



Understanding Deleuze, Understanding Modernism

Edited by **Paul Ardoin, S. E. Gontarski, and Laci Mattison**

B L O O M S B U R Y

Understanding Philosophy, Understanding Modernism

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Paul Ardoin, S. E. Gontarski, and Laci Mattison

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Understanding Deleuze, Understanding Modernism

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B L O O M S B U R Y
NEW YORK • LONDON • NEW DELHI • SYDNEY

Bloomsbury Academic

An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Inc

1385 Broadway
New York
NY 10018
USA

50 Bedford Square
London
WC1B 3DP
UK

www.bloomsbury.com

Bloomsbury is a registered trade mark of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

First published 2014

© Paul Ardoïn, S. E. Gontarski, and Laci Mattison, 2014

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ISBN: HB: 978-1-6235-6349-3

ePDF: 978-1-6235-6068-3

ePub: 978-1-6235-6530-5

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Understanding Deleuze, Understanding Modernism / edited by S. E. Gontarski,
Paul Ardoïn, Laci Mattison.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-62356-349-3 (hardback)

1. Deleuze, Gilles, 1925–1995—Criticism and interpretation. 2. Modernism (Aesthetics)
3. Literature—Philosophy. I. Gontarski, S. E., editor of compilation. II. Ardoïn, Paul, editor of compilation. III. Mattison, Laci, editor of compilation.

B2430.D454U53 2014

194—dc23

2014009296

Typeset by Deanta Global Publishing Services, Chennai, India

Contents

| | |
|--|------|
| Abbreviations | vii |
| Contributors | viii |
| Series Preface <i>Paul Ardoïn, S. E. Gontarski, and Laci Mattison</i> | xiii |
| Introduction: Gilles Deleuze and the Staging of Philosophy <i>Paul Ardoïn, S. E. Gontarski, and Laci Mattison</i> | 1 |
| Part 1 Conceptualizing Deleuze | |
| 1 Deleuze's <i>Proust and Signs</i> : The Literary Partial Object <i>Patrick M. Bray</i> | 11 |
| 2 Life as Method: The Invention of Problems in Deleuze's <i>Bergsonism</i> <i>Wahida Khandker</i> | 21 |
| 3 Diagrammatic Modernism: Abstraction, Immanence, and the Positions of Style <i>Joe Hughes</i> | 33 |
| 4 Reading <i>Anti-Oedipus</i> : Literature, Schizophrenia, and Universal History <i>Aidan Tynan</i> | 48 |
| 5 On the Flyleaves of Modernism: Deleuze and Guattari's <i>Kafka</i> <i>Jason Skeet</i> | 61 |
| 6 Intensive Multiplicities in <i>A Thousand Plateaus</i> <i>Audronė Žukauskaitė</i> | 75 |
| 7 <i>The Movement-Image, The Time-Image</i> , and the Paradoxes of Literary and Other Modernisms <i>Garin Dowd</i> | 90 |
| 8 <i>What is Philosophy?</i> : "To play it again on a new stage" <i>S. E. Gontarski</i> | 110 |
| 9 <i>Essays Critical and Clinical</i> : The Book as a "Whole" <i>Anthony Uhlmann</i> | 121 |
| Part 2 Deleuze and Aesthetics | |
| 10 "A strange respect for the individual": Gilles Deleuze and Hardy the Novelist <i>John Hughes</i> | 135 |
| 11 Entangled in Nature: Deleuze's Modernism, Woolf's Philosophy, and Spinoza's Ethology <i>Derek Ryan</i> | 151 |
| 12 Dancing with Deleuze: Modernism and the Imperceptible Animal <i>Carrie Rohman</i> | 169 |

| | | |
|-----------------|--|-----|
| 13 | Henry Miller and Deleuze's "Strange Anglo-American Literature" <i>Andrew Marzoni</i> | 182 |
| 14 | Schizoanalytic Modernism: The Case of Antonin Artaud <i>Ian Buchanan</i> | 196 |
| 15 | Deleuze's Perspectival Theory of Modernism and the Baroque <i>Christopher Langlois</i> | 207 |
| 16 | Incorporeal Modernism <i>Claire Colebrook</i> | 223 |
| Part 3 Glossary | | |
| 17 | Abstract Machine <i>Aden L. Evens</i> | 245 |
| 18 | Actual/Virtual <i>Aden L. Evens</i> | 247 |
| 19 | Affect <i>Mickey Vallee</i> | 249 |
| 20 | Assemblage <i>Justin Litaker</i> | 251 |
| 21 | Becoming <i>Jason Skeet</i> | 253 |
| 22 | Body Without Organs <i>Ian Buchanan</i> | 255 |
| 23 | Desire <i>Marco Altamirano</i> | 258 |
| 24 | Deterritorialization <i>John Mac Kilgore</i> | 261 |
| 25 | Memory <i>Nadine Boljkovac</i> | 264 |
| 26 | Minor Literature <i>Christopher Langlois</i> | 266 |
| 27 | Plane of Immanence <i>Jon K. Shaw</i> | 268 |
| 28 | Rhizome <i>Eugene W. Holland</i> | 271 |
| 29 | Schizoanalysis <i>Anna Powell</i> | 273 |
| 30 | Stuttering <i>Mickey Vallee</i> | 276 |
| 31 | Time-Image <i>Nadine Boljkovac</i> | 278 |
| | Index | 281 |

Abbreviations

| | |
|-----|--|
| AO | <i>Anti-Oedipus</i> |
| ATP | <i>A Thousand Plateaus</i> |
| B | <i>Bergsonism</i> |
| CI | <i>Cinema I: The Movement-Image</i> |
| CII | <i>Cinema II: The Time-Image</i> |
| DII | <i>Dialogues II</i> |
| DR | <i>Difference and Repetition</i> |
| ECC | <i>Essays Critical and Clinical</i> |
| EP | <i>Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza</i> |
| FB | <i>Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation</i> |
| K | <i>Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature</i> |
| LS | <i>The Logic of Sense</i> |
| N | <i>Negotiations</i> |
| NP | <i>Nietzsche and Philosophy</i> |
| PI | <i>Pure Immanence</i> |
| PS | <i>Proust and Signs</i> |
| SPP | <i>Spinoza: Practical Philosophy</i> |
| WP | <i>What is Philosophy?</i> |

Contributors

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(Continuum, 1997), *Gilles Deleuze* (Routledge, 2002), *Understanding Deleuze* (Allen and Unwin, 2002), *Irony in the Work of Philosophy* (Nebraska University Press, 2002), *Gender* (Palgrave, 2003), *Irony* (Routledge, 2004), *Milton, Evil and Literary History* (Continuum 2008), *Deleuze and the Meaning of Life* (Continuum, 2010), and *William Blake and Digital Aesthetics* (Continuum, 2011). She co-authored *Theory and the Disappearing Future* with Tom Cohen and J. Hillis Miller (Routledge, 2011), and co-edited *Deleuze and Feminist Theory* with Ian Buchanan (Edinburgh University Press, 2000), *Deleuze and History* with Jeff Bell (Edinburgh University Press, 2008), *Deleuze and Gender* with Jami Weinstein (Edinburgh University Press, 2009) and *Deleuze and Law* (Palgrave) with Rosi Braidotti and Patrick Hanafin. She has written articles on visual culture, poetry, literary theory, queer theory, and contemporary culture. She is completing a book on human extinction.

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Eugene Holland is author of the Bloomsbury *Readers Guide to A Thousand Plateaus, Nomad Citizenship: Free-Market Communism and the Slow-Motion General Strike* (Minnesota), *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis*

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Series Preface

Understanding Philosophy, Understanding Modernism

Paul Ardoin, S. E. Gontarski, and Laci Mattison

Sometime late in the twentieth century, modernism, like philosophy itself, underwent something of an unmooring from (at least) linear literary history in favor of the multiperspectival history implicit in “new historicisms” or varieties of “presentism,” say. Amid current reassessments of modernism and modernity, critics have posited various “new” or alternative modernisms—postcolonial, cosmopolitan, transatlantic, transnational, geomodernism, or even “bad” modernisms. In doing so, they have not only reassessed modernism as a category or period, but also, more broadly, they have rethought epistemology and ontology, aesthetics, metaphysics, materialism, history, and being itself, opening possibilities of rethinking not only which texts we read as modernist, but also how we read those texts.

Much of this new conversation constitutes something of a critique of the periodization of modernism or modernist studies in favor of modernism as mode (or mode of production) or concept. *Understanding Philosophy, Understanding Modernism* situates itself amid just such a plurality of discourses, offering collections focused on single key philosophical thinkers influential both to the moment of modernism and to our current understanding of that moment’s genealogy, archeology, and becomings. Such critiques of modernism(s) and modernity afford opportunities to rethink and reassess the overlaps, folds, interrelationships, interleavings, or cross-pollinations of modernism and philosophy. Our goal in each volume of the series is to understand literary modernism better through philosophy as we also better understand a philosopher through literary modernism.

The first two volumes of the series, those dedicated to Henri Bergson and Gilles Deleuze, have established a tripartite structure that serves to offer accessibility both to the philosopher’s principle texts and to current new research. Each volume opens with a section focused on “conceptualizing” the philosopher through close readings of seminal texts in the thinker’s *œuvre*. A second section, on aesthetics, maps connections between modernist works and the philosophical figure, often surveying key modernist trends and shedding new light on authors and texts. The final section of each volume serves as an extended glossary of principal terms in the philosopher’s work, each treated at length, allowing a fuller engagement with and examination of the many,

sometimes contradictory ways terms are deployed. The series is thus designed both to introduce philosophers and to rethink their relationship to modernist studies, revising our understandings of both modernism and philosophy, and offering resources that will be of use across disciplines, from philosophy, theory, and literature, to religion, the visual and performing arts, and often to the sciences as well.

Introduction: Gilles Deleuze and the Staging of Philosophy

Paul Ardoyn, S. E. Gontarski, and Laci Mattison

Perhaps one day, this century will be known as Deleuzian.

—Michel Foucault¹

Gilles Deleuze has rewritten the story of philosophy, challenged and reconstructed it philosopher by philosopher, idea by idea, concept by concept; reconceived aesthetics, epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, materialism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, and ontology, rethought the relationship among philosophy, literature, and science, and inflected those fields with a critique of power through a series of books and essays on individual philosophers like Kant, Spinoza, Leibniz, Nietzsche, and Bergson, not summarizing their thought but restaging it with something of a Deleuzian rereading. His approach was similar with artists: Deleuze's (and Guattari's) reflections on Proust, Kafka, Beckett, Woolf, and others recreated the story of modern and modernist literature, as well as that of twentieth-century narrative in general. He reconceived the plastic arts and music with analyses of Bacon, Messiaen, and Pollock, among others, and he reconceptualized film in a brace of studies on that medium. His work, that is, is of no small import.

While *Empirisme et subjectivité* appeared in 1953 (trans. as *Empiricism and Subjectivity* in 1991), Deleuze's breakthrough came with a publishing spurt nearly a decade later: *Nietzsche et la philosophie* in 1962 (trans. as *Nietzsche and Philosophy* in 1983), *La philosophie critique de Kant* in 1963 (trans. as *Kant's Critical Philosophy* in 1983), and *Proust et les signes* in 1964 (trans. as *Proust and Signs* in 1973, expanded ed. 2000). This stunning body of work was followed by something of a consolidation of his positions, works organized around concepts, beginning with what is often considered his masterwork, his metaphysical treatise *Différence et répétition* (1968, trans. as *Difference and Repetition*, 1994), and followed soon by the great diptych on *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 1972's *L'Anti-Oedipe* (trans. as *Anti-Oedipus*, 1977) and 1980's *Mille Plateaux* (trans. as *A Thousand Plateaus*, 1987), both written in collaboration with Félix Guattari.

The aim (and effect) was to upset the history of philosophy and the received wisdom of theory, and Deleuze (and Guattari) materialized metaphysics in a way that offered challenges to or critiques of language, the family, capitalism, and history itself. The work drew early praise from noted philosopher Michel Foucault in his extended review in *Critique* called "Theatrum Philosophicum" (1970), which opens with his assessment

of what he calls Deleuze's "reversed Platonism," focusing on Deleuze's philosophy of difference thus:

I must discuss two books of exceptional merit and importance: *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*. Indeed these books are so outstanding that they are difficult to discuss; this may explain, as well, why so few have undertaken this task. I believe that these works will continue to revolve around us in enigmatic resonance with those of Klossowski, another major and excessive sign, and perhaps one day, this century will be known as Deleuzian. (885)

The last and most dramatic part of Foucault's quotation, which Deleuze considered something of a joke or one designed to provoke ire among his contemporaries, was nonetheless seized, that is, capitalized upon almost immediately by publishers to promote sales. Foucault offered a further endorsement in his "Preface" to *Anti-Oedipus*, with a shorthand summary of the authors' line(s) of flight in terms of advice to the reader: "Prefer what is positive and multiple. Difference over uniformity, flows over unities, mobile arrangements over systems. Believe that what is productive is not sedentary but nomadic."²

This image of a line of flight is appropriate for a body of work that continues to insist that "theory does not totalize," as Deleuze tells us; "it is an instrument for multiplication and it also multiplies itself. It is in the nature of power to totalize and . . . theory is by nature opposed to power."³ This "nomadic" thrust—itself a line of flight, an instrument of multiplication and becomings—owes much to Henri Bergson, of course, and hence is a bridge to the first volume in this book series. But Deleuze's own rereading, remaking, and restaging of Bergson, Nietzsche, Spinoza, and other philosophers has had such an impact on subsequent cultural production and philosophical thought that the twentieth century, and now the twenty-first, might reasonably be described as Deleuzian, as long as we accept Foucault's qualifier, "perhaps." That last was, coincidentally, a favorite word of Samuel Beckett, one of those "minor" (or minoritarian) artistic figures Deleuze rereads so influentially, demonstrating that philosophy owes as much or more to literature as literature does to philosophy.

This volume explores and details Deleuze's profound impact on two centuries of art and philosophy, on theory and praxis, and it traces the arc of that impact in Deleuze's own understanding of modernism. The format here follows that of our previous volume, which allows the term "understanding" to describe a plurality of access: an introduction to a figure and a field that will interest advanced undergraduates, graduate students, and other scholars new to the subject and at the same time will offer an evolving "understanding" for established scholars that comes through the publication of new, analytic essays by leaders in the field.

The volume begins with a section that aims to "conceptualize" Deleuze by offering close readings of some of his most important solo works, as well as those written in collaboration with Félix Guattari. This unique feature to our volume allows in-depth discussion, elaboration, and contextualization of key philosophical texts before they are read alongside modernist works in part two. Throughout the "Conceptualizing

Deleuze” section, contributors aim to offer new readings that both illuminate Deleuze’s work and expand current understandings of that work. Some of the essays accomplish this by reading one of Deleuze’s texts against or in the context of his entire body of work, while others challenge Deleuze’s readings of other philosophers. Furthermore, essays in this section also make arguments about how these philosophical texts are important to the ways we think about modernism, politics, aesthetics, and life.

Included in this section are essays on Deleuze and Guattari’s two-volume magnum opus, *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, and another collaboration written between the publication of these two works, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. In his essay on *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, contributor Aidan Tynan shows how the discipline Deleuze and Guattari call schizoanalysis serves as an explanation of how genius emerges, via desire, not only “in the arts but also in our thinking, feeling, and general behavior.” As Deleuze and Guattari note, “Oedipus is in fact literary before being psychoanalytic” (AO, 145), and as Tynan states, it is no surprise, then, that Freudian analysis has dominated literary discourse. What Freud offered to literature (and to literary studies) was, however, not an opening up but a closing off of, as Tynan writes, “what Deleuze and Guattari call a ‘right to nonsense,’ a right to a free creative space.” Such is the difference between a literature of health and a literature of illness, and as Tynan concludes, the authors who attract Deleuze and Guattari in a mutual becoming of philosophy and literature—and indeed, those authors who are significant to the concepts of *Anti-Oedipus*—are those who “manifest a pre-occupation with health that diverges from established medicine.”

For Deleuze and Guattari, the Signifier (the biggest example of which is Oedipus, who turns everything into Daddy) blocks the type of productive reading they champion. Jason Skeet highlights this issue in his essay on Kafka: “Kafka’s novels and short stories . . . present us with a world to be entered, investigated and experienced in different ways. . . . Deleuze and Guattari identify their enemy as the freezing of understanding, the introduction of ‘the Signifier and those attempts to interpret a work that is actually only open to experimentation.’” Skeet’s essay offers an answer to the question posed at the opening of *Kafka*, namely, how to “enter into” it. *Kafka*, written between the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, both develops concepts from *Anti-Oedipus* and “looks forward to the rhizome as image of thought that *A Thousand Plateaus* explores,” Skeet writes. This chapter moves on to offer a close-reading of “assemblage” and “minor literature” and discusses the wider political implications of *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Audronė Žukauskaitė, like Skeet, highlights the politics integral to Deleuze and Guattari’s work in her essay on *A Thousand Plateaus*. Žukauskaitė also offers a productive way to approach this complex volume for both new and veteran readers, as she takes up Deleuze’s differentiation of extensive and intensive multiplicities as a way to connect various plateaus of the second installment of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. The opposition between these two types of multiplicities is also that of “the permanent tension between the arborescent structures and the rhizome, the organism and the body without organs, the apparatus of capture and the war machine,” Žukauskaitė states.

Contributor essays on *Proust and Signs*, *The Movement-Image* and *The Time-Image*, and *Difference and Repetition* all deal, in some fashion or another, with the

way Deleuze puts forth an image of thought. Like the works of modernist writers and artists, Deleuze's philosophy not only forces us to think differently about subjectivity and our relationship to the world, but it also challenges us to radicalize the way we think, to recognize and break our habits of thought. Patrick Bray, in his essay "Deleuze's *Proust and Signs*: The Literary Partial Object," shows how Deleuze's reading of Proust underlines "the philosophical implications of literary thought" and argues that references to Proust in Deleuze's other works are markers of "philosophy's debt to literary practice." *Proust and Signs*, Bray concludes, is not just a fascinating look into a philosopher's reading of a great modernist masterpiece; it also draws a map of the recurring concepts of Deleuzian philosophy, particularly the image of thought. A violent encounter generates the image of thought; such an "image of thought would be telescopic . . . bringing into the same field of vision elements that are very distant from each other," Bray writes, acknowledging that, for Deleuze, *In Search of Lost Time* produces such a telescopic vision, or rather, is the telescope with which the reader assembles, a telescope which "forces us to think" (PS, 24).

Garin Dowd, in "*The Movement-Image, The Time-Image, and the Paradoxes of Literary and Other Modernisms*," examines the ways Deleuze's examples of modern(ist) cinema also "effectuate this new image of thought"—in distinction from Kantian and Hegelian images of thought and in alliance with Nietzsche and Bergson—thus linking the *Cinema* books to the project begun in *Difference and Repetition*. For Dowd, Deleuze's modernism is "intrinsically linked to his overall philosophical system." Thus, any relationship between Deleuze and modernism must be explored within this system.

Deleuze claims in *Difference and Repetition* that "[t]he theory of thought is like painting: it needs that revolution which took art from representation to abstraction. This is the aim of a theory of thought without image." Such a new theory of thought, Joe Hughes explains in "Diagrammatic Modernism: Abstraction, Immanence, and the Positions of Style," would be precisely modernist. Hughes explains that this analogy is not just a fitting simile, but rather a functional and significant way to approach Deleuze's methodology in *Difference and Repetition*.

Like many of the other chapters in section one of this volume, essays on *Essays Critical and Clinical*, *Bergsonism*, and *What is Philosophy?* do not only offer useful suggestions for how to read Deleuze, but they also take a closer look into the ways his work was triggered by modernist literature and philosophy and, in some cases, also departed from those earlier thinkers who were central to his philosophy. Deleuze picks up the theme of a literature of health again in his final book, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, which Anthony Uhlmann argues should be read as a "whole," not as a collection of essays. Uhlmann turns to Deleuze's comments on Whitman—that "a whole must be constructed, a whole that is all the more paradoxical in that it only comes after the fragments and leaves them intact, making no attempt to totalize them"—as a useful practice not only for reading literature (in general), but also as an appropriate explanation of how to read *Essays Critical and Clinical* as a whole, because Deleuze's "own work echoes and answers the forms, processes and methods he discerns in the works of the writers he treats." For Uhlmann, as for Deleuze, the relationship between philosophy and literature is always in relation to life.

Deleuze not only borrowed from modernist literature, but also, of course, made monstrous children with modernist philosophers. His book on Henri Bergson serves as a notable example on this point. Bergson, as our *Understanding Bergson*, *Understanding Modernism* argues, is one of the thinkers key to many modernist writers, although, in literary studies, his significance has been overshadowed by attention to Freudian theories of the mind and (un)consciousness. Deleuze's *Bergsonism* reclaims that thinker's mantle as modernist philosopher, and the result can be read as a sort of creative ventriloquism of Bergson. In her chapter, "Life as Method: The Invention of Problems in Deleuze's *Bergsonism*," Wahida Khandker offers a useful close-reading of this book, but also maps the ways in which Deleuze "embellishes or diverges from Bergson's texts"—especially on the topics of memory and the virtual/actual.

S. E. Gontarski reads *What is Philosophy?* as a return: a return, first, to Deleuze's early book on Nietzsche, an eternal return that is never a repetition of the same, but a repetition with a difference. But *What is Philosophy?* is also a return to Bergson's critique, and Deleuze and Guattari's reimagining, of the concept. As Gontarski writes, Deleuze and Guattari "fold the static outlier concept as conceived by Bergson within the process and multiplicity of thought." Gontarski's essay goes on to explore the image of thought—paying particular attention to the one and the multiple (a problem that Samuel Beckett also takes up, as Gontarski points out)—the idiot, "who discovers in thought the inability to think" (*WP*, 70), and sensibilia. Finally, as Gontarski claims, *What is Philosophy?* is "[a]bove all . . . a performance of philosophy. . . . It is philosophy become affect."

A central section on Deleuze and his aesthetics brings together new research by various international scholars aimed at mapping relationships between Deleuze's thought and the literary work of a number of modernist texts. Essays in this section identify key modernist trends and offer readings of specific authors and texts. The chapters in this section look closely at the relationship between modernist literature and Deleuze's philosophy, making arguments about how modernist writers not only served as apt examples of certain philosophical concepts for Deleuze, but also how their philosophically inflected writings are central to our understanding of Deleuze's thought. The first essay in this section, John Hughes's "A Strange Respect for the Individual: Gilles Deleuze and Hardy's Fiction," maps out a network of stylistic affects not only important for reading Hardy (on his own or alongside Deleuze) but for reading other modernist writers, as well—writers like Woolf, Powys, Lawrence, and Proust, who, as Hughes concludes, diverged on their own paths of individuation, or lines of flight.

Derek Ryan's essay, "Entangled in Nature: Deleuze's Modernism, Woolf's Philosophy, and Spinoza's Ethology," highlights the importance of Woolf "in Deleuze's ontological mappings as well as in his comments on literary aesthetics" and positions Woolf, as Deleuze does, "as a distinctly philosophical writer." Moreover, Ryan argues that what Deleuze takes from Woolf's idiosyncratic philosophy indicates their mutual concern with "material reality that is entangled with that which is outside the 'human' (or the outside of the human)." What Woolf and Deleuze both offer, then, is a non-anthropocentric worldview and an attention to "nonhuman entanglements."

Carrie Rohman picks up this conversation about the nonhuman in her essay “Dancing with Deleuze: Modernism and the Imperceptible Animal.” She writes that Deleuze’s “attraction to modernists can be explained not by the radial ‘genius’ of these individual artists, but more productively by the eruption of animality in a post-Darwin era and the particular becomings-animal that era cultivates.” Deleuze’s reading of D. H. Lawrence, Rohman argues, can be tied to an overlooked aspect of Deleuze’s fascination with modernism: namely, dance as enactments of becoming-animal. “Dance as a practice of visceral, embodied transformation might be understood as particularly creaturely or inhuman among the arts. If dance is the most ‘animal’ aesthetic form, and if Deleuze views the arts as being haunted by animality, then moments of inhuman dancerly becomings in modernist literature can be considered charged minoritarian zones of metamorphosis,” Rohman argues.

Like Lawrence’s work, Henry Miller’s novels are also noted by Deleuze and Guattari in their list of “Strange Anglo-American literature” (AO, 133), which they uphold as superior to French literature (excepting Proust and Artaud, of course). Andrew Marzoni’s chapter on Miller and Deleuze responds to this claim, as he positions Miller’s work as a bridge between these supposedly distinct literary traditions. Marzoni argues that Deleuze and Guattari “fail to reckon with the fact that Miller’s emphasis on the processual, productive, and schizophrenic nature of literature in his production of a counterfeit self has as much in common with European modernism as it does with” the Anglo-American tradition. Such an argument about Miller’s work, then, also becomes a very Deleuzian one, as it emphasizes the writing not as a finished product but as a production.

Ian Buchanan, in “Schizoanalytic Modernism: The Case of Antonin Artaud,” defines modernism as a concept (in the Deleuzian sense) that “holds together, rather than . . . refers to” a set of practices. For Buchanan, Antonin Artaud serves as an apt example of such a conceptualization of modernism, especially in the context of Deleuze (and Deleuze and Guattari’s) philosophy. Artaud is a clinician: as Buchanan writes, “In Deleuze and Guattari’s view, Artaud created art in order to, if not heal himself, then at least find a way of living in the circumstances . . . he found himself in.” Yet, Buchanan explains, when Artaud’s suffering became too much, when it was not alleviated even by the new language he created (breath- and howl-words), then he was “forced to retreat to a space he referred to as his body without organs.” Much has been made of the body without organs (or BwO) in scholarship on Deleuze, especially in connection with Artaud; however, there remains no consensus on what, exactly, the BwO is. The reason, Buchanan argues, is because “we have failed to heed one of the most basic interpretive principles Deleuze and Guattari insist upon, which is that instead of asking what something means, we should ask how it works.”

Where Buchanan examines modernism as a concept, Christopher Langlois draws our attention to another concept—the monad, which Deleuze appropriates from Leibniz—in order to theorize a particularly Deleuzian strain of modernism that includes writers and artists like Jorge Luis Borges, Samuel Beckett, and Francis Bacon. The quality these modernists have in common—and this argument can be extended to modernism more largely—is the particular aesthetic perspectivism they develop.

Leibniz and the Baroque offer, for Deleuze, a way out of nihilism without succumbing to transcendence.

The last chapter in this section, Claire Colebrook's "Incorporeal Modernism," outlines two Deleuzes and two modernisms: a high modernist Deleuze and a post-post-modernist Deleuze; a self-reflexive modernism and, what follows from this, a modernism that "free[s] language from voice and representation and allow[s] the world to operate in its machinic and inhuman power." Taking the poetry of Mina Loy as an example, Colebrook argues that the distinction between these two types of modernism breaks down, that modernism presents a way of thinking that "can imagine its own non-existence." For Colebrook, "modernism emerges as a thought of the radically inhuman—not just a matter that subtends perception, but an utterly alien existence and persistence." In this way, "Modernism matters today," and "only a modernist aesthetics can offer any hope of a future."

The volume's final section features an extended glossary of Deleuze's key terms. In a departure from conventional glossaries, however, we include entries much lengthier—and therefore much more in-depth—than the single paragraph definitions offered by typical glossaries. Since these pieces are short essays in and of themselves, this section allows a full engagement with and examination of the many, sometimes contradictory ways Deleuze has applied particular terms. Here, we again invite readers of all levels of familiarity with Deleuze's work, introducing terms in a way comprehensible to the neophyte while also mapping their various appearances and applications for the seasoned scholar. The result, we hope, sheds light on Foucault's Deleuzian century and its continuing relevance today.

Notes

- 1 Michel Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum," *Critique* 282 (1970): 885.
- 2 Foucault, "Preface," in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem, and H. R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), viii.
- 3 Foucault and Deleuze, "Intellectuals and Power: A Conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 208.

Part One

Conceptualizing Deleuze

Deleuze's *Proust and Signs*: The Literary Partial Object

Patrick M. Bray

While Gilles Deleuze infamously described his early work in the history of philosophy as “a sort of buggery,” “making a child behind the back” of other thinkers by using their own words to produce a new and monstrous thought, his 1964 study of the novelist Marcel Proust, *Proust and Signs*, departs from this intraphilosophical procreation to embrace the uniqueness of literary thought.¹ Instead of one philosopher rereading another, a philosopher engages with a novelist to bring out the philosophical implications of literary thought.² Deleuze was one of the first readers of Proust to follow the logical chain of thought of *In Search of Lost Time*, arguing that the novel is not about memory or madeleines, but about the apprenticeship of signs. *Proust and Signs* and Proust's appearance in Deleuze's subsequent works suggest philosophy's debt to literary practice, especially related to style, perspective, and a certain violence that “forces us to think” (24).

The first *Proust and Signs*

Deleuze's fourth book, after *Empiricism and Subjectivity* (1953), *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962), and *Kant's Critical Philosophy* (1963), the first edition of *Proust and Signs* proposes a reading of the monumental *In Search of Lost Time* as a complex *Bildungsroman*. It also, more subtlety, offers a new conception of the “sign” that differs radically from the structuralist fashion of the period. Most importantly, *Proust and Signs*, like Deleuze's previous books, invents its conceptual framework by ventriloquizing another thinker—here this means not reactualizing outdated concepts but inhabiting a complex literary style. At times, *Proust and Signs* approaches Proust's own level of well-wrought sentences and elaborate metaphors. In the words of Tom Conley, “There is no way of getting around the fact that to consider [Deleuze's] corpus in the light of literature means that he has to be read *as* literature, and that time and again the reader must work through the writing with the eye of an artist and the ear of a poet.”³ The poeticity of *Proust and Signs*, if we follow its own argument, saves Deleuze's thought from the “abstraction” of philosophical intelligence and introduces a more “profound truth” based on an encounter with another text (25).

Deleuze distinguishes in Proust's novel four types of signs, each different in content and in kind: the signs of high society, of love, of impressions, and of art. The narrator experiences his apprenticeship of signs over the three-thousand-page novel before he is ready to become a novelist. Only by learning how to read and interpret in succession the empty signs of high society and the deceptive signs of love can he arrive at the understanding and ultimately the creation of art signs, which encompass all the others and lead to a perception of the workings of time. While the vast majority of Proustian criticism focuses on the notion of involuntary memory (a subset of impression signs), and some recent criticism attempts to read Proust against the grain of the novel's own claims, it remains surprising that the champions of reading Proust's novel for the narrative it in fact tells would be two philosophers, Deleuze, but also Paul Ricœur, who brings to the fore Proust's innovations in narrative time, echoing in many ways Deleuze's work.⁴ Instead of tracing the source of Proust's ideas and then separating them out of the literary text, Deleuze shows how Proust's elaborate literary machine produces thought.

Signs in *Proust and Signs* have nothing to do with Saussurian linguistic signs—they are not composed of an arbitrary dyad that could then be confused with the novel's own writing, as text, or distanced from sensory perception, which escapes language.⁵ Instead of a clear presentation of an alternative to semiology, however, Deleuze structures his work as an initiation rite, or perhaps a quest for truth, mirroring Proust's novel. Truth, Deleuze's Proust affirms, cannot be reached by disinterested and abstract pondering, but only by the involuntary force of thought, which comes from the passion of encountering difference. The reader, it follows, must also be led by desire, slowly deciphering the signs given by Proust/Deleuze, until the final revelation of the nature of signs only at the end of *In Search of Lost Time* and *Proust and Signs*. Each revelation, about love, time, and essences, leads to the next, and yet the structure relies on the imbrication of specific signs, which cannot be extracted from the text without becoming nearly incomprehensible. Similar to Deleuze's taxonomy of signs, the "general laws" found scattered throughout Proust's novel serve as necessary steps in the narrator's artistic apprenticeship, but often seem unintelligible when taken out of context, leading less diligent readers to conclude that Proust was a poor thinker.

Signs, the reader must infer and accept near the beginning of Deleuze's work, are simply what call to be interpreted and deciphered—the ability to see the world as made up of signs is a "gift" (37). This open and, at the beginning of the text, implicit definition allows Deleuze to include extralinguistic signs, since anything can provoke the desire to be interpreted. But the trick is that we have to be motivated to distinguish a sign and then want to interpret it. Signs, in this sense, can only be subjective and personal, losing their meaning when communicated to others. Individual signs cannot be objects of philosophical debate, which must focus only on the different categories of signs and how they function. Proust's novel, by developing the narrator's sensibility and inviting the reader to share in his interpretation of subjective signs, creates both specific fictional signs and the possibility of understanding their universality.

Proust's narrator, in his journey from needy mama's boy to budding novelist, passes through four stages of his apprenticeship, as each new type of sign, or new world of

signs, teaches him about a different aspect of time and subjectivity. While the narrator encounters all four types of signs throughout the novel, Deleuze orders them according to a precise hierarchy, calling them a “dialectical movement” or “dialectique ascendante” after Plato (108). The signs of high society constitute the bottom rung, as they are empty of meaning. A certain surface criticism of Proust and his novel often focuses on snobbery, on an elitism related to what some perceive as the novel's obsession with high society. Deleuze shows, however, that high society is a unique world of signs (“le monde” meaning both high society and the world) based on exclusion and inclusion. The young apprentice/narrator must learn the secret why an exclusive society admits one person over another. The world of high society turns around itself, emitting ever more signs at an astonishing pace in order to bind together the “ins” and keep the “outs” from cracking the code. The signs of high society take the place of action and thought; they are place holders that project meaning and constancy in order to mask their own emptiness and transience. While these signs are empty, they serve a necessary purpose in the narrator's apprenticeship because of their “ritual perfection, like a formalism” (13).

Love signs form the second world, or “circle,” of signs. Like the signs of high society, love signs depend upon inclusion and exclusion. The loved one emits signs about a world that lies necessarily outside the perception of the lover, who wishes to understand this world through the interpretation of signs. Falling in love involves “individualizing” someone by the signs they emit by picking the person out of a group or as representative of a place. To love would entail unfolding this secret world through a long deciphering of all the signs offered by the love object. The loved one cannot choose to make the lover part of the world they embody without destroying what crystallized the love in the first place, and so all love signs are necessarily lies. Proust's novel abounds with examples of this cynical view of love, elaborately explained by Deleuze as stemming from the inevitable separation of the sexes.

The majority of Proust's readers have mistaken the third type of signs, impressions, or sensitive signs, as the key to the novel's meaning. The famous madeleine scene, where the taste of a cake dipped in herbal tea causes an intense joy leading to the recovery of childhood memories, overshadows other meaningful nonmnemonic impressions and prevents the narrator (and many readers) from understanding its true significance.⁶ Occurring barely 30 or 40 pages into the novel, the madeleine scene can only hint at the final revelation, and so it is not the ultimate truth of the novel. Just as love signs use the love object as a stand-in for a world outside of the lover, the intense pleasure derived from impression signs leads the narrator to search for the origin of the impression in another object. While the madeleine is an involuntary memory that recalls the past of the narrator, not all impression signs relate to the past. The earliest example in the novel occurs when the narrator writes down his impressions of the steeples of Martinville as he rides in a coach. While impression signs lead us to turn toward the object, the truth behind the impression lies within us: “Each sign has two halves: it *designates* an object, it *signifies* something different” (PS, 37). Since the object causes the physical sensation of pleasure, our intelligence focuses on this “objectivity” of signs, then compensates by relating it to subjective experience, but the sign points to something greater than either the subject or the object—the “essence.”

Essences only manifest themselves in art signs, because they alone are “immaterial” and thereby exist beyond subject and object (51). All the other signs retain at least a foothold in an object, whereas the sign emitted by a work of art surpasses whatever matter contains it. Art is therefore superior to life in that all signs encountered in life are rooted in the material world, while only art provides access to the “spiritual” (53). Deleuze thus explains Proust’s often quoted and often misunderstood declaration in *Time Regained* that “true life, life finally discovered and understood, the only life consequently fully lived, is literature.”⁷ Literature, and art in general, allow intersubjectivity (*PS*, 55), a way to live life outside of the “wasted time” or “lost time” of experience as seen through the other three types of signs. The purpose of worldly signs, love signs, and impression signs would be to make us aware of how time is lost, preparing us to search for and create art signs as the only way to escape death: “the only proof [of immortality], the only hope, is esthetic” (57). Essences, as exposed by art signs, allow us to find time in its “pure state,” as eternal, and distinct from the “time regained” of impression signs such as the madeleine, which are only recovered from our own past (59).

Essences, as revealed in art objects, are differences, “the ultimate and absolute Difference” (53).⁸ Essences individualize subjects, but are not equivalent to them, since essences express themselves as the common quality between two different objects (61). They envelop themselves in matter, they complicate being, in a manner which Deleuze likens to Leibniz: “In this, Proust is Leibnizien: essences are veritable monads, each one defining itself by the point of view in which it expresses the world, each point of view referring back in turn to an ultimate quality at the heart of the monad” (54). Deleuze continues by explaining that for Leibniz, the point of view is difference itself, having “neither doors nor windows,” an enigmatic phrase that only becomes clearer at the beginning of his book *Leibniz and the Fold* when he talks about the allegory of the Baroque House, where the soul is enfolded in matter as light from the upper floor of a labyrinthine Baroque building filters down to the lower floor.

While art signs are the only signs capable of teaching the apprentice about essences once this discovery occurs, essences can then be seen incarnated in the other types of signs, akin to the lower floor of the Baroque House. Deleuze brilliantly demonstrates how differences emerge from the “series and groups” of our love objects and society cliques. Art signs, by recuperating time in its pure state, salvage our experiences, even the “emptiness” of high society, from our lost past and uncover, hidden within them, a timeless essence. Thus *In Search of Lost Time* is not turned toward the past but rather to the future, specifically the future of the narrator as writer.

Proust and Signs in its initial form leads the reader through the same stages of apprenticeship or initiation as the novel’s narrator, in order to argue for a truth in art, especially writing, that would offer us the “image of thought.” Deleuze often uses orientalist metaphors to describe this initiation, such as calling the narrator an “Egyptologist” and the sign a “hieroglyph”; while this terminology points to the mystical aspect of the “search,” it also emphasizes the play of the readable and the visible in all forms of knowledge, as is most apparent in hieroglyphic figures.⁹ As an initiation rite Deleuze’s book reproduces the modernist meta-literary trope of the *Bildungsroman*

of the artist, though here it might be more apt to say the “portrait of the philosopher as a young artist.” Proust’s novel allows Deleuze a certain freedom to create concepts outside of philosophy, though subsequent editions as we shall see pulled Proust back into Deleuze’s philosophical preoccupations.

The second *Proust and Signs*

Six years after the first edition of *Proust and Signs*, Deleuze added a new section, entitled *The Literary Machine*. This new section clarifies the arguments of the first edition, such as distinguishing Proust from Plato, and explores in depth the production of signs in the novel. While the first edition catalogued the types of signs and their relationship to essences and time, Deleuze’s addition argues for the diversity of signs themselves, their proliferation, and disruptive function.

Proust’s system of signs, according to Deleuze, acts as an “antilogos,” in a series of oppositions that set “Jerusalem” versus “Athens.” Against the philosophical totality of Platonism, Proust composes his novel through fragments and breaks that put into question the consensus between “friends” which is at the foundation of philosophy. According to Platonic thought, intelligence always comes first since it presupposes a single Idea or Essence from which must follow a series of inferior material copies. Philosophical camaraderie consists in agreeing upon terms for these ideas without descending into the differences between the copies. In Proust, by contrast, the essence is difference; it individualizes each quality in time, with intelligence coming only after involuntary perception. The essence makes subjects and objects possible, since it is a “superior point of view” beyond the individual (133). While Plato starts with the external world and moves through consciousness to attain the objective realm of the Idea, Proust’s essences are “transcendent” and creative: “So much so that the whole problem of objectivity, like that of unity, finds itself displaced in a way that can only be qualified as ‘modern,’ essential to modern literature” (134). While Plato famously banished art from the Republic for disseminating copies of copies, Proust’s thought, as “modern” literature, depends on the creation of ever more signs that explode meaning beyond the narrow confines of language and of material art objects, since art would not be a “copy” of an Idea, but the container of an essence that surpasses both art and observer in “pure” time.

Having established the necessity of the proliferation of art signs in Proust’s work, Deleuze sets about exploring the textual mechanisms that produce series of signs, the Proustian response to Plato’s simulacra. Deleuze finds in Proust’s novel two recurring images that figure different ways of disrupting continuity and totality within a series: boxes and vases. Open boxes (“boîtes entrouvertes”) hold too many qualities to fit within a single container, and so overflow their volume. The narrator’s great love, Albertine would be the emblematic “open box” as she contains countless unstable identities with no other connection than that they all exist under a single name. The madeleine may be the most famous “open box,” as it contains within its ephemeral flavor the incommensurable selves of the narrator that remember all the different

aspects of Combray—all of Combray emerges from a tea cup. Sealed vases or vessels (“vases clos”), on the other hand, cannot communicate with their surroundings, like a moment in time out of sync with the place it occupies. The structure of the novel itself embodies the idea of sealed vases, since it is divided into two opposing “Ways,” “Swann’s Way” and the “Guermantes Way.” Each “Way” connects to the others in space, as the character Gilberte Swann reveals to the narrator at the end of the novel, yet they remain separate essences. Several famous spatial approaches to Proust, such as Georges Poulet’s *L’Espace proustien* and Gérard Genette’s “Métonymie chez Proust,” break down, according to Deleuze, when they reject the importance of time in order to insist that Proust’s metaphors are almost always spatial: spatial contiguity bears no relation to essences since they are irreducible to a seamless whole.

This fragmented and broken world is not without partial communication and temporary groupings or assemblages. Between sealed vases there can be “transversal” connections that link parts of the past to the present and future; multiple identities can be unfolded, explained, and explicated from an open box. Both vases and boxes participate in a “system of non-spatial distances . . . *distances without intervals*” (156)—this system is time itself, which connects all spaces without forming a pregiven Whole (157).

Since there is no totality or identity, fragments can be grouped together in “sets” (“ensembles”) in which the only worth is “statistical” (162), meaning that there are always conflicting forces within any given series. Deleuze uses the example of Proust’s representation of love to explore the complexity of “sets” functioning between three levels of complexity, depending on how closely you inspect the elements of the set—heterosexual love, homosexual love, and the presence of the other sex within the self, with which we cannot communicate. The play of these three levels ensures the continued multiplication of love signs.

But there can also be forced or arbitrary bridging of distances between the parts of the missing Whole. Without a Logos to order the world, the “law” (Proust’s “general laws”) forces connections between sealed vases, mixing qualities from different worlds, all the while exposing the immense distances between the fragments. If the image of thought, as he claimed in the first edition, is born of the violence of an encounter that “forces us to think,” the law would be this thought-provoking violence, and this image of thought would be telescopic. As Deleuze claims, the *Search* functions as a telescope, not a microscope, bringing into the same field of vision elements that are very distant from each other.

The novel does not simply describe signs, laws, or telescopes, it invents them. For Deleuze, *In Search of Lost Time* “produces the truth [that is] looked for” (178). However paradoxical this might seem, it follows logically from the idea of an art that reveals essences by inventing links between qualities. Art stakes out a territory, as Deleuze says in *L’Abécédaire*, and here Proust’s territory is the realm of involuntary memory, of time lost and regained.¹⁰ Readers of Proust can use the laws and telescopes he invented, in the territory he staked out, to experience their own worlds differently. Far from being caught up in an illusion, these readers have understood the nature of literary truth (*PS*, 184–5).

Proust's novel has three separate "machines" for "producing" signs, just as love existed across three separate levels: (1) the singularity of reminiscences and essences that produce time regained, (2) the partial objects of desire and pain formed by love and high society and that produce lost time, and (3) the inescapable, universal signs of aging and death that produce catastrophe or the threat that the narrator might not complete his novel, all the while driving him to write (178–9). While the movement of the novel leads toward a final "revelation," each of these machines functions separately, without being canceled out by the others. Deleuze insists on a mechanical, as opposed to aesthetic, vocabulary in order to draw a distinction between artistic "creation" and the "production" of truth—the literary machine "works," it produces essences that function beyond the narrow scope of the narrator and his reminiscence and correspond with readers and other texts. The novel's truths, produced by impersonal and chaotic machines, can now be reproduced and multiplied beyond the book.

Deleuze, after an elaborate catalogue of signs, levels, and series in Proust, poses the question of what can unify so many fragments and pieces. While Deleuze's work argues for rupture and against totality, the ingenuity of his argument points toward a desire for totality. Following Proust, he proposes that the unity of a work of art comes in the form of "style," but this unity comes afterward as a product of the machine, just as intelligence comes after reminiscence. Balzac's *Human Comedy* would be the model of a totalizing style, an artistic unity, which only comes after the fact of writing dozens of volumes but which projects this unity backward toward an invented origin (197). Zola, too, would imitate Balzac, inscribing an imaginary origin to the family at the heart of his novel series *The Rougon-Macquart*, though the fictional genealogy developed and changed throughout the course of the writing of the 20 novels. But the heterogeneity of Balzac, Zola, Proust, and other modern writers implies that there can be no unified "style" inherent to the author, only an effect produced afterward by the structure of the work itself (novel of Parisian society for Balzac, genealogy of a decadent family for Zola, the apprenticeship of a writer for Proust). The stylistic unity of *Proust and Signs* itself must necessarily be an aftereffect, as its three parts were each written years apart, with the conclusion upsetting the unity of the whole.

A new conclusion

The final edition of *Proust and Signs* in 1973 contains a strange new conclusion, called enigmatically "Presence and Function of Madness the Spider." As the forward to the third edition notes, the conclusion was taken from another text published in a collective volume of *Saggi e ricerche di Letteratura Francese* of the same year. The methodology, vocabulary, and philosophical foundations differ radically from the rest of *Proust and Signs*, yet the subject matter is unmistakably Proustian and the philosophical concerns completely Deleuzian. This rupture within the text reaffirms the modernist aesthetic of fragmentation, while at the same time revealing more subtle aspects of Proust's work that escape a systematic approach to the novel.

Unlike the rest of *Proust and Signs*, which followed Proust's thought, Deleuze declares that he is not concerned with the problem of art and madness in Proust, but rather with the presence of madness in the novel and how this presence functions. In other words, madness may be a secondary effect of the textual machine, not a machine itself. Deleuze focuses on two complementary characters, Charlus and Albertine, whose madness is related to sexuality. Charlus's folly comes from the fact that he is "master of Logos," of language signs and discourse, but he runs off the rails when objects confront discourse, when the unconscious interferes with his rational mastery (214). Albertine's madness stems from her problem of individuation, from the impossibility of deciding who she might really be.

The supposed madness of Charlus and of Albertine resonates in the actions of the narrator, leading Deleuze to propose that the narrator himself is mad. Arguing that the narrator-hero is not a "subject" but a "machine de la Recherche" (perhaps "search engine" would be today's equivalent), Deleuze suggests that the narrator might best be qualified as a "spider": blind, a giant Body without Organs (218).¹¹ While the image of the spider hardly appears at all in the novel (four times in thousands of pages), the idea of the narrator as a schizophrenic spider playing the other characters as marionettes reframes the notion of the narrator as rational apprentice of signs. Since the narrator orients the movement and rhythm of the novel, turning it toward the future when he will become a novelist, the novel risks becoming totalized by his all-encompassing vision. In the second edition of *Proust and Signs*, Deleuze insists that the unity of Proust's style can only come afterward in a sort of "non-style," but he never addresses the problem of the narrator. By proposing, perhaps tongue-in-cheek, that the narrator is a mad spider, Deleuze reintroduces rupture into the novel, with the narrator's madness producing ever more "delirious" signs.

Forever Proust

If the Proustian narrator be a mad spider spinning an elaborate web to catch and interpret signs, we may well consider whether Deleuze himself shows signs of madness, or even becoming-spider, as his *Proust and Signs* adds layer upon layer, level upon level of complexity onto his interpretation of an almost never-ending novel. Certainly Deleuze's book multiplies points of view onto the Proustian world rendering a definitive reading of the novel impossible and undesirable. But just as Proust hoped his novel would serve as an instrument for readers to understand the novel and themselves, we can use *Proust and Signs* to read Deleuze and his work.

Proust and Signs serves as a virtual introduction to the key concepts of Deleuze's thought, except that these concepts are enveloped in a Proustian vocabulary and context.¹² The notions of essences that individualize points of view and "the image of thought" prefigure a more elaborate development in *Leibniz and the Fold*. The open boxes and sealed vases rehearse the "sets" and "wholes" of *Cinema I* and *II*. The distinctions between lost time and pure time anticipate *Bergsonism*. The disciplinary territories

more or less harmoniously staked out in *What is Philosophy* are more productively set against each other in the book on Proust. And the entire project of *Essays Critical and Clinical*, as the epigraph from Proust's *Contre Sainte-Beuve* suggests, stems from the unique problems of writing and understanding posed so well by Proust.

Deleuze's concepts manifest themselves as though in series and groups, materialized in each book, yet every instance different from the others, making an amalgamation of *Proust and Signs* with the other books impossible. Tracing the development of these concepts chronologically or insisting on the relevance or irrelevance of Deleuze's thought to *In Search of Lost Time* and Proustian criticism misses how Deleuze himself, as reader of Proust's novel, becomes a seeker of truth, an interpreter of signs, and quite possibly falls in love with the literary work. In his chapter on the "Levels of the Search" in *Proust and Signs*, Deleuze argues that at the profoundest level of the individual in Proust there coexist fragments of both sexes as "partial objects" that do not communicate between themselves (164). Statistically we are one sex but we contain fragments of the other sex within us and seek in the object of our love the possibility of completing those fragments: "the individual globally determined as male would fertilize his feminine part by partial objects that could be found just as well in a woman as in a man" (164–5). Love is the "transversal" between the sealed vases of our masculine and feminine parts, which cannot communicate between themselves without a third partial object.

Deleuze the philosopher needs *In Search of Lost Time* as a "partial object" that could, in the "vegetal" vocabulary so dear to Proust, pollinate the literary writer within. Proust's novel gains from the encounter too, as the wide range of its concepts becomes visible, "fertilized," even as it critiques a totalizing Logos. While Deleuze describes his rewriting of other philosophers as "buggery" (corresponding perhaps to the second level of love in *The Search*, the level of a "global" homosexuality, but also of guilt and of a statistical, social identity), his encounter with literature occurs at the deepest level of difference, revealing the fragmented selves within the "self," the irreducible multiplicity of Deleuze as thinker. Far from being a "monstrous child" of a forced philosophical consensus, *Proust and Signs* continues to bear fruit, complicating and diversifying the ways we read Deleuze.

Notes

- 1 "Lettre à un critique sévère," Gilles Deleuze, *Pourparlers* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1990), 15; Deleuze, *Proust et les signes* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998 [1964]). All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own.
- 2 See Ronald Bogue for a thorough account of literature's role in Deleuze's thought: *Deleuze on Literature* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003).
- 3 Tom Conley, "I and My Deleuze," in *Deleuze and Literature*, eds. Ian Buchanan and John Marks (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 264.
- 4 For an overview of Proustian criticism see Roger Shattuck, *Proust's Way: A Field Guide to In Search of Lost Time* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 2000). Popular writing on Proust, such as that by Jonah Lehrer in *Proust was a Neuroscientist*

(Boston and New York: Mariner Books, 2008), but also writing that takes on a supposed interdisciplinary approach, obsesses over the madeleine and involuntary memory. Since the mid-nineties, a current of Proustian criticism has argued that Proust's own thought is deficient or misleading, see Vincent Descombes, *Proust: philosophe du roman* (Paris: Éditions de minuit, 1987) and Richard Terdiman, especially chapters 5 and 6 of *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

- 5 According to Julia Kristeva, "Although Proust never stops 'deciphering,' his world does not consist of 'signs.' At any rate, his world is not made of sign-words or idea-signs and certainly not of signifiers and signifieds." See Kristeva, *Time and Sense: Proust and the Experience of Literature*, trans. Ross Guberman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 251.
- 6 See E. T. Troschianko, "Cognitive Realism and Memory in Proust's Madeleine Episode," *Memory Studies* 6 (4) (2013): 437–56.
- 7 Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*, vol. 4 (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1989), 474.
- 8 While Colombat sees Deleuze's unique conception of signs as setting up an eventual and definitive break with the work of Jacques Derrida, we can see in the redefinition of signs, the emphasis on difference, the rejection of binaries, a great affinity with the early Derrida. André Pierre Colombat, "Deleuze and Signs," in *Deleuze and Literature*, eds. Buchanan and Marks (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 14–33.
- 9 In *Foucault*, Deleuze writes, "All knowledge goes from a visible to an expressible, and vice versa; and yet there is no common totalizing form, nor even conformity or bi-univocal correspondence." See Deleuze, *Foucault* (Paris: Minuit, 2004 [1986]), 46–7.
- 10 Deleuze, film interview with Claire Parnet, *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*, dir. Pierre-André Boutang (Paris: Éditions Montparnasse, 1996).
- 11 See Patrick M. Bray, "Deleuze's Spider, Proust's Narrator," *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies* 16.5 (2012): 703–10.
- 12 For Christopher M. Drohan, oddly, the density of *Proust and Signs* and its Proustian vocabulary suggest an incomplete development of Deleuze's concepts: "As one of his earlier books, it contains a good number of half-finished concepts and ideas that only a comprehensive reading of his whole life's work could clarify." See *Deleuze and the Sign* (New York and Dresden: Atropos Press, 2009), 5.

Life as Method: The Invention of Problems in Deleuze's *Bergsonism*

Wahida Khandker

In his Afterword to *Bergsonism*, Gilles Deleuze proposes a return to the thought of Henri Bergson in terms of three moments or characteristics of the Bergsonian project. Let us consider the first two in particular. The first characteristic is Bergson's concept of Intuition, which will be the main focus of this chapter, understood as the process of posing problems. The second concerns the seemingly insoluble division between the sciences and metaphysics as two kinds of knowledge, or two perspectives on the Absolute. Bergson's solution to this division is to promote metaphysical analysis as the complement and completion of science, justifying his attempts to rethink certain scientific problems (such as organic evolution, seemingly limited by scientific enquiry's tendency toward spatialization) in renewed, and specifically, temporal terms. With these two characteristics in mind, this chapter will provide a close reading of Deleuze's *Bergsonism* in three main sections, focusing on particular moments in which Deleuze embellishes or diverges from Bergson's texts. In Section 1, I will outline Deleuze's identification of a number of rules governing what he will call Bergson's method of intuition, and how this method is intertwined with, and indeed the result of, the broader movement of the evolution of life as Bergson conceives of it in *Creative Evolution*. The second section will then focus on perhaps what is Deleuze's most distinctive departure from Bergson, in the ontological theory of memory and the formulation of the relation between virtual and actual as a critique of the relation between the possible and the real. In the third section, I will summarize Deleuze's final chapter of *Bergsonism*, in which he lays out the trajectory of Bergson's project in line with a Spinozist understanding of nature. This latter alignment reveals that life, and by extension, human consciousness, is both capable of creation or invention and yet is susceptible to alienation from itself and its environment through its tendency to settle into physical and intellectual habits.

Section 1

When Deleuze accentuates the movement from dualism to monism in Bergson's writings, he refers not only to particular arguments within a number of Bergson's

works. He also reads this move toward a monism (or the creation of problems) as a single trajectory followed by Bergson's œuvre as a whole, from the dualism of time and space in *Time and Free Will* to the affirmation of a single Duration and creative impetus in *Creative Evolution*.¹

In the first chapter of *Bergsonism*, on "intuition as method," Deleuze shows the importance of identifying badly stated problems. In philosophy, these usually take the form of dualistic impasses, such as the mind-body problem, the opposition of the possible and the real, and being and nothingness. Bergson attempts to address these problems not by arguing for the relative strength of either one of the terms within the dualism in question, but by undermining or exposing the very foundations upon which the terms are built. One can only set about this activity of undermining foundations, contends Deleuze, by virtue of the apparently contradictory nature of intuition taken as method.² It is contradictory, on closer analysis, if we remember that in Bergsonian terms, intuition is the human correlate of instinct in animals. That is, it is our most immediate contact with the real, but a contact that is also intentional or directed, or what Bergson calls attentive recognition or the highest attention to life (e.g. in Chapter 2 of *Matter and Memory*). Unlike those moments of inattention, where we may be engaged in an activity that has become so familiar that we can perform it without due attention (a contracted habit), the phenomena of instinctive behaviors across the animal kingdom (including *Homo sapiens*) and of intuition in human thought share in common the implication of the whole organism in a perfected activity. In the case of instinct, the process of refinement or perfection has occurred over generations through natural selection, but in intuition the refinement of activity occurs at once in the directedness of a single consciousness toward its actions. All of this is to say that intuition, though seemingly immediate in its contact with the world, at the same time implicates a virtual multiplicity of conscious states: or, in other words, in order for there to be any intentional engagement with the world, there must be memory. Thus intuition is not one limited response to many different situations (a habitual action would be such), but rather it "involves a plurality of meanings and irreducible multiple aspects" (*B*, 14) applied to one situation or problem. It is this plurality of meanings that is sought when Deleuze identifies three "acts" that determine the rules of the method of intuition: (i) state or create problems; (ii) discover differences in kind; and (iii) apprehend real time.

(i) State or create problems (Stating a problem is also inventing one. Truth is not given in ready-made alternatives of true and false)

The basis for this first rule underlines that one must already appeal to the evolution of life itself to identify the conditions of its functioning along the path of intelligence. It is the most rudimentary of operations of organic evolution to avoid obstacles, to state and solve a problem, with each evolved living organism manifesting a problem solved (*B*, 16). Furthermore, the nature of problems, as identified across Bergson's texts, tends

to be either of the nonexistent kind (e.g. the ideas of nonbeing, disorder and possibility only appear to function as negations, whereas they are all retroactive additions to the existing concepts of being, order, and reality) or they are simply badly stated. In *Time and Free Will*, for example, Bergson commences with a fundamental difficulty for the possibilities of philosophical thinking arising from the fact that we express ourselves in words and think in terms of space, and that language requires the same sharp distinctions as those made between material objects.³ Bergson asks whether this introduction of sharp distinctions by language into philosophical thinking does not in fact create the many insurmountable problems that have characterized philosophy. In the spirit of stating problems anew, then, Bergson proposes that the problem of free will might be tackled by confronting the confused terms employed by determinists and their opponents, such as duration and extensity, succession and simultaneity, and quality and quantity (*Time and Free Will*, xx).

(ii) Struggle against illusion, rediscover the true differences in kind or articulations of the real

In "Bergson's Conception of Difference" (1956), Deleuze claims that Bergson's works stand in a general critical relation to the history of philosophy in which there has been a failure to see "true differences of nature."⁴ Deleuze notes that Bergson's philosophy "is always at work on two different planes: the one methodological, and the other ontological" ("Bergson's Conception of Difference," 32). In *Bergsonism*, Deleuze reiterates this insight by describing Bergson's identification of confusions of degree and kind (or nature) as the overcoming of illusions through the discovery of true differences (at a methodological level) and their resolution in a certain unity (at an ontological level) (B, 21).

A simple example that Bergson uses to illustrate the consequences of confusing a difference of kind with a difference of degree is in the assumption that the relation between perception and memory is a relation between strong and weak states of consciousness. Building on his critique, in *Time and Free Will*, of the idea of conscious states as defined in terms of quantitative differences (conscious states as discrete units), Bergson criticizes certain psychological assumptions that memory is a weakened form of perceptual states; they are different in degree only. This assumption is reinforced by the observation that in the effort to recall the memory of a pain, if concentrated upon for long enough, it gradually comes closer to the real experience of pain. Therefore, one might conclude that a memory must be something like a nascent perception. The error here, Bergson notes, is demonstrated starkly when we try to think of the inverse movement, commencing instead with the experience of pain, followed by the formation of the memory of that pain:

... if the two states differ merely in degree, there should be a given moment at which the sensation changed into a memory. If the memory of an acute pain, for instance, is but a slight pain, inversely, an intense pain which I feel, will end, as

it grows less, by being an acute pain remembered. Now the moment will come, undoubtedly, when it is impossible for me to say whether what I feel is a slight sensation, which I experience, or a slight sensation, which I imagine (and this is natural, because the memory-image is already partly sensation), but never will this weak state appear to me to be the memory of a strong state. Memory, then, is something quite different.⁵

The difference in kind, here, between perception and memory is based, Bergson argues, on a more fundamental confusion about the relation between present and past. Ultimately, Bergson's aim is to show how the psychological focus on habit, on the outward and lingering (empirically verifiable) phenomena, excludes an entire dimension of experience from its analysis. It is not that perception and action constitute the whole of conscious experience (which an exclusive analysis of our motor habits assumes), but rather that memory is implicated, to varying degrees, in each perception and action.

This constitutes the second basis of Rule 2 (discovering differences in kind). Having distinguished between habit and memory, the two are then implicated in the unity, albeit a processive or dynamic one, of the circuit of memory and perception (leaning backward into dream and forward toward action). The two are different in kind, but they form a continuum in which perception is contaminated with memory-images (both sensory *and* intellectual), and memory is either dispersed in the dream-state or concentrated in gestures of imminent actions to be performed. Moreover, while memory and perception form a dynamic circuit, the underpinning relation of past and present is shown to be not one of succession, but instead a relation of coexistence. In these terms, perception and memory coexist in the virtual object which is the plan of a possible action.

For Deleuze, then, in examples such as the above, Bergson's method reveals itself to be firstly the analysis of dualisms (memory and perception) that are resolved by their implication in a monism (the circuit). That is, the solutions, moments of invention or creation, then occur *with* the effective reformulation of problems, which is also the formation of a monism (B, 29). Secondly, Deleuze reinforces the significance of differences in kind for Bergson's method through a reference to Bergson's essay, "Life and Consciousness," in which he sets out his method in terms of the analysis of "lines of fact." These lines of fact will only point toward certain conclusions but, taken together, will constitute a compelling case through the accumulation of probabilities. It is for philosophers, collectively, to build on these lines of fact (philosophy as a work of collaboration).⁶ In this vein, Bergson goes on to identify a number of key elements in which the problem of consciousness is simultaneously the problem of life in general: (a) consciousness is, at its root, memory, but memory is not exclusively attributable to organisms with a brain; (b) consciousness is more "diffused" in simpler organisms, but not completely absent; and (c) consciousness aims toward the greatest intensity of freedom or creativity. For Deleuze, this method is a "qualitative probabilism, lines of fact being qualitatively distinct. In their divergence, in the disarticulation of the real that they brought about according to the differences in kind, they already constituted

a superior empiricism, capable of stating problems and of going beyond experience toward concrete conditions" (B, 30).

(iii) State and solve problems in terms of time rather than space

The discernment of connections or continuities, where previously only discontinuities were observed or assumed, constitutes the third rule of Bergson's method. Deleuze observes here two main aspects of the development of Bergson's thought:

Duration seemed to him to be less and less reducible to a psychological experience and became instead the variable essence of things, providing the theme of a complex ontology. But, simultaneously, space seemed to him to be less and less reducible to a fiction separating us from this psychological reality, rather it was itself grounded in being and expressed one of its two slopes, one of its two directions. (B, 34–5)

Thus, while Bergson is often criticized for formulating a pejorative account of geometrical or spatial thinking (Whitehead, for example, provides this reading of Bergsonian thought), Deleuze discerns a certain trajectory in Bergson's thought in which the operation of spatialization becomes one expression of being in process. It is not that space is simply an illusion to be overcome, but rather forms one part of the whole of real experience. For example, thinking spatially (or geometrically) is not an error that we overcome in the discovery of a new form of experience. It is, as Bergson articulates in *Creative Evolution* in the passages on the ideal genesis of matter, the completion of a movement of mind that has evolved a facility to manipulate matter or to control its environment for the purposes of efficient action.

Section 2

I will now turn to the most significant departure that Deleuze makes from Bergson's texts: the description of the relation between the virtual and the actual. In a reading of *Matter and Memory*, that Deleuze will go on to develop in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze opens up a distinction between ontological memory, describing the virtual coexistence of levels of memory and the pure being of the past, and a psychological memory defined by a movement of translation and actualization into action in the present.⁷ In Section 1, we saw an example of the identification of a difference in kind, where normally a difference of degree was presupposed, in the relation between perception and memory (where memory is mistaken for a weakened perception). Not only does this recognition of a mistaken ascription of a difference of degree open up psychological and philosophical engagements with theories of memory, but it also constitutes a rethinking of the nature of time. Time is no longer the succession of moments (present moments become past moments) but rather the coexistence, virtually, of present and past, while the experience of time is a movement from past

to present (the movement from memory to perception in the form of expectation and selection).

The past, it seems, is ontologically prior to the present and, as Deleuze contends, Bergson's theory of the existence of unconscious mental states does not refer to a psychological reality outside consciousness, but rather to a nonpsychological reality which is being as it is in itself (B, 56). In order to discern this theory of nonpsychological being, Deleuze undertakes a close reading of a passage in *Matter and Memory* in which Bergson talks about the relation of memory to the present using the cone metaphor or diagram to illustrate. It is in this microscopic analysis of Bergson's text that Deleuze affirms his ontological concept of memory, that is not fully formulated (or intended) in Bergson's *Matter and Memory*. Deleuze is essentially reading the unifying arc contained in *Creative Evolution* and other later texts back onto the observations on consciousness and its pathologies in *Matter and Memory*. (Note that Deleuze makes a similar move in his reading of the insights of *Matter and Memory* back onto *Time and Free Will* in order to criticize the concept of duration as succession.)

As Deleuze reads it, this relation between memory and the present is composed of a movement of actualization as *translation-contraction* (memory moving and contracting the whole of itself to meet experience, at the plane of action) and *rotation-orientation* (expansion and division, or memory presenting the side of itself that is the most useful to the situation at hand). The latter refers to the "dynamism" of the cone in which there is an oscillation of attention (what Bergson refers to as variations in attention to life) from the base to the summit until an appropriate action is decided (B, 63). Deleuze also reads here a difference between the *contraction* of levels of memory and this movement of *translation-contraction*: the former indicates only the existence of the levels of pure memory, the latter to the process of actualization of recollections into actions (B, 64). The subtlety of Deleuze's reading, from which this difference between an ontological memory (contraction) and psychological memory (translation-contraction) is extracted, allows him to find in Bergson's text—both the written and diagrammatic elements—a quality of recollections that, say, the cone diagram alone may not make entirely obvious. As Deleuze observes, in the process of recall or recognition, each recollection retains its individuality by possessing its proper plane of consciousness. At the broader levels of the cone, indicating the more diffuse levels of consciousness such as our moments of distraction or dream, some recollections might be too dispersed to be recognizable or useful. At the more concentrated levels, in our moments of decisiveness or action, other recollections may blend into others, become confused, and thereby escape our attention in that way. Thus each recollection is only actualized by passing through its own plane of consciousness; while the different regions of the past simply exist (or coexist) without having to be traversed in the process of recalling an object or event:

Hence the need to distinguish intensive, ontological contraction—where all the levels coexist virtually, contracted or relaxed—and translatable, psychological contraction through which each recollection on its own level (however relaxed it is) must pass in order to be actualized and thereby become image. (B, 65)

In the second movement of rotation-orientation, Deleuze completes his analysis of the different aspects of memory in terms of the actualization of a memory-image into a perception-image. For this part of the analysis, Deleuze notes an ambiguity in *Matter and Memory* in Bergson's meaning of *rotation* and turns instead to an essay in *Mind-Energy* entitled "Intellectual Effort" in order to clarify the process of actualization. In "Intellectual Effort," Bergson evokes the idea of a "dynamic scheme" to describe the movement that takes place between different levels of memory in the process of recollection. There are, in fact, two significant moments in Bergson's essay, the first of which Deleuze uses to clarify the movement involved in simple recall. The second indicates, in the highest form of intellectual effort (invention), the asymmetry between virtual and actual. While Deleuze famously develops this virtual/actual relation both in *Bergsonism* and in later texts, most notably, *Difference and Repetition*, any direct reference to this second aspect of Bergson's "Intellectual Effort" is, in fact, omitted.⁸ Deleuze underlines that, in the movement of the dynamic scheme from reciprocal penetration of recollections to their development into distinct images, there is a process of not just contraction but also of division or expansion:

Recollection can only be said to be actualized when it has become image. It is then, in fact, that it enters not only into "coalescence," but into a kind of *circuit* with the present, the recollection-image referring back to the perception-image and vice versa. Hence the preceding metaphor of "rotation" which prepares the ground for this launch into the circuit. (*B*, 66)

In these passages we can see why the circuit diagram (in Chapter 2 of *Matter and Memory*) can be said to be more significant for Deleuze (in the *Cinema* books, for example) than the cone diagram. The circuit indicates more clearly the relation between virtual and actual, both in depth of the coexistence of past and present, and the movement into actualization, whereas the cone only refers to a flat plane of action.

The other significant aspect of Bergson's essay "Intellectual Effort" concerns the nature of creative or inventive effort, and accentuates the relation between virtual and actual images through a critique of the nature of possibility or prefiguration. In Bergson's analysis of invention or problem-solving, he reiterates his basic account of intellectual effort as the conversion of scheme to image (or recollection to action), such as in the execution of everyday tasks (recognizing a glass of water and drinking it in order to satisfy one's thirst). In the creative solution to a problem, one takes a "leap" forwards to a result. The effort of invention is the construction of the means to achieve that result (again, the conversion of scheme to image). Bergson's account of inventive or creative effort is thus complementary to the account of voluntary attention or recall. We range through all available ideas and images across different planes of memory and concentration, in order to match them up to the present object or situation that we wish to bring back to mind. What is distinctive about problem-solving is that the desired "present object" is completely new, although we employ all means available to our minds to place the imagined object or scenario before us. That is, the same operation of throwing forward a virtual image, carving out ahead of us a

plan of possible action from the world, occurs more intensely when we think forward to an imagined object or previously unforeseen solution to a problem (Bergson, *Mind-Energy*, 211–2). In this modified account of creative effort, Bergson notes that while there is a similar process of discernment in both simple recollection and invention, we see in the latter that the scheme is modified in the process of actualization (even such that the primitive scheme no longer remains in the finished product). The scheme is not necessarily always the *origin*: that is, images can themselves suggest or provoke a scheme, making the process of problem-solving something more resonant with the model of a *circuit* of memory and perception (*Mind-Energy*, 212). In other words, it is not that memory (as collection of past moments or images) is simply reconstructed or reconstituted in present actions or objects, but rather that the process of conscious effort, in moments of invention or creation, involves the creation of a product that does not resemble the plan from which it emerged.⁹

This distinction and “asymmetry” between the virtual and the actual is also found (and in part inspired by) Deleuze’s engagements with Proust, for example, in his work *Proust and Signs* (1964), on the subject of *mémoire involontaire*.¹⁰ Proust’s account is intended as a critique of Bergsonian “voluntary memory” or intellectual effort. However, Deleuze’s peculiar reading of this definitive moment in Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu* operates as an exemplification of the original and internal difference that is fundamental to experience,¹¹ one that remains compatible and indeed confirms Bergson’s ontological stance. As exemplified in the process of problem-solving, we require a concept of time that is truly creative, insofar as it displays an asymmetry between the past and the present (the virtual and the actual). The “being” of the past is nothing but the very process of constituting the present, as is evident in Bergson’s account of conscious perception and voluntary memory. What we see in Deleuze’s reading of Proust with Bergson is the possibility of an “immanent criticism” of Bergsonian time for the purposes of liberating the latter from charges of subjectivism and substantialism associated with any reading of memory as a closed form of repetition (repetition of the same).

This immanent criticism of Bergsonian *durée* is continued, for example, in the second chapter of *Difference and Repetition*. Here, Deleuze traces the formation of present, past, and future in a way that initially corresponds with Kant’s analysis of the active syntheses of consciousness (in the Transcendental Deduction). He then goes on to rethink this analysis through the application of Bergson’s “asubjective” theory of the relation between matter and memory. In other words, the account of the first two syntheses in particular approaches Kant’s problem of uniting the empirical (present) with the transcendental (past) using Bergson’s solution of their virtual coexistence in a single “enduring” continuum (duration). In Deleuze’s own analysis of the threefold synthesis, the first two syntheses follow Bergson’s critique, in *Matter and Memory*, of the reduction of “memory” to the status of a repetition of formerly present states, a view according to which “memories” would be stored physically in cerebral matter. The alternative to this materialist reduction is the theory of the coexistence of a pure past (memory as ground) with the present (perception) that it enables to pass. For Deleuze, the only way to ensure that Bergson’s alternative movement from past to

present does not veer too far in the opposite direction toward a preformed Being (a transcendent past) and thus a closed circle of repetition as reminiscence is to show how the first two syntheses are “ungrounded” in an open circle of time. The discovery of a third synthesis beneath the first two would achieve this in

refusing the content of a repetition which is more or less able to “draw off” difference (Habitus); refusing the form of a repetition which includes difference, but in order once again to subordinate it to the Same and the Similar (Mnemosyne) . . . ; [and instead] making it the thought and the production of the “absolutely different”; making it so that repetition is, for itself, difference in itself.¹²

Deleuze asks whether there is a “liveable” manifestation of this “ungrounding” of subjectivity, according to which there is *no* resemblance between the present state and its basis in a past that was never lived. Returning, finally, to Deleuze’s references to the Proustian “involuntary memory” (e.g. the “Combray” episode used both in *Proust and Signs* as well as *Difference and Repetition*) we find here an expansion of Bergson’s model of coexistence. This expansion is achieved through a description of an experience in which an apparent resemblance between moments (one past and one present) is actually the result of a more profound disparity: “Combray appears as it could not be experienced: not in reality, but in its truth; not in its external and contingent relations, but in its internalized difference, in its essence.”¹³ The “ungrounding” of memory in a more original (internal) difference suggests a way of reconciling opposing activities, such as those of the practically and creatively oriented aspects of “life,” without applying to them a relation of identity and resemblance. Deleuze’s reading of Bergsonian method in the final chapters of *Bergsonism*, as the resolution of differences by means of a monism of multiple and opposing tendencies, requires an appeal to an original creative principle in order to demonstrate how the communication between “heterogeneous series” is in fact primary, while the relations of identity and resemblance are only subsequently, or retroactively, imposed.

Section 3/Conclusion

Deleuze explicitly affirms a Spinozist ontological theory of memory in Chapter 5 of *Bergsonism*, and it is here that he finally addresses a concept that is central to Bergson’s work: the nature and role of habit. In his reading of *Creative Evolution*, Deleuze begins by showing how intelligence, through the evolution of human life, finds its meaning in intuition (purposeful and creative contact with the world and superior manipulation of matter). On this account, mind meets matter not as empiricism or intellectualism would have it. Empiricism suggests that mind molds onto matter, while intellectualism suggests that rational ideas mediate our contact with matter. For Bergson, mind at its most contracted meets matter which is at its most extended (like does not meet like). Intelligence finds its *form* in matter, the most extended (which is the genesis of intellect toward the development of spatial concepts), but finds its *sense* or meaning in

contraction in order to dominate and utilize matter: “It might therefore be said that its form separates intelligence from its meaning, but that this meaning always remains present in it, and must be rediscovered by intuition” (B, 88). There is a limitation in this reading, because it omits the moments of inattention or dream in which activity degrades into habit, the latter being central to Bergson’s philosophy. Intelligence may find its meaning in intuition, but it also tends to lose itself in habit (action without attention). The role of habit is, of course, discussed by Deleuze in terms of the threefold synthesis in *Difference and Repetition*, but it is initially in Chapter 5 of *Bergsonism* that Deleuze rediscovers the interrelated problems of habit, limitation, and failure, in his analysis of the *élan vital* as “movement of differentiation.”

The account of habit—the formation of intellectual habits, and the negative possibilities of life—is grounded in Deleuze’s Spinozist reading of the arc of Bergsonian thought, according to which nature is expressed either in terms of differences in kind or differences in degree, as we saw above. The ontological difference suggested in Bergson’s analysis of consciousness in *Matter and Memory* is inflected, through Deleuze’s reading, with the Spinozist understanding of alternative but interrelated views of nature as *natura naturata* (an active “naturing” nature) and *natura naturans* (the product of its activity, a “natured” nature). Thus on the one hand, duration, insofar as it is continuous, unfolding, and able to encompass “other durations,” is a naturing nature (Deleuze works into this account Bergson’s response to Einsteinian relativity in the shape of a single Time that encompasses all other times). On the other hand, matter, insofar as it is capable of (artificial) division and tends toward repetition, is a natured nature (B, 93).

Consider the following as a single, coherent statement. First, the passages from Bergson’s essay “Intellectual Effort” that Deleuze inexplicably omits from his own analyses, on the process of creative problem-solving, where the plan and product do not resemble one another. Second, the Proustian critique of voluntary memory in which Deleuze extracts an insight into an internal difference at the basis of what is traditionally thought to be a relation of identity between the past and present in the form of “memory.” Finally, consider Deleuze’s account, in Chapter 5 of *Bergsonism*, of the process of actualization of intentions into actions. We find here an explication of the difference between Deleuze’s account of the virtual and conventional formulations of the idea of possibility. As Deleuze explains, the move from the possible to actualization is one of elimination or limitation. The move from virtual to actual, on the other hand, is the creation of divergent lines of actualization in positive acts (B, 97). In this account, life as a whole is not only the creation of problems across divergent lines of organic evolution, but it also “alienates itself in the material *form* that it creates” (B, 104) such that the solidification of a tendency into a particular organism or set of characteristics that we subsequently name a species is simply an arrest, or an artificial petrification of what is essentially a continuous movement. Life does not stop or “culminate” in any particular organism. Furthermore, the vital tendency not only “alienates” itself in its instantiations, but it also has a tendency to manifest false problems in evolutionary “dead-ends”; while in the life of an individual consciousness, this negative tendency manifests itself in intellectual habits and excessive contemplation.

Notes

- 1 Elizabeth Grosz also argues that Deleuze's Bergsonian traits in turn constitute a unity in Deleuze's own thought under the banner of "inorganic life." See Elizabeth Grosz, "Deleuze, Bergson and the Concept of Life," *Revue internationale de philosophie* 3 (2007): 288–9.
- 2 Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 14.
- 3 Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F. L. Pogson (New York: Dover, 2001), xix.
- 4 Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference," in *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953–1974*, trans. Michael Taormina, ed. David Lapoujade (Los Angeles and New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), 32.
- 5 Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 136–7.
- 6 Bergson, *Mind-Energy: Lectures and Essays*, trans. H. Wildon Carr (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1975), 7.
- 7 Michael R. Kelly notes how Deleuze continues a lineage of early Bergson commentators according to whom Bergson abandons a psychology of time in favor of an ontology of time. However, the idea that Bergson "abandons" the psychological significance of time is problematized in the early pages of *Creative Evolution*. There, Bergson points back to *Time and Free Will* and reiterates the value of thinking something that is as seemingly nonhuman and impersonal as the movement of organic evolution in the same terms as processes of human consciousness. See Michael R. Kelly, "Husserl, Deleuzian Bergsonism and the Sense of the Past in General," *Husserl Studies* 24 (2008): 15–30.
- 8 Alia Al-Saji also misses this aspect of Bergson's text in an explication of the departure Deleuze makes from Bergson in the ascription of a certain power of creation, rather than simply selection, to the virtual image: "Bergson's explication is that the present operates according to a principle of selection accepting certain memory-images and blocking others, guided in this choice by action and utility. But this explication remains insufficient in my view. What is difficult to reconcile in Bergson's account is the spontaneity of pure memory, on the one hand, and his claim, on the other, that 'what presides, even from afar, over the choice [of memories] is the movement of imitation which continues the perception', in other words, the sensori-motor present aiming at the future." See Alia Al-Saji, "The Memory of Another Past: Bergson, Deleuze and a New Theory of Time," *Continental Philosophy Review* 37 (2004): 214.
- 9 Cf. Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, pp. 40–3: Deleuze attributes an early formulation of the virtual to a passage in *Time and Free Will* in which Bergson discusses objectivity and subjectivity: "for Bergson, duration was not simply the indivisible, nor was it the nonmeasurable. Rather it was that which divided only by changing in kind, that which was susceptible to measurement only by varying its metrical principle at each stage of the division."
- 10 Deleuze compares this to Platonic reminiscence, but see also, in a footnote to p. 16, to Proust. There is no lived experience of the pure past or pure recollection, only of recollection-images. The present always presupposes a pure past: "each present goes back to itself as past" (B, 59).

- 11 For an examination of the relation between Deleuze's conception of difference and his concept of the "the virtual," see Dan W. Smith, "Deleuze's Concept of the Virtual and the Critique of the Possible," *The Journal of Philosophy* 4.9 (2009): 34–43 . This originary difference, as Smith outlines, is characterized by Deleuze's rejection of the idea of difference as negation of identity (not-A) in favor of the differential expression (dx). Difference can thus be understood better in terms of disjunctive relations: "Rather than having the faculties converge on a common project, each faculty is violently compelled to confront the differential limit that is peculiar to it—a limit that is ungraspable from the point of view of its transcendental exercise: something unimaginable in the imagination, something unrememberable in memory, something unthinkable in thought, and so on." (Smith, "Deleuze's Concept of the Virtual," 39)
- 12 Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Athlone, 1994), 94.
- 13 Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Athlone, 2000), 61. See also p. 60: "[Involuntary memory] internalizes the context, it makes the context inseparable from the present sensation. At the same time that the resemblance between the two moments is transcended in the direction of a more profound identity, the contiguity that belonged to the past moment is transcended in the direction of a more profound difference. Combray rises up again in the present sensation in which its difference from the past sensation is internalized. The present sensation is therefore no longer separable from this relation with the different object. The essential thing in involuntary memory is not resemblance, nor even identity, which are merely conditions, but the internalized difference, which becomes immanent."

Diagrammatic Modernism: Abstraction, Immanence, and the Positions of Style

Joe Hughes

“The theory of thought,” Deleuze wrote at the end of *Difference and Repetition*, “is like painting: it needs that revolution which took art from representation to abstraction. This is the aim of a theory of thought without image.”¹ Put differently, the theory of thought needs to become modernist.

Such a statement would seem to reinforce the image of Deleuze as a belated modernist—an image which has continually resurfaced in Deleuze studies over the past thirty years. The immediate evidence for such a view is strong. Deleuze regularly engaged with the artists of the period—Lawrence, Kafka, Proust, Miller, Joyce, Artaud, Klee, not to mention the broad sweep of *Cinema I*. Two of his early monographs engage with central philosophical sources of modernism, Bergson and Nietzsche.² His thought unfolded in close conversation with a set of thinkers which Eleanor Kaufman has suggested constitute a kind of French high modernism—Bataille, Klossowski, Blanchot.³ In addition to these broad textual markers, some of the basic tendencies of his thought mirror those of modernism. His readers have noted his preoccupation with the question of novelty⁴; his pursuit of cinema’s properly cinematic essence; his insistence on the autonomy of the art work⁵; his aesthetic formalism; his promotion of collage to a philosophical method⁶; and so on. Sometimes this proximity to modernism is seen as a virtue; sometimes it is seen as a vice; but that an engagement with modernism pervades his work seems undeniable.

The demand that the theory of thought follow the path of modernist painting would further sanction such an image of Deleuze. Even more, it would include *Difference and Repetition*, the core text of Deleuze’s work, within that picture. Indeed, one of the things I hope to show in this chapter is the extent to which this framing of *Difference and Repetition* as a work of abstract art is central to some of the fundamental methodological gestures of Deleuze’s text. To make the revolution from representation to abstraction entails a new conception of the philosophical concept, it reconfigures the position from which the philosopher speaks and sees, and raises the question of the uses of representation with renewed force. To make this revolution, to adopt its particular distribution of the visible, is to develop a philosophical style adequate to the thought of immanence. But it would be shortsighted to claim that for this reason Deleuze is

somehow complicit with the ideology of modernism.⁷ If Deleuze appropriates some of the techniques of modernist painting, it is not to reproduce the ethics or politics of modernism, but to create the conditions under which one can break with the logic of modernity.

Abstraction

The sense of Deleuze's call for a philosophy which turns from representation to abstraction is not immediately apparent. The primary difficulty turns not on the rejection of representation—though this is a problem as well—but on what Deleuze might mean by “abstraction.” One thing “abstraction” cannot mean in this context is *conceptual* abstraction. The first problem with such a reading is its absurdity. Unlike painting of the early nineteenth century, philosophy already is abstract. To demand that it become abstract is to demand that it become what it already is. One could try to remove this difficulty by quietly translating the call. It is not so much a question of turning from *representation* to abstraction, we could say, but rather a question of turning from abstraction to still more abstraction. Deleuze and Guattari make such a claim in *A Thousand Plateaus*. The problem with arboreal axiomatics is not that they are too abstract, but that they remain at a level of “coagulated abstraction,” suspended between the concrete and the real.⁸

This remedy, however, has its own problems. Most immediately, it removes any sense of the starkness of the turn—the “revolution,” as Deleuze called it. It places the theory of thought on a continuum of abstraction in which one kind of abstraction, arboreal, differs only in degree from another. Nor does it account for what seems to be at stake in the proposition. Whatever sense we make of Deleuze's demand, it needs to include within it a strong emphasis on a mutation in our way of seeing. The proposition implicates philosophical visibility as such and calls for its transformation. Both of these shortcomings are related to a third. What is arguably at stake here is what we mean by “conceptual.” One of the consequences of the turn from representation to abstraction, I want to suggest, is the necessity of inventing a new concept of the concept.⁹

The most pressing problem with reading “abstraction” as conceptual abstraction is that a concept just *is* a representation. Kant emphasized this in most iterations of his course on Logic. Take, for example, his framing of the issue in the *Jäsche Logic*:

All cognitions, that is, all representations related with consciousness to an object, are either *intuitions* or *concepts*. An intuition is a *singular* representation (*repraesentatio singularis*), a concept a universal (*repraesentatio per notas communes*) or *reflected* representation (*repraesentatio discursiva*).¹⁰

If “abstraction” means “concept,” then to move from representation to abstraction is just to remain in the realm of representation. We thus encounter the inverse formulation of the absurd interpretation of Deleuze's proposition: philosophy must make the turn which took art from representation to representation.

This signals a more profound difficulty with reading “abstraction” as “conceptual abstraction.” What Kant calls the “universal concept” is precisely the conception of the concept the first sentence of *Difference and Repetition* sets itself against. The first sentence, “Repetition is not generality,” implies the existence of a form of repetition which is not grounded in the generality of the concept. It marks a break from the technique of representation by common marks. Indeed, this form of the concept grounds what Deleuze calls throughout the introduction “bare” or “empty” repetition. It transforms repetition into a matter of resemblance, grounding it in the dead repetition of represented qualities.

One of the subterranean projects of *Difference and Repetition* is the development of a different kind of concept. The basic gesture of Deleuze’s reconception of the concept is to assert the primacy of the practical concept over that of the theoretical. This is most clear if we contrast the function of concepts in *Difference and Repetition* to their use in *The Critique of Pure Reason*. For Kant, concepts were ultimately functions of the object = x. They provided rules for the process of synthesis, rules which allowed the mind to simultaneously unite the manifold before it and relate that unity to the indeterminate object. Deleuze maintains this Kantian distribution in *Difference and Repetition*—it is central to his conception of common sense and its active synthesis—but he maintains it only as a secondary phenomenon. Concepts first arise in relation to an “action = x” (DR, 110, 294). Their ground is practical rather than theoretical. They are an assemblage of predicates around an action rather than a grounding of predicates in a substance. The Deleuzian concept is a kind of cognition, as Bergson says, of which we can say that “it is no longer a representation; it is an action.”¹¹

From the perspective of this movement from representation to action, perhaps we can read “abstraction” as “conceptual abstraction,” insofar as the concept is understood as an asymmetrical synthesis of the practical scene. What becomes clear, though, is that the specificity of abstraction in modernist painting becomes central to the project of creating a theory of thought without image. Painting gives us a kind of abstraction that is practical not theoretical. It opens up a mode of representation that breaks with the logic of representation. There is another way to sharpen this distinction. As Kant puts it, again in the *Jäsche Logic*, properly speaking, one abstracts *to* a concept, in a movement which carries us from concrete singularity to disembodied generality (592–3). This generality is subject precisely to the requirements of the concept: the logical coordination of predicates in relation to a ground and according to the universal laws of the understanding. Abstraction in painting does not make the same movement. One abstracts *to* an image, not a concept. Pictorial abstraction, depending on your position with respect to the act, is either a way of doing or a way of seeing, not a way of knowing. And while a certain distribution of predicates remains, those predicates are not organized logically, if by logical we understand the coordination of predicates with respect to a substantial ground. They are organized according to a different logic—that of sensation, where sensation is understood not only as a field of vibrating intensities, but as a field structured according to the logic of need, action, and desire.¹² To turn from representation to abstraction, in this sense, means to turn to the nonrepresentative logic of an embodied way of seeing, feeling, or acting.

The Logic of Sensation

Abstraction in painting, of course, is not a homogeneous practice. Even if we narrow the field of interpretation and insist on the specificity of abstraction in painting, there are still multiple things it could mean to turn from representation to abstraction. In his much later *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, Deleuze himself distinguished three paths of abstraction. A variation on the third path, I want to argue, bears directly on the aesthetics of *Difference and Repetition*.

The first two paths are articulated along the lines of a more or less traditional art-historical account of the progression of abstraction in modernism. The first tendency is represented by Mondrian and Kandinsky. Deleuze characterizes this tendency as “an asceticism, a spiritual salvation” in which the painting rescues modern man from the rush of the world by leaping over chaos into “abstract and signifying Forms.”¹³ Abstraction, in this context, represents the privileging of pure form. The second path is that of abstract expressionism, represented here primarily by Jackson Pollock and Morris Louis. Deleuze characterizes this tendency as “the opposite extreme of abstraction” (104). In Pollock, he says, it is no longer a matter of “the transformation of the form but a decomposition of matter, which abandons us to its lineaments and gradations” (105). Abstraction, in this context, represents the privileging of pure chaos. In the language of *Difference and Repetition*, we could say that each path exalts one or the other dimension of representation: abstract art is the universalization of extensity; abstract expressionism is the universalization of quality.

On Deleuze’s reading, Bacon avoids both of these paths, inventing a third kind of abstraction. Deleuze’s account of this third path is not merely descriptive, however. It responds to two different demands—one explicit, the other implicit. The explicit demand for a third way is that neither of these modes of abstraction do justice to what Deleuze calls “the diagram.”¹⁴ The diagram is the functional equivalent in this text of the virtual of *Difference and Repetition*. It shares most of the virtual’s basic characteristics: it is an “operative set of assignifying and nonrepresentational lines and zones” (101) experienced as a “nonfigurative chaos,” (103); it is not merely possibility but a possibility of fact (102); it spreads itself out across the empty form of time, “Aeon,” (85); and so on. More importantly, it shares the basic function of the virtual. The diagram is that immaterial becoming out of which the “germ of order or rhythm”—what Deleuze calls in *Difference and Repetition* the “Idea”—will arise (102). The process of its actualization will eventually allow it to “evolve into a Figure,” but in its virtual state, before its actualization, it is “not sufficient” in itself but “must be ‘utilized’” (101), much in the same way that an Idea must be selected by intensities before it can individuate anything.

Bacon’s third form of abstraction develops a new relation to the “nonfigurative chaos” of the diagram. The diagram’s chaos is not the chaos of modern life, nor is it an absolute chaos of matter in flux. Rather, it is a relative chaos. It is chaotic only “in relation to the figurative givens” (102)—or the representations and clichés which are always before the painter. On its own terms, the diagram is, in fact, a principle of order. It is the virtual act of thinking from which emerges “a germ of rhythm” which

will give rise to “the new order of the painting” (102). Both tendencies of abstraction miss the specificity of this kind of diagrammatic thinking. Abstract art codifies chaos, rendering it in sterile forms; abstract expression multiplies it to the point that it becomes excessive: there is too much chaos and thus it loses its generative capacity. Bacon, Deleuze claims, discovers a third way between too much order and too much chaos in which the diagram maintains its becoming even after it has been actualized in a Figure. What this means, of course, is that if philosophy must make the turn from representation to abstraction, it is this third kind of abstraction that is going to be important for the set of concepts Deleuze develops in *Difference and Repetition*.

Deleuze’s implicit motivation for articulating a third path for abstraction is just as important. Neither of the first two approaches avoid Picasso’s well-known criticism of abstract art. While Deleuze never quotes Picasso, it becomes increasingly clear that Picasso’s position has shaped Deleuze’s narrative—not only because Picasso poses significant difficulties for the theory of abstract painting as painting but also because he implicates any aspiration for an abstract philosophy in his critique as well:

There is no abstract art. You must always start with something. . . . Nor is there any “figurative” and “nonfigurative” art. Everything appears to us in the guise of a “figure.” Even in metaphysics ideas are expressed by means of symbolic “figures.” See how ridiculous it is then to think of painting without “figuration.” A person, an object, a circle are all “figures”; they react on us more or less intensely.”¹⁵

Picasso’s remarks essentially amount to the claim that it is impossible to escape figuration. The artist is always working with figures even when they think they have erased them. Deleuze regularly admits this objection throughout *Francis Bacon*. To cite only one example: “we never cease to trip over the objection of fact: the Figure is still figurative, it still represents someone (a screaming man, a smiling man, a seated man), it still narrates something, even if it is a surrealistic tale” (97). Despite these affirmations of Picasso’s claim, one of the central efforts of Deleuze’s book is to conceive a mode of abstraction which does not succumb to this difficulty. It follows from Picasso claim that if one could conceive of an account of pictorial abstraction which does not succumb to this difficulty one could also conceive of a philosophical practice which does not.

Deleuze’s strategy for overcoming these difficulties is to focus on the *act* of painting as such. His way out does not turn on a question of representation but on a question of technique; it is a question of the nature of the act or practice rather than one of the nature of the image. Deleuze stages the act of painting as a drama unfolding in precisely the situation Picasso described: the painter is always struggling with clichés, “ready-made perceptions, memories and phantasms [or imaginings]” (87). Before the painter even begins to paint, these representations are “always already on the canvas” (87). To avoid this problem Bacon develops a set of techniques which allow him to break with representation and give expression to the virtual diagram:

at that very moment once I have begun, how do I proceed so that what I paint does not become a cliché? “Free marks” will have to be made rather quickly on the image being painted so as to destroy the nascent figuration in it. (93–4)

Later Deleuze develops the nature of this act more fully:

What does this act of painting consist of? Bacon defines it in this way: make random marks (line-traits); scrub, sweep, or wipe the canvas in order to clear out locales or zones (color-patches); throw the paint, from various angles and at various speeds. Now this act, or these acts, presuppose that there were already figurative givens on the canvas (and in the painter's head), more or less virtual, more or less actual. It is precisely these givens that will be removed by the act of painting, either by being wiped, brushed, or rubbed, or else covered over. (100)

If philosophy needs to become more like painting, if it needs to make the turn from representation to abstraction, and if the kind of abstraction we are after is the one which does not exalt one or the other term of representation, but rather creates a space in which the virtual can appear, then we might ask: are there not comparable techniques at the level of philosophical practice? Is there not, in *Difference and Repetition*, a distribution of free marks, a scrubbing, a throwing of concepts from various angles at various speeds, a series of techniques for the disruptive inflection of philosophical givens (in the form of traditional problems, traditional concepts and traditional solutions)? Or, if we do not want to risk the banality of this kind of isomorphy, can we not generalize to the function of Bacon's techniques? The common function of Bacon's various techniques is the disruption of clichés—or habitual ways of seeing and painting. We could thus pose the question this way: are there not a series of techniques in Deleuze's prose style which are designed to engineer the failure of the habits and conventions of reading and writing philosophy?

Intensive texts

This conception of abstraction—one which depends on technical means to disrupt habit so that a figure expressive of the diagram can emerge (rather than a figure which expresses pure form or pure chaos)—would begin explain one of the most basic experiences of reading *Difference and Repetition*, an experience which is rarely discussed in the secondary literature and is sometimes flatly denied. Reading *Difference and Repetition* is difficult. Most philosophical texts are difficult, of course. But you hit the prose of *Difference and Repetition* like you hit a wall—and it is a different wall than Kant's or Hegel's. There are many distinguishing characteristics. Like dreamwork, Deleuze's text operates through processes of condensation and displacement so that, for example, the first synthesis of the imagination becomes a binding of intensities in the Id and then a coupling of forces within an energetic field. *Difference and Repetition* does not develop its arguments linearly, but through a process of collage in which fragments of other arguments of other thinkers are repeated alongside one another in a seemingly alogical series. Its disjointed narrative moves in and out of a kind of philosophical free-indirect discourse so that you never know whether a concept is Nietzsche's or Deleuze's. He poses problems whose sense is not immediately apparent

(the first sentence, for example—"Repetition is not generality"—jars: why would repetition be confused with generality?). The text creates its own citational world, which calls for a reader simultaneously familiar with Duns Scotus, and Jacques Monod (nobody, to my knowledge, has yet noted how wonderfully incoherent the bibliography to *Difference and Repetition* is). The text asks us take its metaphors literally and its declarative statements metaphorically. And, crucially for the argument I want to make below, Deleuze refuses to adopt an authoritative position outside of the text. He cultivates instead a radical perspectivism, positioning his statements within the perspective of the concept being articulated.

Many of these techniques and their effects are specifically modernist: collage, deformation, decontextualization, and defamiliarization. But they constitute a form of abstraction which approaches that of Bacon's in terms of function. What all of these devices have in common is a disruption of our habits or expectations as readers. Rather than orienting the reader, they disorient the reader.¹⁶ The prose immediately carries us into a world without others, a world without structured potentialities guiding our expectations according to common conventions of meaning and connection. It annihilates cliché. It derails the act of recognition. This stylistic violence is crucial to the way the text works and to one of the basic methodological positions Deleuze adopts.

The opening pages of *Difference and Repetition* explicitly foreground the problem of philosophical style. It is in the conclusion that Deleuze says the theory of thought needs to become like painting, but the conclusion is far from being the first place he announces this imperative. In fact this call for a new style of philosophizing is a current which runs throughout the text. In the preface, Deleuze writes that it is no longer possible to write philosophy in the "old style." The philosopher must take up the "search for new means of philosophical expression," a search which was "begun by Nietzsche" (xxi). In the introduction, the philosophical stakes of this demand are developed further.

Kierkegaard and Nietzsche are among those who bring to philosophy a new means of expression. Furthermore, in all their work, *movement* is at issue. Their objection to Hegel is that he does not go beyond false movement—in other words, the abstract logical movement of "mediation." They want to put metaphysics in motion, in action. They want to make it act, and make it carry out immediate acts. It is not enough, therefore, for them to propose a new representation of movement; representation is already mediation. Rather, it is a question of producing within the work a movement capable of affecting the mind outside of all representation; it is a question of making movement itself a work, without interposition; of substituting direct signs for mediate representations; of inventing vibrations, rotations, whirlings, gravitations, dances or leaps which directly touch the mind. (8; original emphasis)

This passage clearly articulates Deleuze's familiar imperative for philosophy to break with representation, but it does so in terms other than those usually emphasized in Deleuze studies. The task is not to break with representation understood as a

philosophical presupposition, a concept or a project; it is to break with the very act of representation at the level of philosophical style. The criticism of Hegel here, for example, does not turn on Hegel's concepts, but on the way in which he created and communicated his concepts. The implication is that to represent thought already commits one to the logic of mediation, and ultimately to an image of thought which takes, however indirectly, the form and movement of representation.

In opposition to the play of representation, Deleuze envisions another kind of act, one in which the movement of the work immediately touches the mind. The emphasis on immediacy is striking here. To break with representation is to align oneself with "direct signs," "immediate acts," a movement "without interposition." Twice, he emphasizes that it is a question of directly touching the mind. It is as though the right kind of style developing the right kind of concept makes possible a new kind of intuition or a new mode of visibility. The kind of immediacy Deleuze indicates here is not that of sensible intuition—or the immediate relation to the object; nor is it a categorical intuition—or the immediate vision of the idea. It is, rather, a kind of stylistic intuition in which the acts of a text—its whirlings and rotations—directly touch the mind, urging it to carry out "immediate acts." "Style in philosophy," Deleuze said in an interview almost 30 years later, "is the movement of concepts. This movement's only present, of course, in the sentences, but the sole point of the sentences is to give it life, a life of its own."¹⁷

We get the sense, too, that this demand is tied to the task of thinking immanence. For in both the preface and this passage, it is Nietzsche who provides the model of a philosopher artist—the same thinker who, in *Difference and Repetition*, goes beyond Duns Scotus and Spinoza in the pursuit of immanence. Both passages allude to Nietzsche's conception of the artist-philosopher.¹⁸ Nietzsche imagines a philosopher who writes with lust, who stimulates life, creates rather than represents, transforms life into a more noble form, and directly forms the reader. All of these points resonate within Deleuze's text. But perhaps the crucial characteristic of Nietzsche's artist-philosopher is her attachment to this world. Nietzsche implies that this project is connected with a commitment to immanence: "In the main, I agree more with the artists than with any philosopher hitherto: they have not lost the scent of life, they have loved the things of 'this world'—they have loved their senses" (820).

What's at stake in Deleuze's style, then, is the mobilization of a new kind of concept—one grounded in acts rather than representations; one which merges with the violence of intensity rather than the calm of representation. To ignore the difficulty of the text, or to pretend it is not there or that we are somehow not affected by the whirlings and rotations of the text—Deleuze's free marks—is to erase one of the most basic methodological gestures of the text: Deleuze's demand for a new mode of writing and thinking which would be adequate to the thought of immanence.

Positions of transcendence

One of the concomitants of the revolution which took painting from representation to abstraction was a reconfiguration of the position of the observer with respect to

the image. As Jonathan Crary describes it, in the mid-century a “Plotinian model of the observer” arose, a model which performed a “radical conflation of eye and sun, of self and divinity, of subject and object.”¹⁹ The succession of dualities here traverses categories which are properly metaphysical, and their collective merger can be summarized as a transition from transcendence to immanence, from a divinity turned away from the self to a divinity which is the self. If Crary calls this a “Plotinian” model, it is because he has in mind Goethe’s gloss of Plotinus at the beginning of *The Theory of Colors*—a gloss which Deleuze himself also used to explain the immanence of the spontaneous imagination with respect to discontinuous matter in the first synthesis. In Goethe’s words: “If the eye were not sunny, how could we possibly perceive light?”²⁰ In Deleuze’s: “the eye that binds light is itself a bound light” (*DR*, 96).

Something similar happens to philosophical thought when it makes the turn from representation to abstraction. This merger of seer and seen, subject and object, substance and mode, in the whirlings and rotations of a text requires a reconception of the position from which the philosopher (and his or her readers) sees and speaks. In *Francis Bacon*, Deleuze writes that the inherent tendency of abstraction, particularly in its expressionist form, is a tendency toward “the abandonment of any visual sovereignty” (*FB*, 106). What is at stake in the turn from representation to abstraction in philosophy, then, even more than a reconception of the concept and a new importance for prose style, is the abandonment of any position of philosophical sovereignty.

This gesture is directed at one of the basic problematics within the history of idealism. When Kant distinguished, in the introduction to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, between the two couplets—transcendental idealism/empirical realism and transcendental realism/empirical idealism—he did not merely create a set of categories into which one could distribute basic philosophical positions. As Henry Allison emphasizes, he articulated properly meta-philosophical categories. Beyond their capacity to sort, they stake out an entirely new *position* from which thought can think.²¹ To do philosophy critically is to occupy the viewpoint opened up by “transcendental idealism.” Kant, you could say, is philosophy’s Brunelleschi—not in the sense that he affirmed the subjectivity of space, but in the sense that he discovered the position from which the subjective distribution of space finally became visible.²²

The importance of this position carved out by Kant is fundamental for the history of German idealism (as well as its afterlife in the Leninist-Althusserian tradition of Marxism), and it becomes a particularly important problem in Hegel who, in his own pursuit of immanence, tried to simultaneously maintain the viewpoint of the philosopher and that of embodied, “common” consciousness. As Jean Hyppolite shows, one of the fundamental methodological strategies of the *Phenomenology* was to begin in a description of natural or common consciousness.²³ By virtue of the fidelity of his description, Hegel would be able to set science, which was trying to “walk on its head,” back on its feet (Hyppolite, 7). But, as Deleuze argues, this description is already a representation, and it is clear as early as the end of the introduction that the person who is writing the *Phenomenology* and the person who is reading the *Phenomenology*—the “us” in Hegel’s “for us”—are not subjects of common consciousness. Indeed, what the reader and writer of the *Phenomenology* see is what, as Hegel puts it, happens

“behind the back of consciousness.”²⁴ We occupy with Hegel a position outside of common consciousness, from which we can not only watch the gradual unfolding of its successive shapes, but from which we can also grasp the necessity of its becoming. We thus stand in a perspective which does not break with representation, but merely gives it universal extension (arguably, the next best thing).

François Laruelle has thus argued that an act of auto-positioning is the founding gesture of philosophy as such. Philosophy establishes itself by means of a properly philosophical decision through which it gives itself authority over the real. In order to do philosophy, Laruelle writes, we must carve out the position of a “philosopher spectator who exposit, decides and positions himself in logos-games.”²⁵ To do philosophy is to adopt a certain way of seeing. This way of seeing is defined, of course, by the object one chooses to see and by the principles of selection structuring that gaze; but, more profoundly, it is modulated by the very position the viewer adopts. Laruelle suggests, perhaps thinking of Deleuze, that philosophy has remained too closely tied to a specific regime of visibility in which thought is still too representational. Thought, he says, is still in a state which is “as ‘pre-cubist’ . . . as the laws of perspective formulated in the Renaissance” (Laruelle, 18).

Positions of immanence

Laruelle not only names this act of auto-positioning as the founding gesture of philosophy, but also establishes the problem of this gesture for any philosophy of immanence. A philosophy of immanence cannot begin in the transcendence of the philosophical gaze. The thought of immanence can only emerge through the refusal to adopt a position above and beyond the real from which we pretend to legislate the sense, truth, and value of being. For Laruelle, this means performing a “*lived mutation . . . of our relation to philosophy*” (24; original emphasis), which in fact would break with philosophy altogether. Hence his performance of a nonphilosophical science grounded on a new way of seeing: nonphilosophy’s “essence,” he writes, “consists in substituting the structural and transcendental rule of philosophical decision . . . for a completely different principle, that of the Vision-in-One” (16).

For Deleuze, however, it is not necessary to break with philosophy to think immanence. If, for Laruelle, philosophy is no longer possible, for Deleuze it must be created. When Kant ceaselessly reminds us to read from the perspective of transcendental idealism, or Hegel demands we step behind common consciousness, or Husserl carries us behind the veil of the reduction, each implicitly establishes a relation between the position of the spectator and the vanishing point from which consciousness and its structures come into focus. It is from this correlation of position and point that their image of thought comes into focus. Deleuze disrupts this relation precisely through his style—his scrubbing, his free marks, the way in which he throws the history of philosophy at the text from various speeds and angles. Much in the same way Bacon’s scrubbing frees the field for thought to emerge, Deleuze’s stylistic gestures

eliminate any pregiven position from which we can see the text. There is no position given in the text which we can stand under and grasp finally Deleuze's image of thought without image. This is not to say that a position cannot be achieved, but only that it cannot be given outright. His style demands our immersion in the text, but this does not mean that the position from which one sees and knows cannot be produced.

Intensive reading and the uses of representation

This question of production, like the question of what Deleuze might mean by "abstraction," is best approached obliquely. Let me pose other, related, questions: From what position do I claim to be speaking in a commentary on Deleuze? Does the act of commentary not reintroduce the very position Deleuze's style attempted to erase? How is one to respond coherently to a text which resists coherence? I began this chapter with the claim that what was unclear in Deleuze's dictum that philosophy should turn from representation to abstraction was what he meant by "abstraction." But to determine the position from which a reader of Deleuze might speak, or a critic might write, we need to trouble the concept of representation as well.

One could simply not worry about the position from which the critic speaks. It is entirely possible to proceed as usual, insisting that the act and position of criticism is different from the act and position of the philosopher, and does not require any particular fidelity to the methods of text in question. Or one could decide that the only faithful reading is to augment or amplify the intensive flow of the text, relishing in its *délire*, extending its whirlings and vibrations in a new direction. Or one could pursue something entirely unexpected. James Williams, for example, establishes a short circuit shuttling between Deleuze's text and italicized patches of melodrama. None of these responses have a strong foundation in the conceptual architecture of *Difference and Repetition*, however. Deleuze gives a clear itinerary for the movement of thought which encounters intensity. If one of the functions of his style is to return us to the level of the intensive, it should be possible to outline a theory of response which derives from this itinerary.

One version of the itinerary takes the form of a genetic line linking each of the faculties—sensitivity, imagination, memory, and thought. This genetic line has a fixed origin: "on the path which leads to that which is to be thought, all begins with sensitivity" (144). It has a fixed order: "There is indeed a serial connection between the faculties and an order in that series" (145). It has a "principle of communication:" violence (145). The story which unfolds from this configuration is as follows: Intensity transmits its shock to "a transcendental sensitivity which apprehends it immediately in the encounter" (144). Sensitivity then "transmits its constraint to the imagination." The imagination passes its constraint to memory, and memory passes its violence on to thought. It would be a mistake to treat this theory of the faculties as a minor and passing moment of *Difference and Repetition*. Each of these faculties—and the logic of their relations to one another—is merely a replaying of the process of passive synthesis

developed in the previous chapter—the first passive synthesis of imagination generates the second of memory which, in turn, awakens the third of thought.

This itinerary already suggests that the ideal of a purely intensive reading would be misguided (if the very definition of intensity did not already make the expression oxymoronic). To give ourselves over to the flow of the text is a way of not responding to the encounter it manufactures. To respond to the violence of the encounter is to pick up that violence and to raise it to the level of thought. An intensive reading demands the formulation of an Idea, not the running on of material flows. Thought responds to the violence of intensity by creating an idea. It surveys the dismembered body of the cogito and stitches together its scattered limbs in an ideal synthesis.

Thought, however, is not the end of the line. It is merely the midpoint. Once created, the Idea remains ineffectual unless actualized. To actualize an Idea is to represent it. Insofar as the second half of the story of *Difference and Repetition* tells the story of the genesis of representation, it is of fundamental importance for the question of the reader's position and the possibility of representing Deleuze's text.

Through a mechanism Deleuze calls dramatization—a mechanism which explicitly reformulates the Kantian schematism much in the same way his theory of the faculties reformulates the process of synthesis in the deduction—thought returns to the field of sensibility. The Idea “pierces” the body, but its violence, unlike that of intensity, is “cruel” (*DR*, 219). It is cruel, because it is ordered and methodical. Whereas the process of synthesis was originally passive, after dramatization, it becomes active. The Idea gives rules for the imagination's synthesis of intensity, and by virtue of these rules, the synthesis becomes active, capable of canceling the violence of intensity in the direction of a real object and stable subject. This real object and stable subject are the coordinates of representation.

It is thus not the case that *Difference and Repetition* does away with the concept of representation. On the contrary, what this genetic line shows, when taken in its totality, is that *Difference and Repetition* is the story of the birth of representation. It accounts for a process in which the unrepresentable and unthinkable become externalized in representation. What I want to argue in conclusion is that it is not only possible but also *legitimate* for the critic to occupy this position of stability.

One of the most overlooked aspects of Deleuze's work is his distinction between a legitimate and an illegitimate use of representation. In *Difference and Repetition* he even claims this distinction constitutes one of the central “practical” ends of his work. To ground representation in its genesis is to define “the conditions of the legitimate use of the words ‘identical’ and ‘similar’” (*DR*, 301). The most developed discussion of this distinction is in *The Logic of Sense*, a text he published one year after *Difference and Repetition*. There he distinguishes “two types of knowledge.” The first, what he calls a “dead” representation, is “indifferent, remaining external to its object.” The second, what he calls a “living” representation, is “concrete, seeking its object wherever it is” (*LS*, 146). It is only this latter use of representation that Deleuze considers legitimate. Its legitimacy is derived from the way in which it remains tied to and expressive of their conditions of production. “Representation attains this topical ideal,” Deleuze explains, “only by means of the hidden expression which it encompasses, that is, by means of the

event it envelops. There is thus a ‘use’ of representation without which representation would remain lifeless and senseless” (LS, 146; my emphasis).

In *Difference and Repetition*, this distinction establishes itself as one between those modes of generality which repeat in an empty way, the quality and quantity of an object in general—Kant’s representation by common marks—and those modes of representation which remain tied in to the “structure-other”—a structure which “cannot be separated from the expressivity which constitutes it” and which endows every representation with “a swarm of possibilities” which pad it within a horizon of expectation and memory (DR, 260). Such a distinction is at work, in fact, in *Francis Bacon*, where Deleuze draws a sharp distinction between “figuration” with its complicity in the empty repetition of cliché and the “Figure,” a mode of representation which continually expresses the generative potential of the diagram.

The importance of the distinction is that it allows us to formulate a theory of response, grounded in the conceptual architecture of *Difference and Repetition*, one which avoids the heedlessness of the critic who proceeds as critic, as well as the arbitrariness of the intensive and idiosyncratic readers. Criticism, we can say, is the actualization of an Idea generated in response to the violence of an encounter. Its representation is legitimate insofar as it approaches the “topical ideal” of returning eternally to the text which generates it. In this way, the criterion for the legitimate representation of the work approaches the criteria of good art criticism—and what is *Difference and Repetition* if not a painting?

When philosophy moves from representation to abstraction, it not only removes metaphilosophical difficulties relating to the nature of the concept and the position of the philosopher, it creates a position from which the critic can comment. Put differently, the position from which the critic speaks becomes valid only insofar as it treats the text as a work of art. “Each painting, each piece of music,” Maurice Blanchot writes, “makes us a present of the organ we need to welcome it; each one ‘gives’ us the eye and the ear we need to see and hear it.”²⁶ Deleuze’s stylistic wager in *Difference and Repetition* is that when philosophy makes the turn to abstraction, it discovers the resources to engender the thought we need to think it.

Notes

- 1 Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. P. Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), hereafter DR, 276.
- 2 See R. Bogue, “Gilles Deleuze: Postmodern Philosopher?” in *The Ends of Theory*, eds. J. Herron, et al. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996), 166–82.
- 3 Eleanor Kaufmann, *The Delirium of Praise* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 159–60n5.
- 4 See F. Jameson, *A Singular Modernity* (New York: Verso, 2002), 203; I. Buchanan, “Introduction,” in *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Cinema*, eds. I. Buchanan and P. MacCormack (New York: Continuum, 2008), 10–11; and G. Flaxman, *Gilles Deleuze and the Fabulation of Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 8: “We can do no better, and we might do much worse, than to

characterize Deleuze's profusion of concepts by recalling Ezra Pound's modernist ethos: *make it new*."

- 5 C. Colebrook, *Deleuze: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 95. See 95 and 100 for a clear distinction between Deleuze and modernist aesthetics on the question of the relation between art and life. See also Jameson, *A Singular Modernity*, 204.
- 6 See *DR*, xxi. While this method is at work in all of Deleuze's historical works, it is actualized in his 1953 *Instincts et institutions*, a text which is nothing but a collage of other texts.
- 7 See, for example, Jameson, *A Singular Modernity*, *op. cit.*, 203.
- 8 Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. B. Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 144.
- 9 This project of inventing a new concept of the concept is explicitly announced in *What is Philosophy?* (see pg. 19), but it is a project which occupied Deleuze across his career. Few of Deleuze's readers have engaged with this issue. Notable exceptions include E. Alliez, *The Signature of the World*, trans. E. R. Albert (London: Continuum, 2004), 22–3; I. Buchanan, *Deleuzism: A Metacommentary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 60; and P. Patton, *Deleuze and the Political* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 14–17.
- 10 I. Kant, *Lectures on Logic*, trans. J. M. Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 589; original emphasis.
- 11 H. Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 2002), 81.
- 12 Kandinsky: "In real art theory does not precede practice, but follows her" (35). In W. Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, trans. M. T. H. Sadler (New York: Dover, 1972).
- 13 Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. D. Smith (London: Continuum, 2003), hereafter *FB*, 103–4.
- 14 For a more developed account of the concept than I can provide here, see J. Zdebik, *Deleuze and the Diagram: Aesthetic Threads in Visual Organization* (London: Continuum, 2012), 1–24.
- 15 P. Picasso, Interview with Zervos in *Picasso on Art: A Selection of Views*, ed. D. Ashton (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 9.
- 16 Perhaps the best evidence of this disorientation is that in the past 10 years, three readers' guides to *Difference and Repetition* have been published. What is striking about these guides is how little overlap there is between them. Whereas guides to other difficult texts in the history of philosophy are more or less predictable—almost every guide to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, for example, is going to begin with a discussion of synthetic *a priori* judgments and transcendental idealism, before devoting the majority of the text to the deduction—there is nothing predictable about the guides to *Difference and Repetition*.
- 17 Deleuze, *Negotiations*, trans. M. Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 140. On the importance of that short clause "a life of its own," see Colebrook, "The Work of Art that Stands Alone," *Deleuze Studies* 1.1 (2007): 36; and Colebrook, *Blake, Deleuzian Aesthetics and the Digital* (London: Continuum, 2012), 84–5.
- 18 F. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. W. Kaufman and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1968), 795.

- 19 J. Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 142–3.
- 20 Goethe, *Theory of Colors*, trans. C. Eastlake (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970), xxxix.
- 21 Indeed, one of Allison's basic strategies in *Kant's Transcendental Idealism* is to argue that many of the classic problems of Kant scholarship arise from our failure to consistently occupy this position. See, in particular, pg. 73. H. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).
- 22 Friedrich Kittler argues in *Optical Media* that the discovery of linear perspective depended on an acrobatics of thought very much like Kant's Copernican revolution: seeing does not leave the viewer but rather comes to them. See Kittler, *Optical Media*, trans. A. Enns (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), 50.
- 23 J. Hyppolite, *The Genesis and Structure of the Phenomenology of Perception* (Bloomington: Northwestern University Press, 1974), chapter 1.
- 24 G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 56.
- 25 F. Laruelle, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, trans. T. Adkins (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2013), 29.
- 26 M. Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. A. Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 192.

Reading *Anti-Oedipus*: Literature, Schizophrenia, and Universal History

Aidan Tynan

“It works too, believe me . . .”

Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, published in 1972, is a captivating, eccentric, and difficult book, the first fruit of a collaboration between Deleuze and Guattari that lasted over two decades. An initial difficulty it presents is how to place it in its proper historical and intellectual context, a difficulty exacerbated by claims the authors make about the nature of the creative process: “from the moment there is genius, there is something that belongs to no school, no period, something that achieves a breakthrough.”¹ Deleuze and Guattari’s aim is to explain how such breakthroughs occur, not simply in the arts but also in our thinking, feeling, and general behavior. In doing so they achieved something of a breakthrough themselves, producing a new discipline they termed schizoanalysis. Their critique of psychoanalytic reason—the ostensible subject of the book—asserts a far-reaching theory of desire in response to “Oedipal” accounts that locate the unconscious in the domestic triangle of “daddy-mommy-me” (25). Desire is the *something* that achieves a breakthrough and for this reason is essentially homeless, wherever it may be found. The unconscious has no daddy-and-mommy but is, like Ishmael adrift on the sea at the close of *Moby Dick*, eternally an orphan.²

Another difficulty presents itself in Deleuze and Guattari’s contention that the orphan unconscious is less something to be known or interpreted than to be *practiced*, put to use within a social field. This is the central political premise that makes their book more than a mere critique of psychoanalytic theory. The opening passage begins *in medias res*, launching us into the midst of what are termed “desiring machines”:

It is at work everywhere, functioning smoothly at times, at other times in fits and starts. It breathes, it heats, it eats. It shits and fucks. What a mistake to have ever said the id. Everywhere it is machines—real ones, not figurative ones: machines driving other machines, machines being driven by other machines, with all the necessary couplings and connections. (1)

Anti-Oedipus begins by posing the question of beginnings—of how to begin when we are always in the middle—through the concept of the “machine,” machines being always connected to other machines. While Deleuze and Guattari insist these are machines in the strict literal sense, they also say that unlike utilitarian technical machines, which are said to work only by doing what they are supposed to do, “desiring-machines work only when they break down, and by continually breaking down” (9). This relates more to a practical distinction between uses than to a distinction between different types of objects. If desire achieves a breakthrough, it does so by jamming the gears of some existing concatenation of cause and effect and allowing new functions to emerge. This is how Deleuze and Guattari envisage change, creation, and process, but also stasis, blockage, and breakdown. This practical approach is intended to overcome the old philosophical opposition between “mechanism” and “vitalism” (312). What we call “nature” is neither mechanistic and purely physical nor the manifestation of some ineffable life principle but “machinic,” that is, contingently self-engineered and self-engineering.

The novelist Malcolm Lowry described his masterpiece *Under the Volcano* as “a sort of machine,” adding enigmatically that “it works too, believe me, as I have found out.”³ Deleuze and Guattari borrow Lowry’s phrase to insist that the unconscious poses “no problem of meaning, but only of usage” (86). They argue that art in general, and literature in particular, “accedes to its authentic modernity” when it poses the question of use in this way (405). In the opening pages of *Anti-Oedipus*, a famous scene from Beckett’s novel *Molloy*, in which the protagonist distributes stones in his various pockets so as to suck them equally one after another, is given as an example of a desiring machine. Beckett’s “stone-sucking machine” presents an automatistic account of human behavior, stripped of the narrative or descriptive elements that would render it meaningful (3). The desiring machine is directly related to the problem of language and meaning:

Desire makes its entry with the general collapse of the question “What does it mean?” No one has been able to pose the problem of language except to the extent that linguists and logicians have first eliminated meaning; and the greatest force of language was only discovered once a *work* was viewed as a machine, producing certain effects, amenable to a certain use. (119)

Meanings are effects produced by certain uses of language. This is not to say that we should treat language as a technical machine that works by producing the meanings we intend. On the contrary, meanings are only assembled retroactively from particles which do not mean anything but simply function. The link between meaning and function can thus be grasped at a “molecular” level, where the machines’ multiple parts take on definition as *signs* beneath the level of meaning. Literature is important from a political point of view because it shows how this molecular functionalism suggests in principle a certain dismantling or re-engineering of the collective social body in relation to the meanings that organize it in practice. In Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time*, the narrator’s perception of his rigid “molar” social environment “comes apart . . . in

a molecular and pure multiplicity" (AO, 77). The concept of the molecular here is indebted to Freud's distinction between neurosis and psychosis, which suggested that a patient of the former kind may eroticize a stocking by imagining it as a vagina, the foot symbolizing a penis. A schizophrenic patient, by contrast, "in putting on his stockings . . . was disturbed by the idea that he must pull apart the stitches in the knitting, i.e. the holes, and to him every hole was a symbol of the female genital aperture."⁴ For Deleuze and Guattari, "to compare a pure aggregate of stitches to a field of vaginas" requires an entirely different aesthetic, "a difference in style" revealed by the machinic universe.⁵

The central thesis of *Anti-Oedipus* is that the unconscious exists only because it has been produced. As Ian Buchanan notes, for Deleuze and Guattari as for Marx, the category of production can be understood as a "rational abstraction" intended as a "new beginning."⁶ Marx castigated the economists of his day for taking as their starting point isolated producers who come together via a social contract. Such a conception of an originary "natural individual" is, Marx argued, a capitalist fantasy along the lines of *Robinson Crusoe*, one arising from a certain conception of presocial existence that only takes shape with the ascent of capitalism and civil society.⁷ Deleuze and Guattari criticize the Oedipus complex as a model of psychosexual development for being a false beginning of this kind, in which the infant as isolated producer becomes a social individual only through resolving the conflict between incestuous desires and the norms embodied in the parents (3). By interposing the family as a mediator between desire and the social, we presuppose, instead of explaining, the repression by which desire is isolated from its wider environment. Oedipus constructs its own fantasy of the natural individual—the infant subjected to the complex—on the basis of the product of the latter's repression—the Oedipalized adult. Any direct investment of desire in the social then becomes unthinkable.

Marx's correction was to begin not with concrete producers but with "production in general," abstracted from any concrete state of affairs. Such a move was, perhaps counterintuitively, necessary for Marx's materialist aims. For a society in which the commodity form has complete dominance, we cannot assume any resemblance, any representational fidelity, between a product and the material facts of its production. Deleuze and Guattari remind us of "one of Marx's caveats: we cannot tell from the mere taste of wheat who grew it; the product gives us no hint as to the system and the relations of production" (26). In order to understand the *process* of production we should instead begin with production in the abstract. Desiring production is intended as a corrective to the "paralogisms" encountered when reasoning from specific cases to their conditions. Analytical reasoning assumes the private, personalized ego of the Oedipal drama to be the necessary destiny or "aggregate of destination" of the desiring machines without considering that other viable subjectivities, corresponding to different uses of the machines, may be possible (111). The corrective element is what Deleuze and Guattari, following Kant, call "synthesis" and they outline, in their first chapter, three different syntheses of the unconscious—connection, disjunction, and conjunction/consumption—carried out by the desiring machines. The synthetic correction of psychoanalysis forms the basis of schizoanalysis.

From homo natura to homo historia

But do not Deleuze and Guattari present us with their very own natural individual, a *homo natura*, in the figure of the “schizo”? If the desiring machines are the components of nature, then the schizophrenic, for whom the Oedipal process of subject formation fails, might be thought to be in touch with a more authentic extrafamilial outside. “A schizophrenic out for a walk is a better model than a neurotic lying on the analyst’s couch” because it is outside that we find the ontological equation for desire: “Nature = production” (2, 18). The schizophrenic in question here is Lenz from Georg Büchner’s novella of that name but Deleuze and Guattari call up a litany of others: Vaslav Nijinsky, Antonin Artaud, Daniel Paul Schreber, Friedrich Hölderlin. We can note that most of these are literary figures. Schreber, who was a judge, published a remarkable account of his paranoid delirium—most notably his transformation into a woman for the purposes of copulating with God. Freud’s interpretation of Schreber’s memoir signals for Deleuze and Guattari the ultimate inadequacy of Oedipus as a means of reading the unconscious:

It should be noted that Judge Schreber’s destiny was not merely that of being sodomized, while still alive, by the rays from heaven, but also that of being posthumously oedipalized by Freud. From the enormous political, social, and historical content of Schreber’s delirium, not one word is retained, as though the libido did not bother itself with such things. Freud invokes only a sexual argument, which consists in bringing about the union of sexuality and the familial complex, and a mythological argument, which consists in positing the adequation of the productive force of the unconscious and the “edifying forces of myths and religions.” (64–5)

Freud reduces the extraordinary richness of Schreber’s delirium—which is filled with apocalyptic and racial themes—to a paranoiac defense against a homosexuality originally directed toward his father. Oedipalization amounts to this splitting of desire into a sexual form whose matrix is the family, and an expressive form in which desire is sublimated (desexualized) in cultural archetypes and images. Sexuality and culture are desire’s Scylla and Charybdis. Whether one sides with Freud or Jung, whether one descends from culture to sexuality or ascends from sexuality to culture, makes no difference because in both cases a direct constitutive relation between desire and social reality is lost.

Deleuze and Guattari discover in schizophrenia a means to break through this double impasse. But do they not thereby idealize the schizophrenic? Deleuze regretted the fact that some readers may have read *Anti-Oedipus* as a license to “go crazy,” insisting that he and Guattari “never stopped opposing the schizophrenic process to the repressive hospital type.”⁸ They do not deny the debilitating nature of the illness—Guattari worked for many years at an experimental clinic for the treatment of schizophrenics—but they do distinguish schizophrenia as a pathological product from schizophrenia as a nonpathological process: “our society produces schizos

the same way it produces Prell shampoo or Ford cars . . . capitalist production is constantly arresting the schizophrenic process and transforming the subject of the process into a confined clinical entity” (266). Schizophrenic illness is desire’s commodity form, and not because schizos are salable but precisely because they are not. Capitalist production only functions by virtue of a breakdown that causes it to drive continually toward the immanent economic limits from which it must recoil in order to maintain itself as a social form. The production of capitalist subjectivity follows the same path. Schizophrenia is *the* pathology of capitalism, “modern man’s sickness,” because it is the clinical manifestation of this recoil, just as unemployment and stagnation are the social manifestations (142). Deleuze and Guattari thus draw a direct link between the social production accounting for capitalism and the desiring production accounting for schizophrenia. Schizophrenia as process is the point where the two economies—the social and the libidinal—can no longer be distinguished.

If the schizophrenic is a better model than the neurotic, this is not because he is more authentic or natural but, on the contrary, because he tells us something important about the inauthenticity specific to our own age. Karl Jaspers remarked that “just as hysteria may have been ‘in the air’ for the mentality of people prior to the eighteenth century, so schizophrenia may somehow be a trait for our days.”⁹ Jaspers adds a qualification to this insight, which Deleuze and Guattari quote:

We have seen that in former times human beings attempted to drive themselves into hysteria; and we might say that today many human beings attempt to drive themselves into madness in much the same way. But if the former attempt was to a certain extent psychologically possible, the latter is not possible at all, and can lead only to inauthenticity. (36)

The difference between St Teresa of Avila, for example, and Van Gogh is that the former’s hysteria provided her with a viable way of living whereas the latter’s schizophrenia plunged him into catastrophe. In short, if neurosis can form the basis of a lifestyle, schizophrenia ultimately cannot. The equation Nature = production may thus be read as a fundamental ontological claim, but it by no means entails a more meaningful experience. The schizophrenic process breaches the man/nature dichotomy by which we normally put meaningful distance between our inner life and the external world. For Lenz in the Vosges, everything from the mountains and the stars to the chlorophyll in the plants are connected to his own body by the logic of machines extending to the edge of the universe: “there is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together . . . the self and the non-self, outside and inside, no longer have any meaning whatsoever” (2). The point where schizophrenia becomes pathological, then, relates less to the process itself than to the limits by which the “subject of the process” (what Deleuze and Guattari, following Artaud, call the “body without organs”) becomes a particular kind of psychosocial entity—a subject of capitalism.

We can thus clarify what Deleuze and Guattari mean when they claim that capitalism produces schizophrenics. Both capitalism and schizophrenia bring into the foreground the same process of constitution by which social production and desiring production are merged in a universal economy. As Marx and Engels suggest, such foregrounding does not happen without the ruptures and crises, liberations and repressions, characteristic of the capitalist age:

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors," and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment." . . . The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society.¹⁰

By reducing all possible social relations to monetary relations, the bourgeoisie expose what had been clothed in previous social formations: the economic constitution of reality as such. It becomes possible to read *all* prior history in terms of capitalism, provided that capitalism itself is defined in terms of its "immanent limits," its forms of self-inhibition. Deleuze and Guattari speak of "deterritorialization," by which socioeconomic ties are dissolved and the cultural codes facilitating them "decoded," and of "reterritorialization" by which societies attempt to contain or "recode" the economic flows thus liberated. The Freudian unconscious, as the domain of private man, constitutes a "last territoriality" whose peculiarly artificial nature—assembled from the mythological and cultural remains of prior ages—the schizophrenic suffers in the form of a generalized collapse of meaning (132). Capitalism thus has two "poles" by which it instigates an unprecedented liberation of productive potential that it simultaneously counteracts via the strangulating cash nexus: "capitalism, through its process of production, produces an awesome schizophrenic accumulation of energy or charge, against which it brings all its vast powers of repression to bear, but which nonetheless continues to act as capitalism's limit" (37).

In answer to the question "where to begin, when we are always in the middle?" Deleuze and Guattari answer: at the end. Capitalism is precisely "the end of history" not because it is the best realizable social form but because it provides the conditions under which society can submit itself to a total critique as part of its own functioning (142). This is a critique that can only take the form of one of the oldest of all deliriums, the delirium of the end: Schreber envisages an apocalyptic end of the world, and something similar can be detected in the paintings of Turner (143–4). But delirium is not, Deleuze and Guattari insist, a form of deluded or false consciousness. It is the very means by which capitalism records or inscribes its historicity. Delirium "raves universal history" because it is a "true consciousness of a false movement, a true perception of an apparent objective movement" by which capitalism imposes itself as humanity's final form (11, 94).

May '68 and the impasse of Oedipus

For a book that defines the unconscious as an orphan, *Anti-Oedipus* features a telling remark about the problem of generations:

In the generation-gap conflict we hear old people reproach the young, in the most malicious way, for putting their desires (a car, credit, a loan, girl-boy relationships) ahead of their interests (work, savings, a good marriage). But what appears to other people as raw desire still contains complexes of desire and interest, and a mixture of forms of desire and of interest that are specifically reactionary and vaguely revolutionary. (383–4)

The immediate context for Deleuze and Guattari's collaboration was the famous "events" in France in May 1968, in which students protesting what they saw as an archaic and authoritarian university system quickly escalated into clashes with police, barricades on the streets, and a wildcat general strike in which workers, dismayed by the violent reaction of de Gaulle's state, walked out in solidarity with the protesters. By the time Deleuze, then 44 years old, defended his doctoral thesis at the Sorbonne in early '69 the rebellion had mostly died out, but a few remnants still roved the university. Deleuze recalls that "when I defended my thesis, the jury president stayed posted at the door to see whether the gangs were coming, and I never saw his eyes."¹¹ Experiences such as this would have raised unavoidable questions about the role of the intellectual in relation to politics and the academic establishment. While Deleuze had not been directly involved in the protests he was one of the few professors at his university to declare his support and attend the events. Guattari, a committed militant since his teens, had taken a far more active role, participating in the occupation of the Odeon Theater, "a bastion of official French culture" which suddenly became a site for countercultural "happenings" and revolutionary art beneath a banner that read: "When the national assembly becomes a bourgeois theater, all the theaters should turn into national assemblies!" (Dosse, 173).

When *Anti-Oedipus* came out it was inevitably read in the light of these events. May had been a failure as a revolution, but its achievement was to have raised pressing questions about the nature of politics and power and the very possibility of revolt. These questions animated the country's leading intellectuals throughout the period and in this respect *Anti-Oedipus* could not have failed to set the intellectual world alight. But the post-'68 years also saw a backlash from the powers that be, "a veritable hypertrophy of the French state in response to a palpable panic among the elites."¹² Guattari remarked that when he and Deleuze first met in the summer of '69,

it was less a question of pooling our knowledge than an accumulation of our uncertainties; we were confused about the turn of events after May '68. . . . The questions left unanswered by the aborted revolution in May '68 developed in a counter-point that we found troubling: we were worried, like many others, about the future being prepared for us.¹³

It should be understood, then, that while May comprised the revolutionary context of their initial meeting, the main political questions their book addresses were formulated in May's counterrevolutionary aftermath.

Ian Buchanan points out that Deleuze and Guattari never quite shared the enthusiasm of the "68ers" for the simple reason that they were of a generation whose "intellectual and political formation took shape during World War II and its aftermath and wears the scars of the defeat, occupation and liberation of France in its scepticism towards all forms of organized politics."¹⁴ As the point about the generation gap suggests, any "irruption of desire" may already be a reactionary subsidence, each unforeseeable break a part of a greater continuity since, as Guattari puts it, "desire never stops investing history, even in its darkest periods" (*Desert Islands*, 217). The central political concern of *Anti-Oedipus* is not how desire is repressed or even how to unleash it but how desire represses itself, manufactures its own impasses. Wilhelm Reich's startling suggestion that the masses were not duped into following Hitler but actually desired fascism orients the entire work. *Anti-Oedipus*, for all its rhetoric of revolution, does not advocate a political program but simply poses the question "how can the revolution be betrayed?" given that desire is the medium of both the revolution *and* the betrayal, and not because at some point in its history it goes bad but because its goodness is also its badness, its purity its impurity (AO, 414).

The whole theory of the Oedipus complex can be seen to emerge from desire's irreducible political ambiguity here. Freud's use of the Oedipus narrative argues that desire renounces its initial and most fundamental infantile attachments as part of the formation of "healthy" adult subjectivity. The successful "dissolution" of the complex involves a relinquishment not only of the incestuous desire for the mother but also of attitudes of hostility toward the father. The internalization of paternal authority, under the threat of castration, accounts for the formation of the superego. Desire then ceases to be a chaotic, murderous impulse to find lawful, socially sanctioned forms of expression. Oedipus, as a story of intergenerational conflict, portrays the struggle between desire and the social as taking place at the most elementary structure of social reproduction, the nuclear family. Deleuze and Guattari's main criticism bears on the centrality of the incest motive in all this. If incest really is the thing desired, then desire may be said to be fundamentally antisocial, becoming social only through the familial conflict which displaces the original motivation. But there is no reason to believe that desire is not social from the beginning or that it needs the family to become social. Making desire incestuous can only be to the benefit of social authority. This was Freud's major compromise. Psychoanalysis ends up being unable to present the history of desire except as the reproduction of the social or else as a pathology that refers us back to infantile revolts against socialization. Freud's whole thesis of the "primal father" and his murder is an attempt to ground this sterile view of desire's historicity in a buried prehistory. But once desire is "welded to the law," once it is defined against social authority in this way, it is defanged; we move in a "circle of prohibition and transgression" (122), "a familial circle, so to speak, represented by Oedipus" (*Desert*, 234).

Deleuze and Guattari argue, however, that Freud's initial conception of desire as "libido," a form of free-floating energy capable of investing any object or aim and

not subordinated to the requirements of sexual reproduction, and Marx's notion of abstract labor power correspond to one and the same revolutionary discovery: "the discovery of an activity of production in general and without distinction, as it appears in capitalism, is the identical discovery of both political economy and psychoanalysis" (AO, 332–3). The concepts of libido and labor power both testify to the emergence, in the capitalist epoch, of an "abstract subjective essence," a universalist and utopian understanding of human activity as pure potential (280). Such a concept was needed to explain what Marx called the "free" worker of capitalism who, unlike the serf or peasant, needs to be able to adjust to a situation where any specific concrete skill may suddenly become obsolete as a result of innovations. Capitalism needs to have at its disposable a reservoir of purely abstract labor power in order to facilitate the production of specific commodities, whatever they might be. The subjective essence is thus deterritorialized but only on condition of a brutal reterritorialization in the commodity form. The same double movement characterizes the libido: "[Freud's] greatness lies in having determined the essence or nature of desire, no longer in relation to objects, aims, or even sources (territories), but as an abstract subjective essence—libido or sexuality. But he still relates this essence to the family as the last territoriality of private man—whence the position of Oedipus" (292–3). The ascent of psychoanalysis in the twentieth century is itself a perfect example of how desire as a revolutionary force can be incorporated into mainstream society.

But Freud, despite appearances, is not really the main target of Deleuze and Guattari's polemic. The role of Lacan cannot be underestimated. Guattari himself had been trained as an analyst by Lacan, and by some accounts had even been his "heir apparent" (Dosse, 172). In a lecture titled "Machine and Structure," written just before he met Deleuze, Guattari drew on the latter's theories in an attempt to introduce elements of historical change into Lacan's structuralism. In his monumental *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze had argued that the Kantian principle of synthesis could be used not just to describe conscious activity but to show how subjectivity is temporally constituted at an unconscious or "passive" level.¹⁵ The concept of synthesis appealed to Deleuze because for Kant the synthetic capacity to assemble different aspects of thought and experience into a coherent whole was based on a quasi-instinctual faculty of the imagination, which Kant referred to as "the productive imagination."¹⁶ Deleuze wanted to free synthesis as a creative and constitutive force from Kant's notions of subjective unity and to show how the subject is itself a product of synthesis. These ideas fascinated Guattari because they suggested that the unconscious was constituted in time and thus in history. The three syntheses of the unconscious presented in the opening chapter of *Anti-Oedipus* form the basis for a new kind of genealogy of desire, passing through the three historical stages or three "social machines" of the primitive, the despotic, and the capitalist.

We would be mistaken, however, in thinking that *Anti-Oedipus* is the fruit of a marriage between Deleuze and Lacan. Lacan's achievement is defined, ultimately, as no more than a highly original demonstration of the tenacity of the psychoanalytic impasse. The translation of Freud's literal familialism into symbolic or metaphoric functions shows that the family was never essential but only the site of a reterritorialization whose

necessity is delegated from elsewhere. *Anti-Oedipus* defines the social function of the family not only in terms of the actual family but of an “intensive” or “phantasmal” one by which the familial figures can be extended infinitely into the social field (393). Oedipus fills the unconscious with archaic mythological or primal images, but these are delegated a “current function” that has nothing to do with the family as such but everything to do with social authority (279). It is not just that the long-dead father of the primal horde coexists happily with the meek father of the bourgeois family. The father can also symbolize the cop, the boss, the teacher, even God himself. Even the most cosmic rebellions can be domesticated in this way. The family itself is not essential, but the cultural imaginary it composes serves the nonfamilial structural function of channeling desire in accordance with capitalism’s socioeconomic reproduction. Oedipus is thus both structural or symbolic *and* imaginary, and Deleuze and Guattari contest the distinction between these terms insisted upon by Lacan (59).

The Lacanian dialectic by which the subject misrecognizes himself in the mirror image in order to secure a position in the sociolinguistic structure renders the double impasse into formal terms, freed of Freud’s cultural bias. Lacan shows Oedipus to be universal, a meaningless structure that serves to guarantee any meaning whatever. But this is the same kind of universality as capitalism: once history arrives at it, it draws everything into its nets with infinite versatility. Deleuze and Guattari call Oedipus “imperial” because it can be extended anywhere and will perform its functions just as well at the periphery as at the center (as demonstrated for example by the psychoanalytic ethnographers) (25). Lacan thus helps to bring psychoanalysis to its point of autocritique, but this cannot be divorced from an autocritique of capitalism itself and so Deleuze and Guattari ultimately depart from Lacan’s “imperial discourse” (265).

Schizoanalysis as cultural criticism

Anti-Oedipus can be said to have three main components: a universal history of desire, defined in terms of an autocritique of Oedipus; a theory of schizophrenia that presents the unconscious as a process of production; and a concern with language, meaning, and form centered on literature. Deleuze and Guattari say that “Oedipus is in fact literary before being psychoanalytic” (145). They mean that Oedipus suggests a market value of desire in that the psychotherapeutic process consists of “paying” to have one’s unconscious read and interpreted as so many legible “expressions,” and this overlaps with a form of literary marketability. The centrality of literature in the evolution of Freud’s theories and his general desire for cultural respectability are thus in no way incidental:

The great discovery of psychoanalysis was that of the production of desire, of the productions of the unconscious. But once Oedipus entered the picture, this discovery was soon buried beneath a new brand of idealism: a classical theater was substituted for the unconscious as a factory; representation was substituted for the units of production of the unconscious; and an unconscious that was capable of

nothing but expressing itself—in myth, tragedy, dreams—was substituted for the productive unconscious. (25)

The thesis of the incest motive, and the substitution during infancy of prohibited incestuous aims for socially sanctioned ones, provides psychoanalysis with an entire theory of culture by which desire, divested of its primary objects, can be read in terms of an empty form capable of taking on contents of any kind but ultimately driven by a sense of lost completeness that comes to divide the subject. This is how the Lacanian definition of desire as “lack” is justified. Psychoanalytic criticism acquires an infinite flexibility by which any cultural production whatever becomes amenable to Oedipal legibility. One of the more notable examples of this in recent years is Žižek’s interpretation of a particularly nonsensical film by David Lynch.¹⁷ The problem, then, is not that Oedipus does not work, but that it works all too well and can be applied to anything so long as it pushes itself to greater and greater extremes of formalization (which is why Žižek needs to supplement Lacan’s formalism with Hegel’s). We are thus denied what Deleuze and Guattari call a “right to nonsense,” a right to a free creative space (346).

Schizoanalysis reengineers Freud’s economic model in order to give a different account of culture based on a political ontology of the multiple, in which meanings are subordinated to the movement of molecules that do not represent or signify but may still be classed as signs (41). This molecular semiotic is what Deleuze and Guattari oppose to Oedipal hermeneutics. This is related, as everything in *Anti-Oedipus* is, to the history of capitalism as decoding. Capitalism dissolves the cultural codes holding the old social body together and provides a new principle of organization based on the axiomatic nets of money. Capitalist modernity devastates culture as such because it shows the codes to be mere means of economic containment. Our cultural condition can thus be defined as a return of all the old codes and images of the previous formations but under the regime of a generalized repudiation (336–7). Capitalist culture coincides with repudiated belief, a cynicism toward meaning as such. We know that the axiomatic money-signs do not *mean* anything, but they still somehow capture our actions and interests, perhaps more than the old codes could have ever hoped. Capitalist subjects thus find themselves searching for ways to account for their apparently meaningless behavior. The Oedipal methodology follows this logic perfectly: its incestuous genealogy attempts to save belief at the unconscious level, ascribing to desire a real motive which consciousness repudiates. The question for schizoanalysis, then, is how to account for the sphere of culture when it tends to overlap with this impasse of a belief that does not really believe. The psychoanalytic theory of culture, by which an infinitely expansive form caters for an increasingly eclectic content, cannot help us because it is itself a mere demonstration of the cynical formula.

Deleuze and Guattari’s answer is to move the analysis from the neurotic unconscious as a reservoir of repudiated meanings toward the schizophrenic unconscious of a general collapse of meaning. But how can schizoanalysis then function as cultural criticism? The essential thing here is the understanding of delirium as the medium of historical experience, the mode by which production is inscribed or recorded (11). Delirium suggests a better model of accounting for the investment of desire in the social field because it calls the whole category of belief into question but in a noncynical

way. The psychologist Louis Sass remarks that schizophrenics often appear “curiously apathetic about their delusions and seldom take action on the basis of these ‘beliefs’ to which they devote so much attention.”¹⁸ Does this apparent disjunction between reported experience and manifest behavior, the so-called “flattened affect,” indicate that schizophrenics do not really believe in the delirious worlds they describe? Sass’s answer is that a purely subjective certitude of the kind demonstrated in a delirium—for example, Schreber’s assertion that “I am becoming a woman”—cannot be understood the way we normally understand a claim about reality, even a deluded one. A statement of this kind refers less to the empirical “contents of reality” than to the “form of the real” itself (Sass, 297). Schreber’s becoming-woman should be understood as an existential attitude relating to a field of pure feeling or affect autonomous to his verifiable physical properties and personal identity.

Deleuze and Guattari insist that this is how desire is inscribed at a historical and collective level and this is their solution to the problem of belief, meaning, and representation, the problem of culture or ideology under the conditions of capitalism. A society’s delirium is the set of its collective affects autonomous to its contents. When we look at the vicissitudes of history, what we find there are not mere differences of content but a radical mutability of form by which the conditions of our experience are altered. We wake up one day realizing that it’s possible to *feel* differently, though everything appears the same. Delirium can establish a direct access to this domain of pure feeling, but like desire it is irreducibly ambiguous, revolutionary and counterrevolutionary, liberatory and fascistic. Schreber’s memoirs “are filled with a theory of God’s chosen peoples, and with the dangers that face the currently chosen people, the Germans, who are threatened by the Jews, the Catholics, and the Slavs” (AO, 98). At the same time, he appears to identify, via his own persecution by God, with all the persecuted peoples of the earth: “delirium has something like two poles, racist and racial, paranoiac-segregative and schizonomadic. And between the two, ever so many subtle, uncertain shiftings where the unconscious itself oscillates between its reactionary charge and its revolutionary potential” (116). The “subject of the process” of desiring production, the body without organs, is a kind of “surface” on which this oscillation, the movements of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, are inscribed as so many signs beneath the level of guaranteed meanings (17). But how is the body without organs produced without the catastrophic breakdown? How is the subject of the pathology separable from the subject of the process?

Again, literature is central. Deleuze and Guattari, speaking in an interview shortly after the publication of *Anti-Oedipus*, say that people may criticize their account of schizophrenia as not clinical enough, as being overly reliant on literary authors. But they suggest that these authors often manifest a preoccupation with health that diverges from established medicine. They point to the work of William S. Burroughs, who tried in his most experimental writings to “harness the power of drugs without them taking over, without turning into a dazed zombie.”¹⁹ This is literature’s anti-Oedipal pole, the point where it converges on delirium. Schizoanalysis similarly positions itself between the two subjects, the two healths, the process and the product. Deleuze and Guattari say that writing *Anti-Oedipus* was never a question of “writing a madman’s book, but we did write a book in which you no longer know who is speaking; there is no basis

for knowing whether it's a doctor, a patient, or some present, past, or future madman speaking" (*Desert*, 219). This is why schizoanalysis is offered in the broadest possible terms as a "universal clinical theory," a collective self-diagnosis and articulation of the possibilities of transforming the psychosocial structures of feeling (AO, 311).

Notes

- 1 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane, new edition (London: Continuum, 2004), 404.
- 2 Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick, or The Whale* (London: Vintage Classics, 2007), 634.
- 3 Malcolm Lowry, *Selected Letters of Malcolm Lowry*, eds. Harvey Breit and Margaret Bonner Lowry (Philadelphia and New York: Lippincott, 1965), 66.
- 4 Sigmund Freud, *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis*, selected with an introduction by Anna Freud, trans. James Strachey, new edition (London: Vintage Classics, 2005), 171.
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On the Flyleaves of Modernism: Deleuze and Guattari's *Kafka*

Jason Skeet

*There are the Alps. What is there to say about them?
They don't make sense. Fatal glaciers, crags cranks climb,
jumbled boulder and weed, pasture and boulder, scree,
et l'on entend, maybe, le refrain joyeux et léger.
Who knows what the ice will have scraped on the rock it is smoothing?*

Basil Bunting¹

Deleuze and Guattari begin their book about Kafka with a problem; the very first sentence asks, "How can we enter into Kafka's work?"² Emphasis immediately is given to a concern with practice, a problem of reading, but this is not only a question of how to begin a piece of literary criticism. "How" also suggests a certain resistance from Kafka's work to any reading, hinting that the reading to come remains provisional. The book's opening paragraph then offers an initial response to the problem by drawing up a battle line: on the one side the "principle of multiple entrances" found throughout Kafka's writing that requires us as readers to connect points, connections that are always liable to be reversioned or altered as we enter into the work through other points. As with Basil Bunting's account of the Alps in his poem "On the Fly-Leaf of Pound's *Cantos*," Kafka's novels and short stories "don't make sense" but rather present us with a world to be entered, investigated and experienced in different ways: Kafka's writing, we are informed, is "a rhizome, a burrow" and what we must first pay attention to is "what the map of the rhizome is and how the map is modified if one enters by another point" (3). In contrast to this emphasis on movement, Deleuze and Guattari identify their enemy as the freezing of understanding, the introduction of "the Signifier and those attempts to interpret a work that is actually only open to experimentation" (3).

First published in 1975, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* was written between the two volumes of Deleuze and Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project, *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1981). One way to enter into *Kafka* then is to consider how it both picks up trajectories from *Anti-Oedipus*, specifically the examination of desire developed therein, and looks forward to the rhizome as image of thought that *A Thousand Plateaus* explores. With this in mind, we will begin by

examining both the problem of reading and the problem of writing that Deleuze and Guattari discover in Kafka, and then take a close look at the two important concepts invented in *Kafka* through the encounter with these problems, the assemblage and minor literature. We can then consider the political implications of what Deleuze and Guattari do in their reading of Kafka. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari had proclaimed their conception of reading as “productive use of the literary machine” with the aim to extract from the text its “revolutionary force,” and their *Kafka* can be seen as an experiment in doing just this.³

The problem(s) of Kafka

Throughout his career Deleuze was concerned with the status and function of the problem. His early book on Hume characterizes philosophy as the “necessary implications of a formulated question.”⁴ In *Bergsonism*, he relates problem formation to a politics so that “[t]rue freedom lies in a power to decide, to constitute problems themselves.”⁵ *Difference and Repetition* constructs an “ontology of the question.”⁶ In his books about other philosophers Deleuze’s approach is to uncover the problems motivating the creation of particular concepts and to explore how these concepts are put to work within a field of thought—a field understood in terms of internal and external variables interacting with each other. Deleuze and Guattari adopt this problem-forming approach for their reading of Kafka in two ways: they seek to identify the problems preoccupying Kafka by showing how these problems are present in different and connected ways across his corpus (significantly, they include Kafka’s letters for examination as well as the short stories and novels) and they formulate problems for themselves as Kafka readers (how can we enter into Kafka’s work? what is an assemblage? what is a minor literature?). The first way is a concern with a problem of writing, while the second a problem of reading. As I have already noted, it is a problem of reading that is first put forward in *Kafka*, whereas the problems preoccupying Kafka, which are problems of writing, are only identified in the final chapter of *Kafka*. What is the significance then of this trajectory, a movement from the problem of reading to that of writing?

We can think about this question of a trajectory by considering the last chapter of *Kafka*—titled “What is an assemblage?”—as both the summation of results of the reading experiment conducted by Deleuze and Guattari in response to the problem they formulate at the start of the book (“How can we enter into Kafka’s work?”), and the formulation of a new problem that will then occupy their writing of *A Thousand Plateaus*. As Gregg Lambert argues, the initial hypothesis for their reading of Kafka is that the work is “a rhizome, a burrow.”⁷ The principle of multiple entrances that they posit at the outset is the prerequisite for the three concerns that are then mapped across Kafka’s work: “[p]roduction of intensive quantities in the social body, proliferation and precipitation of series, polyvalent and collective connections” (71)—that is, a theory and practice of intensity, contiguity, and heterogeneity. This then explains Deleuze and Guattari’s trajectory from problem of reading to that of writing: reading and writing are conceived as interconnected and interfused problems engendering more problems.

Moreover, "[i]nside or outside, the animal is part of the burrow-machine" (7): here we must understand "animal" as both the writer and reader. In other words, while we enter into Kafka's work as readers our reading also becomes part of the literary machine and can be connected with the problems occupying Kafka through his writing.

This concern with reading and writing, both components of a literary machine, is precisely why it is pointless to characterize *Kafka* in terms of how it may or may not be related to other literary theories. Deleuze and Guattari have multiple concerns, and what they do cannot be labeled according to what is available in the marketplace of literary critical methodologies. For them it is necessary to take ideas from diverse fields, to shift emphasis as the need arises, and to avoid the straightjacket of determining *a priori* what is going to be looked for in the text. This is the basis of Deleuze and Guattari's objection to an interpretation of Kafka (and to hermeneutics in general) whereby a theory of reading comes first which the practice of reading acts out: for example, deciphering imagery, uncovering symbolic or archetypal meaning according to presupposed criteria, or imposing a psychoanalytical framework for understanding the work. Deleuze and Guattari insist that the literary machine they construct in *Kafka* only works in the case of Kafka. Further, Deleuze and Guattari's method in *Kafka* (and there is a method, as the insistence on problem formation suggests) maintains that a writer's individual struggles are instantly connected with an outside; personal issues are symptoms of problems operating in relation to a wider social and cultural terrain. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the problems absorbing Kafka as a writer are "*when can one say that a statement is new? . . . and when can one say that a new assemblage is coming into view?*" (83). On the one side, then, the impact of these problems can be found in Kafka's personal relations as chronicled in his letters, while on the other, Kafka's writing points toward "the diabolical powers of the future" and the collective assemblages producing these powers (83).

Deleuze and Guattari use Kafka's short story "The Great Wall of China" to illustrate the problem of a new statement. A revolutionary manifesto is dismissed on the basis of its mode or form of expression before its content is even considered, the text's "archaic characters" ensuring that the readers quickly decide it must concern "old sorrows long since healed."⁸ In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari reformulate this first problem of Kafka's in other terms, which help us to think about how the problem of the new is linked with further problems of habit and sound. They ask "[w]hat do you not have to do in order to produce a new sound?"⁹ We see, then, how a concern with the destruction of convention is made apparent, with how to break with certain ways of doing things or with certain habits of thought. Yet this also raises the question as to when and how such disruption may itself become conventional or clichéd. A statement also functions as a form of convention, or command, determining roles and responsibilities, and always as a working part of a social machine: here Deleuze and Guattari's specific use in *Kafka* of the term "statement" shows them drawing on Foucault's work. However, the emphasis on sound in the formulation above taken from *A Thousand Plateaus* indicates how the production of the new, a break in the flow of habitual thought and action, is linked with the domain of expression and specifically to the appearance in that domain of a component of expression that operates outside

of any existing categories of representation, but which enters the machine so as to transform it. That writing possesses this ability to produce such new sounds in and through language is one of the key arguments of *Kafka*.

The second problem (when can we say that a new assemblage has come into view?) is exemplified through a finding Deleuze and Guattari observe at several points in *Kafka*, that the work records new collective assemblages—capitalism, Stalinism, and fascism—in the process of inserting themselves into older social assemblages. Accordingly, literature is a “watch that moves forward” (84). However, this connection between present and future is not conceived as the imaginary representation in writing of a world to come (in the manner, say, of science fiction). In *Kafka* we hear “the sound of a contiguous future” (83). That is, *Kafka* understands how in a transitional moment it is possible to connect certain points and fast-forward in time. However, it would be a mistake to consider Deleuze and Guattari’s contention that literature is written for a people to come as a utopian appeal: they clearly state that the collectivity yet to be constituted is “for better or for worse” (84). The presence in “The Great Wall of China” of the nomads whose movements sweep away an older imperial and transcendental law shows how this contiguity between present and a future to come is reflected in a passage between two different, yet connected, operations of a machine of law, and that the order of their coming into view is therefore significant. In *Kafka* we witness the movement from the paranoid law machine to a schizo law. Indeed, *Kafka*’s writing operates by means of procedures that continually construct such movement: “finite-contiguous-continuous-unlimited” or in the case of the law machine, “immediate resolution gives way to an unlimited deferral” (73). This principle or procedure of contiguity and continuity is the condition of writing that *Kafka* discovers: thus also the unfinished quality to the work that Deleuze and Guattari claim, the writing always moving out into an unlimited field of immanence along a trajectory that also demands ongoing reading.

However, while Deleuze and Guattari claim that two particular problems of writing “enthrall” *Kafka* (83), this idea is never supported by anything like an artistic statement of intent from *Kafka* himself. Prior to his collaborations with Guattari, Deleuze had insisted that thinking must be conceived as a dramatic event, with the field of thought thus surveyed having both spatial and temporal coordinates marking an encounter with a problem. Rather than fix the essence of something by asking “What is . . .?”, the challenge is to construct problems using “*who? how much? how? where? when?*”.¹⁰ The *Kafka* that Deleuze and Guattari create is a construction, one that goes hand-in-hand with the formation of new problems and concepts for Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical project. We should apply to Deleuze and Guattari’s critical enterprise in *Kafka* the same questions Deleuze himself recommends for reading by asking “[d]oes it work, and how does it work?”.¹¹ *Kafka* works in one way through the formation of problems in relation to the work of a writer. Indeed, it is precisely this idea of reading as a problem formation that is suggested by Bunting’s poem, used as the epigraph above, a linkage indicating the potential for an affinity between the problems that occupied modernist poetry and the philosophical enterprise of Deleuze and Guattari. It is through this problem formation that Deleuze and Guattari do philosophy and create

new concepts: in the case of *Kafka*, the concept of assemblage and of minor literature, concepts that we must now consider in more detail.

“What is an assemblage?”

I have suggested, following Lambert, that Deleuze and Guattari begin their reading of Kafka with a hypothesis, that the work is “a rhizome, a burrow.” This hypothesis is both supported and developed with the concept of the assemblage, and their assertion that an assemblage is “the perfect object for the novel” (81). Highlighting this concept allows us to construct a thread that can then be followed into a subsequent discussion of minor literature. As a starting point for this thread, it is significant that Deleuze and Guattari do not provide a simple definition of what an assemblage is; rather their concern is with examining functioning, with how assemblages work. Yet they do offer a (nonexhaustive) list of examples of Kafka assemblages (and the machines that form a component of the assemblage) that may be useful for demonstrating the scope of this concept, as well as indicating how as a concept it is tied to another concern for Deleuze, the concept of becoming:

[T]he assemblage of letters, the machine for making letters; the assemblage of the becoming-animal, the animalistic machines; the assemblage of the becoming-female or the becoming-child, the mannerisms of female blocks or childhood blocks; the large assemblages that deal with commercial machines, hotel machines, bank machines, judiciary machines, bureaucratic machines, and so on; the bachelor assemblage or the artistic machine of the minority. (87)

The concept of the assemblage is used to think about processes. An assemblage is machinic in the sense that its various parts are so many gears and cogs that interact with each other. However, it would be wrong to then think that assemblages are created in order to produce something; assemblages are not predesigned by anyone, they are not brought about through a blueprint predetermining their makeup or what it is they can produce. In fact assemblages have to be considered more along the lines of self-organizing entities. We learn from Deleuze and Guattari in *Kafka* that every assemblage has two sides: a collective assemblage of enunciation and a machinic assemblage of desire. The machinic assemblage of desire points us in the direction of *Anti-Oedipus*, where desire is conceived not in terms of a subject's desire for or of something but as an impersonal construction in which a subject may function as a component: desire is always, as it is put in *Kafka*, “making a machine in the machine and creates a new gear alongside the preceding gear, indefinitely” (82). Significantly, since the concept of assemblage is a concern with processes of production, or the production of production, when new gears are added these may work in opposition to existing gears, functioning discordantly, or even operating to disassemble the machine.

It is the idea that this machinic assemblage of desire forms the side of the content of an assemblage, with the other side of expression, which is the important development

Kafka introduces. By adding this component of expression Deleuze and Guattari also indicate an intention to engage with a problem of language, and this therefore helps to explain their decision after *Anti-Oedipus* to make an intervention into literary criticism with *Kafka*. In *Anti-Oedipus* they had indicated the need for a nonidealistic and nonrepresentational conception of expression. In *Kafka*, Deleuze and Guattari state that the sides of an assemblage function alongside each other. This means that a given statement functioning on the side of expression is not a product of the assemblage but as much the parts of the working machinery as the state of affairs involved in the machinic assemblage of desire. That this new component of expression is significant in this conception of the assemblage is shown by the description of the statement as a rule or instruction for the machine, setting the assemblage in motion and making it possible to function, or even able to transform the assemblage entirely. Kafka, Deleuze and Guattari claim, is the first writer to dismantle the two sides of an assemblage; how he then recombines the sides becomes his signature or style. A component of this style is the profound ambiguity in the working of statements, with how statements give rise to contradictory possibilities: submission can be a form of revolt, and a willingness to struggle becomes acceptance.

Deleuze and Guattari offer in the very first chapter of *Kafka* an example of how content and expression function to produce different states of desire. In various works by Kafka we encounter photographic portraits with heads bent: the bent head corresponds with a form of content and the photographic portrait the form of expression. According to Deleuze and Guattari, this combination causes a blockage of connective, flowing desire, producing instead a submissive desire that takes pleasure from its submission. In contrast they discover the straightened head (form of content) that is always connected with an “intense sonorous material” that is in turn connected “to *its own abolition*—a deterritorialized musical sound, a cry that escapes signification, composition, song, words” (6). The first state can be described as depressive and oppressive, the second as a schizo state since it functions to open up new connections. Yet a note of caution is required, since Deleuze and Guattari emphasize that these two states of desire do not form a simple binary relation, nor do they always function in fixed ways. While the two forms of content (bent head/straightened head) do appear to oppose each other, in the realm of expression there is not a comparable formal opposition but rather a question of intensity. When a deterritorialized or a signifying sound appears it functions as “unformed material of expression” acting on forms of content, rupturing the chains of signification and sweeping everything away along a line of escape. However, as Kafka demonstrates, this sound can become reterritorialized, reinserted into mechanisms of signification and representation, while the rigidity of the bent head portrait configuration can be made to adopt a new function, their very proliferation and repetition becoming the condition for “an upheaval in which they fall into new lines of intensity” (6). Kafka shows that we have to avoid a simple dualism between two types of assemblage: even the construction of massive paranoid bureaucratic machines also brings into operation tiny schizo machines. It is in fact a single assemblage that is involved, producing different states of desire and liable to be transformed by the impact of unformed materials of expression passing through it.

The first concrete rule of an assemblage as given later in *A Thousand Plateaus* is that an assemblage requires a territory. The two sides of content and expression are thus cut across by another axis so that an assemblage can be said to be tetravalent. On one side of this second axis the assemblage marks out a territory and so is always constructed in relation to a specific environment: Deleuze and Guattari state in *A Thousand Plateaus* that an assemblage begins by “decoding” a “milieu,” or in other words, by extracting its own uses from its surroundings through the construction of a territory, capturing and fixing desire.¹² The Kafka assemblages listed above are made using what is at hand for Kafka, that is, the materials offered up by his life so that writing and living become interfused: Deleuze and Guattari state in their discussion of minor literature that art and life are only opposed from the perspective of a major literature. What matters is how the personal becomes material, elements for a literary machine, used to “make writing an act of thought and life a non-personal power.”¹³ The parts of the assemblage mark out both its powers and territory, but with this second axis the assemblage moves along a line of deterritorialization toward a point at which it escapes from itself. Kafka shows that there are two such points of deterritorialization: one by which expression turns into pure sound or “language of intensities” (in contrast to the photographic portrait), a second transforming contents (in contrast to the bent head) (86). Kafka’s work therefore provides a model for the way assemblages function and a model for exploring the conditions applicable to every assemblage, and *Kafka* concludes by outlining four such criteria. First, the extent to which an assemblage functions without the need for the mechanisms of a transcendental law (for example, the extent to which a family assemblage can be said to operate beyond or despite an Oedipal interpretation imposed from above). Second, the extent to which an assemblage can divide or extend itself according to its rigidity or suppleness: Deleuze and Guattari stress that suppleness is not in some way better than rigidity, it can even become more oppressive than rigidity, another seemingly paradoxical possibility as Kafka shows with the movable barriers in the offices of *The Castle*. Following this, the extent to which an assemblage can deterritorialize or exceed itself by flowing into a field of immanence. Finally, the ability of a collective assemblage of enunciation, such as a work of literature, to form itself into what Deleuze and Guattari term an abstract machine, so that expression leads and directs content (87–8). The quantification of these criteria and of their different mixes within assemblages is what Deleuze and Guattari define as Kafka’s style, what they term as the “K function.”

“What is a minor literature?”

Bunting’s poem “On the Fly-Leaf of Pound’s *Cantos*” establishes a complex relationship between Bunting’s work and that of Pound’s, a reflection also of the personal relationship between these poets. Yet this is also a relationship between a “fly-leaf” and a textual body, a margin to a center, or the minor and the major. The concept of minor literature that we encounter in the third chapter of *Kafka* was, alongside the concept of assemblage, a result of Deleuze and Guattari’s experimental reading of

Kafka (the importance of this concept is stressed by the book's full title *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*). Deleuze and Guattari's concept can help us to explore the nature of the relationship that Bunting's poem displays. We can do so by considering in detail the three characteristics of minor literature: "the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation" (18).

Kafka, a Czech Jew writing in German (the official language of the then crumbling Austro-Hungarian empire), demonstrates how a writer transforms a major language from within. Deleuze and Guattari draw attention to the Prague German used in Kafka's social milieu and how, as with a pidgin language, incorrect grammatical usages (improper, that is, according to the standard language) are both creative and intensive. In a minor literature, language is likewise deterritorialized and taken to a limit, transmuting "syntax into a cry" (26). In the case of Kafka this is done by ridding German of its function as the language of law and trade and purging it of its associations with the dominant culture, using the relatively "poorer" Prague German to release hitherto unknown possibilities in the language by pushing it "to the point of sobriety" (19). It is the presence of nonsignifying enunciations that are then of particular interest to Deleuze and Guattari. They offer numerous examples: the short story about Josephine the mouse, the peasant's gesture in the opening chapter of *The Castle*, Gregor's warbling in *The Metamorphosis*, moments in stories when music obliterates itself or language is cut through by a line that rips words away from sense. What happens at these points is that a component of expression finds value in itself. In these examples Kafka reveals how expression can be made to precede content, enunciation coming before the statement, making it "the function of an assemblage that makes this into its first gear in order to connect to other gears that will follow" (85). Disarticulate sound, words, gestures are made to mark a threshold of intensity and provide a line of escape, as the assemblage they form the first working parts of is made to overextend itself into an infinite field of immanence.

The second characteristic of minor literature concerns the status of the individual writer, and, I would add, the politics of writing. Deleuze and Guattari's interest in Kafka is partly accounted for by how Kafka exemplifies two key concerns for thinking about the role of the writer: a writer is both at a border and is singular or unique. Kafka is a border figure, not in any geographical sense, but historically and socially. His writing records the transition between old and new bureaucracies, or different forms of social organization, and the totalitarian powers "knocking at the door" (83). Further, in the insurance company where he works he operates between technical machines (including injured workers, employer-employee conflicts, etc.) and the juridical statements that function as rules to be followed. What is then important for Kafka is how both sides provide a model for a form of content and a form of expression applicable to any social terrain and to any statement anywhere. He shows how "machine, statement, and desire form part of one and the same assemblage" (83). Kafka's writing can also be described as singular, or what Deleuze and Guattari call a "bachelor-machine" (the use of "bachelor" may seem strange, but perhaps Deleuze and Guattari wish to play on Kafka's terminal bachelor status and his constant deferral of marriage as recorded

in his letters). Language is, for Deleuze and Guattari, a working part of a social assemblage, a collective concern and not that of an individual subject of enunciation. They argue that it is this status as a singularity or bachelor that enables a writer to create new statements and by extension to make available the conditions for a new social assemblage. The literary machine that Kafka constructs is “[a] machine that is all the more social and collective insofar as it is solitary, a bachelor, and that, tracing the line of escape, is equivalent in itself to a community whose conditions haven’t yet been established” (71). On this basis Deleuze and Guattari argue that literature is a “concern of the people” (84). Such a formulation not only casts light on the difficult question as to the nature of the relationship between the writer and the people, it moreover provides a possible answer to the question “What is literature?”. A new statement does not represent the people, it is not about the people or intended on their behalf, nor does it provide a metaphor for the situation of a minority. A statement becomes literary when a singular writer uses it in such a way their individual enunciation precedes the collective conditions of enunciation, expression preceding content, and the writer writes for a people to come: “the actual bachelor and the virtual community—both of them real—are the components of a collective assemblage” (84).

We can see now, with regard to the third characteristic of minor literature, how language for Deleuze and Guattari is a collective enunciation. Deleuze and Guattari argue that a statement never refers back to a subject: “[t]here isn’t a subject who emits the statement or a subject about which the statement would be emitted” (83). Statements only function as the working parts of an assemblage. In this regard Kafka is determined to avoid all traps of subjectivity. What Deleuze and Guattari call the “K function” (Kafka’s singular style) works to problematize further the relationship between a subject of enunciation and a subject of the statement (and, we can add, between Kafka as author and the work itself). According to Deleuze and Guattari, in Kafka’s novels the protagonist “K” becomes a “general function” of a “polyvalent assemblage” of which the individual, and by extension the singular writer, is one part, the social assemblage to come another (85). This is how Kafka makes use of the law, to show how statements function on behalf of assemblages. However, there is an oscillation to be aware of here in the movement of expression to content, between the possibility of engendering rigid forms of content and expression transforming contents along lines of deterritorialization. Moreover, while expression may be primary it is still determined by the assemblage just as content is. The K function also has to be understood as part of what Deleuze and Guattari call “a Kafka politics,” and it is this conception of politics that we will consider next.

1975: Head over heels and away

In his “Translator’s Foreword” to *A Thousand Plateaus*, Brian Massumi explains that each “plateau” in the book seeks to construct an “intensive state in thought.” The reason Deleuze and Guattari date each plateau is that this designates a specific “point at which that particular dynamism found its purest incarnation in matter” (xiv). It is not my

intention to suggest that the publication of *Kafka* in 1975 is somehow attachable to a moment at which a particular assemblage took up its clearest configuration. Rather, this year can be considered useful for marking a transition, both in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's own collaboration and, I would further argue, for the various social, political, and economic assemblages that were also within phases of profound change at this time, societies transforming in far-reaching ways and with developments that have come to characterize our present-day.¹⁴ What I want to emphasize with this year of publication then is how a new political conception within the context of Deleuze and Guattari's work had, and continues to have, wider implications. Furthermore, I propose that it is through the notion of constructivism that these implications can be apprehended.

Deleuze and Guattari required a new political conception after the polemics of *Anti-Oedipus*, a work still bound to a radical utopianism and the euphoria of May'68.¹⁵ In *Kafka* they posit "a Kafka *politics* that is neither imaginary nor symbolic" (7). The use here of the indefinite article is significant, always an index in Deleuze's thought of the singular and of a process. We have also noted that Deleuze and Guattari conceive desire as process or procedure, that is, as a construction.¹⁶ This is not a constructivism that places the subject at its core—as we have seen, a subject is a component of an assemblage. Like the ape in Kafka's "Report to the Academy," in Deleuze and Guattari's new political conception it is not freedom that is sought but a way out, to construct a line of escape so as to flee, an undertaking expressed through the formula Deleuze and Guattari derive from Kafka's ape: "head over heels and away." We have also considered how an important characteristic of minor literature is its connection to a political immediacy. The shift in a political conception that *Kafka* was made for, and the constructivism it explores as part of this, puts forward components for a political expressionism of everyday life, picked up by Deleuze and Guattari from Kafka: these components are affirmation and experimentation.

Deleuze and Guattari claim that it is impossible to read Kafka without laughing out loud, a riposte to all those readings of Kafka portraying him as the archetypal alienated modernist author. They discover a writer of joy, who devises procedures to affirm joy through humor. For example, in Kafka's "Letter to the Father" he exaggerates, to the point of absurdity, his father's control over his life—absolutely everything wrong with his life is the fault of the father. This becomes a projection of this relationship onto a "map of the world" and then into a veritable "Oedipalization of the universe" (10). Such amplification actually enables Kafka to find a way out of the deadlock of this relationship, to affirm a life that finds a line of escape, and crucially it is the comedic effect that provides the way out. Moreover, with this process of enlargement we see how Kafka constructs a relationship or connection to an outside or field of immanence, disguised in this instance as the exaggerated Oedipus. This amplification can also take the form of the production of a series, so that the familial triangulation (mummy-daddy-me), for example, becomes repeated through other triangulations. In *The Trial* a proliferation of triads demonstrates how the investments involved in the familial triangulations are extended into a social terrain, how the relationships are in actuality external to the terms, so that the terms may change, switch, and rearrange themselves

(the trios are found at the bank, in the judicial system, in all manner of situations). Thus the principle again of contiguity: the family “opens onto doors” on which knock the diabolical powers of the future, the “American technocratic apparatus or the Russian bureaucracy or the machinery of Fascism” (12), but it is also a vector that at the same time enables another way out to appear, again through absurdity. This affirmative component of a political expressionism shows how a line of escape can be constructed through distinct uses of humor.

These comedic effects in *Kafka* are tied up with the second component of a *Kafka* politics, that of experimentation. This is what Deleuze and Guattari discover in *Kafka's* animal-becomings. These becomings are not symbolic, but acts of absolute deterritorialization through which what matters is a movement, the crossing of a threshold in order to reach a plateau of intensity, an experimentation taking place in which prior forms are undone, “a capturing, a possession, a plus-value, but never a reproduction or an imitation” (13). This is the tactic *Kafka* devises to resist the oppressive powers knocking at the door. Since, as I have argued, reading for Deleuze and Guattari can be said to be in a contiguous relation with writing, as the trajectory from a problem of reading to *Kafka's* problems of writing shows, reading also becomes a concern with becoming, with an experimentation or “tests of experience” (7). For thought to be an experiment it must have no blueprint, no prefabricated agenda for where it is headed, only to move out “head over heels and away.” This component of experimentation on the everyday and on what is at hand is also, therefore, an exploration that, as Deleuze puts it in *Dialogues*, understands itself “in the movement of learning and not in the result of knowledge” (18).

This emphasis on experimentation raises the question as to the relation between theory and practice. Lambert argues that we must regard *Kafka* as linking to the book that followed it, *Rhizome* (later used as the first plateau of *A Thousand Plateaus*), in terms of *Kafka's* work providing a “laboratory experiment” preceding and giving rise to the theory of the rhizome (Lambert, 66). However, in a conversation with Foucault that took place in 1972, Deleuze describes the relationship between practice and theory as “fragmentary and partial,” so that we need to think in terms of relays between them and of theory as a form of practice (*Desert Islands*, 206). This interfused relationship between theory and practice reflects the interfused relationship between reading and writing that I have argued is a dynamic present throughout *Kafka*. With this in mind we can recall the battle line demarcated by the opening paragraph of *Kafka*, an opposition between two ways of reading. One approach is a concern with hermeneutics and the drive to interpret, or as Deleuze puts it in *Negotiations*, to “write a book about the book” (8), which is most certainly not what *Kafka* strives at. Or there is an approach based on experimentation, plugging into the singular affects and functions of the text, its becomings, since writing, for Deleuze, is always “a question of becoming.”¹⁷ Deleuze and Guattari's *Kafka* demonstrates that literary criticism can be an experimental construction of a reading machine: this is the challenge *Kafka* still presents for literary criticism and modernist studies today. This concept of the reading machine has to take the idea of literature as a problem, and that it is only through testing a reading immanent to the text, with the text providing for its own reading machine, that the text

can be said to be working and becoming-literary. According to Deleuze and Guattari “[o]nly expression gives us the *method*” (16), a method, in fact, outlined in the opening paragraph of *Kafka*: enter the assemblage at any point, use what is at hand, discover how points can be connected and how these connections change when the assemblage is entered by another point.

Michel de Certeau, in an essay titled “Reading as Poaching,” has outlined what is at stake here:

The autonomy of the reader depends on a transformation of the social relationships that overdetermine his relation to texts. This transformation is a necessary task. This revolution would be no more that another totalitarianism on the part of an elite claiming for itself the right to conceal different modes of conduct and substituting a new normative education for the previous one, were it not that we can count on the *fact* that there *already* exists, though it is surreptitious or even repressed, an experience other than that of passivity. A politics of reading must be articulated on an analysis that, describing practices that have long been in effect, makes them politicizable.¹⁸

Whether De Certeau had in mind the reading Deleuze and Guattari perform in *Kafka* is not important, because I would argue that his appeal for a politics of reading resonates with Deleuze’s notion of “intensive” reading, and with what he and Guattari exemplify with their construction of a singular Kafka reading machine.

Conclusion

Deleuze and Guattari argue that in Kafka’s work we are confronted with two oscillating states of desire in disjunctive synthesis with each other, one always hiding beneath the other: diabolical on the one hand, revolutionary on the other. Literature, then, can become “positively charged with the role and function of collective, and even revolutionary, enunciation” (17) and as “the relay for a revolutionary machine-to-come” (18). This “becoming-revolutionary” of literature was first declared in *Anti-Oedipus*, but it is the concept of the assemblage invented in *Kafka* that provides a framework to see how this is worked out in practice. There is a becoming-revolutionary of literature, but there is also in Kafka the “K function,” when the literary machine turns itself into an abstract machine, expression leading content, becoming a machine that “operates in a field of unlimited immanence” mixing with concrete machinic assemblages in the “process or the movement of desire” (86). Not an abstract machine that gives itself the pretense of transcendence, so that assemblages function in accordance with its dictates. Instead the reverse, the abstract machine becomes the unlimited field of immanence providing the measure for the functioning of an assemblage, for mapping the parts of the assemblage and assessing its “mode of existence” or style of life (87).

A poem by Bunting, an excerpt from which opened this exploration of *Kafka*, has been used as an additional resource at certain moments in the discussion because

it raises a certain problem. This poem is often read as Bunting's homage to Pound's mountainous influence on twentieth-century poetry; on the other hand, the poem indicates that Pound's canonical modernist text is found to contain, on its margins, the problem of the Alps. What is the relationship between this problem and Pound's work? Should we reread the *Cantos* in some way, and what is it about the reality of these mountains—reality that is inescapable yet outside of the expressive capability of language—that connects with Pound's work? We recall the problematizing approach that Deleuze and Guattari take to Kafka's writing, allowing them to work on problems necessary for their own work, and through this inventing the concepts of assemblage and of minor literature. On the flyleaves of modernism then, on these blank edges, we might yet construct new problems, as Deleuze and Guattari have demonstrated.

Notes

- 1 Basil Bunting, *Complete Poems* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe, 2000), 132.
- 2 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 3.
- 3 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* (London: Continuum, 2004), 116.
- 4 Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 106.
- 5 Deleuze, *Bergsonism* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 15.
- 6 Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (London: Continuum, 2004), 245.
- 7 Gregg Lambert, *In Search of a New Image of Thought: Gilles Deleuze and Philosophical Expressionism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012). Lambert argues that the second sentence of *Kafka* functions as "the hypothesis proposed as the condition of the Kafka experiment" (67). Moreover, Lambert considers the equivalence of "burrow" with "rhizome" as a hybrid construction, combining animal and vegetal realms that are also relatable to the interplay between depressive and schizo states of desire. Such a hybrid construction makes use of Deleuze's analyses of the spider narrator in his study of Proust, hinted at in *Kafka* with the description of the letters as a "rhizome, a network, a spider's web" (29). Lambert offers a detailed examination of the importance of *Kafka* in the evolution of Deleuze's thought. For an account of *Kafka* in the context of Deleuze's uses of literature see also Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2003).
- 8 Franz Kafka, *Metamorphosis and Other Stories* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), 79.
- 9 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (London: Athlone Press, 1988), 34.
- 10 Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004), 94, emphasis in original.
- 11 Deleuze, *Negotiations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 8.
- 12 For the "concrete rules" of assemblages see the final plateau of *A Thousand Plateaus*, 501–14.
- 13 Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II* (London: Continuum, 2006), 23.
- 14 1975 provides, arguably, a number of events that could be considered significant in this regard. Consider, as one example, that 1975 was important for the career

of a politician whose name became associated with the monetarist ideology that drove the capitalist revolution of the 1970s and 1980s and which continues to exert political influence: Margaret Thatcher became the Leader of the Conservative Party that year. Or another event that would come to have significance for the state of everyday life now: Bill Gates and Paul Allen founded Microsoft in 1975. 1 May 1975 was the date of the Fall of Saigon and the end of the Vietnam War, and the onset of an era that brought the experience of loss and stagnation, in the United States and beyond. Furthermore, by 1975 the new conditions made possible by the removal of the gold standard were giving rise to the particular forms of free market capitalism we now live under.

- 15 See François Dosse, *Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari: Intersecting Lives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010) for an account of Deleuze's and Guattari's own differing and sometimes ambivalent assessments of *Anti-Oedipus*.
- 16 In Deleuze's *From A to Z* interview with Claire Parnet for television he uses the word "constructivism" to explain desire. See "D for Desire" in Gilles Deleuze, *From A to Z* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2012).
- 17 Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 1.
- 18 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 173.

Intensive Multiplicities in *A Thousand Plateaus*

Audronė Žukauskaitė

In his introduction to *Anti-Oedipus* Michel Foucault wrote that it is a book of ethics, pursuing the traces of desire and fascism in our souls and bodies. In a similar manner we can claim that *A Thousand Plateaus* is a book of politics, examining the tension between the capitalist axiomatic and the lines of flight which seek to evade it. Deleuze and Guattari point out that any power system is based on its capacity to unify, calculate, and totalize; and, by contrast, any revolutionary (and even evolutionary) process is based on qualitative changes, which cannot be calculated or predicted in advance. The tension between these conflicting tendencies can be read with the help of opposition between two types of multiplicity—extensive multiplicity and intensive multiplicity. These two types of multiplicity can be seen as two different driving forces explaining the permanent tension between the arborescent structures and the rhizome, the organism and the body without organs, the apparatus of capture and the war machine. Deleuze and Guattari argue that it is precisely the extensive multiplicity which underlies the axiomatic logic of capitalism and the modern state and that it is only the intensive multiplicity which creates qualitative change and the potential for resistance to power. In my article I will examine the specific forms in which intensive multiplicities appear and how these forms may engender qualitative changes in the political sphere.

Multiplicity, rhizome, destratification

The concept of multiplicity appears in Deleuze's *Bergsonism*, then is briefly discussed in *Difference and Repetition* and then more closely examined in *A Thousand Plateaus* (ATP). Deleuze makes some important notes, which enable us to think that the concept of multiplicity is one of the key concepts to understand his (and Guattari's) philosophy. For example, in his "Preface" to the English edition of *Dialogues II* (DII) Deleuze describes his project as a "logic of multiplicities."¹ Similarly in *Negotiations* Deleuze claims: "I see philosophy as a logic of multiplicities."² Thus, Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy can be read as a "logic of multiplicities," defining the relations between psychic (the schizo flows), biological and corporeal (a rhizome, the body without

organs, becomings), and social and political (nomadism, the war machine, becoming-minoritarian) multiplicities.

Manuel DeLanda in *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy* argues that the concept of multiplicity is crucial to understand the Deleuzian project; moreover, this concept helps to define the difference between the metaphysical tradition and Deleuzian philosophy. DeLanda argues that the concept of multiplicity has replaced the metaphysical concept of essence.³ The concept of essence defines a thing's identity which is always conceived as being unified and timeless, or eternal. By contrast, the concept of multiplicity defines something as having a variable number of dimensions, which cannot be subsumed by a higher dimension, that is to say, which cannot be unified or universalized. Moreover, the essence or the identity of a thing is given all at once, whereas the multiplicity is never given all at once and appears in a form of progressive differentiation. As DeLanda explains, "the singularities which define a multiplicity come in sets, and these sets are not given all at once but are structured in such a way that they *progressively specify the nature of a multiplicity* as they unfold following recurrent sequences" (16). This means that a multiplicity is never a closed or unified system and it exists as a "work in progress," that is, it unfolds in duration and time. This characteristic will be very important in explaining the concept of becoming in Deleuze and Guattari. Meanwhile, following DeLanda's distinction between an essence and a multiplicity, we can say that in contrast to essences, which are always abstract and general, multiplicities are concrete and "*meshed together into a continuum*" (21). This means that, contrary to transcendent and self-identical essences, multiplicities are immanent to each other and form what Deleuze and Guattari call the plane of immanence.

As was mentioned before, the notion of multiplicity is a key concept in *A Thousand Plateaus*, where it helps to explain the univocity of different planes: psychic, biological, social, and political. Deleuze and Guattari relate the notion of multiplicity to the work of mathematician and physicist Riemann and his distinction between discreet multiplicities and continuous multiplicities; also they refer to the works of Meinong and Russell who make a distinction between multiplicities of magnitude or divisibility, which are extensive, and multiplicities of distance, which are closer to intensive. Then they recall the Bergsonian distinction between numerical or extended multiplicities and qualitative or durational multiplicities. After making all these references Deleuze and Guattari point out:

We are doing approximately the same thing when we distinguish between arborescent multiplicities and rhizomatic multiplicities. Between macro- and micromultiplicities. On the one hand, multiplicities that are extensive, divisible, and molar; unifiable, totalizable, organizable; conscious and preconscious—and on the other hand, libidinal, unconscious, molecular, intensive multiplicities composed of particles that do not divide without changing in nature.⁴

In other words, Deleuze and Guattari rethink the same opposition between extensive and intensive multiplicities, introducing them into biological and corporeal, social

and political fields: intensive multiplicities are rhizomatic as opposed to arborescent, molecular as opposed to molar, destratified as opposed to the strata, the body without organs with all its becomings as opposed to the organism, the plane of consistency as opposed to the plane of organization. The most important thing is that Deleuze and Guattari creatively elaborate this mathematical concept and make it a tool capable to explain the functioning of intensive singularities in the modern capitalist state.

One of the first concepts embodying the notion of intensive multiplicity in *A Thousand Plateaus* is that of a rhizome. At first sight this concept has not very much to do with political changes, though it can give a better understanding of what intensive multiplicity is. A rhizome is defined by characteristics which are crucial for intensive multiplicities: first, a rhizome functions like a multiple system which has no higher dimension to impose a unity on it; second, any part of this multiplicity cannot change without the entire multiplicity changing in nature or kind. As Deleuze and Guattari point out, "Multiplicities are rhizomatic, and expose arborescent pseudomultiplicities for what they are. . . . A multiplicity has neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions that cannot increase in number without the multiplicity changing in nature (the laws of combination therefore increase in number as the multiplicity grows)" (8–9). In other words, the elements in an arborescent structure can increase or decrease in number but they remain of the same nature. Thus, we can speak about them only in terms of quantity or quantitative multiplicity. By contrast, a rhizomatic multiplicity cannot increase the number of dimensions without changing in nature. This explains Deleuze and Guattari's statement that arborescent structures can be measured, whereas a rhizome is unmeasurable: instead of a universal concept of measurement, there are only multiplicities or varieties of measurement (9). The unity appears as a result of power relationships: a unity requires a supplementary higher dimension in which the diverse elements could be overcoded and thus unified. By contrast,

a rhizome or multiplicity never allows itself to be overcoded, never has available a supplementary dimension over and above its number of lines, that is, over and above the multiplicity of numbers attached to those lines. All multiplicities are flat, in the sense that they fill or occupy all of their dimensions: we will therefore speak of a *plane of consistency* of multiplicities, even though the dimensions of this "plane" increase with the number of connections that are made on it. (9)

Thus the principle of multiplicity in Deleuze and Guattari refers to a "flat ontology" or, as they name it, the plane of consistency which organizes entities not by subsuming them to a higher dimension or by extrapolating their intrinsic essence but by defining them from the outside. In other words, a plane of consistency is the plane of exteriority where all multiplicities of different kinds are laid out: these can be "lived events, historical determinations, concepts, individuals, groups, social formations" (10).

From this it follows that a rhizome is the perfect model for a multiplicity and reveals all important features describing the multiplicity. Both a multiplicity and a rhizome

cannot be traced back or reduced to the dichotomy between the one and the multiple. As Deleuze and Guattari point out,

It is not a multiple derived from the One, or to which One is added ($n+1$). It is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. . . . It constitutes linear multiplicities with n dimensions having neither subject nor object, which can be laid out on a plane of consistency, and from which the One is always subtracted ($n-1$). When a multiplicity of this kind changes dimension, it necessarily changes in nature as well, undergoes a metamorphosis. (23)

In *Bergsonism* Deleuze pointed out that one of the most important definitions of any multiplicity is not the division between the multiple and the one but between extensive and intensive properties: only extensive properties are divisible, while intensive properties cannot divide without changing in nature. It is precisely the intensive which moves the process of progressive differentiation and development and engenders the qualitative change. For example, such intensive properties as temperature or pressure cannot be divided without changing in nature. As DeLanda points out, “If we take a volume of water at 90 degrees of temperature, for instance, and break it up into two equal parts, we do not end up with two volumes at 45 degrees each, but with two volumes at the original temperature” (25). In other words, when intensity reaches a critical point, the physical system undergoes a phase of transition and creates productive differences. The same principle of intensive multiplicity guides not only physical but also biological systems: for instance, at some critical point a population may undergo a transition and change in kind. That means that intensive properties are also important in defining such phenomena as social and corporeal organization. This relates to another of Deleuze and Guattari’s themes—the notions of strata and the body without organs.

Strata, destratification, the body without organs

The notion of the strata which appears in *A Thousand Plateaus* is the principle of creation: strata mean accumulations, coagulations, sedimentations, and foldings. Stratification is like the creation of the world from chaos; therefore, sometimes it is referred to as “the judgment of God.” Deleuze and Guattari distinguish three major strata: physicochemical, organic, and anthropomorphic. Strata is a term taken from geology, which for Deleuze and Guattari means the principle of organization:

Strata are Layers, Belts. They consist of giving form to matters, of imprisoning intensities or locking singularities into systems of resonance and redundancy, of producing upon the body of the earth molecules large and small and organizing them into molar aggregates. Strata are acts of capture, they are like “black holes” or occlusions striving to seize whatever comes within their reach. They operate by

coding and territorialization upon the earth . . . The strata are judgments of God; stratification in general is the entire system of the judgment of God (but the earth, or the body without organs, constantly eludes that judgment, flees and becomes destratified, decoded, deterritorialized). (45)

This long citation gives us the whole package of conceptual oppositions: stratification means organization, coding, and territorialization, whereas the body without organs refers to disorganization, decoding, and deterritorialization. The Earth can be seen as the first stage of the body without organs, which consists of flows, intensities, particles, singularities. Deleuze and Guattari explain that each stratum is subjected to double articulation:

the first articulation chooses or deducts, from unstable particle flows, metastable molecular or quasi-molecular units (*substances*) upon which it imposes a statistical order of connections and successions (*forms*). The second articulation establishes functional, compact, stable structures (*forms*), and constructs molar compounds in which these structures are simultaneously actualized (*substances*). (46)

Therefore, in speaking about geological strata, the first articulation would be the process of sedimentation, and the second articulation would be the process of folding, which creates stable structures, for example, sedimentary rock. Similarly the organism is subjected to a double articulation: the organic matter (molecules, proteins, etc.) is subjected to the first articulation: molecules are “caught up in crowd phenomena or statistical aggregates determining an order (the protein fiber and its sequence or segmentarity)”; then they are subjected to the second articulation, which take these aggregates into stable structures; they “form organs, functions, and regulations, organize molar mechanisms” (47). In other words, the body is transformed into organic strata, for example, an organism. In this sense the organism, as every stratum, is a “judgment of God,” that means, it is created as a result of capture and subjection to power. Deleuze takes this expression from Antonin Artaud and relates the divine desire to organize with the psychoanalytic desire to organize the unconscious.

The notion of the body without organs first appears in *Anti-Oedipus*, where it refers to a schizophrenic break or a phase of antiproduction. As Daniel W. Smith points out, the body without organs refers to “a non-productive surface upon which the an-organic functioning of the organs is stopped dead in a kind of catatonic stupor.”⁵ In *A Thousand Plateaus* the notion of the body without organs is related to the flow of intensities that traverses the organs. Deleuze and Guattari refer to Antonin Artaud’s piece *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* (*To Have Done With the Judgment of God*) where Artaud declares war on the organs: “for you can tie me up if you wish, but there is nothing more useless than an organ” (166). For Artaud this war means not only discursive but also biological, social, and political experimentation: what can a body do? In other words, the body without organs is a platform or a plane which transforms the functions of the organism into different kinds of intensities. As Deleuze and Guattari point out, “A body without organs is made in such a way that it can be occupied, populated only

by intensities. Only intensities pass and circulate. . . . The body without organs causes intensities to pass; it produces and distributes them in a *spatium* that is itself intensive, lacking extension. It is not space, nor is it in space; it is matter that occupies space to a given degree—to the degree corresponding to the intensities produced” (169). In other words, here we see a shift from the extensive properties or functions of the organism to the intensive properties of the body without organs. As Smith points out, “the body without organs is the model of Life itself, a powerful non-organic and intensive vitality that traverses the organism; by contrast, the organism, with its forms and functions, is not life, but rather that which imprisons life” (209). Therefore “organs are no longer anything more than intensities that are produced, flows, thresholds, and gradients. ‘A’ stomach, ‘an’ eye, ‘a’ mouth: the indefinite article does not lack anything; it is not indeterminate or undifferentiated, but expresses the pure determination of intensity, intensive difference” (*ATP*, 182).

It is important to stress that intensities or properties are immanent to the processes in which they appear. As Constantin V. Boundas points out, “intensities are not entities, they are virtual yet real events whose mode of existence is to actualise themselves in states of affairs.”⁶ This is why the body without organs sometimes is referred to as the plane of immanence. At the same time it is described as the plane of consistency (or, to be more precise, the plane of inconsistency) because the plane has to assure the production and sustenance of all intensities without which the plane would be empty. Deleuze and Guattari assert that the plane of consistency functions like a grid or a row of doors which select those intensities which make productive connections and eliminate those which lead toward death and produce cancerous bodies. “What is retained and preserved, therefore created, what consists, is only *that which increases the number of connections* at each level of division or composition, thus in descending as well as ascending order (that which is cannot be divided without changing in nature, or enter into a larger composition without requiring a new criterion of comparison. . .)” (*ATP*, 559). In other words, the body without organs is a platform or an intensive *spatium* which engenders a qualitative change in every multiplicity and at the same time contains these qualitative differences in virtual continuum.

To understand the notion of the body without organs we have to reconsider it with reference to psychoanalysis, which Deleuze and Guattari interpret as a structure of an arborescent type. By contrast, the body without organs is another name for schizoanalysis, which examines the rhizomatic connections of schizo flows, decentering and at the same time questioning the psychoanalytical notion of subjective identity. Therefore, the notion of the body without organs is opposed to the three strata which underlie psychoanalysis: organism (organization), signification, and subjectification. In relation to these three strata the body without organs opposes “disarticulation (or *n* articulations) as the property of the plane of consistency, experimentation as the operation on that plane (no signifier, never interpret!), and nomadism as the movement (keep moving, even in place, never stop moving, motionless voyage, desubjectification)” (*ATP*, 177). In other words, to the three great strata, organism, signification, and subjectification, the body without organs opposes disarticulation, experimentation, and desubjectification.

The notion of the body without organs could be relevant in discussing the political field, having in mind the idea that organism can be interpreted as a system of subjection which is implemented on the body without organs to extract labor power from it. This is what Deleuze and Guattari name “the judgment of God”: it is “a phenomenon of accumulation, coagulation, and sedimentation that, in order to extract useful labor from the body without organs, imposes upon it forms, functions, bonds, dominant and hierarchized organizations, organized transcendencies” (*ATP*, 176). Artaud claims that to liberate man from the judgment of God it is necessary to rebuild him without the organs which are the instruments of manipulation: organs are the means of measuring and structuring the body, making it an instrument in the theological, social, or psychoanalytical system.

The notion of the body without organs is much more difficult to grasp than the notion of the rhizome: in the case of the rhizome we simply discover entities which are either of rhizomatic or arborescent type; in the case of the body without organs we see the process of becoming, a transformation from one type of entity to another. As far as every becoming changes the nature of the entity which is undergoing this transformation, we can conclude that the body without organs exists only in this mode of becoming, in other words, its existence is purely virtual. To become the body without organs means to open the body for connections, to create a machine passing and transforming intensities. As Deleuze and Guattari point out, “dismantling the organism has never meant killing yourself, but rather opening the body to connections that presuppose an entire assemblage, circuits, conjunctions, levels and thresholds, passages and distributions of intensity” (*ATP*, 177). It is precisely these rhizomatic connections which let us tear the body away from the organism and in this way evade subjection to a dominant reality. At the same time Deleuze and Guattari warn us that a certain kind of precaution is necessary in order to keep minimum portions of organism, signification, and subjectification. Otherwise it could happen that the body without organs will turn into empty bodies where nothing is produced, no intensities are created, and which finally disappear into the black hole.

From becoming-intense . . . to becoming-minoritarian

Thus the notion of the bodies without organs is closely related to the notion of becoming. Becoming is by definition molecular: contrary to molar structures, which define and divide separate entities or subjects, molecular becomings refer to change, transformation, and reorganization. Deleuze and Guattari speak about three types of “lines” which define the relationship between the subject and society. The first type of line is called molar—it is based on a rigid segmentarity and defines the relations between sexes, groups, classes, the subject, and the object. This first type of line is also called stratification. The second type of line is molecular—it traverses these rigid distinctions and has the capacity to reorganize them. The third type of line is called nomadic and it is the line of flight which carries us away not only “across our

segments, but also across our thresholds, towards a destination which is unknown, not foreseeable, not pre-existent" (*DII*, 94). This is the line of flight toward which the body without organs moves.

The notion of becoming is closely interrelated with the notion of intensive multiplicity. Deleuze and Guattari point out that every body without organs is a multiplicity, which is of different types, genres, substantial attributes, and which at the beginning has a zero degree of intensity. Then a certain intensity is produced, a flow or a wave of intensity is created (it can be pain, cold, joy, etc.), and these intensities produce the plane of consistency where the continuum of intensities is maintained and supported. But how can the continuum of intensities be maintained and why does it not disappear into the black hole? It is because becomings are constantly keeping the level of intensity and supplying the plane of consistency with different flows. In this sense becoming is a metamorphosing machine and an essential part of any intensive multiplicity: "becoming and multiplicity are the same thing" (*ATP*, 275). For Deleuze and Guattari becoming and multiplicity are like all-encompassing principles which not only make every entity connect with each other but also transform each entity into another.

What is important in defining becomings and intensive multiplicities is that they do not follow any line of filiation or heredity. Becomings make random rhizomatic connections which are much closer to the connections made by contagion or epidemics than to those made by filiation and heredity. Deleuze and Guattari maintain that these transformations follow the "logic of multiplicities" which cannot divide without changing in nature: "*it amounts to the same thing to say that each multiplicity is already composed of heterogeneous terms in symbiosis, and that a multiplicity is continually transforming itself into a string of other multiplicities, according to its thresholds and doors*" (*ATP*, 275). Any entity, including the subject and the Self, is a threshold, a borderline between one multiplicity and another. In this sense Deleuze and Guattari prefer individuations instead of individuals, or, to be more precise, they assert individuations without subjectivity.

It is precisely these individuations without subjectivity which create the spontaneous energy of every process of becoming ending up with becoming-imperceptible. Deleuze and Guattari refer to different kinds of becomings: becoming-woman, becoming-child, becoming-animal, becoming vegetable or mineral, becoming-molecular of all kinds, becoming-particle, and becoming-imperceptible. Rosi Braidotti in her article "The Ethics of Becoming-Imperceptible" points out two important characteristics of becoming: first, its temporality, duration, endurance, and second, its capacity to form assemblages. As Braidotti points out, "A subject thus constituted inhabits a time that is the active tense of continuous 'becoming.' Deleuze defines the latter with reference to Bergson's concept of 'duration,' thus proposing the notion of the subject as an entity that lasts, that is to say that endures sustainable changes and transformation and enacts them around him/herself in a community or collectivity."⁷ Becoming is not an issue of imitating something or identifying with something but of entering into a zone of molecular proximity, of fiber or corpuscular copresence which makes transformation possible.

Although Deleuze and Guattari refer to different types of becoming, the most provoking and the most relevant to the discussion of political issues is the notion of becoming-minoritarian. We can assert that becoming-minoritarian is a tautological term because all becomings by definition are minoritarian, whereas the majority presupposes a state of power and domination. Deleuze and Guattari assert that the

opposition between minority and majority is not simply quantitative. Majority implies a constant, . . . serving as a standard measure by which to evaluate it. Let us suppose that the constant or standard is the average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male speaking a standard language (Joyce's or Ezra Pound's Ulysses). It is obvious that "man" holds the majority, even if he is less numerous than mosquitoes, children, women, blacks, peasants, homosexuals, etc. (*ATP*, 116)

There is no becoming-majoritarian, because majority is never becoming: it is a position of power, of solid strata and molar forms trying to safeguard its boundaries. By contrast, becoming-minoritarian tries to cross these boundaries, destratify the strata, and invent new forms of molecular becoming.

Becoming-minoritarian closely relates to the notion of minor literature defined in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Here Deleuze and Guattari describe the notion of minor literature and claim that minor literature, regardless of its authorship, is the people's concern and that it is expressed only in the collective assemblages of enunciation. Deleuze and Guattari define the three characteristics of minor literature: these are the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation.⁸ The deterritorialization of language here implies the minor use or "minorization" of a major language. For example, Deleuze and Guattari refer to Kafka, a Prague Jew, writing in German. In this sense to "minorize" a major language means to change the subject and function of language and to force it to connect with political immediacy and collective assemblages. The same quest for a minor language reappears in Deleuze's *Cinema 2* book, where he asserts that the minority filmmaker has to invent a new cinematographic language within a dominant language which could express collective subjectivities and foresee "the people to come."⁹

It is important not to confuse minorities as a certain defined social group with becoming-minoritarian: as Deleuze and Guattari point out, even women must enter the becoming-woman, even Jews must become-Jewish, etc. A minority should serve as an active medium for becoming and transformation and at the end transform itself into some new state or condition. Similarly, minor language, minor literature, or minor cinema should be thought not as an end in itself but as a specific bifurcation point, opening the potential to make a leap into a new social and political order. As Deleuze and Guattari argue, minorities must be thought of "as seeds, crystals of becoming whose value is to trigger uncontrollable movements and deterritorializations of the mean or majority" (*ATP*, 117). In this sense becoming-minoritarian means to become-intense, to become everybody/everything, to become-imperceptible. In other words, becoming unleashes powers (*puissances*) which make minorities autonomous from the

biopolitical effects of power (*Pouvoir*). “Becoming-minoritarian as the universal figure of consciousness is called autonomy. It is certainly not by using a minor language as a dialect, by regionalizing or ghettoizing, that one becomes revolutionary; rather, by using a number of minority elements, by connecting, conjugating them, one invents a specific, unforeseen, autonomous becoming” (*ATP*, 118).

Becoming-minoritarian always works against power structures and in this sense it is always a political action. As Deleuze and Guattari point out, “Becoming-minoritarian is a political affair and necessitates a labor of power (*puissance*), an active micropolitics. This is the opposite of macropolitics, and even of History, in which it is a question of knowing how to win or obtain a majority” (*ATP*, 322). This means that the political field is simultaneously a macropolitics and a micropolitics: macropolitics operates on the level of molar organization, which defines certain segments, such as the state or a class, whereas micropolitics operates on the level of “quantum flow.” “In short, the molecular, or microeconomics, micropolitics, is defined not by the smallness of its elements but by the nature of its ‘mass’—the quantum flow as opposed to the molar segmented line” (*ATP*, 239–40).

Here, Deleuze and Guattari introduce a distinction from Cantor—that between denumerable and nondenumerable sets—which they relate to the notion of minorities. They make a connection between macropolitics and denumerable multiplicities on the one hand, and minorities and nondenumerable multiplicities on the other.

What defines a minority, then, is not the number but the relations internal to the number. A minority can be numerous, or even infinite; so can a majority. What distinguishes them is that in the case of a majority the relation internal to the number constitutes a set that may be finite or infinite, but is always denumerable, whereas the minority is defined as a non-denumerable set, however many elements it may have. What characterizes the nondenumerable is neither the set nor its elements; rather it is the *connection*, the “and” produced between elements, between sets, and which belongs to neither, which eludes them and constitutes a line of flight. (*ATP*, 518–9)

In other words, a minority as a nondenumerable set constitutes becoming without a plan or a goal, becoming “which produces nothing other than itself.” In this sense the opposition between the nondenumerable and the denumerable sets is not the one between anarchy and organization, but that between the becoming-minoritarian and the capitalist axiomatic.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that the capitalist mode of social production is distinct from other modes of production, such as savagery or despotism, in one specific respect: its mode of social organization is based on axiomatization. Codes and overcodes refer to qualitative differences and similarities between entities; the circulation and distribution of social goods, as Eugene W. Holland points out, is still dependent on the symbolic system of conduct, meaning, and belief. What makes capitalism different is that it “substitutes a quantitative calculus based on axioms for qualitative codes and overcodes that organized social life in previous formations. . . . Axiomatization

not only does not depend on meaning, belief, and custom, but actively defies and subverts them, giving capitalism its distinctive dynamism and modernism.”¹⁰ In other words, capitalism can be deterritorialized in such an unprecedented degree only on the condition that it creates an equal measure, a quantitative measure for qualitatively different codes and overcodes. As Alberto Toscano suggests, “axioms . . . operate on elements and relations whose nature need not be specified. They are indifferent to the properties or qualities of their domain of application and treat their objects as purely functional, rather than as qualitatively differentiated by any intrinsic features.”¹¹

Hence, everything that is of denumerable nature can be easily compatible with capitalism and vice versa: only the nondenumerable sets enable an escape from the subsuming power of capitalism. As Deleuze and Guattari point out, “the axiomatic manipulates only denumerable sets, even infinite ones, whereas the minorities constitute ‘fuzzy,’ nondenumerable, nonaxiomizable sets, in short, ‘masses,’ multiplicities of escape and flux” (*ATP*, 519). Minorities should assert “a power of the nondenumerable,” that is, they should try to evade any forms which could be subsumed into the axiomatic logic of the State; the response of the State would be to try to translate minorities into axioms, the denumerable sets, which could be counted as an element in the majority. In this respect “the minorities issue is instead that of smashing capitalism, of redefining socialism, of constituting a war machine capable of countering the world war machine by other means” (*ATP*, 521–2).

Deleuze and Guattari assert that these two tendencies, the one of the nondenumerable, and the other of the denumerable or axiomatic, form “an undecidable proposition”: *At the same time as capitalism is effectuated in the denumerable sets serving as its models, it necessarily constitutes nondenumerable sets that cut across and disrupt those models* (*ATP*, 522). This is also the undecidable opposition between the plane of consistency, on the one hand, and the plane of organization (and development of capital or the State), on the other. The plane of organization is always trying to plug the lines of flight and becoming, while the plane of consistency seeks to extricate itself from the plane of organization. The undecidable also means the opposition between the system which conjugates and “that which never ceases to escape it following lines of flight that are themselves connectable” (*ATP*, 522). In other words, the social field is always caught up in the opposition between revolutionary connections and the conjugations of the axiomatic.

War machine and the apparatus of capture

The tension between the capitalist axiomatic and the potential for revolutionary change is reconsidered in *A Thousand Plateaus* using different concepts and distinctions, for instance, between the war machine and the apparatus of capture, and between the smooth and the striated. These distinctions in different ways conceptualize the opposition between qualitative and quantitative multiplicities. The notion of the apparatus of capture relates capitalist axiomatization to the nature of the modern state: what forms the apparatus of capture (from archaic imperial states to modern

capitalism) are two basic operations: it creates a space of comparison, that means, of equalization, quantification, and homogenization, and the justification for monopolistic appropriation. In other words, the apparatus of capture, including modern capitalism, creates a general axiomatic of decoded flows, which are countable and homogeneous. Therefore every apparatus of capture works as a machine of stratification and striation. But not all flows are decoded and overcoded—some of them flee and escape the procedure of axiomatization and some of them are of a different nature which cannot be counted and homogenized. This is what Deleuze and Guattari call the smooth space. The smooth space is a place for qualitative multiplicities and it operates in the same way as Bergsonian duration—it is a space which endures and therefore can experience a qualitative change. “Not only is that which peoples a smooth space a multiplicity that changes in nature when it divides—such as tribes in the desert: constantly modified distances, packs that are always undergoing metamorphosis—but smooth space itself, desert, steppe, sea, or ice, is a multiplicity of this type, nonmetric, acentered, directional, etc.” (534). By contrast, the striated space can be divided only in relation to numbers or quantitative multiplicities. As DeLanda explains, “To the sedentary way of metricizing space, of dealing with it as essentially extensive, Deleuze opposes an intensive way of occupying space the way a liquid does, that is, occupying it without dividing it or counting it. This alternative he calls a ‘nomadic distribution’” (47). From this it follows that smooth space is that kind of space which can be defined by its intensity and intensification, similar to the body without organs which is a body defined by the intensities it produces.

Intensity is another word for becoming. In this sense the smooth space creates the conditions for intense becomings which are continuous but heterogeneous. Although it may seem that what is not countable should be homogeneous, it is the other way round:

homogeneity did not seem to us to be a characteristic of smooth space, but on the contrary, the extreme result of striation, or the limit-form of a space striated everywhere and in all directions. . . . In each model, the smooth actually seemed to pertain to a fundamental heterogeneity: felt or patchwork rather than weaving, rhythmic values rather than harmony-melody, Riemannian space rather than Euclidean space. (*ATP*, 539)

In other words, only homogeneous elements can be countable, whereas heterogeneous elements are defined not by counting them but by referring to the intensity of their qualities.

The distinction between the smooth and the striated is close to another distinction—that between the war machine and the State apparatus. The notion of the war machine is quite confusing, because, as the authors explain, this kind of assemblage “*in no way has war as its object*” (*ATP*, 253). Rather it is an assemblage for the passage of quanta flows, for the lines of flight which help to escape from the capitalist axiomatic. In this respect the war machine always works against the State apparatus. Although the war machine and State apparatus are of different origin, the State will always seek to appropriate

the war machine and to subject it to its needs. This creates a deep conflict between the State and the war machine: although the State seeks to appropriate it, the war machine by definition works against the State: “it is the mode of a social state that wards off and prevents the State” (*ATP*, 394). The state of war deterritorializes the socius and diffuses the centers of power, creating packs, bands, and other rhizomatic groups. By contrast, the State apparatus presupposes the arborescent hierarchies of power, which work by centralizing and homogenizing.

In other words, the State form proceeds by way of interiorizing, appropriating, and homogenizing, whereas the war machine is oriented toward exteriority and creates acentered and heterogeneous flows. Paul Patton relates the State apparatus to quantitative multiplicity and the war machine to qualitative multiplicity:

As an apparatus of capture, the state-form represents a purely quantitative or linear model of increase of power. It involves the incorporation of other bodies, either because their substance feeds the powers of the capturing body, or because their powers may be added to its own. By contrast, the metamorphosis machine represents a more qualitative or multi-dimensional model of increase of power: “it comprises something other than increasing quantities of force.”¹²

Similarly the distinction between the quantitative and qualitative multiplicities helps to explain the opposition between the smooth and the striated. According to Patton, “Smooth space is Deleuze and Guattari’s term for the heterogeneous space of qualitative multiplicity, while striated space is the homogeneous space of quantitative multiplicity. . . . It is a fluid space of continuous variation, characterised by a plurality of local directions” (111–12).

These distinctions between the smooth and the striated, and between the war machine and the apparatus of capture could be used as guidelines to rethink political strategies. Deleuze and Guattari refer to “private” thinkers, such as Kierkegaard, Shestov, or Nietzsche, who think against common sense and create “counterthoughts, which are violent in their acts and discontinuous in their appearances” (*ATP*, 415). What is most important in describing this kind of thought is that it is the thinking from the outside rather than the contemplation of interiority. But the most important thing is that the thinking from the outside does not oppose another image of thought to the old one but destroys any image of thought. “It is . . . a force that destroys both the image *and* its copies, the model *and* its reproductions, every possibility of subordinating thought to a model of the True, the Just, or the Right (Cartesian truth, Kantian just, Hegelian right, etc.)” (*ATP*, 416). In other words, if the classical image of thought establishes the striated space of thinking, the thinking of exteriority creates smooth spaces and a conceptual war machine. Every thinker, artist, or revolutionary has to invent his or her potential war machine to open new lines of flight and engender creative changes.

Coming back to the distinction between the war machine and the State apparatus, and between the smooth and the striated, we should ask what does nomadic or smooth distribution mean in terms of micropolitics? How do these oppositions help to (dis)organize the social and political field? Deleuze and Guattari speak about nomadic

and sedentary distribution (an idea which first appears in *Difference and Repetition*): the nomadic trajectory distributes people in the open and smooth space, which is indefinite, whereas sedentary space is defined and striated. The sedentary's relation with the earth is always mediated by the State apparatus (property, rent); therefore, sedentary distribution is always limited and limiting. By contrast, a nomad can move in different directions and has an intensive rather than extensive relation with the earth: he or she does not appropriate but inhabits the space, and, paradoxically, takes this space with himself or herself: a nomad "increases the desert," or, in other words, creates autonomous zones, which are not accessible to the capitalist axiomatic. In this sense every nomadic distribution of space already is an unintentional revolution because it deconstructs the sedentary relation with space, based on the contract with the State apparatus. The State responds to the nomad by trying to stop the nomadic distribution, to striate and limit, to define the relation with earth, territory, or land. For example, the idea of citizenship is closely related to the notions of nation and land, in this way creating a perfect means not only of punishment but also of control (in order to be a citizen you have to become sedentary).

It is precisely this apparatus of control against which the war machine takes action:

it is when the war machine, with infinitely lower "quantities," has as its object not war but the drawing of a creative line of flight, the composition of a smooth space and of the movement of people in that space. At this other pole, the machine does indeed encounter war, but as its supplementary or synthetic object, now directed against the State and against the worldwide axiomatic expressed by States. (ATP, 466)

Every innovative, artistic, or political action always already works as a war machine. In this respect the issue of minorities is to create its own war machine and to increase the proliferation of smooth spaces. This is also the role and the advantage of intensive multiplicities: to resist the power of capitalist homogenization and calculation and to engender qualitative change.

Notes

- 1 Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York, London: Continuum, 2006), VII.
- 2 Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1972–1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 147.
- 3 Manuel DeLanda, *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy* (New York, London: Continuum, 2002), 9.
- 4 Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London, New York: Continuum, 2004), 36–7.

- 5 Daniel W. Smith, *Essays on Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 321.
- 6 Constantin V. Boundas, "Intensity," in *The Deleuze Dictionary. Revised Edition*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 133–4.
- 7 Rosi Braidotti, "The Ethics of Becoming-Imperceptible," in *Deleuze and Philosophy*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 135.
- 8 Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 18.
- 9 Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London, New York: Continuum, 2008), 208–9.
- 10 Eugene W. Holland, *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis* (New York, London: Routledge, 2003), 66–7.
- 11 Alberto Toscano, "Axiomatic," in *The Deleuze Dictionary. Revised Edition*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 22.
- 12 Paul Patton, *Deleuze and the Political* (London, New York: Routledge, 2000), 111.

The Movement-Image, The Time-Image, and the Paradoxes of Literary and Other Modernisms

Garin Dowd

Which modernism or modernisms circulate in Deleuze's two-volume work on cinema? Can one meaningfully claim that both or either *The Movement-Image* (*Cinema I*) and *The Time-Image* (*Cinema II*) maintain connections with literary modernism? What relationship if any may be forged between theoretical debates in the areas of literary and film studies as these have been influenced by engagement with Deleuze's work on cinema? The first obstacle to any successful negotiation of these questions lies in the absence in the books of any reference to the category of modernism—a fact which is after all hardly surprising in a French author of Deleuze's generation. That Jacques Rancière employs the term *modernisme* so centrally in his book *Malaise dans l'esthétique* (2004) is indicative of how much the landscape has changed since Antoine Compagnon's book of 1990.¹ A second consideration is summed up well by Joost Raessens when he argues that “[f]or Deleuze the term ‘modernity’ is not a neutral category. In effect modern cinema is a representation of differential thought which is determined . . . as a fundamental critique of the classic thought of Plato and Hegel.”² It has been claimed that Deleuze's modernity owes much to Nietzsche, in the shape of the latter's demand for a new approach to questions of truth and knowledge. Once life is no longer judged in the name of a higher authority such as the good or the true, the stage is set for Nietzschean transvaluation. This is a process which subjects “every being, every action and passion, even every value, in relation to the life which they involve” to evaluation.³ An evaluative model of a cinema which has the capacity to carry out a Nietzschean total critique by means other than philosophy presides over *The Time-Image* in particular. While Nietzsche may provide the theoretical impetus for the evaluative component of the project, it is another philosopher, Bergson, who provides the vitalist dimension. The thinking images of modern cinema, more specifically of its preeminent auteurs in Deleuze's pantheon such as Welles, Resnais, Godard, and others, can effectuate this new image of thought.⁴ This chapter assumes the position that it is impossible to consider Deleuze's modernism as being in any way other than intrinsically linked

to his overall philosophical system and therefore that it is only in this context that connections with literary modernism can be explored.

In this context, a preliminary methodological indication seems appropriate. The judgment of Stephen Zepke is astute: the two concepts—of the movement and time images—“emerge from different ontological co-ordinates.”⁵ Accordingly, despite their union as a two-volume singular work, the method and aim of the problematization in *The Movement-Image* and *The Time-Image* differ. There are tensions between the two books if one seeks to find in them the sort of totalization that, say, is something of a challenge to find in the other important two volume work to which Deleuze signed his name: *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Indeed it is the latter which offers the well-known critique of totality and advocates totalization on the periphery. The conjunction of Deleuze’s cinema books and literary modernism, then, is necessarily an exercise in peripheral totalization.

Modernisms

In the field of literature the key elements of modernism routinely identified include a departure from representational realism and a movement toward abstract and autotelic art forms; aesthetic self-consciousness; an aesthetic of radical innovation, fragmentation, and shock; the breaking of conventions of logic and language; a taste for paradox.⁶ While the field of literary studies has witnessed since the 1940s a consolidation of the semantics of the term modernism, followed by various revisionist reconfigurations—feminist, postcolonial, postmodern—followed in turn by an insistence on the multivalency of modernisms (plural) to trouble the once unchallengeable canonical modernism (singular), film studies is a different matter entirely.⁷ There has never been an orthodoxy regarding modernism and periodization in the area of film. The lack of such an orthodoxy is compounded by the fact that modernism is itself a classification which is not univocally taken as periodizing per se. Film studies differs from studies of literature, music, and the arts in that it does not quite have a comparable narrative to tell itself about its own modernism. It certainly does not have its Greenbergian moment of solidification. Clement Greenberg had identified modernist painting with a purification and perfection of the form up to and including Pollock.⁸ The account was underwritten by a teleological narrative of the art of the first four decades of the twentieth century. No equivalent voice sought to construct, or would have been able to do so, a comparable account of the precocious art form of cinema.

The field has witnessed, nonetheless, much debate about two modern periods, or two modernisms, which though far from universally recognized or agreed upon, can be said to have organized much recent work in film studies on the related concepts of the modern, modernism, and modernity. This then is one of the paradoxes which hangs over the task of locating Deleuze’s cinema books in the context of literary modernism. It is connected to the simple matter of nomenclature and classification. Even in the expanded and multivalent usage of the term in the humanities in recent decades the situation is not especially promising. Deleuze, let us make clear from the

outset, does not invoke the term *modernism* as such in either of the two volumes he devoted to cinema. Yet Deleuze does use a distinction which has some currency in film studies—namely that between *classic* and *modern*. Classic cinema is the cinema of rational linkage, resolved threads of narrative, and logical succession and, in Deleuze's estimation, is only capable of the indirect presentation of time. That time is subservient to movement is the formulation in *The Movement-Image* reminiscent of the claim made in the book on Kant, and attributed to the philosopher as one of his major discoveries, that we are internal to time and not the other way round.⁹ By contrast to classic cinema, the modern form as understood by Deleuze explores irrational fragmentation, forking and disjunctive narrative, and achronological temporality and is able to disclose, by virtue of these operations, a direct image of time. On a superficial level the distinction bears many of the hallmarks of an understanding of literary modernism's rupture with inherited modes of narration and in particular with mimesis. Here at least, however, any hasty correlation of the antimimetic and/or autotelic tendencies of modernist literature with Deleuze's modern would be misguided. If for some, modernism in the arts names a period of innovation and blasting away at conformity, for others it is conformity itself stepping outside historical context. As Paul Willemsen asserts, "Modernism, in its Greenbergian adoration of eternal values, froze different art disciplines into timeless essences and promoted a fetishistic notion of specificity."¹⁰ Indeed, for Willemsen, the whole debate over modernism and realism played out in the pages of *Screen* in the 1970s (part of D. N. Rodowick's era of "political modernism" in film theory) bears the imprint of a false debate between two ahistorical ideologies: on the one side, modernism, and on the other, the avant-garde (as associated for example with Peter Woollen). The question of the coexistence of modernist and avant-garde credentials in the same artist, and/or the debate which would construe modernism as necessarily the domestication of avant-garde innovations produces a further paradox as far as Deleuze's cinema books are concerned. To his indifference to the critical terms modernism and postmodernism we can add: Deleuze is not really interested in the category of the avant-garde.¹¹ As to which version of cinematographic modernism his distinction may be most closely aligned, the argument in what follows will serve to make some general and specific indications.

How many times has film been modern?

Let us continue then by considering this term, so absent from Deleuze's writings and so foreign to his generation of French intellectuals. Deleuze does of course abundantly affirm his admiration for many of the important authors and artists commonly associated with literary and artistic modernism—in the cinema books as much as elsewhere. The importance of the canon of celebrated modernist authors and artists to Deleuze finds its echo, *mutatis mutandis*, in the role played by the great modern film directors discussed in clearly evaluative terms in the cinema books, to the extent that, as Rodowick suggests, "Deleuze's theory of modernism often evokes a perspective where the last avatars of experimentation and thought in film are defending cinematic

art from the onslaught of one-dimensional mass culture.”¹² If there is an Adornian side to this aspect of the role played by Deleuze’s pantheon of auteurs it is however allied on the one hand to the Bergsonian element of cinema as such in its embodiment of a machinic perception and on the other to the critique of knowledge in the work of certain directors. It is in this context that Deleuze can claim that Godard demolishes a system of knowledge which is retained, despite challenges, in Rossellini (*CII*, 172), with the latter here managing the equivalent, in the language of *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, of a partial critique and the former a total critique.

The modernism of Deleuze’s *The Movement-Image* and *The Time-Image* then may be said in large part to derive from two philosophical concepts (not to mention the whole corpus of works encompassing these and many other concepts crucial to Deleuze) central to conceptualizations of modernism in the arts: Bergson (*durée* but also the radically new conception of the image) and Nietzsche (transvaluation). One core element therefore of Deleuze’s “modernism” derives from the common interest in Bergson and Nietzsche displayed within modernist literature and within modernist studies. But before any consideration of a philosophical modernism and/or challenge to philosophical modernity in the shape of these two conceptualizations (Bergsonian *durée*, Nietzschean transvaluation) is undertaken, the intertextual literary modernism of the cinema books should be considered on its own terms.

Cinematographic and literary modernisms: Paradox of specificity

The flexibility with which Deleuze’s name is invoked in relation to literary modernism reflects the mutability and malleability of the term modernism (in literature) in the decades since Deleuze published his cinema books. The period since then has seen, *inter alia*, the consolidation of the idea of modernisms (notably in Nicholls’s landmark study from 1995), the eclipse of postmodernism as a paradigm and broad acceptance of a modernism that extends far beyond the 1930 cutoff point which a generation of students had been encouraged to accept as a workable rule of thumb, and including in some instances the specification of a high or late modernism, or a postmodernism which served to loosen modernism itself from what Patricia Waugh, writing in 1992, described as “its traditional critical moorings by viewing texts through an engagement with postmodern aesthetic discourses.”¹³

This mutability and malleability notwithstanding, it is perhaps promising as far as the consideration of *The Movement-Image* and *The Time-Image*, and literary modernism are concerned to discuss representative juxtapositions of cinema and literary modernism as these arise in the books, where authors such as Proust, Kafka, Dos Passos, and Beckett are all prominent and important references. For example, Deleuze mentions Dos Passos, in whose writing one encounters what Udris describes as “the avant-garde spirit of the modernist period of the 1930s, characterised by a sense of total relatedness of things and translated by the creative impulse of cross-fertilisation

among all the arts.”¹⁴ Of all the modernist authors, Dos Passos perhaps went furthest in explicitly invoking cinematographic analogies. This is embodied most directly in his invocation in *1919* of the kino-eye of Vertov. In the chapter on “Thought and Cinema” Dos Passos is credited with transforming the internal monologue in literature. The paragraph which introduces Dos Passos in this context begins by discussing the idea of internal monologue in Eisenstein. The chapter up until this point has considered what is described as the interstice and its ramifications in various dimensions of film. In addition to the spacing-out of images (which occurs in the films of Godard) and the disjunction of the seen and the heard (in the films of Straub and Huillet as well as those of Duras) a further interstitial operation entails what Deleuze describes as the “dislocation of the internal monologue”:

According to Eisenstein’s musical conception, the internal monologue constituted a descriptive material loaded with features of visual and sound expression which were associated or linked together with each other: each image had a dominant tonality, but also harmonics which defined its possibilities of harmony and metaphor (there was metaphor when two images had the same harmonics). There was thus a whole of the film which encompassed the author, the world and the characters, and the way in which the world was seen formed a signifying unity. (CII, 182)

Now it is Deleuze’s contention that one of the innovations—one of the radically new elements—introduced by the moderns (and *not* therefore the modernists or the avant-garde of the 1920s) is, via the dislocation of the internal monologue, to shatter the unifying and centripetal harmonics of this (Eisensteinian) model. While the discussion is an aside, the purpose of which is to contextualize the idea of an internal monologue which no longer has a role in modern cinema, the mention of Dos Passos is arguably somewhat idiosyncratic as far as orthodox literary history is concerned and, in particular, certain tenets of modernism in literature. True, Dos Passos does use cinematographic writing and this fragments the internal monologue in novels such as *1919* and *The Big Money*. But was he really the first to expose the internal monologue (or stream of consciousness) in literature to the sort of heterogeneity and polymorphousness attributed by Deleuze to modern cinema?

The so-called stream of consciousness technique, which was first identified in these terms in relation to the work of Dorothy Richardson, but is found in other writing predating the novels by Dos Passos to which Deleuze refers (in works by such authors as Proust and Woolf), often reveals traits which betray either a direct influence of, or interaction with, contemporary innovations in cinema. The owner of Dublin’s short-lived Volta cinema James Joyce is an especially significant author in this respect. His 1922 novel *Ulysses*, which had been published in installments in *The Little Review* and Ezra Pound’s *The Egoist* from early 1918 had already subjected the internal monologue—notably of Leopold Bloom—to the sort of dislocation attributed by Deleuze to Dos Passos but “perfected” in the modern cinema. Given that the discussion in this section of Deleuze’s analysis centers on the question of harmony,

the thematic and formal properties of the Sirens chapter of Joyce's novel seem to offer especially pertinent substance to this argument. The chapter witnesses Leopold Bloom observing and listening to the actions and conversations taking place in the bar of a Dublin hotel (the Ormond) as these are focalized in the interplay of the two barmaids as distilled through the interior monologue of Bloom. The chapter famously begins with a polyphonic overture consisting of 58 phrases which reappear in the rest of the chapter.¹⁵ Consider, in this context, Deleuze's conclusion concerning the "completion," in Godard's *Une femme mariée*, of the innovation represented in his view by Dos Passos: "There are no longer any perfect and 'resolved' harmonies, but only dissonant tunings or irrational cuts, because there are no more harmonics of the image, but only 'unlinked' tones forming the series. What disappears here is all metaphor or figure" (*CII*, 182). While in some respects a minor point, concerning what is merely an aside in the argument, it is the case that Deleuze somewhat exaggerates the innovation of Dos Passos in the novel. The novel form did not require cinematographic writing in the guise of Vertovian interludes in order to dislocate the internal monologue. Joyce was already achieving a comparable dislocation in *Ulysses*.

Deleuze's argument finds an echo later in the chapter, the conclusion of which asserts that Godard's work consolidates the dislocation of the internal monologue (the claim that Godard at once breaks with and completes Eisenstein is important to Deleuze's overall argument in the second volume: "montrage" (*CII*, 41) as opposed to montage). In his final paragraph, Deleuze invokes Bakhtin's definition of the novel. Bakhtin's conception of the novel is one which already displaces any notion of the novel form as subject to a strict periodization—premodernist, modernist—insofar as it is polyphonic on the one hand, and *the modern* genre par excellence on the other. Insofar as this chapter turns in its third and concluding section to the novel, via Dos Passos and Bakhtin, Deleuze reveals that in addition he is not in the least concerned with subscribing to an orthodox list of noted moments of literary experimentation. Neither is he concerned with innovations in the modernist novel which prefigure the innovations of the modern cinema even if these might assist him in his argument.¹⁶

Literature and literary criticism thus come to play an idiosyncratic and not always consistent role in Deleuze's elaboration of the specificity of the time-image in particular. In this context, as one of the last modernists of literature, the role of Robbe-Grillet, both as novelist and theorist, is crucial. Earlier in *The Time-Image*, Deleuze (as discussed above) reintroduces the idea of pure optical and sound situations, which are precisely those components facilitated by the innovations of modern cinema. The "visionary aestheticism" of Visconti, the "emptied spaces" of Antonioni which have "absorbed characters and actions" (*TI*, 5), and the effacement of the "distinction between the spectator and the spectacle" in Fellini are components emerging from the neorealist tradition. As in *L'année dernière à Marienbad*, in Antonioni's films, from *L'Eclisse* (1962) onwards, according to Deleuze, the severance of character from territory means that what we encounter is emptied space "occupied" or haunted by emptied character. "[T]his space refers back again to the lost gaze of the being who is absent from the world as much as from himself" (*TI*, 9). The gaze is adrift and dislocated, thus creating an optical drama lived by the character. In fact it is true also of *La notte* (1961),

from the year before *L'Eclisse*. In *La Notte*, Lidia's aimless fugue in Milan leads to her encounters with pure optical and sound situations—"percepts" in the language of *What is Philosophy?*—such as the crying infant in the grounds of the derelict building, the rockets being set off in the open ground next to the busy thoroughfare, the empty street, the white glare of modernist architecture, and the sound of aircraft—helicopters in particular—overhead. These disparate elements are not resolved by recourse either to the motivation which might be provided by the idea of Lidia's "inner life," or by means of allegorical or symbolic totalization; nor do they serve to prolong a narrative as such. The starting point, however, is not the innovations of this or that film director, but rather the distinction made by Bergson between automatic or habitual recognition and attentive recognition. On the basis of this distinction Deleuze proceeds to identify two image types which correspond, in cinema's embodying of Bergson's ideas, to the sensory-motor image and the pure optical and sound situation. The new cinema—here exemplified by Rossellini in *Europe 51*, but other examples could have served just as well to embody the any-place-whatever at stake—has its correlate in the *nouveau roman*.¹⁷ The importance in this context of Robbe-Grillet to Deleuze's conception of the modern cinema cannot be overstated. On the one hand, he is responsible for part of one of the monolithic achievements of modern cinema—*Last Year at Marienbad*—and, on the other, he is the inventor of what Deleuze regards as a radically new theory and practice of descriptions, "pure descriptions which are unmade at the same time as they are outlined" (*CII*, 45). Arguably, Deleuze comes closest to direct contact with literary modernism in *The Time-Image* with the importance he places on Robbe-Grillet and the theory and practice of the *nouveau roman*. The unnamed abstract city of a novel such as *Dans le labyrinthe* features the renowned construction and erasure of settings and objects. The labyrinthine city is the location for a soldier repeatedly to encounter a child as they circulate in a "quadrillage" of identical streets. The oneiric space is subject to the operations of several self-reflexive devices such as the "engraving generator" which is itself the source of the characters in the city.¹⁸ "On" this scene, "in" this place, objects come into prominence only through their being covered, traced in their contours by an at once enveloping and disclosing substance. They are absences which are pulled back into existence by means of being covered either by dust (if they are interior objects) or snow (if they are exterior objects). In the process of their very coming into emergence, the cityscape and the cafe table are simultaneously and paradoxically buried. The type of innovation which Deleuze admires in such work was not of course limited to Robbe-Grillet and the proponents of the *nouveau roman*. In quite a distinct way and with quite different ambitions, the postwar writing of Samuel Beckett reformulates subject-object relations in its own experiments in prose. In the novel *Watt*, for example, the celebrated description of Mr Knott's pot (as Deleuze notes in "L'Epuisé" if not in the cinema books) is another way in which the modern novel presents the act of description in such a way as to cause it to "replace the thing, which 'erases' the concrete object, which selects only certain features of it, even if this means making way for different descriptions which will pick out different lines or features, which are always provisional, always in question, displaced or replaced." (*CII*, 44–5).¹⁹ Thus it can be inferred that Deleuze's theorization of this new type of description in

modern cinema has its roots in a theory and practice of literature, which, according to some reappraisals, is effectively still modernist literature.

The idiosyncratic choice made by Deleuze of the 1966 project *Film*, written by Beckett but directed by Alan Schneider, in order to illustrate what he describes in *The Movement-Image* as the return to “the luminosity of things” needs to be understood in the context of the influence of the same literary modernist lineage. Beckett’s *Film* illustrates for Deleuze the Bergsonian notion of the object producing its own light and thus occupies the exemplary position of a film which participates in the same challenge to dualisms as did Bergson’s conception of the image. The role played by the film in the context of the specific argument unfolding in the first volume, however, should not prevent one from extrapolating to the larger context of Beckett—rethought here as a modernist author—and his role in Deleuze’s thinking elsewhere. While Deleuze in the cinema books only refers to *Film* it is not difficult to see how aspects of Beckett’s prose works could have been invoked, for example in relation to the shattering of the internal monologue (in, say, the dual narration of *Molloy* or what Deleuze might call the “fabulation” of *Malone Dies*, the metamorphic utterances of the *Unnamable* or the “voice on all sides multiplied by megaphones” of *How It Is*) or in the context of the replacement of the object by the hallucinogenic and/or combinatorial description which serves to erase the object described.²⁰ *Film* may indeed restore us to the plane of immanence of images, Deleuze argues, but when he (Beckett) is said to “extinguish the face” one thinks of the fact that, as Deleuze himself is only too well aware, Beckett’s prose works perform a more comprehensive set of exhaustions and extenuations (the explicit theme of “L’Epuisé” in the context of other audio-visual works developed by Beckett). In particular, Beckett is the artist who succeeds in exhausting the potentialities of space in his late works made for television, but he achieves comparable exhaustions in prose works where the idea of “the image” bears the hallmarks of a certain Bergsonism. While reference to Beckett’s prose remains absent in the cinema books, when Deleuze turns to the late works for television in “L’Epuisé,” the late prose comes to play a key role in what may be regarded as a coda to *The Movement-Image* and *The Time-Image* insofar as the Beckett essay takes further the ontology of the image pursued throughout the two volumes. Deleuze’s associative approach to distinct disciplines and to different art forms facilitates and embraces productive cross-fertilizations, and it is therefore often in following the unfolding of his practice of creating concepts through encounters with other disciplines that something like the connections between the cinema books and literary modernism can be unearthed.

Bergson, the world seen anew, and the paradox of the modernist visionary

Bergson’s concepts of the materiality of the image and of duration struck a chord with artists seeking to express the pace and complexity of life in the modern metropolis: a sense of the human sensorium exposed to and resonating with the radically altered and rapidly modernizing urban environment. To take what is in many ways a minor

but for all that highly illustrative instance of a modernist sensibility in response to a modernized metropolis, an early short story by Katherine Mansfield, "The Tiredness of Rosabel," depicts the inner life of a young woman dreaming of love on board an omnibus, amid the throng of bodies and within a visual environment marked by a sense of heightened and novel modes of visibility, commerce and social exchange which the author displays as impinging on the consciousness of her protagonist.²¹ The brief portrait of Rosabel arguably offers in microcosm an explanation of why Bergson was so suited to modernist literary authors.²²

The idea of novelty dominates the opening pages of *The Movement-Image*, but it is not the "make it new!" of Ezra Pound but rather the Bergsonian idea of novelty that is at stake: "how are the production and appearance of something new possible?" (30).²³ In its challenge to the phenomenological model, Bergson's confrontation with the idea of a natural perception was one of the attractions his thought held for Deleuze. Early in the development of cinema, the invention of montage is key to the cinema's parallel production of Bergsonian novelty. Montage is part of the evolution of cinema and is one of the ways in which cinema departs from natural perception—which it began of necessity (due to technological constraints) by imitating. It was only with the technological evolution of cinema that the shot becomes a temporal category (*CI*, 3).

In what is a characteristically idiosyncratic manner of illustration, Deleuze states that the dancing of Fred Astaire's takes place in an "any-location-whatever" (*CI*, 7), and that cinema belongs to "this modern conception of movement" (*CI*, 7). The modernity pertains to the thought of Bergson on the one hand—for example, "how are the production and appearance of something new possible?"—and the manner in which cinema is the exemplification of such modern novelty. The onscreen dancing of Astaire, taking place as it does across four decades, spans the period which includes the war—and hence the pivotal historical reference point by means of which the movement-and the time-images can be differentiated. By "any-location-whatever" Deleuze here merely means to evoke the genre conventions that developed in the musical comedy which would stretch social verisimilitude but conform to the cultural verisimilitude which it served itself to create, whereby song and dance suddenly burst into scenes and on to sets or settings. The any-location-whatever in which these eruptions would occur are nondetermined because it does not matter if the location is a street (Stanley Donen's *Funny Face* as the three principals undertake their tour of Paris), a café (as Maurice Chevalier prompts Gene Kelly in Minnelli's *An American in Paris*), a hotel room (*The Band Wagon*), or a film set (*Singin' in the Rain*). Allied to the moment of the sudden eruption, "when one relates movement to any-moment-whatevers one must be capable of thinking the production of the new, that is, of the remarkable and the singular" (*CI*, 7).²⁴

This amounts to "a conversion of philosophy" for Deleuze, but cinema, he argues, "is an essential factor" in this new way of thinking (*CI*, 7). Bergson goes halfway to showing that cinema is "the organ for perfecting the new reality" (*CI*, 8), but someone such as Astaire provides the impetus for the prolongation of the journey. The any-space-whatever and the any-moment-whatever exemplified in the musical comedy are however still firmly located within the regime of the movement-image. As Deleuze

comments in *The Time-Image*, the between out of which the any-moment-whatever is fashioned is not yet the dissonant *between* (or interval) of someone such as Godard in *Une femme est une femme*. The musical comedy thus furnishes an example of what Deleuze elsewhere calls conjunctive synthesis as opposed to the disjunctive syntheses of a Godard, a Duras, or a Straub-Huillet film. In the language of conventional film studies the any-moment-whatever is subject to resolution, often by means of audio and/or visual dissolve. This is further developed in relation to the musical comedy in general (and Minnelli in particular) in *The Time-Image*—with pure optical and sound situations and the idea of the dance as the break into another world (*CII*, 62–3).

In this way that the same concept—the any-space-whatever—will come to play a pivotal role in the elaboration of the distinction between the movement-image and the time-image themselves. The Astaire moment, like many other innovations in the films described in the first volume, are like genetic markers of the mutations which only become possible in a certain set of historical and technological conditions which will come later are in place: “slackening of the sensory-motor connections—this is only the dawn which leads to a purely optical and sound situation” (*CI*, 3). The markers continued into the period which saw the emergence of the time image: Hitchcock remains thus a merely potential modern, the Astaire-Rogers moment a potential Jean-Claude Brialys-Anna Karina domestic choreography (in Godard’s *Une femme est une femme*). But meanwhile the genetic marker has been activated by changed historical and technological conditions and the any-space-whatever comes to name the radical conclusion to a Deleuzo-Bergsonianism of cinema. This conclusion, under the auspices of the pursuit of new perceptions, of seeing the unseeable (*CII*, 260), leads Deleuze to the easily misunderstood idea of a visionary cinema—a cinema of the seer. For this figure of modern cinema to be positioned in Deleuze’s quasidevelopmental taxonomy/typology he needs Nietzsche.

Nietzsche and the paradox of fabulation: Powers of the false

The Time-Image relies far more heavily on Nietzsche than does the first volume. It is Nietzsche’s valorization of art as a will to falsehood (*NP*, 184) that provides the most obvious link between Deleuze’s account of cinema in *The Time-Image* and his concerns two decades earlier in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. In the latter, Deleuze asserts: “our highest thoughts take falsehood into account; moreover, they never stop turning falsehood into a higher power, an affirmative and artistic power that is brought into effect, verified and becomes true in the work of art” (*NP*, 105). *The Time-Image* returns to this theme of the “powers of the false.” In the book on Nietzsche, Deleuze had begun to develop the idea which would come to form a chapter of central importance to his later *Difference and Repetition*—that of the image of thought. Nietzsche offers philosophy a radically new image of thought, namely one where truth is not the “natural” element or environment of thought. Nietzsche provides an image of thought liberated from the dogmatism represented by such a conception, where what emerges (i.e. transvaluation) is not a change of value, but a change in the element from which

the value of values derives (NP, 171). While not as surprising perhaps as the pivotal nature of the part played by Fred Astaire in the history of Deleuzo-Bergsonian thought, the central Nietzschean chapter of *The Time-Image* recruits the somewhat unlikely figure of Orson Welles in order to exemplify, *inter alia*, such aspects of the new image of thought as the concept of art taking falsehood to its highest power of affirmation, the attack on the system of judgment and the elaboration of a “transvaluative” and perspectival system of proto-philosophical thought. Welles combines such formal cinematographic innovations (the celebrated exploitation of depth of field for example) as developed in *Citizen Kane* and *The Magnificent Ambersons*, compelling complementary formal and thematic elements (such as the border crane shot in *A Touch of Evil*), direct interventions in the history of representations of judgment and justice (his adaptation of Kafka’s *The Trial*) and the showman-conjuror’s playful (and for Deleuze all the more Nietzschean for that) celebration of fakery, illusion, and chimerical subversion, *F for Fake*. Aside from Nietzsche, Deleuze identifies two other principal sources for Welles’s modernity: the proto-modernism of Herman Melville and the Kafka of the infinite deferral of judgment. While both of these latter merely serve to compound what Deleuze insists is the unlikely Nietzschean strand which may be said to run throughout Welles’s œuvre, the fact provides further support for the argument that literary modernism in *The Time-Image* is often felt via a rather indirect genealogy.

As the concept of the powers of the false is framed in Deleuze’s titular chapter however it comes to be viewed as symptomatic of the broader transformation which Deleuze associates with the break with the movement-image. Just as Nietzsche demands of thought that it move away from its erstwhile “element” of truth, so also do the powers of cinematographic falsehood lay down a fundamental challenge to the precepts and *modus operandi*, not to mention the conceptual support-structure, of “sensory-motor” or organic cinematographic presentation. Thus cinema’s dependence on representation, verisimilitude, and realism is dislodged. “The space of a sensory-motor situation,” *The Time-Image* explains, “is a setting which is already specified and presupposes an action which discloses it, or prompts a reaction which adapts to or modifies it” (CII, 7). Organized as it is by a vector of transcendence guaranteed to consolidate “good form,” organic cinematographic presentation secretes what Deleuze calls chronological time. In chronological time, which is a temporal model presided over by the “sensory-motor situation,” any intervention which jars with the narrative presupposed by that situation will be bracketed as only “contingently abnormal” (CII, 128). For example, one of the most famous instances of preposterous plot is contained in Hitchcock’s *North by Northwest*, where, as Kovács puts it, the survival by the duo of their seemingly mortal predicament on the faces of Mount Rushmore can only be resolved if the viewer conceives of it as “miraculous” (Kovács, 248). The transition, via highly ostentatious editing, which sees the seemingly ill-fated gesture of Cary Grant’s hand gripping Eve-Marie Saint segue with his hand pulling hers to join him in bed aboard the train is logically abnormal due to its improbability. It is resolved however through a combination of genre and industry templates (the romantic leads should survive) and auteurist signatures (Hitchcock’s

formal inventiveness and ludic disposition). Organic cinema, according to Deleuze, “presupposes the independence of its object, and hence presupposes a discernibility of the real and the imaginary” (CII, 7). The two are discernible in *North by Northwest*. By contrast, the cinema which Deleuze identifies as “crystalline” adopts strategies of representation that, like the *nouveau roman*, offer up descriptions which replace its own object. Many commentators are united in regarding the *nouveau roman* as the literature of cinematographic modernism—some even describing certain outputs (and not only those scripted and directed by Alain Robbe-Grillet) as *nouveau roman* films (*Last Year at Marienbad* being the quintessential example, but the category also embraces films made by Duras). In the *nouveau roman* the object is erased but another reality is powerfully brought out in the act of constructing through speech or vision. In such a cinema the imaginary and the real become indiscernible (CII, 7). Such indiscernibility was present in a limited sense in the first modernism. In someone such as Epstein, for example, the quest is for a visionary poetry, emblemized in such renowned scenes as that of the flowing drapes of the dining room, and the cutaways to aquatic landscapes in *La chute de la maison d’Usher*. What renders this agenda distinct from modern cinema, though, is the fact that there is no quest for a purity of form—emblematically represented by Epstein’s concept of *photogénie*, which he borrows from Delluc and explicitly defines against literature, thereby seeking to define the specificity of cinematographic form.²⁵

Periodization and the paradox of a film history in the temporality of Aïon

Deleuze’s cinema books are at once a taxonomy and, as he says himself, a natural history. There is at times a tension between these two tendencies.²⁶ The first volume begins with a philosophical prehistory of cinema, in the shape of its commentaries on Bergson. The remainder of *The Movement-Image* oscillates between a taxonomy derived from Deleuze’s importation of Peirce’s semiology and discussions of phases (prewar, postwar, the late or early work of a given director) and schools (expressionism, neorealism, the nouvelle vague) occupying or emerging within defined historical periods. On the one hand Deleuze outlines the components of and conditions for different types of image: the action image, the affection image, the perception image (all Bergsonian categories), and other subcategories.

The taxonomy largely (albeit far from completely) recedes in the second volume, yet the tension between the synchronic and diachronic impulses remains, albeit registered in a more diffuse manner. As Schwab has argued,

Deleuze’s language is often temporal and evolutionary, as if the differentiations [between image types] arose in a temporal fashion. The considered theory, however, requires an untemporalized hierarchy of ontological constitution and ontological dependencies. . . . Deleuze uses an evolutionary *qua* temporal and structural *qua*

atemporal perspective side-by-side, but does not address the problem of their relation. (Schwab, 136n24)²⁷

Other commentators have offered a rationale for this apparent omission on the part of Deleuze. Flaxman, for example, presents the problem of the relation as follows:

from classification, images and signs emerge in stratigraphic series, sedimented at unpredictable angles and betraying so many peculiar intersections. For Deleuze, classification works “symptomalogically” by selecting certain singularities that bring forth improbable connections and unseen tendencies, but this process reveals classification, no less the history to which it gives rise, to be “effective” (Foucault), to be genealogical. Not a quest for origins or a positing of conclusions, classification is a creative process, the production of a map. (Flaxman, 25)

And so it is within the elaboration of the taxonomy of image types that a certain film director can span two regimes or can break out of a regime while simultaneously exemplifying it. Bergman in relation to the affection image is the supreme case in point in *The Movement-Image*. Bergman at once perfects the affection image while simultaneously seeming to destroy the very grounds of the image type—in its dependence on the face.²⁸ To return to the odd but for Deleuze exemplary case of Beckett’s *Film*, this work—described hyperbolically (but with a serious allusion to the transhistorical pseudocouple of Bishop Berkeley and Beckett) as “the greatest Irish film” (“*le plus beau film irlandais*”)—serves to illustrate the exhaustion of the three main image types. Thus the taxonomy seems increasingly to serve as a possible world of cinema as if Bergson had in fact been thinking about it. Beckett’s *Film* serves, as Raymond Bellour argues, a singular purpose: it functions in *The Movement-Image* as a “matrix for the (barely introduced at this point) three varieties of the movement-image in order via its final shot, which enables the ‘rejoining of a world before man,’ to open on to all that the second volume will develop as suspended categories of the time-image.”²⁹ Beckett’s *Film*, in short, is treated symptomalogically.

Modernism and the question of Deleuze’s “second poetics”

The matter may be connected to what has been described by Jean-Jacques Lecercle as the tension in Deleuze’s work between his high modernism and the second poetics he develops after his meeting with and subsequent collaboration with Félix Guattari. Thus on the one hand there are those high modernist values with which he is associated through his endorsement of the canons of modernism in literature and the arts, and on the other the idea of collective assemblage of enunciation which rather goes against the grain of canonical hierarchy.³⁰

Lecercle explores the paradox within the framework of Deleuze and literary modernism both in his book on Deleuze and language and subsequently in the context of Deleuze’s and Badiou’s contrasting approaches to the work of Beckett. He does

so by suggesting that the concept of style in Deleuze's late work is the name of the tension between his modernism and the second (Guattarian) poetics. Lecercle's focus is on stylistics as understood in the realm of literary theory and on the paradoxical gravitation toward the problem of language of which Deleuze's essay on Beckett is emblematic. The fact, however, that among Deleuze's commentators Lecercle offers the most convincing account of Deleuze as himself a "modernist" (Lecercle, 122) suggests that he may offer some fresh perspectives by means of which to draw some conclusions regarding the position of literary modernism in the cinema books considered within the broad framework of this putative tension. To begin with, it should be noted that "style may be perceived as the most individual inhabitation of language . . . and yet not be ascribed to a person."³¹ But on the other hand, as the concept of style is somewhat counterintuitively explored in Deleuze's late work. In several of the essays collected in *Critique et clinique*, it becomes linked to and emblematic of the thwarting, insinuating, and mutating efforts of fragmentation, disjunctive synthesis, and other means by which, for Deleuze, literature reveals that an *assemblage* is speaking.³²

Of course, when one moves from literature to cinema, the commonsensical (as opposed to the perverse Deleuzian) question of style understood in the context of an individual signature finds its most complete formulation in the ideology of the auteur, to which Deleuze wholeheartedly subscribes, steeped as he is in the cinephilic culture which nurtured the *nouvelle vague* and the *Cahiers* author-directors associated with *Cahiers du cinéma*. But does the Deleuzian theme of style as the stuttering of language nonetheless have a part to play in the cinema books; does an equivalent to style-as-stuttering emerge?

A beginning may be made by consulting the interview with *Cahiers* published upon the publication of the second volume. There Deleuze reprises the formulation he adapts from Proust: that all great works of art excavate a foreign language in language. The surrounding context however is significant for a number of reasons. The allusion to Proust's phrase—all great works are written in a kind of foreign language—arises in the course of Deleuze's response to a question concerning the altered status of the auteur. The preceding question, however, is important. Deleuze is asked about his penchant for classification. The response begins by amplifying comments already made in the prefaces to the cinema books. He then proceeds to admit that many of the categories he employs—"classic,' 'romantic,' or '*nouveau roman*'—even 'neorealism'" (368, to which list one might add "modernism")—although insufficient abstractions, possess nonetheless a certain validity. He goes on to explain: "they are in fact valid categories, provided that we trace them to singular symptoms or signs rather than general forms. A classification is always a symptomology" (368). He offers two examples of the work that classification as symptomatology might facilitate: a classification of light in cinema would lead him to link certain lights with Epstein, Grémillon, or Rivette, while a classification of space in cinema would lead him to analyze elaborations of space in directors such as Mizoguchi, Ozu, or Antonioni. The names of the directors are attached to symptoms, just as Masoch is in Deleuze's 1967 study. The director in such instances functions as the name for a particular manner of the coming together of forces (in the sense spoken of by *Nietzsche and Philosophy*). Technique and style

(the cinematic equivalents of Deleuze's "clinical"), to adapt the words of Daniel Smith, are "directly linked to the creation of a differential table of vital signs (the clinical), so that one can speak of a clinical 'beckettism' . . . just as one speaks of a clinical 'sadism' or 'masochism'."³³ In this context the question which follows in the *Cahiers* interview, concerning the *politique des auteurs*, seems logical. He points out that for him the idea of the auteur, to which much is owed to *Cahiers*, should be retained as a shorthand way to mark the distinction between films designed for mass consumption and filmic works of art (roughly translated as Deleuze's cinematic modernism, both in terms of periodization—if one follows Kovács for example—and elitism). He then goes on to talk of what the equivalent of syntax might be in cinema, described as "the linkages and relinkages of images, but also the relation between sound and the visual image" (370). It is in working with this syntax that the great auteurs may also become the names of symptoms.

The section in question in this interview which develops this theme may be relatively brief and relatively circumscribed, but it is nonetheless informative as to the extent to which insights gained from the literature of the great canonical modernists make their way into the books on cinema. Indeed through the concept of foreign language understood as a decentering and dislocating force one links up with other work concerned with the idea of the assemblage and thus of collective assemblage of enunciation. The foreign language in language is one of the concepts which emerge with more political force from the collaboration with Guattari—first outlined in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*.

In the second volume therefore it is not surprising that the idea of "the people are missing"—first articulated in the Kafka book—reappears (and does so because a link between Welles and Kafka is emphasized—not just reliant on Welles's adaptation of *The Trial*). Indeed the idea is explored over several pages on practices of fabulation, legending, and a general power of the false which Deleuze finds in place in *cinéma vérité* (in Rouch notably). Referring in this instance to cinemas of specifically the decolonization and postcolonial contexts, Deleuze argues that "because the people are missing, the author is in a situation of producing utterances which are already collective, which are like the seeds of the people to come, and whose political impact is immediate and inescapable" (*CII*, 221). The filmmaker in certain contexts, such as notably Ousmane Sembène makes use of the intercessor in order to produce collective utterances (*CII*, 222), through harnessing an idea of folk or oral memory, even if this is only the performative convention in which fabulation as performative collective utterance takes place. Deleuze suggests that "[a]s a general rule, third world cinema has this aim: through trance or crisis, to constitute an assemblage which brings real parties together in order to make them produce collective utterances as the prefiguration of the people who are missing" (*CII*, 224). The whole section comprising pages 215–24 in the English translation is arguably the part of the two volumes which is most indebted to Guattari. A film such as *Xala* by Sembène seems rather emphatically to illustrate this trance, transfer, and sense of prefiguration—all presented through a unifying—*griot*-style—allegory centered on collective myth and custom (the curse—*xala*—which befalls the protagonist).

The section of *The Time-Image*, however, in which this espousal of the political potential of third world cinema is located, begins somewhat unexpectedly by claiming that Resnais and Straub-Huillet (rather than, say, the expected Sembène in Senegal) begin from the idea of absent people, people yet to come. In the case of the latter another perspective on the Deleuze of assemblage emerges, another perhaps more linked to the Guattari side than to the high modernist side. It is as if the first, modernist, Deleuze, who celebrates Eisenstein, needs something more than what passes for the “second modernism” of film studies orthodoxy. Disjunctions of sound and image—the new Nietzschean interval, the logic of between (“and, and, and”): these essentially stylistic (as Deleuze understands style) elements come increasingly to the fore as the second volume progresses. It is however impossible not to reflect back as one reads these passages, late in the second volume, on the fact that the sensory motor schema is embodied in or embodies good sense and the organic, the resolution of form and the retention of interiority, whereas the time-image film scrambles the codes and is paradoxical rather than orthodox; it repudiates the solace of good form. The ungrounding is comparable to the extent that both can be traced to a range of ideas in *Logic of Sense* and *Difference and Repetition*. One might select from these the emphasis on sense and the disjunctive synthesis. It has been said that the late poetics of Deleuze ends up being a hybrid of Guattarian assemblage and collective enunciation and the earlier critical and clinical model sketched in the 1960s and consolidated in *Critique et clinique*. As the second volume progresses toward its end so also do literary references proliferate in order to account metaphorically for the innovations of Deleuze’s moderns. At the same time Nietzsche’s presence becomes more insistent.

Untimely meditation

Written under the impetus of the temporality of Aïon rather than of Chronos and committed to the creation of concepts, the two volumes on cinema can only be subjected to a peripheral totalization. The thought grows from the middle, such that any-space-whatever announced in a movement of Fred Astaire first witnessed as a child in the prewar period and recalled some 40 years on by a cinephile philosopher can become conceptually remodeled as the space of disconnection, dislocation, and emptiness in an Antonioni after the war. As Jaessens suggests: “The classic period therefore has modern aspects. As a result the concept of ‘modernity’ must not be considered as a historical category, but more so as a systematic category with many virtual characters which can be actualised in different periods” (Jaessens, 274). The thought of cinema, by cinema, grows from this middle in the philosopher to produce mutant and mutating concepts, all seemingly held within a reassuring taxonomy which is simultaneously, as Raymond Bellour has proposed, a kind of novel (“Penser, raconter,” 27–31).

It is well documented that many of the most important modernist authors had an interest in cinema. Dorothy Richardson wrote film reviews, Joyce opened a cinema in Dublin, and Beckett wrote to Eisenstein asking to become his assistant. It is however less these conjunctions through which the elements of literary modernism

in *The Movement-Image* and *The Time-Image* emerge than by means of the role played by literary authors as they serve to illustrate and exemplify concepts, trajectories, and framings of the double heritage of Bergson and Nietzsche. In this sense the peripheral but significant presence of literary authors in Deleuze's cinema books serves as a reminder that in some ways these take up again the symptomalogical enquiry first announced in the book on Nietzsche and taken as far as it could go (in his lifetime) in *Critique et clinique*.

Notes

- 1 Jacques Rancière, *La malaise dans l'esthétique* (Paris: Gallilée, 2004). See Antoine Compagnon, *The Five Paradoxes of Modernity*, trans. Franklin Philip (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), iii–xii.
- 2 Joost Raessens, "Deleuze et la modernité cinématographique," in *Der Film bei Deleuze/Le cinéma selon Deleuze*, eds. Oliver Fahle and Lorenz Engell (Berlin and Paris: Verlag der Bauhaus-Universität Weimar and Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1997), 669–75 (273).
- 3 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 141.
- 4 Nietzsche, Deleuze points out, opposes judgment as it is embodied in Kant's "fantastic subjective tribunal" (*Essays Critical and Clinical*, 127). For the latter model depends upon the prior inscription (in short, the prescription—the writing in advance and ordaining) of a form (to inspire conformity). To this is opposed Nietzschean transvaluation, giving rise to a "justice beyond all judgement" (127). See Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. D. W. Smith and M. A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).
- 5 Stephen Zepke, *Art as Abstract Machine: Ontology and Aesthetics in Deleuze and Guattari* (London: Routledge, 2005), 78.
- 6 See a comparable list against which Jean-Jacques Lecercle ticks Deleuze, rendering him a modernist philosopher in Lecercle, *Badiou and Deleuze Read Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).
- 7 For an influential revisiting of modernism see for example Peter Nicholls, *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995). Among the many key interventions in the 1990s indicative of these revisions is Patricia Waugh's *Practising Postmodernism; Reading Modernism* (London: Edward Arnold, 1992): "In my view, ever postmodern before his time, Joyce achieves this [an awareness of our embeddedness in a culture which grand narratives have helped to shape] through recognition of the ethical potential in an aesthetic mode: parody" (152).
- 8 Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Art," in *The Collected Essays and Criticism, Volume 4 Modernism with a Vengeance*, ed. J. O'Brian (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993).
- 9 A moment which Gregory Flaxman glosses as the "vertiginous unhinging of time from space," "Introduction," in *The Brain is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*, ed. Flaxman (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2000), 1–57 (4).
- 10 Paul Willemen, *Looks and Frictions: Essays in Cultural Studies and Film Theory* (London: BFI, 1994), 147.

- 11 Deleuze is aware of the work of Snow and Brakhage and others and cites their work affirmatively. The references to the avant-garde of the 1920s are subsumed under the celebration of Artaud, who though collaborating with Dulac on *Le coquille et le clergyman* and acting in, for example, Abel Gance's *Napoleon*, quickly gave up on cinema.
- 12 D. N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), xiv.
- 13 In arguing against a radical break, Waugh also wisely cautioned against, "fall[ing] into the opposite error of a naive evolutionism, but to consider continuities and discontinuities and the possibility of perceiving new relationships" (4).
- 14 Raynalle Udris, "Modernity and 'Cinematographic Writing' in André Malraux's *Days of Heaven* and John Dos Passos' *The Big Money*," in *Intertextuality and Modernism in Comparative Literature*, eds. Emilie Salines and Raynalle Udris (Dublin: Philomel Press, 2002), 295–311 (311).
- 15 I pursue an extended analysis of the Sirens episode in the context of harmonics using Deleuze and Leibniz in an essay "Disconcerting the Fugue: Dissonance in the Sirens Episode of Joyce's *Ulysses*," *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 3.2 (1998): 147–68. More recently, in his study of cinema and modernism, Andrew Shail has explored the possibility of thinking about techniques in *Ulysses* as being influenced by cross-cutting in cinema editing. The Telemachus chapter is the focus of his study. See Andrew Shail, *The Cinema and the Origins of Literary Modernism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012).
- 16 As Kovács comments for example: "Although this evolution often coincides with those divisions into periods or aesthetic movements that film studies traditionally asserts, there are other moments when Deleuze's approach cuts across (or flies against) conventional wisdom" (Kovács, 166).
- 17 The meaning and provenance of the concept of any-space-whatever (the somewhat cumbersome standard English translation of the term *espace quelconque*) has been subject to widespread misrepresentation. The source of the confusion derives from the fact that its originator—Pascal Auger—was among Deleuze's students at Vincennes. His concept, which was initially applicable to the realm of temporality in relation to cinema and the shot—picked up uncredited initially by Deleuze early in *The Movement-Image*, but credited later in the same volume as well as in *The Time-Image*—came to be misattributed by Anglophone commentators who could find no evidence of the work of an author named Pascal Augé who might fit the bill. Thus many either suggested or insisted that it was Marc Augé who was intended, and thus many laborious, often unconvincing, often fractious expositions of the possible links between *espace quelconque* and *non-lieux* have occupied Deleuze commentators. All have done so superfluously. Perhaps due to the homophone Auger-Augé the French original publication by Minuit is ultimately the source of the error—and hence perhaps Deleuze himself in an inexact memory of the name of one of his many students. It has nevertheless given rise to a shaggy dog story with many tails in the secondary criticism of the cinema books (an essay by Réda Bensmaïa which takes the error as its basis). Pascal Auger offers his account of the role he played in the genesis of Deleuze's concept in an interview: "Entretien avec Pascal Auger: autour du Deleuze et du cinéma," by Nicholas Rousseau (11 July 2011), www.actu-philosophia.com/spip.php?article316, accessed 15 November 2013.
- 18 Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Dans le labyrinthe* (Paris: Minuit, 1959), 38.

- 19 Samuel Beckett, *Watt* (London: Calder 1976).
- 20 Of course Deleuze does refer to Beckett's prose elsewhere in related contexts: it just so happens he does not in the cinema books. Deleuze directly explores these aspects in a different argument in "L'Épuisé."
- 21 Rosabel's discomfort on the bus reminds one of Flaubert's declaration, "since the invention of the public bus, the bourgeoisie is dead; they sit there in the bus alongside the 'lower classes,' and not only think like them and look like them but even dress like them" (Flaubert, cited in Nicholls, 17).
- 22 It is hardly necessary to point out that the conjunction Bergson-modernism has been a rich seam in modernist studies. Indeed, the precursor to this volume in the series *Understanding Philosophy, Understanding Modernism*, is both survey of and a welcome revitalization of the terrain.
- 23 Or in the words of *Creative Evolution*, "duration means invention, the creation of forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new," Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. A. Mitchell (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983), 11.
- 24 Pascal Auger, the originator of the concept, remarks that of the example he proposed to Deleuze, Michael Snow's *The Central Region*, while such locations may facilitated the *espace quelconque* a more radically undetermined space such as a desert (as in Snow's film) offers more immediate filmic potential.
- 25 Another experimental and iconic film from the same decade, Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*, is preceded, *inter alia*, by the claim, in the opening credits that what is about to unreel is to be understood as decidedly not literature or theater. The cinema of the kino-eye is to attempt the presentation of quotidian life in Soviet Russia through the specificity of what Deleuze calls a camera at one with materiality. Ménil makes a very convincing case for the importance of Epstein's theoretical writings to Deleuze in Alain Ménil, "The Time(s) of Cinema," trans. Kevin Nolan and Jean Khalfa, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*, ed. Jean Khalfa (New York and London: Continuum, 2003), 85–104. Epstein took up Delluc's notion of *photogénie* in order to try to account for the specificity of the machine-vision of cinema. See Epstein, *Critical Essays and New Translations*, eds. Sarah Keller and Jason N. Paul (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012) and Willemen for an account of the concept in the context of modernism in the visual arts.
- 26 The gap between the two aspects—the historical and the ontological—has been pointed out by others. Schwab, for example, in his criticism of Deleuze's reading of Beckett's *Film*, identifies the gap as being between "on the one hand, Deleuze's detailed accounts of films qua his history of the cinema—broadly construed his aesthetics of cinema—and on the other, Deleuze's ontological views as expressed in the theoretical sections of the two books." Martin Schwab, "Escape from the Image: Deleuze's Image-Ontology," in *The Brain is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*, ed. Gregory Flaxman (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2000), 109–39 (130). For others, such as Raessens, Deleuze's periodization is not strictly speaking historical (274). Rodowick contends that there are two historical ideas shaping the two volumes, one deriving from Wölfflin's classifications of style in art history and the other from Ilya Prigogine and Isabelle Stengers characterization of the evolution of science and philosophy as open systems (*Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*, 5).

- 27 Schwab makes the point that while the “image-ontology in *The Movement-Image* is presented in the form of a general and comprehensive ontology” by the time of *The Time-Image* “the interpretations . . . are even further removed from the image-ontology than those of *The Movement-Image*” (134n3).
- 28 Bergman is for theorists of the cinematographic modern an interesting case in point. Kovács makes him a dedicated follower of fashion, departing from his Strindbergian chamber drama mode in the 1960s only to return to it—and thus a form of classicism—after modernist cinema came to an end.
- 29 Raymond Bellour, “Penser, raconter: le cinéma de Gilles Deleuze,” in *Der Film bei Deleuze/Le cinéma selon Deleuze*, eds. Oliver Fahle and Lorenz Engell (Berlin and Paris: Verlag der Bauhaus-Universität Weimar and Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1997), 22–40 (31). My translation.
- 30 When translated back to film studies from the vantage point of revisions in the recent past, however, the picture is less clear. Hamish Ford for example asserts that “modernism has emerged as a key concept in recent film scholarship in part because it generally does not (contra literary ‘high modernism’) in fact give off hierarchical intonations” (14). It lies beyond the scope of the present study to develop this point. Hamish Ford, *Post-War Modernist Cinema* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 14.
- 31 Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2002), 223.
- 32 “[S]tyle is a name not for a form of diction (the choice of the proper, or the metaphorical, word), not for a structure of signifiers, not for a deliberate organisation of language, not even for the result of spontaneous inspiration, but for the discord, the disequilibrium, the stuttering that affect language at its most alive” (Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, 221). See also Lecercle, *Badiou and Deleuze Read Literature*.
- 33 Daniel W. Smith, “Introduction. ‘A Life of Pure Immanence’: Deleuze’s ‘Critique et Clinique’ Project,” in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London and New York: Verso, 1998), *xi–lvi (li)*. Rodowick’s account of cinema in the context of a symptomatology derived from Nietzsche is indispensable (*Gilles Deleuze’s Time Machine*, 130–8).

What is Philosophy?: “To play it again on a new stage”

S. E. Gontarski

This is not philosophy as thought, but as theatre: a theater of mime with multiple, fugitive, and instantaneous scenes.

Let us pervert good sense.

—Michel Foucault, *Theatrum Philosophicum*

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari open their *summa*, *What is Philosophy?*, with the admission that so brazen a question “can perhaps be posed only late in life, with the arrival of old age and the time for speaking correctly.”¹ They cite Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* as “an unrestrained work of old age,” for instance, when “all the mind’s faculties overcome their limits” (2).² That some books can only be written late in one’s career, after a lifetime of contemplating issues and so “the time for speaking correctly,” that is, not only with maturity but also with a certain boldness, at hand, appears to signal retrospection, a look backwards. And so such books inevitably return, as all thought inevitably returns, to earlier principles and preoccupations, repetitions and differences, even as they are always fresh and new. Deleuze and Guattari thus begin (if that is the word) with a survey, as the English translation has it, or an overview (*survol*), say, of the “concept” in tradition, in history, and they define the philosophical enterprise, that is, the activity of philosophy, in terms of developing, reworking, inventing, or constructing concepts, which enterprise is neither essentialist, transcendental, nor teleological, not, that is, the discovery of secreted, veiled, or, worse, universal and thus static truths, but the contrary, a constant activity of reinvention; thus what philosophers do is an *act* of creation: “philosophy is the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts” (2); and again, “The object of philosophy is to create concepts that are always new” (5). This activity, this creation, this constant remaking, this disruption, then, is an event (cf. line of flight), and a fabricated or constructed one at that, one that “cannot be known before being constructed” (82), and so is not, cannot, in fact, be predictive. Deleuze and Guattari divide their work into two parts: Part I is called simply Philosophy and deals with the creation of concepts (cf. “Ideas” in *Difference and Repetition* and “multiplicities” in *A Thousand Plateaus*) and the presuppositions of philosophy; Part II, called Philosophy, Science, Logic, and Art, deals with the interrelationships among those approaches to thinking.

As a survey, an overview, then, Deleuze and Guattari return to Deleuze's earliest major publication, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, the opening of which is immediately concerned with Nietzsche's creation of *concepts*, its first section called "The Concept of Genealogy," its first sentence, thus, "Nietzsche's most general project is the introduction of the concepts of sense and value into philosophy;" that is, the origin of the "good," say, or of the "good man." But even here Deleuze's use of "concept" (and "genealogy," for that matter) already suggests difference as he runs counter to or swerves from traditional use. Nietzsche and Deleuze are less concerned with genesis as roots or origins, as an absolute value or a grounding, say, than with *genealogy*, like *concept*, as a multiply creative act: "Genealogy thus means origin or birth but also difference and distance in the origin. Genealogy thus means nobility *and* baseness, nobility *and* vulgarity, nobility *and* decadence in the origin" (*Nietzsche* 2, emphasis added). And so with the central role of "concept," to genealogy and to philosophy, but philosophy too exists in relation to difference, in need, thus, of another, even its opposite, its negative, as Deleuze and Guattari note to conclude the discourse of *What is Philosophy?*, and so it is not just that art must "awaken us and teach us to feel, and that philosophy must teach us to conceive, or that science must teach us to know," the tripartite structure that Deleuze and Guattari follow throughout the book and which constitutes its third major subject, but that "Such pedagogies are only possible if each of the disciplines is, each on its own behalf, in an essential relationship with the No that concerns it. . . . *Philosophy needs a nonphilosophy that comprehends it; it needs a nonphilosophical comprehension just as art needs nonart and science needs nonscience*" (WP, 218, emphasis in the original).

The tradition that Deleuze and Guattari are most concerned with is particularly a post-Kantian history, but they reach back to what may be the origins of philosophy among the Greeks and thereby rethink history as well, rejecting history as a causal or meaningful sequence of events, treating history as becoming, as multiplicity. That is, it might be argued that Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on virtuality is fundamentally ahistorical or antihistorical, but much of their work has entailed a history but not history as Grand Narrative, offering, instead, an alternative history of philosophy, capitalism, psychoanalysis, among others. So much of *What is Philosophy?*, then, takes an historical arc, a genealogy that takes on the character of geology or stratification, a multiplicity of layers that produces various and variant strata or plateaus. There is, thus, for them no single perspective, no dominant history, but histories and multiplicities. Hegel, an encyclopedist, according to Deleuze, for instance, situates the concept within subjectivity whereby concepts are created through consciousness, thus, "the figures become part of the concept" (11). The concept, moreover, "has nothing whatever to do with a general or abstract idea" (12), as it does, say, even for Henri Bergson. In his "Translator's Preface" to *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (1910), F. L. Pogson summarized Bergson's position thus:

For him reality is not to be reached by any elaborate construction of thought: it is given in immediate experience as a flux, a continuous process of becoming, to be grasped by intuition, by sympathetic insight. Concepts break up the continuous flow of reality into parts external to one another, they further the interests of language and social life and are useful primarily for practical purposes. But they

give us nothing of the life and movement of reality [*durée*, say]; rather, by substituting for this an artificial reconstruction, a patchwork of dead fragments, they lead to the difficulties which have always beset the intellectualist philosophy, and which on its premises are insoluble.⁴ (vi)

Deleuze will reread, reinvent, restage if not re-create Bergson in *Bergsonism*, and resituate “concept” within immanence, the “continuous process of becoming,” within “life and movement,” for, after all, a concept needs “conceptual personae,” the subject of Chapter 3, friends “to determine its moment, its occasion and circumstances” (WP, 2). Here Deleuze and Guattari return to the etymology of philosophy not as a “lover of wisdom” but as “a friend of wisdom, those who seek wisdom but do not formally possess it” (3), and which marks philosophy as a decidedly Greek encounter. The etymology returns us as well to *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, “*Philosophos* does not mean ‘wise man’ but ‘friend of wisdom’” (5–6), friend, as Nietzsche might say, as “a third person in between ‘I’ and ‘me’” (6), and so Deleuze already returns to the state or condition of “in betweenness.”

Concept has, thus, its traditional meaning, restated above by Bergson through Pogson, that which can be known before being constructed. Deleuze further cites contemporary appropriations, rather misappropriations of that sense of the term, a highjacking, really, a “most shameful moment” (10), first by the social or “human sciences,” then by the agents of computers and marketers whom they see as products of “commercial professional training” (12): “the general movement that replaced Critique with sales promotion” (10). Such an usurpation will form part of Deleuze and Guattari’s political analysis in Chapter 4, their critique of capitalism in *Geophilosophy*, where philosophy becomes something of an “agreeable commerce of the mind, which, with concept, would have its own commodity, or rather its exchange value. . . . It is understandable why marketing appropriates the concept and advertising puts itself forward as the conceiver par excellence, as the poet and thinker” (99). Deleuze and Guattari situate *their* enterprise, pedagogy, on the other hand, in between, like a friend, an activity that features a critique of the “conditions of creation as factors of always singular moments” (12). “Conditions of creation” thus suggest a cultural critique, a materiality, on the one hand, while “always singular moments,” on the other, suggests fluxion, something of perpetual disruption, change, and instability. The enterprise of pedagogy, then, is a *process* in between material culture and metaphysics, like a friend. In short, they fold the static, outlier *concept* as conceived by Bergson within the process and multiplicity of thought.

Unsurprisingly, then, Chapter 1 is entitled, “What is a Concept?” in which “concept” is less defined (and hence limited or made static) than opened, that is, dissected and problematized. Concepts are inseparable from, only have meaning in relationship to problems, and since such problems exists, that is, preexist the concept, concepts can neither be foundational nor a grounding. The first problem that Deleuze and Guattari set for themselves is that of subject and object, being, the self, or, the self and another, *the* other, and the question posed is whether another, or *the* other, is “necessarily second in relation to a self” (16), which other, however, as an object, and, as a special object,

becomes another subject; that is, "We are dealing here with a problem concerning the plurality of subjects, their relationship, and their reciprocal presentation" (16): "the other person will become the condition under which not only subject and object are redistributed but also figure and ground, margins and centre, moving object and reference point, transitive and substantial, length and depth" (18). Such is plurality, Deleuze emphasizes, not dialectic: "The other is a possible world as it exists in a face that expresses it and takes shape in a language that gives it a reality. In this sense it is a concept with three inseparable components: possible world, existing face, and real language or speech" (17). Thus, the borders of the concept are not discreet, "every concept relates back to other concepts, not only in its history, but in its becoming or its present connections. . . . Concepts, therefore, extend to infinity and, being created, are never created from nothing" (19). The concept is, thus, both "absolute and relative. . . . As a whole it is absolute, but insofar as it is fragmentary it is relative" (21), at which point, Deleuze and Guattari return to quote or allude to Proust: "the concept is real without being actual, ideal without being abstract" (22), a principle of "the ideal-real" that Samuel Beckett will foreground in his own study of the novelist, *Proust*.⁵

Deleuze and Guattari offer two examples, central problems, in their historical overview, the first dealing with the Cartesian *cogito* the second reaching back to the *Parmenides* of Plato and the genealogy of philosophy, these to "confirm" their earlier analysis. On Descartes' "concept of self," Deleuze and Guattari see this foundational Cartesian "I" of the *cogito*, as already multiple, distributed among or occupying several zones, where "I' (doubting), I" (thinking), and I'" (being) coincide" (25). The I' that doubts then is thinking, as is I", and this process then, this act is I'", or being, that is, the subject who experiences or perceives phenomena, the world; thus subjectivity is seen in Cartesianism as foundational, or thinking, the necessary "I" doing so as the ultimate ground. But Deleuze and Guattari demonstrate their own discourse on method and ask about precursors, "Are there concepts signed by [that is, identified with] previous philosophers that have similar or almost identical components, but from which one component is lacking, or to which others have been added" (26). That is, "What is the first concept on this [Cartesian] plane," or how does the Cartesian concept of the *cogito* appear? What concepts does Descartes reactivate into his own set of problems, for instance; such reactivation, then, would make the *cogito* reliant, something other than foundational, a part, instead, of an incessant process. In Deleuze and Guattari's critique it is not a stable subject who experiences the world, but from experience, from the inchoate, heterogeneous flow of phenomena distinct subjects are generated, who through self-perception create images of themselves, their I, say. Such a critique of Descartes is of a piece with Deleuze and Guattari's critique of all grounding systems or "plateaus," most famously in *A Thousand Plateaus*.

Example 2 takes us to an earlier argument for grounding in Plato's *Parmenides* where Plato argues, through a dialogue between Parmenides and Socrates, with The One and the Eleatics's concept of timelessness and the unchanging. Of the One, superior both to being and to nonbeing, Deleuze and Guattari ask, is it not "prior to every concept?" (28), which priority would suggest something of a grounding, or again, "In Plato it is the virtual image of the already-thought that doubles every actual

concept" (40); that is, thinking the concept can thus but repeat "the already-thought." For Plato, perhaps, for Deleuze, of course, no, as Deleuze's philosophical project of becoming needs both to account for and to overcome the stasis or universality of Platonism in order to see a world of appearances with no prior "all" or "one," that is, with no higher, transcendental truth. Deleuze will replace the One/many opposition with multiples, with multiplicity, which is not a collection or linear series of ones, or plus ones, the many, say, and one which does not refer to or rely on a prior unity but replaces the One as well. As Deleuze and Guattari note in their initial collaboration, *Anti-Oedipus*: "It is only the category of the multiplicity, used as a substantive and going beyond both the One and the many, beyond the predicative relation of the one and the many, that can account for desiring-production: desiring-production is pure multiplicity, that is to say, an affirmation that is irreducible to any sort of unity."⁶ This is the infinite possibility of the desiring machine. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze returns to the pre-Socratics, to Heraclitus, in particular, "The tragic thinker" (23), as he calls him in a Nietzschean sense: "Multiplicity is the inseparable manifestation, essential transformation and constant symptom of unity. Multiplicity is the affirmation of unity, becoming is the affirmation of being. The affirmation of becoming is itself being, the affirmation of multiplicity is itself one" (24).

The image of thought

The relationship between the One and the many, between a whole and its fragments returns in the second chapter as Deleuze and Guattari explore the Plane of Immanence and its relationship to other Planes of Immanence and to concept formation, concepts that are "fragmentary wholes that are not aligned with one another . . . but are outcomes of throws of the dice" (35), that is, the result of chance, but chance as necessity, or what Nietzsche calls destiny. Deleuze critiques the "throw of the dice" in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* in terms of the One and the many, so that the single throw of the dice is already necessity, destiny: "The dice which are thrown once are the affirmation of *chance*, the combination which they form on falling is the affirmation of *necessity*. . . . For just as unity does not suppress or deny multiplicity, necessity does not suppress or deny chance" (26). The acceptance of such necessity, the destiny of chance, is the *amor fati* of both Deleuze and Nietzsche, the love or acceptance of fate or of that which simply is. And so the One and the many become a One-All, an "Omnitudo" in *What is Philosophy?*, and "Concepts are concrete assemblages, like the configurations of a machine, but the plane is the abstract machine of which these assemblages are the working parts. Concepts are events, but the plane is the horizon of events, the reservoir or reserve of purely conceptual events; not the relative horizon that functions as a limit" (36). Even as the same elements may appear as parts of concepts and planes of immanence, they should not be confused, Deleuze and Guattari warn; they are "*interleaved*," and so a "One in all," (50), concepts being *intensive*, planes of immanence *diagrammatic* (39). The danger is, furthermore, in

thinking the immanent immanent in relation to something else, which leads to the reintroduction of transcendence.

Such a line of flight leads Deleuze and Guattari to the second great subject of *What is Philosophy?*—the presuppositions of thought. One path here is to focus on error, as Descartes does in Example 4, since error reorientates thought toward or presupposes a contrary, nonerror or truth, say. The fallacy of presupposition, of the already thought is evident at the very opening of Descartes's *Discourse on Method*, the goal of which "method" is to develop "*the capacity to judge correctly and to distinguish the true from the false.*" Such a reorientation of immanence toward something Deleuze and Guattari refer to as "the image of thought" constitutes the entire third chapter of *Difference and Repetition*.

The issue of the One and the many remains central to Deleuze and Guattari, as it was to Deleuze writing alone, as it was to Pythagoreanism, a between the limited and the unlimited, say, or between odd and even, between light and darkness, good and bad, rest and motion, straight and crooked. In his philosophical self-study, Samuel Beckett copied out precisely such notes as he worked his way through the Pre-Socratic philosophers in the 1930s and was as preoccupied with the distinction between the One and the many, unity and multiplicity, between being and becoming, as Deleuze would be, and essentially through the same genealogy, in Beckett's case on a Beckettian Plane of Immanence that intersects with or overlaps in places those of, at least, Deleuze, Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Bergson, among others. In his philosophical notebooks Beckett wrote (for future reference), "In this ceaseless transformation of all things nothing individual persists, but only the order, in which the exchange between the contrary movements is effected—the *law of change*, which constitutes the meaning and worth of the whole. . . . The Becoming of Heraclitus produces no Being, as the Being of Parmenides no Becoming."⁷ Beckett thinks through such paradoxes through the whole of his career, "the *law of change*, which constitutes the meaning and worth of the whole," particularly the paradox of the One and the many in *Endgame*, which opens with Clov's comments, "Grain upon grain." Hamm later refers to "that old Greek." Most assume an allusion to Zeno the Eleatic, and in rehearsals for his direction of the play in Berlin, Beckett spoke to his cast of "Zeno's grains, a logical jest." The jest is the paradox of the part and the whole: at what point do one grain and other separate grains make up a unit called a heap? Hamm restates the paradox in human terms: at what point do separate moments of existence make up a whole, a life: "all life long you wait for that to mount up to a life."⁸ Beckett told Dubliner Eoin O'Brien that the allusion was not to Zeno, but to a philosopher he no longer recalled; Windelband (89), a source for much of Beckett's Greek philosophy, indicates Eubulides of Miletus, dialectician of Megaria, to whom is attributed a series of "little catches," retraceable to Zeno: "Which kernel of grain by being added makes the heap? Which hair falling out makes the bald head?" The exact philosopher is less important here (and for Beckett) than the line of flight. Directing the play in London, Beckett recorded in his *Riverside Notebook*: "C [Clov] perplexed. All seemingly in order, yet a change. Fatal grain added to form impossible heap. Ratio ruentis acetvi." The Latin alludes to Horace who in the *Epistle* to Augustus (II.i, 47) uses the logical puzzle called *sorites* or "heap" (*acervus*) to consider

how long it takes for a poet to be considered an “ancient” and hence great: “*dum cadat elusus ratione ruentis acervi*” [“till after the fashion of the falling heap he is baffled and thrown down”]. Clov senses the almost imperceptible change, the single grain “needed to make the heap—the last straw,” according to Beckett. Such a Beckettian line of flight situates him directly in a philosophical genealogy, a line of flight that includes even philosophers he doubtless never read, like Deleuze and Guattari. For Deleuze (as for Beckett, we might add) multiplicity will finally replace substance, as the event will replace essence (see the novel *Watt* for its most dramatic effect), and virtuality possibility. Deleuze and Guattari use “the image of thought,” which Deleuze has already critiqued in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (103–10) as a subordination of process to some form of externality.

The idiot

Chapter 3 takes up the image of “conceptual personae,” one manifestation of whom is the idiot. As an alternate conception or voice of, say, the philosopher, the idiot himself is also potentially doubled, old and new idiots. Descartes’s idiot is still a solver of problems and seeker of truth, the idiot who says I, until perhaps he goes mad in Russia (viz. Dostoevski): the “new idiot has no wish for indubitable truths. . . . The old idiot wanted truth, but the new idiot wants to turn the absurd into the highest power of thought—in other words to create” (WP, 62). He “wills the absurd” (62). This is a figure who “must always be reconstituted by the reader” (63). These conceptual personae “play a part in constituting the author’s concepts . . . the philosopher is only the envelope of his principal conceptual personae” (63–4) who is thus always a third person. But here Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between conceptual personae (of philosophy) and aesthetic figures (of art): “The former take effect on the plane of immanence that is an image of Thought-Being (*noumenon*), and the latter take effect on a plane of composition as image of a Universe (*phenomenon*)” (65) so that art thinks through affect. These planes are related and can slip into one another; they do not, however, produce a synthesis but continue to branch out (67), which in turn is something of a deterritorialization: “*The role of conceptual personae is to show thought’s territories, its absolute deterritorializations and reterritorializations*” (69, emphasis in the original). The result is or may be a thought that stammers, a thought “that can only stammer” (69). This stammering or a stammerer, the conceptual personae who “lives intensely within the thinker and forced him to think,” is the point of association between the philosopher and the schizophrenic, philosopher or artist as madman or idiot, “who discovers in thought the inability to think” (70). Thus “philosophy invents modes of existence or possibilities of life” (72), possible only on planes of immanence. Every thought then is a throw of the dice and so a construction, diagramed, perhaps, as follows: the prephilosophical plane (immanence or Reason), the persona or personae it must invent (insistence or Imagination) and the philosophical concepts it must create (consistency or Understanding) (76–7), their “coadaptation” necessary since none of these elements is “deduced from the others,” and so concept creation is a “triple

faculty" that Deleuze and Guattari call "taste" (77), and here they again return to Nietzsche, "who sensed this relationship of the creation of concepts with a specifically philosophical taste" (78).

Such a process of concept formation, then, is yet another way "by which philosophy is thought of as something Greek: The Greek city puts forward the friend or rival as a social relation, and it lays out a plane of immanence—but it also makes *free opinion* (*doxa*) prevail" (79), that is, constitutes a dialectic "that reduces philosophy to interminable discussion" (79) that was designed to raise opinion to the level of knowledge. Such a return to the Greeks will take Deleuze and Guattari on another flight, an overview, a return to the history of philosophy as concept formation through the process of opinions and contradictions: such endless discussion moving toward a higher opinion, toward an *Urdoxa*, dominates through the intellectual life of the Middle Ages and Aquinas's (or the Scholasticists's) principle educational method, the *Disputatio de quodlibet*, "until Hegel has the idea of making use of the contradiction between rival opinions to extract from them suprascientific propositions able to move, contemplate, reflect and communicate in themselves and within the absolute (the speculative proposition wherein opinions become moments of the concept)" (80).

The issue for Deleuze and Guattari is that amid these disputes and dialectics of philosophy's histories, "solutions are reviewed without ever determining what the problem is" (80), and here it is "Bergson, who contributed so much to the comprehension of the nature of philosophical problems," when he notes that "a well-posed problem was a problem solved" (81). And thus we return to the "triple faculty" of "taste" whereby solutions are constructed: "The whole of the problem (of which the solution is itself a part) always consists in constructing the other two when the third is underway" (81). No discussion can say in advance, however, whether a problem is well posed, and, moreover, "philosophy does not consist in knowing and is not inspired by truth" (82). The failure to recognize such and to persist in the pursuit of eternal forms or values, of universal concepts, leads to unfruitful pursuits where "[n]othing positive is done, nothing at all, in the domains of either criticism or history" (83). The function of philosophy then (or again) is "to awaken a dormant concept and to play it again on a new stage" (83).

Chapter 4 brings us back to earth, or back to *the* earth, and thus into new territory, into the social, the scientific, and the political, into the relationship between earth and territory, with geophilosophy, a stratification whereby earth is something of a grounding, while territory is ungrounded, subject to deterritorializations, even as Mark Bonta and John Protevi, in their chapter called "Deleuzoguattarian Geophilosophy," suggest, Geophilosophy is Deleuze and Guattari's "attempt to refound philosophy as materialist, earthly, and spatial." But earth, too, is subject to deterritorialization since it is beyond any territory so that each, earth and territory, retains the potential of the contrary force, earth to deterritorialize, territory to reterritorialize. Territory and earth both have "zones of indiscernibility" (86). Philosophy then is the construction of concepts, itself an intensive multiplicity, inscribed on a plane of immanence and peopled by conceptual personae who or which are not subjects but can operate the conceptual machinery of thinking which takes place in the interstices between or amid

the indiscernibility of earth and territory. Geophilosophy, as Bonta and Protevi's brief summary has it, "posits that philosophy needs the contingent connection . . . between the absolute deterritorialization of a thought of radical immanence and a relative social deterritorialization constituting a milieu of social immanence" (93).

Sensibilia

In Part II of *What is Philosophy?* (Chapter 5), Deleuze and Guattari take up the volume's third major subject, the (inter)relationship among philosophy, science (or more particularly Royal, positivist, or major science to distinguish it from the minor science Deleuze and Guattari advocate in *A Thousand Plateaus*), and art, all of which are creative and so, finally, complementary, and all are responses to chaos, which "is an infinite speed of birth and disappearance": "Science . . . relinquished the infinite, infinite speed, in order to gain a reference to actualize the virtual" via functions, while "philosophy wants to know how to retain infinite speeds while gaining consistency, by giving the virtual a consistency specific to it" (118, emphases in the original), that is, on a plane of immanence through concepts as constituted events. The actual, or the principal interest of science, "to actualize the virtual," thus might be considered as dealing with constituted bodies, the virtual as potential transformations of material systems or states of affairs, or "actualizes the event in a state of affairs, thing or body that can be referred to" (126). Science, then, is the creation of functions, whose elements Deleuze and Guattari call "functives," on a plane of reference, that is, in space and time, so that behavior can be predicted by establishing chains of causation: "science displays a peculiar, serial, ramified time, in which the before (the previous) always designates bifurcations and ruptures to come, and the after designates retroactive reconnections" (124). "The first difference between philosophy and science lies in the presuppositions of the concept and the function: in the one a plane of immanence or consistency, in the other a plane of reference" (125) featuring "independent variables" (127). The plane of immanence features concepts with "inseparable variations" (127), or what Bergson called "multiplicity of fusion" or *durée*, even as both planes, immanence and reference, are multiplicities but with differing natures, the former, intensive, the latter, extensional.

A third difference between philosophy and science is the role and nature of the observer, even in the age where "there is no total observer," particularly the *conceptual personae* of philosophy and the *partial observers* of science, which position moves us from the determinism of Laplace's "demon" to Heisenberg's "uncertainty," the latter less a matter of subjective interference than a matter of the equality of probabilities and hence constitutes a shift from subjectivity, the issue then not that of the relativity of truth but "a truth of the relative" (129–30). Such a partial observer perceives and experiences, but those experiences and perceptions are not localized in a subject but "belong to the thing studied" (130), and so Deleuze and Guattari invoke the notion of *sensibilia* developed by Bertrand Russell, among the most ardent anti-Bergsonians in all of Britain.¹⁰ But for Deleuze and Guattari the invocation of *sensibilia* is less a dismissal of Idealism or subjectivity and an invocation of what might be considered Russell's

misreading of Bergson, but something of an independent observer, independent of human agency, that is, a "nonsubjective observer," which finds one manifestation in the "time image" of Deleuze's *Cinema 2*. The link or overlap here, however, the complementarity, say, is that "conceptual personae are philosophical sensibilia" (131).

Chapter 6, "Prospects and Concepts," takes up both propositions ("all types of propositions are *prospects*, with an informational value," 138) and the fourth term in the serial description of Part II, "logic," where the "informational value" of propositions through tendencies of reference limits becoming, imposing a "finite movement of thought" (139): "Functions derive all their power from reference [. . . by] reduction of the concept to the function" (138); thus, "*States of affairs, objects, bodies, and lived states*," actualities all and all critiqued in the chapter, "form the function's reference, whereas *events* are the concept's consistency" (151, emphasis in the original). When Deleuze and Guattari turn their attention to literature and the arts in the Chapter 7, "Percept, Affect, and Concept," their performance soars: "Art, preserves, and it is the only thing in the world that is preserved" (163). But preserved in itself not necessarily in a material form or an industrial way, from which material and "various personae" the artwork establishes an independence as a "bloc of sensations" (164) so that percepts are not perceptions and affects are not feelings or affections; that is, such "Sensations, percepts, and affects are *beings* whose validity lies in themselves and exceeds any lived" (164, emphasis in the original). The work of art, then, "is a being of sensations and nothing else: it exists in itself" (164) and whose action is not memory but fabulation: "what great writer has not been able to create these beings of sensation. . . . The percept of the landscape before man, in the absence of man" (169), and so Mrs Dalloway "perceives the town . . . passed into the town . . . and becomes imperceptible herself. *Affects are precisely these nonhuman becomings of man*, just as percepts—including the town—are *nonhuman landscapes of nature*. . . . Everything is vision, becoming. We become universes. Becoming animal, plant, molecular, becoming zero" (169, emphasis in the original). The percepts and affects of art are not the perceptions or the emotional responses of any particular individuals but are created on a plane of composition, itself a corollary to the plane of immanence.

What is Philosophy?, then, is overview (return) and repetition (as difference), a survey of Deleuze's earliest insights and differentiations from and variations on them, now in collaboration with Guattari. Above all, however, it is a performance of philosophy. The final collaboration of Deleuze and Guattari, their final work, then, is both expository and performative, a linguistic account and a mime, a saying and a staging through which the authors disappear into the performance, become imperceptible, become text, become a "bloc of sensations." It is philosophy become affect. We might conclude, then, by returning to Michel Foucault's trenchant celebration of *Difference and Repetition* as insightful anticipation of what was yet to be written, *What is Philosophy?*:

This is philosophy not as thought but as theater: a theater of mime with multiple, fugitive, and instantaneous scenes in which blind gestures signal to each other. This is the theater where the laughter of the Sophist bursts out from under the mask of Socrates; where Spinoza's modes conduct a wild dance in a decentered

circle while substance revolves about it like a mad planet; where a limping Fichte announces “the fractured I \neq the dissolved self”; where Leibniz, having reached the top of the pyramid, can see through the darkness that celestial music is in fact a *Pierrot lunaire*. In the sentry box of the Luxembourg Gardens, Duns Scotus places his head through the circular window; he is sporting an impressive mustache; it belongs to Nietzsche, disguised as Klossowski.¹¹

Notes

- 1 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 1.
- 2 Guattari dies shortly after the work's French publication, 1991, Deleuze 4 years later.
- 3 Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (London: Athlone Press, 1983), 1.
- 4 F. L. Pogson, “Translator’s Preface,” in Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. Pogson (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2001), vi.
- 5 Musing on the prospect of his death, Marcel offers us the following observation in the final volume, volume 8, of *À la recherche du temps perdu*, *Le Temps retrouvé* of 1927 (*Time Regained* in English). In the third chapter, “An afternoon party at the house of the Princesse de Guermantes” Marcel notes: “But let a noise or a scent, once heard or once smelt, be heard or smelt again in the present and at the same time in the past, *real without being actual, ideal without being abstract*, and immediately the permanent and habitually concealed essence of things is liberated and our true self . . . is awakened” Marcel Proust, *Time Regained*, trans. Andreas Mayor and Terence Kilmartin (New York: Modern Library, 1993), 264, emphasis added.
- 6 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem, and H. R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 42.
- 7 Samuel Beckett, Notebooks, Trinity College Dublin MS 10967/26.
- 8 Beckett, *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett*, vol. II, *Endgame*, ed. S. E. Gontarski (New York: Grove Press, 1993), 70.
- 9 Mark Bonta and John Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Guide and Glossary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 92.
- 10 J. L. Austin’s reformulation of A. J. Ayer’s lectures of 1947 gives as follows, “The general doctrine, generally stated, goes like this: we never see or otherwise perceive (or ‘sense’), anyway, we never *directly* perceive or sense, material objects (or material things) but only sense-data (or our own ideas, impressions, sense, sense perceptions, percepts, etc.)” (2). At least as stated here, the principle might be deemed a restatement of Bergson, although, as Austin suggests, these formulations are “at least as old as Heraclitus” (1).
- 11 Michel Foucault, “Theatrum Philosophicum,” in *Deleuze and Guattari: Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers*, ed. Gary Genosko (London: Routledge, 2001), 325.

Essays Critical and Clinical: The Book as a “Whole”

Anthony Uhlmann

Critique et Clinique was published in France in 1993, 2 years before Gilles Deleuze's death.¹ It would be the last book he would publish in his life and the culmination of a project that he had announced some years before in an interview in 1988, where he spoke about “bringing together a series of studies under the general title” *Critique et Clinique*.² A number of things would urge us to approach this book as a collection of essays, rather than a properly coherent book: the comment just cited at first seems to underline this, as does the fact that eight of seventeen chapters of the original French edition of the book had been published before, and had been revised for the book. Further, in his introduction to the English-language version of the book, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, Daniel W. Smith indicates that Deleuze had made mention of the project even earlier (in his book on Sacher-Masoch in 1967, and in *Logique du sens* in 1969).³ That the first of the republished essays to appear, “Mystère d'Ariane,” was revised for republication in *Magazine Littéraire* in 1992, and originally published in 1963, with the others appearing between 1970 and 1992, seems to demonstrate conclusively that this is a collection rather than a whole.

Clearly Smith and Michael A. Greco, who translated and edited the English edition, felt certain that this was the case, as otherwise they might well have hesitated to contact me to ask whether I would give my permission to republish the final essay in the English collection “The Exhausted,” my translation of which had appeared in *SubStance*.⁴ This essay on Beckett had appeared in French in 1992 as a postface to an edition of Beckett's plays for television (Beckett and Deleuze, *Quad*).⁵ Deleuze had indicated in correspondence that he would prefer to see this essay published in English alongside Beckett's TV plays as they had been in French, and this was at first attempted but permission was not forthcoming from Beckett's English or American publishers for such an edition. Deleuze then agreed to allow this essay to appear alongside the others in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, something that would allow it to reach a wider audience in English.

In spite of all this, however, I will argue that *Essays Critical and Clinical* is best read as a “whole.”⁶ In “Whitman,” the eighth essay in the book (roughly at the middle of the original French collection), Deleuze explains how Walt Whitman begins with an

understanding of all things (Nature, History, the Earth, and War) as being comprised of fragments, and how, drawing out this understanding, he develops a style in which “a whole must be constructed, a whole that is all the more paradoxical in that it only comes *after* the fragments and leaves them intact, making no attempt to totalize them” (ECC, 58). The understanding Deleuze develops of Whitman, like the other understandings he develops in relation to other particular literary practitioners, stands in this book both for itself and as an indefinite function that is able to be attributed to literary practice more generally. It is as if a relation to signs, once achieved by one writer, echoes through writing itself. Just as Deleuze develops a consistent methodology in this work, which extracts concepts from the works and methods of writers rather than imposing preformulated concepts upon them, his own work echoes and answers the forms, processes, and methods he discerns in the works of the writers he treats. It is fair, of course, to firstly point out that he begins by choosing and responding to those writers who interest him most, so that echoing affinities with his own interests and enthusiasms should not be entirely unexpected. This is not to say they are distorted, however: the method of conceptual extraction succeeds in large part because of Deleuze’s capacities as a reader of real insight. My point is simply that Deleuze’s book itself seems to be an example of a whole that comes after the fragments that comprise it and yet leaves those fragments intact.

Once we begin to consider the work as a whole, and as a whole comprised of relations “that are external to their terms”—that is, as a nonorganic whole, a whole that has been constructed and has to be reconstructed in the act of reading—*Essays Critical and Clinical* completely changes its character. A first move in relation to it involves provisionally bracketing off “The Exhausted,” as this essay seems to alter the shape and the effect of the whole. This is not to say that this is not in itself a formidable essay, and I will consider it below, but rather that it was not drawn into the original “series of studies,” and was conceived of as entering into a different set of relations with the Beckett texts it stood alongside in its original edition. Once we bracket off “The Exhausted,” we can better see the outline of the whole, which begins with an essay that connects literature and life and ends with an essay that considers literature and thought. In both sets of relations there is a third term, philosophy, which moves between the other two, overlaps and mediates them.

The first three paragraphs of “Literature and Life” begin with negations related to the idea of writing. That is, the essay does not focus on “Literature” at this point, but the *process* through which it is generated. The three negations Deleuze posits, then, are as follows: firstly, writing does not impose a form; rather, it “moves in the direction of the ill-formed or incomplete” (ECC, 1). That is, it partakes of becoming and is itself a kind of becoming. Secondly, writing does not merely involve recounting your memories or travels; there can be sins of too much reality as well as of too much imagination. Deleuze affirms that literature appears not through precisely expressing an individual self, but when a power of the impersonal is created. The impersonal is “not a generality but a singularity at the highest point: a man, a woman, a beast, a stomach, a child. . .” (ECC, 3). What is written becomes literature when a “third person” is created “that strips us of the power to say ‘I’” (3). This too, moves the writer away from fixed

positions and opens out to becoming. Thirdly, you cannot write with your neuroses. This is because neuroses are states, they are fixed in place, they are blockages that stop us from moving. One of the central ideas crystallizes here: "Illness is not a process but a stopping of the process" (3).

Smith has written convincingly about the idea of symptomatology in relation to *Essays Critical and Clinical*, and the heart of the matter is that literature reveals and treats the symptoms that emerge in life.⁷ This is particularly clear in essays such as "Re-presentation of Masoch" and "What Children Say." Rather than being the symptoms of an individual illness, the literary work, having accessed the impersonal and the power of the general, diagnoses the symptoms of the world or the environment from which the writer emerges. The word "process" is one which recurs and is strongly emphasized throughout the work: process links to becoming and there is a philosophical tradition which understands the world to be involved in continuous becoming (rather than fixed as being) called Process Philosophy.⁸ As we have just seen, illness is not a process, but treating the illness or diagnosing its symptoms in order that it might be treated is.

The shadow of readers and their role in this is indicated in the second half of the essay. Having dealt with the negative and what "is not" writing, the essay moves to define writing in positive terms. Health is opposed to illness and "consists in inventing a people who are missing." The cryptic formula is typical of Deleuze and is the kind of phrase that leads some readers to lose sympathy with him. It is worth remembering that many of the formulas he adopts are taken from literature and the language of literature and are then mobilized to suggest ideas. A formula differs from a concept in that it suggests, it provokes or leads to thought, while a concept is an instrument with which to think. Here the people who are missing are readers, who have not yet encountered the work of the future, which is only in the process of being written. The writer does not write for himself or herself but for others, some audience. But the audience is not preexisting, the audience has to be made, or gathered together, through the work itself. "Audience" is an inadequate term because of the baggage it conveys, which designates a passive group waiting to be entertained. "The people who are missing," however, seek to designate what is not yet there, what is becoming through the writing. We can see this after the fact: certain books change our understandings and so our ideas, there is a process of formation, or education, that we all go through. This process of formation often has a given end: to produce a fixed or stable being. Yet writing enters into these spaces and opens what did not exist before, possibilities that might otherwise not exist.

Language too is drawn into becoming through style. Deleuze talks of style as involving the writer creating a foreign language, and, in "He Stuttered," it becomes clear that this involves mobilizing the capacities of language to carry multiple meanings simultaneously. These meanings might echo or contradict; they might involve paradox or uncertainty; they might point to unexpected understandings. This is what is meant by stuttering: several meanings become possible at the same moment . . . and stammering: the meaning that is emerging is held in suspension. This not only involves rapidly alternating through the syntagmatic and paradigmatic lines of language, it further opens out to elements that exist outside of language: "Visions and

Auditions that no longer belong to any language.” Through style, writers can construct a “becoming of language,” which causes “Ideas” to emerge not outside language but as “the outside of language.”⁹ The emergence of Ideas, Deleuze concludes, is constituted by “the passage of life within language”: language has to be deformed and made strange to offer an analog of the movement and becoming that constitutes living. Already, as will be underlined by the repetition of these terms throughout my reading, the first essay in the collection gives us Deleuze’s central terms or conceptual understandings of the importance of literature as an engagement with life: process, becoming form.

Particular relationships between literature and philosophy recur throughout *Essays Critical and Clinical*. On the one hand, writers of literature are often paired with writers of philosophy whose ideas enter into dialogue with the writers of literature, creating affects to express ideas that the philosophers express as concepts: Beckett and Bishop Berkeley; Kant and Shakespeare, Rimbaud and Kafka; Nietzsche and D. H. Lawrence; Heidegger and Alfred Jarry. Yet at other times the relation between literature and philosophy involves zones where the writer of a work of philosophy becomes indiscernible from a writer of work of literature. This zone is inhabited by “style.” Style, as we have seen, puts ideas into continuous variation which means that the only possible way of understanding them is by actively engaging with them, feeling them and using them as part of the process of our lives, rather than learning them by rote and repeating them as if our being was fixed and certain. Style in language sits under or behind the ideas expressed by philosophers, but without style it would not be possible to create an expression adequate to philosophical insight.

The final essay in the original French collection, “Spinoza and the Three ‘Ethics’,” takes as its theme not only the question of how Spinoza mobilizes his style or styles in constructing his philosophical system, but also the question as to the kinds of knowledge that are proper to literature, the kinds of thinking literature is capable of. The shape of the argument is set out in the second paragraph:

The *Ethics* sets forth three elements, which are not only contents but forms of expression: Signs or affects; Notions or concepts; Essences or percepts. They correspond to the three kinds of knowledge, which are also modes of existence and expression. (*ECC*, 138)

In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari argue that there are three kinds of thinking, broadly speaking: Science, Philosophy, and Art. Science thinks through “functions” and “prospects,” Philosophy thinks through “concepts,” and Art thinks through “percepts and affects.”¹⁰ In the *Ethics* Spinoza identifies three kinds of knowledge: the first kind maps roughly onto what we usually call the imagination but also involves immediate sensory perception and the interpretations of those perceptions we develop through habit of mind or action; the second kind maps roughly onto rational or scientific thought through tracing cause and effect and eliminating extraneous thoughts; the third kind is often called “intuition” and involves immediate insight into the true nature of some thing.¹¹ The two modes of thought Deleuze and Guattari mention concerning art—the affect and the percept—appear in the quotation above in relation to Spinoza. The affect (along with the sign) is aligned with the first kind of knowledge, and this is

not unexpected because the arts are usually associated with the imagination, and the thinking developed through it is in turn usually disregarded as being unreliable. Yet the percept (along with the essence) is aligned with the third kind of knowledge, which is the highest kind of knowledge for Spinoza.

While much more could be said about this essay, I will limit myself to one point with regard to it. The percept, which Deleuze indicates is an attribute of literary expression, involves the rapid shift between thoughts. He talks of thought moving at lightning speed, and leaping across "violent hiatuses" and involving many "ellipses and contractions" (ECC, 149). He argues that this characterizes the style of Book V of the *Ethics* in which Spinoza considers the third kind of knowledge. The logic of juxtaposition that underlies so much of the meaning making potential that inheres in art and literature is indicated here. The percept is the flash that occurs between related elements, the flash that reveals the relationship that pertains within these juxtaposed but not otherwise obviously linked elements. So literature offers not only that model of thought that proceeds through affects or signs, making our bodies feel and in parallel causing our minds to link together signs in ways that construct meanings that are equally felt; it offers a second in which we seem to glimpse the essence of the matter, in the gaps between what is presented to us.

The procedure

Rather than working with the conventional distinction between form and content in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, Deleuze speaks of the *form of expression* and the *form of content*. He exemplifies this distinction as follows:

when an author is [satisfied] with an external marker that leaves the *form of expression* intact ("he stuttered . . ."), its efficacy will be poorly understood unless there is a corresponding *form of content*—an atmospheric quality, a milieu that acts as the [electrical] conductor of words. (ECC, 108, translation modified)

There is always a standard form of expression, then (a novel, a poem, a genre, a mode, a sentence, a phrase, a word), that conveys meaning, but minoritarian or "foreign" styles are necessary to generate a form of content that in turn provides a feeling of understanding, a sense of the fullness of what is given. Deleuze continues:

This, at least, is what happens in great writers like Melville, in whom the hum of the forests and caves, the silence of the house, and the presence of the guitar are evidence of Isabelle's murmurings, and her soft, "foreign intonations." (ECC, 108)

Form is not now opposed to content; rather, it is integral to it. In consequence Deleuze's understanding of literature cannot be labeled "formalist" because it does not assent to the fundamental nature of the distinction upon which what we normally call "formalism" has come to be based.

With this caveat in mind, however, one of the most striking aspects of *Essays Critical and Clinical* is how it interrogates the idea of form (or form in relation to expression and content) and creates a new concept, which links form directly to life and becoming. Although Deleuze discusses a number of formal elements in this book, two become especially prominent—the procedure and the formula—and both of these are linked by easy steps to life and becoming. The procedure follows the process, and the process, which might be a trial in the manner of Kafka's *Trial*, is always linked to life as becoming: the process through which things emerge. The formula is linked not only to form, but to formation: a word which in French as in English is closely related to the idea of education or the technical means through which a subject is trained to enter into the social formations with which he or she will be asked to engage.

In the second essay in the collection, "Louis Wolfson: or, The Procedure," Deleuze discusses the nature of the procedure at length in relation to the particular example of an American schizophrenic writer who, through meticulously worked out procedures that translate elements according to specific sets of rules—much like a functional equation—invents a new language, based on French, as a deliberate means of annihilating his mother tongue, English, which oppresses and threatens him. While Deleuze considers that Wolfson's work ultimately fails to escape the conditions of its own imprisonment, and so exists more as a curiosity than literature on its own terms, Wolfson nevertheless allows him to explain the nature of the procedure (*ECC*, 20). Writing can be governed by rules of transformation, and Deleuze points to the work of Roussel and Brisset in France as examples. He does not mention groups such as the Oulipo, or Beckett's procedural works such as *Lessness*, which seem to be formed through algorithmic process, or those contemporary writers who work with computer programs, though it is clear that his analysis here is of great interest to this kind of literary process.¹² What is perhaps more telling is that he claims that the procedure itself haunts all of American literature:

Is this not the schizophrenic vocation of American literature: to make the English language, by means of driftings, deviations, de-taxes or sur-taxes (as opposed to the standard syntax), slip in this manner? . . . Melville invents a foreign language that runs beneath English and carries it off. (*ECC*, 72)

Just as "schizophrenic" and "psychosis" in Deleuze's usage indicate real conditions while, in effect, developing into concepts that float free of these conditions, the idea of "America" at once indicates a real place with a real social and literary history while also developing into a concept of literary production. In this instance "American Literature" refers to the kinds of processes and forms of content and expression developed by writers like Walt Whitman, who recognizes fragments as comprising the conditions of life and draws them into relations that are external to the fragments themselves so as to construct a whole. The same thing might be said of an entire tradition of modernist literature, which understood the fragmentary nature of the social and political and aesthetic orders, as well as the fragmentary nature of experience itself, and developed forms of expression and content to engage with the lived. The American

writing Deleuze affirms emerges in the nineteenth century in response to a history that involves separation from a colonial parent, separation across regions within a federated nation, separation through civil war, and separation of identities as immigrants from all over the world are drawn into proximity in the new nation.

While the dream of creating a whole that would do justice to the American dream has long since been betrayed, the idea of America as that space which might draw free distinct peoples into a whole persists (*ECC*, 60). Today, however, this dream is often turned inside out by anxiety, becoming a nightmare, as ever more virulent animus emerges along lines of fracture, as the conditions that characterized the late nineteenth-century America that pragmatically sought to imagine itself as a whole are now the conditions of everyone everywhere, as the global world simultaneously endeavors to imagine itself as being a whole while acting to reveal itself as composed of apparently irreconcilable fragments.

In "Bartleby, or, the Formula" Deleuze describes the formula as a subcategory of the procedure. That is, the formula Melville develops in *Bartleby*—"I would prefer not to"—functions much like the procedure developed by Wolfson in that it attempts to kill the speech act by excluding all alternatives, just as Wolfson attempts to destroy the maternal tongue.¹³ Yet there seems to be something more involved with Deleuze's choice of the term "formula" to designate a short phrase, that might be an aphorism, and that might either be repeated frequently within the text, as with the formula in *Bartleby*, or might only occur once but emerge as a phrase that will often be repeated and quoted as is the case with the four formulas Deleuze discusses in "On Four Poetic Formulas That Might Summarize the Kantian Philosophy" (*ECC*, 27–35). As I have suggested above, the formula here involves a process of thinking from which an idea might emerge rather than the idea itself, a leading to thought, a becoming of thought.

In the essay on Kant in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, the formulas themselves refer to form: time, which is "out of joint" in Shakespeare's formula, is revealed, through this phrase and through Kant's work, to be paradoxically "the immutable form of change and movement" (*ECC*, 29). The self, which is other to itself, in Rimbaud's formula, reveals in turn the paradoxical nature of the form of the subject in relation to time and space in Kant: "time as an immutable form . . . appears as the form of interiority (inner sense), whereas space . . . appears for its part as the form of exteriority, the formal possibility of being affected by something else" (*ECC*, 31). The law of which one remains ignorant, which circumscribes one's being and freedom, in Kafka's formula, reveals that the law is in effect defined as "the pure form of universality"; that is, for Kant any maxim which logically pertains in all cases, or universally, is moral. The fourth formula, again from Rimbaud, talks of reaching what is unknown through a systematic disorganization (or derangement) of all the senses. Here Deleuze shows how, in the *Critique of Judgement*, the various subjective faculties Kant defines (outer sense, inner sense, the imagination, the understanding, reason) are no longer ordered by a dominant faculty as had been the case in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (where understanding was dominant) or the *Critique of Practical Reason* (where reason was dominant). Now none are dominant, so that "the various faculties mutually produce the most remote harmonics in each other, so that they form essentially dissonant accords" (*ECC*, 35).

In the first three formulas form is integral: to time; to the kind of subject that emerges; and to the idea of a universal moral law. In the fourth what is unknown, an unexpected meaning emerges through processes of relation across fragments: a whole emerges through a form of becoming that is not itself a fixed form. Its power emanates from resonances that only exist because there is movement between the various faculties. The kind of form Deleuze finds in literature, then, is anything but static: it involves becoming, process.

The power of works of literature to develop a process of thinking is explored in particular instances in a number of essays in *Essays Critical and Clinical*. “The Greatest Irish Film (Beckett’s ‘Film’)” stages a process of thinking. In *Cinema 1*, Deleuze identifies three main kinds of cinematographic images: the action image (long shot), the perception image (medium shot), and the affection image (close up).¹⁴ Here Deleuze offers a reading of Beckett’s *Film* similar to that developed in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, but in *Cinema 1* he focuses on the manner in which Beckett exhausts the three images listed above, drawing the reading of Beckett’s *Film* into relation with concepts of these three cinematographic images. Yet the reading of *Film* offered in *Essays Critical and Clinical* allows us to understand how thinking in literature involves movement or process. Beckett makes use of Berkeley’s conceptual proposition that *esse est percipi* (to be is to be perceived) “for dramatic convenience.”¹⁵ It becomes “dramatic” because the concept is mobilized, becoming a formula. Whereas *Cinema 1* emphasizes what Beckett’s *Film* has to say about the cinematographic form (one of the points of focus of the work as the title *Film* indicates), the essay in *Essays Critical and Clinical* points us toward the form of thought or perception: the “thin transparent film” that separates being from perception.¹⁶

“Nietzsche and Saint Paul, Lawrence and John of Patmos” demonstrates how literary form (mobilized here by a philosopher and a writer of fiction in long essays) works through bringing back into relation ideas that have become static. Nietzsche seeks to re-engage with the doxa that had come to harden around the ideas of Saint Paul, forcing them back into relation with the teachings of Christ they had come to (mis)represent, and Lawrence extends this project by drawing the Book of Revelations back into relation with Christ’s teachings. The movement engendered acts like acid in attacking the hardened ideas that surround the training set out by Saint Paul (that affirms judgment in place of Christ’s open love) and John of Patmos (that further fixes the power of judgment in place over the power of love).¹⁷ In bringing the ideas of Christ back into relation with dogma, the process of living is now reaffirmed over hardened belief and eternal judgment:

Christ invented a religion of love (a practice, a way of living and not a belief), whereas the Apocalypse brings a religion of Power [*Pouvoir*]*—*a belief, a terrible manner of *judging*. Instead of the gift of Christ, the infinite debt. (*ECC*, 36)

The same theme re-emerges later in Deleuze’s book in “To Have Done with Judgment” (*ECC*, 126–35). Here justice is opposed to judgment. The former involves the “process,” even when this process is harrowing, as in Kafka’s story “The Penal Colony” with its

harrowing machine that writes on the body of the victim/accused, or Artaud's theater of cruelty that asserts the creative potential of life lived by recognizing rather than effacing its horrific potentials. It is not as if some benign order might emerge that kills all unpleasantness. Instead, suffering is understood as part of the process of living:

The system of cruelty expresses the finite relations of the existing body with the forces that affect it, whereas the doctrine of infinite debt determines the relationships of the immortal soul with judgments. The system of cruelty is everywhere opposed to the doctrine of judgment. (*ECC*, 128)

Such ideas do not allow us to rest easy; rather, they provoke us and make us think, they force us out of complacency and require us to re-engage with the nature of living. It is not as if we are being asked to accept an idea. The theater of cruelty is a process of thinking, the expression of life, "how it is" (to use Beckett's phrase). It does not claim to understand life; rather, it enters into relation with it. The same process is expressed in the reading of T. E. Lawrence in "The Shame and the Glory: T. E. Lawrence."

The English edition of *Essays Critical and Clinical* ends with the appended essay on Beckett's TV Plays, "The Exhausted." As mentioned above, I feel that the addition of this essay partially occludes the form of the whole that is conveyed in the French edition of the book. Yet "The Exhausted" is a major essay and allows us to witness the processes through which Deleuze himself thinks with literature. This involves a process of extraction, where ideas emerge from the works themselves: either as formulas, as in *Bartleby's* "I would prefer not to" or Artaud's "pour en finir avec le jugement de Dieu"; or as processes, as in Beckett's process of exhaustion or the process of shame Deleuze identifies in T. E. Lawrence's *The Mint*, which is drawn into relation with the process of glory in his other work *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. In "The Exhausted" Deleuze exemplifies how a process that drives and haunts the work of a given writer might be identified and extracted. Once extracted it can be mobilized as a hybrid type of thinking between the concept and the affect, the concept and the percept, what Deleuze and Guattari call "concepts of sensations" and "sensations of concepts" in *What is Philosophy?*. In this way literature and philosophy enter into relation and act upon us, drawing us back into contact with the process of living.

I will try and put this another way, in an effort to tease out some of the relations involved. The method Deleuze adopts in "The Exhausted" are typical of his method of thinking with literature: he takes seriously that writers of fiction can discover or formulate particular kinds of ideas. These are ideas that are mixed with affects. Spinoza understands affects as occurring because we have been in some way changed: we feel this change as an emotion or sensation and we say, in everyday language, that we have been affected by what we have read. Yet these affects can also be linked with ideas or concepts, and these concepts have a different kind of power (the power to alter how we think). In this way there is a direct engagement between the process of thinking through literature (and philosophy) and the process of living itself, the processes of our own lives. Life itself involves ongoing processes of change, but literature (and philosophy) allows us to enter into understandings of life that not only reflect upon it,

but also affect our experience of it directly by creating means with which to understand how we feel and how we think. We extract these understandings for ourselves when we sense we have understood a work of literature, something which involves both feeling the work and getting the strong sense that we need to think about it, whether we do that systematically or unsystematically. Spinoza argues that we feel the affect of joy when our power increases and sadness when our power decreases (see *Ethics*, Part III). Powerful works of literature offer understanding or insight into the nature of life and this is pleasurable because it has added to our capacity: that is, reading is an active process, one that enters into and inflects the processes that correspond to our own lives.

Notes

- 1 Gilles Deleuze, *Critique et Clinique* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1993).
- 2 Deleuze, *Negotiations*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 142.
- 3 Daniel W. Smith, "Introduction 'A Life of Pure Immanence': Deleuze's 'Critique et Clinique' Project," in Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. D. W. Smith and M. A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 175n6.
- 4 I reworked my translation in correspondence with Smith and Greco to bring the style into line with the other translations in the collection *Essays Critical and Clinical*, and it is the only essay in the collection they do not translate. Gilles Deleuze, "The Exhausted," trans. Anthony Uhlmann, *SubStance* 24.3, Issue 78 (1995): 3–28.
- 5 Samuel Beckett and Deleuze, *Quad et Autres pieces pour la television suivi de "L'Epuisé"* (Paris: Minuit, 1992).
- 6 Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. D. W. Smith and M. A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).
- 7 Smith, "Introduction," xi–lxi. For a reading of symptomatology in the context of Psychoanalysis see Tomas Geyskens, "Literature as Symptomatology: Gilles Deleuze on Sacher-Masoch," in *Deleuze and Psychoanalysis: Philosophical Essays on Deleuze's Debate with Psychoanalysis*, ed. Leen De Bolle (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 2010), 103–15.
- 8 For an introduction see Nicholas Rescher, *Process Metaphysics: An Introduction to Process Philosophy* (New York: SUNY Press, 1996).
- 9 Deleuze, *ECC*, 5. For useful readings of Deleuze's concept of style see Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Literature* (London: Routledge, 2003), 153–86; John Hughes, "Deleuze, Style and Literature," *Literature Interpretation Theory* 21.4 (October–December 2010): 269–84; Tom Conley, "From Multiplicities to Folds: On Style and Form in Deleuze," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 96.3 (Summer 1997): 629–46; and Charles J. Stivale, "Deleuze, 'L'entre-deux,' and Literary Style," *The Journal of Twentieth Century Contemporary French Studies* 6.2 (Fall 2002): 402–13.
- 10 Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

- 11 Benedictus de Spinoza, *Ethics*, in *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, trans. Edwin M. Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).
- 12 See J. M. Coetzee, "Samuel Beckett's Lessness: An exercise in decomposition," *Computers and the Humanities* 7.4 (March 1973): 195–8.
- 13 Ibid., 73. For a detailed reading of this particular essay and the readings Deleuze and Derrida offer of Bartleby's formula see Gregg Lambert, *In Search of a New Image of Thought: Gilles Deleuze and Philosophical Expressionism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 115–54.
- 14 Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).
- 15 Beckett, *The Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber, 1990), 323.
- 16 I offer a more detailed reading of this points in Anthony Uhlmann, *Samuel Beckett and the Philosophical Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 114–28.
- 17 For a detailed reading of Deleuze's reading of Lawrence's *Apocalypse* see Mary Bryden, "Nietzsche's Arrow: Deleuze on D. H. Lawrence's *Apocalypse*," in *Deleuze and Religion*, ed. M. Bryden (London: Routledge, 2001).

Part Two

Deleuze and Aesthetics

“A strange respect for the individual”: Gilles Deleuze and Hardy the Novelist

John Hughes

In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari referred to *The Return of the Native*: “[N]ot the perception of the moor in Hardy, but the moor as percept.” The aim of “a great novelist,” they said, is not to represent a world or a character but to invent and convey “unknown or unrecognized affects and [bring] them to light as the becoming of his characters.”¹ Throughout the novel, Eustacia inhabits the heath as its transformative milieu, perpetually departing from herself and forgetting her place, her truant desire waiting on its occasions. In *Dialogues II*, Deleuze refers to the novel’s heath world, while describing Thomas Hardy as a novelist who possessed a “strange respect for the individual,” his characters existing not as “people or subjects,” but experimentally, as “collections of intensive sensations.”² One can think of our first sighting of the unnamed Eustacia, in Chapter 6. Mysterious, intent, and solitary amidst the gathering nocturnal darkness of the wind-blown heath, she is a figure of passionate readiness, less an identifiable person than an obscure respondent, or “a bloc of variable sensations” (30):

Her reason for standing so still as the pivot of this circle of heath-country was just as obscure. . . . It might reasonably have been supposed that she was listening to the wind, which rose somewhat as the night advanced, and laid hold of the attention.³

And the narrator’s own dislocated inspiration is discernible above in his vigilant stance. He waits on her, transfixed and ruminative, while everything hangs in the balance in this crepuscular world suffused by the untimely, the virtual, the eventual.

In such respects, Hardy (for Deleuze) is one of the earliest of those modern, Anglo-American writers who open the novel to an empiricist and paratactic practice of the unrecognizable, through displacement and rupture: “In them everything is departure, becoming, passage, leap, daemon, relationship with the outside” (*DII*, 27). This chapter primarily explores different interconnecting aspects of Deleuze’s insight that Hardy’s writing is identifiable with individuation and an empiricist experimentation. The generative values of Hardy’s fiction perpetually unfold the lives of his characters according to a volatile power of expressive self-difference at odds with the centripetal

logic of subjectivity. In Hardy there is the perpetual sense that the self—for narrator, reader, and the character—is coming off its hinges, as the writing turns on its singular, unforeseen encounters, on adventures of passion and sensation. Further, from the first, Hardy's narrative is crucially open to the intermissions of a "becoming-woman" that Deleuze and Guattari associate with "English novel writing," and as having "spared no man": their words produce "atoms of womanhood capable of crossing and impregnating an entire social field, and of contaminating men, of sweeping them up in that becoming."⁴ So (like so many of Hardy's heroines) Eustacia—the *arriviste* in the society of the heath—is outwardly associated with the incursions of the modern world. Inwardly though, she simultaneously transmits this irruptive "becoming-woman" that is always operative as a deterritorializing principle of Hardy's narration, and a fundamental component of its modernity.

The discussion that follows also tracks how influential were these experimental features of Hardy's writing for later modernists. D. H. Lawrence's career was in important respects a reaction to his perception of how, in Hardy's work, "even the apparently wishy-washy heroines" of the "earlier books" have "a real, vital, potential self": "and this self suddenly bursts the shell of manner and convention and commonplace opinion, and acts independently, absurdly, without mental knowledge or acquiescence. And from such an outburst the tragedy usually develops."⁵ Hence too the repeated pattern in Hardy's novels, as their worlds become disrupted by a socially transgressive male infatuation with a woman, often an interloper, who refuses to be fixed, and who embodies a discombobulating, often tragic, power of self-difference. Perpetually, these women bear out Deleuze's claim that "[i]ndividuality is not a characteristic of the Self, but on the contrary, forms and sustains the system of the dissolved self."⁶ So, in *Desperate Remedies*, the heroine Cytherea—the first of those "apparently wishy-washy heroines"—is continually drawing the novel into a "becoming-woman" out of which such individuation occurs. One thinks of the extraordinarily unfettered, if incipient, lesbian tenderness and eroticism of the nighttime scene between Cytherea and Miss Aldclyffe; or the virtuoso passage where Aeneas Manston improvises on his organ for her while the chaotic storm outside amplifies the poetry and passion of the scene:

The varying strains—now loud, now soft; simple, complicated, weird, touching grand, boisterous, subdued; each phrase distinct, yet modulating into the next with a graceful and easy flow—shook and bent her to themselves, as a gushing brook shakes and bends a shadow cast across its surface. The power of the music did not show itself so much by attracting her attention to the subject of the piece, as by taking up and developing as its libretto the poem of her life and soul, shifting her deeds and intentions from the judgement and holding them in its own . . .

She found herself involuntarily shrinking up beside him, and looking with parted lips at his face.

He turned his eyes and saw her emotion, which greatly increased the ideal element in her expressive face.⁷

"Becoming-woman" is evident here not as a passion that emanates from Cytherea but as an affect that transcends her, prising open the subjectivity of narrator and reader as well as her own. Everything is self-forgetful response in this musical storm: the syntax divides and dilates, its rhythmical modulations and braidings conveying how musical extemporization has become the means of a transpersonal becoming that irresistibly summons Cytherea and reveals "involuntarily" the "ideal element" in her "expressive face." The passage reveals the kind of quasi-musical, dynamic compounding of masculinity and femininity that Lawrence identified in his study of Hardy: "Ever there is more and more vibration, movement, and less and less stability, centralization" (67). These words also bring to mind Deleuze and Guattari's words on the refrain: "there is no form or correct structure imposed from without or above but rather an articulation from within, as if oscillating molecules, oscillators, passed from one heterogeneous center to another" (*ATP*, 328).⁸

In comparable terms, other modernist novelists like Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, and John Cowper Powys acknowledged Hardy as their great precursor. Woolf, like Lawrence, wrote at length of the affects that Hardy inspired in her, suggesting how far her own becoming as a writer was precipitated out of her encounter with his texts. And for both authors, it was some notion of individuation, as a mysterious resource, traversing Hardy's conscious designs that was key.⁹ Hence Woolf suggests that there was always in Hardy's texts an awareness that was more than conscious and that produced "a little blur of consciousness, that halo of freshness and margin of the unexpressed" (248). These intimations of vitality and virtuality are identifiable both with the reader's pleasure and with the affective dynamism of the characters: "Even if it were in their power to analyse their emotions, life is too stirring to give them time" (253). In a similar vein, Lawrence wrote in a letter that the impetus of his long *Study of Thomas Hardy* was to pursue the catalytic power of Hardy's capacity to register the human in terms of nonhuman powers of life: "that which is physic—non-human, in humanity, is more interesting to me than the old-fashioned human element."¹⁰ Lawrence's study of Hardy is a meditation on this, and the ways Hardy's writing harnessed unconscious powers at odds with what he called Hardy's tragic "metaphysic." Lawrence evokes the unaccountable, unbidden futurity of Hardy's world, its seemingly involuntary power to open itself to yet unseen forces. In Hardy, Lawrence would write in the *Study*, almost "nowhere . . . is there the slightest development of personal action in the characters: it is all explosive" (20).

For Woolf, similarly, what distinguishes Hardy is that he "can create characters but cannot control them" (246). They exhibit a combination of emergence and emergency: of "passions" that transport them, and "sudden" and "overwhelming catastrophes that overtake them" (247). Hardy himself too is an "unconscious" writer, who is "not quite aware" of what he does, whose gifts "do not consent to run together easily in harness" and who is perpetually "taken by surprise," appearing "suddenly and without [his] own consent to be lifted up and swept onwards":

His own word, "moments of vision" exactly describes those passages of astonishing beauty and force which are to be found in every book that he wrote. With a sudden

quickenings of power which we cannot foretell, nor he, it seems, control, a single scene breaks off from the rest. (247–8)

Further, to talk of Hardy's modernity in terms of these operative ratios of disconnection and emergence is clearly to talk of his style, and the dissociative praxis by which his writing perpetually dislocates conventional Victorian novelistic forms of expression and content, and the fictive, abstract, armature of normative subjectivity.

For Proust's Marcel (in the passage that ends this section), Hardy's style (so often denigrated as cumbersome and uneven) reveals the ideal commonality of a medium in which contingency and the empirical are at once accommodated and transcended. Deleuze explicates its philosophical, individuating aspects:

For example, in Thomas Hardy, the blocks of stone, the geometry of these blocks, and the parallelism of their lines forms a spiritualized substance from which these words themselves derive their arrangement. . . . Art is a veritable transmutation of substance. . . . As the quality of a world, essence is never to be confused with an object but on the contrary brings together two quite different objects, concerning which we in fact perceive that they have this quality in the revealing medium. (DII, 31)

Hardy refracts and transmutes what is obdurately separate in lived experience into the spiritual arrangements, the inclusive disjunctions, of a unique style, unfolding a wholly original universe through art. In *Proust and Signs* Deleuze describes this manifestation of the Hardeyan essence "[a]s the quality of a world [where] essence is never to be confused with an object but on the contrary brings together two quite different objects, concerning which we in fact perceive that they have this quality in the revealing medium."¹¹ In *The Well-Beloved*, the most Proustian of Hardy's novels, this unity in disjunction takes the lived form of wrenching irony, as sculptor Jocelyn Pierston explicitly and involuntarily pursues what he comes to acknowledge as the same ideal essence of woman through three separate incarnations, across three generations of the same family. For Marcel, this pattern of desire is an epitome of the Hardeyan essence:

I explained to Albertine that the great men of letters have never created more than a single work, or rather have never done more than refract through various media an identical beauty which they bring into the world. . . . I returned to Thomas Hardy. "Do you remember the stonemasons in *Jude the Obscure*, and in *The Well-Beloved* the blocks of stone which the father hews out of the island coming in boats to be piled up in the son's work-shop where they are turned into statues; and in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* the parallelism of the tombs, and also the parallel line of the boat and the nearby railway coaches containing the lovers and the dead woman; and the parallel between *The Well-Beloved*, where the man loves three women, and *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, where the woman loves three men, and in short all those novels which can be superimposed on one another like the houses piled up vertically on the rocky soil of the island. . . ."¹²

I

Hardy described Tess Durbeyfield, in a Deleuzian phrase, as a “sheaf of susceptibilities,” and nothing distinguishes the novelist’s writing more than its pervading sense of a decentered world in which the personal and human are held in abeyance, while the mind, sprung open, discovers itself through the micrologic of its disjoined encounters of sensation, impression, and affect; and through the incidental, contemplative recoil of its articulations. Woolf quotes a phrase from *Under the Greenwood Tree* that conveys this sense of the mind’s physical condition in Hardy, a typical example of how his prose raises to expression a passing and subliminal impression. Her implication is that no other author could have written it:

And yet what kindly lover of antiquity, what naturalist with a microscope in his pocket, what scholar solicitous for the changing shapes of language, ever heard the cry of a small bird killed in the next wood by an owl with such intensity? The cry “passed into the silence without mingling with it.” (246–7)

This description of a cry passing into silence without mingling with it can also be taken as an index of a sensibility for which everything stands apart (or in parallel perhaps, in Marcel’s terms), according to an empiricist conception of external relations.¹³ Equally, empiricism is inscribed in the paratactic dimensions of Hardy’s style, in sentences that are dynamically discovering themselves in what they uncover, whether for good or ill, and forgetful of conventional notions of good composition.

Affectively, this excursive dynamism is evident in the ways the narrative is itself a vehicle for involuntary responses and affects. As Lawrence and Woolf suggest, the self in Hardy is always breaking with precedent, forging new sympathetic connections. Early in *A Loadicean* the hero George Somerset observes Paula Power (daughter of her industrialist father) refusing baptism. He is drawn to her by an unconscious affective divination that passes as a fluctuating relay of feeling, sensation, and observation between narrator, reader, and character.

She approached the edge, looked into the water, and turned away shaking her head. Somerset could for the first time see her face. Though humanly imperfect, as is every face we see, it was one which made him think that the best in woman-kind no less than the best in psalm-tunes had gone over to the Dissenters. He had certainly seen nobody so interesting in his tour hitherto; she was about twenty or twenty-one—perhaps twenty-three, for years have a way of stealing marches even upon beauty’s anointed. The total dissimilarity between the expression of her lineaments and that of the countenances around her was not a little surprising, and was productive of hypotheses without measure as to how she came there. She was, in fact, emphatically a modern type of maidenhood, and she looked ultra-modern by reason of her environment: a presumably sophisticated being among the simple ones—not wickedly so, but one who knew life fairly well for her age.¹⁴

Intelligence is identified here with the refusal of imposed clichés and with a ruminative exactitude that embraces inconclusiveness. George and the narrator take Paula as a problem, and muse on “how she came there,” and George is interested and attracted to her, as she turns from self-dedication, because he finds his own uncertainties and willful autonomy, as well as his openness to modernity, echoed in her own as it occasions his “sudden intuitive sympathy” (16).

Like Eustacia, Paula is the wild card in the novel’s deck, intriguing, obscure, and unpredictable. Like Elfride in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, too, which so mesmerized Proust, each woman incarnates “a world that excludes” those she intrigues (*PS*, 6). She stands outside Hardy’s awareness of her, the presiding spirit of her novel. She conducts a contagious power of self-difference through such scenes and releases the nonpersonal, deterritorializing fluxes of passion and becoming that course through the text: “Tales must contain haecceities that are not simply emplacements, but concrete individuations that have a status of their own and direct the metamorphosis of things and subjects” (*ATP*, 261).

If Deleuze uses the word “strange” for Hardy’s expression of individuality it is perhaps in part because the narrator appears in this way himself as unconsciously and involuntarily under the sway of this individuality—as beside and estranged from himself—as are his characters. However, the experimental aspect of each novel also corresponds to the dissimilarities and singularity of each woman. So in *A Laodicean*, the writing opens itself to the incursions of a destabilizing modernity associated with Paula’s independence from her society. In *The Return of the Native*, though, it is Eustacia’s erotic susceptibility that initiates the action, continually leading her to forget herself and her position.

The empirical and experimental aspects of Hardy’s writing, then, are a matter of novelistic sensibility, as Hardy traces such convulsive intervals and metamorphoses with an attention that endlessly divides within itself, becoming a bristling open multiplicity. Within his style, the various faculties of mind—the erotic, the sympathetic, the visual, the philosophic—are mutually oblivious, yet equally engrossed. They stand alongside and succeed each other in the writing, according to the logic of separate and parallel coexistence that Marcel identified with Hardy’s universe. As such, the different faculties resemble the strange disjointed relay of watchers out in the open that repeats itself throughout his fiction: in the woods in *The Woodlanders*, on the heath in *The Return of the Native*, or at the close of *Desperate Remedies* or *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. Such scenes reveal a characteristic signature of Hardy’s own individuality, imbued with reflexive intimation as they enact and dramatize the operations of a mind which functions as a sensitized and diversified register of what passes outside the centripetal functions of rational subjectivity.

Deleuze’s comments on Hardy have important implications for considering the relations of such immanence and the larger construction of narrative. As Eustacia continually loses and finds herself amidst the obscurity of the heath, so the modernity of Hardy’s writing is a matter of its “heath-becoming”: “[I]t is not that the heath is the subject or the content of the novel, but that a flux of modern writing combines

with a flux of immemorial heath. A heath-becoming" (*DII*, 38). Deleuze likens the individuations that take place on the heath to a game of chance:

[Hardy] saw himself and saw others as so many "unique chances"—the unique chance from which one combination or another had been drawn. Individuation without a subject. And these packets of sensation in the raw, these collections or combinations, run along the lines of chance, or mischance, where their encounters take place—if need be, their bad encounters which lead to death, to murder. Hardy invokes a sort of Greek destiny for this empiricist experimental world. Individuals, packets of sensations, run over the heath like a line of flight or a line of deterritorialization of the earth. (*DII*, 30)

One thinks also of the dice-throwing that the reddleman Venn challenges Wildevve to on the heath, with selfless intentions, but fateful consequences. And from such chances, Hardy's narrative draws its consequences, its lines of flight often tragically unsustainable and fatal. Lawrence came to similar conclusions, figuring the heath as the locus of "primitive, primal earth, where the instinctive life heaves up," and as "the deep, black source," indifferent to "the purpose of man" from "whence all these little contents of lives are drawn" (172–3). So, in Chapter 3 of Book Four Eustacia dances with former lover, Damon Wildevve on the heath. Though both are now married, their former illicit passion is headily reignited:

Thus, for different reasons, what was to the rest an exhilarating movement was to these two a riding upon the whirlwind. The dance had come like an irresistible attack upon whatever sense of social order there was in their minds. (284)

Eustacia's story shapes itself ultimately as tragic because her desire is unsustainable within the social world of the novel, and collapses into mere fantasies of escape and transcendence. The infinite materiality of the heath endlessly solicits her passion and excursive self-expression, but it also fatally resists her, since her ecstatic meetings with Clym or Wildevve cannot be translated into lived experience. So, she falls back into the black hole of her subjectivity, disastrously reterritorializing her passion, and misconstruing it in romantic dreams of Paris and Budmouth. By a characteristically Hardeyan irony, these lead to her eventual death as she drowns mysteriously in Shadwater weir at night, in the chapter ominously entitled "Sights and Sounds Draw the Wanderers Together."

A comparison would be with the world of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, where the prolonged idyll of Tess and Angel's romance ultimately discovers that it has no place in the social world of the novel. But again, the affective and tonal world of the novel is so different. Consider, for instance, the contrast between the dancing scene on the heath, and the comparable scene where we first see Tess at the dance on the green. Like Marcel's Albertine, she emerges from a band of girls, "dressed in white gowns":

A young member of the band turned her head at the exclamation. She was a fine and handsome girl—not handsomer than some others, possibly—but her mobile

peony mouth and large innocent eyes added eloquence to colour and shape. She wore a red ribbon in her hair, and was the only one of the white company who could boast of such a pronounced adornment.¹⁵

Tess's "mobile peony mouth" and eloquent eyes as she turns her head betray the unconscious susceptibility that will in turn betray her (since it will occasion the tragic, ironically divergent, passions of Angel and Alec: the one all romantic idealization, the other all violent, invasive desire). Tess is at the mercy of an ardor that occasions an intent yet watchful sympathy on the part of the narrator. It is utterly divergent from the imaginative relation to Eustacia, where the narrator is at a fascinated remove, always waiting on her capacity to reveal herself and conjure some new self-departure from a scene. In each case, though, the woman's fate appears obscurely implicit as a capacity for relation: for Tess, the "pure woman," it is a function of the designs she cannot help but inspire in others, while for Eustacia, it is a function of the desires others will inspire in her.

In such ways, Hardy's novels differ from each other, and one might consider how other dance scenes in other books similarly reveal the qualitative, stylistic, and affective differences, and the painful discordances internal to a novel's world: the incongruous pastoral comedy of the scene in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, where Fancy Day and Dick Dewy dance; the bizarre social comedy of the two distinct social worlds dancing a floor apart in *The Hand of Ethelberta*; the tragic, mortifying humiliations of the dances organized by Michael Henchard in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* or by Giles Winterborne in *The Woodlanders*. . . . Or again, one might examine how Hardy's books unfold differently from their first page, from those celebrated opening scenes that are characteristically imbued with a sense of the virtual. Commonly, the narrator suspends identification, alert to the intimations of place, detail, gesture, while there is a sense of imminence and immanence, of everything hanging in the balance, of a narrative in the becoming. For Hardy's narrator, as much as the reader, the effect is of everything held *in potentia* and yet to shape itself. The scenes reverberate with an ominous eloquence yet to be construed: a man and his wife walk in combustible, sullen silence along a dusty road; a schoolmaster leaves the village, in a scene invested with uncertainty and deracination; an elderly man with a stick stands on a now deserted, forlorn woodland highway on a winter evening; a young urban sculptor climbs a steep peninsula road to a lonely island, dazzling and white in the midday sun. . . .

In such ways, Hardy construes mind as a dynamic power of individuation, expressed through adventures of sympathy and sensation, rather than through any logically inviolable rational core of mind and identity. His inspiration appears at the bidding of exteriorized, dislocated powers of observation and response, and at odds with rationality, custom, or novelistic precept. It creates experimental passages out of suspense and surprise, his modernity a function of this sensitivity that breaks into the recognizable, occupying an interval of obscurity and shaping consciousness and narrative from the middle of things. To take the model of individuation that Deleuze cites from Simondon as an analogy, it is as if Hardy were observing the still indeterminate elements of a crystalline solution just prior to the effect of the seed crystal (*ATP*, 408).

Certainly, Hardy himself often referred to his own lack of premeditation as he waited on the individuality of his characters to announce itself, as in comments relayed by publisher Richard Bowker:

But soon the characters take possession of him and of the story . . . for this reason he never plots the final development, the latter half, of a novel, but lets the *dramatis personae* finish it for themselves and literally work out their own salvation or the contrary.¹⁶

In a similar vein, even at the end of his career he could remark about the plot of *Jude*—in a letter to Edmund Gosse of 10 November 1895—that “I ought not to say *constructed*, for, beyond a certain point, the characters necessitated it, & I simply let it come.”¹⁷

II

Hardy's first novel, *The Poor Man and The Lady*, written in 1867, was turned down by publisher Alexander Macmillan on the basis that its unbridled, ardent radicalism, and socially subversive romance, “meant mischief.” Hardy himself later confessed the book's intent to be “socialistic, not to say revolutionary.”¹⁸ The manuscript does not survive, but it was followed by *Desperate Remedies*—a much-neglected novel designed to conform to the highly marketable “sensation” genre. However, the book was in fact no less subversive, since Hardy's wayward, insurgent, and physically conditioned imagination continually eclipses his more conscious designs, and overturns nineteenth-century novelistic notions of subjectivity and good form. John Bayley identified a constitutive kind of “instability” in Hardy's texts from the first, and *Desperate Remedies* is certainly one of the most unstable of all (Bayley, 12). It is also the first of what are often categorized by Hardy critics as the “minor” novels: those often astonishingly speculative or eccentric texts which have long confounded Hardy's critics because so unmindful of the responsibilities of nineteenth-century realism—texts like *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, *The Hand of Ethelberta*, *A Laodicean*, *Two on a Tower*, *The Trumpet-Major*, or *The Well-Beloved*.

Critics have reacted by neglecting this minor tradition within Hardy's own *corpus*, and Hardy himself recognized the tension, categorizing the “major novels” under the heading “Novels of Character and Environment” (a title which aspires to objectivity), and somewhat apologetically sidelining the others as “Romances and Fantasies” or “Novels of Ingenuity.” Certainly, within the minor novels, the plot machinery nearly always appears an incongruous imposition: as in the outlandish, preposterous plotting of *Desperate Remedies* or *A Laodicean*, or in the grotesque and rigidifying ironies of *The Hand of Ethelberta* or *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. Yet, in fact nowhere is the “strange” logic of individuation and modernity more fully and variously manifested than in these “minor” texts. They contain many of the most beautiful, unbridled, and compelling passages in Hardy's work, the writing consumed by the fugitive affects and percepts of characters in flight from those constraining social principle and contexts

that provide the often tragic determinants for plot and drama in the “major” novels. Further, the critic’s avoidance of these texts betrays a deeper crux—that this secondary experimental tradition is inextricably interwoven with the “major” texts for which Hardy is celebrated. The two types of novel alternate throughout Hardy’s career, in a telling syncopation of forgetful inspiration and conscious ambition that replicates that constitutive divorce perpetually registered in the drama and texture of the writing itself—between the centrifugal breakouts of desire and the centripetal returnings of ruminative, social consciousness. If Hardy provided later writers with an excursive sense of modernity and new directions, then, one can say it is because he is perpetually escaping from himself in these ways: both within texts and between them.

As this implies, subjectivity within Hardy’s texts, as a social or philosophical fiction of identity, is always belated, and throughout his career his novels can be seen to produce reflexive self-awareness as a passing effect, rather than as a controlling, prior instance. Such moments appear all the more powerful for the narrator himself because they appear to emerge involuntarily from the texture of the writing itself, as figurative potentials of self-contemplation secreted through the texts, and hovering over them. In *Desperate Remedies*, for instance, we can note how the instability to which Bayley referred threatens from the first to become a fatal kind of imbalance. Cytherea is introduced to us in terms of her capacity for motion and balance, in syntax that itself betrays its own capacity for modulation, rhythmic adjustment, and “motion within motion”:

Indeed, motion was her specialty, whether shown on its most extended scale of bodily progression, or minutely, as in the uplifting of her eyelids, the bending of her fingers, the pouting of her lip. The carriage of her head—motion within motion—a glide upon a glide—was as delicate as that of a magnetic needle. And this flexibility and elasticity had never been taught her by rule, nor even been acquired by observation, but, *nullo cultu*, had naturally developed itself with her years. In childhood, a stone or stalk in the way, which had been the inevitable occasion of a fall to her playmates, had usually left her safe and upright on her feet after the narrowest escape by oscillations and whirls for the preservation of her balance. (7)

In the scene that follows, she listens to a mediocre reading of Shakespeare in a provincial town hall while observing her architect father through a window, as he topples and falls to his death from scaffolding. An audacious scene, it also condenses itself as an allegory of the principles of Hardy’s writing: it is at once endlessly animated, agile, and open in its immersive and mobile moments of “becoming-woman,” yet equally at the same time liable to falling flat, and to bathos or disaster in its neglect of the masculine business of construction. At the same time, one could identify such reflexive moments as a certain kind of “becoming-philosophy” in the work, of emergent self-contemplation generated through material means.

However, in terms of the seeming collapse or neglect of narrative architecture, Hardy’s novels are often denigrated for their crudities, unevenness, and bathos, and

these seem inevitable accompaniments to a writing so dependent on its intermissive inspiration—on what Woolf referred to as his fictional “moments of vision.” When the impetus of individuation is absent, a text can threaten to drift or stutter, to take pause, to circle, to mark time, or otherwise hang in the balance: one thinks of the repeated scenes in *Two on a Tower* where Lady Constantine listlessly approaches the tower before she eventually meets her youthful lover; those bizarrely repeated episodes in *Jude the Obscure* where Jude again confronts Sue framed by a window. Or, one could think of the often grimly overdetermined nature of the novel’s endings. In the minor texts the climaxes of the novels appear particularly perfunctory and dismissive: as when Elfride dies at the end of *A Pair of Blue Eyes*; or when the castle burns down at the end of *A Laodicean*; or when Ethelberta marries Lord Mountclere at the end of *The Hand of Ethelberta*; or when Lady Constantine dies at the end of *Two on a Tower*: “Viviette was dead. The Bishop was avenged.”¹⁹ At such moments Hardy’s narrator appears less to tie up his text than to tear it up and throw it away, and to signal through the death of the character that the conventions of Victorian fiction are now a cruel imposition, as if the plot were an empty shell for a life that has departed.

As Hardy’s career presses to a close, though, his modernist qualities of critique and displacement become the expressive focus of the texts themselves, most unrelentingly and self-excoriatingly in *Jude the Obscure* or *The Well-Beloved*. These texts starkly bear out the dictum that “[t]here is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made” (*ATP*, 4). The alienation of character and narrator become wound round each other, as Jude Fawley and Jocelyn Pierston live out Hardy’s determining, brooding consciousness of a social context where desire is fatally mismatched with convention and circumstance. Events repetitively satirize desire, and experience is structured as a circuit of disappointment. The plots hollow themselves out from within, audaciously piling improbability upon improbability, and shattering the recognizable world of nineteenth-century fiction. Tess’s “ache of modernism” becomes a death agony in *Jude*, the tale of a working-class orphan boy aspiring to live out all the ameliorating syntheses encoded in nineteenth-century fiction, but finding only that his dreams of University and marriage, or of love outside of marriage, are brutally trampled down within the novel’s indifferent world. Jude’s obscurity is a function of his experience of modernity as endless, reiterated displacement within the still-Victorian world of the novel. However, obscurity is also the narrator’s predicament as a novelist at the close of the nineteenth century, inhabiting an impossible interval between times, and able to anticipate modernity only through the untimely repetitions of a Nietzschean “active destruction” that opens the present to the invisible forces of the future.²⁰

Jude is a novel full of reflexive intimations of these complexities, adopting a radical, vertiginous irony as the means of interrogating and displacing conventional novelistic structures of identity. One example is the episode in which Jude, after the breakdown of his first marriage to Arabella, discovers in a broker’s shop a framed photograph of himself that he had given to her on his wedding-day:

The utter death of every tender sentiment in his wife, as brought home to him by this mute and undesigned evidence of her sale of his portrait and gift, was the

conclusive little stroke required to demolish all sentiment in him. He paid the shilling, took the photograph away with him, and burnt it, frame and all, when he reached his lodging.²¹

The incident (itself narratively redundant and interpolated at the end of a chapter) is one of an eviscerating repetition of disillusion, as Jude finds himself bitterly confronting his superseded self-representation. Further, the language also enacts its parallel, reflexive destruction of its own representative schemas. So the endlessly tautological, otiose elaborations of the first sentence (“utter death . . . tender sentiment . . . mute and undersigned . . . portrait and gift . . . conclusive . . . demolish”) mime and hollow-out the evaluative syntax and lexis of Victorian narrative, before this sentence is itself discarded “frame and all” in the brutally reductive statement of the second sentence that then renders it wholly superfluous (“He paid the shilling, took the photograph away with him, and burnt it, frame and all, when he reached his lodging.”).

In such a way, the passage, like many others, reflexively emblemizes, through its use of the *mise-en-abyme*, a novel coming apart at the seams, and obscurely signaling to its own performative destruction of normative novelistic resolutions of identity and marriage. And as *Jude* presses to its close, the novel twists parody around tragedy in an intensifying spiral that leaves the reader in a peculiarly unsettled position, caught up by Jude’s fate in a novel that itself can be said to be no longer recognizable, since its breach with previous modes broaches only a sense that, as Jude says “the time was not ripe for us. Our ideas were fifty years too soon to be any good to us” (422–3). After *Jude Hardy* will abandon novel-writing altogether, but one can equally say that *Jude* is the most abandoned of Hardy’s novels, or even that it is the book in which the novel as a form has abandoned him, leaving him like Jude in an untimely situation of radical obscurity and modernity, a refugee from a time to come. Certainly in manifold ways *Jude* bears out Deleuze’s remark in *Difference and Repetition* that “[t]he conditions of a true critique and a true creation are the same: the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself” (139). Now, with increasing consciousness as he comes to abandon novel-writing altogether, Hardy’s only recourse is to direct his texts explosively, and with brooding self-consciousness, against the stultifying clichés, the generic *formulae*, of novelistic good form. By the end of his career, with texts like *Jude the Obscure* and *The Well-Beloved*, the essentially experimental, proto-modernist principle in Hardy’s fiction manifests itself no longer as an unconscious principle of disjunction, but as a conscious principle of destruction. Fiction has left him nowhere to go, and his practice takes the form of a reflexive ironic repetition—endlessly philosophical in implication—that consumes the texts themselves, and their passing figurations of subjectivity.

III

Hardy’s modernity, and his legacy to the writers who followed him, is identifiable with such expressionist dimensions of his fiction, as it experimentally overturns the norms

of Victorian novelistic representation. In such respects, Hardy's writing, I have been suggesting, can always be seen as innately philosophical, and it is worth emphasizing in this connection his parallel, lifelong interest in philosophical reading. In this connection, it is ironic that Hardy's often-patronized auto-didacticism can blind critics to the authentic freedom, modernity, and independence of his own thinking, and to the values of individuation that are the focus of this discussion, and that make it possible to describe Hardy's affinities with Deleuzian thought. As a kind of compound motto for this, there is a 1910 jotting in *The Life of Thomas Hardy*, his self-ghosted biography, that usefully captures this sense of self-education, expression, reflection, and empiricism: "Let every man make a philosophy out of his own experience."²² In what follows, I briefly chart how Hardy used his philosophical reading to refine and verbalize that fascination—so prevalent in his artistic practice and style—with how thought and individuality are generated from immediate experience, sensation, and affectivity.

Indeed, Hardy's philosophical reading, as referenced in his notebooks, letters, or the *Life*, is a perpetual meditation on such questions, and is full of repeating themes and anticipations of a transcendental empiricism. So, the most central, informing, and long-standing issue for Hardy can be said to be his interest in philosophical enquiries into the nonrational conditions of mind—affective, sentient, material, unconscious In 1873 he transcribed in his notebook Comte's dictum that "[t]hought depends on sensation,"²³ and in his twenties the young Hardy would have read in John Stuart Mill's *Essays on Religion* the following passage that scoped out a materialist and empiricist conception of the physical conditions of mind:

The assertion is that physical nature must have been produced by a will because nothing but will is known to us as having the power of originating the production of phenomena. . . . That nothing can *consciously* produce Mind but Mind is self-evident, being involved in the meaning of the words; but that there cannot be unconscious production cannot be assumed.²⁴

Again, Hardy's lifelong passion for Mill's writing about social progress, ethics, and individual expression was of a piece with a broad and abiding fascination with notions of evolution that can be traced back to his youthful immersion in the scientific or socioeconomic thinking about becoming and evolution in Charles Darwin or Herbert Spencer, and that surfaced late in life in his appreciative response to Bergson's *Creative Evolution*.

Further study could demonstrate also more fully the continuity between this young man, for whom volition and consciousness are belated effects, or epiphenomena, of underlying unconscious forces, and the older one variously gripped by Bergson's vitalism, Nietzsche's ethics and aesthetics, James's pragmatism, Schopenhauer's pre-Freudian metaphysics of the unconscious, or von Hartmann's materialism. Nor is it possible here to do more than merely signal in indicative fashion to the continuities between Hardy's interests and Deleuzian ontology and thought. But Hardy's notebooks are full of careful transcriptions that reveal his assiduous pursuit of an antirationalist

metaphysics, and that explicate issues of the transcendental unconscious and individuation, as indicated here in extracts from (respectively) von Hartmann's *Philosophy of the Unconscious* and Schopenhauer's *Studies in Pessimism*:

All that is *original* and therefore *all that is genuine* in man, acts as such *unconsciously*, like the forces of Nature. What has passed through consciousness has thereby become a representation. Accordingly, *all genuine and sterling* qualities of the *character* and of the mind are originally *unconscious*, and only as such do they make a deep impression.²⁵

Everything that is fundamental in man & therefore genuine, works, as such, unconsciously; in this respect like the power of Nature.²⁶

Again, ideas of pluralism, becoming, and immanence recur time and again, at the levels of the universe itself, and in relation to the self, as in this 1885 note from an article by F. W. H. Myers in the *Fortnightly Review*:

The unity of an individual organism—"a unity aggregated from multiplicity". . . . Does my consciousness testify that I am a single entity? This only means that a stable *cænesthesia* exists in me just now; a sufficient number of my nervous centres are acting in unison. (Björk, vol. 1, 74)

It is important also to emphasize how such cognate preoccupations are ultimately bound together too with Hardy's conception of aesthetic experience, so that one notices oblique affinities, lateral connections, and resonances, as well as explicit, articulated links between his notes on Pater or Ruskin, for instance, and these philosophical themes. Above all, it was style for Hardy, as for Deleuze or Proust, that was the central expressive means for individuation. Increasingly, in his own more mature formulations, art was repeatedly described as a revelation of an original sensibility through the making conscious of response:

what you carry away with you from a scene is the true feature to grasp; in other words, *what appeals to your own individual eye and heart in particular* amid much that does not so appeal, and which you therefore omit to record. (F. E. Hardy, 184)

Finally, then, such remarks and notes indicate how cognate were Hardy's philosophical ruminations with Deleuze's thinking. By his own admission, Hardy's philosophical notes are piecemeal, unsystematic, and provisional, and based on temperament and sensibility rather than philosophical training. Nonetheless, they offer a powerful correlate to the ways in which Hardy's literary work offers an untimely anticipation of the experimental, empiricist thought and "becoming-woman" that Deleuze identifies with the world and modes of Anglo-American literary modernism. Yet again, the philosophical dimensions of Hardy's work and his reading still remain

almost wholly neglected, though one can argue that they are no less significant than the philosophical element in the writers influenced by him. Hence critics have often noted the Bergsonian parallels in Woolf's world, the masochism in Powys, and even the Nietzschean element in Lawrence, while Hardy's work, arguably more far-reaching, attracts few such framings beyond a distracting, time-honored identification of conscious pronouncements in the fiction with pessimistic themes in Schopenhauer. Maybe the time has now come to articulate a Deleuzian or Bergsonian or Spinozist or Nietzschean Hardy, and to recognize that Hardy's influence as thinker and writer can appear all the deeper because its primary vehicle is an imagination that deranges conscious, rational subjectivity and exemplifies an embodied condition of mind. It is a typically Hardeyan irony perhaps that his work should have proved so influential in releasing in the writers that came after him expressive, individuating lines of flight, and nomadic forces of desire while the nature of his own inspiration remains still obscure, still unrecognized in such ways.

Notes

- 1 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. H. Tomlinson and Graham Burchill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 174.
- 2 Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam (London: Continuum, 2002), 30.
- 3 Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1974), 80.
- 4 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone, 1988), 276.
- 5 D. H. Lawrence, "Study of Thomas Hardy," in *Selected Literary Criticism*, ed. Anthony Beal (London: Heinemann, 1973), 167.
- 6 Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Athlone, 1994), 254.
- 7 Hardy, *Desperate Remedies* (London: Penguin, 1995), 155.
- 8 Feminist critics have explored how the women in Hardy—Cytherea, Fancy, Elfride, Bathsheba, Ethelberta, Eustacia, Lucetta, Sue, or anyone else—embody such powers of emergence and dissolution, refusing ever to be resolved by the narrator's words or his world. But it is only recently that critics have begun to emphasize how unremitting is Hardy's interrogation of the intractabilities of Victorian masculinity, and how it is "always articulated within sociocultural contexts, and . . . perilous to negotiate." For a survey of the literature in this area, see Elizabeth Langland, "Hardy and Masculinity," in *Thomas Hardy in Context*, ed. Phillip Mallett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 382.
- 9 Virginia Woolf, "Thomas Hardy's Novels," in *The Common Reader*, second series (London: Hogarth, 1959), 198.
- 10 Cited by Bruce Steele, "Introduction," in *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, ed. Steele (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xxv.
- 11 Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Continuum, 2008), 31.
- 12 Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, vol. 3, trans. C. K. S. Moncrieff, T. Kilmartin, and A. Mayor (London: Penguin, 1989), 382–3.

- 13 John Bayley described Hardy's mind as "stubbornly unsynthesizing" in its refusal to subsume what it describes according to the logic of subjective interiority. See Bayley, *An Essay on Hardy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).
- 14 Hardy, *A Laodicean* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1972), 15.
- 15 Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1974), 41–2.
- 16 Richard Bowker, "Thomas Hardy: The Dorset Novelist," in *Thomas Hardy: Interviews and Recollections*, ed. James Gibson (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 14.
- 17 Hardy, *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, vol. 1, eds. R. L. Purdy and M. Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), 93.
- 18 Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 111.
- 19 Hardy, *Two on a Tower* (Project Gutenberg e-text: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/3146/3146-h/3146-h.htm>).
- 20 Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. H. Tomlinson (London: Athlone, 1983), 70.
- 21 Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1985), 72. I have explored this passage more fully in the chapter on *Jude* in my *Lines of Flight* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), but it usefully condenses the point here.
- 22 F. E. Hardy, *The Life of Thomas Hardy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1975), 310.
- 23 Hardy, *The Literary Notebooks of Thomas Hardy*, vol. 1, ed. L. A. Björk (New York: New York University Press, 1985), 74.
- 24 Cited William R. Rutland, *Thomas Hardy: A Study of his Writings and Their Background*, extract rep. *Thomas Hardy: Critical Assessments*, ed. Graham Clarke (Mountfield: Helm, 1993), 277.
- 25 Eduard von Hartmann, *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, vol. 3, trans. W. C. Coupland (London: Kegan Paul, 1893), 293.
- 26 Hardy, *The Literary Notebooks of Thomas Hardy*, vol. 2, ed. L. A. Björk (New York: New York University Press, 1985), 29.

Entangled in Nature: Deleuze's Modernism, Woolf's Philosophy, and Spinoza's Ethology

Derek Ryan

And what is my own position towards the inner & the outer? I think a kind of ease & dash are good;—yes: I think even externality is good; some combination of them ought to be possible. The idea has come to me that what I want now to do is to saturate every atom. I mean to eliminate all waste, deadness, superfluity: to give the moment whole; whatever it includes. Say that the moment is a combination of thought; sensation; the voice of the sea. Waste, deadness, come from the inclusion of things that dont [*sic*] belong to the moment; this appalling narrative business of the realist: getting on from lunch to dinner: it is false, unreal, merely conventional. Why admit any thing to literature that is not poetry—by which I mean saturated? Is that not my grudge against novel[ist]s—that they select nothing? The poets succeeding by simplifying: practically everything is left out. I want to put practically everything in; yet to saturate. That is what I want to do in *The Moths*. It must include nonsense, fact, sordidity: but made transparent.¹

This diary entry, dated 28 November 1928, offers an early insight into some of the philosophical and aesthetic concerns explored in *The Waves* (1931)—or, as it was initially conceived, “*The Moths*.”² Woolf’s “play-poem” is (D3, 139), along with *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), the most important of her works for Deleuze, and in *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari recognize that its rhythmic interludes and alternating soliloquies articulate this mixing of internal and external worlds, this attempt to combine “thought; sensation; the voice of the sea.” The individuality of the seven main characters, Deleuze and Guattari write, “designates a multiplicity” which includes nonhuman “vibrations” that reverberate throughout the text.³ But Deleuze is not only interested in the product of Woolf’s attempts; he is attentive to the process of her writing. In turning to the above diary entry, he almost finds in the phrase “saturate every atom” a kind of philosophical concept; he and Guattari cite the passage when conceptualizing their worldly assemblages or “haecceities”: “[Woolf] says that it is necessary to ‘saturate every atom,’ . . . to eliminate all that is resemblance and analogy, but also ‘to put everything into it’: eliminate everything that exceeds the moment, but put in everything that it includes” (ATP, 309; see also 363). Before *A Thousand Plateaus*,

Deleuze brought *The Waves* and this diary entry together in his *Dialogues* with Claire Parinet when conceptualizing the molecular movements on the “plane of consistency” that deal less in organized structures and formed subjects and more in “particles definable solely by relationships of movement and rest, speed and slowness.”⁴ What Deleuze describes here, with Woolf, is material-semiotic assemblages, where there are “no longer any elements on one side and syntagms on the other; there are only particles entering into each other’s proximity on the basis of a plane of immanence” (91). Woolf is present, then, in Deleuze’s ontological mappings as well as in his comments on literary aesthetics. Artistic works may, as Deleuze and Guattari argue in *What is Philosophy?*, create percepts and affects rather than concepts, but “art thinks no less than philosophy,” whereby the two “often pass into each other in a becoming that sweeps them both up in an intensity which co-determines them.”⁵ Deleuze recognizes Woolf not as a “high modernist” aesthete, but as a distinctly philosophical writer.

Woolf’s desire to saturate every *atom* is also influenced by her interest in contemporaneous developments in science relating to the new physics, astronomy, and evolutionary theory—all of which profoundly challenged anthropocentric worldviews⁶—and a striking aspect of almost all Deleuze’s references to Woolf and her work is that they point to her concern with a material reality that is entangled with that which is outside the “human” (or the outside of the human), that which does not take a human-centered approach to reality. Even when Woolf appears to be talking about a human concern, there is an understanding from Deleuze that she is also pointing to nonhuman entanglements. This is seen when Deleuze and Guattari refer to Woolf’s discussion of the feminist politics of writing in *A Room of One’s Own* as influencing their “becoming-woman”: “When Virginia Woolf was questioned about a specifically women’s writing she was appalled at the idea of writing ‘as a woman’” (*ATP*, 304; see also *Dialogues*, 32). Deleuze and Guattari may miss some of the subtlety in the rhetorical nature of Woolf’s feminism—not least the fact that it is the narrator, Mary Beton, who writes the words “it is fatal for anyone who writes to think of their sex”⁷—but they are right to view her aim as not to finally claim a woman’s or feminine form of writing, nor to stop at a concern with the material conditions of women (although these are, of course, vitally important to Woolf). Deleuze and Guattari’s “becoming-woman” connects to other ethological and ecological becomings (*ATP*, 300), just as Woolf’s modernist feminist manifesto conceptualizes a material reality which finds “human beings not always in their relation to each other but in relation to reality; and the sky, too, and the trees or whatever it may be in themselves; . . . our relation is to the world of reality and not only to the world of men and women” (149).

Deleuze recognizes that Woolf’s modernism experiments with material-semiotic entanglements of human and nonhuman, culture and nature. Woolf does not want to simply document or record reality in the way the “realist,” as she puts it above, or “materialist,” as she writes in “Modern Fiction,”⁸ does; nor does she wish for a full retreat inwards to represent the internalized workings of the mind. Rather, when Woolf writes that she wants to include “fact” alongside “nonsense” in her saturated moment, but wants to make them “transparent,” she betrays a far wider concern in her modernist essays, short stories, and novels with illuminating a material reality that encompasses fiction as well as fact, mind and soul as well as body.⁹ Woolf’s essay “The

Novels of E. M. Forster” demonstrates one of the clearest instances of this, where she bemoans the fact that on the one hand Forster’s concern in his novels “is with the private life; his message is addressed to the soul” and yet on the other hand this “soul” has a quite tangible material home: “The omnibus, the villa, the suburban residence, are an essential part of his design”; “the soul . . . is caged in a solid villa of red bricks somewhere in the suburbs of London” (*E4*, 494–5). The “reality” of Forster’s inner and outer worlds is not convincing: “if his books are to succeed in their mission his reality must at certain points become irradiated; his brick must be lit up; we must see the whole building saturated with light. We have at once to believe in the complete reality of the suburb and in the complete reality of the soul” (*E4*, 495). As an example of an “irradiated,” “luminously transparent,” saturated material reality, Woolf points to Henrik Ibsen—and we can note here that directly after affirming the importance of saturating every atom she writes that she “must read Ibsen” (*D3*, 209)—who “gives us it by choosing very few facts and those of a highly relevant kind. Thus, when the moment of illumination comes we accept it implicitly . . . it has not ceased to be itself by becoming something else” (*E4*, 495–6). We might say that this modernist saturation of every atom, this “becoming” that is nothing but “itself,” is, like Deleuze’s philosophy of becoming, ontologically entangled in a “supersaturated materialism”—“a materialism,” as Elizabeth Grosz puts it, “that incorporates that which is commonly opposed to it—the ideal, the conceptual, the mind, or consciousness.”¹⁰

This essay will contextualize Deleuze’s references to Woolf within a wider concern with the relationship between human and nonhuman life in order to consider how Deleuze can help us to understand modernism and how modernist literature can shed light on Deleuze’s philosophy.¹¹ The first section will focus on human entanglements with/in the natural world in *Mrs. Dalloway*, expanding on Deleuze’s references to this novel. Although Deleuze often provides only fleeting references to modernist texts (with the obvious exceptions of Kafka and Proust, the two modernists he wrote books on), this essay aims to show how his readings of Woolf open up new conceptual paradigms from which we can engage in close readings of her texts. The second section will consider Deleuze’s return to Spinozist ethical philosophy alongside Woolf’s own little-discussed references to Spinoza. Understanding Spinoza’s influence on Deleuze helps us to understand some of Deleuze’s specific references to Woolf as well as the broader issues of nature, animality, and immanent modes of life in modernism.

Percepts and affects: *Mrs. Dalloway*

Deleuze’s references to Woolf’s 1925 novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*, mainly relate to a scene near the beginning of the novel where Clarissa strolls through London in search of flowers for her party:

She would not say of anyone in the world now that they were this or were that. She felt very young; at the same time unspeakably aged. She sliced like a knife through everything; at the same time was outside, looking on. She had a perpetual sense,

as she watched the taxicabs, of being out, out, far out to sea and alone; she always had the feeling that it was very, very dangerous to live even one day . . . to her it was absolutely absorbing; all this; the cabs passing; and she would not say of Peter, she would not say of herself, I am this, I am that.¹²

This passage is not to be read as a scene of psychological isolation in the modernist city, of subjects “lonely” and “deserted” in the “metropolitan crush of persons,” as described in Georg Simmel’s “The Metropolis and Mental Life.”¹³ Instead, we are encouraged to read it as an affirmation of the positivity of *depersonalization*, where indefinite articles and pronouns express “haecceities,” and where proper names do not demarcate “forms and subjects” (*ATP*, 290), “do not designate people but mark events” (*Dialogues*, 68–9). There are, in fact, more definite than indefinite articles and pronouns in the above passage from Woolf’s novel, but Deleuze is interested in Clarissa Dalloway’s impulse to move away from them. In particular, her vow never again to say “I am this; I am that” marks the shift toward qualitative multiplicity that Deleuze and Guattari detect in Woolf’s modernist free indirect discourse, a worldly multiplicity that affirms singularities irreducible to human subjectivities: “she would not say of *anyone in the world* now that they were this or were that.”

In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari echo Clarissa’s impulse in the appropriately titled, “One or Several Wolves”: “To be fully a part of the crowd and at the same time completely outside of it, removed from it: to be on the edge, to take a walk like Virginia Woolf (never again will I say, *I am this, I am that*)” (33). Here the allusion to the novel is embedded within their critique of psychoanalysis; Woolf’s phrase provides Deleuze and Guattari with a modernist vocabulary to counter the reduction of multiplicity to simple identity, so galling in Freud’s treatment of the Wolf-man, which typifies a psychoanalytic practice whereby “it is always a question of bringing back the unity or identity of the person or allegedly lost object. The wolves will have to be purged of their multiplicity” (*ATP*, 31). Woolf, on the other hand, rejects this purging of multiplicity in her 1920 essay “Freudian Fictions”—a text that Deleuze and Guattari do not appear to have been aware of but which supports their positioning of Woolf’s fiction as a counter to psychoanalytic theories of subject formation.¹⁴ Despite the fact that Freud’s works were published through the Woolfs’ Hogarth Press, in this review of J. D. Beresford’s *An Imperfect Mother* Woolf ridicules “the new psychology”—or even “morbid psychology”—of Freud in a fashion not dissimilar to some of Deleuze and Guattari’s more sarcastic anti-Oedipal passages: “A patient who has never heard a canary sing without falling down in a fit can now walk through an avenue of cages without a twinge of emotion since he has faced the fact that his mother kissed him in his cradle.” Fiction fails when it incorporates Oedipal theories because “characters” become “cases” and this “simplifies rather than complicates, detracts rather than enriches.”¹⁵

For Deleuze, *Mrs. Dalloway* is less about “cases” and more about “a question of life” (*Dialogues*, 68–9) that is irreducible to the human psyche. Clarissa may not possess nous—it is stressed that she “knew nothing; no language, no history; she scarcely read a book” (*MD*, 7)—but this does not distance her from either Deleuze’s or Woolf’s

philosophizing. After all, Woolf's well-known "philosophy" passage in her unfinished autobiographical "Sketch of the Past" affirms that to become "the words," "the music," and "the thing itself" is not to enter a transcendent realm of art and culture but to be attuned to, and embedded within, a vibrantly material world.¹⁶ Such an articulation of materially embedded life in these early pages of *Mrs. Dalloway* is evident in a passage just before the one that Deleuze cites: "In people's eyes, in the swing, tramp, and trudge; in the bellow and the uproar; the carriages, motor cars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich men shuffling and swinging; brass bands; barrel organs; in the triumph and the jungle and the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead was what she loved; life; London; this moment of June" (*MD*, 4). Clarissa walks within what Deleuze calls "a life" (*PI*, 26–7), one not tied to a human subject nor elevated through transcendence, but generative, creative, and immanent. Furthermore, while Woolf here articulates human entanglements with the technological innovations of modernity (the inorganic nonhuman), a few pages later she turns to ecological assemblages: "somehow in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived, Peter survived, lived in each other, she being part, she was positive, of the trees at home; of the house there, ugly, rambling all to bits and pieces as it was; part of people she had never met; being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best, who lifted her on their branches as she had seen the trees lift the mist, but it spread ever so far, her life, herself" (*MD*, 8). The reference to this sentence in *Dialogues* paraphrases: "being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best" as "I spread myself out like fog BETWEEN the people that I know the best," says Virginia Woolf in her walk among the taxis" (23). But it is the clause that follows—"who lifted her on their branches as she had seen the trees lift the mist"—that best captures the ecological assemblage of "her life, herself" that Woolf is conceptualizing. The "people she knew best" are impersonal, are "people she had never met," as well as being curiously arboreal, with "branches."

Mrs. Dalloway is entangled in Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualization of "percepts" and "affects" (which philosophically find their central influences in Leibniz and Spinoza, respectively). Their final allusion to the novel in *What is Philosophy?* finds Woolf in the company of a diverse list of authors including Herman Melville and Thomas Hardy as part of an Anglo-American tradition that articulates a decentered human subject and a nonanthropocentric vision:

The novel has often risen to the percept—not perception of the moor in Hardy but the moor as percept; oceanic percepts in Melville; urban percepts, or those of the mirror, in Virginia Woolf. The landscape *sees*. The percept is the landscape before man, in the absence of man. But why do we say this, since in all these cases the landscape is not independent of the supposed perceptions of the characters and, through them, of the author's perceptions and memories? How could the town exist without or before man, or the mirror without the old woman it reflects, even if she does not look at herself in it? (168–9)

Deleuze and Guattari emphasize both urban landscapes and mirrors which themselves *see*, rather than merely reflecting human visual perception, and the fact that they

turn to Woolf's most famous urban novel as exemplifying these percepts and affects reinforces the fact that neither Deleuze's, nor Woolf's, interest in the nonhuman is tied to a sentimental (anthropocentric) pastoral vision. The description of Clarissa's love of "life," fueled by the pulsing urban rhythms of motor cars, an aeroplane, and brass bands as well as by nature, near the beginning of the *Mrs. Dalloway* illustrates a nonhuman perception or "percept" and nonhuman affection or "affect"—a perceptual and emotional experience that might be Mrs. Dalloway's, but only after the proper name "Mrs. Dalloway" has become an event rather than an individual, only after "she has passed into the town" and "becomes imperceptible herself": "*Affects are precisely these nonhuman becomings of man*, just as percepts—including the town—are *nonhuman landscapes of nature*" (WP, 169). We should not reduce Clarissa to a human subject perceiving an exterior urban landscape, but as having "passed into the landscape," having become ontologically entangled with her nonhuman environment. As Claire Colebrook notes, it is not subjects that perceive for Deleuze and Guattari, "but perceptions *from which* subject positions are formed"; Woolf presents "a different mode of modernism—one focused less on the limits of language than on broadening perception."¹⁷

Where the mirror is concerned, Deleuze and Guattari are most likely alluding to a scene where Clarissa looks into her mirror "collecting the whole of her at one point" (MD, 31). But this mirror plays a more ambiguous role in the text; what seems to occur in this scene is a centripetal movement that resolves the multiplicity of her life into a falsified image "of Clarissa Dalloway; of herself" (31). What the mirror reflects back to Clarissa and the reader is the "definite" *Mrs. Dalloway*, which appears when there is "some call on her to be her self . . . one woman who sat in her drawing-room and made a meeting-point" that is "different" and "incompatible" with the multiplicity of "Mrs. Dalloway," with "all the other sides of her" (MD, 32). But this is just one example of mirrors that frequently shimmer in Woolf's modernist aesthetics and, four years after *Mrs. Dalloway* was published, her short story "The Lady in the Looking-Glass: A Reflection" similarly has a mirror which reflects the world "fixedly."¹⁸ The narrator of the story draws a contrast between the lifeless image reflected by the mirror and the discreet observational methods of "naturalists who, covered with grass and leaves, lie watching the shyest animals—badgers, otters, kingfishers—moving about freely, themselves unseen" (CSF, 221). We might say that naturalists are one example of human observers who are more interested in the nonhuman percept than in the human perception—they attempt to form nonanthropocentric observations. Nonetheless, there is a passage later in this story which would be a more appropriate reference point for Deleuze, when the opposition set up between mirror and naturalist begins to break down. In this instance the woman "does not look at herself" in the mirror (something that cannot be said of Clarissa) and yet appears in reflection in that mirror. The reader witnesses her covert entrance into an ecological assemblage, the entanglement of both the woman and the mirror with the nonhuman domestic landscape:

here was she in the looking-glass. . . . She was so far off at first that one could not see her clearly. She came lingering and pausing, here straightening a rose, there lifting a pink to smell it, but she never stopped; and all the time she became larger

and larger in the looking-glass. . . . She came so gradually that she did not seem to derange the pattern in the glass, but only to bring in some new element which gently moved and altered the other objects as if asking them, courteously, to make room for her. (CSF, 225)

In this passage it is the centrifugal movement, the paradoxical spreading *outwards* precisely by coming *into* focus among the nonhuman landscape, that makes Isabella “more completely” who the narrator had been trying to imagine. As the mirror begins to reflect “a light . . . that seemed like some acid to bite off the unessential and superficial and to leave only the truth” it recalls Woolf’s desire to “saturate every atom . . . to eliminate waste, deadness, superfluity.” Importantly, we learn that in becoming more complete “Isabella was perfectly empty”—the proper noun “Isabella” signals an event rather than an identity. This is Isabella’s becoming-imperceptible and her deterritorialization from perceiving subject: “she had no thoughts.” Her refusal to open the “bills” waiting for her on the table (CSF, 225) is a momentary escape from the inevitable “reterritorializations on property, work, and money” (ATP, 560).

It would be wrong to claim that percepts and affects are consistent and guiding principles of *Mrs. Dalloway*. For one thing, Clarissa’s moments of deterritorialization, her lines of flight from majoritarian modes of living, are always reterritorialized on capitalist and imperialist London society. We might think here of the aeroplane advertisement that demonstrates technology appropriated for profiteering (MD, 24); it is a section of the novel rich in descriptions of characters’ perceptions, but such perceptions are swiftly reterritorialized on an anthropocentric, upper-class, majoritarian landscape. But the instances in which Woolf deterritorializes the human and conceptualizes nonanthropocentric perceptions and affections of nature do involve characters other than Clarissa. For example, Septimus Smith, the war veteran, initially appears to perceive the natural world as threatening to his sanity: “the excitement of the elm trees rising and falling, rising and falling with all their leaves alight and the colour thinning and thickening . . . so proudly they rose and fell, so superbly” that he feels if his wife Rezia had not been there it “would have sent him mad” (MD, 19). Significantly, however, when Septimus closes his eyes it is a kind of *dis*perception that stops him from losing his sanity: “he would not go mad. He would shut his eyes; he would see no more” (MD, 19). What we then find is not a withdrawal into a delusional imaginary, but a line of flight toward a nonanthropocentric entanglement—the nonhuman becoming of man (affect) as well as the nonhuman landscape of nature (percept)—as nature “buts” in:

But they beckoned; leaves were alive; trees were alive. And the leaves being connected by millions of fibres with his own body, there on the seat, fanned it up and down; when the branch stretched he, too, made that statement. The sparrows fluttering, rising, and falling in jagged fountains were part of the pattern; the white and blue, barred with black branches. (MD, 19)

Other critics who are interested in the permeation of nature in Woolf’s urban landscapes have been too quick to see these passages as examples of Septimus’s “delusions”¹⁹

or “hallucinations.”²⁰ While Septimus clearly shows signs of mental illness—and we should take seriously Woolf’s exploration of this in the novel—such descriptions are consistent with the ecological assemblages of other characters in *Mrs. Dalloway*, all of which prefigure *The Waves* and the entanglements with nature seen with Louis and Jinny,²¹ and with Susan who is “not a woman, but the light that falls on this gate, on this ground . . . the seasons . . . the mud, the mist, the dawn” (*W*, 79). Moments such as these are neither indicative of an epiphanous insight nor a momentary transcendence of reality, but of Woolf’s grounded and repeated exploration of the creative immanence of nature and culture, materiality and meaning-making. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Septimus shares with Peter an affinity with “life itself” which is not captured and controlled by “people”; a life where “every ounce of pleasure” and “every shade of meaning” is “more solid” by being “less personal” (*MD*, 67). In closing his eyes Septimus moves from a phenomenological experience to an ontological entanglement; it is no longer a matter of his “excitement” at how “superbly” the leaves and trees moved, but that they “were alive” (*MD*, 19). To be sure, perception and affection still rely on his presence but are not centered on it, a feature of percepts and affects that Deleuze and Guattari make clear (*WP*, 169).

Later in the novel there is another instance when Septimus closing his eyes signals a transformation from affection to affect, from perception to percept: Septimus “lay back in his chair . . . resting” as a break before he again “interpreted . . . to mankind” (in other words before he returned to a distinctly human realm of perception):

He lay very high, on the back of the world. The earth thrilled beneath him. Red flowers grew through his flesh; their stiff leaves rustled by his head. Music began clanging . . . and as, before walking, the voices of birds and the sound of wheels chime and chatter in a queer harmony, grow louder and louder, and the sleeper feels himself drawing to the shores of life, so he felt himself drawing towards life, the sun growing hotter, cries sounding louder, something tremendous about to happen. (*MD*, 58–9)

This passage enacts deterritorialization, the sparking of a material and conceptual line of flight that illuminates the creative activity of the natural world. Only when Rezia calls Septimus back to human “time,” and thus to his molar identity, does the memory of Evans then reterritorialize the scene as a kind of hallucination (*MD*, 59). Moreover, such scenes are then viewed to be a “crime” by Septimus’s doctors, Bradshaw and Holmes, who maintain that a distinctly “human nature” must be upheld at all costs; that the human must remain at the center of things (*MD*, 83). The quantitative “proportion” (*MD*, 84) Bradshaw cares so much about is certainly not the same as the qualitative proportions of Septimus’s line of flight. Bradshaw’s emphasis on “rest” is, too, of a markedly different kind than when Septimus had his eyes closed (*MD*, 84); it is a rest imposed in order to reach a kind of transcendent “divine proportion” linked to the majoritarian will to colonize and convert (*MD*, 85), a will that “swooped” and “devoured” (*MD*, 87). When Septimus later commits suicide, it is ironic how rational his decision-making process is as he tries to escape the majoritarian capture of Holmes and Bradshaw. It is,

indeed, humans, and not his so-called delusions, that cause Septimus to kill himself: “He did not want to die. Life was good. The sun hot. Only human beings?” (*MD*, 127). It is not a misanthropic nihilism that leads to Septimus’s suicide, but the doctors’ misplaced majoritarian, anthropocentric view of the world as standard. Notably, the character who is failed by his rational mind is Holmes: “why the devil he did it, Dr. Holmes could not conceive” (*MD*, 127). Undoubtedly the medical world of Holmes and Bradshaw cannot perceive or be affected by that which escapes anthropocentric ordering and classification, that which resists saying “this is he; this is she.”

Spinozist Ethology: Woolf, Katherine Mansfield, and Roger Fry

The entanglement of Deleuze’s philosophy and Woolf’s modernism returns us to key aspects of a Spinozist “Nature.” Deleuze and Guattari bring together Spinoza and Woolf in their wider discussion of “affect animals” (*ATP*, 265) and “becoming-animal.” In asking “What can a body do?” Spinoza turns us toward “affect” and away from defining a body—for Deleuze and Guattari either human or nonhuman—by “Species or Genus characteristics”; Spinoza’s “true Ethics” is an “ethology” (283). Woolf, too, displays this ethico-ethological concern with affect animals, this shift from characteristics and classifications to movements and becomings, in *The Waves*:

Virginia Woolf experiences herself not as a monkey or a fish but as a troop of monkeys, a school of fish, according to her variable relations of becoming with the people she approaches. We do not wish to say that certain animals live in packs. We want nothing to do with ridiculous evolutionary classifications. . . . What we are saying is that every animal is fundamentally a band, a pack. That it has pack modes, rather than characteristics, even if further distinctions within these modes are called for. It is at this point that the human being encounters the animals. We do not become animal without a fascination for the pack, for multiplicity. (*ATP*, 264)

As I have noted elsewhere, the specific animals Deleuze and Guattari choose to describe Woolf’s animal involutions are not as strange as they might, at first, appear.²² That they write of Woolf’s “experiences of herself” as “a troop of monkeys,” for example, might allude to the fact that one of Woolf’s nicknames, used by her family and by herself, was “the Apes,”²³ or it might refer to a passage in *The Waves* when Jinny describes her desire to let go of the mundane “facts” that limit her “body’s imagination” to “a monkey” that “drops nuts from its naked paws”—it is by doing so that she can enter the “heterogeneous crowd” (*W*, 146). This recalls imagery that appears earlier in the novel when Louis, who has “lived a thousand lives already,” describes himself as “the little ape who chatters over a nut” (*W*, 104–5). Additionally, the “school of fish” in the above quote prefigures the later reference that Deleuze and Guattari make to the closing section of *The Waves* when Bernard describes the naming of himself and his

friends as “only a string of six little fish that let themselves be caught while a million others leap and sizzle” in the “cauldron” of life (W, 214). If Deleuze and Guattari find percepts most prominent in *Mrs. Dalloway* then it is affects as nonhuman becomings that they discover in *The Waves*.

For Deleuze and Guattari, this Spinozist affective ethology also sheds light on Woolf’s “thin dog” which exemplifies the symbiotic relations that form in ecological and ethological assemblages, the flattening of human and nonhuman into an immanent arrangement:

Climate, wind, season, hour are not of another nature than the things, animals, or people that populate them, follow them, sleep and awaken within them. This should be read without a pause: the animal-stalks-at-five-o’clock. The becoming-evening, becoming-night of an animal, blood nuptials. Five o’clock is this animal! This animal is this place! “The thin dog is running in the road, this dog is the road,” cries Virginia Woolf. That is how we need to feel. Spatiotemporal relations, determinations, are not predicates of the thing but dimensions of multiplicities. (ATP, 290)

But this stray dog is actually adopted by Woolf from Katherine Mansfield’s diary. In her essay on Mansfield’s journal, “A Terribly Sensitive Mind” (1927), Woolf presents examples of Mansfield’s description of “the moment”: “The thin dog, so thin that his body is like ‘a cage on four wooden pegs,’ who runs down the street. In some sense, she feels the thin dog is the street. In all this we seem to be in the midst of unfinished stories” (E4, 447). The thin dog moves in the middle of things, and here runs between Mansfield, Woolf, and Deleuze. In Mansfield’s diary from July 1918 she actually writes:

This is the hour when the poor underfed dog appears, at a run, nosing the dry gutter. He is so thin that his body is like a cage on four wooden pegs. His lean triangle of a head is down, his long straight tail is out, and up and down, up and down he goes, silent and fearfully eager. The street watches him from its creeper-covered balconies, from its open windows—but the fat lady on the ground floor who is no better than she should be comes out, down the steps to the gate, with a bone. His tail, as he waits for her to give it him, bangs against the gate post, like a broom-handle—and the street says she’s a fool to go feeding strange dogs. Now she’ll never be rid of him.

(What I’d like to convey is that, at this hour, with this half light and the pianos and the open, empty sounding houses, he is the spirit of the street—running up and down, poor dog, when he ought to have been done away with years ago).²⁴

Intriguingly, Mansfield presents a kind of percept through the watching street. In fact, while Deleuze does not directly cite Mansfield, this passage suggests that he may well have read or been aware of the original source. From Mansfield’s journal entry we know, for example, that it is a summer evening at the time when “people . . . were

walking home at their ease, after a procession or a pic-nic or a day at the sea” and that “the sky is pale and clear” (144)—very plausibly Mansfield’s “animal-stalks-at-five-o’clock.”

In another example Woolf provides—and this time quotes at length—of Mansfield’s “moment” an ecological arrangement becomes an ethological assemblage or haecceity:

It’s raining, but the air is soft, smoky, warm. Big drops patter on the languid leaves, the tobacco flowers lean over. Now there is a rustle in the ivy. Wingley has appeared from the garden next door; he bounds from the wall. And delicately, lifting his paws, pointing his ears, very afraid the big wave will overtake him, he wades over the lake of green grass. (*E4*, 447; Mansfield, 166)

Mansfield moves here from a description of nature to an observation of Wingley, her black and white cat, in what Uexküllian ethologists would call his “Umwelt” or environment-world. Clearly we see that “an animal, a thing, is never separable from its relations with the world,” as Deleuze puts it in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*.²⁵ Deleuze and Guattari therefore find in modernist literature examples of animal affects that are the nonhuman becomings of the modernist writer. They affirm modernist becomings-animal that involve a shared event of becoming different, of becoming entangled in a “creative line of escape” from traditional ontological categories of human and animal (*K*, 17). Concerned with the immanent power and creative potential embedded in the nonhuman rather than a human quest for power, the affects and percepts explored in *Mrs. Dalloway*, and found in a text like *The Waves*, display a Spinozist “Nature,” which affirms “a life no longer lived on the basis of need, in terms of means and ends, but according to a production, a productivity, a potency” (*SPP*, 3).

But if a Spinozist ethology is entangled with Deleuze and Guattari’s reading of Woolf’s aesthetics, and their more oblique allusion to Mansfield, we must acknowledge that affect animals have an awkward place in Spinoza’s philosophy and have already undergone a conceptual becoming by the time they reach Deleuze’s philosophy and his placing of these modernist animals within his ontological landscape. This is clear if we return to Part IV of Spinoza’s *Ethics* (1677) which comments on animal killing:

the law against killing animals is based more on empty superstition and unmanly compassion than sound reason. The rational principle of seeking our own advantage teaches us to establish a bond with men, but not with the lower animals, or with things whose nature is different from human nature. We have the same right against them that they have against us. Indeed, because the right of each one is defined by his virtue, or power, men have a far greater right against the lower animals than they have against men. Not that I deny that the lower animals have sensations. But I do deny that we are therefore not permitted to consider our own advantage, use them at our pleasure, and treat them as is most convenient for us. For they do not agree in nature with us, and their affects are different in nature from human affects.²⁶

In asserting the right of humans to kill animals and to utilize them for their own ends, Spinoza appears to hold different affects as precisely what distinguishes humans from animals. Certainly there is none of the sympathy for animals felt by Woolf and Mansfield for the “poor dog” running in the street. And yet, crucially, Spinoza does not deny that animals have sensations, nor does he consistently set out to divide human and animal in his writings. As Hasana Sharp has convincingly argued, Spinoza’s desire to distinguish here between human affects and animal affects has more to do with his pragmatism, with his concern that human sympathy for animals (a concern that animals and humans were becoming *too* close in the seventeenth century) would distract or counter efforts to create bonds between humans.²⁷ That is, Spinoza’s fear of human–animal closeness betrays an ontological acknowledgment of their closeness; Spinoza himself “overlooked the enabling possibilities of beastly affective contagion” that his *Ethics* supported on an ontological level by bringing the human alongside the animal into a fully immanent “Nature” (Sharp, 64). But the space left to challenge human superiority and the human/animal boundary is precisely what Deleuze recognizes; Spinoza is so important to Deleuzian philosophy precisely because of the “new ‘naturalism’” he, along with Leibniz, was responsible for in the seventeenth century. The effect of Descartes’s dominance in the first half of that century was, as Deleuze writes in *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, “to devalue Nature by taking away from it any virtuality or potentiality, any immanent power, any inherent being,”²⁸ but Spinoza’s fundamental role in the “Anticartesian reaction” placed aim at “re-establishing the claims of a Nature endowed with forces of power” (228).

Understanding Deleuze in order to understand modernism can lead us to consider other philosophers such as Spinoza whose confluence with certain modernist writers has been understudied.²⁹ Woolf is one such writer, despite the fact her engagement with the relationship between mind and body has been recognized as anti-Cartesian.³⁰ In fact, the impetus for viewing Woolf’s modernism alongside Spinoza comes from Woolf’s writing itself. Although his appearances in her writings are infrequent, Spinoza is mentioned across a range of Woolf’s texts. In “The Modern Essay” (1922), Woolf’s review of *Modern English Essays, 1870 to 1920*, she notes the “widely spread” array of articles includes those with “serious” subject matter “about God or Spinoza” (E4, 216). Woolf is referring here to Matthew Arnold’s essay in the volume, originally published in December 1863 in *Macmillan’s Magazine* as “A Word More About Spinoza.” Arnold mainly discusses the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670), describes Spinoza’s “life of unbroken diligence, kindliness, and purity,” and documents the rising interest in his work which for so long had been rejected due to its heresy: “Spinoza’s name has silently risen in importance, the man and his works have attracted a steadily increasing notice, and bid fair to become soon what they deserve to become,—in the history of modern philosophy, the central point of interest.”³¹ That Woolf comments on this essay is not necessarily an endorsement of Spinoza’s philosophy (or indeed of Arnold’s essay writing style), but it is a recognition of Spinoza’s significance and a clear indication that Woolf was aware of his philosophy

before she came to write her most significant modernist texts. Woolf's third novel *Jacob's Room* (1922)—published in the same year as “The Modern Essay”—mentions Spinoza in good company when in Jacob Flanders's bedroom we find Spinoza among an array of classic books and authors including “Dickens, the Faery Queen, a Greek dictionary . . . all the Elizabethans. . . . Jane Austen. . . . Carlyle.”³² In her 1935 version of her only play, *Freshwater*, Woolf again places Spinoza in high company. Among those who have declared “damn facts” to be “the death of poetry” Mr. Cameron names Spinoza alongside Plato, Radakrishna [*sic*], and Confucius—Spinoza is therefore included among a list of philosophies that cross Eastern and Western thought.³³ As the only seventeenth-century philosopher included here, it is also worth noting that Spinoza's name appears in Woolf's writing more than Descartes, who is only directly mentioned once in passing alongside Hobbes in “The Duchess of Newcastle,” as those philosophers the Duchess had encountered (with the Duke of Newcastle being their patron) (*E4*, 85; 90). None of this is evidence of Woolf affirming her knowledge of, or belief in, specific aspects of Spinoza's writing, but it does show her focus on the important status of his philosophy rather than his life, therefore avoiding the kind of treatment of Spinoza as a “personality” and “symbolic hero” that T. S. Eliot bemoaned in a 1927 review of *The Oldest Biography of Spinoza*.³⁴ Indeed, Woolf may have been introduced to Spinoza's thought via Bloomsbury philosophy. For example, in 1908 she read Moore's *Principia Ethica* (1903), which discusses Spinoza in the chapter on metaphysical ethics.³⁵ She may even have been introduced to Spinoza through the earlier *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (1876) and *An Agnostic's Apology* (1893) in which her father, Leslie Stephen, refers on numerous occasions to Spinoza. More significant, perhaps, is that Leonard and Virginia Woolf had the second volume of *The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza* (1903) and Frederick Pollock's *Spinoza, his Life and Philosophy* (1880) in their library. Although we cannot know if Woolf read these books, she knew Sir Frederick Pollock and reports him “talking of all things under the sun” at the Stephen family home at Hyde Park Gate.³⁶

One of Woolf's most tantalizing allusions to Spinoza appears in a letter—dated 13 August 1940—to Ben Nicolson, the son of Harold Nicolson and Vita Sackville-West, which relates to that central figure of Bloomsbury, Roger Fry. Here Woolf recalls a discussion about philosophy at his house two months before the outbreak of war: “Isaiah Berlin discussing philosophy—not Spinozas—[G. E.] Moores [*sic*]—with Leonard.”³⁷ We can only speculate as to why Woolf felt it necessary to stress that Berlin, a critic of Spinoza's work, was not in this instance discussing him, but it again suggests Woolf's ease in situating his philosophy. Indeed, the mention of both Spinoza and Moore seems important in the context of what is a pointed and poignant letter where Woolf, in response to Nicolson's criticism of what he sees as Fry's insularity distanced from the realities of war, defends Fry's life and work and affirms the role of the artist just as an air raid alarm is sounding. One way to read this would be in the spirit of the last chapter of Moore's *Principia Ethica*, which praises the “most valuable things” as “the pleasures of human intercourse and the

enjoyment of beautiful objects” (188). But we might say there is a Spinozist ethical point being made, too: Woolf resists blaming Fry for being an artist rather than a politician, for doing nothing to stop war, because she recognizes that, as Part IV of Spinoza’s *Ethics* puts it,

to bring aid to everyone in need far surpasses the powers and advantage of a private person. For his riches are quite unequal to the task. Moreover, the capacity of one man is too limited for him to be able to unite all men to him in friendship. So the care of the poor falls upon society as a whole, and concerns only the general advantage. (157)

Exposing Nicolson’s hypocrisy by pointing to his own privileged upbringing, and challenging crass distinctions between the personal and political, private and public, Woolf recognizes that in his own way Fry touched a great many people and affected their lives. Woolf’s “scapegoats” for war are not individuals like Fry, as they are for Nicolson, but (patriarchal and imperialist) institutions. Not believing in the transcendent power of human will to alone change things, Woolf recognizes that ethical behavior develops out of, as well as seeks to affect, wider structures and at the same time supports a more humble form of human agency: “human power is very limited and infinitely surpassed by the power of external causes. So we do not have an absolute power to adapt things outside us to our use” (Spinoza, 160). Acknowledgment of this would allow humans to respond to external events with calm, rather than being engulfed by anger—something that was of concern to Woolf when writing in *A Room of One’s Own* (1929) that anger breeds anger (44) and in *Three Guineas* (1938) that such anger “prevent[s] real freedom in the private house” as well as “real freedom in the public world” (197). Woolf’s pacifist politics share an affinity with Spinoza’s ethical project: “we shall bear calmly those things that happen to us contrary to what the principle of our advantage demands, if we are conscious that we have done our duty, that the power we have could not have extended itself to the point where we could have avoided those things” (*Ethics*, 160).

In “Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid,” written in the same month as the letter to Nicolson and similarly punctuated with air raid alarms and, this time, dropping bombs, Woolf displays precisely this kind of calm ethical response. She movingly writes that the sound of “the zoom of a hornet which may at any moment sting you to death” should “compel one to think about peace” and that “we can fight with the mind” by making ideas that can be put “into action.”³⁸ Woolf decries the myth that “we are a free people, fighting to defend freedom” in war. There is no freedom in war and violence, for freedom is about affirming life, not fearing it; freedom is about being “out in the open, dancing, at the play, or sitting at the window talking together” (*E6*, 243)—in other words, engaging the bodily capacity to affect and be affected, something central to a Spinozist and Deleuzian ethology. Again, Woolf refuses to blame even Hitler alone but points to what Spinoza would call evil affects: “Aggressiveness, tyranny, the insane love of power made manifest . . . the desire for aggressiveness; the desire to dominate

and enslave" (E6, 243). By pointing to "desire" Woolf is recognizing the very first of Spinoza's affects in the *Ethics*, as well as a central tenet of Deleuze's onto-ethics: that "desire is man's very essence" as it leads him "to do something"—it is "any of man's strivings, impulses, appetites, and volitions, which vary as the man's constitution varies" (*Ethics*, 104). In destroying the desire to fight, and putting into action positive desires or joyful affects, men will be free: "we must give [men] access to creative feelings. We must make happiness" (E6, 245). By all of this Woolf does not endorse a transcendence of mind over nature, but an immanent life, a collective creation. As Deleuze reminds us, Spinoza also lived in a time of "war" and "tyranny" with "men who fight for their enslavement as if it were their freedom,"³⁹ and he responded to this by affirming life: "In a world consumed by the negative, he has enough confidence in life, in the power of life, to challenge death, the murderous appetite of men, the rules of good and evil, of the just and the unjust. Enough confidence in life to denounce all the phantoms of the negative" (SPP, 13). Woolf too, in the letter above and in her "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid," has this confidence in life and denounces negative phantoms. Like Spinoza and Deleuze, Woolf searches for "a new consciousness, a new vision, a new appetite for living" (SPP, 13).

Woolf's most significant allusion to Spinoza again relates to Fry. Toward the end of her biography *Roger Fry*, Woolf quotes from a letter Fry wrote to Helen Anrep following the funeral in 1925 of his lifelong friend John McTaggart, the metaphysician who was an admirer of Spinoza. Those present were "read this from Spinoza, 'The free man thinks less of death than of anything else and all his wisdom is the contemplation of life' or very nearly that. So for once the right thing was said."⁴⁰ In the letter Fry then expands on a Spinozist ethics, conceived as an ethology that finds faith in a life embedded in immanent entanglements with animals and the molecular movements of the natural world: "My faith in life is utterly unreasonable . . . it rests on nothing I can see, it seeks for no sanction; it is the faith by which the animals live and move, perhaps the atoms themselves. So I must hurry on with this business of living which lasts as long as life lasts" (RF, 278). We might even say that Fry articulates a Deleuzian life here of percepts and affects: he moves toward an imperceptible life that "rests on nothing I can see," a life that does not require majoritarian "sanction," but is embedded in a nonhuman landscape, and he moves toward a nonhuman becoming where "the business of living" is shared with the movement of animals. Woolf's biography of Fry ends with the quotation from Part IV proposition 67 of Spinoza's *Ethics*, which was included on a pamphlet handed out at his own funeral in 1934: "A free man thinks of death least of all things; and his wisdom is a meditation not of death but of life" (RF, 298).

This recalls a famous line written by Woolf in a diary entry from 17 February 1922. Reflecting on a disappointing review of her collection of short stories, *Monday or Tuesday*, Woolf first notes she has "acquired a little philosophy. It amounts to a sense of freedom. I write what I like writing & there's an end on it."⁴¹ But this statement of artistic freedom takes on a Spinozist inflection when, after recounting her meeting with Molly Hamilton and considering feminism as well as what "'real'

life” is, Woolf notes: “I meant to write about death, only life came breaking in as usual” (D2, 166–7). When she then contemplates the possibility of her own death, her response is precisely such an affirmation of life, a desire to form more ethological and ecological assemblages:

Suppose, I said to myself the other day this pain over my heart suddenly wrung me out like a dish cloth & left me dead?—I was feeling sleepy, indifferent, & calm; & so thought it didn’t much matter, except for L[eonard]. Then, some bird or light I daresay, or waking wider, set me off wishing to live on my own—wishing chiefly to walk along the river & look at things. (D2, 168)

The life that breaks in here is not personalized or enclosed within the human, nor is it a transcendent force. Reading Woolf alongside Deleuze and Spinoza illuminates a life that here, as elsewhere in Woolf’s philosophical modernist landscape, is immanently and creatively entangled in nature.

Notes

- 1 Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 3, ed. A. O. Bell (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), 209–10. Hereafter abbreviated as D3.
- 2 Woolf didn’t seriously begin the first draft of *The Waves* until July 1929. See. J. W. Graham, *The Waves: The Two Holograph Drafts* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1976), 30.
- 3 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 278.
- 4 Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 91.
- 5 Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (London: Verso, 1994), 65–6.
- 6 For discussions of the influence of evolutionary theory and the new physics on Woolf’s writing see Chapters 1 and 6, respectively, of Gillian Beer, *Virginia Woolf: The Common Ground* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996); for a discussion of Woolf and astronomy see Holly Henry, *Virginia Woolf and the Discourse of Science: The Aesthetics of Astronomy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
- 7 Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own and Three Guineas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 136.
- 8 Woolf, *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 4, ed. Andrew McNeillie (London: The Hogarth Press, 1994), 159. Hereafter abbreviated as E4.
- 9 For a study of Woolf’s theorizing of materiality across the span of her writings see Derek Ryan, *Virginia Woolf and the Materiality of Theory: Sex, Animal, Life* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).
- 10 Elizabeth Grosz, *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 43.
- 11 There has been a growing interest in the relationship between Deleuze and Woolf among critics, and this is the subject of a recent special issue on “Deleuze, Virginia

- Woolf, and Modernism,” edited by myself and Laci Mattison. See *Deleuze Studies* 7.4 (2013).
- 12 Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 7. Hereafter abbreviated as *MD*.
 - 13 Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” in *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*, eds. V. Kolocotroni, J. Goldman, O. Taxis (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 57.
 - 14 For different psychoanalytic approaches to Woolf see Elizabeth Abel, *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989) and Makiko Minow-Pinkney, *Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Subject* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1987).
 - 15 Woolf, *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 3, ed. Andrew McNeillie (London: The Hogarth Press, 1988), 196–7. Hereafter abbreviated as *E3*.
 - 16 Woolf, “Sketch of the Past,” in *Moments of Being*, ed. Jeanne Schulkind (London: Pimlico, 2002), 85. For a more detailed reading of this section see the opening pages of Ryan, *Virginia Woolf*, 2013.
 - 17 Claire Colebrook, “Woolf and ‘Theory,’” in *Virginia Woolf in Context*, Bryony Randall and Jane Goldman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 66, 71.
 - 18 Woolf, “The Lady in the Looking-Glass: A Reflection,” in *The Complete Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf*, 2nd edn, ed. Susan Dick (San Diego: Harcourt, 1989), 222. Hereafter abbreviated as *CSF*.
 - 19 Justyna Kostkowska, “‘Scissors and Silks,’ ‘Flowers and Trees,’ and ‘Geraniums Ruined by the War’: Virginia Woolf’s Ecological Critique of Science in *Mrs. Dalloway*,” *Women’s Studies* 33 (2004): 191.
 - 20 Kaley Joyes, “Failed Witnessing in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*,” *Woolf Studies Annual* 14 (2008): 73.
 - 21 Woolf, *The Waves* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 7–8. Hereafter abbreviated as *W*.
 - 22 See Derek Ryan, “‘The reality of becoming’: Deleuze, Woolf, and the Territory of Cows,” *Deleuze Studies* 7.4 (2013): 540.
 - 23 Woolf signed or referred to herself in numerous letters as “the Apes.” See Woolf, *Letters*.
 - 24 Katherine Mansfield, *Journal of Katherine Mansfield*, ed. J. Middleton Murry (London: Constable, 1962), 145.
 - 25 Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 2001).
 - 26 Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. Edwin Curley (London: Penguin, 1996), 135.
 - 27 Hasana Sharp, “Animal Affects: Spinoza and the Frontiers of the Human,” *Journal for Critical Animal Studies*, IX.1/2 (2011): 52. See *Ethics*, 72 for a more generous view of nonhuman animals.
 - 28 Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 227.
 - 29 Where literary modernism is concerned, a consideration of Woolf and Spinoza adds to work recently undertaken by Anthony Uhlmann to bring Spinoza into greater dialogue with modernism, where he adds Joyce and Beckett to the list of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers who were fascinated by Spinoza’s work. Uhlmann discusses Woolf in the book, but Spinoza is not considered in his chapter on her. See *Thinking in Literature: Joyce, Nabokov, Woolf* (New York: Continuum, 2011).

- 30 For an extremely rich recent discussion of Woolf's anti-Cartesian thought, see Patricia Waugh, "'Did I not banish the soul?' Thinking Otherwise, Woolf-wise," in *Contradictory Woolf: Selected Papers from the Twenty-first Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf*, eds. Derek Ryan and Stella Bolaki (Clemson, SC: Clemson University Digital Press, 2012). Among the wide range of philosophers touched on by Waugh, Spinoza is a notable absence.
- 31 Matthew Arnold, "A Word More About Spinoza," *Macmillan's Magazine* 9 (December 1863): 136.
- 32 Woolf, *Jacob's Room* (London: Vintage, 2004), 33.
- 33 Woolf, *Freshwater: A Comedy*, ed. Lucio P. Ruotolo (London: The Hogarth Press, 1976), 39.
- 34 T. S. Eliot, "Spinoza" [Review of *The Oldest Biography of Spinoza*, ed. A. Wolf]. *Times Literary Supplement* 1316 (21 April 1927): 275.
- 35 G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 110, 113. For an important study of the influence of thinkers like Russell and Moore on Woolf and Bloomsbury see Ann Banfield, *The Phantom Table: Fry, Russell and the Epistemology of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- 36 Woolf, *Moments of Being*, 31; see also 47 and *D4*, 207.
- 37 Woolf, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 6, eds. N. Nicolson and J. Trautmann (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), 413.
- 38 Woolf, *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 6, ed. S. N. Clarke (London: The Hogarth Press, 2011), 242. Hereafter abbreviated as *E6*.
- 39 Deleuze specifically refers to the assassination of the De Witt brothers, two politicians tortured, murdered, and mutilated in 1672 by Orangists.
- 40 Woolf, *Roger Fry* (London: Vintage, 2003), 278. Hereafter abbreviated as *RF*.
- 41 Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 2, ed. A. O. Bell (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 166. Hereafter abbreviated as *D2*.

Dancing with Deleuze: Modernism and the Imperceptible Animal

Carrie Rohman

Deleuze often frames his attraction to modernist writers such as D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, and Franz Kafka through the lens of exceptional talent. For instance, when discussing Lawrence's "becoming-tortoise," Deleuze and Guattari note, "Lawrence is another of the writers who leave us troubled and filled with admiration because they were able to tie their writing to real and unheard-of becomings."¹ But this Deleuzian attraction to modernists can be explained not by the radical "genius" of these individual artists, but more productively by the eruption of animality in a post-Darwinian era and the particular becomings-animal that era cultivates. As I have outlined in earlier work, modernist literature exhibits humanism's intensified engagement with the discourse of species partly in response to the crises that Darwin's and Freud's theories set in motion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.² Thus Deleuze's attentions to modernist becomings are owed in some measure to the particularities of modernism's heightened attunement to the species axis. When Deleuze and Guattari single out Lawrence's "becoming-tortoise" as exemplary of affective deterritorialization we recognize the centrality of modernist literature's becomings-animal in Deleuze's broad theoretical framework.³ What has been less recognized in discussions of Deleuzian modernism is the coincidence of dancing with moments of inhuman becoming. Dance as a practice of visceral, embodied transformation might be understood as particularly creaturely or inhuman among the arts. If dance is the most "animal" aesthetic form, and if Deleuze views the arts as being haunted by animality, then moments of inhuman dancery becomings in modernist literature can be considered charged minoritarian zones of metamorphosis.

Dancing remains one of the more interesting yet critically under-examined elements of D. H. Lawrence's writing, despite the recurrence of dancing as a variation or refrain in modernist becomings. The relation between dancing and becoming highlights questions of movement, perception, the bodily, and the improvisational that put pressure on the species boundary and render it more porous. A Deleuzian understanding of art as having its roots in inhuman forces allows us to make sense of the well-known, yet under-theorized, moments in *Women in Love* when both Gudrun and Birkin dance. Gudrun's scene in particular, where she dances with a herd of cattle,

calls for a careful parsing through a Deleuzian lens. Rather than some “expressive” or symbolic activity, these moments in Lawrence’s novel should be understood as becomings-imperceptible/animal that link creativity to an inhuman sexuality, and that access a vibratory energy connecting living beings with cosmic capacities. Lawrence’s Deleuzian dancing is a “lapsing out” or line of flight into the inhuman;⁴ it also parallels modern dance’s emergent experimentations with the possibilities of the body in terms of invention or innovation in the early twentieth century. Dancing in Lawrence, as in Nietzsche, has a strong affiliation with philosophy in that both writers seem to emphasize the relinquishing of outmoded, humanist templates and to enact what William Connolly might call the “telesearching” for new concepts, concepts in Deleuze’s sense.⁵ Thus dance as a minoritarian art form should occupy a more pivotal status in critical discussions of Deleuzian modernism.

In scholarly analyses of Lawrence’s work, moderate attention has been given to Anna’s dance while pregnant in *The Rainbow*, but a number of critics have also treated the question of dance in *Women in Love*. It is also interesting to note Gerald Doherty’s highly self-conscious, almost performative use of the trope of dance in his introduction to *Theorizing Lawrence*.⁶ He suggests dance is a metaphor for the kind of thinking that he himself enacts in the book, and also that the ideal reader of the book’s contents will approach it as through a dance. Doherty seems to trade on the role of dance in Lawrence’s work here, which might implicitly signal the importance of the way dance actually functions in much of Lawrence’s writing.

One of the first major attentions to dance in *Women in Love* occurs in the Breadalby section, where Hermione convinces Ursula, Gudrun, and another woman to join her in making “a little ballet, in the style of the Russian Ballet of Pavlova and Nijinsky.”⁷ While the reference to dance revolutionary Nijinsky might lead the reader to anticipate something unconventional, the little ballet that the women enact appears rather clichéd and representational, despite a few scenes that move the male onlookers. After the formal “ballet,” when the group of friends begin to dance socially, Lawrence provides the novel’s first deterritorializing movement through Birkin, who “when he could get free from the weight of the people present, whom he disliked, danced rapidly and with real gaiety. And how Hermione hated him for this irresponsible gaiety” (92). The contessa, who had been the ballet’s fourth dancer, watches Birkin and replies, “He is not a man, he is a chameleon, a creature of change” (92). This brief scene already sets up a difference between “traditional” or imitative dance (majoritarian) and an improvisational, excessive movement that is characterized by creaturely becomings, and thus a certain minor unpredictability and “schizo” refusal of the Oedipalized (hu)man. Hermione silently mimics the charge, “He is not a man, he is treacherous, not one of us” (92). Birkin’s inhuman, rhizomatic coming-to-life in his own capricious dance destroys her, in part because “of his power to escape, to exist, other than she did, because he was not consistent, not a man, less than a man” (92).

As Lawrence leads up to the extended dancing scene in “Water-Party,” he emphasizes Gudrun’s desire for “life.” When Gudrun sits beneath the trees and listens to Ursula singing a German folk song, she has “the yearning come into her heart” (165). In contrast to Ursula who “seemed so peaceful and sufficient unto herself, sitting there

unconsciously crooning her song, strong and unquestioned at the centre of her own universe,” Gudrun feels herself “outside” (165). She not only feels external to Ursula’s attentions, however. More pointedly, the text describes her as a nonparticipant in the living: “Always this desolating, agonized feeling, that she was outside life, an onlooker, whilst Ursula was a partaker, caused Gudrun to suffer from a sense of her own negation” (165). Gudrun interrupts her sister to suggest that she “do Dalcroze” while Ursula sings a different tune.⁸ Gudrun’s difficulty in making this suggestion is emphasized by her “curious muted tone” and by the fact that Ursula does not hear her properly (165). Having to repeat the request reinforces how difficult the movement toward a minor form or experience really is.

Lawrence’s reference to Dalcroze not only indicates his awareness of various dance forms that were in circulation in the early part of the century, but also confirms the negotiation with animality in Gudrun’s cattle dance that I will elaborate shortly. Elgin Mellown catalogues Lawrence’s grasp of various developments in early twentieth-century music and dance, and reminds us that Hermione Roddice’s character is based on Lady Ottoline Morrell, who was a London patron for Diaghilev’s Ballet Russes.⁹ Mellown suggests that Lawrence “must have known that the motions which Emile Jacques-Dalcroze had evolved to teach music were based on natural gestures rather than the artificial positions of the ballet vocabulary” (56–7). He goes on to call the “version” of Gudrun depicted with the Highland cattle “a creature of primitive instincts” (57).

Both Mellown and Mark Kinkead-Weekes note the Isadora Duncan-like movements of this scene. While Lawrence’s actual exposure to Duncan’s performances is unverified, Mellown suggests that he was influenced by his wife Freida’s own “fluid, expressive movements” that were inspired by the experiments in movement taking place at this time (57). Moreover, Kinkead-Weekes describes the transition in this scene from rhythmic, “harmonious” movements to something more rhapsodic—and thus more natural or animal—“like Isadora Duncan, perhaps in Nietzschean/ Dionysiac mood.”¹⁰ We do well to unpack for a moment Duncan’s own engagements with the inhuman and with a Deleuzian emphasis on the vibrational.

In her linking of Darwinian and Deleuzian concepts of sexual selection, the refrain, aesthetic display, and spectacle, Elizabeth Grosz returns again and again to the vibratory.¹¹ Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari note, “Sensation is excitation itself, not insofar as it is gradually prolonged and passes into the reaction but insofar as it is preserved or preserves its vibrations.”¹² When speculating that sexuality itself is best understood in terms of pleasure rather than heteronormative reproduction, Grosz asserts, “Vibrations, waves, oscillations, resonances affect living bodies, not for any higher purpose but for pleasure alone. Living beings are vibratory beings: vibration is their mode of differentiation, the way they enhance and enjoy the forces of the earth itself.”¹³ Duncan, whose theories about dance are often overlooked because of the “sensational” life she lived, addresses the vibratory again and again in her essays, collected in *The Art of the Dance*. For instance, in her section “Movement is Life,” Duncan writes, “When asked for the pedagogic program of my school, I reply: ‘Let us first teach little children to breathe, *to vibrate*, to feel, and to become one with the general harmony and movement of nature’” (my emphasis).¹⁴ When Grosz delineates

the tendency of living entities to intensify themselves, we can understand Duncan's claims about children vibrating within a Deleuzian aesthetic register:

What music and the arts indicate is that (sexual) taste and erotic appeal are not reducible to the pragmatic world of survival, although of course subject to its broad principle as a limit: they indicate that those living beings that "really live," that intensify life—for its own sake, for the sake of intensi[t]y or sensation—bring something new to the world, create something that has no other purpose than to intensify, to experience itself. (*Chaos*, 39)

Vibration in Duncan's writings correlates with a Deleuzian marshaling of inhuman and cosmic intensities. Duncan writes at another point in that essay:

Man has not invented the harmony of music. It is one of the underlying principles of life. Neither could the harmony of movement be invented: it is essential to draw one's conception of it from Nature herself, and to seek the rhythm of human movement from the rhythm of water in motion, from the blowing of the winds on the world, in all the earth's movements, in the motions of animals, fish, birds, reptiles, and even in primitive man, whose body still moved in harmony with nature. (78)

This statement evokes the Deleuzian claim that human art is haunted by the animal.

Lawrence evokes a Duncan-esque, intensifying experience through Gudrun's rhapsodic dancing, and we can read the rhythmic opening of this scene as performing just this kind of Deleuzian transfer of forces:

Gudrun, looking as if some invisible chain weighed on her hands and feet, began slowly to dance in the eurythmic manner, pulsing and fluttering rhythmically with her feet, making slower, regular gestures with her hands and arms, now spreading her arms wide, now raising them above her head, now flinging them softly apart, and lifting her face, her feet all the time beating and running to the measure of the song, as if it were some strange incantation, her white, rapt form drifting here and there in a strange impulsive rhapsody, seeming to be lifted on a breeze of incantation, shuddering with strange little runs. (166)

Lawrence's first image exaggerates, through the evocation of chains, the weight of the body, and the body's connection to the earth. In contrast to the ethereal and gravity-defying aesthetic of traditional ballet, Duncan's "modern" dance emphasized the weightiness of the body and eschewed more rigid poses such as the arabesque, which she felt contorted the "natural" body. Carrie Preston has also pointed out that Duncan's exposed and full thighs themselves ushered in a new way to experience and represent women's bodies within a dance and political aesthetic at this time.¹⁵ Given other scenes in *Women in Love*—such as Birkin's somewhat masochistic "becoming-plant" episode after Hermione smashes him over the head with a lapis-lazuli stone—it is useful to recall

that modern dance has a specific relationship to the earth. As Elizabeth Dempster puts it, “Modern dance has often been termed ‘terrestrial’.”¹⁶ Therefore, the way in which Lawrence emphasizes the feet just slightly more than the gestures of arms and hands in this segment also contributes to Gudrun’s earth-bound, vibrational method. Her feet pulse, flutter, beat, run, and make her body shudder.

Lawrence’s evocation of a barefooted, Duncan-like rhythmic stampeding thus highlights the sense of a Deleuzian transmission of earthly forces to human shuddering. As I have noted elsewhere,¹⁷ Grosz theorizes the Deleuzian role of vibration for the artistic as a kind of *invitation* to the creative. We inevitably partake in the tremor of the rhythmic and the territorial in Deleuze’s terms, to be sure, but the vibratory also functions as an incitement to become *more* vibratory:

Vibration is the common thread or rhythm running through the universe from its chaotic inorganic interminability to its most intimate forces of inscription on living bodies of all kinds and back again. It is vibration that constitutes the harmony of the universe with all its living components, enabling them to find a vibratory comfort level—neither too slow or too fast—not only to survive but above all to generate excess, further vibratory forces, more effects, useless effects, qualities that can’t be directly capitalized. (*Chaos*, 54)

Gudrun’s becoming-inhuman at this initial moment is most clearly registered through Lawrence’s rhythmic invocation of a “rapt form drifting here and there” on “a breeze of incantation.” Later, when the cattle arrive, those animals will clarify Gudrun’s inhuman becoming-artistic. Here, the drift of pulsation, excess, and display works from earth and wind to Gudrun’s activations of a strange kind of rapture. So too Ursula’s singing intensifies the invitation to the vibrational, and she notices “some of the unconscious ritualistic suggestion of the complex shuddering and waving and drifting of her sister’s white form” (166). Waving and drifting evoke not only the experimentations in bodily practice that marked the emergence of modern dance, but also the sort of philosophical “telescope searching” for new concepts that Birkin inhabits throughout the novel.

The “unconscious ritualistic suggestion” that Ursula observes is made all the more Deleuzian and Groszian when we investigate the details of Ursula’s switch from a German folk song to a spontaneous American tune for Gudrun’s “performance.” When Ursula finally understands that Gudrun wants to “do Dalcroze,” she cannot “for her life think of anything to sing” (166). Then Ursula suddenly begins “in a laughing, teasing voice: ‘My love— is a high-born lady—’” (166). The Cambridge edition notes for *Women in Love* provide us with the extraordinary information that this chorus comes from the American song “My Gal is a High Born Lady,” which was “advertised as ‘The best high-class Coon song of the day’” (550). In addition to a trading on perceived black or interracial “suggestiveness” that we might want to trouble here, Lawrence’s choice includes an especially animal element of seduction. The editors’ notes continue by providing the following excerpt from this popular song: “My gal is a high born lady, / She’s black, but not to[o] shady, / Feathered like a peacock, just as gay, / She is not colored, she was born that way” (550).

Again, there would be much more to say about the particular calibration of racial and class discourses here,¹⁸ but for the purposes of this discussion, I want to point out that the peacock brings us squarely into an analysis of the aesthetic workings of sexual selection. The peacock is one of nature's most evident examples of the way in which extreme or excessive bodily extravagance attends the dynamics of sexual dimorphism and attraction. The peacock, then, is an especially keen example of the way that sexuality itself requires creativity: "sexuality needs to harness excessiveness and invention to function at all" (*Chaos*, 64).

Grosz has refined her understanding of art's connections to sexual selection in her most recent book *Becoming Undone*. She emphasizes the bodily and affective nature of artistic experience via Deleuze and insists upon Darwin's assertion that animals have the power of discrimination or taste that is central to aesthetic appeal and choice. "Music, painting, dance, and the other arts," she explains, "are only possible because the power to appeal and enhance seems to reside in regular ways in [animals'] use of colors, sounds, and shapes for the purposes of resonance and intensification. Art is the formal structuring or framing of these intensified bodily organs and processes which stimulate the receptive organs of observers and coparticipants" (*Undone*, 135). On some level, therefore, Gudrun's dance with the cattle is already prefigured in Ursula's choice of tunes. Being compared to one feathered like a peacock reinforces the superfluous qualities of an aesthetic engagement that is "suggestive," extravagant, and at least partly outside the human.

Lawrence's initial portrayal of the Highland cattle might best be described as emphasizing their aesthetic properties and their phenomenological potential, no matter how "diminished" that potential may have been considered by the author. The cattle are "vividly coloured and fleecy in the evening light, their horns branching into the sky, pushing forward their muzzles inquisitively, to know what it was all about. Their eyes glittered through their tangle of hair, their naked nostrils were full of shadow" (167). As mentioned above, vivid coloring is an essential element of animals' bodily excess within the lexicon of sexual selection. Moreover, the image of horns "branching into the sky" emphasizes the aesthetic nature of secondary sexual characteristics in their precise sexual role within the dynamics of enticement. In other words, the horns are, evolutionarily speaking, a good example of Grosz's idea that sexuality must be creative to be itself. This, coupled with the image of inquisitive muzzles and glittering eyes, sets us up to read the cattle as an audience who attempt to discern or distinguish the aesthetic power of Gudrun's performance.

When Gudrun suggests that the cattle are "charming," therefore, the charm is not *merely* sexual. Or rather, it is sexual in a much richer register than we typically assert in critical discussions of Lawrence and sexuality. The cattle are not only or even primarily metaphorical stand-ins for men or male sexuality. Rather, they are charming because they invite Gudrun into an embodiment of a "mating" dance that is not only about sexuality, to be sure, but also is as much about the becoming-artistic of the human through vibrational excess and a Deleuzian harnessing of *inhuman* forces. Gudrun's desire to perform a Deleuzian dance with cattle is clearly linked to all the characters' experiments in living and in being, to their attempts to experience themselves as

self-overcoming, to use a Nietzschean phrase. When Lawrence writes of Gudrun that it was “evident that she had a strange passion to dance before the sturdy, handsome cattle,” the phrase “strange passion” would seem even more relevant than the descriptors “sturdy, handsome” (167). This strange passion parallels Birkin’s own variations on the “grotesque step-dance” (168) that I will discuss shortly.

Another way of thinking about this would have us emphasizing the “strangeness” of the very peacockian excess that all creatures inhabit when becoming-intense, becoming-other, and becoming-artistic. Thus, I would want to elaborate upon one of my earlier claims about Lawrence, the claim that we ought to read sexuality in his work as an important component of a larger recuperation of animality for the human subject in modernism.¹⁹ Inhuman becomings in Lawrence also exhibit vibrational shudderings of the creative, which open us to the emergence of difference or the new. These becomings privilege movement or change, which not only signals the significance of dance in Lawrence’s thematics, but also helps to clarify Birkin’s search for new concepts and his distaste for static or clichéd mores or ideas. Thus Gudrun’s “strange” dance in the novel functions as a kind of template for the inhuman becoming-excessive that Deleuze and Grosz locate as foundational for aesthetic intensities and that Lawrence makes central to so many of his literary-philosophical explorations.

The role of inhuman forces in Gudrun’s “becoming” cattle is registered in part by Lawrence through the power of electric currents. The second major description of Gudrun’s dancing is more Duncanesque than the first, incorporating the terms “unconscious sensation,” “uncanny,” “fluctuations,” “hypnotised” (167–8).²⁰ Central to this second description is the line, “She could feel them just in front of her, it was as if she had the electric pulse from their breasts running into her hands. Soon she would touch them, actually touch them” (168). Andrew Harrison discusses the linguistic and thematic role of electricity in the novel as it relates to Lawrence’s entanglements with Futurism. He analyzes the way that *Women in Love* “places the overwhelming emphasis not on strict chronological verisimilitude but on the psychological shifts which accompanied electrical modernization.”²¹ Harrison notes that the connection between Gerald and Gudrun is dangerously “magnetic” throughout the text (*Women in Love*, 120) and that in relationships with Gerald the “violent electrical vocabulary does not work up to a new awareness of impersonality, opening up new insights and new forms of symbolism, as it had for Ursula in the final pages of *The Rainbow*. Instead it recounts a form of destructive discharge that there is no getting beyond” (18). In contrast, Harrison suggests, Birkin and Ursula are distinguished by “their ability to ‘earth’ or ‘ground’ the current through their polarity” (19). Moreover, for them, “an articulate channeling of electrical energies results in a creative kind of closed circuit” (19).

For Gudrun it is the cattle, it is animality that is “grounding” her own “electric” energies, enabling a circuit that is specifically trans-species or interspecies. I want to read electricity in this moment as a force that enables Gudrun’s “communicative or contagious” becoming (*Thousand Plateaus*, 238). Electricity functions in Lawrence’s scene as the conduit of inhuman or cross-creaturely forces.²² When re-examining the details of Deleuze and Guattari’s language in the opening of “1730: Becoming-Intense,

Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible” in *A Thousand Plateaus*, their introduction of the concept becoming-animal trades on electric capacities: “there is a circulation of impersonal affects, *an alternate current* that disrupts signifying projects as well as subjective feelings, and constitutes a nonhuman sexuality” (233, my emphasis). To parrot Deleuze and Guattari’s own discussion of the 1972 film *Willard*: in the Lawrence scene, “it’s all there.” Gudrun’s becoming does not “proceed by resemblance” because she is ultimately inventing her own dance with the cattle, improvising her line of flight from the human (233). Moreover, the herd of cattle instantiates precisely the multiplicity, proliferation, or pack that Deleuze and Guattari, perhaps problematically, install at the heart of such alliances (233).²³ Gudrun’s “electric” becoming also “forestalls attempts at professional, conjugal, or Oedipal reterritorialization” (233), which is what makes Gerald’s interference in her experience so traumatic and violent. Because Gudrun, if we are to believe Deleuze and Guattari, is partaking in “involution,” which is specifically not regression, and which is specifically creative: “Becoming is involutionary, involution is creative” (238). Thus Gerald’s interdiction obstructs what can be seen as a core modality of Gudrun’s creative, or we might say “energetic” living or being.

We ought to see this sort of involution in the works of modernists such as Lawrence, Woolf, and Kafka as native to that era *because* of the post-Darwinian specificity of humanism’s crisis vis-à-vis the animal. This helps to explain why modernist writers occupy a block, a peopling, a band of intensity in Deleuze’s *own* writing. The heightened awareness of our deep historico-evolutionary connection to other animals in the early twentieth century produces precisely the kind of “very special becomings-animal” that Deleuze and Guattari locate in the vampire block from the 1700s (237). What’s surprising is that they do not overtly identify their own theorizing of the modernist block of becomings-animal, but tend to frame it through the veneration of individual authors. That tendency is a rather ironic valorization of the personal, what might be described as a sort of slippage into arborescent thinking about individual “genius,” rather than a recognition of the particular assemblage of human animalities in the modernist moment.

Returning to the scene, the fact that Gerald puts a halt to Gudrun’s “communion” with the cattle has always called readers’ attention to the importance of her “strange” dance with the cattle. That dance is clearly a valuable experience of becoming-other and becoming-imperceptible that Gerald cuts off, and it seems that Gudrun is never able to recapture this kind of redemptive “grounding” in the inhuman. It is true that one can read certain moments in Gudrun’s dance as potentially aggressive or even destructive, as when “[a] terrible shiver of fear and pleasure went through her” (168). But I would argue for seeing this scene as, at the very least, fluctuating for Gudrun, and therefore more productively as perhaps the only moment when she approaches the kind of grounded, creative balance that Birkin and Ursula are able to achieve more regularly. Not only is the experience of becoming one that profoundly dislocates our normative sense of self, but creative sexuality also involves “dangerous” excesses of the body and of identity that can unsettle and disrupt. In Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, “love itself is a war machine endowed with strange and somewhat terrifying powers” (*ATP*, 278). That said, the critical tendency, as evidenced in Ken Russell’s 1969 film

adaptation of the novel, is to highlight a sadistic strain in Gudrun's relation to the cattle. But it is only *after* Gerald stops her that she turns decidedly aggressive with these animals, rushing "sheer upon the long-horned bullocks" who snort in "terror" and run off (169–70). Not long afterward she strikes Gerald, in the first violent moment of their relationship.

I want to examine a few additional details of Gudrun's "rapt trance" (167) before moving on to a discussion of Birkin. A slightly longer quotation of Lawrence's second major description of the dance will help here:

[She] went in a strange, palpitating dance towards the cattle, lifting her body towards them as if in a spell, her feet pulsing as if in some little frenzy of unconscious sensation, her arms, her wrists, her hands stretching and heaving and falling and reaching and reaching and falling, her breasts lifted and shaken towards the cattle, her throat exposed as in some voluptuous ecstasy towards them, whilst she drifted imperceptibly nearer, an uncanny white figure carried away in its own rapt trance, ebbing in strange fluctuations upon the cattle. (168)

The above discussion of creative sexuality sheds light on a reading of Gudrun's lifted and shaking breasts. Again, the "mating dance" here is about more than just mating. It is also inherently about excess, display, taste, and discernment in Gudrun's becoming-cow as creative involution. This scene also reminds us of Deleuze and Guattari's admonition that becomings-molecular in sexuality *are* becomings-animal but have "no need for bestialism" as such (*ATP*, 279). And in this case, we see the discernible wading toward the indiscernible, as Gudrun drifts "imperceptibly nearer" the cattle. Deleuze and Guattari continue to explain that the rites of sexuality are

not so much a question of making love with animals. Becomings-animal are basically of another power, since their reality resides not in an animal one imitates or to which one corresponds, but in themselves, in that which suddenly sweeps us up and makes us become—a *proximity, an indiscernibility* that extracts a shared element from the animal far more effectively than any domestication, utilization, or imitation could. (279)

Thus the contrast between Gudrun's erotic and inventive "cowing" and Gerald's protective fears and claim to ownership, "they're my cattle" (170), is all the more pronounced here, as is the troubling of domestication on both the gender and species fronts.

Moreover, Lawrence's phrase "drifted imperceptibly nearer" not only emphasizes the "approach" of human to animal, but also draws attention to the specificity of dance practice in his text's working out of deterritorializing lapses. In their discussion of becomings intense, animal, and woman, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that all these transformations are "rushing" toward "becomings-imperceptible. The imperceptible is the immanent end of becoming, its cosmic formula" (279). They continue to outline the linked "three virtues" of imperceptibility, indiscernibility, and impersonality,

elaborating how one can slip between and grow in the midst of things (280). Movement becomes central to this set of questions: "Movement has an essential relation to the imperceptible; it is by nature imperceptible. Perception can grasp movement only as the displacement of a moving body or the development of a form. Movements, becomings, in other words, pure relations of speed and slowness, pure affects, are below and above the threshold of perception" (281). While the dancing body is not equivalent to pure affects, we can nonetheless extract valuable insights from the claim that movement has "an essential relation" to the imperceptible. If perception cannot grasp movement "in itself," to some degree, if perception can only register the mutations of forms that themselves are constantly shifting and reassembling, then dancing ought to be understood as a privileged modality for becomings. Gudrun's becoming-cattle vis-à-vis dance delineates a becoming-imperceptible/animal that—given modern dance's "grounding" of dance practice in the bodily and earthly, and the heightened negotiation with animality in this period—is precisely to be understood as a modernist becoming that moves beyond the threshold of humanism's "perception."

One of the potentially gendered ironies of the novel is that Birkin, rather than Gudrun, more reliably models the kind of dancerly becomings-imperceptible that produce a certain privileging of the rhizomatic across Lawrence's text. The way that Birkin mirrors Gudrun, to some respect, in the "Water-Party" scene, after he and Gerald come upon the two women in their "reverie," might be read as partly departing from what Mellow describes as a stylistic differential between a feminine and masculine way of moving in the unpublished novel, *Mr. Noon*. There, Lawrence seems to associate the feminine with the fluid and "soft," the masculine with a jerky and "rigid" comportment.²⁴ Birkin's movements, however, are repeatedly described as "loose" in this scene. Moreover, Lawrence explicitly evokes the vibratory in his calibration of Birkin's dancing, as seen through Ursula's perspective: "Yet somewhere inside her she was fascinated by the sight of his loose, vibrating body, perfectly abandoned to its own dropping and swinging, and by the pallid, sardonic-smiling face above" (169). What further unites their movement styles can be described as an irreverence toward the major or molar, an attendant "madness," and a surfing of inhuman sexuality that reemerges later in the novel. Here, as Birkin moves in and out of his abandonment, his "grotesque step-dance" in which "his body seemed to hang all loose and quaking in between, like a shadow" (168–9), he responds to Ursula's assertion that "we've all gone mad" with "[p]ity we aren't madder," and a sudden kissing of her fingers (169). He puts his face near hers here and would have kissed her again a few moments later "had she not started back" (169). There's a way in which Birkin seems able to recapitulate, or at least emulate, the "animal" mating dance here *with* Ursula, whereas Gudrun seems only able to perform it with the cattle.

Similar entanglements between animality, inhuman sexuality, and what Lawrence understands as the impersonal characterize one of the more critically noteworthy scenes between Birkin and Ursula near the novel's conclusion. In the "Snow" chapter, when both couples dance energetically with the German travelers at their inn, Gerald's "powers" are construed as destructively violent, while Birkin's frightening provocations are ultimately entertained and engaged by Ursula. Moreover, Gerald's animal dancing

is treated metaphorically; the young girl he partners with is “in his power, as if she were a palpitating bird, a fluttering, flushing bewildered creature” (412). When describing Birkin, Lawrence moves away from proper metaphor and toward the metamorphic that Deleuze associates with the minor and with becomings. Birkin the dancer is described through Ursula’s perspective this way: “Clear, before her eyes, as in a vision, she could see the sardonic, licentious mockery of his eyes, he moved towards her with subtle, animal, indifferent approach” (412). The proximity of animality and indifference, or impersonality, in Birkin’s dancing marks an opening onto immanence in Birkin and Ursula’s subsequent sexual engagement that exceeds both Oedipalized subjectivity and the parameters of a socially locatable Act. Ursula muses afterward:

She winced.—But after all, why not? She exulted as well. Why not be bestial, and go the whole round of experience? She exulted in it. She was bestial, How good it was to be really shameful! There would be no shameful thing she had not experienced.—Yes she was unabashed, she was herself. Why not?—She was free, when she knew everything, and no dark shameful things were denied her. (413)

The vacillations between “bestial” “herself” and “free” tend to trouble the human/animal divide, just as the challenging of the concept “shameful” in this segment contests notions of the civilized or proper. When articulating his views on immanence, Deleuze identifies those near death and small children, but his description seems to resonate with Ursula’s freedoms above:

The life of the individual gives way to an impersonal and yet singular life that releases a pure event freed from the accidents of internal and external life, that is, from the subjectivity and objectivity of what happens: a “Homo tantum” with whom everyone empathizes and who attains a sort of beatitude. It is a haecceity no longer of individuation but of singularization: a life of pure immanence, neutral, beyond good and evil.²⁵

It is Birkin’s “animal” dancing, his impersonal antimetaphorical becoming-imperceptible, that functions as an opening for Ursula’s moment of immanence.

Dancing demarcates the improvisation of the human animal in Lawrence, where becoming-imperceptible, movement and change, and “electric” self-overcomings are privileged as templates of creative living and as precursors for the emergence of new concepts and new ways of being. Gudrun’s becoming-cow stages an inhuman aesthetic mating dance that registers all the “classic” markers of Deleuze’s becomings, and all the intensities of Grosz’s vibratory emergences: it therefore wildly exceeds a “symbolic” battle of the sexes and should be read as privileging the becoming-excessive located at the heart of aesthetic intensities. Similarly, Birkin’s slack and ridiculous jigging prefigures his own “bestly” becomings with Ursula, where their enactment of an inhuman sexuality moves early twentieth-century codes of the “human” outside of that which is discernibly human. Such moments call our attention not primarily to the “admirable” radicality of Lawrence’s individual genius, but rather to the intense assemblage of human animalities in modernism.

Notes

- 1 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 244.
- 2 See Carrie Rohman, *Stalking the Subject: Modernism and the Animal* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).
- 3 For a fuller discussion of the Deleuzian refrain in Lawrence's poem "Tortoise Shout," see Rohman, "The Voice of the Living: Becoming-Artistic and the Creaturely Refrain in D. H. Lawrence's "Tortoise Shout," in *Experiencing Animal Minds: An Anthology of Animal-Human Encounters*, eds. J. A. Smith and R. W. Mitchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 170–85.
- 4 Lawrence's phrase "lapsing out" has been variously associated with his concept of "blood-consciousness" and a relaxing of mental cognition or mindlessness. It is usefully aligned with Deleuze's notion of becoming as both involve the dissolution of an Oedipal or centralized subjectivity. In *Women in Love*, Birkin claims, "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" (44). For further discussion of forms of knowledge in Lawrence, see Eric P. Levy, "Ontological incoherence in *Women in Love*," *College Literature* 30.4 (2003): 156–65.
- 5 William Connolly, *The Fragility of Things: Self-Organizing Processes, Neoliberal Fantasies, and Democratic Activism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 156.
- 6 Gerald Doherty, *Theorizing Lawrence: Nine Meditations on Tropological Themes* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999).
- 7 D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*, eds. D. Farmer, J. Worthen, and L. Vasey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 93.
- 8 Dalcroze was developed by the Swiss composer Émile Jacques-Dalcroze. A system of musical training that used movement, it was associated with "eurythmics" or self-expression.
- 9 Elgin W. Mellow, "Music and Dance in D. H. Lawrence," *Journal of Modern Literature* 21.1 (1997): 54.
- 10 Mark Kinkadee-Weekes, "Dance in Yeats, Lawrence, Eliot, and Williams," in *D. H. Lawrence: Literature, History, Culture*, eds. M. Bell, K. Cushman, T. Iida, and H. Tateishi (Tokyo: Kokusho-Kankokai Press, 2005), 246.
- 11 The role of vibration is prominent in a number of recent theoretical articulations related to new materialism and other emergent discourses about process philosophy and ecological politics. See for instance Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), which articulates a political ecology of the other-than-human, and the fourth chapter of William Connolly's *The Fragility of Things: Self-Organizing Processes, Neoliberal Fantasies, and Democratic Activism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), where he links concepts of excess and force in Nietzsche to Whitehead's theories of creativity and novelty.
- 12 Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 211.
- 13 Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 33.
- 14 Isadora Duncan, "Movement is Life," in *The Art of the Dance*, ed. Sheldon Cheney (New York: Theatre Arts, 1969): 77.

- 15 See C. J. Preston, *Modernism's Mythic Pose: Gender, Genre, Solo Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- 16 Elizabeth Dempster, "Women Writing the Body: Let's Watch a Little How She Dances," in *The Routledge Dance Studies Reader*, eds. Alexandra Carter and Janet O'Shea (New York: Routledge, 2010), 224.
- 17 See Rohman, "A Hoard of Floating Monkeys: Creativity and Inhuman Becomings in Woolf's Nurse Lugton Story," *Deleuze Studies* 7.4 (2013), 519.
- 18 Grosz's own view of race, which she elaborates in *Becoming Undone*, follows Darwin's view, that "Racial differences . . . are those differences produced not by the direct effects of the environment (as sociobiology suggests), but through the operations of ideals of beauty and taste." See Grosz, *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 137.
- 19 See Chapter 4 in Rohman, *Stalking the Subject*.
- 20 Many critics have corrected the view of Duncan as "purely" spontaneous by noting that her performances were highly crafted. She often choreographed into her works a "reaction" to musical cues that involved a few seconds' delay, creating a greater "illusion" of improvisation or spontaneity. Nonetheless, Duncan worked to develop movements that were less traditionally constrained and more connected to the body's own morphology, and to certain natural or material forces or rhythms. Thus, in my view, Duncan's association with the "unconscious" is not naïve or unjustified if understood within a Deleuzian or even posthumanist theoretical register.
- 21 Andrew Harrison, "Electricity and the Place of Futurism in Women in Love," *D. H. Lawrence Review* 29.2 (2000): 21.
- 22 It is crucial to mention Nicole Shukin's incisive work on animal "magnetism" here. Shukin theorizes the "fantasy of 'painless transmission'" within electric transference that has been central to ideas about animal electricity since Galvani's work in the 1700s (Shukin, 133). Shukin also insists upon a historical understanding of electricity that sees animal sacrifice at its core, reading the electrocution of Topsy the elephant in 1903 as a "founding symbolic and material gesture of early electrical and cinematic culture" (152). While I do not have space to elaborate a number of Shukin's questions here, it would be worth asking whether the disquiet of Gudrun (and Ursula's) experience constitutes a "painful transmission" that acknowledges, rather than elides, the Serrean "noise" of Gudrun's trans-species becoming.
- 23 We ought to remain somewhat skeptical of the tendency in Deleuze to associate animality proper with a form of packness, and to thus reinforce the notion that animals are not "individuals" or do not experience a form of self or "subjectivity." The implication that our Oedipalizing of them is purely a phantasm tends to reinforce what Bataille also assumed about animal experience, that "every animal is *in the world like water in water*" (19), and that "there is nothing in animal life that introduces the relation of the master to the one he commands, nothing that might establish autonomy on one side and dependence on the other" (18). While becomings obviously disrupt certain subjective singularities, they may not be exclusively human. See Bataille, *Theory of Religion*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1989).
- 24 See Mellow's discussion of Lawrence's descriptions of dance in *Mr. Noon* and his comparison of those descriptions to Frieda's dancing, E. G. Mellow, "Music and Dance in D. H. Lawrence," *Journal of Modern Literature* 21.1 (1997): 56–7.
- 25 Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, intro. John Rajchman, trans. Ann Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2005), 28–9.

Henry Miller and Deleuze's "Strange Anglo-American Literature"

Andrew Marzoni

"It is at work everywhere, functioning smoothly at times, at other times in fits and starts. It breathes, it heats, it eats. It shits and fucks."¹ So Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari begin *Anti-Oedipus* (1972), the inauguration of the two thinkers' decades-long collaboration, a simultaneous synthesis and refutation of Marx and Freud, steeped in the post-1968 political anxiety in which it was written. Though we learn the "it" of these introductory sentences refers to the *id*, both the style and content of this passage bring to mind one *id* in particular: that of American novelist Henry Miller. Deleuze and Guattari directly cite Miller's *Sexus* (1949) a handful of pages in, a passage in which Miller argues that "the men who were most *in* life, who were moulding life, who were life itself, ate little, slept little, owned little or nothing" (qtd. in AO, 27), a description which leads Deleuze and Guattari to conclude that the "true visionary is a Spinoza in the garb of a Neapolitan revolutionary" (AO, 28).

"A Spinoza in the garb of a Neapolitan revolutionary" is an apt summation of how Miller's name and words are invoked by Deleuze and Guattari throughout *Anti-Oedipus*, as well as its companion in the two-volume *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 1977's *A Thousand Plateaus*. Miller, along with D. H. Lawrence especially, is cited not so much as a novelist, but as a philosopher, a theorist of desire. While the reader of Miller's novels may find in them a sort of revolutionary, he appears much less ascetic than the visionary described in the passage of *Sexus* Deleuze and Guattari cite. An enigmatic figure in literary history, Miller—underrated modernist, purveyor of smut, anticipator of the Beats—never seems to be mentioned the same way twice (or at all, as is the case in contemporary scholarship, following Kate Millet's famous attack on Miller in 1970's *Sexual Politics*, one of the founding texts of feminist literary criticism). And here, Deleuze and Guattari are no exception. They write in *Anti-Oedipus*,

Strange Anglo-American literature: from Thomas Hardy, from D. H. Lawrence to Malcolm Lowry, from Henry Miller to Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, men who know how to leave, to scramble the codes, to cause flows to circulate, to traverse the desert of the body without organs. They overcome a limit, they shatter a wall,

the capitalist barrier. And of course they fail to complete the process, they never cease failing to do so. (133)²

Here, Deleuze and Guattari commend such Anglophone writers for exploring, as Philip Goodchild puts it, "the nomadic wanderings of desire."³ Deleuze and Guattari's typical preferences—the overcoming of a limit, the shattering of a wall, the line of flight, the flow—are very much on display here, and it should come as no surprise that they cite writers of fiction and poetry in the aid of elucidating some of their key concepts. As Anneleen Masschelein points out,

Much like Freud, who repeatedly claimed poets intuited the truths of psychoanalysis, Deleuze and Guattari cast literary authors like Artaud, Beckett, Proust, Kafka, Miller, Burroughs, Lawrence, etc. as the main precursors of their criticism of Freud and the Oedipus complex, alongside dissident psychoanalysts like Wilhelm Reich or the anti-psychiatrists David Cooper and Robert D. Laing.⁴

Indeed, in *What is Philosophy?* (1991), Deleuze and Guattari insist that such writers (Miller among them) are "half" philosophers but also much more than philosophers. . . . To be sure, they do not produce a synthesis of art and philosophy. They branch out and do not stop branching out."⁵ With Claire Parnet, Deleuze argues for "the superiority of Anglo-American literature" (as opposed to French literature, which is "too human, too historical, too concerned with the future and the past")⁶ in the title of an essay published in 1977's *Dialogues II*, suggesting that Miller and his Anglophone contemporaries are privileged in fulfilling the promise of literature, as Deleuze and Guattari see it: like philosophy, but also more than philosophy. Miller's omnipresence in such discussions is undoubtedly appropriate: in fact, his peculiar style of novel writing often reads more like philosophy than fiction. However, Deleuze, Guattari, and Parnet offer the work of Miller—an American writer, though one who spent much of his career living and writing in France—as a paradigm against which the somehow less modern French literature (with the notable exceptions of Artaud and Proust) is opposed. As a result, they fail to reckon with the fact that Miller's emphasis on the processual, productive, and schizophrenic nature of literature in his production of a counterfeit self has as much in common with European modernism as it does with Deleuze's "strange Anglo-American literature," revealing Miller's significance as a direct and generative link between these two literary traditions. Deleuze's tendency to create separate modernist canons—organized into rhizomes—without acknowledging the zones of becoming between them, ironically or not, reveals the transatlantic, borderless nature of aesthetic and philosophical exchange between various twentieth-century avant-gardes. The case of Henry Miller—and more specifically, the influence of Surrealism and Dada on his work—provides a precise example of writing as production, an idea which is central to the theory of literature developed throughout Deleuze's entire philosophical project, an idea which is distinctly modern: as Marielle Macé writes, "The category of Individual, presenting itself without fixed contours, continually making and unmaking itself, is both boon and burden of modernity."⁷

The counterfeit self

Henry Miller was an extremely prolific writer. Prior to his death in 1980, he published over 70 books, among them novels, travel writings, critical essays about art and literature, and extensive correspondence with other writers such as Blaise Cendrars, Lawrence Durrell, and Anaïs Nin. He got a late start, though: his first novel, *Tropic of Cancer*, was not published until Miller was 42 years old, when Nin (the sometime lover of both Henry and his second wife, June) arranged its publication and borrowed the money for the first printing from her psychoanalyst (and lover), Otto Rank.⁸ In fact, it is Miller's belatedness as a published author that provides the theme of what is perhaps the most interesting portion of Miller's two trilogies, each divided by a decade, a World War, and expatriate Miller's return to the United States: the Obelisk trilogy, including *Tropic of Cancer* (1934), *Black Spring* (1936), and *Tropic of Capricorn* (1938); and *The Rosy Crucifixion*, which is made up of *Sexus*, *Plexus* (1953) and *Nexus* (1960). Miller is well known for a number of other works, and in fact many of his texts exceed the confines of a single work, a single œuvre, in much the same way that it is difficult to strictly label Miller as an "American writer," his writing as "American literature." This network of texts includes the fascinating correspondence between Miller and philosopher Michael Fraenkel which develops Miller's theory of the intellect, *Hamlet* (1939–41), and the many volumes of Nin's diaries, which provide a different, contemporaneous perspective on the years, events, and people discussed by Miller himself in his own autobiographical work.

The six romans à clef, which are usually considered the core of Miller's œuvre, focus on three periods of his life, treated in a patchwork, starkly achronological, and often repetitive fashion. Miller begins with the first two decades of the twentieth century, focusing on his childhood in Williamsburg, Brooklyn (or, "the Fourteenth Ward," as he refers to it), the son of conservative working-class German-Catholic stock. The second period begins in the 1920s as Miller, now a young man, rambles around the United States (unsuccessfully trying to capitalize on a Florida land boom, picking oranges in Chula Vista, California), finally finding work as the employment manager of the Western Union office in New York, memorialized in his novels as the Cosmodemonic (or sometimes, Cosmococcic) Telegraph Company. Having married his first wife, Beatrice (Maude, in his novels), in 1917, the predominant theme of this period is the beginnings of Miller's ill-fated relationship with June, Mansfield, née Juliet Smerth who is introduced to the reader as "Mara," a beautiful and eccentric "taxi dancer" with whom Miller engages in an impassioned, volatile affair before finally marrying her in 1928, following his divorce from Beatrice/Maude. As Miller's relationship with Mara is further complicated by the introduction of Anastasia, a bisexual artist who becomes Mara's lover and Miller's second roommate, the third period begins: the 1930s in Paris, where Miller attempts to repair his relationship with Mara and finally becomes a writer, once and for all. It is this last theme which effectively ties these novels together as a single unit: the Obelisk trilogy and *The Rosy Crucifixion* are the chronicle of Miller's attempt not just to become a writer, but to write—to produce. As Miller describes it in his 1962 "Art of Fiction" interview with *The Paris Review's* George Wickes,

most writing is done away from the typewriter, away from the desk. I'd say it occurs in the quiet, silent moments, while you're walking or shaving or playing a game or whatever, or even talking to someone you're not vitally interested in. You're working, your mind is working, on this problem in the back of your head. So, when you get to the machine it's a mere matter of transfer.⁹

Despite Miller's cavalier downplaying of the tediousness of the process, these two trilogies serve as a record of this "mere matter of transfer," much like Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913–27), of which Miller was a great admirer.

In *The Art of Scandal: Modernism, Libel Law, and the Roman à Clef* (2009), Sean Latham describes the genre of the roman à clef—French for "novel with a key"—as "a reviled and disruptive literary form, thriving as it does on duplicity and an appetite for scandal."¹⁰ The genre has been dismissed by Henry James as little but a "tissue of personalities" (qtd. in Latham, 9) and defended by Truman Capote, who claimed in a 1976 interview with *Playboy* that "all literature is gossip" (qtd. in Latham, 4). Like all romans à clef, there is a "key" to Miller's novels: Mara/Mona refers to June, Boris to Michael Fraenkel, Carl to Austrian writer Alfred Perlès, Anastasia to artist-poet Jean Kronschi. And yet, the reader requires no key to uncover the referent of Henry Miller's Henry Miller—he makes the connection explicit, while also making it clear that the literary Henry Miller is *not* the "real" Henry Miller. In *Tropic of Capricorn* (1938), he writes,

I was the evil product of an evil soil. If the self were not imperishable, the "I" I write about would have been destroyed long ago. To some this may seem like an invention, but whatever I imagine to have happened did actually happen, *at least to me*. History may deny it, since I have played no part in the history of my people, but even if everything I say is wrong, is prejudiced, spiteful, malevolent, even if I am a liar and a poisoner, it is nevertheless the truth and it will have to be swallowed.¹¹

The point Miller is making here is perhaps not as immediate as one might think. Latham introduces his book with a warning to the reader: "this book commits one of literary criticism's deadliest sins by treating seemingly fictional works from the early twentieth century as if they contained real facts about real people and events" (3). He goes on to argue that the intentional fallacy, "that sturdy foundation stone of the modern critical enterprise," is "[f]ar from a natural practice" because it

has to be regularly drummed into literature students. James Joyce is no more Stephen Dedalus, we confidently assure them, than Ernest Hemingway is Jake Barnes or Virginia Woolf is Clarissa Dalloway. That this principle is taught rather than simply intuited, however, suggests that it is *not* a natural way to read, that it is a disciplined intellectual skill rather than some natural aesthetic instinct. (4)

Rather than advocating a return to a pre-Barthes, pre-Foucault conception of the "Author" or a belief in the sovereign subject, Latham here seeks to describe a

pre-1970s mode of reading and writing which “contains its own distinctive array of creative energies that spark productively across the gaps between fact and fiction, between ‘a world elsewhere’ and our own” (5). Though Miller’s work was written during the inaugural era of the roman à clef—“a counter-form to the novel that emerged in the 1890s and helped constitute the legal, aesthetic, and ethical challenges we associate with some of the early twentieth century’s most monumental legal productions” (5)—Latham fails to address the problem of Miller’s particular brand of roman à clef by remaining bogged down in the language of representation. The point of Miller novelizing his own life, as opposed to *memoirizing* it, is not to represent Henry Miller, but to present a new Henry Miller, to *produce* a counterfeit self.

It is in sacrificing himself to literature, effectively forging a counterfeit self through language, that Miller takes what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as a “line of flight,” an act influenced by his reading of the post-World War I European avant-gardes (Dada and Surrealism, in particular) as much as the “Democratic tradition” of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman, whose looming shadow is so frequently cited by Miller and his critics alike.¹² Describing one of the primary aims of schizoanalysis, “the constant destructive task of disintegrating the normal ego,” Deleuze and Guattari identify Miller as a precursor in this task: “Lawrence, Miller, and then Laing were able to demonstrate this in a profound way: it is certain that neither men nor women are clearly defined personalities, but rather vibrations, flows, schizzes, and ‘knots’” (AO, 382). This frustration with the Freudian insistence on a stable subjectivity directly parallels Miller’s dissatisfaction with the modern novel. In *Sexus*—published in Paris in 1949, but not legally available in his native United States until Grove Press boldly published the two trilogies in the 1960s, in defiance of puritanical obscenity laws—Miller seems to defend his choice of himself as the hero of a modern novel, writing,

In the subway, faced with the broken-down night riders of the big city, I fell into a deep introspection, such as comes over the hero in modern novels. Like them, I asked myself useless questions, posed problems that didn’t exist, made plans for the future which would never materialize, doubted everything, including my own existence. For the modern hero thought leads nowhere; his brain is a collender [*sic*] in which he washes the soggy vegetables of the mind.¹³

But this is less of a defense of the modern novel than a critique: more than a decade earlier, in *Black Spring*, his most surrealist text, Miller writes, “No harm, I say, can ever be done a great book by taking it with you to the toilet. Only the little books suffer thereby. Only the little books make ass wipers.”¹⁴ The examples of such “ass wipers” he mentions include the bulk of what is now considered the American modernist canon: “the *Atlantic Monthly*, or any other monthly. . . . Aldous Huxley, Gertrude Stein, Sinclair Lewis, Hemingway, Dos Passos, Dreiser, etc., etc. . . . I hear no bell ringing inside me when I bring these birds to the water closet. I pull the chain and down the sewer they go” (49). For Miller, writing in all-caps this time, “THE TRUE ARTIST IS HE WHO CONQUERS THE ROMANTIC IN HIMSELF” (228), and in arguing that Henry Miller, the author, is such a “true artist,” he offers in *Black Spring* the twin thesis

statements, "*l'homme que j'étais, je ne le suis plus*" (31),¹⁵ and "*I want to declare that I am a traitor to the human race*" (154).

In *Tropic of Capricorn*, Miller writes, "I was ignorant of the fact that there were men then living who went by the outlandish names of Blaise Cendrars, Jacques Vaché, Louis Aragon, Tristan Tzara, René Crevel, Henri de Montherlant, André Breton, Max Ernst, Georges Grosz; ignorant of the fact that on July 14, 1916, at the Saal Waag, in Zurich, the first Dada Manifesto had been proclaimed" (288). Miller goes on to describe the improbability of himself, "[j]ust a Brooklyn boy communicating with the red-haired albinos of the Zuni region" (290), identifying kindred spirits in the founders of Dada and Surrealism, praising Vaché, Apollinaire, and Emile Bouvier, in particular, along the way. And yet, he emphasizes, he *understands* these artists, mourning the fact that he was born a decade too late, on the wrong continent: "To be generous is to say Yes before the man even opens his mouth. To say Yes you have to be first a surrealist or Dadaist, because you have understood what it means to say No. You can even say Yes and No at the same time, provided you do more than is expected of you" (291). He continues:

Ah yes, if I had known then that these birds existed—Cendrars, Vaché, Grosz, Ernst, Apollinaire—if I had known that then, if I had known that in their own way they were thinking exactly the same things as I was, I think I'd have blown up. Yes, I think I'd have gone off like a bomb. But I was ignorant. (292)

Miller's admiration of Dada and Surrealism is not shocking given the proximity of the modernist art novel and the roman à clef.¹⁶ As "the unique Dadaist in America" (*Tropic of Capricorn*, 282), Miller merges the Surrealist impulse to, through writing, uncover the unconscious—"the night life" where "what once ruled during the day," Miller writes in *Plexus* (1953), roughly paraphrasing Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900)¹⁷ because, he declares, it "*contains the entire modern psychology*"¹⁸—with the Emersonian call for autobiography—a traitorous demand spawning the "strange Anglo-American literature" of which Deleuze asks, rhetorically, "What other reason is there for writing than to be traitor to one's own reign, traitor to one's sex, to one's class, to one's majority? And to be traitor to writing" (*DII*, 44).

Miller is simultaneously a traitor to himself and to writing. That it is through writing about himself that he is able to dissolve his ego, to effectively disappear, is no paradox. Deleuze and Parnet write, "For it is difficult to be a traitor; it is to create. One has to lose one's identity, one's face in it. One has to disappear, to become unknown" (45). Miller's style of treachery does not give the reader the impression that Henry Miller is a nonentity, exactly—rather, he jams the circuits, producing so many Henry Millers that the reader is ultimately unable to pin him down as *one* author. Referencing Miller directly, Deleuze and Parnet continue: "Christ invented the face. Miller's problem (like Lawrence's): how to unmake the face by liberating in ourselves the queuing heads which trace the lines of becoming? . . . How to become imperceptible?" (45–6). It is not so much that the author is dead, but that the author as a stable, singular subject has never actually existed—an idea which Miller's writing makes explicit, anticipating

similar proclamations by Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault at the end of the 1960s.¹⁹ In his novels, Miller becomes imperceptible through proliferation, which is why his writing does not fit snugly into Latham's account of the *roman à clef*.

Getting drunk on water

Because of the associative explosiveness of Miller's style, his resistance to contained or continuous narratives in his novels, one could point to nearly any passage in his work in order to identify his production of a counterfeit Henry Miller, a Surrealist "loosening of the self," a literary uncovering of the unconscious self, which is itself no more "authentic" than the conscious self, he seems to suggest.²⁰ To elucidate the ways in which Henry Miller, the protagonist of Miller's novels, does not adhere exactly to the Henry Miller of historical fact would be to merely approach his work through the lens of critical biography. Instead, it is more interesting to consider how throughout his novels, Henry Miller becomes, in fact, many different Henry Millers. Take, for instance, one of the more famous episodes in *Sexus* (which stands out as a mature triumph among Miller's novels) not exclusively dedicated to Miller's sexual escapades (of which, there are of course many)—and one to which Deleuze returns often. This episode illustrates Henry Miller in the process of becoming yet another Henry Miller.

Late in the novel, Miller's reader witnesses him playing the role of the madman—one of many different roles the protagonist is seen to play throughout *Sexus*. This episode occurs in New York, in what can be considered the novel's present day—despite the consistently loose temporality of Miller's narratives. It begins with a lover's quarrel between Mara—now Mona—and Miller in the couple's home. Mona leaves, only to be coaxed back by Miller's friend Arthur Raymond, a pianist. Upon returning, Mona implores her soon-to-be-husband: "I want you to fuck me as though you never had before" (556). An extended sex scene ensues, in which Mona, "squirming like an eel" (556) becomes convinced—for the moment—of Miller's love for her and the two drift off to sleep. They wake up late, "hungry as wolves" (559), and take a taxi to a grocery store, where the proprietor sings the praises of his native Italy, putting a bug in Miller's ear: "Your wife is so beautiful . . . why you don't go to Italy? Just a few months. I tell you, you never come back" (560). Thus is introduced one of the major themes of Miller's novels: the urge to escape, and to Europe in particular. Miller and Mona return home, daydreaming in bed of traveling the world: Baghdad, Vienna, Budapest, Sofia, Belgrade, Constantinople, Timbuktu, Taormina, Jerusalem, Romania, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt. Almost seamlessly, the daydream transitions into a REM cycle:

Somebody is talking to me. We've been having a long conversation. And I'm not in the desert any more but on Sixth Avenue under an elevated station. My friend Ulric is placing his hand on my shoulder and smiling at me reassuringly. He is repeating what he said a moment ago—that I will be happy in Europe. He talks about Mt. Aetna, about grapes, about leisure, idleness, good food, sunshine. He drops a seed in me. (564–5)

The reader's sense of space and time is further disoriented as Miller continues this increasingly surreal interlude: "sixteen years later on a Sunday morning, accompanied by a native of the Argentine and a French whore from Montmartre, I am strolling leisurely through a cathedral in Naples" (565). Eventually, Miller the narrator emerges from Miller the dreamer's unconscious:

I was like a slave who dreams of freedom, whose whole being is saturated with one idea: escape. Nobody could have convinced me that if I were offered the choice between her and my dream of Europe I would choose the latter. It would have seemed utterly fantastic, *then*, to suppose that it would be she herself who would offer me this choice. And perhaps even more fantastic still that the day I would sail for Europe I would have to ask my friend Ulric for ten dollars so as to have something in my pocket on touching my beloved European soil. (568)

As Miller rapidly, chaotically moves between past, present, and future, dreams and waking life, fact and fiction, as it were, it becomes clear that Miller's resistance to chronological or teleological narratives is tied up with his rejection of a stable subjectivity: he is not the man he was, nor is he ever to stop becoming different men. His tendency to refer to himself as a "Mongol" in his novels, speculating on the possibility of his having "Mongolian blood" refers not only to his constant wanderings through space, but through time—and, like the surrealists, different consciousnesses, which he will soon make explicit. According to Deleuze and Parnet, "Writing always becomes something else which is its own becoming. There is no assemblage which functions on a single flux" (44). This flux, both one and multiple, is duration, in the Bergsonian sense: time. In his textual travels through space and time, Miller is a nomad, a producer of nomadic thought.

It is here where we begin to see Miller actively create a counterfeit self, yet another Henry Miller. As his dream-premonition makes his love for Mona somehow more real to him, the next day the two take the train to Hoboken to get married, perhaps "to conceal the fact that I had been married before, perhaps we were a bit ahead of the legal schedule" (569). It turns out to be a humiliating experience: they find two hobos to serve as witnesses, and they both return to New York penniless, feeling thoroughly depressed. Miller calls his friend Ulric, but Ulric's roommate Ned answers instead. Ned invites them over, and Miller agrees, hoping to eke out a wedding present in the form of a hot meal and something to drink. When they arrive, it turns out that Ned does not have any money—his girlfriend Marcelle does, and she is on her way—but he has got plenty of liquor: "He was an artist who had never found his medium. His best medium was drink" (571). Marcelle arrives and the two women decide to go out for groceries to prepare a makeshift wedding feast. Miller takes a few sips of gin and Ned provokes him to a rant, which takes a strange turn when Miller declares, "I want everybody to strip down, not just to the flesh, but to the soul. Sometimes I get so hungry, so rapacious, that I could eat people up. I can't wait for them to tell me things . . . how they feel . . . what they want . . . and so on. I want to chew them alive . . . find out for myself . . . quick, all at once. Listen" (578). At this point, Miller sees a drawing made by Ulric, an artist, and

begins to eat it. Ned snatches it away; Miller replies, "Give me something else then. Give me a coat . . . anything. Here, give me your hand!" (578). Miller attempts to eat Ned's hand and Ned accuses him of "going nuts" (578). "You think it's the gin?" Miller asks: "'All right, I'll throw the glass away.' I went to the window and threw it into the courtyard. 'There! Now give me a glass of water. Bring a *pitcher* of water in. I'll show you. . . . You never saw anybody get drunk on water, eh? Well watch me!'" (578–9).

What follows is an extended monologue in which Miller, portraying an enlightened madman, is interrupted more and more frequently as his ideas and language become increasingly surreal, ultimately leading Marcelle to resolve to leave Ned, realizing that he does not love her, thanking Miller: "Thanks, Henry, for giving me a jolt. I guess you weren't talking such nonsense after all" (588). In the meantime, Miller waxes philosophical on the nature of hunger, desire, intoxication, ecstasy, and insanity. After requesting to eat only the bones of the chicken Marcelle has prepared—"Bones give phosphorous and iodine. Mona always feeds me bones when I'm exalted. You see, when I'm effervescent I give off vital energy. You don't need bones—you need cosmic juices. You've worn your celestial envelope too thin. You're radiating from the sexual sphere" (582)—Marcelle asks for clarification, to which he replies, "Your spiritual hormones are impoverished. You love Apis the Bull instead of Krishna the charioteer. You'll find your Paradise, but it will be on the lower level. Then the only escape is insanity" (583). Having succeeded in getting drunk on water, embodying a new consciousness by means of a placebo, Miller seems to snap out of it:

I paused a moment to get my breath, rather surprised that I hadn't received a clout. Ned had a gleam in his eye which might have been interpreted as friendly and encouraging—or murderous. I was hoping somebody would start something, throw a bottle, smash things, scream, yell, anything but sit there and take it like stunned owls. I didn't know why I had picked on Marcelle, she hadn't done anything to me. I was just using her as a stooge. Mona should have interrupted me. . . . I sort of counted on her doing that. But no, she was strangely quiet, strangely impartial. (587)

Of course, Miller does not remark on the strangeness of this particular wedding night. Deleuze makes much of this scene, asking with Guattari, "Could what the drug user or masochist obtains also be obtained in a different fashion in the conditions of the plane, so it would even be possible to use drugs without using drugs, to get soused on pure water, as in Henry Miller's experimentations?"²¹ In their consideration of the ability of drugs to grant their users immanence, Deleuze and Guattari conclude, like Breton, Charles Baudelaire, and Henri Michaux (whom they cite) before them, "Drugs are too unwieldy to grasp the imperceptible and becomings-imperceptible; drug users believed that drugs would grant them the plane, when in fact the plane must distill its own drugs, remaining master of speeds and proximities" (*ATP*, 286). In getting drunk on pure water, Miller "succeed[s] in getting high, but by abstention" (*ATP*, 285). Deleuze and Guattari's reading of *Sexus* seems to echo Walter Benjamin's claim of the surrealists, that "This loosening of the self by intoxication is, at the same time, precisely

the fruitful, living experience that allowed these people to step outside the domain of intoxication" (279). Here, it is through language and life-as-art that Miller is able to achieve intoxication, lucidity, madness—the reader witnesses Henry Miller in the process of becoming yet another Henry Miller.

Strange Anglo-American literature

Praising the "superiority" of Anglo-American literature, Deleuze and Parnet again cite "the great scene of drunkenness on pure water in Henry Miller" (53). In fact, they use this scene as an example of the concept of "becoming"—as integral to Deleuze's entire philosophy as it is at work throughout Miller's novels. They write,

Becoming is loving without alcohol, drugs and madness, becoming-sober for a life which is richer and richer. This is sympathy, assembling. Making one's bed, the opposite of making a career, being neither simulator of identifications nor the frigid doctor of distances. You will get into your bed as you made it, no one will come to tuck you in. Too many people want to be tucked in by a huge identifying mother, or by the social medical officer of distances. Yes, lunatics, madmen, neurotics, alcoholics, and drug addicts, the infectious ones, let them get out of it as best they can: our very sympathy is that it should be none of our business. Each one of us has to make his own way. But being capable of it is sometimes difficult. (53–4)

Here, Deleuze and Parnet defend what some might see as Deleuze and Guattari's privileging of the schizophrenic (and with him or her, the lunatic, the madman or -woman, the neurotic, the alcoholic, the drug addict) as the paradigmatic figure free from the bonds of modern society, slave as it is to capitalism and "the daddy-mommy Oedipalization" (AO, 133) of psychoanalysis in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, insisting that in singing the praises of such fringe characters, "We are trying to extract from love all possession, all identification to become capable of loving. We are trying to extract from madness the life which it contains, while hating the lunatics who constantly kill life, turn it against itself. We are trying to extract from alcohol the life which it contains, without drinking" (DII, 53). Here, the outsider—or as they put it, the "traitor"—becomes the model of liberation, though Deleuze and Guattari are careful not to ignore the realities of the schizophrenic's condition. Ironically, in an essay devoted to elaborating on the theory of "strange Anglo-American literature" first introduced in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Parnet fail to recognize the extent to which, as French writers, their fascination with American writers is mirrored by those very same Americans' fascination with French literature. They begin the essay citing Lawrence on leaving—what they call the line of flight, a deterritorialization, claiming that according to Lawrence, the highest aim of literature is "to leave, to escape . . . to cross the horizon, enter into another life. . . . It is thus that Melville finds himself in the middle of the Pacific. He has really crossed the line of the horizon" (36). The French, they argue,

do not understand this: “The French are too human, too historical, too concerned with the future and the past. They spend their time in in-depth analysis. They do not know how to become, they think in terms of historical past and future” (37). Anglo-American writers, though, “constantly [show] these ruptures, these characters who create their line of flight, who create through a line of flight. Thomas Hardy, Melville, Stevenson, Virginia Woolf, Thomas Wolfe, Lawrence, Fitzgerald, Miller, Kerouac. In them everything is departure, becoming, passage, leap, daemon, relationship with the outside. They create a new Earth” (36).

While their analysis of Miller along these lines is certainly correct, their eagerness to essentialize Miller as an American writer leaves them unable to account for the fact that Miller, a self-declared “citizen of the world,” takes his line of flight—both in his writing and his life—toward France, toward the ruins of the European avant-garde. As Miller writes in *Sexus*, it is on the model of Surrealism and Dada that he develops his techniques, not only as a writer, but also more generally, as an artist in the world:

I had survived my own destructive school of Dadaism: I had progressed, if that is the word, from scholar to critic to pole-axer. My literary experiments lay in ruins, like the cities of old which were sacked by the vandals. I wanted to build, but the materials were unreliable and the plans had not even become blueprints. If the substance of art is the human soul, then I must confess that with dead souls I could visualize nothing germinating under my hand. (271)

Deleuze and Parnet’s admiration of the becomingness of Miller’s writing—becoming-woman, becoming-animal, becoming-grass, becoming-China—and his success as a “traitor” does not acknowledge the European roots of these very undertakings. As a traitor to himself and to writing, Miller is also traitor to his native country and to the very idea of citizenship or national allegiance itself. In *Tropic of Capricorn*, Miller quotes the following lines from Tzara’s *Dada Manifesto* of 1918:

I am writing a manifesto and I want nothing, yet I saw certain things, and I am against manifestoes as a matter of principle, as I am also against principles. . . . I write this manifesto to show that one may perform opposed actions together, in a single fresh respiration; I am against action; for continual contradiction, for affirmation also, I am neither for nor against it and I do not explain for I hate good sense. . . . There is a literature which does not reach the voracious mass. The work of creators, sprung from a real necessity on the part of the author, and for himself. Consciousness of a supreme egotism where the stars waste away. . . . Each page must explode, either with the profoundly serious and heavy, the whirlwind, dizziness, the new, the eternal, with the overwhelming hoax, with an enthusiasm for principles or with the mode of typography. On the one hand a staggering fleeing world, affianced to the jinglebells of the infernal gamut, on the other hand: *new beings*. (288)

The very process of becoming at work in Miller’s novels, praised as quintessentially Anglo-American by Deleuze and Parnet, is here in its embryonic form. The opposition

as a matter of principle, even to principles (!); the "minority" ("There is a literature which does not reach the voracious mass"); the "supreme egotism" at work in the creation of a literary self (cf. Emerson's call for diaries and autobiographies); the production of "*new beings*," new Henry Millers.

The counterfeit self of Miller's novels is caught up in this process of becoming: becoming-literary, becoming-dreamwork, becoming-Henry Miller:

The artist's game is to move over into reality. It is to see beyond the mere "disaster" which the picture of a lost battlefield renders to the naked eye. For, since the beginning of time the picture which the world has presented to the naked human eye can hardly seem anything but a hideous battle ground of lost causes. It has been so and will be so until man ceases to regard himself as the mere seat of conflict. Until he takes up the task of becoming the "I of his I." (*Sexus*, 273)

In becoming the "I of his I," and never ceasing, never finding satiation in one final "I," getting drunk on water, Henry Miller inaugurates a revolution in consciousness which is continued by American writers of the decades following World War II, who seek other consciousnesses, escapes, and lines of flight through experiments with drugs, sexuality, and literary form itself. Maybe the current interest of literary criticism in Deleuze's (and Deleuze and Guattari's) work, to which Miller's writings as both novelist and philosopher is so integral, will aid in the resurgence of scholarship on Miller, whose contributions to American and international modernism have been too long ignored, or at the very least, swept to the side. By conceiving of Miller not only as a man of letters, but as an initiator of discourse, a bridge between modernisms in the United States and Europe, Deleuze (with Guattari and Parnet) opens up the possibility for a new perspective on the writer, whose masculine bravado and churlish remarks on women and minorities (no matter how well they are historically contextualized) have for too long overshadowed his contribution to literary aesthetics and modern thought.

Notes

- 1 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Penguin, 2009), 1.
- 2 They continue, turning to the problem of literature: "The neurotic impasse again closes—the daddy-mommy of Oedipalization, America, the return to the native land—or else the perversion of the exotic territorialities, then drugs, alcohol—or worse still, an old fascist dream. Never has delirium oscillated more between its two poles. But through the impasses and the triangles a schizophrenic flow moves, irresistibly; sperm, river, drainage, inflamed genital mucus, or a stream of words that do not let themselves be coded, a libido that is too fluid, too viscous: a violence against syntax, a concerted destruction of the signifier, non-sense erect as a flow, polyvocality that returns to haunt all relations. How poorly the problem of literature

is put, starting from the ideology that it bears, or from the co-option of it by a social order. People are co-opted, not works, which will always come to awake a sleeping youth, and which never cease extending their flame. As for ideology, it is the most confused notion because it keeps us from seizing the relationship of the literary machine with a field of production, and the moment when the emitted sign breaks through this 'form of the content' that was attempting to maintain the sign within the order of the signifier. Yet it has been a long time since Engels demonstrated, already apropos of Balzac, how an author is great because he cannot prevent himself from tracing flows and causing them to circulate, flows that split asunder the catholic and despotic signifier of his work, and that necessarily nourish a revolutionary machine on the horizon. That is what style is, or rather the absence of style—asyntactic, agrammatical: the moment when language is no longer defined by what it says, even less by what makes it a signifying thing, but by what causes it to move, to flow, and to explode—desire. For literature is like schizophrenia: a process and not a goal, a production and not an expression" (*Anti-Oedipus*, 133).

- 3 Philip Goodchild, *Deleuze and Guattari: An Introduction to the Politics of Desire* (London: Sage, 1996), 55.
- 4 Anneleen Masschelein, "Rip the veil of the old vision across through the rent: Reading D. H. Lawrence with Deleuze and Guattari," in *Modernism and Theory: A Critical Debate*, ed. Stephen Ross (London: Routledge, 2009), 24.
- 5 Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (London: Verso, 1994), 67.
- 6 Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University, 2007), 37.
- 7 Marielle Macé, "Ways of Reading, Modes of Being," trans. Marlon Jones, *New Literary History* 44 (2013): 219.
- 8 Neil Pearson, *Obelisk: A History of Jack Kahane and Obelisk Press* (Liverpool: Liverpool University, 2007), 439.
- 9 George Plimpton, ed., *Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews*, vol. 2 (New York: Viking, 1963), 172.
- 10 Sean Latham, *The Art of Scandal: Modernism, Libel Law, and the Roman à Clef* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2009), 7.
- 11 Henry Miller, *Tropic of Capricorn* (New York: Grove, 1961), 5.
- 12 It is reported that *Leaves of Grass* was the only book Miller packed in his luggage when he embarked for France, where he was to live upon arriving in 1930 until the outbreak of World War II. Interestingly, in the 1855 Preface to *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman instructs his reader to "read these leaves in the open air every season of every year of your life, re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book, dismiss whatever insults your own soul; and your very flesh shall be a great poem and have the richest fluency not only in its words but in the silent lines of its lips and face and between the lashes of your eyes and in every motion and joint of your body." See Jeanette Winterson, "Renegade: The Male Mystique of Henry Miller," *New York Times* (26 January 2012): n.p.; and Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass: The Original 1855 Edition* (New York: Dover, 2007), 8.
- 13 Miller, *Sexus* (New York: Grove, 1965), 102–3.
- 14 Miller, *Black Spring* (New York: Grove, 1965), 49.
- 15 "The man I was, I am no longer."

- 16 In his 1929 essay on surrealism, Walter Benjamin praises Breton's *Nadja* (1928) as a "true, creative synthesis between the art novel and the *roman-à-clef*," as accurate a description of Breton's novel as it is of Miller's first published novel, *Tropic of Cancer*, which begins with an epigraph taken from an 1840 entry in Emerson's journals: "These novels will give way, by and by, to diaries or autobiographies—captivating books, if only a man knew how to choose among what he calls his experiences that which is really his experience, and how to record truth truly!" See Walter Benjamin, "Surrealism," in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken, 1977), 180; and Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson: 1820–1872*, eds. Edward Waldo Emerson and Waldo Emerson Forbes, vol. 5 (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1911), 516.
- 17 It is unclear exactly what passage in *The Interpretation of Dreams* Miller here refers to, though it is interesting to note that the phrase "Into the Night Life" was previously used by Miller as the title of the seventh chapter of *Black Spring*.
- 18 Miller, *Plexus* (New York: Grove, 1965), 384.
- 19 See Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image-Music-Text*, trans. and ed. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 142–8; and Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977), 113–38.
- 20 See, especially, the episode in *Sexus* in which Miller parodically enacts the role of his friend Kronski's analyst, having convinced Kronski that he studied psychoanalysis in Europe with Rank, and ultimately concluding that "*everybody becomes a healer the moment he forgets about himself*" (425).
- 21 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 166.

Schizoanalytic Modernism: The Case of Antonin Artaud

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We have become so accustomed to speaking about modernism as though it were a period in history when certain quite definite things took place, or more particularly, when a certain artistic style, or perhaps more strongly, a certain creative mode of production, held sway, that we have forgotten the basic fact that in the first instance “modernism” was and remains nothing more or less than a concept. It is a word that does a certain kind of intellectual work for us. Like all concepts, it is self-positing and self-referential: “it posits itself and its object at the same time as it is created.”¹ Modernism, as a concept, is defined by its consistency, what it holds together, rather than what it refers to; in doing so, it unites the relative and the absolute: “it is relative to its own components, to other concepts, to the plane on which it is defined, and to the problems it is supposed to resolve; but it is absolute through the condensation it carries out, the site it occupies on the plane, and the conditions it assigns to the problem” (*WP*, 21). Its relativity is its pedagogy, Deleuze and Guattari suggest, while its absoluteness is its ontology, its ideality, and its reality. If this definition of the concept holds for modernism, as I think it does, then it goes some way towards clarifying the difficulties many of us have with generalizing concepts like modernism which however precisely we try to define them always seem to come up against works that defy categorization. Antonin Artaud is an excellent case in point—is he a surrealist, modernist or proto-postmodernist? He has been claimed by proponents of all three, which suggests these categories are leaky, at best.

To say that modernism is self-positing is not to say that any text that claims to be modern or modernist is worthy of the name, though it has to be said that most of the artists and authors we have come to think of as modernist were rather fond of making such proclamations. Calling one’s work, or indeed one’s self, modernist is not enough—one has to go further than that to be truly modernist. We might concede that these acts of self-naming and self-designation of works belong to the order of modernism’s pedagogy. But its ontology lies elsewhere. The modernist work is one that takes the risk of self-positing its own status as an artistic object. Duchamp’s *Fountain* (1917) is the *locus classicus* in this respect because it challenges the idea that the artist needs also to be the actual “God” creator of the work. In this case, Duchamp did nothing more than

sign and name the piece. It is as pure an example of self-positing as one could hope to find. What is key, though, is the willingness of the artist to set aside tradition, or what might be thought of as the artistic phylum, and start afresh. What the modernists invented, then, was a new way of holding things together in an artistic sense. By which I mean to say that modernism was first of all a concept—we did not invent the term “modernism” to retrospectively classify and describe an artistic movement, as we did with “classicism”; rather, modernism as a movement came into being by first of all inventing the concept of modernism. Modernism separated itself not only from previous ways of “doing” art, but also from previous ways of “constituting” the very idea of art. As Artaud’s brief appreciation of Rimbaud makes clear, the very meaning of the word “art” changed with the advent of modernism:

New events in thought, stirrings, vitality of relations—not relations of feelings, of the inside of one feeling to the inside of another feeling, but the outside of a feeling, its place, its status of the *importance* of one feeling to the *importance* of another feeling, the external, figurative value of one thought in relation to another thought—and of his relations to these things, their acceptance within him, their twists and turns—this is the contribution of Rimbaud. Rimbaud taught us a new way of being, a new way of maintaining ourselves in the midst of things.²

Ultimately, the true legacy of modernism was not the body of works it left behind. Its true bequest, rather, was the concept of modernism itself and idea that art is self-positing. This was its most powerful gift to future generations. In one fell swoop, art was freed from the twin chains of the artist as “God” creator and the artistic “field” (in Bourdieu’s sense), enabling it to appear—to be realized—anywhere where the artistic will and the taste for art could be found. Modernism’s pedagogy was important in this regard because it taught us to accept this new way of doing and, more importantly, thinking about art. Instead of an unfolding tradition in which art was produced according to a received understanding of what art was, modernism taught the world that art could be anything we were prepared to say was art and could, in Deleuze and Guattari’s sense, make “stand up” as art (*WP*, 164). Art was anything that made us think in an artistic way, irrespective of the nature of the actual object. Postmodernism has kept this legacy alive, but has also cashed-in on it and commercialized it and in doing so blurred the boundaries between art and its greatest rival, the pure commodity. Art is of course a commodity too, but in Deleuze and Guattari’s terms it also offers something beyond that, a surplus value of code, as they call it, that cannot be realized in purely commercial terms. The cost of an artwork has nothing to do with its impact as a creative work and vice versa.

Artaud clearly fits this paradigm of a modernist. His artistic œuvre is built on a dual platform of denouncing as “pig shit” all previous forms of writing on the one hand and on the other hand announcing that his own largely unrealizable mode of writing is the one true form. Artaud’s work, particularly his theater, but also his film treatments, can usefully be described as conceptual in the sense in which I have outlined it here—it is self-positing and it has no (possible) reference. Despite the many practical instructions Artaud gave for staging what he called cruel theater, the instructions cannot readily

be actualized, and they tend to function more as virtual intensities. It is certainly in that vein that his work has been appreciated by so-called French theory, particularly Derrida, Foucault, and of course Deleuze and Guattari. For Derrida and Foucault, Artaud is an emblematic figure whose work stands at the intersection between sense and nonsense, madness and sanity, and ultimately art and nonart. Deleuze and Guattari not only share an interest in this side of Artaud, but also want to adduce another side to his work that will interest me more here, namely that of the clinician: through his art he conceptualized key elements of what Darian Leader has usefully termed the “structure” of psychosis.³ In Deleuze and Guattari’s view, Artaud created art in order to, if not heal himself, then at least find a way of living in the circumstances—mental, physical, material, and so on—he found himself in. Often destitute, frequently strung-out for the want of morphine, physically broken, not to mention incarcerated in an asylum many years of his life, Artaud’s daily existence was a constant struggle just to survive; but for him, the real battle was elsewhere. His very thoughts felt like so many barbs, and his words were no less hurtful. As he says repeatedly in his writings, he suffered.

Artaud’s sufferings were many and various. Some of them, particularly those associated with his addiction to opium and morphine, were to a certain extent self-induced. His addiction interfered with his ability to form and maintain intimate relations, and it got in the way of his acting career. But for all that, it was also necessary to him. In part, this was no doubt purely chemical—once addicted to morphine, the body literally demands its daily fix and without it falls into illness. Artaud described his craving for the drug as the need for angels, having already endured enough hell.⁴ His letters have all the double-dealing and self-justification one has learned to see as typical of addicts, but that does not mean they do not contain a certain amount of truth. Artaud is very clear-eyed about why he’s an addict. In a 1922 letter to his first major girlfriend, Génica Athanasiou, he admits that he takes “opium from time to time, but not out of habit,” which is scarcely to be believed. But he touches on something essential when he implores her:

Understand at last that the primordial thing, the thing which is the question is the INTENSITY of suffering. You are always talking about my life, about being cured someday, but you must understand that the *idea of suffering* is stronger than the idea of healing, the idea of life. And the question for me is to relieve this suffering; the very intensity of this suffering prevents me from thinking of anything else. (21–2)

In 1940 he is much more forthright about his addiction. Again writing to Génica Athanasiou he says: “You must find heroin at all costs and you must risk death to get it to me here [the asylum at Ville-Evrard]. This is where matters stand” (418).

It is the precise nature of this suffering—whether drug-related, or not, it hardly matters—that interests me here because it goes to the heart of what the concept of the body without organs does. In a brief aperçu on suicide, Artaud writes:

I suffer hideously from life. There is no state I can attain. And it is certain that I have been dead for a long time, I have already committed suicide. . . . I have

no appetite for death, I have an appetite for not existing, for never having fallen into this interlude of imbecilities, abdications, renunciations, and obtuse encounters which is the self of Antonin Artaud, much weaker than he is. The self of this wandering invalid which from time to time presents its shadow on which he himself has spat, and long since, this crippled and shuffling self, this virtual, impossible self which nevertheless finds itself in reality. No one has felt its weakness as strongly as he, it is the principal, essential weakness of humanity. To destroy, to not exist. (102)

The distinction Artaud draws here between life and existence is central to the body without organs—schizoanalysis is in many ways, as Guattari admits in different places throughout his work, a form of existentialism. This is perhaps too strongly put. But it is nevertheless the case, as Artaud's writings here demonstrate, that the realm of the body without organs is a realm beyond and other to biological life. He suffers physically, to be sure, but Artaud's true pain is existential—he cannot endure the fact that the world is as it is, full of idiots and shysters, that the language he has to speak is so poorly formed, and so on. He invents a whole new language of breath-words (*mots-souffle*) and howl-words (*mots-cris*), but sometimes not even that is enough to save him and he is forced to retreat to a space he referred to as his body without organs.

Deleuze and Guattari adopt the concept of the body without organs very early on in their collaboration and, as I will try to show, it soon became an essential component in their map of the structure of psychosis. Although its significance is widely recognized, the body without organs concept has a very checkered history in the secondary literature on Deleuze and Guattari—there is very little agreement across the board as to its precise meaning, a fact that has surely impeded its broader uptake. Matters are not helped any by Deleuze and Guattari saying in interview that they themselves are not sure whether they each meant the same thing by it. I want to suggest that the reason we—and I very much mean to include myself in this “we”—have struggled to understand the concept of the body without organs properly is that we have failed to heed one of the most basic interpretive principles Deleuze and Guattari insist upon, which is that instead of asking what something means, we should ask how it works.⁵ Put simply, if we want to know what the body without organs is, then we should first of all ask how it works. The body without organs *is* what it *does*. To which I will add the following caveat: to understand how the body without organs works we have to take a systemic view of it and recognize that it does not work alone.

If we are to understand the body without organs properly, then, we must as Laplanche and Pontalis say of the “death instinct,” discover its “structural necessity.”⁶ Not simply how it works, but why it is necessary to the larger mechanism that is schizoanalysis. Our starting question, “how does it work?,” is less clear-cut than it first appears because neither of the basic points of reference—neither the “body” nor the “organs”—are deployed in anything like a straightforward manner. The body it refers to is not the physical body, and the organs it refers to are not necessarily bodily. Both may be “material,” as Deleuze and Guattari often maintain, but that does not

mean they are physical, or actual empirical entities, because for Deleuze and Guattari almost anything, including words, thoughts, ideas, and so on, can constitute “matter” under the right conditions. If we were to locate the body without organs at all, in a spatial or topographical sense, we would have to say it was in the unconscious, but this is not quite right either because for Deleuze and Guattari (in contrast to Freud), the unconscious is not a preexisting entity or agency of the mind.⁷ Deleuze and Guattari reject the idea that the unconscious is only revealed in the slips of the tongue, errors of memory, and assorted other tics and *faux pas* that have come to be known as “Freudian slips.” In Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, the unconscious is not simply a dark force constantly threatening to undermine and betray our performance of our self or indeed selves; it is, rather, a capacity or capability of the mind whose limits are constantly tested without ever being reached. We will need to qualify this statement further in what follows, but for now it serves to at least locate the territory that interests us.

If we return to the very source of the phrase itself, namely the work of Artaud, it is obvious that insofar as Deleuze and Guattari are concerned it does not refer to a state of being. It is neither physiological nor ontological.

“No mouth. No tongue. No teeth. No larynx. No oesophagus. No belly. No anus.” The automata stop dead and set free the unorganized mass they once served to articulate. The full body without organs is the unproductive, the sterile, the unengendered, the unconsumable. Antonin Artaud discovered this one day, finding himself with no shape or form whatsoever, right there where he was at that moment. The death instinct: that is its name, and death is not without a model. For desire desires death also, because the full body of death is its motor, just as it desires life, because the organs of life are the *working machine*. (AO, 8)

There are several points to note in Deleuze and Guattari’s analysis of Artaud here that can help us to answer more concretely the twofold question of what the body without organs does and what the body without organs therefore is: first, and most importantly, Deleuze and Guattari say the body without organs is synonymous with Freud’s death instinct—the implications of this have not been sufficiently investigated in the secondary literature: at a minimum it means that the body without organs is what desire *desires* (not as an object, but rather as a state of being); second, the body without organs is not an object, it is not something desire *desires* because of something it lacks (in Freudian terms it is akin to an aim, not an object); third, the body without organs is how desire *desires* (it is not only the direction in which desire moves, it is the way it moves too); lastly, the body without organs is the degree zero of desire, it is what desire *desires* when it no longer wishes to desire. “It is nondesire as well as desire” (ATP, 149). In extreme situations like Artaud’s, in the face of the onslaught of psychosis, this is what desire desires the most, not to desire, or more accurately to be in a state in which desire is unable to exert any pressure, unable to make any demands, any judgments. What Artaud longs for, what he desires, and what he finds in the body without organs is a blessed moment of relief from desire’s incessant demands.

From a certain point of view it would be much better if nothing worked, if nothing functioned. Never being born, escaping the wheel of continual birth and rebirth, no mouth to suck with, no anus to shit through. (AO, 7)

For Artaud, the organs—the mouth, the tongue, the anus, and so on—are importunate parasites, or interlopers, or invaders, constantly seeking his attention, demanding action of him, and ultimately driving him “crazy” (in the vernacular rather than clinical sense). From this it is clear, too, that the body without organs belongs exclusively to the psychical apparatus; it has no direct connection with the physical world: its attributes are impossible anywhere except the virtual domain of the psyche. It is a realm of pure intensities, a realm like that of nonsense which as Deleuze explains in the *Logic of Sense* is by definition incapable of extension.⁸

This does not mean the body cannot be a source of stimulus for the productions that take place on and through the body without organs, but it does mean that the body is not a reference point for the body without organs. Deleuze and Guattari are explicit about this. It “has nothing whatsoever to do with the body itself, or with an image of the body. It is the body without an image” (AO, 8). They perhaps confuse matters when they go on to speak about the anorexic building herself a body without organs via starvation, as though to say her emaciated body is the literal embodiment of the organless body. But this is not what they mean. Anorexia is not a refusal of the body, it is a refusal of the “organism,” or more specifically, a refusal of what the “organism” imposes upon the body.⁹ By “organism” they seem to mean a conception of life that is independent of the subject. One might see it as the true object of the death drive. As will become clear in what follows, the theme of refusal is central to the notion of the body without organs. What it is refusing in this case, the organism, is perhaps coextensive with the body, but is also clearly not identical with the body, or else there would be no need to make this distinction to begin with. Deleuze and Guattari never actually define the organism. However, it seems clear that what they mean by it is some kind of “organ system” in which organ is code for any kind of internal psychic stimulus, that is, stimulus originating from within the psychic apparatus itself and not as a response to stimuli from the external environment.

As Deleuze and Guattari constantly emphasize throughout their work, the body without organs does not preexist desire, operating as some ultimate or primordial gatekeeper; it comes into being as an effect of desiring. For example, when schizophrenic desire goes into a kind of productive hyperdrive, firing off thoughts and associations faster than the subject can process and put into perspective, the body without organs arises as a counterweight, as a force of antiproduction, slowing things down, and eventually bringing them to a halt. Deleuze and Guattari find an instructive example of this process in the “schizophrenic table” observed by the Belgian poet and painter Henri Michaux in *The Major Ordeals of the Mind*, which is rendered inoperative as a table by years of “useless additions, supplements to supplements—the sign of an irresistible tendency to elaborate without ever being able to stop.”¹⁰ The subject of endless production, the table is paradoxically incapable of producing anything by itself; it cannot even perform its basic function as a table. It is unproductive in and of itself,

it cannot produce anything, but more importantly it sets a natural limit to production, eventually becoming so overly elaborate it cannot be augmented any further. Just as importantly, it achieves this unproductive state without anyone intending for it to happen this way.

This is precisely the point of Artaud's cry that he wants a body without organs. Besieged by demands from within, demands which are like so many extra and as it were unneeded organs, Artaud longs for the peace of the unproductive state of an organless body. In most instances, then, at least in its earliest iteration in Deleuze and Guattari's thinking, the body without organs manifests itself as a refusal, or even more strongly as a repulsion (not to be confused with repression). Not in the conscious sense of an "I" being put off or disgusted by something external to it, but in the deeper and dare I say more visceral sense of an unconscious and essentially defensive response to internal stimuli, that is, stimuli produced by the unconscious system taken as a whole (which is by no means limited to the stimuli produced within the confines of the skull, but includes the entire sensory apparatus), which Deleuze and Guattari initially referred to as "desiring machines," but would later term "affects" and "becomings" (having grown uncomfortable with the narrowly sexual reading many of their commentators made of "desiring machines").

Every coupling of machines, every production of a machine, every sound of a machine running, becomes unbearable to the body without organs. Beneath its organs it senses there are larvae and loathsome worms, and a God at work messing it all up or strangling it by organizing it. (AO, 9)

The body without organs arises in response to stimuli generated from within the unconscious system (desire, in the most general sense of the word) and not in response to external events and circumstances, no matter how troubling or perplexing they may be. Internal stimuli do not directly cause the body without organs to come into being, but their existence, or rather their insistence, requires its presence to keep things "balanced." The body without organs is, in this precise sense, structurally necessary. If I may be permitted a structural analogy here, I would suggest its function is akin to that of the "wind dampener" one finds in certain tall buildings, such as the Taipei 101, which acts as an internal counterbalance against external forces, particularly high winds, enabling the building to move but preventing it from moving too far and cracking. The wind dampener absorbs the building's shocks into itself, thus sparing the building. The practical operation of the body without organs is counterbalancing too in this precise sense: it erects a membrane where Freud thought no barrier was possible (between the so-called "primary processes" and the unconscious) that absorbs the potential shocks of the psychic material that passes through. Although not dissimilar in terms of its effect, its actual operation is quite different from the censor (in the psychoanalytic sense of the term); it operates in the midst of desire, alongside it or beneath it, recoding it and passing judgment on it, keeping things balanced.

The body without organs determines when a particular mode of desire, or particular way of desiring, is undesirable (not to say inadmissible). In contrast to Freud's censor,

though, the body without organs is not a near-sighted gatekeeper easily duped by the cunning disguises desire is apt to wear. Its function is not merely to protect the conscious from blushing self-reproach we experience when we are confronted by our desires in their naked form. It is more powerful than that, and its operations tend to be all or nothing campaigns. It is a force of antiproduction, that is, counterbalance, where production refers to the processes whereby the unconscious formulates the objects (the intuitions, ideas, thoughts, fantasies, and so on) that are central to the subject's sense of self and wellbeing.

In order to resist organ-machines, the body without organs presents its smooth, slippery, opaque, taut surface as a barrier. In order to resist linked, connected, and interrupted flows, it sets up a counterflow of amorphous, undifferentiated fluid. In order to resist using words composed of articulated phonetic units, it utters only gasps and cries that are sheer unarticulated blocks of sound. (AO, 9)

The body without organs does not regulate the flow of good and bad unconscious thoughts, as the censor does in Freud's work, it actively—and aggressively—seeks to drown out and bring a halt to every aspect of the production of unconscious thoughts: it does not repress them, leaving them free to shunt off elsewhere and take on a different guise; it drowns them.

The imagery Deleuze and Guattari use here (counterflows of amorphous undifferentiated fluid and so on) to describe how the body without organs functions is drawn from Deleuze's discussion of Melanie Klein's theory of partial objects in *The Logic of Sense*, and not Artaud. The latter is only brought into the discussion as an example of what Klein means. It is worth mentioning this because it reminds us that the origins of the term body without organs, and the thinking behind it, are heterogeneous. We cannot simply look to Artaud as the defining authority capable of providing the "last word" on the subject.¹¹ Freud and Klein are at least as important points of reference as Artaud. There is perhaps another reason, too, which is that as one charts the movement from Deleuze's first use of the term body without organs in *The Logic of Sense* through to its later iterations in both *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, it becomes clear that the concept of the body without organs evolved constantly and considerably (to the point of eventually being declared a nonconcept). This underscores my previous point, namely that Artaud cannot be used as the final arbiter of what the body without organs means. Having said that, as I have tried to demonstrate here, it is nevertheless important to consider closely what Artaud meant to Deleuze and Guattari, because it is clear they took considerable inspiration from his work. Indeed, I am tempted to claim—but there is no precise evidence to support such a claim—that for Deleuze and Guattari the very idea that schizophrenia could be thought of as having a structure derives from Artaud.

What particularly interested Deleuze about Klein is her "geography and geometry of living dimensions," that is, her distinction between the so-called paranoid-schizoid position of the infant and the depressive position which is supposed to succeed it (LS, 188). One can see in this the precursor to Deleuze and Guattari's interest in

maps and diagrams. The paranoid-schizoid position Klein speaks of is the product of the splitting of the object, that is, that which the child first attaches to both as a matter of practical necessity and out of love, namely the maternal breast. For Klein, all subsequent attachments, meaning all subsequent investments of the libido, follow this path of latching onto and in the process separating off an object. The “invested” breast is dissociated from the maternal body as is the child’s mouth from its own body; in the process, both take on a life of their own, or in Deleuze and Guattari’s language they become machinic. The good partial objects are adopted by the child as central to her sense of self (introjection), while the bad objects are expelled (projection); but, the good objects do not stay good, as it were, and continue to split apart, thus creating new good and bad objects to be absorbed or expelled (*LS*, 187).

Klein’s theory of good and bad objects is subsumed in Deleuze and Guattari’s work by the concept of desiring-machines. “The breast is a machine that produces milk, and the mouth a machine coupled to it” (*AO*, 1). Deleuze and Guattari retain, and indeed refine, the ambivalence central to Klein’s theory of object relations. The body without organs is precisely a defense mechanism against the ambivalence of objects/machines. At the micro level, the breast and the mouth are machines because they constitute an effective relationship—at the most mechanical level, the breast supplies the child with the nutrition it requires to live, the child’s suckling stimulates the production of milk in the breast; over and above that, the nursing process is said to facilitate the formation of the child–mother bond. At the macro level, the breast and the mouth are machines because they begin the process of forming the child as subject by organizing his or her body in a particular way. The mouth of the infant is used not only for eating and breathing, but also for crying and vomiting, and so on, but over time it is also used for speaking, and eventually this function becomes dominant, with even breathing consigned to the nose. At that point the mouth ceases to be machinic, what matters now are the words and sounds that issue from it; its machinic quality is displaced onto language. Pathology makes its appearance when this ordering of the machines is undone, or becomes somehow intolerable, as in the example of the anorexic. “The mouth of the anorexic wavers between several functions: its possessor is uncertain as to whether it is an eating-machine, an anal machine, a talking-machine, or a breathing-machine (asthma attacks)” (*AO*, 1). This is what Deleuze and Guattari mean when they say desiring-machines “only work by breaking down [*Les machines désirantes ne marchent que détraquées*],” their effect is always (potentially) as disordering as it is ordering, particularly when, as in this example, the machinic possibilities appear endless (*AO*, 8).

Desiring-machines are not in and of themselves pathological, but they do nevertheless have a pathological modality, which is characterized by what I will term the *irruption of immanence*. “Desiring-machines make us an organism; but at the very heart of this production, within the very production of this production, the body suffers from being organized in this way, from not having some other sort of organization, or no organization at all” (*AO*, 8). As Deleuze and Guattari go on to clarify, the body they are referring to here is the body without organs. When *this* body rebels, it overturns all the existing hierarchies, all the established benchmarks, and to a greater or lesser

degree induces chaos. If the mouth acquires the status of speaking-machine, it loses its distinct purpose—the production of words can be accomplished by other machines (we can write, make films, music, and so on). To put it another way, when the mouth starts to speak, it must give up its other functions—eating, vomiting, and crying, and so on—and enter a realm in which it is a relatively unimportant instrument. When the mouth speaks, what matters are the words that flow from it, not the mouth itself. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari describe this process as deterritorialization. When immanence is restored, however, the mouth regains its vital, machinic ability to form new connections, but at the cost of its ordered place in the world. It becomes machinic in itself when it ceases to speak and instead utters gasps and cries and other unarticulated sounds such as Artaud's breath-cries; it enhances this power by reasserting its bodily ability to bite and chew and spew and so on. These are not regressions, in Freud's sense, because they do not constitute a return to childhood as such; rather, what is at stake is an irruption of immanence and a corresponding loss of transcendence (AO, 5). Chaos and disorder reign when the desiring-machines become autonomous, when they break free from the necessary constraints of the organism as a whole.

This irruption of immanence is, I want to stress, pathological—it is a schizophrenic effect signaling the onset of psychosis. I stress this because the material Deleuze and Guattari cite as examples of the irruption of immanence is often quite charming, bucolic even. As for instance, the seemingly beautiful scene they extract from Büchner's account of Lenz's mountain strolls:

Everything is a machine. Celestial machines, the stars or rainbows in the sky, alpine machines—all of them connected to those of his body. The continual whirl of machines. "He thought that it must be a feeling of endless bliss to be in contact with the profound life of every form, to have a soul for rocks, metals, water, and plants, to take into himself, as in a dream, every element of nature, like flowers that breathe with the waxing and waning of the moon." (AO, 2)

As conditioned as we are by more than two centuries of nature-driven Romanticism, it is difficult for us to see this passage as anything but beautiful. It seems to betoken everything we strive for in this hypercultural age that constantly bemoans its disconnection from the natural environment. Here is someone who is fully in touch with and connected at the deepest levels to the one thing we post-postmodernists no longer know how to know, namely nature itself. For precisely this reason we should be cautious. It is true, Deleuze and Guattari do, at times, and this is clearly one of those times, make it seem as though the irruption of immanence is liberating, but one has to read them very carefully because what they are saying is that it is liberating for the schizophrenic, who finds the pressure of staying within the confines of the transcendently organized body and universe impossible to sustain. Lenz enjoys his mountain stroll precisely because it enables him to escape the claustrophobic atmosphere of his home and his church, his father and his pastor. This does not mean it is in and of itself liberating; in fact, it should be understood as a falling into illness. Schizoanalysis is the attempt to understand this illness for itself and map its structure.

In the foregoing, we have only seen the body without organs in its “negative” light as an agency of repulsion and antiproduction. Although this was how the “concept” began life, it is not the whole story, though it is the whole story insofar as Artaud is concerned. The decade between *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* saw Deleuze and Guattari rethink the body without organs as a multidimensional concept with both “negative” and “affirmative” capabilities. And new voices besides Artaud’s were drafted in to dramatize this paradigm shift in their thinking. In line with this, they also propose that the formation of the body without organs could be influenced by the subject’s actions. While they continue to maintain that the body without organs is unengendered, they now allow that it is possible to act in such a way as to give rise to an “affirmative,” or what they now term a “healthy” body without organs as opposed to a “negative” or “cancerous” body without organs.

Notes

- 1 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. G. Burchell and H. Tomlinson (London: Verso, 1994), 22.
- 2 Antonin Artaud, *Selected Writings*, ed. Susan Sontag (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 26.
- 3 Darian Leader, *What is Madness?* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2011), 11.
- 4 Stephen Barber, *Blows and Bombs: Antonin Artaud: The Biography* (London: Creation Books, 2003), 24.
- 5 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem, and H. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 109.
- 6 Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-analysis*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), 97.
- 7 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. B. Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 149.
- 8 Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. M. Lester (London: Athlone, 1990), 70.
- 9 Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam (London: Athlone, 1987), 110.
- 10 Henri Michaux, *The Major Ordeals of the Mind and the Countless Minor Ones*, trans. R. Howard (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), 126. See also Deleuze and Guattari, *AO*, 6.
- 11 For an extended discussion of this point see Ian Buchanan, “Deleuze and his Sources,” in *Modernism and Theory: A Critical Debate*, ed. S. Ross (London: Routledge, 2009), 40–8.

Deleuze's Perspectival Theory of Modernism and the Baroque

Christopher Langlois

Writing in *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, Deleuze provocatively insists that we consider the philosophical contributions of Leibniz as a “source of all modern literature.”¹ To understand what Deleuze intends by genetically linking the discourse of modernist literature with post-Leibnizian philosophy, it is necessary at the outset that we shift our focus to the peculiar conceptual dimension through which both of these discourses are reciprocally constituted—the Baroque diagram of the monad and the virtual (metaphysical) perceptions that it grounds. The operative Leibnizian concept that Deleuze exploits and thereby innovates is that of the monad, particularly its capacity for conceiving for philosophy a nontranscendent (univocal and vitalist) metaphysics of perspective and immanence. Deleuze inherits the Leibnizian monad in the same way and for the same reason that he excavates the aesthetic concept of the Baroque: as a critique of the philosophical law of transcendence and as a subversion of the “Image of Thought” and its attendant avatars of classical representation.² The aesthetics of the Baroque that Deleuze derives from Leibniz’s metaphysical and mathematical writings (they turn out to be one and the same) stands in the history of modernity as the first serious attempt to supplement for the shadow of nihilism that began to sweep across the cultural landscape of Europe in the wake of the

crisis and collapse of all theological Reason. . . . That is where the Baroque assumes its position: Is there some way of saving the theological ideal at a moment when it is being contested on all sides, and when the world cannot stop accumulating its “proofs” against it, ravages and miseries, at a time when the earth will soon shake and tremble . . . ?³

Only by coming to terms with the convergence of Leibniz and the Baroque within the philosophical and aesthetic history of modernity can we begin to appreciate Deleuze’s investment in portraying *both* Leibniz and the Baroque as sources of modernist literature and contemporary intellectual culture.

The impetus behind Deleuze’s writing and thinking in *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* is not radically different from what similarly impelled Walter Benjamin to

advocate a wholesale reconsideration of the Baroque as the quintessential aesthetic ideology of modernity.⁴ The Baroque is fundamentally an aesthetic borne out of a crisis at the heart of modernity, and what it exposes is not the opportunity, for instance, of either philosophy, literature, painting, or science to pick up the reins of a metaphysics where they are dropped, say, by the theological hegemony of divine transcendence or the commodity form of capitalist ideology.⁵ The Baroque is not a mere opportunistic paradigm of aesthetic or philosophical significance. What the Baroque exposes and expresses, rather, is what Deleuze calls the “*dark background*” of immanence constitutive of the monadic ontology advanced by Leibniz, which is revealed to the latter’s philosophical and mathematical imagination precisely where the theological and enlightenment fictions of transcendence begin historically to dissolve (*Fold*, 27). The collapse of the monotheistic and rationalist worldviews are thus fortuitous occasions in the historical narrative of modernity for Deleuze to place an uncompromising emphasis on what alternative visions of transcendence (whether Platonic, Cartesian, Kantian, or even Heideggerian) were unable to keep out of philosophical sight: the chaotic ontological ground of immanence.

More specifically, what Deleuze is trying to accomplish with his unorthodox study of Leibniz and the Baroque is a conceptual expression of the aleatory instant of ontological rupture when the veil of transcendence is lifted and the groundswell of immanence rises up to reveal just how intensely and sovereignly creative is the essence of life and thought.⁶ The monad is the conceptual device that Deleuze selects in order to develop and fortify a philosophical sensibility that even insofar as it refuses to capitulate to the appeal of principles of chaos and nihilism, does not have to take immediate recourse to ideologies of transcendence, which for Deleuze (and Guattari) are invariably implicated in grinding the infinite speed of creative philosophical thinking to a mind-numbing halt, “making us think that immanence is a prison (solipsism) from which the Transcendent will save us.”⁷

The challenge that Deleuze faces in extricating modern philosophy and art from the twin disasters of chaos and nihilism, then, is in devising a metaphysical theory of perspective capable of envisioning an intelligible way through the monadic totality of immanence that he inherits from the Baroque-inspired worldview of Leibniz. What makes this challenge especially daunting is that in order to separate a metaphysical theory of perspective from the ideology of transcendence, Deleuze is logically compelled to integrate any such perspective into the monadic totality of which it turns out to be an indissociable part. The infinitely dynamic curvatures and tangents, the incessant rhythms and folds that constitute the Baroque architecture of the monadic space of immanence, Deleuze recognizes, entail that articulating the metaphysical optics of a subjective viewpoint in this context must negotiate the problematic that such a viewpoint is everywhere under threat of dissolving, through topological metamorphosis, into the anamorphic images and vanishing points of inflection that permanently populate the subject’s object-field of perception and consciousness in the world of the monad. To be sure, Deleuze’s account of how it is that the subject of a nontranscendent theory of metaphysical perception is able to function and exist amidst the continual catastrophe of its anamorphic dissolution, which it is the initial task of this chapter to explicate,

is an invaluable philosophical contribution to further deciphering the aesthetics of perspectivism that the modernist imagination, particularly of figures like Jorge Luis Borges, Francis Bacon, and Samuel Beckett, works tirelessly to represent.

Toward a metaphysics of perspective in the monadic space of the Baroque

As Deleuze states at the very outset of *The Fold*, “the Baroque refers not to an essence but rather to an operative function, to a trait. It endlessly produces folds” (3). The “operative function” that the Leibnizian monad facilitates is geared toward a synthesis of two mathematical and abstract lines of flight, one of an infinitely continuous movement of objects and points, and the other of variable curvatures of space, “the pleats of matter, and the folds in the soul” (3). Leibniz is supremely post-Cartesian in a way that twentieth-century poststructuralist philosophers and modernist artists should admire. In plotting a trajectory that leads through the continuous labyrinth of pleats of matter (body) to the folds of the soul (mind), Leibniz melds the dynamic atomism of an infinitely vitalist conception of the creative becoming of existence with the physical matter and textures of force that perpetually express and exacerbate it. The movement of force and becoming that Leibnizian mathematics is trying to capture and calculate is in no way oriented as a linear, flat, or teleological trajectory along the monadological plane of immanence. This is why a differential calculus is needed that can rise to the occasion of computing irrational numbers and erratically traced vectors and magnitudes as they accelerate on the monadological plane where their movements are inscribed. Passage through the monadological plane cannot therefore “be represented by a straight line,” which does not account for magnitudes and vectors of variability and curvature (17). “The straight line,” on the contrary, “always has to be intermingled with curved lines” (17). The movement of such a line is always variable and tending toward concavity as it weaves its way through pleats of matter guided only by the surrounding force of its folds.

The reason why Deleuze is interested in explicating Leibniz's differential calculus of the variability and curvature of matter and movement in monadological space is so that he can uncover what, in Leibnizian mathematics, escapes referential modes of mathematical critique and must defer to the analytical resources of a metaphysical philosophy of immanence and an aesthetic theory of the Baroque imagination. To arrive at a comprehensive picture of the metaphysics of perspectivism that Deleuze is interested in deriving from the limit-point of Leibnizian mathematics and philosophy, then, it is imperative that an account be given of precisely how Deleuze makes his way through Leibnizian mathematics⁸ and concludes with the discovery of a post-Leibnizian aesthetics of perception and point of view, one that is initially grounded in an analytics of the Baroque (and neo-Baroque) and then further developed in line with a philosophical critique of modernist art and fiction. Accordingly, the first step in seeing how Deleuze accomplishes this is to trace the conceptual development

from what he calls “point of inflection” in the object-world of monadological space all the way to the “metaphysical point” of an immanently monadological experience of perspective, which is located, paradoxically, where the subject and object of this perception continuously collapse, or vanish into reciprocating relations of anamorphic distortion (23).

Deleuze calls the tangential intersections of the straight lines intermingled with curves, which reflect movement on the monadological plane of immanence, sites of the “point of inflection,” or alternatively the “physical point,” and one of their ambiguous characteristics is that they compel the gaze of mathematical and conceptual perception to conflate infinite acceleration and velocity with absolute inertia (23). The swirls in a slab of marble, the folds to infinity in a horse’s mane, for instance, are flooded with so many points of inflection that can be quantified (their physical scale being so microscopic and minor) using only irrational number-sets that are not restricted in their calculations by a flattened or “real” scientific plane of reference. As Deleuze explains, “the irrational number is the common limit of two convergent series, of which one has no maximum and the other no minimum. The differential quotient is the common limit of the relation between two quantities that are vanishing” (17). The point of inflection, what for Deleuze functions as the first modality of virtual perception, inheres in this vanishing point where two convergent lines intersect. Deleuze’s insistence on deploying a mathematical and philosophical analytic in the space of the monadological plane thus demands the capacity to impute value and coherence to a vanishing point of inflection. In order to trace an object’s vector of movement on the monadological plane of the fold as it approaches the asymptotic vanishing point of inflection, it is necessary to confront the object and register its magnitude as it is in the throes of leaping off the plane of reference and out of the purview of rational calculation. Paradoxically, what is most real and what is most in need of quantification and conceptualization on the monadological plane is precisely what is vanishing and what thereby resists calculation by rational values and numbers. Hence the demand, according to Deleuze, of a mathematical sensibility that converges with a Baroque imagination: “The definition of Baroque mathematics is born with Leibniz” (17).

Once he has established that the invention of a differential calculus is necessary for the Leibnizian conception of the monad, Deleuze then proceeds to explain that tracing the movement of matter in the vanishing instants and crevices of monadic space calls also for an overhaul of the subject–object relation that had hitherto grounded philosophical and mathematical perception: “if the status of the object is profoundly changed, so also is that of the subject” (19). The transition from “point of inflection” in the object to “point of position” in the subject occurs when the line that “intermingles with curves” is followed all the way to where it collides with another line of curvature, intermingling yet again with its monadic counterpart on the tangent of a fold. Deleuze calls the site of this eventual intermingling between convergent lines of curvature the “*point of view*,” but it is not a point of view in the quotidian use of the term (19). It is here that Deleuze refashions the subjective viewpoint of mathematical and philosophical perception after the objective image of the point of inflection:

Such is the basis of perspectivism, which does not mean a dependence in respect to a pre-given or defined subject; to the contrary, a subject will be what comes to the point of view, or rather what remains in the point of view. That is why the transformation of the object refers to a correlative transformation of the subject. . . . The point of view is not what varies with the subject, at least in the first instance; it is, to the contrary, the condition in which an eventual subject apprehends a variation (metamorphosis), or: something = x (anamorphosis). For Leibniz, for Nietzsche, for William and Henry James, and for Whitehead as well, perspectivism amounts to a relativism, but not the relativism we take for granted. It is not a variation of truth according to the subject, but the condition in which the truth of a variation appears to the subject. This is the very idea of a Baroque perspective. (19–20)

As Deleuze makes clear in this lengthy excerpt, Baroque perspective consists in a topological indeterminacy between the point of view of the object of inflection and the point of view of the subject of perception. Before the metamorphosis of two lines into a vanishing point of inflection, according to this schema, the subject of perception does not in any real way exist *as such*. An event of metamorphosis, an anamorphic distortion of the object is required if the subject of perception is to exist at all (and constitutively) as the inhabitant of a particular point of view coextensive with the position of the object of perception. The anamorphic distortion of the object that occurs at the site of the vanishing point of inflection is therefore conceptualized by Deleuze as the birthplace of what he dubs “*point of position*” (23). It is this point that it is the honor of the subject to singularly inhabit, precisely so that it can begin its life exclusively as a subject for the perception of this very same vanishing point of inflection (23). There is no such thing as a metaphysical perspective of transcendence that is immune from the fluctuations in perception caused by anamorphic variations in the objects and object-fields that perception beholds. The Baroque perspective on points of inflection therefore doubles as the *point of position*, or alternatively as what Deleuze calls the “*mathematical point*,” and what this reciprocal relation reveals is that both the point of position and the vanishing point of inflection are together inscribed in the monadological plane of immanence (23). What the object of inflection shares with the subject of position, then, is precisely the reciprocating perspective they bring to the monadological event of vanishing, the perspective, that is to say, that is inscribed where the object and the subject are overwhelmed by infinitely variegated images and perceptions erupting out of the chiaroscuro of the thresholds of the fold. The possibility of perception inheres in the subject of position, then, only to the degree that it is constituted by the very flux of variation that it is charged with registering in the objective point of inflection. As Gregg Lambert writes,

the subject now designates the temporal unity of a “point-of-view,” but only on the condition that every point-of-view is centered on variation. . . . Consequently, if the world can be described as an infinite number of perspectives in variation, approaching chaos, then point-of-view would correspond to the secret order of these perspectives that, according to Leibniz, each monad includes.⁹

The third modality of virtual perception that the monad expresses is what Deleuze calls the “*point of inclusion*,” or the “*metaphysical point*.” Although it appears patently contradictory for Deleuze to resurrect a metaphysical point of perception after having guided the Leibnizian monadology through several stages of the subversion of classical metaphysics, what saves it from bad faith and logical incoherence is the absence of any recourse taken to philosophical illusions of transcendence. Lacking transcendence, the metaphysical point of inclusion that the Baroque perspective inscribes in the monadological plane of immanence nevertheless occupies what Deleuze does not shy away from calling “a higher point” and “another nature” (*Fold*, 23). Again, this would indeed be deeply problematic and raise flags of logical inconsistency (and philosophical disaster) were it not for the fact that any point of perspective, metaphysical or otherwise, is inextricably linked to the *operative function*, a *trait* of the folds in the soul of the Baroque. The developmental trajectory taken by Deleuze’s analytic of the monad, which distinguishes between “*the point of inflection*, *the point of position*, and [now] *the point of inclusion*,” is circular in its trajectory, though without devolving into a tautological theory of perception (23). To phrase this in the terms of Deleuze and Guattari’s *What is Philosophy?*, the *metaphysical point* that Deleuze develops in *The Fold* does not represent a concept of a type of perspective that can be smuggled outside of the reality constructed by the philosophical imagination that it retroactively grounds. It is the concept that comes closest to thinking “the nonthought within thought,” which for Deleuze and Guattari will come to represent the prephilosophical “plane of immanence,” the *apriori* of philosophical thinking as such (*WP*, 59).

The monadological circuit of the Baroque perspective that Deleuze traverses, in other words, is virtuously immanent rather than viciously transcendent. The metaphysical point of inclusion, by coalescing the point of inflection and the point of position into an infinitely dynamic yet singular perspective on objects and points of view that are constantly at the point of vanishing, reinforces the ontological One of the monad, such that traversing the monad all the way to infinity winds the journey back and displaces it onto simply another topological surface of the monadological plane of immanence. At the absolute limit of the horizon of the metaphysical perspective of inclusion is a continuous topological inversion displacing this perspective into an infinity of singular monads that fold, unfold, and refold in a perpetual show of creative ontological becoming. “Everyone knows the name,” Deleuze insists, “that Leibniz ascribes to the soul or to the subject of a metaphysical point: the monad. He borrows this name from the Neoplatonists who used it to designate a state of One, a unity that envelops multiplicity, this multiplicity developing the One in the manner of a ‘series’” (*Fold*, 23). The monad is *the metaphysical point of its own immanent perspective*, and because each monad is reflected in a multiplicity of other monads, and because each monad reflects (in varying degrees of clarity) the One of the infinitely multiple series of monadic reflections, Deleuze is being entirely logically consistent in stating that where points of subjective position converge with points of objective inflection is in an anamorphic point of vanishing that is nevertheless not the equivalent of a void or a nothingness (and thus not an escapist pathway to nihilism). Deleuze develops a

perspectival theory of metaphysical immanence precisely as a reaction against nihilism as the only form of revolt against the ideology of transcendence.

Deleuze is careful here to separate the differential calculus of metaphysical perception that he derives from Leibniz from the more familiar context of its application in the physical world that mathematics tends ordinarily to reflect. This distinction is central to the metaphysics of perception that Deleuze is developing:

Differential relations intervene only in order to extract a clear perception from minute, obscure perceptions. Thus the calculus is precisely a psychic mechanism, and if it is fictive, it is in the sense that this mechanism belongs to a hallucinatory perception. Calculus surely has a psychological reality, but here it is deprived of physical reality. There can be no question of assuming it in what perception resembles, that is, by turning it into a physical mechanism, except through convention and by increasing the fiction. (97–8)

Ontologically speaking, the physical reality of what the Leibnizian differential calculus projects is something that is completely hypothetical and can only really be expressed as an albeit highly convincing fiction of mathematical reality (the fiction is very much *real* in this case). Deleuze does not in any way deny that what the differential calculus discovers in physical space—a series of minute perceptions—is really there to be calculated, dissected, and experimented with. Rather, the argument here is that because each minute monadic perception can be combined and selected together with any other minute monadic perceptions to compose a clear calculation, expression, or sensation (say, the calculation of magnitude for a line of curvature traveling at speeds of infinite acceleration, the expression of shades of gray out of yellows and purples, or the sensation of hunger or pain out of a flux of micro sensations of satiety and pleasure), it is necessary to admit that implicit to the monadic totality is “an infinity of compossible minute perceptions” that simply do not make the perspectival cut, *in all individual instances*, of selection and distinction:

at the limit, then, all monads possess an infinity of compossible minute perceptions, but have differential relations that will select certain ones in order to yield clear perceptions proper to each. In this way every monad, as we have seen, expresses the same world as the others, but nonetheless owns an exclusive zone of clear expression that is distinguished from every other monad. (90)

From “compossibility” in the Baroque to “impossibility” in the neo-Baroque

The world that includes an infinity of “compossible” monadic expressions is the one in which each monad hypothetically has perspectival access to “the same green color, the same note, the same river,” even if it is the case that, in the individual’s exclusive

zone of reality, “never do two monads perceive the same green in the same degree of chiaroscuro” (90). This is the harmonious and rational world of the monadic totality that Leibniz affirms as constitutive of his Baroque theodicy, a world that is based on a rigid selection from, and exclusion of “impossible” singularities and expressions. Although Deleuze sympathizes with the Leibnizian theodicy, he is nevertheless obliged to admit that one of its philosophical (to say nothing of its aesthetic and ethical) shortcomings is that it rejects, ontologically, the intuition of the simultaneous inherence of compossible *and* impossible singularities and perceptions in the univocal monadic totality: “God chooses between an infinity of possible worlds, impossible with each other, and chooses the best. . . . That is what makes Adam the nonsinner to be supposed impossible with this world, since it implies a singularity that diverges from those of this world” (60–1). Deleuze had already taken Leibniz to task in *Logic of Sense* for having reduced the discovery of impossible and divergent series of singularities to a preindividual condition that is subsequently excluded according to the criteria of “the best” reality, which under the watchful authority of the divine presence is populated only by reasonable and reciprocally compossible monads. “In fact,” writes Deleuze in *Logic of Sense*,

a notion like Leibnizian “*compossibility*” means that, with the monads being assimilated to singular points, each series which converges around one of these points is extended in other series which converge around other points; another world begins in the vicinity of points which would bring about the divergence of obtained series. We see therefore how Leibniz *excludes* divergence by distributing it into “impossibles,” and by retaining maximum convergence or continuity as the criterion of the best possible world, that is, of the real world.¹⁰

It is precisely where Deleuze wants to level the distinction between impossibility and compossibility that there arises the necessity of supplementing the Baroque sensibility that Leibniz expresses with a neo-Baroque affirmation of divergent series of singularities, the elements that comprise the totality of impossible forms of existence and that reflect the spectrum of possible perceptions within the infinite multiplicity of the post-theological monadic universe.

This is why Deleuze is constantly drawn to the fantastical neo-Baroque and modernist fiction of Jorge Luis Borges, and particularly to the short story “The Garden of Forking Paths,”¹¹ where “Borges, one of Leibniz’s disciples, invoked the Chinese philosopher-architect Ts’ui Pen, the inventor of the ‘garden with bifurcating paths,’ a baroque labyrinth whose infinite series converge and diverge, forming a webbing of time embracing all possibilities” (*Fold*, 62). Deleuze continues: “Borges invokes the Chinese philosopher rather than Leibniz,” however, for the simple reason that “he wanted, just as did Maurice Leblanc, to have God pass into existence all impossible worlds at once instead of choosing one of them, the best” (62). Borges does not defend *this* world, which Deleuze points out is the Leibnizian world of divine selection; rather, Borges’s fictional constructions are invested in the neo-Baroque conception of a world comprised of nonlinear, multidirectional, and nonmutually exclusive possibilities of narrative,

where sequences of past, present, and future events and temporalities are aggregated in a textual fabric of impossible simultaneity. The virtual narrative operator of Borges's "The Garden of Forking Paths" is the *secret* of Yu Tsun's mission and death, his "infinite penitence and sickness of the heart," a secret that takes flight across multiple lines of aleatory convergence and that continually intersects, in palimpsestual coherence, with other secrets and other worlds that are disjointed, temporally as much as psychologically and geographically, from the narrative's originary point of reference ("Garden," 101). Borges refuses to foreclose avenues of digression and divergence even as the narrative rushes toward its mysteriously fateful conclusion. The narrative's protagonist, Yu Tsun, who is set into motion by the power that this virtual secret unleashes, is forced to negotiate his way through a labyrinthine narrative series that is everywhere at the point of vanishing into outlandish circumlocution. "Along this line," observes Jean-Clet Martin,

a number of unrelated events occur that cause [Yu Tsun] to forget who he is and force him to abandon the reference points of an all too human subjectivity. To flee and to become clandestine are operations associated with worlds and things that no longer have a connection with being human, but rather awaken in us becomings where the form of determination (I think) completely dissolves into something that is a purely impersonal determinable.¹²

If the neo-Baroque project of modernist aesthetics consists not only in the pursuit of the desire to unveil the disguised reality of impossible worlds, but also the imperative "to think without principles, in the absence of God and in the absence of man himself" (*Fold*, 67), as Deleuze suggests that it is, then it should come as no surprise that at the foundation of this project is Deleuze's avowed indebtedness to the Leibnizian theory of a nontranscendent yet metaphysically determinable mode of thought and perception.¹³ Thanks specifically to the mathematical and philosophical inventiveness of Leibniz, then, Deleuze has at his disposal the ingredients for further developing a theory of perspectivism that is sharpened and concentrated to the paradoxical degree that it is plunged into instances of obscurity, darkness, contingency, and chaos. Although "we must wait for Nietzsche, Mallarmé, Whitehead and Borges to appoint divergence as the unique event in a violent cosmos," Martin reminds us, it is nevertheless with Leibniz that the monumental philosophical leap is risked that takes our everyday modes of subjective perception and thought into the recesses of the impossible and therefore fictional (yet real) existence of worlds that are immune from empirical and realist verification and judgment (*Variations*, 114).

Toward a metaphysical perspective in modernist art and literature

Deleuze's metaphysical theory of perspectivism, which is embedded conceptually in the monadological plane of immanence and guided by a dynamic logic of anamorphic

distortion and ontological metamorphosis, is what determines his contribution to a modernist theory of perception, one that is Baroque in its imagination and style and that does not compromise on its misgivings with the philosophical ideology of transcendence. Once the principle of an anamorphic logic of perspective is projected as the metaphysical horizon of life in the monad, Deleuze can go on to assert that “the essence of the Baroque entails neither falling into nor emerging from illusion but rather *realizing* something in illusion itself, or of tying it to a spiritual *presence* that endows its spaces and fragments with a collective unity. . . . The Baroque artists know well that hallucination does not feign presence, but that presence is hallucinatory” (*Fold*, 125). Fredric Jameson reads Deleuze’s (and Guattari’s) contribution to the aesthetic ideology of modernism precisely along these lines, in terms of how the conceptual repertoire developed in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*¹⁴—“schizophrenic literature” in particular¹⁵—is fixated on decoding (deterritorializing) “the bonds of time and of logic, the succession of one experiential moment after another without the organization and perspective imposed by the various kinds of abstract orders of meaning—whether individual or social—which we associate with ordinary daily life” (*The Ideologies of Theory*, 424). The “most revealing and authentic” modernist moment in the history of literature for Deleuze and Guattari (426), Jameson explains, a history that spans from “primitive storytelling, precapitalist literatures, bourgeois realism, and the various modernisms of the present postindustrial world of late monopoly capital and of the superstate” (425), inheres in those works that express a vigilant aesthetic commitment to creating art in the midst of the “pure primordial flux” of immanence while fending off the desire to recode this flux according to the dictates and terms of whatever philosophical, social, political, or psychological ideology and perspective happens to presently be dominant in the world outside of art.

The modernists who do this the best are the ones who neither make of immanence, the “pure primordial flux,” a new idol of aesthetic transcendence, like the extreme “Action Painting” of Jackson Pollock,¹⁶ nor do they return nostalgically and impotently to historically defunct styles of composition, like the post-*White on White* painting of Kazimir Malevich. For Deleuze, the artists most committed to the ideals of modernism are those who push the limits of hallucinatory visions as far as they can go into the virtual substratum of realism and reality, into the *in-between* zones of transcendence and immanence, figuration and abstraction. This is where Bacon paints and where Kafka and Beckett write: “on a single plane . . . of two immediately adjacent sectors, that encloses space, that constitutes an absolutely closed and revolving space” (*FB*, 9). What Deleuze explicates in *The Fold* as a nontranscendent metaphysics of perspective applies directly to the forms of vision, sensation, and imagination that are opened up by the “closed and revolving” spaces of the creative becomings of modernist works of art and literature.¹⁷

The relevance of Deleuze’s theory of a metaphysical perspective for diagnosing the aesthetic ideology of modernity becomes clearer where he associates the Baroque with a crisis in capitalist property: “if the Baroque has often been associated with capitalism, it is because the Baroque is linked to a crisis of property, a crisis that appears at once with the growth of new machines in the social field and the discovery of new living

beings in the organism" (*Fold*, 110). As provocative as this linkage between the Baroque and capitalism no doubt is, it comes on the heels of the distinction Deleuze wants to make regarding "Having" and "Being," which is a fundamentally ontological distinction to be making (109). Perceptions are what monads "Have" and what in turn demarcate their zones of ontological discernibility. Deleuze is not oblivious to the fact that at some point in the presentation of a theory of metaphysical perspective that is enmeshed in what he conceptualizes, after Leibniz, as the monadological plane of immanence, he would have to confront the *actual* and *real* implications of the plane being populated by living monads: "The question always entails living in the world" (137). Building on a critique of Husserlian and Heideggerian onto-phenomenology, Deleuze thus proposes that one of Leibniz's great philosophical discoveries was that "reasonable monads" inhabit a world that they cannot entirely possess or control, that the subjects of virtual perception are constantly converging, diverging, and vanishing into the world of objects (and *vice versa*) in an infinitely fluctuating state of becoming. The animal world, the world of physical objects and fields of forces, is exterior to the reasonable monad. Yet because the monad is in constant contact with this world, this world in turn is folded into the monad's perspectival field of vision and converted into a set of predicates that the monad will use in defining its ontological inherence. With every other monad, with every other animal, with every other atom and molecule that the singularly reasonable monad encounters, it should come as no surprise that the higher order monad of metaphysical perception is itself under perpetual threat of being folded, enfolded, and refolded on the basis of its sundry encounters and divergences.

This is why, furthermore, Deleuze argues that "phenomenology does not suffice" to tell us what life is like from the closed perspective of the monad (109):

Already Leibniz had been erecting, on the inside of the monad, "I have diverse thoughts" in correlation with "I am thinking." Perceptions as included predicates, that is, as inner properties, were replacing attributes. Predication was of the domain of having, and was resolving aporias of being or of attribution. This was all the more reason for the body, as extrinsic property, to introduce into possessions factors of inversion, turnaround, precariousness, and temporalization. (110)

For the monad to determine "what I am" according to an account of "what belongs to me" would require that it not be under condition of the factors just listed. Both historically and ontologically, then, the theory of the Leibnizian monad was advocating for the very conditions of indiscernibility and anxiety (of possession) that spelled disaster no less for the phenomenological constitution of subjectivity and consciousness than for the capitalist ideology of bourgeois ownership and private property. Deleuze not only resurrects this aspect of Leibniz's monadology to demonstrate its contemporary significance for resisting the interrelated ideologies of nihilism and transcendence, operative to varying degrees of intensity and influence ever since the secular collapse of theological reason, but also for tuning our attention onto why a discussion of a metaphysical theory of perspective, one that inheres in the vanishing points of an anamorphic system of creative monadic becoming, is imperative for contributing

something new to philosophical discourse and for exposing the vital reality embedded in the fictions (psychic projections) that this perspective reflects.

Glimpses of the metaphysical perspective in Beckett

Deleuze turns in *The Fold* to the modernist fiction of Beckett (but not only Beckett) to illustrate in what way “these reincarnations of appurtenance or possession carry a great philosophical importance. It is as if philosophy were penetrating into a new element and were putting the element of Having in place of that of Being” (109):

The great inventory of Beckett’s Malone is consummate proof. Malone is a naked monad, or almost naked, scatterbrained, degenerate, whose zone of clarity is always shrinking, and whose body folds upon itself, its requisites always escaping him. It’s hard for him to tell what remains in his possession, that is, “according to his definition,” what belongs to him only partially, and for what duration of time. Is he a thing or an animalcule? If he does not have belongings, then to whom does he belong? That is a metaphysical question. He needs a special hook, a sort of *vinculum* on which he can hang and sort through his different things, but he has even lost his hook. (109)

The problematic of deciding on suitable definitions of predication, in the case of Beckett’s Malone, turns out to be a problematic of metaphysical dimension once Having is substituted for Being as the medium of monadic becoming (of envelopment and development, of the folding, enfolding, and refolding of life in the monad). Malone is denied the dignity of a fully fledged rational monad whose zone of expression is “clear and distinct” and is instead downgraded to the naked expression of what happens to the “Having” of perspectives when they are subjected to virtual conditions such as anamorphosis and impossible sequences of temporal divergence. Literature and philosophy converge here in the dark recesses of monadic hallucination, so long as hallucination is considered as a metaphysical property of virtual forms of becoming. Malone is forced to hallucinate the reality that his monadic existence always already expresses in the first place, except that without the (supposed) perceptual confidence and precision of a nonmetaphysical mathematician of the physical world, he cannot reasonably deny that hallucination is not the only access to reality that his powers of perception are capable of possessing. The “metaphysical question” to which Malone returns again and again is generated by not being able to say, once and for all, whether his identity is not subject to a constant flux of anamorphic distortions. The terrifying reality, which Malone struggles to avoid confirming at all costs, is that his subjectivity inheres precisely in the creases and silences that the monadic continuum of anamorphic distortions perpetually expose. The problematic that Malone faces, in other words, is that all he knows how to become is a rational mathematician and reasonable monad that selects the predicates and draws up the inventory of what will constitute the ontological conditions of his reality and subjectivity, except that Malone

inhabits a space that pushes him deeper and deeper into becoming the metaphysical perspective of the identity that cannot be realized, cannot be selectively made actual, other than in the virtual and hallucinatory folds of the obscure monadic presence that surrounds him.¹⁸

Not until Beckett's writing begins again (fails again?) after *Malone Dies* with *The Unnamable* does it directly encounter the Baroque metaphysical perspective from the narrative viewpoint of what it would be like to sustain life in the distorted space of monadic anamorphosis. The narrative voice of Beckett's *The Unnamable* obsessively entertains the hypothesis that

perhaps that's what I am, the thing that divides the world in two, on the one side the outside, on the other the inside, that can be as thin as foil, I'm neither one side nor the other, I'm in the middle, I'm the partition, I've two surfaces and no thickness, perhaps that's what I feel, myself vibrating, I'm the tympanum, on the one hand the mind, on the other the world, I don't belong to either.¹⁹

It requires no far leap of the imagination to detect parallels between the unspeakable existence that Beckett's narrative voice is incessantly in the throes of communicating and what Deleuze seeks to conceptualize philosophically by inscribing in a post-Leibnizian ontology a metaphysical perspective that is "clear and distinct" precisely to the degree that it is dark and obscure: a "partition," Deleuze writes, "a supple and adherent membrane coextensive with everything inside" (*Fold*, 111). Beckett's narrative discourse gains in momentum and intensity the more it zeroes in on the impossibility of speaking and thinking from the perspective of the "unthinkable unspeakable," the partition, "where I have not ceased to be, where they will not let me be" (*Unnamable*, 335). What "enables the discourse to continue" (299), in the *unthinkable unspeakable*, Beckett's narrator quickly surmises, is the desire of forever chasing, *fold upon fold*, we might add, the dream to "speak and yet say nothing" (303): "you think you have succeeded, but you always overlook something, a little yes, a little no, enough to exterminate a regiment of dragoons. And yet I do not despair" (303). Here Beckett's writing implicitly takes Deleuze's post-Leibnizian insights to heart and has elected to sentence the narrative voice of *The Unnamable* to the turbulent and hallucinatory reality that its imagination devises as it folds one textual instant and image into another.²⁰ To be sure, never will the unnamable successfully ascend to the ontological rank of a monad that is at once naked and reasonable, gazing calmly and confidently onto the monadic expanse of the Baroque universe from the Deleuzian vantage point of a metaphysical perspective. And yet, it is nothing short of *something like* Deleuze's metaphysical perspective that draws the unnamable into the tentative conclusion, revoked no sooner than it is advanced, that *perhaps that's what I am*.

Beckett provides Deleuze with negative proof that what sustains the adventures of modernist literature is the desire for a perspective that is not only inscribed in the dark recesses of the consciousness and the imagination, between the folds of empirical reality (actuality) and its hallucinatory substratum (virtuality), but that can see itself looking from without and from within this very same space of blindness and

confusion. Deleuze is indeed hardly unsympathetic to the sacrifices Beckett's aesthetic vision had to make in continuing its commitment to the tyranny of the *perhaps*, to "the refusal and the refusal to accept refusal" that a narrative perspective in the thin, almost nonexistent space of the metaphorical tympanum can be called upon as a perch of transcendence for the thinking that is all too ordinarily practiced in literature no less than it is on the conceptual plane of philosophy.²¹ The literature that Beckett produces, exceptionally and unsustainably, "answers to the demands of Ill seen Ill said, Ill seen Ill heard, which reigns in the kingdom of the mind. And as a spiritual movement, it cannot be separated from the process of its own disappearance, its dissipation" (*Essays Critical and Clinical*, 170).²² Beckett comes as close as is possible to unearthing the metaphysical perspective that folds persistently in and out of the monadic totality. His writing accomplishes this precisely by being so vigilantly entrenched in the ruins and the folds of the mystery and the reality of what it desires to perceive and comprehend. As such, Beckett continues the Baroque project insofar as, "contrary to Descartes" and thus very much in accordance with Leibniz, his writing "begins in darkness. Clarity emerges from obscurity by way of a genetic process, and so too clarity plunges into darkness, and continues to plunge deeper and deeper" (*Fold*, 90). The task of modernism, like the task of post-Leibnizian perspectivism as described by Deleuze, is to give access to the unplumbed depths of the imagination and of reality, tearing open the surface and façade of the latter and revealing it as the impossible set of anamorphic, hallucinatory, and fictional collection of possibilities that reasonable and nonmetaphysical monads otherwise desire it to disavow.

Notes

- 1 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: The Athlone Press, 1989), 303.
- 2 Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 129.
- 3 Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 67.
- 4 Cf. Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (New York: Verso, 2009).
- 5 Cf. Matthew Wilkins, "Toward a Benjaminian Theory of Dialectical Allegory," *New Literary History* 37.4 (2006): 285–98.
- 6 Peter Hallward's *Out of This World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* (New York: Verso, 2006) provides an impressively comprehensive account of Deleuze's thought according to the principles of "creation" and "creativity": "We can only make sense of any given activity, says Deleuze, 'in terms of what it creates and its modes of creation.' This is a principle that Deleuze will apply to the activity of living (the creation of ways of life) and the activity of being (the creation of beings) as much as to the activities of painting (the creation of lines and colours), speaking (the creation of sense) or philosophy (the creation of concepts)" (1). Following Hallward, I would insist that through Deleuze's encounter with Leibniz and the

- Baroque we can see how it is that perspective is created and also the perceptions that this Deleuzian perspective subsequently creates in the monadic context of existence.
- 7 Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 47.
 - 8 It is not my intention in this chapter to discuss the range of mathematical principles and concepts that Deleuze invokes in *The Fold*. For a more thorough reading of the mathematics that pervades *The Fold*, the reader can consult Simon Duffy's "Leibniz, Mathematics and the Monad," in *Deleuze and The Fold: A Critical Reader*, eds. Sjoerd van Tuinen and Niamh McDonnell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 89–112.
 - 9 Gregg Lambert, *The Non-Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze* (London: Continuum, 2002), 60.
 - 10 Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, trans. Mark Lester (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 259–60.
 - 11 Jorge Luis Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths," in *Ficciones*, ed. Anthony Kerrigan (New York: Grove Press, 1962), 89–105.
 - 12 Jean-Clet Martin, *Variations: The Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas and Susan Dyrkton (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 107.
 - 13 After articulating Deleuze's philosophical distaste for Leibniz in *Logic of Sense*, where Leibniz figures as a "repulsive conceptual persona" (31), Isabelle Stengers, in her essay "Thinking with Deleuze and Whitehead: a Double Test," in *Deleuze, Whitehead, Bergson: Rhizomatic Connections*, ed. Keith Robinson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), reminds us that "in *The Fold* Leibniz's sentence is no longer a shameful declaration. . . . At the end of *The Fold*, Deleuze comes back to his own concept of diverging series, but it now signals a change of what I would call, with Whitehead, an epoch. The world now is made up of diverging series, Deleuze writes, but we remain Leibnizians because thinking is still folding, enfolding, unfolding" (32).
 - 14 Cf. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Penguin Books, 2009).
 - 15 Fredric Jameson, "Beyond the Cave: Demystifying the Ideology of Modernism," in *The Ideologies of Theory* (New York: Verso, 2008), 415–34.
 - 16 Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 89.
 - 17 In *Deleuze, the Dark Precursor: Dialectic, Structure, Being* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), Eleanor Kaufman is right to follow Žižek in distinguishing Deleuze's single-authored works from the coauthored works with Guattari on the grounds that it is the former works, particularly *Logic of Sense* and, I would add, *The Fold*, "in which the corporeal realm instantiates a secondary level of incorporeal effects (effects that retrospectively turn out to be embedded in the very heart of the corporeal)" (90). Here Kaufman finds, again enthusiastically following Žižek, evidence of "a hidden idealism," not unlike what I have been calling a metaphysics of perspective, in Deleuze's single-authored writings (90).
 - 18 In *Samuel Beckett and the Philosophical Image* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Anthony Uhlmann discusses (not uncritically) Beckett's proto-Deleuzian affinities with the combinatorial logic of exhaustion that Deleuze develops. Uhlmann explains that "the distinction which Deleuze stresses with regard to this process of exhausting relations involves that between the exclusive

disjunction and the inclusive disjunction” (44). Such a distinction, Uhlmann goes on to suggest, is similarly exploited, however with varying degrees of intensity, at nearly every stage of Beckett’s aesthetic career from *Murphy* all the way through to “*What Where, Quad* and *Come and Go*” (45).

- 19 Samuel Beckett, *Three Novels: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable* (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 383.
- 20 In his *Abstract Machines: Samuel Beckett and Philosophy after Deleuze and Guattari* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), Garid Dowd alerts us to one of Beckett’s “correspondence with MacGreevy”: “in what is a formulation to interest a reader of Beckett with a knowledge of Deleuze’s book on Leibniz, Beckett describes his particular brand of solipsism as ‘baroque’” (129).
- 21 Beckett, *The Letters of Samuel Beckett: 1941–1956*, eds. Lois More Overbeck et al, trans. George Craig (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 140.
- 22 Deleuze, “The Exhausted,” in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 170.

Incorporeal Modernism

Claire Colebrook

I

Let us imagine that there are two Deleuzes: the first, a high modernist “literary” Deleuze who might be canonized alongside the post-1968 French celebration of writing, and a postmodernist materialist Deleuze who would provide an exit from the linguistic narcissism of deconstruction, and would provide a philosophical-ontological grounding for recent developments in science.¹ The first (modernist and literary) Deleuze would be the Deleuze of *Proust and Signs*, the Deleuze who wrote on minor literature with Guattari, and the Deleuze who took the task of philosophy to be inextricably intertwined with the intuition of time in its pure state. Writing on Proust, and perhaps speaking not quite in his own voice, Deleuze declared that “Art is the splendid final unity of an immaterial sign and a spiritual meaning.”² On such an account even the transition, toward the end of the book on Proust, would be on a par with Deleuze’s cinematic philosophy: the task of thinking is certainly not that of a materialism that would step outside human thought to embrace the physical and actualized universe, but rather an embrace of that which has made thought possible—the sign, the image—with philosophy then imagining what it would be to think at this purely formal level: “For philosophers are beings who have passed through death, who are born from it, and go towards another death, perhaps the same one” (*PS*, 201). If thought emerges with systems of signs and images, and signs and images emerge with thinking, might we free such systems from their emergence? On such an understanding, the great bet of *Difference and Repetition*—“thought without an image”—would be a claim for pure formalism: rather than see thinking as the reproduction or grasp of a world that requires formalization, might we imagine a pure formality? This high modernist Deleuze would therefore grant that it is in art that thought is finally able to abandon its self-captivation and release sensation as such: as though words, colors, sounds, and vibrations might exist in their pure form, freed from the human all too human imagination of the lived world. When Deleuze writes about the transition from the movement-image to the time-image (or the way in which cinema shifts from connecting images across space that connect movements to producing connections of images which expose a time that is not that of human action), he does not just write about an object within the world; he looks at the ways in which this immanent world

of perception may generate an intuition of a virtual plane from which this world is actualized. Here, modernism is about grasping *thought*, but this thought is not that of a moving human body that maps its world according to its own interests and actions. Rather, thinking is disembodied, inhuman, and impersonal and is the contact with a temporality outside human and worldly purposiveness. If something is seen not as it is for us but as it is in its potentiality to be perceived, then everything human, tolerable, and purposive is destroyed. This is genuine immanence, for the world is not viewed in terms of meaning (or projects or contexts):

There is no need at all to call on transcendence. In everyday banality, the action-image and the movement-image tend to disappear in favour of pure optical situations, but these reveal connections of a new type, which are no longer sensory-motor and which bring the emancipated senses into direct relation with time and thought. This is the very special extension of the *opsign*: to make time and thought perceptible, to make them visible and of sound.

A purely optical and sound situation does not extend any action, any more than it is induced by an action. It makes us grasp, it is supposed to make us grasp, something intolerable and unbearable. Not a brutality as nervous aggression, an exaggerated violence that can always be extracted from the sensory-motor relations in the action image. Nor is it a matter of scenes of terror, although there are sometimes corpses and blood. It is a matter of something too powerful, or too unjust, but sometimes also too beautiful, and which henceforth outstrips our sensory-motor capacities.³

The other Deleuze is post-post-modern and provides a way of overcoming the naively human finitude of a poststructuralism oriented toward writing. If postmodernism is an abandonment of grand narratives or an acceptance of our linguistic finitude, then Deleuze's project of thinking "becoming-imperceptible" might be interpreted as a destruction of human-centeredness (where human knowing is taken to be inextricably divorced from the world as it really is, only capable of knowing a world as given to us and for us). This is the Deleuze who legitimates an anti-deconstruction focus on materialism, where synthesis and relations are objective:

When one asserts the mind-independence of the material world a crucial task is to explain the more or less stable identity of the mind-independent entities that inhabit that world. If this identity is explained by the possession of an atemporal essence then all one has done is to reintroduce idealism through the back door. Thus a coherent materialism must have as its main tool a concept of *objective synthesis*, that is of a temporal process that produces and maintains those stable identities. . . . Gilles Deleuze introduced new ideas with which to conceptualise the temporal synthesis of objective entities.⁴

If there are human systems, then these emerge from life. Such a Deleuze gives birth to a new materialism, where matter is the stuff of this world and is fully real. It would make sense, from this point of view, to focus our attention to objects, and maybe arrive at an

object-oriented ontology. One would either cast aside the high modernist emphasis on art, writing, and autonomous affects in order to argue for a properly scientific realism, or one would regard affects (and thinking) as components of a physical system of living bodily responses and networks that are as much a part of the physical political world as buildings and linguistic systems. Deleuze, on such a reading, would offer a way out of the high modernism of French theory.

But perhaps there is another modernism that might be salvaged in the light of a Deleuze who could be liberated from Foucault's celebration of modern literature's capacity for allowing language to "shine,"⁵ or from Derrida's emphasis on writing.⁶ At the risk, again, of being bluntly dichotomous, we might add two modernisms to our two faces of Deleuze. The first modernism would be linguistic and self-reflexive. This might be the modernism consecrated by a certain conception of high theory, where "textuality" (or an awareness of the necessary mediation of language and systems) precludes us from thinking any nature or reality other than that given through signs. It is perhaps this modernism and a concomitant conception of theory as "textualist" or linguistic that has been so enthusiastically displaced by various new realisms—realisms that have little, if anything to say about literature, and even less about literary modernism. The manifesto volume of *The Speculative Turn* mentions literary modernism only once, and that by way of suggesting its inattention to what lies beyond representation: "if anything, twentieth-century modernism seems *insufficiently* interested in the sublime."⁷ Elsewhere, Graham Harman's work on Lovecraft celebrates its "weird realism," which is opposed to representational realism. The world cannot be captured in language, but this does not mean we resign ourselves to remaining at the level of language. Instead, we regard the real as that which recedes from language.⁸ In its list of opponents new and speculative realisms and materialisms frequently distance themselves from postmodern textualism, but rarely consider modernism. If postmodernism is often the foil against which materialism or realism defines itself, this is because it is deemed to be the extension of a long modern project of abandoning the world as it is in favor of viewing the world as it is for us. Modernism, on such an account, abandons any attempt to see language as expression or representation of some prelinguistic reality, accepts the distinction of language *as language*, and places humans as the effect of linguistic systems. Defining modernism in this way relies upon privileging certain texts and techniques—Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* or Eliot's *The Waste Land*, and free-indirect discourse and allusion—over another modernism oriented to intuition and the creation of new styles adequate to inhuman perception. I would suggest that the failure to consider modernism's legacy when we declare Deleuze to be a new materialist is that we have displaced a Bergsonian modernism of intuition and pure perception and accepted a proto-post-modern modernism of the bounds of language. Whereas a modernism of intuition would generate an imperative to think beyond the grammar of human systems, the modernism of finitude accepts an inevitable and unsurpassable linguistic mediation. Such a narrowed modernism might then yield a politics of writing: free language from voice and representation and allow the word to operate in its machinic and inhuman power. The idea of humans as generators of ideas, sense, and meaning would be abandoned in favor of the proliferation of signifying systems beyond human comprehension and sense. This notion of modernism was

hailed as progressively political by Colin MacCabe who saw an attention to “the word” as a form of political demystification, freeing us from any notion of a world in itself, outside systems of linguistic synthesis:

Where in the realist text we find a meta-language controlling the other discourses (and it must be emphasized that it is the position of the meta-language that matters and not its content), in *Dubliners* we read the various discourses which constituted a city at a given historical moment and which, besides their contemporaneity, escape any unifying force other than discourses of the reader.⁹

Anthony Easthope even managed to celebrate Ezra Pound on the basis of his progressive poetic attention to “the signifier” and an “irreducibly graphic poetics.”¹⁰ In his early work on Joyce, Derrida suggested that if there were a metaphysical ideal of language (in which all different discourses might ultimately be translated to reveal a single clarity of originating sense), then Joyce occupied the other end of the spectrum: the Joycean book would include all the discourses of the world, creating a unified totality of pure text:

to repeat and take responsibility for all equivocation itself, utilizing a language that could equalize the greatest possible synchrony with the greatest potential for buried, accumulated, and interwoven intentions within each linguistic atom, each vocable, each word, each simple proposition, in all wordly cultures and their most ingenious forms (mythology, religion, sciences, arts, literature, politics, philosophy, and so forth). And, like Joyce, this endeavor would try to make the structural unity of all empirical culture appear in the generalized equivocation of a writing that, no longer translating one language into another on the basis of their common cores of sense, circulates throughout all languages at once, accumulates their energies, actualizes their most secret consonances, discloses their furthestmost common horizons, cultivates their associative syntheses instead of avoiding them, and rediscovers the poetic value of passivity. In short, rather than put it out of play with quotation marks, rather than “reduce” it, this writing resolutely settles itself *within* the *labyrinthine* field of culture bound by its own equivocations, in order to travel through and explore the vastest possible historical distance that is now at all possible.¹¹

Deleuze and Guattari also suggested, in their plateau on signs, that the grand modernist “book” might yet be one more totality, a way of warding off a more radical proliferation:

The unique book, the total work, all possible combinations *inside* the book, the tree-book, the cosmos-book: all of these platitudes so dear to the avant-gardes, which cut the book off from its relations with the outside, are even worse than the chant of the signifier. Of course, they are entirely bound up with a mixed semiotic. But in truth they have a particularly pious origin. Wagner, Mallarmé, and Joyce, Marx and Freud: still Bibles.¹²

Something of this sense of a “bookish” modernism would appear to be consecrated by the more “literary” Deleuze, who writes about the stuttering of language,¹³ and who—with Guattari—celebrates the stammering of language,¹⁴ and who instead approves of (and extends) Foucault’s invocation of modern literature as a means for detaching language from the lived:

This modern literature uncovers a “strange language within language” and, through an unlimited number of superimposed grammatical constructions, tends towards an atypical form of expression that marks the end of language as such (here we might cite such examples as Mallarmé’s book, Peguy’s repetitions, Artaud’s breaths, the agrammaticality of Cummings, Burroughs and his cut-ups and fold-ins, as well as Roussel’s proliferations, Brisset’s deviations, Dada, and so on).¹⁵

In the literary text, language seems to generate its own machinic and inhuman connections. The politics of modernism might lie, then, in a sort of antifoundational, denaturalizing, posthumanism. If the world were to be always given in and through signification then there could be no appeal to nature, and certainly no appeal to man as some ground from which politics might proceed. Instead, all “we” would have would be phrases (and there would be no “we” outside this fragmented circulating system of ungrounded discourse). There would not even be “a” language or single archive, but rather so many proliferating and discontinuous voices. What would remain would be writing without a subject, multiple voices without a “we,” and a politics from which “the people” would be missing or in which the people (or community) would necessarily remain “to come.” Such a modernism would seem to be valorized by Derrida’s notion of literature as the right to say anything (with voice freed from ownership such that literature is democracy), and by Lyotard’s conception of “phrases” that would not cohere into some unified system of sense and certainly not a *sensus communis*, and finally by Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of a minor literature that exposes a certain foreign or alien quality in what is supposedly one’s own medium of expression.¹⁶ This would be a modernism of immanence, where there would be no truth or sense outside the systems that compose our world, and we could certainly not see humans as exceptional. Rather, what “we” took ourselves to be would ultimately be nothing more than parts of a fragmented whole. We might cite the first line of Mina Loy’s “Apology of Genius,” as exemplary of such a modernism: “Ostracized as we are with God.” From that distance, the second line follows; all we can do is purvey the “waste” that is our “civilization”: “Ostracized as we are with God/ The watchers of the civilized wastes.”¹⁷

II

At first glance, there might be two problems with defining modernism by way of linguistic self-reflexivity and with defining modernist politics as being an attention to the world’s mediation by way of signs.

First, modernism was as much about images and perceptions as it was about words, and tended to have a seemingly naïve desire to capture the moment, and to establish a silent distance from the panorama of futility that made up the wasteland of urban civilization's disembodied voices. When Deleuze and Guattari write about art's constitutive task of creating affects and percepts that stand alone, and when they write about the artist emerging from chaos with bloodshot eyes (*WP*, 41), tearing language apart, then perhaps they are closer to a modernism that would find some space or distance from constituted systems:

By means of the material, the aim of art is to wrest the percept from perceptions of objects and states of a perceiving subject, to wrest the affect from affections as the transition from one state to another: to extract a bloc of sensations, a pure being of sensations. . . . It is true that every work of art is a *monument*, but here the monument is not something commemorating a past, it is a bloc of present sensations that owe their preservation only to themselves and that provide the event with the compound that celebrates it. (*WP*, 167)

If contemporary post-Deleuzian theory has turned against linguistic mediation and back to the world or reality from which language emerges, it has also relied upon a binary between autonomous and emergent language. Modernism destroys such a binary: language emerges from (and remains mired in) the wasteland of life, but is also distinct from any body and capable of being captured in its *pure being*. Modernism is as much about perceptions, affects, and *distaste for the system of constituted signifiers* as it is about signs. To use Loy's phrase: "The watchers of the civilized wastes/reverse their signals on our tracks." (The "watchers" are both the ostracized "we," and the impersonal distant "you" to whom the poem is addressed; it is as though poetry is a mode of self-address, in which the other to whom we speak is our own speaking self, but distanced or reversed.)

Rather than see modernism as primarily linguistic (leading to the pure pastiche of postmodernism that would then be overcome by a posthumanism that turned back to the real or to materiality), it would be more fruitful to take modernism's strange duality of language seriously. Language is the unsurpassable horizon through which we speak; but language is not reducible to human speech, and includes systems of affects and percepts. It is true that we perceive, speak, and feel in a material world, but it is that same matter that becomes expressive in and for itself. It is the nature of any of the "atoms" or "particles" by which we live, articulate, and perceive that they may become monumental. I would suggest that rather than divide Deleuze into two tendencies—materialist versus aesthetic/virtualist/idealist—and rather than posit modernism as either a resignation to language or a commitment to a distance from language, we should regard language as necessarily self-alienating and then regard linguistic self-alienation as the condition of all "particles." "Writing" or "perceiving" are not human qualities, which is why Derrida can use words such as "trace" and "écriture" to pose a notion of a life that is always already archival: life is always, in part, becoming what it is by fragmenting and alienating "itself." The modernist book and the modernist word

is at once an act of supreme human mastery and enclosure, *and* a means to expose the necessary distance and disconnection that mark “life.” We might say, then, that before there was an object-oriented ontology that sought to approach things from their own world, and not merely as human correlates, there was a modernism that positioned things as always already bearers of sense (opening to a world of their own), and that positioned humans as things (subject to systems of relations beyond consciousness).

Consider, for example, the famous event of reification in Joyce’s *Ulysses*, where the lemon soap sings its own advertising jingle: “We’re a capital couple are Bloom and I. He brightens the earth, I polish the sky.”¹⁸ One reading might suggest that this is the height of commodity culture, in which the human orientation to things and actions is already subsumed by some alienating, reifying, and inhuman system of exchange.¹⁹ Another reading—and one I would pursue here, following Deleuze—is that capitalism exposes the essential reification or articulation of all life and sense, and one that modernism manages to extend beyond the limits of capital. The things we encounter in our human and meaningful world also bear capacities, histories, systems, and virtual lines of connection beyond our own use. If capitalism allows everything to have an exchange value beyond its localized use value, then this is because it is the very possibility of *any thing* including a human being to be considered from the point of view of sense: not as it is here and now, but as it might be beyond its function. If something can be quantified, circulated, and detached from its original site of emergence, this is because the condition for any qualified, meaningful, and localized thing is the absolute contingency of quantity and force, which transcends human meaning while being the very immanent condition for what we know as the world. If Bloom’s soap can sing, this is because before we have soap as a daily useable human item there is the contingency of matter, which is always becoming other than whatever it is *for us*. Modernism’s capitalism is therefore not a lamentable system that would detract from an originally human and meaningful world, but a sense of the possibility for the world to be other than any of its already constituted systems. To write, as Loy does, that “we come among you/innocent/of our luminous sores”²⁰ is to say that whatever illumination or marking we bear is not our own. The human is at once a determined being within a world not its own: “magically diseased” and “unaware” of its being within a world not of its own making (5); and yet Loy nevertheless writes of this imbrication of the human as a form of luminosity, light, jewelry, shining or delicate visibility. Just as things are bound up in a world of sense not their own, so humans radiate with a force visible from a placeless elsewhere: “The cuirass of the soul/still shines — / And we are unaware/if you confuse/such brief /corrosion with possession” (25–30). “We” humans are defined or distinguished by a certain closure or blindness (“cuirass”) that at once shines, and yet this shining is not the illumination of enlightenment so much as a “corrosion”—a wearing away that is part of a broader plane of destructive forces that cuts everything down: “A delicate crop/of criminal mystic immortelles/stands to the censor’s scythe” (36–8). Loy’s poem sets up an opposition between a viewed, mocked, censored, and cut “we” addressing a distant, imperious, other “you.” But the we/you opposition that is also a speaking, forming, and shining self opposed to a dust of chaos consistently breaks down in the poem. It is as though the speaking and forging human “we” (a “we”

without any law or destiny) is a moment of brief but corroding illumination in a world of dusky chaos: “In the raw caverns of the Increate/we forge the dusk of Chaos.” Loy’s modernism does not oppose human language to the radical contingency of chaos; there is speaking, forging, shining, and “curious disciplines” only because ultimately such events take place in a broader plane of chance that “we” disturb: “the chances of your flesh/are not our destiny —” (23–4).

Modernism is just one moment in the human archive where the very medium of human making and meaning is also exposed as having the same material and alien force that tears human complacency and meaning apart. It is not surprising, then, that the same Mallarmé whom Derrida saw as presenting something like play as such would also be Quentin Meillassoux’s chosen path for approaching a new articulation of the absolute: not an absolute of some actually existing substance, but a contingency of number—not the counting of this or that qualified being, but just a count as such: “The ultimate singularity of Mallarmé’s poetics . . . thus consisted in the quest for a ‘diffusion of the absolute’ emancipated from representation (even if, evidently, the latter is not annulled in the labor of the work) and dismissing all eschatological parousia.”²¹

Let us use this destructive notion of language to abandon an all too simple set of oppositions: between a textualist deconstruction opposed to a realist/materialist post-Deleuzism, and between a modernism of language versus a posthumanism of reality/materialism. Rather, language is human/inhuman; it is the means by which any real or material being articulates and separates itself, and it is also contingent, singular, and disarticulated. The Mallarmé of the great book is the same Mallarmé of errant writing. For Derrida,

The adventurous excess of a writing that is no longer directed by any knowledge does not abandon itself to improvisation. The accident or throw of dice that “opens” such a text does not contradict the rigorous necessity of its formal assemblage. The game here is the unity of chance and rule, of the program and its leftovers or extras. This *play* will still be called *literature* or book *only* when it exhibits its negative, atheistic face (the insufficient but indispensable phase of reversal). (*Dissemination*, 40)

What writing refers to here is not an activity of the human hand, nor a system that synthesizes and gives order; rather, writing is excessive insofar as any posited thing or system bears a dynamic potentiality for a movement that will also destroy any containment. If Mallarmé writes an all-encompassing book, it is also that same inscribed book that contains traces, marks, signs, and forces that cannot be contained:

On this condition, “literature” *comes out* of the book. Mallarmé’s Book issues from *The Book*. It is possible to discern without any doubt the features of the most visible filiation marking it as a descendant of the Bible. . . . But by affirmed simulacrum and theatrical staging, by the break-in of the re-mark, it has *issued out* of the book: it escapes it beyond return, no longer sends it back its image, no longer constitutes

an object finished and *posed*, reposing in the bookcase of a *bibliothèque*. (Derrida, *Dissemination*, 41)

That is, there is something *supplementary* about writing: it is not the synthesis or medium through which we view the world, but is added on as something rogue, or as a play that displaces any sense of the world as some present, stable, given, and ordered whole. It is not unlike what Meillassoux will refer to as contingency: whatever we might like to think of as necessary nevertheless might also *not be*, for contingency is not something contained by the world and being, but is a radical possibility of being otherwise. Deleuze also writes of the order of chronological time being haunted by Aion: this is not what *is*, not what is actualized in some order of constituted things, but an unlimited “otherwise” or counter-actualization that hovers over every actuality. Most importantly this counter-actuality is tied inextricably to language, which *cannot* be domesticated by a world of constituted things or bodies (human or otherwise):

Whereas Chronos was inseparable from circularity and its accidents—such as blockages and precipitations, explosions, disconnections, and indurations—Aion stretches out in a straight line, limitless in either direction. Always already passed and eternally yet to come, Aion is the eternal truth of time: *pure empty form of time*, which has freed itself of its present corporeal content and has thereby unwound its own circle, stretching itself out in a straight line. . . .

It is this new world of incorporeal effects which makes language possible. For . . . it is this world which draws sounds from their simple state of corporeal actions and passions. It is this new world which distinguishes language, prevents it from being confused with the sound-effects of bodies, and abstracts it from their oral-anal determinations. Pure events ground language because they wait for it as much as they wait for us, and have a pure singular, impersonal, and pre-individual existence only inside the language which expresses them.²²

Language is at once a thing—the sounds of the world and bodies—and also other than any thing, allowing the incarnation of a sense of the virtuality or potentiality of the thing that is not present. The singing soap in *Ulysses* that seems to epitomize a world no longer lived but now reduced to an inhuman system of exchange is only possible because human systems are already liberated from any single thing, body, or actuality—open to a time beyond the lived. There is not a gulf of difference between the circulating bodies of the material world of Joyce’s *Dubliners* and the pure circulating time of Eliot’s *Four Quartets* or Mina Loy’s “wind and stars/and pulverous pastures of poverty” (16–17): all indicate the power of movement, circulation, and disinterrance that allows anything to always be potentially other than itself, open to destruction and re-creation.

So let us undo the opposition between a mode of thinking devoted to the formalism of writing and a mode of thinking that strives to destroy the limits of the organizing imagination. If there can be the thought of something like life, the world, or even the totality of all that is, then this *thought* is not a part of the world, and therefore necessarily

opens a pure potentiality of nonbeing, or a contingency or difference, distinct from the possibility of all that actually *is*. Here is Derrida commenting again on Mallarmé:

To recognize the fullness and self-presence of nature: “We know, captives of an absolute formula that, of course, there is nothing but what is. . . . Nature takes place; it can’t be added to.” If one confined oneself to this captivity, a captivity of formulas and absolute knowledge, one would be incapable of thinking anything that could be added to the whole, whether to fulfill it or think it *as such*, not even its image or mimetic double, which would still be part of the whole within the great book of nature.

But if the formula for this absolute knowledge can be thought about and put in question, the whole is then treated by a “part” bigger than itself; this is the strange subtraction of a *remark* whose theory is borne by dissemination and which constitutes the whole, necessarily, as a *totality-effect*. (*Dissemination*, 40)

The absolute, then, might be subtractive: from the presentation of what is, there is the *thought* of what is, and that yields something other, supplemental, contingent—but certainly not contained within the human as a meaning-making animal. After all, is not the great achievement of modernism the location of thinking outside the human brain: if texts can circulate freely, without human voice, and if images can reflect and reverberate without human or organic perception, does this not create movement outside life in its narrow carbon-based organic sense? When we refer to writing or images we are not referring to the human archive as the repository of meaning and personal or interpersonal memory, but something that hovers *alongside* actuality (or “meanwhile”) as its always-potential otherness, nonbeing, or being-otherwise. Yes, Deleuze is the great thinker of immanence and the great challenger of negativity, but this is only because saying no to what already is, opens a space that cannot be reduced to the lived, but would always be supplemental, extra, excessive:

Philosophy is always meanwhile. Mallarmé, who counter-effectuated the event, called it Mime because it side-steps the state of affairs and “confines itself to perpetual allusion without breaking the ice.” Such a mime neither reproduces the state of affairs nor imitates the lived; it does not give an image but constructs the concept. It does not look for the function of what happens but extracts the event from it, or that part that does not let itself be actualized, the reality of the concept. (*WP*, 159–60)

This part, supplement or addition would, to use Deleuze’s language in *Difference and Repetition*, be something like?-being. Anything that is might also be otherwise; this is not possibility—contained within the thing as it is—but potentiality, as the thing’s capacity not just to be another thing, but also for there to be the absence of all things. This is the thing minus itself, if we could view the actual world both as it is but also imagine it as the sense of what it is, or as if it were a mime or simulation, not existing within time: nothingness.

But is not Deleuze the great materialist thinker of immanence and (many would argue) materialism? This may be so, but only if materialism or matter is not aligned with something as parochial as this known and organized world. If Deleuze is the philosopher of events this is because his materialism is one in which potentiality does not exist as a series of not yet realized possibilities. Rather—and this is what is evidenced in the existence of art—events are potentialities that may have nothing to do with the composed and organized lived earth; every composed body also harbors a sense that is radically disembodied. Deleuze explains this by way of Mallarmé and mime: if my body, gesturing, mimes an affection, then what is captured is the sense as such—what it is *to suffer* independent of any suffering body:

Philosophy's sole aim is to be worthy of the event, and it is precisely the conceptual persona who counter-effectuates the event. Mime is an ambiguous name. It is he or she, the conceptual persona carrying out the infinite movement. (WP, 160)

Mime is an “ambiguous name” precisely because it is at once art as such, with a body moving such that its very gestures are distanced so as to be images or doubles: when I mime walking, dancing, or falling my body *actually* falls, but it also doubles itself by gesturing to the event of falling that is not mine. The conceptual persona of philosophy, or the vice that writes and speaks is therefore speaking not as the self or person, but a possibility of speaking or conceptualizing. When one asks questions, writes, or speaks, as a philosopher, the question and statement can no longer be one's own: the question is launched into a circulation and sense beyond oneself. This is the *textual* condition: not textual because of being located within human language, but rather the quite opposite detachment of sense. Sense is not actuality, but it is also not possibility; sense is the detachment *in time* of what is *for all time*. Philosophy, in this respect, is close to art precisely because a certain way of approaching art is by way of an event—or a disembodiment—that can perhaps disclose the sense of “pangs of death against all deaths,” a *dying* that is not reducible to any death. Or, if there are wars, in time, this allows for the thought of war as such; but this thought is *not mine* insofar as it is the attempt to think impersonally:

Willing war against past and future, the pangs of death against all deaths, and the wound against all scars, in the name of becoming and not of the eternal: it is only in this sense that the concept gathers together. (WP, 160)

One might, following this line of thought, not see the great modernist book as the inclusion of all discourse within a totality, but instead imagine the book as being the thought of something excessive, supplemental, and utterly at odds within any closed sense of life or matter. If there can be writing then this is because whatever actually is might also, always, be supplemented by an untamed creation. Writing is what makes possible the philosophical creation of concepts: inscription generates an archive and constituted plane of sense that, once instituted, opens to the thought of any time whatever. In addition to being that which extends any mode of life or existence, writing is also superfluous and tears the actual world of constituted things open. The aesthetics

of mime allows any gesture or movement to be doubled as not only what occurs in the here and now, but also this same action or gesture for all time. Such a mode of modernism might appear to be the last thing we should be entertaining for the present; as climate change and resource depletion threaten the species as such, how much sense does it make to contemplate a world beyond human time and meaning? And yet, perhaps it is *this* modernist question, freed from our world of things, concerns, and meanings that grasped the true problem of climate change before it actually occurred. What if actual climate change, or the sense of humanity's species termination within our own imagined chronological time, forced us to think about existence in general? Is this not what time in its pure state in all its modernist articulations gestured towards? Is this not the ultimate sense of Yeats's "Second Coming" and its reference to "twenty centuries of stony sleep"? More importantly, is this not the problem posed by Mina Loy's "Apology of Genius," where the "I-thou" structure is addressed not to a personal or anthropomorphic other but to a you that is beyond all identity, and that will ultimately transcend and annihilate all that has been forged and determined? Whatever is human, whatever takes itself to be the "we" of meaning-making, is ultimately exposed to a distant, difficult, and different force that is neither human nor animal, and certainly not object-like. This otherness is at once addressed as a "you," but is radically inhuman, impersonal, and disarticulated: "We are the sacerdotal clowns/who feed upon the wind and stars/and pulverous pastures of poverty." Not only indifferent, there is also something disruptive and mocking—superior—about a cosmos that is other than any humanizing spirit.

Loy's poem uses the very facticity of language to destroy temporal priority. In the first stanza, the middle line ("The watchers of the civilized wastes") follows on from the first line's "we," such that "we" are watchers. It is as though humans are the guardians of meaning, giving order to the world. But the third line ties the same subject (the watchers) to the "you" to whom the poem is addressed: "The watchers of the civilized wastes/ reverse their signals on our tracks." The poem sets up a binary that identifies us as human all too human ("we"/"our" versus "you"), but then destroys this identity and temporality by way of the very medium of human articulation—language. Nearly every grammatical subject in the poem has a dual identity, operating as subject and object of the verb, depending on how we read the sequence. The poem therefore possesses different meanings depending on word order, thus exposing the fragility of meaning and the breakdown of linear time in favor of sense. For example, the subject of "their" can be carried over to the next line so that *they* are "Lepers of the moon": "The watchers . . . reverse their signals on our track/Lepers of the moon." But the same subject—Lepers—can also be the "we": "Lepers of the moon/all magically diseased/we come among you" (4–6). The poem sets up an I/thou binary and then uses the same articulating medium of language to operate at the level of sense: detached from temporal sequence, the I/thou mode of address breaks down, as does the determination of subject and object:

You may give birth to us
or marry us
the chances of your flesh
are not our destiny. (21–4)

These lines oppose “us” to “you,” and distinguish “our destiny” from “your flesh,” as though the poem—in speaking—were marking out a human space of meaning. Meaning, or the carrying over of the past into the present in chronological time, requires something like the potentiality of the event or *mime*. What is, in the present, is also repeatable into the future. Writing and meaning are possible because of the eternal power of the event; every thing can be viewed chronologically, as it is within time, and then from the point of view of Aion (as it would be for any time whatever). Writing incarnates the present, but also allows that present to be carried over beyond itself. In Loy’s poem the same medium of text destroys the temporality of reference: “marry us” refers back to “You may give birth to us /marry us” but it also—if read further into the poem—ties “marry us” to “marry us/the chances of your flesh” (as though “we” were inescapably married to “your flesh”), and then there is detachment: “the chances of your flesh/are not our destiny” (21–4). What this single poem discloses is that we cannot read modernism as a resignation to the linguistic construction of a world, precisely because language destroys *the world* (or some ordered domain of meaning) and opens *sense*. Every word designates in the present only because it also has the capacity to indicate a potentiality in the present that is repeatable for any moment whatever. Everything—every thing—is at once elsewhere. Further, and more importantly, every thing is also not a thing. The actual world is exposed to the contingency and chaos from which it briefly emerges, and which it also intimates. The “you” addressed in Loy’s poem is not some orderly cosmos or nature in which we dwell but operates to destroy “our” efforts at meaning: “While to your eyes/A delicate crop/of criminal mystic immortelles/stands to the censor’s scythe” (35–8).

Modernist time opens from an actual present—*not* to resign itself to the present’s fragmented detachment from a past that remains absent and sublimely intimated; rather, the other of the present is unfolded from the present’s *beauty* (or from the capacity of every actuality to become an event, or to be experienced beyond itself and for all time). Philosophy’s concepts “gather together” the force of the event, a force that does not lie in any actual *thing* but in something that can be sensed in the thing’s becoming: the “war” or “dying” that is not *a* war and not *a* death. We might refer to this as an *object-disoriented ontology* that takes its departure from things, releasing a sense that has a temporality quite distinct from the spatiotemporality of objects, states of affairs or the lived.

The event is that no one ever dies, but has always just died, or is always going to die, in the empty present of the Aion, that is, in eternity. As he was describing a murder such that it had to be mimed—pure ideality—Mallarmé said: “Here advancing, there remembering, to the future, to the past, under the false appearance of the present—in such a manner the Mime proceeds, whose game is limited to a perpetual allusion, without breaking the mirror.” Each event is the smallest time, smaller than the minimum of continuous thinkable time, because it is divided into proximate past and minimum future. But it is also the longest time, longer than the maximum of continuous thinkable time, because it is endlessly subdivided by the Aion which renders it equal to its own unlimited line. . . . Each event is adequate

to the entire Aion; each event communicates with all the others, and they all form one and the same event, an event of the Aion where they have an eternal truth. (LS, 74)

Modernism in this mode is anything but a commitment to the linguistically mediated nature of experience; nor is it a simple and literal posthumanism that claims to be able to step outside language, as though language did not incarnate a milieu of sense forever irreducible to the world of things. Instead, what language discloses is something like a potentiality for *mime*, which is also a potentiality for sense. Anything actual or given in the here and now is also elsewhere; to refer or name is to allow what is in the present to be repeatable into a future and be retained from the past. To take up Derrida's phrase, modernism is an aesthetics of "Perpetual allusion": everything that is actual is doubled in its sense, which is not its meaningful being for us, but its potential existence elsewhere. Or, to follow Deleuze, we might talk of the doubling of the corporeal world of states of affairs by way of the sense of the world of time in itself, becoming or counter-actualization. Or, we might read Mina Loy's "Apology of Genius," with a sense of genius as inhabiting spirit, expressing the widespread modernist sense of the present always being haunted by a temporality at odds with clock time—a view from elsewhere that is any moment whatever. "We" are perturbed, mocked, ostracized, illuminated, unknowing, and unaware, and yet it is this *not knowing* or being exposed to a time and sense not fully of our own making, that always returns to destroy the closure of meaning. Loy uses the word "lights" in a double sense, such that perturbing (being visited or disturbed) lands upon us (or alights), *and* also how perturbing lights or illuminates our spirit. "Lights" is both a verb such that it is "perturbing" that sheds light, but it is also a noun, such that we seem to be burdened by lights that are *on* our spirit. "Perturbing" works as a noun and an adjective: perturbing is what lands or alights, or the lights are perturbing. That double use splits spirit in two: spirit is both what is *on* the passion of man (added to, or supplemental), or what our spirit is about, directed toward ("on. . . . Man"):

unknowing
 how perturbing lights
 our spirit
 on the passion of Man (8–11)

Either our spirit seems to illuminate our passions (as though the incorporeal gave light to our bodily feeling), *or* it simply alights. The capacity for language to pull in two directions is not an accident added on to being, spirit, life, or Man: everything designated by language is at once anchored and rendered *not* itself, always other than what it simply is.

What if the "we" of the human were to strive, by way of its own medium of speaking, to that force or temporality that allows the voice of sense to come into being? Modernism frequently opens onto deep time and sense. Human meaning opens onto a potentiality and contingency beyond its own containment, with language incarnating

a present beyond any presentation. Rather than seeing modernism as a resignation to the limits of linguistic systems and human synthesis, it would be more fruitful to see language, the word, speaking and voice as possessing a rogue power of beauty, precisely when detached from meaning and appearing as *sense*:

In the raw caverns of the Increate
we forge the dusk of Chaos
to that imperious jewellery of the Universe
— the Beautiful — (31–4)

This, I would suggest, is where modernism operates as an aesthetic of the beautiful, rather than the sublime, and an aesthetics that is destructive of our world of composed things and objects. Every present actuality bears a power of its own repetition, with our efforts at framing, composing, and ordering being at odds with a radical chaos that is utterly beyond any spatiotemporal containment of objects. Modernism's sense is nonlinear, not producing a first time by way of creating a series, but allowing every now or present to open in all directions. Loy's "Apology of Genius," is ostensibly written in second person, with a fragile "we" addressing a distant and difficult "you." This "you" is, however, not identified as an order, destiny, or meaning from which we are distant, but is variously described as that from which chaos is forged. Loy explicitly rejects sublimity—as though the world possessed a genuine order from which we were removed—and instead proffers the beautiful.

Considered in relation to modernism, we might start to make a quite different account of key motifs, such as futurism, elitism, destruction, sexism, impersonality, and counter-vitalism. The future that breaks with the present is not that of an extension of the present, but another time; it is as if we could think the absence of thinking, destroying actuality and the imagination to encounter something beyond the lived. Further work could be done here on Loy's futurism, which seems torn between radical in-humanism—"LET the Universe flow into your consciousness, there is no limit to its capacity, nothing that it shall not re-create"—and a seemingly parochial humanism:

AND so these sounds shall dissolve back to their innate sense-lessness. THUS shall evolve the language of the Future. THROUGH derision of Humanity as it appears—TO arrive at respect for man as he shall be— (428)

Once we mention humanism, antihumanism and futurism we also bring in that other "ism" that haunted modernism and Deleuze: fascism. Rather than cleanse thought of this "ism" it is perhaps best to think of it as cancerous: the very growth and proliferation—the very opening to a limit without any respect for the same—can become cancerous when the forces of creative destruction operate by allowing force to turn back upon its own body. The problem with fascism was not so much its absolutely destructive emphasis on creativity that would lay waste to anything in its path, but rather its reterritorialization on a single term (in the name of the *Volk*, or nation, or "man"). Perhaps the phrase, "To arrive at respect for man as he shall be" comes close to

what both Deleuze and Giorgio Agamben referred to as a beatitude of not subjecting this world to anything other than its own sense, and not seeing man as anything other than his own potentiality to be and not be.²³ Or, to conclude in Loy's terms:

There is no Life or Death
 Only activity
 And in the absolute
 Is no declivity
 . . .
 There is no Space or Time
 Only intensity(3)

Positing ideality and futurity beyond the lived places the human and the material as mere means for some grander envisioned end that is ideal, and beyond the grubby life of human interests. Yet the problem of modernism's elitist and destructive futurism is not that it was politically immaterialist—positing an ideal that would be destructive of all present concerns—but that it remained too anchored to human matters and the lived, subjecting man to some ideal of the human. Would modernism's genuine force not lie in a more violent, more disruptive futurism that stepped outside the time of the human (and the human race) altogether, not concerned with the progress and transformation of humanity? Consider the present and our claims for survival, sustainability, and environment: is this not the most parochial of materialisms that can only view the earth and actuality as if for us, and are we not—now, in this present—forced with all the violence that modernism gestured towards, confronted with the sense of the imminent and immanent un-lived?

III

Here is where the opposition between a textual and a speculative modernism breaks down. *If* we pose the thought experiment of writing as such, a system that does not emerge from or express the world, but might operate machinically and independent of anything stable and organic—let us call this the most formal of all possibilities—then what we might also be thinking about is something akin to a speculative realism: something that *is* outside of all our dreams of natural, organic, synthesized order. Modernism, then, would not be some high linguistic textualism that needed to be vanquished in order for the postmodern to discover a world outside human tradition and meaning. Modernism would signal an occupation of the radical contingency of a purely formal system, deprived of synthesis that would expose us to an inhuman force that could not be returned to anything as comforting as life. What if thinking could imagine its own nonexistence? This, I would suggest, is the bet of modernism. It sometimes issues in a language of pure perception, of force, of life, of text, and even of an eternity outside the time of clocks and human syntheses; what it does *not* yield is a world of interconnected and animated things. Modernism matters

today: there is one sense in which only a modernist aesthetics can offer any hope of a future. Without a thought of the immense panorama of futility that constitutes the present, we will only be living the same dull round. We might, from a lazy position of anthropocentrism, imagine that life has meaning, and that all we need to do is feel the sense and presence of the earth and we will be just fine. Modernism, as many of its critics have pointed out, is a grand separation—an awareness that meaning does not inhere in things, that the world is distant and difficult, and that the life that we so parochially imagine to be ours is in fact a wasteland of fragments that we ought finally to perceive as fragments, as the dead objects they are. This, I would suggest, is a modernism of radical inhuman realism, where voices, texts, signs, particles, sentiments, ideas, and perceptions have as much distinction and reality as anything else. This is a monist modernism in which texts, feelings, natural and non-natural objects have no intrinsic relation to anything. To be more specific I would suggest that modernism emerges as a thought of the radically inhuman—not just a matter that subtends perception, but an utterly alien existence and persistence—that runs from the canonical high modernist thought of disembodied voices operating in some eternity beyond human synthesis—to contemporary theory’s speculative realism in which we claim that it is possible to think an absence of human thinking and to perceive the human archive as a contingent fragment of an inhuman and utterly contingent absolute.

On this understanding, modernism would be opposed to all contemporary forms of posthumanism that sought to provide a continuity between human and nonhuman life and where language might be regarded as emerging from a broader whole of emerging and evolving existence. Modernism would be a radical thought of discontinuity and separation that entertains the thought of a breakdown of temporal synthesis, and a subsequently inhuman contingency. As a canonical example of such a modernism we might think of Joyce’s style in *Dubliners* where phrases are spoken by characters without being fully meant or intended, as though there were a circulating system of disarticulated dead phrases that happened to invade, without colonizing or organizing, a consciousness that no longer masters the languages for which it is a host: “If we could only get one of them new-fangled carriages that makes no noise that Father O’Rourke told him about—they with rheumatic wheels—for the day cheap, he said, at Johnny Rush’s over the way there and drive out the three of us together of a Sunday evening.”²⁴ Or, one might also think of Virginia Woolf’s “atomism,” which strives to write a disarticulation which is not that of language: “Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness. Let us not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small.”²⁵ Modernism’s disembodied and impersonal voices would be indicative not so much of a single system of language that might be tied back to one grand archive of the word, and would instead signal an irreducible dehiscence. To return, once again to Loy’s “Apology of Genius”: Loy’s style intensifies a transcendental duplicity of language that is not simply linguistic, but exposes separation as such.

There is not some continuous meaningful life that is then expressed in a language that may come to appear as alien, separate, and distant. Rather, life as such, reality as such experience as such—all these supposed continuous grounds from which language emerges—are already marked by dispersion, disconnection, nonrelation, rogue and intended doublings, stratifications, and dispersal mechanisms that can never be contained by anything as unified as “life” or “humanity.” Loy’s *writing* places words together in order to generate an intensified distance and chaos. Chaos, here, is not some undifferentiated whole or ground from which articulation emerges, for chaos occurs through difference and distance. “Apology of Genius” exposes a problem of poetic voice that is a problem of writing as such (where writing is the necessary relation between articulation and disarticulation): “Lepers of the moon/all magically diseased/we come among you.” On the one hand these lines express transcendence and visitation (as though life were imbued with spirit, which is the very sense of genius). At the same time, it is unclear whether the “lepers” are those visiting or visited; and what is the “magic” of leprosy as a disease other than a destruction of the bounded border of the skin, a “magic” of decomposition, and an anti-organicism?

For all their differences in style, did not the canonical modernists express some commitment to an eternal plane of perceptions, qualities, emotions, or forces that might be actualized in human experience but had a being of their own? Eliot granted an objectivity to emotions: in “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” art captures the being of an emotion outside its personal manifestation. Woolf gave perceptions themselves a quiddity, such that her prose captures the moment itself, rather than any subjectively framed meaning or propositional content. Not only do Woolf and Eliot anticipate Deleuze and Guattari’s affects and percepts, there is a broader resonance between modernism’s impersonal, inhuman, and virtual plane of thinking (where thinking includes concepts, affects, and percepts), and Deleuze’s philosophy of immanence where thoughts are not pictures or ideas of the world, but compose one of the worlds that make up the domain of a reality that includes the virtual and the actual and is definitely more than human.

Notes

- 1 John Protevi, *Life, War, Earth: Deleuze and the Sciences* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).
- 2 Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (London: The Athlone Press, 2000), 86.
- 3 Deleuze, *Cinema 2* (London: Continuum, 2005), 17.
- 4 Manuel DeLanda, “Deleuze, Materialism and Politics,” in *Deleuze and Politics*, eds. I. Buchanan and N. Thoburn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 160–77.
- 5 “At the moment when language, as spoken and scattered words, becomes an object of knowledge, we see it reappearing in a strictly opposite modality: a silent cautious deposition of the word upon the whiteness of a piece of paper, where it can possess neither sound nor interlocutor, where it has nothing to say but itself, nothing to

- do but shine in the brightness of its being.” Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 300.
- 6 Derrida refers to “what is being advanced, in its most radical exigency, as writing. Or at any rate that is what one can call, *within* philosophy and ‘mimetology’, that which exceeds the conceptual oppositions within which Plato defines the phantasm. Beyond these oppositions, beyond the values of truth and nontruth, this excess (of) writing can no longer, as one might guess, be qualified simply as simulacrum or phantasm. Nor can it indeed be named by the classical concept of writing.” Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (London: Continuum, 2004), 182.
- 7 Graham Harman, “Response to Shaviri,” in *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism*, eds. Levi Bryant, Nick Srnicek, and Graham Harman (Melbourne: re.press, 2011), 302.
- 8 Harman, *Weird Realism: Lovecraft and Philosophy* (Alresford: Zero Books, 2012), 51.
- 9 Colin MacCabe, *James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word* (London: Palgrave, 2003), 32.
- 10 Anthony Easthope, *Poetry as Discourse* (London: Methuen, 1983), 140.
- 11 Jacques Derrida, *Edmund Husserl’s Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, trans. John P. Leavey (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 1989), 102.
- 12 Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 127.
- 13 “A trembling that is no longer psychological but linguistic. To make the language itself stutter in this manner, at the deepest level of style, is a creative process that runs through all great works.” Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London: Verso, 1998), 55.
- 14 “The writer uses words, but by creating a syntax that makes them pass into sensation that makes the standard language stammer, tremble, cry, or even sing: this is the style, the ‘tone,’ the language of sensations, or the foreign language within language that summons forth a people to come. . . .” Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (London: Verso, 1994), 176.
- 15 Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Sean Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 131.
- 16 Derrida, 29; Jean-Francois Lyotard, “*Sensus Communis*,” in *Judging Lyotard*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (London: Routledge, 1992), 5; Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1986), 19.
- 17 Mina Loy, *Lost Lunar Baedeker: Poems of Mina Loy*, ed. Roger L. Conover (New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1996), 77.
- 18 James Joyce, *Ulysses* (New York: Vintage, 1986), 360.
- 19 Carey James Mickalities, *Modernism and Market Fantasy: British Fictions of Capital, 1910–1939* (London: Palgrave, 2012), 123.
- 20 Loy, “Apology of Genius,” lines 6–8. Unless otherwise indicated, all further references will be to “Apology of Genius,” from Loy, 1996, with line numbers in parentheses.
- 21 Quentin Meillassoux, *The Number and the Siren: A Decipherment of Mallarmé’s Coup de Des*, trans. Robin Mackay (New York: Sequence Press, 2012), 112.

- 22 Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale (London: Continuum, 2004), 189.
- 23 Giorgio Agamben, *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, trans. Daniel Heller Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 235.
- 24 Joyce, *Dubliners* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1914), 9.
- 25 Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction," in *Selected Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 9.

Part Three

Glossary

Abstract Machine

Aden L. Evens

Why *machine*? Machine must be understood in opposition to mechanism. For Deleuze, mechanism explains little because it locates the effect already in the cause; mechanism posits genesis as latent or possible in the system prior to the event. Deleuze's philosophy of difference appeals instead to machines for at least two reasons. First, a machine has its reason in itself; it is immanent to itself. Unlike a mechanism which operates by virtue of rules taken as universal within its domain of operation, the machine does not appeal to a transcendental principle but *machines* its own rules as well as their variations and violations. "What we term machinic is precisely this synthesis of heterogeneities as such," a collection of elements in collective resonance (both within the collection of elements and in relation to their context).¹ Second, whereas mechanism discovers the effect already as possibility in its cause, a machine determines itself dialectically by placing its elements in continuous variation in relation to each other. There is neither cause nor effect, neither instrument nor outcome, for a machine *machines* itself, proceeding how it will.

(Prior to his work with Guattari, Deleuze understands this *aleatory* character of the universe, the "how it will" celebrated by Nietzsche among others as the very principle of affirmation and the core *value* of his philosophy, infusing his readings of ethics, aesthetics, ontology, and more. In the collaborative work, this polarizing metaphysics is tempered, as though by an Aristotelian moderation: it is necessary to deterritorialize, to follow lines of flight, to abstract, *but do not go too far*, they write again and again.)

Why *abstract*? The abstract machine is both a machine that is abstract as well as a machine that abstracts. In keeping with the transcendental empiricism at the core of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy, the abstract machine is no less real for being abstract; it does not have the positive reality of the actual but the problematic reality of the virtual. The abstract machine operates at the margins, on the edges of the actual, tearing into those edges to free up parts and make them circulate. It refers to the dynamism of events rather than the stolidity of things; it includes the about-to and the just-did, the felt rather than the seen, and so it occupies a preindividual realm of intensity. To effect this abstraction, to move from the actual to the virtual, from the plane of transcendence to the plane of consistency, requires a rending, a reconstitution in parts. This is why D&G tend to present the machine as more *destructive* than constructive: tearing is at once constitutive of the machine and inimical to it.

Mirroring this paradox, the abstract machine always presents two aspects, one universal and absolute, one singular and relative: “an indissolubility of a singular Abstract and a collective Concrete. The abstract machine does not exist independently of the assemblage, any more than the assemblage functions independently of the machine” (100). As a machine of absolute deterritorialization, the abstract machine cuts headlong across organisms and scales, releasing disorganized pieces and intensive energies onto the plane of consistency, where there is only difference and difference of difference. But on a particular territory (or across related territories), the concrete assemblage effects relative deterritorializations, cuts into its own layers, placing the parts of the assemblage in contact with each other across their heterogeneity.

The question to which the abstract machine answers is, “How does difference make order, even stability, without appealing to transcendence?” Responding only to its own necessity, the abstract machine is strung from difference, but how does it relate to the concrete assemblage without either machine or assemblage assuming a transcendent role? The abstract machine *insists* in the concrete assemblage, ensuring the circulation of parts, posing through incision and abrasion the affront that is both the problem and the potential of the concrete assemblage. “For a true abstract machine pertains to an assemblage in its entirety: it is defined as the diagram of that assemblage” (91). A diagram immanent to an assemblage, the abstract machine also overruns the assemblage, setting its elements in variation, machining itself anew, but only at the risk of going too far. If the abstract machine rends the assemblage, and if it thus recruits as telos the Plane of Consistency, then the peril of absolute deterritorialization, the line of flight pursued to oblivion, the Body without Organs as a frozen corpse or a catatonic, these can never be obviated. “We witness a transformation of substances and a dissolution of forms, a passage to the limit or flight from contours in favor of fluid forces, flows, air, light, and matter, such that a body or a word does not end at a precise point. . . . It is only at this point that one reaches the abstract machine” (109).

Note

- 1 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 330. References throughout are to this text.

Actual/Virtual

Aden L. Evens

A physicalist reads Deleuze poorly: the virtual is a churning chaos of molecules in miscellaneous flight which, through accidental interactions among molecules, forms temporary stabilities whose impressions on our senses constitute the actual enduring objects and relations of experience. The virtual is thus a kind of original cause of the actual, and the actual an effect of the *true* events percolating underneath it. The virtual earns its name by virtue of being the prime cause without being recognized as such; the first definition of *virtual* listed in many English dictionaries is effectiveness in all but name or title. An ethics based on this ontology recommends gaining access to the virtual as the locus of authenticity, the real value behind the appearance. How to do so depends on the specific nature of the relationship between virtual and actual: can we, who may be rooted in the actual, obtain a relationship to the virtual that is other than passive and secondary?

But every part of this physicalist definition is wrong. The virtual is not a chaos, but a machine of in/consistency, where the slash intends an equivocation that parentheses would hierarchize. Making in/consistent does not sow chaos but neither does it reach organization; organs, organizations, and organisms do not arise without leaving the virtual behind. Staving off organs, the virtual does not define and resolve but tends to cluster and distribute, compress and rarefy, contort and erode, approximate and probabilize. The promise of the virtual is to avoid hard and fast promises, which does not preclude sudden events and radical breaks.

Nor is the virtual concerned with molecules, or only in a relative sense. If molecules are already organs, formed and qualified individuals with atomic constituents and measurable geometries, then these molecules have withdrawn from the virtual, which resists metrics and the full determination of an atomic structure. But when a molecule is understood as any part of a problem, whatever has yet to settle, to find itself, to join or flee, to dissolve or collapse—when a molecule takes its meaning from an urgent and constrained openness, then the molecule enwraps its tendrils into the cotton-candy web of the virtual. Anything therefore might be a molecule; it has only to be taken up by a problem, or a becoming, as Deleuze and Guattari write in *A Thousand Plateaus*.

The greatest fault in the bad definition, however, lies in its characterization of the virtual's relationship to the actual. This presents one of the most contentious issues in

Deleuze studies, both due to its weighty bearing on the question of ethics in Deleuze and because this relationship is complex and multiple, both over- and underdetermined. *Difference and Repetition* offers an extended reading of the virtual stretched over an ontogenetic depth, describing the actual as relatively flat and derivative, but theirs is not a causal relationship.

The virtual, a field of difference (in/consistency), includes sympathetic (and antipathetic) resonances that determine structures that Deleuze, turning Plato on his head, calls *Ideas*. The primary *stuff* of the virtual, Ideas are not Plato's transcendent objects of pure self-identity nor are they mental contents, for Ideas as virtual are fully real though not actual; they exist as structure, as impetus, as incipience, as variation, prior to the individuated world of specific qualities and extended parts. Ideas flicker and swarm at the edges of the subject, ensuring and problematizing its engagement with the world by immersing its borders in the virtual.

Deleuze describes virtual Ideas in terms of mathematical abstractions: they comprise *varieties of relation* (such as linear, polynomial, or exponential relations) and *singular points* (such as asymptotes, local maxima, or discontinuities), that together constitute the Idea as abstract-virtual: determinate in its structure of relations and points but not yet determined as to quality and extension, time and space. A further step in the ontogenesis—the spatiotemporal incarnation of varieties of relation into qualities, and singular points into the junctures of extensities—is designated *actualization*. But Deleuze insists, in a fifth chapter often underappreciated by readers of *Difference and Repetition*, that actualization is not produced by the virtual Ideas whose relations and singularities it incarnates; specific qualities and extended parts can be incarnated only by virtue of *individuating factors* that are pure intensive differences on the plane of in/consistency. “Individuation always governs actualization.”¹ These individuating intensities—pure difference understood as the potential across a gap whose edges are also intensities—exhaust themselves as they span that gap to incarnate varieties of relation and singular points into qualities and extensions. Or rather, they do not exhaust themselves in themselves, but only “when seen from above.” The question of the virtual, then, is how to refuse this transcendental *negative* perspective, or how not to “explicate too much.”

Note

- 1 Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 251

Affect

Mickey Vallee

Affect denotes a nonrepresentational mode of thought and is divided into two subterms: *affectio* (affection) and *affectus* (affect). Although it diverges from *idea* (a representational mode of thought), affect is deeply entrenched within it. First, an idea is a representational mode of thought in that it represents the objective world. If I possess the idea of a table, such a possession remains the consequence of some experience with the object-oriented force of what we tend to call a table, and if I need to express the presence of this object in its absence, I will refer to it using such a term: in this sense, language, made of the substance of representation, superseding that which is lacking. This is a vital starting point for Deleuze: *the idea is a mode of thought which represents something in its objective description*.

One component of affect, *affectus*, is *also* a mode of thought, but lacks the component of representation that *idea* possesses. For instance, one may have a “love for books” or a “fear of heights” or the “anxiety of obsolescence,” but these are ideas inasmuch as they possess a referent which must be willed by a nonrepresentational affective force: love, fear, anxiety—these are examples of *affectus*. To elaborate, when Deleuze admires Francis Bacon for painting less the horror than the scream, he respects Bacon for singularizing affect without its representation. For Deleuze, affect is the qualification for the idea.

Affectus is the stream of variation according to which a range of ideas assign the potential for action. The power of acting is increased or decreased according to the qualities attached to the forms of ideas which determine the variation in/of affect. Affect is only manifest in the effect it generates in action: it either inhibits the power of action or it facilitates the power of action; respectively, Deleuze adopts these terms from Spinoza’s joyful-affects and sadness-affects. The latter instance is exhibited in those with political power whose affective capacity is to diminish the action of the populous by working *for* them (sadness-affect). *Affectio*, meanwhile, is an entirely different matter, as the coinciding state of a body that is subject to the action of another body.

Affectio is the state of the body as it is subject to the action of another body. If *affectus* marks the potential for action in its inhibited or facilitated value, *affectio* is the degree to which one body is altered by the action of another. Every body is by law of the *affectus* always already modified through external forces, which tells us more about

the affected body than the one facilitating the affection. This constitutes the formal contour of an idea, since the knowledge of an idea is first-order—that which is only known by way of a continuous register of the effects manifest in the body—though it is a knowledge about which one knows nothing. A flock of seagulls constitutes a body that experiences the prohibition of its movement when encountering the body of wind, yet it knows nothing of the causes of wind's effects. Because the *affectio* (the law that every body is always-already modified by the action of another body) is registered as knowledge, this mode of affect (*affectio*) is an idea insofar as it is knowledge about which one knows nothing.

The ethics of affects regard the following question: *what is the common notion to the affected and the affecting body?* This is a question that can only be answered by way of joyful affect, since sad affect limits attention to solitary passions and joyful affect brings the perceiving subject to the closest proximity to the multiplicity of desires and assemblages of affects. Deleuze asks that we live on the limit of the joyful passion as an ethical rule.

A body is composed of infinite relations that correspond to essence but never touch it—these are just made of rules of extension. The “essence” of a body is thus its intensive threshold for joyful passion, its most excitable moment of complex relations. Nature is always already in a state of complex relations, at its most joyful in that it is never resting. A burnt forest burns ember for months; insects feed off the burnt bark and thrive.

Assemblage

Justin Litaker

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari argue that desire is not essentially the lack of something or someone, but first and foremost a process or activity of producing what is desired. This notion of desire is completed by the concept of *assemblage* as the combination of three aspects: (1) the *conditions* for acting, (2) the *activity*, and (3) the *consequences* of the action. In short, desire is that which is assembled (as condition and consequence) and the process of assembling: “there is no desire but assembling, assembled desire.”¹ The concept of *assemblage* is quite complex; however, in *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari provide a relatively simple set of coordinates useful for mapping the concept.

First, the conditions and consequences of desire’s assembling refer to what Deleuze and Guattari call the horizontal axis of an assemblage; these include the institutions or practices with which we define ourselves, determine our goals, and organize our activities. The axis is comprised of two aspects: *content* and *expression*. *Content* refers to a constellation or “intermingling” of *bodies*, which are defined by active and passive affects. For instance, this book as a body might be defined by the affects: *to be legible, to be profitable, to provoke thought, to inform, to be imitated, to be enjoyable, etc.* *Expression* refers to statements that “intervene in contents, not to represent them but to anticipate them or move them back, slow them down or speed them up, separate or combine them, delimit them in a different way” (*ATP*, 86). In short, content and expression refer to those elements of an assemblage that qualify desire and serve as its resources for constructing its future conditions.

Second, the vertical axis corresponds to desire as the activity or process of assembling. Along this axis, desire is defined by two coexisting, asymmetrical tendencies: *(re)territorialization* and *detrterritorialization*. On the side of *territorialization* or *reterritorialization*, the process of desire tends to diminish resources for experimentation and novelty in favor of the reproduction of initial conditions, whereby desire comes to treat certain resources as necessary for its continuance. For example, one may write—as a process of desire—with the point of view of becoming a professional writer in a competitive market, adopting both the stylistic trends of a major language (expression) and the popular categories and themes (content) of social representation. In this way writing, as a process of (re)territorializing, engages resources to produce the writer as

a subject of dominant interests and, consequently, contributes to the reproduction, reinforcement, and advancement of these specific conditions.

In contrast, the tendency toward *deterritorialization* entails experimentation with the variables of an assemblage such that its reproduction is placed in jeopardy. For example, to write according to this tendency is to become something other than a writer, to encounter *minorities*, and to introduce a deep variation and novel distribution of the composing elements that precipitates a dismantling or transformation of the assemblage. This is how Deleuze and Guattari describe Kafka's work: becoming a "stranger *within* his own language," producing an expression for a people "yet to come," and utilizing the dominant social representations in order to dismantle the assemblages animating them.² The tendency toward deterritorialization thus destabilizes and uproots the territorialization of desire in favor of a novel production. One of Deleuze's favored examples is Captain Ahab, who selects the white whale in opposition to the law of the fisherman—"according to which all whales are fit to hunt."³ And while Moby Dick certainly belongs to the class of *all whales*, he constitutes the border or *limit* beyond which the whale-fishing assemblage, led by Ahab, is no longer sustainable or reproducible.

As the *cutting edge of deterritorialization* or *line of flight*, the *limit* of an assemblage determines the rules for sustaining its territorialization or reproducibility. Deleuze and Guattari extend the economic theory of *marginalism* to articulate this idea. For example, in an assemblage of the domestic quarrel each individual evaluates the weight of the *last word* that would end the discussion and confer advantage while sustaining the renewability of the domestic assemblage. Beyond the last word are other statements that would require the assemblage to change its nature (e.g. "I can't do this anymore"). Hence an assemblage's tendency toward deterritorialization defines its possible territorial organization and reproducibility as well as its point of departure and transformation.

In short, the horizontal axis of an assemblage refers to the conditions and consequences of action as configurations of *content* and *expression*, that is, forms of organization and elements that are more or less deterritorialized and variable. Inseparable from the conditions and consequences is desire as the activity or process of assembling, which defines the vertical axis of an assemblage. In (re)territorializing, an assemblage tends toward the reproduction and reinvestment of more rigid formations. In contrast, an assemblage tends to deterritorialize by extracting the variations inherent to its elements, which results in the decomposition of the conditioning assemblage. As a synthesis of the conditions, consequences, and activity of desire as process of production, Deleuze and Guattari's concept of *assemblage* is a robust conception of agency and a powerful framework for analyzing social formations.

Notes

- 1 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 399.
- 2 Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 18, 26, 59.
- 3 Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, trans. Barbara Habberjam and Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 42.

Becoming

Jason Skeet

Deleuze's work is often characterized as an ontology of becoming that provides for a critique of philosophies of being. Deleuze reverses the determination to understand life through a positing of eternal and fixed essences. For Deleuze, it is process rather than form that is primary, and every form is the effect of a process of becoming. Deleuze formulated this reversal in terms of a linguistic procedure in French: as the shift from "est" to "et," from the verb "to be" to the connective "and." Becoming is thus tied to the challenge Deleuze's philosophy presents us with of how to think of difference as difference in itself.

Deleuze's ambition to construct a philosophy of becoming was inspired by his encounter with Nietzsche's work. Nietzsche's eternal return is a conception of the becoming of becoming, and of the productive return of difference. Becoming is therefore a component of Deleuze's search for a new image of thought, and of how to conceive thought as an experiment that does not know beforehand what its result may be. Becoming is also linked with the abiding significance Deleuze attaches to empiricism, which is also the basis for his insistence on the need to develop new forms of philosophical expression.

However, the term "becoming" should not be thought of as a synonym for "change." Although change is what becoming effects, our thinking is inadequate if we conceive becoming as the difference between an origin and end point in a linear process of transformation. Becoming is the passage between points. In *Kafka*, Deleuze and Guattari discuss *The Metamorphosis* and Gregor's becoming-animal as a path that crosses a threshold to reach a plateau of intensity. This intensity is the line between, valued only in itself, and not in relation to or as the representation of something else. Kafka's story is not metaphorical or allegorical, and neither is it a case study of a man actually turning into an insect. Neither mode of thought can grasp the zone of indiscernibility between two states. Deleuze and Guattari also claim that becoming-animal is Kafka's tactic for resisting the totalitarian powers coming into view at the time he was writing. This zone of indiscernibility is the necessary condition for differentiation to occur: a zone through which something passes to become different.

Another example Deleuze frequently uses to discuss becoming is that of the wasp and the orchid. Both are involved in a mutual process or "block of becoming"—a

line of deterritorialization that they share and that passes between them. The orchid becomes wasp; its flower markings, coloring and scent attract the wasp, which then becomes part of the orchid's reproductive system. However, these becomings involve more than imitation, as they bring a benefit to both sides and an intensification of the deterritorializations as their "surplus value." Nor does this process constitute the formation of a third term, an orchid-wasp hybrid, since both sides are interlinked yet pursue an "a-parallel" movement. The relationship between orchid and wasp is analogous to the effect of counterpoint in music—this musical conception of ecology is developed in *A Thousand Plateaus*—and it is with this idea of contrapuntal relations that we see how becoming occurs in a space between two terms.

Deleuze and Guattari posit a line of becoming, starting out from becoming-woman and proceeding by way of becoming-animal to molecular becomings and becoming-imperceptible. On this basis, Deleuze not only attacks the fascination (in the western philosophical canon) with identity and essence, but also makes immanence a component of a conception of becoming. For example, we are accustomed to thinking of movement as subordinate to time, with time as the transcendent reference for measuring speed. In this understanding, movement can then be divided into distinct points on a line. In a becoming, however, these points are rendered indiscernible and made subordinate to the paths or relations they determine, that are in turn relatable only to a plane of immanence or field of pure differences. A distinction can then be made between speed and movement, one that correlates with a contrast between the intensive and extensive: the "absolute character" of speed versus the "relative character" of movement. In a becoming, what counts for Deleuze are the differential relations between speeds, that is, intensities distributed on a smooth and open space or plane of immanence and the ability to then occupy or retain attachment to this plane. The plane of immanence is contrasted with the plane of organization, on which forms (including the individual as subject) are locatable.

Deleuze states that writing is a question of becoming. Virginia Woolf can be considered exemplary in this regard. For example, her characters in *The Waves* never possess stable identities but instead are constantly inserted onto lines of becoming, that is, "I" as ongoing event continually expanding beyond the known. The self as an event of becoming: not end product but that which is the condition for an entirely impersonal production.

Body Without Organs

Ian Buchanan

Pierre Bourdieu's notion of "disposition" (*habitus*) comes closest to capturing what might be termed the functional core of the concept of the body without organs. Disposition in Bourdieu's work points to what might usefully be described as an underlying attitude toward the self and the world, or what we might also think of as the condition of desire—how and why and in what way desire *desires*, as well as what it desires.¹ It is the realm of anticipations, aspirations, calculations, experimentations, motivations, needs, and wants. Above all, it is the realm of conditioned possibilities. It is a product of history but at the same time it produces history; it is the internalization of the past, memories and experiences, all the acts and events that form "us," in such a way as to open us to the future in a very particular way.

Disposition is simultaneously generative (i.e. productive) and restricted or constrained (i.e. antiproduktive). This means, paradoxically, it is passively productive—it produces without knowing ahead of time what it will produce—and actively antiproduktive—it prevents production not by repressing it, but by starving it of energy. As we will see, this is precisely the way the body without organs operates as well. The advantage of this comparison is that it points up something all too often overlooked in discussions of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts, namely a practical origin and purpose. The body without organs is an essential component of the critical apparatus Deleuze and Guattari called schizoanalysis. It is, I want to suggest, as structurally necessary to their endeavor as disposition (*habitus*) is to Bourdieu's; it is a core part of the way they analyze things.

To see that, though, we have to chart its trajectory from its first appearance in Deleuze's *Logic of Sense* in 1969 to its culmination in *A Thousand Plateaus* in 1980 and take note of its transformation along the way from symptom to psychic agency. As is well known, the phrase "body without organs" is taken from the radio play "To Have Done with the Judgment of God" by the French surrealist Antonin Artaud. Written in the form of a prose poem and in what is generally assumed to be an autobiographical voice, "To Have Done with the Judgment of God" charts a strange course that begins with geopolitics (Americans wanting war) and descends into an examination of the body at its most visceral (shitting = being) before concluding finally that "man" will only be free when he has made for himself a body without organs. Organs are a source

of eternal suffering for Artaud, so it is better to have done with them. But this does not mean he longs for death—as he says in his short note on suicide, it is existence, not life, that he's tired of.²

For Deleuze, at this early stage in his thinking about the body without organs, Artaud's work is analyzed in terms of what it can say about schizophrenia and language. His purpose is to refute the psychoanalytic idea that schizophrenic language can be grasped as an "endless and panic-stricken sliding of the signifying series toward the signified series."³ In point of fact, he says, both series disappear. The problem for the schizophrenic is that in the full flight of psychosis there "is no longer anything to prevent propositions from falling back onto bodies and from mingling their sonorous elements with the body's olfactory, gustatory, or digestive affects" (*LS*, 91). In short, the distinction between words and things collapses, such that words can wound the body just as surely as knives. It is in order to escape these wounding-words that Artaud longs for a body without organs. Artaud's desire for a body without organs is thus read by Deleuze as a symptom of his psychosis.

With the aid of Melanie Klein's concept of the liquid object, which is directly opposed to the more familiar anal object, Deleuze takes this a step further and without exactly putting it in these terms proposes that the desire for the body without organs can also be read as an attempt at self-cure. Its very existence is a defense against the wounding-words the schizophrenic encounters. The body without organs dissolves the wounding-words and absorbs them into itself (*LS*, 189). It does so passively, that is without necessarily intending to; it simply shuts everything down. In the next iteration of the concept in *Anti-Oedipus* this is precisely the formulation Deleuze and Guattari give of it: "In order to resist organ-machines, the body without organs presents its smooth, slippery, opaque, taut surface as a barrier. In order to resist linked, connected, and interrupted flows, it sets up a counterflow of amorphous, undifferentiated fluid."⁴ The body without organs is a mechanism of defense.

Although Deleuze does not announce it as such, at this point, what begins to take form here is the idea that the body without organs is not simply a symptom, but something more. It is produced by the process of desire, but it also has an effect on desire—it is, as Bourdieu says of habitus, a product of history and an agent in history. In *Anti-Oedipus* the body without organs simply arises alongside the process of desiring, acting as a kind of counterweight to it, limiting its excesses. But it is positioned behind the conscious grasp of the subject. The body without organs is a condition to be suffered, endured: think of poor Judge Schreber who had to live "for a long time without a stomach, without intestines, almost without lungs" and so on (*AO*, 8). This suffering takes place on the plane of existence, as Artaud called it, not the plane of life. It has nothing to do with the actual body or even the body-image.

A Thousand Plateaus takes a surprising, but entirely logical step and proposes that the body without organs is something that can be constructed. One does not simply have to endure it, like an unwanted state of being. It is in this iteration of the concept that its proximity to Bourdieu's concept of disposition is at its clearest. In contrast, though, to Bourdieu, Deleuze and Guattari allow two things Bourdieu does not: first, that it is possible to actively construct a new disposition—this thesis plays out in a

particularly strong way in Guattari's work and was clearly central to his thinking in respect of his therapeutic practice—and, second, that it can be mapped—the body without organs eventually disappears as a concept because it is superseded by the plane of immanence, which, right from the start, was one of its cognates. In proposing a “mappable” notion of disposition, Deleuze and Guattari open up a highly agile way of thinking about how it is we desire and what it is we desire.

Notes

- 1 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (London: Polity Press, 1992). Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 165.
- 2 Antonin Artaud, “Inquiry. . . Is Suicide a Solution?,” in *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, ed. Susan Sontag (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1976), 102.
- 3 Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. M. Lester (London: Athlone, 1990), 91.
- 4 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem, and H. R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 9.

Desire

Marco Altamirano

Something can be learned about desire just by watching television advertisements. An ad might claim, for example, “this is the movie you’ve been waiting for!” Subsequently, you might find yourself watching a movie (the one you were suddenly waiting for) not only because desires are manufactured, but because, as Deleuze and Guattari argue in *Anti-Oedipus*, desire is itself a process of production.¹ This productive conception of desire arrives as a critique of the Oedipal configuration of desire, which makes the familial structure (the mother, the father, and the child subject) the foundation of our unconscious drives. On this psychoanalytic configuration, we desire (to see a movie, for example) only because our unconscious is driving us to fulfill some loss (so the object of conscious desire is a kind of substitute for a more primordial loss or lack). Desire is thus formulated in terms of lack, in the sense that desires are ways of compensating or negotiating an essential lack, ultimately constituting a psychic reality where dreams and fantasies form a playground for our unconscious drives. Instead of conceiving of desire in terms of an Oedipal structure that stages unconscious dramas, Deleuze and Guattari present a concept of desire that is thoroughly productive, which is not simply to say that desires are produced, but rather that desire *is* production, and more, that its product is the real itself.

Deleuze and Guattari credit Kant for “effecting a critical revolution as regards the theory of desire” because he maintained that desire, through its representations, could cause the reality of the objects of those representations (AO, 25). Kant did not think that the mere mental representation of something, say a sandwich, could cause the reality of the sandwich—the sandwich has to be created through some external cause, involving bread and perhaps a toaster. But while the imaginative desire for a sandwich may help to produce a real sandwich, Kant’s examples were mainly hallucinations and fantasies, features of a *psychic reality*. Conversely, Deleuze and Guattari claim that “if desire is productive, it can be productive only in the real world and can produce only reality” (AO, 26). The world is not split in two, between a subjective or psychic pole and an objective or real pole; instead, there is only a process of production that produces the subjects and objects of desire—instead of a theater of representations in the mind cast over and against so many objects, there is only a factory of real production. And this is why Deleuze and Guattari never discuss desire as if it were a

matter of objects, as if it were the desire for a movie, a sandwich, or a lover—desire is always a process of production whose investment spans far beyond such so-called “objects of desire.”

Take, for instance, the production of money as it is distributed throughout a capitalist arrangement: the owner of a factory or some means of production employs a laborer to extract labor and produce surplus, augmenting the owner’s capital while merely preserving the laborer. The laborer, finding the situation unfair, may go on strike, disconnecting from the flow of money, but the capitalist may be in a position to simply wait, suckling on his capital. After all, the laborer has less capital, and must eventually return to work in order to reconnect to the flow of money, to survive and perhaps to provide for dependents. But this arrangement works only because the laborer and the capitalist *both believe in money*. In other words, the flow of labor, the flow of money, and the flow of ownership require an investment in capital, a desiring investment which goes far beyond the subjects (laborers, owners) and the objects (factories) of capital; in fact, such a desiring investment is what produces those subjects and objects in the first place. Hence, desire is always discussed in terms of machines: what we normally take as a desire to see a movie is in reality a mere result, a product of desiring-machines.

In order to illustrate the machinic function of desire, Deleuze and Guattari offer the situation of a schizophrenic child named little Joey, a boy literally caught within a complex of gears, levers, pulleys, lightbulbs, and carburetors, a veritable machine within which he operates (AO, 37). Little Joey can only function through these machines: he eats through a machine, he sleeps through a machine, and he speaks through a machine. It becomes difficult to discern, then, where the machines stop and where little Joey begins. Deleuze and Guattari take this machinic arrangement seriously—and with a little effort we find that, like little Joey, we too speak with the anatomical machinery of a mouth and windpipe in order to produce sounds and words, and we, too, walk with shoes, clothes, wheelchairs, and other machinic prosthetics that propel us down the street in a certain way. What matters in the machine is not its material, but rather the set of relations that constitute its functional arrangement. In other words, desiring-machines are productive because they are *synthetic*—the mouth machine is connected to the windpipe in order to produce a flow of sound, a flow which in turn connects to other machines that interrupt, change, and produce other flows (a flow of music, a flow of people, a flow of dancing). Since machines are always connected to other machines, there is no way of understanding one machine (say a factory) outside of the entire range of connections that it shares with other machines (the system of capitalism). So a court cannot be understood unless you take into account the entire social order wherein laws, law schools, lawyers, trespasses, and juries conduct a series of events through those desiring-machines—similarly, the desire to become a lawyer only testifies to a machinic investment within the entire assemblage of desiring-machines that produce lawyers and courts.

Thus, if we dismiss the “mechanistic” connotation of the concept of machine and keep its synthetic and productive dimension, we find that desiring-machines offer conceptual resources for examining the problem of the individual and society. The

concept of desiring-machines is something of a resolution between Freud and Marx on the question of the “origin” of desire, the question of where our desires come from—do they arise from the individual or society? While Freud attempted to find desire “inside” the subject, in a libidinal economy characterized by family dramas, Marx held that desire is determined by social structures and class consciousness, the political economy “outside” the subject. What Deleuze and Guattari accomplish, through their concept of desiring-machines, is to draw a line perpendicular to the opposing starting-points of Freudianism and Marxism—libidinal economy is *already* political economy: “social production and desiring-production are one and the same” (AO, 116). Desire does not lie within the psyche of the individual any more than it determines the individual through society. Rather, desiring-machines produce both the individual and the social order they traverse—machines dissolve the subject and its objects alike. Thus, we cannot interpret desire as an expression of a subject’s psyche because desire does not “stand for” an Oedipal lack or anything else—desire is not symbolic. There is, rather, only desiring-production, functioning through a certain assemblage of machines, with diverse flows and breaks, and with their various products. So, for example, the mouth machine taps into a flow of air and produces a speech-sound, but only by being connected to a hearing machine, both of which are connected to a vast social machine that produces the flow of language. The point here is that desire is always arranged and assembled, and different individuals in different social orders desire differently: the contemporary Londoner does not desire in the same way as an official of a dynasty in ancient China, and it is not a matter of desiring different objects. Their mouths and larynges may be anatomically similar, but their *machinic* constitution (i.e. their connection to other machines) produces different sounds and languages. That is, the mouth is only a mouth by virtue of its connection to an assemblage of machines that spans across the entire *socius*, the synthetic constitution that obtains among flows of thought, geography, systems of kinship, material cultures, and history, for example. In short, the different machinic arrangements between the capitalist Londoner and the official of an ancient dynasty produce not only different cultures, but also different individuals and different bodies, in the sense that what the body of a Londoner perceives, affects, and effects is different from what the body of an ancient official sees, feels, and produces.

Note

- 1 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem, and H. R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983). On desiring-production, see especially pp. 1–50.

Deterritorialization

John Mac Kilgore

Deterritorialization does not express itself in general. And therefore it cannot be understood generally either. To define it as “the movement by which ‘one’ leaves the territory” elucidates nothing but a rule or procedure that’s as much an evaluative tool as it is an operative force.¹ Said movement never happens in a pure form. This is why “the movement of deterritorialization can never be grasped in itself, one can only grasp its indices in relation to the territorial representations.”² As implied by the term, deterritorialization has no concrete meaning apart from that territory it traverses. But it is not merely the undoing or freeing of territory either: “What is more, the force and obstinacy of a deterritorialization can only be evaluated through the types of reterritorialization that represent it; the one is the reverse side of the other” (AO, 316). A case of deterritorialization not only gives way to new territorial relations but functions internal to the law of territorialization. The territory allows us to measure a deterritorialization’s relative strength or weakness. Thus it is a distortion to say that deterritorialization merely describes a process of leaving a territory—it is equally the movement and becoming *of* that territory, the means by which territories expand and mutate, divide and conquer. An economic relationship occurs between the contrary, if mutually constitutive, forces of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, crystallizing in the form of a territorial assemblage.

There are at least four intercombinative forms of deterritorialization depending upon the economy established between deterritorialization and its opposite; since Deleuze and Guattari lay these out explicitly in their own glossary-style treatment of deterritorialization, it will be most helpful to slot key examples from their work into the schema.³ First, the two weak types of deterritorialization that privilege reterritorialization as a *primary value*—“negative D” and “relative D.” In terms of social forms, “negative D” represents both the territorial and despotic machine—any strongly centralized case of power, radiating outward from a center, proceeding via “principle reterritorializations” that strongly block the flows of deterritorialization. The latter, “relative D,” represents the capitalist machine, which deterritorializes the socius and decodes flows of money and labor, but only to play the vampire that sucks

their blood, capitalizing on deterritorialization and repressing/segmenting its flows. Whereas “negative D” inheres in a Tree or Root model of molar organization, in any “signifying regime” where a principle unity, a One, governs a field of difference, “relative D” both does and does not support such a model: it breaks the unity down in order to reestablish it, albeit always in the name of reterritorialization—a “striated space.”

The two strong forms privilege deterritorialization as a *primary value*. They are dubbed “absolute,” the one “positive” and the other “negative” in its effects. Why absolute? Because it is a “type of movement” that relates an assemblage to a “smooth space,” to an “abstract vital line” coincident with the nonterritorialized earth—the “strict correlate of D.” Thus, if deterritorialization must be defined, in and for itself, then call it “the creator of the earth,” the earth as creation—this is the positive absolute. However, since it is not “transcendent,” the absolute “necessarily proceeds by way of relative D,” just as “relative D” necessarily proceeds by way of the “absolute D” (as a “limitative absolute”). Take, for instance, the rhizome. Even though it expresses “absolute D,” as a decentralized network of cross-pollinating lines of flight, it nevertheless takes *form* through “lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc” (ATP, 9). Likewise, the category of *minor literature*, a rhizome writing, may have “a high coefficient of deterritorialization” that makes “strange or minor uses” of a major—centralized, overcoded—language, but it too, as in the case of Kafka, contains many reterritorialized elements that speak to blocked, entrapped, segmented, defeated desire and connectivity.⁴ Even in an ideal rhizome writing, it is not a matter of evacuating a language territory but breaking it open, freeing it up, so that it connects immediately to a “collective, even revolutionary, enunciation” (K, 19). Deleuze and Guattari encourage you to “increase your territory by deterritorialization,” on the plane of consistency (ATP, 11).

But what are we to make of the last and most ambiguous case of deterritorialization—the negative absolute—in which lines of flight, pursued for themselves, “turn into lines of destruction or death”? That this absolute form contradictorily demands a reterritorialized earth—“girded, encompassed, overcoded, conjugated”—suggests a case where the negative or relative logics of deterritorialization begin to run free of any limited territorial assemblage or State, raised to an abstract plane; this, in effect, inverts the positive absolute, leading to a “suicidal organization” and the destruction of the earth. Deleuze and Guattari address this elsewhere as the highest danger of micropolitics—“the Passion for abolition,” pursued by a social machine (such as fascism) that “has no other object but war” (ATP, 227, 230). Yet, from our vantage point today, it might be fair to pose the question, first, whether the disaster capitalist machine of globalization, ever pushing us toward both a fully conjugated and unsustainable earth, does not, in a suicidal respect, represent a repressed form of the negative absolute; and, second, whether a revolutionary machine of creative deterritorialization can emerge that is strong enough to stop it.

Notes

- 1 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 508.
- 2 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem, and H. R. Land (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 316.
- 3 See *ATP*, 508–10, for the entry on “D: *Deterritorialization*.” Except where otherwise noted below, the remaining quotations come from this entry.
- 4 Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 16–17.

Memory

Nadine Boljkovac

“Becoming is an antimemory” write Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*.¹ In keeping with a philosophy of the ever-new through a conception of difference that exists purely or *in itself*, never this or that but this and then that, or this *and* this *and* this . . . , Deleuze explores the power of a pure, nonpsychological, ontological memory and subjectivity. Throughout his works with and without Guattari, and by way of Henri Bergson, Deleuze proposes memory as a creative force that emerges from stratigraphic planes of subhistorical layers of past. When recollected and actualized, the virtual memory image is always already something new.

In this way, Deleuze refers to Bergson’s famous cone whereby actual present and its past, the virtual image that always doubles the actual, exist at the cone’s point. According to Bergson, pure memory preserves our actual experiences. These experiences are doubled in a virtual existence and exist as virtual images that may become actualized, while at once remaining virtual, as in an experience of *déjà vu*. This virtual pure recollection exists in a “sheet” or continuum preserved in time beyond any single individual or group. Virtual sections, circuits, or “sheets” and layers of past comprise this cone of recollections as it widens, “each of which contains all our past as this is preserved in itself (pure recollection).”² Given this understanding of the past, conventional time as such and *bodies* themselves lose organization and resist the reterritorializing of social production and overcoding. No longer merely a matter of one’s personal memory, memory in this sense opens, as Deleuze explains in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, to a world-memory, an architecture of memory (117), to a foreign world and otherness of self, life, and language, a *becoming*. Crucial to Deleuze’s philosophy but less to Bergson’s own, in *Cinema 2* Deleuze identifies a process of actualization whereby virtual images become anew via recollection. As noted above, films of the time-image leap among various regions of virtual past, as does memory itself, so that during recall, layers of memory surface anew. This synthesis of actual-virtual extends to the heart of Deleuze’s thought as premised upon life’s flow and the creative productive potential of memory itself.

We may look to Chris Marker’s 1962 short film *La Jetée*³ to observe a man who discovers a contemporaneousness of his adult and child self as he becomes, as Deleuze and Guattari might suggest, other and imperceptible. The child whose story

the film tells is a child, “‘a’ molecular child” (ATP, 294), whose assemblage or block of singular sensations and perceptions are not of the man’s childhood but of a new world becoming, a new memory-world formed by the lovers’ encounter whose virtual images permeate a vast virtual and impersonal world-memory and past. Deleuze and Guattari write: “The BwO [body without organs] is a childhood block, a becoming, the opposite of a childhood memory. It is not the child ‘before’ the adult . . . : it is the strict contemporaneousness of the adult, of the adult and the child, their map of comparative densities and intensities, and all of the variations on that map” (ATP, 164).

Memory in this way is more accurately an assemblage of singular sensations, bodily encounters of connections, actions, and reactions. The man in *La Jetée* is a prisoner within an unimaginable, unrecognizable world of crumbled ruins that once were known as Paris, his virtual images seeming remnants of this past existence. If the film does not then recover, re-present, or redeem a memory as conventionally, nostalgically conceived, it achieves an *untimeliness*, such as Deleuze and Guattari describe through Nietzsche, or “in other words, forgetting as opposed to memory, geography as opposed to history” (ATP, 296). This dismantling of memory as conventionally conceived becomes a form of stammering beyond memory and the self. We may now speak of a futurity that yet remains fully immersed within a creative past and memory. Such “does not form a whole, but rather a limit” (CII, 206) that realizes a doubling or splitting in two of time between virtual memory and actual perception, past and future *at once*.

Notes

- 1 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 294.
- 2 Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 294 n. 22.
- 3 Chris Marker (dir.), *La Jetée* (Argos Films, 1962).

Minor Literature

Christopher Langlois

In *Kafka*, Deleuze and Guattari construct the concept of a “minor literature,” which encapsulates the conditions that enable literature to perform a political intervention into the national languages and sociohistorical communities that its composition inherits. A minor literature inserts itself into the major language of its composition, and through its formal techniques of linguistic and aesthetic subversion, a minor literature proceeds to make the grammatical, lexical, semantic, sonorous, and syntactic *status quo* of a major language (and also of the canonical or “great” traditions of literature) undergo an internal displacement and contortion whereby the language itself begins to “scream, stutter, stammer, or murmur.”¹ By assaulting so committedly and intensively the linguistic integrity of a major language and (by extension) the hegemonic cultures that such languages invariably prop up, a minor literature opens up a space of communication between individuals and an emergent political presence, which suddenly begins to provide avenues of enunciation for collectives of the oppressed to voice the conditions of their oppression and to pave new and unpredictable lines of flight from their territorial imprisonment (literal or otherwise).

According to Deleuze, a minor literature does not refer simply to “a situation of bilingualism or multilingualism, even though Kafka is a Czech writing in German, and Beckett an Irishman (often) writing in French, and so on” (“He Stuttered,” 109). What constitutes the literature of Kafka and Beckett as a minor use of language, but also the modernist and avant-garde writings of Joyce, Melville, Lawrence, Artaud, Céline, Péguy, Roussel, and Mandelstam, to name only several that Deleuze and Guattari include in their pantheon of minor literati, is that it subverts a language’s major usages from within—Kafka works “to be a sort of stranger *within* his own language”—and invents ways of disrupting its harmonious structures of communication and expression.² Just as the aesthetic mantra of modernism consisted in a creative subtraction from prior techniques and ideologies of what the artistic imagination had hitherto been capable of envisioning for words on the page, paint on the canvas, or bodies and voices in movement and in speech on the stage, so too does a minoritarian usage of language conduct a deterritorializing mission within the boundaries of the major language that confines the political imagination of the subaltern and the oppressed. Whenever a language is established so as to have a majoritarian influence over the society that speaks and thinks using its codes and idioms, it tends also to reinforce the influence

of the social and political order of this very same people, which more often than not extends to anyone who does not speak this language fluently, but who has no choice but to live where it is being enlisted in the service of domination. A minor literature is not invented for people already assimilated into a hegemonic culture or political community; it is invented for a people who do not yet exist, or rather for a people who *will have existed*, or who exist only on the periphery and in the margins, out of sight and out of mind of the major structures of power: “this is the problem of immigrants, and especially of their children, the problem of minorities, the problem of a minor literature, but also a problem for all of us: how to tear a minor literature away from its own language, allowing it to challenge the language and making it follow a sober revolutionary path?” (K, 19).

Deleuze and Guattari’s endorsement of minor literature avoids amounting to a propagandistic defense of literature’s political potency insofar as the pathway that minor literatures take in pursuing the “sober revolutionary path” is restricted to how a work’s stylistic mastery over its material and form accelerates and exacerbates the immanent deterritorializations that every language and every people is always already on the brink of experiencing. Kafka stands for Deleuze and Guattari as the quintessential minoritarian writer, even though, and in contrast for example to Samuel Beckett’s writing of *Worstward Ho* or James Joyce’s writing of *Finnegans Wake* (both in English), his writing does not consist so explicitly in a deterritorialization of the major German language. Kafka nevertheless accomplishes a deterritorialization of language in his novels and prose not so much by violating the grammatical or syntactical laws of his native Prague German, which were far from inviolable in the dialect of everyday Czech usage, but by converting this language “into a unique and solitary form of writing” (K, 25). Not by perforating the word surface or abusing the syntactical regularities of the German language will Kafka subversively invigorate its bureaucratic sterility. Kafka, rather, will push Prague German “in the direction of a new sobriety, a new and unexpected modification, a pitiless rectification, a straightening of the head” (25–6). He will extract from the lexical impoverishment of German “the barking of the dog, the cough of the ape, and the bustling of the beetle” (26). There are as many ways of becoming-minoritarian in literature as there are collectives of people and animals waiting to break free from majoritarian structures of power, and thus Kafka’s example is not to be misconstrued or idolized as the only legitimate instantiation of a minor literature. In order to begin understanding the concept of minor literature, it is necessary to foster a cultural and political sensitivity to how new literatures, new languages, and new collectives are presently and diversely in the process of becoming-deterritorialized.

Notes

- 1 Gilles Deleuze, “He Stuttered,” in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. D. W. Smith and M. A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 110.
- 2 Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 26.

Plane of Immanence

Jon K. Shaw

*[I]t is only when immanence is no longer immanence to anything other than itself that we can speak of a plane of immanence.*¹

As Christian Kerslake has noted, “immanence” is a rare “terminological constant” running through Deleuze’s œuvre; indeed, it is, perhaps, “*the* problem inspiring his work.”²

While immanence often seems to be opposed to transcendence, this should never be thought as a simple contradiction. Although “it is always possible to invoke a transcendent that falls outside the plane of immanence, or that attributes immanence to itself, all transcendence is constituted solely in the flow of immanent consciousness that belongs to this plane” (*PI*, 30–1). In order that the plane of immanence be purely immanent and “not hand itself over”³ to transcendence, immanence must be only immanence *to immanence*: it is the pure difference ontologically anterior to, and ultimately debasing, any transcendent identity or unity.

A convention introduced in the English translations of Deleuze marks a difference between “plan of transcendence” and “plane of immanence” (the French word, in both cases, is *plan*).⁴ This convention highlights two important aspects. First, that the plane has no outside: neither an objective “place” from which to observe it, nor an “elsewhere” from which it is a derivation (no Platonic ideal, for example). Second, the rejection of “plan” as a term for immanence also points toward the role of experimentation in making and showing the plane of immanence. This said, it might be objected that the kind of experimentation of which Deleuze speaks is more akin to the method of “trial and error” of the sciences (the Enlightenment’s “following tracks” [*WP*, 53]) than to the understanding of “experimental” which prefixes writing, film, and music in much discussion of modernist art. This objection would ally Deleuze’s kind of experimentation with a model of truth which he and Guattari explicitly reject in *What is Philosophy?*, and make of it a fascicular, rather than a rhizomatic form of experimentation.⁵ Such a vestige of a One or telos of immanence is a central theme in Alain Badiou’s critique of Deleuze.⁶

In the “Memories of a Plan(e) Maker” section of the tenth plateau, it is asserted that the plane of immanence is never “a regression leading back to a principle” (*ATP*, 267),

nor is it a directed plan or evolution (indeed, on the plane “nothing develops” [ATP, 266]): “It is on the contrary an *involution*, in which form is constantly being dissolved, freeing times and speeds” (ATP, 267). Deleuze and Guattari explicitly link this to the arts: “It is a fixed plan, a fixed sound plane, or visual plane, or writing plane, etc. Here, fixed does not mean immobile: it is the absolute state of movement as well as of rest, from which all relative speeds and slownesses spring, and nothing but them” (ATP, 267).

Just as it is always fixed but not immobile, the plane is always *flat* but not delimited. The flatness of the plane is very different to the vantage point or hidden dimension which the plan infers. Rather, “[h]owever many dimensions it [the plane] may have, it never has a supplementary dimension to that which transpires upon it” (ATP, 266). There is no “transcendent unity or hidden principle . . . ungiven in that to which it gives rise” (ATP, 266). The writings of Balzac and Proust, it is inferred, *do* have such a hidden dimension, just as “Stockhausen [is] also obliged to describe the structure of his sound forms as existing ‘alongside’ them, since he is unable to make it audible” (ATP, 266). To this, Deleuze and Guattari contrast the music of Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Pierre Boulez, and John Cage, in which no such supplementary dimension subsists.⁷

The flatness of the plane of immanence is markedly different to the understanding of flatness under which Clement Greenberg organizes the history of modern painting. Greenberg’s use of the term to describe what is “unique and exclusive to pictorial art”—and which he allies to a Kantian form of critique—affirms limits, unicity, and exclusions, rather than making contact with an outside or progressing by involution.⁸

In the later writing on the plane of immanence—particularly in *What is Philosophy?* and “Immanence: A Life”—Deleuze introduces the ostensibly superlative terms “THE plane of immanence” (WP, 59), “pure immanence” (PI, 27), and “the ‘best’ plane of immanence” (WP, 60). This is, however, far from introducing some transcendent “One” plane to supplant and organize all other planes. Rather, the “best” plane of immanence is “the one that does not hand itself over to the transcendent or restore any transcendent, the one that inspires the fewest illusions, bad feelings, and erroneous perceptions” (WP, 60). In these late works, as throughout his oeuvre, the proper name most closely associated with the plane of immanence is Spinoza. It is he who “showed, drew up, and thought the ‘best’ plane of immanence” (WP, 60). This “best” plane finds that part of any plane of immanence which puts it in contact with the outside and which attains absolute velocity or “infinite movement” (WP, 59). As such, it is not a plane to envelop all other planes but, again, the immanence of immanence.

While immanence is most often associated with Spinoza, two of Deleuze’s other mainstays are of relevance: Artaud and Nietzsche. In both *A Thousand Plateaus* and *What is Philosophy?* allusions are made to the two planes which Artaud describes in his *Peyote Dance*, from where the theme of “least errors” is extrapolated.⁹ In the discussion of the doctrine of univocity in *Difference and Repetition*, it is in the philosophy of Nietzsche, and explicitly not that of Spinoza, that Deleuze finds “crowned anarchy” (another term taken from Artaud).¹⁰ Here, the Eternal Return—as that which “begins by subordinating the identical to the different” (DR, 41)—is found to affirm pure difference in a way which Spinoza’s One of Substance cannot. This criticism of Spinoza

is not retained in the later books: indeed, by the time of “Immanence: A Life,” it has been completely revised, such that “[i]n Spinoza, immanence is not immanence to substance; rather, substance and modes are in immanence” (*PI*, 26).

So, “[p]erhaps this is the supreme act of philosophy: not so much to think *THE* plane of immanence as to show that it is there, unthought in every plane, and to think it in this way as the outside and inside of thought” (*WP*, 59–60). We see here, finally, how the plane of immanence is delivered from becoming a purely conceptual pursuit, for it is also an affective one: it “presents two sides to us, extension and thought, or rather its two powers, power of being and power of thinking” (*WP*, 48). As the title of Deleuze’s final published work, “Immanence: A Life,” suggests, the plane is not solely a philosophical, or intraphilosophical, problem, but is found and affirmed when thought and life—concept and affect—open, and open onto, each other.

Notes

- 1 Gilles Deleuze, “Immanence: A Life,” in *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (Brooklyn, NY: Zone, 2001), 27.
- 2 Christian Kerslake, “The Vertigo of Philosophy: Deleuze and the Problem of Immanence,” *Radical Philosophy* 113 (May/June 2002): 10.
- 3 Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (London: Verso, 1994), 60.
- 4 See Robert Hurley’s translator’s note to Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (San Francisco, CA: City Lights, 1988), 122. See also Brian Massumi’s choices of “plan(e)” and “plane” (correlating to Hurley’s “plan” and “plane”) in, for example, “Memories of a Plan(e) Maker,” in Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Massumi (London: Continuum, 1992), 265–72.
- 5 See *ATP*, 5–7. On “rhizomatic” and “fascicular” forms of the book, see also Nicholas Thoburn, “The Strangest Cult: Material Forms of the Political Book through Deleuze and Guattari,” *Deleuze Studies* 7.1 (2013): 53–82.
- 6 See Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, trans. Louise Burchill (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999). Note, however, that the theme of experimentation is not discussed, as such, in Badiou’s monograph.
- 7 See *ATP*, 542 n. 46 and *ATP*, 267.
- 8 See Clement Greenberg, “Modernist Painting,” in *The Collected Essays and Criticism, Volume 4: Modernism with a Vengeance, 1957–1969*, ed. John O’Brian (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1995), 85–93.
- 9 See *WP*, 49. And cf. “the true Plane” see *ATP*, 163 and *ATP*, 542 n. 48.
- 10 See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994), 40–1. “The Crowned Anarchist” is the subtitle of Artaud’s book on Roman Emperor Heliogabalus. Artaud, *Heliogabalus*, trans. Alexis Lykiard (London: Creation Books, 2003). Though, note that by *A Thousand Plateaus*, “Heliogabalus is Spinoza, and Spinoza is Heliogabalus revived” (*ATP*, 158).

Rhizome

Eugene W. Holland

Rhizome is the name of the introductory plateau of Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, and of the model of thought informing the writing and the reading of that book. The plateau had appeared as a stand-alone essay (in 1976) several years before *A Thousand Plateaus* was published (in 1980), in close proximity to both Deleuze and Guattari's book on Kafka (1975) and a new edition of Deleuze's book on Proust (1976). As a model of thought, the rhizome can be located between the philosophical concept of multiplicity that Deleuze derives from Riemann and Bergson, on the one hand, and physical instantiations such as botanical rhizomes, felt, and patchwork quilts, on the other.

The proximity of the "Rhizome" essay to the literary studies preceding *A Thousand Plateaus* is noteworthy because Kafka's work was analyzed as a spatial multiplicity ("Kafka's work . . . is a rhizome")¹ and Proust's as a temporal multiplicity, although the parallel comparisons of rhizomes with trees, felt with woven fabric, and smooth (nomadic) with striated (sedentary) space, presented in the opening and closing plateaus of the book, are also instructive. To write rhizomatically is to "write at $n-1$ dimensions," they say, "with the number of dimensions one already has available—always $n-1$ "²; whereas Kant had insisted on *adding* the subjective "I" to experience, in order to provide a stable, coherent ground for true knowledge and ethical action, Proust leads Deleuze in the opposite direction, by *subtracting* the subject from experience, and treating the subject as a by-product or residue of experience itself. From this perspective, what is paramount in Proust's work is the patchwork of temporal relations generated by a narrative machine that produces the impression of "a life"—and the question of whether the narrator can ever take complete control of that life becomes secondary. Such a life is an open temporal multiplicity; that is to say, it consists precisely and only of the connections composing the patchwork. A patchwork quilt is the opening image of "The Smooth and the Striated" plateau: like felt and unlike woven fabric and patterned quilts, patchwork quilts can expand in any direction and take any imaginable shape; their consistency does not depend on a preexisting pattern. The strength of felt, similarly, arises from the random overlapping of myriad fibers, not from the patterned regularity of a weave; in principle, any fiber in a piece of felt can overlap with any other: "any point of a rhizome can be connected to any other"

(ATP, 7). But here the botanical and material examples break down, for philosophical rhizomes are necessarily heterogeneous: rather than connecting fibers or strands of the same material (e.g. wool), a philosophical rhizome “ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles” (7). Philosophical rhizomes are assemblages consisting of absolutely heterogeneous elements.

“Wasp and orchid, as heterogeneous elements, form a rhizome” (ATP, 10). This is not principally a matter of imitation: the resemblance between orchid and wasp arises as a by-product of an “aparael evolution” that connects the reproduction of wasps (who acquire nutrients from the orchid) with the reproduction of orchids (whose pollen is transmitted by the wasp); the orchid becomes part of the wasp’s digestive system just as the wasp becomes part of the orchid’s reproductive system. In just the same way, Deleuze and Guattari insist, “the book is not a image of the world. It forms a rhizome with the world, there is an aparael evolution of the book and the world” (11). The rhizome-book enables us to think *with* the world, rather than thinking *about* the world—in both senses of the term “with”: we think with the world in the sense of using the world as a tool to think with, and in the sense of thinking along with the world the way it itself thinks. Thinking *about* the world, by contrast, introduces the apparatus of representation-signification between us and the world—something Deleuze and Guattari are keen to avoid. Representation and signification belong to and perpetuate the tree image of arborescent thought, imposing a “bi-univocal” relation between two terms—whether signifier and signified or sign and referent. Written as a rhizome, then, the book does not represent or reproduce the world (as its referent), nor signify the meaning of the world (as its signified), but connects and articulates itself in reciprocal presupposition with the world. Thinking, writing, and reading rhizomatically enables us to “overthrow ontology” (ATP, 25) and engage the world in the simplest, zero-degree mode of relation possible, as designated by the logic of “and . . . and . . . and . . .” (this and that and this and . . .). The challenge for a rhizome-book is to “find an adequate outside with which to assemble in heterogeneity, rather than a world to reproduce” (24); and the aim of such a book-outside articulation or assemblage is not to represent the world as it is or what it means, but to survey and map its tendencies or becomings, for better and for worse, so as to be able to affirm the former and avert the latter.

Notes

- 1 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 3.
- 2 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 6.

Schizoanalysis

Anna Powell

In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari reject the templates of institutionalized psychoanalysis for the fluid process of schizoanalysis, positing an autoproductive desiring machine rather than a neurotic subjective ego. Schizoanalysis is a method of apprehending the material flux on whatever plane it operates by mobilizing affective and critical engagement. Whether applied to abstract or concrete material, the method seeks to develop a “nonfigurative and nonsymbolic” unconscious.¹ The turn from psychoanalysis to schizoanalysis enables the fuller realization of unconscious desire.

Schizoanalysis refutes lack as primal condition, with its consequent splitting of subject from object. Deleuze and Guattari seek out “regions of the orphan unconscious—indeed ‘beyond all law’—where the problem of Oedipus can no longer be raised” (AO, 251). Oedipus colludes with the existing system, whereas schizoanalysis mobilizes the micropolitics of desire. The schizo is anarchic, “irresponsible, solitary, and joyous . . . a desire lacking nothing, a flux that overcomes barriers and codes, a name that no longer designates any ego whatever” (131). This model diverges sharply from the psychoanalytic use of fantasy to enable the return of the repressed, engineer sublimation, and endorse social consensus.

Schizoanalysis combines clinical and philosophical insights. Radical therapies were integral to Guattari’s clinical practice with schizophrenics at La Borde, and his insights, combined with Deleuze’s philosophical concepts, catalyzed a more widely applicable process. For the schizophrenic individual, antipsychiatric groups offer a dynamic “desiring machine, independently of any interpretation” (322). Rather than strengthening the ego defenses, this method works to disintegrate the “normal” ego. As well as new methods of clinical practice, the “intensive voyage” of schizoanalysis opens up new modes of art and politics (319). In the critical field as well, the archeology of psychoanalysis is replaced by the cartography of schizoanalysis. Schizoanalytic maps do not depend on foundational relations but produce themselves. Rejecting traditional models of the body’s organic layout, these “intensive” maps chart a shifting “constellation of affects.”²

Schizoanalysis does not apply pathologizing diagnoses to psychic anomalies, but instead draws on their “intense feeling of transition, states of pure, naked intensity

stripped of all shape and form" (AO, 18). Yet, schizophrenia as clinical entity is clearly distinguished from schizoanalysis and its creative "schizos." Modernists and experimental precursors, such as Melville, Artaud, Beckett, and Kafka, whose "schizzes" both deploy and motivate becomings, are put to new critical uses. Schizoanalysis potentializes a "pure abstract figural dimension" of a fluid desire operant "below the minimum conditions" of egoic identity (AO, 351). The Oedipal triangle shores up the capitalist system, whereas schizoanalysis offers a fluid micropolitics of desire located firmly in the collective machinery of the social.

Despite the undoubted historical and political value of psychoanalytic critique, its pathologizing trajectory elides the affective *experience* of reading or viewing. The psychoanalytic need to strengthen ego boundaries ignores the ways in which art mobilizes psychical and material affect. The machinic unconscious does not operate distinct representational, semiotic, or structural systems. Without schizoanalysis, the art user's affective encounter with the work and its impact as an event is sidestepped. The user's subjectivity is not a critical template applied to the text, but a fluid process of becoming operant during and after the art encounter. Schizoanalysis foregrounds the intensive transitions of autoproduktive desiring machines in states of immanence. It avoids translating symbolic representation into a fixed set of meanings, but aims to "overturn the theatre of representation into the order of desiring-production" (AO, 271).

To exemplify and develop schizoanalysis and its methodology, Deleuze and Guattari use the work and "convulsive life" of Antonin Artaud.³ They celebrate the "schizorevolutionary" potential of Artaud's *œuvre*, its attacks on signification and formal structure and their replacement by the "decoded and deterritorialized flows" of passional energy. Chance, change, and multiplicity are the fundamental powers of schizoanalysis as it works to dismantle the templates of habit and overthrow despotic systems that block becoming on all levels. Schizoanalysis opens up a plane of process traversed with vectors of force and flows of affect in which no single element predominates to stratify meaning.

Schizoanalytic approaches to art, then, replace representational paradigms by apprehending the material flux of expression. Denying the psyche's fixed nature as subjective interiority, Deleuze and Guattari insist that art is an immanent "being in sensation and nothing else: it exists in itself."⁴ The schizo forces of experimental art, rather than being pathologized and diagnosed, can thus be put to use as an ongoing, vital process of becoming. The "intensive voyage" of schizoanalysis enables readers and viewers to engage in formal experimentation as event that impacts beyond both text and subject (AO, 319).

Notes

- 1 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem, and H. R. Lane (London: Athlone, 1984), 251.

- 2 Deleuze, "Real and Imaginary: What Children Say," in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. D. W. Smith and M. A. Greco (London and New York: Verso, 1998), 64.
- 3 Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. M. Lester and C. Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 82.
- 4 Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. G. Burchill and H. Tomlinson (London: Verso, 1991), 164.

Stuttering

Mickey Vallee

Typically, a stutter is a disruption in a signifying system that temporarily dislocates that system's logical continuity. However, Deleuze urges us to disabuse the belief that language is a closed system occasioned by desultory interruptions. Instead, he encourages us to approach language as an ongoing disequilibrium that harnesses the potential for continuous variation.

If, perhaps, "order-words" run their course through an overly rationalized or bureaucratized modern state, "stuttering" occupies the fringes of language and speech in poetry, painting, and music. Stuttering occurs when a "minority" employs the language of its "majority" to disrupt the latter by counter-subordinating the former—the minor takes the major from behind to "minorize" its power. Stutters cause the majority language to collapse into a zone of intensity, to bifurcate, to expose the inner disequilibrium the majority uses order-words to ensconce. Thus, Deleuze writes, the "stutterer in language" is

always like a foreigner in the language in which he expresses himself, even if this is his native tongue. At the limit, he draws his strength from a mute and unknown minority that belongs only to him. He is a foreigner in his own language: he does not mix another language with his own language, he carves out a nonpreexistent foreign language *within* his own language. He makes language itself scream, stutter, stammer, or murmur.¹

Stuttering is a concept that transposes well beyond the literary arts. We might think of the manner in which a hip hop DJ scratches a record as an example of stuttering, in that DJs reconfigure a majority technology of sonic dissemination (the record player) in a way that emphasizes its supposed accidental features, foregrounding the needle scratch and the otherwise inappropriate contact of hand on vinyl (always hold a record by its edges!). Such a practice contributes to the constitution of an entire zone of vibration that resonates throughout a style of dress, speech, dance, rhyme, art, interaction, sociality, and so on. We could say something similar about glitch art, circuit bending, datamoshing, or even wabi-sabi.

Immersion in the contingencies and disjunctives of stuttering evinces the affectivity of language and its susceptibility to change and transformation. Deleuze is consistent in his dissension that a great writer seldom tailors the perfect sentence: "Being well spoken has never been either the distinctive feature or the concern of great writers" (111). We might think, for instance, of John Cage's transformation of incidental noise into the content of music in his watershed 4'33", a piece that tested the limits of silence in a recital gathering where the performer is motionless at his instrument, calling into the zone of vibration sounds that become-music by way of their parvenu as minority sounds in a majority space where they are customarily rendered unwanted interruptions: "Creative stuttering is what makes language grow from the middle, like grass; it is what makes language a rhizome instead of a tree, what puts language in perpetual disequilibrium: *Ill Seen, Ill Said* (content and expression)" (111).

Deleuze gives stutter his customary ecumenical status, that change and disequilibrium are the true syntactical elements that govern change and transformation in bodies: how authors (of statements, actions, conversations, inscriptions, etc.) choose to deploy disruptions as either occasion for literary emphasis or total deterritorialization are entirely conducive with rates of palpable change. Thus, a stutter is not an interruption, it is not the accident while speech the intent; stutter is the inarticulate nonsense that gives emerging order-words their explosive impact.

If the power of art is harnessed on its potential to create new affects, literature is the potential of language to become new modes of affect by territorializing the otherwise austere and closed system that couples words to their referents. To approach literature as minor literature is to masticate language's defiance of convention in service of developing a singularity in affect within the trope of art.

Deleuze's concepts are interminable. He argues that the means of communicating must be taken as insufficient if systemic change is ever likely to occur. Language must be taken as a potential limit to its own expression that we are aware of when it falls silent. Where the self is annihilated, where the possibilities of relying on the ontological fiction of the self become alien, is precisely the periphery where the great writers with "embarrassing stammers" continue to expand and collapse.

Note

- 1 Gilles Deleuze, "He Stuttered," in *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, eds. C. V. Boundas and D. Olkowski (London: Routledge, 1994).

Time-Image

Nadine Boljkovac

*It is a "method of BETWEEN, 'between two images' . . . which does away with all the cinema of Being= is"*¹

In *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Deleuze remarks that European cinema has confronted "amnesia, hypnosis, hallucination, madness, the vision of the dying, and especially nightmare and dream" since its early formations (55). If a spectator's sensory-motor schema and reflexes organize the cinematic movement-image that Deleuze identifies in *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, an image whose moments are perceived to be constitutive parts of a whole duration, it is the cinematic time-image that profoundly disturbs and suspends this sensory-motor flux as any center or fixed point disappears. Among factors that give rise to the time-image, Deleuze cites World War II as a violent encounter to thought. As postwar limit-situations broke with the mundane quotidian, a "cinema of seeing" emerged as opposed to that of action. Deleuze's argument is both simple and profound: the world as it was known is no longer what it was. From the desecrated wasteland of postwar horror and disbelief, the politics and practices of cinema notably shifted as the medium discovered its unique potential to expose time in its "pure" state, unlike any other art or even that of the cinematic movement-image. Such a time, as perceived at near-death or in near-death circumstances, shocks and fragments any sense of a stable here and now. From these memory disturbances and recognition failures there emerges a "new type of character for a new cinema," a visionary mutant overcome by forces too powerful, unjust, or beautiful, in any case "too great for us, like too strong a pain," "a limit-situation . . . but also the most banal, a plain factory, a wasteland" (*CII*, 18–19). As this encountering of the intolerable and unbearable in its excess of horror and beauty fragments the self and its psychology, beliefs, and memory, the new cinema of the postwar time-image confronts the difficulty of escaping the black hole of subjectivity, consciousness, and memory.

The "time is out of joint" insists Deleuze by way of Hamlet through Kant. This liberalization of time is both an "empty form of time," or "third synthesis," as well as a temporal totality and a series.² Time is divided and "at the intersection of a twofold synthesis" of actual qualities and virtual extensions. Through Henri Bergson's distinction between extensive and intensive duration, Deleuze identifies the signs of

the cinematic movement and time-images. While linear quotidian time indirectly experiences and perceives time, crystal time-images directly expose time in its pure intensive state. The actualized present gives way to a coexistence of disparate layers, sheets, continuums, planes, or ages of past through which time becomes both past and always to come. And it is this Time that the time-image reveals.

As he assesses instances of the time-image's emergence throughout pre- and postwar cinema, Deleuze discerns particular potential and evidence within post-World War II cinema to reveal durations beyond that of any character, family, or group as certain films open to a virtual world-memory. An eternal "sort of immediate, consecutive or even simultaneous double" of the actual through its virtual counterpart in perpetual exchange persists whereby the virtual eternally coexists alongside the actual so that time, as Deleuze continues following Bergson, is always a "passing of the present" and "preservation of the past."³ Deleuze terms the virtual-actual, actual-virtual exchange a crystal and the "tightest" or most indiscernible moment of the virtual-actual oscillation a crystallization. Through the cinema's revelation of space-times and crystalline virtual-actual coalescences "between the immediate past which is already no longer and the immediate future which is not yet" (*CII*, 81), cinematic time-images open to nonhierarchical, virtual becomings, affects and percepts of worlds other than those that can be recognized, a time of difference in-itself, an untimely time that brings only the new, the eternal repetition of the different.

And so, whereas the movement-image of pre-World War II cinema finds narrative cohesion and chronological organization through the sensory-motor schema that Bergson identifies of habitual movement and response, the postwar time-image that Deleuze discerns encounters a splitting or crack of time toward past and future. The contemporaneous virtual past actualizes in the present; this actualization of pure memory or recollection, the paramnesia or déjà-vu to which Deleuze and Bergson refer, gives way to a cinematic autonomous consciousness of time. Such corresponds to the apprehension of a self's instantaneous, paradoxical dissolution as a subject. Disjunctions of image, sound, score, speed, light, and intensity affect the sensory body of the spectator. This becoming of consciousness and subjectivity, as produced by the doubling of crystalline time, is enabled through virtual memory. Deleuze distinguishes the time-image then as a means of reaching a mystery of time, of uniting image, thought and camera in a single automatic subjectivity. Freedom or resistance surfaces from the interstices and disparate audio-visual layers of modern cinema's time-images that affect via a virtual perception or intervention, a violence or "inhuman" power that overwhelms habitual response as might a traumatic experience. Urged to impossibly think life's immanent flow of becoming, time, or immanence itself, the processes and connections of this thought rupture the screen. What remains in the place of any authoritative authentic or accurate cinematic representation are forces that fracture character and viewer through affective singular experiences.

What then becomes important is "no longer the association of images . . . but the interstices between two images" (*CII*, 200). This coincidence or between of two filmic shots, terms, or forces speaks to the potential of life through death, an impersonal immanent death through a becoming-imperceptible or becoming-other, a folding

and taking into the self of every element of nature. With respect to, for instance, the cinemas of Chris Marker and Alain Resnais, one might observe how their cinematic time-images enter within ages of the past as their assemblages of voice, sound, and visual image become percepts of nonhuman vision, of Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Paris, and “any-space-whatever,” fractured, haunting, unknown places with names at once familiar. Alongside Maurice Blanchot’s claim that even death is never present, the filmic time-image also, Deleuze maintains, is not in the present. “On the contrary, it is necessary to move towards a limit, to make the limit of before the film and after it pass into the film . . . to achieve a before and an after as they coexist with the image . . . to achieve a direct presentation of time” (*CII*, 38). This is our limit or challenge toward which we strive to perceive and think, and what the cinema most profoundly exhibits: a direct presentation of time that speaks not only to an emancipation of time but also of life as we attempt to live and follow a “deeper memory, a memory of the world directly exploring time, reaching in the past that which conceals itself from memory” (39).

Notes

- 1 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. H. Tomlinson, R. Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 180.
- 2 See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994), 88–9.
- 3 See Deleuze, Gilles, “The Actual and the Virtual.” Trans. Eliot Ross Albert. *Dialogues II*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 148–52.

Index

- actual 21, 25–8, 30, 36–7, 38, 44, 45,
79–80, 113, 118–19, 198, 219, 223,
231–8, 240, 245, 247–8, 264–5, 278–9
- affect/affection 59, 71, 101–2, 116, 119,
124–5, 128–30, 135, 137, 139, 141–2,
143, 147, 152–65, 169, 174, 176, 178,
202, 225, 228, 233, 240, 249–50, 251,
256, 260, 270, 273–4, 277, 279
- Agamben, Giorgio 238
- animal/animality 22, 63, 65, 71, 73n. 7,
153, 156, 159–62, 165, 169–79, 217,
218, 232, 234, 254–5, 267
- anthropocentrism 152, 155–9, 239
- Aquinas 117
- Arnold, Matthew 162
- Artaud, Antonin 33, 51, 52, 79, 81,
107n. 11, 129, 183, 196–206, 227,
255–6, 266, 269, 274
- assemblage 16, 35, 62–70, 72–3, 81–3, 86,
102–5, 114, 151, 152, 155, 156, 158,
160, 161, 166, 176, 179, 189, 230,
246, 250, 251–2, 259, 260, 261, 262,
265, 272, 280
- Austin, J. L. 120n. 10
- Ayer, A. J. 120n. 10
- Bacon, Francis 6, 36–8, 39, 42, 209,
216, 249
- Badiou, Alain 102, 268
- Balzac, Honoré de 17, 194n. 2, 269
- Barthes, Roland 185, 188
- Beckett, Samuel 1, 2, 6, 49, 93, 96–7,
102–4, 105, 113, 115–16, 121, 122,
124, 126, 128–9, 167n. 29, 183, 209,
216, 218–22, 266–7, 274
- becoming 2, 36, 37, 42, 65, 71–2, 76–7,
81–6, 111–15, 119, 122–4, 126–8,
135–7, 140–1, 142, 144, 147, 148,
152, 153, 156, 157, 159–61, 165,
169–70, 173, 175–9, 181, 183,
187–93, 202, 209, 212, 215–19,
228–9, 233, 235, 236, 247, 253–4,
261, 264–5, 267, 272, 274, 279
- becoming-animal 65, 71, 82, 159,
159–61, 169, 170, 175–9, 181n. 22,
192, 254–5
- becoming-artistic 173–5
- becoming-child 65, 82
- becoming-deterritorialized 267
- becoming-imperceptible 82–3, 157, 170,
176–9, 190, 224, 279
- becoming-minoritarian 81, 83–4, 267
- becoming-other 279
- becoming-philosophy 144
- becoming-plant 172
- becoming-spider 18
- becoming-woman 59, 136–7, 144, 148,
152, 177, 192
- Benjamin, Walter 190, 195n. 16, 207, 220
- Bergman, Ingmar 102, 109n. 28
- Bergson, Henri 1, 2, 21–30, 33, 35, 76, 82,
86, 90, 93, 96–102, 106, 111–12, 115,
117–19, 120n. 10, 147, 149, 189, 225,
264, 271, 278–9
- Blanchot, Maurice 33, 45, 280
- Bloomsbury 163
- body without organs 18, 52, 59, 75–6, 77,
78–82, 86, 182, 198–204, 206, 246,
255–7, 265
- Bonta, Mark 117–18
- Borges, Jorge Luis 6, 209, 214–15
- Boulex, Pierre 269
- Bourdieu, Pierre 197, 255–7
- Breton, André 187, 190, 195n. 16
- Buchanan, Ian 50, 55, 206n. 11
- Büchner, Georg 51, 205
- Bunting, Basil 61, 64, 67–8, 72–3
- Burroughs, William S. 59, 183, 227
- Cage, John 269, 277
- Capitalism 50, 52–3, 56–8, 59, 64,
74n. 14, 75, 77, 84–6, 88, 111–12,
157, 183, 191, 208, 216–17, 229,
259–60, 261–2, 274
- Céline, Louis-Ferdinand 266
- Cendrars, Blaise 184, 187

- Coetzee, J. M. 131n. 12
- Colebrook, Claire 46n. 5, 46n. 17, 156
- Comte, Auguste 147
- Dada 183, 186–7, 192, 227
- Darwin, Charles 147, 169, 171, 174, 176
- DeLanda, Manuel 76, 78, 86, 224
- Deleuze, Gilles
- Anti-Oedipus* 1, 3, 6, 48–60, 61–2, 65–6, 70, 72, 75, 79, 114, 182–3, 186, 188–9, 191, 194n. 2, 200–1, 202, 203–6, 216, 251, 256, 258–60, 261, 273–4
 - Bergsonism* 18, 21–30, 31n. 10, 62, 75, 78, 112
 - Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* 18, 27, 33, 90–106, 128, 278–80
 - Cinema 2: The Time-Image* 18, 27, 83, 90–106, 119, 207, 224, 265, 278–80
 - Desert Islands and Other Texts* 1953–1974 23, 55, 60, 71
 - Dialogues* 71, 152, 154–5, 201
 - Dialogues II* 67, 75, 82, 135, 138, 141, 183, 187, 191, 252, 279
 - Difference and Repetition* 1, 25, 27, 28–9, 30, 33–45, 46n. 6, 56, 62, 75, 88, 99, 105, 110, 115, 119, 146, 207, 223, 232, 248, 269, 278
 - Empiricism and Subjectivity* 1, 11, 62
 - Essays Critical and Clinical* 19, 71, 106n. 4, 121–30, 220, 241n. 13, 266, 273
 - Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* 162
 - The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* 14, 18, 207–12, 214–20, 221
 - Foucault* 20n. 9, 227
 - Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* 36–7, 41, 45, 216
 - Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* 61–73, 83, 104, 161, 227, 252, 253, 262, 266–7, 271
 - Kant's Critical Philosophy* 1, 11
 - L'Abécédaire* 16
 - The Logic of Sense* 44–5, 105, 201, 203–4, 214, 221, 231, 235–6, 255, 256, 274
 - Negotiations* 40, 71, 75, 121
 - Nietzsche and Philosophy* 1, 11, 93, 99–100, 103, 111–12, 114, 116
 - Proust and Signs* 1, 11–19, 24, 28, 29, 138, 140, 223, 224, 271
 - Pure Immanence* 155, 179, 268–70
 - Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* 161, 165, 270n. 4
 - A Thousand Plateaus* 1, 34, 50, 61–3, 67, 69, 71, 75–88, 110, 113, 118, 136, 137, 140, 142, 145, 151–2, 154, 157, 159–60, 175–7, 182, 190–1, 200, 203, 205, 206, 226, 245, 247, 251, 254, 255–6, 261, 262, 263n. 3, 265, 268–9, 270, 271–2
 - What Is Philosophy?* 5, 19, 46n. 9, 96, 110–20, 124, 129, 135, 152, 155, 156, 158, 171, 183, 196, 197, 208, 212, 228, 232, 233, 241n. 14, 268–70, 274
- Derrida, Jacques 198, 225–8, 230–2, 236, 241
- Descartes, René 87, 113, 115–16, 162–3, 168n. 30, 208, 209, 220
- desire 12, 17, 35, 48–52, 54–9, 61, 65–8, 70, 72, 75, 79, 135, 138, 141–2, 144, 145, 149, 164–6, 182, 183, 190, 194n. 2, 200–4, 250, 251–2, 255–7, 258–60, 262, 273–4
- desiring machine 48–52, 114, 204–5, 259–60, 273–4
- detrterritorialization 53, 56, 59, 66–9, 71, 79, 83, 85, 87, 116, 117–18, 157–8, 245–6, 251–2, 254, 261–2, 266–7, 274, 277
- Dostoevski, Fyodor 116
- Eleatics 113, 115
- Eliot, T. S. 163, 225, 231, 240
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo 186–7, 193, 195n. 16
- eternal return 253, 269
- ethics 34, 75, 106n. 7, 159, 161–5, 245, 247–8, 250
- ethology 151–2, 159–61, 164–6
- Eubulides of Miletus 115
- feminism 91, 149n. 8, 152, 165, 182
- Forster, E. M. 153

- Foucault, Michel 1–2, 63, 71, 75, 102, 110, 119, 120n. 11, 185, 188, 198, 225, 227
- Fraenkel, Michael 184–5
- Freud, Sigmund 50, 51, 55–7, 147, 154, 169, 182–3, 186–7, 200, 202–3, 205, 226, 260
- Fry, Roger 159, 163–5
- geophilosophy 112, 117–18
- Glass, Philip 269
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von 41
- Greenberg, Clement 91–2, 269
- Grosz, Elizabeth 31n. 1, 153, 171–5, 179, 181n. 18
- Hardy, Thomas 135–49, 155, 182, 192
- von Hartmann, Eduard 147–8
- Hegel, Georg W. F. 38, 39–40, 41–2, 58, 87, 90, 111, 117
- Heidegger, Martin 124, 208, 217
- Heisenberg, Werner 118
- Hemingway, Ernest 185–6
- Heraclitus 114–15, 120n. 10
- Horace 115
- Ibsen, Henrik 153
- immanence 33–45, 64, 67, 68, 70, 71, 72, 76, 80, 97, 112, 114–19, 140, 142, 148, 152–3, 155, 158, 160–2, 165–6, 179, 190, 204, 205, 207–13, 215–17, 224, 227, 232–3, 240, 254, 257, 268–70, 274, 279
- James, Henry 185, 211
- James, William 147
- Jameson, Fredric 45n. 4, 46n. 5, 46n. 7, 216–21
- Jarry, Alfred 124
- Jaspers, Karl 52
- Joyce, James 33, 83, 94–5, 105, 106n. 7, 107n. 15, 167, 185, 225, 226, 229, 231, 239, 266–7
- Kafka, Franz 1, 33, 61–73, 83, 93, 100, 104, 124, 126, 127, 128, 153, 169, 176, 183, 216, 252, 253, 262, 266–7, 274
- Kant, Immanuel 1, 28, 34–5, 38, 41, 42, 44, 45, 50, 56, 87, 92, 106n. 4, 110–11, 124, 127, 208, 258, 269, 271, 278
- Kerouac, Jack 182, 192
- Klee, Paul 33
- Klossowski, Pierre 33, 120
- Kristeva, Julia 20n. 5
- Lacan, Jacques 56–8
- Laing, R. D. 183, 186
- Laplace, Pierre-Simon 118
- Laruelle, François 42
- Lawrence, D. H. 33, 124, 136–7, 139, 141, 149, 169–81, 182–3, 186–7, 191–2, 266
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm 1, 14, 120, 155, 162, 207–15, 217, 219–22
- line of flight 75, 81–2, 84–8, 110, 115–16, 117, 141, 149, 157, 158, 170, 176, 183, 186, 191–3, 209, 242, 245–6, 252, 262, 266
- Lowry, Malcolm 49, 182
- Loy, Mina 7, 227–40
- Lynch, David 58
- majoritarian 83–5, 157–9, 165, 170, 266–7, 276–7
- Malevich, Kazimir 216
- Mandelstam, Osip 266
- Mansfield, Katherine 98, 159–62
- Marx, Karl 50, 53, 56, 182, 226, 260
- May '68 54–5, 182, 223
- Melville, Herman 48, 100, 125–7, 155, 191–2, 252, 266, 274
- Messiaen, Olivier 1
- Mill, John Stuart 147
- Miller, Henry 33, 182–95
- minor/minor literature 61–73, 83–5, 125, 169–71, 179, 193, 223, 227, 262, 266–7, 276–7
- monad 14, 207–21
- Moore, G. E. 163
- neo-Baroque 209, 213–15
- Nicolson, Harold 163
- Nietzsche, Friedrich 1–2, 33, 38, 39, 40, 87, 90, 93, 99–101, 105, 106, 111–12, 114–17, 120, 124, 128, 145, 147, 149, 170, 171, 175, 211, 215, 245, 253, 265, 269
- nihilism 159, 207–8, 212–13, 217

- Nin, Anaïs 184
 nomad 2, 59, 64, 76, 80, 81, 86, 87–8, 149, 183, 189, 271
 Oedipal/Oedipus 50, 55–8, 67, 70, 154, 170, 176, 179, 180n. 4, 181n. 23, 183, 191, 193n. 2, 258, 260, 273–4
 pacifism 164
 Parmenides 113, 115
 Parnet, Claire 74n. 16, 152, 183, 187, 189, 191–3, 252
 Pater, Walter 148
 Péguy, Charles 266
 percept 96, 119, 120, 124, 125, 129, 135, 143, 152–61, 165, 228, 240, 279–80
 Picasso, Pablo 37
 Plato 90, 113–14, 163, 208, 212, 241n. 6, 248, 268
 Pogson, F. L. 111–12, 120n. 4
 Pollock, Frederick 163
 Pollock, Jackson 36, 91, 216
 Powys, John Cowper 137, 149
 Protevi, John 117–18, 223
 Proust, Marcel 1, 11–19, 28, 29, 30, 33, 49–50, 73n. 7, 93, 94, 103, 113, 120n. 5, 137–8, 140, 148–9, 153, 183, 185, 223, 269, 271
 psychoanalysis 48, 50, 55–8, 63, 79, 80–1, 111, 130n. 7, 154, 183–4, 191–2, 256, 258, 273–4
 Rancière, Jacques 90
 Rank, Otto 184, 195n. 20
 Reich, Steve 269
 reterritorialization 53, 56, 59, 66, 116, 117, 141, 157–8, 176, 237, 251, 261–2, 264
 rhizome 3, 61–2, 65, 71, 73n. 7, 75–7, 80, 81, 82, 87, 170, 178, 183, 262, 268, 271–2, 277
 Rimbaud, Arthur 124, 127, 197
 Robbe-Grillet, Alain 95–6, 101
 Roussel, Raymond 126, 227, 266
 Ruskin, John 148
 Russell, Bertrand 76, 118
 schizo 64, 66, 73n. 7, 75, 79, 80, 170, 196–206, 273–4
 schizoanalysis 80, 186, 196–206, 255, 273, 273–4
 schizophrenia 18, 50–2, 59, 116, 126, 183, 191, 193n. 2, 196–206, 216, 256, 259, 273–4
 Schopenhauer, Arthur 147–9
 Schreber, Daniel Paul 51, 53, 59, 256
 Sharp, Hasana 162
 Simmel, Georg 154
 Spencer, Herbert 147
 Spinoza, B. 1, 2, 21, 29, 30, 40, 115, 119, 124–5, 129–30, 149, 153, 155, 159–68, 182, 249, 269–70
 Stephen, Leslie 163
 Stockhausen, Karlheinz 269
 subtraction 78, 232, 266, 271
 surrealism 183, 186–90, 192, 195n. 16, 196, 255
 transcendence 40–3, 72, 81, 100, 115, 141, 155, 185, 165, 205, 207–8, 211–13, 216–17, 220, 224, 240, 245–6, 268–9
 Tzara, Tristan 187, 192
 virtual 21, 22, 24–8, 30, 36, 37, 38, 69, 80, 81, 105, 111, 113, 116, 118, 135, 137, 142, 162, 198–9, 201, 207, 210, 212, 215–19, 224, 228, 229, 231, 240, 245, 247–8, 264–5, 278–9
 Waugh, Patricia 93, 106n. 7, 107n. 13, 168n. 30
 Whitehead, Alfred North 25, 180n. 11, 211, 215, 221n. 13
 Whitman, Walt 121–2, 126, 186, 194n. 12
 Windelband, Wilhelm 115
 Woolf, Leonard 163, 166
 Woolf, Virginia 1, 94, 119, 137, 139, 145, 149, 151–68, 169, 176, 185, 192, 239–40, 254
 Zeno 115
 Žižek, Slavoj 58, 221

