

○ THE FACE OF CHRIST

DELEUZE AND GUATTARI ON THE POLITICS OF WORD AND IMAGE

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In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari manifest a strange fascination for paintings of Christ, as well as for the biblical Hebrews, their God, and his written word. For the two French theorists, however, the portraits of Christ do not represent the son of God, but rather deploy faciality, marking the predominance of a regime of signs necessary to the politics which underpin Western Christianity. Deleuze and Guattari's critique of representation can be used to address several conceptual difficulties encountered by the new generation of art historians which has taken conceptually sophisticated positions in regard to Byzantine and medieval holy artworks. The question of the power of holy artworks, their relationship to holy texts, and their effect on ordinary beholders had been neglected, these art historians claim, although, unlike Deleuze and Guattari, they do not reject the theory of representation outright. The first section of this paper shows how the notion of faciality upholds Deleuze's critique of representation, while identifying resonances between his critique and problems expressed by a number of art historians. The second section of the paper continues to map out an encounter between the concerns of Deleuze and Guattari and those of art historians, in regard to the political history of Christian visual art.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari manifest a strange fascination for paintings of Christ, as well as for the biblical Hebrews, their God, and his written word. Their discussions of Christian art and the Hebrew God illustrate their notion of semiotic regimes, which deploy faces and signs in various configurations, according to the needs of the regime in power. According to *A Thousand Plateaus*, the birth of Christ signals the initiation of a new regime of signs, one in which 'faciality' predominates. Certain political regimes need the face, others do not, the book claims. Christianity requires a visible face, whereas biblical-era Judaism did not. 'The face is a politics' (Deleuze et al. 1987 p. 181). Deleuze and Guattari argue that, on the one hand, Christian artists unleashed the creative potential of the Christ-face, that painting was faciality's positive effect, and that on the other hand, European racism was the negative effect of the Christ-face, the face of 'the average ordinary European white man' (p. 178). The emergence of the face repositions the Word in the semiotic regime associated with Christianity. Paintings of Christ therefore play a crucial role in this new regime of signs. Significantly, the 'plateau' entitled 'Year Zero: Faciality' is illustrated with a painting of Christ, Duccio's 'Calling of Saint Peter and Saint Andrew' (p. 167).

A Thousand Plateaus does not mention the Old Testament interdiction of images so passionately upheld by iconoclasts. For Deleuze and Guattari, however, the painting is not necessarily an image, even in the case of figurative painting. The very term 'image' plunges one immediately into the world of representation, the hierarchically ordered world from which *A Thousand Plateaus* seeks liberation, following the critique of representation developed elsewhere by Deleuze

(Deleuze 1990). Under the regime of representation, a painting can only be an 'image' which refers to, imitates or reproduces something else. This is not what true artists do, according to Deleuze and Guattari. Artists unleash creative lines of flight which escape the constraints of representation. The painting is therefore not an image, but a machine, an orchestration of sensations, an expression of Dionysian joy. The face of Christ is not an image of Christ, but rather a part – a component – of the Christ-machine, the politico-historical machine of Christianity.

Deleuze and Guattari's critique of representation can be used to address several conceptual difficulties encountered by the new generation of art historians which has taken conceptually sophisticated positions in regard to Byzantine and medieval holy artworks. The question of the power of holy artworks, their relationship to holy texts, and their effect on ordinary beholders had been neglected, these art historians claim. Deleuze and Guattari would agree with these scholars that Christian visual art does much more than illustrate the Bible. However, unlike the authors of *A Thousand Plateaus*, the art historians do not reject representation outright. The first section of this paper shows how the notion of faciality upholds Deleuze's critique of representation, while identifying resonances between his critique and problems expressed by a number of art historians. The second section of the paper continues to map out an encounter between the concerns of Deleuze and Guattari and those of art historians, in regard to the political history of Christian visual art.

This paper thus proposes a rethinking of Christian holy art outside of the realm of representation, as picture without image. In order to keep open the possibility of thinking of figurative painting outside of representation, it is necessary to avoid the slippages inherent in the term 'image'. An 'image' can be graphic (pictures, statues, designs), optical (mirrors, projections), perceptual (sense data, appearances), mental (dreams, memories, ideas, fantasmata), or verbal (metaphor, description). The only thing that these types of image have in common is that all can be defined in terms of likeness, resemblance or similitude to some other thing (Mitchell 1986 p. 10). By confusing graphic images with abstract images (optical, perceptual, mental, verbal), the term 'image' remains inextricably bound up with representation. Throughout this paper, I therefore avoid using the term 'image', preferring instead more concretely graphic terms such as 'picture', 'painting', 'artwork', or 'portrait'.

REJECTING REPRESENTATION, OR FIGURATIVE PAINTING WITHOUT IMAGE

Discussions of Christian visual art have often been cast in terms of a competition between word and pictorial image, between scripture and visual representation, even among iconophiles. One way of thinking about the relationship between words and pictorial images is to think of both as representations. Such an understanding of religious depiction casts both words and pictures as representations of God. In Saussurean terms, the Bible and Christian artworks are signifiers (or signs), while God would be the signified (or referent). The question then arises, which represents God better, the word or the visual image? This is surely too simplistic a model for the understanding of holy figurative art.

Several recent art historical accounts of Christian holy art point out inadequacies in the theory of representation. Representation cannot account for many dimensions of the plastic arts, for (at least) three reasons. First, the theory of representation makes the pictorial image dependent on a referent. In his discussion of portraits of Christ, Gerhard Wolf faults art history itself for

its tendency to either neglect the picture, making it a mirror of something else, or to look only at the picture, neglecting the world (Wolf 1995 p. 105). In other words, art history has been caught between formalism (neglecting the world) and iconology (neglecting the picture), neither of which has been capable of addressing the problems presented by holy pictures. How can the picture be explained in its own terms, without recourse to a text or a referent? Second, the representational model does not take into account the power of pictures believed to be invested with the divine *presence*, as Hans Belting has characterised the difference between holy artworks and other artworks. Belting in this way points to a dissymmetry between holy text and holy picture. Icons in particular were (and in some cases still are) thought to have a direct link to a saint or to Christ (as in the shroud of Turin or the Veronica veil). An icon is therefore not strictly speaking a representation, because it is perceived as a real presence, to follow Belting's logic. 'Only the portrait, or image, has the presence necessary for veneration, whereas the narrative exists only in the past' (Belting 1994 p. 10). It seems to me that this fundamental dissymmetry between word (existing only in the past) and pictorial image (perceived as real presence) cannot be explained through the theory of representation, which posits a symmetry between word and picture by subordinating both to the referent. The theory of representation itself cannot therefore adequately account for the difference between the word and the holy work of art, whereas Belting's theory of presence does provide a basis for explaining a hierarchical relationship between word and pictorial image: 'In the pictorial history of Christ and the saints, the portrait, or *imago*, always ranked higher than the narrative image, or *historia*' (p. 10). The picture finds favour among the faithful because its evocation of the real presence produces results.¹ A third shortcoming of the theory of representation concerns the positing of the picture as a representation of a text, as in the art historical tradition of iconology. This critique of iconology would apply to understanding Christian holy artwork as a mere illustration of the words of the Bible. The art historical practice of iconology 'examines the content of images and not their power, rooting analysis in the relationship between text and image rather than between beholder and image', writes Michael Camille (1989 p. xxvi). The iconological method leaves the viewer out of the account, denying the meanings brought to the artwork by the viewer, as well as the powerful effects of the artwork on the viewer. Holy art and holy word function differently, harnessing different modes of power.

The problem with comprehending portrait art representationally in the referential terms of sign and signified can be illustrated with the example of the teddy bear, suggests EH Gombrich (1990) in his response to David Freedberg's controversial book, *The Power of Images* (Freedberg 1989). Freedberg holds up the 'holy image' (by which he means religious pictures and sculptures) as prototypical of all visual art, arguing that 'what is constitutive of images – all of them – is that they are replete with the possibility of inherence, fusion and enlivenment' (Freedberg 1995 p. 76). He explains the 'power of images' by positing a fusion between sign and signified, or between image and prototype (Freedberg 1989 pp. 32, 188, 202, etc.). For example, a Christic icon fuses the prototype (Christ himself) with an image (such as a painting or imprinted shroud). The power of pictorial images lies in the viewer's response, which, psychologically, tends toward fusing image and prototype; the viewer thereby apprehends the prototype as inherent in the image, bringing the image alive. Freedberg insists that inherence, fusion and enlivenment take place not only with animistic or holy images, but with all images, even those classified in the West as 'art'. Gombrich takes issue with Freedberg's use of the terms 'sign' and 'signified' (which he sometimes

uses in place of ‘image’ and ‘prototype’) throughout the book, declaring that ‘this application of Saussurean terminology obscures rather than illuminates the problem’.² In thinking about pictorial art, Freedberg should have looked to the nursery for an example, says Gombrich. The teddy bear exists on its own terms, independent of reference. ‘The teddy bear is not a sign signifying a nonexistent species of bears, it is a member of that species, existing in its own right to be hugged, chastised, or thrown into a corner’ (Gombrich p. 7). The ontology of the teddy bear need not be traced back to an original or prototype. It does not in any way evoke a real bear for the child. There is in fact no original, not even in the mind of the child who perceives the teddy bear as animate. The teddy bear *represents* nothing. Its emotive power cannot be attributed to any kind of signifying, representative function. The teddy bear’s power comes from what it is, stuffing and fake fur, from what it does for the child, and from what the child does with it. Art functions similarly, implies Gombrich.

However, despite its conceptual shortcomings, the theory of representation has dominated the Christian theology of pictorial images. Theologians and art historians alike are aware that the Old Testament account of man’s creation in God’s image can be understood as a problem of representation. In fact, Freedberg counters Gombrich’s critique of his sign-signified theory of art by saying that ‘the terminology was not Saussurean, it was Nicaean’ (Freedberg 1995 p. 75). In this respect, Saussure must be understood as the heir of the Nicaeans. Likewise, the New Testament’s account of Christ as the incarnation of God in flesh resembles representation in its logical structure. That Christ’s incarnation was a problem of the image was the view of Byzantine iconophile theologians like John of Damascus (Wolf 1995 p. 169). The theory of representation was in fact used to justify Christian visual art. Worshippers could be defended by the claim that they were responding to the signified and not to the sign; that is, to God and not to the image of God. Idols, in this view, would be pure empty sign, an image without a referent. ‘Idolatry seemed ridiculous to Christians because of this very lack of signification, this absence of reference beyond’ (Camille 1989 p. 14). Freedberg notes Saint Basil’s defence of images, that the honour paid to an image passes to its prototype, or, in Saussurean terms, from the sign to the signified. ‘The Byzantine theory of images is paradigmatic precisely because it, more than any other, reveals an intense awareness of the need to clarify the distinction between image and prototype’ (Freedberg 1995 p. 74). Given the multiple condemnations of image-making in the Bible (Camille pp. 27–30), Christian iconophiles had to find ways to define a figurative art practice that would not be a making of ‘graven images’ or ‘idols’. As Camille observes, ‘The Christian Church was never in doubt that idolatry should always be condemned; the perennial debate was how to define and separate “correct” visual representations from incorrect idols and how to operate within that definition’ (p. xxvii). There are good images and bad idols; good Christians must know the difference.

In his stinging critique of representation, Deleuze exposes the ‘dialectic of rivalry’ behind this choosing between good and bad images – between acceptable Christian images and unacceptable idols. He locates the Christian theory of the image within the history of philosophy, explaining that the messy business of representation began with Plato, whose theory of the image boils down to a matter of “making a difference,” of distinguishing the “thing” itself from its images, the original from the copy, the model from the simulacrum’ (Deleuze 1990 p. 253). Thus Platonism defines two kinds of images, *copies*, which are ‘well-founded pretenders guaranteed by resemb-

lance', and *simulacra*, which are 'like false pretenders, built upon a dissimilarity, implying an essential perversion or a deviation' (p. 256). The simulacrum, then, is not inferior because it is a copy of a copy, but rather because it is different in nature, being without resemblance. While the simulacrum might resemble the original externally, it does not resemble its object internally, since the simulacrum is not modelled on the Platonic Idea. Deleuze illustrates the distinction between the copy (endowed with resemblance) and the simulacrum (without resemblance) by reminding his readers of the God of the Old Testament. 'The catechism, so much inspired by Platonism, has familiarised us with this notion [of representation]. God made man in his image and resemblance. Through sin, however, man lost the resemblance while maintaining the image. We have become simulacra' (p. 257). Adam was at first a good copy, because he resembled God internally. After the fall, he became a bad simulacrum, without resemblance. Humans became simulacra with the fall, not because man is a copy of Adam, who was already a copy, but rather because man has lost his internal resemblance to the Idea, to God himself. To view God in this way is to dwell in the 'world of representation'. This world operates through 'the selection among pretenders, the exclusion of the *eccentric* and the *divergent*, in the name of a superior finality, an essential reality, or even a meaning of history' (p. 260; my emphasis).

Rather than accepting the world of representation and its policing of divergence and eccentricity, Deleuze invites his readers to enter the world of simulacra, a world which embraces the different and the divergent, in which the simulacrum 'breaks its chains and rises to the surface', affirming 'its phantasmatic power, that is, its repressed power' (Deleuze 1990 p. 261). Representation represses the rebellious simulacrum, excluding it for its divergence and eccentricity, rejecting it in favour of the conformist copy. In classifying all earthly things as copy or simulacrum, including man himself, representation posits the world as icon, notes Deleuze. The simulacrum, in contrast, posits the world as phantasm, and 'harbors a positive power which denies *the original and the copy, the model and the reproduction*' (p. 262). The simulacrum destroys hierarchy, establishes nomadic distributions and crowned anarchies, and affirms creative chaos, divergence and decentring (pp. 263–5). The world of the simulacrum comes about with Nietzsche's 'twilight of the idols'. Simulacra earn their place among icons and copies. Dionysius triumphs over Plato. Dionysian life-affirming joy triumphs over the Christian denial of life (Deleuze 1983 pp. 15–17). Deleuze, however, finds life-affirming joy in some versions of Christianity, such as medieval theology and Christian painting: 'With what joy the painters used the face of Christ himself, taking it in every sense and direction; and it was not simply the joy of a desire to paint, but the joy of all desires' (Deleuze et al. 1987 p. 189).³ Daniel W. Smith indeed suggests that for Deleuze, God freed philosophical concepts from the onerous task of representation, allowing them 'to assume fantastic dimensions' (Smith 2001 p.167).⁴ Painting at its best does not represent, and neither do philosophical concepts. Liberated from representation, word and pictorial image alike become joyful acts of creative production. The pursuit of such life-affirming joy allows Christians to dwell in the world of the simulacrum. Creative thinking and creative aesthetic production become central to Deleuze and Guattari's project of liberation, as developed in *A Thousand Plateaus*. The Christ face so joyfully harnessed by painters does more than inspire creative aesthetic production, according to *A Thousand Plateaus*. It also sets in motion a new politics, one in which pictorial art plays a crucial role.

POLITICS OF THE FACE

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, the face of Christ inaugurates a new ‘regime of signs’, one in which the visible face dominates over the written text. Art historians of Christian pictorial practice are well aware of the politics of religious art under the reign of representation, and its historical evolution from the Judaic ban on figuration to the early Christian cult of figuration to the Byzantine ban to the medieval European practices of figuration. Eva Kuryluk sets out the terms of the first part of this history:

Dissenting from Judaism in a late Hellenistic world saturated with images, Christianity is initially reluctant to embrace icons. But the existence of Jesus, a *vera icon* of divinity created in Mary’s flesh, calls for representation. The New Testament adds to the linguistic God Father... a visual God Son... (Kuryluk 1991 p. 8).

Kuryluk’s aim here is to point out the gendering of this politics of the pictorial image (masculine ban, feminine embrace). She at the same time highlights the word-picture rivalry, though she remains solidly entrenched within the language of representation. Siding with the image-loving Greeks against the iconoclastic Jews, Christians decide in favour of representing Christ, who is himself his Father’s representative on earth. The words of the Hebrew Bible are supplemented by the visual images of the new Christ. The *vera icon* (a picture of Christ believed to have been produced by divine means, such as the imprint of his bodily fluids on cloth) thus signals a hierarchical reversal, the formerly triumphant word ceding to the triumph of the visual image.

Deleuze and Guattari depart from the world of representation by describing this shift from Judaic ban to the Christian embrace of holy pictures as a change in semiotic configuration of political power, or regime of signs.⁵ For them, painting does not therefore *represent* the face of Christ; rather, painting deploys the face within a particular semiotic orchestration of power. Deleuze and Guattari’s (non-exhaustive) typology of semiotic regimes revolves around the role of signification and of subjectification in various types of governance.⁶ The despot deploys signification and shows his face. The authoritarian relies on subjectification and turns aside his face. The primitive needs no signification, no subjectification and no face. The warrior-nomad operates primarily by numbers and loses his face in an animal-becoming. Capitalism and Christianity blend signification with subjectification, producing facility in its full force. Table 1 illustrates the typology of regimes of signs which Deleuze and Guattari describe in their text.

To paraphrase Eva Kuryluk (1991), as quoted above, the ‘linguistic father’ of the post-Decalogue Hebrews relied on subjectification under the authoritarian regime, after the Hebrews received the tablets on which God has inscribed the law, in words. The linguistic father was preceded by a despotic father who relied on signification, on the emission of signs. The written word of the linguistic father led to the internalisation of the word, which characterises subjectification. The ‘visual son’ combined his father’s regimes of signification and subjectification, thereby discovering the full power of the face. Following this logic, Christians embraced pictures of their Christ because their semiotic regime needed the face in order to function.

	<i>Pre-signifying Regime</i>	<i>Signifying Regime</i>	<i>Counter-signifying Regime</i>	<i>Post-signifying Regime</i>	<i>Mixed regime of signifi-ance-subjectification</i>
Assemblage of power	Primitive	Despotic	Nomadic	Authoritarian	Assemblages of power act through signifiers upon souls and subjects
Example		Egyptian Pharaoh	Hebrews in the desert	Hebrews after receipt of tablets	Christianity (modern White man)
Overcoding	Multiple substances of expression	Signifier (signifi-ance)	Numbers	Subjectification	Total interpenetration of signifi-ance – subjectification
Face	No faces; head is part of the body	Face of God / Despot	Face loses its individuality in an animal-becoming	Averted faces	FACIALITY assumes its full scope

Table 1

The face of Christ, then, is a politics, not a mode of representation. It functions not as image, but rather as a substance of expression through which social relations operate. Different regimes privilege different substances of expression. In *A Thousand Plateaus* the ‘power’ of the painting of Christ does not come primarily from the creative forces that produced it, nor does it arise from the power of picture over word, but rather from the power of the face itself. Deleuze and Guattari define ‘faciality’ as a mode of signification and subjectification peculiar to Europe and Europe-derived cultures. Guattari first developed the notion of faciality in his book *L’Inconscient machinique*, as part of his critique of linguistics, which, he argues does not sufficiently take the context and conditions of enunciation into account, therefore neglecting the connection between language and the constitution of social power (Guattari 1979). He is particularly harsh in his criticism of Saussure. In support of his insistence on the importance of the face, Guattari cites psychologists’ studies of mother-infant interaction. American child psychology shows that the infant recognises the mother’s face long before situating her body within its cognitive world (Robson 1967 p. 18). Animal ethology further confirms the importance of the face in the establishment of social relations. Lacan’s mirror stage likewise recognises the significance of the face. However, claims Guattari, none of these theories of the face adequately explore the power politics at stake.

The face and language together function politically, organising the social sphere. In *A Thousand Plateaus* Guattari and Deleuze insist that language must be understood in terms of the face, since language always comes from a face, and is incomprehensible without the face that emits it. ‘A child, woman, mother, man, father, boss, teacher, police officer, does not speak a general language but one whose signifying traits are indexed to specific faciality traits’ (pp. 167–168). There is, moreover, no signification and no subjectification without an accompanying faciality. Certain power formations cannot function without it. While despotic and authoritarian regimes produce and use the face, it is under assemblages of power such as Christianity, capitalism and psychoanalysis that faciality comes into its own.

The differences between various Judaic and Christian semiotic modes illustrate the politics of the face. The Word of the Hebrew God received by Moses emanated from a face, although the face was averted, made invisible (Deleuze et al. 1987 p. 123).⁷ The tablets of God replaced the face of God (p. 128). Indeed, the handing over of the tablets to Moses constituted a break between two regimes of signs, the counter-signifying regime of the Hebrews' nomadic desert wandering, and the post-signifying regime of authoritarian subjectification made possible by an internalisation of the written word. Whereas the despotic Pharaoh showed his face, the Hebrew God hid his face but sent his Word. Extending the arguments of Deleuze and Guattari, who do not explicitly discuss iconoclasm, I would like emphasise that the Judaic ban on images fits in with this logic of subjectification, whereby the invisibility of the Hebrew God's face formed the basis of his authority. Political change can thus be recounted in terms of the positioning of the face of God. For the post-Decalogue Hebrews, the face had to remain hidden in order to assure the smooth functioning of the semiotics of power in effect at the time.

The emergence of faciality, as manifested in the proliferation of pictorial images of Christ (as opposed to Judaic iconoclasm) signals a change in the regime of signs, one which entails a displacement of the text in the workings of power. The notion of faciality implies a repositioning of word in relation to the pictorial or sculptural image, of the linguistic word in relation to the visual face. It is not that there are no books in the despotic regime, but rather that its books retain their orality and emanate from the face of the despotic God. Powerful scribes and priests interpret the despot's books, fixing their signifieds and setting off their signifiers. The deterritorialised book of the authoritarian regime, in contrast, replaces the face of God.⁸ The role of interpretation changes (Deleuze et al. 1987 pp.126–127). '*The book has become the body of passion, just as the face was the body of the signifier*' (p. 127).

It is only under the mixed semiotic that faciality reunites passion and the signifier in the face, which replaces the body, as in Christian painting. For Deleuze and Guattari, the face of Christ is neither representation nor image, but rather a powerful new form of coding, an overcoding of the body by the face. In order to fully grasp the politics of the face, it is useful to imagine people without faces, but with beautifully expressive bodies. While all humans have heads, not all have faces. 'The head, even the human head, is not necessarily a face. The face is produced only when the head ceases to be a part of the body, where it ceases to be coded by the body, when it ceases to have a multidimensional polyvocal corporeal code—when the body, head included, has been decoded and has to be *overcoded* by something we shall call the Face' ((Deleuze et al. 1987 p. 170). The face is a machine for overcoding and deterritorialising. It is a deterritorialisation of the body, which is why 'primitive' peoples have no faces. 'The head is included in the body, but the face is not' (p. 170). Certain assemblages of power (such as those which have prevailed in Europe and North America since the reign of Christ) need the face; other assemblages of power (such as that governing the primitive tribe) do not. Primitive peoples have territorialised bodies, and therefore have no faces, and need no faces. Primitive enunciations make use of multiple substances of expression—dance, body markings, drumming, chanting, ritual. In contrast, when faciality, signification or subjectification dominates in a regime of signs, the substance of expression is limited (to the signifier in the case of the signifying regime, to subjectification for postsignifying, and to the signifier working through the subject in the mixed regime).

Just as the world of representation repressed divergence and eccentricity, so certain semiotic regimes repress most substances of expression: 'A concerted effort is made to do away with the body and corporeal coordinates through which the multidimensional or polyvocal semiotics operated. Bodies are disciplined, corporeality dismantled, ... deterritorialization pushed to a new threshold... A single substance of expression is produced' (Deleuze et al. 1987 p. 181). This 'single substance of expression' is of course language, the Word. The face is produced along with the dominance of language to the detriment of other substances of expression. Both language and the face are social productions, and are the products of what Deleuze and Guattari call 'the faciality machine', which, they claim, 'performs the facialization of the entire body and all its surroundings and objects'. The face, essential to the reign of linguistic enunciation, overcodes the deterritorialized body. 'The deterritorialization of the body implies an overcoding by the face'. They go on to observe that 'the semiotic of the signifier and the subjective never operate through bodies'. The body itself becomes facialised: 'our uniforms and clothes ... effect a facialization of the body' (p. 181). The body in effect disappears, semiotically speaking. The nude body itself becomes standardised, stylised, facialised. Christian painting participates in the facialisation of the body:

The most prodigious strokes of madness appear on canvas under the auspices of the Catholic code. A single example chosen from many [Giotto, *The Life of St. Francis*, scene XII, *The Transfiguration-Trans.*]: against the white background of the landscape and the black-blue hole of the sky, the crucified Christ-turned-kite-machine sends stigmata to Saint Francis by rays; the stigmata effect the facialization of the body of the saint, in the image of the body of Christ. (Deleuze et al. 1987 p. 178.)⁹

Although the stigmata evoke the body in its visceral physicality, the painting stylises them to the point that they look like kite strings which attach the figure of Christ to the figure of the saint receiving the imprint of the stigmata. The facialised body of Christ in turn facialises the saint's body by sending the stigmata.

The Christian aversion to the body is well known. The soul must be elevated, and the body disciplined. Wolf describes what we could call the facialisation of Christ's body, tracing the effacement of the full body in Christian holy icons. He cites as examples three of the most famous *vera icons* of Christ, the Lateran Saviour in the *Sancta Sanctorum* and the Veronica veil, both located in Rome, and the Mandylion of Constantinople. All are thought to have been produced by divine intervention, the Lateran Saviour by the hand of God working through Saint Luke, the Veronica veil and Mandylion by contact with Christ's sweaty face. The Veronica and Mandylion only ever showed Christ's face, but the Lateran Saviour was originally a full body portrait. Wolf describes the 'decorporalization' of the latter, to make it more like the former, emphasizing the spirituality of the face in preference to the materiality of the body. 'The Veronica... shows only a *face* and is therefore understood as... uncontaminated by bodily reality; its beauty was defined as purely spiritual' (Deleuze et al. 1987 p. 169). Innocent III had the Lateran Saviour covered by a silver sheet, leaving only the bust visible. Wolf cites one of Emperor Constantine's laws, which states that 'the human face is a simulacrum of the divine beauty' (p. 170). The isolated faces of the Mandylion in Constantinople and the Veronica in Rome indicate 'a new aesthetic of the body and the image' (p. 170).

The frontal view of Christ's face manifests the authoritarian aspect of the mixed regime of Christianity. Thomas Mathews's thesis that images of Christ developed out of the Roman-era cult of the emperor gestures toward the political power that Deleuze and Guattari locate in the face of Christ. Mathews argues that 'Frontality and symmetry are considered an imperial mode of composition, and the images of Christ get their punch from evoking in the viewer latent memories of the emperor in the same pose' (Mathews 1993 p. 14). Because the face of the despot is crucial to maintaining the semiotic regime of signification, the imperial face is depicted eyes facing forward. But why the switch from emperors to Christ? Christian images competed not only with the Bible, but also with Greco-Roman and pagan images, argues Mathews. 'The decline of the gods...had much to do with the bankruptcy of their images and the appearance of a more forceful set of divine images', the portraits of Christ and the saints (p. 10).

Deleuze and Guattari provide their own version of the art history of Christic portraiture. Christ's face initiated a mixed semiotic-subjectifying regime, but can also function within a despotic or an authoritarian political regime. They cite art historian Jean Paris to support their distinction between the two regimes, signifying-despotic (Byzantine mosaics) and authoritarian-passional (quattrocento painting):

The terrestrial signifying despotic face, the maritime subjective passional authoritarian face (the desert can also be a sea of land). Two figures of destiny, two states of the faciality machine. Jean Paris (1965) has clearly shown how these poles operate in painting, the pole of the despotic Christ and that of the passional Christ: on the one hand, the face of Christ seen from the front, as in a Byzantine mosaic, with the black hole of the eyes against a gold background, all depth projected forward; and on the other hand, faces that cross glances and turned away from each other, seen halfturned or in profile, as in a quattrocento painting, their sidelong glances drawing multiple lines, integrating depth into the painting itself (arbitrary examples of transition and mixture can be cited, such as Duccio's *Calling of Saint Peter and Saint Andrew*, against the background of an aquatic landscape; the second formula has already overtaken Christ and the first fisherman, while the second fisherman remains within the Byzantine code) (pp. 184–185).

This example nicely illustrates the positioning of the face in the different semiotic regimes. The full frontal face and the face averted in profile differentiate the despotic signifying regime of Byzantium from the passional authoritarian regime of early Renaissance Europe.

Just as painting manifests the joyous face of Christianity, European racism reveals the dark side of Christ's face. Rather than citing Judaic or Byzantine iconoclasm, Deleuze and Guattari develop their own highly original theory of the politics of the Christic portraiture. They explain that the establishment of a normalizing grid was the first function performed by faciality when it assumed its full scope under the mixed semiotic of subjectification and signification. Faciality performs a function of binarisation. A face belongs to a man or a woman, a black or a white, a child or an adult, a rich person or a poor person. This exercise of binarisation in turn produces the grid of what passes for 'normal'. After establishing the grid, faciality performs a second function essential to the mixed semiotic of capitalism, and that is the function of deviance detection. Each face encountered is measured against the elementary facial units on the grid, and

judged acceptable or not. Yes or no, does a given face conform? The face is a machine whose function is ‘biunivocalization, or binarisation’. Binarisation organises the social field. ‘The abstract machine of faciality assumes a role of selective response, or choice: given a concrete face, the machine judges whether it passes or not, whether it goes or not, on the basis of the elementary facial units... At every moment, the machine rejects faces that do not conform, or seem suspicious’ (Deleuze et al. 1987 p. 177). It is a question of norms and deviance from those norms. Each face must submit to the judgment: yes, no. Note that it is not an individual or a subject which judges, but the machine itself – a social machine. We are caught up in the faciality machine specific to the regime of signs under which we live. This sounds very much like ‘othering’, like the setting into place of alterity, but this facialising process of deviance detection works differently. Primitive, tribal societies *do* exclude the Other, claim Deleuze and Guattari, but signifying/subjectifying societies (like the contemporary West) do not even admit the possibility of the existence of ‘the Other’. For the modern Westerner, a deviant is not an excluded other, but rather someone who *should* be like ‘us’ but isn’t.

For Deleuze and Guattari, faciality came into being with the Christianisation of Europe. The face is the face of Christ, they claim. Christianity spread the Christ-face throughout Europe, then the world.

If the face is in fact Christ, in other words, your average ordinary White Man, then the first deviances, the first divergence-types, are racial: yellow man, black man.... They must be Christianized, in other words, facialized. European racism as the white man’s claim has never operated by exclusion, or by the designation of someone as Other: it is in primitive societies that the stranger is grasped as an ‘other’. Racism operates by the determination of *degrees of deviance* in relation to the White-Man face, which endeavors to integrate nonconforming traits into increasingly eccentric and backward waves, sometimes tolerating them at given places under given conditions, in a given ghetto, sometimes erasing them from the wall [of signification], which never abides alterity... (Deleuze et al. 1987 p. 178).

If the first divergence types are racial, this does not mean that divergent facial types remain racial. A face of colour can be Christianised, or facialised, and made acceptable. Certain nonconforming traits have been integrated into the realm of acceptability. The faciality machine whirs constantly, ceaselessly refining the grid, always testing for deviance. The grid adapts to changing circumstances, incorporating new faces, rejecting other previously acceptable faces.

In advancing their concept of faciality, Deleuze and Guattari do not actually claim to eliminate representation. Their point, rather, is to show that it is possible to live outside the world of representation (Deleuze et al. 1987 p. 12). Extrapolating, it could be said that the painter harnessing the joy of the Christ face lives outside the confines of representation, while to use the Christ-face as a deviance detector is to live within the world of representation at its worst. Likewise, there are two aspects of God. On the one hand, for painters, ‘With God—but also with Christ, the Virgin, and even Hell—lines, colours, and movements are freed from the demands of representation’ (Deleuze 2003 p. 11). On the other hand, ‘the judgment of God’ (Deleuze et al. 1987 p. 40, etc.) confines and stratifies, as does representational thinking.

Earlier in this paper I identified three problems with the theory of representation: it binds pictures to a referent, it cannot account for divine pictures, and it reduces pictures to illustrations. These problems (referentiality, divinity, text illustration) were raised by art historians studying Christian holy art. How successfully do Deleuze and Guattari's critique of representation and notion of faciality address these three problems?

Faciality does rid painting of referents, by tying painting to the world without reducing it to an icon of that world. It also effectively bypasses the pitfall of illustration, by defining Christian picture practices on their own terms, without reducing them to illustrations of the Bible. A shortcoming of the theory of faciality might be its inability to account for the investment of pictures with divine presence. Faciality does not differentiate between icons (pictures thought to produce miracles) and holy artworks not endowed with divine presence. Byzantine icons and Renaissance painting were merely differentiated on the basis of their positioning of the face and eyes (see the reference to Jean Paris quoted above), and not on the basis of their miracle-producing powers. It is certainly possible that the opposition between idolatry and art is a false binary. As noted above, the theory of representation can make such a distinction, by defining idolaters as those who fail to accept the merely representative function of art, confusing the referent with the image.

Despite faciality's shortcomings in describing holy portraiture, I still prefer it to representation, due to the former's ability to analyse the play of power wielded by word and picture in various political configurations. Faciality does address the political power of pictorial images, and accounts for regimes which rely on the visibility of the divine face. Though Deleuze and Guattari do not make this point specifically, I hope that this paper has shown that the theory of faciality offers a theoretically viable explanation of the rejection of holy figurative art by some regimes and the embrace of the figurative by other regimes.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ 'Authentic images seemed capable of action, seemed to possess *dynamis*, or supernatural power.... People looked to such images with an expectation of beneficence, which was often more important to the believer than were abstract notions of God or an afterlife.... Although theologians may view religion primarily as a set of ideas, ordinary worshipers are more concerned with receiving aid in their personal affairs' (Belting 1994 p. 6).
- ² Michael Camille (1993) likewise expresses the inadequacy of representation for the practice of art history: 'Although the more recent influence of theories based on Saussurean linguistics has undoubtedly energized the discipline they have simultaneously taken us further from the specific problems of the visual, which are now all too easily subsumed under the rubric of the textual' (pp. 43–44).
- ³ Deleuze's conception of joy is also no doubt influenced by Spinoza, whose distinction between sad and joyful passions is discussed in both of Deleuze's monographs on Spinoza.
- ⁴ Deleuze does not, like Nietzsche, reject Christianity out of hand. There is in Deleuze's critique of representation a critique of transcendence, a claim that there is nothing beyond the simulacrum or the image, no superior referent or original. While this would seem to preclude the existence of a certain conceptualisation of God, and although Nietzsche remains resolutely anti-religious throughout his philosophical writing, Deleuze's attitude toward religion remains more tempered. Daniel W. Smith (2001) summarises Deleuze's stance toward God: 'Deleuze thus harbours neither the antagonism of

the 'secular' who find the concept of God outmoded, nor the angst or mourning of those for whom the loss of God was crisis-provoking, nor the faith of those who would like to retrieve the concept in a new form. He remained fascinated with theological concepts, and regarded medieval theologians in particular as a magnificent breed of thinkers who were able to invent, in the name of God, remarkable systems of logic and physics' (p. 167).

5 Although the progression from wandering Hebrews to law-bound Hebrews to Christians bound by the face looks like an evolution, it is in fact based on configuration, and not on historical progression. This is why Deleuze and Guattari claim that they 'are not even doing history' (Deleuze et al. 1987 p. 126). These different semiotic configurations are not eras or stages, but *assemblages*, a key concept in *A Thousand Plateaus*. As the authors explain, 'semiotic systems depend on assemblages, and it is the assemblages that determine that a given people, period or language, and even a given style, fashion, pathology, or minuscule event in a limited situation, can assure the predominance of one semiotic or another' (p. 119). An assemblage is an aggregation of various components. While their typology of regimes of signs resemble Marx's modes of production (primitive, feudal, Asian, capitalist), there is no teleology for Deleuze and Guattari, and no historical dialectical succession. They insist that their delineation of despots, Hebrews in Egypt and Christian capitalists is not an evolution, but instead different configurations of power dependent on different 'regimes of signs'. Rather than merely privileging the image over the word, the concept of faciality redeploys the word-image opposition, making the predominance of the one over the other a determining factor in characterizing the dominance of a particular 'regime of signs'.

6 Deleuze and Guattari caution that their list of typologies is not exhaustive, that other regimes are possible. In addition, they insist that all actually-existing regimes are mixed. Any combination is possible. Other regimes are possible, presumably with other elements. 'Christianity is a particularly important case of a mixed semiotic, with its signifying imperial combination together with its postsignifying Jewish subjectivity' (Deleuze et al. 1987 p. 126).

7 For an excellent gloss on this passage, see 'The Betrayal of God' by Ronald Bogue (2001).

8 'Wagner, Mallarmé, and Joyce, Marx and Freud: still Bibles' (Deleuze et al. 1987 p. 127). The modernist book belongs to the monomaniacal passionate authoritarian regime.

9 The painting described is more likely Giotto's 'Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata', at the Louvre. This painting not only matches the description very closely, but appears in the book by Jean Paris which Deleuze and Guattari cite, and which also includes the Duccio painting chosen to illustrate to the faciality chapter in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Giotto's stigmata painting can be viewed at the Louvre Museum website: http://www.louvre.fr/anglais/collec/peint/inv0309/peint_f.htm.

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