Disfigural Dynamisms of the Pictographic Theater:
Towards a Deleuzian Phenomenology of the Embodied Comics Experience

Piktografik Tiyatronun Biçimsiz Dinamizmleri: Bedenleşmiş Çizgi Roman Deneyiminin Deleuzecü Fenomenolojisine Doğru

Corry SHORES*1

Abstract

Vivian Sobchack's Merleau-Pontian phenomenology of embodied film experience is applicable, with certain modifications, to the embodied comics experience, especially when considering her analyses of Gestalt closure, bodily affectivity, and synaesthesia. We adopt these concepts yet with a different aim, namely, to account for shocking, disorienting, and decompositional embodied comics experiences of dramatically deformed bodies. For this task, we employ Gilles Deleuze's philosophy of shocking sensations and their role in promoting the "body without organs." While it can be depicted in comics, like it is in Francis Bacon's paintings, the visual experience of such a figure may also communicate these disordering forces to the viewing reader's body as well, thereby shockingly disrupting their own inner workings. We test the potential applicability of these Deleuzian concepts by examining deformational bodies in Peter Bagge, Mary Fleener, and Craig Thompson, which will demonstrate the potential aptness of a Deleuze-inspired analysis of physiological shocks in the comics experience.
Keywords: Phenomenology of comics, body without organs, Gilles Deleuze, Peter Bagge, Mary Fleener, Craig Thompson, Vivian Sobchack, Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

Öz

Vivian Sobchack'ın bedenleşmiş film deneyimine ilişkin Merlau-Pontyci fenomenolojisi; özellikle Sobchack'ın Gestalt tamamlaması, bedensel duygulanım ve sinestezi analizlerini dikkate aldığımızda bedenleşmiş çizgi roman deneyimine bazı değişiklikler ile uygulanabilir. Fakat bu kavramlara farklı bir amaca yönelik olarak şöyle ki; çarpıcı biçimde deforme edilmiş bedenlerin şok edici, kafa karıştırıcı ve ayrıştırıcı bedenleşmiş çizgi roman deneyimlerini açıklamak için başvuruyoruz. Bu iş için Gilles Deleuze felsefesinin şok edici duyumsamalarını ve onların Organsız Beden'i kurmadaki rolünü kullanıyoruz. Çizgi romanlarda tasvir edilebilen böyle bir figürün görsel deneyimi, Francis Bacon tablolarında da olduğu gibi düzensizleştiren güçleri okuyucunun bedenine iletebilir; böylece kendi iç işleyişini şok edici bir biçimde bozabilir. Bahsedilen Deleuze konseptlerinin potansiyel uygulanabilirliğini; Peter Bagge, Mary Fleener ve Craig Thompson'daki deformasyonel bedenleri inceleyerek test edeceğiz ve bu, şokların Deleuze'den esinlenen fenomenolojik analizinin çizgi roman deneyimindeki potansiyel yatkınlığını gösterecek.
Anahtar sözcükler: Çizgi romanın fenomenolojisi, organsız beden, Gilles Deleuze, Peter Bagge, Mary Fleener, Craig Thompson, Vivian Sobchack, Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

* Asst. Prof., Middle East Technical University, Faculty of Arts and Science, Department of Philosophy. E-mail: corryshores@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-2183-7286

Introduction

Gilles Deleuze (2003), in his studies of the paintings of Francis Bacon, examines how deformative, visual forces disfigure the bodies depicted on the canvass. Daniel Smith (2012) turns our attention to similar ideas in Deleuze's writings on Immanuel Kant's sublime to incorporate into Deleuze's account the way that these same disruptive visual forces *within* the image also act *upon* the painting's viewers themselves (pp. 222–225). So, by studying the aesthetic experience of artworks that cause us inner, bodily disruptions, we may imagine a Deleuze-inspired study of the audience's experience of visual arts.

Part of Deleuze's (2003) analysis of Bacon's works focuses upon the rhythmic relations that are built across his triptych panels (pp. 53–60). And in fact, when viewing them, we may find our eyes darting excitedly from panel to panel, as we seek a way to gather up what we are viewing, despite their anti-representational features defying every attempt to do so. All the while, the sequence of visual experiences corresponds to a series of shocks to our sensory and motor coordination, causing our own bodies to tend toward being disorganized like the "bodies without organs" in Bacon's paintings. In the following, we will apply these notions to a similar mode of aesthetic experience, namely, of comics. Their inherently abrupt and discontinuous panel transitions provide the conditions for such sudden and shocking, bodily disruptions in both the visual imagery and in the viewing reader's experiences of them. To test Deleuze's notions in the comics art form, we consider in particular the depictions of bodily distortions in Peter Bagge, Mary Fleener, and Craig Thompson, looking to see if they can be understood as transferring those deformative powers to the viewing readers themselves.

To do so, we first discuss Vivian Sobchack's methodology for applying Merleau-Pontian phenomenology to film, which will form the basis for how we approach comics phenomenologically. The two ideas we note especially are synaesthesia and Gestalt closure. Next, we draw from Deleuze's philosophy of the body, as it proves more fitting to the unexpected discontinuities in the comics experience, and we examine comics examples of suddenly deformed bodies to illustrate it. In the end, we find that Deleuze's philosophy of experience seems better suited than a Merleau-Pontian approach when accounting for the abrupt and shocking defiance to our expectations that often occurs in the comics experience.

It should be noted at the outset that speaking of a Deleuzian "phenomenology" can be highly problematic, given his strong critiques of this philosophical field. In certain cases, his criticisms specifically target the Husserlian tradition that Maurice Merleau-Ponty is a part of and that we critically examine here.[2] Accordingly, some would be inclined instead to speak of Deleuze's *anti*-phenomenology.[3] Yet, Deleuze does not always use the term "phenomenology" with a critical purpose and in reference to the Husserlian variety. In his cinema writings, for instance, he speaks of C.S. Peirce's "phenomenology" of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness, which Deleuze also adopts in large part when formulating his notions of image and sign in film (Deleuze, 2005b, p. 30).[4] So, to be clear, when we speak of a Deleuzian "phenomenology," we are taking the term to mean, quite broadly, a sort of philosophy that examines experience, be it Husserlian, Peircian, or any other kind.

Towards a Phenomenology of the Embodied Comics Experience

Our methodology takes its inspiration from Sobchack's phenomenology of the embodied film experience. In her works, she examines "the body's radical contribution to the constitution of the film experience" and rigorously formulates a semiotic film phenomenology (Sobchack, 1992, p. 25). We will need to modify and supplement her thinking in order to apply it to a Deleuzian study of the comics experience. Yet, we still build from certain key ideas of hers, namely, her emphasis on the body's role

---

[2] See: Deleuze, 2003, pp. 30–33; Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, pp. 142–150, 178–179, 209–210.

[3] See: Shores, 2012, especially pp. 181–182 and 206–207, which discusses the debate over whether Deleuze's philosophy of the body bears any compatibilities with phenomenology.

[4] See also: Deleuze, 2005a, pp. 100–101, 145–146, 201–206. Peirce himself classifies these studies as "phenomenology," but in some instances instead uses the term "phaneroscopy." See: Peirce, 1965, p. 78 (CP 1.186), 135–180 (CP 1.280–353) and Rosensohn, 1974.

in the experience of art by means of its acts of perception and also that Gestalt factors, as understood from the perspective of Merleau-Ponty, are at work in the aesthetic engagement with the work. She writes, "perception is a living and *organizing organization* of the world" (Sobchack, 1992, p. 69), that is to say, it is something already bearing structuring principles that influence the way the perceived world becomes organized phenomenally. The particular Gestalt concept that concerns us here will be *closure*. This is related to another important notion in Sobchack's work that we will employ, namely, the synaesthetic operation of our senses: the body's different sense modalities never operate independently from one another; for, an activation of one is thereby an activation of the others (Sobchack, 1992, p. 76).

Given certain differences between the film and comics experiences, we cannot simply transpose Sobchack's phenomenology of visual experience from the one domain to the other. In film, there is a continuous visual and sonic sensory flow. And, the screen in the cinema theater can occupy nearly the entire field of our vision, while at the same time audio can play from all directions and is often dominating enough to drown out most other sounds, all of which causing us to feel physically immersed to some extent in the presented visual and sonic imagery of the film. This simulated experience can often be so compelling that our bodies' muscles may even react by flinching slightly when objects are shown speeding toward the camera. In other words, the film experience is one where the immediately given sensory data can be taken nearly as phenomenal givens of actual perceptual experience that may be reacted upon as though they were physically present to us. This is a fundamentally different sort of embodied experience than what we undergo when reading comics, where the physiological interaction with the work is much less perceptually immersive. Given this distinction, we will need to begin by looking phenomenologically at our bodily engagement with the imagery in the comics experience in order to clarify its unique features.

Synaesthesia in the Comics Experience

Our Deleuze-inspired phenomenology of the comics experience is concerned with anti-synaesthetic factors, so let us first examine the way that synaesthesia is often understood as operating in perception, especially of artworks. Under the Merleau-Pontian notion of synaesthesia that Sobchack adopts, all perception whatsoever is understood as being thoroughly synaesthetic.[5] For Merleau-Ponty, our sensory modalities, like vision, hearing, tactility, along with our motor activities and sense of kinaesthesia, each have all the others on their "horizon," so to speak. So, for one sense modality to be particularly active is still to have all the others in our implicit awareness, even if there are no physical stimuli corresponding to them. As Merleau-Ponty (1962) explains, our

> senses intercommunicate by opening on to the structure of the thing. One sees the hardness
> and brittleness of glass, and when, with a tinkling sound, it breaks, this sound is conveyed
> by the visible glass. One sees the springiness of steel, the ductility of red-hot steel, the
> hardness of a plane blade, the softness of shavings. (pp. 266–267)[6]

Or, as Sobchack (1992) puts it, "As a perceptive body, I am able to see texture. My sense of sight is pervaded by my sense of touch" (p. 77). Thus, when watching a film, all other modes of sensory perception are activated, because "Our fingers, our skin and nose and lips and tongue and stomach and all the other parts of us understand what we see in the film experience" (Sobchack, 2004, p. 84).

Similarly, when we read the dialogue within a comics panel, we might "hear" in our mind the words being uttered, colored by the qualities we ascribe to that character's voice. And when we read sound effects, often written as onomatopoeic words shown within the depicted imagery, perhaps we "hear" those sounds as well when reading them in their visual context.[7]

---

[5] "Synaesthetic perception is the rule" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 266).

[6] See: Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 15.

[7] This can be especially so when the sounds are rendered with careful detail in the spellings, as with Simone Lia's (2008) sound effects, such as "kerrunch ling" for a set of keys when one is inserted into a lock or "ppppSSHHHHT" when an overfull drawer is opened (pp. 16, 18). Another notable instance is her character's dance with God to the INXS song "Need You Tonight" in *Please God, Find Me a Husband!* (Lia, 2011, pp. 7–11). (This sequence can be read at Lia's website: https://simonelia.com/please-god-find-me-a-husband.) Here, the finely crafted musical

Figure 1. (left portion) McCloud's synaesthesia and (right portion) spatial closure demonstrations, in *Understanding Comics* (1993, pp. 88, 61). (Copyright 1993, Scott McCloud, Harper, used with the author's knowledge.)

Scott McCloud (1993) demonstrates how the other senses can be evoked as well. He displays a series of panels showing a woman cooking (figure 1, left portion), while all along providing close-ups exhibiting the sensuous, visual details of the scene, and he asks, "Can you *smell* this kitchen? *Feel* it? *Taste* it?" (p. 89).

We should note here that Ian Hague (2012, 2014) takes a position against this synaesthetic interpretation of the role of vision in the comics experience. In particular, he disagrees with McCloud's claim that comics are simply a mono-sensory, visual medium (see: McCloud, 1993, p. 89). He argues, rather, that comics are "not simply sequences of images; they are physical objects that affect us in ways that far exceed the limitations of the visual field" (Hague, 2012, pp. 98, 107; see: Hague, 2014, pp. 20–21). He supports this claim with examples and descriptions where the other sensory modalities directly play a vital role in the experience of the comics work and in the ways we come to interpret and understand it. For instance, Art Spiegelman's and Chip Kidd's *Jack Cole and Plastic Man: Forms Stretched to Their Limits!* "features a plastic cover, a huge variety of paper stocks and textures, and rounded corners. The effect of this is to make the reading experience very changeable and inconsistent" (Hague, 2012, p. 99). This is much like the characteristics of Plastic Man, "whose superpower is an inhuman malleability – he is able to stretch and transform himself into outlandish shapes and sizes – a power that is replicated within the book itself and accessed by the reader through their sense of touch just as much, if not more than, through their sense of sight" (p. 100). We will not wade into this particular debate because we are not claiming that comics are a mono-sensory medium. Our aesthetic concern, rather, has to do with the various senses' cooperative efforts to recognize what they are sensing, with a focus on certain ways that those synaesthetic processes can break down.

Gestalt Closure

Merleau-Ponty (1964) associates the synaesthetic *holism* of the sensory experience to a *Gestalt* sort of operation, where each sense informs all the others to complete a perceptual entirety (pp. 49–51).[8] As McCloud observes, we also find a Gestalt sort of "closure" at work in how our minds supply material lacking both within and between panels. He illustrates the first kind of gap-filling by showing a panel whose frame cuts off his depicted body from the waist down. He notes that, "In this panel you can't even see my *legs*, yet you *assume* that they're *there*" (figure 1, right portion) (McCloud, 1993, p. 61).

---

sound effects combined with the recited lyrics of this familiar pop song enable the music to appear with vivid sonic detail in one's imaginative awareness. And, it can work the other way around, as Scott McCloud (1993) demonstrates with a series of panels only showing sound effects and speech balloons, where on the basis of presented sounds in the otherwise blank white panels we further imagine or infer the visual components involved in those sonic situations (p. 87).

[8] See also: Merleau-Ponty, 1962, pp. 4–7, 15–20, 1963, pp. 47–50, 150, 1992, pp. 79–80, 2010, pp. 146–148, 428. For Merleau-Ponty's complex relationship with Gestalt psychology, see: Embree, 1980.

In other words, the frame draws a spatial limitation, but our minds may infer or imagine what likely exists outside those bounds, invisible to our eyes.[9]

To demonstrate the sort of closure that involves temporal variation between successive panels, McCloud provides a two-panel sequence (figure 2, right portion).

Figure 2. (left portion) McCloud's demonstration of inter-panel motion continuity and (right portion) event continuity through closure, in *Understanding Comics* (1993, p. 66, 67). (Copyright 1993, Scott McCloud, Harper, used with the author's knowledge.)

The first shows a man raising an axe to a swinging position and exclaiming to another man standing within the axe's reach that he will now die, all while this presumed victim both verbally and non-verbally expresses utter fear in apparent certainty of that prospect. These clues, along with streaking lines shown in the background that suggest pending, intense action, strongly lead us to expect that a murder is a likely outcome. Then, the second panel suddenly "cuts," so to speak, to the skyline of a city at night, with "eeyaa!!!" written boldly and jaggedly in the air (McCloud, 1993, p. 66). McCloud's point with this demonstration is that in the gutter between the panels, "*human imagination* takes two separate images and *transforms* them into a single idea" (p. 66), which in this case is the axe murder that constitutes the main event of the image sequence, even though it remains invisible to the viewing reader.

This "suturing," as Hannah Miodrag (2013) calls it, of the different panels' disjointed contents could involve our imagination actually forming a mental picture of the excluded event (pp. 108–109, 113–114, 133). As McCloud (1993) writes with regard to the axe murder sequence,

> closure in *comics* is *far* from continuous and *anything* but *involuntary!* Every act committed to paper by the comics artist is *aided* and *abetted* by a *silent accomplice*. An *equal partner in crime* known as *the reader*. I may have drawn an *axe* being *raised* in this example, but I'm not the one who let it *drop* or decided how *hard* the blow, or *who* screamed, or *why*. *That*, dear reader, was *your special crime*, each of you committing it in your own *style*. All of you *participated* in the murder. All of you *held the axe* and *chose your spot*. (p. 68)[10]

---

[9] Thierry Groensteen contrasts film framing with comics framing in a way that could challenge this notion. He says that the filmmaker has a full location or studio set in front of the camera, but they must decide what will appear in the recorded frame and what will be excluded. In this way, film framing is a reductive or subtractive sort of enclosing. Comics artists, however, first conceive all the contents they want to show in the panel, which together have a coherence and unity, and thus these selected images already express an implicit frame that traces the "outline," so to speak, of this conceptual unity. So, when the drawn frame is included on the page, it is superfluous to the implied frame expressed already by the contents' coherent unity. In this sense, the comics frame is world-creating rather than world-concealing like the film frame (Groensteen, 2007, pp. 41–43). Groensteen does not, however, comment here on the possibility of the reader further creating, imaginatively, more content to those spatially enclosed scenes in comics panels, but it is possible that in his view it would be superfluous to the given experience of the panel so long as what is seen in it is already complete unto itself.

[10] Note that Thierry Groensteen, by contrast, does not think that the reader imagines the intervening activity that presumably takes place between the panels. For him, the gap of the gutter (or of the single outline sharing the gutter's separative function) is something absolute and self-sufficient in its emptiness and thus does not need to be filled by more story content in the reader's mind (Groensteen, 2007, pp. 44, 113). Rather, a gutter should be seen more like the location of a flexible joining mechanism that allows the panels to enter into interconnecting coherence relations with all the other panels throughout the work, and the formation of these interconnections is based more on conceptual inference than on imaginative reconstruction (pp. 114–115).

Discontinuity and Decompression

Later we will examine how phenomenal shock can result from these gaps in the fragmented imagery, so let us further elaborate a little more on the sort of discontinuity at work in the comics experience, along with how implicit awareness fills in the unseen elements. To this end, we should note two of the ways that motion has been traditionally understood, according to Deleuze. Under the first view, movement is conceived as being primarily composed of essential states or "poses," also called "privileged instants." Under this conception of movement, the continuous transition between the poses is of secondary importance; for, insofar as the transition period contains no important moments, it is superfluous to what is essential in the motion, namely, the destinations of those movements (Deleuze, 2005a, pp. 4–6).

Deleuze (2005a) thus writes that in this sense of movement there is a "regulated transition from one form to another, that is, an order of *poses* or privileged instants, as in a dance" (p. 4). McCloud demonstrates something like this with a series of panels showing different poses of a simple human figure, including, for instance, its posture while walking, it standing still, and it touching its toes (figure 2, left portion). When we view this sequence, we take it to show a person continuously moving their body through the various, displayed positions and actions. This shows how "Comics panels *fracture* both *time* and *space*, offering a *jagged, staccato rhythm* of *unconnected moments*. But closure allows us to *connect* these moments and *mentally construct* a *continuous, unified reality*" (McCloud, 1993, p. 67).

Deleuze then contrasts this notion to another way of understanding movement, where it is conceived as having absolutely no privileged instants or important poses but rather as being constituted by a completely homogeneous temporality where any and every instant, that is to say, "any-instant-whatever" (*l'instant quelconque*), is just another in the series constituting the motion. In other words, under this view, there are an infinity of moments or poses in movement, none of which playing any greater role than the others, as each is simply a temporal location in a spatialized conception of the movement's duration. Deleuze here reminds us of Étienne-Jules Marey's instruments for recording variations in animals' movements (Deleuze, 1981a, 2005a, p.5). In one such device, the patterns of motion of a flying bird, which remains wired to the machine, are inscribed upon a rotating cylinder that makes a constant record of those continuous variations (figure 3).
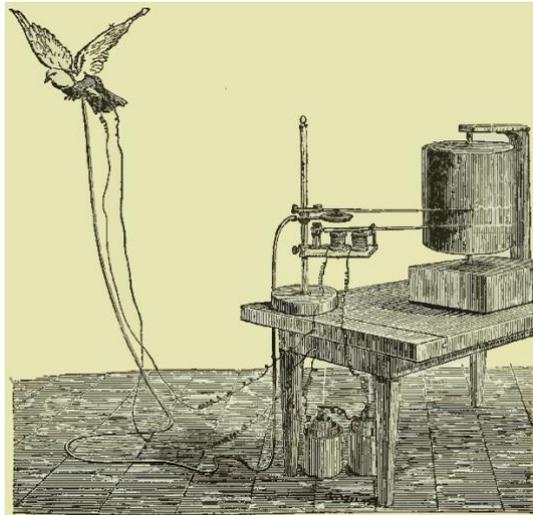

Figure 3. Marey's graphical inscription of a bird's wing-beats on the smooth, continuous surface of a rotating drum (1885, p. 153)[11]

The metrical homogeneity of the time axis along the recording cylinder, along with its steady, fluid, mechanical movement, represents the homogeneity of the motion's temporality where no one instant has any privileged place among the others. Similarly (and in contrast to comics), in an animated

---

[11] Public domain image available at: https://archive.org/details/b20411583.

cartoon film […] the drawing no longer constitutes a pose or a completed figure, but the description of a figure which is always in the process of being formed or dissolving through the movement of lines and points taken at any-instant-whatevers in their course. […] It does not give us a figure described in a unique moment, but the continuity of the movement which describes the figure. (Deleuze, 2005a, p. 5)

Chris Ware's more "cinematic" works can illustrate this difference. He sets out in sequence a series of panels and instructs the viewing reader either to make a flip book or, in other cases, to construct a more elaborate cinematographic device (a miniature "peep show" machine) using the frames. Supposing we both see the individual frames first on the page and then also reproduce and assemble them for their motion picture rendition, we can experience the same images under both conceptions of movement: as a heterogeneous series of discrete, discontinuous poses and as a homogenous flow of continuous motion (Ware, 1994a, p. 10, 1994b, pp. 40–41, 2005, pp. 41, 73).[12]

What is important here is that in the cinematically animated form of a cartoon, the continuous elements of the movement are given in a homogenous temporality that requires the variations to unfold at pace with the steady movement of time. However, as we have noted, in still-image cartoon sequences showing movement or the development of a situation, the continuity of the motions or narrative developments are implied by the *differences between* the depicted privileged instants, such that, when we arrive upon the next one in the series, we infer what must have transpired since the prior panel. Thus, each panel involves a *condensation* of a larger narrative expanse, since from these privileged instants unfolds the countless intervening others that were not depicted but which are implied in what is visibly portrayed. Charles Hatfield offers a very useful description of these compressing and unpacking operations. Through what is called the "breakdown," the comics author divides "a narrative into […] images – a process that necessarily entails omitting as well as including," with closure being the inverse process of filling those gaps back in: "the author's task is to evoke an imagined sequence by creating a visual series (a breakdown), whereas the reader's task is to translate the given series into a narrative sequence by achieving closure" (Hatfield, 2009, p. 135). Thus, the phenomenal construction of the comics story is mediated by a relatively limited sequence of *compressed*, informational givens.

Phenomenologically speaking, this process can be understood in terms of background and foreground awareness. Normally, something grabs our explicit attention, all while other related phenomena hover at the margins of our awareness (see: Husserl, 2001, pp. 39–46). For Merleau-Ponty (1962), anything that is in the forefront of our consciousness implies everything else that is phenomenally related to it, and this includes an implicit awareness of both past and future acts of consciousness (pp. 20, 486–488). Consider, for example, if we see a part of a red carpet that is shaded by something blocking the light source. When we look just at the shadow, we are not directly attending to the other object that is shading the carpet, but it is implicitly there in the background of our awareness; for, the shadow that we do see "announces something else which it does not include" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 15). Since all objects in our awareness bear some phenomenal relation to every other one, Merleau-Ponty concludes that "every object is the mirror of all others" (p. 79). Also, the act of seeing that shadow implicitly presages our future moment of perception when we turn our gaze to that nearby thing that is blocking the light. Thus, our implicit consciousness is composed of a rich and complicated network of relations forming the fluent continuity of the time and space of our phenomenal world, even though much of it goes unnoticed. So, for example, recall McCloud's motion demonstration of the series of a figure's poses. We never see the motion between the panels; yet, as we view each pose, the motion connecting them is implicitly given at the boundaries of our awareness as we marginally discern the

---

[12] Yet, note that Ware might not be picking out privileged instants in the sequence; nonetheless, we may still experience the two modes of motion perception this way. Also note that André Barbe's *Cinéma* (1982a, 1982b) may attain a motion somewhere in between the two types, as the panel contents invite the eye to *smoothly* and briskly drop down along the cinematic panels. Miodrag (2013) notes something similar in a sequence from Alan Moore's and David Gibbon's *Watchmen* where "the reader takes in many closely linked slivers showing infinitesimal movements in a sort of zoetrope effect" (p. 121). Greice Schneider (2013) notes another factor that slows down the pace of reading in other Ware works, namely, the sheer density and complexity of information per spatial part of the page, which triggers "a powerful impression of slowness," perhaps thereby accentuating the privileged instants in the flow (p. 335).

transitions implied between each visible panel. We can see, then, how this structure of consciousness can been understood as operating while we proceed through the comics' story events: when we have some panel contents in our foreground awareness, there is thereby a mass of phenomenally related coherence relations and intervening events hovering at the margins of our consciousness, too.[13] The viewing reader is free either to bring these implicit contents of consciousness to their explicit awareness or to leave them to remain at that moment in the background.[14] What we emphasize here is that from a phenomenological perspective, each moment of the comics experience involves an enormous quantity of content in our implicit awareness, all *packed in tightly, waiting to be released into an explicit, mental view*.[15] This sort of a phenomenal *intensity* of the comics experience will play an important role in our Deleuze-inspired comics phenomenology.

The Disfigurative Body without Organs

We turn now to Deleuze's notion of the "body without organs" to better characterize the role of deformative forces in visual experience. Deleuze elaborates this idea in other contexts, especially in his collaborations with Félix Guattari (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, 2004), and altogether it encompasses a much richer and more complex set of conceptions than we are employing here. The issue becomes even more complicated when we take into account Deleuze's (2006) report that his understanding of the notion differed somewhat from Guattari's, even when they were writing jointly about it (p. 239; see Smith 2012, p. 124). So, for our phenomenological purposes here, we simply use the basic sense that Deleuze gives to it in his *Francis Bacon* book, where it is specifically contrasted with the phenomenological "lived" body of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty.[16] In particular, Deleuze (2003) is critical of the synaesthetic function of the lived body; by contrast, the body without organs' different parts and sense modalities do not cooperate harmoniously (pp. 30–33).

Deleuze (2003) studies a number of Bacon's paintings where there are grotesquely deformed bodies, sometimes even as if the figure is a hunk of inert meat getting torn and twisted by conflicting forces acting violently upon it (pp. 15–19). Now, one trait of a body without organs is that it is under such deformative forces, and in response, it reconfigures itself such that its organs and their functions, including its sense and cerebral organs and tissues, enter into a discordant rather than an organic operation (p. 32). Smith (2012) notes how these ideas regarding the chaos of bodily forces overlap with Deleuze's account of Kant's sublime (pp. 229–230). For Kant, our senses give us fragments of what we are perceiving moment-by-moment, and those parts are retained in our "reproductive imagination,"

---

[13] For a detailed account of how Husserl's horizonal consciousness can be understood as being at work in the experience of textual fiction, see: Iser, 1972.

[14] To give a concrete example, there is a sequence in Don Rosa's "Hearts of the Yukon," where first we see a man leaning through the doorway into a women's dressing room to make an announcement, with his hand over his eyes as if discretely respecting their privacy while yet still obviously peeping a view through his loosened fingers. All the while, a woman standing before him is holding a hair brush over his head. The next panel cuts away to another woman in the room. Then, in the following panel, it cuts back again to the man, who now lies on the floor, with the first woman's brush broken in half as a star hovers above the man's head, seemingly having been knocked unconscious (Rosa, 2010, p. 130). When we arrive upon that third panel, we can simply draw the inference that the woman struck him down with the brush as punishment for peeping, or, if it takes our fancy, we can also bring out into our explicit consciousness the comical slap-stick imagery of him getting struck down for his misbehavior. Now, according to the Merleau-Pontian phenomenological view we are considering, this imagined event was already there in our consciousness, even before, as a vague anticipation, back when we viewed that third panel; yet, it was packed away as an implicit image in our background awareness, awaiting a possible explicit presentation in the forefront of our imagination.

[15] Consider a similar case where the inferential component is made explicit. In Ware's "Tales of Tomorrow, Number 11," a man seemingly from the Renaissance time period has invented a flying apparatus that is no more than cloth wings between his arms and an umbrella-hat upon his head. We see him running to the edge of a cliff. The next panel is so narrow as to almost constitute a gutter, and it only reads 'SO', written vertically. The third of these panels then shows the inventor reclining at home with a cast on his leg (Ware, 2005, p. 88). The gutter-like 'SO' panel is superfluous, as anyone would conclude that the broken leg resulted from the fall, but it brings to our explicit awareness a logical inference that would otherwise be made automatically in the back of our minds.

[16] See: Husserl, 1989, pp. 35–36, 61–90; Merleau-Ponty, 1962, pp. 63–65, 141, 352.

which is something like what is now called sensory memory. Then, our "productive imagination" organizes those fragments such that they correspond to the appropriate concept in our understanding. So, by means of this harmonious operation of our faculties, we recognize the things we perceive (Kant, 1998, pp. 228–34 [A98–110]). In sublime experiences, however, on account of the overwhelming amount or power of the phenomenal givens, our faculties are thrown into discord, and for a time we cannot recognize what we are perceiving (Deleuze, 1995, pp. 50–52; Kant, 2000, pp. 134–48 [§26–28]). This is similar to how Deleuze characterizes the deformative bodies in Bacon's paintings, only in this context Deleuze speaks of a discordant operation of bodily organs, which can be seen more or less as serving the functions of Kant's faculties. On account of the seeming forces that apparently deform the painted bodies in Bacon's paintings and render them incomprehensible – and yet still unified as whole figures – the sense data is thereby given to the viewer by means of chaotic "rhythms" (patterns of givenness). For this reason, we as viewers of these images are unable to properly organize our fragmented perceptions, and yet we are being bombarded by an overwhelming amount and intensity of them. As a result, our own bodies cease to work organically and harmoniously when we view the grotesquely deformed bodies in these works, and we tend in the direction of becoming bodies without organs (Deleuze, 2003, pp. 32–35; Smith, 2012, pp. 228–232).

Now, insofar as all organs (or faculties) are operating disjunctively, they lose the ability to communicate harmoniously with one another (Deleuze, 1995, pp. 49–51, 2003, pp. 30, 32). In other words, these bodily disruptive experiences create a heterogeneity of composition and operation, because they introduce an internal foreignness among the body's parts. Furthermore, as they are deformative, they produce a heterogeneous sequence of transitional states, causing the body to become outlandish with respect to its prior formations.[17] What we note here is that although there will be forces that act in defiance of the synaesthetic and Gestalt factors of perception, still there are at the same time profound *efforts*, although failing ones, to bring the body's sensory and motor operations into accord.

Dramatic Dynamisms of the Pictographic Theater

Let us now further characterize the sort of comics experience we have in mind where the implicit phenomenal data is given in a way that is potentially disruptive to the viewing reader's embodied interaction with the work. For this purpose, consider Ware's characterization of comics as a "pictographic theater" of "imaginary drama" (2000, p. 1, "Introduction," 2005, p. 8) along with Deleuze's notion of "dramatic dynamisms." For Deleuze (2004), this drama, which in fact underlies the workings of reality and thought, is a matter of differentiation operating on a deeper level of intensive, transformative forces (pp. 96–98). We might think of such dramatic dynamisms of intensive forces as being at work in the gutters of comics where no extensive time or space is depicted directly and yet much can transpire intensively. In other words, between panels, no space or time of the story extends within the gutter; however, degrees of spatial or temporal changes do occur as intensive variations lodged between the "cracks," so to speak, in the depicted world.

Experientially speaking, these intensive variations are like phenomenal shocks of greater or lesser degrees, depending on the amount of differentiation that must be made coherent. Now note that, as Miodrag (2013) observes, the transitions of comics gutters function in a similar way as the cuts between film shots (p. 110). One thing Deleuze emphasizes about film cuts is their power to produce a "shock to thought," especially when the cuts force viewers to suddenly combine images where there are great "leaps" between them (2005a, pp. 34–39, 2005b, pp. 152–155). Yet, according to Hatfield (2005), this analogy between film cuts and comics gutters ultimately fails, because even when the panels are highly discontinuous, the fact that they are all spatially juxtaposed means that the viewing reader can peruse them at their own pace, which presumably softens the harshness of moving through sharp transitions, unlike in films where "jarring cuts" often produce a "visceral shock" (p. 74). Nonetheless, the spatialized distribution of the panels does not prevent there being what McCloud calls a "forward momentum" that comics pacing often has. Our curiosities can drive our eyes forward, making us feel as if we are

---

[17] The idea here is similar to Gilbert Simondon's (1992) description of becoming as corresponding to beings' capacity for "falling out of step with themselves" (p. 300).

"tumbling from panel to panel" (McCloud & Roth, 2015).[18] And even were we to look at the panels on the page all at once, we cannot explicitly grasp the many events of the story in that one singular glance. Much of what will transpire is yet to be discovered, thus we can still be shocked by sudden, intense transitions as our eyes are pushed forward to subsequent panels.

Yet still, at this point it would seem that although shocks are possible in the comics experience, they for the most part will be less intense than film transitions, on account of the automatism of the cinematic mechanisms and the helplessness of the film viewer to modulate the pacing. Nonetheless, something more should be said about the comics experience to fairly assess its powers to disruptively shock the viewing reader's phenomenal operations. This additional distinction is not, however, another difference between comics gutters and film cuts (which phenomenologically function in approximately the same way) but rather between any-instant-whatevers and privileged instants. To explain this notion, consider the "buybombs" (also called "block consumer incentive bursts") in the techno-dystopian world of the *Transmetropolitan* comics series. The home viewer briefly is shown on their giant television screen bizarre, psychedelic imagery that somehow phenomenally encodes a long series of television commercials, which will only become unpacked into full visual sequences at night in their dreams (Warren & Robertson, 1998). Now also, recall that the greater the *intensive* difference between comics panels, the more phenomenal data could be packed into the background of one's awareness with the turn from one panel to the next (so long as the viewing reader is compelled to find coherence between them). For there to be this high degree of intensive phenomenal difference, then, it would need to tend toward what McCloud calls the "non-sequitur" sort of transition, where there is insufficient logical connection for coherence to be readily found. Yet, at the same time, it would still need to have the strong force of continuity found in what he terms the "moment to moment" sorts of transitions, like in cinematic slow-motion sequences (McCloud, 2006, pp. 17–18). Comics panels designed in such a way as to urge the viewing reader to find continuity while at the same time presenting obstacles to doing so would have what Hatfield (2009) calls the "tension between single image and image-in-series," where there is a tense interplay between our efforts to create coherence among all the panels as a whole versus the tendency for particular ones to insist on their own unique individuality, as they stand over against their context (p. 137). But, given how comics panels present us with privileged instants packed overfull with implicit phenomenal data, there is more than just the intensity of the gutter transitions; additionally, there are the near instantaneous bombardments of compressed phenomenal data that can overload our consciousness – "phenomena bombs" of a sort – impacting us as our eyes dwell upon a given, singular panel. So, while the film experience in Deleuze's assessment can be seen as a series of shocks between extents of any-moment-whatevers, that is, as a series of disruptions (cuts) between gradual unfoldings (shots), the comics experience, by contrast, because it proceeds through gutter cuts separating intense, *privileged instants*, is structured as a series of *disruptions between eruptions.* It is something akin to a stroboscopic pattern in the sense that the phenomenal data is given as if in brilliant "flashes," with hard abrupt cuts between them.[19] And for this reason, it has the potential to shockingly disrupt the viewing reader's inner workings in a uniquely intense way.

Comics Bodies without Organs

The first instances of suddenly and drastically deformed bodies in comics that we examine here are ones drawn by Peter Bagge. He explains that the "rubbery exaggeration" in his depictions are his attempt to capture on the printed page the "energy and dynamism" of cartoon animator Bob Clampett's "explosive" figures (Bagge & Roth, 2013). One notable example of shocking, dramatic dynamisms of bodily deformation (and one which creates a hybrid of both the moment-by-moment and non-sequitur type transitions) is the one-page story "Bowling with Studs" (*Neat Stuff* #7) that details the character's

---

[18] McCloud's *The Sculptor* (2015) notably demonstrates this effect very well. And consider again the falling momentum of Barbe's *Cinéma*, too.

[19] Groensteen (2013) also observes a sort of "stroboscopic effect" that can appear in comics (p. 145). But this is more a matter of a rhythmic factor involving a repetition of images. The stroboscopic pattern we are describing here is a general structure in the comics experience where the successive acts of viewing comics panels unfold through a series of discrete "flashes" or bursts of phenomenal data.

attempt to successfully bowl a strike. The first seven panels give a moment-by-moment cinematic recreation of him rolling the ball, and it takes the form of a series of poses dividing that continuous motion and lending to his action a sense of full concentration and total, bodily self-control.
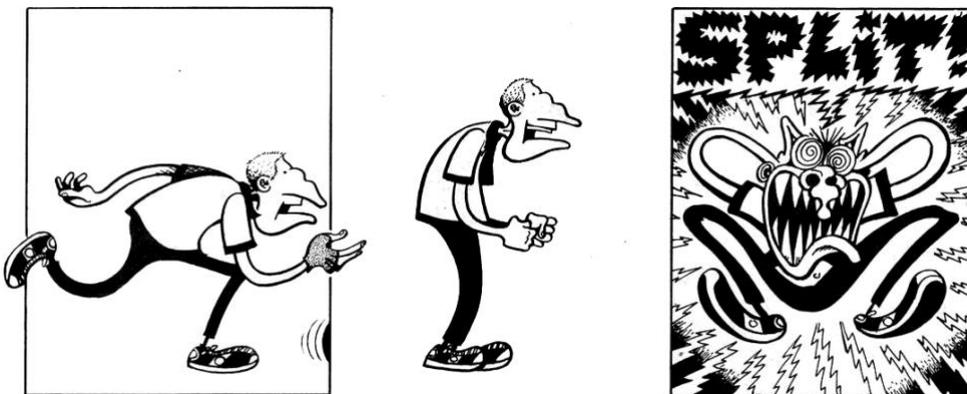

Figure 4. The dramatic dynamism of a shocking, abrupt transition to an intensely deformed body, in Peter Bagge's *Neat Stuff* #7 (1987, p. 12). (Copyright 1987, Peter Bagge, used with the author's permission.)

The eighth panel shows him waiting for the outcome of his roll (figure 4, middle panel), and the ninth is almost like a visual non-sequitur, as the style of the depiction is vastly different than in the prior panels (figure 4, right panel). Here, Studs becomes drastically deformed, with lightning bolts and a jagged-edged speech balloon, along with dialogue text reading "*Split!*"

In another sequence, from Bagge's *Hate* #15 (figure 5, left portion), the character Buddy begins to talk to his girlfriend Lisa about their relationship, and she suddenly descends into a frightening rage.

Figure 5. (left portion) Sudden and shocking bodily deformations in Peter Bagge's *Hate* #15 and (right portion) *Hate* #12 (1993, p. 14, 1994, p. 8). (Copyright 1993, 1994, Peter Bagge, used with the author's permission.)

Here we see the two dimensions of bodily deformation. The parts of Lisa's body do not clearly seem to bear some harmonic, cooperative functioning with one another, as they appear too organically unrelated. Also, her bodily states from one panel to the next are drastically heterogeneous. Moreover, Lisa's frightening, instantaneous transformation into an outlandish mass of shapes communicates a shock to Buddy, whose body likewise deforms. Now, to the extent that viewing readers are also unprepared for this sudden mutation, they too may, for a brief moment and to a slight degree, feel a bodily shock like Buddy does as they are overwhelmed with an enormous amount of intensely given, implicit, phenomenal data in the second panel. In another notable case, a distressed Buddy is shown with multiple arms, which is a common visual trope[20] but in this instance is remarkable for making Buddy look more like his body has grown extra arms rather than them flailing about (figure 5, right portion). This can have an appearance of a grotesque body without organs, and it also creates difficulty for a viewing reader trying to make visual sense of the depicted bodily activity, which communicates some of Buddy's distress.

---

[20] John Kennedy (1982) studies this sort of metaphor (pp. 591–592).

Another interesting sort of bodily disfigurement can be found in Mary Fleener's "Rock Bottom: Part 1."

Figure 6. Panels in Mary Fleener's "Rock Bottom: Part 1," showing drastic bodily deformation into discrete yet interlocking shapes (1993, p. 1, 9). (Copyright 1993, Mary Fleener, used with the author's permission.)

In the title panel (figure 6, left portion), which displays her "Cubismo" style (Fleener & Roth, 2014), we see her character's body on the left side in a relatively normal state and then, in distinct but overlapping steps, tend toward discrete, geometrically abstract shapes that lose their organic cohesion, perhaps indicative of a descent into a more chaotic or incoherent inner state. In another sequence, she and her lover's bodies are first depicted in a more normal way, but the characters suddenly break into passionate acts of love, with both of their bodies decomposing into scattered geometrical shapes, where it is difficult to discern in many places which parts belong to which person (figure 6, right portion).

Deleuze notes another sort of visual style that is exemplified by abstract expressionist works like Jackson Pollock's "action paintings" (Deleuze, 2003, pp. 74–76). Here, the artists themselves experience somewhat erratic variations in their body's workings, like Pollock's throwing paint across the studio onto the canvass laid upon the floor. These bodily variations are recorded directly into the splatter's formations in the way that the body's impulses and other physical forces have shaped them. Then, when the viewer sees those splatters, they are potentially affected in a manner that reflects the sorts of affections Pollock had while making them. We find this sort of disruptive bodily deformation, for example, in Craig Thompson's *Blankets*.

Figure 7. Panels in Craig Thompson's *Blankets*, showing bodily deformative forces from inner turmoil (2015, p. 58, 59). (Copyright 2015, Craig Thompson. Used with permission from Drawn and Quarterly).

On the whole, it is drawn in an expressionist style, where often the character's inner turmoil is portrayed in the way the world around him is deformed (figure 7, left portion). One important characteristic of this style is the "Northern" or "Gothic" line that Wilhelm Worringer discusses, which, Deleuze (2013) notes, "never ceases to change direction, […] is broken, split, diverted, turned in on itself, coiled up, or even extended beyond its natural limits, dying away in a 'disordered convulsion': there are *free marks* that extend or arrest the line, acting beneath or beyond representation," and thus, it "works through violent movements" (p. 33). For Deleuze, it can take two different sorts of formations. It can be, on the one hand, a diagonalized line that "passes in a zigzag between things, sometimes drawing them into a bottomlessness in which it loses itself, sometimes whirling them in a formlessness into which it veers in a 'disorderly convulsion'" (Deleuze, 2005a, p. 52; see 1981b), or on the other hand, it can be a meandering curvilinear line like Pollack's splatters, "continually changing direction" (Deleuze, 2003, p. 74). There is a scene in *Blankets* where the main character is depicted as though he were undergoing bodily deformations. As a young man, he realizes that his calling is in the ministry. But, this makes him see all the drawing work he had been doing as an affront to God, as he had been wasting "his God-given time on ESCAPISM!" (Thompson, 2015, p. 58). We see his and his world's lines decompose in diagonal Northern lines (again, figure 7, left portion). And in another case, he is so full of inner turmoil that his body is depicted as deforming under the pressures of those forces, twisting and bending grotesquely (figure 7, right portion). In these cases, there is much less transitional shock than in many of Bagge's sudden decompositions. Nonetheless, the bodily deformations in these panels by Thompson still can present perceptual challenges to the viewing reader who might struggle to coherently grasp the imagery; and moreover, the twists and bends in the lines, or the diagonal imbalances, communicate affectively to the viewing reader the character's inner turmoil.

Conclusion

Thus, it is conceivable that, as with Francis Bacon's paintings, the comics experience of sudden bodily deformations can, under certain conditions, communicate disruptive forces to viewing readers, and these forces may have, to a limited extent and duration, a similarly disruptive influence on their own bodies. Another result of our studies was that by comparing film experience with that of comics, we saw that comics, by overloading the viewing reader's marginal consciousness with implicit phenomenal data, have the potential to shock in their own unique sort of way. It is not just the shock of difference as in jarring film cuts but is also the shock of those cuts bursting with intense amounts of phenomenal data to process. This suggests that what comics communicate is not simply the informational content of the panels along with the inferred or imagined connections between them. There is also a raw affective dimension of shocking, disruptive influence, whose force is as great as the viewing reader's strains to find coherence where there is instead sharp discontinuity and fragmentation. With all this in mind, we can see that a purely Merleau-Pontian approach to comics phenomenology does not capture vital elements of the comics experience, especially its shocking discontinuities, some of which can potentially disrupt the harmonious operation of our senses. The body of comics and of its reading viewers is not always a synaesthetic lived body but may be more like a body without organs. Thus, on these matters, Deleuze's philosophy of experience proves more fitting.

References

Bagge, P. (1987). *Neat stuff* #7. Agoura Hills, Calif.: Fantagraphics.

Bagge, P. (1993). *Hate* #12. Seattle, Wash.: Fantagraphics.

Bagge, P. (1994). *Hate* #15. Seattle, Wash.: Fantagraphics.

Bagge, P., & Roth, G. (2013). *The least insane of cartoonists.* Episode 22 of *Virtual memories.* Podcast interview. Retrieved from http://chimeraobscura.com/vm/podcast-the-least-insane-of-cartoonists

Barbe, A. (1982a). *Cinéma* #1. Grenoble, France: Glénat.

Barbe, A. (1982b). *Cinéma* #2. Grenoble, France: Glénat.

Deleuze, G. (1981a). *Course 1981.11.10, part 2*. Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica; *La voix de Gilles Deleuze en ligne* (Université Paris 8); *Web Deleuze*; *The Deleuze Seminars* (Purdue University). Transcription by Lise Renaux, augmented and translated by Charles Stivale. Paris. Retrieved from https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k128261x ; http://www2.univ-paris8.fr/deleuze/article.php3?id_article=36 ; https://www.webdeleuze.com/textes/294 ; https://deleuze.cla.purdue.edu/seminars/cinema-movement-image/lecture-01

Deleuze, G. (1981b). *Course 1981.11.24, part 3.* Bibliothèque nationale de France/Gallica; *La voix de Gilles Deleuze en ligne* (Université Paris 8); *Web Deleuze*; *The Deleuze Seminars* (Purdue University). Transcription by Marc Ledannois, augmented and translated by Charles Stivale. Paris. Retrieved from https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k128266t ; http://www2.univ-paris8.fr/deleuze/article.php3?id_article=82 ; https://www.webdeleuze.com/textes/296 ; https://deleuze.cla.purdue.edu/seminars/cinema-movement-image/lecture-03

Deleuze, G. (1995). *Kant's critical philosophy: The doctrine of the faculties* (H. Tomlinson & B. Habberjam, Trans.). London: Athlone.

Deleuze, G. (2003). *Francis Bacon: The logic of sensation* (D. Smith, Trans.). London & New York: Continuum.

Deleuze, G. (2004). *Desert islands and other texts, 1953–1974* (D. Lapoujade, Ed.; M. Taormina, Trans.). Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).

Deleuze, G. (2005a). *Cinema 1: The movement-image* (H. Tomlinson & B. Habberjam, Trans.). London: Continuum.

Deleuze, G. (2005b). *Cinema 2: The time-image* (H. Tomlinson & R. Galeta, Trans.). London: Continuum.

Deleuze, G. (2006). *Two regimes of madness: Texts and interviews 1975–1995* (D. Lapoujade, Ed.; A. Hodges & M. Taormina, Trans.). New York: Semiotext(e).

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1983). *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and schizophrenia, 1* (R. Hurley, M. Seem, & H. Lane, Trans.). Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1994). *What is philosophy?* (H. Tomlinson & G. Burchell, Trans.). New York: Columbia University.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (2004). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia, 2* (B. Massumi, Trans.). London: Continuum.

Embree, L. (1980). Merleau-Ponty's examination of Gestalt psychology. *Research in Phenomenology*, *10*, 89–121.

Fleener, M. (1993). *Slutburger* #4. Montreal: Drawn and Quarterly.

Fleener, M., & Roth, G. (2014). *Our lady of organized vituperationn.* Episode 45 of *Virtual memories.* Podcast interview. Retrieved from http://chimeraobscura.com/vm/podcast-our-lady-of-organized-vituperation

Groensteen, T. (2007). *The system of comics* (B. Beaty & N. Nguyen, Trans.). Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi.

Groensteen, T. (2013). *Comics and narration* (A. Miller, Trans.). Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi.

Hague, I. (2012). Beyond the visual: The roles of the senses in contemporary comics. *Scandinavian Journal of Comic Art*, *1*(1), 98–110.

Hague, I. (2014). *Comics and the senses: A multisensory approach to comics and graphic novels*. London & New York: Routledge.

Hatfield, C. (2005). *Alternative comics: An emerging literature*. Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi.

Hatfield, C. (2009). The art of tensions. In J. Heer & K. Worcester (Eds.), *A comics studies reader* (pp. 132–148). Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi.

Husserl, E. (1989). *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy,* Book 2: *Studies in the phenomenology of constitution* (R. Rojcewicz & A. Schuwer, Trans.). Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Husserl, E. (2001). *Analyses concerning active and passive synthesis: Lectures on transcendental logic* (A. Steinbock, Trans.). Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Iser, W. (1972). The reading process: A phenomenological approach. *New Literary History*, *3*(2), 279–299.

Kant, I. (1998). *Critique of pure reason* (P. Guyer & A. W. Wood, Eds. & Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University.

Kant, I. (2000). *Critique of the power of judgment* (P. Guyer, Ed.; P. Guyer & E. Matthews, Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University.

Kennedy, J. (1982). Metaphor in pictures. *Perception*, *11*, 589–605.

Lia, S. (2008). *Fluffy*. Milwaukie, Oreg.: Dark Horse.

Lia, S. (2011). *Please God, find me a husband!* London: Cape.

Marey, É.-J. (1885). *La méthode graphique dans les sciences expérimentales et principalement en physiologie et en médecine*. Paris: Masson.

McCloud, S. (1993). *Understanding comics: The invisible art*. Northampton, Mass.: Kitchen Sink.

McCloud, S. (2006). *Making comics: Storytelling secrets of comics, manga, and graphic novels*. New York: Harper.

McCloud, S. (2015). *The sculptor*. New York: First Second.

McCloud, S., & Roth, G. (2015). *Scott McCloud – Tumblings.* Episode 137 of *Virtual memories.* Podcast interview. Retrieved from http://chimeraobscura.com/vm/episode-137-scott-mccloud

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of perception* (C. Smith, Trans.). London & New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1963). *The structure of behavior* (A. Fisher, Trans.). Boston: Beacon.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1964). *Sense and non-sense* (H. Dreyfus & P. Dreyfus, Trans.). Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1992). The nature of perception: Two proposals. In H. Silverman & J. Barry (Eds.), & F. Williams (Trans.), *Texts and dialogues: On philosophy, politics, and culture* (pp. 74–84). Amherst, N.Y.: Humanity.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (2010). *Child psychology and pedagogy: The Sorbonne lectures 1949–52* (T. Welsh, Trans.). Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University.

Miodrag, H. (2013). *Comics and language: Reimagining critical discourse on the form*. Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi.

Peirce, C. S. (1965). *Collected papers of Charles Sanders Peirce (Two volumes in one),* Vol. 1: *Principles of philosophy*, Vol. 2: *Elements of logic* (C. Hartshorne & P. Weiss, Eds.). Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap of Harvard University.

Rosa, D. (2010). *The life and times of Scrooge McDuck companion*. Los Angeles: Boom.

Rosensohn, W. (1974). *The phenomenology of Charles S. Peirce*. Amsterdam: Grüner.

Schneider, G. (2013). Resisting narrative immersion. *Studies in Comics*, *4*(2), 333–354.

Shores, C. (2012). Body and world in Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze. *Studia Phaenomenologica, 12*, 181–209.

Simondon, G. (1992). The genesis of the individual. In J. Crary & S. Kwinter (Eds.), *Zone 6: Incorporations* (pp. 297–319). New York: Zone.

Smith, D. (2012). *Essays on Deleuze*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University.

Sobchack, V. (1992). *The address of the eye: A phenomenology of film experience*. Princeton: Princeton University.

Sobchack, V. (2004). *Carnal thoughts: Embodiment and moving image culture*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California.

Thompson, C. (2015). *Blankets*. Montreal: Drawn and Quarterly.

Ware, C. (1994a). *ACME novelty library,* #2. Seattle: Fantagraphics.

Ware, C. (1994b). *ACME novelty library,* #3. Seattle: Fantagraphics.

Ware, C. (2000). *Jimmy Corrigan: The smartest kid on earth*. New York: Pantheon.

Ware, C. (2005). *The ACME novelty library annual report to shareholders and Saturday afternoon rainy day fun book*. New York: Pantheon.

Warren, E. (writer), & Robertson, D. (pencils). (1998). *Transmetropolitan* #5. New York: DC Comics.