gray goo (a nanotech apocalypse in which everything on earth is reduced to identical copies of infinitesimally small self-replicating machines), a final epidemic can leave the biosphere intact, along with plenty of loot for survivors. The epidemic is invariably swift, which spares readers too much distressing imagery. Two of the finest novels of human extinction, Gore Vidal’s *Klute* (1978) and Kurt Vonnegut’s *Galapagos* (1985), feature terminal epidemics. Now Margaret Atwood updates the story of disease-induced human extinction for the first decade of the 21st century.

*Oryx and Crake* is set in a near-future that is like today, only more so. Gigantic corporations with names like OrganInc, HelthWyzer and RejuvenEsence rule the earth. Society is divided into have and have-nots. The have-haves work for or run the corporations, live in gated compounds with good shopping. The have-nots live in theplebeians, vast crime-ridden slums. Jimmy and Crake meet in high school in the HelthWyzer compound, where their parents work. Both boys are loners. Jimmy cultivates a jaundiced view of the world and thinks about sex. Crake, whose father died a few years before, an apparent suicide, is remote and academically gifted. The boys play computer games together, favoring ones that involve extinction lore, historical battles or world conquest. They surf the net and discover sites dedicated to open heart surgeries, executions, animal torture and pornography. On a site called HotTotts, which features child sex in impoverished countries, they first see Oryx, an exquisitely beautiful child prostitute from somewhere in Southeast Asia. Both boys are extraordinary, and all genuinely seize the moment, the body without organs and a host of concepts that emerged from Descartes’s cogito, Kant’s sublime, Hegel’s dialectic and so on. Familiarity with such absence of sentimentality of what is at stake.

### Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation


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Often, a philosopher’s body of work can become tied down to a set of shorthand references. Plato’s cave, Descartes’s cogito, Kant’s sublime, Hegel’s dialectic and so on. Familiarity asks for clarity, and clarity delivers what in some cases is a philosophical soundbite. Arguably, this sort of shorthand has been happening to more modern philosophers such as Gilles Deleuze. For many, Deleuze’s name has been tied to a set of concepts that emerged out of *A Thousand Plateaus* (co-authored with Félix Guattari): the rhizome, deterritorialization, multiplicity, the body without organs and a host of other concepts.

With this in mind, it is a welcome event to see many of Deleuze’s neglected other writings being translated for the first time. Deleuze’s work on the painter Francis Bacon is one such book. First published in 1981, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* is a book that marks a move towards the later Deleuze, in which the philosopher explored aesthetics and culture in a more focused vein. Deleuze’s cinema
books have had a decisive impact on film studies, and his writings on literature and music promise to do the same for their respective areas. Deleuze’s book on Bacon—like the cinema books—is as much a book of philosophy as it is a book on painting. Those familiar with Deleuze’s work will encounter familiar concepts—the diagram, faciality, difference and repetition, and haptic space. However, these and other concepts are placed within the affective space, or the “logic of sensation” of Bacon’s paintings.

Likewise, those familiar with Bacon’s twisted, distorted, mangled faces and figures will find here a complementary conceptual voice in Deleuze. Deleuze’s book is not art criticism, nor does it ever claim to be. He works as a philosopher, but one who always begins from Bacon’s paintings, and his concepts emerge from the paintings—not as interpretations, but as a kind of resonance between “concept” and “affect.”

The book is divided into 17 chapters, and the Minnesota edition includes an excellent introduction by Daniel Smith (also the translator), as well as an afterward by Tom Conley. In each chapter of the book, Deleuze begins from a particular aspect of Bacon’s paintings: arena and ring, body and figure, athleticism, the triptych, the face and the head, and the tactile and haptic qualities of paint itself. In each chapter one finds Deleuze developing new concepts and new ways of thinking about aesthetics, ways that are never far from thinking about the body, or violence, or politics. Deleuze not only mediates on Bacon’s paintings, but also draws upon art history. His concepts emerge from a strange sort of immersed stoicism in his consideration of the affective capacity of Bacon’s paintings (and hence the subtitle, “The Logic of Sensation”).

Take, for instance, the chapter on “Body, Meat, and Spirit,” a chapter that highlights some of the best aspects of both Bacon’s painting and Deleuze’s thought. As Deleuze notes, meat is both horrific in its implications and yet beautiful in its raw materiality. “Meat is not dead flesh—It manifests such convulsive pain and vulnerability, but also such delightful invention, color, and acrobatics” (p. 21). Deleuze effectively rethinks Cartesianism through the “athleticism” of meat; “meat,” for Deleuze, is a concept that describes a zone of indiscernibility between flesh and bone. Speaking of Bacon’s 1975 Three Figures and a Portrait, he notes that “[m]eat is the state of the body in which flesh and bone confront each other locally rather than being composed structurally” (p. 20–21). In this way, “the bones are like a trapeze apparatus (the carcass) upon which the flesh is the acrylic” (p. 21). For Deleuze, the real tension is not between body and mind (or even body and soul), but rather between flesh and bone. “Meat” is the name for that tension. “Meat, the common zone of spirit and the beast, their zone of indiscernibility” (p. 21). Chapters such as this one evoke the affective role of “meat” in contemporary art. For instance, one thinks of Diane Gromala’s piece Meat-Book, in which a time-based (that is, decaying) slab of meat is embedded with proximity sensors in silicone, causing the meat to react and quiver as the viewer approaches it.

Deleuze’s study is fascinating, whether or not you are a fan of Francis Bacon’s painting. The book is really about sensation itself, or rather, a notion of sensation that is not a kind of procedural, Kantian container-sensation. For Deleuze, sensation is always a verb, not a noun, and this book is an attempt to make this movement and logic of sensation apparent—but not necessarily visible.

PHILOSOPHIZING ART: SELECTED ESSAYS

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Arthur Danto is known primarily as a philosopher of art, and this volume of essays on art is the companion to another collection of more philosophically oriented essays, The Body/Body Problem, reviewed recently in this journal.

For Danto then proceeds to write about art from a philosophical perspective is not so much to expound a particular doctrine or mode of analysis as it is to bring philosophical insights to bear on the difficulties inherent in (mostly) contemporary art. These difficulties—problems of representation, meaning, reference and interpretation—that Danto recognizes are no less profound, complex or urgent than the problems of contemporary philosophy.

In his chapter on Robert Motherwell, the seminal American expressionist, Danto claims that the artist saw painting itself as a problem, very much as the great philosophers of the past saw knowledge itself—or understanding, or truth—as a problem, or as, in the twentieth century, philosophers found philosophy itself to be a problem to which increasingly radical solutions were proposed (p. 14).

Motherwell’s strategy for resolving the problem of painting was to adopt a mode of practice that “demanded a wholesale reconstructive methodological solution” (p. 15). This was the “psychic automatism” propounded by Breton in his literary work, but hardly applied to visual art by the original Surrealist circle.

The paintings and drawings Motherwell made using the automatist approach (originally popularized by the psychics and mediums of the 19th-century spiritualist revival) pose a number of problems, not just for the philosophy of art, but for the philosophy of mind. In these works we are presented with urgent, mostly scruffy, marks that speak of meaningfulness, holding cognition at bay, but which we inevitably try to reconcile with memory, to find in them known objects or meaning. Consequently, the ordinary perceptual process is somehow challenged or disengaged so that one becomes conscious, as it were, of one’s act of viewing, sifting and guessing. One is left,