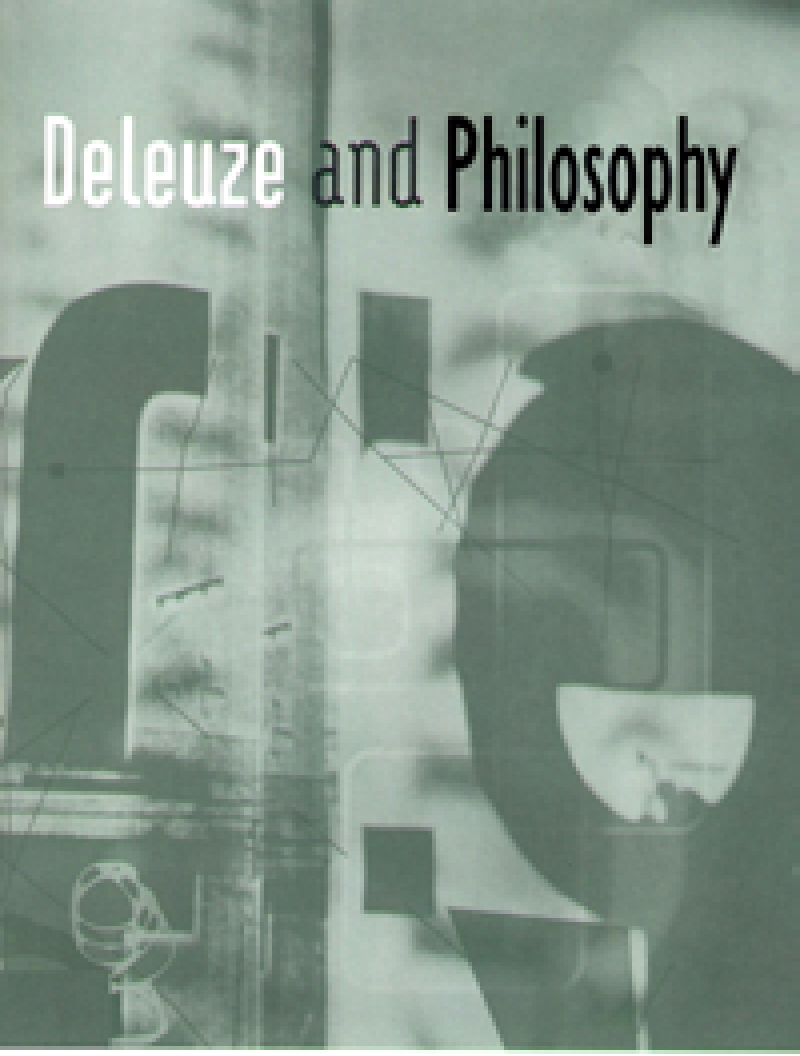
Deleuze and Philosophy



Edited by Constantin V. Boundas

Deleuze and Philosophy

Deleuze Connections

'It is not the elements or the sets which define the multiplicity. What defines it is the AND, as something which has its place between the elements or between the sets. AND, AND, AND – stammering.'

Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*

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Acknowledgements

The plan for this collection of essays on the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze was laid out during the International Conference, 'Gilles Deleuze: Experimenting with Intensities', held at Trent University in Ontario in May 2004 and generously supported by the Canadian Social Science and Humanities Research Council. Several of the contributions made to this conference have been rewritten to fit this volume, and others have been solicited especially for the occasion. The principle governing the selection of the chapters of the present work has been the ability of their authors to advance the discussion of some contested points in the philosophy of Deleuze, to shed new light on a few of its not-yet well-understood problems, and to stimulate new and vigorous exchanges.

Since the publication of *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy* in 1994 (a collection of essays that I had the good fortune to put together thanks to my friendship with Professor Dorothea Olkowski – my co-editor), the scholarship surrounding Deleuze and his philosophy has progressed by leaps and bounds. We were beginning to learn how to read Deleuze in the1990s. We now have the luxury of reminding each other that Deleuze is not to be shadowboxed but rather put to work in problems and concerns that were not his own. One of the contributors to the present volume, Philippe Mengue, records this reminder rather starkly, expressing his conviction that the time is ripe to be '*contra Deleuzum sed pro vero Deleuzo!*' I am, of course, in agreement with these reminders and admonitions providing that they do not conspire to terrorise the increasing numbers of the 'unsophisticated' readers that would still like to understand what a toolkit is like – 'what it means,' or 'is all about' – in order to find a place and a function for it.

If Deleuze today finds a philosophical audience in increasing numbers, if he commands the attention and generates the interest of several good minds, and if visiting and revisiting his work continues to offer us new

and shining sign posts on the trajectory of becoming-philosopher, we owe it to the dedicated efforts (some pioneer, others of a more recent vintage) of a distinct group of individuals, to the friendships they struck and the collaborations they established, in the best spirit of Deleuzian encounters. This volume salutes them all: Eric Alliez whose fidelity to Deleuze's text is matched only by his strength in building with Deleuze's blocks things non-Deleuzian; Keith Ansell-Pearson who, with his tremendous erudition in the philosophy of biology, taught us how to read Deleuze as an ethologist; Véronique Bergen whose massive study of Deleuze's ontology has helped tremendously philosophers in their effort to read Deleuze as a philosopher-creator of concepts; Ronald Bogue who has the distinction of having published the first book (in any known-to-me language) on Deleuze, and whose five published volumes on Gilles Deleuze prompted Professor Olkowski to write 'that there will be no need for anyone else to write a how-to-understand-Deleuze book'; Rosi Braidotti who pondered long and hard on the Deleuzian 'becoming-woman', on nomadic subjects, and the ethics of sustainability; Ian Buchanan who explored the promises that Deleuzism holds for cultural studies and stands tall at the gates of the prestigious 'Deleuze series' of Edinburgh University Press; Jean-François Laruelle who was writing very insightful things on Deleuze in France at a time when most of us were still learning how to spell Deleuze's name; Jean-Clet Martin who, having accepted Deleuze's advice to be faithful to transcendental empiricism by focusing on the concrete, went on, after his first subtle variation on Deleuzian themes, to write wonderful books in his own name; Brian Massumi whose translation of *A Thousand Plateaus* would have been sufficient a contribution to earn our undying gratitude, if it were not for his masterful variations on Deleuze-themes, of the calibre of *Parables of the Virtual*; Dorothea Olkowski who has been one of the pioneers in the field, capable of combining insightful interpretations of the most difficult ontological claims of Deleuze with truly elegant appreciations of his writings on the arts; Paul Patton, another early comer to the field, whose sustained work on Deleuze and the political made it difficult for the rest of us to say casually and irresponsibly that Deleuze's philosophy lacks both ethics and politics; Charles Stivale whose enviable ability to interchange the pen of the seasoned writer, the special sensitivity and skills of the translator, and the magic wand of the webmaster have contributed so much to the Deleuze studies; Arnaud Villani, one of the oldest and most attentive readers of Deleuze in France who best understood all that Deleuze intended to pack in the figure of the orchid and the wasp; François Zourabichvili whose grasp of Deleuzian texts is impeccable, his

sufferance of careless readings low, and his writings, among the subtlest that one can find. I would be ungrateful if I did not salute here the wonderful contributions of Manola Antonioli, Friedrich Balke, Reda Bensmaia, Claire Colebrook, Tom Conley, José Gil, Philip Goodchild, Elizabeth Grosz, Michael Hardt, Eugene Holland, Thomas Lange, Stéfan Leclerck, John Marks, Todd May, Toni Negri, John Protevi, D. N. Rodowick, Mark Roelli, René Schérer, Juliette Simmont, Daniel W. Smith, Isabelle Stengers, Martin Stingelin and John Williams.

These are my overdue tributes to those I worked with (often from a distance), on whose writings I often leaned in order to sustain my own. But a new group of Deleuze readers is on the rise – a group of readers destined to find their own way to Deleuze; to prove us too timid in our relation to his thought and too conventional; to add their own shoots to the Deleuze-rhizome; and to let themselves be filled with the affects that the great stutterer knew how to generate. It is to this group of men and women that I dedicate this volume.

I would be remiss if I did not express my deep appreciation for the cheerful and always helpful assistance I received from Jackie Jones, Carol Macdonald and Nicola Wood of Edinburgh University Press; and the priceless advice of my friend, Susan Dyrkton, who – with her command of the language and her elegant style – succeeds, most of the time, in unravelling the unfamiliar phrasing my Greek mother tongue unleashes on the English text.

Constantin V. Boundas

Abbreviations

AO	*Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*
CC	*Deleuze: Essays Critical and Clinical*
DR	*Difference and Repetition*
EE	*L'être et l'évènement*
EPS	*Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*
GL	*Germinal Life*
LS	*Logic of Sense*
LS-F	*Logic of Sense* (French edition – *Logique du sens*)
N	*Negotiations*
PED	*Politique de l'entre-deux dans la philosophie de Gilles Deleuze*
PS	*Proust and Signs*
SPE	*Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*
SPP	*Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*
THN	*A Treatise of Human Nature*
TP	*A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*
WIP	*What is Philosophy?*
ZF	*Axiomatic Set Theory* (Zermelo-Frankael)

L' Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze; avec Claire Parnet. Produit et realisé par Pierre André Boutang (Paris: Editions Montparnasse, n.d.).

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

Chapter 1

What Difference does Deleuze's Difference make?

Constantin V. Boundas

Philosophies of difference, where difference maintains its grounds from beginning to end without being eclipsed by identity, are exceedingly rare. In fact, if we subtract from their ranks those which, in their struggle to maintain the primacy of difference, succumb to the ineffable and turn their back on the creation of concepts, the number of philosophical heterologies turns out to be minuscule. And of course it is not by chance that the fortunes of philosophical heterologies are better served inside process philosophies. Although to be a process philosopher is not a guarantee that one will also be a philosopher of pure difference, movement and the reflection on movement that constitute the raison d'être of the philosophies of process offer a rich soil for the nurture of *tou heterou philia*. In the distance travelled between the Heraclitian river with its flowing waters being eternally qualified as *alla kai alla* (different upon different) and the Bergsonian durée, the birthrights of difference are well protected. But a process philosophy, in order to support a purely heterological thought, has to be capable of doing without subjects steering the process (or being steered by it), without substantive names designating 'blocks' in motion, and without points of origin or destination marking the allowed trajectory. Only a process philosophy where process and product are the same can hope to prevent the subordination, in the final analysis, of difference to identity. It seems to me that Gilles Deleuze's philosophy meets all these requirements and represents, in the wake of Nietzsche, the most consistent difference philosophy of all.

Different/ciating

The mistake in reading Heidegger's 'Being' as if it were a substantive noun is now well recognised. The mistake in reading Deleuze's 'difference' as a noun on the other hand is in the process of being slowly

registered. It is not as if we now begin to notice for the first time that in his texts 'difference' means differentiation and differen*c*iation[1] – this became clear to us early on. It is rather that we are now in the process of exploring all the implications of this decision. We understand better, for example, the sense in which difference is not a concept: concepts are not processes, and 'different/ciation' names a process – actually, it names the twin processes of the real: the virtual and the actual. Were we to heed Deleuze's recommendation and opt for a philosophical language revolving around infinitives, the temptation of mistaking 'different/ciation' for a noun would be prevented: we would then choose to think in terms of 'different/ciating'. A new ontology would consequently be possible, built on the intuition that 'to be is to different/ciate and to be different/ciated'.

Indeed, the reason for the grapheme, *t/c*, is that, in Deleuze's ontology, processes are made of two intertwining flows – the one virtual, the other actual – with both flows being real. The virtual is a differentiated and differentiating process whose differentiating dynamism coincides with its differen*c*iated actualisation. The product is the process, but with a difference: the product-process belongs to the realm of solutions and actualisations of problems. Problems are expressions of tendencies present in solutions only because tendencies belong by right to the virtual process that subsists inside the product-process and nowhere else. The plausibility of this point depends on the successful co-ordination of a number of concepts that Deleuze needs in order to build his ontology – force, intensity, tendency, virtuality and event. The co-ordination will also decide whether or not Deleuze's ontology is that of a pure process capable of guaranteeing the irreducibility of difference – and it is to the complex issues stemming from this co-ordination that I now turn my attention.

Deleuze's ontology is an ontology of forces bent on correcting the mistake we make whenever we think exclusively in terms of things and their qualities:[2] in privileging extension and extended magnitudes, we overlook the intensive genesis of the extended. Forces, however, are experienced only in the results they render, and the products of forcefields are extended and qualified. I said 'forcefields' because, in an ontology of forces like Deleuze's, 'force' comes to mean relation between forces. Such an ontology therefore amounts to a veritable diacritics of forces in motion: forces are different/ciated – they are what they are only because of the differential relation that they have with other forces. The differential quantity of forces is called 'intensity' and intensities – or better, intensifications – are the real subjects of processes.[3] But they are not subjects in any ordinary sense, because intensities are not entities; being responsible for the genesis of entities, they are virtual yet real

events, whose mode of existence is to actualise themselves in states of affairs. They exist nowhere else but in the extended that they constitute. Despite the fact that they are not identical with the extended, the distinction between virtual intensities and actual extended things cannot be accounted for in terms of any presumed ontological *chorismo*s.

The Deleuzian virtual has generated an endless number of discussions and controversies,[4] but I do not think that there is anything mysterious about it. In Deleuze's ontology, the virtual and the actual are two mutually exclusive, yet jointly sufficient characterisations of the real. Actual/real are states of affairs, that is, bodies, their mixtures and individuals existing in the present. Virtual/real are incorporeal events and singularities in a plane of consistency, belonging to a past that Deleuze qualifies as 'pure' because he thinks of it as a past that has never been present. Virtual is something which, without being or resembling an actual x, has nonetheless the capacity to bring about x, without (in being actualised) ever coming to coincide or to identify itself with, or to be depleted and exhausted in the x. The kind of process that we find in Deleuze's ontology is not properly captured in the scheme, actual/real →actual/real; its correct schematisation is rather this: virtual/real↔ actual/real↔virtual/real (DR: 208–21).[5] Becoming, instead of being a linear process from one actual to another, should rather be conceived as the movement from an actual state of affairs, through a dynamic field of virtual/real tendencies, to the actualisation of this field in a new state of affairs. This schema safeguards the relation of reversibility between the virtual and the actual.

It is best to think of the virtual in terms of tendencies, provided that we remember also to say that tendencies exist in differentiated intensities and subsist in differen*c*iated extended parts (Adamson 1999). They, rather than the movement of extended elements, guarantee the continuity of intensive transformations. Although they are incited by the differential relations between material forces and are actualised in them, tendencies cannot be reduced to the material forces without ruining the continuity and indivisibility of the duration of the process. Absence of continuity and indivisibility will render the process vulnerable to the paradoxes of Zeno. It is important not to confuse the virtuality of tendencies with Plato's ideational Being: the emphasis that Deleuze places on materiality would by itself be a convincing reminder. The virtual can be apprehended only at the end of a chain reaction starting with sensation, affecting all faculties, and orchestrating their resonance in a kind of discordant harmony. However, there are additional safeguards against the return of Platonism: tendencies are problems and problems have no

final solutions, although the partial solution of a problem transforms the problem back again into a tendency. Now, to the extent that tendencies stand for problems on the way to becoming the solutions that the actual forces in tension with one another permit them to have, they provide the actual with sense and intelligibility, without ever resembling it.

This is the reason why the role played by the virtual in processual transformations cannot be overlooked. Indeed, Deleuze often calls the virtual 'quasi-cause'. He also describes it as the horizon of events and he goes on to distinguish events from states of affairs that belong to the actual and are, in fact, actualisations of (incorporeal) events:

> (E)very event [has a] double structure . . . With every event, there is indeed the present moment of its actualisation, the moment in which the event is embodied in a state of affairs, an individual, or a person . . . The future and the past of the event are evaluated only with respect to the definitive present, and from the point of view of that which embodies it. But on the other hand, there is the future and the past of event considered in itself, sidestepping each present, being free of the limitations of a state of affairs . . . (LS: 151)

It is in the context of making the distinction between events and states of affairs that Deleuze claims the infinitive as the best verbal mode for the designation of events: to green, to cut, to grow, to die, are the best designations possible for pure incorporeal events. Infinitives guarantee specificity and determinacy, without imposing subjective or objective co-ordinates. In their infinitival modes, verbs guarantee reversibility between past and future by virtue of the fact that they themselves are untimely matrices.[6] They stand for forces, intensities and acts, rather than substances or qualities. To reduce events to states of affairs and then to assign them to the rupture points of a continuum is 'to grant an unwarranted normative status to that state and to posit the break with it in terms that are both blind and transcendent' (GL: 132; LS: 148–53).

Perhaps, now, we can see more clearly why and how Deleuze's ontology is built around a notion of difference that is not contained in the 'from' of the 'x is different from y' – in which case, difference would be relative to identity – but rather built around the attempt to capture difference in itself. The centrality that Deleuze attributes to intensity is pivotal here. In order to safeguard the continuity of becoming and to prevent the reduction of temporal sequences to sets of discrete moments, ontology requires the distinction between intensive differences and extended parts. Unlike extended magnitudes whose *partes extra partes* allow to be divided without any corresponding change in their Nature (a situation that guarantees the commensurability of their divided parts)

intensities cannot be subdivided without corresponding change in their Nature; they are, therefore, incommensurable, and their 'distance' from one another makes each one of them a veritable difference in itself. Placed in the context of the two sides of the Deleuzian ontology – the virtual and the actual – intensities catalyse the actualisation of the virtual, generating extension, linear, successive time, as well as extended bodies and their qualities. The relation of reversibility between virtual and actual guarantees that intensities will not suffer the fate of negentropic death.

The advantages of these moves, from an epistemological and ontological point of view, are significant. Becoming, in the name of which Deleuze's entire work is mobilised, cannot be constituted through a juxtaposition of 'immobile cuts'. Participation in immobile cuts has always been responsible for the hieratic and static world of Being. On the other hand, forces seized *in actu* are better candidates for a diagrammatic mapping out of becoming. Of course, the success of these moves depends on the availability of a plausible theory of time and space that will permit the deployment of subjectless processes of a continuum of differentials, with no origin and no end points. No adequate theory of transformation and change can be contemplated as long as it is predicated on a process conceived as a mere sequence of multiple states of affairs. Deleuze's claim that transformation goes from (actual) states of affairs to (virtual) tendencies and back to (actual) states of affairs prevents the time of transformation from collapsing into discrete temporal blocks and from destroying the kind of continuity and mutual imbrication necessary for an adequate characterisation of the duration of processes. Without it, processes of continua would be possible only as mathematical formulas, devoid of physical embodiments.

Deleuze articulates the structure of temporality required by his ontology of processes through an ingenious rereading of Bergson's durée that permits him to advance the following claims: actual presents are constituted simultaneously as both present and past; in all presents, the entire past is conserved in itself; and there is a past that has never been present as well as a future that will never be present (DR: 70–128).[7] The idea of a past that has never been present (the immemorial past), as well as of a future that would never turn into a present, can also be found (although with different axes to be ground) in the writings of Jacques Derrida and Emmanuel Levinas. The reasons for its postulation vary from one thinker to another, but there is one thing that they share: any philosophy that puts a premium on the de-actualisation of the present, in order to tap the resources of the past or the future, runs the risk of reifying the past (as in

Plato's recollection) and also the future (as in the case of apocalyptic eschatologies). To prevent this reification, the notions of the 'immemorial past' and the 'messianic future' (Deleuze prefers to talk of the pure past and of the eternal repetition of the different)[8] are brought to safeguard the idea of a process that can be conceived without the dead weight of tendencies determining it *a tergo* or *ab ende*.

When is thinking possible?

Deleuze's uncompromising theory of difference has important implications for knowledge claims. It builds on a critique of the image of thought (recognition through representation) that the philosophical tradition has solidified on to a dogma; it ushers in a new understanding of what philosophy is (creation of concepts); it requires a new methodology – that of 'transcendental empiricism'; and it works with a non-traditional understanding of the 'dialectics of truth and error (undecidability between truth and falsehood and 'the power of the false').

Platonism raised re-cognition on to the model of thinking, and grounded the model on postulates that gave it a *de jure* legitimacy which *de facto* it could not have. With these postulates, it vested an image of thought that retained from our cognitive processes few trivial facts illustrating recognition through representation. *Doxa* was mistaken for *episteme*. Error was held to be an evil extrinsic to thought whereas intrinsic to thought malignancies like madness, stupidity and mean-spiritedness were ignored as of no consequence. This traditional paradigm of thought is not able to think difference, without compromising it. In it, difference turns into an object of recognition and representation, and is subsumed under similitude, opposition, analogy and identity. An already constituted and familiar world is greeted by an already constituted and familiar subject. An alternative 'model' is needed for thought to become possible, and Deleuze contends that it will have to be responsible for jumpstarting in 'fundamental encounters' with intensities our always already reticent and idle thought. It should be the *cogitandum* (*noeteon*) that motivates the construction of a thought model, not the *cogitatum* (*noeton*) – provided, of course, that (given the axiom of the primacy of materiality) thought becomes the thought of the *cogitandum* only after the *sentiendum* and the *memorandum* have prepared it for this task: from that which ought to be sensed, through that which ought to be recalled, to that which ought to be thought – this is what cognition becomes when it is liberated from the constraints of the representative strait-jacket.

The gerunds that inspire the cognitive 'ought' are the result of a bold reading and transformation of the Kantian theory of Ideas undertaken in the pages of *Difference and Repetition*. An Idea, for Kant, has no instantiations in the empirical world, yet *it must be thought*. Deleuze retains this imperative when he thinks of the virtual, but he confounds Kantianism with his decision to multiply Ideas by making them the gerunds of all faculties (the *cogitandum*, the *memorandum*, the *loquendum*, the *sentiendum*). Now, Ideas do not obey the Platonic imperative, '*unum nomen unum nominatum*'. They are (differential) structures of singular and ordinary points and intensities, animated by spatio-temporal dynamisms, in the process of actualisation. Ideas are virtual and their 'being' is that of problem-setting matrices. This is Deleuze's way of preventing the virtual from being a mere fraudulent and unnecessary duplication of the actual raised to the power of the transcendental: the virtual must not resemble the actual, exactly the way that problems do not resemble or represent their solutions. The tool for this rehabilitation of the transcendental is transcendental empiricism. (For a detailed and informative discussion of Deleuzian Ideas, refer to Daniel Smith's chapter in the present volume.)

Transcendental empiricism – Deleuze's method – attempts to go beyond experience to the conditions that account for things, states of things and their mixtures given to experience.[9] Its object is not what is given immediately but rather the immediate given. But the immediate given is the tendency – in other words, the 'unrepresentable' virtual. The similarity between transcendental empiricism and the Kantian transcendentalism is misleading. For both Kant and Deleuze, the actual with its *de facto* existence, is governed by conditions that exist *de jure*. But the Kantian *de jure* is not like the Deleuzian *in virtu*. What is *de jure* is not characterised by a dynamic thrust toward its own actualisation. Moreover, Deleuze's empiricism, unlike the Kantian critique, is capable of providing a genetic (not merely a static) account of the constitution of the actual, because the conditions that it seeks are themselves given in the virtual as the conditions of actual (not all possible) experience. Whereas in Kantianism, the sought after conditions are those of possible experience, in the case of Deleuze, the targeted conditions do not exceed the conditioned, and, therefore, the concept they form ends up being identical with its object.

Rather than looking in the direction of Kant, we must recognise in the Deleuzian transcendental empiricism the inspiration of Bergson's intuition (Deleuze 1988a: Chapter 1). Things and states of things are mixtures and as such are subject to qualifications according to the more and the

less, that is, according to differences of degree. But these (actual) mixtures are the products of (virtual) tendencies which, unlike mixtures, differ in Nature or in kind from each other. Bergsonian intuition is a method for dividing the mixture according to tendencies, that is, according to real differences. Viewed in this light, Bergson's intuition is identical with Deleuze's transcendental empiricism. In the case of the traditional image of thought, representation, through the mediation of concepts, requires the presence of an identical subject to an identical object. However, the virtuality of the Idea does not require the assistance of an identical subject or an identical object in order to become real. Representation belongs essentially to consciousness and follows the logic of solutions. The Idea, on the contrary, is in Deleuze's expression, 'sub-representative' and is fashioned according to the logic of problems and questions. Transcendental empiricism explores the field of this logic.

To be a transcendental empiricist, therefore, is to hunt for the 'referents' of the gerunds: *sentiendum→cogitandum*. Deleuze, for whom consciousness is the 'opaque blade' in the heart of becoming and therefore subject to intensive reduction, assigns to radical empiricism the responsibility of putting perception inside things, rather than of coaxing eloquently about its ineradicably ambiguous grounding in the 'lived body'. To put perception inside things, to see things as they are, would seem to contradict Deleuze's appropriation of the label 'constructivism' on behalf of his method. But the contradiction evaporates as soon as we understand Deleuze's constructivism to be the history of a redemption. This is how Jacques Rancière expresses this Deleuzian point:

> We must give things the perceptual power that they have already, because they have lost it. And they have lost it, because their phosphorescence and movement have been interrupted by another image – the image of the human brain . . . that confiscated the interval between action and reaction . . . and made itself the center of the world. To put perception inside things is a restitution. (Runcière 2001: 150)

It is redemption and what is redeemed is *aesthesis*. The inspiration for all this comes, of course, from Bergson, for whom matter and mind are best reconfigured as a world of images, moving, colliding, being deflected or being arrested. It is the mind that does the arresting, the selecting and the reacting (after the interpolation of an interval calibrated in a way that permits reactions to 'fit' actions). Taking into consideration the interpolation of this 'opaque blade,' the Bergsonian/Deleuzian *sentiendum* is nothing but the *chaosmos* prior to its being stretched on the plane of organisation that consciousness constructs.

To radical empiricism, Deleuze also assigns the responsibility of creating concepts that would be adequate to what ought to be thought and sensed. Being neither reflective (one is perfectly capable of reflecting without philosophy) nor communicative (communication arrives either too early or too late), philosophy is creative of concepts.[10] The concepts that it creates are neither abstract ideas nor universals – they do not name the traditional essence of a thing. They are about the circumstances of the emergence of a thing (the 'how', the 'when', the 'where', the 'particular case'). A concept condenses the conditions of the actualisation of an entity. As such, therefore, it is an assemblage of singularities that must not be confused with individuals. Made up of singularities, the concept is itself a singularity to the extent that its internal consistency is brought about through a condensation that causes the concept to be an intensity. Unlike extended magnitudes, concepts cannot be decomposed to their constituent singularities without becoming different concepts – this is precisely why concepts are intensities. Although the singularities, that is, the component elements of concepts, are incarnated in actual (sensible, particular) bodies, they are not reducible to the states of affairs of interacting bodies. They are virtual conditions, with no spatio-temporal co-ordinates and, therefore, best thought of as expressing events – virtual and yet real events – in the process of actualisation. The task of philosophy is to draw out concepts from states of affairs inasmuch as it extracts the event from them.

And the concepts that philosophy creates have a history:

> We say that every concept always has a *history*, even though this history zigzags, though it passes, if need be, through other problems or on to different planes. In any concept there are usually bits or components that come from other concepts, which correspond to other problems and presuppose other planes. This is inevitable because each concept carries out new cut-outs, takes on new contours, and must be reactivated or recut. (WIP: 18)

This is the reason why to be a Platonist or a Kantian today means to reactivate Plato's or Kant's concepts in our problems. Deleuze quotes approvingly Robbe-Grillet's answer to the question of whether or not there is progress in philosophy:

> There is of course movement in philosophy, but to try to do philosophy the way Plato did is senseless; not because we know better than Plato, but because Plato cannot be outdone or outsmarted; what he did, he did it for ever. The only choice is between the history of philosophy and Plato-grafts on problems which are no longer his own. (Deleuze 1998: 23)

If, as Deleuze proposes, the 'history of philosophy' is best done in stratigraphic time – rather than chronological – that is, in the time of the simultaneous and non-contradictory co-presence of philosophical problems and events, the contradictions of the philosophical propositions that belong to the actual history of philosophy must give way to the 'inclusive disjunctions' of philosophy's own becoming (see Antonioli 1999: Chapter 1).

It is time now to close this section with the addition of two more points: (1) the ability of an ontology grounded on different/ciating processes to deal with questions of genetic constitution; and (2) its contribution to the integration of *aesthesis*.

1. Kant's critical philosophy and Husserl's phenomenology, as I argued elsewhere (see Boundas 2002 and Simont 1997: Chapters 1 and 4), took seriously the need for genetic explanations and constitutions, albeit static conditioning always has had the last word in their work. For both, the answer to the question: how is x possible? – whether this x is an object of experience or whether it is a bit of sense – may be provided when one or more rules or conditions, supposedly given and known *a priori*, are shown to be involved in its constitution. If the object whose constitution we are attempting to account for is, for the purpose of our investigation, not changing, and if the *a priori* rules that we bring to bear upon its constitution are not, for the duration of our investigation, scrutinised as to their own constitution, our transcendental investigation is 'static'. But if our investigation changes in focus and is brought to bear upon the conditions and rules that could account for x's coming to be as it is now, or on the coming to be of the conditions and rules themselves as they are now, our transcendental investigation will be 'genetic'. It is often thought that the only way to prevent the blasphemy of endowing ourselves with an *intellectus archetypus*, usurping thereby the creative prerogatives of God, is to introduce into transcendental constitutions – whether of the static or the genetic variety – a neat distinction between activity and passivity (conditioning and being conditioned). Rules, structures and forms act upon (condition) an unformed (primary) matter that passively receives their action.

Now, in an ontology of differentiated and differenciating intensities the slippage from dynamic genesis to static conditioning is prevented. When force overtakes form, intensity – rather than extension – takes centre stage and the question of the genesis of form can no longer be sidestepped: genesis discriminates, de-sediments, de-stratifies, different/ciates; it accounts for becomings and unclogs passages. Let us take as an example perception. Perception is the result of a becoming – the result of

a 'summation' of degrees. To perceive is the result of an integration and integration is not static conditioning – it is a genesis (see Boundas 2002 and Simont 1997: Chapters 1 and 4). But an integration of what? A genesis to what? The answer requires that we discern not only one, but two operations: *differentiation*, as the registering (below the threshold of consciousness) of differentials – *petites perceptions* – being the reason for perception; *and integration*, as the summation by means of which the mind tends to connect differentials as a single perception. Borrowing an old Aristotelian distinction, 'to perceive' is not a verb marking a process (*kinesis*), it is a verb marking an achievement (*energeia*).[11] In the centre of every perception, there is something that cannot be sensed – albeit something without which there would be no sensation. This 'unsensed' is not a mere formal condition of the possibility of sensation in general, but the concrete set of differential *petites perceptions* – the necessary elements for the genetic constitution of whatever is actually sensed.

Genesis shows that intensity is not only the being of the sensible – the way that Kant had decided – but also the being of imagination, memory and thought. No longer confined to the category of quality, intensity is the *ratio essendi* of all categories, Ideas, concepts – as well as of space and time. Genetic constitution reveals that Ideas regulate and totalise because they are problem-setters, and also because, far from being the sole prerogative of reason, they belong to each and every faculty.

Finally, to the extent that genesis is a search for the *sentiendum* and the *cogitandum*, it frees transcendental enquiry from the tyranny of what is possible (DR: 211–14);[12] what is being sought in genetic constitutive investigations are not the conditions of all possible experience, but rather the series of 'sub-representative experiences' that account for the singularity under investigation. It follows that genesis prevents the transcendental from becoming a sterile repetition and duplication of empirical descriptions. As long as the possible usurps the space of the virtual, genetic constitution and straightforward formal conditioning cannot be distinguished from one another: under such circumstances, genesis would be the process of engendering the real from the possible, and formal conditioning would be the extraction of the possible from the real. No longer conceived in the image and the resemblance of the empirical, the transcendental transforms itself into the virtual (neither sensible nor intelligible, but rather the being of the sensible as well as the being of the intelligible).

2. The strength of genetic accounts is in their ability to show that the *sentiendum*, *memorandum* and *cogitandum* – unlike sensa, memories and *cogitationes* – reposition the sublime within every faculty; that they

inflict violence upon faculties, forcing them to seize that which cannot be experienced in their normal, empirical exercise. The intensive gerunds underwrite a new pedagogy for our faculties by reconnecting the sensation of our cognitive experience with the affect of our aesthetic appreciation – after all, the Greeks did call them both by the same name: *aesthesis*. Revisiting, for a moment, the Kantian narrative permits us to see the promise of this pedagogy and the betrayal of the promise. The rational idea was presented in the first *Critique* as a concept with no intuition being adequate to it. But the final *concordia discordata* in the third *Critique* shows the aesthetic idea to be an intuition with no concept adequate to it. And yet, this aesthetic idea expresses what could not be expressed in the rational idea (See Deleuze 1984: Chapter 3; and Deleuze 2002: 79–101). It looks as if the *cogitandum* and the *sentiendum* have both been named. But the problem with the Kantian criticism is that sensibility is never really trained, having been resigned to receptivity and passivity. The sensible manifold of the first *Critique* continues to be cut off from the *sentiendum* of the third. Aesthetics, therefore, has to bring down the barriers that Kantianism established between the cognitive, the praxiological and the ludic – which does not mean the reduction of all language games or forms of life to the aesthetic. It means that it must discover the 'discordant harmony' of their distinct problematics. It also means that *aesthesis* – in all the domains of its exercise – must be understood as the intensive process of capturing forces – not forms – that it is. It means that Deleuze's text on Francis Bacon and the violence of sensation must be made into a chapter of his *Difference and Repetition* or, if you wish, *Difference and Repetition* must be made into a section of *The Logic of Sensation* (Deleuze 2003). Bacon – the painter – trades off representation for the *aesthetic* exploration of a world never seen before; yet familiar and near the way that Deleuze – the ontologist – trades off the image of thought for a new thinking without image.

The Ethics of the Event

The role of pure difference is not confined to the domains of ontology and noology alone. It finds an important place in Deleuze's ethics, which resolves 'to be done with (the) judgement (of God)' and attempts to get rid of the transcendental *ought*, along with its twin bulwarks of duty and obligation.[13] In its place, a virtue ethic is being rebuilt, with intensity as its only foundation. In the succinct formulation of François Zourabichvili: '[E]thical difference distinguishes itself absolutely from moral opposition to the extent that it is no longer possible to pass

judgement upon existence in general, in the name of transcendental values' (Zourabichvili 1994: 113). But an ethic of virtue (where 'virtue' is meant in its Greek and Nietzschean sense) could still be essentialist: it could still permit Aristotle in the case of the ambidextrous to muse about the right hand being *phusei* the best.[14] Intensity, on the other hand, disallows partiality to the right hand because intensity does not resonate with good and common sense nor is it derived from the habitual insight of the Aristotelian *phronimos* and the expert.

An ethics of intensity is defined by Deleuze as life, rendering itself worthy of the event (LS: 149; also 146–7 and 148–51). Although the definition reminds us of old Stoic admonitions, a direct appropriation of this formula is bound to lead to misunderstandings, as long as the terrain is not yet prepared by one more intensive reduction. This time, what is reduced is the self (*mine* and *other*) on its way to becoming-imperceptible. This is the kind of becoming that carries with it its own pre-personal and pre-subjective intensities – the 'affects', that is, intensities, modifications and expressions of our power to be – the *vis existendi* of Spinoza's *conatus* and Deleuze's desire.

Intensification and intensity, in order to be capable of delivering us from the judgement of God, must first free themselves from subjectivity, transcendental fields and personological co-ordinates. They must be resituated, away from the typologies of the noetico-noematic structures of reasons, motives and deeds, and closer to the topological diagrammatic configurations of forces and counter-forces. It is in *The Logic of Sense* that Deleuze demonstrates that freedom from subjectival and personological transcendental fields requires the reduction of the structure-self and the structure-other – in other words, the decision to commit simultaneously *altrucide* and *suicide*.[15]

I can only summarise this argument here. If Sartre, Deleuze claims, is correct in arguing for the contemporaneity of ego and other ego – if both structures are the result of a dialectic of non-egological consciousnesses – the (intensive) reduction of the one will precipitate the reduction of the other. And if, as again Sartre argued, 'being seen by the other is the truth of seeing the other', it is appropriate to initiate a double murder/suicide through the reduction of the 'other first'. Again, if the other is the structure of the possible (worlds) – as phenomenology tends to maintain – the *sine qua non* of the 'worlding of the world' and of 'lived perception' – and if the possible by not being actual is the source of negativities, it would follow that the reduction of the other/possible will restore to the transcendental field its fullness and affirmation. Once this reduction is complete, the transcendental field will surface as 'otherwise other' (*autre*

qu'autrui), and the anthropogenic force – the *vis existendi* or, as Deleuze now calls it, desire – will assert itself as the creative *energeia* of life.

Rather than being a source of phantasms, desire, in Deleuze's work, produces relations and connections that are real in their functions and revolutionary in their rhizomatic multiplicity because the Deleuzian desire is not defined by the intentionality of 'wanting to be or to have';[16] lacking nothing, it is defined by the expression of its capacity to make connections. It is not assessed according to the extrinsic *telos* of pleasure, since it is desire itself that distributes the intensities of pleasure and attempts to stave off the dissipation of intensities in extension. Desire atrophies inside the dialectic of subject and object: either a fully constituted subject will confront a fully constituted object, in which case desire can only be a relation external to both; or, if desire were to be thought as a relation internal to both subject and object, subject and object alike will have to suffer from a Sartrean haemorrhage of being on the road to being related to each other. It is not strange, therefore, that, under these circumstances, desire is downgraded to the need of the 'have nots'. The way out of this, Deleuze advocates, is to think of desire as *energeia* – not *kinesis*. A process without *telos*, intensity without intention, desire (like Aristotle's pleasure) has its 'specific perfection' in itself, at each moment of its duration.

Conscious of his debt to Spinoza, Deleuze submits that desire is not a passive state of being but rather an act, enhanced by joy, facilitating the formation of adequate ideas and striving towards more and 'better encounters' – in other words, desire is the power to annex Being. It is at this point that the 'naturalism' of Deleuze's ethics rings loud and clear: the distinction between good and bad annexations – good and bad encounters – is made, not according to the measuring rod of transcendent norms, but rather on the basis of the ability of the constructed, concrete encounter and relation to augment the power to be of its *relata*. Experimentation, rather than expertise, is required: 'There are never any criteria other than the tenor of existence, the intensification of life' (WIP: 74; and see also Deleuze 1983: 68–72).

However, the 'tenor of existence' and the 'intensification of life' are capable of grounding an ethic of desire/joy only if they are calibrated according to their alliance with the virtual. We must therefore try to reach a better understanding of Deleuze's claim that ethics must be an ethics of the event – an 'ethics of the virtual' that would, at the same time, be a 'virtue ethics'. As long as our surrender to the actual has not yet allowed the exploration of the problem-setting virtual, Deleuze's Stoic characterisation of ethics as the search for our becoming worthy

of the event can be mistaken for an invitation to resignation; *amor fati* can in this case be read as the flattest fatalist maxim possible. To prevent this misunderstanding, it is not enough to be reminded, as is frequently done, that the Deleuzian event is not a mere state of affairs. We need also to remember to insert between events and states of affairs the process of 'counter-actualisation'; it is this process that reveals the true meaning of 'becoming worthy of the event' – the spinal cord of Deleuze's ethics.

The moment ethics cuts itself loose from the mooring of the infinite obligation and turns itself into a search for ways and means to multiply the powers of existence or to intensify life, the question of the fit between forms of life and affects imposes itself. To put it in a different way, the moment that ethics can no longer be defined in terms of the right habit formation (which is not to say that habit has not its place), the question of counter-memory, which alone can problematise old and new presents responsible for habits, begins to press. And to the extent that ethics should not be abandoned to the romance of authenticity and bad faith, actual valuations and their standpoints must be accounted for genealogically, and their plane of (virtual) consistency must be constructed.

It follows that a quietist interception of Deleuze's entreaty to become worthy of the event is impossible, because Deleuze is not suggesting that we acquiesce without demurring to whatever happens. The ethics of the event is not the ethics of the state of affairs (LS: 149; and see also Boundas 2003). The event intended in the formula of (Stoic) ethics is virtual and, to the extent that virtual events are still future and always past, the ethics of the event presupposes a will that seeks in states of affairs the eternal truth of the pure, virtual event, which is actualised in them. True *amor fati* is not the acceptance of the actual state of affairs but rather the *counter-actualisation* of the actual in order for the inherent virtual or pure event to be thought and willed. '[One] wills not exactly what occurs,' writes Deleuze, 'but something *in* that which occurs, something yet to come which would be consistent with what occurs, in accordance with the laws of . . . the Event' (LS: 149). Or again:

> [C]ounter-actualization is nothing but the affair of buffoons, if it stands alone and pretends to take the value of *what could have happened*. But to be the mime of *what actually happens*, to double the actualization with a counter-actualization, the identification with a distance, like a true actor or a dancer does, is to give the truth of the event the only chance of not getting confused with its inevitable actualisation. (LS: 161)

As I said earlier, the virtual event is actualised in states of affairs that necessarily do not represent it, since actualisation is not imitation but differentiation. Consequently, the mime to whom Deleuze entrusts the ethical task is not the hero of the *re*-presentation of the same (say, the Kantian who 'repeats' a maxim for the categorical imperative to acquire the extension of a law of Nature). The Deleuzian mime is given the twin obligation to unmask the pretension of the actual to be the only player in the field *and* to re-enact the virtual in its infinite process of differing from itself (see LS: 150, 178–9).

Nietzsche's imperative that Deleuze often makes his own belongs here: *whatever you will, will it in such a way that you also will its eternal return* (Deleuze 1983: 68). Now, if the eternal return were about actual bodies, qualities and their mixtures, repetition would be the recycling of the Same, and the only ethics possible would then be the morality of resignation. But the eternal return that Deleuze talks about is 'the theory of pure events and their linear condensation on the surface' (LS: 178). Only in their case repetition can be imposed as the task of freedom. As such, Deleuze argues, repetition is like a festival that repeats that which cannot begin again, not in order to multiply the original by so many festivals, but rather in order to take the first time to the nth power, 'once and for all' and 'for all times' (DR: 300). The repetition intended here responds to the process of counter-actualisation.

In the imperative of the eternal return and in the accompanying invitation that we measure up to the event, we may find, I believe, the elements of an ethics and the means to a delicate negotiation of the relation between obligation and creation, between distance and friendship or sociability, between affect and *phronesis*. What often prevents us from exploring these inclusive disjunctions is that 'ethics' and 'theory of (moral) obligation' have often been taken as synonymous – but we must undo the link between the two. There is something definitely amiss whenever philanthropic avocation is taken to be coextensive with ethics. No one suggests that ethics without morality knows no obligations. What Deleuze suggests is that obligation, in order to be admitted, must be measured, in the first place, by men and women whose souls have already been tried and proven noble in the fire of the eternal return. These men and women are not all that far from Aristotle's *megalopsychoi*. They are the ones worthy of the event, the actors and dancers – the mimes of the counter-actualisation.

We are in a position now to draw the elements for a Deleuzian ethics together. The dehumanisation and depersonalisation of the transcendental field for the sake of singularities and events deconstructs the

onto-metaphysical discourse on values, and lifts their subordination to valuers. It clears up, therefore, the way for an ethics in which decentred subjects experiment and are experimented upon – encompassing, and also being encompassed by the *chaosmos* of anorganic life. Here, the self is no longer the master or the servant of the Other; nor is it the Other's equal. But this does not prevent it from freely assuming responsibilities for the sake of a new earth. What Deleuze writes about Tournier's Robinson and his search for a new earth aptly characterises his own: 'the end, that is, Robinson's final goal, is "dehumanization," the coming together of the libido and of the free elements, the discovery of a cosmic energy or a great elemental Health . . .' (LS: 303).

This is what the Deleuzian 'becoming-imperceptible' means, in the last analysis: that 'someone' comes to be where the 'I' used to reign supreme. Becoming-imperceptible would be impossible if the temporality of (*my*) becoming were strictly limited by the metric time and the nested presents of *Chronos*. It is the absolute symmetry of the never ceasing to pass and of the never arriving – the very definition of *Aion* – which is responsible for the fact that I is another. This is the paradoxical structure that no studious distinction between *ipse* and *idem* can ever eliminate.[17] That which exists partakes of the *Aion* because it always already has a virtual side; with respect to this side, we can say that all differences coexist in a dynamic 'state' of inclusive disjunction. The reality of the virtual side with its inclusive disjunction is a necessary condition of the affect that, in the words of Zourabichvili, is 'the very consistence of that which exists' (Zourabichvili 1994: 109).

It is the depersonalisation and dehumanisation of the transcendental field that makes the construction of the ethical field necessary through an endless experimentation for the sake of the compossibility of abiding differences, with elements that cannot be expected to resemble the finished product. But this experimentation is never a solitary game. An ethics enjoining us to become worthy of the event must be supplemented with powerful politico-philosophical imperatives and tactics. A life filled as much as possible with active joy, and a life of striving to become worthy of the event may be facilitated or, alternatively, made impossible by the conditions prevailing inside the *polis*.

Deleuze and the Political

Lately, the questions whether or not Deleuze ever succeeded in articulating a philosophico-political theory (rather than an ethical attitude and preference); whether or not he was a friend of democracy and of human

rights; and whether or not he was capable of moving the discussion past the nostalgia of the veterans of May 1968, have being vigorously debated. From my point of view (which is in full agreement with the points of view of François Zourabichvili and Jérémie Valentin), Deleuze's reflections on the political are best understood after we come to appreciate the simultaneous presence of two attitudes in his thought – subversion and perversion – and the role that difference plays between the two: it prevents them from ever freezing in iconic immobility, 'contaminating' the one with the other, and joining them together in the space of an inclusive disjunction.

Before I discuss these attitudes, I think that it is important to understand the source of Deleuze's guarded optimism present in his discussions of the political. In his early work, the fellow traveller (Deleuze would call him an 'intercessor') who becomes the foil for his intuitions is David Hume (Deleuze 1991). Hume assists Deleuze in his claim that the ethico-political project of assembling the multitude inside a livable *polis* does not begin without resources. It is true, of course, that the ethico-political subject is given only as a task (later on, Deleuze will speak of 'the missing people' being given as a task) (see, e.g., Deleuze 1989: 219–20; and also 1997: 4), but this task is undertaken with the assistance of a natural passion – 'sympathy'. Sympathy – the bonding substance for the constitution of the political subject – naturally belongs to each one of us. But our sympathies are partial, limited and mutually exclusive. It follows that the constitution of the social space and the limitation of violence requires the extension of our sympathies and their integration through the invention of corrective rules. Deleuze makes no grand assumptions about subjects prior to the processes of extending and integrating sympathies – assumptions made at this point would have trapped the processes in advance. For him, to be a subject is to invent and experiment – the subject itself is both the process and the unstable result of experimentation and artifice. Without going into the details of this argument, I want to signal the importance, in this context, of the word 'artifice'. The subject is not a substantive foundation of an incorrigible intuition; it is something constructed as the correlate of a 'fiction-of-the-imagination-turned-principle-of-human-nature'; it is the product of a fiction-turned-constitutive. Its precariousness, but also the possibility for its existence, are grounded here (Deleuze 1991: 126–33). (For more on Hume, sympathy and the constitution of political subjectivity, see Davide Panagia's chapter included in the present volume.)

Equally early in his work, and this time with Spinoza as his intercessor, Deleuze downplays the will of the individual to annoy and to injure,

denouncing instead the passions which have not yet been educated and socialised through adequate ideas (Deleuze 1990: 260). What he deplores is less the universality of violence and more the frailty and vulnerability of man. If the state of Nature is unlivable, it is because the individual in it is totally exposed to the threatening chaos of accidental encounters. In Nature, bodies encounter other bodies but they are not always compatible with one another. Civil society, on the other hand, is the result of the effort to organise encounters, in other words, the effort to organise the useful and to fend off the detrimental. The greater the numbers of those who come together in one body, the more rights they will have in common. Liberation, that is, freedom from the fortuitousness of external causes and, therefore, the affirmation and increase of one's own *vis existendi*, can be promoted by society, under conditions open to experimentation and discovery. Following upon these premises, an explication of modes of existence (forms of life) replaces the appeal to the transcendental 'ought'. It is my contention that in these readings of Spinoza's and Hume's ethics one can locate the source of the guarded optimism that informs Deleuze's subversive tendencies and ultimately mitigates his 'perverse' political posture.

Now, the presence of subversive tendencies is unmistaken in Deleuze's works (especially in those that he co-authored with Félix Guattari). They tend to cluster around the concepts minority/majority and nomad/sedentary developed in *A Thousand Plateaus* in Deleuze and Guattari's attempt to summon those who are in a position to stand against the state's capturing forces.[18] This quest is broader than it initially appears, as it involves minor, transformative forces (of life, politics, thought, artistic creation) capable of escaping the sedentarism and stratification being dear to majorities. 'Nomadic' are called the minority forces – better still, the minor tendencies – which belong to the events of virtual becoming (rather than to the states of affairs of actual history). Nomads, unlike migrants, have territories. And, having portable roots, they reterritorialise upon the line and the trajectory of their deterritorialisation. The object of their 'knowledge' is the behaviour of the materials they work with and the intensity of forces, rather than the matter and form of hierarchical and hylomorphic sedentary sciences. The singular, rather than the universal essence, is their objective. Deleuze and Guattari hypothesise that nomads (or better, nomadic tendencies) have the ability to ward off the encroaching forces of the sedentaries. In fact, they assign to them the invention of the 'war machine'. But unlike the state that wages war in order to conserve its integrative power, nomads wage war when their lines of flight are blocked and their deterritorialisation prevented.

In this nomadology, one can still find the remnants of the Marxist reading of the state as the 'capturing apparatus' in the hands of the ruling class being maintained for the sake of that class's interests. The sedentaries (alias the majority or the majoritarians) are the state or the state-apparatus or, rather, the state-form; the nomads are the multitudes, the masses or the minorities whose desires do not coincide with the interests of the state. But in this post-Marxist context, the nomads do not aspire to becoming the state or to taking over the state-apparatus, but rather to destroying it or to escaping it. Here, nomad is the one who tries to prevent the social sedimentation of desire from blocking the connective process of the production of desire. Nomadic lines of flight are lines of subversion and transformation of the well-organised and smoothly-functioning institutions of the sedentaries.

But there is another side to Deleuze's (and Guattari's) posture vis-à-vis the political – a posture that François Zourabichvili has qualified as 'perverse' (Zourabichvili 1998: 335–57).[19] Jérémie Valentin, in a chapter included in this volume, and in his not yet published doctoral dissertation expands on, and illuminates Zourabichvili's intuitions. 'Politics,' for Deleuze, Valentin writes, 'is a posture, a matter of perception, the result of a conversion that allows the development of a mechanics of resistance to the present' (PED: 106). This posture is 'the permanent quest for an inner balance (for a liberation of force) . . . always an in-between (*entre-deux*)' (PED: 138). It is an always 'in-between' posture: in-between philosophy and non-philosophy; in-between political philosophy and politics; in-between the aristocracy of thought and the becoming-democratic; in-between the chief and the tribe; in-between the near and the far; in-between a past that has never taken place and a future that will never come to be present; in-between subversion and perversion. François Zourabichvili locates the perversity of this posture in the identity of fleeing and causing something to flee – the twin imperatives of Deleuze's political platform; and he finds this perverse attitude clearly expressed in passages like this one:

> It might seem that a disavowal is, generally speaking, much more superficial than a negation or even a partial destruction. But this is not so, for it represents an entirely different operation. Disavowal should perhaps be understood as the point of departure of an operation that consists neither in negating nor even destroying, but rather in radically contesting the validity of that which is: it suspends belief in and neutralizes the given in such a way that a new horizon opens up beyond the given in place of it. (Deleuze 1989b: 31)

Deleuze's perversion has the structure of disavowal, and this is what makes it always already untimely. Untimeliness better equips political philosophers in their task to resist the present but also renders Deleuze's political philosophy incommensurable with traditional political thought.

Faced with Deleuze's subversive tendencies, we are bound to ask how best to flee, without finding ourselves deprived of weapons or of the artifices needed during the journey of deterritorialisation. We already saw the nomad fleeing sedimentation. (Valentin prefers to say that the nomad flees the generality and stratification of the law.) It seems to me that the question of the best means available for fleeing leads us to the heart of Deleuze's 'perversion'. With this question in mind, Valentin, drawing his inspiration from Zourabichvili again, takes his reader through Deleuze's writings on Masoch and masochism and Deleuze's repudiation of the conventional wisdom that sees in masochism the mere inversion of sadism. The sadist, argues Deleuze, is still steeped in the language of the law; his feat is that, in having abandoned the deduction of the law from an alleged principle of the good, he chooses to *subvert* the old law ironically by maintaining its form, while, at the same time, replacing its content with precepts deduced from a 'principle of evil'. *A contrario*, for Deleuze, the masochist chooses to *pervert* the law by submitting to it humorously in order to savour the pleasures that the law prohibits and punishes (Deleuze 1989b: 86–90).

In their effort to elucidate the sense of the Deleuzian perversion, Zourabichvili and Valentin also visit Deleuze's distinction between the tired and the exhausted (see Deluze 1992 and 1997: 152–74) and make the point that the tired person is more likely to mount the barricades and to mobilise his troops for the sake of the ultimate overthrow of the established power. On the other hand, the exhausted person confronts the depletion of the possible with the quest for the *autrement qu'autre* of Speranza's Robinson in counter-actualisation and in plumbing the field of the virtual. Along with Zourabichvili, Valentin attempts to draw the delicate distinction between *ne faire rien*(to do nothing) and *faire le rien* (make the nothing)[20] and to conclude that it is the latter that characterises Deleuze's political posture – a posture that problematises the field of the possibles, without ever articulating a plan in view of a *telos*. This posture fits exactly the definition of perversion: 'The pervert is the one who acts without regard for the result but only for the sake of the event or process itself' (TP: 357–61). What Deleuze advocates is *ataraxia* (absence of agitation), which is not to be confused with *apraghia* (repudiation of action). 'One still has to move ahead with the event,' Valentin

writes, 'to act along with it, to draw from it a certain number of principles, and to align here and now with this encounter' (PED: 37).

Those, then, who speak of the aristocratic dimension in Deleuze's thought (see Philippe Mengue's essay in this volume) are right, provided that this aristocratic posture is not confused with hatred for democracy. Deleuze's interest in Pierre Clastre's writings on primitive societies is perfectly intelligible in this context: displacing Clastre's preoccupation with the issue of power, Deleuze retains nevertheless Clastre's attribution to the chief of an aristocratic distance from the tribe – the space, in other words, necessary for the chief to exercise his clairvoyance (*voyance*) and to ponder over the means available for assembling the 'missing people' (Kazarian 1998: 100). Despite all the reservations that Deleuze expresses against actual democracies, his option for a becoming democratic, conceived as the politics of a universal brotherhood *à venir*, is unmistakable. This universal brotherhood *à venir* is the answer to the political problem generated by the fact that, in the Deleuzian narrative, the people (to whom the political theorist appeals) is missing (*le peuple manque*); 'a new people and a new earth *à venir*' gives Deleuze's political posture 'a purposefulness without purpose' – provided, that is, that the clarion for a new people and a new earth is not intercepted as a teleological anticipation with messianic aspirations. Being not a question of '*les lendemains qui chantent*', the missing people is both *à venir* and already there.

I spoke of the clarion for a new people and a new earth; Deleuze speaks of fabulation.[21] (See Ronald Bogue's chapter on fabulation included in the present volume.) The becoming-democratic of the missing people requires the art of fabulation – and fabulation must be distinguished from a mere fiction: 'The fable transports us to a territory that was unknown until this moment: the territory of indiscernibility' (PED: 91). The 'aristocratic touch' of Deleuze's posture is once again visible here. Fabulation requires the ability to be receptive to one's environment, the luxury of a 'site' not too near and not too far from the *demos*, the letting be filled with the affects generated by having seen the intolerable in the present, and a style to speak the possibles that arise the same time that one apprehends the intolerable. It is plausible to assume that the clarion for the creation of the new people and the new earth will be heard primarily by those who recognise themselves in the fable enunciated by the seer. Yet, the 'aristocratic posture' is planted firmly inside the becoming-democratic. Deleuze never characterised concretely the people to come or the new earth: he did say that the 'race' summoned up fabulation exists only as an oppressed race, and only in the name of the oppression

it suffers. He did claim that there is no race but inferior and minoritarian, and that 'race' is not defined by its purity, but rather by the impurity conferred upon it by a system of domination.[22] Valentin aptly concludes, the posture assumed by Deleuze is not struck for the sake of discovering the '*plage au dessus le pavé*', but rather for the sake of re-injecting some disorder in our societies of control – and waiting for the contagious propagation of this disorder to do its work.

I am painfully aware of the fact that no account of the difference that Deleuze's difference makes is complete without a discussion of his reflections on painting, music, literature and the cinema; or of his stance on questions of life (and death). Space, unfortunately, does not allow me to visit these reflections here. Happily, the reader will find significant discussions of these subjects in the chapters of Zsuzsa Baross, Rosi Braidotti, Claire Colebrook, Dorothea Olkowski and Arnaud Villani – all included in the present volume.

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Notes

1. The concept 'different/ciation' is discussed by Gilles Deleuze in his *Difference and Repetition* (1994: 245–7, 279–80; hereafter referred to as DR). For a brief discussion of the concept, see entry 'Différence' in *Le Vocabulaire de Gilles Deleuze* (2003: 14–23). See also Williams 2003, Chapter 3.
2. I discuss in more detail Deleuze's ontology of forces in my 'An Ontology of Intensities' (2002). See also on this subject the excellent work of Véronique Bergen (2001). Recently, François Zourabichvili (2004) claimed that Deleuze has no ontology and that it is a mistake to attribute one to him. Zourabichvili speculates that those who attribute an ontology to Deleuze must assume either that Deleuze has something to say about an ultimate reality (vulgar metaphysical position) or that he postulates the primacy of being over knowledge (deeper metaphysical position). I do hold the vulgar metaphysical position and, therefore, Zourabichvili's reminder reaches me also: Deleuze is 'a philosopher who, throughout his work, questioned the conditions of experience, insatisfied that he was with Kant and phenomenology'. I do not see the pertinence of this reminder. Zourabichvili must hold the view that intensities and affects are useful fictions rather than the *sentienda* and the *gerunds* that Deleuze had wanted them to be. He must hold the view that Bergson's and Deleuze's structure of temporality have no ontological significance – but I beg to differ. Unlike him, I see no reason for withholding the title of the ontologist from the one that replaces the copula 'is'(*est*) with the conjunction 'and' (*et*).
3. For more details on intensities, see Simont 1997 (Chapter V and Appendix); and DeLanda 2002.
4. See Ansell-Pearson 2002; Badiou 2000; Villani and Gil and Bergen 1998. See also the three essays included in this volume: Bruce Baugh's 'Real Essences without Essentialism', Véronique Bergen's 'The Precariousness of Being and Thought in the Philosophies of Gilles Deleuze and Alain Badiou,' and Bela Egyed's 'Counter-Actualisation and the Method of Intuition'.

5. See Ansell-Pearson 1999; hereafter referred as GL. See also Deleuze and Parnet 1996.
6. See Deleuze 1990: 184–5; hereafter referred as LS. For a detailed discussion of the historical antecedents of Deleuze's position see Elie 1936.
7. For an excellent discussion of Deleuze's theory of temporality, see Pal Pelbart 1998 and for a brief but incisive discussion, see Zourabichvili 2003.
8. I have argued elsewhere that caution must be taken against the syncretist tendencies that tend to identify the structures of the Deleuzian and the Derridean temporality; see Boundas 2005. A useful meditation on (Pauline) temporality that I found very helpful in my reading of Deleuze is Giorgio Agamben's 'The Time that is Left' (2002).
9. On transcendental empiricism, see Baugh 1992 and 1993. See also Antonioli 1999, Chapter 2.
10. See Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 34; hereafter referred as WIP. See also Patton 1996 and Daniel W. Smith's essay, 'Deleuze, Kant, and the Theory of Immanent Ideas', in this volume.
11. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* : Θ, 6 (1048 b 18–35).
12. On the critique of the possible and the preference for the virtual, see Zourabichvili 1998.
13. See my essay, 'The Ethics of Counter-Actualization', (2003).
14. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, V, 7 (1134b 34).
15. For a discussion of this 'murder/suicide' see my 'Foreclosure of the Other (1993). See also Beaulieu 2004: 55–66.
16. See Deleuze and Parnet 1987: 103–5 and see also Deleuze and Guattari 1977: 25–8. Desire without lack and law seems to challenge the premises of Freud's psychoanalysis and arguably Lacan's positions as well.
17. The distinction is explored by Paul Ricoeur for the sake of his discussion of personal identity (1992: 2–3).
18. Deleuze and Guattari 1987: Chapter 12. For a discussion of this chapter, see Patton 2000. See also Holland 1999: Chapter 3. For a lucid presentation of Deleuze's notion of the political, see May 2005: 154–72.
19. See also Valentin 2004, hereafter referred as PED.
20. François Zourabichvili (1998) prefers to play with *ne faire rien* and *s'activer de rien*.
21. Ronald Bogue will have an entire book on fabulation published soon.
22. On the question of the missing people, consult Colombat 1990.

DIFFERENT/CIATION

Chapter 2

Real Essences without Essentialism

Bruce Baugh

'Essences' have had a hard time of it in philosophy over the last forty years; on both sides of the analytic–continental divide, 'essentialism' is a dirty word. Yet what if we have no adequate idea of what an essence is? It is one of Deleuze's great virtues that he forces us to think about these questions in new ways, particularly with the theory put forward in his Spinoza books of 'particular essences'.[1] Since essences are traditionally construed in a more or less Platonic way, as universals or classes which group together individuals in virtue of a set of common characteristics, the notion of a particular essence sounds like a contradiction in terms. In Platonism, according to its received meaning, we have on one side essences (Forms, Ideas or Types), which are universal, unchanging, self-identical, unitary and eternal, and on the other side we have particular beings, which are changeable, different from themselves, divided into different qualities, and exist in the world of time and space. Platonic essences are fixed and transcendent, real but ideal, abstract and invariant. Deleuze's reading of Spinoza proposes, on the contrary, essences that are mobile and immanent in material things, real and material, concrete and subject to variation. If 'essentialism' is belief in Platonic essences – invariant, universal and necessary characteristics that exist somehow independently of the variable particulars these characteristics 'identify' as belonging to a certain class or type, and which remain changeless and self-identical through all the changes in contingent states of affairs – or in something that can be seen as issuing from this Platonic notion, then Deleuze's theory of particular essences is in no way essentialist.[2] As Deleuze's essences are not ideal, invariant or universal, they seem the opposite of what Platonism or essentialism decrees essences should be.

This is a redrawing of the philosophical map that has not received the attention it deserves; it breaks up a long-standing cluster of associated concepts (essence, universal, ideal). But because of the dominance of

the Platonist view of essences, Deleuze's revolutionary proposal has been ignored or misunderstood by some Deleuzians. I am going to try to make sense of the proposition that Deleuze is a realist about essences, but only insofar as an essence is not a transcendent entity or eternally self-identical model,[3] but rather a specific degree of physical power or intensity (SPP: 65), of acting and of being affected (EPS: 93/SPE: 82), 'not a logical possibility, nor a mathematical structure, nor a metaphysical entity, but a physical reality, a *res physica*' that exists and 'is real and actual' (EPS: 192/SPE: 174), 'fully actual' (EPS: 194/SPE: 176), 'actual and in action [*en acte*]' (EPS: 93, 228/SPE: 82, 207; SPP: 97/134), a real being (EPS: 303/SPE: 282), and a 'force of existing' (SPP: 96). A realist understanding of Deleuze's essences allows us to see that Deleuze's 'virtual' is neither 'possible' nor 'imaginary', but real, and very much like an essence.

An ontology that includes real essences does not restrict the number of possible forms of existence, or preclude new forms of existence from arising, as these essences are 'parts' of the power of Nature as 'a principle of the production of the diverse' out of heterogeneous elements, its power of composing and decomposing 'simple bodies' under relations of force or of motion and rest 'to infinity', 'a power of metamorphosis' (LS: 266, 297/307, 345; EPS: 146/SPE: 131) inherent in a world that is open, divergent and creative. By the same token, essences do not form 'a hierarchical system in which the less powerful depend on the more powerful', but 'an actually infinite set [*ensemble*], a system of mutual implications, where each essence agrees with all the others, and where all essences are comprised in the production of each' (EPS: 184, 194, 198/SPE 167, 177, 180–1), a *complicatio* of essences that dissolves hierarchy and fixed boundaries in 'nomadic distributions' and 'crowned anarchies' (LS: 263). Each form of being is distinguished 'according to degrees of power operating in intensity' (DR: 303), or 'a certain [intensive] quantity of a quality' (EPS: 183, 197/SPE: 166, 180), all qualities and all degrees of intensity equally expressing the same, univocal being or 'substance' (DR: 40, 303–4; see EPS: 183, 197/SPE: 166–7, 180). In other words, such an ontology is entirely 'flat',[4] at least if substance or Being depends as much on the essences and modes that differentiate it as the modes depend on substance, rather than, as in Spinoza, modes being 'in' a substance 'as in another thing' (see DR: 40, 304; EPS: 165/SPE: 150).

In the first place, 'every essence is the essence of some thing' (EPS: 94, 193/SPE: 83, 175), that is, its power of acting and its capacity to be affected by other beings (EPS: 89, 93/SPE: 78, 83), and conversely, 'an individual is first of all a singular essence, a degree of power'

(SPP: 27/40).[5] Thus: 'Essence is not only individual, it individualizes.'[6] Different bodies are not affected by the same things, or not affected in the same way by the same things (EPS: 217/SPE: 197): each type of body is characterised by minimum and maximum thresholds concerning what can affect it, and in what degree and what way (SPP: 123–5; EPS: 204/SPE: 186), which in turn is a function of the relations among its parts (or unformed, simple elements) – particularly ratios of motion and rest, speed and slowness (SPP: 32, 127–8): 'The speed or slowness of metabolisms, perceptions, actions and reactions link together to constitute a particular individual in the world' (SPP: 125), or a particular, individuated essence of a body (SPP: 27/40; EPS: 93/SPE: 82). This essence, as a degree of power, is quantitative: '[T]he more power a thing has the more it can be affected in a great number of ways' (EPS: 102/SPE: 90).

A body must be understood in the wide sense of any whole composed of parts or elements: 'an animal, a body of sounds, a mind or an idea, a linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity' (SPP: 127). Different bodies can indeed be combined into a greater whole when they have 'an identity of structure' that allows them to 'compose' all their relations together, 'the whole exercising a general function with respect to the parts' (EPS: 275/SPE: 254), and constituting a 'higher individual' with a greater degree of power (SPP: 126). Bodies in which the parts are themselves composites have a 'dominant relation' that presides over the relations within the parts themselves (SPP: 32), a relation of the subsidiary relations. Given that there is no *a priori* limit to the number of ways parts can be combined into wholes – whether those parts are simple or composite – and that for every dominant relation among parts there corresponds an essence, there is no limit to the number of essences, nor can we enumerate or classify these essences *a priori*.

The way in which an individual (body, mode) comes into existence, then, is when a 'great number of extensive parts' – parts that are extended, 'external' to the individual's essence and external to one another (EPS: 191, 201/SPE: 173, 183) – are determined 'by virtue of purely mechanical laws' of cause and effect to enter into the precise relation (or ratio) expressing its essence (EPS: 191/SPE: 210; SPP: 65–7, 71, 76). 'Each mode endures as long as its parts remain under the relation which characterizes it' (EPS: 213/SPE: 194), a relation that corresponds to the Nature and limits of the individual's capacity to be affected, a maximum and minimum of its power (EPS: 204, 218/SPE: 186, 198; SPP: 63). Like the minimum and maximum thresholds of affect: '[T]he relation that characterizes an existing [individual] as a whole [*dans son ensemble*] is endowed with a sort of elasticity'; it may undergo a great

many changes and variations in its parts and even in its relations, and yet retain the same dominant relation and the same capacity or power of being affected (EPS: 222/SPE: 202; SPP: 33, 78, 101–2). On the other hand, some changes, whether induced by a major shock or whether occurring gradually, may push the relation among parts 'outside its form', so that it is no longer the same individual (EPS: 222, 244–5/SPE: 202, 223). 'Death occurs when the body's characteristic or dominant relation is destroyed' (SPP: 32) by external forces acting on it such that some of the body's parts or elements enter into a new relation that is incompatible with the relation expressive of the body's essence (EPS: 210–11, 236–8/SPE: 191–3, 215–17).[7] We have no *a priori* knowledge of which encounters between bodies will lead to the destruction of one or the other, even though this destruction is a matter of necessity. Only experience and experimentation will reveal which combinations are possible (SPP: 61, 116–7 fn. 12; EPS: 193/SPE: 212) or even what a body is capable of in any given encounter (SPP: 61, 116–7 fn. 12, 125; EPS: 242/SPE: 221).

Although essences are closely associated with the ratios of motion and rest, speed and slowness among parts of actually existing bodies, essences cannot be identified with either ratios or the bodies that incarnate these ratios and 'effectuate' the essence or power: '[D]estruction [of a body] affects neither the reality of the essence in itself, nor the eternal truth of the relations' (EPS: 251/SPE: 230). The relation or ratio among parts is not the same as the essence it expresses; it has its own eternal truth, which is purely mathematical, and so distinct from essence, which is a degree of physical power or force (EPS: 192–4, 209–10, 236, 312/SPE: 174–6, 191, 215, 290–1; SPP: 41). At the same time, a particular or singular essence 'exists, is real and actual, even if the mode of which it is the essence does not exist' (EPS: 192/SPE: 174). 'Essences . . . are not 'possibles': they lack nothing, are all that they are, even if the corresponding modes do not exist' (EPS: 230/SPE: 209; see SPP: 98).

As a 'pure physical reality', each essence exists only in virtue of its efficient cause, just as do bodies or modes, and this efficient cause is extrinsic to the essence, 'in God', or the productive forces of the universe as a whole (EPS: 194/SPE: 174). An essence is thus not a tendency to come into existence, but an actually existing potentiality or capacity, an immanent power [*pouvoir*], an actual and acting force [*puissance*] (EPS: 228/SPE: 207). It is constituted through its relations and dynamic interactions with all other forces or essences, which together form 'a total system, an actually infinite set' (EPS: 184, 194, 198/SPE: 167, 177, 180–1), 'comprising all relations which are composed to infinity, the set

of all sets [*l'ensemble de tous les ensembles*] under all relations' (EPS: 236/SPE: 215; SPP: 79). As implicated in the total system of physical forces, essences are both produced (by the total power of Nature) and indestructible: an essence could not be destroyed without all the other essences being destroyed as well (EPS: 236/SPE: 215). Essences are thus eternal through God or Nature as *natura naturans* or productive power (EPS: 312/SPE: 291), that is, 'eternal through their cause and not through themselves' (SPP: 67).

How are we to understand these strange essences, which are particular rather than general, singular rather than universal, real rather than possible, immanent rather than transcendent, and yet also eternal? A concrete example may help. My car has the capacity to hit 130 kilometres an hour going downhill. This does not mean that at each and every moment my car is travelling at that rate; at the moment I write this, my car is stationary relative to a frame of reference (it is parked in my carport). My car's capacity is thus not the same as its momentary state at any given time, for its momentary state depends not only on its capacity (its essence), but on the extrinsic factors affecting it, that is, on the action of other bodies (see EPS: 147, 252–3, 269). At every moment, my car's capacity is fulfilled or exercised in accordance with extrinsic factors; at every moment, my car is doing all it can, given both its capacity (essence) and the external determining factors that cause it to go through variations in its power of acting (see EPS: 218, 229, 233, 251/SPE: 198, 208, 213, 230). So, although my car is capable of reaching 130km/hr, it will do so only if the engine is turned on, the accelerator is depressed, it is moving downhill, and so on. These extrinsic factors do not determine my car's capacity; they determine only how that capacity will be exercised or fulfilled. Or rather, extrinsic factors affect my car's capacity only if they cause the car's parts to be subsumed under some relation that is incompatible with its continued existence, as could happen in the case of a crash, or, less dramatically, through gradual wear and tear leading to mechanical breakdown.

Note that my car's capacity is real, not possible, and is entirely thisworldly and concrete. It is abstractly possible that my car could reach speeds of 200km/hr, that is, in some other possible world. But this is equivalent to saying that an object identical to my car in all respects except for how fast it can go could reach that speed, which is really saying that a different car, with a different capacity (or essence) could go that fast. My car does not have that capacity, it has a different one. Yet the capacity my car possesses existed prior to my car coming into existence, will continue to exist after my car has perished, and would have

existed even if my car never had existed. In this world, given the play and mutual imbrications of physical forces (essences), there exist certain capacities that could be embodied or effectuated if the right sort of physical entities ('parts') entered the right sort of system of relations. One such capacity or eternally existing essence is that of an automobile travelling at 130km/hr; that capacity of the universe as a whole existed as a real capacity of this world (not of some possible world) before cars existed, and will not be affected if cars cease to exist (see EPS: 249, 311/SPE: 228, 290; SPP: 42). In some other world, such a capacity might not exist, depending on the forces of that world and how those forces mutually determine each other.

We should not confuse my car's capacity or essence with that of cars in general, or even with cars of the same year, make and model (1993 Ford Taurus wagon, if you want to know). Essences are particular or singular (EPS: 303/SPE: 282) – the essence of a body (EPS: 94, 193, 312/SPE: 83, 175, 290–1); they are not essences of bodies in general or of some particular type of body. My car's capacity is correlative to the structural relations among its parts, and not the gross parts determined by their function (engine, transmission, tie-rods, shocks: the car's 'organs') but the parts of those parts that give my car's parts their distinctive characteristics (see EPS: 278/SPE: 257): 'There are no two bodies whose relations are identical' (SPP: 32; see LS: 266/307). Yet, among bodies we can find certain structural similarities, a 'unity of composition' or 'similarity of relations' among their constitutive elements (SPE: 257 fn. 15) concerning what is equally in two bodies, or common to them both, and which are expressed by what Spinoza calls 'common notions'. The most basic common notion is motion and rest, which obtains in varying ways among the elements of all bodies (EPS: 277/SPE: 257–8; SPP: 55). At a higher level, common notions 'play the role of [regulative] Ideas' by differentiating organisms into groups based on 'variations of relation' among anatomical elements, variations of their respective situations, and of the dependence of those elements (EPS: 278/SPE: 257–8; see SPP: 116; aTP: 255, DR: 182–5). Just as particular essences and bodies, being quantitatively rather than qualitatively distinguished, are irreducible to species (DR: 304), so too common notions, at whatever level of generality or specificity, are neither transcendental Forms nor fixed universals such as species or genera (EPS: 277/SPE: 257–8; SPP: 27, 45). Common notions are 'general rather than abstract ideas' (EPS: 278/SPE: 258) based on structural equivalencies, rather than abstract universals based on external resemblances which may disguise important inner, structural differences (SPP: 45).

In Deleuze's ontology, then, I discern essences of two kinds: singular or particular essences, the essence of a particular body; and 'common notions' that explicate structural similarities among the relations among the parts. Particular essences are immanent rather than transcendent, real and active capacities of Nature, whether or not they are actualised in an existing body, making them eternal but not ideal. Regulative Ideas and common notions, although based on the infinite and eternal mode of 'motion and rest', are historical, rather than eternal; whether there exists a group of beings having a similar structure, capacity for acting and for being affected depends on whether the external causal mechanisms have in fact brought forces, elements or 'simple bodies' into similar relations, expressing similar essences, in a number of cases. Unlike particular essences, common notions, which disclose the structure common to at least two bodies, require the existence of actual bodies (SPP: 54); they are 'necessarily embodied in living beings' (SPP: 57) inasmuch as they disclose 'a real relation between real, physical, existing beings' (SPP: 115), 'united into ever larger and more composite bodies, until one reaches . . . Nature in its entirety'.[8]

Neither singular essences nor common notions would belong to some Platonic, ideal and transcendent realm, as every essence is conditioned by every other, and by the productive power of Nature as a whole. Every essence belongs to this world, rather than to every possible world, as every essence depends on the actual forces and their actual relations in this world: 'Everything is necessary from its essence or from its cause . . . necessity is the sole affection of being, its sole modality' (EPS: 167/SPE: 152). It is true that a species term or a proper name 'rigidly designates' either a kind of thing or an individual across all possible worlds 'in any case where it would have existed' (Kripke 1980: 48, 124–7), provided that the set of all possible worlds in which it would have existed is equal to 1 (see EPS: 182/SPE: 165–6).[9]

Essences are real and reality is one: this also pertains to what Deleuze means by 'the virtual'. Deleuze is as realist about the virtual as he is about essences. This, too, is required by 'the univocity of the real' or the 'univocity of being' in Deleuze (see DR: 35, 37; EPS: 48–9, 63–7, 102–3, 165–7, 332–3). The virtual is no less real than the actual, essences are no less real than the modes or bodies that incarnate them. Like essences, the virtual is fully real even when it is not actualised in an existing state of affairs, body or thing, and thus 'remains indifferent to actualization, since its reality does not depend on it' (WIP: 156). Both essences and the virtual are real powers, intensive quantities, immanent in the actual as a capacity of acting and being affected is immanent in the relations among

a composite entity's parts. These powers are constituted by the dynamic interplay of actually existing forces in the universe; powers are not abstract or merely logical possibilities, but real capacities of the actual world, capable of being actualised or effectuated because they are themselves efficacious, and efficacious because they are not static or stable structures but the dynamism immanent in the active relation of forces that constitutes them. Like essences, the virtual is constituted by intensive quantities, degrees of physical power, and these are always dynamic and active. Virtual powers do not, as it were, hover about the world like ghostly penumbra, waiting to be actualised and thereby made active; they are active powers:[10] 'There is no aptitude or capacity [*potestas*] that is not actual' (EPS: 93/SPE: 82). Deleuze's ontology is free of any hierarchy: everything is equally real – 'Not only is being equal in itself, but it appears equally present in all beings' (EPS: 173/SPE: 157) – which also means that everything is equally physical.

The difference between essence and mode, between virtual and actual, is the difference between, on the one hand, powers grasped *sub specie aeternitatis*, and on the other hand, their products, the states of affairs existing in time. The reason for confusing physical powers or degrees of intensity with the actual is because the physical is often reduced to what takes place in extensive duration: the 'states of affairs' or states of bodies in the world as it is now, or the world as it is between two 'nows' or points demarcating a determinate span of time. Essences, existing independently of their corresponding modes, do not have extensive duration, and neither does the virtual. Yet the 'eternity' of essences and the virtual is not the motionless and atemporal eternity of Plato, but what Deleuze and Guattari call the 'aternal' (*l'internel*) (WIP: 111–13, 157), a 'between times' that is never an existing moment, never 'happens', has no 'when?' or 'how long?', but is coexistent with every instant (WIP: 158; see LS: 63–4/LS-F: 80–1). It is becoming itself, rather than what has become or what exists; *natura naturans* rather than *natura naturata*.[11] At each and every passing moment of constituted chronological time, powers pass through all the others and 'return' via all the others so as to differentiate themselves from each other (LS: 64, 299–301/LS-F: 80, 347–50). The determining forces of *natura naturans* are as physical as the actual and existing products of those forces (SPP: 91),[12] and the 'aternal' or 'Temporally eternal' (WIP: 113) of the 'inseparable variations' that constitute the virtual (WIP: 158–9), and the relation of movement and rest of a body's parts corresponding to that body's essence, is not stasis of unchanging logical relations, but the 'complication' or interfolding of essences within each other in the perpetual recreation of

the elements of Nature.[13] Even though essences and the virtual are not 'in' time (conceived as a series of passing moments), they nevertheless necessarily refer to the time implicit in Nature's determination of itself through the production of its different essences, 'an original time, coiled, complicated within essence itself, embracing simultaneously all series and all dimensions – a veritable eternity, an absolute, original time' (PS: 46) of self-determining necessity or auto-poetic Nature (SPP: 65–8, 92–3), 'strictly contemporaneous with, coexistent with existence in duration' (SPP: 40).

Physical Nature is not just actual corporeal bodies, but also 'incorporeal' essences and virtualities, which are nonetheless really efficacious physical degrees of power,[14] 'bands of intensity, potentials, thresholds, and gradients',[15] 'pure intensities' (AO: 84), 'intensity as difference' (DR: 222–3) or 'difference in itself' (LS: 299/LS-F: 348). 'It is one and the same world' (CC: 151) that envelops essences and existing modes, the virtual and the actual, immanent forces and the bodies that incarnate them; one and the same Nature that is expressed in virtuality and actuality (Deleuze 1988b: 93–5).

Things have essences, but essences are not things. Nor are they 'models' which things could faithfully or falsely imitate: there is nothing imitative in things, their essences are productive powers which are as real as the things produced, the things being as real as their essences. Nature is the cause of all things in the same way that its forces and powers are the cause of each other: pure immanence (see EPS: 164, 167, 173, 180/SPE: 149, 157, 152, 164; SPP: 92). Essences and the virtual are real and physical, not ideal or mathematical, however much mathematical ratios may express the relations among the parts or elements of a thing that has an essence:

> Everything is 'physical' in Nature: physics of intensive quantity which corresponds to the essences of modes; physics of extensive quantity, that is, of the mechanism through which modes come into existence [through mechanical determinism]; physics of force, that is, the dynamism through which essence affirms itself in existence, joining itself to the variations of the power of acting. (EPS: 233/SPE: 213)

We have assumed for too long that we knew *a priori* that the essence of essence was to establish an opposition of essence and appearance, and 'to silence the empirical responses in order to open up the indeterminate horizon of a transcendental problem which is the object of an Idea', and to separate the question of 'what is X?' from the question of 'how many?', 'how?', and 'in which cases?' (DR: 188; see LS: 135, 253–62).

We can see that Deleuze's singular essences, on the contrary, respond to fully empirical questions of the real powers and capacities of things in relation to the real powers of the universe that produce them. Long live essence!

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Notes

1. Deleuze 1968, hereafter SPE, in English, Deleuze 1990, hereafter EPS; Deleuze 1981, in English, Deleuze 1988, hereafter SPP. All references are to the English translation.
2. For Richard Rorty, 'essentialism' is defined variously as 'the . . . notion of "necessary and sufficient conditions built into our language" for the application of . . . terms' (Rorty 1979: 120); 'the notion that one could distinguish

between what people were talking about and what they were saying about it by discovering the essence of the object being discussed' (Rorty 1979: 268); a distinction between 'objective' and 'subjective' 'in which we know in advance that what cannot be put in the vocabulary of the physics of the day is so inessential as to be merely "in the eye of the beholder", a matter of subjective convenience' (Rorty 1979: 195, fn. 27); and as 'Platonism's' attempt to find criteria to pick out a unique referent for a term, a 'transcendental term' (Rorty 1979: 374). An essence would then be a universal description in a language that makes all possible descriptions commensurable (Rorty 1979: 378). In a similar vein, W. V. O. Quine claims that in distinguishing between essential and accidental characteristics, 'we commit ourselves to affirm that objects possess some of their qualities necessarily while others only contingently', that is, that some qualities inhere in the object in any possible language while others do not (Quine 1965: 155). On Rorty and Quine's reading, any talk about what objects 'really' are thus amounts to invoking a distinction between the essential and the accidental, the necessary and the contingent, the universal and the particular, where essential characteristics would be those ascribed to an object in all possible languages, a linguistic 'turning' of Leibniz's idea of essences being 'truths of reason' that hold true in all possible worlds.

3. Using the 'essentialist' model of 'essences', Manuel DeLanda argues that 'Deleuze is not a realist about essences, or any other transcendent entity' (DeLanda 2002: 3), but DeLanda takes this position because he retains the traditional or essentialist view of essences as transcendent, as ideal models (DeLanda 2002: 4), 'timeless categories' (DeLanda 2002: 10) with 'a defining unity' in 'a transcendent space' (DeLanda 2002: 13), and which are not singular but 'always abstract and general entities' (DeLanda 2002: 22), static (DeLanda 2002: 41–3) and linked to 'an immutable world of transcendent archetypes' (DeLanda 2002: 80). Following Rorty, DeLanda states that: '[T]he very idea that there can be a set of true sentences which give us the facts once and for all . . . [presupposes] a closed and finite world' (DeLanda 2002: 6), the sentences in question being logical statements of regularities (laws, general categories) under which particular cases are subsumed according to 'the deductive-nomological approach' (DeLanda 2002: 120–2), which is the 'positivist' form of 'essentialist and typological thought' (DeLanda 2002: 118). Deleuze's essences do not conform to this essentialist or typological thought in any respect.
4. See Delanda 2002. Yet what DeLanda calls a 'real virtuality' – 'differential elements and relations', a structure that is stable insofar as the relation of elements remains constant when subject to perturbations or shocks (DeLanda 2002: 33) – corresponds to what Deleuze means by 'essence'.
5. See DeLanda 2002: 62: 'an individual may . . . possess an indefinite number of capacities to affect and be affected by other individuals'. This capacity is what Deleuze means by an 'essence'.
6. Deleuze 2000: 43, 48; hereafter PS.
7. Death on this definition is structurally equivalent to what DeLanda calls a perturbation large enough to render a distribution of attractors unstable and to change into a different one (2002: 32; see also 19–20).
8. Deleuze 1997: 142; hereafter CC.
9. See EPS: 104/SPE: 92: God 'could not have produced anything else, or produced things in a different order, without having a different Nature'. For essences to be different from what they are, the entire universe, and all the laws of Nature, would have to be different; see also EPS: 167/SPE: 151–2. Deleuze does speak of 'possible worlds' (see LS: 301–21/LS-F: 350–72; DR: 259–61), but in the

context of a theory of the Other as 'the expression of a possible world'; possible worlds are nevertheless included in 'the plane of immanence', that is, of the real. See Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 17; hereafter WIP, which distinguishes the Other as the expression of a possible world from Leibniz's possibles, which 'do not exist in the real world', and Deleuze (PS: 41–6) on the Other as a viewpoint expressing a qualitatively unique 'possible world', but within the 'unity of the multiple' enveloping all 'worlds'.

10. On the connection between the virtual and effective power (*virtus*), see Boundas 1996. Deleuze says: '[V]irtue is nothing other than . . . power' and is always exercised by whoever possesses it (SPP: 103).
11. See Deleuze 1988b: 93: '[D]uration is like a *natura naturans*, and matter a *natura naturata*'; the extensive and homogenous time of matter, that is, of bodies and the actual, differs in kind from intensive and heterogeneous duration of:

    > the virtual insofar as it is actualized, in the course of being actualized . . . inseparable from the movement of its actualization . . . The characteristic of virtuality is to exist in such a way that it is actualized by being differentiated and is forced to differentiate itself, to create its lines of differentiation, in order to actualize itself. (Deleuze 1988b: 42–3, 97; translation altered)

12. For a more extensive discussion of the relation of time to eternity in Spinoza and Deleuze, see Baugh 2002 and Baugh 2000.
13. Paraphrasing Deleuze 2000: 44–5.
14. Deleuze also refers to incorporeal effects which are only effects, and never causes: 'sense' is characterised in this way in *The Logic of Sense*. This is a dimension of the virtual which seems to exceed being altogether, and thereby exceeds the realist virtual under discussion here.
15. Deleuze 1983: 19; hereafter AO.

Chapter 3

Deleuze, Kant, and the Theory of Immanent Ideas

Daniel W. Smith

Introduction

One of Deleuze's primary aims in *Difference and Repetition* is to present a new theory of Ideas (dialectics) in which Ideas are conceived of as both immanent and differential. What I would like to examine in this paper is the relation between Deleuze's theory of Ideas and the theme of immanence, particularly with regard to the theory of Ideas found in Kant's three critiques. In using the term 'Idea', Deleuze is not referring to the common-sense use of the term, or the use to which empiricists like Hume or Locke put it, for whom the word 'idea' refers primarily to mental representations. Rather, Deleuze is referring to the concept of the Idea that was first proposed by Plato, and then modified by Kant and Hegel. Plato, Kant and Hegel are the three great figures in the history of the theory of Ideas, for whom Ideas are as much ontological as epistemological. Deleuze's name could no doubt be added to that list, since he has modified the theory of Ideas in a profound and essential manner.

In what follows, however, I would like to focus primarily on Deleuze's relation to Kant rather than Plato or Hegel. Deleuze tends to index his own theory of Ideas on Kant, and with regard to the theory of Ideas his relations to Plato and Hegel are, in a sense, somewhat secondary. There are two reasons for the priority Deleuze gives to Kant on the question of dialectics. On the one hand, Deleuze's critique of Plato's theory of Ideas largely functions as a propaedeutic to his reading of Kant. For Deleuze, Plato created the concept of the Idea in order to provide a criterion to distinguish between (or to 'select' between) things and their simulacra – for instance, between Socrates (the true philosopher) and the sophists (the simulacral counterfeits). If Plato failed in his project, it is because he assigned his Ideas a *transcendent* status. But Deleuze will more or less take up Plato's project anew in order to rejuvenate it: Ideas, he argues,

must be made *immanent*, and therefore *differential*. Yet this was already Kant's project: in fascinating text at the opening of the 'Transcendental Dialectic', Kant criticises Plato for assigning to Ideas a 'transcendent object' – even though Kant is in the process of justifying his own appropriation of the Platonic concept of the 'Ideas'.[1]

On the other hand, Hegel can be passed over, for our purposes, for the opposite reason. Although Deleuze's early works are explicitly anti-Hegelian, Deleuze's real confrontation, even in his early books, was with Kant. Following the work of Salomon Maimon, among others, the post-Kantians such as Fichte, Schelling and Hegel developed Kant's thought in a direction that still found its ground in a principle of identity (Hegel's appeal to contradiction). The strategy of Deleuze's early work was to return to Kant himself, take up again the problems that generated the post-Kantian tradition (as formulated by Maimon), but to develop solutions to those problems that were very different from the solutions that led to Hegel. Deleuze's early philosophical writings are much more pro-Kant than they are anti-Hegel. In his attempt to develop a new theory of Ideas, and a new conception of dialectics, Deleuze will ultimately substitute for the 'major' tradition of post-Kantian philosophy – Fichte, Schelling, Hegel – his own 'minor' tradition comprised of Maimon, Nietzsche and Bergson.

Despite his reputation, Deleuze is not 'against the dialectic'. What one finds in Deleuze's philosophy is not a rejection of dialectics, but rather *a new concept of the dialectic* that breaks with previous conceptions, including Hegel's. Aristotle defined dialectics as the art of posing problems as the subject of a syllogism, while analytics gives us the means of resolving the problem by leading the syllogism to its necessary conclusion. Dialectics in general thus concerns the Nature of problems, and its concept changes with the notion of the *problematic* that is associated with it. The Socratic and Platonic dialectics have their source in a particular type of problem or form of question: the 'What is . . .?' question. Kant himself, in turn, would later define dialectical Ideas as 'problems without solution'. But what was missed in these earlier characterisations of the dialectic, Deleuze argues, was the internal or immanent character of the problem as such, 'the imperative internal element which decides in the first place its truth or falsity and measures its internal genetic power, that is, *the very object of the dialectic or combinatory, the* '*differential*' (Deleuze 1994: 161–2). In what follows, I would like to examine Deleuze's theory of Ideas (as immanent and differential), in a somewhat oblique manner, by comparing it to the theory of Ideas developed by Kant in his three critiques. From the viewpoint of the theory of Ideas,

Difference and Repetition can be read as Deleuze's *Critique of Pure Reason*, just as *Anti-Oedipus* can be read as his *Critique of Practical Reason* (the theory of desire). If the theory of Ideas can be seen as the thread that unites Kant's critical project, Deleuze's own differential and immanent theory of Ideas (the plane of immanence) can similarly be seen as the 'rhizome' that gathers together (but does not unite) the diverse strands of Deleuze's own philosophical project.

Ideas in the *Critique of Pure Reason*

I will begin with the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the first critique, Kant distinguishes between three types of concepts: empirical concepts, *a priori* concepts or 'categories', and Ideas. Empirical concepts are concepts like 'table' and 'rose' that give us genuine knowledge. Such concepts are applied to a multiplicity (or manifold) of sensations: through the imagination I synthesise these perceptions, and in applying the concept 'table' to them, I can recognise the object before me. But Kant also identifies a second type of concept, which are *a priori* concepts or what Kant (following Aristotle) calls 'categories'. Categories are concepts that are applicable, not just to empirical objects such as tables and chairs, but to any object I could ever come across, ever, for all time, in my experience. Neither the concept 'red' nor the concept 'rose' are categories, since not every object is red, and not all red objects are roses. But the concept of 'cause' *is* a category, precisely because I cannot conceive of an object that does not have a cause. If an angel suddenly appeared and hovered in the centre of a room, our first question would be, 'Where did that come from?' since it is part of our concept of *any* object whatsoever to have been caused by something else. Categories are thus *a priori* concepts that are applicable to every object of any possible experience. Indeed, Kant's notion of 'possible experience' is derived from his notion of the category: it is the categories that define the domain of possible experience.

Finally, there is a third type of concept in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which Kant calls 'Ideas' (in the Platonic sense). An Idea is the concept of an object that goes beyond or transcends any possible experience. There are various kinds of transcendent concepts: for instance, anytime we speak of something 'pure' or 'absolute' – for example, the 'pure gift' in Derrida, or 'absolute zero' in physics – we are almost certainly outside the realm of possible experience, since experience presents us with impure mixtures and non-absolutes. Although we can *think* such objects, we can never *know* them, that is, they are not objects we could

encounter in any possible experience. Kant himself, however, famously focuses on three transcendent Ideas, which constitute the three great terminal points of metaphysics: the soul, the world and God. These Ideas go beyond any possible experience: there is no object – anywhere, ever – that could correspond to such Ideas; we can never have a 'possible experience' of them.

For example, the Idea of the world (as the totality of what is) has no intuition or perception that could correspond to it. We initially arrive at this Idea through an extension of the category of causality, that is, through the use of the hypothetical syllogism (if A, then B): if A causes B, and B causes C, and C causes D, and so on, then . . . This series constitutes a kind of *problem* for us. We can continue working through this problem, continuing through the series indefinitely, until we finally reach the 'Idea' of the totality of everything that is: the causal nexus of the world, or the Universe. But in fact we can never, ever, have a perception or intuition of the world, or the totality of what is. To use the famous Kantian distinction, we can *think* the world as if it were real, as if it were an object, but we can never *know* it. Strictly speaking, the world is not an object of our experience; what we actually know is the problematic of causality, a series of causal relations that we can extend indefinitely. *It is this problem*, Kant says, *that is the true object of the Idea of the world*. Hence, we are led into inevitable illusions when we ask questions about the world *as if* it were an object of experience. For instance: did the world have a beginning in time, or is it eternal? Does it have boundaries in space, or does it go on forever? These are false questions because they are being asked about an object that does not exist. Whenever we think of the world as an object (rather than as the problem of the series of conditions), we enter into the domain of a false problem, an internal illusion. The same holds for our Ideas of the soul and God: soul, world and God are all transcendent Ideas that go beyond any possible experience. In the 'Transcendental Dialectic', the longest section of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant analyses the Nature of the logical paradoxes or aporias reason is led into because of these illusions: the *paralogisms* of the soul, the *antinomies* of the world, the *ideal* of God. (One might note here that Jacques Derrida's later philosophy deals almost entirely with the aporetic status of transcendent Ideas such as the pure gift, unconditional forgiveness, the wholly other, and so on.)

This is why Kant was one of the first philosophers to formulate explicitly the difference between the ancient philosophical themes of transcendence and immanence: 'We shall entitle the principles whose

application is confined entirely within the limits of possible experience, *immanent*; and those, on the other hand, which profess to pass beyond these limits, *transcendent*' (Kant 1929: 298–9, A295–6/B352). But one must add immediately that 'transcendent' and 'transcendental' are not identical terms, and in fact are opposed to each other. The aim of Kant's *transcendental* project is to discover criteria immanent to the understanding that are capable of distinguishing between two different uses of the syntheses of consciousness: legitimate immanent uses, and illegitimate transcendent uses (the transcendent Ideas). Transcendental philosophy is a philosophy of immanence, and implies a ruthless critique of transcendence (which is why Deleuze does not hesitate to align himself with Kant's critical philosophy, despite their obvious differences). This is also why Kant can assign to Ideas a legitimate immanent use as well as an illegitimate transcendent use. The immanent use is regulative: ideas constitute ideal *focal points* or *horizons* outside experience that posit the unity of our conceptual knowledge as a *problem*; they can therefore help regulate the systematisation of our scientific knowledge in a purely immanent manner. The illegitimate transcendent use is falsely constitutive: it falsely posits or constitutes an object that supposedly corresponds to the problem. At best, reason can simply postulate a harmony or (in Kant's terminology) an 'analogy' between its Ideas and the material objects of experience: Reason here is the faculty that says, 'Everything happens *as if* . . .' (*as if* there were a world, or a soul, or a God . . .).

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze identifies three components of Kant's concept of the Idea. First, Ideas are *indeterminate* with regard to their object. Since their object lies outside of any possible experience, it can neither be given nor known, but only represented as a problem. The real object of Ideas, in other words, is problems (the concept of problematics is the only component of Kant's theory of Ideas that Deleuze will adopt without question). Second, Ideas are nonetheless *determinable* by analogy with the objects of experience (with regard to the content of phenomena). Third, Ideas imply a regulative ideal of infinite determination in relation to the concepts of the understanding (or the form of phenomena), since my concepts are capable of comprehending more and more differences on the basis of a properly infinite field of continuity.

Now, in effect, this is the point where Chapter 4 of *Difference and Repetition* begins – the chapter entitled 'Ideas and the Synthesis of Difference'.[2] In an important passage, Deleuze defines an Idea as 'an internal problematic objective unity of the undetermined, the determinable,

and determination'. But, he continues, 'perhaps this does not appear sufficiently clearly in Kant'. Why not? Because in Kant:

> two of the three moments [in the concept of the Idea] remain as extrinsic characteristics (if Ideas are themselves undetermined [or problematic], they are determinable only in relation to objects of experience, and bear the ideal of determination only in relation to the concepts of the understanding).

Hence, he concludes, 'the "critical" point, the horizon or focal point at which difference *qua* difference serves to unite, has not yet been assigned' (Deleuze 1994: 170). In other words, we have not yet reached a purely *immanent* conception of Ideas, since it is only a principle of difference that can determine, in a precise manner, the problematic nature of Ideas as such, thereby uniting the three aspects of the Idea (as undetermined, determinable and reciprocally determined). What Deleuze derives from his reading of the theory of Ideas in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is essentially a programme of his own: to develop a purely immanent theory of Ideas, pushing Kant's own trajectory to its immanent conclusions. Put simply, whereas Kantian Ideas are unifying, totalising and conditioning (transcendent Ideas), for Deleuze they will become multiple, differential, and genetic (immanent Ideas). The question is: what leads Deleuze to develop his purely immanent theory of Ideas?

Ideas in the *Critique of Judgement*

The answer to this question takes us to Kant's third critique, the *Critique of Judgement*, which in certain respects goes beyond the theory of Ideas developed in the first critique. I would simply like to make three points about Deleuze's relation to the third critique, each of which outlines an agenda that could no doubt be elaborated in more detail.

First, someone intervenes in our story before we even get to the third critique, namely, the Lithuanian-born philosopher Salomon Maimon (1753–1800). Maimon is a largely unknown thinker in the English-speaking world, but he is a crucial figure in the history of post-Kantianism. Frederick Beiser says that reading Fichte, Schelling and Hegel without having read Maimon is like reading Kant without having read Hume.[3] Maimon was the thinker who set the agenda, who posed the essential problems that led to the post-Kant heritage, and he is an extremely important figure in Deleuze's own philosophical development. Already in 1790 – a full year before the publication of the *Critique of Judgement* – Maimon had published a book on Kant's thought entitled *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy*; Kant himself read part of the

manuscript, and famously declared that: '[N]one of my critics understand me and the main questions as well as Mr. Maimon does' (Kant 1967: 151). Maimon's primary objection is that Kant ignored the demands of a genetic method, by which Maimon means two things. First, Kant simply assumed that there were *a priori* 'facts' of reason (the 'fact' of knowledge in the first critique, and the 'fact' of morality in the second critique) and then sought the 'condition of possibility' of these facts in the transcendental. Against Kant, Maimon argues that one cannot simply assume these supposed 'facts' of knowledge or morality, but must instead show how they are engendered *immanently* from reason alone as the necessary modes of its manifestation. In short, a method of *genesis* has to replace the Kantian method of *conditioning*. Second, Maimon says, such a genetic method would require the positing of a principle of difference in order to function: whereas identity is the condition of possibility of thought in general, he argues, it is difference that constitutes the genetic condition of real thought. These two exigencies laid down by Maimon – the search for the genetic elements of real thought (and not merely the conditions of possible thought), and the positing of a principle of difference as the fulfilment of this condition – reappear like a *leitmotif* in almost every one of Deleuze's books up through 1969, even if Maimon's name is not always explicitly mentioned. (Indeed, one could say that these two exigencies are the primary components of Deleuze's 'transcendental empiricism'.)

Second, Deleuze presumes that Kant, having read Maimon and declared him to be his most astute reader, effectively tried to respond to him in the *Critique of Judgement*. The *Critique of Judgement* is, in fact, the only one of Kant's critiques to adopt a genetic viewpoint, and not merely the viewpoint of conditioning. What plays the genetic role in the *Critique of Judgement*? Unsurprisingly, it is the Ideas of reason. The third critique famously begins with analysis of aesthetic judgements of taste (the judgement 'This is beautiful'), in which the imagination as free enters into a spontaneous accord with the understanding as indeterminate (what Kant calls the 'free play' of the faculties). On the basis of this analysis, Kant puts forward the more profound argument that *every* determinate accord of the faculties finds the ground of its possibility in the free accord of the faculties presented in reflective judgements – that is, in judgements made without a concept, where one starts with the particular and seeks the concept. This is where the Ideas of reason intervene: if reflective judgements are made without a concept, *they always have an operative relationship to Ideas*. The *Critique of Judgement* analyses four Ideas – the sublime, the symbol, genius and the teleological

Idea (purpose in Nature) – in order to show not only that Ideas exist, but that they *exist in sensible Nature* (in a certain sense). The notion of the sublime – where the faculty of the imagination confronts the infinity of an Idea, and is reduced to impotence – is one of best-known examples of the way in which an Idea of reason is found to 'exist' in sensible Nature. But the Kantian notion of 'symbolisation' provides an equally illuminating example. If I see a flower in front of me, I can make several different types of judgement about it. I can make a judgement of knowledge, using the concepts of the understanding ('This is a white lily'). Or I can make a judgement of beauty, in the 'free play' of the imagination and the understanding ('This white lily is beautiful'). But reason, looking over the shoulder of the imagination and the understanding, can do something different: it can 'symbolise,' that is, it can relate the concepts of colour and flower, no longer to the white lily as such, but to something else – to an Idea, for instance, the Idea of pure innocence. The concepts of 'whiteness' and 'lily' are here enlarged beyond their usual use, and made to symbolise an Idea that is not given directly to me in sensible experience, even though the white lily furnishes the occasion through which I confront the Idea in sensibility itself. It is precisely because of the intervention of the Ideas of reason (which enlarge the concepts of the understanding) that the imagination becomes free and the concepts of the understanding become indeterminate in aesthetic judgements. This is perhaps where Deleuze's reading of Kant differs from Heidegger's: the secret of Kant's thought does not lie in the imagination, as Heidegger proposed, since the imagination always points beyond itself toward a theory of Ideas. For Deleuze, it is in the theory of Ideas that the secrets of space, of temporality, of ethics, of sensibility, of thought, are to be found – even in Kant himself.[4]

Third, Deleuze argues that ultimately, Kant did not go far enough, even in the third critique (though Kant did go so far as to introduce the method of genesis). When Deleuze attempts to develop his own theory of Ideas in *Difference and Repetition*, he turns, not to Kant – who gets only a couple of pages at the beginning of the chapter on Ideas – but to Leibniz. In this, he takes his cue from Maimon himself, who argued that Kantianism could only be revised (into a 'transcendental empiricism') by means of a return to Hume, Leibniz and Spinoza. In this sense, he functions as a true precursor to Deleuze, who wrote on all three of these thinkers. Deleuze himself is explicit on this point. In one of his seminars, he remarked that: '[D]oing this [that is, developing an immanent theory of Ideas], means returning to Leibniz, but on bases other than Leibniz's. All the elements to create a genesis, as demanded by the post-Kantians, are virtually

present in Leibniz.'[5] This might seem somewhat surprising: Deleuze, the self-proclaimed empiricist, deriving his most important concepts from Leibniz, the arch-rationalist (and who himself never actually proposes a theory of Ideas, in this Kantian sense). But it is not entirely difficult to see why Deleuze turns to Leibniz. There are two ways of overcoming the concept-intuition duality in Kant: either concepts are sensible things, as in Locke; or sensibility itself is intelligible, as in Leibniz (there are Ideas in sensibility itself). In effect, Deleuze takes this latter path.

It would take a separate paper to analyse Deleuze's indebtedness to Leibniz on this score. Deleuze's readings of Leibniz, not only in *The Fold*, but even more so in *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*, are decidedly critical and post-Kantian appropriations of Leibniz. Many, if not most, of the fundamental criteria Deleuze uses to define immanent Ideas are derived from Leibniz, or from the history of the calculus (which Leibniz invented, along with Newton): differential relations, singular points, ordinary points, fluxes or flows, the virtual, multiplicities or manifolds, and so on. Two of these components of Deleuzian Ideas are worth mentioning here: the differential relation and the notion of singularities. The differential relation is a relation that persists even when the terms of the relation have vanished. It is thus a pure relation, a pure relation of difference; it is what Deleuze means by 'difference-in-itself'. Moreover, not only is the differential relation external to its terms, it is also *constitutive* of its terms: the terms of the relation are completely undetermined (or virtual) until they enter into the differential relation; on their own they are simply determinable. Once such elements enter a differential relation, their reciprocal determination determines a singularity, a singular point. Every multiplicity (that is, every *thing*) is characterised by a combination of singular and ordinary points. In geometry, for instance, a square has four singular points – its corners – which are prolonged in an infinity of ordinary points that connect them. A cube, similarly, has eight singular points. The case of curves is more complicated: the differential relation determines a singular point in a curve, which continues over a series of ordinary points until it reaches another singularity, at which point the curve changes direction – it increases or decreases – and continues along another series of ordinary points, until it reaches another singularity, and so on.

For Deleuze, this is exactly how our life is composed or constructed – from singularity to singularity. The point where someone breaks down in tears, for example, or boils over in anger is a singular point in someone's psychic multiplicity, surrounded by a swarm of ordinary points. In physics, the point where water boils (or freezes) is a singularity

within that physical system. The question: what is singular and what is ordinary? is one of the fundamental questions posed by Deleuze's theory of multiplicities or Ideas. An acquaintance suddenly gets cross with me, and his unexpected anger may seem to mark a critical point, a phase transition, a singularity in his psychic being – but then someone leans over to me and whispers: 'Don't worry, he does that all the time, it's completely ordinary.' When water boils or freezes, it's a phase transition, a singularity, but at the same time, it is something that is completely ordinary. One could say that these are the two poles of Deleuze's philosophy: 'Everything is ordinary!' and 'Everything is singular!'[6] Your reading of this paper, here and now, is a singular moment, never to be repeated; but at the same time it is a completely ordinary event. Yet there is a complex temporality at work in Deleuze's theory of Ideas; and there is a complex temporality at work here as well: your reading of this paper may be ordinary, yet in retrospect it may appear singular because, perhaps, it changes the way you think, or sparks an unrelated idea in you that brings you lasting fame and fortune. We never know such things in advance, of course. In effect, Deleuze's theory of Ideas is an attempt to answer Plato's question: what *is* a thing, what is its essence? His answer, put briefly, is that every thing is a multiplicity, which unfolds and becomes within its own spatio-temporal co-ordinates (its own 'internal metrics'), in perpetual relation with other multiplicities. Deleuze argues that Socrates' fundamental question: what is . . .? (what is courage? what is a thing?), set the theory of Ideas on the wrong track *from the start*, even though it was this same question that opened up the domain of the Idea for philosophy. But the fundamental questions Deleuze links with Ideas are questions such as: how?, where?, when?, how many?, from what viewpoint?, and so on – which are no longer questions of essence, in the old sense, but questions of becoming, of the event (although Deleuze himself does not hesitate to use the term 'essence').

In a technical sense, what Deleuze gets from Leibniz – following the lead of both Maimon and Kant's *Critique of Judgement* – is a purely immanent determination of Ideas (whereas in Kant, two of the three components of Ideas are defined extrinsically). First, the elements of an Idea are completely undetermined (or virtual); second, these elements are nonetheless determinable reciprocally in a differential relation (dx/dy); and third, to this reciprocal determination there corresponds the complete determination of a set of singularities (values of dx/dy), which defines a multiplicity (along with their prolongation in a series of ordinary points). It is these three coexistent moments – the

undetermined, the determinable and the determined – that give Ideas their genetic power.

Ideas in the *Critique of Practical Reason*

In order to get a better grasp of what it means to speak of the 'genetic' power of Ideas, let me turn, finally, to Kant's second critique, the *Critique of Practical Reason*. One might easily (and correctly) surmise that Deleuze would have little sympathy for the second critique, with its appeals to transcendence (the moral law and the categorical imperative). Yet the entire project of *Anti-Oedipus* is indebted to – and indeed derived from – the second critique. Both *Anti-Oedipus* and the *Critique of Practical Reason* present themselves as theories of desire, and one of the aims of *Anti-Oedipus* is to present an immanent theory of desire, one that is derived from the immanent theory of Ideas developed in *Difference and Repetition*.

Kant posited three fundamental faculties of the soul: the faculty of knowledge (first critique), the faculty of desire (second critique), and the feeling of pleasure and displeasure (third critique).[7] This distribution of the faculties was derived from the nature of our representations: every representation we have can be related to something other than itself – either to an *object* or to the *subject*. In the faculty of knowledge, a representation is related to an object from the viewpoint of its agreement or conformity with it (theory of reference or denotation). In the faculty of the feeling of pleasure and pain, the representation is related to the subject, insofar as the representation affects the subject by intensifying or weakening its vital force. In the faculty of desire, finally, the representation is likewise related to an object, but in this case it enters into a *causal* relationship with its object. Kant's definition of desire is extraordinary: desire is 'a faculty which by means of its representations is the cause of the actuality of the objects of those representations' (Kant 1952). It is hard to overemphasise the importance of this Kantian definition for Deleuze, since it breaks with a long tradition in philosophy that defined desire in terms of *lack*. Desire, says Kant, is a faculty that, given a representation in my head, is capable of *producing the object that corresponds to it*.

Now we know why Kant defines the faculty of desire in causal terms: the problem of freedom concerns the operation by which a free being can be said to be the cause of something, that is, in acting freely, the agent produces something that is not reducible to the causal determinism of mechanism. 'Practical reason', Kant writes, 'is concerned not

with objects in order to know them, but with its own capacity to make them real.'[8] Of course, Kant is aware that real objects can be produced only by an external causality and external mechanisms; yet this knowledge does not prevent us from believing in the intrinsic power of desire to create its own object – if only in an unreal, hallucinatory or delirious form. In what Kant calls the 'pathological' productions of desire, what is produced by desire is merely a psychic reality. Nonetheless, Kant brings about a Copernican Revolution in practical philosophy to which Deleuze is strongly indebted: desire is no longer defined in terms of *lack* (I desire something because I don't have it), but rather in terms of *production* (I produce the object because I desire it). The fundamental thesis of *Anti-Oedipus* is a stronger variant of Kant's claim: 'If desire produces, its product is real. If desire is productive, it can be productive only in the real world and can produce only reality' (Deleuze and Guattari 1977: 26). How then does Deleuze work out this immanent conception of desire as productive of the real (and not merely fantasies)?

For Kant, the essential question of practical philosophy concerns the higher form that each faculty is capable of – a form that is no longer merely 'pathological'. A faculty has a higher form when it finds within itself the law of its own exercise, and thus functions autonomously. The higher form of desire, for Kant, is what he calls the 'will'. *The will is the same thing as desire, but raised to its higher form* – that is, desire becomes will when it is determined by the representation of a pure form, namely, the moral law, which is the pure form of a universal legislation (the categorical imperative). Practical reason 'has to do with a will which is a causal agent so far as reason contains its determining ground' (Kant 1993: 93–5). Under such conditions we are acting freely. In Kant, however, the moral law requires the intervention of the three great transcendent Ideas as its postulates. 'Freedom', as the fact of morality, implies the cosmological Idea of a supra-sensible world, independent of any sensible condition; in turn, the abyss that separates the noumenal Law and the phenomenal world requires the intermediary of an intelligible author of sensible Nature or a 'moral cause of the world' (the theological Idea of a supreme being, or God) – an abyss that can only be bridged through the postulate of an infinite progress, which requires the psychological Idea of the immortality of the soul. This is the great shortcoming of Kantian ethics: having denounced the transcendent Ideas of soul, world and God in the first critique, Kant resurrects each of them, one by one, in the second critique, and gives them a practical determination.

Anti-Oedipus remains an incomprehensible book as long as one does not see its overall structure as an attempt, on Deleuze's part, to rewrite the *Critique of Practical Reason* from the viewpoint of a strictly immanent theory of Ideas. What would a purely immanent theory of desire look like in the domain of practical reason? What if one did not appeal to the moral law – and the transcendent Ideas that serve as its necessary postulates – and instead synthesised desire with a conception of Ideas as purely immanent? This is precisely what Deleuze does in the opening two chapters of *Anti-Oedipus*: the three syntheses by which he and Guattari define 'desiring machines' are in fact the same three Ideas that Kant defines as the postulates of practical reason (soul, world and God), but now stripped entirely of their transcendent status, to the point where neither God, world, nor self subsist:

> The divergence of the affirmed series forms a 'chaosmos' and no longer a world; the aleatory point which traverses them forms a counter-self, and no longer a self; disjunction posed as a synthesis exchanges its theological principle of diabolic principle . . . The Grand Canyon of the world, the 'crack' of the self, and the dismembering of God. (Deleuze 1990: 176)

Generally speaking, Deleuze gives a purely immanent characterisation of the three syntheses – connection [world], conjunction [self], and disjunction [God] – and then shows how desire itself is constituted by tracing out series and trajectories following these syntheses within a given social assemblage. There are, of course, many other important themes in *Anti-Oedipus* – such as the problem of the relation between Marx and Freud (via Lacan), and the identity of political economy and libidinal economy; and behind Marx and Freud, ultimately, Deleuze's appeal to the immanent models of Nietzsche and Spinoza. But if *Difference and Repetition* can be read as Deleuze's *Critique of Pure Reason*, *Anti-Oedipus* can be read as his *Critique of Practical Reason*. What unites the two pairs of books, respectively, is the theory of Ideas – the thread that links together theoretical and practical philosophy. What separates them is the status of their respective theories of Ideas (dialectics), and the *use* to which the Ideas are put. Kant critiques the transcendent use of the Ideas in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, only to resurrect them in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and give them a practical determination. In *Difference and Repetition*, by contrast, Deleuze pushes the immanent ambitions of the *Critique of Pure Reason* to their conclusion, uniting (in an immanent principle of difference) the three aspects of the Idea sketched by Kant (the elements of the Ideas are at once undetermined, determinable and reciprocally determined). In the practical

philosophy developed in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze proposes a theory of desire that, rather than seeking out the 'higher' form of desire in the will, which has as its condition the synthesis of desire with its transcendent postulates (soul, world, God), instead seeks to explore the movement of desire, in a manner that is no less formal than Kant's, by tracing out the purely *immanent* syntheses of desire (connection, disjunction, conjunction). The new dialectic (theory of Ideas) whose formal components Deleuze develops in *Difference and Repetition*, could be said to receive its practical determination in *Anti-Oedipus* – with the difference that, in Deleuze, the determinations of the Ideas are practical *from the start* (hence the importance of such questions as: how?, where?, when?, how many?, from what viewpoint?, and so on).

Immanent Ideas and Lived Experience

The preceding sections have attempted to explore the link between Kant's theory of Ideas – the thread of which can be traced through each of the three critiques – and Deleuze's revised theory of the Ideas, which is both dependent upon and critical of Kant. In this final section, I would like to present several concrete examples of the implications Deleuze's theory of immanent Ideas might have in the analysis of lived experience. At the very least, such examples serve to demonstrate that Deleuze's immanent theory of Ideas is not merely an exercise.

First, consider an everyday scenario such as the following. You wake up one morning, go to work, talk with some friends while sipping your coffee, sit outside in the sun during lunch, have dinner and a few drinks later in the evening, go home, feel slightly ill, and fall into bed early. What would be the Deleuzian portrait of a daily trajectory like this? If every 'thing' is a multiplicity, my multiplicity necessarily changes dimensions, and enters a becoming, every time it is affected by another multiplicity: the heat of the sun, a conversation with a friend, the caffeine in my coffee. Each of these encounters introduces a variation in what Spinoza calls my 'force of existing' (*vis existendi*) or 'power of acting' (*potentia agendi*). I run into my friend Peter in the hall, but we've had a falling out, so I feel uneasy and uncertain around him, and my force of existing decreases; then I run into my friend Paul, who compliments me and buys me a drink, and my force of existing increases. In the park, the sun warms me, and expands my power; later I realise I am sunburned, and my power decreases. Drinking initially appears to increase my power, but the hangover the next morning seems to reduce it to zero. This is why Leibniz and Spinoza characterised us as 'spiritual automatons': these events happen

to us automatically, and are almost indifferent to our own subjectivity.[9] I have encounters and am affected by other multiplicities: at each moment these affections increase or decrease the intensity of my power, like a melody, a line of continuous variation or continuous becoming. Deleuze says he liked to imagine Spinoza strolling about, living his own existence, as a multiplicity, following this melodic line of continuous variation.

Second, now imagine yourself sitting in a classroom, listening to a lecture, though your mind is occasionally wandering off elsewhere. Leibniz had noted, famously, that we often perceive things that we are not consciously aware of: you suddenly become aware of a dripping tap at night, or the fact that the lecturer is still droning on and on, even though you tuned out a long time ago. Leibniz therefore put forward the argument that our conscious perceptions are derived from, not the objects around us as such, but rather from the minute and unconscious perceptions of which they are composed, and which my conscious perception integrates. I can apprehend the noise of the sea or the murmur of a group of people, for instance, but not necessarily the sound of each wave or the voice of each person of which they are composed. A conscious perception is produced when at least two of these minute and virtual perceptions – two waves, or two voices – enter into a differential relation that determines a singularity, which 'excels' over the others, and becomes conscious, on the basis of my needs, or interests, or the state of my body. Every conscious perception constitutes a constantly shifting threshold: the minute or virtual perceptions are like the obscure dust of the world, its background noise, what Salomon Maimon liked to call the 'differentials of consciousness'; and the differential relation is the mechanism that extracts from these minute perceptions my own little zone of finite clarity on the world. This is what Deleuze means when he says there is an immanent and virtual Idea of sensibility that is not identical to my actual perceptions, and yet constitutes their real condition of sensibility itself.

Third, this is why Deleuze, following Spinoza, contests the Cartesian notion of the 'clear and distinct', at least with regard to perception (and elsewhere too). My conscious perception of the noise of the sea at the beach, for example, may be clear, but it is by nature confused, because the minute perceptions of which it is composed – the perceptions of each wave, each drop of water – are not themselves clear, but remain obscure, since they have not been 'distinguished' or actualised in a conscious perception. They can be apprehended only by thought, in an Idea – or at best, in fleeting states close to those of vertigo, or drowsiness, or dizzy

spells. Deleuze suggests that philosophers should start from the obscure: a clear perception emerges from the obscure (or the virtual) by means of a genetic process (the differential mechanism). Yet at the same time, my clear perceptions are constantly plunging back into the obscure, into the virtual Idea of minute perceptions: by its very nature, perception is clear *and* obscure (*chiaroscuro*). For one can easily imagine the opposite case: since you are drowsy as you leave the classroom, you lose your balance going down the stairs, strike your head against the wall, and become dizzy; you begin to black out. What is happening? Your consciousness becomes disorganised and loosened, and is invaded by a flotilla of minute perceptions. You are not conscious of these minute perceptions, they do not stop being unconscious; rather, it is you who cease to be conscious. But you nonetheless experience these minute perceptions; there is, as it were, an unconscious lived experience of them. You do not represent them, nor do you perceive them, but they are there, swarming within you, like the obscure dust of the world. We all experience something similar to this whenever we listen to a lecture, drifting in and out of attention. To say that perception is by nature clear-obscure (*chiaroscuro*) is to say that it is made and unmade at every moment, in all directions, constantly extracting the clear while constantly plunging back into the obscure.

Fourth, and finally, one could say that what we call 'freedom', the free act, makes use of the same mechanism. Suppose that I am at home hesitating between continuing to work and going out to have a drink with a friend. How do I decide? What constitutes my 'free choice' in such a situation? There is no appeal to 'decision theory' in Deleuze: a decision theory would strip me of any supposed freedom, since the theory itself would provide the answer. Rather, just as my perceptions are conditioned by minute perceptions, so my decisions are conditioned by a million minute inclinations that remain unconscious – until they reach the threshold that constitutes my decision. 'Staying home' or 'going out' are orientations or tendencies that are in constant flux, each of which integrates a host of possible and even hallucinatory perceptions. My initial inclination to go out not only integrates the sensation of drinking, but also the smell and brouhaha of the tavern, the camaraderie with friends, the temporary lifting of my solitude, and so on. But immediately afterwards my soul inclines toward staying at home, which integrates not my writing of this article, but the noise of the paper, the silence of the environment, the anticipation of publication, the comfort (or frustration) I am finding in my writing. Then I incline again toward going out, but the inclination is not the same, because time has passed, and the affectivity

is different. Even in such a simple example, making a decision is never a question of choosing between x (staying in) and y (going out), since both inclinations are multiplicities that include an unconscious complex of auditory, gustative, olfactory and visual perceptions – an entire 'perceptio-inclinatory ensemble', a multiplicity of minute perceptions, minute tendencies and inclinations. It is this state of constant disquiet that Locke called 'uneasiness', and which Leibniz, in the *New Essays*, termed the *fuscum subnigrum*, the dark background of the soul.[10] When I deliberate, I am really oscillating between two complex perceptive and inclinatory poles – the home and the tavern – which 'fold' my soul, Deleuze would say, in constantly variable directions. Arriving at a decision is a matter of 'integrating' the minute inclinations in a 'distinguished' or 'remarkable' inclination. On which side will I fold my soul? With which minute inclinations and perceptions will I make a 'decisive' fold? To say that we are free means that, in Leibniz's phrase, we are 'inclined without being necessitated'. During the day, in most of our actions – in all our habitual and mechanical acts – we do not confront the question of freedom at all; such acts are done solely, one might say, to calm our disquietude. The question of freedom arises only when we posit the question of an act capable (or not) of 'filling the amplitude of the soul at a given moment'.[11] A free act is an act that integrates the virtual perceptions and virtual inclinations into a remarkable inclination, which then becomes an inclination of the soul. Our decision is the result of the struggle between all these motives, conscious and unconscious –' a battling to and fro, a rising and falling of the scales'.[12] Our calculation of consequences merely enters into this battlefield as one factor, one impulse, one element among others.

The aim of presenting these examples from lived experience is to demonstrate that, despite the abstract Nature of his language, Deleuze is attempting to get at something concrete with his theory of immanent Ideas. Immanent Ideas do not constitute the condition of possible experience, but rather the genetic conditions of *real* experience. 'This is what it's like on the plane of immanence,' Deleuze writes, 'multiplicities fill it, singularities connect with one another, processes or becomings unfold, intensities rise and fall. . . .' (Deleuze 1997: 146–7).

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Notes

1. See Kant 1929: 309: 'Despite the great wealth of our languages, the thinker often finds himself at a loss for the expression which exactly fits his concept, and for want of which he is unable to be really intelligible to others or even to himself' (A312/B368).
2. Deleuze 1994: 168–221 (the title in French is 'Synthèse idéal de la différence').
3. See Beiser 1987: 286. Beiser's book contains an excellent chapter (pp. 285–323) analysing the main themes of Maimon's thought. See also his 'Introduction' (1993); and 'The Context and Problematic of Post-Kantian Philosophy', (1998). For English language studies of Maimon's thought, see Atlas 1964; Bergman 1967; and Bransen 1991.

4. Deleuze's reading of the *Critique of Judgement* can be found in his article, 'The Idea of Genesis in Kant's Aesthetics' (2000).
5. Gilles Deleuze, seminar of 20 May 1980 (transcripts of Deleuze's seminars, by Richard Pinhas, are available on-line at <http://www.webdeleuze.com/ sommaire.html>).
6. This is how Deleuze characterises Leibniz's philosophy; see *The Fold*: (1993: 60, 61).
7. Kant 1952, Introduction, §3: 15–16: 'The faculties of the soul are reducible to three, which do not admit of any further derivation from a common ground: the faculty of knowledge, the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, and the faculty of desire.'
8. Kant 1993, I: 93: 'Practical reason is concerned not with objects in order to know them, but with its own capacity to make them real (which does require knowledge of them), i.e., it has to do with a will which is a causal agent so far as reason contains its determining ground'.
9. See Spinoza 1985, *Emendation of the Intellect*, s. 85: 37 ('So far as I know they [the ancients] never conceived the soul (as we do here) as acting according to certain laws, like a spiritual automaton'); and Leibniz 1969, 'Clarification': 495 ('The soul is a most exact spiritual automaton').
10. For Leibniz's theory of 'minute sufferings', and his commentary on Locke's concept of 'uneasiness', see Leibniz 1996: II, ch. 20, s. 6: 163–6.
11. Deleuze, seminar of 24 February 1987 ('The Tavern') (available on-line at <http://www.webdeleuze.com/php/sommaire.html>).
12. Nietzsche 1982, §129), p. 129. Nietzsche himself recognised Leibniz as his precursor in this regard:

> Leibniz's incomparable insight has been vindicated not only against Descartes but against everybody who had philosophized before him – that consciousness is merely an accident of experience and not its necessary and essential attribute . . . It took them [physiologists and zoologists] two centuries to catch up with Leibniz's suspicion, which soared ahead. (Nietzsche 1974, ss 357, 354: 305, 297.

Chapter 4

The Precariousness of Being and Thought in the Philosophies of Gilles Deleuze and Alain Badiou

Véronique Bergen

This essay stages a confrontation between the state of precariousness at the level of being and thought in Deleuze's vitalist ontology of the continuum and that of Badiou's ontology of the multiple, which lacks the virtual One-All. It wishes to show how a philosophy based on the continuity between being and thought (Deleuze) and a philosophy settling for the disjunction between thought and being (Badiou) situate precariousness according to different co-ordinates.

Deleuze establishes a kind of continuity between being and thought such that, in their simultaneous genesis, an identity between *Physis* and *Nous* is sketched, with the result that the engendering process of the mind coincides with the process of generation of things themselves. Being is apprehended as organic life – as a field of immanence in a state of becoming, agitated by fluxes and differences in intensity and produced in a variety of actual cases. Its production occurs along the lines of a genesis inscribed in the virtual-actual couple that is opposed to the schema of the possible-real. The possible-real shuts itself up in the circle of the similar, rendering impossible the emergence of anything original and making the real a mere copy of the possible. Existence, in this case, turns out to be nothing but a selection from a depository of possibles that are already always given. On the other hand, the virtual-actual couple is able to account for the univocity of a being that is never distinct from its existing concretions – its expressions – by positing every actual solution as an ephemeral, creative differenciation, with no resemblance to the virtual problems that it develops. Events are the novel singularities that flash endlessly inside states of affairs. They are the crisis-points that, without any void or break, offer themselves as folds of being and as inflections of the 'great, cosmic animal' upon a fluid line along which the continuous and the unheard-of coincide. Precariousness has already struck the ontological ground, to the extent that modes – existing solutions – are but

provisional actualisations of ontological problems in a state of perpetual becoming, and the stability of the empirical is only the phenomenal mask of the instability of the transcendental. This precariousness implies that no one can foresee the direction that forces may take and no one can posit *a priori* the evolution that the processes of actualisation are about to witness. It cannot be otherwise because the intensity that constitutes the ground of being is active at the very level of its actualisations. Forces in a state of perpetual boiling over are the truth of the forms derived from them, and this truth never stops transfixing whatever results from it. Let us keep in mind that the perspectivist grasp of the real, in terms of the intensive differences that Deleuze proposes, presents itself as an ontological affirmation, validated through a thoroughly functionalist and pragmatic criterion: inside the frame of an intensive hierarchy of a Spinozist-Nietzschean character, schizoid thought testifies to a higher truth and to its having reached being beyond the filters of representation, given that this option to think translates itself as an increase of the powers of life. If ideas are measured by the extent to which they bring about an intensification of life, *a contrario*, the hatred of life that accompanies the embedding of representation in reactive forces testifies to the fact that, in the way it essentialises being, it spoils the perception of the transcendental.

As far as ideational genesis is concerned, the Deleuzian image of thought, being a throw of the dice, is inscribed in a constructivism along the lines of which thought has to extricate itself from chaos by giving itself consistency. Always brought about in forced engenderings, under the assault of a paradox, or during crisis points that shatter the concordance of faculties and break the circle of what we anticipate and perceive, thought proceeds as a thought-world. It is given as an inflection of Being that is thought through us, in other words, that is thought through its modes. The precarious nature of thought turns radical as soon as it situates itself upstream, at the point of its own generation – the point where it must be linked with what propels it, namely, chaos. Its precariousness comes from the fact that it must riposte to the chaos that crashes it, maintaining all along its effort to avoid the twin pitfalls: on one hand, the pitfall of wanting to eliminate chaos once and for all in refusing to face it; on the other, the pitfall of being engulfed inside chaos, becoming the victim of a fascination with Chance that prohibits all possible determination of what is undetermined. This precariousness is prolonged by the fact that thought must endlessly repeat launching and inventing its own creation, to the extent that it is never conquered once and for all.

To this vitalism with its continuity between being and thought, Badiou counter-proposes a disjunction between thought and the life of the world, which establishes continuity through the overcoming of an empty and inconsistent being. Being, having been freed of the virtual One-All, turns into pure multiple – inscribed, as a result, inside a subtractive ontology (multiples without the one) where the event is also subtracted from it. If mathematics is the adequate discourse on being – an ontology that is not identified as such – the event is the hazardous and unforeseeable supplement, disconnected from the course of the world and summoning up the void of the situation. Mathematics has nothing to say on the event because of the set theoretical prohibition against events belonging to themselves (to their own set). Events, in the process of disappearing and fading way – undecidable with respect to their inscription inside being – are torn off from being that is conceived as a neutral 'there is' and as the monotony of 'an inferior plashing whatever'. Of such events, only a nominal trace is left, that is, the impact of the subject's decision affirming that these 'trans-beings' belong to the situation. At first sight, a seemingly exemplary absence of ontological precariousness manifests itself here to the extent that the atony of Being – 'the identical neutrality of the abyss' – is broken only by the rise of an event which is not the predicate of Being; it is not Being's predicate because a thoroughly pure and uncontaminated exteriority disrupts the inertia of multiplicities and the mobility of the void. However, a certain precariousness is *ab initio* at work, precisely because a principle of indeterminacy stamps every pure multiple: it is not necessary to relate this indeterminacy to a virtual Great All agitated by endless dynamisms, that is, by the intensive factor. Nevertheless, every multiple is exposed to an excess over itself, which is another way to refer to the hiatus between elementary and partitive immanence. It is this fact that obliges the subject to reach a decision about the excess of representation over presentation. Precariousness here does not belong to an intensive but rather to an axiomatic order. We will see later on that singularities and excrescences are those entities, which, from within set theory, perturb and render fragile the regulated generation of singularities.[1]

Thought is at the mercy of evental gaps, which, rare and dissipated as they are, surge up only in the domains of science, poetry, love and politics. These gaps are even capable of summoning up a subject, issued from the procedures of truth – a subject that is officially posted after being ravished by an amorous, political, scientific or artistic event. The precariousness of thought is radical and paralyses its entire trajectory. It is initially present in the encounter with the event – in the danger of being attributed, not to

the event, but rather to its simulacrum which, according to Badiou, turns out to be a supplement that names the plain, rather than the void of the situation. Later on, precariousness will be present in the fidelity to what is new – in the danger of betraying it through the cancellation of the untimeliness of the event and the linkage with the *savoir* and the opinions of the way of the world, in a falling back on what Badiou calls 'the human animal'. And finally, precariousness will be found at the level of truth – in the temptation of forcefully locating truth in the *savoir*, in a belief in the advent of an immortal Subject that negates the mortal animal, and in the sublation of *savoir* inside truths. This sublation would represent the rejection of the Lacanian dimension of truth (namely, that truth is 'not all') and the disavowal of the namelessness that characterises every alethic procedure. The task of thought is to be on the lookout for the silent events of time and to prevent the hypostatisation of the mortal animal (infidelity to the breakthrough of the event) as well as the hypostatisation of the immortal Subject (a belief in total power of truth).

The event, inside a vitalist apparatus that has been established through the continuity of being and thought, stands for a cut and a flection of the world and involves precariousness at the level of *Physis* and *Nous*. This precariousness differs in Nature from the one that freezes an ontology that has made 'the other choice' – the choice of 'the subtraction, of the empty set and the *mathème*' (Badiou 1994: 65) – where the event is a supplement marking a break vis-à-vis the situation. In other words, the provenance, the co-ordinates, and the destiny of precariousness differ according to whether thought has to maintain its fidelity to Chance – to the 'clamor of Being' whence it comes – or according to whether it exists only to the extent that it breaks away from the ontological surface and becomes faithful to an event; in sum, they differ according to whether the highest degree of thought's freedom is in its being enveloped inside being or according to whether its freedom lies in its separation from being. We should now examine in more detail this difference in the localisation of precariousness.

In the case of Deleuze, precariousness in the sense of instability (a term that signifies a dynamic process) is given as the stylistic trait of the transcendental field, of a being run through by forces, intensive differences and freewheeling molecular variations – without safety catch. Higher empiricism is defined as the ascent to the pure conditions of real experience, given that these conditions are not copies of the molar forms of the subject and object of the empirical domain. It challenges, therefore, the suppressed of the Kantian critique, namely a transcendental field which, without resembling the empirical regularities and stabilities that it

generates, presents itself as a being oversaturated with differences and prey to continuous variations that confound the organisation of faculties. The break of the vicious circle between the empirical and the transcendental – of fact and right – (a vicious circle because the characteristics of the former are sublated in the latter) permits us to ascend to conditions of experience that do not retroject into themselves the actual forms that they engender. The field of being, oversaturated with forces in a state of endless vibration, does not prescribe *a priori* any kind of form-giving that would correspond to obligatory road signs; in fact, the process of integration and actualisation cancels out all resemblance and symmetry between the actual and the virtual. The statements, 'we do not know what a body is capable of' and 'we do not know what a transcendental field is capable of' resonate together with the statement 'we do not know the courses and the bifurcations that the lines of actualisation would come to know . . .' The irreparable precariousness of thought translates the vagaries of its invention and its adventure without a point *a quo* or a point *ad quem* – an upstream or downstream guarantee. This precariousness stems from the fact that, as nothing bends it to necessity, and as it always moves ahead tottering between the perils of transcendence, *doxa* and chaos, thought must be conquered in the course of a constructivist arrangement – the riposte to its having been affected by an ontological problem. Thought begins where knowledge stops for the sake of criticism; it stops at the point where, stumbling against points of excess and limit-experiences, it breaks the reassuring circularity between the given and the subject and disrupts the concordance of faculties that validate *a priori* the subjection of phenomena to the anticipations of perception. Only when coming against vague and non-categorisable quasi-phenomena that deregulate cognitive schemata (for example, the encounter with the perceptual paradox of cinnabar being sometimes red sometimes black), thought is compelled to invent itself, to transcend the ordinary exercises of recognition – the agreement between the ontic forms of subject and object – to the advantage of an ontological ascent. Thought is born in a forced genesis, when, having been struck by a problem that upsets its normal disposition, it tries on a new usage for itself and begins to trace ideational cartographies that did not pre-exist. Its precariousness lies primarily in its rise and its impetus point to the extent that it needs the art of drawing up a plane upon the chaos without ever becoming its captive. However, it extends itself to the level of its operation for, on one hand, it calls for a prudence in the processes of decoding (lest the lines of flight that it launches turn into lines of death); and on the other it asks for a vigilance against every falling back to the comforts of *doxa* or of transcendence,

of common sense or of a legitimation of its exercise. The 'bastard,' 'schizoid,' 'vampire-thought,' – prey to a schize of faculties – marks the limit between thought and non-thought, between creation of self and the permanence of the powerlessness that incited its ideational rise, that is, the site of its experimentation. The conquest of its higher use is not without a hint of heroism: the production of the Chaoids – philosophy, art and science – responds to the dangerous exercise of what must be extracted from an undifferentiated ground. The extraction must be done without leaning against the security-inducing reassurances of common sense and recognition and without being engulfed by the chaos, after failing to draw out of it consistent determinations. Precariousness calls for an art of prudence derived from Spinoza's intensive ethics; in other words, it calls for an existential art that favours good encounters, adequate speeds and the formation of beneficial relations. This ethics enjoins us to be faithful to the event that destabilises knowledge, and this implies in turn that we should not smother the event beneath coded stratifications, nor should we abandon ourselves to brutal destratifications in the name of our fascination with the chaos out of which everything comes. Thought's dangerous tightrope walking must guard itself against two dangers: on one hand, against gambling cosily with putting the abyss at a distance, muzzling under a hylomorphic schema all modulation and spoiling the play of forces to the profit of the hypostasis of forms; and conversely, against unilaterally siding with the undetermined bottomless and, as a result, rendering impossible every consistent self-positioning. In the openness to a single event, all the events that make up the virtual reserve of the world's play are being perceived; taking hold of one event coincides with the taking hold of all events rolled up in the 'clamor of being'. In an ontology of the full, the event is affiliated with virtual Being, in the space of the Outside from which it springs up without any break between the virtual site and the evental thunderbolts. Schizoid thought rises up to something unthinkable that can only be thought, thereby liberating – as soon as its passivity has been accepted and its violation by the forces of the Outside has taken place – a free exercise of the self. This free exercise does not refuse the encounter with signs that destabilise it, nor does it immolate itself, in a state of ecstasy, to the unique wave of being.

Let us now turn to Badiou:

> With the exception of moments of 'crisis,' mathematics thinks being but it is not a thought of the thought that it is . . . Let us even say that, in order to be able to deploy historically itself as thought of being . . . it was necessary

> for mathematics to provide itself with an identity that had nothing to do with ontology. It is therefore philosophy's task to announce and to legitimate the equation, mathematics=ontology. In so doing, philosophy frees itself from its loftiest responsibility: it announces that it does not belong to her to think being qua being . . . On the other hand, a crucial question is raised as to what is subtracted from the ontological determination . . . because the subtractive law is implacable: if real ontology is offered as mathematics and escapes the norm of the one, it is also necessary, lest the norm be globally re-established, that there be a point where the ontological field – namely, mathematics – is de-totalized or ends in a dead end. It is this point that I called 'event.' We can also then say that, besides the identification of real ontology that must always be revisited, philosophy is also and above all – to be sure – the general theory of the event. (Badiou 1998: 55–7)

Squeezed between a pre-philosophical foundation – mathematics as ontology, that is, as an adequate discourse of being qua being – and the task of rendering compossible the truth of *mathema*, poem, love and politics, philosophy is at the intersection of a discourse that reflects on the ontology that mathematics implements without thinking it, and an operativity that unifies the post-evental procedures of its time. There is no event in philosophy. Philosophy captures the events that rise up in the four domains of thought, and formulates in the sequence that about which mathematics has nothing to say – that which is subtracted from ontology – namely, the event. The supplement that is subtracted from being – the irruption of gaps in the 'way of the world' of what is neither being nor non-being, but rather trans-being and event – exists only because a subject names it, a subject that is itself the result of its relation to the nominating act. Philosophy, for its part, gathers together the set of post-evental nominations that correspond to the four domains of thought. Being, the multiple of multiples, discovers its own monotony interrupted from within set theory. The interruption is due, on one hand, to the existence of an unassignable and immeasurable point of excess, thanks to which the whole of the parts of a set exceeds the elements of the set; and, on the other, to that which constitutes an exception to the ontological regularity, namely to the event. Given that normality is the essential attribute of natural being, normal terms are present in the situation and represented by the state of the situation – both element and part, belonging to, and included in the situation. But next to them, excrescences rise up, together with singular terms, and are included in the situation without belonging to it; they are presented without being represented – given that singularity is the essential attribute of historical being and of the evental site in particular. Everything that disrupts the

pursuit of normality is struck with precariousness – that is, all the excrescences and singularities open to the subject's decision. Precariousness strikes, therefore, whatever is subtracted from mathematical ontology, namely, the event as the interruption of the law of sprawling multiplicities; on the rebound, it strikes whatever may be derived from it, for example, a procedure of truth orchestrated by a subject that results from it. Precariousness inhabits, first and foremost, the domain of an evental and undecidable rise – one that exists only in the future anterior mode, *après coup*, after a subject has spoken for its nomination and its inscription in the situation. This precariousness becomes even more emphatic thanks to the appearance of simulacral events that conjure up the full (stable multiplicities, the known), rather than the empty and the unknown of the situation. It belongs to the axiomatic order whereas the event is but a hazardous supplementation subtracted from one of the axioms of the multiple – the axiom of foundation. The event as an ultra-one, other-than-one, and trans-being, associated with rarity rather than abundance, as in the case of Deleuze, is distinguished from the pure multiple through the scission of Mallarmé – the scission of a void that separates. Within the frame of an axiomatic apparatus that demands that we hold on to the inexistence of the one (the one is only an operator for counting) and on to the axiom of the void, truth should not allow itself to be captured by 'make believe' events that do not permit, inside the savoir, the presence of any openings towards a universally entertained truth. Instead, they pin existing particularities on the 'there is', and increase the repression of the situation's void through its return in the form of a loathed particularity. Precariousness reappears in the fidelity to the event itself, in the fidelity to its nomination – the only trace of its having been – and in the truth procedure the way of which was paved by the subject. Nothing in militant ethics is achieved once and for all. And by 'militant ethics' I mean the ethics that prescribes not giving in to the amorous, political, artistic or scientific event – the catalyst of the advent of a subject guarding the truth that made it be such as it is; not eliminating the break in order to return to the security of the generalities of opinion and savoir; and not to renouncing, as a consequence, the subject for the sake of the human animal. Finally, precariousness runs through, from one end to the other, the truth required to maintain a place for the unnamable that is delivered exclusively to *doxa*, in order to prevent itself from being seduced by the mirage of a total absorption of the savoir inside truth. If absorption were to occur through a total forcing of truth in the savoir, the mortal animal, propelled by its perseverance in being, would be entirely sublated in a subject associated with a certain truth.

The element, which is inaccessible to truth – this pure 'grain of the real' that suspends the power of truth – is specific to each of the four alethic procedures: the non-contradiction in the case of the *mathema*; language, death and the poet-subject, in the case of the poem; community in the case of politics; and *jouissance* in the case of love.

Inside the vitalist apparatus of the continuum, with its ethics of *amor fati*, precariousness of being is another name for the dynamisms and the intensities that compose it. The precarious nature of the three Chaoids, that is, the three domains of thought – art, philosophy, science – lies in their contact with chaos, which makes chaos less of the enemy to beat and more of a sombre ground that, in surprising thought, gives birth to it. This is the source of the heroic valence attributed to the one who succeeds in tracing a secant and consistent plane stretched over the chaos that, in its molecular shocks, never ceases to assail thought:

> Philosophy, science, and art want us to tear open the firmament and plunge into the chaos . . . And thrice victorious I have crossed the Acheron . . . It is as if *the struggle against chaos* does not take place without an affinity with the enemy, because another struggle develops and takes on more importance – the struggle *against opinion*, which claims to protect us from chaos itself. (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 202–3)

Jettisoning normative presuppositions that confine us inside security – inside recognition – schizoid thought has to be the equal of the ontological violence that runs through it; then, the ontic discordance of the forms of subject and object (rupture of intentionality) will have as their understudy the ontological consonance of an a-subjective and impersonal thought – a thought of the unique wave of being (intuition of being as life in the context of a crisis in the ontic link between the subject and the object of experience).

Inside an apparatus made possible by the disjunction of thought from being and by the ethics of disconnection, the precariousness of being lies in the principle of indeterminacy that characterises every pure multiple (manifestation of a point of excess and subtraction of the event). As for the precariousness of the four procedures of truth (in the number of which philosophy is not included, because philosophy draws their conceptual configuration and offers the site upon which the truths of its time are rendered compossible), it lies in the gesture of their performance. This performance, contrary to the Deleuzian ethics of *amor fati*, must not abandon the distance between ideational creations and the way of the world, betting in favour of a beyond the atony of the place. The decision by which the subject undertakes to invigilate over a rare and fading

event, which nevertheless is sheltered by an eternal truth (whether it is dodecaphonism, Paul Celan's poetry, May 1968, the work of Lacan or Cantor's theorem – to use Badiou's own examples), gives rise to a militant discipline, alien to every confrontation with chaos and, therefore, alien to every form of a heroic pathos. The problem of thought has nothing to do with a struggle with a chaotic bottomless, but rather with a caesura from opinions and, as a result, with the maintenance of the distinction between real and symbolic and between truth and savoir, whereby the former deflates the certainties of the latter. The vigilance that thought must observe permanently enjoins it to remember that there is no intuition of being as a whole, but only an apprehension of ontic appearances in the context of a logic of relation.[2] What thought achieves here is as far away as possible from the rise toward the ontological intuition that Deleuze was talking about.

We should not, therefore, be surprised by the fact that one detects in the proliferation of events – in the very domain of the world-Animal, in the banalisation of the statement 'everything is an event' expressed in the context of the *élan vital*, and in the 'flesh of the full' – an absence of events, and that he suspects that the virtual forge would bring back a horizontal transcendence preventing the ontological singularisation of actual modes (Badiou 1994: 56, 61; 2000). Nor should we be surprised by the fact that the Other could discern, in the rarity of stellar events, the voice of a transcendence that fractures the flaunted immanence. On the side of Deleuze, we find an ontological precariousness, that is, a plasticity being always the prey of a perpetual recast of its cohesion and a thought that is the result of impersonal passive syntheses without subject, with the remarkable and the interesting – never the true – as its parameters. On the side of Badiou, we find an ontological precariousness of an axiomatic – not plastic and not intensive – order and the work of a thought that is affiliated with the recast categories of truth and the subject; this subject is the outcome of a decision – of the nominating intervention that the decision produces on the occasion of the event. On one side, we have a fold of thought being a fold of the world, the positioning of thought as the taking hold of forces, and the desire 'to be done with Platonism'. On the other, we have a fold of thought being an unfold, the positioning of thought as the apprehension of forms, and the re-entry of Platonism.

We know that every investigation related to the conquest of thought is necessarily taken up in an image. We see here, therefore, the opposition between the image of thought enveloped inside being and a thought torn off the ontological inconsistency. The gesture of a thought that is attached to being and lets itself be transfixed by whatever affects it

inscribes itself inside the Spinoza-Nietzsche network and defines the precariousness of its dice throw through the dangers encircling it – being stuck in *doxa*, taking refuge in transcendence, falling back inside chaos. The gesture of a thought cut off the life of the world – being the one that decides what happens – inscribes itself inside the Descartes-Sartre network and defines its precariousness through the menace it must put out of play – the reign of opinion, without the hyperbolic peril of chaos. The pivotal term of the vitalist ontology of the continuum is passivity – the kind of passivity that is adequate to the problem that strikes thought. The vocable that shines like a diamond in the ontology of the multiple is decision. To the insertion of thought in the flows of being's power that represents freedom we see opposed the freedom of a thought that merges with its power of negativity and rupture vis-à-vis the given. Freedom, after all, is the operation which apprehends itself either as the affirmation of the whole of being or as the negation of the 'there is'.[3] In its being put to work, freedom chooses to reflect on its operation either in the modality of an integration inside the genetic process of the whole of being or in the modality of an unhinging and a break vis-à-vis what presents itself – in which case, freedom shows in the choice of the auto-position of its concept the co-ordinates of its precariousness. The way in which the roads to freedom are being envisaged and the intelligibility of freedom is configured carry with them the singular curves that would decide the question of freedom's precariousness.

Translated by Constantin Boundas and Sarah Lamble

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Notes

1. In an interview with Isabelle Vodoz, Badiou insists on this point: events are irreducible to the pure mathematical thought of the multiple; they cannot, however, contradict it, otherwise, metaphysical dualism would be reasserting itself. It is by means of their consequences, that is, by means of their truth, that events are linked to the common law of the thought of being, given that truth is a generic multiplicity (Badiou 2003a: 173).
2. Badiou 2003b: 191–2. *Being and Event* offers an ontology of the pure multiple and a theory of the event. *Logiques des mondes* announces a logic of appearing, which articulates beings inscribed in a world-transcendental and examines the transition from the delinking (*déliaison*) of multiple being to the linking of beings; the latter of course carries with it a redistribution of the connections between subject and post-evental truth. See Badiou 2003c; see also Badiou 2002. The decisive line of separation that seems to be drawn between Deleuze and Badiou concerns the issue of the transcendental: Deleuze situates it inside the field of being; Badiou associates it to a logic of appearing.
3. On the status of freedom in the ontologies of Deleuze, Badiou and Sartre, see Verstraeten. Verstraeten submits that the freedom championed by Badiou is situated 'beyond the concept of freedom conquered on Cartesianism's "native land" '. Badiou exorcises contingency and flattens all untimely rises in his theory of the evental après-coup – the falling back of an event upon the previous site of a first event. The status attributed to freedom is decided by the temporal constraints that each of these ontologies assigns to itself.

Chapter 5

Counter-Actualisation and the Method of Intuition

Bela Egyed

In his article, 'Un, multiple, multiplicité(s)' (2000), Badiou reiterates his earlier objections to Deleuze: (1) Deleuze's conception of 'set' is anachronistic because it is pre-Cantorian. It ignores the extraordinary immanent dialectic that mathematics has bestowed (*dotē*) this concept since the end of the nineteenth century; (2) Deleuze's concept of multiplicity remains inferior (because of its qualitative differentiation) to the concept of *multiple* emerging from the history of contemporary mathematics; and (3) the qualitative determination of multiplicities makes it impossible to subtract them from their equivocal re-absorption into the One (of classical ontology). In the same article, Badiou complains that those who attacked his interpretation of Deleuze (that is, Arnaud Villani and José Gil) (1998) missed their mark because they failed to take into account the ontological alternative he provides in *L'être et l'évènement* (hereafter EE):

> If our critics intend (*entendent*) to demonstrate, as they should within the doctrine that they inherit from the free indirect discourse, that what we say on Deleuze is homogeneous with *L'être et l'évènement*, it would still be necessary, as at least Deleuze attempted, to synthesize what is singular about it (Badiou 1988: 196).

It is not my intention to revisit the question of whether Deleuze is, or is not, committed to a unitary conception of Being. Instead, I want to focus my attention on Badiou's own ontology. In particular, I want to examine the implications that Badiou's mathematical ontology has for his theory of the *event*.

According to Badiou, ontology, the science of being-qua-being, is and can only be mathematics, but historically this insight has been obscured by two factors: (1) the insertion of empirical intuitions into theories about being-qua-being; and (2) the inability to provide a purely mathematical, as opposed to theological idea of actual infinity. In this sense,

his conception of ontology is post-Heideggerian and post-Cantorian. In spite of his immense achievement, Heidegger's critique of representation leads only to a poetic ontology of finitude. Consequently, only Cantor's theory of transfinite sets can provide the way of thinking (infinite) Being. And only by conceiving being as an indifferent multiple of undefined multiples (set of sets) can ontology free itself from empirical intuitions.

What Badiou means by the Cantorian revolution in mathematics is illustrated by the way he describes the move from the modern (Galilean) concept of infinity to the one proposed by Cantor. 'The infinite God of medieval Christianity is,' he says, 'in terms of its being, essentially finite', since it is only with the idea that Nature itself is infinite that we arrive at the properly mathematical concept of infinity.

> The thesis of the infinity of Being is necessarily post-Christian, or, if one wants, post-Galilean. It is historically linked to the ontological advent of a mathematics of the infinite whose intimate connection with the subject of science . . . ruins the Greek limit, and disrupts (*in-disposes*) the supremacy of being (where) the ontologically finite essence of infinity was named 'God'. (EE: 162)

According to Badiou, it was Cantor who completed Galileo's historical achievement. From then on, infinity is predicated only of being-as-being, in the manner of an infinite set. Cantor's theory of infinite sets establishes that there are infinite numbers of different cardinalities. For example, Cantor was able to prove that while the (infinite) set of rational numbers was countable – could be put into one-to-one correspondence with the positive integers – the count did not extend to irrational numbers. And, he was also able to show that the (infinite) set of irrational numbers was equal to the set of all sub-sets of the first (infinite) set, its power set. So, if the cardinality of the first infinite set is αo (aleph o) then the cardinality of its power set is 2 to the power of αo. In Badiou's terminology, this means that the power set (the state of the situation) necessarily exceeds the original set (the situation).

Badiou, however, is careful to note that philosophy is not reducible to ontology. What calls for philosophical thinking, and decision, is precisely that which is not-being-qua-being, namely, the event of being. This is how Badiou sees the task of his major work:

> Our goal is to establish the meta-ontological thesis that mathematics is the historicity of the Discourse on being-qua-being. And the goal of this goal is to assign to philosophy the thinkable articulation of two discourses (and practices) *that are other than it*: mathematics, science of being, and the

> doctrines resulting from the intervention (*les doctrines intervenants*) of the event, which designate, precisely, the 'what-is-not-being-qua-being. (EE: 20)

So, what is Deleuze's objection to all this? The few pages devoted to Badiou in *What is Philosophy?* constitute the first, and to this day the most detailed critique of EE from a Deleuzian perspective. According to some commentators, these pages fail to come to grips with Badiou's text. For example, François Wahl in his introduction to a later work by Badiou claims that: '[T]here is a misunderstanding [in this note on Badiou]: it is impossible to recognize Badiou in the reconstruction that Deleuze makes of it' (Badiou 1992: 20 fn. 38). In the article I mentioned in the first line of this chapter Badiou is somewhat more generous to Deleuze. He repeats his original complaint that Deleuze reduces sets to numbers, and, for that reason, fails to understand that axiomatic set theory is in reality 'rational ontology itself'. And, he adds:

> It is the unwillingness to assume this point, and to maintain at all cost, against the evidence, that all sets are numbers, that results in the very strange text devoted to our book *L'Être et l'évènement* in *What is Philosophy?*

In a footnote to these comments Badiou emphasises that Deleuze's note is a strange, but not at all inexact representation of his ideas. He recognises their friendly intent, he says, but in the end he just does not know what to make of them. He even goes as far as to issue the following challenge: 'If someone could enlighten me on this fragment, and on its real relation to *L'Être et l'évènement*, it would make me happy. This is a sincere invitation to bid (*appel d'offre*), devoid of all irony' (Badiou 2000) As far as I can see it, if one can show that the passage in WIP is an adequate, though short, reconstruction of EE; and, if furthermore, one can show that it also points to a serious problem in Badiou's ontology, one has gone some way towards providing an effective counter-attack from a Deleuzian perspective.

However, before explaining what I take to be the gist of this Deleuzian counter-attack, I would like to make two preliminary remarks. First, one can agree with Badiou that, since its discovery, set theory has become the fundamental theory of mathematics. In that sense it is broader and more fundamental than the theory of numbers. But, however far mathematical analysis may have advanced since the beginning of the twentieth century, it must be noted that the main preoccupation of its founders, from Cantor to Zermelo, was with number theory, in particular with the problem of expressing the geometrical continuum in terms of numbers. And, since the mathematical backbone of EE is the Zermelo-Frankael axiomatisation (ZF) of set theory, it is somewhat disingenuous on

Badiou's part to insist that just because set theory is the foundation of all modern mathematics no other area of mathematics could provide a better model for thinking ontology. Second, Deleuze's note on Badiou in WIP must also be seen in its context. The note appears amidst a discussion of the differences between science (functions) and philosophy (concepts). Thus, just before the note in question Deleuze states:

> we discover the irreducibility of concepts to functions only if, instead of setting them against one another in an indeterminate way, we compare what constitutes the reference of one with what constitutes the other's consistency. *States of affairs, objects* or *bodies*, and *lived states* form the functions' references, whereas *events* are the concepts' consistency. These are the terms that have to be considered from the point of view of a possible *reduction*. (WIP: 151)

Immediately after this comes the note on Badiou. The reconstruction in this note is, indeed, very sketchy. Deleuze himself admits that he may have oversimplified Badiou's very complex theory (WIP: 229 fn. 11). And it might seem enigmatic to Badiou because in it his project is cast in Deleuzian terms. In fact, the first two sentences of the note show just how violent Deleuze's reconstruction is: 'In contemporary thought such a comparison (between science and philosophy) seems to correspond to Badiou's particularly interesting undertaking. He proposes to distribute at intervals on an ascending line a series of factors passing from functions to concepts' (WIP: 151).

Now, within Deleuze's philosophy 'ascent' means going from the actual to the virtual, from function to concept. And, as the rest of the note makes clear, by Badiou's 'errant line' of ascent is meant the move from (actual) Being, conceived as a multiple of multiples, to (virtual) Event. This has the consequence that:

> Finally, the event itself appears (or disappears) less as a singularity than as a separate aleatory point that is added to, or subtracted from, the site, within the transcendence of the void . . . without it being possible to decide on the adherence of the event to the situation in which it finds its site. (WIP: 152)

Deleuze leaves no doubt here that, as far as he sees it, the central philosophical concept of EE – the event – 'floats in an empty transcendence' between a set theoretical ontology and the concrete generic function (truth processes of: love, art, science and politics). For that reason, he thinks that Badiou's programme 'returns', in the guise of the multiple, to an old conception of philosophy, a conception according to which the philosopher is, at the same time, the master of a highly abstract science

and the one who decides by his militant intervention how and when this science is to acquire material force. Deleuze's second criticism of Badiou is that from a purely quantitative, set theoretical account of multiplicities one can never arrive at an adequate conception of 'the event'. This criticism is not developed by Deleuze in the note. He merely assumes that in creating the (philosophical) concept of the event, ascending from the actual to the virtual, Badiou cannot reach the virtual from a qualitatively undifferentiated base. Given Badiou's subsequent attacks on the virtual (Badiou 1997: 80–1, 2000), Deleuze's reconstruction/criticism of EE needs to be spelled out in greater detail. It needs to be shown not only why Badiou's theory of the event is deficient, but also that Deleuze's own ontology offers a solution to problems left unsolved by Badiou.

Readers of EE will agree with Deleuze that it is very difficult to get a clear idea of how Badiou sees the relation between Being and Event. The problem is not so much with his concept of the event; rather, it is with the way he situates it within his ontology of pure multiplicity. The first indication of what Badiou means by 'event' is given in the chapter (Meditation) entitled: 'The Void, the Proper Name of Being'. The event is said to mark the void, the abyss, in a situation, retroactively (EE: 69). It presupposes a breaking down of the count which, in turn, is induced by an excess of One. However, the fullest account of the event is given in Meditations 16–18. It becomes clear by the end of Meditation 18, that what is unique about the event is that it is possible only in the *future anterior* (EE: 211). The identity of the event, called an 'extraordinary set', is in the fact that it can be discerned only after it has already been recognised: 'This type of antecedence to itself indicates the effect of the *ultra one*, in that the set alpha, such that alpha is not a member of alpha, is identical to itself only in so far as it had already been identified to itself' (EE: 211). Because the identity of the event is possible only retroactively, it can never be counted among beings. As Badiou declares: 'Ontology has nothing to say about the event.' In other words, mathematics can say nothing about the event. Philosophy (meta-ontology) on the other hand cannot, according to Badiou, stay silent about it. In fact, one of the main objectives of EE is to show that while the event is not *in* Being (it is 'ultra-being') it is an event *of* Being. (EE: 206). What mediates between Being and Event is the 'evental site' (*situation évènementale*). An evental site is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the occurrence of an event:

> The (evental) site is always only a condition of the event's existence . . . the existence of a multiple on the edge of the void brings about only the possibility of an event . . . A site is evental in the strict sense only by its being qualified retroactively by the event. (EE: 200)

A few pages earlier Badiou gives another definition of 'evental site': 'I call evental site a totally ab-normal multiple, that is to say, one that has none of its elements represented in the situation' (EE: 195). Another name for an 'ab-normal multiple' is 'singular multiple'. A *state of the situation*, given that a situation is a set (a multiple), is the *power set*, the set of all sub-sets of a situation. Elements of a set, which are themselves sets, are presented in a situation, and they are represented in the sub-sets of the situation (states of the situation). Consequently, a singular multiple (set) is an element of a situation whose elements are not themselves presented in the situation. But, more importantly, they are not represented in the state of the situation, namely in the sub-set of the original set. This idea is expressed in ZF by the Axiom of Foundation: 'For all alpha, if alpha is not identical to phi then, there is a beta, such that beta is not a member of alpha and the union of beta and alpha is empty.' In other words, all non-empty sets have at least one element that has no elements in common with them. The question now is how this axiom, and the attendant notion of singularity, explains what it is to be an event. On a charitable interpretation of Badiou's meta-ontology, we could say that events *erupt* in situations from below. That is, since beneath every situation there are elements not counted by the state of the situation, these elements can be a source of the breakdown of the situation, thus making possible an unpredictable intervention. This might also explain why the event can never be counted among the multiples that constitute Being.

The consistency of Being is achieved by the count – counting elements as one. Normally, the state of the situation 'controls' what is to count as one (setting the limit on what can be included in the situation) by *retroaction*. In its role of 'regulating the count, the state of the situation prevents the original situation from falling into the *Void*, into the "abyss" of inconsistency. But the state can control only what is presented directly in the situation. It cannot present what belongs to its elements. This could also explain why the existence of a singular term, an evental site, is not a sufficient condition for the existence of "an event".' A singular element can always be normalised; it can always be presented in another situation that is homogeneous with the first.

This interpretation of Badiou's theory of the event gains plausibility when it is applied to the history of set theory. Cantor's problem of the inconsistent set – the set of all sets – and his obsession with the continuum problem, do come to mind as one reads Badiou's account of the event. Unfortunately, Badiou does not make more specific what is only implicit in his discussion. More often than not, when the going gets rough theoretically – as in the case, for example, of locating abnormal

multiples – he provides 'figurative approximations' only. This, given the task he has set himself in EE, constitutes a serious weakness. But, let us grant him that with a chapter in between 14 (his discussion of infinity) and 16 (his discussion of the event), making the connection with the history of set theory more explicit, this problem could have been mitigated. With such a chapter, he could have made clearer how key 'events' of set theory could be seen as positing themselves retroactively. But, even if he had done that, he would still have been left with a serious problem: how to defend the claim that 'ontology has nothing to say about the event'. Or, to put it differently, he would still have had to prove the philosophical merit of a theory according to which the 'event' is reduced to a retroactive naming of its own disappearance. Badiou's theory holds that the event is an extra-ordinary intervention in a singular situation. Furthermore, it also tells us that a singular situation (an evental site) is what it is only through the retroactive intervention of an event. This invites the question whether there should not be something inherent to the singular situation that calls forth the event. If that were the case, ontology would have something to say about the event. Evidently, Badiou excludes that possibility. Outside the context of ontology, that is, set theory, his 'event' cannot get a purchase on concrete situations.

Recent discussions in the philosophy of science offer a suggestion about how the eruption of an event might be connected to concrete historical situations. For example, Kuhn's theory of paradigm shift – a theory similar to Badiou's in its 'decisionism' – sees the eruption of the event as the crashing in on itself of the old paradigm. But in this view, the event of a scientific revolution must be preceded by a crisis in normal science – which, in turn, presupposes that even normal science contains anomalies. In fact, Cantor's revolution in mathematics could also be accounted for in terms of the Kuhnian theory. Badiou, however, cannot allow himself to flirt with Kuhnian ideas. To do so would compromise his views not only about the event, but also about knowledge and truth. It would commit him to an instrumentalist conception of truth, and to a historicist conception of knowledge – neither of which is compatible with his neo-rationalist position.[1]

The lack of an adequate set-theoretical account of the event obliges Badiou to rely on historical examples in order to make his case. But, these examples, such as the French Revolution, or St Paul's radical intervention in Christianity, are too easy. They are too obvious. They all emerge at the point where the actual is the noisiest. But as Nietzsche has warned us: '(T)he greatest events, they are not our noisiest but our stillest hours' (Nietzsche 1969: 124). So, on the one hand, Badiou offers us a highly

esoteric concept of the event 'floating above being in an empty transcendence', and on the other, when he illustrates with concrete examples, he picks the noisiest ones. His dilemma, therefore, is that he either has a theory of the event that relies on commonly received opinions, or one that is highly esoteric.

And this leads me to a direct confrontation of Badiou's and Deleuze's conceptions of the event. For Deleuze the event is on the plane of the virtual. For Badiou, since for him only the actual has being, the event is in the realm of 'trans-being' (*trans-être*). In short, their theories of the event are intimately connected to their respective ontology. In Badiou's 'post-Cantorian' ontology, Being is an ordered multiple of infinite multiples. This allows him to claim that Being-as-being ought not to be thought of as a primordial One. The one, that which is self-identical is always already a result of an operation of counting-for-one – a multiple counted for one. Axiomatic set theory (ZF) guarantees the consistency of being by preventing the count of multiples from extending into the abyss – the inconsistent set of all sets. But this same axiomatic places an interdiction on the event – it cannot allow that sets (multiples) be members of themselves. In the final analysis, Badiou's is a static ontology. It leaves no room for events, nor does it allow for difference, other than difference in number. The underlying assumption of such an ontology is that the term 'being' can only be understood as a *noun*.

By contrast, the underlying assumption of Deleuze's ontology is that the term 'being' must be understood as a *verb*. Consequently, the difference between Deleuze's ontology and Badiou's is not that the first works under the constraint of 'empirical intuitions' (Badiou 2000) and only the second is free of those constraints. The difference between them is, instead, that the one opts for a static, nominative conception of being, and the other for a dynamic, verbal conception of it. Therefore, the decision between them should be motivated by whether one thinks that it is simpler to account for static, actual, beings in terms of a dynamic conception, or one thinks that it is simpler to do it the other way around.[2] This decision has implications for the way in which one accounts for the relation between *Being* and *Event*.

'Virtual' is Deleuze's name for the mobile difference of heterogeneous multiplicities – for dynamic being. Actual beings do not, in his view, have separate existence apart from this virtual being. They are, simply, temporal phases in the process of its eternal actualisation. Badiou sees no difference between Deleuze's transcendental empiricism and his ontology. Consequently, he fails to see the first as an essential corollary of the second – a method which allows us to sense the intensities that are at

work in the process of actualisation. This method – a method of intuition – is not some mysterious looking beneath, or behind, what is actually present in a given situation, as Badiou would have it; nor is it some unassignable intervention at the edge of a situation. It is, as Deleuze says, 'a pure grasping of the event' (Deleuze 1990: 101). It is, to repeat, to discern within actual things, and states of affairs, the intensive forces that actualise them, and, thus, to see the event as an immanent feature of all actualisation.

Finally, one more difference between Badiou's and Deleuze's conception of the event is shown by the way in which they view the 'dice throw'. They both recognise that the dice throw joins together chance and necessity. But whereas for Badiou this means that the 'erratic multiple' is joined to the 'retroaction of the count' (EE: 215), for Deleuze it means that the event – as the event *in* and *of* Being – projects itself into the eternal passage of the past into the future, in the same instant that it falls back into its own present. Or, again, on Badiou's view, what brings about an event is the retroactive naming of a void in the actual situation (EE: 228). The chance event imposes its necessity in the dice throw, by naming itself at the edge of the situation. For Deleuze, by contrast, each throw of the dice affirms chance and endlessly ramifies it (LS: 59). For him, the event has a double structure: it is the present moment of its actualisation, but it is also the future and the past sidestepping each present. To be worthy of the event means to grasp this double structure.

Earlier in this chapter, I quoted Nietzsche's saying that 'The greatest events are not our noisiest but our stillest hours.' I take this quote to be an implicit reproach to Badiou's ontology. What Nietzsche is saying here is that events occur, not on the edge of some privileged, *actual* situation, floating above it in an empty transcendence. Events are taking place in all situations, in the process of their actualisation. This way of conceiving event and being, avoids Badiou's problem. It avoids the problem of assigning the unassignable place of the event within a static ontology, or of assigning it, *arbitrarily*, to privileged historical situations.

For Deleuze, event is immanent to all concrete situations. By removing the abyss from between being and event, his ontology opens the way for the *event of being* from within what presents itself in actual situations. It opens the way for transcendental empiricism, for the method of intuition, and, ultimately, for counter-actualisation. *Counter-actualisation* is revolutionary in that, by locating the transcendental – yet immanent – conditions of the actual, it can then proceed to a different way of actualising them.[3] And that is precisely what Badiou's militant interventionism, based as it is on an 'abysmal' event, cannot do.[4]

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Notes

1. Peter Hallward (2003) warns against a danger of making too much of the affinities between Kuhn's and Badiou's views on truth and (scientific) knowledge. Instead of Kuhn, Hallward sees Lakatos as a potential ally of Badiou's conception of truth: 'Like Kuhn's critic Lakatos, Badiou is careful to insist on the reasoned integrity of a new scientific truth, what Lakatos calls a "research programme" ' (Hallward 2003: 211). I cannot agree with this assessment of the relation between Lakatos' and Badiou's views. What I am questioning in this essay is precisely that Badiou provides for the 'reasoned integrity of a new scientific truth'. The reason that Lakatos can and Badiou cannot do this is because for Lakatos 'scientific integrity' is faithfulness not to some extraordinary event but to a network of hypotheses about how the world is. In fact, Lakatos would be no more favourable to Badiou's decisionism than he is to Kuhn's. A more careful reading of Lakatos' detailed discussion of how to attenuate the need to make decisions in science (note, for example, Lakatos and Musgrave 1970: 106–9), that is, how to achieve integrity without dogma, would have alerted Hallward to the great divide between Badiou's and Lakatos' conceptions of truth.
2. At one point (Badiou 2000: 197), Badiou claims that it is a 'speculative demagogy' to prefer movement to immobility. But this claim ignores not only Deleuze's careful arguments in *Difference and Repetition* (1994) but also a vast number of works supporting such a view, coming from vastly different philosophical traditions.
3. An indication of the revolutionary aspect of counter-actualisation (referred to as 'vice-diction' there) is given in *Difference and Repetition*

   > On the one hand, in the progressive determination of the conditions, we must in effect discover the adjunctions which complete the initial field of the problem as such – in other words, the varieties of the multiplicity in all its dimensions, the fragments of ideal future or past events which, by the same token, render the problem solvable; and we must establish the modality in which these enclose or are connected with the initial field. On the other hand, we must condense all singularities, precipitate all the circumstances, points of

> fusion, congelation or condensation in a sublime occasion, *Kairos*, which makes the solution explode like something abrupt, brutal and revolutionary. (Deleuze 1994: 190)

4. Badiou makes an attempt (Badiou 1990) at responding, in my view unsuccessfully, to this type of objection to the political implications of EE. First, he tries to explain how the 'event' of Nazism can be accounted for in terms of his theory of the event. How to think about it politically, given that politics is one of the truth procedures that are 'faithful' to an event? His answer is somewhat evasive. In effect, he says that until the invention of new figures of political thinking 'philosophy will be compelled, as regards this type of historical eventfulness (*evénèmentialité*), to make judgements that are either too general or too conspicuous (*singularisants*) (Badiou 1990: 7). That Badiou himself makes this type of judgement is, in fact, the criticism I am making of his view of the event. Deleuze's theory, by contrast, would allow us to diagnose the intensities that condition the actuality of Nazism, thereby allowing us to actualise these intensities differently. The second example of Badiou's attempt at avoiding a possible objection to EE, is his comment on 'speculative leftism'. Once again, his criticisms of speculative leftism resemble my criticisms of his own conception of radical intervention. His objection to this 'aberration', which might also be imputed to his own theory of the event, seems to raise more questions than it answers:

> This imaginary wager on an absolute novelty to break in two the history of the world 'fails to see (*meconnait*) that the Real of the conditions of possibility of intervention is always the circulation of an event already decided, and therefore the presupposition, be it implicitly, that there has already been an intervention.' The problem with this way of avoiding 'leftism' is that, in order to normalise an unassignable event it must be connected to an event that has already been assigned – actualised. But this raises two questions: first, how has the first event been actualised to begin with, and second, assuming we have an answer to the first question, are we not simply trading 'speculative leftism' for common sense conservativism?

Chapter 6

Inconsistencies of Character: David Hume on Sympathy, Intensity and Artifice

Davide Panagia

> And therefore it must be our several particular perceptions,that compose the mind; I say, *compose* the mind, not *belong* to it. The mind is not a substance in which the perceptions inhere.
>
> Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*[1]

The reader will notice that Gilles Deleuze barely makes an appearance in what follows. This essay is, for all intents and purposes, an essay about David Hume. Yet, this is an admittedly odd reading of Hume; a reading that refuses to engage him on epistemological terms but is, rather, committed to reading Hume as a 'minor' literary figure. Of course, Deleuze wrote a book on Hume and his insights on Hume's theories of sensation pepper the gamut of his philosophic *oeuvre* to the point that Deleuze declares that: '[T]he logic of sense is inspired in its entirety by empiricism' (Deleuze 1990: 20) With this in mind, the following is an attempt to expand on the political implications of what Deleuze, in his Preface to *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, refers to as our 'habit of saying *I*' when speaking of our selves. The hope, then, is to think of Hume as a swerve, a line of flight oddly postured between Anglo-American and poststructural theories of aesthetics and politics.

I begin with an ending. In the final version of his will, written a few months before his death, Hume makes one last revision to his *oeuvre*. He specifies (presumably to Adam Smith enlisted to publishing posthumously his *Dialogues on Natural Religion*) that all subsequent editions of his collected essays must begin with his last piece of writing first. 'My Own Life', the autobiographical essay that recounts the successes and failures of his literary career, must introduce those other writings in order to familiarise the reader with the author's character (Christensen 1987: 49). Upon reading 'My Own Life' we learn that life and writing are

inextricably linked for Hume – and what binds this link is the imminence of his own death. Hume, the man writing, must die to ensure the permanence of Hume, the author's, 'own life'.[2]

'My Own Life' is a curious piece of writing. If one is looking for a complete autobiography, success will be thwarted. In fact, Hume makes a virtue of its brevity: by only discussing 'the History of [his] Writings'[3] he will escape the charge of vanity because, as he specifies in a typically self-deprecating manner, 'the first success of most of my writings was not such as to be an object of vanity' (Hume 1963: 611). Indeed, of his *Treatise* he famously avers that: '[N]ever literary attempt was more unfortunate than [it]. It fell *dead-born from the press*, without reaching such distinction, as even to excite murmur among the zealots' (Hume 1963: 612).

Hume's autobiography is less an account of his life than an account of a life of composition and revision. In it he collapses the distinction between his life and his writing so that the entirety of his narrative recounts how, by what circumstances, and under which conditions, his works were composed. In this context, it is noteworthy that Hume's literary career emphasises revision and correction as indispensable aspects of composition, and of life more generally. In light of this, the following is a consideration of Hume's theory of composition. Proceeding by means of what I call a 'poetics of political thinking', I assess the descriptive thickness of Hume's prose that betrays a literary standard for philosophical reasoning.

Indeed, Hume's writings narrate a different story from our received perceptions of the eighteenth-century subject of rights whose ability to reason is in concert with the law of non-contradiction. For him the tendency to negotiate differences in such a manner as to resolve the tensions that arise from them is problematic from a moral point of view that is committed to aesthetic evaluation as the source of discriminatory competency. Judgement implies the ability to differentiate between various impressions and ideas and, as such, it is that faculty that is attuned to difference as a force in the world. Difference, then, is not reducible to diversity or for that matter contradiction; it does not simply refer to the quality or property of an object that is then attributable to disadvantaged individuals or groups. Rather, Hume's theory of composition relies on a dynamic view of difference, as an active force in associational life.

The success of 'My Own Life' as a piece of writing relies on an absolute difference: the presence of death as a limit-case for revision and correction. After one's death one cannot make amends, nor can one

change one's character. 'My Own Life' is thus a *history* of Hume's character:

> To conclude historically with my own character. I am, or rather was (for that is the style I must now use in speaking of myself, which emboldens me more to speak my sentiments); I was, I say, a man of mild dispositions, of command of temper . . . (Hume 1963: 615)

The sentence concludes with a list of all the virtues of the Pyrrhonian sceptic that Hume, the author (designated by the 'I am'), determines in Hume, the man (designated by the 'I was'). In correcting his mistaken use of the tenses of the verb 'to be' he is able to create two different characters in the text. The one is the man of letters – the Hume who revises his style in order properly to speak of himself and be more forthcoming about his sentiments. The second is Hume – the man, to whom 'My Own Life' refers. Though the distinction between the 'I am' and the 'I was' is, as Hume notes, a stylistic one, this does not weaken its significance. To be sure, stylistics is a principal virtue for the auto-declared 'man of letters' and Hume will never resist the temptation to revise or alter an inappropriate use of style.[4]

Hume's autobiography is a diary of alterations, permutations and innovations. All these, however, are premised on a rupture that invokes a re-articulation, and of a view of selfhood grounded in permeable vibrations rather than foundations. Whether changing his name, profession or manner of writing, each of these moments invokes what one commentator calls a '*functional* discontinuity' in Hume's compositional style (Christensen 1987: 23). They are discontinuous because his writing invokes a rupture in narrativity; they are functional because such interruptions invoke the re-articulation of the particulars that comprise one's existence; in short, they are moments of imaginative recreation.

That 'My Own Life' proceeds as it does makes perfect sense for someone who is as committed to induction as a mode of thinking as Hume is. He refers to his life's story as a history because the particular events narrated therein are composed in such a way as to create something he can recognise as 'his own life'. But this can only make sense if Hume's own life is no longer his; it must be the life of another who has since passed on. To be sure, this position of autobiographer is not one Hume can occupy. He must invent it as an author, making it so that Hume's two selves are, first and foremost, a literary composition. In this respect, Hume's self is as much a representation of impressions in the mind as he argues it must be in his *Treatise*, 'a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance' (T: 253).

The distinguishing characteristic of Hume's view of personal identity is that the self is organised on a principle of difference rather than sameness.[5] The self is 'an impression' (T: 251) or, better still, it is a mobile series of disconnected impressions that are composed, arranged and articulated by mental habits. Rather than material, Hume's self is an abstract representation. But, Hume continues, such a representation belies a 'manifest contradiction' (T: 251) because there is no impression that is constant or invariable. The self, then, is not simply an idea; it is a paradox. Its distinguishing feature is not its continuity but its functional discontinuity; being, as it is, a system of images or impressions in perpetual motion, 'a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in perpetual flux and movement' (T: 252).

Denying the possibility of the self's perpetuity through time, Hume makes it so that the experience of difference through succession and flux is the source of our perceptions of identity. In other words, Hume provides us with a theory of identity through difference that at once conceives of identity as a possible representation but paradoxically denies its existence in actuality. Gilles Deleuze explains this aspect of Hume's thought succinctly: 'experience is succession, or the movement of separable ideas insofar as they are different, and different insofar as they are separable. [For Hume] we must begin with this experience because it is *the* experience. It does not presuppose anything else and nothing else precedes it' (Deleuze 1991: 87).

By making succession the differentiating principle that grounds experience (in that when we experience something we experience not the thing itself but its succession of impressions), Hume allows for the possibility of associating differences without resorting either to subsumption or similitude. The task for all thinking, then, is 'to prove that all objects, to which we ascribe identity, without observing their invariableness and uninterruptedness, are such as consist of a succession of related objects' (T: 255). Rather than assumed, invariability must be experienced in an object, and if that experience is not available (as it most probably will not be because 'there is no impression constant and invariable') then we cannot say of an object that it possesses the quality of invariability. Ultimately, Hume conceives of personality identity as a kind of *tromp l'oeil* that results from associations produced by strategies of composition. More succinctly, we might go so far as to suggest that Hume envisions personal identity as a kind of 'moving image'. Not unlike the slippery 'I' of the autobiography, personal identity is a representation (that Hume will later call 'character') at once projected on to

one's mind and to others, rather than a property of a particular body (T: 260). As such, any idea of personal identity is, as he states, 'to be regarded as grammatical rather than as [a] philosophical difficult[y]' (T: 262). By 'grammatical' Hume means that the self is an artifice.[6] The grammatical first person singular that is the source of Hume's stylistic confusion in 'My Own Life' is also the source of the *tromp l'oeil* of identity. We all possess a discursive habit of saying 'I' when referring to our selves but habit, like cause and effect or contiguity, is a form of relating external to the thing to which it applies. As such, the 'I', like the mind, 'is not a substance in which the perceptions inhere' (T: 658). What's more, because identity is a quality rather than a property, the distinction Hume makes between a grammatical and a philosophical problem belies a commitment to a stylistics of the self that parallels his account of the failure of the *Treatise*. That is, personal identity is not something with which we are born but is a matter of style that we develop or acquire through time: it is 'manner rather than matter', form rather than content (Hume 1963: 612).

Hume modulates his voice and tone in the section subsequent to 'Of Personal Identity' to coincide with this account of a stylistics of the 'I'. The 'Conclusion' to Book I of the *Treatise* reads like an epistolary address to the reader that replaces the abstract 'I' invoked in the previous pages with a thoroughly personal and materialised 'I.' In this intensely private moment, Hume reveals his sentiments to the reader: he feels:

> like a man, who having struck on many shoals, and having narrowly escap'd ship-wreck in passing a small firth, has yet the temerity to put out to sea in the same leaky weather-beaten vessel, and even carries his ambition so far as to think of compassing the globe under these disadvantageous circumstances. (T: 263–4)

This state of impending psychic doom and somewhat diffident arrogance 'strikes [Hume] with melancholy', creating within him a state of 'forlorn solitude' (T: 264). 'When I look abroad,' he quivers, 'I foresee on every side, dispute, contradiction, anger, calumny and detraction. When I turn my eye inward, I find nothing but doubt and ignorance' (T: 264). He can give no reasons for assenting to any of his arguments other than that he has a '*strong* propensity to consider objects *strongly* in that view, under which they appear to [him]' (T: 265). Indeed, for Hume senselessness is a persistent possibility (and perhaps even a constant reality) that leaves him to conclude that all he can do is proceed 'merely from an illusion of the imagination' (T: 267). The difficult and important question for him, then, is to determine 'how far we ought to yield to these illusions' (T: 267).

Such a despairing tone is perhaps common to sceptics. There is a perpetual sense of disillusionment when one considers that one's attempts at certainty are thwarted by the inevitability of doubt. We find such moods as easily in Montaigne as we do in Sextus Empiricus. Yet Hume offers a glimmer of hope in his seemingly desperate confession: 'We save ourselves from this total skepticism only by means of that singular and seemingly trivial property of the fancy' (T: 268). What before was referred to as 'merely an illusion of the imagination' is now redeemed: the fancy is a '*seemingly* trivial property' because in actuality it is this property – this capacity to compose fictions to both ourselves and others – that saves us from the kind of nihilism that Hume's radical scepticism might induce.

This quality of composition is discussed as a delicacy of the imagination in Hume's 'Of the Standard of Taste'. When judging, he argues, it is perfectly natural for us to search for general standards that might help us prove the viability or legitimacy of our opinions. But, he explains further, there is a distinction to be made between one's opinions and one's sentiments: amongst a thousand different opinions which different men may entertain of the same subject, there is one, and but one, that is just and true; and the only difficulty is to fix and ascertain it. On the contrary, a thousand different sentiments, excited by the same object, are all right: because no sentiment represents what is really in the object. It only marks a certain conformity or relation between the object and the organs or faculties of the mind (Hume 1965: 234).

Once again, Hume insists on the distinction between the property and the experience of an object and emphasises the mistake in confounding the two. Though a truth may exist about a particular subject, one cannot speak of a 'true sentiment' with regard to an object of beauty precisely because beauty does not refer to the quality of a thing but expresses a relation between the object and the mind of the spectator. And yet Hume still wants to be able to derive a standard of judgement that allows some stability in deliberation. He thus proceeds to instruct that though poetry and the arts more generally cannot submit to a standard of truth, there are rules of art that help us determine whether a work is either good or bad. The cases in point are Ariosto's writings whose grotesque imageries and base humour certainly cannot be said to please us. His works are good works, however, because 'he charms by the force and clearness of his expression, by the readiness and variety of his inventions' (Hume 1965: 236). Hume thus concludes that despite the caprices of taste, general principles of beauty may be determined and agreed upon. However, and here remains the characteristic Humean dilemma: '[M]any and frequent are the defects in the internal organs, which prevent or

weaken the influence of those general principles, on which depends our sentiment of beauty or deformity'(Hume 1965: 239).

Thus we return to the senses and the risk of evaluative failure. We, ourselves, are to blame for our incapacities to judge things adequately – for our want of delicacy – and though this doesn't make the fact of universal standards of beauty moot, it does make it so that our taste, like ourselves, must go through a process of refinement, correction and rearticulation. The only way in which we can move from bad to good sense is by pruning our senses through an experience with the arts: that is, through a sentimental education.

We should not conclude from this that Hume imagines a natural *telos* for sentimental education (as does Rousseau in the *Émile*, for instance). Hume views a sentimental education as an occasion for perfectibility of character that results in a finer attunement of one's discriminatory competencies. He thus finds it worthwhile to develop a compositional manner that, coupled with the fragmentary nature of the essay genre, allows the inexhaustibly subtle ambivalences of his arguments to appear in the manner as much as in the matter of his writings. John Pocock notes that in Hume: '[T]here is no statement that does not contain its own ambiguity or is not offset by another statement somewhere else' (Pocock 1985: 133). These ambiguities work so as to situate the reader in a zone of indiscernibility that occasions judgement but does not dictate its modes – a situation, that is, of having to confront the intensity of difference as such. This tendency is nowhere more evident than in his essay on taste which persistently undulates from a commitment to deriving ideal standards to the realisation of their inaccessibility.

Ultimately, a 'good sense and delicate imagination' (Hume 1965: 236) are the signs of the ideal critic who, though valuable and esteemed in society, may not exist. Nonetheless, we learn from Hume's essay that the refinement of our deliberative faculty – that faculty which saves us from the nihilism of scepticism – is available, though mutable. Or rather, it is its mutability through time that makes the perfectibility of our selves a project rather than a destination. Though we may always pursue an ultimate standard of taste, its attainability seems at once impossible and unnecessary. The point is that individual perfectibility is available but premised on the inconstancy of the self. To value a refined palate means that we cannot remain constant throughout our lives – nor, for that matter, at any one point in time – and that the 'I' which we habitually invoke to refer to ourselves and our judgements is singular only in grammar but not in fact.

In my opening remarks, I proposed that Hume might help us get a better understanding of what a pluralist account of the self might look like. In this regard, I suggested that Hume's notion of experience refers less to the relation between an individual mind and an object and more to the encounter with the movement of distinct impressions. In other words, the first thing we experience when we experience something is not the thing itself but the movement of the impressions that the thing provides in us, which is its difference. The active mind perceives motion and arranges movement into a composition. This operation, I suggest, is first and foremost a literary one that is crucial to Hume's understanding of moral character and, moreover, essential to the emphasis he places on fulfilling promises.

We know that for Hume moral laws and rules of justice are neither natural nor derived from reason but are an artifice of the imagination. 'Vice and Virtue,' he avers, 'may be compar'd to sounds, colours, heat and cold, which according to modern philosophy are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind' (T: 469). Following from this, he famously proceeds to make yet another grammatical distinction that he recommends to the reader as a word of caution: the use of an 'ought' phrase does not imply the necessity of an 'is' but rather, the foundation of a new set of relations between objects that requires explanation and verification (T: 469). So it is that the perceptions of the mind are crucial to one's assessment of justice – especially as with regard to questions of approbation (that is, pleasure) or blame (that is, pain).

Hume allows the word 'perception' to do a lot of work for his account of justice. Not only do the perceptions in our minds help ground moral conventions but, more importantly for my purposes here, the perceptions we have of others are also crucial. Here, 'property' plays as central a role as does 'perception': 'A man's property,' he asserts, 'is some object related to him. This relation is not natural, but moral, and founded on justice' (T: 491). It may seem odd for the contemporary reader to read such a general definition of property. Indeed, Hume defines property simply as that which is related to, rather than possessed by, an individual; but the mode of relation or the thing relating is never really specified or determined. We are left to conclude, then, that by 'property' Hume must also mean those things that are proper to our self – or our *propriety*. In this regard, justice is that relation, that mode of relating, that makes it so we can derive a sense of self. And, as 'the origins of justice explain that of property' in that 'the same artifice gives rise to both' (T: 491) then it must be the case that justice and selfhood are intimately related for Hume. In short, Hume does not provide for us

a moral view of justice if, by moral, we intend a neutral domain of prescriptive rules and procedures for action. Rather, he provides us with a view of justice that relies on a capacity to create associations – that is, to create one's property.

As our property involves a set of relations that composes the self, it is our reputation that matters most in the social world: 'There is nothing, which touches us more nearly than our reputation, and nothing on which our reputation more depends than our conduct, with relation to the property of others' (T: 501). That our reputation is something tangible intervening between ourselves and others is an extremely elegant way of explaining the associational powers of our self's images. Recall that for Hume identity is akin to a theatre where the succession of images play themselves out in the mind. In the same manner, our reputation is a succession of images of our selves that are played out in the minds of others.

What's relevant about our reputation is not that it presents a unity of character; this is not the sense of integrity that Hume has in mind. Rather, our reputation projects those images of our selves that make it so that we can relate with others. In other words, our reputation counts because it gives us currency: it allows us to circulate in the world of artifice within which we live. And, I submit further, such a mode of relating as 'reputation' cannot be limited to a singular view of the self precisely because that would indicate a kind of inflexibility of character that could project an inability to relate to others' properties (that is, other selves). It is ultimately this flexibility of character, grounded in a pluralist view of the self, that makes it so that individuals can make promises.

Promises are the source of commerce and the ability to execute a promise is crucial to our reputation. Despite its relying on convention, each promise is of the order of the new in that it implies the possibility of a new experience, of a new relation and, in the end, the creation of a new self:

> When a man says *he promises any thing*, he in effect expresses a *resolution* of performing it; and along with that, by making use of this *form of words*, subjects himself to the penalty of never being trusted again . . . [Promises] are the conventions of men, which create a new motive . . . (T: 522)

Society's conventions make it so that we require a certain amount of stability in order to proceed with the affairs we conduct in our lives. However, such stability is never a guarantee. What must replace the unavailability of such a natural guarantee is a composition – a 'form of

words' – that is the literary basis of social interaction. In this regard, the moral and the aesthetic worlds are collapsed in Hume's account of justice. The kind of delimitation of faculties one finds between Kant's practical and aesthetic judgement would be unthinkable for Hume. Moral reasoning depends on aesthetic judgement to the extent that we require the ability to make 'good compositions' not only of our selves but of the words we use to promise. The person with a good reputation, the individual of 'good character', is a good composition – the kind Hume artfully (and with some confessed vanity) displays in 'My Own Life'.

Ultimately, our judgements require sympathy. Sympathy, Hume explains, is a quality that arranges individuals within groups; it is a principle of social composition (T: 316–17). Like contiguity or resemblance, sympathy establishes a pattern of relation between two disparate entities. Unlike resemblance or contiguity, however, sympathy is a sentiment that acts upon the mind to create impressions (T: 319). Sympathy guarantees a sense of community, a common taste for local foods, or our capacity to endorse one political candidate over another. In other words, without sympathy, evaluation is not possible and without the ability to give value to things, there is no social 'we'.

One of Hume's central theses in the *Treatise* is that all ideas are derived from impressions and that the difference between an impression and an idea is simply a matter of intensity. 'The component parts of ideas and impressions are precisely alike,' he explains. 'The manner and order of their appearance may be the same. The different degrees of their force and vivacity are, therefore, the only particulars, that distinguish them' (T: 319). Just as we wrongly assume that an object is identical through time because we don't attend to the minute permutations and alterations of movement of that object, so is it the case that ideas and impressions are conflated. Their distinguishing feature, however, is their intensity, which stands as a principle of difference that, like movement, complicates the possibility of permanence.

Sympathy is the name Hume gives to this intensive power. He explains that cause and effect, resemblance and contiguity are all necessary in establishing a feeling of sympathy and of converting ideas into impressions (T: 320). Sympathy, however, is granted unique status as the principle of composition that relates things through intensity – that is, on the basis of their difference. 'In sympathy,' Hume concludes, 'there is an evident conversion of an idea into an impression' (T: 320). If intensity distinguishes an idea from an impression in the mind and if sympathy allows for the conversion of an idea into an impression, then sympathy is the differentiating power that distinguishes the weaker force of an

idea from the vivacious intensity of an impression. The differentiating intensity of sympathy is, in short, the key to Hume's central thesis in the *Treatise* that:

> [A]ll the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call IMPRESSIONS and IDEAS. The difference betwixt these consists in the degrees of force and liveliness, with which they strike upon the mind, and make their way into our thought or consciousness. (T: 1)

As much of a unifying principle as sympathy may seem to be, it is important not to define it in terms of a substitution theory of meaning.[7] Sympathy is not similitude and our ability to sympathise with another does not correspond to an ability mimetically to represent that person. Rather, sympathy is a dynamic force that structures social interaction. Hume's account of the social thus relies on sympathy not merely as a principle of recognition but as a differentiating force that allows for dissimilars to coincide. Sympathy, in short, is not synonymous with either liberal consensus or deliberative agreement.[8]

The literary sense of justice found in Hume's writings – his 'poetics of political thinking' – requires the capacity to correct and revise. We saw that Hume's theory of composition stems from the ability the writer has to interrupt the flow of letters in order to recompose what's there. Hume's poetics of justice also implies an aperture of multiplicity afforded by moments of interruption. Just as the interruption of death written into 'My Own Life' opens the possibility of multiple selves, so does the opportunity to make promises open us up to a multiplicity of novel experiences, to modes of relating to other selves and to new versions of our self. There is, then, a kind of appreciation of excess in Hume's poetics of justice that coincides with his commitment to the experience of difference as the source of all experience.

The language of reputation, sympathy and estimation that pervades Hume's *oeuvre* is a political vocabulary that is not juridical. From his perspective, the fault of juridical accounts of justice is that they present us with a view of society that stands as the negation or limitation of politics (Deleuze 1991: 45). This is why Hume rejects 'state of Nature' arguments and contract theories of justice (T: 493). In both instances, an implicit separation of the social from the political takes place that Hume refuses to accept. Instead, he realises that political phenomena arise because of social interaction. The social is the domain of sympathy where the intensity of difference makes its appearance. Hume's view of justice, and his understanding of 'political thinking' more generally, are thus

rooted in a sense of virtue that, as John Pocock rightly points out, 'cannot be satisfactorily reduced to the status of right or assimilated to the vocabulary of jurisprudence' (Pocock 1985: 41).

Contrary to contemporary accounts of virtue, what seems crucial for Hume's sense of justice is an ability to show inconsistency of character in our daily lives because the flux of the social world requires it. If experience is grounded in movement (in that all experience is, first and foremost, the experience of the difference between impressions) and movement implies an attunement to difference as such, then there is an ethical priority in learning to relate to difference rather than sameness. This ethical ability to relate to difference is born, in Hume's thought, from an aesthetic experience that generates a capacity for sympathy – an attunement, that is, to difference as such. To say this, however, is to distance ourselves substantially from the account of the reading subject transformed, through critical reflection, into the modern subject of rights that one finds narrated in much contemporary political thought. Such an account is, I think, too stifling and ossified given the pressures of contemporary pluralism. Hume's account of the self as a 'work in progress' that is at once stable, fractured and multiple seems, if nothing else, to afford us greater flexibility in dealing with the compositional exigencies of modern living.

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Notes

1. Hume 1978: 658 hereafter, referred to as T.
2. In the concluding paragraph, he goes so far as to refer to 'My Own Life' as a 'funeral oration'.
3. David Hume (1963), 'My Own Life' also available at http://www.econlib.org/library/LFBooks/Hume/hmMPL0.html
4. Most notably, in 1734 while involved in commercial pursuits in Bristol, Hume changes his identity by altering his name from his father's family name of (the Earl of) Home to Hume, in accordance with its proper pronunciation (see Ayer 2000: 5).
5. Though space restrictions do not allow, it is worth distinguishing this account of the self from Jürgen Habermas' account of the rise of the modern subject as a reading subject – and the latter's focus on the epistolary novel exemplified in Richardson's *Pamela* – in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. I discuss these themes, and the relationship between philosophical argument and the literary genre of the essay, in greater detail (2004).
6. 'Grammar' and 'grammatical' typically referred to the study of Latin grammar until the appearance of Ben Johnson's *English Grammar*, written c. 1600. In the eighteenth century, grammar was studied as a science – a statement of facts about linguistic usage – but a large portion of it was also viewed as consisting of rules for practice, and so forming an 'art'. (See the noun entry for 'grammar' in the *Oxford English Dictionary*).
7. Here I invoke a distinction developed by Paul Ricoeur in his writings on the hermeneutics of metaphor. See: Ricoeur, 2000.
8. For an attempt to trope Hume's view of sympathy into a liberal framework of consensus-oriented deliberation see John Rawls's discussion of Hume (2000: 84–102).

Chapter 7

A Fourth Repetition

Zsuzsa Baross

Opening by Abstract

My title gives right away the end toward which I am heading but which for lack of space will not be reaching in any satisfactory fashion: the cinema at once constitutes and performs or actualises a 'fourth' repetition. The ordinal designation is with reference to Deleuze, who as we know in *Difference and Repetition* distinguishes three modalities ('habit', 'memory', and a third 'royal repetition') whose articulated and simultaneous replay by a conceptual apparatus (or the text *Difference and Repetition*) is constitutive of Time itself, in all its complex, mutating and discontinuous dimensions (Deleuze 1994). The analysis that follows borrows from Deleuze with regard to two aspects of his concept of repetition: as a site of an (infinite) productivity that is implicated in its own future as undetermined and imprévisible; and in a more restricted sense, a schema of *temporalising* that brings time in relation with itself, makes it pass, or rather, makes time by making it pass. The hypothesis that guides the movement of passage in the text is that the cinematic apparatus (camera, projector *and* the archive) is a temporalising assemblage: a machine made not for representation but for making new temporal relations. A repetition therefore would be 'fourth' if it engendered a purely cinematic time: one that arrives (also in the sense of happens or takes place in time) for the first time with the cinema, and therefore necessarily intervenes both in history (the concept, the narrative and its time) and in the history of time.

Prefatory Remarks

1

The cinema is 'the shelter of time' (*l'abri du temps*), says Godard (Godard 1998: 299). Yet it has taken a long time, almost a century, to 'discover' the time(s) of the cinema, for cinematic temporality to be encountered in the discourses of criticism, critical analyses, film theory and philosophy as a or as the question of the cinema. The current fascination (after the 'real' came semiotics then desire and the gaze) is a recent phenomenon, even if, like every trend, it comes in the wake of the *belated* recognition of the significance of Deleuze's first *sustained* encounter (for there had been a few precursors, prophets of the future) with the time[-]image, now almost three decades ago.

The reason for the long latency, however, during which the time(s) of the image remained as it were 'invisible' (except perhaps for Epstein and Balázs, who saw in time the immaterial substance holding the film together) should not be sought outside the cinema's own domain: in the failure of theoretic nerve or even in the gaze, all too willing to be 'lured' (blinded) to the 'truth' of the image. Although it may escape many of today's visionaries, the *currency* of the time-image in academic and critical discussions does not follow from a discovery (of time passively waiting as a river source would for its explorer), nor does it result from acts of theoretic genius alone; the encounter with time, or at least the condition of its possibility, has been prepared for by the cinema itself. The time it takes for time to become a question, its passage from invisibility to visibility are events intrinsic to the history of the cinema and should therefore be inscribed in the complex field of our problematic: time(s) of the image in the cinema.[1] (In my choice of terminology, speaking of the image in the cinema rather than the cinematographic image, I defer to Serge Daney's 'Godardian pedagogy': 'the cinema has no other specificity than to receive' – here I would add, as a host *receives* an accidental visitor as a proper guest – 'images not made for it' (Daney 1983: 83).)

That movement should have been privileged from the start (as also witnessed by the affectionate nicknames invented for the new art: '*kino*', '*mozi*', 'movie') is irreducible to the naïvety of the (early) spectator – naturally impressed by what meets the eye, the movement of 'every leaf' (Gorky), the rush of the oncoming train. The long dominance of movement derives rather from the action of the medium itself: nowhere do we experience time as 'metaphysically' and in greater conformity with Aristotle as in the cinema – 'together with movement'. And what this

movement – all too visible, perfectly (ful)filling the eye, desirous (as Bazin tells us) since the beginning of time for an 'ideal image in the likeness of the real' (Bazin 1967: 10) – what this reality-effect masks, *doubly*, is the truth of the cinema: that it is made of the 'stuff' of time, that its 'novelty' is not to reanimate a past world or a present past but to instal rather a productive 'disturbance' (temporalising structure) in the order of time or in a certain common-sense ordering of time.

The one deception, the trembling of every leaf, only masquerades as novelty. The sensation ('nude *descending* on stairs') as we know is well within the grasp of the power of the trait (Paul Klee's '*active* line', Kandinsky's 'yellow *upward*') to create; the 'percept' is already transmitted by the tortuous trajectories of baroque and Gothic art (see Bazin and Worringer). Cézanne saw its force agitating, from the interior of the stone, the winged torso of the ancient *Nike of Samothrace* (which now curiously watches over us in a[n empty] (Deleuze 1994: 94) corridor of the Louvre), while Deleuze, looking with and through the eyes of Bacon, sensed its passage along the curved spine of the nudes of Bonnard. (Even the sensation of *time*, present in the body, whose visibility it borrows, as fatigue, as age, as before and after, is transmitted by painting [see for example the series of self-portraits by Rembrandt], and, as Barthes showed in *Camera Lucida*, even a still photograph may 'temporalise'. Caution is therefore needed before claiming a pure effect for the cinema.)

The other deception concerns what this bedazzling masquerade of novelty conceals. Even Bazin is fooled into thinking it superior to the pure sensation or the movement percept. Yet what the perfect illusion of 'integral reality' masks (or lends its negative visibility to) is precisely the purely cinematic event: duration . . . The *movement* of every leaf, the cat crossing diagonally the space between two legs of a chair, the milk spilling from the jar, or the hundred pearls scattering from Marlene's neck on to the dance floor . . . all this mobility, not only in the image but also of the image, is an epidermis, the visible skin of an event of a different order, the event of an event taking place. Unfolding on the interior of (an unfolding) movement – in the present which is the film's own time – are *durées* past:[2] the cat's *crossing* the field of the frame, the doctor's hand *holding* on to Emma's on the door handle, or the motionless camera *holding* the portrait of the old woman in its gaze that one unique and never-to-be-repeated time. Unlike movement (the tick-tock of the metronome tracing the same path in space every time), this *stuff* of time (not the measurable measure but the incompressible *durée* of the needle *passing* from tick to tock this one time, unique in the whole history of time) will not repeat or reproduce itself in time. Except in the

cinema. Therein lies the truth of the cinema – not a new and different kind of *image* but a novel *apparatus*.

Of course, the time of the image, if not the time-image (which is an artifice created *in* and *by* the medium) has always been 'present'. Any and every film fabricates its own (im)material body – a temporal object – from blocks of time (which it then makes pass again and again in the future, any future, in its own [cinematic] time). But the cinema needed time before it could show, retroactively, that it has always been 'about' time. ('*Le cinéma, il n'était pas à l'abri du temps, il était l'abri du temps*,' says the full quotation from Godard (Godard 1998: 299)). It had to acquire a memory and history (an archive) before it could re-appropriate its own history, on film and as cinema (as in Godard's magnificent *Histoire(s) du cinéma*), so as to show itself for the unique machine that it is, made for temporalising (and not for the making of representations, illusions or 'idols').

2

In a previous study, the 'musical strategy' of successive *repetitions* (projections) served to externalise a certain 'refrain' effect which, on the interior of 'found footage', the cinema of repetition par excellence, engenders the heterogeneous sheets of time in which, or rather, in between which, unfold purely cinematic 'histoires' (Baross: forthcoming). This current text, on the other hand, turns to the *concept* of repetition as the synthesis of time (time as present, as future, and as past) in order to breach a path or paths toward the times of the image from the outside: neither from the direction of the referent, nor the times in the image or the 'time-image', but from the side or *aspectus* that constitutes the outside of every film (on the reverse side of its content, representation, histoire, even its *techné* or art of cinematography), and which outside would be very precisely named here by the overused term: medium.

Before proceeding with my exposition of a 'fourth' repetition, a brief and inevitably reductive summary is in order of the three modalities that Deleuze assembles, articulates and replays in his text by way of a conceptual apparatus that itself is a 'time machine'. (That the aim of this operation [repetition of repetitions] is irreducible, one might even say stranger to any concern with the creation of time or temporality as such, lends a certain violence to my borrowing here, estranging, as it were, my project from that of Deleuze, which I will dare only parenthetically and tangentially to indicate in my text as, in the words of Toni Negri, the 'invention of an absolutely new problematic'[3]: to think together – outside

every opposition, contradiction, or either/or – Bergson's philosophy of duration and Nietzsche's radical interruption, or that which gives rise to the new and what gives birth to the future.)

The first, bare or mechanical, repetition – to which Deleuze significantly gives the name *Habit* – is the foundation of time, the originary synthesis that contracts successive instants into the single *duration* of a living present, *in* time, or better yet, constitutes *time* as a living present that passes in time. I can only telegraphically point in the direction of three momentous consequences that follow from this economic but radically new formulation, which, from among the thousands of habits of which we are composed, designates the living present as our first habit. The first is a paradox: the living present is at once originary and passes *in time*: the intra-temporal event of constitution does not open an abyssal hole, the *mise en abyme* of an infinite regression, *in time*. (The three repetitions are embedded in and envelope one another, without opening [to] an outside, without leaning on or appealing, as mystical foundation, to an originary, immemorial time.) Second, the passing of the instant is not movement from one discontinuous spatio-temporal location to another (future, present and past), but rather a continuous passage, or better still, the contraction of the future and the past as the continuous dimensions of the living present. (To anticipate the extension of the field of the problematic to the cinema already: from a temporal perspective, the bare or mechanical repetition of the projector will have to be rethought not as advancing [in space] single frames from one position to another, but rather as contracting successive images or instants of images into a single flux of time.) The third point concerns the time thus constituted as always already heterogeneous: not even at the point of origin can we speak of time as the same, or of a 'same time', or of a time that would be the same every time.

Deleuze's nomination of 'habit' for this first synthesis fortuitously or metonymically links it to two of Bergson's reflections: on durée and habit, both at once. On the one hand, the formulation of 'habit' as temporalising, as constitutive of a living present, establishes a certain filiation, alliance with Bergson's durée, with the consequence of yielding the foundational plane, converting the moving soil of time to the medium of becoming and of the new, which arrives without cleavage, interval, mediation or disparity. On the other hand, on the level of the signifier, the nomination 'habit' affiliates the concept with Bergson's habit which, as practical action, is doubly a mechanical repetition. It is in and through this double mediation by Bergson that Habit will illuminate the operations of the cinema. Acquired by repetition, the habit of Bergson is made

for (mechanical) repetition. But what it repeats is not this or that, good or bad, habit but the memorised contraction of individual instances: gestures and movements, in the case of practical action; individual shots, cuts and sequences in the cinema.

Memory – the passive synthesis of retention (I will call it the 'Archive'), as distinct from reproduction or representation – is the ground of time. The relation between foundation and ground or *Habitus* and *Mnemosyne*, is that of sky and land as mirrored from above. (In between the two, [there opens] (Tarkovsky 2004: 73, my trans.) the exit or line of flight from the captivity of the *mise en abyme* mentioned above: (Tarkovsky 2004: 74, 79) [T]he ground is the moving soil that present occupies, but it is the past that causes the present to pass and into which it passes.) In a more profound synthesis than habit, memory constitutes the being of the past, the pure past in time. It does not create this or that memory, of this or that past, but rather the past 'in general,' the 'was' – a past that never was, which does not come 'after' the present but is rather the first, the *a priori* element of any act of memory or active synthesis representing a former present – in the present present, as something that 'has been'. This pure past, the past as such, or the in-itself of the past, is the synthesis of all time, in which the present and the future are now dimensions. (In other words, from the Archive memories *of* the future – memories of pasts that never were reproduced or represented in the active synthesis of memory – continue to arrive and fecundate the future with memories of presents that had never passed.)

Finally, in the third repetition, which, with justification I hope, I will call here 'death', all three forms are simultaneously replayed in the performance of a great event that opens a caesura, is the interruption of history, brings time out of joint, dislodging it from the cardinal points that ensure its 'subordination to movement'. In this final synthesis, the present and the past 'are no more than dimensions of the future' – the past as condition, the present as agent. Such a performative, such a tremendous act, however, comes at a price, and is predicated on the death and destruction of the agent of repetition. Deleuze's examples are Hamlet and Oedipus, the self-sacrificial agents of a royal repetition, the creators of the future; for the leap into the volcano opens the future, breaches precisely the continuity of time, the medium of the becoming that incessantly, without interruption engenders the new, and whose violent interruption now liberates a future in the proper sense: a future that 'leaps away from the past'. (What this sacrifice immediately calls to mind are two figures: Bataille, who discovers that the possible future he desires excludes the possibility of his existence; and of course Nietzsche, who for the sake of

another future cuts himself off from the past, sacrificing both memory and history.) In this third and final repetition, repetition becomes the category of the future – on the condition that it repeats the whole, expels both the condition (past) and the agent (present) from the work, turning the latter into something anonymous and unconditioned by the past. And yet, the future and the new cannot be *thought* in opposition, as either/or. On the one hand, the repeater, which is the present, and that which is repeated, the future, belong to different modes, inhabit different orders of time; on the other hand, this difference is itself the effect or anonymous 'work' of a repetition that 'subordinates' the other two to itself and thus opens a hyperbolic acceleration of repetitions that culminate in a philosophy of repetition [*Difference and Repetition*] that passes through all these stages and 'is condemned to repeat repetition itself' (Deleuze 1994: 94).

The Times of the Image

To repeat, our premise is a variation on Deleuze: repetition temporalises. Starting from his threefold schema, three transpositions or projections, if you like, will lead us to approach the cinema as an apparatus of multiple repetitions.

Habit

In the machinal repetition of the projector – of the same frames, at the same speed (24 frames per second), in the same order of succession that constitutes a film, which in turn is itself repeated without end – we recognise habit in pure (theoretical) form. Most immediately not Deleuze's but Bergson's habit:[4] a '*mémoire motrice*'. Lodged within the body (or the machine) it repeats and repeats only, is a memory without memory (the memory of the phone number is in my fingers which must first dial it in order to 'remember' it) and a repetition without memory (of all the other repetitions). Itself a machine or abstract schema, Habit operates on the exterior of the content it actualises in any given present as the memorised contraction of discrete elements (gestures and movements, on one hand; individual shots and sequences, on the other) into one continuous flux (riding a bicycle, or a Godard film).

Now, while this analogy discloses another kind of memory silently at work in cinematography, one preserved not 'inside' the image but *on* the film's material body (the memory of cuts, the montage that paradoxically does not fragment but holds the film together), this formulation does not yet show how this habitual repetition-projection temporalises, and

a fortiori, how it temporalises in ways unseen *before* the cinema. To this end we need to stay with Bergson a little longer and recall that in his formulation, habit is one of two 'extreme forms of memory', whose other (also in the sense of being heterogeneous with it) is the *image souvenir*, memory in the proper sense, which moreover bears an uncanny resemblance to both the 'content' of cinematographic repetition and the method of 'making an instantaneous section [*un coup instantané*] in the general stream of becoming' (Bergson 1962: 86)).

In the place of the subject, the two operations are said to be 'theoretically independent': the one memory repeats, the other imagines – that is, retains or registers, precisely as a film camera would, in the form of images, with their colour, contour and place in time, all events of daily life as they unfold 'live' in the living present (Bergson 1962: 102). If the abstract schema of repetition has no past within it, the image souvenir, which is marked by a unique date and place, will neither repeat nor reproduce itself. Even more significantly, the two memories operate on heterogeneous and discontinuous temporal planes: habit, a performative action, constitutes my actual present and looks only to the future (to the end of the melody it repeats), whereas the image, a virtual spectre, faces only the past; and while the repetition of the contracted instants (frames) requires a determined durée, to the memory image itself I may assign any duration I please, grasp it in an instant as a tableau or linger over its details; and again, if habit is dependent on the will and, like any machine, stands at the service of its command, the memory image reproduces itself only capriciously in flashes and flees the will. It is for this reason, says Bergson, mysteriously without naming the cinema, because we cannot count on the reappearance of the image that we wish to construct a 'mechanism' that would – again and again – present it to us at will.

At this point in *Matter and Memory* Bergson shows himself for the great poet of the cinema that he is (if only in the Platonic sense of poetry as 'inspired' discourse). He gives (away), albeit without naming it, not only the 'mechanism' that satisfies our wish for repetition, but also marks the precise place for its intervention: in the 'subjective' non-relation of habit and image-souvenir, the disjunction of the temporal spaces wherein the two extreme forms independently operate. There, precisely, the cinema installs itself. Without obliterating, though perhaps not without masking their heterogeneity, it articulates *in time* the two operations. Reversing the order of their natural subordination (wherein memory image as it were 'reminds' as to which habit it is appropriate to activate), it places the effective temporality, the concrete and actual durée of the mechanical repetition of the projector at the service of the memory

image, which now unfolds in the borrowed time of the projector. Such lending and borrowing of duration, however, is transfigurative: projected by the physical apparatus is not an image of the past but a singular and never to be repeated durée that is past ('*l'unique fois où un homme, dans Gertrud de Dreyer a pleuré*' (Deleuze 1998: 17).

The question imposing itself before all others is not whether this durée is a *spectre* of time or a time *regained* or *resurrected* (as if by the order-word: 'Lazarus, rise!'). It concerns rather the temporal location and dimension of this repetition: in what order of time – against what logic of time, in what 'contre-temps' – are *durées* past made to pass, again and again? At this point we need to return to Deleuze and our borrowed premise, repetition temporalises, which renders the common-sense realist answer, in 'real' time, impossible, showing that and how it confuses the time of the projector with the time of projection (which, in conformity with the movement paradigm, is listed as the 'length' of film, measured in number of minutes or by time as number). Besides, we have already glimpsed a creative function. A time-effect – impossible without and before the cinema – has been given to experience: for the first time, the 'substance' of repetition in time is itself the 'stuff' of time. As Tarkovksy writes:

> [F]or the first time in the history of the arts and of culture, man found the way to fix time, and at the same time [while, as we must add, also problematising the very notion of 'same time'] to reproduce it, to represent it, and to return to it as often as he would like. (Tarkovsky 2004: 73; my translation)

The answer to the question – in what order of time does the cinema repeat the stuff of time – must simply be, in the projector's time. Yet this is still problematic. Especially if we recall how vehemently Bergson himself criticised 'cinematic consciousness' as annihilating the future. To give a proper account of the projector's time – which would also take us outside the paradoxically mechanical conceptualisation by Bergson – we need to return to Deleuze and his concept of repetition which alone permits us to recognise the productivity of 'mechanical reproduction' and to suspend the received idea, as old as the cinema, that the projector mobilises rather than temporalises the image. This is precisely the direction in which Deleuze's formulation of habit leads in that it transports Bergson's mechanism – which is timeless – to the temporal register, installing it there at the origin as productive of the 'moving soil' of time.

The perspective of a temporalising habit transforms the entire scene. The physiological mechanism behind the phenomenon of the

'after image' – which film theory instals at the origin of the illusion of movement – begins to resemble a whole family of other mechanisms (retention-protension, stretching the instant, the contamination of the present, and so on) to which the discourses of phenomenology and deconstruction, among others, appeal in their construction of a *living* present that passes in *time*. This resemblance in turn casts doubt on the privilege granted to the physiological mechanism with regard to movement and to movement itself as that which gives an indirect image to time. For what is being retained in the after image – the image that has just passed and is present as past in the image currently occupying the retina, itself passing, giving way to the next image arriving as it were from the 'future' of the projector? Is it an instantaneous section of movement, which is absent from the still image and is exterior to it? Or is it rather the time(s) *of* the image: the time of its referent, which it registers and conserves, *and* the time of its passage in front of the projector's light? If the physiological mechanism mimics in its operation several temporalising schemas, also familiar from Husserl, Heidegger and Derrida, is it not because the 'real' effect of the cinema is not an illusion but the actual reality of a projected image – that is, an image that passes *in time*? This passage need not rely on movement. For there to be a cinematographic image, writes Tarkovsky, an image must live in time and time must live in it ('No object, not even a dead (still) one, can be filmed if it is outside time' (Tarkovsky 2004: 74, 79)). Accordingly, one may ask if it is not the illusion (movement) that depends for *its* time on the image passing in time.

Contrary to Bergson, this time is not an abstract mathematical time 'stored' in the machine and added arbitrarily to the image afterwards. First, the projector, as Godard says, is 'obliged to remember the camera' (Godard 1998a: 190): it temporalises in *memory* of the camera's time (even when it appears to violate this memory); second, as we will see, the time of the *image* is not 'in' the machine, not even *in* the image, because the latter is not of the same order as the *indivisible* flux serving as the moving soil against which it unfolds, as Deleuze says, in 'contre-temps' or against the logic of the passage of time.

The Archive

> What *happens* in virtual space and *time*? (Derrida, *Archive Fever*)

The Archive function not only compares as partially analogous with the passive synthesis of Memory that constitutes the *pure past* into which

the present passes. It illuminates the reciprocal double action of this constitution, while also disclosing, in its difference from 'natural' memory, the appearance of something new in the world: a form of simultaneity that is neither the 'present' nor 'eternity', neither spatial nor geometral (cone or sections of it), but is proper to a time-space wherein *images* of the past are simultaneously co-present, communicate with and reciprocally recall one another along aberrant, anachronic lines.[5]

For what is the (film) Archive? The domain – actual and virtual – whereto an image passes and whence, in repetition, it again (and again) emerges. Yet this *habitat* – for the Archive is not a container, 'drawer' or photo-album for storing images 'without imagination' – does not pre-exist the first image. For what action other than the action of the image, or rather, constituting an image could institute the space that will receive it precisely as image? Not a mere thing, another idle and dead object in the world, but a *phantom* that is living, having been lifted off the *living*, and by consequence, a living *present?* (Marey's chronographs – wondrous images of smoke – come immediately to mind: albeit failed attempts, they do capture the *desire* for images of time.) A photograph – in Aristotle's language, a *phantasma* – is therefore a double performative: the visible *aspectus* fixes – 'cruelly', says Serge Daney, as one fixes a butterfly – an image of time, be it an instant or a block of time, whereas the other side of the Janus face opens to the virtual register of the Archive that, from the threshold, instantly claims the first and visible aspect to its own domain.

If an image is not a 'solitude', a pale copy or replica forever cut off from the original model it forever mourns, if there can be an image in the strong Godardian sense[6] – which is not a memory image but itself an act of memory that 'recalls other images' – it is because there is an Archive. The latter resembles Bergson's pure past in this respect: in its domain all the images of the world are simultaneously co-present. On the other hand, if the cinema's specificity is not to fabricate but to receive (and cinematographically repeat) images not made for it, it is because in the Archive *all* images (whether film image or painting or photograph) are subject to the same law of memory: involuntary reminiscence and reciprocal recall.

Yet the film Archive cannot be just another 'other' space or heterotopia. Space, in fact, may not be the right figure or metaphor to think it (and here the analogy with Bergson's spatially construed virtual past breaks down); it is only because the Archive is itself an *element* of time that it can receive (as a host receives a guest) images of *time* – an instant or a block of time never to be repeated in the history of time.

But what does it mean: 'element of time'? In the first place, the archive articulates with the total apparatus as one *element* of its temporalising dispositive. Without the Archive there would not be '*histoire(s) du cinéma*' – purely cinematic histories that come to pass in the medium, and can be neither represented nor narrated, only projected. On the other hand, 'element' also means that in the Archive an image is *in* the element of time. Images (of time) do not sink into a temporal black hole; on the contrary, as it is the proper function of time to do or make something (otherwise, according to Bergson, time would be nothing), something passes in the Archive. Not, as is often feared, decay or corruption, but rather something new. The time of the Archive functions as a *révélateur* in whose element *develop* (as a photo-graph develops) virtual traces – not of presents past but of pasts without a present that have never passed.

For do we not know from experience that the same image of time (the instant when that young woman, not yet my mother, leaned against a young man who was not to become my father, flashing an open smile at the camera in which I recognise my own in my *photographs* as a child) never returns as the same from the Archive? Does not the new film genre called 'found footage' – which, like habit, repeats and repeats only images of the past – derive, though not limit, its possibility from this very ordinary and yet extraordinary phenomenon? That on the one hand, anachronic missives – memories of the future, virtually archived and waiting for the future to arrive – arrive from the past; and on the other hand, virtual histories come to pass as images recall one another, form assemblies (montage) in the Archive? (What history must have passed in the virtual register before the photograph taken in 1898 of that young girl in the Winter Garden could at last project 'my mother' ['There she is!'] for Barthes?[7] Purely archival, passing in between images that recall and are recalled by one another, the history of this history must remain secret, inaccessible, unreconstructable. For it concerns not the subject's memory but the virtual memory borne by the image, which in addition to the history of time it archives (*ça a été là*) is also a memory *of* the Archive, whose history is not only outside of every subjectivity but also of every ordinary concept of history as past.)

Insofar as an image has time (working) within it, it does not 'mummify' change (as Bazin believed); on the contrary, the light impression redoubles as substratum for receiving the virtual marks of change yet to arrive to a photo-graph in the future (though not necessarily from the future). In the case of the cinema, the mechanical repetition of the same celluloid strip will always project another *histoire*. This difference,

however, is not drawn from, but is a self-differing actualised by repetition. This is because the projected image itself 'pro-jects'. Using its material base as screen, it casts upon it image-memories or the phantasmas of the image itself, which do not efface, only dislocate and haunt their base. This pro-jection is essentially temporal. The image of time does not look back at the past but projects itself toward a future present, which it engages about a past that is purely 'cinematic'. Neither fictional nor imaginary but virtual, it arrives to future presents (only) by way of the cinema that projects it. (Harun Farocki's *Arbeiters verlassen die Fabrik* (1995) screens old clichés of 'workers leaving factory' but projects a new history, one that passes in between the images of workers *walking* through the open gates of the Lumière factory in 1895, then in 1926 (Detroit, Ford Motor Company) *filing out* 'as if they had already lost too much time', then again in 1975 (from the VW factory) leaving as if '*carried away* by something', and in 1975, again in Lyon, '*running*' to the outside.)

Death

The third, 'royal', repetition – named here 'death' after the 'image' of a 'unique and tremendous act' that in Deleuze's schema opens an unconditional future at the cost of the *death* of the agent of repetition – does not lend itself to any easy (mechanical) transposition, or as has just been the case, a partial, aborted analogy. The cinema seems to resist the heroic example (of a Hamlet or Oedipus). The most common and least noble of the arts – *pauvre cinéma*, says Godard – has no taste for the great act that 'make(s) the sun explode, throw(s) time out of joint' (Deleuze 1994: 89). Like a cheap (cinematic) prostitute, it may live off the spectacle of death, which it pictures in infinite variations – violently and gently, modestly and immodestly, as death timely or untimely, graceful or cowardly, mercilessly solitary, en masse or intimate, just or unjust, and so on. The act too great for the subject – who, in becoming equal to it, is shattered by it (recalling Bataille's 'more piteous than tragic' dilemma 'that [the future] I desire to be for others . . . requires that I cease to be' (Bataille 1991: 11)) – the deed that causes the future to leap away from the past remains just that: 'too great' for the cinema – not only to perform, but also properly to 'picture' (imagine). The cinematic cliché (mould and model) is too Catholic or Judeo-Christian for that. It sublimates Bataille's dilemma in the direction of tragedy by substitution or sacrifice. (We all carry a condensed composite image of the hero or heroine silently slipping away – into the night, into the dark waters – to die alone *in the place*

of another.) But unlike the original (kenosis, substitution, or sacrifice) that makes a future possible, the cinematic repetition is invariably in the service of the past. (The *passion* of Dreyer's Jeanne d'Arc is for the fire to save retroactively the truth of the past; whereas the descent into madness and fiery destruction ending Tarkovsky's *Sacrifice* (*Offret*) is offered up in exchange for sheltering the present from the future (catastrophe) that has already passed.)

And when the *desire* for repetition is staged (*mise en scène*) by the cinema itself, it is precisely the breaching of the future that invariably fails. (The protagonist in Hitchcock's *Vertigo* will find the woman he believes dead, but instead of leading her back to life, he loses her for the second time to the same vertiginous death he thought he had failed to prevent the first time.) As if the cinema preferred Freud to Deleuze or Kierkegaard: in its *histoire(s)* the trajectories or *Bahnungs*, to use the Freudian term (translated in the Standard Edition as 'facilitation', breached by the past are impervious to change and 'facilitate' only the repetition that will seal (actualise) the hero's 'fate'. (At the other end of the cinematic spectrum, Resnais' anti-hero in *Je t'aime, je t'aime* returns from the dead to relive an exact moment of his past. Missing not only the exit back to the present but also bifurcations to other possible futures, all he achieves in repetition is a proper suicide.) It is as if the cinema were saying to the hero of repetition: 'One does not resuscitate the dead.' '*On ne dévisage pas Eurydice*': no future will be redeemed from the (dead) past.

Lastly, when the cinema itself gives in to the desire for repetition – like a child who wants to hear the same story told again and again – the outcome is a barren and joyless copy, the 'remake' that only uses up the past.

Still, one wonders whether such reading of the history of the cinema is itself not conditioned by the *histoire(s)* of the cinema, the spectacularisation of suffering and death, the *mise en scène* of the 'noble act' – in short, by the cinema's own imaging of the tremendous event, so that in the age of the cinema, the future will not be recognised unless it arrives with the tragic figure as its agent or at least wearing as mask the visage of a 'subject'. For is not the cinema itself the future that was first opened up – now over a century ago – by what was already an a-subjective operation, which Benjamin called, in partial conformity with the truth: 'mechanical reproduction'? When for the first time in history (but this 'first time' also cuts a caesura in the history of time), representation dispenses with the subject as agent and, supplanting it by a mechanical apparatus, a mere 'invention', excludes it – non-violently, but

nonetheless radically/absolutely – from the *scene* (the dark box of the camera/the dark room/the chemical *révélateur*), the *act* and the *time* of representation?

And 'what a future!' this innocuous substitution, without blood or sacrifice, opened. Unforeseen (unprojected by the medium), a future without a future leaps away from the past when this new type of memory image – which archives the memory of the world while it registers the memory of no one – is introduced into the world; when the three constitutive elements of a 'history' (the act, space and time of representation) are placed outside the field of every form of 'presence' and will not be recuperated, reconstructed or regained in the future by an act of memory. Judging by the titles – *Simulations*, *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* – which, decades after the now canonical text of Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, are still arriving – we have not yet done with this future.

It is not that the world has become image and the image the world. Were it the case that their difference had been effaced or weakened to the point of indiscernibility, the present would be caught in a *perpetual* oscillation/reflection (repetition without memory) between two mirror images. Our (futureless) condition is a more complicated (folded) structure. First, in Benjamin's 'age' – theoretically if not actually – everything is photographed, (im)materially registered and archived. (Godard wins the debate with Lanzmann: not one but three photographic clichés of a crematorium are recovered in the archives.[8]) The double virtuality that is Bergson's *concept* of the *past* is actualised: the whole of the past is simultaneously co-present with the present in and as our picture Archive. In the age of the 'world picture' (for Heidegger, still a metaphor), world memory is a picture archive (albeit its structure – and the implications of this cannot be developed here – is not a cone but a web or rhizome of heterogeneous and anachronic time lines along which images communicate – that is, produce virtual *histoires*). Then, in a condensation or saturation that climaxes in a Deleuzian 'exhaustion' (destruction of the possible), the verb tense of the phrase changes, the condition is hyperbolised: everything has already been photographed, or rather, everything will have been photographed. Imaging (and not as Baudrillard says 'imagining') the future has been placed 'beyond us' (Baudrillard 1998: 8). It is not that the future is destined to repeat the past or that it is virtually already present (in which case it is the 'new' of a continuous becoming and not the unforeseeable and incalculable event that arrives from the outside following an interruption that opens the future). It is rather that an *image* of the future is already archived.

After more than a century of relentless production by mechanical reproduction, of video images, television images, cinema images, photographs on paper and posted on the web, an image – a cliché, precisely – is fixed of everything: every gesture, embrace, pose, posture, human situation, expression of agony, ecstasy, hunger, and despair . . . Every phrase of sympathy, mercy, forgiving has been fashioned, fictioned, registered, captured by pictures of the cinema . . . There is an image of every *future* disaster, catastrophe, barbarity, massacre, war, tortured and emaciated body, helpless pair of eyes covered with flies (instead of the new(s), CNN might as well play the archives). This future without an opening to the future, however, is not a repetition of the same history (tragedy returning as comedy); it is the eternity of the cliché: ready made perceptions, memories, fantasies, desires proliferate and reproduce in the medium of what is called the 'media', including the cinema, or rather, *histoires du cinéma*.[9]

The Future of the Future

L'image viendra
au temps
Oh! temps
de la résurrection. (Godard, *Histoire(s) du cinéma*)

That *only* the cinema ('*seul le cinéma*', sighs Godard) can intervene in this condition must remain a hypothesis, perhaps 'for ever'. Within the space that remains I can but telegraphically project how a new cinema, perhaps the cinema *of* the future, 'found footage', promises to liberate the possibility of a future. Not by manufacturing new images or a new image of the future but by reconfiguring the cinematic apparatus – the camera, the projector *and* the archive – instituting thereby a repetition of a new order. I have named it the 'fourth'.[10]

'Found footage' – which first appeared on the avant garde scene maybe a decade ago (although its arrival exposed the presence of several much older precursors) – gives up precisely the 'invention' that gave cinematography to the world: the film camera. The new '*artiste du dernier jour*'[11] (who in Bonnefoy's story averts the disaster about to befall the world, when representations of the living become more numerous than the living, by tying a heavy stone to the drawing hand), this cinema of continence gives up the fabrication of images and turns instead to the forgotten or repressed memory of the memory of the medium, registered and conserved by the apparatus itself – the Archive.

With this turn – as in the 'linguistic turn' – the cinema turns itself to the machine it has always already been – a machine (made for) repetition.

Certainly, there is manipulation of the image in found footage – its frame, speed and colour. The image itself is 'analysed' (deconstructed) by a myriad of new technologies (which for lack of time cannot be discussed here). The principal operation, however, is a purely cinematic repetition. Operating in what Derrida elsewhere called a 'disconcerting *simul*' with the mechanical repetition of the film projector – which now screens only images from another cinema, of another's cinema – a cinematographic 'reprise', its apparatus assembled and operated by the found footage film itself, takes up again the same images so as to project them *as* 'found'. On the one hand: as images haunted by a future that had already passed, and as images, which by reason of their 'facticity' (*ça a été là*), themselves haunt the present as spectres of the past. On the other hand: as images used, second hand, recycled – in a word *repeated* by a projection that itself is a repetition, *in memory* of another projection. On the one hand, registering a *glance* that was cast upon the world once at a precise place and a unique time, and on the other hand, constituting an *image* that shows more than what the gaze sees. Found footage cinema projects the *difference*. So when Harun Farocki's *Bilder der Welt und Inschrift des Krieges* (1988) screens the images shot by Allied reconnaissance planes flying over Auschwitz in August 1944, with the locations – 'tower', 'gas chamber', 'execution wall', 'footprints of prisoners in the snow' (as identified in 1967 by two CIA agents, themselves inspired by the television series *Holocaust*) – inscribed, a virtual history comes to pass or is given a place in the world (Godard: 'I've named it [cinema] a place on earth' (1998a: I)): unseen by the pilots in the air, the military analysts looking for industrial targets, and by the prisoners on the ground, Auschwitz was photographed.

How, though, could such a fourth repetition open to the outside from a futureless present? The answer, very Deleuzian, is: from 'behind'; the cinema does it from the direction of the past. There is no one schema (otherwise the cinema could not be or have the promise of a future). One path already opened destroys the cliché, forcing an *image* (of 'workers leaving factory') to emerge. (In another example, Martin Arnold's *Pièce Touchée* compulsively repeats a single and banal sequence from an unidentified Hollywood movie: husband returns home to be greeted by wife, so as to project this same sequence as the choreographed Habit of everyday, obsessively repeated, every day.) Another path, reminiscent of the liberating gesture of Nietzsche's 'critical history', is for a repetition to fecundate the present with a past from which open other possible

futures, or even more radically, to *incomplete* the history of the present. Godard often cites Faulkner: 'The past is not dead, it has not even passed.' But in the cinema, it is the *future* that is liberated as virtually present and as incessantly reworking the past. Any ordinary cinema may undertake to project a *President* Reagan as a minor actor in a Hollywood B movie. But, if I could risk an adverb whose use one may have to postpone perhaps forever, *only* a cineaste (Godard) could show on film (*Notre Musique*, 2004) that the 'Musulman', the name and the image of the prisoner who ceased to be a human in Auschwitz, develops its full significance – a missive to the future from the past – *after* images from Bosnia arrive in the Archive.

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Notes

1. One could thus reread Deleuze's two volumes on the cinema for this order of (dis)junction between movement and time, as demarcating the precise point where, having become dense with histories, with 'histoire(s) du cinéma,' to be precise, the image in the cinema comes to be saturated and suffused with time(s).
2. For lack of space, I can only note my divergence from Deleuze, who calls this stuff of time an 'indirect image of time'. For Deleuze, the definition is in service of the distinction between the 'image of time' and the 'time-image'; for the case I am developing here, on the other hand, it is necessary to acknowledge that this 'stuff 'is neither 'figure' nor 'image' nor is it 'indirect'. On the contrary, insofar as durée, as Jankélévitch also showed, it is the immediate par excellence – without mediation, mediator or representation. The unique action of the cinema as *medium* therefore is to give time automatically, by virtue of the automatism of the apparatus, and to give it immediately as duration – that is, without the interval or discontinuity of a mediating image or representation.
3. The insight I owe to Toni Negri, who in 'Rencontres philosophiques à la BNF: Gilles Deleuze' (broadcast by France Culture on 26 February 2005) spoke of Deleuze's philosophy as the invention of an absolutely new problematic: to construct a concrete material image of our future ('futur et avenir') that breaks with the history of modernity; or to think not the generality of singularity, but the singular relation between rupture and durée. In this paper I can only parenthetically indicate how the three repetitions in *Difference and Repetition* may be read as an instance where Deleuze responds to this problem.
4. 'Set in motion as a whole by an initial impulse in a closed system of automatic movements which succeed each other in the same order and take the same length of time' (Bergson 1962: 90).
5. For a discussion of the 'present' and 'eternity' as two figures of simultaneity, see Deleuze, 'Image movement/ Image temps', (Cours Vincennes 22 03 1983, www.webdeleuze).
6. 'Une image en appelle une autre, une image n'est jamais seule, contrairement à ce qu'on appelle "les images" aujourd'hui qui sont des ensembles de solitudes' (Godard 1998b: II, 173).
7. Barthes 1979. See also the discussion of Derrida with Bernard Stiegler (Derrida and Stiegler 1996).
8. For a discussion of the terms of the debate, see Didi-Huberman 2003 and my 'Godard-Lanzmann debate' (MS, forthcoming).
9. From Deleuze, Cézanne, Bacon, among others, we know how difficult it is to get outside, to breach an opening from the closure of the cliché. The cliché

reproduces, multiplies: 'Même les réactions contre les clichés engendrent des clichés' Deleuze 1981: 58.

10. From among the richly heterogeneous works that continue to invent ways to take up cinematographically the archives (the cinema's memory of the century), space permits only to mention a few examples: Next to Harun Farocki's stands the considerable corpus of Péter Forgács (*Maelstrom*, *Danube Exodus*, *The Brevarium of István Bibó*, and so on) which turns home movies to 'private archeologies' that dislocate and solicit history. The cinematic recuperation of pasts filmed but not seen is not limited to documentary footage. Here the exemplary practitioners are Chris Marker, Jiri Menzel and Martin Arnold (whose work is mentioned in the main text). In his *Last Bolshevik* (1993), Chris Marker turns to the feature films of Medveneyev to reconstruct the history of the revolution and of Soviet cinema. In this same genre, the Czech director Jiri Menzel exploits an old idea of Alain Resnais, according to which every *histoire* has been filmed by someone, somewhere. For material Menzel turns to the countless films made over a lifetime by a once popular film star to tell the (same old) story of an old man looking back at the end of his life. Since the originals date from the historical time of 'socialist cinema', which itself has a history, and which itself reflects the history of 'socialism' and its mutations, Menzel's film and story simultaneously project multiple – private and public, fictional and actual – 'histories'. The more illicit collaboration between cinema and history needs Godard's magnificent opus *Histoire(s) du cinéma,* (a film in eight parts and a book of the same title in four volumes, which includes some images and most of the text, was distributed and published by Gaumont and Gallimard in 1998). Insofar as the work is on film and itself is cinema, it not only 'makes (film) history', but already falls outside the history it recounts.
11. Cited by Richard Stamelma in his 'Introduction' (Bonnefoy 1995: 4).

LIFE, ETHICS, POLITICS

Chapter 8

Deleuze and the Meaning of Life

Claire Colebrook

Life did not exist

In *The Order of Things* Foucault makes the claim that until the eighteenth century 'life did not exist' (Foucault 1994: 128). The concept of life was not one concept among others but allowed for the construction of a new plane or 'historical a priori'. If man had been, as Foucault notes, a political animal this was because his humanity was created through the social relations he established through speech and action. When 'man' becomes an epiphenomenon of life then his political being is no longer constitutive of who he is; rather his political being might now be explained by reference back to certain exigencies of life. Man speaks and works because he must live. All those seemingly radical movements of the twentieth century such as structuralism, anthropology, psychoanalysis, phenomenology and late Marxism are normalising reterritorialisations: man's being can now be explained and managed according to the exigencies of life from which he emerges. If Deleuze affirms Foucault's capacity for diagrams and relations he also distinguishes his own concept of desire from Foucault's concept of power. Foucault had argued that the late nineteenth-century discourses of life, labour and language could be transformed when *literature* no longer appeared as emerging *from life*. Literature would disclose a divergent, multiple and machinic logic no longer governed by a vital impulse (Deleuze 1988: 131). But, Deleuze argues, we can also discern these forces of the outside in transformed discourses of life. 'Life' need not be a transcendental ground that expresses itself in man's finite empirical being. Whereas modern thought is typified by the fold between 'man' as finite who is a fragment from which infinite life can be discerned or unfolded, Deleuze looks forward to the contemporary 'Superfold'. Rather than *one* life which expresses itself in the being of 'man' who can then turn back and understand life in general,

Deleuze's 'Superfold' describes the ways in which life is composed of different styles or combinations, an 'unlimited finity' – finitudes or distinct combinations that are not united by a single vital current:

> The forces within man enter into a relation with forces from the outside, those of silicon which supersedes carbon, or genetic components which supersede the organism, or agrammaticalities which supersede the signifier . . . What is the superman? It is the formal compound of the forces within man and these new forces. It is the form that results from a new relation between forces. Man tends to free life, labour and language *within himself*. The superman, in accordance with Rimbaud's formula, is the man who is even in charge of the animals (a code that can capture fragments from other codes, as in the new schemata of lateral or retrograde). It is man in charge of the very rocks, or inorganic matter (the domain of silicon). It is man in charge of the very being of language (that formless, 'mute, unsignifying region where language can find its freedom' even from whatever it has to say). As Foucault would say, the superman is much less than the disappearance of living men, and much more than a change of concept: it is the advent of a new form that is neither God nor man and which, it is hoped, will not prove worse than its two previous forms. (Deleuze 1988: 131)

Vitalism and Phenomenology

How, then, might we locate those two philosophers so important for Deleuze – Bergson and Husserl – in this historical progression towards the 'Superfold'?

For both Bergson and Husserl, life in its constituted forms can be traced back to a horizon – either of life or consciousness – which then explains the condition of meaning.[1] But here all resemblance ends, for the two projects are also radically incommensurable and might help us to explain just how the various movements that follow – including Deleuze, Derrida and Foucault – regard the problem of life. First, consider Bergson who in *Creative Evolution* discusses a life with two tendencies, both of which derive from a striving or furthering (Bergson 1998: 267). The tendency to novelty, renewal and energetic propulsion that allows life to live relies upon a seemingly contrary tendency for conservation. Thus, in order to make one's way in the world the mind creates concepts to deal with complexity, but this creation or expenditure also allows for inertia; we do not continually create new concepts but fall into habit, repetition and laziness (Bergson 1998: 269). Such inertia or turning back from the striving of life is itself disrupted or opened only through life's impersonal power: those very habits formed in order to

master life are undone when life – either in memory or urgency – overcomes the ready-made, once more demanding a forward movement and creation (Bergson 1998: 264). But this linear backward and forward movement – a creation of striving countered by a forming and remaining the same – is overcome in that one forward movement which leaps outside the seeming line of time to think life as such, recognising the two tendencies or directions as tendencies of the one life, a life that *is* and can appear only in this differentiation (Bergson 1998: 271). That is, in the recognition of itself as that point within life and history capable of intuiting the energy of life, history grasps itself as time: not as a series of actions but as an energy or striving that can always return to its force, its virtual power, in order to give itself a future that will not be one more action. Thus, in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* Bergson will argue both that there has always been a potential for humanity not only to reduce and liken other bodies to itself, to anticipate the future on the model of the present – an unthought habit or inertia – but also a potential to think of potentiality as such: others who are not like me in form or presence but who are themselves powers or potentials to think (Bergson 1977: 227). So, from the potential to intuit life in its potentiality – in its tendencies that are themselves the outcome of a more radical striving – one can open the thought of a life no longer determined by any of its actualised forms. The very potential in life to produce meaning – the power of the intellect to fix life into concepts – is the very power that will overcome the finitude of meaning such that the real energy or genesis of meaning might be lived:

> But our brain, our society, and our language are only the external and various signs of one and the same internal superiority. They tell, each after its manner, the unique, exceptional success which life has won at a given moment of its evolution. They express the difference of kind, and not only of degree, which separates man from the rest of the animal world. They let us guess that, while at the end of the vast spring-board from which life has taken its leap, all the others have stepped down, finding the cord stretched too high, man alone has cleared the obstacle. (Bergson 1998: 265)

Similarly, but also by contrast, Husserl asks how constituted meanings are possible; and it is this question that is at once critical of *Lebensphilosophie* at the same time as it offers the genesis of the world. Anthropologies may argue that language is necessary for life, and may describe consciousness as an event within the world, but how are such narrative or finite histories possible? Time, or the institution of a present – a *this is* – requires *sense*: the mere this of any phenomenon, any

appearing, requires a minimal sense, and sense is time. That something *is* requires a thesis of being, and this thetic position or *arché* judgement yields a life of consciousness that will retain the past into the present, that will posit and sustain some world. Any explanation, account or thought of anything that *is* requires the synthesis of time, the positing of something as having being, and this then refers us back to transcendental consciousness. This impersonal transcendental consciousness of sense is the condition, not only for any 'I' or any 'we' but also for any life *lived as life*. It is only through meaning, through the production of sense in the temporality of consciousness that anything like *life* might be brought to presence. Language, therefore, would not invade consciousness like a foreign body, for consciousness in its carrying over of the past and its anticipation of a future would *already* have produced a core of sense or sameness that could then receive the mark of the linguistic sign. The supposedly pure in itself, prior to all generalisation, would already be opened to and subjected to the form of the same. For Husserl one thereby returns to the essence of life: essences are not forms in some 'third realm' set over against life but are the sense of life.[2] Consciousness can always return to the animating movement from which sense emerges. In this regard, phenomenology is the meaning of life. Life is meaning: constitution or the production of sense. There can be time only through a synthesis or carrying over of the past towards a future; but this meaning of life and time only comes to itself when consciousness recognises itself, not in its constituted forms as this or that humanity, but as the possibility of sense in general, humanity in general, humanity to come (Derrida 1989: 117).

On the one hand, then, Bergson will explain the constitution of sense *from life* as time: sense, language, forms, presence – all these are ways in which life retards or slows its duration in order to master or control itself. On the other hand, Husserl will insist that any such narrative of time requires the very sense that is supposedly explained; consciousness as sense cannot be an event within the world or life, for it is the very meaning of life as meaning. Foucault's objection to both movements is their construction of a space of knowledge – a single horizon that will govern the genesis of relations – whereas his own history will document the disparity of these spaces (Foucault 1994: xxi). (And in addition to this archaeology Foucault will suggest the possibility of a self that once more acts immanently, without referring back to a plane of life in general.)

How, then, might we read Deleuze's refusal to remain within the constituted planes or spaces of knowledge and his imperative to think

the plane of immanence? While much has been made of Deleuze's Bergsonism (and justifiably so) such that language is one form of striving among others and not *the* horizon through which all other structures or regimes of signs must be read, Deleuze's insistence on *sense* releases us from the equivocity that would situate a logic of life behind life. How then is the life that in Bergson explains the emergence of sense transformed in Deleuze's philosophy of sense?

The Surface of Sense

The answer lies in the surface of sense and the production of this surface through a paradoxical or aleatory object. That is, the genesis or opening of sense is *neither* bodily life *nor* meaning as ideal, but the passage or fold between life in its located material being and life in its eternal potential. This paradoxical, aleatory or virtual object answers the problem of the opening to infinity: how, from this located event within time is a sense released for all time? Once we perceive this as a *problem* we might ask about how well formed this problem is. Do we have to explain the emergence or production of sense from within life, or can there only be life – this lived present here and now – because of sense? The first problem – sense emerging from life – is Bergsonian; the second problem – life as lived through sense, conditional upon a horizon of sense that must come to grasp its own infinite movement – is phenomenological. Deleuze's consideration of sense as a surface maintains both problems. It both recalls Bergson's idea that creation must be spurred on by an obstacle, which forces life to engage or form this relatively stable point (Bergson 1998: 265); *and* it insists on Husserl's production of a noema in immanent life, a transcendence in perception that takes any lived experience beyond itself to its potential for all time:

> The noema, from the beginning, implies a neutralized double of the thesis or the modality of the expressive proposition (the perceived, the remembered, the imagined). Moreover, the noema possesses a nucleus quite independent of the modalities of consciousness and the thetic characteristics of the proposition, and also quite distinct from the physical qualities of the object posited as real (for example, pure predicates, like noematic color, in which neither the reality of the object, nor the way in which we are conscious of it, intervenes). (Deleuze 1990: 96)[3]

The aleatory object that is neither bodily, nor a signifier with a signified, is first explained by Deleuze psychoanalytically. One series – body parts in all their affective connections – intersect with another series, such

as the world of signification, only with a bordering object. The phallus is perceived as the possibility of sense: that bodies are subject to some incorporeal imperative (Deleuze 1990: 200). What makes the phallus aleatory or paradoxical is that it is at once within a localised, spatialised and specific time and series of bodies *and* that it presents itself as the body part which, through the threat of castration, intersects with another series: what bodies are for others, the series of meaning. Sense is not this or that signifier but a certain passage from one series – bodies – to another series – the world of, say, linguistic signs. Sense is not something that can be defined or sensed: '[W]e can never say what is the sense of what we say' (Deleuze 1994: 155). It is that milieu which must be presupposed in meaning and, when stated, only yields another sense, which in turn cannot be stated. I can imagine, then, that if I encounter an entirely other 'regime of signs' – say, a culture of aliens who communicate by touch or by chromatic intonations – then I can begin to make sense of what they 'say' only by imagining 'saying' or by having some Idea of sense: *that there is sense* (Deleuze 1994: 155). This is the requirement of a paradoxical object: what is it that allows the mouth to be both an organ of eating and of speaking? Sense is the event that enables the noise that passes my lips – the bodily series – to intersect with another series – meaning (Deleuze 1990: 194).[4]

The event of sense occurs when the perceived 'now' is opened to infinity, perceived as a power beyond the matters or states of affairs presented: '[W]e noted the specificity of sense or of the event, its irreducibility to the denotatum and to the signified, its neutrality in relation to the particular and the general, or its impersonal and pre-individual singularity' (Deleuze 1990: 145). Sense is the passage from what is perceived here in a located and extended state of affairs to its singularity. If I wish to explain the sense of 'the author of Waverley,' and I describe the 'writer of historical novels', we may designate the same referent, but not the same sense; we can define the meaning – what in general is referred to – but sense or the style of referring, the opening of relations in this manner, is peculiar and singular. And in this local case we can see something more significant in the general milieu of sense; we could account for the emergence of meaning by describing the surface of sense in the Oedipal relation. From a psychoanalytic account we might say that relations across this bodily surface or series are referred to another series – the mother-father-child relations – and that this intersection is enabled by the paradox of the phallus. The phallus both takes us from the body, and acts as the image or figure of that for which one shifts to the system of meaning; the phallus is the figure of sense.

Translated from psychoanalytic terms into the more Husserlian vocabulary Deleuze uses in *The Logic of Sense* we can see the intersection of two series – bodies on the one hand (mere life), and meaning on the other (life as it is lived) – in terms of the noesis and the noema. There is at once the sensible or the bodily and single experience, and the noema or that towards which the experience is directed, an impersonal 'transcendent' intended within experience. Unlike Husserl, however, Deleuze makes two genetic manoeuvres. First, the distinction between noesis and noema needs to be explained more radically than in the phenomenological account. Husserl explains the distinction from within the horizon of consciousness. Husserl brackets the question of the mind's relation to the world, focusing instead on the phenomena or what appears and argues that it is *from appearance* that we then unfold the relation of subject and object. As a consequence, what begins as a method in Husserl – the *epoché*, or the restriction to phenomena – becomes an ontology: there is nothing other than phenomenality and consciousness is transcendental, the sense of all that is. Husserl's genesis, therefore, remains within the sense of consciousness, never asking the question of the emergence of the sense of this sense. (It is for this reason, also, that Husserl's noema will remain as a predicate, that which is ascribed to a subject or substance and not what it is for Deleuze: an attribute that is a power of the sensible *to be sensed*.) For Deleuze, one can never grasp some ultimate sense or horizon of sense, never arrive at the ground or milieu of life; and this is because life is a series of unfoldings, or openings to sense (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 313). The paradoxical object – such as the subject, who is at once a being within the world and an origin of the world – is always one paradoxical object among others; there are worlds rather than *the* world (Deleuze 1990: 97). And this changes the ontology of sense, for what is sensed is no longer what is attributed to an object presented to a subject, but an attribute or potential as such; it is the being of the sensible that opens itself *to sense*, producing subjects: 'The most general operation of sense is this: it brings that which expresses it into existence; and from that point on, as pure inherence, it brings itself to exist within that which expresses it' (Deleuze 1990: 166). For Deleuze, the sensible or noetic, which is the particularity of this encounter between, say, eye and light, opens on to a noema or sense, *not* by constituting that presence or being towards which sensibility is oriented, *not* by the intended that subtends perception, but by a potentiality in the sensible. Consciousness is not the sense of the world; rather, there is consciousness because life is the potentiality for sense, a potentiality which unfolds in consciousness. We can distinguish, then, the particular – *this* experience – from the

singular: that which can be sensed. This singularity occurs when what is experienced opens on to its potential for all time. Deleuze argues that these singularities are events – released from within life through bodily encounters – but also open an eternal plane of life; the singular is potentially for all time (Deleuze 1990: 151). The red here is experienced as a power of life not just for my here and now, nor for us – and so it is not a generality. Nor is it what *must* be for all time for all perceivers (a universal); it is that which is potentially for all time, a 'to red'. Indeed, only in singularities are we given not a time of experiences ordered in a sequence, but a time of that which could be (virtually) for all time: not *Chronos* but Aion. If life yields meaning it is only because life yields sense, and so while propositions are the home of meaning, propositions are only possible because of sense: 'Every proposition of consciousness implies an unconscious of pure thought which constitutes the sphere of sense in which there is infinite regress' (Deleuze 1994: 155). We can only predicate a quality, only think of an essence that could be given now here, now there, and each time still be this absolutely singular power, if there is sense:

> Events are ideational singularities which communicate in one and the same Event. They have therefore an eternal truth, and their time is never the present which realizes them and makes them exist. Rather, it is the unlimited Aion, the Infinitive in which they subsist and insist. Events are the only idealities. To reverse Platonism is first and foremost to remove essences and to substitute events in their place, as jets of singularities. (Deleuze 1990: 53)

What is, the *being* of the sensible, is not a being beyond the sensible but an infinitive: this sensibility in its singularity occurs within time but is also true for all time. From the actual perceived world, counter-actualisation allows the present to be perceived in terms of the (virtual) power it realises:

> With every event, there is indeed the present moment of its actualisation, the moment in which the event is embodied in a state of affairs, an individual, or a person, the moment we designate by saying '*here*, the moment has come.' . . . But on the other hand, there is the future and the past of the event considered in itself, sidestepping each present, being free of the limitations of a state of affairs, impersonal and pre-individual, neutral, neither general nor particular, *eventum tantum* . . . It has no other present than that of the mobile instant which represents it, always divided into past-future, and forming what must be called the counter-actualization. (Deleuze 1990: 151)

The essence, then, and this is Deleuze's second radical departure from Husserl – is not constituted within time and humanity as the truth of

time, such that the noema is for Husserl an ongoing core always capable of further enrichment of sense. Essences are singularities and therefore yield sense: *that there is sense*; that all is not given; that the actual bears the potential to disclose the virtual which is its real life and condition. Sense is not meaning or what we take to be the various components of the proposition – the I who speaks, the object designated, the state of affairs referred to. Rather, sense is the milieu, the institution of one series – bodies – crossing another – the relations of those bodies, whether those relations are strictly perceptual (eye and light) or perceptual in Deleuze's broader use of the term (knife and wound).

What, then, is the meaning of life? Bergson will give us an answer. Life's very striving produces a counter-principle to that striving and only in the overcoming of, say, the rigidity of the intellect may we once more grasp the propulsive dynamism that is our being (and which is also life in general). Husserl will also insist that the meaning of life is consciousness; for consciousness *is* meaning – the possibility of temporality that institutes the being of sense. Deleuze, however, gives the meaning of life as the life of meaning, the life that yields a sense that is grasped through meaning but which is irreducible to meaning. There is meaning – this or that regime of signs – only through sense: the possibility of one series (bodies) being traversed by another (signifiers), but this traversal itself can never be said as such. Sense is the enigma or opening of meaning that itself can have no meaning: something like Bergson's obstacle or opposition that must be mastered in order for life to move on, but that at once gives life – from within itself – something it must work through but never fully assimilate. One might trace specific emergences of this event – either through the psychoanalytic account of the body's capacity to generate a privileged body part as the meaning of the body, or perception's capacity to see in the perceived a singularity that is irreducible to *this* perception, and that might then be thought for all time thus yielding the eternal and virtual essence of the signifier. But sense itself – that there is sense – is a problematic power and not a being, and the *life* of sense is therefore less a space within which we think and more the possibility of the opening of these spaces: a thousand plateaus. Insofar as we no longer explain sense from life, by regarding sense as the act by which man brings the logic of life to presence, but see life as the potentiality of sense, then life is transformed beyond recognition. Life is no longer the horizon of sense, that which explains sense; life is the giving of sense that itself can never be definitively said.

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Notes

1. Keith Ansell-Pearson notes the resemblance between Husserl and Bergson with regard to this striving for purity: the project of retrieving the origin of constituted forms prior to their imbrication in cultural and historical differences (Ansell-Pearson 2002: 12).
2. Like Husserl, Deleuze will also insist on the immanence of sense and essences. Essences are possible only through sense, through the release of a 'to be perceived' in the present that goes beyond the present. After an early psychologism in his *Philosophy of Arithmetic*, Husserl responded to Frege's criticism regarding the reality of sense, not by taking the Fregean path of a third realm, but by insisting that essences are constituted from concrete perception but realise or bring to presence the truth of the perceived. Deleuze will also tie essences, not to

stable and transcendent forms, but to perception. Unlike Husserl, however, Deleuze will free perception from any form of anthropologism and insist that the essences are the sense – or potential perceptibility – of the sensible (the virtual of the actual). Sense is released in an encounter which liberates (or counter-actualises) in the sensible that which *could be perceived*. Rather than a static essence, an attribute that might be predicated of a subject, Deleuze insists on an infinitive: a 'to green . . .' such that the colour grasped now is seen in its possibility for all time – not as a generality that would liken one shade or instance to another – but as a singularity that would always bear this power of difference for all time (Deleuze 1990: 21).

3. We can note here the neutrality of sense, a neutrality that liberates sense from a simple pragmatics or performativity of meaning. That is to say, *sense* remains the same regardless of whether the sensed exists in materiality, is wished for, denied, imagined, believed or feared. That is, the meant or content of meaning – what Husserl will refer to broadly as the noema – needs to be distinguished from the act or attitude. (So, the sense of '2 plus 2 equals 4' is the same across various judgements and judging subjects, and is distinct from the mental act or appearing of such a sense, regardless of whether this sense is doubted, imagined.) Husserl's distinction between noesis and noema adds the genetic dimension to the problem of sense. While Frege notably affirms sense in its distinction from both mental act and referent, Husserl is determined to regard the noema not as a sense existing above and beyond the world, independent of all acts, but as the objective pole or transcendence towards which the act aims; there is an irreducible correlation between noesis and noema, and this will be sustained by Deleuze. For Deleuze the eternal truth and event of sense emerges from perceptions and bodies, but liberates itself from those bodies. Where Deleuze differs most from Husserl is in his insistence that the emergence of the noema does not take the form of a predicate – that which is grasped as a quality pertaining to a subject – but a verb. Sense is not the way in which we grasp the world, seeing what is present *as* this or that. Sense is active and dynamic: the event of an infinitive. The eye that meets the particular red of a canvas is at one and the same time a bodily encounter – eye and light – and an event of sense, the perception of a power of this singular colour that would have been and could be perceived beyond this 'now'. Thus, when we see the red of a traffic light and interpret this as 'stop', this is only because there is the regime of signs of obeying road orders, so that red is perceived as red in general and we do not attend to the nuances of this or that shade. (This would rely on the singular sense of 'order' as such.) The red on the canvas is not the red *of* this thing, but a singular essential and fully real difference, perceived in its sense as different. The event of sense emerges when the perception releases an attribute as a power or infinitive, that which bears a power to be repeated beyond the located present. Further, in contrast to Husserl's common sense, where we imagine that all subjects would see this perception here with a regard congruent with our own, Deleuze insists on a 'necessarily paradoxical instance', so that the sense – or what is both perceived but transcends the local act of perception – is neither subjective nor objective, neither in the act, nor predicated of the world, but an event of the two series: one sees here what is not mine but that which is there to be seen (Deleuze 1990: 98). Thus sense is sterile or neutral, a 'quasi-cause' insofar as it appears as the very core and being of the perceived (as the essence of the matter perceived), at the same time as it is an effect that remains irrespective of the modality of existence of the perceived; it is the same red that is imagined, hallucinated, perceived, remembered, desired, loathed and so on. There is, despite the claims made by Slavoj Žižek, no conflict between the materialist Deleuze of Deleuze and Guattari's

Anti-Oedipus – a Deleuze who would trace meaning and ideality from bodies – and the psychoanalytic Deleuze of *The Logic of Sense*, who affirms the sterility of sense as quasi-cause. What unites the two is the logic of the noema: it is both perceived here and now in this act, *and* a power that transcends this act, an impersonal singularity no longer located within the time of matter and extended fields:

> Neutrality, the impassibility of the event, its indifference to the determinations of the inside and the outside, to the individual and the collective, the particular and the general – all these form a constant without which the event would not have eternal truth and could not be distinguished from its temporal actualizations. (Deleuze 1990: 100)

4. We could anticipate *A Thousand Plateaus* and imagine regimes of signs beyond language, but always opened from a surface: the face is at once bodily but also a regime to allow us to speak as subjects (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 168); the scar on the body is at once affective and corporeal but with the body of the despot becomes a 'sign' of power to deprive one of life. Sense is, therefore, for Deleuze *not* the noematic core in Husserl's sense – that which can be grasped as an attribute of a transcendent world constituted as present.

Chapter 9

The Ethics of Becoming-Imperceptible

Rosi Braidotti

In this essay I will explore the eco-philosophical aspects of the ethics of becoming, with reference to the project of nomadic subjectivity and sustainability. The urge that prompts this investigation is not only abstract, but also very practical. Nomadic philosophy mobilises one's affectivity and enacts the desire for in-depth transformations in the status of the kind of subjects we have become. Such in-depth changes, however, are at best demanding and at worst painful processes. My political generation, that of the baby-boomers, has had to come to terms with this harsh reality, which put a check on the intense and often fatal impatience that characterises those who yearn for change.

We lost so many of its specimen to dead-end experimentations of the existential, political, sexual, narcotic or technological kind. Although it is true that we lost as many if not more of our members to the stultifying inertia of the status quo – a sort of generalised 'Stepford wives' syndrome – it is nonetheless the case that I have developed an acute awareness of how difficult changes are. Which is not meant as a deterrent against them; on the contrary: I think that the current political climate has placed undue emphasis on the risks involved in pursuing social changes, playing ad nauseam the refrain about the death of ideologies. Such a conservative reaction aims at disciplining the citizens and reducing their desire for the 'new' to docile and compulsive forms of consumerism. Nothing could be further removed from my project than this approach. I simply want to issue a cautionary note: processes of change and transformation are so important and necessary, that they have to be handled with care. The concept of ethical sustainability addresses these complex issues. We have to take pain into account as a major incentive for and not only an obstacle to, an ethics of changes and transformations. We need also to rethink the knowing subject in terms of affectivity, inter-relationality, territories, eco-philosophical resources, locations and

forces. In so doing, we shall take our final leave from the spatio-temporal continuum of classical humanism, though not necessarily from its ideals. The nomadic ethico-political project focuses on becomings as a pragmatic philosophy that stresses the need to act, to experiment with different modes of constituting subjectivity and different ways of inhabiting our corporeality. Accordingly, nomadic ethics is not about a master theory, but rather about multiple micro-political modes of daily activism. As we shall see, it is essential to put the 'active' back into activism.[1]

Endurance

The starting point for my project is the concept of a sustainable self that aims at endurance. Endurance has a temporal dimension: it has to do with lasting in time – hence duration and self-perpetuation (traces of Bergson). But it also has a spatial side to do with the space of the body as an enfleshed field of actualisation of passions or forces (traces of Spinoza). It evolves affectivity and joy, as in the capacity for being affected to the point of pain or extreme pleasure – which comes to the same. It means putting up with, tolerating hardship and physical pain.

Apart from providing the key to an aetiology of forces (Gatens and Lloyd: 1999) endurance is also an ethical principle of affirmation of the positivity of the intensive subject – its joyful affirmation as *potentia*. The subject is a spatio-temporal compound which frames the boundaries of processes of becoming. This process works by transforming negative into positive passions through the power of the understanding that is no longer indexed upon a phallogocentric set of standards, based on Law and Lack, but is rather unhinged and therefore affective. The task of turning the tide of negativity is an ethical transformative process. It aims at achieving the freedom of understanding, through the awareness of our limits, of our bondage. This results in the freedom to affirm one's essence as joy, through encounters and minglings with other bodies, entities, beings and forces. Ethics means faithfulness to this *potentia*, or the desire to become.

Affectivity is intrinsically understood as positive: it is the force that aims at fulfilling the subject's capacity for interaction and freedom. It is Spinoza's *conatus*, or the notion of *potentia* as the affirmative aspect of power. It is joyful and pleasure-prone and it is immanent in that it coincides with the terms and modes of its expression. This means concretely that ethical behaviour confirms, facilitates and enhances the subject's *potentia*, as the capacity to express his/her freedom. The positivity of this desire to express one's innermost and constitutive freedom (*conatus*,

potentia or becoming) is conducive to ethical behaviour, however, only if the subject is capable of making it last and endure, thus allowing it to sustain its own impetus. Unethical behaviour achieves the opposite: it denies, hinders and diminishes that impetus and hence makes the subject unable to sustain it. The temporal dimension of this process lays the very conditions of possibility of the future and hence of futurity as such. The production and expression of positive affects is what makes the subject last or endure: it is like a source of long-term energy at the affective core of subjectivity.

I want to argue that Deleuze's (1977, 1980) 'nomadology' is a philosophy of immanence that rests on the idea of sustainability as a principle of framing, synchronising and tuning a subject's intensive resources, understood environmentally, affectively and cognitively. A subject thus constituted inhabits a time that is the active tense of continuous 'becoming'. Deleuze defines the latter with reference to Bergson's concept of 'duration', thus proposing the notion of the subject as an entity that lasts, that is to say that endures sustainable changes and transformation and enacts them around him/herself in a community or collectivity. Deleuze, however, disengages the notion of 'endurance' from the metaphysical tradition that associates it to the idea of intuition, essence, that is, of permanence. Deleuze shoots 'endurance' through with spatio-temporal forces and with mobility. It is a form of transcendental empiricism or of anti-essentialist vitalism. In this perspective, even the earth/Gaia is posited as a partner in a community which is still to come, to be constructed by subjects who will interact with the earth differently.

What is, then, this sustainable subject? It is a slice of living, sensible matter: a self-sustaining system activated by a fundamental drive to life. It expresses *potentia* (rather than *potestas*), neither by the will of God, nor the secret encryption of the genetic code. This subject is physiologically embedded in the corporeal materiality of the self, but the enfleshed intensive or nomadic subject is an in-between: a folding-in of external influences and a simultaneous unfolding-outwards of affects. A mobile entity, in space and time, and also an enfleshed kind of memory, this subject is in-process but is also capable of lasting through sets of discontinuous variations, while remaining extraordinarily faithful to itself.

This 'faithfulness to oneself' is not to be understood in the mode of the psychological or sentimental attachment to a personal 'identity' that often is little more than a social security number and a set of family photo albums. Nor is it the mark of authenticity of a self ('me, myself and I') that is a clearing house for narcissism and paranoia – the great pillars on which Western identity predicates itself. It is rather a faithfulness that is

predicated upon mutual sets of inter-dependence and inter-connections, that is to say sets of relations and encounters. These compose a web of multiple relationships that encompass all levels of one's multi-layered subjectivity, binding the cognitive to the emotional, the intellectual to the affective and connecting them all to socially embedded forms of stratification. Thus, the faithfulness that is at stake in nomadic ethics coincides with the awareness of one's condition of interaction with others, that is to say one's capacity to affect and to be affected. Translated into a temporal scale, this is the faithfulness of duration, the expression of one's continuing attachment to certain dynamic spatio-temporal co-ordinates and to endure.

In a philosophy of temporally-inscribed radical immanence, subjects differ. But they differ along materially embedded co-ordinates: they come in different mileage, temperatures and beats. One can and does change gears and move across these co-ordinates, but cannot claim all of them, all of the time. The latitudinal and longitudinal forces which structure the subject have limits which I express in terms of thresholds of sustainability. By latitudinal forces Deleuze means the affects a subject is capable of, following the degrees of intensity or potency: how intensely they run. By longitude is meant the span of extension: how far they can go. Sustainability is about how much of it a subject can take and ethics is accordingly redefined as the geometry of how much bodies are capable of.

What is this threshold, then, and how does it get fixed? A radically immanent intensive body is an assemblage of forces, or flows, intensities and passions that solidify – in space – and consolidate – in time – within the singular configuration commonly known as an 'individual' (or rather: di-vidual) self. This intensive and dynamic entity does not coincide with the enumeration of inner rationalist laws, nor is it merely the unfolding of genetic data and information encrypted in the material structure of the embodied self. It is rather a portion of forces that is stable enough – spatio-temporally speaking – to sustain and to undergo constant fluxes of transformation.

On all three scores, it is the body's degrees and levels of affectivity that determine the modes of differentiation. Joyful or positive passions and the transcendence of reactive affects are the desirable mode, as I argued earlier. Positivity is in-built into this programme through the idea of thresholds of sustainability. Thus, an ethically empowering option increases one's *potentia* and creates joyful energy in the process. The conditions which can encourage such a quest are not only historical, but also relational: they have to do with cultivating and facilitating productive

encounters, which sustain processes of self-transformation or self-fashioning in the direction of affirming positivity. Because all subjects share in this common Nature, there is a common ground on which to negotiate these encounters and also their eventual conflicts.

So how do we know if we have reached the threshold of sustainability? This sort of intensive mapping requires experimentation. This is where the non-individualistic vision of the subject as embodied and hence affective, socially embedded and inter-relational is of major consequence. Our bodies will thus tell us if and when we have reached a threshold or a limit. The warning can take the form of opposing resistance, falling ill, feeling nauseous, or it can have other somatic manifestations, like fear, anxiety or a sense of insecurity. Whereas the semiotic-linguistic frame of psychoanalysis reduces these to symptoms awaiting interpretation, I see them as corporeal warning-signals or boundary-markers that express a clear message: 'Too much!'. I think that one of the reasons why Deleuze and Guattari are so interested in studying self-destructive or pathological modes of behaviours, such as schizophrenia, masochism, anorexia, various forms of addiction and the black hole of murderous violence, is precisely in order to explore their function as markers of thresholds. This assumes a qualitative distinction between on the one hand the desire that propels the subject's expression of his/her *conatus* – which in a neo-Spinozist perspective is implicitly positive – and on the other hand the constraints imposed by society. The specific, contextually-determined conditions are the forms in which the desire is actualised or actually expressed. To find out about thresholds, we must experiment, which means always, necessarily, relationally or in encounters with others. We need new cognitive and sensorial mappings of the thresholds of sustainability for bodies-in-processes-of-transformation.

This is supported by Deleuze's reading of Spinoza. Another word for Spinoza's *conatus* is self-preservation, not in the liberal individualistic sense of the term, but rather as the actualisation of one's essence, that is to say of one's ontological drive to become. This is not an automatic, nor an intrinsically harmonious process, insofar as it involves inter-connection with other forces and consequently also conflicts and clashes. Violence, pain and a touch of cruelty are part of this process. Negotiations have to occur as stepping stones to sustainable flows of becoming. The bodily self's interaction with his/her environment can either increase or decrease that body's *conatus* or *potentia*. The mind as a sensor that prompts understanding can assist by helping to discern and choose those forces that increase its power of acting and its activity in both physical and mental terms. A higher form of self-knowledge by understanding the nature of

our affectivity is the key to a Spinozist ethics of empowerment. It includes a more adequate understanding of the inter-connections between the self and a multitude of other forces, and it thus undermines the liberal individual understanding of the subject. It also implies, however, the body's ability to comprehend and physically to sustain a greater number of complex inter-connections, and to deal with complexity without being over-burdened. Thus, only an appreciation of increasing degrees of complexity can guarantee the freedom of the mind in the awareness of its true, affective and dynamic nature.

Sustainability thus defined is also about de-centring anthropocentrism in the new, complex compound that is nomadic subjectivity. The notion of sustainability brings together ethical, epistemological and political concerns under the cover of a non-unitary vision of the subject. 'Life' privileges assemblages of a heterogeneous kind: animals, insects, machines are as many fields of forces or territories of becoming. The life in me is not only, not even, human.

Of Limits as Thresholds

The notion of 'life' as a vital force is crucial to the discussion of sustainable ethics,[2] in philosophical nomadism. Life is cosmic energy, simultaneously empty chaos and absolute speed or movement. Life is half animal: *Zoe* and half discursive: *Bios*. *Zoe*, of course, is the poor half of a qualitative distinction that foregrounds *Bios* defined as intelligent life. Centuries of Christian indoctrination have left a deep mark here: *Bios* is divinely ordained and holy, whereas *Zoe* is quite gritty. That these two dimensions should intersect in the human body turns the physical self into a contested space, that is, a political arena. The mind-body dualism has historically functioned as a reductive shortcut through the complexities of this in-between contested zone. *Zoe* is mindlessly material and the idea of life carrying on independently of agency and even regardless of rational control is the dubious privilege attributed to the non-humans. These cover all the classical 'others' of classical visions of the subject, namely the sexual other (woman), the ethnic other (the native) and the naturalised other (earth, plants and animals). *Zoe* is impersonal and inhuman in the monstrous, animal sense of radical alterity, whereas classical philosophy is logo-centric. Nomadic thought loves *Zoe* and sings its praises by emphasising its active, empowering force against all negative odds.

Zoe, or life as absolute vitality, however, is not above negativity and it can hurt. It is always too much for the specific slab of enfleshed existence

that single subjects actualise. It is a constant challenge for us to rise to the occasion, to catch the wave of life's intensities and ride it on, exposing the boundaries or limits as we transgress them. We often crack in the process and just cannot take it any more. The sheer activity of thinking about such intensity is painful: it causes intense strain, psychic unrest and nervous tension. If thinking were pleasurable, more humans might be tempted to engage in this activity. Accelerations or increased intensities, however, are that which most humans prefer to avoid.

Crucial to this ethics of affirmation is the concept of limit. For Spinoza-Deleuze the limit is built into the affective definition of subjectivity. Affectivity, in fact, is what activates an embodied subject, empowering him/her to interact with others. This acceleration of our existential speed, or increase of our affective temperature, is the dynamic process of becoming. It follows that a subject can think/understand/do/become no more than what she/he can take or sustain within his/her embodied, spatio-temporal co-ordinates. This deeply positive understanding of the human subject posits built-in, bio-organic limitations.

Thus the ethical challenge, as Nietzsche recommended, consists in cultivating joyful modes of confronting the overwhelming intensity of *Bios-Zoe*. This implies approaching the world through affectivity and not cognition: as singularity, force, movement, through assemblages or webs of inter-connections with all that lives. The subject is an autopoietic machine, fuelled by targeted perceptions and it functions as the echoing chamber of *Zoe*. This non-anthropocentric view expresses both a profound love for Life as a cosmic force and the desire to depersonalise subjective life and death. This is just one life, not *my* life. The life in 'me' does not answer to my name: 'I' is just passing.

To live intensely and be alive to the nth degree pushes us to the extreme edge of mortality. This has implications for the question of the limits, which are in-built in the very embodied and embedded structure of the subject. The limits are those of our endurance – in the double sense of lasting in time and bearing the pain of confronting 'Life' as *Zoe*. The ethical subject is one that can bear this confrontation, cracking up a bit but without having its physical or affective intensity destroyed by it.

What is ethics, then? A thin barrier against the possibility of extinction. Ethics consists in reworking the pain into the threshold of sustainability, when and if possible: cracking, but holding it, still. It is a mode of actualising sustainable forms of transformation. This requires adequate assemblages or interaction: we have to pursue or create actively the kind of encounters that are likely to favour an increase in active becomings and avoid those that diminish our *potentia*. It is an intensive ethics,

based on the shared capacity of humans to feel empathy for, develop affinity with and hence enter in relation with other forces, entities, beings, waves of intensity. This requires dosage, rhythms, styles of repetition and co-ordination or resonance. It is a matter of unfolding out and enfolding in the complex and multi-layered forces of *Bios-Zoe* as a deeply inhuman force.

In other words, *potentia*, in order to fulfil its inherent positivity must be 'formatted' in the direction of sustainability. Obviously, this means that it is impossible to set one standard that will suit all; a differential approach becomes necessary. What bodies are capable of doing or not, is biologically, physically, psychically, historically, sexually and emotionally specific, that is, partial. Ultimately, the thresholds of sustainable becomings also mark their limits. In this respect: 'I can't take it any more' is an ethical statement, not the assertion of defeat. It is the lyrical lament of a subject-in-process who is shot through with waves of intensity, like a set of fulgurations that illuminate his/her self-awareness, tearing open fields of self-knowledge in the encounter of and configuration with others. Learning to recognise thresholds, borders or limits is thus crucial to the work of the understanding and to the process of becoming.

Whereas for Lacan limits are wounds or scars, that is, marks of internal lacerations and irreplaceable losses and for liberal thoughts limits are frontiers that cannot be trespassed without the required visas or permissions, for Deleuze limits are simultaneously points of passage or thresholds and markers of sustainability. Deleuze has an almost mathematical definition of the limit, as that which we never really reach. In his *Abécedaire* Deleuze discusses with Claire Parnet the question of the limit in terms of addiction. Reminiscing on his own early alcoholism, Deleuze notes that the limit, or frame for the alterations induced by alcohol is to be set with reference not so much to the last glass; because that is the glass that is going to kill you. What matters instead is the 'second-last' glass – the one that is going to allow you to survive, to last, to endure – and consequently also to go on drinking again. A true addict always stops at the second-last glass – one removed from the fatal sip or shot. A death-bound entity, however, usually shoots straight for the last one. That gesture prevents or denies the expression of the desire to start again tomorrow, that is to say to repeat that 'second-last shot', and thus to endure. In fact, there is no sense of a possible tomorrow: time folds in upon itself and excavates a black hole into which the subject dissolves. No future.

In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari speak out clearly against the unsustainable flows of transformation induced by drug-consumption. Before we go on to misread this as moralistic, we would

do well to remember that both 'mind-expansion' and 'mood-enhancement' drugs are something that neither Deleuze nor Guattari is *a priori* against. What they are against is the addiction to drugs, which tips over the threshold of tolerance of the organism. Addiction is not an opening-up, but a narrowing-down of the field of possible becomings. It increases the rigidity, not the fluidity of the subject: it locks the subject up in a black hole of inner fragmentation without encounters with others. The black hole is the point beyond which the line-of-flight of becoming implodes and disintegrates.

I want to stress that Deleuze's position on the thresholds of sustainability attempts to strike a new position that would coincide neither with the 'laissez-faire' ideology nor with repressive moralism. A Spinozist-nomadic notion of the limit, of 'not going too far' is a far cry from mainstream culture's appeal to moderation and savvy management of our health. This renewed appeal to the individual's management of his/her bodily resources, health potential and life-capital is the distinctive feature of contemporary neo-liberalism. As Jackie Stacey (1997) has critically noted, it results in a misappropriation of the notion of 'responsibility' and a mistranslation of the term into styles of self-management based on 'prevention' and the pursuit of 'a healthy life-style'. This cultural obsession with health and with clean, functional bodies is the corollary of the fear of fatal diseases like cancer and AIDS and the monstrous imaginings they give rise to. The compulsive and consumeristic pursuit of 'health' entails social, cultural and bodily practices which are in open contradiction with one another. This is the normative force of contemporary biopolitics (Rose: 2001).

The ethics of sustainability combines a flair for and a commitment to change with a critique of excess for its own sake. In the swinging pendulum of postmodernity, deterritorialisations are followed by reterritorialisations, which means that yesterday's blasphemies constitute today's banalities and boundaries which were transgressed by force or violence then come to be held as the mainstream now. To construct this as 'progress' would be evidence of excessive optimism, or a fatal case of Hegelian overdose, as it conceals the very question that concerns me the most, namely what price we are prepared to pay for going through and even profiting from this chain of contradictory effects, wrongly rendered as 'progress'. The radical social theories and practices of the 1960s and 1970s have undergone the process of commodification into the consumeristic ethics of 'life-style' and 'entertainment'. Their subversive sting, namely the desire for in-depth transformation of the subject and of the public sphere, has been taken out. The extent to which advanced

capitalism has simultaneously reduced all counter-cultures to objects of commodified consumption and re-established a conservative ethos that spells the death of all experimentations aimed at transformative changes, is one of the most perverse traits of contemporary culture. I would like to cultivate the ethical life by applying the principle of joyful transformation of negative into positive affects, in courteous disagreement not only with conservatives, but also with the neo-liberal brand of Kantian cosmopolitanism defended by Nussbaum and others. From within philosophical nomadism,[3] the problem with sustainability is that it has the feel of a qualitative (intensive) criterion, but in fact it is a quantitative one.

Sustainability clashes with duration, which is not the same as pluralistic speed. Speed is a trajectory, it is spatialised and it deals with concepts like bodies or actualised entities. Duration, on the other hand, is an intensity, which deals with abstract diagrams or lines of becoming. Sustainability as a quantitative measure runs the risk of becoming effective and operational within the logic of advanced capitalism, which it aims to undermine. This is an axiomatic system capable of considering all qualities as quantities and of instrumentalising them in order to feed itself. My response to this consists in adopting instead a non-unitary vision of nomadic subjectivity, which, coupled with the idea of desire as plenitude and not as lack, produces a more transformative approach to ethical values. My stated criteria for this new ethics include: non-profit; emphasis on the collective; viral contaminations; link theory-practice, including the importance of creation. The non-Hegelian notion of the limit which I propose as the threshold of sustainability means that limits are to be seen as dynamic connectors or attractors. They need to be experimented with collectively, so as to produce effective cartographies of how much bodies can take – or thresholds of sustainability. They also aim to create collective bonds, a new affective community or polity. This must include an evaluation of the costs involved in pursuing active processes of change and of recognition of the pain and the difficulty these entail. No easy romanticism; on the contrary, I think that 'whatever gets you through the day', whatever help and support one needs to get on with it, is just fine. We need to take into account all that is or can be unsustainable: the soft, aching pain of the soul that Virginia Woolf describes with such precision; the sharp pang at the back of your head, which she captures with such cruel accuracy; the diabolical thumping ache in the belly, which makes Kathy Acker run. The point is to achieve some sense of sustainable balance – for better or for worse and for some time only.

The problem of the costs within the schizoid logic of our times concerns mostly *potestas* – the quantitative, not *potentia* or incorporeal intensities. Creation, invention, the new can only emerge from the qualitative intensities. Hence the ethical question: if in the name of encouraging (pre-individual) life, we value the incorporeal invention of quality and primarily affect and precept – if (again, following Deleuze) we insist on the incorporeal insistence of affects and precepts or becoming (as distinguished from affected bodies and perceptions of entities), how can we use a concept of sustainability to argue against the cost of fidelity to the concept or the precept? That would involve a corporeal criterion to the incorporeal; this is a conceptual double-bind and a true ethical dilemma.

How can we combine sustainability with intensity? One line I would propose, is to hold everyone, not only exceptional people like writers or thinkers, but just anyone (*homo tantum*) accountable for the ethical effort to be worthy of the production of affect and precept. It is a noble ethics of overcoming the self and stretching the boundaries of how much a body can take. The ethical question would therefore emerge from the absolute difference (or differend) between incorporeal affects, or the capacity to experiment with thresholds of sustainability and our corporeal fate as such and such an affected body. What ethical criterion can we invent in the context of this difference? How can we (simultaneously?) increase affectivities as the capacity to invent or capture affect and look after the affected bodies? In other words, what is the 'cost' of the capacity to be affected which allows us to be the vehicle of creation? What would a qualitative concept of cost be? This is the core of the nomadic ethics agenda.

Bios/Zoe ethics and *Thanatos*

My understanding of 'life' as *Bios-Zoe* ethics of sustainable transformations differs considerably from what Giorgio Agamben (1998) calls 'bare life' or 'the rest' after the humanised 'bio-logical' wrapping is taken over. 'Bare life' is that in you which sovereign power can kill: it is the body as disposable matter in the hands of the despotic force of power (*potestas*). Included as necessarily excluded, 'bare life' inscribes fluid vitality at the heart of the mechanisms of capture of the state system. Agamben stresses that this vitality, or 'aliveness', however, is all the more mortal for it. This is linked to Heidegger's theory of Being as deriving its force from the annihilation of animal life.

The position of *Zoe* in Agamben's system is analogous to the role and the location of language in psychoanalytic theory: it is the site of constitution or 'capture' of the subject. This 'capture' functions by

positing – as an *a posteriori* construction, a pre-linguistic dimension of subjectivity which is apprehended as 'always already' lost and out of reach. *Zoe* – like the pre-discursive in Lacan, the *chora* of Kristeva and the maternal feminine of Irigaray – becomes for Agamben the ever-receding horizon of an alterity which has to be included as necessarily excluded in order to sustain the framing of the subject in the first place. This introduces finitude as a constitutive element within the framework of subjectivity, which also fuels an affective political economy of loss and melancholia at the heart of the subject (Braidotti: 2002).

In his important work on the totalitarian edge of regimes of 'bio-power', Agamben perpetuates the philosophical habit, which consists in taking mortality, or finitude as the trans-historical horizon for discussions of 'life'. This fixation on *Thanatos* – which Nietzsche criticised over a century ago – is still very present in critical debates today. It often produces a gloomy and pessimistic vision not only of power, but also of the technological developments that propel the regimes of bio-power. I beg to differ from the habit that favours the deployment of the problem of *Bios-Zoe* on the horizon of death, or on the liminal state of not-life or in the spectral economy of the never-dead. Instead, I prefer to stress the generative powers of *Zoe* and to turn to the Spinozist political ontology defended by Deleuze and Guattari (1977, 1980). I propose to extend this positive approach to the discussion of death as well.

Speaking from the position of an embodied and embedded female subject I find the metaphysics of finitude to be a myopic way of putting the question of the limits of what we call 'life'. It is not because *Thanatos* always wins out in the end that it should enjoy such conceptual high status. Death is overrated. The ultimate subtraction is after all only another phase in a generative process. Too bad that the relentless generative powers of death require the suppression of that which is the nearest and dearest to me, namely myself, my own vital being-there. For the narcissistic human subject, as psychoanalysis teaches us, it is unthinkable that Life should go on without my being there. The process of confronting the thinkability of a Life that may not have 'me' or any 'human' at the centre is actually a sobering and instructive process. I see this post-anthropocentric shift as the start for an ethics of sustainability that aims at shifting the focus towards the positivity of *Zoe*. As Hardt and Negri suggest (2000) Agamben fails to identify the materialist and productive dimension of this concept, making it in fact indifferent.

Death is the ultimate transposition, though it is not final. The sacralisation of life in Christian ethics is challenged by Deleuze's theory of the becoming-animal/insect/imperceptible: *Zoe* carries on, relentlessly

generative; cells multiply in cancer as in pregnancy. Unable to live with this mindless reality, our culture has confined into the container-category of 'self-destruction' or 'nihilism' bodily practices and phenomena which are of daily significance: disaffection of all kinds; addictions of the legal (coffee; cigarettes; alcohol; over-work; achievement) and of the illegal kind (natural and pharmaceutical toxic and narcotic substances); suicide, especially youth-suicide; birth-control, abortion, and the choice of sexual practices and sexual identities; the agony of long-term diseases; life-supporting systems in hospitals and outside; depression and burn-out syndromes. Such practices tend to be assessed with reference to Christian morality and to a sacralised notion of both 'Life' and the individual who inhabits it. This reduces them to pathologies, social problems or crimes. My hope is that a non-unitary vision of the subject, combined with an ethics of sustainability, allows us to transform the habit that pathologises self-destructive practices into a process of experimentation with limits of sustainability.

We live in a culture where some people kill in the name of 'the Right to Life'. Thus, in contrast with the mixture of apathy and hypocrisy that marks the habits of thought that sacralise 'life', I would like to cross-refer to a somewhat 'darker', but more lucid tradition of thought that does not start from the assumption of the inherent, self-evident and intrinsic worth of 'life'. On the contrary, I would like to stress the traumatic elements of life in their often unnoticed familiarity. There is nothing self-evident or automatic about life – it is not a habit. I think that one has to 'jump-start' into life each and every day; the electro-magnetic charge needs to be renewed constantly: there is nothing natural or given about it. 'Life', in other words, is an acquired taste, an addiction like any other, an open-ended project. One has to work at it.

As a consequence, I find that the labour-intensive non-evidence of 'getting on with life' generates another relevant question that is: 'what is the point?' I do not mean this in the plaintive or narcissistic mode, but rather as the necessary moment of stasis that precedes action – the question mark that both prefaces and frames the possibility of ethical agency. When Primo Levi, who asked that question all his life, and struggled to answer it all his life, actually failed to find the motivation for raising the question once more, suicide followed. That gesture, however, was not the sign of moral defeat, or a lowering of one's standards. On the contrary, it expresses one's determination not to accept life at an impoverished or diminished level of intensity. As such, it is an ethically positive gesture.

Lloyd argues that (1994) on the issue of suicide Spinoza is very clear: the choice for self-destruction is neither positive, nor can it be said to be

free. The self-preservation of the self is such a strong drive that destruction can only come from the outside: a *conatus* cannot wish its own self-destruction and if it does so it is due to some physical or psychical compulsion that negates the subject's freedom. The inter-connectedness of entities means that self-preservation is a commonly shared concern. Joining forces with others so as to enhance one's enjoyment of life is the key to the ethical life; it is also the definition of a joyously lived rational life. Suicide and rationality are at odds with each other. Spinoza repudiates the 'ethic of noble suicide', as Lloyd calls it (1996: 94), but he equally refuses to make a virtue of self-denial. The greatest and perhaps the only sin for Spinoza is to succumb to external forces and thus diminish one's *potentia*.

Commenting on Primo Levi's and Virginia Woolf's suicides Deleuze – who will choose himself this way to terminate his own existence – put it very clearly: you can suppress your own life, in its specific and radically immanent form and still affirm the potency of life, especially in cases where deteriorating health or social conditions may seriously hinder your power to affirm and to endure joyfully. This is no Christian affirmation of Life nor transcendental delegation of the meaning and value system to categories higher than the embodied self. Quite the contrary, it is the intelligence of radically immanent flesh that states with every single breath that the life in you is not marked by any signifier and it most certainly does not bear your name. This is linked to the issue of costs, which I discussed earlier. The awareness of the absolute difference between intensive or incorporeal affects and the specific affected bodies that one happens to be is crucial to the ethics of choosing for death. Death is the unsustainable. This type of argument, coupled with mercy for the suffering of terminally ill patients, is also at the heart of contemporary debates on euthanasia. They are marked in the public sphere by dramatically incompatible understandings of 'Life', as well as by often unspoken vested interests. They would benefit from an injection of nomadic ethics.

André Colombat, in his comment on Deleuze's death, links the act of suppressing one's failing body, as in suicide or euthanasia, to an ethics of assertion of the joyfulness and positivity of life, which necessarily translates into the refusal to lead a degraded existence. This notion rests on a preliminary and fundamental distinction between personal and impersonal death. The former is linked to the suppression of the individualised ego, the latter is beyond the ego: a death that is always ahead of me. It is the extreme form of my power to become other or something else. An absolute and dynamic fissure that does not define the 'possible' but that

which will never end, the virtual that never gets accomplished, the unending and unceasing through which 'I' lose the power to die' (Colombat: 1996: 241).

In other words, in a nomadic philosophical perspective the emphasis on the impersonality of life is echoed by an analogous reflection on death. Life being an impersonal, or rather an a-personal force – *Zoe* in its magnificent indifference to the interests of humans – also means that death is no less so. Death is not a failure, or the expression of a structural weakness at the heart of life: it is part and parcel of its generative cycles. As such, it is a 'zero institution', in Levi-Strauss' sense: the empty shape of all possible time as perpetual becoming which can become actualised in the present but flows back to past and future. It is virtual in that it has the generative capacity to engender the actual. Consequently, death is but an obvious manifestation of principles that are active in every aspect of life, namely: the pre-individual or impersonal power of *potentia*; the affirmation of multiplicity and not of one-sidedness and the interconnection with an 'outside' which is of cosmic dimension and infinite. I would describe this as the flows of patterns of becoming in an unlimited space somewhere between the no longer and the not yet. It is a temporal brand of vitalism that could not be further removed from the idea of death as the inanimate and indifferent state of matter, the entropic state to which the body is supposed to 'return'. Death, on the contrary, is the becoming-imperceptible of the nomadic subject and as such it is part of the cycles of becomings, yet another form of inter-connectedness, a vital relationship that links one with other, multiple forces. The impersonal is life and death as *Bios-Zoe* in us – the ultimate outside as the frontier of the incorporeal.

In *Viroid Life*, Ansell-Pearson comments in a very illuminating manner on the distinction between personal and impersonal death in Deleuze's philosophy of becoming. The paradox of affirming life as *potentia*, energy, even in and through the suppression of the specific slice of life that 'I' inhabits is a way of pushing anti-humanism to the point of implosion. It dissolves death into ever-shifting processual changes, and thus disintegrates the ego, with its capital of narcissism, paranoia and negativity. Death from the specific and highly restricted viewpoint of the ego is of no significance whatsoever:

> A positive, dynamical and processual conception of death, which would release it from an anthropomorphic desire for death (for stasis, for being), speaking instead only of a death that desires (a death that is desire, where desire is construed along the lines of a machine or a machinic assemblage), can only be arrived at by freeing the becoming of death from both mechanism and finalism. (Ansell-Pearson 1997: 62–3)

Relying on Spinoza, Deleuze emphasises instead the multiplying of connections and the wealth of creativity of a self that unfolds in processes of becomings. This affirmative view of life and thought situates philosophical nomadism in a logic of positivity, rather than in the redemptive economy of classical metaphysical thought. This vision of death as process is linked to Deleuze's philosophy of time understood as endurance and sustainability.

The ethics of this position in Deleuze's work are as much indebted to Nietzsche as to Spinoza. Philip Goodchild quotes Deleuze most effectively on this point: 'Since destructive forces are always exchanged among people, it is much better to destroy oneself under agreeable conditions than to destroy others' (Goodchild 1996: 208). Against the humanistic convention, packaged as human essence, I would argue that the singularity of the subject rests in the minoritarian consciousness that unfolds itself through multiple becomings. The subject-in-becoming is the one for whom 'What's the point?' is an all-important question. A high-intensity subject is also animated by unparalleled levels of vulnerability. With nomadic patterns comes also a fundamental fragility. Processes without foundations need to be handled with care; *potentia* requires great levels of containment in the mode of framing. Because of this ethics of affirmation and positivity, a Deleuzian approach suggests that 'whatever gets you through the day', whatever life-support, mood-enhancement system one is dependent on, is not to be the object of moral indictment, but rather a neutral term of reference: a prop in the process of becoming.

Eternity within Time

Lloyd argues (1994) that the eternity of the mind makes death an irrelevance for a Spinozist vision of the subject. To understand a thing as eternal for Spinoza means understanding it as actual, as a life-force present in all things, though in different degrees. Eternity is not the same thing as 'duration' and thus it does not mean 'lasting forever'. Minds can understand themselves as partaking of a larger totality – for Spinoza this is the mind of God (*sub specie aeternitatis*) – which is by definition eternal in the enjoyment of its perfection and love. The intellectual love for such a vision makes our own mind eternal as well. Wisdom is the contemplation of the eternity of the life-forces, not the perennity of death.

Spinoza's thought is not free of contradictions on this point – notably on the distinction between the notions of 'eternity' and of 'duration' – which also affects his view of God, religion and salvation. He contests

the orthodox view of God that is upheld by major religions and defends instead the existence of an infinite and eternal God, without whom nothing exists or can be understood – given that the human mind is only a mode in the attribute of the thought of God. The mind, according to Spinoza, strives to make itself into a unity in temporal as well as spatial terms. A subject is necessarily embodied and inscribed in a temporal sequence guaranteed by his/her memory. A radical disruption of consciousness induced by death through the destruction of the body is such that the person could not survive. And yet, for Spinoza self-preservation is written into the essence of the subject and death can occur only through external causes. Setting limits to this internal complexity through qualitative analysis of costs is the key to an ethics of sustainability. Time itself sets some limits, insofar as it organises experience in a sequence of past, present and future, thus limiting the complexities and the proliferation of associations by the memory and the imagination.

The mind involves the realisation of its interconnection with other modes of thought and forces, it can thus also comprehend the rivalry with other minds and consequently external sources that can prove negative or destructive. But it cannot contemplate the possibility of its own death. As Lloyd puts it: '[D]eath is the destruction of the conatus' (Lloyd 1994: 132), and dying means ceasing to partake of that vital flow of positive and negative interactions with others, which is the distinctive trait of the embodied subject. Something in our existence will go on after death, but it is not the continued existence of the self. The mind's eternity rests on its partaking of a larger reflexive totality. But the existence of the mind is contingent upon that of the body and exists only insofar as the body actually exists. So that the mind does cease to exist with the death of the body, yet the idea of that mind/body entity does not get wiped out with the disappearance of the body. The truth of what has been the case, the subject, cannot be lost. The past remains steadfast and self-assured and is thus the true object of becoming. For the subject to understand itself as part of Nature means to perceive itself as eternal, that is to say both vulnerable and transient. It also involves, however, a temporal dimension: what we are is bound up with things that existed before and after us and some of which go on after us. Death does affect it, of course, but: '[D]eath does not have the power to make it not have been' (Lloyd 1994: 132). Being dead does not reduce us to the status of a figment of other people's imagination, but it dissolves the self into an interconnected continuum with Nature as One. Whatever happens – and death always does happen – we will have been and nothing can change that, not even death itself. The future perfect paves the road to the continuous present.

The embodied mind remains part and parcel of a larger and more articulated whole. The point of this is that we can come to this awareness during life, namely the awareness that there is something which transcends time. Once this insight is acquired, there is little to fear from actual death. I think this is a crucial passage: that the truth about the Nature of the embodied self can and must be grasped from within existence.

The crucial aspect of this notion of death is that it is the opposite of transcendence: it does not locate eternity in 'the totality of omnipresent truths' (Lloyd 1994: 137), but in the actualisation of specific patterns of forces which define each specific singularity. It makes the subject into something which 'will continue to have been' (Lloyd 1994: 138). The eternity of the mind not as duration but as the partaking of a continuing existence makes death powerless to intrude on what a subject has been. Thus, salvation occurs in the realisation of eternity within time. What makes a mind eternal is precisely the knowledge of its eternity, which in turn is determined by its power of synthesis between reason, the memory and the imagination.

In philosophical nomadism, the Life and Death forces get recoded, with Spinoza, in terms of activity and passivity; these are expressed in morally neutral terms and simply refer to that which enhances the subject's *conatus*, or *potentia* (affirmative or positive forces), as opposed to that which diminishes it (negative or reactive forces). The authority, centrality and significance of a central conscious subject dominated by the ego is reduced accordingly. Even more significant is the extent to which Deleuze disengages this ethology of forces from any dialectical scheme: life and death can occur simultaneously and even overlap, thus they do not follow the 'either/or' scheme, but rather the 'and/and/and' scheme. In her critique of the vulgarity or commonness of Freud's notion of the death-drive, Dorothea Olkowski (1999) underlines the extent to which psychoanalysis indexes the Ego to powers of desexualisation and emptying out of unconscious libidinal forces. In opposition to this entropic mode, Deleuze proposes endless contractions and expansions/duration and extensity in processual becomings or qualitative differentiations.

Death, in such a framework, is merely a point, it is not the horizon against which the human drama is played out. The centre is taken by *Bios-Zoe* and its ever-recurring flows of vitality. In and through many deaths, *Bios-Zoe* lives on. Deleuze turns this also into a critique of the whole Heidegerrian legacy which places mortality at the centre of philosophical speculation. It is against this self-glorifying image of a pretentious and egotistical narcissistic and paranoid consciousness that

philosophical nomadism unleashes the multiple dynamic forces of *Bios-Zoe* that do not coincide with the human, let alone with consciousness. These are non-essentialistic brands of vitalism.

Self-styling one's Death

In poststructuralist ethics, both God and the principle of immortality undergo a fundamental critique in terms of the embodied, and consequently mortal and partial structure of the subject. What matters is not death as the big gaping hole awaiting at the edge of (our) time, but rather the modes in which we live, perceive and negotiate with dying in the course of life by cultivating positive ethical encounters. Lest this be misunderstood for a Christian type of message let me stress again the non-theist Nature of this statement. Death is not entropy or return to inert lifeless matter, but rather the opening up of new intensities and possibilities of the in-human or non-human kind. Ansell-Pearson describes it as 'the immeasurable, the alogical, the unrepresentable' (1997: 58). Death can be experienced as becoming; as merging with the endless generative energy of a cosmos that is supremely indifferent to humans. Endorsing Blanchot against Freud, Deleuze inscribed death into life not as the dyad Eros-Thanatos, but rather as incorporeality. This is the ultimate crack: perish consciousness that we may experiment with this final leap.

As Adam Phillips notes in his remarkable cross-reading of Darwin and Freud (1999), the notion of 'transience' comes firmly to the fore of their concerns. These critical thinkers introduce a sober and more secular brand of realism, which emphasises our ability to be part of our environment – part of 'Nature' – while being aware that the human is not at the centre of it. Pragmatic realism is the key to an ethical behaviour which stresses processes of active interaction in a bio-centred, egalitarian mode, as well as the instability and flux of individual identity.

The processes of thinking, or of theoretical representation of such an embodied and embedded subject, are not only partial, but also basically defensive in structure. Consciousness is an attempt to come to terms with the forces that have already made us who we are: it is external, hetero-propelled, and *a posteriori*. More importantly, death or the transience of life (Phillips 1999) is written at the core of the subject and is integral to the life-processes. Life being desire which essentially aims at extinguishing itself, that is, reaching its aim and then dissolving, the wish to die is another way to express the desire to live. Not only is there no dialectical tension between *Eros* and *Thanatos*, but also the two forces are really just one – *Zoe* as a life-force aims to reach its own fulfilment. I think this

is the paradox that lies at the heart of the post-humanist ethics I am exploring here: that while at the conscious level all of us struggle for survival, at some deeper level of our unconscious structures, all we long for is to lie silently and let time wash over us in the perfect stillness of not-life. We thus pursue what we are ultimately trying to avoid: '[W]e are essentially, idiosyncratic suicides, but not from despair, but because it is literally our Nature to die' (Phillips 1999: 110). However, as Phillips astutely points out, the point is not that the human's innermost desire is to disappear, but rather that she/he wishes to do so in his/her own way: 'The organism wishes to die only in its own fashion. There is a death (. . .) that is integral to, of a piece with, one's life: a self-fashioned, self-created death' (Phillips 1999: 77).

The self-styling of our death is the logical complement of the notion of 'autopoiesis', or self-organisation and construction. Self-styling our death means cultivating an approach, a 'style' of conceptual creativity which sustains counter-habits, or alternative memories that do not repeat and confirm the dominant modes of representation. The aesthetic model drawn from painting or from the musical refrain is crucial to understand this mixture of conceptual rigour and creativity. The main issue at stake here is to break the cycles of inert repetitions.

The generative capacity of *Bios-Zoe*, in other words, cannot be bound or confined to the single, human individual. It rather transversally trespasses such boundaries in the pursuit of its aim, which is self-perpetuation. 'Life' is understood here as aiming essentially at self-perpetuation and then, after it has achieved its aim, at dissolution, it can be argued that it also encompasses what we usually call 'death'. Just as the life in me is not mine in the appropriative sense espoused by liberal individualism, but is rather a time-sharing device, so the death in me is not mine, except in a very circumscribed sense of the term. In both cases all 'I' can hope for is to craft both my life and my death in a mode, at a speed and fashion which are sustainable and adequate: 'I' can self-style them auto-poietically, thus expressing my essential entity as the constitutive desire to endure (*potentia*).

To reduce this fundamental desire for the stillness of being ex-centric to life to mere nihilism or self-destruction is to miss the point altogether. I would say rather that self-destructive forms of behaviour are the way – the only way – some of us humans have found to express and experience this constitutive longing for non-life, which lies at the heart of subjectivity. To desire actively to die our death is the same as wanting to live life as intensely as possible. My life is my story about dying in my own fashion – argues Phillips – thus expressing my desire as *potentia*, while

Zoe just aims to grow stronger and go further. The point of the ethics of joyful affirmation and becoming is to extract this awareness from the economy of loss, the logic of lack and the moral imperative to dwell in never-ending and unresolvable states of mourning. We need to move beyond both nihilism and the tragic solemnity of traditional morality, to grow to appreciate instead that wishing to die is an affirmation of the *potentia* of that life in me which, by definition, does not bear my name.

The kind of 'self' that is 'styled' in and through such a process is not one, nor is it an anonymous multiplicity: it is an embedded and embodied set of interrelations, constituted in and by the immanence of his/her expressions, acts and interactions with others and held together by the powers of remembrance, that is, by continuity in time.

I refer to this process in terms of sustainability and to stress the idea of continuity which it entails. Sustainability does assume faith in a future, and also a sense of responsibility for 'passing on' to future generations a world that is liveable and worth living in. A present that endures is a sustainable model of the future. Hence the importance of stopping at the second last drink/smoke/shot, before the last, fatal one. 'Enough', or 'not going too far' expresses the necessity of framing, not the common-sense morality of the mainstream cultural orthodoxy. 'Enough' designs a cartography of sustainability.

On becoming Imperceptible

How does all this relate to the project of ethics as a qualitative evaluation of the costs involved in experimenting with boundaries of sustainability? In keeping with the deep materialism of his Spinozist roots, Deleuze stresses not only the importance of shame as the motor of ethical behaviour, but also the relevance of transience for the subject. What we truly desire as humans is to disappear, to step on to the side of life and let it flow by, without actually stopping it: becoming imperceptible. And yet our fundamental drive (*conatus*) is to express the potency of life (*potentia*), by joining forces with other flows of becoming. The great animal-machine universe is the horizon of becoming that marks the eternity of life as *Bios-Zoe* and its resilience, its generative power expressed also through what we humans call death.

Indeed what we humans truly yearn for is to disappear by merging into this eternal flow of becomings, the pre-condition for which is the loss, disappearance and disruption of the self. The ideal would be to take only memories and to leave behind only footsteps. What we most truly desire is to surrender the self, preferably in the agony of ecstasy, thus choosing

our own way of disappearing, our way of dying to and as our self. This can be described also as the moment of dissolution of the subject – the moment of its merging with the web of non-human forces that frame him/her. This point of evanescence has to do with radical immanence, with the totality of the moment in which, as Jacques Lacan cynically and wittily put it, you coincide completely with your body, that is, you become a corpse. In the perspective of sustainable ethics, the same issue is dealt with with more subtlety and with considerably more compassion. Deleuze, for instance, makes a point of distinguishing death along the majority-line of becoming and that which occurs along the minority-line of Becoming.

At the point of his/her evanescence or dissolution, subjects are enfleshed entities, which are immersed, in the full intensity and luminosity of becoming. Theirs, however, is the light of phosphorescent worms, not the light of the eternal rays of some monotheistic God. This, therefore, is the glorious expression of the life-force that is *Zoe*, and not the emanation of some divine essence. Life is eternal, but this eternity is postulated on the dissolution of the self, the individual ego, as the necessary premise. The Life in me does not bear my name, 'I' inhabits it as a time-share. Whereas Christianity, even in its postmodern variations (I am thinking of Gianni Vattimo) turns this into the preface to the re-affirmation of a higher order, a totalising One in which all fragments will re-assemble and finds a harmonious re-allocation, the philosophy of radical immanence remains resolutely attached to *Zoe* – the life-force of recurrent waves of positive differences. Life endures in/as bio-centred egalitarianism on the ruins of the self-representation of a unified, controlling individual subject allegedly motivated by a self-reflexive consciousness.

Deleuze does argue that all processes of becoming aim at the becoming-imperceptible, but he thinks within the flat ontology on immanence, which encompasses both the embodiment of mind and the 'embrainment' of matter[4]. There is no collapse of being into non-being, or ontological implosion, but rather a reversal of all negativity into the great animal, the Body-Without-Organs, the cosmic echoing chamber of infinite becomings. In order to trigger a process of becoming-imperceptible, quite a transformation needs to take place in what we could call the self. I think the becoming-imperceptible is the point of fusion between the self and his/her habitat, the cosmos as a whole. It marks the point of evanescence of the self and its replacement by a living nexus of multiple interconnections that empower not the self, but the collective; not identity, but affirmative subjectivity; not consciousness, but affirmative interconnections.

It is like a floodgate of creative forces that make it possible to be actually fully inserted into the *hic et nunc* defined as the present unfolding of potentials, but also the enfolding of qualitative shifts within the subject. The paradoxical price to pay for this is the death of the Ego – understood as social identity, that is, the labels with which *potestas* has marked our embodied location. This opens the possibility of a proliferation of generative options of an altogether different kind. Ultimately all we have is what we are propelled by, namely: affects. We are constructed in these transitions and through these encounters. It is the ultimate delegation of selfhood to something that we may be tempted to call transcendence, except that it takes us into embodied and embedded perspectives, into radical immanence, not into further abstractions.

In terms of time, this strategy amounts to a qualitative leap to a sustainable future, like writing the pre-history of a future, thus fixing us at last in a present that is neither nostalgic, or backward-looking, nor euphorically confident but is actualised here and now. In this sense, Deleuze's 'becoming-imperceptible' is Deleuze's conceptual and affirmative answer to Foucault's much-celebrated and grossly misunderstood 'death of the subject'. We have to die to the self in order to enter qualitatively finer processes of becoming. To do that, to be able to sustain it, we can draw the strength from the future, and thus engender an event here and now. I want to try to connect this to the process of becoming-imperceptible, or merging with our environment, which Guattari expresses in terms of 'chaosmosis' (Guattari 1995). This marks a different time-sequence: it is a qualitative shift of co-ordinates, which I would describe as a pure process of becoming. It is the flooding of the present by possible futures, in clean break from the past if by past we mean a sedimentation of habits, the institutionalised accumulation of experience whose authority is sealed by memory and the identity it engenders. Becoming-imperceptible plunges us into the impossible, the unheard-of: an affirmative present. This is what Deleuze calls 'an event' – or the eruption of the actualisation of a sustainable future.

The becoming-imperceptible is an eruption of desire for the future which reshapes the present. Maybe it is a mistake to call it 'the future', also, because it smacks of new-age optimism. So let me rephrase this: it is a time sequence based on *Aion*, not on *Chronos*: it marks the time of becoming. It is a qualitative leap which precipitates a change of existential gear, an acceleration, a creative speed. All of this is literally invisible and cannot be perceived by the naked eye – some would call it spiritual, and yet in philosophical nomadism this movement can be conceptualised in terms of immanence. There is no imaginary available to re-present

these shifts, so no identification possible. In this sense they mark the death of the self to any notion of identity: it cannot be recognised, it is a radical displacement which traces patterns of estrangement and deterritorialisation.

Deleuze describes this in terms of 'assemblages', that is to say '*agencements*', which indicates modes of perception which are not subject-based, but are rather beyond intentionality and identification. Nonetheless, they constitute agency (as in: '*agencement*'). These processes push the subject to deferral, they are inescapable, ungraspable and beyond reflexivity; the becoming-imperceptible opens up towards the unexpected and unprogrammed. The process of becoming-imperceptible is cosmic, but not in any sentimental or holistic sense of the term. In philosophical nomadism this mode of becoming is rather linked to a sense of interconnectedness which can be rendered in terms of an ethics of eco-philosophical empathy and affectivity which cuts across species, space and time. Bio-centred egalitarianism is an ethics of sustainable becomings, of affirmative qualitative shifts which decentre and displace the human. The becoming-imperceptible is about reversing the subject towards the outside: a sensory and spiritual stretching of our boundaries. It is a way of living more intensively and of increasing our *potentia* with it, but in a manner which aims at framing, sustaining and enduring these processes by pushing them to the limit. It is the absolute form of deterritorialisation and its horizon is beyond the immediacy of life.

Becoming-imperceptible is the event for which there is no immediate representation. All we can aspire to is the recording of the experience which cannot be located either in relation to the past or the future as we may know it. In this state of becoming the individual that desired (to undergo this process) is already gone and the one who would welcome it is not yet there. Such is the paradox of nomadic subjectivity at the height of its process of becoming other-than-itself, suspended between the no longer and the not yet. The eruption of a sustainable future in the present actualises virtual possibilities in the present. It marks a qualitative transformation, the non-place where the 'no longer' and the 'not yet' reverse into each other, unfolding out and enfolding-in their respective 'outsides'. This short-circuits linear time and causes a creative conflagration. It propels a leap of faith in the world, but it is not an act that can be understood apart from the transformations and the connections it produces. 'Becoming' is a way of configuring this leap itself – the actual transmutation of values which will propel us out of the void of critical negativity, into the paradoxically generative void of positivity or full affirmation. It is a seduction into life that breaks with the spectral economy of the eternal

return of the Same, and thus transcends death: it is the becoming-world of the self.

At that point of becoming-imperceptible, all a subject can do is mark his/her assent to the loss of identity (defined as a by-product of *potestas*) and respectfully merge with the process itself, and hence with his/her environment. You may call it, for lack of a better word, the untimely presence of death; some call it 'adoration'.

If life is not human, however, it can't be divine, either, certainly not in the religious mode which is the inflated projection of the paranoia and narcissism of the Western subject in his Molar formation. Nomadic becoming-imperceptible leans towards a spirituality, which is the opposite of mysticism in the sentimental mode dear to Christianity; it is not a stepping stone to the data-bank in the sky's final cashing-in-point for our existential frequent flyer programme. Nomadic post-secular ethics is not a moral of fringe benefits interested in capitalising on well-placed moral investments, but rather an ethics of non-profit and even anti-profit. Beyond metaphysical life-insurance politics it enjoys gratuitous acts of kindness in the mode of a becoming-world of the subject. Joy in giving something away for free – even if you're not sure of having it; give it for the hell of it, let it go for the love of the world.

This profound generosity, which in Christianity used to be one with a mystical merging with the cosmos, entails the evanescence of the subject in a process of amplification of the field of being. It has a link to *jouissance* in Lacan's system in the sense of the erasure of the boundaries of the self in high eroticism. It is therefore connected to the feminine, defined as fluidity, empathy, pleasure, non-closure, a yearning for otherness in the non-appropriative mode and intensity. Becoming-imperceptible is the ultimate stage in the becoming-woman, in that it marks the transition to a larger, 'natural' cosmic order. Clarice Lispector describes it as an *oratorio*, a song of praise and of acceptance of all that is. Which, for nomadism, means being worthy of all that happens to us, in a pragmatic version of *amor fati*. All that ever happens is the recurrence of difference in successive waves of repeated, successive and excessive becomings, in which 'I' participates and gets formatted, whereas *Zoe* acts as the motor.

This ethics of becoming is a way of not taking 'Life' for granted, while praising the radical immanence of subjects: it proposes becoming-imperceptible as transcendental empiricism. The ultimate threshold is a cosmic echoing chamber that resonates like a web of interconnected, post-human, molecular and viral types of relation affects, intensities. It is the monstrous energy of the intelligent matter, the great animal, the machinic production of gods. It is indeed the case that the Life in me will go on, but

it is *Zoe*, not the rational conscious, sovereign individual. It will go on in the superior generative powers of a Life that is relentlessly not human in its power to endure, in its obscene capacity to fulfil the vitality that animates it. Life will go on, as *Zoe* always does. So much so as to render obsolete the classical dilemma: 'Choose Life (*Bios*), not Death (*Thanatos*)!' – and replace it with: 'Give me life (*Zoe*) *and* hence – give me Death.'

The ethical answer to this false dilemma in other words is that of Molly Bloom in Joyce's *Ulysses*, or of Deleuze at the end of his life. She says: 'Yes I will, yes,' as she opens her heart and comes. And he says: 'Yes I will,' he says, as he opens that window and goes. A fragile and yet enduring affirmation: yes! The rest is silence.

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Notes

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2. I am most grateful to Arnaud Villani for some very enlightening conversations on this topic at the Deleuze conference at Trent University, in May 2004.
3. I am very grateful to Yves Abrioux for clarifying this point to me at the Deleuze conference in Cologne in July 2004.
4. I am borrowing this vivid expression from John Marks.

Chapter 10

The Limits of Intensity and the Mechanics of Death

Dorothea Olkowski

Imagine yourself in the midst of some milieu, some process of continuous *differenciation*, characterised by rapidly changing events and personages, a sense of expectation – what if there is a glimpse, a shudder, a leap, something else? What if there emerges some evanescent darkness, some momentary shift invested with the misery of an onslaught of disturbing reverberations? Responding to this in confusion, perhaps you construct an Idea, a structure, a multiplicity, a system of multiple, nonlocalisable ideal connections which is then incarnated. It is incarnated in real (not ideal) relations and actual (physical) terms, each of which exists only in relation to each other, reciprocally determining each other. What is essential is the movement from ideal or virtual structure to actual incarnation, from the conditions of a problem to the terms of its solution, from differential elements and ideal connections to actual terms and diverse real relations constituting, at each moment, the actuality of time, the time of processes, of differenciation, of connections.[1] So you slip into the construction of an Idea whose intensities produce appearances redolent of harsh wind, dark days, gloomy landscapes.

What solution does this Idea offer? It might allow you to encounter a physical Idea as the distribution of the shuddering disturbances and to go on with your life. After all, you *are* a busy person with a lot of responsibilities and important work to accomplish; people are listening to you, counting on you. In the meantime, you reach for an umbrella, whether you need it or not. Or, you might slip into the construction of a different kind of problem, a biological Idea, one whose ideal elements are oriented by the varieties of sublimations generated by the affinities of their antidepressive *pharmakon*, in which case, you reach for Prozac or make an appointment with your therapist. Or, you might slip into a social Idea, wherein the ideal connections between production and property as established by labour or the owners of the means of production incarnated

in diverse societies condition its actualisation in your society, with the result that certain sectors enjoy guilt-free lives of leisure, while others dementedly drive themselves to labour, dedicate themselves to every imperative of production, every rule of law and embody this as the highest virtue. Each of these trajectories is a possible solution to a possible problem whose form of expression and form of content intertwine, determining one another in the system-series of signs that emerges in space.[2]

If, in this trajectory, you did not instantaneously perceive, conceive and act on what interests you, your conventional responses, your responsibilities or your important work – or on a less coarse level but what would have been the same thing, if you, meaning what is provisionally 'you', were not simply enveloped by the myriad forces competing to compose you, the singular points and differential connections forming and reforming on the continuum – you may have entertained an interval in which to contemplate and to pose a question from out of your own duration. Not transcendent contemplation, but contemplation from inside, a discrete life, the duration of an ontological consciousness without a soul. Is it possible that neither the perception–conception–action nexus nor the conception of continuous relational processes smoothly assembling and reassembling in space is the whole story?[3]

If you, philosophers, theorists, writers, whomever, if you sustain this slowdown, if you abandon your romance with intensity and multiplicity, your preoccupation with your individuation, your subject status, your personality, your fascinating contacts and connections, with the infinite and n-dimensional ideal and actualisable relations overtaking you continuously, you may exist elsewhere than on these trajectories, in between their virtual existence. You may exist in the slow-down as Idea or as events, without these multiplicities actualising you, actualising others, actualising the world. Eventually, yes, something will have to happen. Something, some motions, some perceptible flow or immanent becoming, some increase or decrease in power, immediately influences the plane of immanence that constitutes your processes, affecting this emptiness, this consciousness without a subject, this life without an object (Deleuze 2001: 25, 26, 27). In this sense, on your plane of immanence, there is no opposition between the beings you are and the beings that inform you. The virtual multiplicity, the Idea and its actualisation as actual beings unendingly connected, implicated in and implicating other beings, ceaselessly affecting one another, operates as a universal, yet nevertheless fails to consider your vulnerable sensibilities, your perspective, your zone of indetermination.

It has been remarked that:

> We are used to the idea that a physical theory can describe an infinitude of different worlds. This is because there is a lot of freedom in their application. Newton's physics gives us the laws by which particles move and interact with one another, but it does not otherwise specify the configurations of the particles. Given any arrangement of the particles that make up the universe, and any choices for their initial motions, Newton's laws can be used to predict the future . . . Newton's theory describes an infinite number of different worlds, each connected with a different solution to the theory, which is arrived at by starting with the particles in different positions. However, each solution to Newton's theory describes a single universe. [4]

Every trajectory is defined by these same laws, laws that specify the movement and interaction of particles. The rules are given; what may be contingent are the particular particles themselves, that is, which particles enter into any given trajectory. Which affects. Which percepts. Which concepts. This cannot be predicted, thus every configuration of particles produces a different world. But what does not alter are the rules themselves that specify the movement and interaction of particles. Moreover, in these worlds, space and time are given not emergent. They are the pre-existent manifold, and time in particular is simply a parameter of space, a fourth dimension, a means for differentiating different spaces, but not a temporalisation. Duration disappears, the space-time manifold is always, already given.

But what if it were possible to theorise a world in which different observers 'see' partly different, partial views of the universe, partial views which nonetheless overlap? Would this imply a dependence on the location of the observer, on the observer's unique duration, not the flow that constitutes her, but the information that constructs her perspective – her spatio-*temporalisation*? Recall the image of a cone, so intimately identified with Henri Bergson's concept of ontological memory, that memory created by the imperceptible influences of events in the world on a vulnerable sensibility. Under the sign of this cone, the entire past coexists with each new present in relation to which it is now past:

> Memory, laden with the whole of the past, responds to the appeal of the present state by two simultaneous movements, one of translation, by which it moves in its entirety to meet experience, thus contracting more or less, though without dividing, with a view to action; and the other of rotation upon itself by which it turns toward the situation of the moment.[5]

All of this occurs, as if these memories were repeated a vast but not infinite number of times in the many possible contractions of any past life,

but always altering, altering in each so-called repetition under the influence of intersecting networks of events. These *different planes* are myriad in number but not infinite. They stand in relations of simplicity and contiguity, influencing one another and influencing the present for the sake of action or restraint. For any present, for any perspective emerging from this past, there is the influence of the many layers of the past and of many interactions, networks of interacting events.

How like this is to what is called *the past light cone of an event*:

> The causal past of an event consists of all the events that could have influenced it. The influence must travel from some event in the past at the speed of light or less. So the light rays arriving at an event form the outer boundary of the past of an event and make up what we call the *past light cone of an event*.[6]

But what if, rather than a single cone, every perspective and every event consists of a multiplicity (not an infinity) of cones linked to one another, 'combinatorial structures', that have been called 'spin networks', networks giving rise to self-organised, critical behaviour. Keep in mind that the causal structure of events evolves and the motion of matter is a consequence of evolution. This brings forth the following conjecture. What if, we conjecture, what if smooth or continuous space-time are useful illusions, and what if from the perspective of a different system, the world can be said to be composed of discrete events, events on a very small scale, but nevertheless, events discontinuous with respect to both space and time on that very small scale?[7] Under such conditions, what would be observed, what would be discerned?

If, in the midst of a certain trajectory, one characterised by gloom and darkness, if you enter a slowdown, evading speed, eluding intensity, if you are pushed or fall into the conflicted space of catastrophic discreteness or, if the parameters of your global field simply shift, then something unexpected, some unforeseen influences may permeate your boundary. Perhaps, you begin to feel the earth to be no longer callous and unsympathetic, no longer full of hatred and indifference, and a sort of gracefulness and ease envelops the world. If you feel buoyant, delicate, and all your gestures, imaginings and thoughts proceed from this grace, then perhaps what is taking place is an emergent, critical organisation, a spatio-temporalisation. Events seemingly far into the past of the world approach, pure light radiating across the spectrum, transmitting and influencing 'you', by which I mean your sensibilities, not only what sees and is seen but hearing and things heard, touching and things touched, taste and things tasted, smell and odours, and beyond this, all the imperceptible

particles, bodies working on bodies, friendly or ferocious.[8] By their motions, these illuminations have 'altered the shade of a thousand perceptions and memories, pervading them' (Bergson 1959: 8–12). Imperceptibly, perhaps improbably, your 'I' itself becomes incandescent, your fissured identity radiates its own luminescence, you are not forced immediately or mediately into the multiplicities of the trajectory, the gathering together, the fragments of ideal differentiated connections immanent to their explosion, but you too become light, subtly altering, reflecting, refracting, dispersing, influencing. You have travelled to a new world. Beauty, the unpredictable, might be once again thinkable.

The continuum of differen*t*iation/differen*c*iation is the field of pure immanence, as a system, its primary processes are not the same as those under consideration here. These processes involve the construction of a vulnerable duration, a sensitive contingency, an ontological spatio-temporalisation, an ever-changing perspective in the heterogeneity of space and time. Such a perspective, if it is thinkable, if it is real, could manifest itself as a sort of history, not a linear, causal chain, but a complex causality, layers and layers of events, always susceptible to realignment, to patterns and particles resolving their scintillation and constructing an ontological memory below the speed of light. These primary processes, imperceptible, ephemeral, evanescent, influence one another and in this, they influence the sensibility of human beings. This is not yet perception, for it does not yet imply typical perceptual pre-requisites, thought-like mental processes such as description, inference and problem solving, no matter how unconscious or nonverbal.[9] Rather, given that this is something much more difficult to situate, it is also much more likely to be overlooked. It is the manner in which events (including very tiny events) influence and alter one another and so influence and alter human sensibility, all sensibility. These influences are not the objects of perception nor of consciousness; they cannot be experienced as increases or decreases of power, as the raising or lowering of intensities. They are, in some sense, passive and primary. If they are noticed at all, it is insofar as they are *felt*, felt as pleasure, felt as pain, as expansion and diffusion, as distress. Their influence on sensibility comes via the sensory system, but as ontological not personal memory, it is manifest in the exceptional absorption and emission of each event-organism – purely contingent, subject to alteration, but circumscribing what is characteristic of each sensibility as an original spatio-temporalisation. It is the way, all of a sudden, your eyes crack open when you smile; it is the unnecessary bow you often add to the ceremony when you are introduced; it is the way you cut your hair shoulder length, for the moment neither long nor short; it is an absolute,

immediate, non-conscious consciousness, an ontological unconscious whose passive existence no longer refers to an individual or to a being but is unceasingly suggested in the reflection, refraction and dispersion of light, in a spectrum.[10]

Discrete processes infiltrate even perceptions, percolating through them, saturating them with their colouring, their diffractions, prismatic and spectral, stunning in their range. This is not the same system as that of the catastrophe which forms without connection in place of adjunct fields gathered together and singularities exploding, but the catastrophe, discrete in space and time, that prepares our thought for this more ephemeral, shimmering construction. Persisting on the cusp, the edge between attractors, in the intimacy of a life, something like temporalisation is already thinkable, for the temporal dimension of a cusp is that of a change, be it separation or unification (Casti 1994: 72). But this is not the personal memory of a subject, nor the memory of a resemblance, nor the memory of intensities, but the ontological memory of a new life that begins again, completely new, at each catastrophic moment. Ideas on continuous manifolds exist as multiplicities; they determine everything in multiple trajectories; they actualise worlds; they form a vast field of virtualities. Their actualisation may be called creation, insofar as actual beings do not resemble virtual Ideas, but their rules of formation do not change (Deleuze 1994: 212). And yet, between one event and the next lies the abyss – the realm in which nothing occurs – no movement, no intensities, no individuation. Nothing gathers together the adjunct fields, nothing connected to nothing, thus there will be no condensation, no sublime explosion of the ideal into the actual. All around you, such activities, such actualisations continue unabated, unfolding the universal, each Idea connected with every other, busily varying themselves, forming new multiplicities and breaking them up, oriented by the dream of complete determination.

Morning arrives; imperceptible neural circuits prepare habitual responses, so-called automatic reactions or involuntary movements. Yet alerted by the beginnings of the intensive sensations, something may intervene. Your body, your ears, eyes, skin and nose, your neural circuits, your elements, all radiate the myriad imperceptible processes reaching you, contracting them in a perspective. You lie in bed, awake but not moving, as the past gathers itself through you. You may be asubjectively conscious of the emergence of something unanticipated, unspecified, yet inevitable. Not only is your response altered, your existence is now reforming. These incidents, altering, reflecting, refracting, absorbing, emitting are not the expression of a concept but the

construction of a temporality from out of the light which reaches you from the stars. This is not the world of good or evil, subject or object, problems or solutions but the world of nonintensive heterogeneous movement-moments, assembled from the relations between myriad luminous influences by a universe that views itself from within, and you are its eyes as well as its ears, nose, skin and mouth. When the resulting spatio-temporalisation, the effect of these imperceptibles is realised, brought into the present out of the past that never was a now, encountered in that present as pleasure or pain, expansion-diffusion or distress, it becomes real. Out of this, is it possible to construct a life whose sensibilities are vulnerable and subtle, vast yet circumscribed, where pleasure and pain arise from radiance and obscurity, crossing over and interfering with one another, rays of light, not a number but particles, energy, acceleration over unperceivable distances?

Yet, the continuous manifold, that axiomatic expressing sense, generating events, presses on. Its 'neutrality' permits sense to be distributed as the expressed subsisting in propositions and as the event occuring in states of bodies. Surprisingly, however, sometimes, in circumstances not clearly defined, perhaps undefinable in terms of translucence and genesis, sometimes production collapses or the smooth surface of continuity is rent open by explosive forces or by something so negligible as a snag. Then, it is rumoured, bodies fall back into their depths, words lose their sense and become nothing but bodily affections, pure sounds. How can this happen? If the univocity of Being inhabits a surface, if all heights and depths have been brought to the surface for the sake of ontological intelligibility, how can anything slide off the surface, fall through the topological limit of the skin or fall beneath the neutrality of sense?[11] The words 'metaphysical surface' tell us very little about the boundary between corporeal depth and the distribution of language or expression. The observation that there is a physics of surfaces as the effect of deep mixtures may be 'true', however, whether or not this or any physics is capable of endlessly assembling the variations and pulsations of the *entire* universe, enveloping them inside mobile limits, remains to be seen. Moreover, what are the implications of the claim that the physics of surfaces is an *effect of deep mixtures*? If such mixtures are actual (real in space and time), and their surface effects are virtual (real but not actual), then do bodies fall back into their depths or are they always already there, expressed on the surface only by means of sense?

The history of philosophy is overrun with themes of heights, depths, surfaces, lateral movements, directionality, symmetry, asymmetry, movement high to low, low to high, levels, layers, interiority and exteriority.

This is not accidental. We find ourselves unable to think without such preoccupations. We do not know if there is anything to say without these themes, or if they are, at least some of them, absolutely necessary to philosophy. In fact, they are more than themes. They are essential ontological questions. Ontologically, we take our orientation from them, regardless of what we might wish to proclaim regarding the primacy of phenomena. But every idea, every structure and every event has some limit. It is precisely such limits that are of interest here. Ontologically then, the question is, is it possible to recognise these limits, yet to maintain an ontology in which Being is univocal, in which being is said of each and every thing in the same way? Consequently, no hierarchy, no privileged beings.[12] Beginning with the differential continuum, the surface, the transcendental field, the frontier between corporeal depth and language or expression. What are the limits of the surface? On it, something is continuously produced, and produced as a continuum, a process of production, an endless process producing, recording and distributing. Recall the limits of Kant's first critique. We said that speculative pure reason gives way to practical reason, for what matters is what a consciousness can *do*. Thus categories of freedom, which provide an axiomatic for the *acts* of any *intelligible* being, which do not refer to sensible experience nor to theoretical understanding, are now crucial. They *produce* the reality to which they refer; for Kant they produce an intention of the will but one that is removed from human experience – the more pure the better. When a consciousness is unclouded and translucent . . . anything can happen. In the sensible encounter, the faculties are stirred; they are shaken and set in motion. This, it has been argued, is what puts thought in motion, frees it from the empirical and from categories, from both resemblance and recognition. Sartre has provided the clue for how to proceed, having argued that the unity given by the *I Think* need not accompany all our representations. The pure transcendent consciousness, no longer burdened with the task of unification need never be confused with the *I am*. The purely animal will, sensuous and impulsive, pathological and perverse sets thought in motion only in order to free itself from its affects, its inclinations, its weakness, its depravity, its unworthiness (Kant 1965: A800–4; B828–32).

Kant has advised us that we can overcome this empirical weakness by looking into the mirror. Looking in the mirror, we see what we cannot otherwise see, not our own reflection, but that of the Ideal, the unconscious that conditions our thought. Visible only through their mirrored reflection, but functioning always to regulate the understanding and to provide a rule for what are called free acts of the will, Ideas, the concepts

of reason, have no object that can be met within any experience; they are heuristic fictions, thought-entities. When we do think these Ideas, we think something whose propositions are indemonstrable, blind, haphazard, incomprehensible. The discovery of the Ideas of freedom – God, soul, world – is tantamount to the discovery of the unconscious. Laws of Nature tell us only what does happen. Laws of freedom *reflect on us*, tell us what ought to happen. The Idea subsumes its object in the form of a single continuity:

> However, while it is true that continuousness must be related to Ideas and to their problematic use, this is on condition that it be no longer defined by characteristics borrowed from the sensible or even geometric intuitions . . . Continuousness truly belongs to the realm of Ideas only to the extent that an ideal cause of continuity is determined.[13]

Neither fixed quantities of intuition, nor variable quantities in the form of concepts of the understanding operate here. Intuitions are particulars; concepts of the understanding are generalities; both are cancelled. 'We have passed from one genus to another, as if to the other side of the mirror.'[14]

Forced to their limits, each faculty is disrupted, the unity its transcendental exercise provides fragments. Without the unity of the *I Think*, each 'representation' is *not mine*, and the faculty of intuition, rather than identifying, forces sensibility in the apperception of space and time through what is imperceptible, what *it* cannot recognise, that is, the coexistence of contraries. In its confusion it must call upon the faculty of concepts and the faculty of Ideas to pose a problem, to make sense of what is utter nonsense. Thus perplexed, driven by nonsense, the transcendental Idea is aroused, but we have no knowledge of it. Rather, lacking concepts, the imperceptible, the sign, brings forth the power of transcendental memory. Lacking the unity of an *I Think*, lacking any sensible, which is to say, empirical recognition in a concept, the final faculty comes forth grasping whatever in the world concerns it and brings it into being. What is it that the faculties can do? What faculties can do is a matter of *practical power*, of will, of desire. The power of an *I Think* is an illusion; the power of will freed of the *I Think* is a power that freely produces the world – without subjects, without objects. Only the power of the virtual, the power of abstract production, will itself, desire itself, is real. As ontological forces, the faculties are productive, they produce the reality to which they give sense. Thus, the transcendental Ideas, connection, conjunction, disjunction, derived from the logical categories of *relation* are the modes of production. They connect the part-objects into

desiring-machines, they carry out the dis-organisation or dis-tribution, and consummation-actualisation of the flayed manifold of free will, free of causality. The divine manifold of disorganisation and distribution is here to order and organise, to produce both thought and the world, to spit out entities that look like subjects or objects or worlds but are merely effects. God, after all, has already been defined as the pure *a priori* manifold of space, out of which things are determined to coexist in one time through the mutual determination of their position so as to constitute a whole. 'Either here or there', Kant confirms, each appearance stands *outside* of every other. So if we no longer define the transcendental Idea by characteristics borrowed from sensible or geometric intuitions, then the continuity of the manifold is not given as the pure form of intuition. The continuity of the manifold is given only as the transcendental Idea, the ideal production, the ideal distribution of the disjunctive synthesis in which each *simulacrum* is distributed *without relation to any other*, upon which the ideal free wills are actualised.

It is a sublime Idea, dynamical and distributive, arising not as the ideal of harmony, but as the genetic power of violence – 'the *dark precursor* – enabling communication between difference as such, making the different communicate with difference: the dark precursor is not a friend.'[15] The genetic principle is violence and violence is axiomatic. Not *philo-sophia*, liking wisdom, inclined to wisdom, but *miso-sophia*, hating wisdom, that is to say, embracing disharmony. 'Nature, to be precise, is power. In the name of this power things exist *one by one* without any possibility of their being gathered together *all at once*.'[16] The power of Nature is not the Kantian Idea of world; world like subject is an effect of the power of Nature which is the Idea expressed through disjunctive synthesis. The power of Nature is the divine power to break apart anything that has been connected, transforming every 'and . . . and . . . and' into 'or . . . or . . . or'. The remainder is the world, the residuum is the subject, an effect of the intensive states through which it passes. It is the conjunction of fragments, bands of intensity, potentials, thresholds and gradients; harrowing, emotionally overwhelming, living and consuming every intensity, every affect and percept, living every concept.[17] The great danger here would be slowness. Even the speed of light is slow when speed is everything; speed is Nature/God; it is divine energy. Otherwise, the simple connections become unified, part-objects harmonise, habits form, relations appear where previously there were only continuous connections. If Nature/God is slow, it falls behind its divine task, which is to disconnect what has been connected, to keep separate, to tear apart what otherwise might be related. For if sensibility

is connected to understanding and understanding is connected to reason, it is a simple matter to conclude that if there is sensibility then there must also be reason. Then reason will trace its path through the empirical. Then the *I Think* will accompany all of our representations, then we will represent to ourselves a world. But this world would be an illusion and insofar as we live this illusion, its *necessary* and inevitable products are schizo or paranoic or catatonic states, inescapably the effects of the divine manifold's differential distribution, the *axiomatic*, its *axion*, what is thought to be worthy, what has value.[18] Following from this axiomatic, any being completely cut off from synthesis manifesting a zero degree of desire would fall into catatonia; but both to affirm and deny, to be taken up and connected, then to have those connections torn apart is to live the heroic, human life, the life of Prometheus, torn apart, *disjoined*, every moment of every day, reconnected, *conjoined* by morning, inheritor of a tortured, harrowing world.[19] Nothing in these processes is personal, yet all are real. Given the divine axiomatic, the dark precursor, the violent, disjunctive synthesis, the transcendental Idea that distributes each *simulacrum* without relation to any other. 'Our belief in gods rests upon *simulacra* which seem to dance, to change their gestures, and to shout at us promising eternal punishment – in short, to represent the infinite.' (Deleuze 1990: 277) What can this portend if not that the transcendental Idea of the world has altered? We are no longer protected from the ravages of the mathematical and dynamical sublime.

So it appears that given the disharmony, the violence that unhinges each faculty, even those not yet discovered, none of these operations will be what they once were. What will be connected? What will be conjoined? And disjunction, will it synthesise either/ors or affirm them all, independently of one another? If thought is truly not to trace a line through the empirical, then everything rises to the surface and the transcendental Idea of the pure *a priori* manifold out of which all things are determined to coexist organises them all. Denied the satisfaction of repetition, both the understanding and sensibility pose new problems, again and again and again. Just as sensibility fails with respect to recognition, the faculty of cognition fails with respect to representational identity. Pushed to its limits, it must think new concepts; it is the continuous creation of concepts, a harrowing consumption of intensities (Duleuze 1994: 140–5). What matters is not what an individual *consciousness* can do, but what *does*, what *gives*, what provokes thought and what is thought in a continuous process driven by the dark precursor, the violent axiomatic in which every connection is violently disjoined, the conjoined, violently oscillating. Clearly, a parallel has been established

between the divine productive manifold of desiring-production and forms of social production. But can we claim more? Can we say that the dark precursor inclines us in the direction of Hesiod's sombre myth of creation?

> Some say that Darkness was first, and from Darkness sprang Chaos. From a union between Darkness and Chaos sprang Night, Day, Erebus, and the Air.
>
> From a union between Night and Erebus sprang Doom, Old Age, Death, Murder, Continence, Sleep, Dreams, Discord, Misery, Vexation, Nemesis, Joy, Friendship, Pity, the Three Fates, and the Three Hesperides.
>
> From a union between Air and Day sprang Mother Earth, Sky, and Sea.
>
> From a union between Air and Mother Earth sprang Terror, Craft, Anger, Strife, Lies, Oaths, Vengeance, Intemperance, Altercation, Treaty, Oblivion, Fear, Pride, Battle; also Oceanus, Metis, and the other Titans, Tartarus, and the three Erinnyes, or Furies.
>
> From a union between Earth and Tartarus sprang the Giants.[20]

Every union is undone by its own discordant productions; for every connection, a disjunctive synthesis emerges to separate each event both from its sense and from other events, destroying codes, pushing ahead of itself the detritus of life, actualising it as pure value, the value of savagery, tyranny or capital.

Are discord and violence one with the real? Consider the social production of capital, with its own dark precursor, the axiomatic that breaks apart every connection in order to capitalise it, to value it in terms of money and nothing but money. Is this violence the inevitable and necessary outcome of divine disjunction? Certainly, if this is the case, then the synthesis of schizos and of an axiomatic of abstract quantities (money) – moving further and further in the direction of the deterritorialisation of the socius, destroying all connections, unleashing free will, producing isolated bodies and nonsignifying sense – then that too is real, all of it. [21] Perhaps this is why 'no political program will be elaborated within the framework of schizoanalysis', the *miso-philosophe* does not mix 'himself' up in politics but commits to a mechanical view of the real, doing away with fear of the gods, who do not exist, as well as fear of punishment in the afterlife, which is a dream, practising cheerfulness, moderation, temperance and simplicity, in order to live as pleasantly as possible, without illusion, in a world whose continuous production of expression (prospects, percepts, affects, concepts) makes it interesting enough to live in, but whose violent axiomatic makes it ultimately, a world from which one willingly departs. [22]

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Notes

1. Deleuze 1994: 183. Pages from the original French are given in parentheses. It remains somewhat difficult to see how any 'one' constructs anything, rather, any 'one' seems mostly to respond to what constructs one.
2. Deleuze 1994: 184–7. I have discussed system-series in Olkowski 1999: 186–7.
3. Deleuze 2001: 25. I am playing with the Deleuzian idea of immanence, but not embracing it. Nor am I claiming that there is a view from outside, that is, a transcendental point of view. See Smolin 2001: 47, 53–7. See also Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 482–92 for their account of the smooth and striated space.
4. Smolin 2001: 42–3. The conception of a continuous manifold does not challenge the basic tenets of classical theory.
5. Bergson 1988: 168–9. I have attempted to render the operations of affectivity and ontological memory in all their complexity in *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation* (Olkowski 1999: 109–15).

6. Smolin 2001: 58. I would like to claim that this similarity is conceptual and not merely metaphorical, yet I am fully aware that such claims are subject to a variety of interpretations.
7. Smolin 2001: 58–65. I owe much here to Smolin's simplified explanations of quantum gravity as well as to discussions with Marek Grabowski who guided me through the more complicated mathematical aspects of these concepts. Misinterpretations of these concepts are entirely of my own doing. I have tried to stretch these concepts without distorting them. This can be difficult since, in mathematics, context is everything and implications beyond very precise contexts can easily be disputed.
8. My source for the description of light and photons is Kaler 1992: 36–9.
9. See for example, Rock, 1984: 234–5. Rock differentiates between experience and perception (rightly so) and even proposes that perception may precede conscious reasoning in evolution, making thought a modification of perception.
10. Deleuze 2001: 27. Again, I am extending the Deleuzian conception outside of the field in which it was instituted.
11. Deleuze 1990: 125. For sense in relation to bodies and to language see my *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation* (Olkowski 1999: 214–25. On the 'neutrality' of sense see Badiou 2000: 34.
12. I have discussed univocity in Olkowski 1999: 22–8; 138–9.
13. Deleuze 1994: 171. Thus Ideas cannot be known by any empirical means. The Idea of the continuous manifold is a pure universal and we pass from one genus to another *as if to the other side of the mirror*.
14. Deleuze 1994: 171. Thus the universal can consist neither of particulars nor generalities. What is left?
15. Deleuze 1994: 145. Thus the dismissal or overturning of the Platonic friendship in philosophy, a friendship calling for harmony and unity. See Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 2–6.
16. Deleuze 1990: 266–7. ('The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy') Nor can things be united in any combination adequate to Nature which would then express them all at once.
17. Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 19, 20 Deleuze and Guattari attribute the idea of consumption of intensities to Antonin Artaud. On this point, I demur. See Artaud 1970: I, 112.
18. See 'axiology' and 'axiom,' *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*.
19. Holland 1999: 35. Holland describes catatonia as no syntheses of any kind, paranoia as repelling connective syntheses, and schizophrenia as affirming both connective and disjunctive synthesis and therefore the only synthesis that actually produces a subject. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that schizophrenia is an affirmation of disjunction and conjunction, the latter being a fragmented, tortured world, not a connected and coded world.
20. Hesiod: *Theogony* 211–12, cited in Graves 1980: 33–4. Erebus, in addition to being the brother of Night, is the name for the dark passage under the earth, between earth and Hades.
21. Deleuze and Guattari are quite cagey about this. In *Anti-Oedipus* they state that the parallel between desiring production and social production is merely phenomenological, that they are not drawing conclusions about the nature and relationship of the two and that they are not providing any sort of *a priori* answer to the question of whether the two are *separate and distinct productions* (1983: 10). Capitalism is clearly identified as violent in its decoding and deterritorialisation (breaking apart all connections) and doing this from within, destroying the coded socius in order to make it a Body-Without-Organs (1983: 33). However, it is desire that produces, real desire or 'the real in itself', and

social processes are among its productions, thus social and desiring production are the same production, although under two different regimes. (1983: 379, 380).

22. Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 380. See also *What is Philosophy?* for an account of these forms of expression. The prescriptions regarding how to live are the practices espoused by Epicurus.

Chapter 11

The Problem of the Birth of Philosophy in Greece in the Thought of Gilles Deleuze

Philippe Mengue

What does it mean today to speak of intensities in the domain of political philosophy? The intensive, says Deleuze, is the untimely[1]. To be untimely, for Deleuze, is the essential task of philosophy, its paradoxical intensity – and on this point, I am in total agreement with him. But still the question must be raised – what is it to be untimely today, in our postmodern situation? That is the point.

In order to open a space for reflection on these questions, I would like to examine the difficulty and the problem that Gilles Deleuze encounters when he discusses the birth of philosophy. To understand the sense in which democracy presents him with a problem, I will specify his own philosophical context. In fact, I propose to take a certain distance from Deleuze's political philosophy, but my intention is not at all to invalidate or to devalue it; I maintain that his is among the few capable of helping us to understand our present. My objective is to circumscribe a political attitude that I qualify as being arrogant towards democracy – rather than anti-democratic. This attitude has been widespread in France in the ambience that followed May 1968, and continues to be among us in the intellectual world of the human sciences and, particularly, philosophy. This attitude strikes me as lacking untimeliness – at times, even as harmful and not justified by the principles that lie at the foundations of the Deleuzian philosophical system of the multiple. *Contra Deleuzum sed pro vero Deleuzo!* (Against Deleuze then, in order to be with Deleuze!). From my point of view, the effort to establish the question of democracy as one of the most burning and difficult issues is the most untimely of all.

I approach the question of democracy from the vantage point of its birth in Greece, because Deleuze's strategy, which deals with it in the fourth chapter – 'Geophilosophy' – of *What Is Philosophy?* is exemplary with respect to his political position. The analysis that I propose should

allow us to elucidate and recommend what we must hold today as untimely.

Deleuze's Intention

Deleuze's intention is very clear and without ambiguity: the birth of philosophy has no intrinsic linkages to democracy. In a more general way, his thesis withholds all value from human rights and Western liberal democracies, for the reason (traditional ever since Marx, and, therefore, for us today, lacking in untimeliness) that they maintain with capitalism a tie that cannot be undone. 'Human rights will not make us bless capitalism,' he declares (WIP: 107).

Deleuze paints a horrific and cynical image of economic liberalism and the market economy. This unilateral and sectarian vision – conveying a scathing anger and hatred – suggests that, thanks to their link with the capitalist market, liberal democracies are 'isomorphous' with the most bloody dictatorships, even Nazism (WIP: 107). Hence, the shame of being human becomes 'one of philosophy's most powerful motifs' (WIP: 108). Accordingly, philosophy's untimely task must be the strong denunciation of 'the ignominy of the possibilities of life that we are offered' in liberal democracies (WIP: 109–10). I will not disguise the fact that these pages, and others in *A Thousand Plateaus* of the same tenor, repel me for their exaggeration and injustice, and, above all, for their implied break from the Spinozist and Nietzschean ethical ideal.

The shame and guilt that cause Nietzsche disgust are well known, and it is not worth expanding upon. Spinoza, despite emerging from religious wars, despite recovering from the shock of the de Witt brothers' assassination, and despite living in a monarchic and aristocratic Europe where the most insolent luxury rubbed shoulders with the last famine, was nonetheless prone, without contempt or sniggers, to reserve the affects of shame, fear and hope for the political domain only, and not for philosophy in general, as Deleuze has done. For the sake of dealing with the multitude and securing the highest political value of the state – security – Spinoza saw no other way than to appeal to our passive sentiments (hope included), that is, to the lot of our servitude and powerlessness. These are the same affects that Nietzsche, in direct line with Spinoza (whom he was considering as his only precursor), would later call 'reactive'; he would detect in them the root of powerlessness and *ressentiment*. Spinoza reserved these affects for the political realm, where he thought that they were indispensable; accordingly, he excluded them completely from the life and liberty of the Sage and from authentic philosophical life. Despite

the continuity of the text, the ethics of the fifth book rests on values and principles that differ in nature from those of politics. The latter finds its own values and principles in the management of negative passions, which are studied in the fourth book of his *Ethics*, under the suggestive title 'Of Human Bondage or the Strength of the Affects'. Politics is not the place of authentic human liberty. Freedom finds in the state and in politics the conditions necessary (but insufficient by themselves) for real liberty. The latter is of another nature and belongs only to the man or woman who lives as an individual under the sole authority of Reason (Book V: 'Of the Power of the Intellect, or of Human Liberty').

We are therefore confronted with a serious problem. The praise that Deleuze offers Spinoza in *What is Philosophy?* is well known: he makes him the 'Christ of philosophers', 'the infinite becoming-philosopher', the one who 'drew up . . . the "best" plane of immanence' (WIP: 60). How then, could Deleuze forget Spinoza's praise of democracy and his radical critique of shame, contempt and satirical snigger – things that, in the eyes of Spinoza, represent the basic, professional affects of 'philosophers' that he himself never tired of denouncing in his works? The magnificent beginning of the *Political Treatise* (Chap. 1, s. 1), together with the introduction to Book III of *Ethics* and the famous '*neque ridere, neque flectere sed intelligere*', render the ethical position of Deleuze vis-à-vis the present situation anti-Spinozist – grounded as it is on derision, shame and haughty contempt. This is no longer the Spinozist and Nietzschean Deleuze of *The Logic of Sense* that speaks in these passages; this is not the Deleuze that I have come to appreciate.

The Contributions of the Anthropologists of Ancient Greece

It is understandable that, in a context so virulent towards democracy, it would be damaging to Deleuze's argument if democracy were to appear as something vital and as a condition necessary for the birth of philosophy. Above all, philosophy should not, in any way, be present in the domain of thought as the parallel of a social milieu characterised by democracy. Nevertheless, this is exactly the case, as we learn from the recent studies of specialists in ancient Greek thought. I am referring to the very important, solid and fecund works of the French historical anthropology, particularly of Louis Gernet, Marcel Détienne, and Pierre Vidal-Naquet. In this section, I draw specifically on Jean-Pierre Vernant's study, *Les origines de la pensée grecque*.[2] Vernant's thesis is clear. He concludes his work with the following remarks: 'Greek reason . . . is the daughter of the city,' (OPT: 133) that is, of the *polis*. It is not the birth of

reason that we witness in Greece, but rather a form of rationality which is born in the context of relations of men among themselves, inside political relations of power, allowing everyone to act upon others. And this was not to occur, as it will be the case later on with experimental reason, in relations of power allowing one to act upon things and Nature. This reason is indeed political (OPT: 131). Here, political thought is constituted in this way only because it is open, and has drawn up an immanent plane of reflection, therefore questioning the social order and facilitating discussion that confronts multiple and contradictory points of view. Present also is the formation of a public space, laicised and emancipated from religious rituals and myths. This public space, drawn in plain view of all in the *agora*, enjoys a profound correspondence with the philosophical thought that appears about the same time. The arrival of philosophy is linked to the laicisation of political thought and to the open and public character of the debate that simultaneously takes place. 'Social experience was capable of becoming, with the Greeks, the object of a positive reflection, because it lent itself, inside the cities, to a public argumentative debate' (OPT: 132); or again: '[W]hen it was born in Miletus, philosophy was rooted in this political thought whose fundamental preoccupations it translated' (OPT: 132). Philosophy is the *daughter* of the *polis*, and the fact that it was not able to appear inside the historical states that preceded or neighboured Greece is due, not to the presence of a free market (or a primitive form of capitalism), in which the environing despotisms participated, but rather, to the existence of a political form of the democratic kind. In it, we witness the presence of an immanent political thought where the decisions of common power are reached as a result of argumentative and pluralist discussions. There is a type of thought and rationality internal to democratic politics that cannot be reduced to the realms of *doxa* or the majority; they can be found in the trajectory of a plane of immanent thought that I, for one, call '*doxic*'. Philosophy, without being directly 'caused' by this plane, results nevertheless by its repetition (WIP: 107–8). In the domain of speculation, philosophy extends, deploys and specifies thought categories created and put to work spontaneously in the empirical domain of thought that traversed the entire *polis*. In democratic politics, power is laid *es to meson* – in the middle – according to the ritual formula that Vernant repeats so many times (OPT: 127; 125; 99; 83; etc.). In this 'middle', so often prized by Deleuze, we must see, above all, the presence of a public plane of immanence, a plane of confrontation and reflection that provides support to the power (*kratos*) of the people. Democracy is not, therefore, defined primarily by the power of the majority or by

opinion – the caricature to which Deleuze wishes to reduce it. Rather, it is defined primarily by the problematisation of the social order and of traditions, in the context of a plane of immanence, being stretched in the presence of all, in the middle. Beneath the *agora*, as market and exchange of economic goods, we must be able to discern the existence of a domain of confrontation of thoughts and opinions (that is, the *doxic* plane of immanence as the principle of public space). This plane – the life itself of the *polis* – gives it its specific character, much more so than the existence of an international market. It is evident that such a market existed in other times and places (in the China of the third century, for example, also with the Phoenicians, and so on) without being accompanied by the emergence of philosophy – or capitalism, for that matter.

The Structure of Deleuze's Argumentation

What can be done in light of this solid argument? Deleuze responds by skirting around it, saying nothing, and by rendering the concept of democracy fluid. These are the stakes of the 'Geophilosophy' chapter, and the price paid to maintain a semblance of pertinence for his anti-democratic and anti-liberal position.

Deleuze concedes, aptly, that 'philosophy is a Greek thing', and he offers a masterful demonstration of that very point (WIP: 93, 87–8). Indeed, philosophy is not a mere world vision or a general conception of the world. There is no Chinese, Indian, Jewish or Islamic philosophy, he says with justification. What is offered under these names is wisdom, religion or spirituality (WIP: 89). Despite the great resemblance that brings them, from an external point of view, close to philosophy, there is a difference in nature that accounts for the fact that these wisdoms and religions 'ward off philosophy in advance from the point of view of its very possibility' (WIP: 93). Here, Deleuze, with justification, fights courageously on two fronts, and this is one of the great merits of his thesis: first, Deleuze struggles against the sociologising thesis (very fashionable in its respectable relativism) that renders every problem a question of ethnicity (every culture contains a certain philosophy and philosophy is not the privilege of Westerners in their link to the Greeks). Against this thesis, Deleuze defends philosophical rigour and shows all the difference of nature that exists between a thought based on the concept (philosophy) and a thought based on figures (wisdoms and religions) (WIP: 90). At the same time, working against the purist philosophical thesis of Hegel and Heidegger, Deleuze shows very convincingly that the link with Greece is not necessary. It is the fact of historical contingency. No destiny presides

over the link, and no Greek miracle, in the sense of a sudden rise of Spirit or Reason to self-awareness. This idea he shares with Vernant and the entire French school of historical anthropology.

How can we account for the birth of philosophy as one of Greece's singular distinctions? Deleuze's hypothesis is that, for altogether contingent reasons, an immanent and relative plane of immanence came to be formed, and to its meeting with the plane of immanent and absolute deterritorialisation of thought we owe the appearance of philosophy. What is this historical milieu of relative deterritorialisation that is proper to Greece? Deleuze cannot recognise that it is democracy and, as a result, he is left with the 'international market' (WIP: 87). He appeals explicitly to an economic explanation and relates the relative process of deterritorialisation to an embryonic capitalism and the economic imperialism of Athens. The ground of the explanation involves capital, the way that Marx (quoted WIP: 97) would have analysed it. Capitalism does not cease to deterritorialise itself, to carry further its movement of production and invention, and, at the same time, to oppose the internal movement that would have led it to its destruction. We are, therefore, faced with a thesis that wants to be explicitly and strictly Marxist.

The question is now this: how does Deleuze make use of this (Marxist) idea in the context of the birth of philosophy? Whoever speaks of the international market speaks of competition and rivalry among producers and merchants. This rivalry presupposes a will to trade and to exchange, and, therefore, a general milieu of sociability, because even the rivalry of interests asks for disinterested sociability (WIP: 87). The three conditions of the fact of philosophy stem from this: an immanent milieu of association opposed to imperial sovereignty; the pleasure to associate constituting friendship; and finally 'a taste for the exchange of views, for conversation' (WIP: 88). These three conditions boil down to friendship as an affective intensity forming 'the society of friends' (WIP: 98, 9). Philosophy is the product of the conjunction of friendship (relative deterritorialisation) and thought (absolute deterritorialisation) that engenders love for, or friendship with wisdom: *philo-sophia*. Friendship is exalted, and raised to the absolute, within the infinite plane of immanence upon which the concepts will be constructed. 'The encounter between friend and thought was necessary' (WIP: 93).

The upshot of all this is that democracy has been completely skirted. It has no existence of its own, because it has been squeezed between the two diametrically opposed poles of sociability (understood as the sociological and affective reality of friendship) and mercantile imperialism (understood as economic reality). Democracy, motivated by the taste for opinion,

is now reduced to a mere discussion among friends (see the treacherous point fired through allusion against Richard Rorty: '[T]he idea of a western democratic conversation between friends has never produced a single concept' (WIP: 6). Whenever Deleuze mentions 'democracy', it is always accompanied by a reductive qualifier – 'democratic imperialism', 'colonizing democracy', ad so on (WIP: 97).

Philosophy and its Expatriates

After the demotion of democracy, the turn of politics as an autonomous entity also comes. The new turn of the screw attempts to show that the appearance of philosophy in Athens was due to migrants. Philosophy is Greek, Deleuze says, but brought in by 'foreigners', 'migrants', 'immigrants' (WIP: 87–8, 93). If there is a bottom line proper to philosophy, we should not look for it in the fact of democracy or political activity in the proper sense of the term; rather it is to be found in a micropolitical phenomenon that mobilises minorities, marginals, immigrants and their powers of deterritorialisation.

This second characteristic suggested by Deleuze may work well toward the valorisation of minorities; nevertheless, it represents a historical countersense. It is true that the first philosophers – Thales, Anaximander or Anaximenes – were from Miletus, and Heraclitus was from Ephesus – all of them Ionian towns on the edge of the Orient. But these philosophers are nonetheless Greek, writing and speaking Greek; moreover, their towns of origin – the colonies – are themselves founded as replicas of the Greek cities of the metropolis. The Presocratics, therefore, have nothing to do with foreigners and 'immigrants' in the sense that we attribute to these words today.

The towns of Miletus and Ephesus were themselves cities, founded and built, between 800 and 500 BC, by Greek migrants. They have very little relation to the 'colonies' of the nineteenth-century European sense, whose native populations were subjected and dominated by the representatives of a state or nation of a foreign civilisation, like France or England. The crucial point that proves wrong the insinuations of the Deleuzian reading is highlighted by Christian Meier in *Naissance du politique*. Meier shows that the foundation of new cities, which reproduced the order of their mother city, presupposed a certain reflection on the practical organisation of the city. This thought and reflection, thanks to the distance separating the new city from the 'colony' and to its adaptation to new social conditions, brought about a break from the old customs and traditions. I would add that this civic and public instauration, precisely because it introduced

a conscious and artificial reproduction, involved (in a way analogous to an architectural plan) an intellectual double of the society of origin. Inside this plane of thought, the mother society found itself necessarily reflected and examined down to the foundations of its main institutions. There was, consequently, a veritable plane of immanence, public and critical, giving rise to an open and argumentative discussion, traced along at the time of the foundation of the new cities – the colonies. This plane is really homologous to the plane of immanence that, according to Deleuze, is presupposed by philosophical thinking. But, at the same time and correlatively in the Greek mainland, to this dispersion of intelligence, which never concentrated in a bureaucratic caste, there responded a kind of recentring that took the form of an exchange of different experiments in different colonies. The centre, where delegations from every colony and from other cities used to congregate, was Delphi. This religious sanctuary functioned as a space for recollection of, and confrontation with the different social and political institutions. Most importantly, this space of reflection, albeit religious, was totally enfranchised from all political power, and free from all authority of a specific state power (the separation of religious from political power was established early). The paradox, then, is that, thanks to the autonomy of the religious sphere (and inside its own domain), an immanent plane of theoretical reflection on concrete political practices was developed – a plane that allowed the enrichment and the development of a pure philosophical theory of the political. One of the important consequences was that, through the comparison of different political regimes invented through practice, democracy – having instituted a vast representation of citizens in political life – was capable of demonstrating experimentally its political superiority over other regimes: it showed more than anything else its capacity for curbing social crises and for regulating tensions arising from inequality and from differences in economic interests among rival groups and factions. The possibility, for example, of the wisdom of Solon – the father of Athenian democracy – is found here.

Conclusion

We know that Deleuze introduced an important distinction – one that postmodernity cannot ignore – between becoming and history. This distinction allows him to maintain the possibility of a becoming-revolutionary as separate from the historical future of revolutions, which, as he himself recognises, always turn out badly (WIP: 177). In his case, however, this becoming-revolutionary, pegged upon a 'people to come',

cannot be dissociated from Utopia. Utopia is, in fact, in his eyes saddled with the responsibility of connecting the absolute plane of immanence of thought with the factual history of existing societies and states (WIP: 99). But how then would such an appeal to Utopia be prevented from mutilating immanence and from rendering it invalid? The distinction between a Utopia of transcendence and a Utopia of immanence (WIP: 99–100) seems very difficult to maintain, looking rather like a verbal way out, rather than a rigorous intellectual solution. But for Deleuze, only thought has rights. This is the reason for his haughtiness, and his condescendence toward democracies and politics, in the proper and current sense, where thought must reckon with the opinion of the multitude. To avoid being aristocratically reactionary, or being taken for a mere agitator toying with anarchy, Deleuze is obligated to peg his micropolitics upon the undetermined call for Utopia or 'the missing people'. But in this, he cannot go beyond the pre-political threshold, because politics presupposes, as a minimum, the existence of a public space wherein thought and action attempt, through discussion based on argumentation, to reach an understanding through persuasion. The *doxic* plane of immanence is a veritable plane of thought, albeit thought orientated toward decision, because it represents a plane for the mutual reflection of opinions, and for the comparison or evaluation of propositions for action and laws. It is the heart of every democracy, although it does not coincide with any specific form of existing democracies (English, American or French). The *doxic* plane of immanence constitutes the kind of becoming, thanks to which existing democracies remain democratic, that is, able to problematise themselves and to be philosophically fecund.

I have argued that becoming-revolutionary cannot be distinguished from becoming-democrat – the latter having to begin again at every moment; becoming-democrat has nothing to do with Utopia, even if the latter functions as a proclaimed Dystopia. Becoming-revolutionary is immanent to the plane of thought that underlies the public space of democracies. Every other notion of becoming necessarily reintroduces transcendence. Becoming-Greek or -philosopher or -democrat should not be confused with what the Greeks did, with existing philosophy (not even Deleuze's), or with any concretely existing democracy. Democracy is always to be built on the public plane of discussion, and nothing, absolutely nothing, can guarantee that it is made the way it merits to be made, because we have no idea of what it must be, before debating it here and now – and always. It is precisely the acceptance of an irreducible gap, and the radical absence of concept and knowledge, that render possible an authentic becoming-democratic as well as a radical and untimely thought.

Translated by Constantin V. Boundas and Sarah Lamble

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Notes

1. Deleuze Guattari 1994: 111–2; hereafter referred to as WIP.
2. Hereafter referred to as OPT.

Chapter 12

Gilles Deleuze's Political Posture

Jérémie Valentin

Is it possible to answer the question of politics in the work of Deleuze, without going through desire and its variants? Deleuze's work spans twenty-six publications, authored by him or written in collaboration with the psychiatrist Félix Guattari. In these texts, Deleuze deals with the thought of Kant, Nietzsche, Bergson, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hume, Foucault, with the writings of Kafka, Proust, Sacher-Masoch, with Francis Bacon's painting, and with cinema and theatre. Politics, however, because only traces and indices of it exist in his texts, seems to be permanently put to question. At first sight, it is not even clear that there is, in his work, a political thematic – if by 'political thematic' we understand the organisation of the *polis*. We find no political treatise and no political programme to analyse or to comment upon. And if we look at the political orientation of the philosopher, it does not appear to be particularly fecund – its main traits are very basic: Deleuze travelled little, had never been a member of the Communist Party, had never been a phenomenologist or a Heideggerean, did not renounce Marx, did not repudiate May 1968 (Beaubatie 2000: 263).

On the other hand, *Anti-Oedipus*, the subtitle of which is *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, deals with fundamental political themes. In it, Deleuze and Guattari discuss the state, the war machine, revolution, minorities as well as molar and molecular structures. The question of fascism is analysed in it and a universal vision of history is proposed. The same preoccupations characterise *A Thousand Plateaus*, where these notions are revised and corrected. One could, therefore, say that these two important texts appear to be indispensable tools for the understanding of the political in the work of Deleuze. Indeed, many have argued that the question of desire in these two works, as well as the three errors that, according to Deleuze, relate to it (lack, law and the signifier), constitute the central axis around which the philosopher's reflection on politics is articulated.

Focusing on these themes, Paul Patton (2000), Ronald Bogue (1989), Philip Goodchild (1996), Brian Massumi (1992), Eugene Holland (1999), among others, offer variations on the issue of the political from the vantage point of desire. Essentially, these writers, in their effort to analyse the political, immerse themselves in the exegesis of *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. The resounding impact enjoyed by *Anti-Oedipus* as soon as it was published is, of course, responsible for the consecration of Deleuze, rightly or wrongly, as the philosopher of desire. Anglo-Saxon literature, for the most part, inscribes itself inside this (post-May 1968) current, being receptive to the ideas (recurring in Deleuze but also present in Kerouac and London) of the abolition of borders, the enlargement of horizons as well as of the spirit of liberation fashionable at that time. By contrast, Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, in their work on Deleuze (1998; 1994; 2002), do not hold desire as the only key to the mysteries of the political, albeit they do consider *A Thousand Plateaus* to be the most important political text of Deleuze and Guattari. In their case, it is the concept of *multitude* that is at the centre of their preoccupation.

But do we really have to choose between these two approaches? Deleuze's minor texts – for example, the *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty* (1971) and *The Exhausted* (1977) – as well as recent studies by François Zourabichvili (1998) and David Rabouin (2002), ask for prudence in view of the abusive evocation of the concept of desire in the context of the political question. And the appeal to the desire of the masses, present in Negri and Hardt (2000), does not harmonise easily with the 'aristocratic' posture of Deleuze's politics. I am therefore proposing, in this chapter, to explore the pathways of these political discussions, in order to examine the ambiguities and the conceptual difficulties connected with them. I hope, as a result of this exploration, to be in a position to suggest that Deleuze's political 'posture' is a more promising interpretive tool than the figure of desire that has dominated many of our readings until now. Emphasising simultaneously the subversive and the pervert character of Deleuze's posture, I will try to look *afresh* at Deleuze's politics.

Desire, an Equivocal Concept

It seems to me that desire, the way it is mobilised in the writings on Deleuze, is confronted by two major problems: on one hand, it is an equivocal concept; on the other, it fascinates and perhaps it even mystifies his commentators. This makes me think that desire, as an interpretive

tool, represents a problem rather than an unproblematic point of reference. We know that Deleuze defines desire positively and negatively. With his negative definition, he claims that desire has had three misinterpretations: relating it with lack and the law; associating it with the natural and the spontaneous; and connecting it with pleasure – above all, with the festival. The relation between desire and lack or law is established by means of an explicit reference to Platonic metaphysics, whereas desire's connection with the natural and the spontaneous is made with reference to the theory of the libido. As for the festival, Deleuze refers to it in order to dismiss a form of hedonism prevalent in the events of 1968. Desire, on the other hand, considered positively, is said to be 'production' – with the proviso that production is always desiring and social, at the same time. Deleuze suggests that desire does not take as its object persons or things, but rather the entire surroundings that it traverses (Deleuze and Guattari 1977: 295–6).

Now, Deleuze himself, because there is always some doubt as to whether desire is meant in its positive or its negative sense, alerts us to potential misunderstandings. Besides the fact that the concept does not stand alone but involves other concepts (Body-Without-Organs, immanence), it has often been taken up in the snares of Oedipus, so that its meaning has been affected adversely. This is, after all, the reason for Foucault's reservations about desire (Deleuze 2003: 119). To articulate, therefore, Deleuze's political problematic with desire as its centre would require an in-depth reflection on the term and its implications, instead of our usual tendency to accept it casually. Perhaps the right procedure would be to understand first what desire is not, in order to be in a position to accept what it is. As Deleuze rightly put it with respect to Foucault's reservations, the question of desire is not one of mere preference – it is more than a matter of words. The concept is capable of generating a veritable philosophical debate with respect to the pertinence of its use.

Desire, Fascinating and Mystifying

The main difficulty lies, I think, with the abusive use of the concept, desire, and the fascination that it has been able to exercise. David Rabouin's remarks are, in this respect, very relevant. Rabouin asks: 'Who is capable today of reading *Anti-Oedipus?* – I mean, who is capable of reading it, without transforming it into an understudy of Reich, an understudy of Laing – if not an understudy of Debord? Who is able to understand that the issue was not so much how to take the intrusion of

desire in the political field as an object (something that, at any rate, had been done for a long time before), but rather how to give it the thought that was not present in the (original) call?' (Rabouin 2002: 49). In the sequence, Rabouin counts the difficulties that the use of Deleuze's work presents and returns repeatedly to the problematic use of the concept of desire: '[O]ne may repeat endlessly a few well-coined formulas – brandish everywhere the expressions "desiring machines", "plane of consistency", and "lines of flight" – one will not prevent the deplorable alchemy that makes today these formulas as heavy as lead' (Rabouin 2002: 49). It is in the same sense and for the same reasons that I argue that the concept of desire fascinates and mystifies. Deleuze and Guattari are considered to be the philosophers of desire, but the intellectual labour that they were suggesting has not been well understood; it is as if desire has been seized in its brute state. Rabouin is right: '[T]he concept has found no currency (*n'est pas passé*)' (Rabouin 2002: 51). We do remember after all that Deleuze himself rated – with some reservations – *Anti-Oedipus* (originally published in 1972) as a total failure.

Shouldn't the fact that desire today participates in a *doxa* that, as Rabouin says, can be linked with the love of power, make us suspicious of the attempts to associate the main themes of Deleuzian politics with it? *If desire is desire of objects, the ones who can provide them exercise power over those who want them*. How can we offer solid arguments about Deleuze's politics, if we take into consideration that the basis on which this politics rests is fragile – that its sense is not at all univocal and that everything may be coming down to a big misunderstanding? Desire, because it is equivocal – because it lends itself to misunderstandings and is more of a problem than a concept – seems to have few qualifications for the constitution of the main platform that would allow us to solve the riddle of Deleuze's politics. It is best therefore that we distance ourselves from it.

Heeding, perhaps, this advice, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri propose to analyse Deleuze's politics through the notion of *multitude*. 'Deleuze,' Michael Hardt says, 'does not consider the individual as the foundation of social organization. Social subjectivities are always below or above the level of the individual, as they compose or decompose collectivities of all kinds' (Hardt 2002: 51). And he adds: '[T]here is in Deleuze's work a fundamental and constant political preoccupation – the preoccupation with a plurality of social subjectivities and with a multiplicity of social forms.' As a consequence, Negri invites us to think of Spinoza's notion of *multitudo* in order to delimit the philosophy of Deleuze and its politics – 'in order to identify a virtual form that is always

possible' (Negri 1998a: 84) The interval that separates *Anti-Oedipus* from *A Thousand Plateaus* (volumes one and two of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* respectively) permits us to discern a progressive dilution of the concept of desire. As a result, it is necessary to introduce a distinction between the partisans of a politics tied to the manifestations of desire in *Anti-Oedipus*, and those who linger on its transfiguration and reorientation in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Hardt shows the way to follow: 'Earlier, the procedures of multiplication and pluralisation – the lines of flight – seem to have been an unconditional liberating power. But in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the tone turns more sober and the political analysis, more penetrating. Certain lines of flight are not creative, but rather suicidal and destructive. Certain becomings do not liberate – they are fascist. Politics requires more pragmatic processes of evaluation, and Deleuze and Guattari are now striving to develop them' (Hardt 2002: 51).

What interests me in all this is the assertion of the necessity to evaluate. We seem to move from a deadly context (carceral and suicidal) to a more vitalist and creative ambience. Desire, to the extent that it leads to confusion, lends itself very little to pragmatic evaluations, ends up in numerous misunderstandings, and finds its use to be on the decline. Toni Negri offers his explanation as to what this could possibly mean: 'The politics expressed by Deleuze is the politics of the communism of Spinoza's '*multitudo*' – the politics of the mobility that devastates subjects on the stage of the recently constituted global market, and the politics of the most radical democracy (of all subjects, including the madmen/women). It is a weapon directed against the state – the grand organiser of the exploitation of workers, of the disciplining of the insane, and the control of the General Intellect. *A Thousand Plateaus* refers explicitly to the diffuse and autonomous social struggles of women, youth, workers, homosexuals, marginals and immigrants, in a perspective that sees all walls already having come crashing down' (Negri 1998a: 19).

Becoming-multiple is the maximisation of the individuals' power (*puissance*), understood as a revolutionary vector in society. It is, therefore, in the context of what Hardt calls *plurality of social subjectivities* that we are now invited to situate Deleuze's politics: 'There exists today a multitude of citizens – although to speak of citizens is not enough because the term qualifies, in theoretical and juridical terms, individuals that are formally free. It would be better to say that there exists today a multitude of intellectual workers – but even this is not enough. We must say that there exists a multitude of productive instruments that have been internalised, and incarnated in the subjects that constitute society.

And even that is not enough, because we have to add affective and reproductive reality – the desire of *jouissance*. This is what multitude is today – a multitude that deprives power of possible transcendence – that cannot be dominated, except in a parasitic and, therefore, ferocious way' (Hardt 2002: 51).

But, once again, should we subscribe, without reservations, to these statements that would turn Deleuze's politics into a revolutionary, and even communist, politics? How can we reconcile, for instance, the notion of Spinoza's *multitudo*, the way that Negri and Hardt appropriate it, with the process of hierarchisation that seems to have been introduced by Deleuze among those who dissent? Despite Negri's assertions, everything in his writings tends to show that Deleuze is indeed a thinker who gives hierarchy its dues. His politics does not, on first sight, seem to be addressed to all subjects. This impression is confirmed by Alain Badiou who attributes to Deleuze's philosophy a veritable aristocratism of thought (Badiou 2000: 12).

To be sure, it is foolish to withhold from Hardt and Negri's interpretation all positive value. They are careful readers of Deleuze: by putting his concepts to work they have found excellent ways to appropriate his thought – they are not satisfied to copy or to reproduce it. Still, I am sceptical about their use of Scinoza's notion, *multitude*, that represents the central axis of their readings of Deleuze. These readings rest on an appreciation of *Anti-Oedipus* that attributes to this work the intention of overthrowing Platonism through a correct appreciation of the function of desire: 'To borrow Popper's vocabulary, Gilles-Félix is the worst enemy of Plato. Eros is really desire. It does not involve any transcendence. He is not half poverty (*penia*) and half wealth (*poros*), but rather the destruction of every mediation – the recognition of an immanent and constructive force. Hölderlin's Empedocles triumphs over Aetna's flames. Communism is renewed thanks to the desire of the masses' (Negri 1998a: 80).

According to their interpretation, Deleuze, being an opponent of dialectics, affirms the immanence and the desire of the masses. Negri makes explicit all the implications of Deleuze and Guattari's work being read in terms of desire. But then, as a result, we are back to the snares of desire, its *aporias* and its failures. In fact, Negri takes his investigation even further, linking *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* through an ontology of desire that is supposed to give them substance. *A Thousand Plateaus*, Negri writes, would be: 'a decisively anti-Platonist ontology – analytic rather than synthetic, inductive rather than deductive – a veritable ontology of metamorphoses. It is therefore a political work, provided that politics is defined (as always with Deleuze and Guattari) as an

ontology, or even better, as an intervention in being for the discovery of a virtual form that is always possible. *A Thousand Plateaus* is in its entirety a book of political philosophy' (Negri 1998a: 80).

At any rate, with Negri and Hardt, the basis of the analysis and discussion has been altered: we must now lean against pragmatic powers, the multitude, the molecular and even the free and dynamic subjectivities. It is in Spinoza's work that Negri discovers the roots of the concept of multitude whose relevance for Deleuze's work he clearly sees. The *multitudo* is the foundation of radical democracy to the extent that it allows every individual to present the collectivity with his own values of liberty. Every singularity is now a foundation (Negri 1994: 60).

Negri repeatedly claims that communism can be renewed only as the desire of the masses; and that the politics expressed in Deleuze and Guattari's work is the politics of the communism of Spinoza's *multitudo*: 'If we take the last work of Deleuze,' he writes: '*La Grandeur de Marx*, we discover in it a formidable idea: for, the question is how to translate an epistemological commitment – like the one that the definition of the *nom commun* represents (a set of perceptions that constitute a concept) – to the linguistic construction of an epistemological community. Communism is multitude-having-become-common, without this being a presupposition – an idea, something metaphysically hidden or a unity of sorts. It is a question of the common opposed to the one – an anti-Platonism, pushed to the extreme. It is the very reversal of the communist claim, according to which utopia would necessarily constitute unity and solve the problem of unity and the sovereignty of power.' It is the multitude that constitutes the common (Negri 1998b: 28).

From this short passage, we can draw a number of conclusions. Negri's reasoning rests on what he thinks he can discern in an unfinished and unpublished text of Deleuze, *La Grandeur de Marx*. If communism is multitude-becoming-common, the idea of the *nom commun* gets 'concretised' through its reference to the poor. Negri chooses this reference as the only *nom commun* that cannot be localised – one that belongs to pure difference in every era: 'The poor are destitute, excluded, repressed, exploited – and yet living! It is the common denominator of life – the foundation of the multitude' (Negri and Hardt 2000: 156). And Negri adds: 'Who if not the poor, who are subjugated and desiring, impoverished and powerful – always more powerful? Here, within this reign of global production, the poor are distinguished no longer only by their prophetic capacity, but also by their indispensable presence in the production of a common wealth – always more exploited and always more closely indexed according to the minimum wage. The poor themselves

are power. There is world Poverty, but there is above all world possibility and only the poor are capable of this' (Negri and Hardt 2000: 157).

My response to all this is that the idea of *multitudo* does not capture the aristocratic element of Deleuze's thought. The overflowing enthusiasm of Negri should not make us lose sight of the fact that Deleuze makes no pronouncement on the multitude or on the form that the (missing) people that his political 'posture' tries to court is going to take. The fact that one is inscribed in the becoming-revolutionary does not necessarily make her the agent of revolution. Can we then conclude that Negri's intuitions correspond to those of Deleuze? To the extent that *La Grandeur de Marx* has not been published, the concept of multitude remains ambivalent and vague, and the importance of this text and of this concept for Deleuze delicate to assess. We must show ourselves prudent towards Negri's interpretation. Negri and Hardt's *Empire* transports us in fact to a post-Deleuzian terrain – postmodern, as its authors tell us, beyond Deleuze. Nevertheless, the work of Negri and Hardt is interesting: it attempts to show the evolution of Deleuze's work and to elucidate what Deleuze used to call societies of control, becoming-minor, and so on. All these notions are indeed political and Negri strives, as Rabouin puts it, to blend together a philosophical discourse and a political thought. But it is difficult to follow Negri entirely, and to think of the multitude as the culmination of Deleuzian politics. Were we to do this, we would have the impression of substituting a ready-made thought for a problem and of jumping over steps that are indispensable to the argument. The development of thought is sometimes very rough in the case of Negri. The overthrowal of Platonism is supposed to have been realised and the Utopia already on its way. In the final analysis, desire, with all its ambiguities, occupies a very central place inside this interpretation as well, and the aristocratism of Deleuze's thought stirs some doubts again about the chosen itinerary.

Posture

So far, I have discussed attempts to grasp Deleuze's politics through the notion of desire; I have also discussed attempts that, without giving up on desire, find an access to it through the notion of multitude. I am now going to argue that an access to Deleuze's politics by way of his political posture is the most promising one. The general problem, of course, confronting us is the application of politics: what would a step ahead be like? The particular problem that I raise here concerns the extent of subversion or revolution that Deleuze is ready to support. Is Deleuze a revolutionary who attempts to struggle against law, right and capitalism or is

he rather a conservative, with a method which has strange affinities with the movement of law, right, and capitalism? Is his attitude subversive or irreverent? Anarchic or perverse? Isn't it rather possible that his attitude masks a deeper concern – the concern for untimeliness?

There is certainly a subversive dimension in the posture that Deleuze adopts towards politics. But, if we look closer, we will also find a perverse mechanism at work inside his politics. The issue is not to condemn either one of these tendencies, but rather to examine them carefully in order to extract from them all the possibilities that they carry. What is subversive, I think, is the way Deleuze thinks about the major and the minor (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 469–71). He introduces something really explosive in the relations between majority and minority when he refuses to think in terms of numbers. According to him: '[T]he difference between minorities and majorities isn't their size. A minority may be bigger than a majority. What defines the majority is a model you have to conform to: the average European adult male city-dweller, for example . . . A minority, on the other hand, has no model, it's a becoming, a process' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 173). Subversion and revolution have a limited presence in Deleuze's thought but the presence has a function: it acts as a foil.[1] But the fact is that the method he uses seems much more perverse than subversive – much more attracted by the 'in-between' and the 'outside' than by global overthrowal. Whether we think of law and right or whether we think of capitalism, there is always in his work a question of limit – a limit that Deleuze displaces or tries to cross. I borrow the distinction between 'subversive' and 'perverse' from Zourabichvili and his essay, '*Les deux pensées de Deleuze et de Negri: une richesse et une chance*'.[2] As for my definition of the pervert, it is the same as the definition offered by Edward Kazarian: 'The pervert . . . [is] the one who acts without regard for the result but only for the sake of the event or process itself' (Kazarian 1998: 100).

The nature and scope of Deleuze's 'perversion' may be gleaned from three texts of his: *The Exhausted*; the chapter on Pierre Clastres in *Anti-Oedipus*; and *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty*. A brief look at each one of them is bound to be instructive.

In *The Exhausted*, Deleuze, speaking of Beckett's characters, underlines the contrast between the tired and the exhausted person: 'The tired person,' he writes, 'no longer has any (subjective) possibility at his disposal; he therefore cannot realize the slightest (objective) possibility . . . the tired person can no longer realize, but the exhausted person can no longer possibilize' (Deleuze 1977: 152); or again a bit further down: '[O]nly an exhausted person can exhaust the possible, because he

has renounced all need, preference, goal, or signification. Only the exhausted person is sufficiently disinterested, sufficiently scrupulous' (Deleuze 1977: 154). The one who is tired is more likely to mount the barricades and mobilise the masses for the sake of the ultimate overthrow of the established order. On the other hand, the one who is exhausted confronts the depletion of the possible with the *phronesis* (Deleuze calls it 'sobriety') of the man that plumbs the resources of the virtual by means of the counter-actualisation of the actual – the involuntary posture of the Robinson of Speranza.[3] Reflecting on this distinction, Zourabichvili points at the subtle but decisive difference between '*ne faire rien*' (doing nothing) and '*faire le rien*' (making the nothing) – between passive nihilism and nihilism defeating itself by itself – and it is, in my opinion, the latter that best captures the essence of Deleuze's political posture.[4] It problematises the field of the possible, without ever articulating a plan in view of a *telos*. The voluntarism and activism of subversive politics is put between brackets to the benefit of an 'involuntary' posture that permits the event to occur as the will finds itself paralysed. Zourabichvili expresses this posture of political involuntarism as follows:

> What previously attached us to the world were clichés – mere possibilities. We were given the world in advance – the people and ourselves. Now, everything is possible, that is, included in mere possibility. And yet, nothing is possible: the future is preformed, being totally conceived according to the form of the already there. Necessity has abandoned this world, and we persist in moving, without believing in it, inside the horizon of preference. (Zourabichvili 1998: 352)

It seems that we are faced with a new *epochē* – with a recommendation that we learn to confront the political in a state of *ataraxia* – as the necessary condition for the attentive discernment of all the metamorphoses and all the rhythm changes that events keep folded unto themselves. And I feel that a subtle reading of the other two texts is needed to help us decide whether or not *ataraxia* (absence of agitation) entails *apraghia* (absence of work): Deleuze, for one, suggests that 'one remain . . . active, but for nothing' (Deleuze 1977: 153).

As for Pierre Clastres, the ethnologist, he has written some interesting things on tribal chiefs, their function and power, and Deleuze and Guattari with admiration turned their attention to his studies and paid homage to him in the pages of *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 357ff.). What they appropriated from his research helps us understand better the nature of Deleuze's perverse political posture.

Clastres focused on the question of the tribal chief's power and argued that the functions of the chief in traditional societies are limited: his power depends on the good will of his people. What strikes Deleuze and Guattari is that 'the chief resembles more a leader or a star than a man of power'. And yet, this does not mean that the chief does not have a very special place in the group. Holding himself at some distance from the group, he is nonetheless the chief. Being endowed with qualities that few of the members of the tribe seem to possess, he has constantly to have these qualities measured against the logic of the group. His power is held in check because the gifts he receives increase exponentially his obligations to repay them.

It seems that the role of the chief of the tribal societies that Clastres describes is not far from that of the one in the in-between of politics. The chief is situated in the margin of society, he distances himself from the tribe in the case of Clastres, from *doxa*, in the case of Deleuze, but he is still the chief – the only one – and thanks to the distance he maintains, he has the possibility to survey society in its entirety. Now, unlike Clastres, Deleuze is interested, not in the notion of power, but in the notions of flight and deterritorialisation. The tribe fights eagerly against power and the state – the arrival of which would mean the end of the tribe.To prevent its accumulation, power is thrown outside society by means of the voluntary weakening of the prerogatives of the chief.

One may conclude that the distance of the chief that Deleuze adopts from Clastre's writings preconises political passivity rather than activity – and to this issue I will return later. But already the reference to Clastres sheds sufficient light on the perverse political posture that we are trying to understand. Deleuze is not interested in the question of power; but at the same time, he affirms the untimeliness of the tribal dimension of his thought and himself as the chief of the pack. In his opinion, the aristocratic posture is the only means available for the revirtualisation of the actual and for making society flee.

This posture is meant to hold in check the single-mindedness of political activism and to instal some kind of political involuntarism. But then it is tempting to locate in the heart of Deleuze's work a tension between his notion of becoming on one hand and, on the other, the (political) involuntarism entailed by his 'demotion' of subjective agency and his 'promotion' of events that explicate themselves. Becoming appeals to creation; involuntarism is often thought to be the cause of paralysis. But before I further explore the difficulties that this tension may create if left unchecked, I want to strengthen the impression of the aristocratic posture that Deleuze's discussion of Clastres generates. Only the leader of

the pack is between man and animal, between man and the pack. He is the chief, the seer, the sorcerer – the one that has: 'always held the anomalous position, at the edge of the fields or woods. [He] haunt[s] the fringes. [He is] at the borderline of the village, or between villages. The important thing is [his] affinity with alliance, with the pact, which gives [him] a status opposed to filiation' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 246). This posture is aristocratic (or meritocratic) because it is not given to just anybody. To be sure, Deleuze exploits the resources available in the notion of the pack: the chief is a chief only as long as he is the bearer of merits – he is deposed as soon as he loses them. And the fact is that the chief keeps his distance from the pack in order to better come closer to it (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 245–6). It is only because he occupies this (in-between) position that he is able to discern a number of possibilities. It is only this posture that permits him to discharge his function as a chief: to fabulate and to summon up the missing people.

Fabulation and the summoning of the missing people are beautifully discussed in Ronald Bogue's essay that is included in this volume. Still, a few words on Deleuze's appeal to fabulation seem required at this point. Deleuze may often refer to Bergson as he discusses fabulation but the work and the influence of Foucault is not far from his mind. In *La vie des hommes infâmes* (Foucault 1979), Foucault traced the origins of the discourse of infamy, the object of which is 'to say what is most unsayable, the worst, the most secret, the most intolerable, the shameful'; he also traced the origins of the fable – that which deserves to be told. Deleuze comments on Foucault's enterprise as follows: '[T]he infamous man isn't defined by excessive evil but etymologically, as an ordinary man, anyone at all, suddenly drawn into the spotlight by some minor circumstance, neighbors complaining, a police summons, a trial . . . It is a man confronting power, summoned to appear and speak . . . The infamous man's a particle caught in a shaft of light and a wave of sound' (Deleuze 1995: 108). Anonymity and bringing into the light. This passage from '*l'infime*' (what is not to be told) to '*l'infâme*' (what deserves to be told) gives birth to a language whose task is no longer to celebrate the improbable but rather to make appear what does not appear – what cannot and should not appear. Now, from the place in-between that he occupies – the place that makes it possible for him to survey the entire tribe and to fill himself with the affects necessary for the 'creation of the concept' – the political seer discerns that the people to whom the concept strives to reach is not (yet) there. The people is missing! To fabulate means to cause something to come to light and to be said that was not, and could not, be said or seen before. Fabulation is

the art of summoning up and creating the missing people (Deleuze 1995: 174). And it is not a matter of grandiloquence and fanfare: Foucault had already said that one is in front of a fable when the fabulous has been bracketed.

Fabulation goes a long way towards dispelling the impression that Deleuze's political perversion counsels passivity. But we seem to want to hear more about the lines of flight to which fabulation will be entrusted. Much as we need to avoid the forced disjunction, either passivity or activism, still we may feel that we have not yet faced squarely the question whether or not perversion as a political posture entails inaction. If it does, the tension between the subversive and the pervert halves of Deleuze's politics would amount to a contradiction. I propose therefore to conclude by facing the question with the help of the characters of Sade and Masoch and their relation to the law, the way that Deleuze paints them in his *Masochism*. I will bracket the psychoanalytic interpretation that Deleuze develops around sadism and masochism and I will focus on the ideas of subversion and perversion that take form inside the different postures of Sade and Masoch, as they face the law.

With the help of Sade and Masoch as his mediators, Deleuze succeeds in distinguishing two different strategies of attempting to overcome the law. Both are facing the disappearance of the classical image according to which the Good, as the supreme principle, is capable of grounding and justifying the law, and they must position themselves vis-à-vis the law, without recourse to the Good. This is what Deleuze has to say about Sade's response to this challenge. In his case, 'the tyrant speaks the language of the law, and acknowledges no other, for he lives "in the shadow of the laws". The heroes of Sade are inspired with an extraordinary passion against tyranny; they speak as no tyrant ever spoke or could ever speak . . . [But] we now note a new attempt to transcend the law, this time no longer in the direction of the Good as superior principle and ground of the law, but in the direction of its opposite, the idea of Evil, the supreme principle of wickedness which subverts the law' (Deleuze 1971: 87)'.

Once the law can no longer be deduced from the principle of the good, the sadist chooses to subvert the old law ironically by maintaining its form while, at the same time replacing its content with precepts deduced from the 'principle of evil'.

The case of Masoch is different, as the following excerpt from *Masochism* shows. According to Deleuze, the masochist's strategy accepts the law to the letter, and 'by scrupulously applying the law [she is] able to demonstrate its absurdity and provoke the very disorder that

it is intended to prevent or to conjure . . . Hence, by the closest adherence to it, and by zealously embracing it, [she] may hope to partake of its pleasures. The law is no longer subverted by the upward movement of irony to a principle that overrides it, but by the downward movement of humor which seeks to reduce the law to its furthest consequences' (Deleuze 1971: 88).

It seems to me that Sade's anti-tyrannical attitude is analogous to Deleuze and Guattari's struggle against the fascist state in *Anti-Oedipus*. 'How do we,' asks Foucault, 'keep from being fascist, even (especially) when we believe ourselves to be revolutionary militants? How do we rid our speech and our acts, our hearts and our pleasures, of fascism? Deleuze and Guattari, for their part, pursue the slightest traces of fascism in the body' (Deleuze and Guattari 1977: xii). It is the anarchic version that explodes here, in all its splendour. It is the struggle against tyranny in all its forms: dictatorship, fascism, the law of the priest and the psychoanalyst, judgement, morality. In contradistinction, the masochist posture seems perverse in the apparent immobility that it suggests. But are we really faced with immobility?

There is no doubt that Deleuze's thought faces us with a double movement. Sade substitutes one principle with another, continuing to deduce the law from the principle. Masoch makes use of the wheels from the inside. Both Sade and Masoch circumvent the law, without really overthrowing it. We are bound to be struck by the fragility of a political reasoning attempting to stand in-between the two to the extent that we find ourselves between an impossible overthrow and a necessary perversion. The nuance between these two political attitudes is indeed thin. Sade's behaviour sends us to *Anti-Oedipus*, whereas Masoch's thrusts us inside the world of *A Thousand Plateaus* and shows us its violent prudence. The sadist needs institutions and the masochist, contractual relations (Deleuze 1971: 76–1). The elegant expression of Jacques Rancière perfectly captures what is at stake here: 'creative thought must constantly mutilate itself, in order to match the logic on the basis of which it takes endlessly back from world images the freedom with which it endows them' (Rancière 2001: 159). Subversion always includes a hidden element of perversity. The former brings to mind the case of the Nietzschean incomplete nihilism; the latter, the case of nihilism vanquished by itself. When all is said and done, Deleuze's aristocratic position that evokes nihilism defeated by itself seems closer to the position of the masochist.

I believe that it is only the in-between these two attitudes that is capable of presenting Deleuze's politics. Deleuze's politics requires a twofold reading – both subversive and pervert. It is easy to feel the

presence of the subversion that inhabits the discourse of Deleuze; nevertheless, it is the perversity of his reasoning that must be permanently underlined. As he displaces himself constantly in view of the object of politics, Deleuze opens up the way for a political reflection that will no longer be pursued in terms of application or representation, but rather of creation – but a creation *for nothing*. The subtle displacements that some readers take to be deficiencies are but the reflection of a thought that refuses to give in to a certain pragmatism that would have dishonoured it. Deleuze is discreet towards politics, and it is in the creation and the exhaustion of possibles that this posture manifests itself.[5] Underneath his revolutionary garb, he dissimilates a will of resistance to the present.

This is why, in my opinion, Deleuze situates himself outside and in-between institutions. The traditional political tools that we possess – ideology, political programmes, the state – are brushed aside to the profit of substitutes that are very malleable: minority, jurisprudence, and so on. Deleuze is outside the traditional political grid, without being able to disengage himself from it totally. Law, right and capitalism are being used as foils. Politics appears in a special light when we understand what goes on between these entities. The posture, therefore, to which we appeal in order to define his politics is, first and foremost, a question of territory. It is the territory that allows us to mark distances. Deleuze situates himself in the middle, keeps his distance – he cruises. This cruising posture is the one that I call pervert. If it is paradoxical and even maddening, it is because it searches constantly for ways to escape the dominant currents. It is a constant invitation to becoming-liquid.

> The forces of repression need always an ascribable self and specifiable individuals to apply. When we become a little liquid, when we evade the ascription of the self, when there is no man for God to direct his demands – or to replace him – in such a case, the Police loses it. And this is not just theoretical. What is important is what takes place now. (Deleuze 2002: 191)

Against this background, the seer counts attentively all the metamorphoses and all the rhythm changes that events fold unto themselves.

Today, we are prone to think that the model of liberal democracy has prevailed, and that there is no point in criticizing it. The pertinence of Deleuze's political thought is precisely in its determination to struggle against this reasoning. His vision – initially modest – gains in scope if one lingers, not on his relations to democracy, but rather on his conception of the becoming-democratic. Becoming-democratic is, for him, the posture

that necessitates the double reading – subversive and pervert – turning thereby into an apparatus of resistance to the present. The strength and the weakness of this posture are to a certain extent those of our time.

Translated by Constantin V. Boundas and Sarah Lamble

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Notes

1. I will return to this point in my discussion of Deleuze's political posture.
2. Zourabichvilli 2002: 2. This essay, along with his 'Deleuze et le possible (de l' involontarisme en politique)' have had a decive influence on my understanding of Deleuze's politics. It is from him that I borrow the notion of perversion that I attribute to Deleuze. 'We may as well say,' Zourabichvili writes, 'that Deleuze is a pervert and his leftism, an admirable perversion' (Zourabichvili 1998: 357).
3. Tournier's novel, *Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique*, Robinson and his island, Speranza, are being discussed, is in Deleuze 1990: 301–19.
4. François Zourabichvili (1998) prefers to play with the distinction between '*ne faire rien*' and '*s' activer pour le rien*'.
5. François Zourabichvili is very clear on this matter. See Zourabichvili 1998: 336.

Chapter 13

Fabulation, Narration and the People to Come

Ronald Bogue

In a 1990 interview, Deleuze addresses the question of the relationship of politics to art via a reflection on the modern problem of the 'creation of a people'. The artists Deleuze admires (he names here Mallarmé, Rimbaud, Klee, Berg, Huillet and Straub) have a deep need of a people, but the collectivity they invoke does not yet exist – 'the people are missing [*le peuple manque*]' (Deleuze 1990: 235/174). Artists cannot themselves create a people, and the people in their struggles cannot concern themselves directly with art, but when a people begins to take form, an interactive process emerges that connects art and the people:

> When a people is created [*se crée*: literally, 'creates itself'], it does so through its own means, but in a way that rejoins something in art . . . or in such a way that art rejoins that which it lacks. Utopia is not a good concept: rather, there is a 'fabulation' common to the people and to art. We should take up again the Bergsonian notion of fabulation and give it a political sense. (Deleuze 1990: 235/174)

Deleuze nowhere elaborates at length on the idea of fabulation, but it forms part of a rich complex of concepts central to his approach to the ethics and politics of art. It is also a rather elusive concept, which is Bergsonian only in a special sense that deserves some investigation.

Closed and Open Societies

On initial consideration, Bergson's fabulation must seem antithetical to Deleuze's, for its Bergsonian associations are basically negative, its Deleuzian largely positive. Bergson first makes use of the concept in his late *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (1932), fabulation serving a key function in what Bergson labels closed societies.[1] Ethical theory commonly assumes a continuum of values from love of family, to

love of society, and eventually to a love of mankind, but Bergson argues for a qualitative difference in nature (not degree) between a love of family and society, manifest in closed societies, and a love of mankind, which only appears upon the envisioning of an alternative social order, that of an open society. The essence of any social organisation resides in the co-ordinated functioning of individuals in relation to a whole, a functioning roughly analogous to that of cells within a single organism. Social organisation is widespread in Nature, with two evolutionary tendencies in social life represented by the extremes of hymenoptera (bees, wasps, ants) and *homo sapiens*. The co-ordinated functioning of individuals within insect societies is regulated primarily by instinct, whereas intelligence largely guides individuals' co-functioning within human societies. Instinct and intelligence, however, are not entirely separate from one another in their social function, a certain degree of intelligence being present in insect instinct, a degree of instinct permeating human intelligence. And both instinct and intelligence serve a fundamental social purpose. 'Social life is thus immanent, like a vague ideal, in instinct as well as in intelligence; this ideal finds its most complete realization in the hive or the anthill on one hand, and in human societies on the other' (Bergson 1932: 997/27).[2]

Insect societies are relatively fixed in their structure, the configuration of relations among individuals being dictated by instinct, whereas human societies vary in their mode of organisation, that variation stemming from the utilisation of intelligence in the development and perpetuation of social structures. Individual insects have a minimal autonomy in relation to society, the result being that insect societies are highly stable but extremely limited in their mode of organisation. Conversely, individual humans have a great deal of social autonomy, and as a result humans can use their intelligence to construct a wide range of divergent social systems. The cost of such flexibility in social organisation, however, is one of instability. The autonomy of individuals in human societies, made possible by the development of intelligence, threatens to dissolve social bonds entirely. That which counters the tendency toward social dissolution in humans is what Bergson calls a 'virtual instinct' (Bergson 1932: 998/28), a basic sense of moral obligation that individuals feel towards others. This virtual instinct dictates no specific behaviour; rather, it serves as an unspecified force guiding intelligence in its social operation. Hence, the moral 'ought' has its source in no rational or transcendent principle, but in the natural evolution of humans as a social species.

A general sense of obligation towards others ensures social cohesion, but the extension of that sense is naturally limited, for one of the basic

functions of a society is that of collective self-defence: 'Who does not see that social cohesion is due, in large part, to the necessity for a society to defend itself against others, and that it is first against all other men that one loves the men with whom one lives?' (Bergson 1932: 1002/32–3). Although intelligence allows flexibility in the formation of social structures, it tends to fashion 'closed societies', whose essential characteristic is 'to include at each moment a certain number of individuals, and to exclude others' (Bergson 1932: 1002/30). Hence: '[T]he social instinct that we have perceived at the foundation of social obligation always aims – instinct being relatively unchangeable – at a closed society, however large it may be' (Bergson 1932: 1001/32). A love of all humanity, therefore, cannot develop directly out of a love of family and city (or nation), for such a universal love presumes the existence of an 'open society', one whose constitutive principle would be qualitatively different from that of closed societies.

Closed societies are basically static. They are regulated by habit and custom, by those timeworn assumptions, practices and institutions that function like instincts, rendering social life automatic and somnambulistic. Language is a repository of such habits, customs and their attendant social obligations, and religion in closed societies serves to reinforce static patterns of behaviour. A central component of religion in closed societies is 'fabulation' (rendered by Bergson's English translators as 'myth-making'), which Bergson characterises as the act whereby the 'fantasmatic representations' (Bergson 1932: 1066/108) of spirits, forces, and gods are brought forth. Bergson insists that fabulation is not related to religion as cause to effect – in other words, that religion is not simply the product of humankind's heated imagination. Rather, he sees religion as the '*raison d'être* of the fabulative function' (Bergson 1932: 1067/108–09), and both religion and fabulation as means of reinforcing social cohesion in closed societies.

Fabulation is an action of the intelligence, yet its basic function is to counteract tendencies that are inherent in intelligence itself. On its own, intelligence does not necessarily conclude that the individual's actions should support the common good; indeed, intelligence often reasons that self-interest should prevail over collective interests, and hence intelligence tends to undermine social obligations. Intelligence also establishes cause-and-effect relations, and thereby gives the individual a limited vision of the future. As a result, intelligence inevitably leads humans to foresee their own death, which has the unfortunate consequence of inducing despair. Finally, intelligence brings awareness of the limitations of human powers, for the same faculty that guides purposive rational

action recognises as well that means do not always fulfil their ends, that the hunter's arrow, though intended to kill the deer, does not always find its mark. Religion counters intelligence's anti-social tendency, as well as its tendency to induce despair through its recognition of the individual's mortality and powerlessness. Fabulation is an operation of the intelligence that supports religion's function. The role of the fabulative function, 'which belongs to intelligence yet nonetheless is not pure intelligence', is 'to elaborate that religion . . . which we call static'. Such a religion is 'a defensive reaction of Nature against that which might be depressing for the individual, and dissolvent for society, in the exercise of intelligence' (Bergson 1932: 1150/205).

Static religion instils social obligation through divinely sanctioned actions and enforced taboos. It counters the despair created through an awareness of one's death by inducing belief in immortal spirits, and it checks the depressing recognition of one's impotence by positing supernatural intentions in Nature that individuals can attempt to utilise, placate, defer, overcome, and so on. Fabulation goes hand in hand with religion in creating the myths of forces, spirits and deities that foster social cohesion and individual contentment (the social and individual functions of religion, finally, being inseparable and mutually reinforcing, since stable societies require stable, relatively content individuals (Bergson 1932: 1144/198–9)). The myths created through fabulation are products of an 'intellectual instinct', in that such myths are 'representations formed naturally by intelligence, in order to protect itself, through certain beliefs, from certain dangers of knowledge' (Bergson 1932: 1112/162).

Hallucination and Emotion

At this point, we might wonder what Deleuze could find appealing in the concept of fabulation, if fabulation's primary function is to produce closed, static societies in which habit, custom and common sense enforce somnambulistic rounds of repetitive behaviour. A partial response lies in fabulation's associations with hallucinations and vertiginous disruptions in experience. Bergson offers two intriguing anecdotes to delve into the workings of fabulation. The first concerns a woman who approached her apartment lift with the intention of descending to the ground floor. Normally, the outer gate to the lift shaft would not open if the car had not stopped at that floor, but the lift was not functioning properly, and the gate was open even though the car was stationed on a flight below. As she walked toward the gate she

suddenly felt herself thrust backward; she confusedly sensed that the lift operator had appeared before her and pushed her away. When she emerged from her startled state, she found that neither guard nor lift was there. 'She had been about to throw herself into the void: a miraculous hallucination had saved her life' (Bergson 1932: 1076–7/120). Fabulation, says Bergson, is something like the woman's hallucination, a protective illusion that saves us from the void of social dissolution and individual despair.

The second anecdote comes from William James, who tells of his experience during the San Francisco earthquake of April 1906. James reports that in the preceding December, as he left Harvard for Stanford, his friend B. had joked that he hoped James would 'get a touch of earthquake' at Stanford so that he might 'also become acquainted with *that* Californian institution' (Bergson 1932: 1105/154).[3] When the earthquake struck, James says: '[M]y first consciousness was one of gleeful recognition of the nature of the movement. "By Jove," I said to myself, "here's B.'s old earthquake, after all!" And then, as it went *crescendo*, "And a jolly good one it is, too!" I said' (Bergson 1932: 1105/154). Throughout the earthquake, James felt no fear, only 'glee and admiration' (Bergson 1932: 1106/154). He experienced the earthquake as an individual entity, 'B.'s old earthquake', and as one that had come directly to him personally. 'Animus and intent were never more present in any human action, nor did any human activity ever more definitely point back to a living agent as its source and origin' (Bergson 1932: 1106/155). Bergson argues that James' response to the earthquake was a manifestation of the fabulative function, which, far from being present only in a 'primitive mentality', persists as a basic component of human thought. The shock of the event induces awe, elation and a spontaneous, natural attribution of intention and personhood to the earthquake. Yet, Bergson insists, this intentional entity is not a fully formed personality; rather, 'the living agent is here the earthquake itself' (Bergson 1932: 1107/156), this particular event, no more and no less. It is an individual event, to which has been added intention and a basic humanness that provides a bond between the event and the individual experiencing it. In James' anecdote, we see fabulation in its barest, simplest form. Intelligence:

> impelled by instinct, transforms the situation. It brings forth the image that reassures. It gives to the Event a unity and an individuality which make of the event a being that is malicious or perhaps mischievous, but a being similar to us, with something of the sociable and human about it. (Bergson 1932: 158)

Bergson observes that when fiction moves us, it is 'like a nascent hallucination: it can counteract judgement and reasoning, which are the properly intellectual faculties' (Bergson 1932: 1067/109). A fiction, 'if its image is vivid and haunting [*obsédante*], may precisely imitate perception, and thereby prevent or modify action' (Bergson 1932: 1067/109). The function of fabulation is to support religion in fashioning a closed society, and thereby overcome those tendencies inherent in intelligence that dissolve social bonds. Religion's proper sphere is action (unlike philosophy, whose primary domain is thought (Bergson 1932: 1148/203)), and the purpose of fabulation is to impel humans to act in accordance with religious dictates, which themselves come into existence in order to ensure socially cohesive action. Fabulation thus fulfils its ends by creating hallucinatory fictions – vivid, haunting images that imitate perception and induce action, and thereby counteract the operations of judgement and reason.

Fabulation, then, emerges in the shock of an event, a vertiginous moment of disorientation in which images bypass reason and work directly on the senses to induce action. All these aspects of fabulation Deleuze takes up in his own appropriation of the concept. But in his approach to fabulation he also echoes Bergsonian motifs associated with fabulation's opposite – creative emotion. Bergson argues that the traditional concept of imagination can be misleading, for it encourages the attribution of fabulation and genuine artistic creation to the same faculty, whereas the two stem from qualitatively different processes. To delve into the Nature of true creativity, Bergson notes first that writers, for example, most often adopt ready-made concepts and words, which have been supplied by society, combine them perhaps in new configurations, but largely add nothing new to the stock of language or its expressive possibilities. Those rare writers who genuinely create, by contrast, work from a generative, unique emotion that impels the expression of the ineffable, that pushes the writer 'to forge words, to create ideas', 'to do violence to words, to strain the elements of language', and if successful, to fashion 'a thought capable of taking on a new aspect for each new generation' (Bergson 1932: 1191/254).

Emotions are involved in both ordinary composition and genuine creation, but they are of two qualitatively different types, 'infra-intellectual' and 'supra-intellectual'. An infra-intellectual emotion is 'a consequence of an idea or a represented image' (Bergson 1932: 1011/43); it is a conventionally coded feeling stirred by an independent intellectual representation. By contrast, a supra-intellectual emotion 'is not determined by a representation which it follows and from which it is distinct'; rather, it

is 'pregnant with representations, no one of which is actually formed, but which it draws or might draw from its substance by an organic development' (Bergson 1932: 1012/43–4). In short, 'alongside the emotion which is the effect of a representation and which is added to it, there is the emotion which precedes representation, which contains it virtually and which to a certain point is its cause' (Bergson 1932: 1014/47). Every great artist invents a new emotion in producing an artwork, and, indeed, a new emotion is 'at the origin of the great creations of art, science and civilization in general' (Bergson 1932: 1011/43).

Each inventive, supra-intellectual emotion ultimately is a manifestation of *élan vital*, the force of *natura naturans* that creates the new. Creative emotion's basic principles are joy, liberation and movement, and the great mystics are those who most fully engage that *élan vital*. Mystics, Bergson insists, are not passive and contemplative, but active proponents of a religion and a society qualitatively different from those associated with fabulation. The great mystics embrace a religion of universal love among all humanity and all creation, and that love serves as the basis of an open society that is dynamic and liberating.

There are thus two sources of morality and religion, as Bergson's title indicates, one, the 'virtual instinct' associated with fabulation that leads to a morality of obligation and a closed society; the other, the creative emotion of *élan vital* that points toward a morality of love and an open society. The first is a means by which Nature overcomes itself, in that the virtual instinct counteracts intelligence's natural tendency to engender individual despair and social dissolution. Yet the second is also a means by which Nature overcomes itself, in that creative emotion is a manifestation of Nature's own creative impulse, which breaks the hold of the virtual instinct and makes possible a new social and moral order. The fundamental principle of *élan vital* is creation, the dynamic inventive becoming of the new, and through mystics that principle finds expression in the vision of a creative self-formation of human society. There is no gradual transformation from a closed to an open society, for they stem from qualitatively different principles. Rather, the possibility of an open society only emerges as 'a leap forward [*un bond en avant*]' (Bergson 1932: 1038/74), a break from the closed circle of what seems possible and a disconcerting jump into the apparently impossible, which, however, brings forth its own possibility in its very movement.

Deleuze, like Bergson, sees artistic invention as a manifestation of a general process of cosmic creation, and he also views genuine artistic creativity as an affective activity, 'desire' and 'desiring production' functioning in Deleuze's treatments of the arts as rough counterparts of

Bergson's 'creative emotion'.[4] Echoes of Deleuze's notion of a minor use of language are especially evident in Bergson's account of the writer's effort to do violence to words and strain them in order to forge new concepts and new modes of sensibility. For Bergson, genuine creativity leads toward an open, liberating, dynamically ever-becoming society, and the future collectivity Deleuze hopes to engender might be characterised in the same terms. Yet Bergson subordinates art to religion, using artistic invention to explain the process whereby the mystic creatively envisions an open society; and he regards mystics as rare individuals who foster the formation of an open society by serving as models for emulation by others. Deleuze, by contrast, has no particular interest in religion, though he is deeply concerned with art's social and political function; and if he is interested in the individual artist, it is primarily as a vehicle for the formation of a people – that is, an active collectivity that shapes itself and thereby fashions new modes of social existence. Bergson also separates fabulation from genuine creation, whereas Deleuze conjoins the two. When Bergson relates the anecdotes of the woman approaching the lift shaft and of James experiencing the earthquake, his primary aim is to show that such moments of disequilibrium reveal, beneath the veneer of modern rationality, an automatic, virtually instinctual, fabulative function that is evident in the belief systems of what are often called 'primitive' peoples. For Bergson, the 'leap forward' of genuine creation is unrelated to the shock of the event that induces fabulation. For Deleuze, however, the leap forward *is* the shock of the event, and fabulation is part of the genuinely creative process that makes of the event the occasion for the invention of a people to come.

The People to Come

Although Deleuze mentions fabulation in his early writings on Bergson, he only makes the concept part of his own work around 1985. In his seminal 1956 article 'The Concept of Difference in Bergson', he devotes just one sentence to fabulation (Deleuze 2004: 41), and in *Le Bergsonisme* (1966), though he offers a lucid description of fabulation, it is only as part of a brief account of creative emotion as the means whereby intuition comes to full awareness of the workings of *élan vital* (Deleuze 1966: 111–19/106–13). Nonetheless, the broad concerns Deleuze later takes up in the concept of fabulation are of long standing in his thought, dating at least to the inception of his collaboration with Guattari. Two motifs from *L'Anti-Oedipe* (1972) are especially germane, both of which are initially articulated by Guattari in the 1960s. The first

is the irreducibly social nature of desire, which manifests itself in the desiring subject's hallucination of history: '[B]eyond the Ego,' writes Guattari in 1966, 'the subject finds itself exploded to the four corners of the historical universe; the delirious subject [*le délirant*] begins to speak foreign languages, it hallucinates history: class conflict, wars become its instruments of expression' (Guattari 1974: 155). The second motif is that of the group-subject, as opposed to the subjected group, a concern voiced by Guattari as early as 1962 (Guattari 1974: 42) and prominent throughout his activist engagement with institutional psychiatry. Unlike the subjected group, which receives its identity from outside, struggles against 'any possible inscription of non-sense' (Guattari 1974: 53), and imposes hierarchical, fixed roles on its members, the group-subject forms itself from within, keeps itself open to other groups, and offers fluid and shifting roles for its members.

In *L'Anti-Oedipe*, the desiring subject is said to pass through a series of intensive states and to identify 'the names of history with those states: *all the names of history are me*' (Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 28/21). All investment of desire, Deleuze and Guattari insist, 'is social, and in every regard concerns a social historical field' (Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 409/342). When the desiring subject 'hallucinates and raves universal history, and proliferates the races' (Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 101/85), not only does desire reveal its social nature, but it also shows itself to be inseparable from the formation of a collectivity. 'All delirium is racial' (Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 101/85), in that all desire concerns social groups, either the cursed races, in Rimbaud's phrase, 'inferior for all eternity' (Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 102/86), or the superior races of racist fantasy. The delirium of the cursed races is a manifestation of revolutionary, 'schizo' desire, a desire to 'become other' and form a new collectivity, whereas the delirium of the superior races is an expression of paranoid desire, which seeks to construct and perpetuate social structures of privilege and oppression. Revolutionary desire fosters the creation of group-subjects, whose internal relational patterns are shifting and 'transverse', 'forever mortal', 'without hierarchy or group super-ego' (Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 417–18/348–9) whereas paranoid desire permeates the subjected groups of control and domination.

When Deleuze and Guattari cite Nietzsche's delirious remark in his letter to Burckhardt that 'every name in history is I' (Nietzsche 1969: 347), or when they refer to Schreber's mad ramblings about Germans, Aryans, Jews, Catholics, Slavs, Jesuits and Mongols (Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 106–7/89), they do so to stress both

desire's sociopolitical dimension and its irreducible non-rationality. The language of psychosis offers them a vocabulary of affective engagement with the social, yet one that affords a certain lucidity, in that it provides diagnostic tools for discerning historical and political investments of collective desire. The phantasmagoric talk of races, superior or accursed, finally is a means of discussing the primary task of schizoanalytic politics, that of forming an active, self-determining collective – in short, that of inventing a people.

In *Kafka: pour une littérature mineure* (1975) Deleuze and Guattari directly take up the topic of 'the people' and relate it specifically to the arts. In a diary entry dated 25 December 1911, Kafka states that in the literature of a small group, such as that of the Czechs or Yiddish-speaking Jews, 'literature is less a concern of literary history than of the people' (Kafka 1948: 193). Deleuze and Guattari argue that such is the case of all 'minor literature', and that one of Kafka's chief goals as a minor writer is to foster the invention of a people. The collective consciousness of a minor people, in Kafka's words, is 'often unrealized in public life and always tending to disintegrate' (Kafka 1948: 193), yet for that very reason literature has an 'enunciative function' that is 'collective, and even revolutionary' (Deleuze and Guattari 1975: 31/17). And should the writer be 'on the margins or outside of his fragile community, this situation gives him all the more opportunity to express another potential community, to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility' (Deleuze and Guattari 1975: 31–2/17).

In a minor literature, there is no speaking subject, only 'collective assemblages of enunciation', and a minor literature expresses these assemblages 'as diabolic powers to come or as revolutionary forces to be constructed' (Deleuze and Guattari 1975: 33/18). In the absence of a fully formed and functional community, the artist can only disclose the lines of potential collective development that are immanent within the present social field. In Kafka's case, especially in *The Trial*, he presents the power relations of juridical, economic, political, religious and libidinal existence in the Austro-Hungarian empire, and then sets them in disequilibrium, warping them and mutating them in order to reveal the 'diabolic powers to come' (those manifest later in the bureaucratic regimes of Stalinist Russia, Nazi Germany and capitalist America), while at the same time suggesting potential developmental lines for positive, fluid modes of social interaction. In Deleuze and Guattari's analysis, Kafka, the lone artist, is not the speaking subject of *The Trial*, nor is the future community somehow the speaking subject; rather: '[T]he actual [writer] and the virtual community – both of them real – are pieces of

a collective assemblage' (Deleuze and Guattari 1975: 150/84). *The Trial* is a machine, whose parts include the actual writer and the virtual community, and K in the novel is the function that brings these parts together. K is the:

> *general functioning of a polyvocal assemblage of which the solitary individual is one part*, the approaching collectivity another part, another cog – without our knowing yet what kind of assemblage it is: fascist? revolutionary? socialist? capitalist? or perhaps all at the same time, connected in the most repugnant or most diabolical fashion? (Deleuze and Guattari 1975: 152/85)[5]

In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), Deleuze and Guattari reiterate their analysis of the problem facing the modern artist, noting that in the modern era: '[N]ever has the artist had a greater need of the people, while declaring most firmly that the people is lacking – the people is what is most lacking' (*le peuple, c'est ce qui manque le plus*) (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 427/346). Fabulation, however, only becomes a part of this analysis in *Cinéma 2: L'Image-temps* (1985), when Deleuze examines the 'powers of the false' (*puissances du faux*) displayed in Pierre Perrault's *cinéma du vécu* and in Jean Rouch's *cinéma vérité*. Perrault and Rouch both produce what might be deemed documentary films, but they do so, not by providing an 'objective' recording of an external reality, but by entering into a collaborative process of invention with their subjects.[6] In *Pour la suite du monde* (1963), for example, Perrault proposes that a group of Québecois islanders revive a long-abandoned communal practice of erecting a weir barrier in the St Lawrence River to snare white dolphins, and then he films the fishermen in this enterprise. As the islanders plan and carry out their tasks, they share distant memories and ancestral lore of the hunt for the white dolphin, but they also begin to form a new community. And as they speak of the collective past, the camera captures them, in Perrault's words, 'in a state of legending', 'of legending in *flagrante delicto' (en flagrant délit de légender)* (Perrault 1983: 54), that is, in the process of fashioning a new communal lore.

This 'legending' Deleuze labels 'fabulation', and he sees it as the practice of a minor people engaged in a process of self-invention. The Québecois islanders are marginalised within anglophone Canadian society, but also within official French culture, as speakers of a non-standard dialect. Though himself Québecois, Perrault sees that he, like other well-educated Québecois, has been colonised by the images and discourse of the once-glorious French empire, for he has absorbed and

been shaped by the written forms, standard pronunciation, and orthodox values of 'correct French'. As he observes:

> The famous Age of Enlightenment never spoke of the people of the 17th century. That century produced princely images. A princely imaginary. And a writing and a language were imposed on people who had a language and did not have writing . . . Each epoch produces royal images, images that normalize . . . My soul was conditioned by centuries of the French Academy. Through writing I became a stranger to my own surroundings. Superior' (Perrault 1983: 56)

In *Pour la suite du monde*, he tries to give voice to the popular oral speech of the Québecois, and to make that speech an integral part of the project of collective self-invention which he initiates through the film. In Deleuze's analysis, Perrault's effort is to counter the orthodoxies of anglophone and high French culture whose truth 'is always that of the masters or the colonizers' through 'the fabulative function of the poor' (Deleuze 1985: 196/150). In Perrault's film, we see 'the becoming of the real person as he sets himself to 'fictioning', when he begins 'legending in *flagrante delicto*', and thus contributes to the 'invention of his people'. The real Québecois fisherman 'himself becomes an other, when he sets himself to fabulating without being fictive' (Deleuze 1985: 196/150).

Fabulation challenges the received truths of the dominant social order, and in this regard it 'falsifies', but it also produces its own truths through its inventions, and in this sense it manifests the creative 'power of the false'. In Perrault's cinema, the falsifying power of fabulation is set in motion through a collaborative process involving the director and his subjects. Perrault insists that by himself he cannot escape his literate, classical French mentality. When one of his well-educated interview interlocutors suggests that in Perrault's films 'the peasant that you are [*le paysan que tu es*] could always speak,' Perrault counters:

> No, because I have been colonized by the peasant that you are not [*le paysan que vous n'êtes pas*], by Le Nôtre [the seventeenth-century architect of the formal gardens of Versailles]. I have learned to read by reading in the books that obeyed the geometry of Le Nôtre in order to be elected to the Academy of Richelieu. (Perrault 1983: 56)

He needs the Québecois islanders to serve as intercessors, for they still have contact with a living oral tradition. Yet the islanders also have need of Perrault as the initiator of a communal task that revives group memory and instigates the invention of a new collectivity: 'I do not want to help give birth yet again to myths, but to allow people to give birth to

themselves, to avoid myths, to escape customs, to elude Writings. I would like people to write themselves while liberating themselves from Writings' (Perrault 1983: 56). Perrault and the islanders are mutual intercessors, together engaged in the falsification of received truths and the 'legending' of a people to come:

> Thus it is that I am interceded by Alexis, and Grand-Louis and Léopold and Joachim and all of the Ile-aux-Coudres [the island community of *Pour la suite du monde*] and little by little by all of Québec. So that I might know what I am outside writing. (Perrault 1983: 56)

Perrault's relationship to his subjects might seem peculiar to his own cinematic undertakings, but Deleuze sees his films simply as particularly clear manifestations of the artist's proper relationship to the people in all genuine creation. As in *The Trial*, the actual artist and the virtual community are parts of a single machine, and the work of art is the generative conjunction of those forces in their mutual intercession. Fabulation is the name for the process whereby the artwork initiates the invention of a people to come, and in the case of Perrault's films, the lived speech of the Québecois engaged in 'legending' is central to the fabulative process.

Fabulation and Narration

Fabulation, then, is closely associated with fiction, invention and the 'power of the false'. But at a certain point, one must ask, what has fabulation to do with narration? Fabulation, after all, comes from the Latin *fabula*, which may be rendered as 'talk', 'conversation', or 'small talk', but also as 'story', 'tale', 'myth', or 'legend'. In this regard, *fabula* resembles its Greek counterpart, *mythos*, which may be translated as 'word', 'speech', 'story', or 'legend'. And the French *fable*, besides denoting the literary form of the fable, has as older meanings 'story', 'fiction', 'legend', while *La Fable*, according to the Robert dictionary, may refer to 'the set of mythological stories as a whole'. Surely, it would seem, fabulation must have something to do with the creation of *fabulae*, just as 'legending' must bear some relation to the enunciation of legends.

Curiously, Deleuze says little about narration per se in his remarks on fabulation, and in this he is a dutiful follower of Bergson. Bergson regards the mythologies of the world's religions as products of fabulation, but he says very little about myths themselves. His accounts of the fabulative function's basic operation focus on the invention of the personae of myths and legends – supernatural forces, local spirits and

fully-formed gods – but he virtually ignores the actions and interactions of these eternal beings once their origins have been explained, as if the stories of the gods were merely secondary and insignificant elaborations of their fundamental being. Such an emphasis seems odd, when one considers that Bergson is above all a philosopher of time, and narrative takes as its subject the irreducibly temporal dimension of experience. Bergson's central concern, however, is not with myth itself but with religion as a force that shapes closed societies. The stories of the gods are merely complex means whereby basic social obligations may be enforced, and hence they are of little significance in themselves.

Yet there also seems to be an anti-narrative bias in Bergson, one that surfaces in his occasional references to the arts. The art that Bergson appears to appreciate most is music, and though he speaks well of writers upon occasion, his highest accolades are reserved for composers. When he first introduces the notion of 'supra-intellectual', creative emotion in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, he comments:

> [W]hat is more systematic, more conceptually elaborate, than a Beethoven symphony? But throughout his long labor of arrangement, rearrangement and choice of material, which he was pursuing on the intellectual plane, the composer was ascending back to a point situated outside the plane, there to seek acceptance or refusal, direction, inspiration: in this point resided an indivisible emotion that no doubt aided intelligence in unfolding itself in music, but which was itself more than music and more than intelligence. (Bergson 1932: 1190/252)

Bergson does attribute a similar creative process to the writer, yet he seems to regard the efforts of genuinely creative writers as in some regards antithetical to their medium, for narrative has a natural affinity with fabulation and closed societies. Indeed, language itself bears such an affinity, since 'the soul of society is immanent in the language it speaks' (Bergson 1932: 987/15), and the social obligations of closed societies, which are everywhere the first forms of human society, permeate the languages of the world.

As Deleuze astutely remarks in *Bergsonism*:

> [A]rt, according to Bergson, itself has two sources. There is a *fabulative* art [*un art fabulateur*], sometimes collective, sometimes individual . . . And there is an *emotive* or *creative* art . . . Perhaps every art presents these two aspects, but in variable proportion. Bergson does not hide the fact that the fabulation aspect seems to him to be inferior in art; the novel would above all be fabulation, music, on the contrary, emotion and creation. (Deleuze 1966: 117/134–5)

If narrative is a temporal art, so too is music, and music has the advantage of being a directly emotive art, beyond words and all the restrictive habits, conventions, assumptions, and prejudices that haunt natural languages. Perhaps, then, Bergson's inattention to narrative simply reflects his low regard for fabulation in general and his sense of genuine art as an essentially supra-linguistic enterprise.

A similar disregard for narrative can be found in Deleuze as well, despite the fact that he wrote three books on novelists. True, in *Proust and Signs* (1964) Deleuze does make reference to various episodes in the plot of the *Recherche*, but the story Deleuze unfolds in Proust is that of Marcel's apprenticeship in signs, which eventuates in a philosophical understanding of essences that transcends the sequence of events leading to that understanding. Marcel's final discovery of 'time regained' sets him free from chronological time, which is the time of conventional narrative, and Deleuze's interest is in the emergence of that redeemed time and the atemporal vision it affords of the world. In his extended Preface to Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs, Présentation de Sacher-Masoch* (1967), Deleuze argues that Sacher-Masoch's fantasies are essentially static and that his fiction consists of a sequence of frozen tableaus. Again, as in his analysis of Proust, Deleuze makes reference to diverse plot details in Sacher-Masoch, but he pays little attention to the narratives of the novels themselves, regarding them as mere devices for linking timeless masochistic tableaus. In *Kafka*, finally, he and Guattari discuss a number of Kafka's short stories, but primarily as illustrations of concepts, such as the 'schizo-incest' revealed in *The Metamorphosis*, or the 'becoming-animal' evident in *Report to an Academy*. Deleuze and Guattari see Kafka's unfinished novels as the fulfilment of his project, the novels' supposedly defective plots actually being central aspects of their functioning as open-ended, perpetually moving machines. Perhaps most telling in this regard is Deleuze and Guattari's argument that *The Trial* does not really have an ending – that the execution of K is actually a dream sequence, and that the novel has a loose, paratactic structure that allows an endless wandering from episode to episode. Once again, narrative itself seems a minor consideration.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, an opposition to traditional narrative recurs as an important theme in Deleuze's work. In *The Logic of Sensation* (1981), Deleuze seizes on Bacon's disdain for narrative 'illustration' in painting, arguing that Bacon's fundamental object is to free images from their conventional associations with their attendant stories and make visible 'the brutality of fact'. In his two-volume study of cinema, Deleuze challenges narrative-based theories of film, giving

priority instead to different conceptions of time. Film directors in his view are not master story tellers so much as they are sculptors of time-space. Narratives are the secondary products of structures of time, the conventional narratives of classic film emerging from movement-images regulated by the sensori-motor schema, the fragmented and confusing narratives of modern film serving as indexes of non-chronological time that has been freed of the sensori-motor schema's regulation. And in his 1992 study of Beckett's television plays, *L'Epuisé*, Deleuze shows how Beckett grows impatient with words and attempts to silence his characters' voices and their interminable stories. Beckett's effort, explains Deleuze, is to bore holes in words and extract a non-linguistic 'something' beneath or between the words, and his problem 'is not that words are liars; rather, they are so laden with calculations and significations, and also with intentions and personal memories, with old habits that cement them together, that scarcely has their surface been broached when it closes over again' (Beckett 1992: 103/173). Each of Beckett's characters reveals a 'possible world', an 'Other', and 'the Others – that is, the possible worlds, with their objects, with their voices that bestow on them the only reality to which they can lay claim – constitute "stories" ' (Beckett 1992: 67/157), and it is the incessant babble of such stories that Beckett tries to bring to an end in his television plays.

In Deleuze's analysis, Beckett's goal is to produce 'pure images', images stripped of all their associations with human intentions, calculations, intentions, memories and stories, and it is the visual image finally that Deleuze himself privileges in his approach to the arts and his conceptualisation of fabulation. In the late essay 'Literature and Life' (in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 1993), Deleuze states that literature always engages 'becomings' and 'powers' (*puissances*), metamorphic processes of becoming-other, and that such becomings and powers have nothing to do with the authors' or the characters' personal emotions, memories, dreams or fantasies. Literary characters may be individuated, 'but all their individual traits elevate them to a vision that carries them into an indefinite, like a becoming too powerful for them: Ahab and the vision of Moby Dick'. There is no literature without fabulation, Deleuze adds, 'but, as Bergson saw, fabulation, the fabulative function, consists neither in imagining nor projecting a self [*un moi*]. Rather, it attains to these visions, it rises to these becomings and powers' (Deleuze 1993: 13/3).

In another late essay, devoted to T. E. Lawrence, Deleuze remarks on the reputed 'mythomania' of Lawrence of Arabia in his portrayal of himself and his band of Arab guerillas, arguing that Lawrence's effort is not to aggrandise himself and his comrades but 'to project into things,

into reality, into the future and even into the sky, an image of himself and of others intense enough that it *lives its own life* . . . It is a machine for fabricating giants, what Bergson called a fabulative function' (Deleuze 1993: 147/118). In a note to this passage, Deleuze refers the reader to Genet's analysis in *Prisoner of Love* (1986) of the Palestinian fighters' heroic postures and poses, which Genet regards as efforts to create an image of oneself that is separate from the self and that one projects into the future. Mythomania, says Genet, is merely the name for an unsuccessfully projected image, which should 'live its own life' and allow the individual 'to become legendary [*fabuleux*],' 'to become an eponymous hero, projected into the world' (Genet 1986: 354/262).

Deleuze here is clearly taking up Bergson's association of fabulation with hallucination. Bergson, we recall, says that a fiction, 'if its image is vivid and haunting [*obsédante*], may precisely imitate perception, and thereby prevent or modify action' (Bergson 1959: 1067). Fabulation for Bergson has the power of forcing its images on reality and countering the operations of reason and intelligence, but only in the service of a restrictive morality and a closed society. For Deleuze, the fabulative function is the function proper to art, which projects into the world images so intense that they take on a life of their own. For this reason Deleuze describes great cinema directors as '*voyants*', 'seers', 'clairvoyants' (Deleuze 2003: 200). For the same reason he says that one of literature's chief ends is to push language 'toward an outside or a reverse side consisting of Visions and Auditions' (Deleuze 1993: 16/5), 'Visions' and 'Auditions' here denoting hallucinatory images and sounds that haunt language and manage somehow to force themselves on to the world.

Fabulation, then, is a hallucinatory power that creates 'visions and auditions', 'becomings', 'powers', 'giants'. If it is a myth-making power, it is one that creates a mythology not of stories but of images – images of the becoming-other of the collectivity as it fashions itself by falsifying received truths and fabricating new ones. And if there is a relationship between Deleuzian fabulation and narration, it is that of the disruption of conventional narratives and the disclosure of the time of the event.

In a brief reflection on May 1968, co-written with Guattari in 1984, Deleuze observes that in every social revolution 'there is always something of the *event*, irreducible to social determinisms, to causal series'. Historians study causal relations, 'but the event is out of sync or in rupture with causalities: it is a bifurcation, a deviation in relation to laws, an unstable state that opens a new field of possibilities'. May 1968

was such an event, and most importantly, 'it was a phenomenon of *voyance* ['seeing', 'clairvoyance'], as if a society suddenly saw what was intolerable and also saw the possibility of something else' (Deleuze 2003: 215–16). The time of the event is, in Nietzsche's terminology, 'untimely – that is to say, acting counter to our time and thereby acting on our time and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come' (Nietzsche 1997: 60). It is a time set free from the narrative causality of history and undetermined in its relation to the future.

This association of seeing, the intolerable and the disruptive event is especially evident in Deleuze's reading of Foucault. In a 1986 interview, while reflecting on the thought of his recently deceased friend Foucault, Deleuze comments that Foucault 'was an extraordinary seer/clairvoyant' (*voyant*), with 'a power of seeing equal to his power of writing'. Deleuze explains that when one sees something 'and sees it very profoundly, what one sees is intolerable'. Part of Foucault's genius was his ability to see the intolerable, and in his works we discover 'thought as vision, as the seizure of the intolerable' (Deleuze 2003: 256–7). In a 1988 interview, Deleuze notes further that Foucault was a writer of histories, but above all a philosopher who 'used history for something else: as Nietzsche said, to act against the times, and hence on time, in favor, I hope, of a time to come' (Deleuze 2003: 323). Foucault's attempt was to make possible something new, and to do so by separating us from the causal determinations of the past. 'The new,' says Deleuze, 'is the actual [*l'actuel* bearing both the meaning of 'that which is real' and 'that which is contemporary, of the present moment']. The actual is not what we are, but what we are becoming, what we are in the process of becoming, that is, the Other, our becoming.' In any situation, it is essential to distinguish 'what we are (what we no longer are), and what we are in the process of becoming: *the part of history, and the part of the actual*. History is the archive, the design of that which we are and are ceasing to be, whereas the actual is the rough sketch of what we are becoming' (Deleuze 2003: 322–3).

To see deeply is to see the intolerable, that is, to engage in a critique of the received truths and realities of the present. A moment of hallucinatory, clairvoyant vision is one in which the intolerable becomes suddenly visible, but one also that makes visible new possibilities unencumbered by the past. The hold of history, of the forces that have shaped our present, is broken, and the actual of what we are becoming surges forth. History, story, narrative continuity, yield to the event, a disruption in causality, a gap in the orderly and regular sequence of world occurrences. The event is like James' earthquake, or the woman's

vertiginous moment at the brink of the lift shaft, a breach in ordinary experience that instigates unexpected, hallucinatory images. Fabulation, we might say, is one with the event, fabulation's visions emerging within the event, and those visions themselves constituting events. Fabulation creates visions that falsify received truths by rendering visible the intolerable, thereby critiquing the present, while those same visions loom like giant mythic figures of yet to be explored possibilities. The visions of fabulation break historical continuities and disrupt conventional narratives. They are untimely visions, becomings and powers that are dynamic but unspecified in their narrative possibilities, and hence temporal forces that may generate stories, but not themselves properly narrative elements.

The Two Sources of Fabulation

Bergson's fabulation has its source in the virtual instinct that creates moral obligation and enforces the cohesion of a closed society. Intelligence naturally and inevitably tends to dissolve social bonds, as it pursues self-centred lines of reasoning, while engendering individual despair, as it deduces the facts of the individual's mortality and limited powers. Fabulation is a function of the intelligence that counters these tendencies by creating images that imitate perception and stimulate action, those images assuming the form of the various forces, spirits and gods that populate the mythologies and sacred writings of the world's religions. The spontaneous fashioning of such hallucinatory images is revealed in moments of disorientation or sudden danger, such as James' earthquake or the woman's near mishap with the lift shaft. But the jolt that stimulates fabulation differs from the leap forward that accompanies genuine invention, for the fabulative function is qualitatively distinct from the creative function that inspires every advance into the new, whether that advance be in the arts, the sciences, politics or religion. The creative emotion from which the new issues forth is a manifestation of Nature's *élan vital*, which is simply the name for the natural world's dynamic, open-ended process of inventive becoming. The qualitative break evident in human creativity's leap forward is but a specialised instance of the general cosmic discontinuity that accompanies any genuine advance into the new.

Deleuze's fabulation has its source in the event, which is both a disorienting shock and a leap toward the future. His fabulation resembles Bergson's creative emotion in its internally generative unfolding of new possibilities, but it shares Bergsonian fabulation's characteristics of giving rise to hallucinatory images that short-circuit the operations of

common sense. Bergsonian fabulation has the political function of perpetuating a closed, static society, whereas Deleuzian fabulation promotes the invention of a people and the formation of new modes of social interaction. Deleuzian fabulation thus fulfils a function that is part of the general politics articulated in *Anti-Oedipus*, a politics in which the desiring subject hallucinates history, and the subject's desiring-production in its positive function contributes to the formation of a group-subject, a self-determining, fluid and open collectivity. Fabulation is also central to the function of art outlined in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, the artist's desiring-production conjoining the actual artist and the virtual community in a collective assemblage of enunciation that aims at the invention of a people to come. Fabulation engages the powers of the false, falsifying received truths and fashioning new truths by 'legending'. The artist and the emergent community serve as mutual intercessors, each aiding the other in a process of metamorphic departure from received categories and simultaneous approach toward only partially specified possibilities. Fabulation's political dimension is explicit in images such as those Lawrence offers of himself and his guerilla band, but the political aspect of art is present in every projected image that takes on a life of its own. The goal of fabulation is to break the continuities of received stories and deterministic histories, and at the same time to fashion images that are free of the entangling associations of conventional narratives and open to unspecified elaboration in the construction of a new mode of collective agency.

'Utopia is not a good concept' (Deleuze 1990: 235/174), says Deleuze, for it is too fixed, too programmatic. Better is the notion of 'a "fabulation" common to the people and to art' (Deleuze 1990: 235/174). It is in developing this concept that Deleuze may be said to 'take up again the Bergsonian notion of fabulation and give it a political sense' (Deleuze 1990: 235/174).

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Notes

1. The French 'fabulation' is a rather uncommon word of recent provenance. Its first use documented in Robert's *Dictionnaire* is from Balzac's 1839 *Curé de village*, its sense being that of an 'imaginary representation, fanciful [*roman esque*, i.e., novel-like] version of a set of facts'. By 1905, psychologists had adopted the word to denote the production of imaginary or false stories, associating it with mythomania and pathological lying. Robert cites Bergson's *Two Sources* as the first philosophical use of the word, its meaning being 'activity of the imagination'.
2. Translations from Bergson, Deleuze, Deleuze and Guattari are my own. Page references are to the French text, followed by the corresponding page in available English translations.

3. Throughout my discussion of James' anecdote, I cite the English translation of *Two Sources*, which directly quotes James' original text.
4. The association of artistic creation and cosmic creation is especially evident in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Plateau 11: Of the Refrain. For a discussion of this matter, see Chapters 1 and 3 of my *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts*.
5. I discuss Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of Kafka's minor literature in greater detail in Chapters 3 and 4 of *Deleuze on Literature*.
6. For a discussion of Deleuze and Rouch's films, see pp. 150–4 of my *Deleuze on Cinema*.

EPILOGUE

Chapter 14

Why Am I Deleuzian?

Arnaud Villani

To be 'Deleuzian' represents for me a sign, not of recognition between accomplices in the context of something that could function as a 'Deleuzian school', but rather a sign of conniving or a 'sign of intelligence', according to the expression that Janicaud liked to use. I am thinking of a sign sent, not to a person (even if she is captivating), but rather to the objects that swirl around her – to her themes, her style and mannerisms, her concepts, or, if you prefer it, to the 'mist that she brings to the room' of your life when she writes, speaks or thinks. Above all, it is not a matter of 'reverence', because to be Deleuzian is to be 'on the look out', in order to test how far the concepts of Deleuze's philosophy may be stretched, without breaking.

How Does One Enter Deleuze?

I entered Deleuze's philosophy because, without initially understanding all its propositions, I could sense within it a great power. I started trusting it, because I had a complete literary formation, and I read a lot of German and Anglo-American novels. I had noticed that Deleuze's analysis coincided with mine, or went beyond it, in directions that were enriching my own. *At the same time*, I began to notice that his writings on art were what I had been waiting for for a long time, and I saw the artists around me reading Deleuze and finding him helpful in their practice. It is in this way that a long acquaintance started, first by means of books, and later on, by means of letters.

The ground of my relation with Deleuze is my knowledge that I can trust him. He reads well whatever he cites; he draws out of it – often and with an immense intellectual honesty – what is best. I can testify, throughout all my visitations of his work, that Deleuze has never lied or traded ignorance for knowledge. He speaks the depth of his thought, and

he does not play the 'subject supposed to know', or the role of the mandarin who gives up searching and denigrates what he has not yet read, in order not to have to read it.

French intellectuals have long hesitated to accept Deleuze as a great philosopher. They drew a distinction between the *historian of philosophy* – precise, inventive and occasionally very bold but generally respectable – and the philosopher who retained from 1968 an anarcho-desiring spontaneity, and threw himself, alongside Guattari, into sophistical wild dreams. I think that the French, in their majority, have abandoned this cursory evaluation. We must refrain from separating in this manner the historian from the philosopher, since Deleuze is a great historian (see *Abécédaire*, letter H) only because he is a great philosopher. If, as he himself says so well, he became a researcher in philosophy by means of an endless practice of its history (it is in this way that one learns patiently how to locate problems and concepts), it is, conversely, because, ever since the beginning of his historical work, he was in possession of the following definition of philosophy : 'to create concepts and to find the correlative problems and also to stay clear of the site of discussion-turned-interrogation'. This definition enabled Deleuze to propose his powerful readings of the tradition.

We run the risk of understanding nothing of Deleuze, if we neglect the above advice; we could in fact inscribe it on the pediment of Deleuzism, if it were a 'school'. The *Abécédaire* helps us understand in what sense the priest is a concept, invented by Nietzsche but practised by Christianity, in the context of the following problem: is man bound to an infinite debt? An authentically philosophical question could be this one: how different are the statements 'God is dead' and 'God does not exist', and to which concepts do they refer us? Or take the concept 'monad', invented by Leibniz (even if Leibniz borrowed it from the neo-Platonists and from Bruno): to which problem is it an answer? It answers to the possibility of a folding of perceptions inside the soul, and, therefore, to the modification of the Cartesian relation between the clear and the distinct.

We can see that it is not a question of finding concepts in the public domain, even if the latter sometimes takes on philosophical airs. Concepts are never 'at hand' and never fall from the sky. To take them as if they were 'at hand', in the way of our daily conversations, to behave as if the terms 'politics', 'right', 'left', 'democracy', 'capitalism', 'human rights', 'rule of law', had a sufficient sense, is to condemn Socrates all over again. It is to abandon philosophy in an absent-minded way, and, as we repeat *doxic* themes without *questioning* them, to give in to stupidity; because we do not want to disturb it, we help it to advance.

Situating Deleuze

From my point of view, the merit of Deleuze is 'to repeat' philosophy, and, through this repetition, to extricate from it the difference 'intra' (between philosophies) and the difference 'inter' (between philosophy and other disciplines). To the extent that Deleuze carries on with philosophy and maintains that there is no reason to speak of philosophy's death, it is (if we respect the co-presence in him of continuity and heterogeneity in intensive multiplicities) because he introduces in philosophy an essential break. As a result, he looks like the character of Hölderlin that used to fascinate him: the *faithful traitor*.

There is no better way to test how Deleuze does philosophy (as much as he interrupts it) than to compare it with Heidegger's 'backward step'. In the *Schritt zurück*, two reversals intervene that lead philosophy astray: the first is the Platonic moment whereby a lot of concepts change radically. Philosophy, being 'classical', from this point onwards, follows a homogeneous road – a road whose direction Heidegger, looking for a clear-cut repetition of the question of Being, changes, re-orienting philosophy towards its *dawn* – the Greek *Physis*. The stake of this double reversal is to render visible the Presocratic thought – a thought that until this moment was merely a 'virtual image', sought after in a place that it could not be (hence the classical errors about Heraclitus, and down to our days, about the Sophists and Parmenides). I very much respect this point of view because it is the first turning point that resituates philosophy in view of the Presocratics – its Schopenhauerian–Nietzschean moment. In it, 'will' replaces 'representation'. It is Nietzsche that allows us to read afresh the Presocratics, to refashion them unto 'giants' of thought, or better, unto patient precursors of the future.

Deleuze is clearly in this Nietzschean trajectory *(mouvance)*. What he has to say about desire lacking nothing and about the unconscious being a factory – and no longer theatre – is in line with the revolution of the will. In addition, he gives philosophy the definition of a *concrete metaphysics, free from the universal and all vestiges of transcendence, having movements as its objects and creating problematic concept*s – a definition that causes philosophy decisively to change direction. Deleuze is a *refraction* of philosophy, with Guattari only espousing this movement and offering it a confirmation by means of other references. Philosophy takes with him a bent such that we have never seen before and takes off on a line of flight. It takes on a microscopic vision, along with the virtual reserve that allows it to reach the singular, continuous and heterogeneous constitution of a virtual-real (the real charged with the virtual). The

virtual-real never stops to double up and to make possible what we call real (actual-real), the latter being nothing but thought's own fatigue. It is as if a vital organ were lacking from philosophy before Deleuze: constitutive deterritorialisation.

In this sense, Deleuze not only allows us – the way that Nietzsche doés – to come back to the Presocratics and to their radically different thought; he also permits us to take into account what is positive in Plato: one of Deleuze's fundamentals is the Idea as a problematic complex – that is, the question or virtual node where the possibility is created for a leap from one singularity to another, according to a multiplicity, an indiscernible zone, or a fold.

A sign testifies to the fact that philosophy, ever since Deleuze, bends and twists more than ever before; no word should be accepted without mistrust and without an effort to think it in depth, on Deleuzian terms. To work on Deleuze, without keeping in mind all these *fundamentals* is to enter the court without a racket, and to complain that this does not look at all like tennis. In the name of these fundamentals, Deleuze's thought is fecund because it does not leave any signifier undisturbed; thanks to this Outside that forces us to think (despite our 'good will to think' that is in fact a very 'bad will'), it transforms philosophical language into an enormous construction site.

The 'Play' of Philosophy

Before fully entering the question: why am I Deleuzian? where the 'I' is endowed with an 'aesthetic quantity of universality' giving it a 'subjective universality' (Kant 1951: pt I, bk I, ss. 6–8) (I postulate, as if the question were a question of art and taste, that every individual can and must be Deleuzian), we must notice the presence, within language, of a 'wall of metaphysics' that comes down to a wall of language. Words are the living fossils of thought. We find ourselves with an autobiographical 'I', which is psychological, pathic, 'pathematic', transcendental, and finally grafted upon the *hypokeimenon* – its oldest layer. This is an 'I' where a hundred epochs mingle, along with the slow acquisition of the person (the care of the self) and of an infinite freedom that gives every 'I' an infinite value. It is a substantial 'I'.

The problem is that, with this 'I' as *the constituted form* of philosophy, and with our readiness to accept all the terms of politics, art and science as 'stamped coin that is issued ready from the mint and so can be taken up and used' (Hegel 1931: 98) we fail to see (Deleuze says that the philosopher is a seer) the problematic concepts that these terms carry

along with them, and we block all efforts to accede to the 'real' that Deleuze calls *terra incognita*. Blocked is a site of life where concepts could have the energy, the intensity and the freedom to play and give food to thought because they represent resistance and force (*puissance*) (instead of the sadness of power).

Just like the 'is' turns into an 'and', (*le 'est' devient 'et'*), the monad into 'nomad', the 'plain' into 'plane' and 'plateau', 'genealogy' into 'geology', and 'politics' into 'micropolitics', in the same way we must reach the point where the 'I' turns into 'play', (*le 'je' devient 'jeu'*) and *paideia* into *paidia*. If we are too 'straight' in philosophy, if we have swallowed so many swords that keep us as straight as an 'I' (in keeping with the wish of the gymnast Schreber (the father of the president), whose paranoiac theories – confusing physiological and moral rectitude – had seduced, before the war, millions of Germans) it is because we live and relive the pedagogical compulsion (and we call it *paideia, Bildung*). We should not forget that the eighteenth century lived for the sake of the pedagogical 'perfectibility' of humanity. How could one then be surprised that even today, in politics, economy and society – even in philosophy – a hyper-morality of pure conformity is being developed, aiming at the 'better', or at least the 'correct'?

We confuse thought with the decorum of thought – with the norm that educates. Deleuze's thought cannot but revolt the pedagogue who dislikes his irony, his humour, his gaiety, his endless games, and above all fears the uproar of chaos. It was in the name of *paideia* that Plato uprooted everything that could remind us, in one way or another, of chaos: the sophists, ruse, *poikilos* or the medley of colours, individual differences, and the 'too much' in the *Philebus*. We never stopped reiterating these points. The *Phaedrus* said it all on the need of being serious (*spoudaios*), that is, on moving from *paidia* (play) to *paideia* (education). For twenty-five centuries now, philosophy – with the notable exception of Nietzsche who, by leaving the university, escaped its diktats (or was it the other way around?) – has lived on a *professorial* ideology (the fabrication of the *kalokagathoi*). And yet, philosophy, as creation, is an art form, and just like the case is with the works of Baudelaire and Courbet (*The Origin of the World*), philosophy should also remember that it has no obligation to produce results (in this, it differs from scientific research and technique); it has no obligation to a contract of a moral order or to the respect of a certain decorum inside thought. This explains why, ever since 1972, when I began to read Deleuze and, without the help of any secondary readings, to work freely on him, and, in all modesty, to become him (we are somehow metamorphosed into

the one that we meet with passion – see, for example, how we change after reading Stifler's *L'homme sans posterité*, Lawrence's *Cosmos*, Vesaas' *Les oiseaux*, Powys' *L'art du bonheur* or Bor's *Le requiem de Teresin*. I have met with much hostility: people associated me with (what they took to be) the sophist in him, the pornographer and the forger in writing (André Boutang), the 'evil genius' (Alexis Philonenko), and the bungler.

From the very beginning, therefore, accounting for the reasons that I am Deleuzian helped me to introduce my first question: what becomes of the 'I' when it is refracted, bent and folded inside the system of Deleuze? The response could be, 'play' (*jeu*). But what does the play of philosophy mean to Deleuze? An attractive homage to Deleuze would be to say that his philosophy is a machine whose function is to bend, to fold concepts, to make them 'follow the tangent', to transform all the poles of rectitude into a witch's broom, to change our thought *vis a tergo* into a missile, and to make it dance the gigue. 'Deleuzian', therefore will mean to assent deeply to the fantastic particle accelerator that constitutes Deleuzism. Between an acephalous, decentred, and bent 'I' and this Deleuzism that 'accelerates', we will strive to forget the 'good movement' of philosophy to which we have been accustomed, and which consists – with the exception of the very great ones – in forgetting movement unceremoniously.

To be in motion inside thought means to play. Not only to choose a system of rules, but to invent the rules and even to invent the invention of rules (Calvin's game in Watterson's B.D. where each player changes as he plays the rules of the previous player). But one has to prove to the philistines that this play is serious, more serious even than the compunction of those who find a ready-made real. It is serious, first of all – and this is not a paradox – because it is joyful. We should not resist the pleasure of reading Deleuze, and of encountering his humour in the *Abécédaire* that makes him smile away all the time, or burst out laughing, to the extent that his coughing fits permit him; of discovering his fantasies, his knowing smile and his cheeky humour. This entirely Spinozist joy is, first and foremost, an assent to the event. Above all, it is the other side of what brings about the 'small health' – the other side of the 'great health': life and the real are too big for the one who looks at them with a sharp eye. To not abandon this 'too big' – to be able first to see it (not every one can) and later on to bear it – therein lies a daily heroism that greatly resembles, in Kant's sense, the mind's defiance as it confronts the sublime that crashes it. The artist is joyful, because what crashes her also makes her live – gives her an insatiable appetite to create.

The play, therefore, is the play of the world. Man is not in a privileged position – especially not his consciousness. And this is the reversal of the Copernican reversal. As the *Abécédaire* says ('Animal'), man sometimes has no world, although an animal always has it – a statement that overturns Heidegger's claim about the animal being 'poor in world'. This world is the object of Deleuze's philosophy which – and this is another reason for my liking it – brushes aside the 'weak' philosophies that have no longer the power to confront an Outside and lose their objective. The world is the set of signs emitted by those who have neither the desire nor the power to enter into conversation: a stone, a look, an animal's flight, a book.

The world is made of singularities and the lightning they cast when they move, rhythmically and indivisibly, towards other singularities. The world is force, movement, difference in potential, and arrangements that make possible the privilege – even in the case of the inorganic – of being free (the wave, or the lighthouse in Woolf). But we must know how to accept the world; it is the transcendent work of the functions of syntheses that draws out of encounters a 'surplus value of the code'. Movements render the world concrete – but not necessarily visible – for this is a world that must be rendered visible through art, and conceivable through philosophy. Transcendent overcoding (excessive will and consciousness, insufficiency of the involuntary) is the shame proper to man: it separates forces from what they can do, and prevents them from playing and from inventing rules through new arrangements; it replaces the real by an abstraction, namely, by the obedience to abstract immutable rules, backed by the public order, which we have the deplorable habit of calling 'real'.

I summarise here in three theses Deleuze's radical contribution to philosophy and to thought: he is the first to have a *philosophy of art* which is in all points congruent with modern and contemporary productions; he is the first to maintain that philosophy is thoroughly a *politics of resistance*; he links up with a *philosophy of life*, and gives it the means to be concrete through his constructivism and his transcendental empiricism.

Philosophy of Art: Intransitivity

I will now introduce my own conceptualisation of art, with the help of the concept of intransitivity and Deleuze's theory. We know that art is fabrication (*poiesis*, *techne*), a kind of constructivism, and this is the reason why Deleuze is incomparable as far as art theory is concerned. On the other hand, art cannot be 'abstract', for it always has a matter which

is visual, aural, tactile, ideo-affective – a virtuality that is real. No matter how we set up the problem, art will always raise the issue of the 'presentified'. Presentifying has results that are not without affinity to magic, inducing a form of presence resisting by means of respect. The sameness of rhythm between the magico-religious and art is obvious in its origin, and has already been theorised by Simondon (1958).[1]

Now, the object – as something transcendent appearing inside the flux of consciousness together with the subject[2] – has the annoying tendency, inside the entire classical philosophy, to turn *evanescent*, with the result of reinforcing the inescapability of the subject. Think of Plato, in whose case all that can be salvaged from a thing is its pale participation in the Idea; or think of Berkeley, in whose case objects become ideas which, in turn, become real things. We stumble against things; we do not respect them. Suffice it to think of the technological object, the role of which is to be confused with its function: we do not see the hammer until it hammers no more. Suffice it also to think of the object of desire, within the system of Baudrillard's objects (Baudrillard 1993, 1996, 1981 and 1995): by dint of being reproduced in its simulacra, the object is no longer desired, except as a simulacrum. And the system of these simulacra will end up desiring the subject, swallowing it up inside a perfectly 'obscene' code.

In short, classical philosophy has strongly encouraged the evanescence of the object, making it a purely 'transitive' instance that may always be traversed towards something truer, more interesting or more desirable. Against this background, art struck me as the *intransitive*. In front of art's object, we stop. We stop; we do not search for anything else behind it. This is why Kandinsky's terminology in *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* is not at all adapted to the genius of his painting or to the intransitive nature of art. It is by analogy with these objects that the world can surprise us. We do understand both the idea of an 'internal necessity' that presides over the work, and the idea of the internal logic characteristic of Klee ('the heterogeneous organism of the canvas', 'living the autonomous canvas without object of Nature, having a thoroughly abstract plastic existence', 'the preponderance pertaining to the skeleton of the canvas/ organism') (Klee 1985: 10, 11, note on 11).

Deleuze's theory of art fits the idea of intransitivity perfectly. One could even say that it is the crowning moment of a great tradition that makes art the symphonic performance of contrasted multiplicities – beginning with the Greek *harmonia* and reaching the theory of the 'spinal cord' and the 'standing upright by itself' of Hugo von Hofmannstahl,[3] where 'harmony' tends more and more clearly to yield its place of *independence*

that it had secretly maintained all along. Art is what *resists*. In literature, the original manipulation of syntax that makes language 'stutter' and the constraint placed on language to go as far as its limits – which distinguishes it from cry and music – brings about great works of writing in a 'foreign language'. In painting, the preliminary task of 'cleaning the tablet', as Plato says, the task of 'emptying out, clearing, cleaning' (Deleuze 2004: 71) the invisible traces that come from hearsay – the 'passion of conformity' – defines the power of art in terms of the artist's capacity to resist. In music, the ritornellos, taken up inside the gigantic movement of the deterritorialisation of the grand Ritornello of the earth's song – Mahler – must escape being snapped up by it. The artist, the very sensible one who sees things that are too big for her, must be the one who lets herself be transfixed by this sublimity, but also the one who knows how to resist it, to stand up to it, by being the grand intransitive. In the last analysis, art has its value only as a 'durable' presence,[4] inscribed but also resisting time as much as it resists the lassitude of the painter and of her spectators.

With closer attention, we will notice that the purely constructivist elements of art, in the great pictorial paradigm of Francis Bacon (see Deleuze 2004), are themselves intransitive apparatuses (Villani: forthcoming): 'extraction' is present in order to ward off the narrative; the 'figural', in order to thwart the figurative; the 'diagram', in order to trap the cliché. Narrative, figurative and cliché would be, I dare say, 'the image of art' that totally prevents the creation of affects and percepts, exactly like the 'image of thought' evoked by Deleuze that prevents people from thinking,[5] and from creating concepts.

Let us be careful, however. To define art by means of its intransitivity or resistance tends to focus on the insisting presence of a suddenly regained object – 'on a gust of the real that hits our face', as Deleuze used to say about 1968. But there is resistance, even intransitivity, often very strong and sly, in the case of constituted bodies, arrested ideas and frozen forms which do not want to let themselves be penetrated by movement. Art begins with movement and passes in between things, wanting to figure out that which cannot be figured in passage and becoming. Artistic apparatuses, if we further specify the objective, will then be *an intransitive resistance of movement to the intransigent resistance of the immobile*. The three fundamental elements of Bacon's painting – the armature, the figure and the contour – are not only large field (*aplat*), twisted or scratched figure, and ring or pedestal, but above all, as they invade the field with movement, 'a challenge to paint the forces', 'the montage of a Body-Without-Organs', and 'the freeing of a zone of indiscernibility'.

But we should go still further, in search of greater refinement. Bacon's figures seem subject to the furious wind of a chaos that surges up with an absolute speed, having the sole purpose of making them disappear, because these figures are not figurative, but a realisation (*mise en oeuvre*) of what Deleuze calls the 'Body-Without-Organs'. A Body-Without-Organs, however, in the sense of being *actual*, is nothing but an unlivable pedestal. This is the point where Deleuze's metaphysics and transcendental or superior empiricism meet each other and become equivalent. On the side of metaphysics, there is the Idea or the problem – putting it geometrically, the summit of the cone which is the point of view that hovers over all the sections of the cone. It contains them, in a determined but virtual way: 'differentiated'. The running of the sections on the cone, the flux on the Body-Without-Organs or the plane of immanence are accomplished through an absolute speed – the speed of chaos.

But if we want *to see born a sensation* for art, a concept for philosophy, a function for science, it is necessary that a meeting point exist where the two fluxes can be opposed, and can resist this anarchic trajectory of fluxes. Instead of the point, there could also be a constellation designed by means of two irregular points, or the dice throw, or the fold, or what Worringer called the 'gothic, northern' line. From this point on, we are inside the syntheses, with their double usage, immanent and transcendent. We tie together metaphysics and empiricism, the virtual and the actual: 'differenciation'. *The forces which operate on the Body-Without-Organs, as they constitute it, bring about sensations and affections*. 'When the wave encounters external forces at a particular level, a sensation appears'; 'it elevates mechanical forces to sensible intuition' (Deleuze 2004: 41). Intensities are coupled, and the coupling of differences inside the intensive fields assures the actuality of sensation.

The intervention of the Body-Without-Organs was necessary for the virtual mobilisation of a situation or of a blocked figure, and for giving the situation and the figure a very rapid movement. Once resistance forced the 'without resistance' of the liberated flux to bring about a sensation or a coupling of sensations – after the intransitivity synthesised that which is purely transitive – we need a new and very paradoxical resistance. This resistance will be made to conserve the binding agent of what has been coupled; it could be the fold of what does not stop moving through infinite resonance, and yet holds fast over the continuity of heterogeneous elements.

At this point, Deleuze's solution seems genuinely inspired: it is offered inside the chaoid, that is, the *cut of chaos*, where the virtuality of chaos with its infinite speed (instantaneous appearances and disappearances)

joins an actuality that is pregnant with the virtual of an irregular, zigzagging form; Deleuze calls this form 'block' of becoming or sensations. This block is really what resists (eternally inside masterpieces), without stopping to modulate and vibrate (think of the 'appleness'of Cézanne, which, according to Lawrence, is more important than the Platonic idea). The block is the heterogeneous continuum that does not let anything pass through it, except the *wave of resonance* that comes from all the other folds that it encounters. One can see that art, for Deleuze, is totally independent of the social and the quotidian, despite the fact that art makes the quotidian livable. Art liberates a fantastic power of life; its mere presence, like the mere presence of philosophy, 'prevents stupidity from being as big as it would like to be'. 'As soon as one creates, one resists'; 'an artist cannot be sidestepped' (*Abécédaire*: 'Resistance').

Deleuze and the Problem of the Political

Deleuze's philosophy, being a search for 'what concepts are' from a political point of view, runs the risk of unintelligibility – and this would be deadly for Deleuze and for his commentator – if we do not make the effort to transcribe concepts on to movements. Thus, as we will see later on, a text on the question of the political, if it is not dedicated to the search of invariant blocks that account for the political, would not be able to succeed, without taking up the problem in depth.

Politics is visible; it connects individuals with their passions, norms and laws inside a whole that has a name – *macroplural*. Flattering the plural is never enough to understand the multiple. Subjects, in their free commerce, render structures inhabitable – structures that were thought far away from, and without them. We could illustrate this in politics, the way that Michel de Certeau does in *L'Invention du quotidien*. Intelligence and ruse organise our everydayness. But the distinction between the relative striated and the smooth, which has created so many misunderstandings of an allegedly anarcho-desiring Deleuze, represents only a way of managing the territory rather than a process of deterritorialisation; we must then enter the second level.

The invisible level involves the major addition of the line of flight to the other two lines. We must understand that the line of flight puts everything into motion, including itself. But to the extent that it is flight away from itself, it optimises the molar and the molecular, that is, the coexistence of block and singularities. Hegel failed to discover this principle: his sublation turned out to be deceiving, blocking and uncreative to the extent that it was asking for a new negation. The micropolitical is

fundamentally different, because its movement is real, whereas the sublation was only apparent; with the micropolitical, every dualism turns into a subversive triad. It is the line of flight, in affecting the molar and the molecular, that ejects out of them every dualism. The line of flight is the whole: sombre precursor, disparative lightning, wave of resonance. It cannot be distinguished from the construction of the block. Eternity is not suspended over the massive capture of singularities inside the net of the chaoid. It is the line of flight that creates eternity (Leibniz's, and later on, Whitehead's). It is destiny as a dice throw. Speed as acceleration causes the distinct points to become indiscernible. Forms exist only when the process *calms down*. Everything is played at a dice throw in the context of 'the reign of the playing child' – between the chaos-death of fixity and the very rapid chaos of an unstoppable mobility.

Philippe Mengue's *Deleuze et la question de la démocratie* will serve as support for a vast investigation of the validity of the Deleuzian concepts. First of all, I see an ambiguity, due to different reference points, between politics (Mengue's subject of discussion) and the political (which is Deleuze's stand). The author does not give Deleuze any chance to develop his own theory, because, in his work, the virtual, the Ideas, Deleuzian metaphysics, the syntheses, or the difference between question and interrogation are never evoked, nor even apparently suspected to be the base of Deleuze's work – the base that cannot be ignored. However, in the case of the Deleuzian political, even more so than in the case of art, *the fundamentals of reading* must be fully at work. Ignoring them, *Deleuze et la question de la démocratie* (=of politics) avoids from the very beginning the only question which is essential: Deleuze and the *problem of the political*.

I will not revisit this work in detail to show its insufficiencies, ambiguities and counter-truths that are sometimes confounding; I put their list in a footnote.[6] I am content to show this kind of constant and frustrating incongruity between the (often very harsh) criticisms of Mengue and the reality of the Deleuzian text, in order to signal, in the note on page 79 of the book, that the terms 'thickening', 'fall and decline' (*retombée*), 'viscosity', 'being stuck', which allegedly prove a systematic devalorisation of 'social organizations', are really about – if we refer to the pages quoted of *A Thousand Plateaus* – the three abstract machines: war, painting in relation to music, and becomings. No reference in any of these texts is made to 'social organizations'. It is as if Mengue is not looking at Deleuze but at the projections of his desire in a 'virtual image'.

Let us then take up again the entire debate in order to try, not to justify Deleuze, but rather to *understand* his political position. The specific texts

are to be found in 'Geophilosophy', the fourth chapter of *What Is Philosophy?* in the 'politics' of *Essays Critical and Clinical*; in 'Savages, Barbarians, Civilized Men' and the 'Introduction to Schizoanalysis' of the *Anti-Oedipus;* in 'Treatise on Nomadology: The War Machine' of *A Thousand Plateaus*; and in 'Gauche', 'Resistance' of the *Abécédaire*. We must, of course, refuse to accept that Deleuze's attitude on the political is being expressed only in these texts. His entire work must be taken into account, because the passive syntheses, the régimes of signs, the virtual, resonance, the line of flight, linguistics as the order word, the triad of syntheses and the triad of the territory that concretises it (through territorialisation, deterritorialisation, and reterritorialisation, in short, *the ritornello*) – or even difference and repetition – intervene constantly, in plain light or behind the scenes, to give *sense and consistency* to the Deleuzian position.

I will undertake initially to put aside the most obvious objections – objections that sometimes surprise us with their lack of understanding. It is obviously false to claim that Deleuze is an aristocrat, having turned sour because of the failure of the Revolution. It is no more permissible to say of him that he is an armchair revolutionary or that his micropolitics is not at all politics, but rather ethics – even a genial anticipation of postmodernity, or, by the way, a very abstract concept. We must also be very uneasy about the misunderstanding of the Deleuzian 'minor'. 'The majority is no one; the minority is everybody', the *Abécédaire* says ('*Gauche*'). Where everyone agrees to salute a demonstration of hypersolidarity of the sort 'we are all natives, Jews, women, oppressed', Mengue chooses to assimilate the minority to a pretentious élite of an intellectual avant-garde! And this permits him, in an absurd fashion, to ask Deleuze for a little more *solidarity* (p. 55). One may seriously wonder whether Mengue has read Kafka's *Castle*, with Pepi's chamber-terrier or the end of Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* that enthusiastically cites Deleuze, and whether he ever took seriously Nancy's 'community of those who have nothing in common' or the 'negative communication' of Kierkegaard.

To all these fantasies thrust upon Deleuze, we can oppose the definition of 'being on the left' of the *Abécédaire:* to have a perception that begins with what is farthest from us – the point where people suffer. Democracy is not criticised by Deleuze because he is a crypto-aristocrat, tired and turned sour. It is not because democracy accomplishes a great deal; it is because *it does not do enough*, and because it has not cleared its name from collusions and very questionable compromises. To be sure, democracy, Western rationality, human rights, the free consensual

conversation of Habermas are a 'lesser evil'. But the sharp eye of Deleuze asks for something else more concrete – it asks for something better, *through precision*. Deleuze is always thinking about multiplicities, masses, packs and peoples. He speaks and thinks for (not in place of, but in front of) 'the oppressed, bastard, lower, anarchical, nomadic, and the irremediably minor race' (WIP: 109). Democracy, however, (as de Tocqueville foresaw it (de Tocqueville 1990: II, 38–9)) is 'associated with, and compromised by dictatorial States'. 'What social democracy has not given the order to fire when the poor come out of their territory?' (WIP, 106, and 107). 'There is no democratic state that's not compromised to the very core by its part in generating human misery' (N: 173).[7]

On the other hand – and alas, no one can dispute it – 'advanced liberal democracies' are taken inside 'the isomorphism of the global market' (N: 173). This does not mean that democracy is the equivalent of a totalitarian regime – far from it – but it means that they both allow themselves to be taken by a more powerful movement, of capitalist inspiration. This absence of democracy's resistance to powers (*pouvoirs*) (that is, to powerlessness (*impuissance*), and to the confiscation of power (*puissance*)) by capitalism is the main reason for Deleuze's criticism of democracy, because it is a 'soft' politics that does not define its concepts clearly, nor its friends and foes.

The foundations of democracy do not let themselves be thought, they are not concepts, but mere wishes, often accompanied by a good conscience. Mengue reproaches Deleuze for claiming that human rights are 'complacent' and hypocritical. Here is what Deleuze says: 'A great deal of innocence or cunning is needed by a philosophy of communication that claims to restore the society of friends, or even of wise men, by forming a universal opinion as "consensus" able to moralize nations, States, and the market' (WIP: 107).[8] Does this imply an anti-democratic spirit? I do not think so.

Let us be more concrete; let us work on political conversation, and human rights. What characterises conversation, to the extent that it gives rise to interrogation and does not raise questions, is to proceed the way that Socrates' interlocutors used to do: everybody knows (thinks that he knows) what piety or justice means – everybody has his own definition. Or rather everybody speaks and contests and criticises and gets excited, on the basis of his own definition which does not coincide at all with any definition that the others implicitly assume. This is the pitiful destiny of politics, never to reflect on its foundations. 'We do not talk about the same thing; it is as if we do not speak the same language.' (*Abécédaire*:

'*Gauche*'). Mengue translates this point in a syllogistic chain that is a veritable amalgam: 'He does not like discussion, and to the extent that it is dialogue that opposes violence, Deleuze is a man of violence, a *warrior* of the aristocratic kind.'

According to Deleuze, instead of concepts that would allow us *to think* the political, we have mere *doxic* hearsay – vague opinions fabricated according to the latest fashion or according to affections that pass for detainers of generosity (*privilège du coeur*) and keep the ball rolling, without advancing even one inch. Every conceivable hypocrisy inhabits political discussion:

> Maybe speech and communication have been corrupted. They're thoroughly permeated by money – and not by accident but by their very Nature. We've got to hijack speech. Creating has always been something different from communicating. The key thing may be to create vacuoles of noncommunication, circuit breakers, so we can elude control. (N: 175)

This is a new intervention into the idea of *resistance*. One can quickly despair of 'discussing politics'. Who asks a head of state to define all the concepts of the political that allow her to act inside politics? No one; she would not know how to do it, and, at any rate, it would be an infinite task.

The philosopher then, if she wants to exercise her function, cannot but *think afresh the concepts of the political*, that is, create them, outside politics. And this requires time, momentary retreat, and a certain intransitivity towards all the fashionable sirens. And we should not go on to say at random (Mengue 2003: 43, forgetting that a concept is a singularity) that Deleuze despises 'the established, the agreed upon, the good sense, tradition, public debate, information and communication', because we should first find out which concepts are hidden underneath these terms. Good sense, for example, is mentioned among the elements of the 'image of thought' that prevents people from thinking. Good sense belongs to the evidence that, according to Hegel, makes up the 'well known', which, by being well known, 'is badly known'. In contradistinction, how many times, in his written work or in the *Abécédaire*, has Deleuze made use of the expression, 'but it is very simple!'? He wants to say that the concept is the most concrete of the mind's objects, because it is a constructed machine, and, therefore, something whose parts can be assembled and disassembled. Similarly, Deleuze would never think of rejecting 'debate', if debate included the free 'rivalry' of the Greeks, this 'discordant accord' that Mengue pleads for. The constant challenge (assault) of *suitors* that defines their friendship is precisely Deleuze's wish. We see that it would

have been possible to spare Deleuze this mock trial, if we had taken the time to define the concepts the way that Deleuze understands them:

> Those who criticize without creating . . . are the plague of philosophy. [They] are inspired by *ressentiment* . . . Philosophy has a horror of discussions. It always has something else to do. It cannot bear debate, not because it is too certain of itself. On the contrary, it is its uncertainties that take it down other, more solitary paths. (WIP: 23–4)

We can reach the same conclusions in the emblematic and crucial case of human rights. Here, too, we should make use of the spoken and accessible form of the *Abécédaire*, given the fact that Deleuze knows that he speaks 'from beyond the grave' and therefore he can express himself with open heart, without censorship or coquetry. The 'soft thought' of a 'poor period' privileges the abstract, because *the abstract does not resist*. It is enough to have a bit of the gift of rhetoric in order to be right. Deleuze reminds us that desire is never the desire of an object or of a subject, but rather of the *situation*. If we always find ourselves in situations, particularly in confronting cases, Justice or Rights in general are nothing but 'grand signifiers', whose necks Stirner used to wring because they are pure phantoms. They signify nothing that is of any use in thought or in action.

Deleuze, therefore, rather than neglecting the problems of politics, *renders them possible*. He contrasts the respect of human rights – a pious and often hypocritical wish (we have seen the results of brandishing of human rights in Kosovo and China; does one need to be reminded of Hegel's 'battler of morality'?) – to the invention of jurisprudence in order to put an end to unbearable situations. Between Turks and Armenians, Palestinians and Israelis, the problem is to delimit territories on the basis of international *jurisprudence*, *case after case*. Deleuze, rather than being an idealist, as Mengue claims, is a British empiricist (the English law is jurisprudential, whereas French law is Roman, based on principles), or an American pragmatist.

The 'doxic plane of immanence' that Mengue proposes cannot be a concept; micropolitics is indeed politics. A plane of immanence is something 'real'; the movements that are produced in it are matrices of the actual. In the plane of immanence, therefore, there can be only intensities, fluxes, desire, encounters, waves, resonances, proximities or torsions – certainly not 'opinions' or the *doxic*. The *doxic* belongs totally to the actual, but this is a fuzzy actual, with no free movement; it mistakes the forgetting of the 'more or less' for consensus, and combines order words and talk-without-question with concepts that are absent. One

cannot, inside the *doxic*, find any arrangements – not even arrangements of enunciation – because arrangements are concrete and one can detail their components and their mode of composition. It is not because the *doxic* is an intersection of diverse, multiple and 'pluralist' opinions, as Mengue says – naming a difficulty instead of confronting it – that causes it to be necessarily manifested on the side of *difference*. Repetition in it is 'naked', not 'clothed'.[9] The *doxic* plane of immanence is not even a concept; it is big like a hollow tooth, the way that human rights can be; it is a *monster*, obtained through the mixture of a concept (plane of speed or immanence) and the absence of a concept (plane that has slowed down or is transcendent). It is clear, of course, that these two planes are meeting each other, but not in a confused and rough manner. On the contrary, insertion takes place on precise points of both planes, and this is what, inside the virtual, cuts up a livable 'real'. The details of these points – that's what we would have liked to read in Mengue's book.

Politics will become real only if it passes through micropolitics. 'If you believe in the world,' Deleuze says in *Negotiations*, 'you precipitate events, however inconspicuous, that elude control, you engender new space-times, however small their surface or volume' (Deleuze 1995: 176). In this case, one could ward off the terrible 'soft' repression[10] that reflects the collusion of the *better* (characteristic of a pedagogical ideology) and *profit* (confining thought to the rehashing of self-satisfying litanies).[11] I am referring to the collusion that takes place inside the democratic idea and is sanctified by its constitutive connection to Reason. One can understand the angry reactions of Deleuze:

> And yet in philosophy we're coming back to eternal values, to the idea of the intellectual as custodian of eternal values . . . These days it's the rights of man that provide our eternal values. It's the constitutional state and other notions everyone recognizes as very abstract. And it's in the name of all this that thinking's fettered, that any analysis in terms of movements is blocked. But if we're so oppressed, it's because our movement's being restricted, not because our eternal values are being violated. (N: 121–2).

This response (in advance) to Mengue implies that micropolitics cannot be understood straightaway. One must first accept the following principles: (1) ward off every abstraction; (2) avoid every 'wholesale' vision; go for details, the really small, the micrologic; (3) leave behind all providential anthropocentrisms (having read the Appendix to the First Book of Spinoza's *Ethics* and having followed it); leave behind subjectivity, the 'private affair,' and the 'dirty little secret' of individual histories; (4) formulate questions that raise problems and invent the concepts that are

suitable for them – or go and find them in the history of philosophy. In this case, we will see that micropolitics is 'in a small way political'. (Mengue 2003: 160). We should not give up the immense advantage of concepts like 'grass', 'minor', 'micro-', and '*imperceptible*'. We should not waste – as we lean against retrograde positions – the immense progress of the non-propositional form of the concept 'in which communication, exchange, consensus, and opinion vanish entirely' (WIP: 99). Deleuze wants to do things – not to talk – not to discuss, but to become.

Philosophy, as Deleuze understands it, takes hold of capital in its relative deterritorialisation, and turns it against itself. As a result, philosophy accedes to the non-propositional form that devalues consensus and opinion, along with the Habermassian sociability nourished on 'western democratic conversation' (WIP: 99). This is *Utopia*, in the proper sense of the word. The plane of immanence is not without effect – as Mengue believes: 'It is connected with the present relative milieu, and especially with the forces stifled by this milieu' (WIP: 100).[12]

But to say that revolution is itself a Utopia of immanence is not to say that it is a dream – something that is not realised or is only realized by betraying itself. On the contrary, it is to posit revolution as plane of immanence – infinite movement and absolute survey – and to the extent that these features connect up with what is real in the here and now of the struggle against capitalism, it is to relaunch new struggles whenever the earlier ones are betrayed. The word Utopia therefore designates *the conjunction of philosophy, or of the concept, with the present milieu* – political philosophy (WIP: 100).[13]

I would like to end this section with the following comment: Deleuzian politics is *resistance*. In the words of Kierkegaard, 'a town crier of interiority is a strange thing' (Kierkegaard 1992: 79) We should not, therefore, expect to see Deleuzian theses on political resistance being paraded in the public place; rather, a method of investigation is necessary, along with ample time for reading and an acceptance of the fundamentals without reticence. Only then, after having assembled and disassembled the Deleuzian political machine, can we be at liberty to criticise it effectively (if deserving) for the benefit of all.

Conclusion in the Form of a Manifesto: A Philosophy of Life

If I had to reply in one sentence to the question: why are you Deleuzian? I would say without hesitation this: he is the only philosopher, to my knowledge, who loves life to the point of slipping it into all his words, his sentences, his books and interviews, his machines and his entire life.

Like him, I love life in all its processes that are opposed to death[14] – processes not absent from the inorganic. *Life is resistance* and we are responsible for it in every one of our gestures (concrete micropolitics).

Life resists inside the arts: 'there is no art of death'; 'the artist frees an impersonal life – rather than her own life' (Abécédaire: 'Resistance'). In the entry 'Illness' of the *Abécédaire*, Deleuze says: 'To think is to have one's ears turned towards life . . . It is despicable to be a *bon vivant*. But those who are *grand vivant* are altogether different! To see life is to be traversed by life – in all its power and beauty.' We know how attentive Deleuze was to the writers of life – Miller, Lawrence, Beckett, Kerouac, Fitzgerald, Faulkner:

> They saw something that was too big for them and caused them to break: percepts at the limit of what can be sustained and concepts at the limit of what can be thought . . . Great philosophy and great literature testify on behalf of life. (*Abécédaire*: 'Litérature')

> A concept – it splits the skull; a percept – it twists the nerves. Affects are becomings that overflow and exceed the forces of the one they traverse. (*Abécédaire*: 'Idée')

> One writes because of a spark of life runs through her. One writes for the sake of life. (*Abécédaire*: 'Enfance')[15]

> [W]e are all guilty of crime, the great crime of not living life to the full. (Deleuze and Guattari 1977: 334, quoting Henry Miller, *Sextus*).

Life resists in politics; it resists every regression that wants to give us subject and more subject, dominated object, power, the 'better', profit, and much self-satisfaction in the name of Reason. Life, we must understand it, is not my little life of the subject but rather *a* life:

> The life of the individual gives way to an impersonal and yet singular life that releases a pure event freed from the accidents of internal and external life, that is, from the subjectivity and the objectivity of what happens . . . a life of pure immanence, neutral, beyond good and evil, for it was only the subject that made it good or bad . . . an immanent life carrying with it the events or singularities that are merely actualized in subjects and objects. (Deleuze 2001: 28, 29)

I would like to conclude by expressing clearly how fortunate I feel to be born of a century in which we can perhaps be Deleuzian and how much I wish, even if this would involve struggles, that a lot of men and women, philosophers and non-philosophers, would become Deleuzians by the thousands. Perhaps, as Foucault put it, an entire century could become Deleuzian the way that the ideas of Voltaire and Rousseau have

been shared by hundreds of reading societies. I have understood at last – and this transcends me, splits my head and twists my nerves; it is too big for me but at the same time gives me fragility and a fantastic desire to live – I have understood that life on this earth is not only the life of humans, but also the life of the canvas that 'stands upright all alone', the life of music that becomes bird while the bird becomes colour, the life of the orchid that embraces with its tele-organs the wasps, the life of the poet and the painter having become imperceptible, the life of the grass as much or rather more than the life of the tree, the life of the book that changes our outlook, the life of our animal metamorphoses, the life of territories and of the earth (geomicropolitics).

What threatens this powerful life – organic and inorganic – is not the *singular* subject, always anomalous, acephalous and in fragments, but rather *the myth of the rational subject*, with its abstract ideas, its immense pretension, its sanctification of a limitless progress – the feeling that the universe is made to increase our comfort and pleasure. And in the meantime, day after day, abstract idea after abstract idea, hypocrisy after hypocrisy, the genocides and famines multiply, and the earth – the deterritorialised – is lost. One day, our vague propositions and our well-nourished and satisfied conversations will knock out the earth, dead. We will then say: 'The earth moves no more.' And we can bet that man, the last of the last, will not understand one that, distraught, will be announcing: 'The earth is dead, life is dead' – all deterritorialisations will have been mineralised, all lines of flight blocked, every 'shame in being human', swallowed.

The infinite resources of the grass – this would be a sufficient explanation as to why I am Deleuzian.

Translated by Constantin V. Boundas and Sarah Lamble.

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Notes

1. See the remarkable third chapter of *Du mode de l'existence des objets techniques*.
2. Deleuze makes this point very clear in Deleuze 2001: 25–6.
3. Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Lettre du voyageur à son retour*, and van Gogh's admirable example.
4. In the sense that Cézanne was talking about rendering durable the impression of the impressionists; Deleuze refers to this in 'Idée', *L'Abécédaire*.
5. Notice that Philippe Mengue's book, *Deleuze et la question de la démocratie*, fails to make a distinction between the two Deleuzian 'images of thought': the one totally negative, which is often described in *Difference and Repetition*; and the other, totally positive – the plane of immanence that thought gives itself as an image in order to think of itself. The word 'question' of the title does not mean, unfortunately, that Mengue raises the question of democracy in a Deleuzian sense.
6. *Countersense*: p. 25 – 'Deleuze announces that philosophy is modern when it is anti-metaphysical', goes against Deleuze's statement, 'I feel pure metaphysician'; p. 43 – when it is clear that it is regrettable that material psychiatry cannot avoid being 'eschatological', Mengue credits Deleuze with such eschatological concern (see p. 197); p. 37 – 'thought's struggle against chaos' fails to specify that the concept is obtained, not through struggle, but rather by means of cut of chaos; p. 41 – devastating countersense in understanding minor and minorities as if they were about élites (see p. 56); p. 45 – micropolitics turns into a tyranny of Logos – a megalomania – and Deleuze and Foucault reinvent Plato's philosopher-king (same mistake on p. 101); p. 46 – reproach addressed to

Deleuze for wishing to ground, whereas everybody knows the expression of *Difference and Repetition*, 'to unground'; p. 56 – 'thought receives her mission from the will'; p. 47 – mistakes concerning the expression, One-All, that convey the exact opposite of what Deleuze wants to say; p. 60 – 'immanence assigns priority to the categories of unity, continuity, and totality' whereas Deleuze, ever since *Difference and Repetition*, speaks of failed unity, heterogeneous continuity, and totality in fragments; p. 91 – 'there exists a universal antagonism between molar and molecular that will never allow any reconciliation', whereas Deleuze states that the abstract machines of stratification, consistency, as well as the axiomatic ones have 'their various types . . . intertwined (and) their operations . . . convergent'; 'we cannot say that one of these three lines is bad and another good' (Deleuze 1987: 514, 227); 'becomings are subjective affects'(!); on p. 108 of his book, Mengue seems to forget that Deleuze makes it abundantly clear that the isomorphism of states does not imply that they are equivalent. In fact the whole of page 145 is totally unintelligible: Deleuze has not changed the essential points of his political doctrine; p. 177 – the ignominy of life's possibilities (in the Nietzschean sense) is transformed into 'ignominy of the conditions of existence'; p. 198 – the Body Without Organs understood as empty (instead of full!); p. 199 – chaos transformed, in line with the habit of philosophers, into gap, whereas, in Deleuze, it is the *speed* of apparition and abolition; p. 200 – Deleuze is confused, despite his frequent clarifications, with spontaneism and the 'anarcho-désirants'; p. 205 – Deleuze is credited with a 'stubborn belief in historicism', despite the fact that Mengue himself admitted the distinction between becoming and history.

Contradictions: p. 30 – the battle is essential and the philosopher is a warrior; p. 37 – the discussion is about guerilla-battle; p. 40 – quotation from Deleuze: 'the philosopher pursues a war without battle – a guerrila war'; p. 60 – immanence implies totality; p. 71 – 'we should not forget that a thought of differences challenges every form of totalization'; theorem 1 is in direct contradiction with theorem 2.

Insulting attacks: Deleuze is presented as megalomaniac, pretentious, élitist, aristocratic, disdainful, mean, haughty, latecomer, spiteful, hostile. We find in the text, p. 87, 'we cannot but smile', 'jockster' '*plaisanterie de carabin*', 'support to a clown' (concerning Deleuze's support of Coluche's candidacy to the Republic's presidential office; p. 140 – 'he is a buffoon, condemned to an armchair revolution, a reactive intellectual, the last of men, the one who denies for the sake of denying'; p. 152 – 'he has paranoid outbursts'; p. 162 – Deleuze 'understood nothing'; p. 161 and p. 118 – the ignoble assimilation of nomadism and the 'inhuman forced displacements of populations', and the slanderous suggestion that deterritorialisation and fascism are akin to each other; p. 205 – the beautiful oratory about 'the chattering, futile play, trickery, pomposity, pretension, and the rhetoric of all this endless talk of the revolution'.

Naïveties: p. 151 – Mengue accuses Deleuze of not bringing up the social as the power to become wealthy, to create complex or new needs (and, therefore, new pleasures), to make life easier, to appease conflicts, to generate welfare, comfort and prosperity. But has Mengue forgotten by what disequilibria of afluent and third- or fourth-world peoples – by means of what heavy ecological debts – such a well-being is being paid? As for Deleuze, he never forgets it: he defines the Left – to which he belongs – in terms of the perception of what is extremely far (misery, famine) being placed ahead of the perception of what is near (Abécédaire: 'Gauche'); p. 91 – Mengue assigns revolutionary credit to the French democracy for transforming within few decades an agrarian economy in to a great industrial power!

Vague deontological methods: In cases where it is important to be precise with his quotations, Mengue does not quote Deleuze, but rather Foucault and Arendt – all the while holding Deleuze responsible for their words: p. 42 – on the avant-garde élite; p. 37 – on the warrior-thinker; p. 79 – on the idea that the social link depends only on society; p. 92 – on Adorno's élitist scorn; p. 100 – on the flight from the political, shown by Hannah Arendt.
Factual errors: p. 137 and p. 139 – Kronos is not the term that Deleuze uses for time; the term is Chronos.

7. It is not necessary to repeat that democracy is not the worst of regimes. But this does not mean that we should give up our search for new ways for democracy to create justice for all.
8. Deleuze refers to Michel Butel's essay in *L'autre journal* 10 (1991, March, 21–5). It is obvious that this quotation takes Habermas' philosophy as its target.
9. This is a distinction that Carlyle makes in *Sartor Resartus* and Deleuze takes it up in *Difference and Repetition*.
10. Deleuze is right to notice the terribly repressive character of capitalism: 1977: 183, 245, 261–2, 335, 337. Suffice to think of the aptitude tests that have been introduced in schools – even primary schools – or the way that every citizen has become the object of a medicine that is more and more protective, that is, accountable. Does Mengue's fierce opposition to this idea shows his naïvety only?
11. There is a lot of hidden irony (turned against him) in Mengue's quotation (Mengue 2003: 187) of Hegel's 'Introduction':

    > This subjective fault-finding – which, however, only keeps in view the individual and its deficiency, without taking notice of Reason pervading the whole – is easy; and inasmuch as it asserts an excellent intention with regard to the good of the whole, and seems to result from a kindly heart, it feels authorized to give itself airs and assume great sequence.

12. Butler's 'nowhere' (present in the title of his book, *Erewhon*) can also be read as 'nowhere' (See WIP: 100).
13. This text is a perfect response to all the objections of the 'armchair revolutionary' type and expresses clearly the fact that Deleuze has never despaired of the revolution, because the revolution is inscribed micrologically in each one of our becomings.
14. This definition is no longer valid; see the work of Pierre-Antoine Miquel.
15. See also 'Boisson': 'To drink helps people to see something very powerful in life; they [Fitzgerald, Lowry] are the only ones to see it.'

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