minoritarian (other) is in no way a promotion of an identity politics. Minoritarian is not a minority. My identity as a woman does not mean I am always in a state of becoming-woman. My identity as a woman is a collection of inscriptions, based off a binary standard of the dominant (the majoritarian). When I engage in a process of becoming-woman, however, that identity undergoes deterritorialization.49 The process of becoming is always a process of deterritorialization in which the non-rhizomatic relations and meanings of the dominant standard that inscribe the subject are broken up. This means, according to Deleuze and Guattari, that "[in] a way the subject in a becoming is always 'man'.... Becoming-Jewish, becoming-woman etc., therefore imply two simultaneous movements, one by which a term (the subject) is withdrawn from the majority, and another by which a term (the medium or agent) rises up from the minority."50

According to Deleuze and Guattari all becomings, begin and pass through becoming-woman so everyone must become-woman,51 even women.52 They give woman priority

48 Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 291.
49 Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 291.
50 Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 291.
51 The term "becoming-woman" is loaded with many implications for feminist theory. It is important to make clear that I am referring to this term only in the Deleuzian sense, which differs from, say, Butler’s use of the term. Butler’s theory of performativity and identity-formation through cultural inscriptions lacks the material embodiment that Deleuze’s becomings demand. I read becoming-woman as perceiving difference, not a process of identity-formation as Butler or De Beauvoir might use the term. Becoming-woman has less to do with a cultural inscription or performance than it has to do with a cognitive mind-embodiment—though this mind-embodiment produces discourse and is affected by discourse (something along the lines of Grosz’s Mobius strip model [1994]). See later in this chapter, for instance,
for two reasons. First, they understand becoming-woman as a way of undoing the Oedipal constraints of human desire. Deleuze and Guattari share Freud’s view of the libido as free-floating (in the sense that it is not tied to any object), but contend with his formation of psychosexuality through the Oedipal triangle of mommy, daddy, me. For Deleuze and Guattari life emanates from flows of energy that are anti-Oedipal. They reject Freud’s organization of desire through the Oedipal triangle (on the basis of a lack) and see framing the unconscious always in terms of the Oedipal triangle as constraining desire to the familial—when in fact desire is pre-familial and emanates from all life. They propose becoming-woman as a way to understand human desire without the abandonment of the primary love object, to liberate the anti-Oedipal flows. Second, becoming-woman allows for a foundation of a human becoming outside the majoritarian standard. Woman, unlike man, has no standard. It is still open. But woman is only open in so far as it remains creative. For example, early revolutionary movements are often fighting for an identity that is still open, unformed. Once woman is exclusionary, or no longer open, the feminist movement loses its minoritarian status. Because man is the human standard from which all perception and understanding is based, man, unlike woman, is closed. In becoming-woman, we become other than the human standard. That is why all must become-woman, even women.

I argue that Welsh’s *Marabou Stork* expresses becoming-woman through a story of sexual assault and in a medium that is an interaction between the verbal and visual—indeed, a sort of becoming-other in itself. In *Francis Bacon* Deleuze describes how the paintings of the figural painter Francis Bacon reveal sensible expressions of becoming-other. That is, through use of line, space, and color, Bacon’s paintings express sensible aggregates, transcending the cliché of representation, or figuration. For Deleuze,

Deleuze and Guattari’s note that women must still conduct their own molar politics external to becoming-woman.

52 Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 292.
53 Deleuze and Guattari 1983, see pp. 51-6, for example.
54 Deleuze and Guattari 1983, pp. 86-100.
55 Deleuze and Guattari 1983.
representation is problematic on two fronts. It is illusory because it marks the very absence of the reality that is being represented, and because it represents the death of identity by reducing difference to the same. Deleuze turns to the arts to disrupt representation. In Francis Bacon—which I explore in depth in chapter 2—Deleuze describes Bacon’s rejection of figurative art through the Figure.

Towards an Aesthetic Theory

Francis Bacon (1909–1992), a British figural painter, is known for his paintings’ gruesome disfigurations and metamorphoses. Irish-Born, Bacon spent most of his childhood between London and Ireland, whose wartime bombings and despair have been noted to haunt his paintings. The artist also spent significant time in Berlin and Paris where he would be influenced by Edward Munch’s emotional violence and Pablo Picasso’s disassembling of the body. Bacon began as a furniture and interior designer and did not begin professionally painting until studying under Roy de Maistre in the 1930s. In the 1940s and 50s he was a central figure in the artistic milieu of London, which included Lucien Freud, Michael Andrews, Henrietta Moraes, and others. Bacon’s works are recognizable through their uncanny entrapment of the body through a suit, a chair, a cube; their disfiguration of the body; their use of meat; and as some have termed it, their reflection on the “anxiety of the modern condition.” In 1961 he

57 Deleuze 1994, pp. xvii.
58 Deleuze 1994, p. xvii.
59 See, for instance, Andrew Sinclair’s Francis Bacon His Life and Violent Times (1993).
60 Sinclaire 1993.
began his interviews with David Sylvester that became *The Brutality of Fact*, a canonical Bacon text used by Deleuze in his own work on Bacon in 1981.63

In *Francis Bacon* Deleuze uses Bacon’s paintings to reveal the logic of sensation, describing how Bacon’s paintings express the invisible forces of the Figure, the Ring, and the field through what I term Deleuze’s Baconian aesthetic template. Bacon’s figures are always the Figure, a body in the process of becoming-other. His works are highly recognizable by their becoming-animal metamorphoses: a dog’s muzzle protrudes from the jaw, a pig’s snout from the nose, a bird’s wing from an eyebrow. Deleuze recognizes a becoming-other in these works. The body, revealing lines of flight, tries to escape itself through an eye, an ear, a mouth: “the entire series of spasms in Bacon is of this type—love, vomiting, excrement—always the body that attempts to escape itself through one of its organs, to rejoin the background field.... And the cry, the cry in Bacon, is the operation through which the body as a whole escapes through the mouth.”64 These concepts—the Figure, the field, the body escaping, forces—are discussed in depth in chapter 2, which focuses on Deleuze’s *Francis Bacon*. Deleuze describes this text as a work of philosophy responding to the paintings of Francis Bacon, not a work of art criticism. 65 *Francis Bacon* is a project of conceptualization. In other words, Deleuze engages Bacon as a philosopher and in turn produces a Baconian reading of his concepts.

Concepts are the realm of philosophy, according to Deleuze and Guattari.66 Indeed, they define philosophy as a project of creating concepts.67 And as philosophers engage with concepts, so artists engage with percepts and affects. The object of art is to create sensible aggregates rather than concepts. Artists think in lines, color, movement, and

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63 Sylvester 1987.
64 Deleuze 2003, p. 17, emphasis in original.
65 Deleuze 2003, p. viii.
Literary affect reveals not a message or a concept but the instance where speaking can be freed from a subject of enunciation. For example, Deleuze describes a young girl in a painting:

The young girl maintains the pose that she has had for five thousand years, a gesture that no longer depends on whoever made it. The air still has the turbulence, the gust of wind, and the light that it had that day last year, and it no longer depends on whoever was breathing it that morning.\textsuperscript{72}

It is not just the material form of the work of art that is preserved to live for thousands of years. What is preserved, says Deleuze, "is a block of sensations, that is to say, \textit{a compound of percepts and affects}."\textsuperscript{73} As in \textit{das Unheimlich}, the typography in \textit{Marabou Stork} at times expresses affects and percepts not objectifiable but nevertheless sensible. Indeed, its verbal medium facilitates their pre-personal nature, as the visual typography deforms seemingly independent of a visible subject.

Because \textit{Marabou Stork}'s typography works in affects and percepts to express a process on a body (Roy), I turn to Deleuzian theory on visual art, rather than literature, to read Welsh's work. Welsh's novel and Bacon's paintings deal in the same currency of expression and share a similar violence, rhythmic movement, and motif of bodily tension. (I detail these terms in chapter 2 and apply them to the novel in chapter 3.) Note, however, that I do not read Welsh's work only in terms of its typography or its engagement with liberated affects and percepts. That would be simplifying a very complex example of literary meaning-making. Indeed, the typography is only able to construct such meaning through its violent context (what I describe in chapter 2 as the Baconian field). And this context is constructed from, among other elements, crises of enunciation (which I describe in chapter 3) that are understood through an engagement between content (representation) and typography (expression).

\textsuperscript{72} Deleuze and Guattari 1994, p. 163.
\textsuperscript{73} Deleuze and Guattari 1994, p.164, emphasis mine.
A History of a Common Problem

According to Deleuze, modern philosophy and art have converged on the same problem: renouncing the domain of representation and focusing on the conditions of expression. These conditions follow a logic of sensation. This preoccupation with sensation and the body begins with the post-Impressionists, not Bacon. Through the philosophy of Maldiney, Lyotard, and to a degree even Merleau-Ponty, we can trace this tradition of painting to Cézanne. He parts from the Impressionists when he determines that sensation is not in relations of light but in the body. He first conceptualizes this notion of the sensate body that others will call the Figure. The Figure—whether Cézanne’s lush apple or Bacon’s disfigured human—represents the body not as the body is an object to be represented but in so far as it experiences a sensation. Painting the sensation is what links Bacon to Cézanne, and both painters to *Marabou Stork*. It is why my project is more concerned with the book’s typography than the fate of its protagonist, Roy.

Bacon’s primary subject matter is the body, not as a figure represented but as a figure deformed through forces. Deleuze understands the creation of art as a matter of “capturing forces” that are not visible rather than a matter of reproduction. Indeed, he repeats Paul Klee’s formula often: *not to render the visible, but to render visible*. When artists paint these forces, they essay “to make us sense... [the] insensible....” Take Cézanne’s Monte Saint-Victoire (illustration 1.1), for example. Cézanne’s painting

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74 Deleuze 2003, see “Translator’s Introduction.”
75 Lyotard 2006, see specifically pp. 69-111; Maldiney 1967; Merleau-Ponty 1964.
76 Lyotard, Merleau-Ponty, Maldiney, and Deleuze have all pointed to Gasquet’s well-known compilation of interviews with Cézanne, *Cézanne. A Memoir with Conversations* (1959). For example, Cézanne expressed wanting to “rediscover a classic path [of painting] by means of nature, by sensation” (158). For Cézanne’s aesthetic conceptualization of the body, see specifically “What He Told Me” in Gasquet (1959, pp. 145-50).
77 Deleuze 2003, p. 32.
78 Deleuze 2003, p. 48.
79 Klee 1961, quoted in Deleuze 2003, p. 56.
80 Deleuze 2003, p. 48.
renders visible the forces of the mountain on those of the landscape—the mountain's magnetic forces, its sense of gravitation in its folding, and its force of weight against the rupturing thermic forces of the landscape.

Hermitage, St. Petersburg.

Force and sensation are ineluctably linked. A force must be exerted on the body for a sensation to exist. But this force is not that which is sensed, “since the sensation ‘gives’ something completely different from the forces that condition it.” What then are these forces? They are the unobjectifiable yet sensible forces, such as pressure, inertia, weight, attraction, gravitation, and germination. I would suggest that there are also the more cognitive forces of emotion that are at work in such art as African American Blues music, for instance. Deleuze refers to these forces as “insensible.” Yet, we sense these forces. For example, our sense of touch includes weight and pressure. Our sense of

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\(^{81}\) Deleuze 2003, p. 48  
\(^{82}\) Deleuze 2003, p. 48
smell, hearing, and sight includes a sense of balance, attraction, and gravitation.\textsuperscript{83} Counting more than five senses as some do, our sensible capabilities stretch quite far.\textsuperscript{84} Thus, Deleuze's "insensible" might better be understood as that which is unobjectifiable.

Such forces are crucial to all of Bacon's paintings, but his screams are paradigmatic of how they function. Bacon paints the scream to link the sound of the scream with the forces that sustain it. "If we scream," says Deleuze, "it is always as victims of invisible and insensible forces that scramble every spectacle, and that even lie beyond pain and feeling. This is what Bacon meant when he says he wanted "to paint the scream more than the horror" (illustration 1.2).\textsuperscript{85} He wanted to escape the spectacle of the symbolic, where the scream could only ever be a cliché (a narrative of horror).


\textsuperscript{81} Based on personal communication with neurologist Philip Pulaski, M.D., April 24, 2008.

\textsuperscript{82} Elkind (1999) counts at least 10 senses: taste, smell, hearing, touch, sight, thermoception, nociception (pain), equilibrinceptation (balance, gravity), proprioception, and sense of time. But as noted above, most neurologists understand these new senses as subcategories of the "older" senses (for example, thermoception is a subcategory of touch). Sense of time is also more likely to be considered a cognitive endowment rather than a sensory capability.

\textsuperscript{83} Deleuze 2003, p. 51.
The scream reveals the forces of terror on the body through sensation. Sensation is "the action of forces upon the body."\textsuperscript{86} It comprises a variety of things, including pain, proprioception, attraction, balance, and the unconscious physical expression of emotion. It renders forces visible through the Figure's athleticism. Sensation in the body, explains Deleuze,

\ldots takes on an excessive and spasmodic appearance, exceeding the bounds of organic activity. It is immediately conveyed in the flesh through the nervous wave or vital emotion...the body without organs is flesh and nerve; a wave flows through it and traces levels upon it; a sensation is produced when the wave encounters the Forces acting on the body, an 'affective athleticism,' a scream-breath. When sensation is linked to the body in this way, it ceases to be representative and becomes real; and cruelty will be linked less and less to the representation of something horrible, and will become nothing other than the action of forces upon the body...\textsuperscript{87}

Through the body, sensation "incarnates the event"\textsuperscript{88}—incarnates the forces acting on the body that come from everywhere. It is what renders the invisible visible. (Just how it does so is explained in chapter 2.)

Through Bacon's paintings, Deleuze explores how the invisible forces of rhythm (isolation, deformation, and dissipation, or the Figure's athleticism) are rendered visible through sensation. He asks, "How will sensation be able to sufficiently turn on itself, relax or contract itself, so as to capture these non-given forces in what it gives us, to make us sense these insensible forces, and raise itself to its own conditions?"\textsuperscript{89} How, thus, does an artist paint time? Or how, turning to Bacon, can an artist paint a scream?

\textsuperscript{86} Deleuze 2003, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{87} Deleuze 2003, p. 40.
\textsuperscript{88} See Deleuze and Guattari 1994 (p. 165) in which the authors question whether Merleau-Ponty's concept of the "flesh" is just this.
\textsuperscript{89} Deleuze 2003, p. 48.
How does Cézanne paint the germinating forces of Mont Saint Victoire? Art does this by expressing experiences of sensation, affects, directly to the nervous system, bypassing the brain. Art is able to do this not by representing but by “capturing forces” that reveal a process on the body.\textsuperscript{90}

In Francis Bacon Deleuze calls this process on the body “the Figure,” but in his Capitalism and Schizophrenia series (1983, 1987), he terms it the “Body without Organs.” Inspired by the French poet and playwright Antonin Artaud (1896–1948), Deleuze and Guattari’s Body without Organs refers to the body as a pre-law desiring machine, unorganized, uncoordinated, and unregulated: “The body is the body/it is all by itself/and has no need of organs/the body is never an organism/organisms are the enemies of the body.”\textsuperscript{91} The Body without Organs rejects any notion of organization; it is the body completely aware of the flux of forces working on, around, and within it. It is not, however, a literal or physical concept:

A body without organs is not an empty body stripped of organs...[it] is opposed less to organs as such than to the organization of the organs insofar as it composes an organism.... The full body without organs is a body populated by multiplicities.\textsuperscript{92}

It is opposed to the organism, whose senses and perception functions in unison, unlike the Figure whose body is a rhizomatic body filled with multiplicities responding to the various forces around and within it. It is a body in constant flux. The Body without Organs is better understood as a practice: “You never reach the body without organs, you can’t reach it, you are forever attaining it.”\textsuperscript{93}

\textsuperscript{90} Deleuze 2003, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{91} The French reads: “Le corps est le corps/il est seul/ et n’a pas besoin d’organe/le corps n’est jamais un organisme/les organismes sont les ennemis du corps.” Antonin Artaud, in 84, no. 5–6 (1948) in Deleuze and Guattari 1983, p. 9. Translation is from Deleuze and Guattari 1983 translators.
\textsuperscript{92} Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 30.
\textsuperscript{93} Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 149-50.
Deleuze understands the body as a desiring machine composed of multiplicities that engage with the forces within and around it. The Body without Organs is a mediator of these forces, which not only come from within but from other bodies as well—"it produces and distributes them," says Deleuze. It becomes, so to speak, a hot spot for deteritorialization, a constant flux and interaction of desiring forces, always in a process of becoming. We never dismantle all of our desiring machines. For instance, I will always sleep and eat. But I can engage in a process of dismantling such machines—say, through changing careers, speaking a foreign language, or becoming a mother—in order to experience a flow of different forces.

These are large changes, but every day opportunities to dismantle these machines arise when we engage with different forces. Becomings, though imperceptible, are integrated into our daily lives, especially through the arts. Art—singing, composing, writing, painting—"[is] permeated by becoming-animals." Likewise, creating a Body without Organs is about liberating identity and expanding knowledge foundations; it is about:

- taking apart egos and their presuppositions; liberating the prepersonal singularities they enclose and repress; mobilizing the flows they would be capable of transmitting, receiving, or intercepting; establishing always further and more sharply the schizzes and the breaks well below conditions of identity; and assembling the desiring-machines that countersect everyone and group everyone with others.

Deleuze bases the Figure, a concept I expand on in chapter 2, on the body without organs. Relying on the notion of a Figure reacting to forces that are around and within it, I read Marabou Stork Nightmares for the sensation made visible through Roy's

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94 For Deleuze and Guattari’s key discussion of the body without organs, see pp. 9–16 and pp. 322–40 in Deleuze and Guattari 1983 and chapter 6 in Deleuze and Guattari 1987.
96 Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 272.
97 Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 362, emphasis mine.
typographical display of becoming-woman. In its engagement with these terms, *Marabou Stork* straddles two artistic mediums, the visual and verbal arts. A work of literature, it demands to be read as a minor literature that is a becoming in itself—disrupting the line between the verbal and the visual.

**A Minor Literature**

A Deleuzian reading of literature involves what Gilles Deleuze terms a “minor literature.” The Deleuzian text on which one would found such a reading would most likely be *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1986), one of Deleuze’s hallmark texts on literature, in which he establishes his term *minor literature* through the work of Franz Kafka.98 I argue Irvine Welsh’s *Marabou Stork Nightmares* is such a literature.

Yet, what is meant by *minor*? Minor in no way means minority or small. The term *minoritarian* refers to that which is outside the standard dominant position. A minor literature is not constructed from a minor language, that is a language with a small population of speakers, but rather from a minority speaker of a major language, such as Kafka, a Prague Jew writing in German. Welsh, writing in Scottish dialect, also writes a minority language outside standard English. In contrast, a majoritarian literature would present the world using standard or dominant canons against which it would base the language, for instance, using the Oxford English Dictionary and relying on a binary structure of signification. Difference is always based on the same, that is, an original, privileged term—Irigaray’s fundamental critique of Western hegemonic thought. Writing in dialect about a feminine experience of a male protagonist, Welsh writes a Deleuzian minor literature.

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98 For his other major text on literature, see *Proust and Signs* (1972).
In Kafka Deleuze and Guattari develop three characteristics of a minor literature. "The first characteristic of a minor literature in any case," they write "is that in it language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization."\(^{99}\) To deterritorialize is to undo formal order. The typography and dialect in Marabou Stork presents such deterritorialization through the re-readings and oral articulations that the raw dialect demands and through the bodily movement that the typography demands, as well as the new meanings that emerge in turn. Deleuze explains that Kafka writing in the German of a Prague Jew, deterritorializes the German language—like "gypsies who have stolen a German child from its crib."\(^{100}\) A minor literature demands such deterritorialization not only through the blatant appropriation of a major language (as do Kafka, Welsh, and other such authors as James Joyce, Junot Díaz, and Salman Rushdie) but through other dynamics that similarly spur new meanings, or lines of flight. Such dynamics include the way Welsh merges victim and perpetrator, for instance. As mentioned, Welsh's use of dialect, like Kafka's German, deterritorializes the English language, but with his typography—which breaks, shatters, and transforms the visual word—he also deterritorializes the printed text.

The second characteristic of such writing "is that everything in them is political....its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics."\(^{101}\) So, the Oedipal triangle in Kafka's The Metamorphosis relates to the economic, commercial, and juridical. Rape, likewise, in Marabou Stork is also always linked to the familial, commercial, and juridical. Third, a minor literature takes on a collective value. As Deleuze explains, "There are no possibilities for an individual enunciation that would belong to this or that 'master' and that could be separated from a collective enunciation."\(^{102}\) Returning to rape's link to the political and familial, in Marabou Stork the reader witnesses a collective enunciation of the experience of rape through the

\(^{99}\) Deleuze and Guattari 1986, p. 16.  
\(^{100}\) Deleuze and Guattari 1986, p. 19.  
\(^{101}\) Deleuze and Guattari 1986, p. 17.  
\(^{102}\) Deleuze and Guattari 1986, p. 17.
typography’s ability to shatter any notion of a cohesive, singular narrator. This third characteristic has particular implications for the sexual assault victim who is excluded from representing his or her subjectivity as he or she is socially gendered woman.

“Writing,” says Deleuze, “has nothing to do with signifying. It has to do with surveying, mapping, even realms that are yet to come.”103 Thus, it should provoke experience rather than represent it. He was interested in the how, rather than the what. Indeed, as Daniel Smith writes of Deleuze’s study of Bacon paintings, “The question Deleuze poses to an artwork is not ‘What does it mean?’ but rather ‘How does it function?’”104 The condition of a minor literature is not in its content, the representation of universal experiences of life, but in the moments of pure pre-personal sensible experience the literature forces on its audience. In Kafka these moments of pure pre-personal sensible experience are expressed when Deleuze and Guattari note that minor literature makes expression precede content—“either to prefigure the rigid forms into which contents will flow or to make them take flight along lines of escape or transformation.”105 Such instances arise in Marabou Stork as well, freeing understandings of gender from the limitations of representation.

While Deleuze’s work on minor literature focuses largely on Kafka and Proust, I turn to Irvine Welsh’s Marabou Stork Nightmares. Welsh’s novels are often read for their engagement with issues of postcolonialism—a potential line of flight from formal constraints of the “other.”106 Writing partially in Scottish dialect, Welsh’s writing, a spokesman of his own postcolonial inheritance, employs a language that at once

103 Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 4–5, emphasis mine. Many of Gilles Deleuze’s most well-known texts (Anit-Oedipus, A Thousand Plateaus, Kafka, What is Philosophy?) were collaborations with Félix Guattari, psychotherapist and philosopher. Deleuze’s work on Francis Bacon was not a collaboration; however, like many of his own works, it is a variation of similar ideas. When speaking specifically of terms or theory originating from their shared works, I cite both authors, but because my work with Marabou Stork relies on Francis Bacon as its foundational theoretical text, I refer to the theory as Deleuzian theory, even though it is necessary to review much of his work done in collaboration.
104 Deleuze 2003, p. xii, “Translator’s Introduction.”
105 Deleuze and Guattari 1986, p. 85.
represents a refusal to be colonized. Through typographical alignment and spacing, Deleuze’s notions of deterritorialization and lines of flight are made incarnate. Evelyn Nien-Ming Ch’ien, for instance, describes Welsh as engaging in the “weirding” of English with “memorable radicalness.”\textsuperscript{107} His jargon- and dialect-laden work, she notes, often demands to be read aloud, which can “capture the accents, as well as the anger that seeps through a verbal rendering and gets lost on the page....”\textsuperscript{108}


This study confronts several challenges. First, my reading rests on an argument that leaves the sexual assault victim’s sex open. Because sexual violence is a social act of gendering the victim, links between sex and rapeability are erroneous. Indeed, many sexual assault laws now accommodate for such an understanding. Because my reading of \textit{Marabou Stork} explores a man’s becoming-woman through multiple experiences of sexual violence, including his own, this point is particularly important.

It will also have to confront problems of translation. Can one compare Bacon’s paintbrush to Welsh’s pen so easily? I argue one can. Essentially, this study juxtaposes a philosophy of painting onto writing, evoking a line of expression as a common aim of all the arts. In \textit{Dialogues}, Deleuze asks,

\begin{quote}
So what is it, then, to paint, to compose or to write? It’s all a question of line; there is no considerable difference between painting, music and writing. These activities are distinguished by their respective substances, codes and territorialities, but not by the abstract line they trace, which passes between them and carries them toward a common destiny.\textsuperscript{109}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{107} Ch’ien 2004, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{108} Ch’ien 2004, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{109} Deleuze and Parnet 1977, p.89.
It is this abstract line then that I follow. Much of what Bacon relies on is color, which is lacking in Marabou Stork. In chapter 3, I discuss my use of indicators to translate Deleuze’s concepts from brush to pen, so to speak.

In exploring Deleuze’s general philosophy and the connections between Bacon, Deleuze, and Marabou Stork, this chapter contextualizes and establishes a foundation for the chapters to come. Chapter 2 describes the Deleuzian aesthetic template, with all its elements (the Figure, the field, and the Ring), that follows a logic of sensation. It contextualizes and examines my key theoretical text, Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation, and expounds on Deleuze’s theoretical starting points of Kant, Maldiney, and Lyotard. In doing so, it explains some key concepts, such as rhythm and zones of indiscernability, and clarifies others, such as sensation and forces, using Bacon’s paintings and Welsh’s typography. In chapter 3, I juxtapose this aesthetic template onto Welsh’s Marabou Stork Nightmares. This final chapter reads Welsh’s work as a minor literature.

Deleuze’s aesthetic theory has taken a back seat to his other works, for feminists. Meanwhile, Welsh’s works, like much of Scottish dialect literature, have been relegated to studies of masculinity and post-colonialism. Hoping to link ostensibly disparate arts such as painting and literature through a study of the array of relations that compose identity, this dissertation explores these authors and their works outside their typical contexts. The result, I argue, reveals the interrelatedness of art, philosophy, and literature.
CHAPTER 2. CREATING A TEMPLATE—THE LOGIC OF SENSATION

When Deleuze published his work on Bacon (1981), the two were, according to Daniel Smith, “at the height of their powers.”110 Indeed, Bacon’s exhibition in Paris at Galerie Claude Bernard in 1977—which Deleuze likely would have attended111—solidified his position in the art world. By 1980, Deleuze had published most of his canonical works: Difference and Repetition (1968), The Logic of Sense (1969), Anti-Oedipus (1972), Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature (1975), and A Thousand Plateaus (1980). As a result, Francis Bacon and its conceptualization of Bacon’s paintings largely builds on these key Deleuzian texts.

Deleuze begins by recounting the ways in which Bacon reveals sensation, pointing to a pattern of movement, his use of color, and the positioning and alignment of figures. These are Bacon’s sensible aggregates. Deleuze identifies three basic elements to Bacon’s paintings (the Figure, the Ring, and the field) whose interaction expresses becoming-other. Deleuze’s analysis then proceeds to the materiality and technique of Bacon’s paintings, such as his use of color and blurring. And finally Deleuze recounts the various genres, or periods, of Bacon’s work, always relying and building on earlier concepts. Together, the work’s progression, with its own rhythm and structure, appears, as Daniel Smith notes, “quasi-musical,” reflecting the concepts’ highly

110 Deleuze 2003, p. vii.
111 In the Abécédaire interview with Claire Parnet, Deleuze remarks that his frequent outings to exhibitions or films are “part of his investment in being ‘on the lookout’ (être aux aguets)’ for his next ‘encounter.” But “these encounters don’t occur with people. People think that it’s with other people that encounters take place, like among intellectuals at colloquia. Encounters occur, rather, with things, with a painting, a piece of music… On Saturday or Sunday, when he goes out, he isn’t certain to have an encounter; he just goes out, on the lookout for encounters, to see if there might be encounter material, in a film, in a painting.” (Abécédaire interview with Claire Parnet, transcript prepared by Charles Stivale 1996; see www.langlab.wayne.edu/CStivale/D-G/ABC1.html#anchor576387).
interdependent nature. In writing *Francis Bacon*, Deleuze claims to have relied on two things, reproductions of Bacon’s paintings and David Sylvester’s compilation of interviews with the artist in *The Brutality of Fact* (1962–79), though Deleuze does reference other works, such as John Russell’s *Francis Bacon* (1971).

Deleuze went on to publish several other works on art, including the *Cinema* series (1983, 1985) and *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (1988). Never considering himself an art critic, Deleuze always wrote on art as a philosopher. Thus, *Francis Bacon* must be read as a philosophical critique rather than a critique on art history, as Deleuze himself demands as “philosophy, nothing but philosophy….”

The present chapter begins with a background of Deleuze’s philosophical starting point in *Francis Bacon*, which is in Kant. Deleuze begins with Kant’s theory of perceptual synthesis but breaks with Kant in finding that the ground on which this synthesis rests demands its own ground—for which he turns to Henri Maldiney’s rhythm. I then discuss Deleuze’s adoption of Maldiney’s notion of a diastolic-systolic rhythm, which follows a path of isolation, deformation, and dissipation. Following this movement, I explore the field, the Ring, and the Figure using, as does Deleuze, the paintings of Francis Bacon. They form the basic template underlying my reading of *Marabou Stork* in the following chapter. An explanation of the Deleuze’s Baconian template will also inevitably involve what Deleuze calls the athleticism of the Figure—especially its deformation, which allows expression to precede content. Put simply, this chapter explores where this aesthetic template comes from and how it functions. That is, how

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112 “Translator’s Introduction” by Daniel Smith in Deleuze 2003, p. viii.
113 Sylvester 1987 (3rd edition); for Deleuze’s reference materials, see Deleuze 2003, p. xi. Other key texts referenced include Jean-François Lyotard’s *Discours, Figure* (1972) and Henri Maldiney’s *Regard, Parole, Espace* (1973), two works that serve as influential starting points for Deleuze, as discussed later in this chapter.
does the Figure move between the field and the Ring? And what are the implications of its movement?

Finding a Starting-point

Deleuze builds on two earlier philosophers in Francis Bacon, Immanuel Kant and Henry Maldiney. He turns to Kant’s doctrine of the deduction of pure concepts, which takes the experience of sensation as the raw data of life.115 Before perceptual synthesis, this sensation has no formal object; it is first and foremost—before space and time is linked to an object-form.116 To perceive sensation as gestalt (that is, to perceive an object) that sensation undergoes perceptual synthesis. The Critique of Pure Reason takes us from the pure form of sensation (space and time) to a partially synthesized spatiotemporal form (apprehension and reproduction) to the empty object-form (the pure form of perception).

Kant understands perception as a synthesis of the multiplicities of sensation that appear to us in the experience of space and time.117 Three acts make up this synthesis that will eventually link one’s raw experience to an object-form: apprehension, reproduction, and recognition. This synthesis begins when I start to organize the multiplicities that are the world (the world’s raw data) in successive acts of apprehension. The multiplicity of parts that I apprehend must then be reproduced for synthesis to take place. Kant attributes these first two acts to the imagination: "There is thus an active faculty of the synthesis of this manifold in us, which we call imagination."118 To complete this perceptual synthesis, I must now relate this synthesized complex of space and time to the form of an object through recognition.

115 See Daniel W. Smith’s “Translator’s Introduction” in Francis Bacon (Deleuze 2003), see Kant 1998, B143, p. 252.
118 Kant 1998, A120, p. 239.
But first Kant questions what this part, from the raw data with which this act of synthesis begins, is. We must have some sort of measure.¹¹⁹ The imagination, however, does not have recourse to concepts that could constitute a measure. It must find a sensible or qualitative unit of measure. Kant turns to the body.

Even the simplest act of perception presupposes an aesthetic comprehension of a unit of measure. Derrida points out that “this primary (subjective, sensory, immediate, living) measure proceeds from the body. And it takes the body as its primary object.”¹²⁰ For example, if I judge a tree by my body’s height, I now possess a standard unit of measure. As Kant says, “A tree judged by the height of man gives, at all events, a standard for a mountain.”¹²¹ That is, I know a tree is the height of five men, and a mountain is the height of twenty trees. Thus, declares Kant, “all estimation of the magnitude of objects of nature is in the last resort aesthetic (i.e., subjectively and not objectively determined).”¹²² As a result, I am continually changing my unit of measure, depending on the thing being perceived. Aesthetic comprehension of a unit of measure is the foundation of perceptual synthesis, not part of the synthesis. Deleuze understands this “body” or measure of aesthetic comprehension as the “grasping of a rhythm.”¹²³

Rhythm is the original non-conceptual unity of the raw data of sensation. It is this non-conceptual mode of sensation that art relies on and exposes. For example, explains Deleuze,

In Bacon’s bullfights...we hear the noise of the beast’s hooves [illustration 2.1]; in the triptych, we touch the quivering of the bird plunging into the place where the head should be, and each time meat is represented, we

¹²⁰ Derrida 1987, p. 140.
¹²¹ Kant 1978, §26, p. 105.
¹²² Kant 1978, §26, p. 98.
¹²³ Deleuze 2003, p. xviii, “Translator’s Introduction.”
touch it, smell it, weigh it... [Illustration 2.2]. The painter would thus make visible a kind of original unity of the senses, and would make a multisensible Figure appear visually.

Such unity would only be possible if sensation were linked to something that traversed all sensible domains. Deleuze establishes rhythm as the thread running through all domains of sensation (visual, oratory, and so on). This rhythm, explains Deleuze, is a "logic of the senses"...which is neither rational nor cerebral. What is ultimate is thus the relation between sensation and rhythm, which places in each sensation the levels and domains through which it passes. 124 Rhythm is thus the thread running through all art.


When Deleuze speaks of rhythm, he refers to Henri Maldiney’s diastole-systole pattern of movement. When beginning in chaos (Cézanne’s "abyss" or what Deleuze also calls the "catastrophe"), a series of movements evolve into a diastolic eruption (or expansion) of forces. Paul Klee notes that this chaos is a "nonconcept"; as Maldiney explains, "It is balanced with nothing. It is eternally without weight or measure." Klee terms it a grey point, neither black nor white, cold nor hot, high nor low; it is lost between dimensions. The first movement is when this nonpoint "leaps into the realm of order," then come a "systolic condensation of elements" in which definite shapes begin to form—this is Bacon’s isolation of the figure through the Ring. The world is

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Maldiney 1967.
125 Deleuze 2003, pp. xix-xxi, 82-86.
126 Deleuze 2003, p. 83.
128 See Maldiney 1967, pp. 11–12.
130 Klee 1961, p. 4 quoted in Bogue 2003, p. 120.
formed from this chaos. Next a diastolic eruption of forces both dissolves those shapes and forms a communication among all the elements of the whole—this is the figure’s deformation and transformation. Chaos then returns (dissipation into the background field), and the systolic-diastolic pattern begins again. This pattern of isolating, deforming, and disappearing is for Deleuze the rhythm of affective forces in the material world. It is, says Deleuze, “the world that seizes me by closing in around me, the self that opens to the world and opens the world itself.”

Deleuze applies this pattern of movement, or rhythm, to Bacon’s paintings. In them movement (a collision of forces) is created by the interaction, or tension, between the Figure, the Ring, and the field. This interaction is composed of three movements that reveal the logic of sensation: isolation, deformation, and dissipation. Bacon isolates the body in the Ring, which can arise as a chair, a cube, or elliptical, spherical, or arched ring, among other things. The field envelops the Ring and in doing so exerts pressure on the isolated body creating vibrations between the two. This is the “systolic condensation of elements.” Then there is a diastolic movement. The Figure deforms, as a disfiguring internal movement flows through the body, as it attempts to escape itself in order to rejoin the chaos of the material structure (the field), and the Figure dissipates into the field of colors. Through this deformation, Bacon’s figure (a bodily form) becomes the Figure (the body becoming-other). Tracing Maldiney’s systolic-diastolic pattern, this chapter uncovers the logic of sensation in the paintings of Francis Bacon—beginning with the field of colors, or chaos, and progressing to the Figure’s isolation in the Ring and the body’s deformation as it escapes through a sink or another portal.

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132 Deleuze 2003, p. 37.
133 Deleuze 2003, p. 37.
134 Deleuze 2003, see chapters 1 and 3.
The Fields of Color—a Bone Structure

Though sometimes referred to as the "background field," the field is not behind anything; it is an armature, neither behind nor beneath the Figure. The fields of color, says Deleuze,

are not beneath, behind, or beyond the Figure, but are strictly to the side of it, or rather, all around it, and are thus grasped in a close view... [so] when one moves from the Figure to the fields of color, there is no relation of depth or distance... It is the correlation of two sectors on a single Plane, equally close.135

The world (the object) emerges from the ubiquity of the field, and to there it returns completing expression’s rhythmic pattern. In my reading of Marabou Stork I treat the sexual violence that surrounds Roy as the field. He too continually returns to the field, even though it is that violence that he struggles to escape. And the novel concludes with his dissipation, as he transforms into the Stork, a metaphor for the sexual violence he experiences as a child in South Africa. Always present, the violence in Marabou Stork forms Roy and his society, present in the familial, juridical, and linguistic. In reading Marabou Stork, I thus exchange fields of color for fields of sexual violence.

The characteristics that define the field in Bacon’s paintings are also true for the field in Marabou Stork. In Bacon’s paintings the fields of color are hard, flat, motionless, and monochrome; in contrast, the Figure is painted in broken tones to represent the flesh. Similarly, the fields of violence in Marabou Stork reveal a unchanging and ubiquitous violence from which Roy emerges. Deleuze describes the field as a "bone structure": Indeed, "sometimes [it is] like a ship’s rigging, suspended in the sky of the field of color, upon which the Figure executes its taunting acrobatics."136 Thus, in Roy’s narrative we should consider the field always present, regardless of typographical

135 Deleuze 2003, p. 8, emphasis in original.
136 Deleuze 2003, p. xxx.
movement from one world to the next. And perhaps this is Welsh's point—to express the insidious nature of violence as it penetrates all.

**The Ring—Isolating Escapes**

The forces of violence acting on the Figure also emerge from the Ring. Sometimes the Ring is, as the term suggests, a ring encircling the figure as in Bacon's "Figure at a washbasin" (illustration 2.3); elsewhere it is a round space that at once grounds and encloses the Figure as in "Man with a dog" (illustration 2.4). But more often it appears as a chair or an abstract geometric figure (illustrations 2.5 and 2.6). These various Rings serve to isolate figures, to impose on them forces of isolation.

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137 Deleuze also refers to the Ring as the contour or the parallelepiped (Deleuze 2003, pp. 5-10). I limit my own use of this term to the Ring or the round area to avoid unnecessary confusion.
2.3. *Figure at a Washbasin*, 1976. Oil on canvas, 198 x 147.5 cm. Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Caracas.


"In short," says Deleuze, "the painting is composed like a circus ring, a kind of amphitheater as ‘place.’ It is a very simple technique that consists in isolating the Figure."\(^{138}\) Figures must be isolated to escape narration. Explains Deleuze,

A story always slips into, or tends to slip into, the space between two figures in order to animate the illustrated whole. Isolation is thus the simplest means, necessary though not sufficient, to break with representation, to disrupt narration, to escape illustration, to liberate the Figure....\(^{139}\)

By isolating the Figure, Bacon paints the scream rather than the horror, or the sensation rather than the sensational. Avoiding the story, which passes through the mind, he aims directly at the body—as he says, letting the paint come across directly onto the nerves.\(^{140}\)

And he does this by linking the force of isolation to deformation. As in a circus ring, the Figure is isolated but mobile. While the Ring isolates the Figure, it also functions as an appendage of the Figure through which the Figure is liberated as it turns on itself and in turn deforms. The forces of the body push the body to escape, and the Figure is forced to turn on itself—and this is what Deleuze terms the Figure’s "athleticism." It engages

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\(^{138}\) Deleuze 2003, p. 5.
\(^{139}\) Deleuze 2003 p. 6.
\(^{140}\) Sylvester 1987, p. 18.
in a sort of circus acrobatics, contorting and deforming (illustration 2.5). The Ring thus serves as the place that delimits both the Figure and the field, isolating the Figure and encouraging its athletic escape.

**Athleticism and the Immediacy of Expression**

Deleuze tells us that the Ring does not “consign the Figure to immobility but, on the contrary, render[s] sensible a kind of progression, an exploration of the Figure within the place, or upon itself. It is an operative field.”¹⁴¹ This progressive deformation occurs through two sources of movement. First, as explained earlier, in a systolic movement the field envelopes the Ring, putting pressure on the forces between the Ring and the Figure. In turn, the Ring “becomes an apparatus for the Figure’s gymnastics on the fields of color” (illustration 2.6).¹⁴² Second, and coexisting, there is the movement of contortion and contraction that comes from the Figure when the body escapes itself. The Figure is a body before being a Figure in relation to this structure. And so, Deleuze explains, “the body is not simply waiting for something from the structure, it is waiting for something inside itself; it exerts an effort upon itself in order to become a Figure.”¹⁴³

**Ladders and Sinks—Portals of Escape**

The body escapes itself—but it is not I who escapes my body. It is a force that escapes. There is a spasm: a scream, a jerk, vomiting, defecation, and so on (illustration 2.7). This second process often involves the body escaping through a localized point in the Ring—a replication of the Ring in the form of a sink, a keyhole, and so on. For instance, witness in Bacon’s *Figure at a Washbasin* what Deleuze describes as the “intense motionless effort” of the Figure escaping through the washbasin, one foot in the Ring, one in the field (see illustration 2.3).

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¹⁴¹ Deleuze 2003, p. 6.
¹⁴² Deleuze 2003, p. 15.
¹⁴³ Deleuze 2003, p. 15.
Bacon shares with Cézanne a notion of sensation passing between spaces and from one "level" to another—from Figure to round area to field. This is why painting sensation, which demands movement between levels, unlike abstract or figurative art, is the ultimate process of deformation. This movement from the Ring to the field is present in *Marabou Stork*, too, as Roy, reacting to the forces around him, attempts to escape through the Ring (his South Africa dream world) and eventually dissipates into the field metamorphosed into Stork.

Bacon often places an object that functions as a portal, such as a sink, in his paintings in order to mobilize the Figure (see illustration 2.3). In *Marabou Stork* Welsh mirrors this technique through typographical laddering:
Welsh's ladder is Bacon's sink, but the passage above reveals more than typographical ladders; it reveals the deformation linked to expressing the Figure. In Welsh's text, narrative is the Figure's body, and the body deforms. "Distorted" deforms into "dis," and as the narrative climbs upward, we read the narrative as deformed. Before we have a chance to process the meaning of "I lose control when they interfere", we read interruption (in "dis") and loss of control (in the lengthy fall from "dis" to "I lose..."). Through the narrative's deformation, the reader perceives the text before conceptualizing it.

**Blurring**

The deformation in Bacon's paintings express affects and percepts through an immediacy of expression. For Bacon painting is about the immediacy of expression, to *let the paint come across directly onto the nervous system*. He paints violent sensation distinguishable, but not separate, from his Figures. Nor is it separate from the other elements of his paintings; however, it is instantaneous, attacking the nervous system at once.

In *Francis Bacon, the Human Body*, David Sylvester touches on the relationship between Bacon's motif of blurriness and the immediacy of pain. He links the immediacy of Bacon's violence to expression. Remarking on *Three Studies of the Human Head*, Sylvester describes Bacon's triptych as "a tragic strip [that] culminates in an image of a 'broken."

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144 Welsh, p. 1.
145 Sylvester 1987, p. 18.
man'." But what conveys this man's defeat is more than his gesticulations—his bowed head, his howling mouth, his despairing hand on his forehead. It is the smearing of the paint, Bacon's motif of blurring (illustration 2.8). As Sylvester explains:

The smearing means disintegration: the face is already 'food for worms', the skulls seen now 'beneath the skin'. The smearing means destruction: the face is wounded, shattered.

The smearing means obliteration: the face is obscured by the lifted hand, and the hand may be lifted in pain, or to ward off an attack, or to claw at nose and mouth and eyes as if in an effort to wipe them away, to rub out an identity.

Smearing means all this, but what these meanings involve conveys itself before there has been time to become aware of meanings. The meanings, all of them, lie in the paint, and they are in the paint not latently but in the impact of the paint upon our senses, on our nerves.146

146 Sylvester 1998, p. 25, emphasis mine.
in an interview with David Sylvester Bacon speaks of his with flesh in the aesthetic of the slaughterhouse and the crucifixion. He likens the body being crucified to the animal being marched to the slaughterhouse—the body is driven toward escape.\footnote{Sylvester 1987, p. 23.} The body/animal fights, and sensation is revealed. It is this \textit{common} behavior (or zone of indiscernability) that fascinates him, he tells Sylvester. Here, in the struggle at the crucifixion and slaughterhouse, man and animal become indistinguishable. And thus the flesh painted in the aesthetic of the slaughterhouse—in all its suffering and color—is a moment of becoming.

This treatment of flesh to create what Bacon terms a \textquote{common fact}\footnote{Deleuze 2003, pp. 14, 20–21.} or in Deleuzian terms a zone of indiscernability, is common to both Bacon’s paintings and Welsh’s \textit{Marabou Stork}. The carnage of Roy’s nightmares and of the novel’s sexual violence and Roy’s metaphorical transformation into stork at the novel’s end mirror Bacon’s slaughterhouses and carcasses. Such moments invoke zones of indiscernability. They reveal the Figure as becoming-other.

\textbf{The Figure}

Deleuze defines the Figure as \textquote{the sensible form related to a sensation.} Sensation is in the body. To clarify, the body is not the Figure. In Bacon’s paintings the Figure is the body experiencing sensation. In \textit{Marabou Stork} the Figure is the sensory becoming-woman of Roy (the body). It is the bodily expression of the experience of sexual assault.

What Bacon and Cézanne paint is not the body \textquote{as it is represented as an object, but insofar as it is experienced in sustaining \textit{a} sensation (what Lawrence, speaking of Cézanne, called the ‘appleyness of the apple’).}\footnote{Deleuze 2003, p. 32.} More literally then, what is painted is
continuous becoming. There is no figuration. Artists like Cezanne and Bacon extract the Figure from the figurative. As Valéry puts it, sensation “avoids the detour and boredom of conveying a story.”\textsuperscript{152} Finally, we are able to witness the isolated body in its experience.

Deleuze takes the term “the Figure” from Jean-François Lyotard’s “the figural.”\textsuperscript{153} In Francis Bacon Deleuze remarks that

\begin{quote}
[painting] has two possible ways of escaping the figurative: toward pure form, through abstraction; or toward the purely figural, through extraction or isolation. If the painter keeps to the Figure, if he or she opts for the second path, it will be to oppose the “figural” to the figurative.\textsuperscript{154}
\end{quote}

And he remarks that it is Lyotard who first opposed the figural to the figurative.\textsuperscript{155} In the Figure, Deleuze takes from the figural as it connotes the destabilization of representation from within by revealing that which escapes representation. In Bacon’s paintings, the Figure disrupts the figurative, or narration, through forces from within the figure.

For Lyotard the world is presented to us through either the space of the “readable”, that is the coded or representable, or the space of the figural.\textsuperscript{156} According to Bogue:

Figural space is unmarked by the coordinates of a ready dimensionality, of a fixed up and down, left and right, foreground and background; its objects defy ‘good form,’ ready categorization, or denomination; and its time is that of the event, a time free of sequential demarcations of past, present, and future.... The figural itself is unrepresentable. Only the trace of its action appears, and the function of the artwork is to reveal its effects

\textsuperscript{152} Deleuze 2003, p. 32, emphasis mine.
\textsuperscript{153} See Lyotard 1972.
\textsuperscript{154} Deleuze 2003, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{155} See endnote directly following the above passage.
\textsuperscript{156} Lyotard 1972, p. 211.
and thereby open up an interworld between an objective, codified world and a subjective fantasy world.\textsuperscript{157}

Lyotard's figural is that which remains, resisting organization; it is the nonverbal aspect of expression and the invisible aspect of the visible.

Following Lyotard, Deleuze subscribes to a similar notion of a remainder in discourse, and likewise, he finds it in deformation or the formless. Deleuze's Figure transgresses form. While Deleuze links the Figure to the rhythm underlying all life, Lyotard links the figural to unconscious desire. Here Deleuze and Lyotard part ways. Lyotard subscribes to Freud's unconscious and theory of castration, which founds desire on a lack, problematic for Deleuze whose aim in becoming-woman is to obtain desire grounded neither in the Oedipal familial nor on a lack.

The Figure is thus not a figure—rather it is an act, a process, an event. This process, however, has no story or a series of sequentially organized acts; it is a process of revealing sensate forces on the body, which are independent of the figures that would narrate them. Take Bacon's Second Version of 'Study for Bullfight no. 1', painted in 1969 (see illustration 2.1). The two figures struggle, and we witness a becoming-animal as they share a common behavior in their contortions—twisting with the \textit{muleta}—revealing their zone of indiscernability. The bright monochrome field serving as an armature rests on the same plane with the Figure, and their common limit is the grey and camel Ring and the black line that extends out from the Figure itself, encircles the Ring, and whitens as it joins the field, signaling an eventual dissipation into the field. The white of the \textit{muleta} ignites the bull's athleticism, exposing the concomitant deformation with white blurring on the bull itself. The muscular bull contracts to force his rigid body through the \textit{muleta}, which now serves as an eye of a needle through which he escapes. And at once we witness how the white line transforms into black and how it becomes part of the bull, drawing the Figure through the vanishing point into

\textsuperscript{157} Bogue 2003, p. 115.
the material structure. In the corner, the square mirror does not reflect. Like the field, it instigates the animal’s contortion, driving it deeper into the portal.

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This chapter aimed to lay the foundations for the following chapter in which I explore becoming-woman in *Marabou Stork* using the aesthetic template this chapter explored. In explaining this template, I did not intend to summarize Deleuze’s work on Bacon. Indeed, much has been excluded, particularly in his analysis of color, for instance. I have included only those Deleuzian concepts that apply to my reading of Welsh’s novel. These concepts form what I term the Deleuzian aesthetic template—a template founded on Maldiney’s rhythm and Lyotard’s Figure. The template serves to make expression precede content by rendering visible the sensate through a logic of sensation.

The next chapter will face problems of translation. How does one translate so many visual concepts to text? How does color translate? And how does narration limit typography, or vice versa? It thus begins by establishing a set of indicators for each of the elements in order to translate the visual to the verbal. Most crucial is that *Marabou Stork* is conceptualized in terms of a moving medium rather than a static painting. Whereas the Figure, the field, and the Ring are revealed once, and only once, in any given Bacon painting, the template is continually reapplied in a novel that reveals a process of becoming-woman.

The template described in this chapter provides a guide to becoming-other. I argue that *Marabou Stork* reveals a process of becoming-woman and, in doing so, reveals the same systolic-diastolic rhythm that emerges from Bacon’s paintings. Bacon’s paintings
communicate a philosophy. The next chapter hopes to show how this philosophy does not escape the literary arts.
CHAPTER 3. READING BETWEEN THE LINES IN IRVINE WELSH’S MARABOUT STORK NIGHTMARES

“It was me and Jamieson,” announces Roy. And in the first line, Irvine Welsh reveals how expression precedes content through the logic of sensation. Full stops between words—It was me and Jamieson—indicate pauses rather than syntactic closure. Severing concept from content, Welsh connotes time and realizes the immediacy of expression. Often in Marabout Stork Nightmares typography expresses the violent rhythm underlying sensation through alignment or spacing. But here it engages with the reader’s perception of time.

By the end of the first line, typography conveys movement as the reader’s eyes fall with the line break—from “It was me and Jamieson” to “Just us” and then to “Just me and Sandy Jamieson”:

It was me and Jamieson.

Just us.

On this journey, this crazy high-speed journey through this strange land in this strange vehicle.

Just me and Sandy Jamieson.

Before symbolically conceptualizing Welsh’s text, the reader perceives time and movement. Through typography, Welsh liberates time from life’s content—tenseless and independent of its relationship to subjects—allowing the reader to begin with the immediacy of expression, rather than the mental gymnastics of conceptualization. Put simply, it is a physical reading.

158 Welsh, p. 1.
For Deleuze, the immediacy of expression upon the nerves—that is, the ability of expression to precede content through lines of flight—is the bedrock of becoming-other (perceiving difference). Such lines are athletic undertakings toward becoming. Minor literature escapes signification, representation, and metaphors through these lines of flight, or escape: nonrepresentative, "language of sense is traversed by a line of escape." But, of course, this medium is ineluctably tied to its content, unlike, say, painting, which works in colors that can be independent of form. In the above passage, for instance, time and movement are expressed before (though not independent of) the content that represents them. Roy’s isolation is both written and spatialized, and it is the two that produce literary meaning.

This chapter investigates how Welsh’s work—largely through typography—grasps the immediacy of sexual violence on the nerves by engaging with a logic of sensation during one character’s process of becoming-woman. The chapter begins by identifying the key elements of Deleuze’s Baconian template (the Figure, the field, and the Ring) in Marabou Stork, developing a set of indicators that, when applied to the text, will enable juxtaposing visual concepts onto a verbal medium. Welsh’s typography does not visually mimic Bacon’s paintings; rather it evokes the same concepts. By tracing the abstract line that links the arts when respective substances differ, these indicators translate a visual Figure, Ring, and field into typographical ones. Next, the chapter follows the forces of the field and the Ring and the athletics of a schizophrenic Figure as they contribute to Roy’s becoming-woman. And finally, the chapter explores narrative and how the work’s typographical narrative contributes to becoming-woman. This is a reading of a minor literature. But, like all readings, this reading has its own motives and driving forces. Here they are to illuminate the elements at work in the logic of sensation that transform a given figure to the Deleuzian Figure, that is, the elements that provoke a becoming-other. One question drives this chapter, and I aim to continually return to it:

159 Deleuze and Guattari 1986, p. 85.
how does Marabou Stork Nightmares express becoming-woman through an interplay between typography and content?

**Indicators—Following an Abstract Line**

In analyzing painting, Deleuze uses particular indicators to decipher the three key elements of Bacon’s paintings; some of which directly translate, some of which do not. Consider color, for instance. In Bacon’s paintings color is a key indicator of the Figure, the field, and the Ring, but in Welsh’s text only that which color signifies translates: the flesh of the Figure, the monotony of the field. Here I point to an “abstract line [these works] trace.”\(^{161}\) So, how does one write the visual—colors, shape, the interaction between colors? Or, more specifically, how does one write Bacon’s sensible aggregates? For each element I return to the function that contributes to becoming-other, which is unvarying across mediums.

**The Figure**

Color, zones of indiscernability, and athleticism are indicators of the Deleuzian Figure. In particular, broken tones, opposed to monochrome ones, compose the Figure, according to Deleuze: “we now find ourselves before flows of color, in the form of broken tones. Or rather, the broken tones constitute the flesh of the Figures.”\(^{162}\) Flesh translates directly. Roy’s body—especially as it is sexually assaulted—represents the flesh the Figure demands. Indeed, even Bacon’s fetish for animal flesh resonates in the carnage of flamingos repeatedly described in Welsh’s text. At once, Roy is flamingo (victim) and Stork (perpetrator), metaphors for the gendered lived body. Roy is also our athlete, distorting and deforming. And we gain access to his deformation (we read it) through the typography.

\(^{161}\) Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 89.

\(^{162}\) Deleuze 2003, pp. 120–21.
Also key to the Figure is its zone of indiscernability, or its blurriness—also integral to its athletic becoming. Blurriness (or zones of indiscernability) liberates meaning through crises of enunciation: an unconscious wish is enunciated in some “elsewhere” or an utterance appears where it is out of place (such as when I examine Kirsty’s “obviously” or Jamieson’s “time will tell” later in the chapter). Blurriness surfaces in the juxtaposition of four characters, Roy, Jamieson, Lexo, and the Stork. Welsh smears the characters, who appear as changing faces in a funhouse mirror. For instance, during the flamingo massacres—during which an italicized narrative of a similar football massacre by Roy and Lexo at a bar continually interrupts Roy and Jamieson’s hunt for the Stork—the lines that demarcate Roy, Lexo, and the Stork blur. Roy recalls,

I was about to scream: STOP!...when I saw our one, our Stork, and he saw us. The creature lowered its neck and made a short run to take off. It looked awkward and ungainly but continued its laboured ascent.... Despite our quarry’s getaway, I felt a strange elation in my bones.

—LIT’S HIT THE FUCKIN ROAD! Lexo roared, his neck straining, his face seeming tae be just one big black hole.¹⁶³

Roy feels the elation in his bones of the Stork’s ascension, while Lexo’s neck mirrors that of the Stork. The characters (like the text) stumble over each other. Indeed, the language and the layering of plots here evoke an uncanny sense of repetition directed at the nerves, not the mind (as it conceptualizes content). The passage above points to the body escaping itself (the Figure’s athleticism). Roy is our acrobatic Figure who not only escapes himself but travels from the Ring to the field in response to forces. Continually moving between spaces, Roy contorts and deforms under Welsh’s typography.

The Ring, or the Well

The last chapter established that a key indicator of the Ring was isolation. The Figure has an intimate relationship with the Ring—it is the Figure’s refuge. Roy returns to one particular Ring that originates from his childhood. In Uncle Gordon’s house Roy has

¹⁶³ Welsh, p. 173, emphases mine.
access to a well, a hiding spot, through a trapdoor in the garage, to which he retreats during Gordon’s worst molestations:

[In the basement of the garage there was access to the well, via a trapdoor...and although I was told to keep away, I used to climb down there and just hang from the rungs, suspended in semi-darkness. I’d hear Gordon sneaking around above, looking for me to touch me up. The things he wanted to do were getting heavier and I was getting more scared. So whenever I went into the garage I’d hide in the well.... I would just sit in my semi-darkened lair, enjoy the peace and fantasies.]

This well, where Roy goes “DEEPER,” serves as a metaphor for Roy’s fantasies of South Africa. Throughout the novel Roy signals coming out of his dream world through the words “deeper” and “coming up,” each time alluding to his childhood hiding spot. The very structure of Roy’s secret well—physically round, an amphitheater of the mind where Roy is surrounded by fantasies—points to it as the Ring. Roy transports the memory of this well, his fantasies in that well, to his narrative, as he hunts the Stork.

When referring to the Ring, I point to the well, which I take as a metaphor for his fantasy world of South Africa. His fantasies isolate him and amplify his repressed memories, provoking the forces that move the body to escape.

Isolation disrupts figuration, or narration, to arrive at expression. Only in this way can the sensation of an experience be expressed without the interruption of clichéd content, which halts the production of thought and the ability to perceive difference. Through isolation the Ring serves to elicit the forces of the Figure by being a “concentrated reflector” of it. The Ring, according to Deleuze, has a function derived from the halos of pre-modern painting: “at the foot of the Figure, in a profane use, the halo retains its function as a concentrated reflector of the Figure, a colored pressure that ensures the

164 Welsh, p. 75–6.
Figure's balance, and makes one regime of color pass into another."\textsuperscript{165} The concentrated mélange that is Roy's dream of South Africa contains echoes of his past as the repressed rearises: for example, his suicide attempt in Dawson's \textit{Youth in Asia} book and his encounter with the Zero Tolerance Campaign's \textit{no man has the right} in Jamieson's account of a referee's bad call, among others.

The Ring's forces of isolation inspire Roy to escape (to go "DEEPER"), causing the Figure's deformation, making "things get aw \textit{distorted}," as Roy says.\textsuperscript{166} Claude Gandelman claims that the "reality of the body \textit{qua repraesentatio} is its essential distortion."\textsuperscript{167} In \textit{Marabou Stork} distortion (the Figure's athleticism) reveals the \textit{lived} body—a gendered body.\textsuperscript{168}

Signaling the forces of sensation, \textit{distorted} deforms into \textit{dis}, our eyes plummet to \textit{I lose control}, and each hyphen jerks the reader forward, and each word upward, in contrast to the previous fall.

\begin{center}
DEEPER. Things get dis
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{l}
up --- --- \textit{- We're just} \\
coming \textit{going to take} \\
start ROY. Have you got the \\
I \textit{bedpan, Nurse Norton?} \\
Number Twos now Roy, \\
\textit{time for Number Twos. } \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{I lose control when they interfere --- and} \\
Yes, he's looking brighter this morning, isn't he, Nurse Devine? \textit{You're brighter this morning,} \\
\textit{Roy lovey.} \textsuperscript{169}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{165} Deleuze, 2003, p. 122.

\textsuperscript{166} Welsh, p. 1, emphasis mine.

\textsuperscript{167} Gandelman, as quoted in Elkins 1999, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{168} While distortion implies \textit{to twist}, the process Roy undergoes often engages with form (disfiguration), being at once multiple formations of figures—Jamieson, Lexo, the Stork. And his process of becoming-woman is often violent and implies not only a twisting (distortion) but a stretching (distension) or a break (disruption). Thus, the notion of distortion itself takes on many meanings in the novel. In \textit{Francis Bacon} Deleuze most often refers to the Figure's athleticism as a process of deformation, rather than distortion or disfiguration. But again, because in \textit{Marabou Stork} such athleticism includes a range of disfigurations, or deformations, I use the general Deleuzian term \textit{athletics} or \textit{athleticism} to encapsulate such words that comprise what the body undergoes.

\textsuperscript{169} Welsh, p. 1.
What transmogrifies a normative textual arrangement into this ocular rollercoaster ride? Welsh’s typographical acrobatics expose more than textual distortion; they point to the forces at work in the logic of sensation. Roy’s hunt, and all the typographical jerks and ups and downs that accompany it, reveal a harnessing of forces from his past crimes and unconscious memories of sexual assault. Roy’s hunt is a search for the difference he has repressed. It is not so much his own experiences as a perpetrator that Roy must recognize (he recounts these to us) but his own experience as a victim of sexual assault (a social woman), which he never fully recounts as he says near the end, “wi that cunt Gordon it wisnae like how ah telt it, it wisnae like that at aw, that wis oan the surface, thir wis another part ay ayas...”170 Yet, those experiences are still stymied by his “ay ayas....” Once he can perceive those experiences, he can then become-woman in his experiences of perpetrator as well.

In terms of Deleuzian theory, Roy (nor any of Welsh’s characters) has any stable identity; he is a collection of the effects of continuous flows of difference. Thus, again, this is why woman, too, must become-woman. Becoming-other is a continuous process, not a checklist of “others” whose boxes can be checked off as if obtained. For Roy this means there is no obstacle he will overcome to then obtain a state of “enlightened” male protagonist. Indeed, recall from chapter 1 Lasdun’s description of Welsh’s novels as “less...plotted...than a set of loosely linked improvisations.”171 What we come to be aware of in reading Marabou Stork is that Roy’s “crazy high-speed journey” is loosely a metaphor for our own reading experience.

*The Field, a Practiced Violence*

In Bacon’s paintings two key indicators designate the field: function and color. The field is the bone structure of the Figure drawing it to athletic escapes. The Baconian field is usually monochrome, but in Welsh’s novel the monotony of Bacon’s color can only be

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170 Welsh, p. 199.
reflected in something as practiced and structural as violence. Unlike the Ring and the
Figure, no one place, state of mind, or character signifies the field; rather, the field
permeates the novel's content. As noted in chapter 1, the novel's typography should not
be treated as independent of the content, easily subtracted and examined separately.
The interplay between representation and expression in Marabou Stork is what produces
literary meaning. Thus, the violence embedded in the novel's content (often through
language) reveals the field.

A less abstract interpretation might designate Roy's coma as his Ring, and the field the
hospital and all the staff and relatives who visit and interact with Roy. But I would
argue that these spaces exist on different planes, and Deleuze describes the Ring and
the field of colors as "the correlation of two sectors on a single Plane, equally close."172 The
South African dream world and the violence that composes the field share one plane—
that of his mind. The violence of Welsh's text—which permeates content and
typography—necessitates a field that is less physical and more abstract.

Structuralizing Violence

In Marabou Stork violence is a practice in which Roy is trained. This societal violence
composing the field affects Roy structurally. Meaning, violence is something to which
Roy returns and which he carries with him in the well, his own violent escape, and his
precoma past. Indeed, his screams and shouts to escape the violence—DOWN DEEPER
DEEPER—prove of little use, as he meets the same violence in the well, which is replete
with reflections of himself. As Roy explains, "[G]o deeper, go forward, go back to the
Stork or stay with this reminiscing because it doesnae matter, it's the same sad fucking
story, it's always gauny be the same sad fucking story...."173

172 Deleuze 2003, p. 8, emphasis in original.
173 Welsh, p. 238.
A passage in “Into the City of Gold” visually conveys this structuralizing of violence as well as an instance of rendering the forces of the field and Ring visible through a crisis of enunciation. Sandy and Roy stumble on a hut where they decide to camp for the night. When Roy offers to light the stove for heat, Sandy replies, “No, we don’t need to.... If it gets cold we

could always wrap ourselves up in one sleeping bag. It was a practice I indulged in with the native boys, in order to preserve heat coming up

right up the fuckin erse man. Dirty fuckin cow that she wis, Roy, tellin ye...

—Thing is, ah’m no even that bothered if Hannah finds oot.”

The sexual violence that Jamieson practices triggers the Figure to turn on itself through a crisis of enunciation. Such crises scramble meaning as they disconnect desire from subject: The thought—“could always wrap ourselves up in one sleeping bag....a practice I indulged in with...boys”—is Roy’s unconscious desire spoken from “elsewhere” (his psychic double, Jamieson).

Moved by the forces of the Ring and the field, Roy surfaces to find his misogynistic half-brother Tony talking. Jamieson’s sexual assault (practiced against “native boys”) is aligned with Roy’s ladder (the deformation) as he “comes up.” Meanwhile, both the narrative of Jamieson in the well and of Tony, whose misogynistic speech reflects the violence of the field, are positioned symmetrically. Usually when Roy moves between these worlds, the transition forces the reader’s eyes to move up and down, but here the reader moves left to right, pointing again to structure. That is, it points to the shared plane of the Figure, the Ring, and the field. So, though the text describes “coming up,” these two narratives are situated in what the eye would read as a traditional paragraph, or the same plane. Through typography Welsh stretches the very structure of violence.

174 Welsh, p. 70.
Boxing—*all in the family*

Although boxing is one of Bacon’s more infamous obsessions, it eludes his paintings, save for the boxing ring that at times serves as the round area.\(^{175}\) Boxing, however, does not elude Welsh. In *Marabou Stork* it arises as a crucial part of the field rather than the Ring because, though round, it does not point to forces of isolation. Rather, the boxing ring recalls the practiced violence that composes the field and reflects the deformative athletics of the Figure.

Roy and his brother, Bernard, describe their boxing lessons as the “worst of times.” John Strang, Roy’s father, transforms the living room—the familial—into a boxing ring, where he forces Bernard and Roy to fight until one or both “broke down in tears of misery and frustration.”\(^{176}\) Because in developing a super-ego, the child internalizes the figure of the father, John Strang’s practice of producing violence is internalized.\(^{177}\) And how John Strang contextualizes this ring of violence is crucial to the novel’s adaptation of the field of colors. Roy’s family space is transformed into a space of violence so that violence becomes part of his inheritance. This violence is naturalized; in Deleuzian terms, it is his “bone structure.”

In particular, the boxing ring reflects how Roy inherited certain ways of speaking and styles of violence. Roy’s father coaches Bernard, the homosexual son, “[D]innae fuckin slap um like a pansy....”\(^{178}\) John Strang’s speech reveals a violence founded on gender, which he teaches his son in these matches through speech and action. The speech Roy inherits, degrading individuals by gender and in turn shaping gender, enables Roy to progress to physical violence in order to perform a particular gender within that language. Thus, although Strang does not teach Roy to rape, he engenders (one might

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\(^{175}\) In the film “Love is the Devil,” for instance, one scene portrays the character of Francis Bacon engrossed in the carnage of a boxing match. The boxing match points to Bacon’s preoccupation with his Figure’s violent and deforming athleticism.

\(^{176}\) Welsh, p. 29.

\(^{177}\) See Freud’s *The Ego and the Id* (1960).

\(^{178}\) Welsh, p. 29.
argue demands) such violence by planting its verbal seed. When Roy says, “I battered into the fearful face of my broken-spirited pansy half-brother,” he adopts the violent language of the housing scheme culture that enables his sexually violent nature. Furthermore, John Strang links physical violence to gender when he equates the feminine with physical weakness—“[D]innae fuckin slap um like a pansy....” — and the masculine with strength. Because Roy inherits his father’s conception of gender and strength, he reenacts this violent performance when he engages with others he reads as weak, such as when he rapes the “Dressed-By-His-Ma-Cunt” in the “ladies bogs” (toilets).\footnote{Welsh, p. 109.} He inherits this need to differentiate between weak and strong even by name, Strang/Strange/Strong. Crucial to note here is that Roy never abandons physical violence for verbal violence—the two are a violent continuum, the one informing the other and both always present.

John Strang’s speech also reflects the rape discourse appearing later in the novel during his son’s rape trial:

She danced with several men at the party.
She wore provocative clothing.
She had sexual experience.
She was intoxicated and showed flirtatious affection towards several men.

\textbf{She voluntarily went into the bedroom with Osmotherly.}\footnote{Welsh, pp.208–210.}

When Bernard runs from the room sobbing and covered in blood, the father yells with a smirk on his face, “Ye’ll huv tae learn tae stick up fir yirsel!” His words point to a deeper linguistic inheritance—a blame-the-victim logic that reappears in the courtroom.

Welsh reiterates this link between physical and verbal violence through typography. Roy recounts one particular fight in which his father encouraged him to jab away at his overly beaten brother: “On one occasion when I had marked Bernard’s eye and swollen
his lip, John could scarcely contain himself...—Keep that fuckin jab in ehs eye, Roy! Poke ehs fuckin eye right oot.” Roy is ambivalent, as he often is. But he continues:

I kept jabbing away at that reddening queer face, my body tight with concentration as Bernard’s eyes filled with petulant uncase.

BANG  QUEER-FACED CUNT
BANG  TAKE THAT YA FUCKIN SAPPY BIG POOF
BANG

Through the typography’s causal alignment, Welsh links physical violence (BANG) to language (QUEER-FACED CUNT). A verbal punch accompanies each physical one, as if one demands the other. Thus, egging his son on, John teaches violence through language, and language through violence. Indeed, language has painful consequences, such as blood-filled eyes and swollen lips. Roy inherits this relationship between language and violence from his father, who, mirroring the typography, hovers above his son, practicing this relationship. Reflecting the relationship between father and son, the physical violence (BANG) hovers above the verbal violence, as if one, like the father and son, engenders the other.

Welsh writes Roy as a product of discourse. For example, in “Facing the Stork,” when Kirsty comes for her sexually violent revenge, the discourse behind such violence is scattered like free-floating objects on the page to imply a disconnect between meaning-production and subject.

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181 Welsh, p. 29.
Her face, like Caroline Carson's
cruel slags all the same
mocking the afflicted
they fight back
the dog
cannae go around hating fifty per cent
by the population
Gordon
ah didnae want it, ah didnae want that
'The slag asked for it
she was just a young lassie
the slag asked for it
just a young lassie but
'The slag asked for it

Such speech as "the slag asked for it" and "cruel slags all the same" echoes the violent speech that produces Roy. The above passage, however, is a mélange, a collection of experiences of victim and perpetrator. The language, a collection of incomplete thoughts, seems to emerge from multiple characters as an assemblage. Roy's dialect fluctuates: in his narrative of the past it is closer to the Queen's English than the thick housing scheme dialect Welsh is infamous for that narrates the dream world and the hospital present. By typographically positioning all Roy's voices in the passage above on one plane, rather than demarcated through a traditional paragraph Welsh reveals a common plane of discourse.

Violence spreads, eventually infecting Roy's very structure, but even as a child in the boxing ring he contemplates his body escaping, turning in on itself. After one fight, "overwhelmed by pain and frustration," Roy tells us, "I envied my younger brother Elgin, silently rocking or gently humming, trapped in a world of his own, exempt from this torture. Perhaps Elgin had the right idea; perhaps it was all just psychic defense. At times I envied Elgin's autism."\(^\text{183}\) Roy's story of becoming-woman is a process that begins with the familial. Here, in the boxing ring, the forces of violence emanating from the field encourage Roy's "psychic defense," his body turns on itself, and violent sensation is expressed through the immediacy of an emphatic "BANG"..

\(^\text{182}\) Welsh, p. 261.
\(^\text{183}\) Welsh, p. 30.
Climbing Ladders

In the Figure at a Washbasin, a bleish muscular body, with one leg anchored to the scarlet carpet, stretches itself through a washbasin with determination (illustration 3.1).

3.1. Figure at a Washbasin, 1976. Oil on canvas, 198 x 147.5 cm. Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Caracas.

Deleuze describes a similar scene in Conrad’s Nigger of Narcissus. James Wait, a Black West Indian sailor falls sick during his journey on the Narcissus from Bombay to London and is isolated. During a frenzied tempest, Wait is imprisoned in his cabin on deck. Fearing for his safety, he listens with the full force of his body to his fellow sailors carving a small hole in the wall that unprisons him. Conrad writes:

That infamous nigger rushed at the hole, put his lips to it, and whispered 'Help' in an almost extinct voice; he pressed his head to it, trying madly to get out through that opening one inch wide and three inches long. In our
disturbed state we were absolutely paralyzed by his incredible action. It seemed impossible to drive him away.\textsuperscript{184}

Deleuze points to such scenes as paradigmatic of the body attempting to escape itself. The given figure is isolated by a Ring (the cabin on deck), the forces of the field encompass the Ring (the turbulent storm, perhaps reflecting the human relationships on the Narcissus), and a washbasin portal ("that opening one inch wide and three inches long") finally pushes the body to become the Figure.

Conrad’s \textit{Nigger of Narcissus} and Welsh’s \textit{Marabou Stork} share more than a preoccupation with “African darkness.” Like Wait, Roy also escapes, climbing up and down psychic ladders: “[A]h feel masel at the top ay the ladders which run up the side ay the deep well, half-way down being my lair, further down still the beautiful blue skies of Africa....”\textsuperscript{185} “Deeper” and “up,” – Roy’s there’s-no-place-like-home language— recall his childhood in South Africa where he would descend a well to hide from his Uncle Gordon’s pedophilic molestations. Roy’s ladders and escapes, unlike Wait’s, are always mental and reflected in the novel’s typographical gymnastics. The typography that ascends and descends, as in

\begin{verbatim}
DEEPER
DEEPER       up
DEEPER       up
DEEPER       up,
\end{verbatim}

reveals Roy’s repeated psychic escapes through what I term \textit{ladders} (and what Bacon portrays as various objects, notably the washbasin).

\textsuperscript{184} Deleuze 2003, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{185} Welsh, p. 57.
Welsh uses such typography, or ladders, to make expression precede content. The ladder is a vanishing point. And in order to vanish, the isolated Figure deforms. Unlike Conrad, Welsh expresses its deformation through typography, and in avoiding narrative he expresses an isolated event with no before or after. Because this deformation demands that the reader's eyes also adopt an athleticism, it is expressed first to the nerves. The ladders—and the particular athleticism they entail—are thus essential to Welsh's typographical prioritizing of expression.

For instance, recall Elgin's escapist rocking and humming, how Roy envied such escapism after his boxing matches with Bernard. The particular ladder that follows that passage also expresses Elgin's isolated detachment from the world—rocking and humming—through sentence fragments and line breaks that signal an escape from a public language. As usual, Roy goes DEEPER, DEEPER, but then:

Away from them.

Better.

Now it's time to go to the hunt —-------------------

Roy's sentence fragments and spatial gaps express the tone of Elgin's detachment and isolation before an analysis of content has occurred—as line breaks isolate each fragment, and eventually each word.

Most often, however, ladders appear in a rather violent full caps, as in DEEPER, DEEPER. Resembling Bacon's *Figure at a Washbasin*, Roy plummets downward in an effort to escape himself. The full caps express the disfiguration the Figure experiences through its athletics. With their alignment and heavier point size, the full caps express

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180 Welsh, p. 31.
forces acting on the body: a sense of direction (toward another world) and the repressed pain of experiences of sexual assault. And finally, through a single word, they express a violent tone that usually demands the context of content. At once an appendage that facilitates deformation and a reflection of this deformation, the ladders represent a collision of forces on the body.

_Facing the Mirror—an Assemblage of Schizzes_

Of the first four sentences—

It was me and Jamieson.

Just us.

On this journey, this crazy high-speed journey through this strange land in this strange vehicle.

Just me and Sandy Jamieson.

—three are a repetition of one (It was me and Jamieson, Just us, Just me and Sandy Jamieson). In the Ring Welsh isolates the Figure (Roy) through repetition. At once distorting and focusing the Figure, isolation reveals a narrative of schizses, or a schizophrenic Figure. That is, the “and Sandy” was always just a distortion of Roy, “just a manifestation of...guilt.”

Deleuze and Guattari break from a notion of a psyche that could be psychoanalyzed. They reject the notion of a whole object or individual and instead give primacy to parts, or what they term “schizses.” Thus, their becoming-other excludes any notion of a whole self to be imagined; this is why becoming has no end. Roy’s comatose self in flux

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188 Welsh, p. 6.
189 See chapter 4 in Deleuze and Guattari 1983.
is thus truly characteristic of a minor literature, allowing him the varied escapes, or what Deleuze and Guattari term elsewhere *lines of flight*, necessary of a becoming. Indeed, it is because of the primacy given to parts in *Marabou Stork*—with multiple doubles and voices—that Roy is able to perceive himself as both victim and perpetrator and become-woman.

Haunting Roy and recalling his past, Sandy Jamieson is both companion and alter ego, guiding Roy toward the Stork (or toward destroying the violent part of Roy that prevents him from becoming-woman). But also crucial to these schizzes is a sense of the uncanny. In the sentence sandwiched between the two reflections of Roy, he recalls it is a “crazy, high-speed journey, through this strange land, in this strange vehicle.” The demonstrative pronoun *this* points to an antecedent found in Roy himself. This “crazy high-speed” reflects Roy’s changing faces, and “this strange vehicle” Roy’s newly comatose body. Indeed, it refers to a sense of the foreign within Roy himself and the effacement of the line between character and expression. As Derrida writes in his critique of Freud’s paper “The Uncanny,” “We will be unceasingly drawn back [to Freud’s uncanny] by the paradoxes of the double and repetition, the effacement of the limit between ‘imagination’ and ‘reality,’ the ‘symbol’ and the ‘symbolized,’...considerations of the double meaning of the word....”190 Roy’s various selves emanating from different spaces point to the reflective qualities of the Ring and, in their repetition, recall the uncanny nature of becoming, which engages in making that which is foreign part of the home.

**Shattering Voices: A Typographical Narrative**

Crises of enunciation, reflective of Deleuze and Guattari’s schizzes, appear in the traditional narrative through mimicking, echoing, fracturing, and fragmenting—all

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190 Derrida 1972, p. 239, emphasis in original.
typographical and narrative deformations. Most of these create an unreliable narrator. Typography destabilizes the narrative so that narrators become indistinguishable, two narratives proceed as one, or the narrative fractures into pure expression. These techniques compose a typographical narrative that exposes the narrator as a universal schizophrenic. Deleuze argues that minor literature is essentially free of narrators. Along these lines, one can argue that if a set notion of narrativity exists in Marabou Stork, it could be built only on meta-typographical narrative that comprises multiple schizophrenic narratives.

*Mimicry—Vivisecting Narrative*

*Mimicry* refers to typography, not content. It is concerned with formal repetition, unlike the echo, which is concerned with a repetition of content. So, for example, when Kirsty comes to take her revenge on Roy, her usual typography (small, Arial) begins to mimic the font and point size of Roy’s (large, Times New Roman):

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--- --- I'm here for you now Roy. I'm here to take you away . . .
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Thus, any narrator identifiable through typography becomes unreliable. Most important, mimicry is indicative of the process of becoming-other. Bacon exposes this process by revealing the interaction of forces rather than figures. The emphasis in the passage above is not on the story the character of Kirsty tells to the character of Roy but on the change in perception, as Kirsty, once victim, becomes perpetrator in not only content but form.

While Kirsty’s typography mimics Roy’s as she positions herself as the social man, in turn appropriating his cultural inheritance in form and content, Welsh differentiates Roy’s voice through italics. Mirroring the relationship of the flamingo to the Stork—victim and perpetrator—Roy and Kirsty are positioned against one another:

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192 Welsh, p. 258.
— You taught me that you had the right by simply taking it. The posters were prescriptive; they were talking about a world as it should be rather than as it is . . . But there's another world Kirsty, it doesn't have to be this way . . . we can change it now, make it different . . .

— I don't know who fucked you up, what happened to make you the sad, wretched excuse for a human being you are and I don't care. It's not my problem. You're my problem, or rather were. Now I'm your problem. Might is right. You take the right. I'm taking the right Roy, taking the right to fuck you off, son.

I can feel the cold steel on my cock . . .

The appropriation of the Stork typography is symbolic of a particular discourse. Indeed, Kirsty appropriates the justification language of Roy’s father and Lexo as she violates him—“I know you want this, I know you’re asking for it....you have to learn Roy, you have to be taught.” Their violent discourse appearing in the boxing ring and the courtroom is the discourse of the perpetrator (Plaza’s “social man”). And as Roy adopts the voice of the rape victim (her “social woman”), his speech is stymied by pleas: “No, Please.”

**Echo**

At times the narrative echoes. An echo repeats content, not typeface. A speaker from Roy’s past appears in Roy’s South African safari, or a character from the hospital echoes the words of a character from Roy’s safari. Such instances reveal the interaction between Roy’s unconscious and conscious forces on a single plane. At times, it even teases our cognitive ability to source representations. For example, when Roy asks Sandy whether he has concerns about their inadequacy in hunting the Stork, Sandy replies, “Time will tell.” The interruption (and echo) comes from a doctor in Roy’s room:

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193 Welsh, p. 260.
194 Welsh, p. 263.
Time will tell, he said grimly, time will tell.

What the fuck is this?

As "time will tell" repeats in the Ring, or Roy's metaphorical well, the reader senses the impact of the present on the dream world. Like the Figure in Bacon's paintings, the forces of the field and Ring engage with Roy. It is not only Roy who moves. He is only one part of the rhythm underlying this process and his control seems weak at best by his surprise—"What the fuck is this?" After reading "time will tell" for the third time, we can only wonder who really spoke that first articulation.

Sometimes, the echo has a structural purpose, a ladder linking the two speakers and signaling part of Roy's becoming-woman. For instance, below obviously links Uncle Gordon's doppelganger, Dawson, to the victim-perpetrator, Kirsty:

Obviously replaces the usual DEEPER or coming-up ladders and points to Roy's becoming-woman, as it physically links the violent forces that surround Roy in the Ring to the athletic forces within him that, in instigating his escape, push him to perceive difference in the form of his rape victim's consciousness. Later in the chapter obviously and its implications for becoming-woman are further explored.

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195 Welsh, p. 56.
196 Welsh, p. 222.
Fracture

At other times, crises of enunciation appear as narrative fractures. A fracture physically interrupts the narrative through typography. The passage below begins with a dialogue between Roy and Sandy, a recurring discussion about a penalty Sandy received during a game of football. Out of nowhere, Sandy announces, “It was never a penalty,” causing Roy to reevaluate the pain he carries from his sexually exploited past. Sandy’s narrative reflects Roy’s own feelings. Sandy explains, “I curse that decision every fucking day of my life, Roy... It destroyed my place in the record books.... They had no right to do that to me... What gave him the right? No man has the right...” No man has the right triggers his repressed unconscious—“Where did I see that?” asks Roy. The phrase, echoed by Roy’s alter ego and repeated in the anti-rape discourse of the Zero Tolerance Campaign, instigates a confrontation with the feminine experience of sexual assault. Roy responds, “Come on Sandy, that type of setback’s part and parcel of the game.... Sandy, consider forgiveness. Consider human error. He may have just made a mistake.” Sandy turns to Roy enlightened and agrees, “Of course.... No harm done.” But when Roy tries to appropriate “No harm done” for himself, the expression fractures. Roy’s dad divides “No harm,” while a ladder interrupts “done.”

While the reader’s eyes instinctively begin with “harm,” they logically belong at “No” (at the far left). The effect is an immediate sense of interruption and fracture. The weight of the violation is precedes the story of it that would represent it. This fracture undermines the simplicity of Sandy’s conclusion—“Of course! It was just a silly mistake.” And as the reader struggles to read “No harm done,” it becomes clear that the denotations of sexual assault are never as simple as “No harm done.” Roy’s gendered experience, unlike that of Sandy’s, cannot obtain representation so easily. The aim of a

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197 Welsh, p. 123.
minor literature is to express this difficulty. When "No harm done" fractures, it expresses the linguistic unrepresentability of the feminine through the weight of typography.

**Fragment**

Further destabilizing any notion of a whole narrator, the typography also fragments narration. Fragmentation reveals an inherent multiplicity, as two narratives proceed together. The narrative fragments in only one instance. In "The Flamingo Massacres," Roy and Sandy hunt the storks that massacre a colony of flamingos. Meanwhile, Roy narrates a parallel scene of his own carnage as a football hooligan with Lexo. The chapter is continually interrupted by an italicized narrative of his past with Lexo, but the two narratives are inextricably linked. Roy hints that they proceed together. He recalls, "I kept remembering something else, kept seeing something else..." 198 Roy's déjà vue at once temporally links the two narratives and destabilizes any notion of a narrative present.

As the two narratives proceed unaware of the other, Roy's lack of control is exposed. The novel's narrative is schizophrenic, always an interaction between multiple voices (forces), revealing zones of indiscernability. This schizophrenia reflects the Figure's athleticism. Hunting the Stork, Roy hunts himself. And so, at the end of the novel—pages before he becomes-woman, or becomes Z—he says to Kirsty, in the typography of his football hooligan massacre, "It was LEXO, no me, LEXO." 199 Through these crises of enunciation, Welsh renders sensible imperceptible sensory becomings.

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198 Welsh, p. 179.
199 Welsh, p. 259, emphasis in original.
Becoming-Woman

Becoming-other, be it animal or woman, is not about being something else but about perceiving difference through a process of becoming. Becoming-woman forms "a compound of sensations that no longer need anyone." That is, through a rhizomatic process sensations can be expressed beyond the confines of a given state of being. Thus, such independence can open linguistically unrepresentable gendered experience (through a composite of affects and percepts) to expression, unlike the closed symbolic categories of, say, "woman" or "man." Again, this return to experience and sensation—rather than closed states of being—is crucial to my argument: Welsh's typography expresses the feminine, not woman, or women. I do not argue that Welsh has overcome woman's linguistic unrepresentability. The symbolic and its discursive history still govern such terms. And I do not propose to have discovered a feminine symbolic in the realm of typography. Like other feminists, I point to a different linguistic space.

While some feminists have emphasized the importance of touch or rhythm, I would like to suggest that there are possibilities for the feminine embedded in the visual arts as well. Deleuze's aesthetic theory on Bacon as it is applied to Welsh's Marabou Stork is paradigmatic of such visual expression.

Recounting a nauseating massacre of flamingos by Storks in South Africa's Kruger Park, Roy reveals a telling moment of becoming-woman through a metamorphosis of blood. Although a metaphor for violation, the blood also circulates with a sense of defilement that evokes sexual fluids and the particularities of violation. He tells us:

Gaze at the Flamingo's face, and what do you see?
You see a beautiful bi
You see

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201 Deleuze and Guattari 1994, p. 169.
202 See, for example, Kristeva's semiotics (1986).
203 See Kristeva (1986; rhythm) and Irigaray (1980, and 1985a, b; touch) for discussions on the role of the nonverbal in feminine communication.
The flamingo's blood, her blood. The blood of her on me.
No. There was no blood.
Only my blood. My blood
when he did that to me in
the city of gol---------²⁰⁴

The image begins with the beautiful, innocent subject, who deforms to reveal the forces of an experience. "Beautiful bird" appears disfigured ("beautiful bi"), revealing the ever-present forces of deformation and heralding the becoming-other to come. The blood mixes, or rather spills, and difference is perceived. Three types of blood appear in the passage: the flamingo's, Kirsty's, and Roy's. The flamingo's carnage is a metaphor for Kirsty's violation. And Roy is responsible for this violation; recall that he states, "The blood of her on me," not on Lexo. But Roy is also violated. His own violation at once serves to deny her violation and link the two. He denies: "No. There was no blood / Only my blood. My blood." Yet it was Kirsty's victimhood that triggered the recall of Roy's victimization. So, while he denies her blood, there is an undeniable victim-perpetrator miscegenation. This mixed deluge of blood is indicative of becoming-woman because it is always a mixture reliant on both Roy and Kirsty's experiences. Roy begins to perceive difference.

An Obvious Difference—Becoming-Other through Ladders
For Roy becoming-woman is a matter of accepting his own experiences of sexual violation. Earlier, in a discussion of narrative, I remarked that the echo sometimes has a structural purpose. During a conversation with Uncle Gordon's double, Dawson, the reverberation of obviously exposes a revealing instance of becoming-woman. The typography links two experiences through a ladder that echoes "obviously":

²⁰⁴ Welsh, p. 233.
Because obvious implies agreement, Kirsty's obviously forces the listener to engage with her experience. So, Roy must behold her perspective, as the perpetrator who evokes his own repressed experience also evokes Kirsty's. Obviously, in Kirsty's context, signals perspective—difference. Is it obvious to all that going to the police would be difficult for a rape victim? It is obvious Kirsty's going to the police was difficult. Meanwhile, Dawson's obviously triggers Kirsty's obviously painful moment. Unlike other ladders in the text, this typographical linkage is indicative of Roy's becoming-woman because he begins to perceive Kirsty's obviously—as Dawson's words, which evoke Roy's own suffering, are linked to those of Kirsty.

Obviously blurs zones of discernability. These zones enable the Figure to become because they express affects before the subjects who feel them. And, according to Deleuze and Guattari, this approach toward indiscernability is essential to becoming-other: "Becoming is to emit particles that take on certain relations of movement and rest because they enter a particular zone of proximity. Or...to emit particles that enter that zone because they take on those relations."

The above passage reveals how the speakers "appeal to an objective zone of indetermination or uncertainty, 'something shared or indiscernible,' a proximity 'that makes it impossible to say where the boundary between'" Roy's and Kirsty's experiences lie. For Roy the liberation of expression reveals a process of becoming-woman.

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205 Welsh, p. 222.
**Entering Zones of Proximity**

Kirsty’s rape inspires in her psychotic revenge that leads her to become a violator herself. This revenge further positions Roy and Kirsty within a phallic economy. Kirsty, seizing the phallus and in turn speaking position, is positioned as a social male, and Roy a social woman. When Welsh uses a female victim of sexual assault to signify the Stork (perpetrator of sexual violence) and a male to signify the flamingo (the victim socialized woman through sexual assault), he emphasizes gender, rather than sex. While sex closes off possibilities of becoming, gender traverses individuals and experiences. In the novel’s final three pages, Roy and Kirsty appear in parallel as attackers. Roy hallucinates an attack by the Stork (or himself): "I see an image in the mirror, the image of the Marabou Stork. It’s on the flamingo...tearing into it, ripping it to shreds, but the flamingo’s still alive, I see its dulled eyes...."208 The next two images are startling. Kirsty begins her attack: “Her fingers are holding my eyes....she’s holding open one eyelid at a time and her surgical scissors are snipping my eyelids neatly off. I can feel the cold steel and hear the sharp tearing sound....I can feel her knife hacking into my genitals....”209 In ravaging Roy’s genitals and eyes, Kirsty seizes the phallus and symbolic reproduction. Yet, in experiencing this violation, Roy realizes becoming-woman, living her experience—“emitting particles that enter the relation of movement and rest, or the zone of proximity, of a microfemininity...that produce in us a molecular woman.”210

For Roy these scenes point to perception. As Roy watches Kirsty shredding him, he concludes, “We see each other now...I understand her hurt, her pain, how it all just has to come out. It just goes round and round, the hurt.”211 These words were not evoked by Kirsty’s court testimony but her vengeful violation of him. It is mindful of the

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208 Welsh, p. 262, emphasis mine.
209 Welsh, p. 262.
210 Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 275.
211 Welsh, p. 264.
Figure’s reliance on the forces of the field, for only through all the forces can a figure become the Figure.

_Pushing Expression Forward_
At times Welsh uses typography to make expression precede content. Recall that Deleuze says, a minor “literature begins by expressing itself and doesn’t conceptualize until afterward.... Expression must break forms, encourage ruptures and new sproutings.”212 Reflecting Bacon’s paint that affects the nerves immediately, the passage below expresses the pain of sexual assault before the specificity of content has been delivered. Roy recounts:

ften Gordon engineered trips so
that Dad was working and we
could be alone together.
This was my life in the City — — of

**SWITCH THAT SHITE OAF**

Such a cold finger,
Beckons you ... to enter his web of sin,
But don’t go in . . .

The Garage.

— Time for a bedbath, Roy.

In the passage above I count several possible speakers. There is Roy (on the left, narrating), the recording (on the right, interrupting), Roy again (in full caps, yelling; this speaker resides in a different space than the first Roy), the fragmented Roy (“the Garage”),214 and the nurse (alerting Roy of his bath). But all the speakers are connected through the third characteristic of a minor literature: the collective assemblage of enunciation. Roy is not just the typography in traditional Times New Roman, 12-point. He is part of the “Gold fingah” recording through the “City—of Gold fingah,” which

213 Welsh, p. 73.
214 See pages 253, 261, and 262, for instance.
connects him to "the Garage" through "But don’t go in...." Such textual deformation points to an interaction of forces, a narrator who is really an assemblage of parts.

"The Garage." relies on what follows—"But don’t go in...." Roy’s pedophilic uncle transforms the space of the garage into one of abuse. But the reader discovers this only in the next chapter. Yet, when the reader sees, "Beckons you...to enter his web of sin," and then "But don’t go in...The Garage,"—with an eerie and unnatural movement to the left and a proper noun treatment of "The Garage"—there is an engagement of the senses, not the intellect. Expression precedes content. As Bacon would say, Welsh lets the words come across directly onto the nervous system. Although the luring spider "web of sin" and the ominous warning "don’t go in" allude to the content found in the next chapter, they produce a foreboding tone, fear that is immediate and direct.

"The Garage" reveals one of the less conspicuous examples of such expression. Indeed, louder, more vehement examples are sprinkled throughout the text, especially through the Zero Tolerance Campaign. During the trial Roy is lambasted by the campaign’s posters in a stroll down Princes Street. Roy’s first instance of becoming-woman, the posters bring the reader a little relief. His reaction is physical: "I felt as if I had been punched hard in the stomach. I couldnae get air, the blood seeming tae run right oot ay ma heid. I stood in Princes Street, shaking."215 The signs—

ZERO TOLERANCE
Z.
NO MAN HAS THE RIGHT.

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215 Welsh, p. 198.
—force Roy to associate his own experience of sexual assault with Kirsty’s: “There were...photoes ay bairns. Bairns that had been abused, making oot that what we had done wis like what aw they sick cunts that touch up bairns dae...like wi Gordon n South Africa n me....”\textsuperscript{217} This link is crucial. It marks his first moment of becoming-

\textsuperscript{216} Welsh, pp. 261 and 263.
\textsuperscript{217} Welsh, p. 199.
other. As "The Garage" instantly expresses Roy's childhood of violation, Z expresses becoming-woman or his link to Kirsty's experience and his own experiences of the social woman.

Triggering Roy's ultimate escape, the Zero Tolerance Z appears in a club sign in the chapter "Self-deliverance with a plastic bag" and recalls his Princes Street experience:

\[
\text{REZURRECTION}
\]

The Z illuminated and the slogans came rushing into my head:

NO MAN HAS THE RIGHT
WHEN SHE SAYS NO SHE MEANS NO
THERE IS NO EXCUSE
THERE IS NEVER AN EXCUSE

The boldface, capitalized Z reflects a sense of immediacy in Roy, and as the slogans pour forth, Z becomes a vehicle connecting his pain with her pain. What follows is a series of hallucinations:

A girl smiled at me, and it looked like
It was her
They all looked like her
Then there was a guy. A steward. It was Uncle Gordon.\(^\text{219}\)

Roy's hallucinations are of Kirsty and Uncle Gordon—conflating the two experiences into one experience of sexual assault. Z no longer signifies a letter but the violation of sexual assault independent of the subject who experiences such assault.

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\(^{218}\) Welsh, p. 252.

\(^{219}\) Welsh, p. 252.
Essaying to escape his visions, Roy runs to the toilets, where his narrative is interrupted with:

Hospital Bed  
LYING IN YOUR HOSPITAL BED IN A COMA STUPID  
RELATIVES NIPPING YOUR HEAD CAN THEY  
UNDERSTAND WHERE YOU HIDE AND WHAT YOUR LIFE  
AMOUNTS TO  
Their Africa  
YOU ARE A  
DYING MAN  
AND YOU ASK  
FOR NO PITY  
ONLY UNDERSTANDING WHICH WILL NOT HELP YOU  
OR HER OR SANDY OR BERNARD BUT IT IS STILL AN URGE YOU HAVE, A FUTILE  
URGE TO MAKE SENSE OF THIS FUCKING CRAZY SHITE  
YOU'RE INVOLVED IN THIS TROPICAL LAND THIS  
COLONISED NATION OF YOUR DISEASED MIND  
The Well  
Capital City Service  
Marabou Storks  
AfricA, my Africa ...

Why no death  
why only incompetence  
why when you purchase the manual  
is it that you still can't do it right  
in our flat Dore, mind the time I fucked up  
putting up the shelves  
I had the manual and all the right tools then

Perhaps the most visual of all Welsh's typographical stunts, the passage above resembles something closer to a painting than a novel. Indeed, such an arrangement best imports Deleuze's theory: the expression of experience directly onto the nervous system. The passage begins in the present, the "Hospital Bed," but Roy's narrative is subsumed by the novel's greater ambition, Roy's becoming-woman (Z). The Times New Roman "Hospital Bed" transmogrifies into an all-caps Arial, mimicking those around him, including Kirsty. Speaking in "her" voice (small Arial) now with a bone structure of Z, Roy implicates his experience on Princes Street and experiences with Kirsty in his hallucination. Form rather than content guides the reader's eyes. And here, again, Welsh forces a physical reading on the reader—forcing Roy's drug-induced trance onto the reader's experience with the text. In the reader's athletic reading, expression

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220 Welsh, p. 253.
precedes conceptualization. Next to the more fluid narratives of the past, individual words are transformed into floating images—“Their Africa,” “The Well,” “Marabou Storks”—that, in transcending verbal signification, evoke Roy’s pain. Like the avante garde movement of language poetry, Welsh instigates new readings of signification and subject positions.

**The Great Escape**

One big Z is also the last thing we see. In the fantasy world Jamieson turns to Roy and shoots the Stork, killing Roy. But first, Kirsty takes her revenge, mutilating and violating Roy’s body. Then he becomes her: “I understand her,” he tells us, “...her hurt, her pain, how it all just has to come out.” Nearing his death, Roy’s body metamorphoses before the reader:

> The sun is rising behind me and my shadow spills out away from it, out in front of me. My spindly legs, my large overcoat, my massive beak.... I have no visible ears, I never really had much in the way of ears, it was always my nose, Captain Beaky, they used to call me at the school....it wasn’t the ears, my memory hasn’t been so good, nor has my hearing but I can think more clearly now.... I have the gait of a comical scarecrow, I shuffle like an old man who has shot his pants. I’m so tired.... I spread my large, black wings....

Thus, Roy’s hunt for the Stork was always a sort of bodily deformation, the body turning in on itself, escaping itself. Although the novel’s typographical narrative points to Roy’s self-annihilation through crises of enunciation—and, indeed, Roy too admits that his hearing “hasn’t been so good”—his metamorphosis here is integral to his body’s ultimate escape. When Roy finally faces himself, Jamieson (Roy) then faces the Stork. And Roy’s transformation allows Jamieson (Roy) to finally kill the Stork (dissipate into the field). When Roy’s doppelganger kills him, we witness the body turning in on itself, in a Baconian fashion. His shadow spills out. Just how it escapes—

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221 Welsh, p. 264.
through an ear, his beak—we are left to guess. The shadow is the body that has escaped itself, according to Deleuze. Recalling Roy’s school-day bullying ("Captain Beaky, they used to call me"), his scarecrow gait, and elderly shuffle, Welsh echoes Bacon’s becoming-animal Figures, with a wing for an arm or a snout for a nose. The Figure ends in dissipation:

I hear [the gun] going off and it’s all just one big

\[Z\].

An instant expression of becoming-woman, \(Z\) "constitutes passages and states that are real, physical, and effective, and which are sensations and not imaginings...a deformed and deforming movement that at every movement transfers the real image onto the body in order to constitute the Figure." Roy must pass through the \(Z\)—which encapsulates not only his rape and Kirsty’s but myriad experiences of sexual assault and the voiceless feminine.

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Through a Deleuzian lens, this chapter explored how Welsh’s *Marabou Stork Nightmares* engages in meaning-making, particularly in terms of the social woman and sexual assault. Deleuze’s notion of becoming-other adopts its own particular logic when applied to Bacon’s paintings. It is that logic that I hoped to apply here.

Turning to the text, I argue that one can repeatedly read lines of escape—in the schizophrenic narrative, the movement between worlds, and the final metamorphosis. Doing so required a contextualization of the Deleuzian elements in *Marabou Stork*. Most

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222 Deleuze 2003, p. 16.
223 Welsh, p. 264.
224 Deleuze 2003, p. 18.
texts possess something resembling a field and a Ring. That is, there is often a bone structure and then another isolating element. What makes *Marabou Stork* so compatible with Deleuze’s aesthetic theory on Bacon is its use of the Figure. The logic of sensation underlying the Figure—how a figure reacts to the Ring and the field, whether the body deforms—is rendered visible. Welsh uses the same Figure, most likely unwittingly. But was he aware of employing such logic? That is, was he aware of the way he forced one’s reading directly onto the nerves? The way Roy’s pain was rendered visible through his continual deformations? Or of the inadequacy of linguistic representation?

Regardless, in doing so, he reveals the existence of something outside of the phallogocentric symbolic order. Welsh’s typography expresses, as Evelyn Ch’ien says, not “what” the subject is but “how the speaker can appropriate the language” used.225 Indeed, Welsh crosses symbolic boundaries, deterritorializing the symbolic topography. And when he forces us to engage with our readings as they become physical—as our eyes move about the page jumping up and down with the typographical layout—we too engage in Welsh’s experiment with meaning-making.

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CONCLUSION

This project was borne from an uncertainty, a mark of otherness. Understandings of rape are marked by an uncertainty that rearises, as victims struggle to represent themselves in front of the media, courts, and even their family and peers. The uncertainty that lingers in questions of consent also permeates what it means to be raped in a range of discourses, including legal ones. For example, although national laws exist in the United States to protect children and women from sexual assault, no national law against rape or standards for defining rape exist, leaving understandings to vary among states. And in many legal systems the loaded term “rape” has been replaced with “sexual assault”, a term that in its broad inclusion evades the troubling uncertainty of rape.

The act’s inability to be universally pinned down calls into question the very parameters of representation. According to Irigarayan theory, this failure can be traced to the “masculine parameters” of representation—a phallogocentric economy that privileges masculine organs, masculine desire, and sight over absence. In Speculum Lucé Irigaray traces the masculine parameters of Freudian psychosexual development. “The trial of intercourse,” explains Irigaray, “will have, moreover, as teleological parameter the challenge of an indefinite regeneration, of a reproduction of the same that defies death, in the procreation of the son, this same of the procreating father.” She argues that representation is founded on a universal subject who is male and in turn that any reproduction of the subject will reflect only the same.

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1 See RAIN 2009.
2 Irigaray 1985, p. 27.
Returning to understandings of rape, Monique Plaza describes rape as a "social sexing."\(^4\) That is, rape marks the body. It is an act, Plaza explains, in which one body is gendered a "social woman" against a "social man."\(^5\) Always a social woman, a rape victim is excluded from representing his or her experience within a masculine symbolic that only ever reproduces the same.

This project began as a reading of rape literature, a survey of stories about rape. Among an array of contemporary fiction, from Lewis Nkosi's *Mating Birds* to Margaret Atwood's "Rape Fantasies", one novel stood out and caused me to abandon my investigation into representation. Irvine Welsh's *Marabou Stork Nightmares*, with its typographical acrobatics and Scottish dialect, relies on expression, which is immediate and preverbal. Through space and movement *Marabou Stork* expresses a sensible experience of the gendered, lived body—the impact is an inarticulable "reading" of expression. Because *Marabou Stork* constructs meaning through a nonverbal medium, it could not be read solely in terms of Irigarayan theory.

In *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* Deleuze looks to Bacon's paintings to translate sensible aggregates (space, line, color) into concepts, particularly becoming-other. Although I hope I have made explicit that the various aspects of Welsh's novel (its content, typography, dialect, and so on) cannot be understood separately, I turned to Deleuze's work on painting rather than literature because like Bacon's paintings Welsh's typography deals in sensible aggregates, through space, alignment, font, and point size. For this reason, as well as the similarities between Bacon's chaotic and nearly grotesque style and Welsh's own style, I applied Deleuze's Baconian theory of the logic of sensation to *Marabou Stork*. And thus I call this a reading of a minor literature through Deleuze's Baconian lens.

\(^4\) Plaza 1981, p. 29, emphasis in original.
A figural painter, Bacon focuses on the body—not as a figure represented but as the Figure deformed through forces. Through this deformation, he captures sensation. A sensation exists because a force has been exerted on the body. Forces and sensation are not synonymous. They are linked. A force is not that which is sensed, "since the sensation 'gives' something completely different from the forces that condition it." These forces are unobjectifiable yet sensible, such as pressure, inertia, weight, attraction, gravitation, and germination. They are also the more cognitive forces of emotion, such as the forces of guilt and shame that are exerted onto Roy's psyche. Bacon paints the body as it experiences a sensation as a result of these forces on the body. This is the body becoming-other—that is, being deterritorialized through difference—or what in *Francis Bacon* Deleuze terms "the Figure". Welsh's *Marabou Stork* reveals a body in the process of becoming-woman (the Figure); it reveals unobjectifiable forces at work on the body. It is the bodily expression of the invisible forces of sexual assault that continue to act on the body that pushes the narrative forward. Through the body, sensation "incarnates the event." Thus, *Marabou Stork* is both a story of the body's violation and a story told through the body.

Becoming-other entails a challenging of personal identity, shattering the conceptual organization of essentialist group identity. It engages subjects at their utmost limits of their being, destabilizing consciousness and creating new abilities to perceive difference. Becoming-other, be it animal or woman, is not about being something else but about perceiving difference through a process of becoming. I have argued that in its transcendence of content and representation, becoming-other can reveal linguistically unrepresentable gendered experience, unlike the closed symbolic categories of, say, "woman" or "man."

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6 Deleuze 2003, p. 48.
7 Deleuze 2003, p. 48.
8 See Deleuze and Guattari 1994 (p. 165).
In Deleuze’s study of Bacon paintings he links becoming-other to the interaction of three basic elements: the Figure, the Ring, and the field. In my reading of Marabou Stork I treat the sexual violence that permeates Roy—through language and action—as the field. As does Bacon’s Figure, Roy too continually returns to the field, even though it is that violence that he struggles to escape. Indeed, the novel concludes with his dissipation, as he transforms into the Stork, a metaphor for the sexual violence he experiences as a child in South Africa.

The forces of violence acting on the Figure also emerge from the Ring, which isolates the Figure. When referring to the Ring, I pointed to Roy’s childhood hiding spot, a well in the garage, to which he would retreat from his Uncle Gordon’s sexual molestations. There he would fantasize about his adventures in South Africa. During his narrative, Roy turns to his fantasies of South Africa to escape; however, even there the repressed rearises. His violent memories return distorted but forceful, causing the body to turn on itself. Likewise, in Bacon’s paintings the Ring is not a refuge but a technique Bacon uses to isolate the Figure in order to provoke its athletic escape.

When forces from the field and the Ring are exerted on the body, the body turns on itself becoming the Figure. In Marabou Stork the body’s (Roy’s) athleticism pushes the narrative forward, as Roy moves from his South African dream-world (the Ring) to his memories and to his hospital-bed present. What connects Welsh to the logic of sensation is his use of levels. Though Welsh uses psychic levels, both Welsh and Bacon reveal sensation as passing between spaces and from one “level” to another—from Figure to Ring to field. This movement from the Ring to the field is present in Marabou Stork, as Roy, reacting to the forces around him, attempts to escape to the Ring (his South Africa dream world) and eventually, metamorphosed into Stork, dissipates into the field. This dissertation explored this logic of sensation at work in Marabou Stork. I argued that Welsh’s typography enables him to spatialize Roy’s psyche revealing levels of forces at work on Roy that are not so easily expressed in a more traditional verbal medium.
For example, manipulating space, Welsh mobilizes the Figure through typographical laddering, as Bacon does with his sinks or various portals. When Bacon paints the Figure attempting to escape through a sink or keyhole, the forces at work on the body are revealed in the Figure’s deformation. Likewise, Welsh’s ladders reveal deformation:

DEEPER. Things get dis

\[ \text{up} \quad - \quad - \quad - \quad \text{We're just going to take your temperature,} \]
\[ \text{start} \quad \text{Roy. Have you got the bedpan, Nurse Norton?} \]
\[ \text{I} \quad \text{Number Twos now Roy, time for Number Twos.} \]

I lose control when they interfere -- -- and

Yes, he's looking brighter this morning, isn't he, Nurse Devine? You're brighter this morning.

Roy lovey 10

"Distorted" deforms into "dis," and as the text climbs upward, our reading is also distorted. Before we have a chance to process the meaning of "I lose control when they interfere", we read interruption (in "dis") and loss of control (in the lengthy fall from "dis" to "I lose..."). Through the narrative's deformation, the reader perceives the text before conceptualizing it.

Through deformation Welsh expresses the forces behind the experiences of sexual assault that still haunt Roy. This return to experience—rather than subjecthood—is crucial to my argument: Welsh’s typography expresses the feminine, not woman or women. Although I rely on the idea of social markings that permeate language, I do not argue that Welsh has overcome woman’s linguistic unrepresentability. The symbolic and its discursive history still govern such terms. Nor do I propose to have discovered a feminine symbolic in the realm of typography. Like other feminists, I point to a different linguistic space.\(^\text{11}\) While some feminists have emphasized the importance of touch or

\(^{10}\) Welsh, p. 1.
\(^{11}\) See, for example, Kristeva’s semiotics (1986).
rhythm,\textsuperscript{12} I would like to suggest that there are possibilities for the feminine embedded in the visual arts as well. Deleuze’s aesthetic theory on Bacon as it is applied to Welsh’s \textit{Marabou Stork} is paradigmatic of such visual expression.

I argued that \textit{Marabou Stork} reveals Deleuze’s logic of sensation, but in \textit{Francis Bacon} Deleuze engages with this logic only as it applies to the visual arts. This dissertation aimed to reveal how all arts trace the same philosophical line, with the hope of igniting a dialogue between the various arts. Bacon and Welsh were not the first, nor the only artists to employ this logic. In concluding, I would like to briefly point to this line running through other areas of art as well.

African American Blues—in its history of a tradition of pain—offers one of the most poignant examples of expressing an experience through the logic of sensation. Indeed, “[the] blues,” says Ralph Ellison, “is an \textit{impulse} to keep the painful details and episodes of a brutal experience alive in one’s aching consciousness, to \textit{finger} its \textit{jagged} grain, and to transcend it, not by the consolation of philosophy but by \textit{squeezing} from it a near tragic, near-comic lyricism.”\textsuperscript{13} Ellison’s words—the impulse...to finger its jagged grain...by squeezing”—point to the forces of deformation foundational to expressing an experience through the logic of sensation. He contends that this experience is transcended “not by the consolation of philosophy” but by a deformation that is a matter of feeling, not thought. This deformation through feeling rather than conceptualization is at the heart of such logic. And when Ellison “finger[s] its jagged grain”, he locates an essence beyond symbolic detection. Beginning with a feminist question, this dissertation explored how Welsh’s work “fingers” that “jagged grain”—and what exactly it “squeezes” out.

\textsuperscript{12} See Kristeva (1986; rhythm) and Irigaray (1980 and 1985; touch) for discussions on the role of the nonverbal in feminine communication.
\textsuperscript{13} Ellison 1952, pp. 78–79, emphasis mine.
In a similar tradition to *Marabou Stork*, female artists have turned to the arts to respond to problems of representation. Female performance artists conflate positions traditionally split in the artistic process: the artist, the material (object), and the traditional female muse (model). The 1960s and '70s saw a wave of female performance artists using their art to reinscribe woman’s violated body. In doing so, such artists as Eleanor Antin, Carolee Schneeman, Adrian Piper, and others began to realize that “images and texts created by women that deal with female body-experience have the tendency to be more rigorous and independent if they are about the body’s pain.” They returned to the lived body. Because conventional “positive” representations of women have been so imbedded in—and indeed implicated in—the historical exploitation of the female body, pain, or deformation, offered possibilities for deconstructing that body.

Welsh, meanwhile, deforms narrative to deconstruct the feminine experience against a masculine violence. By focusing on experience, rather than the sexed body, he avoids reinscribing woman as victimized or masochistic as many female performance artists seem to do through their use of physical pain. Gina Pane’s “Norriture, actualités télévisées, feu,” for instance, begins by her devouring a large quantity of raw ground meat and then regurgitating it. In part two she sits with the audience watching the evening news. And in her final scene she stomps out a small fire with her bare feet. Such art risks reinscribing woman with the same Freudian inscription: an inherit *woundedness* from castration.

Because, as described in chapter 3, Welsh undermines the reliability of speakers and narrators in *Marabou Stork*, there is no subject to reinscribe. Instead, all speakers are identities in flux, only understood through their experiences as continuous becomings. Welsh’s technique points to other novels and their possible readings—such as the typographical workings in Alasdair Gray’s *Lanark* or W.G. Sebald’s photography, or

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14 Valerie Export quoted in Anja Zimmerman, p. 31.
writers like Junot Díaz, whose Spanish code-switching disrupts the majoritarian linguistic rhythm. Refusing to rely on only one sense, such novels point to the unity between the arts, and in turn, the knowledge that can be gained through interdisciplinary studies. But more important, such techniques offer the chance for new voices to be heard. This dissertation hoped to show how through adopting a logic of sensation a voice denied access to traditional representation, the feminine, can be heard.
Bibliography


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