

STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY

ROBERT BERNASCONI, *General Editor*

THE RELEVANCE OF PHENOMENOLOGY TO
THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE AND MIND
Sean D. Kelly

BETWEEN DEFLATIONISM AND
CORRESPONDENCE THEORY
Matthew McGrath

RISK, AMBIGUITY, AND DECISION
Daniel Ellsberg

THE EXPLANATIONIST DEFENSE OF
SCIENTIFIC REALISM
Dorit A. Ganson

NEW THOUGHTS ABOUT OLD THINGS
Krista Lawlor

ESSAYS ON SYMMETRY
Jenann Ismael

DESCARTES' METAPHYSICAL REASONING
Roger Florka

ESSAYS ON LINGUISTIC CONTEXT
SENSITIVITY AND ITS PHILOSOPHICAL
SIGNIFICANCE
Steven Gross

NAMES AND NATURE IN PLATO'S CRATYLUS
Rachel Barney

REALITY AND IMPENETRABILITY IN KANT'S
PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE
Daniel Warren

FREGE AND THE LOGIC OF SENSE AND
REFERENCE
Kevin C. Klement

TOPICS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF POSSIBLE
WORLDS
Daniel Patrick Nolan

UNDERSTANDING THE MANY
Byeong-uk Yi

ANTHROPIC BIAS
Observation Selection Effects
Nick Bostrom

THE BEAUTIFUL SHAPE OF THE GOOD
*Platonic and Pythagorean Themes in Kant's
Critique of the Power of Judgment*
Mihaela C. Fisticoc

MATHEMATICS IN KANT'S CRITICAL
PHILOSOPHY
Reflections on Mathematical Practice
Lisa Shabel

REFERENTIAL OPACITY AND MODAL LOGIC
Dagfinn Føllesdal

EMMANUEL LEVINAS
Ethics, Justice, and the Human beyond Being
Elisabeth Louise Thomas

THE CONSTITUTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS
A Study in Analytic Phenomenology
Wolfgang Huemer

DIALECTICS OF THE BODY
Corporeality in the Philosophy of T.W. Adorno
Lisa Yun Lee

ART AS ABSTRACT MACHINE
*Ontology and Aesthetics in Deleuze and
Guattari*
Stephen Zepke

ART AS ABSTRACT MACHINE ONTOLOGY AND AESTHETICS IN DELEUZE AND GUATTARI

Stephen Zepke

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Contents

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| | |
|---------------|-----|
| Abbreviations | vii |
|---------------|-----|

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| List of Figures | xi |
|-----------------|----|

| | |
|-----------------|------|
| Acknowledgments | xiii |
|-----------------|------|

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <i>Introduction</i> | |
| Art as Abstract Machine | 1 |

| | |
|--|----|
| <i>Chapter One</i> | |
| The Artist-Philosopher: Deleuze, Nietzsche, and the Critical Art of Affirmation | 11 |

| | |
|--|----|
| <i>Chapter Two</i> | |
| Spinoza: Mystical Atheism and the Art of Beatitude | 41 |

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>Chapter Three</i> | |
| We Need New Signs: Towards a Cinematic Image of Thought | 77 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| <i>Chapter Four</i> | |
| A Freedom for the End of the World: Painting and Absolute Deterritorialisation | 117 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| <i>Chapter Five</i> | |
| Songs of Molecules: The Chaosmosis of Sensation | 151 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| <i>Chapter Six</i> | |
| The Agitations of Convulsive Life: Painting the Flesh | 185 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Conclusion</i> | |
| A Break, a Becoming, and a Belief | 219 |

| | |
|--------------|-----|
| Notes | 231 |
| Bibliography | 283 |
| Index | 295 |

Contents

Abbreviations

- AO Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated by R. Hurly, M. Seem, and H. R. Lane. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983.
Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *L'Anti-Œdipe*. Paris: Minuit, 1972.
- ATP Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, translated by B. Massumi. London: Athlone, 1988.
Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*. Paris: Minuit, 1980.
- B Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, translated by H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam. New York: Zone Books, 1991.
Gilles Deleuze, *Le bergsonisme*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966.
- C1 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1, The Movement Image*, translated by H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.
Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: L'image-mouvement*. Paris: Minuit, 1983.
- C2 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, translated by H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.
Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma 2. L'image-temps*. Paris: Minuit, 1980.
- Chaos Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: an ethico-aesthetic paradigm*, translated by P. Baines and J. Pefanis. Sydney: Power publications, 1995.
Félix Guattari, *Chaosmose*. Paris: Galilée, 1992.

| | <i>Abbreviations</i> |
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| DR | Gilles Deleuze, <i>Difference and Repetition</i> , translated by P. Patton. New York: University of Columbia Press, 1996. Gilles Deleuze, <i>Différence et Répétition</i> . Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968. |
| ECC | Gilles Deleuze, <i>Essays critical and clinical</i> , translated by D. Smith and M. Greco. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. Gilles Deleuze, <i>Critique et Clinique</i> . Paris: Minuit, 1993. |
| EPS | Gilles Deleuze, <i>Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza</i> , translated by M. Joughin. New York: Zone Books, 1992. Gilles Deleuze, <i>Spinoza et le problème de l'expression</i> . Paris: Minuit, 1968. |
| FB | Gilles Deleuze, <i>Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation</i> , translated by D.W. Smith. London and New York: Continuum, 2003. Gilles Deleuze, <i>Francis Bacon logique la sensation</i> . Paris: Seuil, 2002. |
| LS | Gilles Deleuze, <i>The Logic of Sense</i> , translated by M. Lester with C. Stivale, edited by C.V. Boundas. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. Gilles Deleuze, <i>Logique du sens</i> . Paris: Minuit, 1969. |
| NP | Gilles Deleuze, <i>Nietzsche and Philosophy</i> , translated by H. Tomlinson. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983. Gilles Deleuze, <i>Nietzsche et la philosophie</i> . Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962. |
| REA | Félix Guattari, "Ritornellos and Existential Affects," <i>The Guattari Reader</i> , p. 158-171, edited by G. Genosko. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996. Félix Guattari, "Ritournelles et Affects existentiels," <i>Cartographies Schizoanalytiques</i> . p. 251-267. Paris: Galilée, 1989. |
| SPP | Gilles Deleuze, <i>Spinoza: Practical Philosophy</i> , translated by R. Hurley. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988. Gilles Deleuze, <i>Spinoza Philosophie pratique</i> . Paris: Minuit, 1981. |
| TF | Gilles Deleuze, <i>The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque</i> , translated by T. Conley. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. Gilles Deleuze, <i>Le Pli, Leibniz et le baroque</i> . Paris: Minuit, 1988 |

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| WP | Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, <i>What Is Philosophy?</i> , translated by H. Tomlinson and G. Burchell. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, <i>Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?</i> . Paris: Minuit, 1991. |
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References in the text give the page number of the English translation, followed by the page number of the French edition. References to other texts by Deleuze and Guattari are given in the notes. The title and page number for other quoted sources are given in the notes, with full details found in the bibliography. When a book is quoted which is not listed in the bibliography, full details are given in the notes.

List of Figures

- | | | |
|----------|---|-----|
| Figure 1 | Andy Warhol, <i>Triple Elvis</i> , 1963, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. © 2004 Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York | 34 |
| Figure 2 | Carl Theodor Dreyer, <i>La Passion de Jeanne D'Arc</i> , 1928, Austrian Film Museum. | 94 |
| Figure 3 | Michelangelo Antonioni, <i>Deserto Rosso</i> , 1964, Austrian Film Museum. | 113 |
| Figure 4 | Titian, <i>The Death of Actaeon</i> , 1565-76, National Gallery, London. | 137 |
| Figure 5 | Jackson Pollock, <i>Cathedral</i> , 1947, Dallas Museum of Art. © 2004 Pollock-Krasner Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York | 147 |
| Figure 6 | Marcel Duchamp, <i>Bottle Rack</i> , 1913, Philadelphia Museum of Art. © 2004 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris / Succession Marcel Duchamp | 161 |
| Figure 7 | Francis Bacon, <i>Portrait of Isabel Rawthorne</i> , 1965, Tate Gallery, London. © 2004 Estate of Francis Bacon / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / DACS, London | 190 |
| Figure 8 | Francis Bacon, <i>Triptych, August 1972</i> , 1972, Tate Gallery, London. © 2004 Estate of Francis Bacon / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / DACS, London | 213 |

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S.Z.—Vienna

Introduction

Art as Abstract Machine

And the question is still what it was then, how to view scholarship from the vantage point of the artist and art from the vantage of life.

—Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*

“Art as abstract machine” (ATP, 496/619). This book’s title is not a description but an imperative. It urges an action, an undertaking, a perpetual departure, for wherever we start, it remains to be done. A machine has to be constructed, and art as abstract machine will require an artist adequate to the task: a mechanic. For each machine its mechanic: “The painting machine of an artist-mechanic.”¹ We are already—as always—in the middle of things, a swirling cacophony of questions: A mechanic? A machine? Who? What? When? And given all that, what does this machine produce? And for what reasons? But these questions are the necessary conditions for any construction, for their answers will be the components of new machines that will themselves depart, to test out new directions. The abstract machine is nothing but this unfolding of complexity, a fractal engineering inseparable from life, a blooming of multiplicity.

But let’s step back from this complexity that will nevertheless remain the condition of our investigation. We don’t want to crash and burn, not yet. Let’s try taking one question at a time. If our title is an imperative what does it bid us do? To construct an abstract machine, obviously, but how? And to risk another question, already, what does it do? (We will see how these questions, to immediately step into Deleuze and Guattari’s vocabulary, will become indiscernible.) Deleuze and Guattari give what seems a straightforward answer: “The diagrammatic or abstract machine does not function to represent, even something real, but rather constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality” (ATP, 142/177). Art as abstract machine’s first principle: it is real and not a representation. Deleuze and Guattari, whether discussing art, philosophy, or anything else, will not stop coming back to this first principle.² And as such, it

immediately implies another—its necessary compliment—that constructing an abstract machine is to construct construction itself. The abstract machine is the vital mechanism of a world always emerging anew, it is the mechanism of creation operating at the level of the real. Here, a new world opens up, a living world in which nothing is given except creation. To open a world, to construct a new type of reality, this is the ontological foundation of the world—of *this* world and of all the others—on an abstract machine guiding its becoming.

The abstract machine creates a new reality, constructs new ways of being, but although inseparable from this innovation of existence, it has no being. The abstract machine is the entirely immanent condition of the new, and thereby receives its Nietzschean definition: its being is becoming. For now we will unfold the implications of this ontology rather rapidly, any beginning must involve a certain reckless plunge . . . The abstract machine doesn't represent anything because nothing exists outside of its action, it is what it does and its immanence is always active. In the middle of things the abstract machine is never an end, it's a means, a vector of creation. But despite the abstract machine having no form, it is inseparable from what happens: it is the "non-outside" living vitality of matter. (But is it an inside? As we shall see the question marks a certain limit to an old and no longer useful topological vocabulary.) As a result, abstract machines are neither ideal identities nor categories of being, and remain entirely unaffected by any transcendent ambitions.

But before we get into the intricacies of this technical philosophical terminology we should remind ourselves that we are speaking of practical matters, of machines and their constructions. Building an abstract machine is more DIY than techno-science, and requires a bit of the mad professor.³ Deleuze and Guattari, mad professors no doubt, adopt the language of the construction site, an earthy directness reflecting the pragmatism required by the job at hand. Machines eat and sleep, they remind us, they shit and fuck. (AO, 1/7) We are, no mistake, machines. "Everything is a machine" (AO, 2/8). Our task—to be done with techno-paranoia—is to turn these machines creative, to liberate their parts in an explosion that remakes the world. The mechanic is, to use another of Deleuze and Guattari's colorful phrases, "the cosmic artisan: a homemade atomic bomb" (ATP, 345/426). "There is a necessary joy in creation," Deleuze says, "art is necessarily a liberation that explodes everything."⁴ But the abstract machine is not an expression implying technophilia either, and is inseparable from a mechanics of the flesh, an example of Deleuze and Guattari's avowed materialism: "The abstract machine is pure Matter-Function" (ATP, 141/176). The world is a plane of matter-force, a material process of experimentation connecting and disconnecting machines. On this plane abstract machines act as guidance mechanisms—

"probe-heads" (*têtes chercheuses*, ATP, 190/232)—steering the world on its "creative flight" (ATP, 190/233). The abstract machine is therefore both vital and material, it exists, Deleuze and Guattari write, as the "life proper to matter as such, a material vitalism that doubtless exists everywhere but is ordinarily hidden or covered, rendered unrecognizable, dissociated by the hylomorphic model" (ATP, 411/512). Hylomorphism is an operation that moulds matter into forms according to an ideal model, an operation by which the world appears as obedient and predictable representations. Once more, the abstract machine *against* representation.

We have already sketched—at a speed that no doubt calls out for a subsequent slowness—the underlying structure of this book's diagram. First, not only the echo of Nietzsche in the abstract machine's *against*, but Deleuze and Guattari's mobilization of his ontology of becoming. Second, the necessity of Spinoza to any philosophy of immanence. Spinoza will be the permanent signature of Deleuze and Guattari's immanent machinery, of its expression and construction. Third, a materialism inseparable from a vitalism; in other words, Bergson. These are the abstract co-ordinates of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical machine, and are mapped in the first three chapters of this book. These chapters lay out the basic components of Deleuze and Guattari's ontology, while seeking to show how they work, how they must be put to work in constructing an expression of the living materiality of the world, in constructing an abstract machine. Understanding this ontology will therefore confront us with the immediate necessity of understanding its appearance in and as life, an understanding inseparable from an experience of the new realities that are forever being created. At this point it becomes obvious that the ontology of the abstract machine implies an aesthetic, because its existence is indiscernible from its appearance in and as experience.

What then, to ask the question of aesthetics, are the conditions of this experience? This question calls to account another of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical interlocutors: Kant. Unlike Nietzsche, Spinoza and Bergson however, Kant is less a "fellow traveller" than an adversary, and the site of combat will be the aesthetic. For Deleuze and Guattari aesthetics is not the determination of the objective conditions of any possible experience, nor does it determine the subjective conditions of an actual experience *qua* beautiful. Aesthetics instead involves the determination of real conditions that are no wider than the experience itself, that are, once more, indiscernible from *this* experience. Aesthetics then, is inseparable from ontology, because experience is, for Deleuze and Guattari, irreducibly real. To construct an abstract machine will mean constructing a new experience indissociable from a new reality. The sensible, like the thinkable, is nothing but the temporary conditions

from which an abstract machine departs, following Spinoza's "war cry" (the phrase is Deleuze's) "we don't even know what a body can do" (EPS, 255/234). This introduces another of our constant concerns, how can we create a new body, a new sensibility adequate to a life of ontological innovation? Art emerges here as a privileged site of corporeal experimentation. Art as abstract machine gives a genetic definition of art, one that transforms both its ontological and aesthetic dimensions. "Everything changes once we determine the conditions of real experience," Deleuze writes, "which are not larger than the conditioned and which differ in kind from the categories: [Kant's] two senses of the aesthetic become one, to the point where the being of the sensible reveals itself in the work of art, while at the same time the work of art appears as experimentation" (DR, 68/94). An abstract machine determines the real conditions of experience, conditions neither subjective nor objective (they have become abstract), and that can only be experienced in the work of art (in a machine). A work entirely experimental, inasmuch as art is a permanent research on its own conditions, and is always constructing new machines. Feedback loop. Once more, this will be an overarching concern of this book, to understand the necessary and active immanence of abstract and actual, infinite and finite in the machine of art. The work of art understood in this way will give a real experience, an experience of its real conditions, an experience of and as its immanent abstract machine in the process of (re)constructing reality. Which is to say—or what can be said before we say everything else—art is an experience of becoming, an experiential body of becoming, an experimentation producing new realities. The implications are obvious: there is neither an ontology of art nor an aesthetics of art, each in its own realm of competency, each with its own all too serious professors. There are artists constructing abstract machines, mechanics engaged in the pragmatic practice of *onto-aesthetics*. Cosmic artisans everywhere setting off their atom bombs.

Our diagram has already grown quite complex. The co-implication of ontology and aesthetics in art as abstract machine—the onto-aesthetics of art—involves a redefinition of experience by which its objective and subjective conditions are dissolved in the real, the reality of the world as it becomes nothing else than itself. Art in these terms is an autogenesis expressing the world (its real conditions) by constructing experience (its real experience). And what is this experience? A simple question that it will take a whole book (and no doubt not just this one) to answer. Art is, before all else, and as Deleuze and Guattari put it, a sensation. A sensation of this work, but this work, this sensation, it does nothing if it does not restore us to our constitutive infinity by creating the world anew. Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of art as sensation will set off from

Nietzsche's statement serving as the epitaph above, to view scholarship from the vantage of art—it means our investigations only begin when we start to create—and art from the vantage of life—meaning our creations must become alive. Art will be nothing (at least not for us) if it is not this ongoing expression of life in the construction of living machines.

Expression and construction are the doubled dimensions of art as abstract machine. The abstract machine expresses the autogenetic and infinite processuality of its real conditions (the infinite, a cosmic world), which appear as the construction of *this* reality, *this* art-work. But, once more, doubled, the abstract machine expresses the infinite, but also constructs it, right here right now: "The field of immanence or plane of consistency must be constructed." Deleuze and Guattari write: "It is constructed piece by piece, and the places, conditions, and techniques are irreducible to one another. The question, rather, is whether the pieces fit together, and at what price. Inevitably there will be monstrous cross-breeds" (ATP, 157/195). To express an infinite world in constructing a finite art-work, to make art in other words, is a process by which the becoming of the world is expressed in a construction which works upon its own conditions, which operates at the level of its constitutive mechanism. Any construction of art then, any sensation, emerges through an abstract machine to express an infinite plane by way of an actual becoming whose very specificity and precision involves or infolds a change in its real conditions. The world is this genetic plane of immanence, a Bergsonian multiplicity, which in being expressed in a finite construction, an art-work, a sensation, changes in nature. At this point it is not a question of distinguishing expression and construction as two dimensions or moments of sensation, because they have become indiscernible on the single multiplied plane of onto-aesthetics. All that remains is to affirm their identity, construction=expression.⁵

This affirmation will be another theme of this book, echoing in its different terminologies. It appears as Nietzsche's interpretation and evaluation of will to power, as Spinoza's affects of joy and beatitude in God/Nature, as the actual and the virtual dimensions of duration in a Bergsonian cinema, as traits of content and expression in the abstract machine, and finally as the affect and the percept in sensation itself. In all these cases it is the affirmation of becoming that puts immanence to work in a feedback loop of construction and expression, making becoming the being of a work of art that, as Deleuze and Guattari put it, "wants to create the finite that restores the infinite" (WP, 197/186).

We could well ask, as some already have, whether Deleuze and Guattari are offering us a modern version of Romanticism here, whether onto-aesthetics is simply art expressing nature. Certainly Deleuze and Guattari pass through Romanticism, and although they find a stopping place in the inhuman rupture

of the sublime—a rupture and rapture—they do so only by changing its Nature. A change that rejects the sublime's Kantian conditions, removing art from any romantic analogy with the divine, and placing it back among the animals. All this will be developed later of course, but I mention it here as the first qualification of what is the necessary correlate of the construction=expression equation, an “atheistic mysticism.” This is a phrase employed by Deleuze to describe Spinoza's philosophy of immanence, and is the only way to understand Deleuze and Guattari's ironic deification of Spinoza as the “Christ of philosophers” (WP, 60/59). Spinoza is the philosopher who thought the “best” plane of immanence, the “best” God, because through the attributes the plane's (God/Nature) expression in the joy of affectual assemblages is nothing but the ongoing construction of an infinite and divine *here and now*: God yes, but *Deus sive natura*. Spinoza's revolutionary formula introduces an atheist God to philosophy—an atheism inseparable from a true philosophy of immanence—because reason is the way to express God/Nature constructing itself, and immanence achieves nothing without this identity of expression and construction. To put it simply, Spinoza overcomes transcendence because, as Deleuze puts it, “expression is not simply manifestation, but is also the constitution of God himself. Life, that is, expressivity, is carried into the absolute” (EPS, 80–1/70).

This strange atheism that in Spinoza never stops speaking of God, and in Deleuze and Guattari never stops seeking to become adequate to becoming itself, will be the consistent aim of a *practical philosophy*. Philosophy, like art, is a construction site, a workshop producing abstract machines with cosmic ambition. Deleuze and Guattari are continually coming back to this mystical practice, the production of what Michel de Certeau has called, “the infinity of a local singularity.”⁶ From the Nietzschean simulacrum as the superior form of everything that is to the seed/universe of the cinematic crystal image, from the visions of cinema's seer to Bacon's BwO, from Goeth's differential color theory to Leibniz's imperceptible waves infolding perception in the ocean of experience, Deleuze and Guattari describe the atheistic mysticism of a philosophy of immanence, the construction and expression by an abstract machine of a “*local absolute*” (ATP, 382/474). This vision of a mystical Deleuze and Guattari is, I am well aware, regarded with suspicion by many commentators.⁷ Nevertheless, with the important addition of its atheist condition, this seems to me the best way to approach the profusion of mystical formulations in Deleuze and Guattari's work, and their consistent attempts to find our real conditions on a cosmic plane of production.

Mystical atheism is the real condition of Deleuze and Guattari's pragmatic philosophy. Mysticism is the experience of immanence, of the construction/ex-

pression of the at once infinite and finite material plane on which everything happens. Thus, mysticism as an experience of immanence is necessarily atheist, because it cannot involve transcendence of any kind (where to?). Atheist mysticism replaces transcendence with construction/expression, first of all as a construction of the body—atheism *against asceticism*. Mysticism is a physical practice: how do you make yourself a body without organs? Furthermore, mysticism is a creative process that, whether in the realm of philosophy, art, or somewhere else, is inseparable from affirmation. Deleuze and Guattari identify the same philosophers as philosophers of affirmation as they did the philosophers of immanence, the holy trinity: Nietzsche, Spinoza, and Bergson. It's no accident of course, as in each case it is by affirming the immanence of a fundamentally creative life that the joy proper to mysticism will explode on its lines of flight, all the way to infinity. Deleuze reads Nietzsche's affirmation of will to power, the affirmation of affirmation as he puts it, as the practical mechanism of overcoming, the door through which we eternally return. Similarly, it is the Spinozian affect of joy that constructs the rhizomatic compositions of power constituting the ever increasing All, and culminating in the mystical affect of beatitude, the love by which God/Nature loves itself. In Bergson Deleuze finds in the intuition of the *elan vital*, an intuition Bergson associates with artists and mystics, an affirmation capable of entering into the creative process itself. “If man accedes to the open creative totality,” Deleuze writes of Bergson, “it is therefore by acting, by creating rather than by contemplating” (B, 111/118). Deleuze suggests as a slogan, and it's a joke, but perhaps only half a joke, “It's all good, but really.”⁸

Affirmation is the mechanism of immanence, the means by which to construct a joyful expression. No doubt Deleuze's affirmation of affirmation also has a serious philosophical function as the antidote to that other notable philosophical double-banger, the negation of negation (just as overcoming in this context is the overcoming of *Aufhebung*). But it is also the guiding thread of Deleuze and Guattari's work in a practical sense, for they very rarely discuss artwork, at least, which they do not like. (And in a wider sense this would be the rational behind Deleuze's refusal to specifically deal with the philosophy of Hegel.) But behind this seemingly banal observation lies an important new element to Deleuze and Guattari's abstract machine, and that is its ethical dimension. Affirmation is an ethical choice, a choice for the creative energies of life, first of all our own. This will be an ethics that will immediately appear in our first chapter on Nietzsche, where affirmation returns will to power eternally, a return that will be our own overcoming. Here affirmation takes on a critical function, because a true affirmation of immanence will involve the destruction of nihilism, of all the resentful negations defining the human, all too human. As

Nietzsche said, and it is a slogan that will accompany us through the course of this book: no creation without destruction. A motto for the artist first of all. Affirmation, and the mystical onto-aesthetics it enables, is nothing if not critical. It is, in fact, the creative process of critique, and involves violence and cruelty, and their correlate: pain. Just like nature. Any creation worth its name will therefore encompass the destructions necessary to set it free, an explosion that destroys negation and propels its liberated matter into the new. Affirmation is therefore like a leap of faith, a leap into the chaos of the world in order to bring something back, in order to construct something that expresses life beyond its sad negation. And how could it be anything else? Because from our subjective perspective, from within its narrow and blinkered vision, the life of matter, the cosmic infinity of our here and now is what cannot be experienced or thought, at least not without some recourse to mollifying images of a transcendent beyond. This unthought of thought, the insensible in sensation, this is the impossible aim of Deleuze and Guattari's project. Not, once more, to transcend the world, but to discover it as it is, to create a thought, a sensation, a life that participates in the world's joyful birth of itself: a dancing star. This, Deleuze writes, "is the impossible which can only be restored within a faith. [. . .] Only belief in the world can reconnect man to what he sees and hears" (C2, 172/223).

To reconnect man to what he sees and hears, this is nothing less than the project of art. A critical project for sure, because art has been overcoded with so many merely human ambitions, so many representational limitations. Let us not forget: "No art and no sensation have ever been representational" (WP, 193/182). First, we need a machine to clear the canvas (or the screen, the page, the compact disc) of all the clichés which prevent a creation. Second, we need an affirmation that is strong enough to actually create something, because a constant risk of destruction is that nothing new will emerge from it. Nothing is sadder than a void, nothing so ugly as a black hole. And art can just as easily be these things, a soporific or worse, a poison. Art as abstract machine therefore involves an ethical choice, a selection and conjugation of those matter-flows which are in the process of escaping from themselves, it must affirm only what is the most deterritorialised. Art must be critical enough to divert its contents and expressions back to the plane of consistency, to achieve an absolute deterritorialisation. But then, something must happen, something must emerge, the creative life of this plane must be expressed in a sensation. And sensations must be created, as any artist knows, for the machine to work.

In this way the abstract machine operates at the interstice between finite and infinite, it deterritorialises the concrete world, breaking matter out of its overcoded forms, to put it back into contact with its vitality, with its living flows, its inhuman and inorganic nature. This is art's infinite material dimension, and

here, absolutely deterritorialised, the machine begins to work, "flush with the real" as Deleuze and Guattari put it, constructing flows of matter-force into expressive sensations. This is the bacchanaal of art, immersed in the real, affirming its own creative ecstacies. Deleuze is a laughing Dionysus: "Yes, the essence of art is a kind of joy," he affirms, "and this is the very point of art."⁹

Here art will become a politics of lived experience, a realm of experimentation that opens life up to alternative modes of being, affirming new realities, new communities, and new methods of self-organisation. Art becomes a kind of bio-politics, an experimentation with life as it is lived, a contestation in the realm of experience with everything that seeks to prevent us from affirming our power of composition. Art is a mechanism to increase our power, to liberate ourselves from the limits of representation (and the political operation of these limits is a constant subtext of Deleuze and Guattari's discussion). Art is the freedom to experiment on our conditions of existence, and is the ethical condition of any revolution. Art as ethics, and as bio-politics, serves to emphasise the fact that art is always concerned with very practical problems. In this sense Deleuze and Guattari offer a philosophy of art-work, and it only begins—for real—when we put it to work for and against ourselves.

Finally we have arrived at what has no doubt been a puzzling absence to this introduction. Art, I mean art as it is normally understood, pictures and things. Of course it was never absent, because the path so far taken was necessary in order to open the question of what art means for Deleuze and Guattari, ontologically, aesthetically and ethically. It is the question to which this book will try to provide some answers. But nevertheless, and following Deleuze and Guattari, much of this book will talk very specifically about art, about artists, their work, and about how art works. Each chapter—with the exception of the second on Spinoza, where the introduction of art examples to a discussion of a thinker who barely mentions art at all seems a little far-fetched—contains a more or less lengthy discussion of an art-work, an artist's work, or an art movement. In each case the general philosophical argument of the chapter is taken up in an example appropriate to it: Andy Warhol's "Death and Disaster" series in relation to the Nietzschean simulacrum (Chapter One); cinema in terms of Bergson's ontology of time (Chapter Three); Venetian Renaissance painting as an abstract machine (Chapter Four); Jackson Pollock's "middle" period as a diagram for Abstraction opposed to his American modernist champions (Chapter Four); the readymades of Marcel Duchamp as machines of chaosmosis (Chapter Five); and the work of Francis Bacon (Chapter Six). In each case the aim is to show how it is meaningless to isolate Deleuze and Guattari's discussions of art from their wider philosophical concerns, and further that their discussion of art can only be fully understood within this wider context. This is to

say that Deleuze and Guattari offer us an onto-aesthetics, but more importantly it is to show it in action, to get close to the explosions it ignites, its destruction of inherited opinions about aesthetics and art, and the joyful affirmations it offers in their place.

This is finally simply to follow what I have outlined above, a Deleuzeo-Guattarian *practice*, a practice in which life is both expressed and constructed, and by which art restores the finite to its infinite dimension. It means that in attempting to understand art as abstract machine we will have to understand its onto-aesthetics, its mystical and yet utterly actual processes of creation. This, as Guattari put it, will be our, and art's "dance of chaos and complexity" (*Chaos*, 88/123).

Chapter One

The Artist-Philosopher: Deleuze, Nietzsche, and the Critical Art of Affirmation

The notion of a "beyond" is the death of life.
—Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*.

It is not without profound sorrow that one admits to oneself that in their highest flights the artists of all ages have raised to heavenly transfiguration precisely those conceptions which we now recognise as false; they are the glorifiers of the religious and philosophical errors of mankind.

—Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*.

Our religion, morality and philosophy are decadent forms of man. The *countermovement: art*.

—Nietzsche, *Will to Power*.

NIETZSCHE, DELEUZE AND THE NEW

Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche is in the spirit of Zarathustra's words to his disciples: "One repays a teacher badly if one always remains nothing but a pupil."¹ Nietzsche does not want followers, he wants those capable of creating something new. He wants to produce, in other words, artists. Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche is therefore artistic; in the spirit of Nietzsche he creates a new Nietzsche. This practice of creative interpretation affirms an important element of Nietzsche's aesthetics, that art is not representational, but is an experimental process by which the form of representation is overcome, and through which something new emerges. The emergence of the new is, for Nietzsche as for Deleuze, nothing less than the movement of life, the genetic process of life expressing itself. Consequently, Nietzsche's aesthetic is inseparable from the ontology that animates it. The creative movement of life is "entirely different," Deleuze writes, "from the imaginary movement of representation or the abstract

movement of concepts that habitually takes place among words and within the mind of the reader. Something leaps up from the book [or art work] and enters a region completely exterior to it. And this, I believe, is the warrant for legitimately misunderstanding the whole of Nietzsche's work.”²

Misunderstanding before representation! This cry sounds strange to philosophical ears, although perhaps not so strange to artistic ones. Creative misunderstanding (what, as we shall see, Nietzsche calls affirmation) overcomes the old to produce something new, a creative process inseparable from art and an art inseparable from life. This onto-aesthetic ecology inspires Nietzsche to introduce another odd conjunction as its agent: the “*artist-philosopher*” (Nietzsche’s emphasis). Artist-philosophers *practice* a creative life, a practice—common to thought and the plastic arts—by which they “survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art.”³ Art, embodied by the artist-philosopher, is first of all a process of self-creation, an ethical and ontological practice as much as an aesthetic one. This, Nietzsche claims, is a “Higher concept of art”⁴ that no longer simply describes an object, nor a subjective process, but the mechanism by which the creativity of life, the “will to power” as Nietzsche calls it, is expressed in a life.

The problem for the artist-philosopher—the same problem for art and for philosophy—is how to express the will to power despite the forces of a human, all too human culture that seeks to deny it? How, in other words, is it possible to live as the affirmation of will to power, or, more simply, how can life create art? The answer is found in Deleuze’s reading of Nietzsche’s method of critique. Critique is a “higher concept of art,” a vital practice of evaluation and selection through which life is returned to us in a radically revalued art-work, what we shall see Deleuze call a “simulacrum.” The simulacrum is produced by critique as an expression of will to power, and will to power lives as this expression.

CRITIQUE

Will to power is an ontological energy, the living power of everything; it is, Nietzsche writes, “the unexhausted procreative will of life” (Z, “Of Self-Overcoming”). This living will seeks to increase its power, to grow, and doing so means overcoming whatever resists it. “Every living thing,” Nietzsche claims, “does everything it can not to preserve itself but to become more” (WtP, 688). The will to power is therefore essentially creative, but this creation involves the necessary destruction of whatever seeks to oppose and negate it. To create means to become more powerful and requires an affirmation of will to power, but, and it’s sadly obvious, most people are not creative and prefer

to protect their banality by denying will to power’s violent vitality. Will to power, Nietzsche argues, is embodied along these two trajectories of expression: “Every individual may be regarded as representing the ascending or descending line of life. When one has decided which, one has thereby established a canon for the value of his egoism.”⁵ The point is two-fold. Humans gain or lose power, ascend or descend depending on whether they live an affirmative or negative life. But these values are neither pre-given nor fixed, and are themselves the product of an evaluation (“when one has decided . . .”) by which will to power is expressed in and as our life. This “notion of value,” Deleuze argues, “implies” a “critical reversal” (NP, 1/1). Our values are no longer derived from pre-existing transcendent truths and moral laws, but are instead created by our own evaluations, our own affirmations and negations of will to power. This leads to another reversal: for Nietzsche the problem of critique is no longer to criticise given values, but is to create them (NP, 1/1). Critique is the art of creating values as the direct expressions or “symptoms” of will to power.

“Critical philosophy,” Deleuze writes, “has two inseparable moments: the referencing back of all things and any kind of origin to values, but also the referencing back of these values to something which is, as it were, their origin and determines their values” (NP, 2/2). The first moment is “interpretation,” which establishes the “meaning” of things according to whether they have an active or reactive value, according to whether the forces they embody overcome their limits to become something new, or react against this power to confirm things within their limits. Interpretation analyses things as symptoms of force, and requires, as Nietzsche famously puts it, a physician of culture. Force, Nietzsche writes, “requires first a *physiological* investigation and interpretation, rather than a psychological one; and every one of them needs a critique on the part of medical science.”⁶ We will examine this physiological aspect of interpretation a little later, but staying with medical metaphors we can say that interpretation, by producing a thing’s value, is a creative “symptomatology,” and as such, Deleuze writes, “is always a question of art.”⁷

Interpretation however, is inseparable from the second moment of critique, for a forces value only emerges through an evaluation that creates it. This second moment is a “re-valuation of value” that makes of the individual’s interpretation of forces an affirmation or negation of the will to power. Evaluation is therefore pre-individual, and expresses will to power in “perspectives of appraisal,” (NP, 1/1) perspectives which reveal the individual as a resentful human negating will to power, or as the human overcome, an *Übermensch* whose values are alive with joy. This is the extraordinary value of the artist-philosopher; their evaluative perspective—the value of their values—is affirmative.

Affirmation is the Nietzschean condition for the creation of art, and affirmative evaluation defines the perspective of the artist-philosopher, who creates (that is interprets) active things or forces. This is a new critical art which encompasses both an affirmative process and the active things it creates. Art is procreative for Nietzsche, it is a critical practice by which things increase their power, by which things become new, and as such is indiscernible from life. "Art and nothing but art!" he writes, "It is the great means of making life possible, the great seduction to life, the great stimulant of life" (WtP, 853, ii). We have quickly reached the necessary immanence of ontology and aesthetics in Nietzsche's philosophy of art, for, as Deleuze puts it, "Nietzsche demands an aesthetics of creation" (NP, 102/116).

For Deleuze, as for Nietzsche, the ascending line of critique embodies an "artistic will," because its creative power is "always opening new 'possibilities'" (C2, 141/185).⁸ On the descending line however, there is a completely different method of evaluation. Here "*resentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values" (GM, I, 10). This resentful creation, Nietzsche writes, is "the other origin of the 'good,' of the good as conceived by the man of *resentiment*" (GM, I, 13). These resentful men and women interpret the strength required to overcome as *evil*, so that they, the weak and overcome, will appear good. Thus their evaluation negates the creative energy of will to power, and establishes a truth and moral system that transcends and judges the life of will to power. Nietzsche pours scorn on all such evaluations, based as they are on "the belief that the strong man is *free* to be weak and the bird of prey to be a lamb—for thus they make the bird of prey *accountable* for being a bird of prey" (GM, I, 13). This morality of good and evil requires the fallacy of understanding physiological strength according to a psychological cause. The man of *resentiment* imagines that the eagle chooses to kill the lamb, when in fact that is its function and necessity, its strength and active force.⁹ In judging the eagle to be evil the sweet little lambs justify the "goodness" of their own impotent negations of will to power. These moral judgements are symptoms of an evaluation based on different ontological assumptions to those of the artist-philosopher. The ontology of sheep, of the "herd" as Nietzsche calls them, projects "ascetic ideals" to justify their moral judgements, ascetic because they are removed from life and attributed to a transcendent God, a divine "beyond." This moralistic and mortified metaphysics justifies the *resentiment* of the herd by privileging the negation of will to power over its active strength. Here it is not will to power that lives, but God.

Nietzsche assumes an immanent will to power as the genetic condition of life, but its ascending and descending lines of valuation give different ontological expressions of its vitality. Depending on the perspective, evaluation produces

values (interpretations) that either affirm or deny life. To negate will to power means to deny life and results in nihilism, whereas to affirm is to create, and so participate in life's vital becoming. Whichever way we look at it, there is no extra dimension in which our evaluations and actions are judged. We are what we do, and we get the life—and the art—we deserve depending on our perspective. Nietzsche explains it this way, "popular morality," he writes, "separates strength from expressions of strength, as if there was a neutral substratum behind the strong man, which was *free* to express strength or not to do so. But there is no such substratum; there is no 'being' behind doing, effectuating, becoming; the 'doer' is merely a fiction added to the deed—the deed is everything" (GM, I, 13). The strong man or woman, the artist-philosopher, is defined by their act, an action that overcomes human nihilism and the delicate ego it seeks to protect, just as it overcomes the herd's resentful morality. Man overcome, or the Overman, is no longer made in God's image, for God—the ultimate nihilist—is dead, and with him the moral laws that judge man's actions from "beyond." The art of critique frees life from its divine judgement, from its human limitations and moral determinations, and affirms (that is embodies) the will to power as creative life. As a result, art must be critical because it is only through the critique of man and his values that something new and truly beautiful can be created. No creation without destruction, as Nietzsche put it, "whoever must be a creator in good and evil, verily, he must first be an annihilator and break values. Thus the highest evil belongs to the highest goodness: but this is creative" (Z, "Of Self-Overcoming"). Neither Nietzsche nor Deleuze can be understood apart from this fundamental aggression.¹⁰

The artist-philosopher, and the art he or she creates, affirms will to power in the face of everything—God, man, culture, morality—that tries to negate it. This is the difficult critical affirmation by which ascetic ideals, as the determining truths the "good" man represents, are destroyed and an active "perspective" of will to power emerges. To understand how, we must enter further into Deleuze's reading of the Nietzschean world of force. The universe, Deleuze argues, is made up of forces. But a force exists only through its difference to other forces, these forces themselves existing through differences, their ramifying relations encompassing, at their limit, everything. A force's quality (the object it constitutes) therefore appears as active or reactive, noble or base, good or bad, according to the quantitative differences between the forces that constitute it. "Forces," Deleuze writes, "express their difference in quantity by the quality which is due to them" (NP, 53/60). It is interpretation that fixes a force's quality, and so gives meaning to an event, but it is the evaluative perspective of will to power that has first put the forces into contact and established their quantitative relation. As Deleuze puts it: "The relation of force to force is called

'will."¹¹ In critique "force is what can, [and] will to power is what wills" (NP, 50/57). Force and will (the qualities and quantities of interpretation and evaluation) are therefore inseparable, the interpretation of forces expressing the will to powers "fluent, primordial and seminal qualitative elements" (NP, 53/60) of affirmation or negation. But a quality is never fixed once and for all, because a force's constitutive quantitative relation is rising and falling as it overcomes other forces, or is overcome. In other words, a force is a quantitative becoming before it is a quality, a (human) being or a fact. Differential relations of force embody ascending or descending lines of evaluation (affirmation and negation), becomings active or reactive, and these give rise to interpretations of qualities and their accompanying actions or reactions. The rise and fall of will to power, its becoming, therefore develops through the linked operations of interpretation and evaluation in critique. Critique is either "artistic" in affirming the differential becoming of forces as will to power, and produces something new, or it negates a force's becoming, giving it an identity, a being, in order to "arrive at a semblance of affirmation,"¹² in mans nihilist affirmations of a moral truth. As Deleuze rather dramatically puts it, reversing the Christian trajectories Nietzsche attacks: "Affirmation takes us into the glorious world of Dionysus, the being of becoming and negation hurls us down into the disquieting depths from which reactive forces emerge" (NP, 54/61).

PERSPECTIVES

The will to power appears as a force's quality because appearance (quality) necessarily implies an interpretation of a quantity of force as active or reactive, and this interpretation in turn requires an evaluation—the affirmation or negation—of and by will to power. Each quality therefore embodies a perspective, an affirmation or negation of will to power that encompasses the differential infinity that makes it up. In this way interpretations are perspectives constituting the processes of life. Critique is therefore the expression of will to power, and life is nothing if not critical. Consequently, we cannot interpret by comparing forces to outside (transcendental, moral) criteria, and critique cannot give a judgment that stands as a "true fact." Interpretation cannot be conceptually distinguished from the becoming that gives it value, for the evaluation it embodies, as the becoming active or reactive of will to power, is its real and immanent condition. Will to power is what constructs meaning and value, at the same time as meaning and value express its 'seminal elements.'¹³ This has radical epistemological consequences, for the world as will to power is the permanent becoming of ideas as much as things. Knowledge, as Nietzsche put it, is "Interpretation, the introduction of meaning—not 'explanation' . . . There are

no facts" (WtP, 604). An understanding of the world is always a question of creative interpretation and the evaluation it implies. For Nietzsche, as Deleuze puts it, "*creation takes the place of knowledge itself*" (NP, 173/199).¹⁴

Critique is the creation of knowledge and things through the interpretation of qualities, according to an evaluation of and by will to power. Evaluation is in this sense a mode of being, and the ontological ground of those who interpret. "This is why," Deleuze argues, "we always have the beliefs, feelings and thoughts we deserve given our way of being or our style of life" (NP, 1/2).¹⁵ Critique is the production of our feelings and thoughts (interpretation) according to their immanent will to power, the mode of existence they embody (evaluation). As a result, Deleuze tells us: "Fundamentally it is always a question 'What is it *for me?*'" (NP, 77/87). The answer to this question will embody a perspective; at once the value of my life and an expression of the will to power. As Deleuze writes: "Willing is the critical and genetic instance of all our actions, feelings and thoughts. The method is as follows: relating a concept to the will to power [interpretation] in order to make it the symptom of a will [evaluation] without which it could not even be thought (nor the feeling experienced, nor the action undertaken)" (NP, 78/89). An evaluative perspective is produced by and as will to power, and is expressed in interpretations. This means life *qua* will to power, is inseparable from a life that lives it.

The critical question in regard to the art-work is therefore not "what is it?" nor "what does it mean?" but "what is it for me?" Obviously, art always awaits its critique, indeed it requires it, because critique poses the ethical-ontological problem of who is able to affirm, before it answers questions as to meaning or value. The question posed by the art-work ('what is it for me?') is nothing but the question of who is able to be an artist-philosopher. In asking "what is it?" we assume a metaphysics of essence and truth and an object that represents them. The question "what is it for me?" however, asks "what are the forces which takes hold of a given thing, what is the will that possesses it? Which one is expressed, manifested and even hidden in it?" (NP, 76-7/87). The question "what is it for me?" therefore implies another, about what this "me" is. It implies a critique of any assumed subjective unity, as does any "thing" or object. In this way critique detaches experience from the subject/object relation as much as from subjects and objects as categories of thought. As Nietzsche puts it: "The origin of things' is wholly the work of that which imagines, thinks, wills, feels. The concept 'thing' itself just as much as all its qualities. Even 'the subject' is such a created entity, a 'thing' like all others: a simplification with the object of defining the force which posits, invents, thinks, as distinct from all individual positing, inventing, thinking as such" (WtP, 556). In other words, "subject" and "object" are interpretations that attempt to detach a thought from thinking as a force,

and are negations. For Nietzsche the personal is only ever a symptom or expression of the impersonal will to power and must be revalued as such. It is only in such a revaluation that we will overcome our human nihilism and emerge as artist-philosophers. Henry Miller poses this problem of a transvaluative criticism precisely: "Why are we so full of restraint? Is it fear of losing ourselves? Until we do lose ourselves there can be no hope of finding ourselves. We are of the world, and to enter fully into the world we must first lose ourselves in it."¹⁶ All objective interrogations of the form "what is . . . ?" must be revalued in answering the question "what wills?" a question whose answer in turn revalues the subjective question "what does this mean to me?" We lose ourselves in finding the answer, for the answer is neither a subject nor an object, but something existing between them, a becoming—active or reactive, an affect. Nietzsche puts it in this way:

The question "what is that?" is an imposition of meaning from some other viewpoint. "Essence," the "essential nature," is something perspective and already presupposes a multiplicity. At the bottom of it there always lies "what is that for me?" (for us, for all that lives, etc.) A thing would be defined once all creatures had asked "what is that?" and had answered the question. [. . .] One may not ask: "who then interprets?" for the interpretation itself as a form of the will to power, exists (but not as a "being" but as a process, a becomings) as an affect. (WtP, 556)

Any perception of an object is always an interpretation of forces, necessarily different each time, which gives an answer to the question "what is it for me?" in a becoming-active or reactive, in an expression of the will to power in an affect, in a rise or fall of power. This means that the art of critique will be, as we shall see, necessarily physiological.

In Deleuze's Nietzschean aesthetics, will to power's affirmative or negative evaluations are expressed in the active or reactive forces of life. But these forces appear in an interpretation that lays hold of them, and constructs their differential quantity. This quantity, as quality, emerges from an in principle infinite series of differential relations that at their limit encompass the entire genetic conditions of will to power, co-extensive with life. In being interpreted each force receives a value only through the construction of the differential series that composes it. At the same time however, this construction is the expression of will to power in an evaluative perspective. Each force therefore constructs a world, the world of will to power, the world each force expresses. Will to power exists in and as this ongoing critical construction, and as affirmation it creates new and by definition active forces (this is Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche's *eternal return*), as its own becoming-active. This means, as Deleuze

writes: "The conditions of a true critique and a true creation are the same: the destruction of an image of thought [or art] which presupposes itself and the genesis of the act of thinking in thought" (DR, 139/182).

Becoming-active will therefore be Nietzsche's critical definition of art, a definition as much ontological as aesthetic, and succinctly expressed by Nietzsche's famous statement: "To impose upon becoming the character of being—that is the supreme will to power" (WtP, 617).¹⁷ Art and philosophy as critical affirmation, and embodied in the artist-philosopher, do not represent a life outside them, but affirm life as will to power, in a becoming-active, in their active affects. In the ontology of will to power there is no "being" behind "doing," and this insight will be developed by Deleuze both in terms of an inorganic vitality, and the affects that its becoming produces. With no "being" in the background there is no truth, meaning aesthetics cannot be a science of representation, because quite simply there is nothing to represent. Art without truth; it means that art is nothing but the creation of falsehood. This is one of Nietzsche's most important insights about art, which Deleuze repeats:

The world is neither true nor real but living. And the living world is will to power, will to falsehood, which is actualised in many different powers. To actualise the will to falsehood under any quality whatever, is always to evaluate. To live is to evaluate. There is no truth of the world as it is thought, no reality of the sensible world, all is evaluation, even and above all the sensible and the real. (NP, 184/191–2)

We get the truths, values, and affects we deserve according to the way we live, the way we evaluate, and the perspectives we create. As Nietzsche writes: "All seeing is essentially perspective, and so is knowing" (GM, III, 12).

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF THE ARTIST-PHILOSOPHER

Bodies, whether human or otherwise, are the mechanisms of critique because, Nietzsche claims, "all sense perceptions are permeated with value judgments" (WtP, 305). Sense perceptions are interpretations of forces, vision for example emerges from what he calls "the value-positing eye" (GM, I, 10). This is a Nietzschean empiricism that is inseparable from a critical art, because "art" is always an empirical question, a question of what something is for me *as will to power*. But the "I/eye" of the subject perceives the identity of things too quickly, and only sees itself through the negation of will to power. Human vision is, to steal a line from T. S. Eliot, "eyes assured of certain certainties."¹⁸ This is the tenacious insistence of human nihilism, its self-fulfilling negations find themselves confirmed in every experience appearing under its terms.

"Only we have created the world *that concerns man*" (GS, 301), Nietzsche writes. But what exactly is this world, and how have we created it? For Nietzsche it is human rationality which determines our perceptual certainty through its power of negation, a "no" which preserves the human, as much as each human, by separating us from what we are not. "Slave ethics," Nietzsche argues, "begins by saying no to an "outside," an "other," a non-self, and that no is its creative act" (GM, I, 10).

Deleuze claims that the philosophical method of negation is the dialectic, because the dialectic understands the differential forces of will to power (difference itself) as a power of the negative. "We already sense the form in which the syllogism of the slave has been so successful in philosophy:" he writes, "*the dialectic. The dialectic, as the ideology of ressentiment*" (NP, 121/139). The dialectic enslaves life because it is unable to affirm the constitutive difference of will to power. Instead the dialectic represents difference as negation, assuming that the essential activity of life is its power of negation. This is nothing but the negation of Nietzschean empiricism in thought, because for Nietzsche interpretation is the affirmation of a forces constitutive difference—an action producing becoming—whereas the dialectic establishes identity only through negating differences—a reaction which cannot be creative.¹⁹ The dialectic therefore negates will to power's constitutive difference by representing it as the negative itself. Inasmuch as dialectical negation is creative then, it is so only within the confines of a human thought that makes negation its essence and principle of existence (NP, 9/10). Both thought and art labour under this nihilistic ideology and its dialectical method in attempting to represent the truth of life, in attempting to transcend life (i.e. negate it) by giving a representation of truth. For Deleuze dialectical representation "poisons" philosophy, and as the product of the slave it is one of his most consistent targets (NP, 81/92). Nietzsche also attacks the nihilism of representation, often directly in terms of the fine arts. "The profession of almost every man, even that of the artist," he writes, "begins with hypocrisy, with an imitation from without, with a copying of what is most effective."²⁰

Nietzsche claims to "possess an instinctive distrust of dialectics,"²¹ and he extends his distrust to the dialectic's avatar, the artist of negation, the sick and decadent "anti-artist" as Nietzsche calls him or her. These artists, in producing the "arts of man," merely create aesthetic confirmations of their human sensibility and its metaphysical consolations. Within this loop, Nietzsche argues: "Nothing is beautiful, only man: on this piece of naivety rests all aesthetics, it is the *first* truth of aesthetics. Let us immediately add its second: nothing is ugly but degenerate man—the domain of aesthetic judgment is therewith defined" (TI, "Expeditions of an Untimely Man," 20). What is beautiful confirms man

because it represents his higher Being, and what is ugly denies this higher truth. Thus the arts of man are fundamentally moral, and aesthetics is a realm of moral judgment identifying the heavenly truths—unchanging and essential—that act as transcendent standards by which art is both produced and assessed. As a result, what is most beautiful in man is that which is beyond him, the ascetic ideals by which he confirms the beauty of his negations, his own perceptions, and his own art. Once more, the stakes in aesthetics are shown by Nietzsche to be ontological, for with the anti-artist "we have made the 'real' world a world not of change and becoming, but one of Being" (WtP, 507).²² In this way anti-artists have always functioned as "the glorifiers of the religious and philosophical errors of mankind" (HH, 220). In the critical art of the artist-philosopher however, in their affirmations of will to power, in their artistic constructions, as Deleuze simply puts it, "there is no longer any place for another world" (NP, 175/201). But to arrive in this new world—which has no other world—we will need a new sensibility adequate to will to power's active affects, and a new thought able to revalue our values. The artist-philosopher will require an entirely new physiology.

For Deleuze dialectical systems and their negation of difference (i.e. difference as negation) are "powerless to create new ways of thinking and feeling" (NP, 159/183). New thoughts and feelings can only emerge from affirmation, as Deleuze writes: "For the speculative element of negation, opposition or contradiction, Nietzsche substitutes the practical element of difference, the object of affirmation and enjoyment [*jouissance*]" (NP, 9/10). Deleuze, like Nietzsche, will turn to a critical art capable of transvaluing negation through the affirmation of difference, in order to introduce a new body and new thoughts and feelings into philosophy and art. In this way we could say Deleuze and Nietzsche, like Francis Bacon—whose phrase it is—are cerebrally pessimistic ("We deny," Nietzsche writes, "that anything can be done perfectly so long as it is done consciously."²³), but nervously optimistic. This optimism extends to nihilism, which Nietzsche argues still has the will to power as the living pulse of its sad life. "If we say no," Nietzsche writes, "we still do what we are" (WtP, 675). In other words, will to power appears in its negation as an affirmation denied, and this at least implies the possibility of a critical transvaluation. As Nietzsche explains: "We negate and must negate because something in us wants to live and affirm—something that we perhaps do not know or see as yet.—This is said in favor of criticism" (GS, 307). In favour of the artist-philosopher whose creative interpretations change the value of the world in which we live, offering new perspectives, new worlds, or more accurately, a world which is forever becoming new. In Nietzsche thought becomes truly creative, and as such becomes a question of sensibility.

"In knowing and understanding, too," Nietzsche writes, "I feel only my will's delight in begetting and becoming" (Z, "On the Blissful Islands").

Art is in this sense the artist-philosophers "pure contempt of man" (A, 54). Although this sounds harsh, it's not. Man justifies himself through negation, and this is the object of the artist-philosopher's contempt. But this contempt is the destructive side of an affirmation in which man overcomes himself to become something new, the Overman. Not the negation of negation, but the affirmation of affirmation.²⁴ "The aim of critique," Deleuze writes, "is not the ends of man or of reason but in the end the Overman, the overcome, overtaken man. The point of critique is not justification but a different way of feeling: another sensibility" (NP, 94/198). The contempt of the artist-philosopher is not a negation but a strength, an aggression, an ability to affirm to the point of overcoming man. This will mean the reinvention of man, and—Deleuze makes the point again—"a new way of feeling" (NP, 163/188). The human, all too human, was only good for feeling himself, a reassuring masturbation. The artist-philosopher, the overcome man, has as Nietzsche puts it: "New ears for new music. New eyes for what is most distant. A new conscience for truths that have hitherto remained unheard" (A, preface).

This new sensibility, Nietzsche argues, requires a physiological transformation creating an inhuman body. Through the artist-philosopher's critique of man's rational nihilism, Nietzsche proudly announces, "we have dropped him back among the beasts" (A, 14). The revalued physiology of the artist-philosopher is no longer human, and has become animal. Critique thereby frees a new sensibility, an "animal' sensibility" (WtP, 800) as Nietzsche calls it, a sensibility that isn't opposed to the human but is the animal sensibility of the human, the sensibility of a vital will to power capable of affirming what human consciousness has until this point negated. The revalued physiology of the artist-philosopher, of animal-man, is what enables him or her to affirm will to power, and create the new. As Nietzsche writes, this feeling "of animal well-being and desires constitute the aesthetic state" (WtP, 801). The artist-philosopher's animal vigour is the antidote to the poison of representation and human rationality; it overcomes anti-artistic nihilism to restore life to its animal health. Animal sensibility affirms active force in its interpretations, constructing perspectives no longer rational and conscious, but operating through, Nietzsche writes, "the perfect functioning of the regulating, unconscious instincts" (GM, I, 10). The animal vitality of the artist-philosopher will emerge once we have freed our sensibilities from the nihilist task of knowing, once we have become an animal capable of living the un-known, capable of enjoying it, and capable, finally, of embodying becoming as being. D. H. Lawrence knew the feeling: "You've got to lapse out before you can know what

sensual reality is, lapse into unknowingness, and give up your volition. You've got to do it. You've got to learn not to be, before you can come into being."²⁵ The artist-philosopher-animal will therefore embody critique in physiological becomings inseparable from the production of art. Nietzsche puts it clearly: "Art reminds us of a state of animal vigor; it is on the one hand an excess and overflow of blooming physicality into the world of images and desires; on the other, an excitation of the animal functions through the images and desires of an intensified life;—an enhancement of the feeling of life, a stimulant to it" (WtP, 802).

Art and artist are, in these terms, two poles of an animal perspective that constructs itself, and continually overcomes itself, in its own affirmation, creating a feedback loop of/as will to power. As Nietzsche sings: "I drink back into myself the flames that break from me" (Z, "The Night Song"). Instinctual interpretations construct an art-work as a new singularity, a singularity that affirms (expresses) all of will to power in its differential genesis, and eternally returns all of will to power in the living becoming of its differences, in a construction of the art works intensified life. Deleuze explains art's feedback loop like this: "According to Nietzsche we have not yet understood what the life of an artist means: the activity of this life serves as a stimulant to the affirmation contained in the work of art itself, to the will to power of the artist as artist" (NP, 102/177). But we haven't understood, we haven't become active, become artists, and so from our still human perspective a transvalued and animal art appears as a "play of mirrors"²⁶ between art and artist, a paradoxical and irrational mystery. Indeed we cannot "understand" it, and the inseparability of an art of critique from the art-work it produces, an inseparability of an aesthetics and an ontology of will to power, will produce an inhuman state of animal health which Nietzsche calls intoxication: "the effect of works of art is to excite the state which creates art—intoxication" (WtP, 821). To make art we must get out of it, a Nietzschean practice many artists have taken literally. But only if such intoxication gives birth to the animal, the inhuman, in the work, does it stand up, and indeed, as Deleuze and Guattari often stress, does it have the sobriety to do so.²⁷

Art and artist, producer and product, are inadequate terms to describe the new physiology required to create art. We need a new concept in which artist and art-work can be understood as the becoming of an intoxicated animal body. This concept arrives in Nietzsche's figure of Dionysus.²⁸ Dionysus is neither subject nor object, because Dionysus cannot tolerate any personal identities based on human negation. Dionysus is the animal-artist in the middle of things, as the affirmation that creates their simultaneous immanence and singularity. Dionysus, the artist, Nietzsche writes, "stands in the midst of the universe with

a joyful and trusting fatalism, in the *faith* that only what is separate and individual may be rejected, that in the totality everything is redeemed and affirmed—*he no longer denies. . . .*" (TI, "Expeditions of an Untimely Man," 49). In no longer denying, in affirming the will to power in a cosmic construction, Dionysus creates a new totality. Dionysus no longer denies, he creates. In Dionysus the will to power lives as becoming, and in the Dionysian art-work this creative power is unleashed. This is the way we are able to understand the art-work as expression, that is, as the constructive force of a creative will to power, as a Dionysian art. Under these conditions, Nietzsche notes: "The work of art appears without an artist, e.g., as body, as organization (Prussian officer corps, Jesuit order). To what extent the artist is only a preliminary stage. The world as work of art that gives birth to itself" (WtP, 796). The art-work is an individuation of the world, an interpretation constructing a singularity in which the will to power is expressed as an evaluation that constructs itself. With the destruction, or transvaluation of the ontology and aesthetics of a nihilist anti-art, the Dionysian artist-philosopher introduces art as the material process of life, an expressive vitalism expressed in art, as the affirmative will to power itself. This is finally the artist's answer to the question "what is it for me?" As Deleuze puts it: "Dionysus, the will to power, is the one that answers it each time it is put" (NP, 77/88).

In affirmative critique the artist-philosopher becomes animal, because his or her actions are physiologically rather than psychologically determined. The artist and art-work are nothing but affects, and as such embody the will to power immediately, expressing it without mediation. "One takes," Nietzsche writes, "one does not ask who gives; a thought flashes up like lightening, with necessity, unalteringly formed—I have never had any choice" (EH, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," 6). How could artists have a choice when their affects are determined by the vital feedback mechanism of art, in an interpretation expressing will to power giving birth to itself? We construct the world we deserve. . . . The artist-philosopher is in this sense, and as Nietzsche writes, an "involuntary co-ordination" of will to power, "a kind of autonomism of the whole muscular system impelled by strong stimuli from within" (WtP, 811). Impelled by an affirmative will to power the artist affirms, and this creates art. The physiology of the artist expresses the necessity and beauty of life in what they create, and so what they create is necessary and beautiful. "I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things," Nietzsche writes, "then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati* let that be my love henceforth" (GS, 276). Here is a new canon for beauty, and a new aesthetic for art. Art's beauty is no longer judged by external standards or formal criteria, or by transcendental faculties through which they would operate. Art is necessary, it

is the creation necessary for life, and in seeing this necessity, in feeling it, the artist-philosopher is drawn into its affirmative loop, to become with it, and to construct will to power once more, embraced in its eternal return. "The world is perfect," this for Nietzsche is "the instinct of the man who says yes to life" (A, 57).

We can contrast the necessity of the work of art formed in and by critique with the work of the art critic, another nihilist anti-artist. Jacques Derrida describes the nihilism of the art critic, who, "face to face with art, never abandons his positions in front of art, who never actually ventures to lay his hands on it, who, even though he at times fancies himself an artist producing works, is content merely to gossip about art."²⁹ We could imagine Deleuze agreeing on this point. Practicing the art of critique, for Deleuze and for Nietzsche—as artist-philosophers—is to embody will to power as will to power. Will to power is art and art work, indiscernibly the affirmation which creates a singular work and the work which expresses all of will to power in its becoming, in its evaluative perspective. There are many artist-philosophers and many art-works, but in the necessity of their construction, each time anew, they express will to power again as the eternal return of its differential infinity. The artist-philosopher is the singular animal life that affirms will to power, and through which will to power creates art—beyond good and evil and true and false. Art is not the true, because, as we have seen, there is no truth. Similarly, art represents nothing because there is nothing to represent. Art becomes, and as a result it needs a new name, a name Deleuze gives it—the simulacrum.

SIMULACRA

Deleuze suggests the concept of the "simulacrum" as a new image of art, one that meets the ontological, aesthetic and ethical requirements of the artistic methodology of affirmative critique. Critique transforms the representational forms of nihilism into the affirmative and animal bodies of will to power, and these bodies are what Deleuze simulacrum.

Plato originally suggested the concept of the simulacrum as the bottom rung of his metaphysical ladder. On top were "Ideas," pure immaterial essences as the truth of things, and absolutely distinct from the images that represented them. These images, or things, existed in the material world and were the mere copies of the essences that determined them. Finally, lying beneath things were the degraded simulacra produced by the arts, nothing but dangerous copies of copies that could cause us, through the feelings they evoked, to treat them as real and so ignore the Ideas. In the Idea Plato created the definitive structure of metaphysical transcendence and founded, Deleuze

claims “the entire domain that philosophy will later recognise as its own: the domain of representation” (LS, 259/298). In this domain an “appearance” only exists in relation to the ideal “beyond” it represents and the philosopher will only arrive at truth by transcending this world to arrive at its immaterial essence. The critical powers of Plato’s philosopher are therefore spent judging this world according to a truth found in an ideal beyond. In this sense, Deleuze writes, Plato’s Idea’s were, “a moral vision of the world” (DR, 127/166). This metaphysical structure was adopted by Christianity, which made full use of its moral implications. In Christianity as in Plato, our world represents a fall, and contains the danger of illegitimate and evil images distracting us from a divine truth. In Christianity Deleuze argues, man is made in God’s image, but through the fall our good image turns to bad, and our sin does nothing but affirm material life. In sin then: “We have become simulacra” (LS, 257/297).³⁰ The demonic simulacrum is inferior to the copy because it has no true model, its model being found in an already impure matter. Plato’s metaphysics as much as Christianity’s condemn the body in privileging the transcendent, and it is no surprise that Nietzsche’s animal artist announces the death of God as the necessary condition for a living body. Atheism and art, as we shall see, are continually co-implicated in Deleuze’s thought. Plato was in fact one of Nietzsche’s most cherished targets, he was, Nietzsche writes, “the greatest enemy of art Europe has thus far produced. [. . .] the deliberate transcendentalist and detractor of life” (GM, III, 25). Unsurprisingly Plato is also Deleuze’s enemy, and escaping Plato’s system will be a consistent feature of the philosophical lineage Deleuze creates: “In truth,” he writes, “only the philosophies of pure immanence escape Platonism—from the Stoics to Spinoza or Nietzsche” (ECC, 137/171).³¹

For Deleuze, the simulacrum is the affirmation of a power that escapes the Idea, and embodies Nietzsche’s explicit attempt to reverse Platonism’s philosophy of representation.³² “The simulacrum is not a degraded copy,” Deleuze writes, “It harbors a positive power which denies the original and the copy, the model and the reproduction” (LS, 262/302). Against Plato, and with Nietzsche, the simulacrum is for Deleuze the image of a univocal will to power, an expression of life beyond, not only good and evil, but also beyond the “beyond” of Christo-Platonism. In this sense, “the copy is an image endowed with resemblance, the simulacrum is an image without resemblance” (LS, 257/297). The simulacrum is Deleuze’s response to Nietzsche’s explicit aim of living in semblance, it expresses life as semblance undetermined by any idea of truth. The results of this overturning of Platonism are dramatic, for with the disappearance of essence appearances as representations also disappear.³³ As Nietzsche puts it, “with the real world we have also abolished the apparent world”

(TI, “How the ‘Real World’ at last Became a Myth”). Without essence as its transcendent determination, the simulacrum is free to continually become something else. As such the simulacrum is art, because it is the appearance of becoming (will to power) itself. As this power of the false, Nietzsche writes, “art is worth more than truth” (WtP, 835, iv).

The simulacra are critical, first, in being destructive, in abolishing the true world of Ideas along with their appearance as representations. Simulacra are non-representative, because there’s nothing beyond this world of representation. Second, the simulacrum as “a Dionysian machine” (LS, 263/303) is a creative surface of interpretation that affirms will to power in escaping the transcendence of truth. Here art gains its active onto-aesthetic dimension. As Pierre Klossowski puts it, Nietzsche proposes “a positive notion of the false, which, as the basis of artistic creation, is now *extended to every problem raised by existence*.³⁴ The art of simulacra now begins to take on a political dimension as the ethical lie (which shouldn’t be confused with usual political practice). This is the art of politics in the most creative sense, where lying—as art—is the ethical practice of affirmation, the affirmation of life.³⁵ Art is an affirmative lie for Nietzsche, a creative and radical politics, “whenever man rejoices [i.e., affirms], he is always the same in his rejoicing; he rejoices as an artist, he enjoys himself as power, he enjoys the lie as his form of power” (WtP, 853).³⁶

The art of appearances, the creation of simulacra, nevertheless requires a technique. This technique will be critical, and will be, Deleuze argues once more following Nietzsche, a question of selection. “For the artist appearance no longer means the negation of the real in this world but this kind of selection, correction, redoubling and affirmation.” The artist-philosopher selects (interprets) what is active in the world, thereby affirming will to power, and actively overcoming nihilist art and thought. Selection is therefore the artistic construction of new truths as the creative expression of life. Deleuze writes: “Then truth perhaps takes on a new sense. Truth is appearance. Truth means bringing of power into effect, raising to the highest power. In Nietzsche, ‘we the artists’ = ‘we the seekers after knowledge or truth’ = ‘we the inventors of new possibilities of life’” (NP, 103/117). Appearance as construction (interpretation) and expression (evaluation) now exist on a single plane of immanence—will to power—which is both existence and essence, a univocal formula Spinoza also uses and which we will come back to in the next chapter. Nietzsche’s own formulation is similar: “What is ‘appearance’ for me now?” he asks, “Certainly not the opposite of some essence. What could I say about any essence except to name the attributes of its appearance!” (GS, 54). To name the attributes of appearance means to interpret, to select and affirm active forces, and so to construct an affirmative expression of and as will to power. Expression of the will to power in

appearance is therefore inseparable from its construction as appearance. "The joy in shaping and reshaping—a primeval joy!" Nietzsche cries, "We can only comprehend a world that we ourselves have made" (WtP, 495). Not a world made in our image, or in God's, but a world without image and without truth, except as pure appearance. The simulacrum is the appearance of this world's essence, but this essence only exists as its appearance in an art-work. This means the simulacrum cannot exist in a dimension "beyond" the human, but is the mechanism by which the human, all too human, world is overcome in being created anew.

The simulacral art-work is a repetition of constitutive differences (forces) in an individuated series, a series that is constantly becoming-other as it continues to affirm (repeat) its difference from itself. "Simulacra," Deleuze explains, "are those systems in which different relates to different *by means* of difference itself. What is essential is that we find in these systems no *prior identity*, no *internal resemblance*. It is all a matter of difference in the series, and of difference in the communication between series" (DR, 299/383). Each series is constituted through, and includes all the others, the simulacral art-work being the simultaneous unity and irreducible multiplicity of a new point of view on/of the world. An art-work therefore, "is" nothing, because it is, under the impetus of evaluative affirmation, a simulacrum always "becoming" something else. But it is not "becoming" in a simple sense, as if this was a simple statement of the type "everything changes." Rather the art-work as simulacrum exists only when "everything is change." At this, the ontological affirmation operating in and through the transvaluative power of critique: "Everything has become simulacrum" (DR, 69/95).

The ontological transvaluation of aesthetics marks another important Deleuzian break, this time within the tradition of aesthetics as it is more usually understood. Plato's metaphysics of representation defined the transcendental conditions for all possible experiences, and Kant subsequently maintained these conditions while dividing aesthetics into two realms, one in which the sensible in general appears according to categories of possible experience (in his *Critique of Pure Reason*), and another in which the beautiful was defined according to the conditions of real, or actual, experience (in the *Critique of Judgement*) (DR, 68/94). In this way aesthetics is divided on the one hand into a theory of sensation describing the objective conditions of experience, and on the other as a theory of the beautiful defining the subjective conditions of experience. With the simulacrum however, we can only have a real experience undetermined by any subjective or objective conditions. There is no "outside" determining experience (whether this is imagined to be a transcendent essence, as with Plato, or an immanent transcendental faculty, as with Kant), because the simulacrum expresses

only its own immanent conditions, as the repetition of its constitutive difference in an ongoing series or becoming (Deleuze also calls this a "sign"). The conditions of the sign's real experience (will to power) are therefore the same as the sign's real experience (will to power). As Deleuze puts it, the will to power "is an essentially *plastic* principle that is no wider than what it conditions, that changes itself with the conditioned and determines itself in each case along with what it determines" (NP, 50/57). The Kantian division of aesthetics is therefore overcome by Nietzsche, because will to power as the being of the sensible, as the eternal return of difference in the simulacrum, only exists in and as the appearance of the work of art (DR, 68/94).³⁷ The simulacrum appears as a singularity without identity, without subject or object, as the sensation of/as repetition, of/as the eternal return of difference, as it overcomes itself. Once more any distinction of the artist and art work, as separate identities, is impossible. As Deleuze puts it: "To every perspective or point of view there must correspond an autonomous work with its own self-sufficient sense" (DR, 69/94). The art-work is an action, an affirmation in which artist and work are entirely immanent in the sensation, and that appears in the revalued physiology—no longer defined subjectively or objectively—adequate to this "affect."

THE SIMULACRUM AS ETERNAL RETURN

Critical art therefore destroys as it creates; on the one hand its interpretations overcome the world of man, and on the other it expresses the cosmic dimension of will to power constructing itself. Art begins as the transvaluation of representation, as the overcoming of "anti-art" and its "sad" repetitions, all the banal and stereotypical re-productions of habit and cliché. Art once more emerges here in its ethical modality, because its action, its affirmation, produces simulacral signs that construct the world. Deleuze puts it in his own anti-Platonic terms: "Things are simulacra themselves, simulacra are the superior forms, and the difficulty facing everything is to become its own simulacrum, to attain the status of a sign in the coherence of eternal return" (DR, 67/93). In Nietzsche then, aesthetics attains its properly political and ethical dimension, a dimension equally ontological, where art must overcome man in creating a simulacrum, to eternally return us to what we already are—the becoming of will to power.

The artist-philosopher is what we could call will to power's "operative," he or she is the one capable of giving an interpretation that constructs simulacra as the affirmative evaluation of will to power itself. In simulacra in other words, the conditions of a real experience (the "seminal" constitutive differences of will to power) are entirely immanent to that experience, and fulfil the Deleuzeo-Nietzschean conditions of onto-aesthetics: "It is a matter of

showing," Deleuze argues of the one who wills, "that he could not say, think or feel this particular thing if he did not have a particular will, particular forces, a particular way of being" (NP, 78/88). This means that the simulacrum as particular thing, as interpretation, is so only on condition that it expresses a particular will, an evaluation, as the generic differential relation of forces constituting the becoming of its world. "Each difference passes through all of the others," Deleuze writes, "it must 'will' itself or find itself through all the others" (DR, 57/80). As a result, the simulacrum expresses its generic differential conditions through affirming them, but affirmation necessarily unleashes an overcoming, an on-going becoming inseparable from the eternal return and that constructs the world anew. This is the "highpoint of the meditation" for Nietzsche: "That everything recurs is the closest approximation of a world of becoming to a world of being" (WtP, 617).³⁸

The simulacrum gives a perspective of will to power, but this perspective doesn't "represent" will to power, as in a snapshot, it is the sensation of the becoming—the eternal return—of will to power. The simulacrum is the series produced through the repetition of its own constitutive differences, as these extend to encompass the world. This means, as Deleuze argues: "Every thing, animal or being assumes the status of the simulacrum; so that the thinker of eternal return [. . .] can rightly say that he is himself burdened with the superior form of everything that is" (DR, 67/92). The simulacrum is the continual creation of the world, the becoming of a world constructed into mobile series, differentiating and differentiated. In this sense, "the eternal return concerns only simulacra" (DR, 126/165). In the simulacrum, Nietzschean transvaluation is not achieved simply by changing something's value, but by achieving a new, affirmative and artistic way of evaluating. The simulacrum is not a new truth, because it transvalues "truth" as the element from which the value of value derives, replacing it with a power of the false, a vital power inseparable from an artistic life. This finally is the transvaluation of the creative artist, who is no longer content to simply create things or to express themselves, but constructs a world of simulacra (i.e. interprets the world) through an evaluation that eternally returns the world, as the affirmative and creative will. For Nietzsche, as for Deleuze, "only the Dionysian artist takes the power of the false to the point where it is realised, not in form, but in transformation" (ECC, 105/133). Finally, the immanence of expression and construction in the artistic affirmation of the will to power means, as Deleuze puts it: "Between the eternal return and the simulacrum, there is such a profound link that the one cannot be understood except through the other" (LS, 264/305).

For Deleuze it is to the credit of modern art, before philosophy, to have rejected representation in favour of producing simulacra. All that we have just

seen, therefore, defines the Nietzschean artist-philosopher as the practitioner of a truly modern art. Deleuze argues that the creation of divergent series, as divergent and in a single work, "is, without doubt, the essential characteristic of the modern work of art" (LS, 260/300). Modern art is the affirmation of a creative becoming, creating divergent series in which the art-work is continually becoming-other. "Art does not imitate," Deleuze argues, "above all because it repeats; it repeats all the repetitions, by virtue of an internal power (an imitation is a copy, but art is simulation, it reverses copies into simulacra)" (DR, 293/375). In this sense, Deleuze believes, modern art shows the way to philosophy, for "when the modern work of art develops its permutating series and its circular structures, it indicates to philosophy a path leading to the abandonment of representation" (DR, 68–9/94). Modernism renounces art's ancient metaphysics of true and false, of original and copy, and announces its embrace of the repetition of difference in the eternal return.

Although Deleuze's examples in *Difference and Repetition* are Mallarmé's *Book* and James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, Nietzsche is also privileged in the genesis of the "modern image of thought" as the one who "succeeded in making us understand, thought is creation, not will to truth" (WP, 54/55). But Nietzsche makes a further claim to the invention of a truly modern art in being one of the few philosophers to have managed to "slip in" to the realm of art. Zarathustra, Deleuze and Guattari argue, is not only a "conceptual persona" but an "aesthetic figure," a creator of sensations, and in the serial wanderings of Nietzsche's eponymous hero affects as well as concepts are produced (WP, 217/205). Nietzsche's concepts of will to power and eternal return are therefore already at work in aesthetics' realm of experience, and it is in modern art's complication of its intense "divergent series" that the Nietzschean physiology of the artist-philosopher is fulfilled, and Zarathustra dances. The repetition of difference as the compositional principle of modern art produces, Deleuze claims, an "internal resonance," a "forced movement which goes beyond the series itself" (LS, 260–1/300–1). This "forced movement" is the affect or "affective charge" (LS, 261/301), a sensation of becoming (i.e. of a repetition) coextensive with the differential life of will to power. This affective charge is intoxicating, and overcomes the object experienced as much as the subject experiencing it. The identity of the object is dissolved in the divergent series constituting the affect (art-work as an expression and not an object), and the identity of the subject is dissolved in the multiplicity of differences the affect at once infolds and unfolds (artist as a force under construction and not a subject). But nothing is lost, Deleuze argues, because each series exists only in the return of all the others, and modern art appears only at this point of transvaluation, when everything has become a simulacrum

(DR, 69/95). Modernism is therefore defined by the dismemberment of every thing which separates art from the life of will to power, every thing which prevents its eternal return. What would prevent the eternal return, according to Deleuze, is to only understand art in terms of the artist (pure construction), or only in terms of the conditions under which the art work appears (pure expression).³⁹ The eternal return “repudiates these and expels them,” Deleuze writes, “with all its centrifugal force. It constitutes the autonomy of the product, the independence of the work” (DR, 90/122). Deleuze was obviously not the first to define the modernist art work as autonomous, but unlike the classical modernism of Clement Greenberg for example, this autonomy will not be defined by a formal purity, but by its formal vitality.

THE ART-WORK AS SIMULACRA

Given this profound link between the simulacra and eternal return, how should we approach art works as they normally appear? This is a problem of immediate urgency, not just to gain an understanding of our own “real experience,” but also to bring Nietzsche’s onto-aesthetics into affect within the politics of the everyday. This is entirely necessary as both Deleuze and Nietzsche condemn any aesthetic philosophy separating art from life.⁴⁰ Indeed, as Deleuze dramatically puts it, “there is no other aesthetic problem than that of the insertion of art into everyday life” (DR, 293/375). Deleuze immediately proposes an example: “Warhol’s remarkable ‘serial’ series” (DR, 294/375). Given the publication date of *Difference and Repetition* (1968) Deleuze’s example must refer to the so-called “screen-print” paintings Warhol begins in 1962 and developed over the next five years in what is known as the “Death and Disaster” paintings.⁴¹ We have already seen Deleuze suggest that modern art’s use of repetition in composing series is simulacral, but here he elaborates this suggestion in terms of his concrete example of Pop. “Even the most mechanical, the most banal, the most habitual and the most stereotyped repetition finds a place in works of art,” he writes, “it is always displaced in relation to other repetitions, and it is subject to the condition that a difference may be extracted from it for these other repetitions” (DR, 293/375). This passage clearly affirms Warhol’s use of commercial reproduction techniques and their media aesthetic as an insertion of art into life, which is not in itself such a controversial claim about Pop art. More controversial however, is Deleuze’s suggestion that Warhol’s use of repetition does not repeat (represent) a model, but produces a real and simulacral experience coextensive with the creative repetitions of life.⁴² This suggestion is a good example of Deleuze’s critical method, and repays exploration. Deleuze is certainly not alone in claiming that Warhol reinserts art into life by using the aesthetics of consumerism.

But Deleuze provides an ontological interpretation of this “insertion” by affirming it as the creation of simulacra, the production of “a canvas whose very operation reverses the relationship of model and copy, and which means that there is no longer a copy, nor is there a model. To push the copy, the copy of the copy, to the point at which it reverses itself and produces the model: Pop art.”⁴³

Deleuze reads Pop art, and specifically Warhol’s work, as the emergence of mechanical repetition immanent to modern processes of mechanical reproduction, and hence as an art form ‘inserted’ into everyday life. It is obvious, looking at Warhol’s *Triple Elvis* (1963, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts) for example, that he transforms a mechanical reproduction through its repetition.⁴⁴ This transformation is achieved through a mechanical technique (the screen print) which retains the in principle infinity of its “original,” which it “copies,” and therefore side-steps any appeal to the mythology of the artist’s subjectivity as the guarantor of artistic value.⁴⁵ Indeed, Warhol’s whole mediated personality, even if ironic, sought to engage and deconstruct such mythologies—in this he was utterly “modern.” Warhol’s repetition of the process of mechanical reproduction is not “critical” in any subjective sense, and is instead an affirmation that revalues painting itself. Painting is no longer “expressive,” but—in a Warholian sense—repetitive. As he said: “The reason I am painting this way is that I want to be a machine.”⁴⁶ Warhol’s painting process, as a mechanical reproduction, takes in the case of the *Elvis* paintings an “original” (a postcard of Elvis as he appeared in the film *Flaming Star*), which is itself a “copy” (of a studio promotional photo, it is not an image originally in the film). Each painting is therefore a copy of a copy, and affirmed in its very mode of appearing as such, it is a simulacrum, and is elaborated in an in-principle open (the principle of mechanical reproduction) series.⁴⁷

The Warhol-machine understood perfectly that the work of art had lost its aura as original in the age of mechanical reproduction. But he refused to mourn this loss, and instead embraced the living power of repetition it introduces. He did so by using reproduction technology to produce “original” art works that had, through this process, and their inevitable appearance in series, attained an entirely modern “aura,” that of the simulacrum. But this still must be explained, as obviously Deleuze is interested in Warhol’s images, and not just any old photo of Elvis. Warhol succeeds in producing simulacrum by foregrounding the way an image’s repetition introduces necessary differences. Each work in the series differs from the others, but this difference is not a consistent object that structures the work (as it would be in Frank Stella’s paintings or Donald Judd’s work, or in much conceptual art, such as Sol Le Witt’s sculptures, for example), but is the genetic element immanent to their production, the differing difference which does not stay the same (it is not a “grammar”), and in



Figure 1 Andy Warhol, *Triple Elvis*, 1963, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. © 2004 Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

fact rejects the same from the process of serial repetition. The first things we notice are the differences. Warhol's series are in this way a repetition, or eternal return, of what is already different from itself. Elvis as simulacrum. Elvis as object has no identity in Warhol's paintings, and exists only as the always differing repetition of himself as "sign." The eternal return is in this way affirmed in the middle of the everyday process of consumption, a point we will pick up again later.

The *Elvis* paintings, like all Warhol's series of the time, dissolve their "subject" and themselves as "objects" in being emptied of any extra dimension outside that of their own production. What appears on this surface of evaporation is their own genetic and vital force, they affirm the will to power as it continually overcomes itself. As their serial production has no beginning (no "original") nor an end (it is in principle open) it is composed only of a self-differing repetition (the technique does not allow homogeneity between paintings) as both subject and object of its multiple affects. This is why Deleuze emphasizes the serial nature of Warhol's work, because it is in the series that the repetition of difference becomes visible, even, or perhaps especially when this seriality is seen in a single work (*Elvis Eight Times* or *Elvis (Eleven Times)* for example).

Warhol is not therefore, a proto-post-modernist, as some would have it.⁴⁸ His series do not multiply perspectives in order to deny any possibility of presence, but instead foreground presence as the differential process appearing as the real experience of mechanical reproduction itself. Painting for Warhol is not a play of signifiers forever deferring presence, but the evaporation of the signifier in the presence of the self-differing sign, a perspectival art work adequate to the serial processes of the everyday. This is Warhol's dramatic (and of course utterly banal, Warhol's genius was to be able to combine these elements so effectively) revaluation, from signifier to simulacrum, and from representation to repetition. Just another Elvis comeback. As such Warhol's series are the perfect elaboration of Deleuze's theory of modern art:

each composing repetition must be distorted, diverted, and torn from its centre. Each point of view must itself be the object, or the object must belong to the point of view. The object must therefore be *in no way* identical, but torn asunder in a difference in which the identity of the object as seen by a seeing subject vanishes. Difference must become the element, the ultimate unity; it must therefore refer to other differences which never identify it but rather differentiate it. [. . .] Divergence and decentring must be affirmed in the series itself. Every object, every thing must see its own identity swallowed up in difference, each being no more than a difference between differences. Difference must show itself to be *differing*. (DR, 56/79)

Pop art produces a Nietzschean perspectival critique in which the eternal return as repetition of difference (i.e. as simulacral art-work) appears in the midst of the modern everyday.

Warhol inserts the simulacrum into everyday life by using a commercial production technique and aesthetic to make images of the people and events already being infinitely reproduced in the media. In using already recognizable images Pop art was, as Warhol said, "for everyone." But this availability

nevertheless carried with it a transformative charge, for it made visible the way mechanical processes extended from "form" to "content" in popular culture, which effectively produced an image with nothing behind it—a pure surface.⁴⁹ "Once you 'got' Pop," he said, "you could never see a sign the same way again. And once you thought Pop you could never see America the same way again."⁵⁰ This is Deleuze's point, that the transformation in our perspective achieved by Pop art operates at once on the level of the ontology of the sign (as surface), and within the commercial economy of that sign, within, in other words, everyday life. Warhol succeeded in bringing these levels together to show how life was nothing more (but also nothing less) than the creation of difference through mechanical repetitions. Warhol thereby affirms the eternal return of will to power in life, as *our* life.

Warhol succeeded in transforming mechanical reproduction into mechanical repetition, by affirming the former to the point where the distinction of model and copy are lost in productive difference. In this way Pop art exemplifies Nietzsche's own artistic strategy, "we want to be poets of our life—first of all in the smallest, most everyday matters" (GS, 299). Perhaps, given Warhol's use of pop culture technologies and subject matter we could say he was the poet of his life in the *smallest, most everyday* manner. Warhol is the artist of the little difference, but his affirmation of mechanical repetitions nevertheless produced a new relation between art and the world. Warhol's *Death and Destruction* series produced simulacrum, and in these simulacrum the destruction of man is necessarily connected to the creation of this vital life of the everyday. Deleuze makes this link explicitly:

The more our daily life appears standardised, stereotyped and subject to an accelerated reproduction of objects of consumption, the more art must be injected into it in order to extract from it that little difference which plays simultaneously between other levels of repetition, and even in order to make the two extremes resonate—namely the habitual series of consumption, and the instinctual series of destruction and death. (DR, 293/375)

From the sublime to the ridiculous: *Marilyn Monroe* to *Tuna Fish Disaster*.

The relation of repetition to death in Warhol's work can be understood in terms of Deleuze's discussion of Freud in *Difference and Repetition*. There Deleuze reinterprets Freud's grounding of symptomatic repetition in the death drive. Deleuze argues that this drive is not a return to a pure inanimate matter, as most interpretations of Freud would have it, but is instead the genetic principle of repetition which operates 'beneath' its symptomatic representation and which this representation represses. As such, death is the realm of instinctual

drives—the Freudian term for the 'seminal qualitative elements' of the will to power. These drives can only be lived by being repressed, because they are by nature a-subjective. But this repression is their repetition in disguise, and they have no reality other than becoming disguised. The death instinct is then, the return of the repressed as disguised, and as what disguises, making death (*qua* the unlivable) the genetic principle of repetition itself. As Deleuze puts it:

Repetition is truly that which disguises itself in constituting itself, that which constitutes itself only by disguising itself. It is not underneath the masks, but is formed from one mask to another, as from one distinctive point to another, from one privileged instant to another, with and within the variations. The masks do not hide anything except other masks. (DR, 17/28)

This last sentence would seem an appropriate description of Warhol's celebrity series, but rather than their repetition of masks being a critique of either the morbidity or the entropy of popular culture as some have argued,⁵¹ the repetition of masks is the living reality of the genetic power, *qua* death.⁵² The mask as simulacrum does not disguise a reality behind it; rather, it is the only possible repetition, the only possible lived reality, of genetic difference. Warhol's "Death and Disaster" series affirm this in foregrounding the mask as a repetition of difference (eternal return) inseparable from death.

It is interesting to speculate at this point about the disappearance of the term "simulacrum" from Deleuze's work after *Difference and Repetition*. Could we link this disappearance to Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari's move towards articulating art's modernity through the question of color? This hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that Deleuze makes no further reference to Warhol, apart from the brief discussion of his films in *Cinema 2*.⁵³ Indeed, after *Difference and Repetition* and coinciding with his collaboration with Guattari, Deleuze moves away from many of the terms and formulations of *Difference and Repetition* he had connected to Pop art. For example, in *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze emphasizes the role of disguise in any appearance of the repetition of difference, which draws a line between it and its instantiation and radicalises its appearance as death.⁵⁴ This is one way Deleuze tends to elaborate difference as being cancelled in its extensive representations.⁵⁵ This means genetic forces tend to be repeated in forms (masks) which dissipate their becoming, and only very few exemplary art works are able to reveal the vitality of masks themselves, in simulacra. While this argument seems to fit with Warhol's "Death and Disaster" series, it also tends to locate genetic will to power in an otherworldly sphere in relation to our own experience (i.e. as death). It is this aspect of *Difference and*

Repetition that Deleuze moves away from after meeting Guattari, who introduces a less disguised/disguising value to onto-genesis.⁵⁶ I have also tended to avoid this interpretation in my reading of the simulacrum, in line with Deleuze's later work. In the realm of art this shift introduces the centrality of color for Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari as the locus of a sensation that is understood as a living embodiment of difference.⁵⁷ We will be turning to this philosophy of color in later chapters, but here it is worth noting how this assemblage of terms Deleuze uses to articulate Pop art—masks, repetition, eternal return, series, simulacra and death—along with Pop art itself, all fade from his work. Many of them, however, remain important theatics for Deleuze (the centrality of Nietzsche and the powers of the false in *Cinema 2* for example), but these theatics are rethought and so require a new vocabulary.

Nevertheless, it is also possible to follow another trajectory through the Nietzschean assemblage of Pop art that emphasizes its critical, and therefore transformative, possibilities. To do this we must return to Deleuze's reference to "different levels of repetition" (DR, 293/375) which is in fact a reference to his theory of the three syntheses of time. The first, habit, operates the material repetitions necessary for the functioning of organic processes, and fixes life in a pure present that passes. The second, memory, creates a past which the present becomes, and through this repetition constitutes the realm of consciousness and thought. The third, the eternal return, is the time of the future, where repetition produces "complete novelty" (DR, 90/122). In the third synthesis time is the repetition of what is to come, dissolving subject and object in a pure difference that refuses any identity and is "precisely" the death instinct (DR, 111/147). As we have seen, Deleuze's equation of the simulacrum and eternal return implies a radical transformation inseparable from death, and Warhol's death and disaster paintings seem the perfect expression of this conjunction. But death is not a pure outside; it is what disguises as it is disguised. The critical question for art would therefore be how to produce the third synthesis of time as it appears (i.e. as it disguises itself) in the other two, immanent to the banalities of material and subjective life. Deleuze argues the third synthesis must affirm the other two, but in doing so it operates its law of eternal return, beyond its living cancellation, as the freeing of difference in the genetic repetition of a living future. This will finally be where the simulacrum, the eternal return and repetition find their paradoxical politics—in the death necessary for life. This is the "critical and revolutionary power" of art, Deleuze argues, and it is exemplified in Warhol's paintings of Elvis. These paintings embody the resonance between the everyday habits of consumption and the eternal return of mechanical repetition produced by the simulacrum. This resonance is what *may* "lead us from the sad repetitions of habit to the profound repetitions of memory, and

then to the ultimate repetitions of death in which our freedom is played out" (DR, 293/375). This then, would be Deleuze's affirmation of Warhol's *Death and Destruction* series, they are nothing less than an overcoming of human sadness, an overcoming of our memorial sentiment, in a work of art that eternally returns the inhuman vitality of will to power, that eternally repeats its difference in a simulacrum inseparable from our own death. And this indiscernibility, indiscernible that is from *Life*, is finally the very freedom of art.

Despite this (only seemingly) morbid end for the Nietzschean artist-philosopher in the simulacrum's eternal return of death, and despite Deleuze abandoning its vocabulary, much of what we have seen him develop here remains the focus of our ongoing exploration of an onto-aesthetics. Specifically the univocity of will to power as both critical and genetic principle, and its construction and expression in the art-work, will continue to be a focus of our discussion. Similarly, the destruction of representation will remain the "eternal truth of painting"⁵⁸ throughout Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari's work. Affirmation as the necessary "motor" of a vital repetition of difference will also be a feature of Deleuze's onto-aesthetics we will continually come back to. Nevertheless, much of the Nietzschean assemblage does drop out of Deleuze's account, and is replaced by a much stronger emphasis on the philosophy of Spinoza, to which we will now turn.

Chapter Two

Spinoza: Mystical Atheism and the Art of Beatitude

The more we understand singular things, the more we understand God.
—Spinoza, *The Ethics*.¹

I am God most of the time.
—Félix Guattari.²

INTRODUCTION

“There is,” Deleuze writes, “a philosophy of ‘life’ in Spinoza; it consists precisely in denouncing everything that separates us from life” (SPP, 26/39). Already the tone has changed from the death and disaster of Warhol’s simulacra. Spinoza’s philosophy of life understands the individual as an expression of God, a God Deleuze describes in an old mystical formulation as, “a circle whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere” (EPS, 176/160). Again, we seem far from Nietzsche’s overcoming of man through the death of God. But perhaps not, for in Deleuze’s reading of Spinoza God exists only as the continual transformations and creations of the actual world. The world is expressive, and God exists only in being expressed in life. This means, as Deleuze writes, “expression is not simply manifestation, but is also the constitution of God himself. Life, that is expressivity, is carried into the absolute” (EPS, 80–1/70). Once more, art understood as expression will be inseparable from a process of construction, and this very indiscernibility will be the principle of a creative life. Of course with Spinoza the terminology will change, but nevertheless the univocity of being, as what is both expressed and constructed in becoming, will be the common ontological insight Deleuze draws from both Nietzsche and Spinoza. For Spinoza God is immanent and univocal, meaning its essence is its existence and, to make the obvious connection to the previous chapter, God’s being is becoming.

Expressionism is Deleuze's term for the univocity of becoming, a becoming of life inseparable from the being of Spinoza's univocal and immanent God.

We saw in the previous chapter how Nietzsche's concept of art attacks artists who produce nihilistic cultural expressions. These, he argued, must be gone beyond in the critical process by which art overcomes its rational and reactive forms, and truly begins to live. Art, as the process of construction expressing will to power, defines a way of living, and so Nietzsche's aesthetics are equally an ethics. In Spinoza we will find the definitive formulation of this ethical-aesthetics, even though he does not consider traditional aesthetic questions, nor discuss "art" in any specific sense. Consequently Spinoza does not set his ethics against art as a cultural product and practice in the way Nietzsche does, nor does he privilege certain aesthetic practices as "ethical." Indeed, if in the first chapter we were immediately placed within the context of a critical art practice, then this one will step back from the explicitly artistic realm to explore its ethical and "mystical" dimensions. As a result, most of this chapter will move through the key concepts of *The Ethics*, and refers to art only as an implicit example of the ethical world of expression. Nevertheless, at certain points I will try to show how these concepts can be used to think about art works as mechanisms of expression.

SUBSTANCE

There are three basic distinctions in Spinoza's ontology: Substance, Attribute and Mode. Each of these describes a necessary aspect of a philosophical system in which, Deleuze writes, "univocal being is said immediately of individual differences or the universal is said of the most singular independent of any mediation" (DR, 39/57). Substance describes being inasmuch as it is everything, the One-All of God, but this being is univocal, and is understood in all its forms as through itself. God, in Spinoza, is not a supplemental dimension. Spinoza writes: "By Substance I understand what is in itself and is conceived through itself, that is, that whose concept does not require the concept of another thing, from which it must be formed" (Ethics, I, D3). If God as Substance is understood only through itself, as *causa sui* or cause of itself, then our understanding of God will always be a part of God. This is what we could call Spinoza's mystical "head-start," that God is necessarily immanent in its expressions, because an immanent cause is only present in its effects. God, Spinoza argues, has an absolutely infinite power of existing (Ethics, I, P11s), and whatever exists cannot be conceived without God. (Ethics, I, P15) Simply, every actual thing (or mode) is an expression of God, and God or Substance is the essence of all existing expressions. But this distinction of essence and existence only appears within the

ongoing process of expressionism, a process in which, as Spinoza famously puts it: "God's existence and his essence are one and the same thing" (Ethics, I, P20). This is an aesthetic formula, as we shall see, because it means my existence is an expression of God, and as Walt Whitman writes, "a song make I of the One form'd out of all."³ There is no better understanding of Deleuze's declaration: "Spinoza and Us."

The univocity of being is expressive because of the role played by the attributes. God as Substance consists of an infinity of attributes, each one expressing an eternal and infinite essence of God (Ethics, I, D6). Modes express Substance in an actual and determinate way, each mode being a modification of Substance, expressed according to the essence of each attribute. So in a schematic sense, Substance expresses itself, attributes express its essence, while modes are expressions within the attributes, and hence expressions of the essence of Substance.⁴ Modes in relation to the attributes are, as Deleuze comments, "an expression, as it were, of expression itself" (EPS, 14/10). That is, the expressed (Substance) has no existence outside of its expression (modes), because modes express the essence (attributes) of what expresses itself. This means, Spinoza writes: "God must be called the cause of all things in the same sense in which he is called the cause of himself" (Ethics, I, P25d). God is therefore absolutely non-hierarchical, and in univocal being, as Deleuze comments, "all things are in absolute proximity" (DR, 37/55).

In the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* Spinoza argued that it is through the things of this world that God is known, rather than through his revelation in scripture. This radical departure from traditional Christian theology is implied by Spinoza's univocal ontology, which argues that God only exists as expressed in Nature. This gives rise to Spinoza's heretical formula "*Deus sive natura*," or God/Nature. For Spinoza, Nature is the infinite unfolding of what expresses itself, the explication of the One in the many. But this process is simultaneously an implication, by which the One is constructed by its multitudinous expressions. Accordingly "one" and "many" become two ways of describing the same thing, the genetic, or vitalist process of becoming, the infinite (un)folding of being in life. For Spinoza, Nature is becoming because God's expressive essence exists only in its action: "That eternal and infinite being we call God, or Nature," he writes, "acts from the same necessity from which he exists. For we have shown that the necessity of nature from which he acts is the same as that from which he exists" (Ethics, IV, Pref.). God exists as active expression in the modes, which exist as the continual inter-action—the continual construction—of Nature. Substance, attributes and modes therefore comprise the systematic immanence of essence and existence in expressive and univocal being. As Spinoza writes, "the whole of nature is one individual, whose parts, that is, all

bodies, vary in infinite ways, without any change of the whole individual" (*Ethics*, II, P13L7s). Clearly then, Spinoza's Nature is nothing to do with the "natural," and eludes any distinction between nature and culture. Nature is instead a name for a vital and inorganic Substance, and its living expressions can be equally "natural" or "unnatural."

ATTRIBUTES

Attributes animate Spinoza's system, they are both expressions of God, and what is expressed. Spinoza writes: "By attribute I understand what the intellect perceives of a Substance, as constituting its essence" (*Ethics*, I, D4). Essence is infinite, and each attribute is an unlimited quality of Substance. Substance (God/Nature) does not pre-exist its attributes, just as it does not pre-exist its actual expressions. The attributes are the immanent formal elements that constitute God's absolute nature, but in being the formal constituents of God's essence they are also the mechanisms of God's expression in differentiated things. Attributes are the way in which God remains One/All, in its individual expressions. "The unity of Substance, and the distinction of attributes," Deleuze writes, "are correlates that together constitute expression. The distinction of attributes is nothing but the qualitative composition of an ontologically single Substance" (EPS, 182/166). Attributes are therefore common to Substance and modes, according to what Deleuze calls the "rule of convertibility" whereby "the essence is not only that without which a thing can neither be nor be conceived, but is conversely that which cannot be nor be conceived outside the thing" (EPS, 47/38). This convertibility of the attributes means they simultaneously constitute God's essence, and God's existence. The attributes form the qualitative composition of an ontologically single Substance, each essence (attribute) being an unlimited, infinite quality of Substance. Within the attribute the mode, in its essence and as God's existence, is always a certain degree or quantity of this quality. The philosophy of expression then, begins and ends with an entirely active and affirmative Substance, whose qualitative essences are expressed in its attributes, and whose quantitative existence is expressed in the actions of its modes. As Spinoza puts it: "God's power is nothing except God's active essence. And so it is impossible for us to conceive that God does not act as it is to conceive that he does not exist" (*Ethics*, II, P3s). God's essence and existence are expressed in and through the attributes.

The affirmative activity of Substance will be the occasion for Deleuze to extend his critique of "that imbecile Hegel" and his dialectic, which we introduced in relation to Nietzsche in the last chapter.⁵ Hegel claimed Spinoza did not understand negation, and this reading was very influential in the

subsequent philosophical demonisation of Spinoza as an atheist.⁶ Deleuze's reading of Spinoza's expressionism as implying an entirely active essence and an entirely affirmative existence, rejects Hegel's claim that we need negation in order to understand being, or to act. As Deleuze rather bluntly puts it: "When Hegel says, against Spinoza, "ah that one never understood anything of the labor of the negative," it's perfect, the labor of the negative is a load of crap."⁷ For Deleuze, this is the beauty of Spinoza's philosophy, in it "negation is nothing, because absolutely nothing ever lacks anything" (SPP, 96/125). The absence of dialectical negation in Spinoza's ontology means, as we shall see, that negation becomes purely epistemological, existing only as an incomplete understanding of Substance's expression.⁸

Spinoza claims we only know two attributes, extension and thought, because we can only conceive as infinite those qualities—body and mind—that constitute our essence. Thought and extension are parallel attributes for Spinoza because, as he puts it, "the mind and the body are one and the same thing, which is conceived now under the attribute of thought, now under the attribute of extension" (*Ethics*, III, P25). As a result, there is no connection or causality between attributes, as each is conceived through itself (*Ethics*, I, P10). God is the cause of all things and all ideas, these modifications occurring in the same order in two parallel series. The parallelism of the attributes means neither mind nor matter, ideas nor bodies are privileged over the other. This opposes what Deleuze calls, "the moral principle" (EPS, 256/235) running from Plato to Descartes (and beyond) in which the mind or soul is imagined to be what determines the body's actions. Spinoza puts it simply: "The body cannot determine the mind to thinking and the mind cannot determine the body to motion, to rest, or to anything else" (*Ethics*, III, P2). This implies an "epistemological parallelism" (EPS, 117/102) as Deleuze calls it, where every affect of my body corresponds to an affect in my mind. This parallelism has important consequences, for, as Spinoza writes, "in proportion as a body is more capable than others of doing many things at once, or being acted on in many ways at once, so its mind is more capable than others of perceiving many things at once" (*Ethics*, II, P13s). As ideas and bodies are strictly parallel, and the intellect cannot produce true ideas about Substance without Substance expressing itself in these ideas, the more we experience, the more we know about God (SPP, 91/118–19). Consequently, reason provides a way of understanding God not as an object outside of us, but as an immanent and constitutive infinity, expressed in the affectual relations of my body and ideas. This does not, Deleuze argues, mean a devaluation of thought in relation to the body, but a devaluation of moral consciousness as the intentional and guiding mechanism of an otherwise

inert body—the body is set free. Spinoza provides a new body, along with new ideas to understand it.

ATHEISTIC MYSTICISM

The aim of Spinoza's ethics will be to know God—God as Nature—but, once more, this means that God exists as, and only as, its expressions. This project of knowing God, despite surface similarities, differs radically from the traditional Christian concept of a transcendent God. The Christian God builds on the Platonic concept of the “Good,” and the neo-Platonic concept of the “One.”⁹ The “Good” and the “One” are transcendent terms from which our lives are derived, and against which they are judged, as second order realities. Spinoza, like Nietzsche, will develop his concept of a univocal and immanent God/Nature in opposition to both, and this will be his implicit “anti-Platonism.” Christianity's theology of transcendence—as a religious Platonism—is exemplified by Thomas Aquinas' statement: “God is the essence of all, not essentially, but causally.”¹⁰ For Aquinas, God's essence is the transcendental cause of existence, and stands in direct contrast to Spinoza's God whose essence is entirely immanent in existence. Similarly, Spinoza's God departs from the neo-Platonic mystical tradition emerging from Plotinus, in which the whole or One is emanative. Here God is the cause of being while remaining in himself, being is his gift but not his essence. As Deleuze explains it: “Emanation is at once cause and gift: causality by donation, but by productive donation” (EPS, 170/154).¹¹ The One produces being, as a gift that we receive, and through which we participate in the One. But we only participate in the One through what it gives (being) (rather than our being constructing the One directly), making the One transcendent and insuring that, as Plotinus argues, we have with it “nothing in common.”¹² “The giver is above its gifts,” Deleuze explains, “as it is above its products, participable through what it gives, but imparticipable in itself or as itself, thereby grounding participation” (EPS, 171/155). Emanation gives rise to a hierarchy of being as closer or further away from the One, and laid out on a mystical path of redemption/reabsorption. This path finally transcends being because being as existence is subordinated and outside the transcendent essence of God.¹³

Spinoza's univocal and immanent God is also an alternative to the Christian doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, in which God creates the world from nothing. This creation assumes a non-being pre-existing being, and implies that God as creator is outside being, as its immanent but nonetheless negative shadow. God on this account is expressed in the world in representations which cannot lay hold of his essential (non)being, and, as Deleuze puts it, “asserts and

expresses himself in the world as immanent cause, and who remains inexpressible and transcendent as the object of a negative theology that denies of him all that is affirmed of his immanence” (EPS, 178/161). As Psuedo-Dionysus, an important early exemplar of this tradition puts it: “There is no speaking of it [the divine], nor name nor knowledge of it.”¹⁴ For negative theology God cannot be grasped in his essence, because this is by definition outside of human intelligence. Meister Eckhart's elaboration of this idea is the most well known example of this doctrine, and argues that any statement of the type “x is” is said of beings, and so cannot be said of God. This leads us onto a mystic path towards God seeking to leave our human being behind. This mystical spiritualism rests on a transcendental metaphysics, and is expressed in Meister Eckhart's claim: “Scripture always exhorts us to go out of this world.”¹⁵ Spinoza opposes this tradition, because for him God as Nature exists only as this world, meaning our knowledge of the world must also be direct knowledge of God. Spinoza's Substance exists as the affirmative expression of its essence, it avoids a distinction between being and non-being, as it avoids a dialectical mysticism working through negation. Finally, Deleuze writes: “Immanence is opposed to any eminence of the cause, any negative theology, any method of analogy, any hierarchical conception of the world” (EPS, 173/157).

Spinoza's God/Nature is, paradoxically, atheistic because its essence exists only as its expressions, and not in a transcendent dimension.¹⁶ In other words, everything is God and thus God loses his place. A metaphysics of the divine cannot be maintained on the plane of univocal being. Nevertheless, and as we shall see, univocal being implies for Spinoza the mystical possibility of knowing God as God knows itself. Spinoza's univocal and immanent God is therefore the conceptual condition for what Deleuze calls, “a kind of mystical atheist experience proper to Spinoza.”¹⁷ This is a strange atheism in which Spinoza talks of nothing but God, a bit like the poet Pessoa, for whom: “Only Nature is divine, and she is not divine.”¹⁸ It was necessary, of course, for Spinoza to talk of God in the seventeenth century, although it did not prevent his excommunication from the Jewish church.¹⁹ Deleuze argues that Spinoza's atheist “God” is in fact the condition of his “radical emancipation” from both a religious and philosophical transcendence. This is not however, to deny Spinoza's mysticism, but to affirm that in formulating a mystical understanding of God's univocity Spinoza declares his atheism. In this sense, and as Deleuze argues in relation to Spinoza, “atheism has never been external to religion: atheism is the artistic power at work on religion.”²⁰ In other words, Spinoza's atheism is a mystical affirmation of God's immanence in life. It is creative in Nietzsche's sense, for expressionism is nothing but the construction of new possibilities for life, just as it is mystical in an atheistic sense, express-

ing a God/Nature entirely immanent in its expressions.²¹ Spinoza's mystical atheism will therefore be the formula for an ethical-aesthetics that is critical in Nietzsche's terms, as the overcoming of religious transcendence in order to live a creative life, in order to experience our real conditions (God/Nature) as they are constructed in our expressions. Spinoza's mystical atheism is therefore Christianity's own artistic power, inasmuch as it is, as Deleuze puts it, the "transformation of constraints into a means of creation."²² For Spinoza art must be atheistic in order to escape a metaphysics of representation, just as it must be mystical in expressing the univocity of God/Nature. As a result, my account of a Spinozian ethical-aesthetics will explore its atheistic mysticism, which, I argue, culminates in an understanding of God in which we find our highest expressive power, in the creation of God/Nature itself.²³

MODES AND THEIR AFFECTS.

Unlike Substance, which is being in itself, the modes are being in something else (Ethics, I, D5). They are modifications of Substance, in the form of particular things. "Particular things are nothing but affections of God's attributes," Spinoza writes, "or modes by which God's attributes are expressed in a certain and determinate way" (Ethics, I, P25c see also Ethics, III, P6d). The modes are the expression of God, as Spinoza says quite specifically: "Whatever exists expresses the nature, or essence of God in a certain and determinate way, that is, whatever exists expresses in a certain and determinate way the power of God, which is the cause of all things" (Ethics, I, P36d). Extrinsic parts (modes) form a whole, but through their constantly variable relations this is a dynamic whole undergoing continual transformation, and forming an infinitely changeable universe. As a result God, as Nature, and as expressed in the modes, is this permanent becoming, and has an infinite power of expression.²⁴

In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze seems to question the univocity of Spinoza's Substance by confronting it with Nietzsche's formulation of eternal return. This raises many interesting questions about Spinoza's relation to Nietzsche, and about Deleuze's changing evaluation of Spinoza's philosophy of immanence. Deleuze suggests that Spinoza's univocity retains a hierarchical distinction between Substance and modes, and requires a Nietzschean "correction" to become truly immanent.

There still remains a difference between Substance and the modes: Spinoza's Substance appears independent of the modes, while the modes are dependent on Substance, but as though on something other than themselves. Substance must itself be said of the modes and only of the modes. Such a condition can be satisfied only at the price of a more general categorical re-

versal according to which being is said of becoming, identity of that which is different, the one of the multiple, etc. (DR, 40/59)

Deleuze believes that unless Substance is said only of the modes Spinoza's God runs the risk of re-introducing a transcendent term. In response to this problem Deleuze posits a Nietzschean Spinoza: "All that Spinozism needed to do for the univocal to become an object of pure affirmation was to make Substance turn around the modes—in other words, to realize univocity in the form of repetition in the eternal return" (DR, 304/389). Nietzsche appears here as the necessary (Deleuzian) condition to understanding Spinozian Substance and its "expressive immanence." This reading would avoid the danger Deleuze indicates, of an emanative Being, by affirming a univocal being in becoming (i.e. univocal being as the repetition of eternal return). But as we have seen, the "categorical reversal" Deleuze requires to fully affirm Spinoza's Substance can be found in his reading of Spinoza's attributes in *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, published the same year as *Difference and Repetition* (1968). The attributes both constitute God's essence as Substance, while simultaneously and inseparably expressing God's essence in the existence of the modes. Deleuze argues that Substance is constituted by an infinity of attributes, and their expressions in modes exist on the same plane, a plane of immanence, where the attributes simultaneously constitute the essence of Substance. This means Substance (being) is defined entirely in terms of the modes (becoming), which express the essence of Substance (attributes).²⁵ This will allow the modal expression of Substance in existence to be the simultaneous construction of an immanent (and therefore atheist) God in its essence. "What is involved," Deleuze explains, "is no longer the affirmation of a single substance, but rather the laying out of a *common plane of immanence* on which all bodies, all minds, and all individuals are situated" (SPP, 122/164). Substance is, at this point, immanent to the modes and is expressed only in and as the process of modal becoming which constructs it.

This will mean the trajectory Deleuze takes after 1968 does not follow the "correction" of Spinoza by Nietzsche, but instead tends to privilege Spinoza's system inasmuch as it was already Nietzschean. As Deleuze and Guattari put it: "What we are talking about is not the unity of substance but the infinity of the modifications that are part of one another on this unique plane of life" (ATP, 254/311). The ethical question of how to live therefore becomes a question of how one constructs this plane of immanence, for, Deleuze writes, "it has to be constructed if one is to live in a Spinozist manner" (SPP, 123/165). Understanding what this could mean will form the bulk of what follows, but suffice to say it is the trajectory of Spinoza's apotheosis in Deleuze's thought, a trajectory that is, as we have seen, indiscernible from Deleuze's construction of what he calls "the grand identity Spinoza-Nietzsche."²⁶

Let's take a closer look at the modal world of becoming. Existence is composed of bodies continually coming into contact with other bodies in chance encounters. There is no prewritten divine plan, although, as Spinoza rather sarcastically points out: "Men have been so mad as to believe that God is pleased by harmony" (*Ethics*, I, App.III). The modes as affections (*affectio*) are determined on this infinite plane of modal interaction by their dynamic relations, every finite thing being an effect of another thing, which is itself the effect of some other thing, *ad infinitum* (*Ethics*, I, P28). As a result, Deleuze writes, "a thing is never separable from its relations with the world" (SPP, 125/168). Modes are determined through their continual interaction, and in this sense they are "images or corporeal traces" (SPP, 48/68) of each other. As Spinoza suggests: "The idea of any mode in which the human body is affected by external bodies must involve the nature of the human body and at the same time the nature of the external body" (*Ethics*, II, P16). This modal relation forms an affect (*affectus*) as either the greater (composition) or lesser (decomposition) perfection of the mode resulting from its interaction with other modes. These modal (de)compositions constitute the tenor of our lives, for, Spinoza explains, "we live in continuous change, and that as we change for the better or worse, we are called happy or unhappy" (*Ethics*, V,P39s). More usually, Spinoza uses the terms "joy" and "sadness" to describe these changes. "By joy," he writes, "I shall understand in what follows that passion by which the mind passes to a greater perfection. And by sadness, that passion by which it passes to a lesser perfection" (*Ethics*, III, P11s). Perfection is measured in terms of a mode's power of acting, the more a mode is positively affected, the more it can act. The affect of joy causes the body to be affected in a greater number of ways, (*Ethics*, IV, P38) whereas sadness decreases a body's power to be affected. The aim of life, quite simply, is maximum joy, which results in maximum power, and maximum action. This is what Deleuze means when he says Spinoza's is an ethics of affirmation.

For Spinoza joy is found in a process of perfection that doesn't assume a pre-existing concept of the perfect. What is perfect and therefore good is simply what increases our power to act, and this is defined only by the immanent conditions of each encounter. Spinoza's *Ethics* offers a practical program for the production of joy which is undetermined by any metaphysical concepts by which we could judge it. What is good always remains to be discovered, and is produced in the experimental relations we have with the world. As Spinoza writes, "in ordering our thoughts and images, we must always attend to those things which are good in each thing so that in this way we are always determined to acting from an affect of joy" (*Ethics*, V, P10s). Spinoza's *Ethics* is therefore antithetical to a morality, and is another reason it appeals to Deleuze: "Ethics,

which is to say a typology of immanent modes of existence, replaces Morality, which always refers existence to transcendent values" (EPS, 269/248). Life is a question of selection and affirmation, not of judgment, which presupposes an otherworldly truth represented by metaphysical idols and moral symbols. Christianity is the obvious example of such a system, establishing God as the external authority on behalf of which one judges. But such a system is always despotic, Deleuze argues, and "condemns us to an endless servitude and annuls any libratory process" (ECC, 128/160). God's judgment descends on us from on high and damns us for our sins, it is impervious to lived particularity and demands only obedience, punishing our guilt when it is not obeyed. Thomas Bernhard gives a beautiful description of this horror: "Whenever I entered the chapel," he writes, "even at the age of fifteen or twenty, it seemed to me a place of terror and damnation, a hall of judgment, a lofty courtroom where sentence was passed on me. I could see the relentless fingers of the judges pointing down at me, and I always left the chapel with my head bowed, as one who had been humiliated and punished."²⁷ Spinoza's *Ethics* "Have Done with Judgment," and in this echo of Artaud kills God just as surely as we will see Artaud kill man's organism.²⁸

Spinozian ethics involves making a typology of our modal affects, of our joy and sadness. But our joy and sadness are not predetermined, and our typology is always conditional on each new encounter, and appears only according to its local and singular conditions. This typology of affect can obviously be used in considering art, and this would be the starting point of a Spinozian ethical-aesthetics. We are, once again, in the heart of a participatory critical process that defines the artwork, or the *work of art*. Once more, we are required to sense the real forces at play in the artistic field, rather than judge an object through a moralistic aesthetic. Aesthetic experience in Spinoza's terms is always under construction as the ethical process of selecting those encounters that increase our power and perfection. For Spinoza as for Nietzsche, the art-work, ethically understood, is this process of construction, a process understood as an increase or decrease in power rather than as an object already determined. Importantly, this also changes our concept of the subject, as the subject is similarly processual, emerging only in the affectual selections that are made, as the changing appearance of forces that are no longer simply "subjective" in an organic or psychological sense. The art-work exists within an affectual economy of emergence, and cannot be "understood" (in the precise sense we will see Spinoza give to this term) by any kind of judgment. Deleuze is explicit on this point:

What expert judgment, in art could ever bear on the work to come? It is not a question of judging other existing beings, but of sensing whether they

agree or disagree with us, that is, whether they bring forces to us, or whether they return us to the miseries of war, to the poverty of the dream, to the rigors of organization. As Spinoza had said, it is a problem of love and hate and not judgment. [. . .] This is not subjectivism, since to pose the problem in terms of force, and not in other terms, already surpasses all subjectivity. (ECC, 136/169)

To have done with judgment in evaluating art means overcoming the organization of the subject and object, and entering the artwork to construct its process of expressive emergence. The art work is constituted by modes and their affects, these affects emerging in a perception of the work that constitutes a singular body defined by its increasing or decreasing power and perfection, by the joy or sadness which defines its becoming. Art as affect is constructed in this processual life of modes, and as we shall see, it is as such that it expresses the imminent infinity of God/Nature. This implies a revaluation of the subject-object relation as it is usually understood, and as it operates in aesthetics. A Spinozian ethical-aesthetics, as he puts it, “*consider[s] human actions and appetites just as if it were a question of lines, planes and bodies*” (Ethics, III, Pref.).²⁹ Art is therefore an ethical practice, and as such expresses an increase or decrease in power, or force, (a becoming—“Affects are becomings” (ATP, 256/314)) and emerges in a process of participation. Art does not appear in a judgment assuming our exteriority to the work, and requiring transcendental values to maintain everything in its proper place (art in the gallery, the market, in the studio, on the wall, but not in our life, not as a question of life. . . .). In Spinoza’s ethical-aesthetics the question of art would be, as Deleuze puts it, “to make exist, not to judge” (ECC, 135/169). Art emerges—it is created—in our experimental relations, as what lives, as the increase or decrease in a body’s power to act. This will lead us out of our human, all too human form of understanding: our imagination, and the passions it evokes. For an ethical-aesthetic will affirm joyful affects in constructing a new mode of existence, an existence that expresses God, and understands this expression as a becoming through which God constructs and so understands itself. This will be the atheistic mysticism of art. Before considering this culminating moment of understanding however, we must consider the rest of Spinoza’s system.

MODAL ESSENCE

All modes have an intensive and extensive quantity, each of which is infinite. The first constitutes modal essence, the second modal existence. The essence of a mode is immanent to its existence, but nevertheless exists independently of the modes existence. Spinoza writes: “The essence of things produced by God does

not involve existence” (Ethics, I, P24). How is this possible in a univocal ontology? Modal essence, Spinoza argues, defines the mode’s power to persevere in its being (Ethics, III, P7). Beyond this essential threshold a mode simply exists as something else. This essence or power is caused by and exists in God eternally, whether or not the mode itself exists. For Spinoza: “God is the cause, not only of the existence of this or that human body, but also of its essence, which therefore must be conceived through the very essence of God, by a certain eternal necessity, and this concept must be in God” (Ethics, V, P22d). This necessity is that of an idea comprised in the idea of God, that is, an idea caused by God, as opposed to an object or idea which finds its cause in relation to other objects or ideas (modes). Existence is not added to essence as a distinct actuality (for they remain immanent), but is Deleuze writes, “a sort of ultimate determination resulting from the essence’s cause” (EPS, 194/176). That is, modal essence does not cause modal existence, both find their cause in God.

Modal essences form an important part of Deleuze’s interpretation of Spinozian univocity, for it is essence as degree of power that will provide the mechanism by which: “Being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said, but that of which it is said differs” (DR, 36/53). In other words, it is through the capacity of the modes to affect and to be affected, according to their essence or degree of power, that difference emerges in modal becoming. Existing modes are composed of an infinity of extended parts in relations of movement and rest, which express a degree of intensity (modal essence or power). The composition of extended nature fluctuates in the continuous variation of its affections and affects, but as long as a particular relation of movement and rest exists between modes, it expresses a modal essence or power. Essences all agree on their immanent plane, forming as Deleuze puts it, “an actually infinite collection, a system of mutual implications, in which each essence conforms with all of the others, and in which all essences are involved in the production of each. Thus God directly produces each essence together with all the others. That is, existing modes themselves have God as their direct cause” (EPS, 184/167 see also 198/181). Modal essences exist in a reciprocal and differential determination of each other, and form a plane immanent to all modes, which thereby find their cause in God. “Thus,” Deleuze argues, “essences form a total system, an actually infinite whole” (EPS, 194/177). In understanding modal essence, we will understand the individuation of modes, but because modal essences exist on a univocal plane of being immanent to existence, understanding modal essence will mean understanding the expressive power of the infinite whole of God in its actual expression as existing modes. Consequently, Deleuze states, “each finite being must be said to express the absolute, according to the intensive quantity that consti-

tutes its essence, according, that is, to the degree of its power" (EPS, 197/180). Once more, we are not far away from Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche's will to power as a quantity of force appearing in qualities. Individuation for Deleuze, in Spinoza as much as in Nietzsche, is always intensive. That is, modal essence as power is simply a certain capacity to affect and be affected, a capacity which determines the individuated limits of modes in their constitutive relations of motion and rest, and speed and slowness (Ethics, II, P13L1).

But modal existence is constantly becoming, as each mode increases or decreases its power in the vibration of inorganic life. As a result, understanding modal essence will be a matter of understanding modal relation, and this will mean understanding how the becoming of modal existence expresses the creative dynamism of God. At this point however, there remains the problem of the independence of Substance, as Deleuze posed it in *Difference and Repetition*. For in fact all modes express an essence, but not all essences involve existence. This apparent problem for univocity finds its answer in Deleuze's insistence on the mutual implication of essences, which means all modal existence expresses all the modal essences, despite the fact that not every modal essence has a modal existence. As Deleuze puts it: "They [essences] are all compatible with one another without limit, because all are included in the production of each one, but each one corresponds to a specific degree of power different from all the others" (SPP, 65/100).

Within the attribute all essences agree because they share God as their efficient and material cause, and together form God's infinite whole under that attribute or essence. Because modal essence exists in God as it does in modes, and because each modal essence is determined through its relation to all others, in knowing a modal essence we will know God. This introduces another important aspect to Spinoza's philosophy, that any means of understanding essence must be immanent to existence. This means a materialist thought as much as a materialist mysticism, and requires us to consider more closely how understanding emerges and operates. Unsurprisingly, any understanding of God will be found in the ideas, which in the attribute of thought, and as modal essence, are both ours and Gods. As Deleuze puts it, "the things we know of God belong to God in the same form as that in which we know them, that is, in a form common to God who possesses them, and to creatures who imply and know them" (EPS, 142/128). What we must now understand is the process of reason required to adequately understand ideas in their modal essence, and how they express God's immanence in existence.

The existence and the essence of the modal idea together constitute consciousness, but it is a consciousness that will no longer be subjective, and will be

able to think itself as divine. How? Every idea has as its object something that exists (i.e. either a thing or another idea), and this idea can in turn become the object of another idea. This idea of an object is the objective reality of the idea. But every idea also exists in the attribute of thought as a modal essence, and as such it is independent of the mind that thinks it. This essential aspect of the idea constitutes the formal reality of the existent and objective idea.³⁰ These two realities of the idea coexist in any given idea as its reflexive (objective) and expressive (formal) aspects, these aspects being, Deleuze says, "one and the same thing" (EPS, 139/125). This means consciousness no longer implies a subject as a psychological character or a moral entity, consciousness being simply the affect or "trace" (objective idea) of an essence (formal reality) found in the attribute of thought. This implies—contra Descartes—a thought without an "I am." This thought, which Spinoza will develop in the third type of knowledge, operates in eternity and without a subject, without an organism-body, and without a consciousness-idea. This subjectless and eternal thought is the thought of God, and is the aim of Spinoza's mystical atheism.

INADEQUATE IDEAS

Inasmuch as we have ideas, they are representative ideas and shouldn't be confused with the idea that we are, inasmuch as this constitutes our essence or formal reality. We don't have this idea we are immediately, and it is what we strive for in our understanding. The ideas that we have on the other hand, are those given to us through perceptions of affections and affects. As Spinoza writes: "The images of things are affections of the human body whose ideas represent external bodies as present to us" (Ethics, III, P27d). These images are what Spinoza calls inadequate ideas because they tell us nothing of our, or other essences, but are simply representations of objects relative to us (Ethics, III, P23d). Insofar as the mind has such representative ideas, it is said to imagine. It means we imagine that an artwork is beautiful, but we don't understand this affectual relation in its essence. If we wish to reach a true understanding of art according to a Spinozian ethical-aesthetics, we will have to overcome imaginative representations and the subjective consciousness that supports them. Ethical-aesthetics will therefore begin with the epistemological problem of the proper way to think, or in Deleuzian terms, the proper image of thought.

As we have seen, reflexive ideas represent our random encounters and the consequent variation of affects according to their imagined causes. This knowledge however ordered, is inadequate as it imagines our experience of the world entirely in terms of the affects of objects upon us. As a result, the

process of representation operates through a human consciousness, because it requires a pre-existing subjectivity, as effected, to understand our relations to the world. The problem with this, Spinoza argues, is

... that each one has judged things according to the disposition of his brain; or rather has accepted affections of the imagination as things. We see, therefore, that all the notions by which ordinary people are accustomed to explain Nature are only modes of imagining, and do not indicate the nature of anything, only the constitution of the imagination. And because they have names, as if they were [notions] of beings existing outside the imagination, I call them beings, not of reason, but of imagination. [...] For the perfection of things is to be judged solely from their nature and power [i.e. essence]; things are not more or less perfect because they please or offend men's senses, or because they are of use to, or incompatible with, human nature. (Ethics, I, App.III)

Spinoza offers a new evaluative framework for our understanding of life, one in which we will have understood nothing, of art or of anything, if we remain at the level of the human imagination. Like Nietzsche, understanding life in its real conditions will mean overcoming the false consciousness of humans.

This new way of understanding involves a radical revaluation of value, for it is only from our point of view as human subjects that a relation could be bad, and could decompose our modal integrity. From the point of view of Nature every relation is affirmative and expresses an increase, even those that are, from our perspective, disasters. Deleuze's example is a car crash in which the fire that burns, the air that escapes its compression in the tires, and the flesh combining with the dashboard, are all compositions.³¹ As a result, bad things, sad affects and all other negations are simply symptoms of an inadequate and anthropocentric understanding (we could say "evaluation") of the world. This means humanity, or at least our way of imagining such negative affects, will only be a hindrance to understanding God/Nature. In Nature, in the midst of its constant compositions, there are no distinctions between the human and inhuman, just as there are none between the natural and artificial: "Artifice," Deleuze writes, "is fully a part of Nature" (SPP, 124/167). Spinoza's ontology therefore carries remarkable epistemological consequences: "There is nothing positive in ideas," he writes, "on account of which they can be called false" (Ethics, II, P33). Whenever we regard something as false, and negate it, or when we are ourselves negated and feel sad, we are simply having an inadequate idea, caught in an incomplete understanding, or imagination. As Deleuze rather wryly comments: "Sadness makes no one intelligent."³² For in the inadequate idea of an imagination, I understand only the effect (as decomposition) and not the cause (the

composition in Nature), and in this sense, according to Spinoza, I have only a "privation of knowledge" (Ethics, II, P35).

On the other hand, however, when I understand an effect as causing me joy, I retain this same imaginative epistemological relation. I still experience what Spinoza calls a passion, "a confused idea, by which the mind affirms of its body, or of some part of it, a greater or a lesser force of existing than before, which, when it is given, determines the mind to think of this rather than that" (Ethics, III, General definition of the Affects). This determination of what the mind thinks by an imagined outside cause, whether good or bad, indicates a lack of power, a failure to select and affirm, and an inability of the mode to actively express the power of its essence. "Man's lack of power to moderate and restrain the affects," Spinoza writes, "I call bondage. For the man who is subject to affects is under the control, not of himself, but of fortune, in whose power he so greatly is that often, though he sees the better for himself, he is still forced to follow the worse" (Ethics, IV, Pref.). Modes are captured by their imaginative representations, in which life is simply a series of causes and effects taking place between individual things. Thus we can only imagine passions, even if these are joyful, rather than understand them. As we shall see, Spinoza liberates man from the bondage of the passions and, in Deleuze's hands, this will become a liberation from the human itself. We can easily see how art exists on the level of the imagination, as the cause of our feelings of joy or sadness, and how these feelings determine our judgments of its qualities. But we can also see how art's existence as the cause of those feelings is determined by man's faculty of imagination, rather than by anything intrinsic to art. Therefore the liberation of man's understanding from its human limitations will also mark a new mode of existence for art. A new image of thought will mean a new artistic image.

ADEQUATE IDEAS / COMMON NOTIONS

Spinoza argues that good and bad can only be understood in terms of actual modal relations. What is bad for us is contrary to, or reduces, our power of action, and what is good for us agrees with our nature and increases our power of action (Ethics, IV, P29–30). This means good and bad do not exist outside the material fluctuations of our own being, according to the quality of our affects as they express the changes in our embodied power. But what determines good and bad as the increase or decline of my power of action? As we have seen, the passions of joy and sadness always arise from the imagination, as the affect of something on us from outside. Although joy is related to what is good, the passions of joy and sadness are not the same as what is good and bad. Rather it is lack of power that is bad, and the power to act that is good. As Spinoza has it, "lack of power consists only in this, that a man allows himself to be guided by

things outside him, and to be determined by them to do what the common constitution of external things demands, not what his own nature, considered in itself, demands" (Ethics, IV, P32). It will be by doing what its own nature demands, in acting according to its essence or power that a mode will do good. This is when it will truly be active, for then it is determined to action by nothing other than its own power (i.e. by its real conditions) and by an understanding that is entirely adequate (Ethics, IV, P59d).

How are we to have adequate ideas of the essence of things? The first step, typical for the seventeenth century, involves the nature of the idea. "An affect which is a passion," Spinoza writes, "ceases to be a passion as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of it" (Ethics, V, P3). As a result, Spinoza explains: "The more an affect is known to us, then, the more it is in our power, and the less the mind is acted on by it" (Ethics, V, P3c). Thus, it is reason that separates an affect from its imagined external cause, forming a true (clear and distinct) idea of it (Ethics, II, D2). As we can only experience an affect, at least initially, as a passion, as an external body acting upon ours, our understanding of its essence will begin from an inadequate understanding of its affect. We know that when we feel joy it is because joining forces with that of another mode has compounded our power of action. Alternatively we feel sadness for the opposite reason, when our power of action has been decreased by another mode. As a result our understanding of affects, and our ethical ability to select the good ones, will come through knowing our body's "agreements, differences, and oppositions" (Ethics, II, P29s).

In understanding we turn our attention from imagined effects to modal affect, and this change introduces us to what Deleuze calls "ethology." Bodies now appear, as we have noted before, according to capacities of affect and affection rather than any pre-existing identificatory schema. Ethology takes us beyond the form to understand the affectual dynamic of life, and a thing is no longer identified by asking "what is it?" but by the question "what does it do?" "what is it for me?" Deleuze explains the consequences: "Concretely, if you define bodies and thoughts as capacities for affecting and being affected, many things change. You will define an animal, or a human being, not by its form, its organs, and its functions, and not as a subject either; you will define it by the affects of which it is capable" (SPP, 124/166).

Ethology starts with an understanding of the affects, and leads to a clear and distinct idea of what is shared by two modes, and what it is that enables the joyful affect they produce. What is shared in a joyful affect is a common modal essence, and when the understanding grasps this essence it has an adequate idea. As Spinoza puts it: "If something is common to, and particular to, the human body and certain external bodies by which the human body is usually affected,

and is equally in the part and in the whole of each of them, its idea will be adequate in the mind" (Ethics, II, P39). It is through joy therefore, that a clear and distinct idea of what is common to the bodies in question, their "common notion" as Spinoza calls it emerges. This makes joy the prerequisite and first step towards understanding modal essence in common notions. Common notions, or adequate ideas, form the "second" kind of knowledge through which we will be able to pass to the "third," of God. As Spinoza argues, "the greater the joy with which we are affected, the greater the perfection to which we pass, that is, the more we must participate in the divine nature. To use things, therefore, and take pleasure in them as far as possible—not, of course, to the point where we are disgusted with them, for there is no pleasure in that—this is the part of the wise-man" (Ethics, IV, P45s). This leads Deleuze to clearly state the line of ethical affirmation laid out by Spinoza: "The primary question of the Ethics is thus: What must we do in order to be affected by a maximum of joyful passions?" (EPS, 273/252). And as a result: "The second principle question of the Ethics is thus: What must we do to produce in ourselves active affections?" (EPS, 274/253). These questions compose a Spinozian ethical-aesthetics; how may we create and understand joy? How may we understand the world from our own point of view (from our active force), in its essence, and as it is related to all other essences in and as God? These may seem questions unrelated or only distantly related to those of art. But in fact these questions include those concerning the production of art, and revalue them as ethical and ontological questions. This revaluation removes art from its representational and inadequate frame of the subject-object, and from the realm of the passions, and reposes the question of its function in terms of understanding its affects. The art of creating joyful affects will in this way find its "higher concept" in an understanding indiscernible from an atheist mysticism. This will be Spinoza's "higher concept" of art.

Deleuze finds this "higher concept" in what he calls Spinoza's "war cry" (EPS, 255/134), Spinoza's claim that "no one has yet determined what the body can do, [. . .] For no one has yet come to know the structure of the body so accurately that he could explain all its functions" (Ethics, III, P2s). For Deleuze, Spinoza offers philosophy a new model with this war cry—the body, but the body as a process of material experimentation. That is, we know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, what its affects are, and whether its relations with other bodies decompose it, or compose a more powerful body. The more affections a body is capable of the more joy it experiences, each increase gives the body more power and more understanding (for Spinoza knowledge is power), right up to the overcoming of its own limits in the mystical state of beatitude. This path to the absolute requires a rigorous program of experimentation, as experimentation is the way a body, as Deleuze puts it, "transcends

its limits in going to the limit of what it can do" (DR, 37/55). Beyond our limits we have thoughts that overcome our consciousness, thoughts in which an unknown body as the unknown of thought emerges. (SPP, 17/28) This "unknown" is so only from the point of view of the limits of human consciousness and organic integrity however, and Deleuze's reading of Spinoza quickly pushes beyond such inadequate ideas. As Deleuze and Guattari succinctly put it, "pure affects imply an enterprise of desubjectification" (ATP, 270/330). To the point where, Deleuze says: "Experimentation on oneself, is our only identity."³³

The path of reason, in forming common notions, overcomes the human in its understanding of essence and ultimately of God. This path begins from discovering our maximum possible number of affects, and as this is in principle infinite, we must live in a constant process of experimentation, forever seeking what the body can do, in order to understand the eternal essence(s) of God. As Spinoza writes:

He who has a body capable of a great many things has a mind whose greatest part is eternal. Dem.: He who has a body capable of doing a great many things is least troubled by evil affects, that is, by affects contrary to our nature. So he has the power of ordering and connecting the affections of his body according to the order of the intellect—consequently, of bringing it about that all the affections of the body are related to the idea of God. (Ethics, V, P39)

For Spinoza the formula is a simple one, the more affects the body is capable of, the more knowledge it will have (Ethics, II, P14). The nature of our ideas therefore, will always be determined by the capacity of our body to experience life—our real conditions—and the process of understanding God (as well as of creating art) will always be carried out through a process of experimentation with the body. This means, for Deleuze, that Spinoza's *Ethics* like Nietzsche's thought, gives us an anti-Platonic physiology of art. "The body," Deleuze writes in *Cinema 2*, but in direct relation to Spinoza, "is no longer the obstacle that separates thought from itself, that which it has to overcome to reach thinking. It is on the contrary that which it plunges into or must plunge into, in order to reach the unthought that is life. [. . .] 'We do not even know what a body can do': in its sleep, in its drunkenness, in its efforts and resistances. To think is to learn what a non-thinking body is capable of, its capacity, its postures" (C2, 189/246).

The result of acting according to ethical reason, and this will have important consequences for an aesthetics constructed on its basis, will be acting according to what increases our power, according that is, to what is good. In an art of common notions experimentation is nothing but the expression of

essence as the production, that is the construction, of a new body, a body constructed of common notions. Art, adequately understood, is nothing but this experimental construction of common notions eventually leading to ideas expressing a mystical knowledge of and as God.

When we understand our joy as the result of a common notion, we understand how it is an action, an expression and affirmation of our own power of acting (of our essence, or formal reality). As Spinoza puts it, "insofar as he is determined to do something from the fact that he understands, he acts, that is does something which is perceived through his essence alone, or which follows adequately from his virtue" (Ethics, IV, P23d). The more we know of what a body can do, the more we understand the essences it expresses. This process will culminate with the removal, or at least the radical minimization of passions (Ethics, V, P20s). As a result: "*The more perfection each thing has, the more it acts and the less it is acted on; and conversely, the more it acts, the more perfect it is*" (Ethics, V, P40). We are now in a position to understand more fully the role of affirmation in Spinoza. Affirmation is the active expression of essence, inasmuch as understanding is an affirmation of our power to act in which an imagined joy expresses a common notion. Spinoza writes: "*The mind strives to imagine only those things which posit its power of acting.* Dem.: The mind's striving, or power, is its very essence; but the mind's essence (as is known through itself) affirms only what the mind is and can do, not what it is not and cannot do. So it strives to imagine only what affirms, or posits, its power of acting" (Ethics, III, P54). For Spinoza, affirmation is the mechanism by which God is expressed, for it is through affirming my power of acting that I express myself as essence, this essence being in itself an expression of God. As Deleuze puts it, each finite being must be said to express the absolute, according to the intensive quantity that constitutes its essence, according, that is, to the degree of its power (EPS, 197/180). The degree of each things power (i.e. their modal essence) constitutes the singularity of their modal existence, this existence now being understood in its essence and hence as an expression of the absolute. Through this process of understanding thought opens out to an understanding of its own infinity.

Spinoza argues that the move from the first to the second kinds of knowledge, from imagination to understanding, involves the transformation of perceptions of objects into concepts of essence. "I say concept rather than perception," he writes, "because the word perception seems to indicate that the mind is acted on by the object. But concept seems to express an action of the mind" (Ethics, II, D3, Exp.). Concepts, Spinoza will argue, involve knowledge of ourselves, an understanding of our affects not as imaginative, subjective representations, but as expressions of immanent essences.³⁴ Understanding, on this

account involves a knowledge that emerges from the affirmation of essence (concepts), and as such dissolves subjective and representational distinctions (imaginative perceptions). In this way, and like Nietzsche, Spinoza provides a way for our human, all to human subjective imagination to overcome itself, not once and for all, but in an ongoing affirmation of life. This process of understanding, in which concepts of common notions emerge through an experimentation at the limits of what a body can do, constructs a body beyond human perception which lives as the expression of its real immanent power or essence, as the expression of God.

Common notions express modal essences, but more than this the understanding that constructs common notions gives an adequate idea of an essence's formal reality in the attribute. To have an adequate idea or concept of an essence means to have an adequate understanding of all essences, as they constitute any singular essence in the attribute. As Spinoza explains:

A true idea must agree with its object, that is (as is known through itself), what is contained objectively in the intellect must necessarily be in Nature. But in Nature there is only one Substance, namely, God, and there are no affections other than those which are in God and which can neither be nor be conceived without God. Therefore, an actual intellect, whether finite or infinite, must comprehend God's attributes and God's affections, and nothing else. (Ethics, I, P30d)

In understanding the common notion, objective and formal idea come together in the concept. In understanding therefore, modes break out of the recursive imagination of causes and effects, to express their immanent essence as the expression of God.

The more we act according to essence, and the more we understand and affirm that essence in common notions, the more we act and think as immanent expressions of God. This means that the actions of an intelligent person, being actions determined entirely by their essence, are actions always already determined by the infinite and necessary connection of essences in God, and as God. Consequently modal action properly understood, as Spinoza famously argues, dispenses with the inadequate idea of free will. It is only the consciousness of inadequate ideas which gives rise to the subjective illusion of freedom, and so free will only exists in a subject which imagines its passions as caused by outside objects. In understanding the realm of modal essence, everything is already decided, for when we understand and affirm a common notion we understand it as entirely necessary in its relation to all other essences. Spinoza puts it this way: "*In the mind there is no absolute, or free, will; but the mind is determined to will this or that by a cause which is likewise determined by another, and this again by*

another, and so on to infinity" (Ethics, II, P48). The affects of the modes are generated from their chance encounters, but these affects are determined by the modal essences they express. Reason will be the way in which we may understand these affects not as effects caused by other modes, but as actions expressing the modes essence in a common notion. In understanding common notions we construct affectual assemblages expressing God/Nature, in which subjective imagination is redundant, and affects are necessary. We become, to use a term Deleuze introduces in *Cinema 2*, but which is appropriate here, a "spiritual automaton" (C2, 170/221) capable of understanding and living the necessary relation of man and the world, or of modes and the God/Nature they express.

ART AND ETHICAL AESTHETICS

We have seen how the affectual body constructed by an understanding of common notions arises from perceptions, but cannot be understood as such. Common notions are concepts, as is art when it is adequately understood. This introduces another crucial element of Deleuze's onto-aesthetics, one we have already seen him develop in relation to Nietzsche: art adequately understood no longer appears as a representational image. Understanding art as a representational image means for Spinoza that we experience it through the affections that make it present to us. As Spinoza puts it, "the affections of the human body whose ideas present external bodies as present to us, we shall call images of things, though they do not reproduce [external] figures of things. And when the mind regards bodies in this way, we shall say that it imagines" (Ethics, II, P17s). But art adequately understood cannot be representational in this way, and has become a concept that is truly expressive.³⁵

For Spinoza, expressions rather than representations are univocal, as only they give an idea that is equally in Substance and mode. Furthermore, it is expression that is adequate to the parallelism of ideas and bodies, as representation implies that one affects the other. Representation is of course, a kind of knowledge, but it is an inadequate one that must assume a position outside of its object in order to create an analogical sign for it.³⁶ An expression on the other hand, encompasses object and idea in expressing their essence as a common notion. As Deleuze writes:

... an idea represents an object, and in a way expresses it; but at a deeper level idea and object express something that is at once common to them, and yet belongs to each: a power, or the absolute in two of its powers, those of thinking or knowing, and being or acting. Representation is thus located

in a certain extrinsic relation of idea and object, where each enjoys an expressivity over and above representation. (EPS, 335/317)

This means the duality between subject and object required by representation will be transformed. Expression includes neither subject nor object inasmuch as it is their common notion, or essence that is expressed. Similarly, art does not represent an object for a subject, and cannot be a signifier ("a crazy concept for Spinoza," Deleuze comments).³⁷ Deleuze does not tire in making this point: "There is clearly a theory of the sign in Spinoza," he writes, "which consists in relating the sign to the most confused understanding and imagination in the world, and in the world such as it is, according to Spinoza, the idea of the sign does not exist. There are expressions, there are never signs."³⁸ Art for Spinoza will consist of expressions, and will be an art of common notions rather than representational signs. Art will be the construction of assemblages of affects through an ethological understanding of the world, a construction that expresses modal essence. As Deleuze puts it: "Spinoza's whole operation consists in making, in imposing a kind of *assemblage of affects* which implies likewise a critique of representation."³⁹ The understanding of art-works gained through this practice will be conceptual rather than perceptual. This is not to say that art transcends the body, because all understandings have their parallel in a bodily encounter from which common notions emerge, but understanding art as it appears through a bodily encounter means forming an adequate idea.

How do we reach this concept of art, and how, precisely, does it involve the body? The physical perception of objects given in an imagined image already involves an affect, and is experienced as an increase or decrease in our power to be affected. Experiencing art, even inadequately as an image, is already a dynamic experience of relation, of joy and sadness. This means that although understanding art will produce a concept expressing modal essence, imagination will nevertheless be the starting point for this process, because such an understanding must start from its joyful affects. Ethical-aesthetics always begins with what we like, with what affirms our power to act.

Spinoza introduces a new understanding of art, no longer as inadequate representation, but as adequate expression. As a result, ethical-aesthetics will not ask what an artwork means or represents, but what it is capable of, what it expresses. An expressive artist is the one who affirms new common notions, and constructs new affectual assemblages. The artist has become critical, and is simply the name for the action of affirmation that emerges from modal encounters properly understood. The artwork is, similar to last chapter, indiscernible from this action as its embodiment and expression. Only by asking what the artwork does, what joys it brings and what essences it expresses, will

we understand it. But this understanding is not once and for all, and is procedural, resumed each time the work is perceived or encountered. This means the art assemblage includes on the one hand the affects emerging from its encounter, and on the other remains open to connections yet to come. Art is always under construction. Aesthetics is always a question about "what happens?," about the process of composition that is expressed in a work. This is entirely appropriate given the ontological assumption that, as Deleuze puts it: "Everything in Nature is just composition" (EPS, 237/216). This is the sense in which ethical life requires a certain artistry, an ability to compose ourselves, to select the good encounters and construct from them the maximum number of joyful affections. Deleuze states this expanded concept of art clearly: "The common notions are an Art, the art of the Ethics itself: organizing good encounters, composing actual relations, forming powers, experimenting" (SPP, 119/161). But common notions are not only constructed through an ethics that could be broadly described as artistic, they are also transformative in a way we have already seen Deleuze make a condition of art. In understanding common notions life breaks free of its imaginative representations, and expresses structures that cross the boundaries of the organism, of subjects and objects, and the consciousness that maintains them.

Common notions therefore provide the beginnings of an art practice which is: 1) Specific to the body of the affectual assemblage constructed and the essence which is expressed. These assemblages are always changing as their relations change, meaning the work of art, or artwork is never separate from the becoming of the assemblages it is part of. 2) This participatory practice is capable of producing new concepts in response to new conditions. Art practice becomes an empirical experiment with what art can do, constructing an experimental body as a real expression of its real conditions, an expression of God/Nature's essence. 3) Under these conditions the criteria for successful art-work are no different than those determining any successful creation whatsoever. Aesthetics in these terms is an ethical-aesthetics, a practice rather than a theory of the object, the practice of composing affectual relations into common notions. This experimental art defines a practice, an art-work that is inseparable from the works it creates, as it is from the common notions it constructs and expresses.

The question remains, however, whether art expresses common notions in a way that could be identified as belonging specifically to something called "art." It seems to me that both in the last chapter and in this one, Deleuze is consistent in calling for an art and an aesthetics which is ethically and ontologically defined, and undetermined by any material or formal givens. Under these conditions art must be understood in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's statement, "art includes no other plane than that of aesthetic composition" (WP,

195/185). This immanent plane of composition defines art in terms of its affectual relations, in terms of what Deleuze and Guattari will call sensations. What Spinoza shows us however, is that this plane of aesthetic composition cannot be understood except as the plane of ethical action, and this means the revaluation of art within a wider frame of ethical-aesthetics. This does not however, exclude an understanding of art as a particular aesthetic practice, with its own mechanisms of expression. Indeed, Deleuze, and Deleuze and Guattari develop various typologies within specific arts in order to explain particular aesthetic processes of composition, and we shall look in detail at those developed for cinema and for painting. But art as an ethical-aesthetics in a Spinozian sense cannot be limited to these mechanisms, and gives instead the conditions by which life—including those things we commonly call “art works”—can be understood as expressive, and by which “art” becomes art.

TOWARDS GOD: BEATITUDE, OR THE THIRD KIND OF KNOWLEDGE

Adequate ideas, or common notions express essence, and as such find their necessity in their relations to all the other essences making up the infinite attribute of thought. The less the mind is acted upon by passions the more ideas it understands adequately, leading to a point where, according to Spinoza: “The mind understands all things to be necessary, and to be determined by an infinite connection of causes [i.e. in and by God] to exist and produce effects” (Ethics, V, P6d). Adequate knowledge understands the affects as they are in their modal essence, that is, as they are in God. Such knowledge does not exist subjectively as if of an object, but immanent in God, as a part which expresses God’s necessary and interconnected whole. As Spinoza explains it, “our mind, insofar as it understands, is an eternal mode of thinking [i.e. essence], which is determined by another eternal mode of thinking, and this again by another, and so on, to infinity; so that together, they all constitute God’s eternal and infinite intellect” (Ethics, V, P40s). Knowledge constituted by adequate ideas is not the operation of a subject but of an “eternal mode of thought,” one that affirms the idea *qua* essence in the attribute of thought. As a result, subjective consciousness is overcome in the understanding, where we do not affirm or deny anything of a thing (imagination), the revalued thing (as affectual assemblage) affirms or denies (expresses) something of itself (essence) in us (SPP, 81/79). This is an important moment in Spinoza’s “mystical” thought, and means, as he puts it, “our mind, insofar as it perceives things truly, is part of the infinite intellect of God; hence, it is as necessary that the minds clear and distinct ideas are true as that God’s ideas are” (Ethics,

II, P43s). In the adequate knowledge of common notions we begin to know God not from the outside as it were, in relations to the objects that affect us, but from the inside, as expressions of God, as God’s modal essences (Ethics, V, P22). As Deleuze writes, “common notions are ideas that are formally explained by our power of thinking and that, materially, express the idea of God as their efficient cause” (EPS, 279/258). The common notions are the folds from the human to the divine, they express the immanence of modal existence and substantial essence, and as a result, “give us direct knowledge of God’s eternal infinite essence” (EPS, 280/259). This knowledge of common notions emerges from the affirmation of joy, and charts an ethology in which we become active. This becoming active is the creation of a new body, one that I experience as it is in God, as God’s expression. The becoming active of ethical-aesthetics makes the art of ethology the expression of God, and makes of the understanding an atheistic mysticism. It is this claim, marking the high point of Spinoza’s path of reason, that we will now go on to examine further.

In the first type of knowledge, or imagination, we perceive affects as caused by outside bodies. Our ideas act as representational signs of these extrinsic determinations. In the second type of knowledge we understand what is common to our body and another, and construct an affectual assemblage or common notion, acting as an adequate idea. This idea expresses an essence, which in turn exists only through its combination with others according to the eternal laws of God/Nature. Common notions therefore express essences, but only from a modal point of view and not yet as ideas that God has of itself. That is, common notions express God’s essence but do not give an adequate (clear and distinct) idea of it. Common notions remain ideas about the essences of perceived bodies and their relations, which in expressing God’s essence only point towards its adequate understanding. But in doing so common notions “propel” (EPS, 299/279) us into a new domain, that of the third type of knowledge (Ethics, V, P28). “We begin,” Deleuze writes, “by forming common notions that express God’s essence; only then can we understand God as expressing himself in essence” (EPS, 301/280). Here our knowledge of God is no longer restricted to common notions, and we reach the beatitude of knowing how we are ourselves modal expressions of the essence of God. Beatitude is the expression of univocity in life, for in the third type of knowledge, Deleuze writes: “A reasonable being may [...] in its way, reproduce and express the effort of Nature as a whole” (EPS, 265/243).

An idea we have is essentially true, and gives the third kind of knowledge, when we understand it as an expression of God’s essence rather than as an expression of a modal essence (the second kind of knowledge). To understand how this is possible we must remember certain distinctions Spinoza

makes. The idea of God I have is an objective idea, and remains at the second level of knowledge inasmuch as it arises through my understanding of modal essence. This idea exists within the attribute of thought, which constitutes God in his essence, and is inseparable from his power of thinking as this constitutes the formal attribute of thought. Spinoza began the *Ethics* by assuming the univocity of God, which meant God could only be understood through itself. This in turn implies, as Deleuze has it, "the idea of God is the idea in its objective being, and the infinite intellect is the same idea considered in its formal being. The two aspects are inseparable; one cannot dissociate the first aspect from the second" (SPP, 80/90–1). As a result, God's infinite intellect, in constituting his essence in the attribute of thought, and as the formal being of his essence, constitutes the essence and existence of all ideas (Ethics, I, P17sII). Consequently, we have the opportunity to understand our thought as God's inasmuch as, according to Spinoza: "God is the efficient cause of all things which can fall under an infinite intellect" (Ethics, I, P16c1). Beatitude will mark the mystical moment of thought where an objective idea of God will be adequate to and expressive of its formal being, of God as thinking being. Beatitude will be an understanding of God such as God has of itself.

Beatitude will arrive in an idea of the absolute immanence of God and the modes, but will nevertheless maintain the distinction of Substance from modes, and of God's infinite essence from the modal essences and existences that express it (Ethics, I, P16c3). As Spinoza explains: "God's intellect, insofar as it is conceived to constitute the divine essence, differs from our intellect both as to its essence and as to its existence, and cannot agree with it in anything except in name" (Ethics, I, P16sII). This "name" is the univocal attribute of thought, in which God's essence as intellect is constituted, and the modal essence of an idea is found. Beatitude will be an idea adequate to the attribute as God's essence, and which will require the final overcoming of "our" intellect to become a singular idea God has of itself. But this overcoming will emerge from "our" intellect inasmuch as it understands, because this understanding finds its condition in the univocity of the attribute. This transformation of the understanding into beatitude obviously needs careful explanation, as it is both the culmination, and the most obscure point of Spinoza's *Ethics*. An idea has a cause inasmuch as it has an essence that it expresses, and which is thought as another idea. But every idea also has God as its formal cause, different from the idea in its essence and existence. These two senses of idea meet in the univocal attribute of thought, "in which," Deleuze writes, "the effect is produced and by which the cause acts" (SPP, 53/78). As Spinoza has it:

Singular thoughts, or this or that thought, are modes which express God's nature in a certain and determinate way. Therefore there belongs to God an attribute whose concept all singular thoughts involve, and through which they are also conceived. Thought is one of God's infinite attributes, which expresses an eternal and infinite essence of God, or God is a thinking thing. (Ethics, II, P1d)

The formal cause of all ideas is God's infinite intellect in its essence as attribute, which is expressed in modal form as ideas in their essence and existence. The idea giving the third kind of knowledge therefore explains its essence *qua* attribute as formal cause, in an idea expressing this cause itself.

So what constitutes this "true idea" of the third kind? God's essence is formal in the attributes that constitute his nature, God's power of acting being the essence or "formal being of things," and God's power of thinking being the essence or "formal being of ideas" (Ethics, II, P5d and P6d). As Spinoza explains, this simply means that the modes find their formal essence in God's attributes, that is, God is the cause of all thinking and acting things (Ethics, II, P8). Objective ideas find their necessity and order in being caused by God's formal essence. This means, Spinoza writes, "whatever follows formally from God's infinite nature follows objectively in God from his idea in the same order and with the same connection" (Ethics, II, P7c). God's formal essence, insofar as we are concerned, is its infinite intellect and body, and these compose all modal bodies and ideas in the infinity of affectual assemblages according to their divine order. The attributes therefore constitute the formal being of all things and ideas, and the third kind of knowledge will give an adequate idea of this divine essence. Beatitude will only emerge in thought however, because it is only the attribute of thought which has the capacity to express all the other attributes and their modes in objective ideas, including the formal being of thought itself. This is the final, remarkable, consequence of Spinoza's theory of parallelism, and opens up the mystical power of understanding. Reason will, at its furthest reach, comprehend God's essence in its formal being as thinking thing, as the necessary co-implication of all things and ideas within the attribute of thought. How is this possible? First of all, Spinoza argues: "The formal being of ideas admits God as a cause only insofar as he is explained as a thinking thing, and not insofar as he is explained by any other attribute. That is, ideas, both of God's attributes and of singular things, admit not the objects themselves, or the things perceived, as their efficient cause, but God himself, insofar as he is a thinking thing" (Ethics, II, P5). As we have already seen, there can be an objective idea of anything, including ideas. When inadequate, these ideas understand their cause as an idea of another body,

but when they are adequate they understand and express their essence in a common notion, which necessarily expresses the interrelated co-determination of essences constituting the attribute of thought. Finally, in the third kind of knowledge an idea comprehends its formal reality, meaning it understands its cause not in terms of its own power as an essence, but as an idea of God expressing itself. In other words, the third kind of knowledge understands an idea as caused by God, in its formal essence, as expressing the whole of Nature.

Between the second and third types of knowledge therefore, we move, according to Spinoza, "from an adequate knowledge of certain attributes of God, to an adequate knowledge of the essence of things" (Ethics, V, P25d). This is a move from knowledge of essence in its attribute, to knowledge of God's essence as attribute, expressed in modal existence as an idea. In the second kind of knowledge we have an idea of God, but only through the common notions that express it, the formal reality of God not being one of these notions (EPS, 309/288). An understanding of essence in the third type of knowledge however, expresses the formal reality of God as thinking thing as the immanent cause of this idea, and so comprehends God's essence in all its attributes and modes. Pierre Macherey describes this final stage of reason nicely, "by returning into itself," he writes, "without escaping its own order, thought discovers everything contained within Substance, insofar as the latter is expressed in the infinity of all its attributes."⁴⁰ The final end of philosophy for Spinoza is the point where we understand the formal cause of our objective ideas as God's infinite intellect, which contains the infinity of attributes that make up his essence, and the infinity of modes in their essence and existences. An objective idea of God as formal cause of that idea is therefore an adequate idea of God's essence. In the third type of knowledge then, an objective idea has moved from an idea of affects, as inadequate (imagination) or adequate (understanding), to an idea of the whole of God/Nature as cause of, and expressed in, this idea (beatitude). To put it in other, more personal words (Spinoza's), it is the adequate idea of my own essence, attained in the second kind of knowledge, "which therefore must be conceived through the very essence of God (by I, A4 ['The knowledge of an affect depends on and involves the knowledge of its cause']) and this concept must be in God" (Ethics, V, P22d).

It is therefore possible for a finite intellect to know everything, to understand its own constitutional infinity as the formal being of God. At this point our power of comprehension would be the same as our power of expression, and we would know and express God as God knows and expresses itself. This is the culmination of Spinoza's mystical atheism, because it is an understanding of my own essence and existence that comprehends and expresses the infinity of all that is. This is an understanding of our existence as the univocity of God in the

immanence of its formal essence and objective expression, and is the meaning of the phrase of Guattari's that began this chapter, "I am God most of the time." An idea in the third type of knowledge expresses all of God, inasmuch as God's formal essence in the attribute of thought is its cause, and includes an idea of everything. Ideas of the third kind will therefore be ideas we have of God's essence at the same time as they will be ideas of our essence as God conceives them. For in the third kind of knowledge, Deleuze writes: "We think as God thinks, we experience the very feelings of God" (EPS, 308/287). In beatitude, or an atheistic mysticism proper to Spinoza, we reach the full reversibility of Substance and mode Deleuze calls for in *Difference and Repetition*. In the third type of knowledge the modes and Substance become entirely immanent to each other on a single univocal plane. "Our essence," Deleuze writes, "is a part of God, and the idea of our essence a part of the idea of God, only to the extent that God's essence explicates itself through ours" (EPS, 309–10/288–9). In this way, as Deleuze and Guattari put it, remembering Spinoza: "The One expresses in a single meaning all of the multiple. Being expresses in a single meaning all that differs" (ATP, 254/311).

Finally then, it is the univocity of the attribute that is capable of rendering God and modes fully immanent in the third kind of knowledge, but it is expression that ensures their relation maintains their distinction while being entirely dynamic and co-determining. As a result, Deleuze writes: "In Spinoza the whole theory of expression supports univocity; and its whole import is to free univocal Being from a state of indifference or neutrality, to make it the object of a pure affirmation, which is actually realized in an expressive pantheism or immanence" (EPS, 333/309). This is why Spinoza calls the third kind of knowledge the "salvation of man," because, as Deleuze explains, once more evoking the mystical path of reason: "The path of salvation is the path of expression itself: to become expressive—that is, to become active; to express God's essence, to be oneself an idea through which the essence of God explicates itself, to have affections that are explained by our own essence and express God's essence" (EPS, 320/298). The salvation of man then, will be, quite precisely, the overcoming of man, because the becoming active of man is his or her becoming expressive, and this, in the final moment of an ethical-aesthetics, is a becoming-divine.

At this, the high point of reason, the thinker expresses everything in their idea of God, so expressing the "greatest human perfection" (Ethics, V, P27d) and the greatest joy. But this joyful expression of ones own perfection is beyond all affections of joy or sadness, because one's perfection is expressed through a purely "intellectual love" of God. This love is only found through ideas of the body and its essence, and is not itself an extended thing. In this intellectual love,

or beatitude, all affections and images of things are related to the idea of God, (Ethics, V, P14) making the body immanent to, but distinct from the mind's love of God (Ethics, V, P16). Things exist in God, but God can only be truly expressed in the beatitude of the idea. Deleuze develops this understanding of bodies in terms of intensity. Bodies are always extended things, and although their ideas lead to knowledge, bodies are not themselves knowledge. Beatitude, as a result, will involve bodies but not be bodies, the world of ideas being purely intense. "What interests me in this mystical point," Deleuze says, "is this world of intensities. There, you are in possession, not merely formally but in an accomplished way. It's no longer even joy, Spinoza finds the mystical word beatitude or active affect, that is to say the auto-affect. But this remains quite concrete. The third kind is a world of pure intensities."⁴¹ The concreteness of intensities is therefore quite different from that of things, and indeed this is what Spinoza argues, that extended things exist in duration, whereas essences exist eternally (Ethics, I, Def.8). As he puts it: "*Whatever the mind understands under a species of eternity, it understands not from the fact that it conceives the body's present actual existence, but from the fact that it conceives the body's essence under a species of eternity*" (Ethics, V, P29). In the third kind of knowledge it is precisely the body's essence that is understood as the eternal and infinite essence of God (Ethics, V, P29s). God's essence exists in eternity, which means it has an intense existence rather than an extended duration. As a result, in understanding our or another's essence as eternal we conceive things, through God's essence, as real and yet intense beings (Ethics, V, P30d). Again, it is the univocity of the attribute of thought which is crucial here, as it is only insofar as the mind itself is eternal (i.e. part of God's attribute of thought) that it can have knowledge of the third kind (Ethics, V, P31). This is not to finally privilege ideas over the body, for although the eternal is "a certain mode of thinking" (Ethics, V, P23s), thinking is the expression of "the essence of the body under a species of eternity" (Ethics, V, P23s). That is, in the mystical and intellectual love of God everything attains its concrete existence as intensity and in eternity.

Our greatest perfection, our salvation, will therefore leave all notions of ourselves as volitional, affective, and extended subjects behind, in becoming the thoughts of God. Any form of psychological consciousness has evaporated, leaving, as Deleuze calls it, a purely "explicative logical formalism" (EPS, 326/303). We have become purely formal elements in the systematic explication of God/Nature, spiritual automatons in which all "human" affects have been overcome, "not only that love, hate, and the like are destroyed," Spinoza explains, "but also that the appetites, or desires, which usually arise from such an affect, cannot be excessive" (Ethics, V, P4s).⁴² In place of the human subjective emotions is an inhuman intellectual love that surpasses them, the impersonal joy of

God/Nature as it affirms and expresses itself. As Spinoza writes: "*The mind's intellectual love of God is the very love of God by which God loves himself, not insofar as he is infinite, but insofar as he can be explained by the human mind's essence, considered under a species of eternity; that is, the mind's intellectual love of God is part of the infinite love by which God loves himself*" (Ethics, V, P36).⁴³ The intellectual love of God is an action in which the mind contemplates itself, inasmuch as God is its cause. In contemplating ourselves we contemplate God, in understanding the part we understand the whole. This is what Deleuze elsewhere calls a "percept" (ECC, 148/184) or "direct vision" (EPS, 301/281) of God, and this is a term we will come back to in Chapter Five, where it play an important part in art's production of sensation. As Spinoza has it, the third kind of knowledge is, "an action by which God, insofar as he can be explained through the human mind, contemplates himself, with the accompanying idea of himself [as the cause]" (Ethics, V, P36d). Finally then, the third kind of knowledge is the formula for Spinoza's mysticism: "God's love of men and the mind's intellectual love of God are one and the same thing" (Ethics, V, P36c). Or as Deleuze and Guattari put it, we have become indiscernible because we have become the world, and entered the "impersonality of the creator" (ATP, 280/343).

THE ART OF ATHEISTIC MYSTICISM

Knowing what the third kind of knowledge is naturally leads us to the question of how we may attain it. It is precisely the empirical compositional experiments that the body has made in discovering what it can do, that has lead to the understanding of intense essence as an idea of God. A body capable of a great many things has ethically optimised or affirmed its compositional joy. This means it is not troubled by bad affects, and does not express affects contrary to its nature. Such a body affirms its own power of acting and has succeeded in ordering and connecting its affects according to the necessary order of essences as they constitute the attribute. As ideas are always parallel to bodies, the ethical ordering of affects implies ideas that are adequate to these affects. This knowledge of the body is, as we have seen, the condition for the eternal and intellectual love of beatitude. The rarefied realm of the third kind of knowledge is therefore inseparable from an ethical-aesthetics as the critical practice of life. As Spinoza writes: "*He who has a body capable of a great many things has a mind whose greatest part is eternal*" (Ethics, V, P39). Although the third kind of knowledge is entirely intellectual, it emerges from an experimental understanding of things, and understands the essence of God only inasmuch as it involves existence. Consequently, as Spinoza puts it: "To conceive things under a species of eternity, therefore, is to conceive things insofar as they are conceived through God's essence, as real

beings, or insofar as through God's essence they involve existence" (*Ethics*, V, P30d). Eternity is not gained by transcending the body, but through understanding its affects. The body under these conditions expresses its intense eternal essence, rather than marking our distance from essence. Spinoza's intellectual love of God is not a transcendence of the body but is the true immanence of God's essence and existence in the attribute of thought. Only in relation to this immanence of existence and essence can we understand the mind's ideas as eternal. Eternal essence is expressed in bodies but this essence as God, rather than simply as expressing God, is only understood in the mind.

The point, in relation to art, is that art cannot be thought outside the parallelism of things and ideas. Art must be the construction of ethical bodies through a critical practice, as much as the thinking of ideas expressing God's essence. The minds mystical comprehension of the essence of God, inasmuch as this emerges from the construction of affectual bodies (assemblages), offers a beatific image of art. Art is an experimental practice exploring what the body can do, and as such is the continual emergence of new expressions (new existences, new affectual assemblages, new becomings) of intense essence. Parallel to this emergence is an understanding of these expressions in a true idea of God. Together this experimental body and its intellectual understanding, produce a mystical but atheist art. This art exists as the expression of a dynamic world of affectual assemblage, and as an understanding of eternal essence as this constitutes God/Nature. Art in these terms is inseparable from beatitude, which defines the univocal expressions of an ethical aesthetics. Once more then, we return to our previous problem regarding the status of art as we would usually understand it. Clearly the mystical understanding of the intense world of divine essence does not exclude art from a beatific knowledge. Furthermore, important aspects of an ethical practice, such as selection and affirmation could be broadly defined as "artistic." None of this however, could be regarded as telling us much about art's specific forms of expression. Spinoza's ethics, considered as an aesthetics, can be seen as an affirmative creative process constructing affectual assemblages as expressions of intense essence, and whose ideas, properly understood, culminate in a mystical love of God/Nature. But ethical-aesthetics in these terms is not particular to art, even if it involves, as Deleuze says, an art of the common notions.

We can, at this point, both sum up, and look forward to the work yet to be done. The question as to arts specific modality within Deleuze's ethical-aesthetics, as it has so far emerged from his readings of Nietzsche and Spinoza, no doubt remains. Its answer awaits a consideration of art's various types of materiality, and how these form their specific affectual assemblages. This will tell us much more about how art operates within the broader definition of an onto-

ethical-aesthetics so far undertaken. As a result our attention will now turn to Deleuze's work on cinema and Francis Bacon, as well as to his and Guattari's discussions of painting. But this promissory declaration should not detract from what has already been achieved, most importantly the definition of a new image of art, even if this has taken us well away from what we may have previously considered it to be.

Art thought through Spinoza's *Ethics* exists only in its compositional relations and their affectual becomings, and is understood as intense expressions of the infinitude of God/Nature. This mystical understanding is already a liberation of art from its duties of representation, and its confinement along the subject/object perceptual axis. Michael Hardt puts it clearly when he argues that Deleuze's use of expressionism "constitutes a polemic against semiology on ontological grounds. A system of signs does not recognize being as a productive dynamic; it does not help us understand being through its causal genealogy. [. . .] a theory of expression seeks to make the cause present, to bring us back to an ontological foundation by making clear the genealogy of being."⁴⁴ Spinoza offers an alternative understanding of art, one in which it expresses the productive dynamics of being, and so places its ontological foundation on the same plane of immanence as its expressive existence. This is already a lot, and is clearly the preparatory work necessary to the more specific examinations of a "mystical" art that are to follow.

In a broader sense however, and once more to finish in an ecstatic register as appropriate to a discussion of Spinoza as to Nietzsche, ethical-aesthetics transforms my relations into a question of art, it challenges me to experiment with joy in order to create common notions which connect me to the world. This is an art theory that gives the proper weight to the *work* of art, and gives its proper ontological importance, its proper ethical dimension (as we shall see, a dimension which is also political), and its properly cosmic nature, even if it does not yet describe its specificity. Spinoza's ethical-aesthetics of experimentation expresses the intense Substance of God, and offers an understanding of the way we are folded into the infinite. Spinoza gives a new image of art, an art of living as a living expression of God, and an atheistic mysticism as a new belief in immanence. Art is the expression of this living communion with God, the construction of an immanent spiritual dimension, as life and in life. God has appeared, as our sensation.

Chapter Three

We Need New Signs: Towards a Cinematic Image of Thought

My eyes are useless for they render back only the image of the known. My whole body must become a constant beam of light, moving with an ever greater rapidity, never arrested, never looking back, never dwindling.

—Henry Miller, *Tropic of Capricorn*.

INTRODUCTION

We have seen the affect emerge within Nietzsche's physiology of overcoming and Spinoza's mystical trajectory of reason as the at once singular body and cosmic unity of art. These are, we could say, the simultaneous directions of art's constant movement. Although this movement defines the onto-aesthetic reality of art as such, there is nevertheless an art composed specifically of moving images: cinema. Cinema is a machine for the production of signs that both affect the body in a new way, and give us a new image of thought. Deleuze's two books on cinema will explore this body-brain through a highly innovative taxonomy of its signs, a taxonomy that develops a new semiotic of cinema, gives a fresh account of cinema's historical development, and as the condition of possibility of these contributions, offers a new ontology of cinema itself. Deleuze has given cinema studies new signs, and the results of his startling generosity undoubtedly remain "to come." I can't pretend to exhaust his store of explosives here, and instead will limit myself to tracing Deleuze's ontology of cinema's temporal signs, in order to explore the ways it gives us a new image of thought.

Deleuze bases his discussion of the cinema on the work of Henri Bergson. Although much of what he finds there will echo what we have already encountered in the first two chapters, Deleuze's use of Bergson in relation to cinema also has its own necessity. First, it provides an explicit ontology of perception, which Deleuze takes primarily from Bergson's *Matter and Memory*.¹ Second, this book was published in 1886, making it directly contemporary to the new art-form of cinema. Deleuze will begin then, from the idea that Bergson's book

gives the philosophical elaboration of cinema's great discovery: the moving-image. Cinema invents a new type of sign, and will require—indeed it almost seems to anticipate—the new philosophy of images Bergson provides. But cinema develops Bergson's philosophical insights in its own directions, acting as a kind of experimental laboratory for his ideas that soon produces remarkable new inventions. The most important is the time-image, which moves beyond Bergson and, through Deleuze's intercession, offers cinema back to philosophy as a new image of thought. It is as if the modern exemplar of Nietzsche's artist-philosopher is a film-maker, an experimenter in the realm of cine-thought.

Deleuze begins by outlining two possibilities for cine-thought, which we could call cinema's before and after. The first, Bergson's explicit position, sees cinema's photographic technology as limiting it to a "snapshot" of the present, an "immobile section" of the constantly moving aggregate of images—each acting on every other—constituting the becoming of the universe (this is what Deleuze, following Bergson, calls "duration").² The second, the position Deleuze finds in Bergson, sees cinema invent a new image capable of perceiving and extending this universal movement in a "mobile section of duration" (C1, 22/36).³ This alternative repeats the by now familiar Deleuzian distinction between representation and expression, this time in the Bergsonian register Deleuze believes is appropriate to cinema.

What is in the present is what the image 'represents,' Deleuze writes, 'but not the image itself, which, in cinema as in painting, is never to be confused with what it represents. The image itself is the system of the relationships between its elements, that is, a set of relationships from which the variable present only flows. [. . .] What is specific to the image, as soon as it is creative, is to make perceptible, to make visible, relationships of time which cannot be seen in the represented object and do not allow themselves to be reduced to the present. (C2, xii)

Here Deleuze succinctly defines the Bergsonian conditions of cinema's ont-aesthetics—the construction of an image capable of expressing duration in "relationships of time."

The cinema books develop in detail two cinematic expressions of time. First, the movement-image of classical cinema expresses the whole of time (duration) as its immanent cause, but indirectly, through already given conditions of possibility. Second, modern cinema breaks with these conditions and directly expresses duration in a time-image. Before examining this difference in detail, it is important to point out that the difference between these two cinematic images is neither hierarchical nor strictly chronological, but is a difference in kind—they emerge from different ontological co-ordinates. In fact, Deleuze

writes: "It cannot be said that one is more important than the other, whether more beautiful or more profound. All that can be said is that the movement-image does not give us a time-image" (C2, 270/354). So although each image emerges at a specific time (movement-images before, and time-images after WWII), and due to its own historical conditions (although these remain summary and peripheral in Deleuze's account), their difference cannot be reduced to historical factors and is, in fact, ontological. This means that it is not enough for a film to be produced after the war for it to produce a time-image. In fact, Deleuze claims that Hollywood persists in using the formulas of the movement-image, which in its hands has degenerated into a politically repressive form.

This introduces another important aspect of Deleuze's cine-thought, its political dimension. Hollywood after the war, he argues, inherits the Nazi development of cinema's power of producing "psychological automaton" (C2, 264/345). The cinema of the masses, Deleuze caustically remarks, "has degenerated into state propaganda and manipulation, into a kind of fascism which brought together Hitler and Hollywood, Hollywood and Hitler" (C2, 164/214). Deleuze positions the time-image as an aesthetic intervention into this realm of the Spectacle, opposing the political passivity produced and reproduced in the consumption of mass media.⁴ Cinema's interventions act as a "shock-therapy" (appropriately administered in part by Antonin Artaud, as we shall see), which create new temporal experiences forcing us to think beyond the cliché, its repressive politics, and its first and last bastion, the human, all too human.

THINGS RE-ENTER INTO EACH OTHERS⁵

Deleuze begins *Cinema 1* with a "commentary" on Bergson's concept of movement. Bergson proposed in *Matter and Memory* that "real" movement could no longer be thought through its representation, a proposition Deleuze will test in relation to its contemporaneous instantiation, the cinema. Bergson argues that previous philosophical attempts to represent movement through abstract categories of thought failed. "You cannot reconstitute movement," Deleuze paraphrases, "with positions in space or instants in time: that is, with immobile sections" (C1, 1/9). Space and time, as categories of thought, translate movement into their abstract coordinates, and think movement as a sequential numerical passage appearing as a line drawn through space and time. Movement is thereby reduced to points on a graph. "The number *t* would always stand for the same thing," Bergson writes, "it would still count the same number of correspondences between the states of the objects or systems and the points of the line, ready drawn, which would be then the 'course of

time” (CE, 9). Reason produces this representation by defining movement as a difference of degree between abstract points that in themselves remain the same. Movement becomes measurement. But Zeno’s paradoxes had already shown the impossibility of thinking movement in such a way, and revealed its difference in kind from this numerated, “scientific” and represented movement.⁶ This (mis)representation of time by thought rests, for Bergson, on a failure to understand the difference between two sorts of time, a scientific present that is continually coming to pass, and duration as all of time co-existing with the present. As Bergson puts it: “The systems science work with are in an instantaneous present that is always being renewed; such systems are never in that real, concrete duration in which the past remains bound up with the present” (CE, 28). Science deals with a present that dies and is reborn again at every instant, making of each present instant a frozen image of duration that does not reveal the changes occurring between these fixed points. In producing these “immobile sections” of time reason remains unable to think the movement of change—becoming—and is therefore unable to account for its own genetic dimension. At the same time as the movement-image appears in cinema then, a new image of thought capable of thinking it appears in Bergson’s concept of intuition.⁷ The temporal conjunction of Bergson’s philosophy and cinema’s invention takes us, Deleuze argues, beyond a scientific reason as the general and abstract condition of experience, towards a movement-image expressing its conditions of real experience (B, 27/17). Deleuze’s use of Bergson in relation to cinema therefore converges with his attack on Kantian aesthetics that we have already discussed, for in the movement-image time and space no longer form the autonomous transcendental conditions of all possible experience, but “these conditions can and must be grasped in an intuition [. . .] precisely because they are the conditions of real experience.”⁸

The conditions of our experience of movement, Bergson argues, are found in the virtual dimension of duration, which although not actual is nevertheless real, and produces the movements we perceive. Duration is the past, inasmuch as the past is no longer understood as a numbered line leading to the present, but as the immanent All, the whole of time in its continual interaction that constructs the becoming of the present. Duration is the immanent and ontogenetic life of becoming, of which the present is its expression. As Bergson puts it, “duration means invention, the creation of forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new” (CE, 11). Duration can’t be said to be in space or time, because it is the *becoming* of space and time. Deleuze argues duration is an open set, or perhaps better, the open “itself,” the virtual dimension both expressed and constructed anew in actual movement.⁹ For Bergson the infinite movements of duration and the finite movement of images are not different in

kind, for the latter are the actual expressions of the former once they have passed through the brain (B, 24/14). For Deleuze cinema functions in this way—like a brain—and constructs moving-images, as becomings, expressing their real and immanent conditions: “a change in duration or in the whole” (C1, 8/18).

When images are understood as representations of objects moving in space and time they give, Bergson suggests, “only a snapshot view of a transition” (CE, 302). These snapshots cancel the genetic movement of duration, and only give a frozen image of what escapes them. This snapshot depends on the mechanism that produces it, the rather too slow machinery of reason, which only by freezing movement produces its representation. Opposed to this snapshot, even if it is at 24 frames a second, Deleuze seeks a real image of duration, and this will require both a moving-image, and a new perceptual (and indeed conceptual) mechanism to produce it. Deleuze provides both, and so rehabilitates cinema within Bergson’s philosophy, by shifting our perceptual mechanism from the projector and its projection of snapshots, to the screen. “The brain is the screen.”¹⁰ This changes everything, for on the brain-screen a new image and new perception—a new *intuition*—emerges. Now, as Deleuze writes: “Instead of going from the acentred state of things to centred perception, [we] could go back up towards the acentred state of things, and get closer to it” (C1, 58/85). This distinction Deleuze makes between “descent” and “ascent” is one made between two images of movement. These two images emerge from their cerebral mechanisms, reason (the projection of snapshots) and intuition (moving images on the screen). As Bergson argues: “The first only unwinds a roll ready prepared. In principle, it might be accomplished almost instantaneously, like releasing a spring. But the ascending movement, which corresponds to an inner work of ripening or creating, endures essentially, and imposes its rhythm on the first, which is inseparable from it” (CE, 14). As such, intuition is a “superior empiricism,” one Deleuze often calls for, that would be capable of perceiving the real ontological conditions of each actual perception. This affirmation of intuition as the mechanism of a new cine-brain takes us “beyond the human condition” and its inadequate rationality, to reveal “the inhuman and superhuman” conditions of cinema and thought—duration (B, 28/19).

Deleuze calls this inhuman dimension of duration—and it is a term he takes from Bergson—a “spiritual reality” (C1, 11/22). For Deleuze, as for Bergson, the spiritual reality of duration is both atheist and mystical, inasmuch as it exists as entirely material “cerebral vibrations,” (MM, 23) but these vibrations keep every thing “open somewhere by the finest thread which attaches it to the rest of the universe” (C1, 10/21).¹¹ This “spiritual” movement is imparted through the perceptual process of intuitive thought—the process of the cine-brain—that returns to things their living becoming in duration.

“Spirit,” as Bergson puts it, “borrows from matter the perceptions on which it feeds and restores them to matter in the form of movements which it has stamped with its own freedom” (MM, 249). As a “mystical” movement similar to that we found in Deleuze’s reading of Nietzsche and Spinoza, Bergson’s “spirit” is immanent to life as what gives life, a type of thought utterly material, but one that takes us beyond the rational limits of human being. This life is what Deleuze believes the spirit of cinema discovers as the vital movement that animates its images. Spirit then, is not a Christian concept, and refers to nothing transcendent. It is the immanent and inorganic life of duration, expressed in the perceptive mechanism of the brain as it constructs the new. The problem for Deleuze will therefore be to show how the cine-brain “ascends” to the immanent and virtual plane of duration without transcending its actual images, to show, in other words, how the cine-brain constructs images in such a way as to express their spiritual dimension.

A NEW PRACTICE OF IMAGES AND SIGNS

The conjunction of cinema and Bergson is an obvious one, Deleuze argues, inasmuch as for Bergson: “The identity of the image and movement stems from the identity of matter and light” (C1, 60/88). This is the simple statement by which Deleuze shifts cinema’s mechanism from projector to screen. Deleuze justifies this shift by Bergson’s physics, a radical physics that posits the equivalence of matter and images, and of images and light.¹² The movement-image emerges from this Bergsonian equivalence of light in its materiality and an image in movement, because as Deleuze points out, if “light is movement, [then] the movement-image and the light-image are two facets of one and the same appearing” (C1, 49/73). This is the materialism Deleuze takes from Bergson: “The movement-image is matter itself, as Bergson showed” (C2, 33/49). The materiality of cinema’s moving-image is luminosity; it is a propagation of energy as light. Images, as luminous moving matter are “vibrations” (C1, 8/19), movements that express the infinite connectivity and creativity of the open and immanent plane of duration. As Deleuze puts it: “IMAGE=MOVEMENT” (C1, 58/86). Things are images (i.e. perceptions) as movements of matter, rather than static and immaterial representations of this movement. As a result, and as Deleuze suggests, the universe is cinematic, “the universe as cinema itself, a metacinema” (C1, 59/88). This is the most cosmic and cinematic formulation possible of Bergson’s ontology, one that perfectly expresses Deleuze’s ontological approach to aesthetics.

Deleuze, following the first chapter of Bergson’s *Matter and Memory*, now dissolves rational consciousness into the universal action and reaction of

images in movement. The brain too is matter in movement he argues, a series of images of duration. The cosmos-cinema therefore involves a new brain, for as Deleuze puts it: “How could my brain contain images since it is one image among others? External images act on me, transmit movement to me, and I return movement: how could images be in my consciousness since I am myself image, that is, movement? And can I even, at this level, speak of ‘ego,’ of eye, of brain and of body?” (C1, 58/86). The implication is that eye, brain and body are all images, and “perception” must become the ascending movement expressing their duration. Perception has ceased to be representational, and has become expressive movement.¹³

The question now is to understand this expressive movement as it appears specifically in the cinema. Cinema’s movement-image “perceives” the world in a “mobile section” of its movements, this section being composed of the shot, and its connection to other shots in montage. Montage extends (or “ascends”) shots by constructing an “out of frame” they express, shots and their out of frame world being in reciprocal presupposition. But this relation is dynamic; each shot expressing changes in the world, while these changes are in turn reconstructed by the world montage has created. This makes of a film an open whole where world and image are continually interacting to compose a film’s duration. This interaction is further complexified by the fact that perception is not outside this process but participates in it. The brain is a screen. This means the movement-image no longer implies a human eye at the apex of a cone of vision, but a cine-brain as the fold of duration. To understand the movement-image, and the duration it both expresses and constructs we must therefore understand the cine-brain that produces it.

CINEMA-BRAIN

Although pre-war cinema produces a new image of movement as a movement-image of duration, duration does not appear directly in this image. Deleuze (once more following Bergson closely) argues that duration is a consistent plane of images making up moving matter, and on this plane, he writes: “The movement-image and flowing matter are strictly the same thing” (C1, 59/87). But for “things” to exist as perceptions an image must be removed from the infinite movements of action and reaction comprising duration, and become a “sign.” This happens with the introduction of an interval between the automatic movements constituting the plane, and it is only this interval that is capable of constituting a “point of view”—a perception. Deleuze puts it like this:

The thing and the perception of the thing are one and the same thing, one and the same image, but related to one or other of two systems of refer-

ence. The thing is the image as it is in itself, as it is related to all the other images to whose action it completely submits and on which it reacts immediately. But the perception of the thing is the same image related to another special image which frames it, and which only retains a partial action from it, and only reacts to it meditately. (C1, 63/93)

We must be careful to keep these two sides of the thing, as image and as perception, in mind, because Deleuze will tend to use the same term—"movement-image"—for both of them. The "special image" that "frames" the thing as image, is an interval. This interval extracts the thing from its infinite relations in duration by confining the reception of these movements to one of its sides, and its reactions to the other. But in doing so the interval performs a further operation, which is to subtract from the image all the movements of duration which do not directly involve the interval's own interests. This is the function of perception that enables the interval to take the appropriate actions enabling it to develop and survive (C1, 62/92).¹⁴ This "living" interval is, for Bergson (as for Deleuze), the brain, the operation of which remains entirely material. The brain is constituted by the "cerebral vibrations" of a thing's action upon it, and the analysis of this action transmits vibrations to the body enabling it to make the appropriate reaction. The brain, Bergson writes, is "an instrument of analysis in regard to the movement received and an instrument of selection in regard to movement executed" (MM, 30). The movements of duration now appear relative to the interval-brain operating as a screen, they are no longer images strictly speaking, Bergson writes, they are "*pictures*" (MM, 36). Perception represents the movement of external bodies to the brain, which then determines a corporeal response. Perception and action are the two sides and the two functions of the brain-interval, and accordingly the centre they constitute is a sensory-motor, in which, Deleuze writes: "One passes imperceptibly from perception to action" (C1, 65/95). But this passage through the interval nevertheless involves a further stage, which Deleuze (and Bergson) calls "affection," which is "the way in which the subject perceives itself or feels itself 'from the inside'" (C1, 65/96). The subtraction of a perception-image is immediately connected to memory, which relates perceived movement to a "quality" or a lived state (an affection), which will determine our reaction, or lack of it. Through this process we are able to function as organisms, as body-brains whose temporal continuity is maintained by rational processes in which, "the qualities of matter are so many stable views that we take of its [duration's] instability" (CE, 301).

Given that the brain is a screen, the sensory-motor describes cinematic movement-images as much as it does the images we in fact are. Cinema before

the war, in other words, assumes the same perceptual mechanism for its actors as do our actions. Once more, it means that Deleuze's investigation into the cinema will be at once ontological and aesthetic. In fact, the basic division of the cinema's movement-image Deleuze uses: perception-images, affection-images and action-images, is that Bergson suggests in his ontological analysis of human perception. What remains for Deleuze to do, his commentary on Bergson now over, is to develop these images into a taxonomy of cinema's signs. He will do so by turning to the work of the American semiotician Charles S. Peirce.

PEIRCE'S SEMIOTICS OF THE "SIGNALETIC MATERIAL"

"Peirce's strength," Deleuze writes, "when he invented semiotics, was to conceive of signs on the basis of images and their combinations, not as a function of determinants which were already linguistic. [...] Peirce begins from the phenomenon or from what appears" (C2, 30/45).¹⁵ In other words, Peirce provides Deleuze with a semiotic system adequate to Bergson's ontology of the image. For both Peirce and Bergson, the image as sign is material rather than linguistic, and as a result this "signaletic material" is not reducible to representation (C2, 33/49). Peirce puts it in slightly different terms: "A sign," he writes, "must have a real physical connection with the thing it signifies so as to be affected by that thing."¹⁶ Furthermore, the sign is for Peirce, as the image is for Bergson, inseparable from the brain and its cerebral vibration—thought. Once more this has a slightly different formulation in Peirce, who emphasises how in being thought a sign becomes a thing connected to another sign that signifies it, *ad infinitum*. "Thus," Peirce writes, "there is a virtual endless series of signs when a sign is understood."¹⁷ This is Peirce's way of emphasising the material continuity of thought, for, as in Bergson, thought is a movement encompassing the whole of image-matter. Peirce's semiotics is therefore compatible with Bergson's ontology, as in both the sign shares a materiality with what it expresses, and is inseparable from an endless movement of thought as its condition of possibility, and as what returns it to its constitutive infinity (for Peirce and Bergson both, this is the "virtual").

As we have seen, an image is produced in the interval-brain, or as Peirce puts it: "A sign is something which stands for another thing to a mind."¹⁸ In other words, the sign is the emergence of the movements of duration in thought. To understand how this works we must explain Peirce's most famous idea, of which the last quote was a succinct statement, that of the signs "triadic relations." Peirce begins, according to Deleuze, from the same point as Bergson, with the perception-image. As a result, the perception-image is the degree-zero of a Peircean-Bergsonian semiotics of the cinema because it is the simple fact of

appearance. It is, Deleuze writes, “an image which no longer simply expresses movement, but the relation between movement and the interval of movement” (C2, 31/47). The sign’s first element, its “firstness” as Peirce puts it, is a quality or power as an affect. This is a feeling which refers only to itself, “it is as it is for itself and in itself.” (C1, 98/139) Deleuze writes, and is the appearance of the affection-image.¹⁹ Peirce’s “secondness” refers on the one hand to the affect’s “real physical connection” to something else, it is “what is what it is in relation to a second” (C1, 98/139). On the other hand, the “secondness” of a sign appears in the action an affect gives rise to, and is in Deleuze’s terms, an action-image. “Thirdness” refers to the necessity of these two moments of the sign being interpreted in thought, which in turn returns us to firstness as this interpretation also exists as a sign, involving its own triadic relations. In this way any sign passes through thought, which does not determine the sign in an arbitrary fashion, but according to a relation or law. For Peirce, thought gives interpretations according to “a sense of government by a general rule.”²⁰ Thirdness therefore appears in “relation-images,” or “mental-images” as Deleuze sometimes calls them, which will constitute for cinema, “a new, direct, relationship with thought,” (C1, 198/268) inasmuch as the relation-image gives an image of the rules governing the perceptions, affections, and actions of the sensory-motor (C1, 200/271). These images are “interpretations which refer to the element of sense; not to affections, but to intellectual feelings of relations” (C1, 197/267). Thirdness gives an image of thought as it operates in and as the movement-image, and “reconstitutes the whole of the movement with all the aspects of the interval” (C2, 32/47).²¹ Relation-images, in other words, make thought itself the object of an image, showing the laws and habits which interpret and connect sensory-motor perceptions, affections and actions.

Each moment in Peirce’s triadic sign finds expression in cinema, but before discussing each sign in more detail we will look at the relation-image, because here we gain a first glimpse of the way cinema moves beyond movement-images, and so beyond Pierce and Bergson, to produce time-images. It is Hitchcock, according to Deleuze, that “introduces the mental-image into the cinema” (C1, 203/274). But Hitchcock, despite creating an image of thought, also pushes these images to their limit, where Deleuze sees something that goes beyond it. This “beyond” emerges at the limit of the mental-image, where Hitchcock’s characters are “assimilated to spectators,” (C1, 205/276) and in this role are able to re-examine the “nature and status” of movement-images themselves. This re-examination, Deleuze writes, is provoked by “the rupture of the sensory-motor links in a particular character” (C1, 205/277). Hitchcock’s films often revolve around the struggle of the protagonist to “understand” images that confound them, images that arise from a rupture of the sensory-motor,

such as the broken leg of the photographer in *Rear Window*, or the dizziness of the detective in *Vertigo*. The smooth mental functioning of these characters stumbles over a gap that opens in their sensory-motor interval, a gap that produces signs that cannot be understood within the habitual mechanisms of a coherent mental-image. These characters can no longer give a rule to the signs that confront them, and are thrust outside the interval, and thought, into “a pure optical situation” (C1, 205/276). The hero reduced to the pure uncomprehending eye of his telephoto lens in *Rear Window*, or the incredible vortex of *Vertigo*, where the whole plot seems to leap into the irrational void that opens within the detective, and makes us spin along with him. This is a change in the brain of cinema, which no longer produces signs expressing the organic and understandable relation between subject and world, but like Scotty in *Vertigo*, leaps into the chasm emerging between what is seen and what can be thought. This leap is cine-thought’s escape from the sensory motor and its Peircean-Bergsonian image-sign. This is a necessary leap, Deleuze argues, because the “ground-zero” of the perception-image does not take us to the real genetic element of vision—duration—which only appears indirectly, according to the conditions of the sensory-motor. The time-image therefore emerges beyond the sensory-motor, in a cinema that ascends *directly* to an image of duration. It is in developing his theory of the time-image that Deleuze will part ways with Peirce, and by the beginning of *Cinema 2* he writes: “We therefore take the term ‘sign’ in a completely different way from Peirce” (C2, 32/48). Deleuze describes this crucial development as follows,

the sensory-motor link was broken, and the interval of movement produced the appearance as such of *an image other than the movement-image*. Sign and image thus reversed their relation, because the sign no longer presupposed the movement-image as material that it represented in its specified forms, but set about presenting the other image whose material it was to specify, and forms it was to constitute, from sign to sign. (C2, 34/50)

Cinema was going to need a new brain.

As the cinema moves beyond the movement-image it moves beyond Peirce’s conception of the sign (C2, 34/50). But is this also a move beyond Bergson? The answer to this can only be yes and no. Yes, inasmuch as cine-thought finds its own path beyond the sensory-motor in which indirect movement-images are replaced by a “detour through the direct” (C1, 206/278). For Deleuze, this new regime of cine-thought implies a new brain capable of thinking beyond its Bergsonian conditions: “The soul of the cinema demands increasing thought,” he writes, “even if thought begins by undoing the system of actions, perceptions and affections on which the cinema had fed up to that

point" (C1, 206/278). But, and here is the no of our answer, in abandoning the sensory-motor cinema ascends to its truly Bergsonian conditions, an ascension that Bergson himself couldn't make, and begins to construct images directly expressing duration itself. The brain-screen of cine-thought thereby attains new ontological conditions (and as we shall see opens out a new aesthetic set of possibilities), conditions that retain a Bergsonian duration, but one no longer thought within the conditions of the movement-image and its interpretive generation of signs. Duration emerges in the time-image for itself, and cinema discovers after the war, a Bergson beyond Bergson.

THE CLASSIC, GRANDIOSE CONCEPT OF THE MONTAGE KING

Deleuze often describes the move from the movement-image to the time-image, from classical to modern cinema, as a disjunction or break. But as Deleuze's other example of the breakdown of the relation-image—the Marx brothers—suggests, classical cinema itself often undid the logic of the sensory-motor, and approached the limits of the movement-image. Indeed, Deleuze's analysis privileges these cases by always searching for the genetic element to each of cinema's Bergsonian-Peircean signs, that element that ascended the furthest. In looking at some of these examples we will understand better both the Bergsonian character of early cinema and the way cinema after the war passes beyond it.

Montage, Deleuze argues, is the "principle act of cinema," (C2, 34/51) and is the operation through which movement-images give an image of the whole, as an "image of time" (C2, 14/51). The movement-image is constituted on one side by single shots in which the positions of objects in space vary and on the other by a whole that "flows from montage" (C2, 35/51). In this way: "Montage is the determination of the whole," (C1, 29/46) and as such is the conceptual/perceptual operation of the interval-brain as much as of cinema. Montage then, is the mechanism of cine-thought. But the montage of classical cinema necessarily constructs an indirect image of duration, because it is "deduced from movement-images and their relationships" (C1, 29/46). This is not to say that the movement-image is a formally restrictive category, but that classical cinema worked within it as under a certain epistemological regime. The sensory-motor schema, as the brain of cinema, selected images and montaged them according to conditions it itself set, conditions which were real, but which nevertheless mediated duration's presence to itself. As a result, the creative movement of duration is transformed into a whole relative to the perceptions and actions in which it appears. The movement-image expresses duration, but it is a duration which has been produced from within one of its parts as it were,

a whole produced by montage according to the interval's own laws of thought. The movement-image therefore expresses duration within an organic relation between the brain and a whole the brain constructs in its own image.

Montage, as the mechanism of this classical cine-thought, operated Deleuze writes, "a powerful organic representation [that] produces the set and the parts," through a "rhythmic alternation" (C1, 31/49).²² These alternations take on formal characteristics in the different montage techniques, in the different rhythms of composition typical to each great school of pre-war cinema. Some of these compositional rhythms however, produce in their most exemplary moments images that exceed the sensory motor and broach another regime of cinematic images unaccounted for by the movement-image. Deleuze asks of these images, "to what extent they would be separate from movement-images, and to what extent conversely, they would be based on certain unknown aspects of these images" (C1, 29/47). This is an important question, because it distinguishes an outside to the movement-image, from an outside of the movement-image. The latter position would be occupied by images that seem to move outside the confines of the movement-image but which nevertheless retain its logic. On the other hand, images that appear outside to the movement-image ("separate from") would be images operating according to another logic. This distinction will prompt Deleuze to ask the question that defines his overall project: "How are we to delineate a modern cinema which would be distinct from 'classical' cinema or from the indirect representation of time?" (C2, 39/57)

We can begin to see Deleuze's answer in his discussion of the work of Dziga Vertov. Vertov's "kino-eye," exemplified by *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), introduces a new materialism to cinema by revealing a plane of molecular and "non-human matter" (C1, 40/61). In Vertov's films, buildings, machines, humans and most importantly cinema itself, all appear on the same plane. This plane is not composed in the manner of Eisenstein, through a dialectical montage of the human and his world that both urges and assumes their organic connection, but through a dialectic in matter, by which "the whole merges with the infinite set of matter, and the interval merges with an eye in matter" (C1, 40/61). Vertov's montage explores an inhuman whole that exists beyond the human sensory-motor, and offers an alternative to the Soviet dialectic of man and Nature. How? Vertov's films are entirely Soviet inasmuch as they retain its quintessential theme of Nature being transformed by man into a new communist world, and its consistent aim of raising the masses' consciousness through this dialectic. But Vertov no longer identifies the camera with a human point of view. The function of the camera, Vertov argued, was to see what the human eye could not, like a telescope or microscope, and he extended this idea to montage, incorporating the freeze-frame

and single-frame editing to give effects well beyond those the human eye was capable of.²³ For Vertov the *kino-eye* embodies a raised consciousness in which Nature and man (whole and interval) have become merged in a new material collective achieving the consciousness of matter.²⁴ In Vertov's *kino-eye* Deleuze finds an entirely material dialectic enacting the "correlation between a non-human matter and a super-human eye" (C1, 40/60). Vertov's montage thus enabled the cinema to "regain the system of universal variation in itself" (C1, 80/116) and produced an "identity of a community of matter and a communism of man" (C1, 40/60). Vertov's man with a movie camera is for Deleuze, nothing less than "the overman of the future" (C1, 83/121).

On Deleuze's account, Vertov's montage breaks with the sensory-motor interval and its indirect image of time, inasmuch as Vertov's theory of the interval "no longer marks a gap which is carved out, a distancing between two consecutive images but, on the contrary, a correlation of two images which are distant (and incommensurable from the viewpoint of our human perception)" (C1, 82/118). But to return to our initial question; does Vertov's montage technique give us images other than movement-images, or simply images which were previously unknown to the classical regime? In fact, Deleuze affirms the latter, arguing that Vertov's camera, like other privileged moments in pre-war cinema, finds a universal variation "which goes beyond the human limits of the sensory-motor schema towards a non-human world where movement equals matter [. . .]. It is here the movement image attains the *sublime*" (C2, 40/58, italics added). This is a material sublime, which in carrying perception into matter and action into universal interaction, "points to a 'negative of time' as the ultimate product of the movement-image through montage" (C2, 40/58). This is not, Deleuze points out, a negation, but an image that remains "indirect or derived" despite its inhuman and communist reality (C2, 288/58). It seems that Vertov, in breaking with human perception in favour of the *kino-eye*, produces a sublime movement-image, one that perceives an unrepresentable duration/variation, a radical outside which can only be thought as the "negative of time." The sensory-motor is discarded in favour of a machinic consciousness, but this retains the epistemological coordinates of the interval (perception and action) in overcoming their human dimensions and extending them to the entire universe (C1, 40/61). As a result, Vertov's films remain within the classical regime because, in overcoming the sensory-motor, they erect a machinic interval (the "*kino-eye*") which re-invents, without leaving, (and this shouldn't be read as a criticism, just the opposite) the philosophical conditions of the movement-image. A new cinema emerges after the war, with a new ontology, where duration is no longer expressed in terms of an interval, not even one that is sublime, but is absolutely immanent to the image. Modern cinema then, does not

take Vertov's route of attempting to escape its human conditions to gain a radical material exteriority, but instead discovers the way the movement-image can be "shattered from the inside" (C2, 40/58).

A sublime outside of the sensory-motor is also found in expressionist cinema. There, Deleuze writes, we find images of "*[i]t/he non-organic life of things.*" (C1, 50/75) the deep dark negation of organic life, an image in which life = 0. This negation appears first of all in the deep blacks in the image, against which light, or luminosity, defines organic forms in their distance from the black zero. But the organic cohesion of this light is forever falling back into the black and evil non-organic night. This is also the classic expressionist story-line of course (Lang's *M* (1931), or *Siegfried* (1924), Sternberg's *The Blue Angel* (1930), and even Murnau and Flaherty's sun-drenched *Tabu* (1931)) which figures duration (non-organic life) in the terms of Kant's dynamic sublime, as a formless power which overwhelms organic life. But as in Kant's dynamic sublime our destruction in this dark immensity of an inorganic Nature is simultaneously our projection into a transcendental subjectivity. As Deleuze puts it, expressionism unleashes "*a non-psychological life of the spirit*," which is "the divine part in us, the spiritual relationship in which we are alone with God as light" (C1, 54/80). We lose our organic sensory-motor in Expressionism's black and inorganic night, only to gain the "ideal summit" (C1, 54/81) of the "spiritual abstract Form" (C1, 55/81). This super-natural and supra-sensible divine light breaks with organic composition, but only to take us beyond its sublime conditions "to discover in us a supra-organic space which dominates the whole inorganic life of things" (C1, 52/77). One need only think of the ethics of the criminal community, acting no doubt under a "categorical imperative," that Lang shows provoked by the sublime evil of *M*. As with Vertov, then, Expressionism breaks with the organic relation of the sensory-motor and the whole it indirectly represents, only to discover a sublime world, this time ideal rather than material, in which we find a spiritual redemption which reconfirms the organic conditions of the movement-image.

AS EXPRESSED BY A FACE

Deleuze's discussion of the affection-image, and its expression of an affect in the face, provides another example of the way the movement-image retains an indirect image of duration in seeking its beyond. The affection-image, as we have seen, is in Peirce's terms a "firstness," and is called by Deleuze "the feeling-thing," or "the entity" (C1, 96/136).²⁵ Deleuze goes on to elaborate Peirce's definition: the affect as firstness "is not a sensation, a feeling, an idea, but the quality of a possible sensation, feeling or idea. [. . .] it expresses the possible

without actualising it, whilst making it a complete mode" (C1, 98/139). Peirce puts it rather nicely, explaining that the quality of a firstness is in itself, "a mere possibility. [. . .] Possibility, the mode of being of Firstness, is the embryo of being. It is not nothing. It is not existence."²⁶ The qualities of affects therefore, are "pure possibles" (C1, 102/145) which "constitute the 'expressed' of states of things" (C1, 102/145).²⁷ The affect doesn't exist independently of its expression, although it is distinct from it, and together affect and affection-image form, in Deleuze's Peircean vocabulary, an "icon." The icon's bi-polar composition, the "likeness" it embodies between affect and affection-image, "serves," Peirce notes, "to convey ideas of things they represent simply by imitating them."²⁸ The affection-image is neither an actualisation of affect in action, nor an expression of a psychological state, but a sign of a "purely possible" mode of being (the affect) expressed by a face (C1, 66/97). "The affect," Deleuze writes, "is like the expressed of the state of things, but this expressed does not refer to the state of things, it only refers to the faces which express it and, coming together and separating, give it its proper moving context" (C1, 106/151).

Deleuze is once again combining Peirce's semiotics of signs with Bergson's physiology, for an affect is the change in state existing between an image's perception by a motor nerve (a perception-image) and its instantiation in a motor action (an action-image). The affect as a possible "power" or "quality" expressed in an affection-image therefore emerges within the sensory-motor "between" perception and action, and as a possible "break" in the smooth functioning of the movement-image of cine-thought. For the affect, Deleuze argues, is "that part of the event which does not let itself be actualised in a determinate milieu" (C1, 107/151). This exteriority of the affect, as possible, is explored and defined by Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition*. There Deleuze distinguishes the possible from the virtual, their difference being, as he rather dramatically puts it, "a question of existence itself" (DR, 211/273). The possible, he argues, exists in relation to a state of affairs that pre-exists it, in which it is actualised and expressed, while nevertheless remaining outside this state of affairs. The virtual, on the other hand, exists only as the production of existence, and does not exist outside of this event. The point for Deleuze is that the exteriority of the possible (as mere firstness or affect) appears in an affection-image, but it is this state of affairs (as the interiority of the subject, or sensory-motor) that conditions the exteriority of the affect. This distinction of possible and virtual is decisive for our purposes here, despite Deleuze employing both terms in his description of the affect. This is because although the affect is in itself a complex virtuality of singularities in variable relations, it is produced as a unity (i.e. as a possible) by "the virtual conjunction assured by the expression, face or proposition" (C1, 105/149). This then, is the specifically cinematic way the possible is always

"retroactively fabricated in the image of what resembles it" (DR, 212/273). This is precisely the ontological status of the cinematic affect. "The affect is independent of all determinate space-time;" Deleuze writes, "but it is none the less created in a history which produces it as expressed and the expression of a space and a time, of an epoch or a milieu (this is why the affect is the 'new' and new affects are ceaselessly created, notably by the work of art)" (C1, 99/140). Here Deleuze defines both the ontological status of the affects "independence" from, and "exteriority" to states-of-affairs (as produced by that state-of-affairs), and indicates how this "exteriority" defines an important creative aesthetic dimension of the movement-image.

Classical cinema constantly created new affects, whose affection-images lead away from the clichés of human sensibility and actions, towards what Deleuze calls, "an inhumanity much greater than that of animals" (C1, 99/141). This inhumanity can be understood through two of Deleuze's examples which conveniently lie at opposite ends of the facial spectrum, the expression of a spiritual beyond found in Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928), and the nihilist sensuality of Ingmar Bergman's magnificent women. In *Passion of Joan of Arc*, "the affective film par excellence," there is on the one hand the historical state of affairs, the trial, Joan, her accusers and the law, but on the other there is her faith, a pure affect "outside" the historical state of affairs and expressed so beautifully on Falconetti's face. Her minuscule trembles and teary uplifted eyes are signs for her faith, "this inexhaustible and brilliant part which goes beyond its own actualisation" (C1, 106/151). The film focuses on this interruption of the spirit, and the moving way Joan attempts to remain faithful to it, to attain salvation and peace in its divine beyond. This affect is the "inhuman" content of the film's narrative, the trajectory of martyrdom, the annihilation of Joan's individuality in her becoming-saint.²⁹ Bergman's faces on the other hand are more monumental, expressing singular affects rather than intense movements that achieve suspensions of individuation that teeter on the edge of the void, where the affect is in a permanent proximity to death. Everything in Bergman seems to play against this backdrop of death, and his highly formalised dramas are often reduced to a simple turning toward or turning away of the face, into or away from the void. *Cries and Whispers* (1972) is surely the finest, where the women are no longer characters but pure affects-faces, locked into a series of violent pirouettes. Bergman will accelerate these savage relations to the point of an ambiguous schizophrenia merging the women in *Persona* (1966), who exchange faces in a place "where the principle of individuation ceases to hold sway" (C1, 100/142). In both Dreyer and Bergman the affect emerges for itself, suspends individuation, and creates a powerful possibility, an a-subjective outside to the sensory-motor schema.

These a-subjective affects appear in affection-images—faces—that, Deleuze writes, “go beyond the state of things, to trace lines of flight, just enough to open up in space a dimension of another order” (C1, 101/144). This new dimension is not a state-of-affairs, but opens at the limit of the lived. This new dimension appears in various ways depending on the director who creates it. In Dreyer the affection-image opens up the fourth and fifth dimensions of time and spirit (C1, 107/152). In Bergman the affection-image tends towards “the effacement of faces in nothingness” (C1, 101/144). This new and extra dimension of the affect, Deleuze suggests, is “schizophrenic,” (C1, 110/156) inasmuch as the schizophrenic experience is a turning away from identity into a space of tactile boundlessness, and expresses this corporeal dissolution in a sign detached from its motor continuation in the sensory-motor (paralysis, autism, or delirium). “Schizophrenic” images no longer take place in rational time and space, nor are they the representative signs of human thought (thirdness). Schizo-images exist outside the sensory-motor interval in an “any-space-whatever,” as the “genetic element” or “differential sign” of affection-images (C1, 110/156). With the “any-space-whatever” we have the unusual instance of a term traversing the two cinema books, being introduced in the first in relation to the affection-image, and being explored in the second as a crucial new element of cinema after the war, one discovered by Italian neo-realism. In both cases however, an “any-space-whatever” is a singular space that has lost any homogeneity imposed by an exterior standard of measure, making it the site of an infinite number of possible

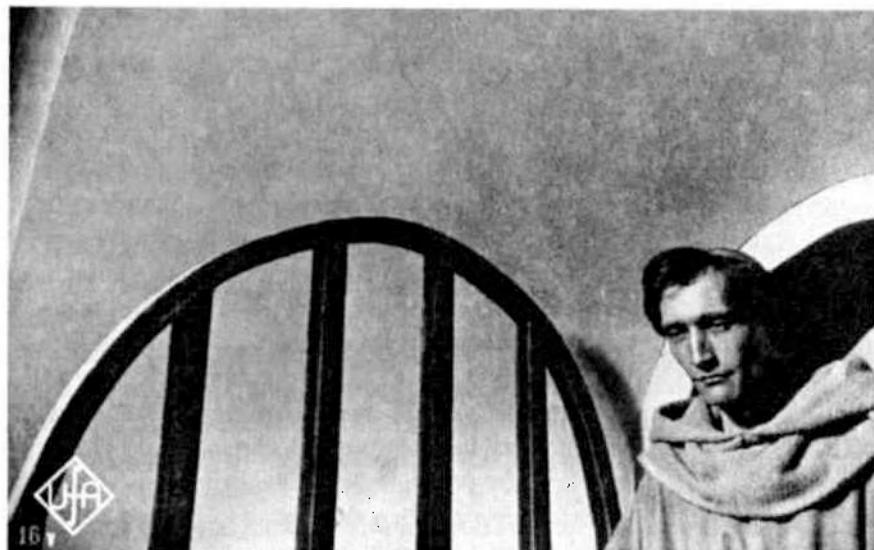


Figure 2 Carl Theodor Dreyer, *La Passion de Jeanne D'Arc*, 1928, Austrian Film Museum

linkages. “It is,” Deleuze writes in relation to classical cinema, “a space of virtual conjunction, grasped as a pure locus of the possible” (C1, 109/155).

We have seen Bergman create this opening through a turning away of faces onto death (perhaps most explicitly in the last scene of *Shame*, 1968). The films of Dreyer and Robert Bresson achieve it in a different way, by discovering this schizo any-space-whatever through a “spiritual opening” (C1, 117/165). Common to both is this “discovery” being indistinguishable from the act of choosing it (Dreyer’s *Passion of Jeanne of Arc*, or *Gertrude* (1964), and just about any of Bresson’s films, *Diary of a Country Priest* (1950), *Pickpocket* (1959), or *A Man Escaped* (1956) to mention a few of the most famous ones). This “opening” is sublime in “overcoming” the “formal obligations and material constraints” of physical space and the sensory-motor, but this “opening” is metaphysically determined by the “decision” which takes us “from” the subjective physical space it disrupts, “to” a “spiritual” world of the affect, operating—as pure possible—as a super-sensible idea. This is the Kantian operation of the affection-image, and is, as Deleuze calls it, a “theoretical or practical evasion” (C1, 117/165). This “evasion” finally “restores” the metaphysics of the movement-image by elevating the “decision,” or the act of choosing choice (what Deleuze calls an “auto-affection”) to the point where it “takes upon itself the linking of parts” (C1, 117/165). In choosing choice the sensory-motor is opened onto its outside, onto a pure indeterminability, a pure possibility or any-space-whatever acting as a space of virtual conjunction, and where the affect is raised to its pure genetic power or potentiality (C1, 113/159). But despite its undeniable beauty and power the affection-image is not an image of duration. In opening onto this beyond of the affects, and in a Kantian manner, the super-sensible becomes, as pure possible, the re-founding of an ontological continuity between this world and its metaphysical dimension. Finally then, affects as pure possibles are determined by the limits of the sensory-motor they exceed, and in this way the directors who are their masters attain sublime movement-images.

When the sublime movement-image “goes beyond the human limits of the sensory-motor,” to find “a non-human world where movement equals matter” (Vertov), a “super-human world which speaks for a new spirit” (Lang), or a purely spiritual affect (Dreyer and Bresson), it produces an opening of the sensory-motor beyond its limits, a beyond acting in a Kantian fashion as a super-sensible guarantee of the necessary unity of man and duration (however this is figured), inasmuch as it acts as “the absolute condition for movement.” As a result, “the movement-image remains primary, and gives rise only indirectly to a representation of time” (C2, 40/58). A direct image of time must await a new ontology of cinema, a new ontology that will find its historical possibility after the war (C1, 120–122/168–172).

NOTHING BUT CLICHÉS, CLICHÉS EVERYWHERE . . .

We must now briefly return to our initial discussion of Bergson's ontology, in order to understand the transition it undergoes between the cinema books. If we remember, within the mental space of an interval-brain the sensory-motor schema translates the matter/image of duration into perceptions, affections, and actions and their cinematic signs. Although at their limit these images pass into a sublime outside of the sensory-motor, this outside is nevertheless conditioned by openings produced by the sensory-motor, and remain indirect images of duration. The sensory-motor schema therefore installs a perceptual process that maintains itself even in being passed "beyond," so that even in its "sublime" moments we perceive only "what it is in our interest to perceive," once our interests have turned spiritual or super sensible (C2, 20/32). Although these images are a wonderful testament to the creativity of the movement-image, they are nevertheless exceptions and more generally Deleuze defines the movement-image as a cliché. "A cliché," Deleuze explains, "is a sensory-motor image of the thing. [. . .] We therefore normally perceive only clichés" (C2, 20/32). As a result, "the image constantly sinks to the state of cliché: because it is introduced into sensory-motor linkages" (C2, 21/32-3). Cinema's biggest challenge, the same challenge facing all the arts, is to produce images that are not clichés, and combat its "conspiracy." Doing so will involve not only the production of new images, but also a new image of art, an image which will allow us, Deleuze writes, to combat, "a civilisation of the cliché where all the powers have an interest in hiding images from us, not necessarily in hiding the same thing from us, but in hiding something in the image" (C2, 21/33).

What is this hidden "thing," and how can we see it? It is the image "itself," the image inasmuch as it expresses duration, in a direct image, or as Deleuze calls it, a "time-image." We perceive this image through a double movement, on the one hand, "our sensory-motor schemata jam or break" (C2, 20/32) and, "[o]n the other hand, at the same time, the image constantly attempts to break through the cliché, to get out of the cliché. There is no knowing how far a real image may lead: the importance of becoming visionary or seer [visionnaire ou voyant]" (C2, 21/33). The seer or visionary will be able to go beyond the sensory-motor without reconfirming its movement in a sublime outside. The figure of the visionary, as we shall see in later chapters, recurs in Deleuze's discussions of art and is always associated with a resistance to the cliché, or "opinion" as he and Guattari finally call it. In this way *Cinema 2* brings us back to the mystical and yet atheist dimension of Deleuze's ontology we have already encountered, and develops it further. The visionary artist,

We Need New Signs

according to Deleuze, is able to see and produce the new directly, as an ontogenetic vision of duration's construction/expression. "Vision" operates in this sense as the absolute immanence of duration and the image, beyond the breakdown of the sensory-motor, as the production of a new image and of a new image of thought. There is, Deleuze claims, "a simultaneous change in our conception of the brain and our relationship to the brain" (C1, 210/283). The "visionaries" of cinema, those directors considered artists (i.e. *auters*), "attack," Deleuze claims, "the dark organization of clichés" and "commit" the irreversible." These directors "extract an Image from all the clichés to set it up against them" (C1, 210/283). Modern cinema is defined by this transvaluation of its own ontology in turning its power of thought against itself; against its own clichés. In this way great directors are artists in being at once political activists (against the "dark organization of clichés"), formal innovators (breaking with the montage techniques of the movement-image), and philosophers (creating a new image of thought).

Deleuze claims the historical conditions of the new image in cinema lie in the collapse of subjective certainty after the war.³⁰ This collapse of the subjective and objective assumptions of the movement-image marks the condition of possibility of cinema's self-transformation. This change is however, ontological before it is historical. Here Deleuze picks up Bergson's own extension of his philosophy of vitalism into a mystical understanding of art.³¹ In this sense Deleuze's vocabulary is Bergsonian when he writes: "It is necessary to *combine* the optical-sound image with the enormous forces that are not those of a simply intellectual consciousness, nor of the social one, but of a profound, vital intuition" (C2, 22/33-4). This is nothing less than a claim for the mystical immanence of actual images and virtual vital forces (duration), whose "combination" can only be "seen" in an "aesthetic intuition" or "vision" as the construction of an inhuman image expressing its own genesis, its own real conditions. In this sense Deleuze echoes Bergson, who believed the force of mysticism "is exactly that of the vital impetus; it is this impetus itself."³² This vital impetus animates those mystics, those "visionaries" as Deleuze puts it, who go beyond the forms of man, and man's form (the sensory-motor), towards the genesis of the vital impetus itself. Such visionary artists are like mystics. Bergson claims, in seeking "the establishment of a contact, consequently of a partial coincidence with the creative effort of which life is the manifestation."³³ Mysticism, for Bergson, has a fundamentally artistic aspect, not only in its search for the creative basis of life, but also in its realization of a creative response to this imperative. Art would therefore share mysticism's task of finding new forms to express the fundamentally creative energy of life itself. Both then, in Bergson's words, "consist in working back from the intellectual and social plane to a point in the

soul from which there springs an imperative demand for creation. The soul within which this demand dwells may indeed have felt it fully only once in its life time, but it is always there, a unique emotion, an impulse, an impetus received from the very depth of things. To obey it completely new words would have to be coined, new ideas would have to be created.”³⁴ Mysticism and art therefore come together in the creative art of “visions,” as in both these are created by “visionaries.” Such creators, Deleuze writes in his book on Bergson, are “the great souls,” the “artists and mystics,” who, at the limit, “play with the whole of creation, who invent an expression of it whose adequacy increases with its dynamism. [. . .] the mystical soul actively plays the whole of the universe, and reproduces the opening of the Whole” (B, 112/118). So even if the Second World War introduces the historical conditions for cinema’s transformation, the real impetus for this change is ahistorical, it is the vital impetus shared by artists and mystics—the impetus to create a “vision” of and as life itself. This is not to say that cinema is ahistorical or apolitical, but that its historical and political development must first be understood ontologically, as expressions of a living duration that is constantly constructing itself new. Now we must see how this mystical art appears in the cinematic image.

THE EYE WE DO NOT HAVE

Cinema after the war, Deleuze argues, breaks with the sensory-motor schema and its movement-image, in order to explore pure optical and sound images that appear under new ontological conditions. These are images in which the virtual realm of duration is directly expressed in an actual image, once “movement has become automatic” and “the artistic essence of the image is realized” (C2, 156/203). These statements describe a new way to think as much as a new image. After the war direct images of time appear that no longer perpetuate in their delay through the sensory-motor interval, movements (action-images and affection-images) that express duration in the clichés of the human. These direct images are the visions of a new breed of characters, and of a new viewer, mutants who “saw rather than acted, they were seers” (C2, xi). Seers embody a type of experience that no longer finds its genetic conditions in perception-images, but instead produce visions of genesis. Vision becomes autonomous and active, a construction expressing duration. Art in its essence—it is a definition Deleuze will repeat in relation to painting—is the creation of visions. The painter Henri Matisse, himself influenced by Bergson, had already pointed this out, “for the artist creation begins with vision. To see is itself a creative operation.”³⁵ What are seen/created by modern cinema, Deleuze argues, are pure optical and sound situations; automatic and unmediated images “which bring the emancipated

senses into direct relation with time and thought” (C2, 17/28). These are what Deleuze will go on to call “crystal images,” images of time in its pure state, images of duration appearing through a crack in the sensory-motor, and by which the cine-brain will think time itself.

The trajectory of the cinema books can perhaps be summarized by Deleuze’s question: “How can we rid ourselves of ourselves, and demolish ourselves?” (C1, 66/97). The movement-image’s answer to this appears in Samuel Beckett’s *Film* (1965), where the escape from vision is figured by, as Deleuze puts it, “death, immobility, blackness” (C1, 68/99). This would be a kind of cinematic summation of the way the movement-image figures our escape from the sensory-motor as an opening onto its sublime outside. As we have seen, the movement-image was only able to answer the question of its limit with an image of duration that confirmed the genetic powers of the sensory-motor. In cinema after the war Deleuze finds a new image, one in which our demolition does not assume a super-sensible duration as our beyond, but is the creation of the world as it already was, the world Cézanne knew, “the world before man, before our own dawn” (C1, 68/100). Cinema after the war creates images which are adequate to a creative power “before man,” before and not beyond the sensory-motor, an inhuman power of expression adequate to its vital and artistic essence. Here the mystical “ascension” of cinema toward the plane of duration cannot be separated from a simultaneous descending movement of individuation, the folding of (and not an opening onto) the plane of immanence as cine-thought. In this ascension-descension, and here we come back to the most important aspect of Deleuze’s mystical aesthetics, the time-image constructs duration at the same time as it expresses it—there is no outside—and this is the creative and artistic “essence” of the vision of the seer.

Cinema constructs a new eye, an inhuman eye that is in duration, that is of matter and in matter, able to “see” time in its simultaneous emergence as the whole of the past being created in the passing present of an individuation. Thus the movement of the time-image constructs a vision of all time, and as Deleuze puts it, “time is no longer the measure of movement but movement is the perspective of time” (C2, 22/34). This is an important distinction, and implies a time-image which does not represent something pre-existing it, it has neither conditions of possibility, nor indeed any super-sensible outside which would determine it. The movements of the time-image give a perspective on all of time, a perspective which did not exist before, and whose construction exists as the continual emergence of the new, as the becoming of duration itself. In this way the inhuman eye is a new cine-brain, its images constructing (thinking) time as the expression of duration. As a result, representation is surpassed in a vision that is, Deleuze writes, “at once fantasy and report” (C2, 19/30). Deleuze argues

that this thinking-eye of the visionary belongs as much to the viewer, as to the character of the film (C2, 19/30). The viewer and the character, as the poles of a single time-image they produce between them, constitute a seer who can see in life what is more than sensory-organic life, “the part that cannot be reduced to what happens: that part of inexhaustible possibility [the virtual as duration] that constitutes the unbearable, the intolerable, the visionary part” (C2, 19–20/31).³⁶ This is the mystical dimension of a vitalist cinema, one which follows the Bergsonian intuition: “Wherever anything lives, there is, open somewhere, a register in which time is being inscribed” (CE, 16).

The time-image emerges prior to the distinction of subject and object, as the immanence of vision and visionary in a seer, who no longer acts, but who “is prey to a vision, pursued by it or pursuing it, rather than engaged in an action” (C2, 3/9). This break with the movement-image is accomplished by Italian neo-realism, and the films of Michelangelo Antonioni are some of Deleuze’s favourite examples.³⁷ For example, the disappearance of a woman in *L’Avventura* (1960) does not give rise to a series of actions leading to the resolution of this situation, but instead animates an affair between her boyfriend and best friend, whose increasingly destructive movements make them victims of the absence they are both pursuing and pursued by. The film no longer expresses duration through the actions and reactions of characters moving through an ordered and pre-existing time and space, instead the film is constructed around a genetic element (the woman’s disappearance) which dislocates sensory-motor coherence (the affair is played out as a series of convulsions which exist “despite”—or to spite—the couple’s rational protestations), in which the characters become the passive spectators of their own emptiness (thus exemplifying Antonioni’s pessimistic assumption that Eros is sick). But this account should not lead one to think that Antonioni has structured the film around a lack. The disappearance of Anna early in the film does not make it rotate around her absence, and instead this absence becomes creative and generates a series of disarticulated and intense affects. These mark out a new temporality, and give new images of duration, not by actualising its infinite interconnectedness in a sublime break of the interval, but by opening the actual up, and dissolving the interval in a virtual infinity. This is what explains both the slowness of the film and its unpredictable trajectory. On the one hand nothing seems to happen because the narrative cohesion suggested by Anna’s disappearance is quickly ignored, and in its place the lovers Claudia and Sandro seem to “wander” through disconnected any-space-whatevers. On the other, the situation existing between the lovers is extraordinary, and unfolds according to a seemingly spontaneous rhythm, “subject to,” Deleuze points out, “rapid breaks, interpolations and infinitesimal injections of atem-

porality” (C2, 8/16). Time has become “unhinged,” and duration as the genetic virtuality of the image (even when this is understood by Antonioni as the sickness of chronos itself, expressed in symptomatic images (C2, 8/16)) has become the “subject” of cinema, the real conditions cinema now expresses. This is a Deleuzean vitalist cinema, where duration as the univocal genetic element of images is expressed only as it is constructed: time-image.

THE CRYSTAL IS EXPRESSION

Bergson will introduce the philosophical framework for Deleuze’s direct time-image in a distinction he makes regarding memory. On the one hand we have our automatic or habitual recognition, by which we recognize objects according to the memories of our sensory-motor schema, both confirmation of and conforming to the world we live in. On the other hand, is what Bergson calls “attentive” recognition, a perception of something as truly “new,” something never seen before. The vision of a child, the visions of a visionary. . . . an image unintelligible to our sensory-motor schema, because it is the emergence *of*, rather than *in*, time. Attentive memory is continually producing these images by creating new virtual connections in vision. We see an image that is continually changing, continually under construction, vibrating in its difference from itself. And this construction works in both directions at once, producing new actual images that in turn construct the new virtual memories it expresses. Here Deleuze quotes Bergson, “it will be seen that the progress of attention results in creating anew, not only the object perceived, but also the ever-widening systems with which it may be bound up” (C2, 46/65).

Attentive recognition produces a “recollection-image,” in which virtual and actual are perceived in dynamic and creative relation (C2, 46/64). But although the recollection image transforms itself through the process of memory, Deleuze argues, it is not in itself virtual, but simply the actualisation of each successive virtual dimension, of each “layer” of memory it actualises, and therefore its construction remains representational. “This is why,” Deleuze writes, “the recollection-image does not deliver the past to us, but only represents the former present that the past ‘was’” (C2, 54/75). The recollection-image is therefore already integrated into the temporal linearity along which the sensory-motor organism moves, and its virtual relations are fed back into spatio-temporal and subjective normality. What is truly disruptive to this, Deleuze will argue, and finally what will give us images making visible the fully reciprocal immanence of the actual and the virtual, is the failure of memory. When the organism cannot remember, cannot represent the virtual in a “new” actual image, a truly new image appears, which “enters into relations with genuinely virtual elements”

(C2, 54/75). The sensory-motor has broken down, but this has produced a visionary function that becomes creative.

A "genuine relation" with the virtual will be forged in the crystal-image, "the image with two sides, actual and virtual at the same time" (C2, 69/93). Here virtual and actual are distinct but indiscernible, being "totally reversible" (C2, 69/94). This reversibility, the "continual exchange" (C2, 70/95) of the actual and the virtual, means the crystal-image is adequate to and expressive of duration. In the crystal-image the virtual and actual, the infinite and the finite, are truly indiscernible, and we have arrived at a mysticism that is entirely atheist. Deleuze suggests as much: "In the crystal-image there is this mutual search—blind and halting—of matter and spirit: beyond the movement-image, 'in which we are still pious'" (C2, 75/101). Still pious because it still seeks the super-sensible. As we have seen, the mystical expression of a vital materialism, a vision, is the Deleuzian condition of art. As Deleuze puts it, the indiscernibility of virtual and actual has "always accompanied art without ever exhausting it, because art found in them a means of creation for certain special images" (C2, 76/103).

What exactly is this "special image" and how does it appear in the cinema? Deleuze argues that the actual image is always present, but that this present passes as each new present arrives. It is the virtual dimension of the image that preserves all of the past, and so when virtual and actual are totally reversible in the crystal-image, it is an image of both the passing present and all of the past at the same time. The differential relation of these simultaneous and "heterogeneous directions" of time form the image in its "most fundamental operation" (C2, 81/108). This genetic and differential relation, Deleuze claims, is the ontological process of a "powerful, non-organic Life which grips the world" (C2, 81/109). At this point Deleuze's taste for taxonomy once more comes to the fore, as he begins the task of classifying crystal-images. He finds the first in the films of Yasujiro Ozu, and identifies one technique in the film *Late Spring* (1943), in which a shot of a vase is inserted into a sequence showing the daughter's half smile and tears. The change in the character, as actual change, appears in a differential relation to the unchanging vase as the form of time (the duration of the virtual), time itself, which does not change. "There is becoming," Deleuze writes, "change, passage. But the form of what changes does not change, does not pass on. This is time, time itself, 'a little time in its pure state': a direct time-image, which gives what changes the unchanging form in which the change is produced" (C2, 17/27).

What happens no longer takes place in time, nor does time simply measure what happens, time and its image, virtual and actual are fully reversible in a crystal-image. This, quite simply, means: "The present is the actual image, and

its contemporaneous past is the virtual image" (C2, 79/106). The two aspects of the crystal image are indiscernible, the virtual from "the actual present of which it is the past, absolutely and simultaneously" (C2, 79/106–7). The crystal-image as indiscernibility, or "smallest circuit," of actual and virtual encompasses, in its largest circuit, the whole universe, all of duration itself. Crystal-images therefore, are mystical images in which, as Deleuze puts it, "one and the same horizon links the cosmic to the everyday" (C2, 17/28). They are images of the present and its own past, "the whole of the real, life in its entirety, which has become spectacle, in accordance with the demands of a pure optical and sound perception" (C2, 84/122). Deleuze describes this cosmic image with the appropriately mystical metaphor of an ocean, in which images "bathe or plunge to trace an actual shape and bring in their provisional harvest" (C2, 80/108).³⁸ That Deleuze's language should get particularly poetic here, where the crystal image is delineated in its mystical dimension, should be no surprise, it is a trait of Deleuze's writing which is as expressive as the image he is attempting to describe. He continues:

The crystal-image has these two aspects: internal limit of all the relative circuits, but also outer-most, variable and reshaping envelope, at the edges of the world, beyond even moments of world. The little crystalline seed and the vast crystallisable universe: everything is included in the capacity for expansion of the collection constituted by the seed and the universe. (C2, 80–1/108)

The crystal-image is mystic inasmuch as seed and universe exist in co-implication within it, inasmuch as the crystal traverses these at once microscopic and cosmic dimensions, each constructing and expressing the other in their processual immanence. For this co-existence is in no way static. The crystal-image is ontogenetic, it constructs the universe which is expressed in the seed, as it must when, once more, *nothing is given except the to come*. Only a mystic seer can produce this image. "The visionary, the seer," Deleuze writes, "is the one who sees in the crystal, and what he sees is the gushing of time as dividing in two, as splitting" (C2, 81/109).

This visionary, inhuman, "third eye" (C2, 18/29) does not perceive things through passive sensory reception, but constructs time-images in what Deleuze calls "hallucinations." This hallucinatory perception, disengaged from spatio-temporal *a priori*, as from the sensory-motor of a subject, constructs a vision of the virtual it expresses in an actual image. To hallucinate an object as a crystal-image is to "see" the ontogenetic split in time, as it becomes both seed and universe, as it passes in the present and includes all of the past, an actual expression that constructs a virtual universe, again. Hallucination is the art of seeing the

image as actual virtuality as, Deleuze writes, the “sole decomposed and multiplied object” (C2, 126/165). In this way a crystal-image “stands for its object, replaces it, both creates and erases it” (C2, 126/165). Hallucination constitutes the “cinema of the seer” (C2, 126/166), a materialist cinematics where the “seer” is an eye *in* matter, an eye that is no longer an interval organising the dialectic of man and Nature, but is a pure vision in which the subject and object are dissolved in an image of, and as an image as, material innovation—the universe as cinema itself. “What can be more subjective than delirium, a dream, a hallucination?” Deleuze asks, “But what can be closer to a materiality made up of luminous wave and molecular interaction?” (C1, 76–7/111). The seer has a vision, as the visuality of matter itself, as the vision matter creates for itself as it emerges in images, each time, again. The vision and the viewer come together in the seer, as the necessary condition to all art-work.³⁹ Art is hallucination, which is to say art is creation, and cinema after the war becomes hallucinatory. Needless to say, this visionary image can no longer be understood in Peircean or any other linguistic terms. Modern cine-thought is no longer defined by a tripartite sign and its sensory-motor, but by a break it creates through which the brain will escape. A crystalline cine-thought emerges anew, its images rinsed of cliché and crystallising in their hallucinatory ellipses a little time in its pure state, a crystal through which the universe is refracted.

Despite the crystal bathing in the cosmic infinite, differentiation is just as important for its crystalline life. At their outer limit all crystal-images merge into the single refrain of a cosmic inorganic life, but they retain a simultaneous particularity that is their present actuality. It is here and now that crystals express themselves, but unlike the movement-image’s pre-existing conditions of appearance, the ‘here and now’ of crystal-images is entirely unpredictable and spontaneous, and depends on a process of experimentation. This is the Bergsonian vitalism of a crystalline artistic process, it is the “bursting forth of life” (C2, 91/121). Does this mean art exists only in the crystal? In ontological terms this is true, although as we shall see and have seen, the crystal-image in this sense has many other names in Deleuze’s work and in his work with Guattari. Indeed, it is the specificity of this vocabulary to the particular “artistic-machine” it describes that focuses our cosmic and mystical enthusiasms on *this* world, a world with no “beyond” but the “to come” it creates. Each *this* will have to be described—it means created—in its singularity. In the cinema each modern director creates his or her own crystals through a unique diagram that at once constructs actual images as the passing present, and contains all of the past, the virtual dimension into which it plunges, like a sieve. Constructing this diagram is the action of cine-thought, the site (the sight) of the splitting of time, and the crystallisation of the universe. Deleuze examines a wide range of these diagrams,

and the ‘crystals’ they produce, but a good example is that of Max Ophüls as it constructs his film *Earrings of Madame D...* (1953). Briefly, Ophüls’ crystalline diagram operates at all levels of composition: in the film’s specific images (crystal chandeliers, mirrors, the earrings of Madame D), in the famous camera movements and shots full of faceted reflections, and in the development of the story whose increasingly complex virtual dimension emerges in series of crystalline circulations and refractions from which there is no escape (this is true of other Ophüls’ films as well, *Lola Montez* (1955) or *La Ronde* (1950) for example) As Deleuze states: “Ophüls’s images are perfect crystals” (C2, 83/111). The crystal is diagrammatic, inasmuch as it creates an actual state-of-affairs at the same time as this actuality is itself creative, constructing a virtuality, a reality that is to come. The crystal-image is an image as the splitting of time, each image a present which enfolds and unfolds its past and future.

IN FAVOUR OF THE FALSE AND ITS ARTISTIC POWER

This emphasis on the constructive powers of the crystal-image has important philosophical consequences for cinema. The crystal-image produces movements that are essentially “false,” the false continuity and jump-cuts of Godard, or the merge of fantasy and reality in Fellini for example. Deleuze finds in these developments a Nietzschean inspiration, and marks the return, though not by its old name, of the simulacra, the “image without resemblance” (LS, 257/297).⁴⁰ The crystal-image is not a resemblance, not a description, nor is it a representation, because it has no extra dimension that would verify or deny its truth. This is the decisive Nietzschean intuition for Deleuze: “By raising the false to power, life freed itself of appearances as well as truth: neither true nor false, an undecidable alternative, but power of the false, decisive will” (C2, 145/189). Nietzsche is crucial at this point of Deleuze’s account, for “it is Nietzsche, who, under the name of ‘will to power,’ substitutes the power of the false for the form of the true, and resolves the crises of truth, wanting to settle it once and for all, [. . .] in favor of the false and its artistic, creative power . . .” (C2, 131/172). In other words, the crystal-image enjoys the power of the false ontologically, for it is the vital power constructing and expressing an absolutely immanent and univocal duration, no longer a duration as the “outside” of time, but an “internal outside,” a creative “will” of cine-thought emerging in a new cinematic aesthetics.

Deleuze provides an interesting discussion of documentary film to illustrate this point, focussing on the so-called “direct” cinema appearing at the beginning of the 1960s (C2, 150/196).⁴¹ Don Pennebaker’s film *Hier Strauss* (1965) for example, is a portrait of the governor of Munchen in this style. The

camera follows Strauss in his day to day activities, telling the story without voice over or comment, seemingly "from within." The camera is so close it is "like being there," but this "like" is precisely the hallucinatory power of the crystal-image which no longer represents the truth, as something it "reports" or "documents," but constructs it. The camera is not dissolved in the "truth" it represents; rather the camera dissolves the true in finding its power of the false.⁴² This has remarkable consequences, for what we see in *Hier Strauss* is not the "reality" of the central character, but the becoming with which he has merged. What Deleuze writes about Pierre Perrault's "cinema of the lived" applies equally to Strauss, "as he himself starts to 'make fiction,' when he enters into the 'flagrant offence of making up legends' and so contributing to the invention of his people" (C2, 150/196). Deleuze intends this comment literally, and the eponymous hero of *Hier Strauss* is seen promoting a new united Europe. He has a "vision" in which a "before" is inseparable from an "after," the film documenting Herr Strauss' tireless efforts on behalf of this world-to-come. This is how the film reveals the splitting of time, the continual appearance of new "befores" and "afters," in a crystal-image embodying, "the passage from one to the other" (C2, 150/196). In this way, Deleuze claims, the cinema of the time-image is "direct" cinema inasmuch as it destroys all models of the true in becoming the creator of truth. Direct cinema will not, he writes, "be a cinema of the truth, but the truth of cinema" (C2, 151/197). At this point we could well ask whether modern cinema finally travels under a Nietzschean banner rather than a Bergsonian one, or perhaps more generously, whether the artistic power of the false marks Deleuze's creation of the indiscernibility of Bergson and Nietzsche,⁴³ a hyphenation giving the name to a Bergson beyond Bergson.⁴⁴

With the introduction of Nietzsche the crystal-image becomes ethically as well as ontologically distinct from representation. Crystal-images are not judgments of life in the name of the higher authorities of the true and the good, they are immanent evaluations of the life they involve, are ethical images rather than moral representations (C2, 137/179–80). This is the Nietzschean-Bergsonian reality of a cinema of becoming rather than being, of time rather than movement. These images can express good or bad, but only in becoming good or bad, in other (Nietzschean) words, by transforming themselves in an affirmation of becoming or by negating themselves in representations of truth. In such a cinema of immanent evaluation we once again return to the onto-aesthetics we have already explored in relation to Spinoza and Nietzsche. Indeed, at this point in Deleuze's account he talks not of cinema, but of the "artistic will or 'virtue which gives,' [as] the creation of new possibilities, in the outpouring becoming" (C2, 141/185). This ontological definition of art will find its specificity in particular art forms, and in and as an ethics of the artist. But this is the artist not as

subjective genius, but as Nietzsche put it as "pure mouthpiece," as a mystical seer or visionary who produces crystal-images as the expression and affirmation of the "artistic becoming" of—and here Deleuze's terminology becomes entirely Nietzschean—"the will to power" (C2, 142/185). Once again: "Only the creative artist takes the power of the false to a degree which is realized, not in form, but in transformation. [...] What the artist is, is *creator of truth*, because truth is not to be achieved, formed, or reproduced; it has to be created" (C2, 146/191). Behind all the film makers and all the painters, behind all artists, is Zarathustra, "the artist or outpouring life" (C2, 147/192). Once more we return to this mystical equivalence of the artist and life.

Nietzsche's appearance in the cinema books allows Deleuze to make a distinction between two concepts of duration. One duration, or whole, exists for the movement-image and one for the time-image, one for the organic regime and one for the crystalline. Quite simply the first assumes a pre-existing reality, the second does not. Becoming is at the heart of duration in both regimes, but they differ in the respective images each regime gives of duration. The organic sensory-motor assumes an open whole, and one which changes, but as an exterior "reality" its movements represent, the movement-image therefore is an "indirect or mediate representation" of time (duration) (C2, 277/361–62). The movement-image constitutes time in its "empirical form," in which "the movement-image gives rise to an image of time which is distinguished from it by excess or default, over or under the present as empirical progression: in this case, time is no longer measured by movement, but is itself the number or measure of movement (metaphysical representation)" (C2, 271/355). This number of time is either its minimum unity found in the interval (Joan's spiritual face as pure affect for example), or it is the maximum of movement in the universe (Vertov's materialist dialectic). But in either case, duration exists only in its indirect representation, as part of an organic whole (inside-outside, individual and Nature) in which the movements of duration are relative to the actions of the sensory-motor interval. This is the "general system of commensurability" required by the classical image (C2, 277/362).

That the crystal-image, or direct image of time will come from the disintegration of the sensory-motor and its spatio-temporal *a priori* is at least hinted at by Bergson. "Degrade the immutable ideas," he writes, "you obtain, by that alone, the perpetual flux of things" (CE, 317). Furthermore, if "we must accustom ourselves to think being directly, without making a detour," then we must, Bergson suggests, "install ourselves within it straight away" (CE, 298–9). But how do we do this, and how do we avoid simply "crossing over" and giving an image of duration as the sensory-motors outside? Such an image finally, would have the same problem Spinoza's univocity was found to have by Deleuze in