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Matisse with Dewey and Deleuze[1]

ERIC ALLIEZ and JEAN-CLAUDE BONNE

No art of the first half of the 20th century is perhaps more capable to prove the relevance and the fruitfulness of the concept of "superior empiricism," in the most rigorous Deleuzian sense of this expression, than that of Matisse. Having taken the initiative in applying without concession his practice to the aesthetic exigency which the notion of superior empiricism implies in its "experience", Matisse will have altered the very conception of art and opened it to a new paradigm which signified the irruption of the contemporary in modernity. The operation carried out by Matisse in, against and with art, in this circumstance painting, will have led him to develop it systematically in the most empirical experimentation, violently pushing back its limits (which are those of the Painting-Form caught in the Art-Form)[2] until bringing it outside itself by obliging painting to join its/an outside, in this circumstance architecture, in a reciprocal becoming other – a becoming otherwise singular and otherwise intense in which a "superior empiricism" of art is negotiated with a new pragmatics.

Ordinary empiricism – a falsely common empiricism which in fact is nothing but the common retrospective representation of empiricism founded by "observation" on a "theory of self-evidence" – consists in relying on the supposed experience of a sensible truth that can be grasped by a common sense called "representation" in philosophy as in art. Representation in general, whether in the field of ideas or artistic

1 The Matissean 'ground' of these pages is taken from a book co-signed by E. Alliez and J. C. Bonne (2005), *La Pensée-Matisse*, Paris, Le Passage.

2 Matisse, by casting suspicion on the traditional conception of painting in terms of forms, what we call Painting-Form [*Forme-Peinture*], has more radically cast suspicion at the same time on that which it grounds itself, namely the very notion of art understood in terms of forms, what we call Art-Form [*Forme-Art*].

productions, implies the subordination of difference to identity, of cognition to recognition. If empiricism stuck to a representational conception of sensible experience, it would also remain indexed to a dogmatic conception of thought – be it sceptical or relativistic as regards ideas or variable and even inventive as regards art. Because to change the manner or style does not tear us away from representation. One needs "the power of a new politics which would overturn the image of thought"[3] so that art can be worked through and energised by an active difference which is not of the order of representation but of the processual conditioned by the requirements of innovation determining it as non-synthesisable – although the stress laid on the processual is not enough, as such, to draw aside formalism, in this particular case to return painting to its supposed essence (this is the modernist conception of art reflexively returning the material purity of its means and its process to abstraction). So that a processual difference does not itself become a mere object of (non-) representation, it is thus necessary to make the assumption of a superior empiricism renouncing that "aesthetics [be] ... founded on what *can* be represented in the sensible" as well as on the "inverse procedure ... consisting of the attempt to withdraw the pure sensible from representation and to determine it as that which remains once representation is removed;"[4] which comes down to saying that the aesthetic question cannot be put in terms of figurative and/or abstract *forms* and that it concerns henceforth a superior or transcendental empiricism. To follow the Deleuzian demonstration, this empiricism requires that, in an insensible sensation from the point of view of common empiricism or an empiricism of the ordinary, thinking experiences itself as a differential power of individuation by taking to task "free or untamed states of difference in itself" so as to bring "the faculties to their respective limits." However we understand these faculties, that which can bear each of them "to the extreme point of its dissolution" is an "element which is in itself difference, and which creates at the same time the quality in the sensible and the transcendent exercise within sensibility: this element is intensity, as pure difference in itself, at the same time the imperceptible for empirical sensibility which grasps intensity only already covered or mediated by the quality which it creates, and yet what can only be perceived from the point of view of a

3 Deleuze, G. (1994) , *Difference and Repetition*, Patton, P. (trans.), London, The Athlone Press, p. 137, hereafter *DR*.

4 *DR*, p. 56. The formalist abstraction bears in fact only on the elimination of the representational content.

transcendental sensibility which apprehends it immediately in the encounter."[5] Now, let us conclude with Deleuze that the "difference in potential" is "that which can only be sensed" from the point of view of a superior empiricism that from the start looks to the *lowest* materialism of sensation, in order thereby to *potentiate* the question of construction. A constructivist vitalism in the guise of the rise to power of the aesthetic.

Under the name of Fauvism, the continuous revolution inaugurated by Matisse in 1905 will have precisely consisted in substituting for the traditional qualitative conception of painting, subordinated to the representation of (forms of) things and/or the exposition of the medium, an intensive conception in which the reciprocal differential quantities of colours *are* their qualities instead of being covered or mediated by phenomenal qualities in the service of which they had hitherto placed their creative power. The intensity of colours which Matisse will have to test fully will push the expansiveness of the canvas which it energises from within until bringing it outside its limits, in other words outside the Canvas-Form of painting. To go beyond the limits of painting will not at all have meant for Matisse going beyond painting (*à la* Duchamp, as a way of responding to the exhaustion of the Canvas-Form of painting), but to open it to the violent resources (for the Art-Form of art) of a heterogeneous outside capable of revitalising it by setting it outside itself. Which is not unrelated with the way Deleuze understands the importance of associationism for empiricism. To establish "relations external to their terms" in virtue of their heterogeneity, such is the vital rather than theoretical discovery, he explains, of the empiricists. "This exteriority of relations is not a principle, it is a vital protestation against principles"; or again: it is "a certainty of life, which changes one's way of living if one truly hangs to it".[6]

Matisse clung to this certainty which changed his manner of painting. Because the rupture with the Canvas-Form of painting was not possible without the discovery with which fauvism is for him associated – namely that the canvas is a matter of *construction* of the colours in relation of forces whose *expressive* power is intrinsically vital, vital/vitalist rather than pictorial. Matisse understood and experienced that the basic expressivity of colours, which his contemporaries were

5 *DR*, pp. 143-4.

6 Deleuze, G. & Parnet,C. (1996), *Dialogues*, Paris, Flammarion, p. 69.

looking for (Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin) without managing to withdraw it from every aesthetisation as from every representational mediation, could only be of an energetic nature. In 1908, drawing an account of the fauvism of the previous years, Matisse, in "*Notes d'un Peintre*," makes his vitalist declaration of faith:

> "I cannot distinguish between the feeling I have of life [*le sentiment que j'ai de la vie*] and the way I translate it."[7]

Another formula, at the beginning of the forties, strongly states the energetic principle of this chromatic vitalism:

> "Colour is for me a force. My paintings [*tableaux*] are composed of four or five colours that jostle together, that give sensations of energy."[8]

This "rising up" of a vital ground,[9] this becoming-sensible bearing a new (i.e. a superior) "expressionism," is indissociable from its production as a (chromatic) surface in an energetic constructivism for which *the quantitative – or potential – differences of colours are their qualities* – according to a principle constantly affirmed by Matisse. This processual materialism or vitalism lies at antipodes from the post-romantic exasperation to which one reduces the fauvist "movement" of 1905. Matisse was not even apprehensive to evoke a *strict quantitative order* in a formula that constitutes for us his most technical definition of fauvism:

7 "Notes d'un peintre" in Matisse, H. (1972) *Écrits et propos sur l'art*, textes, notes et index établis par Dominique Fourcade, nouvelle édition revue et corrigée, Paris, Hermann, p. 46 (henceforth referred to as EPA).

8 Matisse's statement reported by P. Courthion in "Avec Matisse et Bonnard" in *D'une palette à l'autre. Mémoires d'un critique d'art*, Genève, La Baconnière Arts, 2004, p. 173.

9 In the sense in which Matisse declares in 1936, in a text titled "Constance du fauvisme": "when the means have become so refined, so reduced that their power of expression becomes exhausted, it is necessary to return to the essential principles which formed the human language. It is, then, the principles that 'rise up,' which take on life, which *give us life*. The pictures [*tableaux*] that have become refinements, subtle degradations, fadings without energy, call for beautiful blues, beautiful reds, beautiful yellows, materials which stir up the sensual bottom of men. It is the starting point of Fauvism: *the courage to find the purity of the means*." H. Matisse "Propos rapportés par Tériade" (extract from "Constance du fauvisme" in *Minotaure* vol. II no. 9, 1936), EPA: 128 (italics added).

> "At the time of the Fauves, *what constituted the strict order of our paintings* [tableaux] *was that the quantity of colour was its quality.*"[10]

The intensive quantity of colours (their saturation, their luminescent value) varies for Matisse with their reciprocal extensive quantity (their surfaces and the modes of organisation of the latter). The most famous statement of this principle reads: "1 square cm of blue is not *as blue* as a square meter of the same blue."[11] The intensive or differential force of colour constitutes for Matisse its entire quality. Following the Deleuzian demonstration: "each intensity ... reveals the properly qualitative content of quantity" by expressing the difference in quantity.[12] The intensive is *ontologically and operationally* first in that the extensive results from relations of forces. Deleuze again: "Intensity is everywhere first with regard to specific qualities and organic extensions".[13] But Deleuze introduces on this point a very important distinction between extension and extensity: "*intensio* (the intensive) is inseparable from an *extensio* (extensity)" in which it "explicates itself," that is to say, in which it develops the implicated being of difference, "and this extensity [*extensio*] relates it to the extension [*l'étendue*] in which it appears outside itself and hidden beneath quality".[14] A particularly invaluable distinction in that it allows us to clarify the properly empirico-transcendental privilege of Matisse's art compared to other artistic practices: Matisse will have to make sensible and invest *extensity* – in other words, *the intensive inherent to the extensive* – in the extension of surfaces produced by the reciprocal relations of colours or of black and white in drawing. In Matisse's work, extension (of figures) and space (where they are situated) appear not as (phenomenal-empirical) given(s) in and through forms but as momentary *results of the equilibrium of the forces of colours*. It is thus according to the intensive differential that the extensive differences must be ordered: the painter who "wants to give an *expressive character to the meeting of several surfaces of colours*" must take into account "the pure colour *with its intensity, its reactions on neighbouring quantities*."[15] If the intensive has naturally always been at

10 Matisse, H. (1929),"Entretien avec Tériade" , EPA: 98 (italics added).
11 A formula reported by Aragon, EPA: 129, n. 95 (italics added).
12 *DR*, p. 222.
13 *DR*, p. 251.
14 *DR*, pp. 227-8.
15 "Notes sur la couleur" EPA: 206 (italics added).

work in painting in one degree or another, it is Matisse's fauvism that has systematically laid bare a fully affirmative *chromatic energy* (to the extent that it is no longer mediated) – an expressivity that is the sensible reason of vitalism without which fauvism would lose its principle of immanence. Or again: colours are not with Matisse identifying qualities as in a "representational" system which necessarily cuts off the forms of *differential forces* constituting the material base of their production in order to disclose the identity that stabilises them and enables them to be recognised in *their formal and thus structural differences* (resemblance is the law of quality as *form of representation*). When the intensive difference is submitted to representation and thus to identity, "quality then comes to cover intensity," Deleuze concludes in those pages where the philosopher takes colour as his example.[16] When representation is on the contrary submitted to the differential of forces, the field of their confrontation comes to cover the formal differences, *bearing them away* (in both senses of the word) in this chaosmos. Not identified, colours are nevertheless individuating energetic differenciations whose singularities are always in relation of forces with one another, relation of forces which ensures their resonance and/or internal/external expansiveness in this intensive field of individuation which the canvas *is*, or *becomes*. Every individuating force thus affirms itself by communicating immediately with others in an "aesthetic of intensities" whose processual *chaosmic* immanence can be called an "implicated art of intensive quantities" inasmuch as it ex-plicates the "fluctuating world of Dionysius" by restoring intensive difference as the vital being of the sensible.[17]

The quantitative-energetic determination of colours leads Matisse to identify Expression, Construction and Decoration:

> *Expression* for me does not lie in the passion which will burst on a face or which will be affirmed by a violent movement. It lies in the entire disposition of my painting: the place that the bodies occupy, the vacuums which are around them, the proportions, all that has its share there [= the expression of quality results from the construction of quantity]. Composition is the art to arrange in a *decorative* way the various elements the painter has to express his feelings.[18]

16 *DR*, p. 245: "a multiplicity like color for example is constituted by the virtual coexistence of relations between the genetic or differential elements of a certain order. It is these relations that actualise themselves in qualitatively distinct colors, at the same time as their singular points incarnate themselves in distinct extensities that correspond to these qualities".

17 *DR*, p. 245.

The notion of the "decorative" of which Matisse makes use constantly – he says, "for me a painting should always be decorative" – has also nothing any more to do with what one traditionally understood by decoration. What matters for Matisse is no longer a composition that exalts aesthetically and/or thematically the milieu in which it is placed, but which has, to cite Matisse again, "a force of expansion that vivifies the things that surround it."[19] Expansiveness implies that the painting [*tableau*] is not closed on itself in the search of an autonomy implying a contemplative absorption, maintained by the claim of modernism. Matisse rejects composition understood as a self-centred construction on a Canvas-Form. "Decoration" indicates thus primarily two things for him: 1) an internal expansiveness: namely an *all-over* or rhythmic circulation through the entire work ("no point is more important than another," it should not have a hierarchy between the figure and the ground, between the centre and the periphery...) and 2) an external expansiveness: an *all-around* radiation of the work beyond it, around it. By "decoration," Matisse thus aims at the necessary opening, necessarily experimental of art on the outside. It is because the vital constructivism of Matisse is energetic-quantitative-intensive that it is also expansive, and it is because it is expansive since the fauve period that he will manage to spare an opening on the Outside. The becoming-decorative of Matisse's art will tend more and more to eliminate every form of opposition between art and the milieu of life, between the exterior and the interior of the work so as to afford the latter "to take possession of space."

*

The energetic vitalism of colour which is the invention of the first fauvism (1905-1906) will obtain a superior *pragmatic* dimension by passing from the canvas' easel to mural painting (as from the 30's), even if the expansiveness of Matisse's paintings [*tableaux*] since the fauve period already made them radiate on the wall like hearths of energy (except for one period of his work in the twenties). With him, painting on

18 Matisse, H. "Notes d'un peintre" 1908, EPA : 42.

19 *Ibid.* EPA: 43.

a mural scale will take possession of space *otherwise* by no longer simply treating it as a place of radiation (and *a fortiori* as a place to decorate aesthetically and symbolically) but as a milieu of life with which it should dynamically be articulated *to vivify it* (according to Matisse's word). And this "decorative painting at one with architecture"[20] will not only be conceived – architecturised – *according to the latter* ("site specificity") and as dependant on it, it will realise (itself), reciprocally, (in) its *mural* quality as an – *architecturing* – *function of architecture.*

This double architectural function of mural painting returns the canvas' easel to the private relation that a contemplative gaze has to it:

> "the painting [*le tableau*] encircled within its frame ... cannot be penetrated without the attention of the spectator concentrating especially on it. ... To be appreciated the object must be isolated from its milieu (contrary to *architectural painting*)."[21]

Moreover, the public dimension of architectural painting invites us to believe in "the possibility of an art in common," to *dream* "of making painting a collective thing," by relying on the social dimension of architecture without falling back on the idiosyncrasies of "a propagandist art."

> "Art for the people? Admittedly, if by people one understands the young minds that are not fixed in an art of the tradition. [...] I prefer ignorant pupils to pupils whose heads are filled with old truths...".[22]

It is only when his mural art becomes properly environmental, breaking in this measure as well with the old tradition of decorative art as much as with the attempt of his contemporaries to renew it, that Matisse will leave not only the canvas' easel, but will break definitively with the Painting-Form and the Art-Form of art. If he reaches that point, it is by making painting and architecture the occasion of a meeting, creating between them a zone of indetermination which enables them to tie

20 Letter to Simon Bussy of March 7th 1933, EPA: 140, n. 4.

21 Letter to Alexandre Romm of March 17th 1934, EPA: 148 (italics added).

22 Respectively, a declaration to Fels (1929), to Zervos (1931) and to Lejard (1951), EPA: 120, n. 78.

relations of vicinity in which painting and architecture become to some extent indistinguishable in their very differences, in order to allow a mutual transfer of forces. It is in contact with Dewey that the practice of Matisse will work out this *superior empiricism* of architectural painting, and it is in contact with Matisse that Dewey will deepen his own conceptions.

The mutation that will lead Matisse's work from mural painting which is still a (certainly not very orthodox) kind of magnified painting to a properly architectural and then bio-environmental painting can be observed at once in a paradigmatic and accelerated way in the succession of the three great versions of *The Dance* of the years 1931-1933 (oil on canvas in three panels), a monumental decorative composition that Matisse carried out on the occasion of Albert Barnes' order, having to take place in the large room "filled with painted canvasses" of his Merion foundation (Pennsylvania). It is there that Matisse will come into contact with John Dewey associated right from the start with this foundation which the author of the treatise *Democracy and Education* (1916) did not cease influencing.

John Dewey gives in 1931 at Harvard "lectures on aesthetics" which will be published in book form in 1934 under the title *Art as Experience*. The work, dedicated to Barnes, will have a decisive importance for an institution intended to "support education" and to study art by having in view "a category of people for whom these doors are usually closed"...[23] Matisse, as for him, does not doubt the capacity of the Foundation "to destroy the artificial and crooked presentation" of art plunged "in the mysterious light of temple or cathedral." He wants to believe in its adequacy of principle with "the shape and the spirit" of America which he defines as "a great field of experiments" whose "constant dynamism" will be able "to change, in the artist, into an artistic activity."[24]

23 A.C. Barnes in *The New Republic*, March 1923 (cited by R.J. Wattenmaker in "Le docteur Albert C. Barnes et sa Fondation" in *De Cézanne à Matisse. Chefs-d'oeuvre de la Fondation Barnes*, Gallimard/Electra/Réunion des musées nationaux, 1993, p. 6).

24 H. Matisse "Entretien avec Tériade" in *L'Intransigeant*, 19, 20 and 27 October 1930, EPA: 112 and 110.

Dewey's book opens on the conception of a physiology of art refusing the museological spiritualisation of the fine arts in forms separate from the common life ("the common or community life," "the stream of life," "the actual life-experience"...). It is a matter of intensifying, while soliciting, "the ordinary forces and conditions of experience which we do not usually regard as aesthetic,"[25] "of restoring continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognised to constitute [the] experience"[26] of the "living creature" (title of the first chapter: "The Live Creature"). Following William James – in his point of strongest convergence with the Bergsonism of the *élan vital* – experience is for Dewey basically "activity," understanding thereby this mixture of action and reception, stability and struggle, disconnections and connections in which the "intensest life" seeks the path of harmony while rendering man "capable of aesthetic quality." Without an energetics feeding the intensification of experience in which "the creature as a whole invests itself," art is nothing other than an order without rhythm, arbitrarily imposed (aesthetic *disengagement*).[27] Engaging the whole of relations tied with the world by every living being in an expression that is also a construction (the plane of construction of experience), this *total experiment* at which art aims according to a process of creation and impersonal emotion unlimited *de jure* relies necessarily on "the biological characters which man shares with the bird and the animal." In other words: the sources of aesthetic experience are identified with the resources of animal life – a life whose "grace" lies in the absolute continuity between sensibility and movement, so that, resonating with the vaster rhythms of nature, all the senses are equally on the *qui vive*.[28] Or, finding here the animalist formula around which Deleuze and Guattari's vitalist aesthetic turns: as an interactive process irreducible to the finished and isolated product (the "art product"), and insofar as the true *work* of art is none other than "what the product makes of and in experience" ("its working"), art is this organisation of energy which starts with the bird building its nest. Thus is corroborated, according to this extreme vitalist path posing art as life's line of flight, that art could not develop in a living way without

25 Dewey, J. (1980[1934]) *Art as Experience,* New York, Perigee Books, hereafter *AE*, p. 4.
26 *AE*, p. 3.
27 *AE*, p. 14.
28 *AE*, p. 19.

intensifying the somatic immediacy specific to any aesthetic experience, without implicating the environment of our common life in order to transform it in the direction of the community, without investing the social force that constitutes it, with all that the "productive force of aesthetics" (according to Adorno's expression) implies and on which it exercises itself, according to a process of creation that is at once infrapersonal and transindividual. In which art as experience implies *experience as art* in this expansive movement which "enables us to forget ourselves by finding ourselves in the delight of experiencing the world about us,"[29] in this movement of construction of *an* experience which Philip W. Jackson proposes to render as *Experience as Artifice*.[30]

This allows us to grasp the properly *architectonic* character of the historical excursus proposed by Dewey as of his first lesson: before the rise of capitalism and its decisive influence on the development of the museum as "home of the fine arts" separated from everyday life, he explains, "painting and sculpture were organically one with architecture, as that was one with the social purpose that buildings served."[31] It is difficult, here, not to think of the Barnes Foundation as much as these lines could perfectly define the physical reality no less than the social philosophy turned towards the model of a democratic community.[32] Whence also, with the image of the radical empiricism of William James and his pluralist philosophy of experience according to which "everything is present to *every other thing*,"[33] a constant monist inspiration which refuses and refutes point by point the totality of dichotomies having structured the philosophy of art (man/nature, body/soul, sensible/intelligible, matter/form, form/substance, subject/object, aesthetic/cognitive...) by attacking the weak link of the elitist tradition of *l'art pour l'art*, "museum art," namely the *falseness* of the opposition between the so-called applied arts and the fine arts which are shown to

29 *AE*, p. 104.
30 Jackson, P. W. (1998), *John Dewey and the Lessons of Art,* New Haven and London, Yale University Press.
31 *AE*, p. 7.
32 Matisse will be only more disappointed by it when it becomes obvious that Barnes refuses to open the doors of the Foundation to a larger audience after the installation of mural decoration: it is indeed from his point of view a contradiction in the terms of his moral and philosophical agreement with Barnes.
33 James, W. (1919), *Philosophie de l'expérience*, hereafter *PE,* Flammarion, Paris, p. 310.

come from the former.[34] It is in this *anti-formalist* context that the reference to Barnes and Matisse, constantly associated by Dewey to the challenge launched by art against philosophy,[35] takes its entire sense. This is all the importance of this passage, introduced by a long citation of Matisse's "*Notes d'un peintre*":

> "form is not found exclusively in objects labelled works of art. [...] Form is a character of every experience that is *an* experience. [...] *Form may then be defined as the operation of forces that carry the experience of an event, object, scene, and situation to its own integral fulfilment.*"[36]

It presupposes that this "form" is informed by a rhythm propelling Matisse's decorative dynamics, "without rival among the decorative colourists of the present,"[37] to the rank of guide for an aesthetic education which proposes to apprehend the quality of the experience of art by placing itself on the ground of the spectator – "to whichever condition he belongs"[38] – so that he reaches, in his real life – "such that he does not need to divide or go outside himself"[39] – *an actively unified vitality.*

As Matisse declares, "the artist draws around him all that is able to feed his internal vision", "he incorporates, assimilates by degrees the external world until the object he draws has become a part of himself, until he has it in him and is able to project it on the canvas as his own creation," and it is in the expression of this rhythm of the outside which informs the inside of the work that "the activity of the artist will be really creative" of a "new rhythm."[40] It is to Dewey's credit to have perfectly defined the *social reason* of this constructivist naturalism when he posits its necessity for any art worthy of the name as the "fundamental motif of relations of the living creature to its environment," conceiving this

34 *PE*, p. 327.
35 "The Challenge to Philosophy" is the title of Chapter 12 of *Art as Experience*.
36 *AE*, p. 137 (author's italics).
37 *AE*, respectively p. 169 and p. 129.
38 According to the variant version of the famous passage of "Notes d'un peintre" on the *good couch* suggested by Florent Fels in *Propos d'artistes*, Paris, 1925, EPA: 50 n. 16.
39 Marcel Sembat's subject reported by Gaston Diehl, *Henri Matisse*, EPA: *ibid.*
40 H. Matisse "We must view the whole of life with children's eyes," subject reported by Régine Pernoud for *Le Courrier de l'U.N.E.S.C.O* (vol. VI n. 10, October, 1953), taken up in EPA: 322-3.

"motif" as making it possible to escape the conventions of perception. In a way always very Matissean, the philosopher opposes this Naturalism to Realism. Not without concluding by making the point that "the immediate effect of the plastic and architectural arts is not organic" insofar as their "moving and organising rhythm" expresses *the enduring environment* world.[41] Experience is the "American" name of this endurance of the world in a rhythm, a dance, which has arisen from the encounter of an environmental art destined for a new people. An art whose characteristic "is to participate in our life" (Matisse-in-America) so that "all that is heavy becomes light: all that is weighty turns into a dance." (Nietzsche)

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We would have to follow step by step Matisse's installation of the environmental bio-aesthetic in the three successive versions of *The Dance* for the Barnes Foundation. This demonstration having been carried out elsewhere,[42] we'll summarise its principal moments from the point of view of a superior empiricism.

The form and average dimensions of the three canvases which constitute the work and which somewhat vary from one version to another, are originally determined by the layout of the premises where the work was to be placed, namely three spaces in the form of arches [*ogives*] of an arrow of approximately 3.50 m and rather dark since located under an arching ceiling, above 3 French windows 6m height, approximately 2m of width, located on the same wall and giving on a lawn. The whole – "made especially for the places ... like a fragment of architecture"[43] – has a length of more than 13 meters.

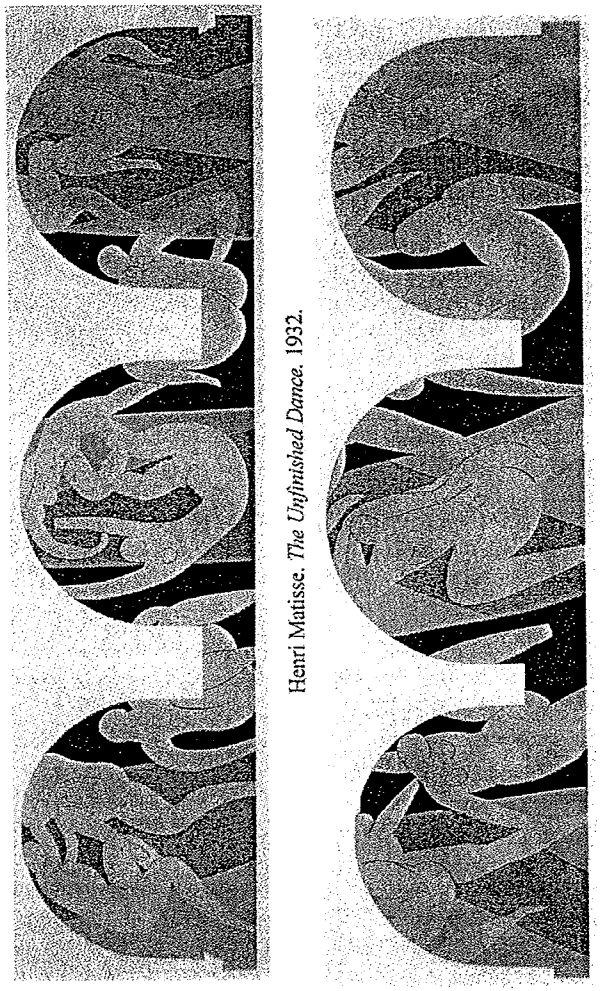
The first version, undertaken in 1931, is known as *The Unfinished Dance* (Museum of Modern Art of the city of Paris) since Matisse stopped its execution. In spite of the simplification of the figures, of their reduced volume and sobriety of the colours, this first composition

41 *AE*, p. 151-60 (Chapter VII: "The Natural History of Form").
42 Cf. Alliez, E. and Bonne, J.-Cl. (2006), "Matisse and the Becoming-Life of Art" in *Polygraph* 18.
43 Letter to Alexandre Romm, 19th of January 1934, EPA: 145.

remains something of a merely magnified painting and subjected to the paradigm of *istoria*. It indeed constructs in a purely internal manner the spatio-temporality of a figurative action whose rhythmic unity is based only on the gestural and it treats the architectural framework as the quasi theatrical framework of the scene.

The second version of *The Dance* was placed at the Barnes Foundation. As opposed to the first version which tended to close the artwork on itself, this one, obeying a more rigorous principle of association of heterogeneities, much more narrowly accords painting to architecture, obliging the first to go outside itself to take into account the "site specificity." First the static blue background is replaced by broad oblique bands, painted alternatively in blue, pink and black flat tints and sweeping uninterruptedly all the field. This painted device functions as an architectural component of the wall because it is articulated with its partitions – namely with the vaults and their pendants around the three panels. In addition the eight dancers have more simplified forms and are treated in flat tints of grey which makes them mural because, Matisse specifies, it is "between black and white, like the walls in the Merion room".[44] These figures no longer detach themselves from an inert background, their play proceeds in counterpoint rhythm of the bands. Moreover, the connection between the interior and the exterior of the composition is not limited to the relationships between the triple decorative panels and the curved arches which frame it; it applies to the whole of the wall, French windows included. Matisse indeed had to find a means of compensating for the strong light coming from them and was likely to make not very visible his composition placed in the backlight. He reached that point by creating an even more intense contrast in his composition between the black and the other less saturated colours (and the white vaults). Pushing still further the association of heterogeneous terms, Matisse wished that the windows not be closed by curtains so that his composition constitutes as if a sky for the external landscape. Barnes did not accept that painting be deterritorialised to the point of including nature in the artifice of his device (which had curtains set in front of the French windows).

44 Interview with Dorothy Dudley, EPA: 140.



Henri Matisse. *The Unfinished Dance*. 1932.

Henri Matisse. *The Dance II*. 1932.

To associate heterogeneities (in the sense in which the fundamental experimentalism which characterises empiricism practices it) indeed produced a deterritorialisation of the terms connected. *The Dance* of Merion thus leads Matisse to a radical overcoming of organicism: "In architectural painting, which is the case of Merion, the human factor appears to me to have to be moderated, if not excluded," because "this painting must join the severity of a volume of stone...".[45] Matisse carries out this idea by renouncing all the manners and mannerisms of the painter (like the play of brushes and the pictorial effects) and by making a house painter apply colours whose impersonal and non-pictorial uniformity – the flat tint – *exhibits* the relations of quantity as the reason of their sensible quality. That all of this is carried out under the aegis of an associationism as demanding as it is perfectly conscious of itself, it is that to which a formula by Matisse like this one bears witness: "the mind of the spectator cannot be stopped by the human character with which it *would identify itself and which would separate it by immobilising it from the great harmonious, living and animated association* of architecture and painting."[46] The organicism of the figures at once cuts them off from their surrounding and invites, in the same movement, the spectator to an *identification* with their humanity which *separates* it in its turn, *by immobilising it*, from the movement which should make of him the agent of the constructive association of the work to its architectural surrounding and even to its "cosmic" (vital) opening.

The version of Merion has also its limits. The conditions that were imposed on it by the depth of the vaults and the width of the pendants led Matisse to split the whole into "three [quite distinct] centers of composition" comprising a symmetry with regard to the central panel and thus privileged orientations and a certain closure – all things that still block the double principle of the *all-over/all-around*.

The leap in a *milieu* where all these limits are exceeded is accomplished by the last version. Presented for itself, without architectural framework (at the Museum of Modern Art in the city of Paris), it functions independently of all "site specificity." The rhythm of this new composition is more regular and more powerful. The broad

45 Letter to Alexandre Romm, 14th of February 1936, EPA: 146.
46 *Ibid.* EPA: 146 (italics added).

black and blue bands are connected henceforth in a series of large chevrons which urge on the pink interstitial triangles. This assemblage draws a continuous (*all-over*) and open (*all-around*) frieze. As for the nymphs, reduced to six, they are no longer coordinated with one another in a gestural way but are parallel and directly coupled or faced with the monumental system of the bands alone. The exceptional architectural force of *The Dance* of Paris comes from the fact that, in an intensive-mutual-becoming-other, the dancers – bodies without organs entirely open on a rhythm which they share with the bands – function like pseudo-bands, and the bands which they cross, like pseudo-humans. The apprehension of this construction which admits any longer neither centre nor symmetry, neither beginning nor end, and does not induce any temporality, is made in an afocal manner, as though in passing and as though accompanying a passage, in the smooth and rhythmic time which invites the spectator to *become* in turn the *vivified* actor of this intensive process as an inhabitant of the *milieu* – and not like the contemplator of a work of art.

While becoming architectured-architecturing, painting recovers and recasts the territory whence it had issued in an "association" (Matissean term, as we saw, with an empiricist resonance) where architecture and painting mutually deterritorialise and reterritorialise each other: "Art starts not with the flesh but with the house; this is why architecture is the first of arts."[47] Matisse was thus to make sure that the decorative-pragmatic paradigm opened by The Dance in Paris outside all "site specificity" was generalisable and could thus take a truly environmental dimension (at least) in the House.[48] It is what made possible the systematic adoption of the papiers découpés technique (first used by Matisse to develop the great coloured surfaces of The Dance): numbers of sheets painted beforehand with gouache by the anonymous hand of

47 Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1991), *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, Paris, Minuit, p. 177. We read earlier that "Art begins with the animal that carves out a territory and makes a house." Since "it is with the territory and with the house [that the expressivity already diffused in life] becomes constructive" (174). We rediscover here, as we have seen, the same "animal formula" in Dewey's *Art as Experience*.
48 We know that for Deleuze and Guattari the territory must open onto the universe and that we must therefore move "from the house-territory to the city-cosmos", *ibid.* p. 177. In default of a public order, Matisse could not extend his environmental paradigm to an entire architecture except in the Chapelle de Vence and partially in the nursery school of Cateau-Cambrésis.

assistants, are cut up with scissors by Matisse who, as a sculptor, cuts directly into vivid colours biomorphic forces-forms, then pins these parts on his walls by allowing himself permanent readjustments of their forms and reciprocal positions in a continuous, free and (nomadically) open variation of assemblages. Matisse invests before anything else his own apartment as a ground of this experimentation intended to "take possession" of an inhabited place "to vivify it". Thus was abolished the split apartment/studio as well as the museal destination of such works, as abundantly testify the photographs of these compositions that are composing themselves with its interior and under the living conditions that were his. Concurrently to the great mural decorations (stained glass, tapestry, ceramic boards...) which are often commissioned and which he conceives on this principle, Matisse multiplies, since 1945-6 and until the end of his life in 1954, the compositions of papiers découpés of variable formats which can comprise one or few motifs. Those are rather often cut out in more or less indented festoons of the palmette or alga type, but the alternatives are numerous as well as the combinations with other elementary motifs (spiral, regular or bristling star, heart, mask, vague silhouette, rivet washer, undulations, screw thread...). Even the compositions more strictly geometrical have a chromatic dynamic and have inflections and polyvalencies which embrace the entire field. Although these compositions were carried out (which is not at all to say conceived) the ones independently of the others and can be self-sufficient, it happens that Matisse assembles them on the walls of his apartment in a vast patchwork whose assemblage changes and whose parts are not always, themselves, in their final state.[49] Instead of contradicting each other, these violently juxtaposed panels mutually exalt each other because their expansiveness projects them towards or against one another. Some of them are themselves internal assemblages of heterogeneous elements that this new external assemblage disassembles and reassembles otherwise according to multiple dynamic combinations. These leaps from one configuration to another, the changes of format and thus the shifts of levels are like the sudden jolts of a formidable chaosmos whose permanent heterogeneous becoming bursts in all directions and whose energy, perpetually renewed, is spent in a bio-poly-morphic joyous intoxication: crazy choreography, pirouettes, juggling, evergreen pantomimes.... The juxtapositions appear at the same time random

49 Picture of a wall of Villa Le Rêve in Vence, covered with cut up sheets in 1948, picture Michel Sima/Selon (reproduced in *Henri Matisse. Zeichnungen und gouaches découpées*, *op. cit.* p. 220, another example, p. 226).

because of the heterogeneity of the panels and arranged [agencées] because of their relationships or of their alternations of format and colours. Empiricism passes here to a still higher power by making itself exponential. Thwarting any mechanical as any overall structural composition, the abstract-vital machine races and actualises or suggests virtualities otherwise beyond suspicion. It cramps greedily any external term that passes in its range, not to assimilate it but to allot it a provisional, hazardous, risky place which, by electrifying it in contact with others, makes the (non synthesisable) whole itself more electric. There is neither a (anticipatory) program nor a (synthesisable) overview, not chaos (maintaining the sensation "in an irremediably confused state")[50] but chaosmos because of the rhythm which improvises sequences of which one can prove to be more dynamic and thus preferable than another. It does not cease to (re)compose itself without ever making a composition; it stops at nothing but passes equally through everything. This machinic multitude is at once in a collective becoming, since the parts move or change themselves and others rejoin them, and in a singular becoming, since its direct or indirect (memorial) capacity to multiply and activate virtualities causes new connected parts, contrasted or stimulating other kind of effects which can be aggregated with the patchwork and detached from it. The ensemble develops in a far too unpredictable way and at a far too greater scale to be controllable. Such is the most heterogeneous and thus most intense assemblage that Matisse has produced to invest the House by the Sensation of a pure Mobile and to construct the Common Space through connections sufficiently novel to deterritorialise art within a life conceived as a process of creation.

Translated by Rafael Winkler[51]

50 As Deleuze declares a propos the Action of Painting in *Francis Bacon, Logique de la sensation*, Paris, ed. de la Différence, 1981, p. 71.

51 [Tr. Note] I want to thank Robin McKay for his impeccable attention and suggestions in revising this translation.

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Between Geophilosophy and Political Physiology

JOHN PROTEVI

In this essay I attempt to link two conceptual fields: "geophilosophy" and "political physiology." Someone once told me upon hearing these terms: "I know what 'geo' and 'philosophy' mean and what 'political' and 'physiology' mean, but I don't have the faintest idea what they're doing together." So I'll explain these terms in a minute.

But first, let me note that these two are terms derived more or less directly from the collaborative work of the French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Now I think it's important that analytic and continental philosophers learn to talk to each other, and I'm convinced that Deleuze and Guattari's work, when properly explained, provides a common ground for this discussion. That's because they provide the ontology and epistemology for a world that is able to yield the results we find in using non-linear dynamical modelling, as is common practice in quite a few scientific fields today, among them some of special interest to philosophers, such as brain studies.[1]

I think Manuel DeLanda is right to claim in *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*[2] that Deleuze is a realist. There are a couple of implications here. First, the ontology Deleuze establishes may not be one

1 Varela, Francisco J., FJ Lachaux, J-P Rodriguez and J. Martinerie (2001), The Brainweb : Phase Synchronization and Large-Scale Integration. *Nature Reviews: Neuroscience* 2: 229-239 is a review article covering one hundred or so studies of the 1990s that used non-linear dynamics for modelling brain function.

2 De Landa, M. (2002), *Intensive science and virtual philosophy*, London ; New York, Continuum.

that cannot be improved upon, but I do think it will serve as a constraint on future ontologies, in that future ontologies will need to be able to account for the features of the world accounted for by Deleuze's ontology. Secondly, although Deleuze is a realist, he is not an essentialist. That is, he is a realist with regard to what he calls the "virtual." In short this means that he doesn't believe surveying the properties of substances to identify essences as a finite set of necessary and sufficient conditions for membership in a category is a fruitful way of doing philosophy. Rather, for Deleuze, we should look to the virtual to see the structures of production processes, instead of looking to the properties of products to identify essences.

According to DeLanda's reconstruction of his work, the Deleuzean distinction of "virtual" and "actual" is a modal distinction, indicating the difference between long-term tendencies and momentary states of systems. Virtual tendencies or patterns of behavior are represented as attractors in phase space portraits of systems; other structures of the virtual realm are bifurcators, represented by singularities, which indicate the borders of basins of attraction, that is, the thresholds at which systems change patterns of behavior, and "sensitive zones," those areas between basins of attraction. These components of the virtual compose what Deleuze calls "Ideas" or "multiplicities," which we can simplify as groups of differential relations and the singularities they form. Such multiplicities account for structures in "morphogenetic" processes: again, the focus is on the production of substances, rather than their properties once formed. The simplest example I know is that of water. 0 and 100 degrees Celcius (at sea level) are singularities or bifurcators or thresholds at which a contained body of water will change tendencies or attractors or patterns, moving from solid to liquid or liquid to gas forms. These virtual patterns and thresholds are multiply actualisable: both in many actual pots of water, but also as the freezing / melting or boiling / condensing points of other materials.

Some will claim that this capacity for multiple actualisations on the part of attractors is the cash value of "emergence"[3]. "Complexity theory"

3 Silberstein, Michael and John McGeever (1999). The Search for Ontological Emergence. *The Philosophical Quarterly* 49.195 (April), 182-200; Thompson, Evan, and Francisco J. Varela (2001). Radical Embodiment: Neuronal Dynamics and Consciousness. *Trends in Cognitive Science* 5: 418-425.

is the study of emergence in systems which move from the complexity of unrelated component action to the relative simplicity of a focused systematic action. This constraint in behavior of components is compensated for by the increase in power of the system now operating as a whole. This coordination of constraint and focus is the production of an emergent effect, an effect that cannot be accounted for by aggregating the measures of the behavior of components, and is best demonstrated by the appearance of attractors and bifurcators in a phase space portrait.

Now of course there are lots of problems here still to be dealt with concerning the analytic philosophy questions of epistemological versus ontological emergence, synchronic versus diachronic emergence, mereological supervenience, and so forth (not to mention the questions some continental philosophers have about DeLanda's work on Deleuze), but at least what we have are bona fide continental philosophers such as Deleuze and Guattari whose work can afford us a starting point in tackling questions that have arisen independently in analytic philosophy. This seems to me to be an excellent opportunity for dialogue, and I hope you'll agree it's better than continuing decades of mutual suspicion, uneasy *détente*, or worse, simply ignoring each other.

To continue with the exposition of complexity theory: a basin of attraction represents a stable situation in which systems can re-establish their basic pattern of behavior, adjusting themselves to instabilities that are below the threshold of the recuperative powers of the system, its "homeostatic mechanisms." These instabilities can be generated internally or be the result of external events, but as long as they remain below the threshold of recuperation the system retains its basic pattern. But when a system is in a sensitive zone, tiny variations can push it in one direction or the other, towards a different basin of attraction / basic pattern. Here the role of chance is irreducible, but only here, in the crisis or revolution or sensitive zone: in the normal operation of a system inside a basic pattern, such chance events are neutralised by the recuperative mechanisms. This is analogous to the damping out of non-average fluctuations in equilibrium thermodynamics treated by statistical mechanics.

You can easily grasp this idea in everyday psychological terms. When things are going well for you, little disturbances are just that, no big deal. But when you are at the end of your rope, the same flat tire that you shrugged off yesterday can flip you into a meltdown, to wildly mix metaphors. That this is such a banal example seems to me to illustrate that we have already established complexity theory as our "folk ontology" in everyday life. "The straw that broke the camel's back," and so on.

Now in these cases where you are pushed out of your "comfort zone" and into a crisis, you can sometimes fall back on other attractors which serve as emergency behavior patterns, virtually available and waiting to be actualised. Some, like freezing panic or blind rage, seem to be evolutionary inheritances, widely shared among mammals. These "affect programs" as Paul Griffiths calls them,[4] seem to be agents or modules able to take over our bodily hardware and crowd out conscious control while they are in charge. (Let me be more precise: in a freezing panic, there does seem to be a conscious subject observing the situation, but conscious control seems suspended: you know you're there and even if you want to move, you can't. In a rage, on the other hand, there doesn't seem to be a subject present anymore. "You" wake up later, after the rage has subsided.) In other cases, the move into crisis can provoke the formation of new attractors, new habits or behavior patterns. If these are new only for the individual, but common to the species, we should call this "development." If they are new to the individual, but common to the culture, we should call this "learning." And if they are new both to the individual and the species / culture, we should call this "creativity."

Deleuze and Guattari call this creativity in forming new patterns, thresholds, and triggers, "absolute deterritorialisation," since they will call "territory" the construction of an environment laden with triggers for behavior patterns. ("Relative deterritorialisation" would conform to development and learning.) One of the most fruitful areas of investigation across the continental / analytic divide is the closeness of this concept with that of "scaffolding," though Deleuze and Guattari would not want to limit territoriality to cognitive behavior as seems to be the case with how the concept of scaffolding has developed to this point.

4 Griffiths, P. (1997), *What emotions really are : the problem of psychological categories, Science and its conceptual foundations*. Chicago, Ill., University of Chicago Press.

This investigation of territories is one of the meanings of the concept of geophilosophy. Now the narrow definition of the term "geophilosophy" in Deleuze and Guattari's last work, *What is Philosophy?*, centers on the birth of Greek philosophy in a certain "plane of immanence" created in the *poleis* that allow *agon*, *philia*, and *logos* – competition, friendship, and argument; the Greek cities are able to sustain such a plane of immanence because they are close to, but separate from, the great empires of Egypt and Persia. But we can extend the sense of geophilosophy to include any philosophical reflection on the role of the earth in social processes: the sort of thing that one often calls "geopolitics," for example, which will be our concern here.

Let me now define "political physiology." It is the study of the construction of "bodies politic," that is, the interlocking of emergent processes that link the patterns, thresholds and triggers of affective and cognitive responses of somatic bodies to the patterns, thresholds and triggers of actions of social bodies. Political physiology has a wider application than consciousness studies. We need to go beyond consciousness studies in this field since political institutions interlock with individual physiology in emotional responses to commands, symbols, slogans, and images; such responses at least strongly condition actions, through unconscious emotional valuing, but sometimes provoke behavior that completely eludes conscious control, as in panics and rages.

In particular, I've been interested in the act of killing and its relation to political sovereignty. The traditional definition of sovereignty is that it is vested in the political body that holds the monopoly on the legitimate use of force within a clearly defined geographical territory. Thus, at the limit, a political body must be able to control the triggering of killing behavior in the bodies of its "forces of order" (army and police). Now it turns out such control is less easy than one might think. Not simply in limiting force to the army and police, but in triggering killing itself. Recent work in military history points to a deep-seated inhibition against one-on-one, face-to-face, cold-blooded killing on the part of some 98% of soldiers.[5] The biggest problem of military training is

5 Grossman, D. (1996). *On killing : the psychological cost of learning to kill in war and society, A Black Bay Book*. Boston, Little, Brown.

how to overcome this deep inhibition. It's not that societies have to stop a natural impulse to murder; far from it. Armies need elaborate training to compel the vast majority of soldiers to kill, and even past basic training, elaborate social technologies such as the firing squad are needed to facilitate cold-blooded killing. One tried and true solution to the inhibition problem is triggering rage in the fighters, but this "warrior" solution creates containment and control problems, for the warrior is not the soldier: the soldier kills only on command, but the warrior kills when his honor is threatened: "you lookin' at me?" .

The answer to the killing problem lies in the "multiplicity" or virtual field underlying killing. The political physiology of military killing entails articulating the patterns, thresholds and triggers of the military unit with the patterns of intensity, the thresholds of inhibition, and the triggers of command embedded in the soldier's body. What are some factors in enabling military killing? The most well-known are distance, machinics, teamwork, command, and dehumanisation. These form an "Idea"[6] or "abstract machine"[7] in that together they form a multiplicity, or group of differential relations and singularities. All these factors are socio-somatic corporeal techniques which, when combined in a "solution" or "machinic assemblage," lower the intensity of the act of killing so that it falls below the threshold that would inhibit in most people close-range killing with the hand.

Distance (or more precisely the differential relation of rates of change of advance and retreat) and machinics (or more precisely the assemblages composed between humans and machines – guns, knives, etc.) combine so that it's not a very intense act just to push a button when far away from the killing. Teamwork and command (horizontal and vertical social relations that are differentially composed and strewn with singularities) will combine to disperse the intensity among a larger social body – it's not me killing you, but my group – phalanx, legion, battalion – fighting yours. Finally, with dehumanisation, the intensity of the act of killing an animal is below the threshold of inhibition for killing a human – the whole point behind Grossman's distinguishing of fight or flight

6 Deleuze, G. (1994). *Difference and repetition*. New York, Columbia University Press.

7 Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1987), *A thousand plateaus : capitalism and schizophrenia*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

(inter-species) from display and submission (intra-species). Repetition in training serves to lower the intensity even more. Artillery and aviation troops have such great enablers from distance, machinics, teamwork and command that they achieve close to 100% "fight to kill" rates without even much need to resort to dehumanisation of the enemy.

At this point I'd like to show how the political physiology of killing interlocks with some geophilosophical concerns. Here we are concerned with social bodies and the patterns, thresholds and triggers that regulate the flow of matter and energy through them. Here we are brought to study the work of Karl Wittfogel and Georges Bataille, whose works on "hydraulic civilisation" and "general economy" can be brought together in the study of the expenditure of surplus solar energy accumulated in social bodies.

Now I know that some of Wittfogel's theses have been proven wrong, but this is so in a way that increases his relevance for a Deleuzean account, in that the origin of irrigation in Egypt was local before being overcoded by the State. Wittfogel seems to say the State was the origin of irrigation, rather than the overcoding force. In any event, the important thing is that aridity is the key to irrigation and stratified societies. An excellent work on the American West by Donald Worster[8] shows how the large-scale state and federal investment in irrigation could only produce stratified societies in arid conditions, where control of water grants a key power position. (Recall the plot of *Chinatown*!)

You don't have to buy into the more melodramatic formulations in Bataille's work (lovingly gathered in Nick Land's tour de force, *The Thirst for Annihilation: Georges Bataille and Virulent* Nihilism[9]) to recognise that looking at circuits of solar energy as the basis of life is not controversial at all, but the basis of biology. And looking at the ways societies waste excess in wars or monuments can help a lot in thinking about political economy, especially the Marxist questions about capitalist crises of overproduction and the "realisation of surplus value."

8 Worster, D. 1(985), *Rivers of Empire : water, aridity and the growth of the American West.* New York, Pantheon Books.

9 Land, N. (1992) *The thirst for annihilation: Georges Bataille and virulent nihilism : an essay in atheistic religion.* London, New York, Routledge.

In principle we could look to the articulation of political physiology and geophilosophy in contemporary life, in the two Iraq wars and their bizarre American offspring, the SUV, where global petroleum wars meet the anxious individual driving an armored car around suburbia. But today I will focus on the ancient Mediterranean, since it will enable me to talk about some famous moments in the Homeric epics. Besides, Colin Renfrew's work on the 1200 BCE Eastern Med collapse, the trigger of the Trojan War, was an early attempt to use systems theory or catastrophe theory and so is of interest to our concerns.[10]

Some geopolitical basics: ancient empires needed flat river valleys, for irrigation-intensive agriculture and to install garrisons in outlying towns which can be quickly supported: the *corvée* supplies labour for roads as well as for irrigation and monuments. Once past a certain threshold, we find a positive feedback loop (the empire, like all social bodies, can be seen as a complex dynamic system regulating material flows): the bigger the territory under control, the more solar energy is captured in agriculture and the larger the bureaucracy and the army that can be fed with the surplus. These can then enlarge and administer the territory and put more peasants to work producing and funneling surpluses and building roads for more expansion, and so on.

Poleis on the other hand need mountainous terrain to maintain independence, each mountain range enclosing a farming region, the small farmers of which were able, by forming a phalanx, to overcome aristocratic dominance and demand *isonomia* or equality before the law. Sparta was the only polis to enslave another group, the *helots* of Messenia, whom we can surmise were behind the curve in forming a phalanx of *hoplites*, that Greek innovation in bringing co-ordinated or "entrained" organisms whose muscle power (fed by the sun captured in grain and meat) is focused in an advancing wall of shields and spears. Sparta, as we know, paid the price of a complete militarisation of its social machine in order to maintain its dominance of the helots. William McNeil's *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History*[11]

10 "Trajectory Discontinuity and Morphogenesis: The Implications of Catastrophe Theory for Archaeology." *American Antiquity* 43: 203-22, 1978

11 McNeill, W. H. (1995), *Keeping together in time: dance and drill in human history.* Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press.

has fascinating details on how Spartan drill and march as entrainment processes allow for the emergent effect of the phalanx's power.

The warrior band moves in the interstices of polis and empire, breaking free when the homogenising forces weaken and setting out to tap the agricultural and artisanal surpluses of sedentary systems. The warrior band breaks established channels of surplus production and distribution, moving bodies and luxuries outside their usual circuits: deterritorialisation as Deleuze and Guattari would call it. The legendary "Sea People" of the 1200 BCE collapse seem to have been such warriors, as do Odysseus ("sacker of cities"), Achilles, and the other freebooters who join Agamemnon and Menelaus.

This is not "geographical determinism": in the phase space of a complex system such as human social organisation there is more than one attractor and the role of chance is irreducible. What does set the contours of the virtual field for the morphogenesis of political units is the multiplicity or group of differential relation between environmental factors such as ground slopes, surface friction, and vegetation; maritime currents, channels, and wave strengths; the speed capacity of available transportation assemblages, which are social – technical at the same time: man – sandal assemblages, horse – man – stirrup assemblages, chariots, wagons, sailing ships, rowing ships, etc. All this makes what the US military now calls the problem of "force projection" a complex problem, or what Deleuze would call an "Idea" or multiplicity.

It may seem odd at first, but olive oil is the key to explaining Athenian democracy. Olive oil is a storage form of solar energy burned for light in lamps and burned for energy in human bodies. The "tipping point" toward democracy in Athens (the singularity in the phase space or multiplicity of social organisation: their little section of the virtual realm) occurs when Solon forbids debt slavery as well as all agricultural exports except that of olive oil. This stabilises the middle class of small farmers who were threatened by aristocratic dominance. These farmers produce olive oil as a cash crop (a small part of their total production, to be sure: it is the large farmers who dominate the oil market; nonetheless, it is a crucial money source – and money is needed for taxes: I support Deleuze and Guattari's thesis of the political rather than commercial origin of

money.) This kick starts work by urban artisans: jars for olive oil and manufactured goods for export (also arms for hoplites to forestall aristocratic re-conquest). A growing urban population needs grain importation. Protecting this needs a naval force: Themistocles and the wooden walls in 480, and the Long Walls connecting Athens and the Piraeus. This necessitates democracy; rowers drawn from ranks of urban masses. Fighters must be able to speak out, as we will see in a moment.

The geo-morphogenetic key to the transition from Athenian democracy at home to the "Athenian Empire" after the Persian Wars is the threshold of human energy production from grain ingestion. As GEM de Ste. Croix points out,[12] rower-powered war ships had a much shorter range than sail-driven merchant ships, which are able to capture solar energy in form of wind power (temperature differentials of land mass / sea / water currents produces wind). So the Athenian democrats needed a network of friendly regimes whose ports could serve to refuel and rest the rowers. All this democratic naval geo-political philosophy explains why Plato in the *Laws* put the ideal city away from the sea, and why in the same dialogue hoplite victory in the land battle of Marathon is praised over democratic rowers' victory in the sea battle of Salamis.

The materialist account of the "military egalitarianism" thesis for the origin of democracy is that in order to stand the stress of combat, you must be able to speak in order to "psych yourself up." Now talk about war in the form of strategy – should we fight, and how? – is limited in the Homeric epics to the council of nobles; the army can only say yea or nay in the assembly. An uncomfortably close analogy to the American spectacle of elections!

The more interesting type of talk about war is "trash talking" in the *Iliad*. The physiology of fighting is that to overcome an inherited and universal intra-species inhibition on close-range killing warriors need rage. Rage will release endorphins, which are anxiety-reducing and analgesics, pain-killers. (This is of course shorthand for a complex biological process, but it seems plausible endorphins are a key player in this state). The repetition of such rages however is traumatic: they

12 De Ste. Croix, G. E. M. (1981), *The class struggle in the Ancient Greek world : from the archaic age to the Arab conquests*. London, Duckworth.

produce chronic high endorphin levels, which set a high threshold for new endorphin release. Putting yourself into danger, and the trash talking that accompanies it, thus has to escalate: you need more and more stress, more and more danger to get the same rush. "Normal life" triggers will then not be able to push the body past the threshold of endorphin release. Thus outside of battle – think Achilles' sulking when he deprives himself of battle throughout most of the *Iliad* – the warrior feels "dead": there's no *joie de vivre*. In fact, he (I'm using the masculine pronoun here, but let's not forget the Amazons) is "objectively" deprived of endorphins. There's a lot to think about here in terms of affect and experience, physiology and consciousness, affect and cognition: was Achilles "thinking straight" when in his depression he allowed Patroclus to fight in his stead?

Now democratic rowing in the Athenian navy was relatively low intensity, at least compared to the hand-to-hand fighting depicted in Homer (actually, "hand to hand" is a misnomer: shield and sword / spear is itself quite a bit less intense than just one on one with hands.) There is thus less necessity for the high intensity training needed for noble single combat: this only makes sense in that the relative "capital investment" for an agricultural society to produce an aristocratic warrior is much greater than that for a complex trading society to produce a rower. To produce such a warrior body you need to traumatise it by lots of intensive hunting and fighting as boys: think of Odysseus's scar from his adolescent rite of passage, the boar hunt.

Phalanx training was intermediate between aristocratic single combat and naval rowing; it is less intense than single combat, because of teamwork, that is, emergence. In the phalanx, you stand by your comrades rather than surge ahead. Recall Aristotle's definition of courage as the mean between rashness and cowardice: in concrete terms, rashness for the phalanx is standard behavior for the warrior, while phalanx courage – staying with your comrades – would be mediocrity if not cowardice for the warrior. (This, by the way, is an excellent example of the Deleuzean distaste for essentialism: you've never going to be able to come up with a set of necessary and sufficient conditions to define "courage": much better to investigate the morphogenesis of warrior and soldierly bodies and see if there are any common structures to those production processes. How are the warrior and the soldier different

actualisations of the virtual multiplicity linking political physiology and geopolitics?)

And this standing together is the key to the *eros* -- ecstatic union with a social body – of the phalanx. McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time* and other works allows us to account for this human bonding in terms of resonance and "entrainment" of asubjective physiological processes triggering endorphin release. Remember the discussion in the *Symposium* about Homer's not being explicit about sex between Achilles and Patroclus. Later Greeks, soaked in the *eros* of the phalanx, assumed sex between them, the only question for them was who was the lover and who was the beloved.

Homer is the great ancestor of all political physiologists in his treatment of Achilles, Hector, Odysseus. Achilles' rage triggers include insult to honour. But "honour" is not a sentiment for Homer's Greeks. *Timé* is stuff: tangible and visible signs of esteem, usually in the form of women and gold, but also the best cuts of meat and wine. Recall the dialogue between Sarpedon and Glaucus: "Why do we fight? For the meat, the wine, and the land." In materialist terms, the meat is for muscle-building, the wine is for coming down off of the high of battle, the land is to produce these inputs.

Homer's portrayal of Hector's dilemma concerning glory is great. When asked by Andromache in Book 6 (and later by Priam and Hecuba in Book 22) to fight from the walls, he replies "I would feel a terribly great shame before the Trojan men and the Trojan women, with their flowing robes." We might even say Homer has what Damasio would call a "somatic marker," a flashing scenario of what it would be like for his body to experience the removal from his constant bath in the positive feedback of admiring glances, which constantly keep his endorphins flowing. Without the reinforcement of those glances, he has no triggers for endorphins and would become depressed. He flashes onto this future, this way in which he would "die of shame." (Just as we have a "folk ontology" of complex systems I think we also have a "folk political physiology": we've always known you can die of shame or of a broken heart, that is, that the social and the somatic are intimately linked; it's just the Cartesian dualist ontology, the folk ontology of mechanistic medicine,

that overlooks this or is troubled by it.) Thus Hector's choice to fight is really the choice of form of death. He doesn't have Achilles' choice: a short glorious life or a long dull one. Hector's choice is a short glorious life or a short depressed and inglorious life.

The problem is that his warrior body would need a long reprogramming to be a soldier and fight from the walls. Soldier fighting is *poietic*: done for the sake of something greater outside the action: that is, the safety and glory of the polis. Soldier fighting done in the phalanx is lower intensity: group *eros* versus the high of warrior fighting done in a rage. Warrior fighting is *praxis*: it is done for its own sake, or more precisely, it's done in order to deal with the traumatised warrior body, to get the next endorphin fix: its necessity is immanently produced rather than transcendently imposed.

In his voyages Odysseus undergoes just the sort of long deprogramming Hector couldn't. In crying on the beach of Calypso's island for 7 years he's mourning his death as a warrior, that is, he's reprogramming his joy / endorphin triggers, which are set at a very high level due to the intensity of battle. This is what all mourning is, finding new endorphin triggers. This is why "breaking up is hard to do": love is an intense state in which high levels of endorphins are released ONLY in the presence of the beloved. This sets your endorphin release threshold very high. Thus everyday life is boring (its triggers can't push you past that threshold of endorphin release) and you neglect your friends. "You never call since you met him / her!" But when the love trigger is disengaged, then you have no triggers at all that can reach the high threshold for endorphin release. That's why your friends always recommend a hobby, meeting new people: you have to form new triggers. And Ares and Aphrodite are a couple because love and war can both be intense, erotic-ecstatic, physiologically traumatising and addictive experiences. Madonna showed her pop-culture genius in 1991 when she called General Schwartzkopf "the sexiest man in America," thereby positing herself as Aphrodite.

Putting together the micro and macro scales of political physiology and Bataillean / Wittfogelian geopolitics we see that Homeric war is a means of transporting gold and women and killing warriors and thus

wasting surplus energy (the work of farmers to feed warriors as well as the miners and artisans who supply them). The subjective level just provides triggers for war. Helen as excuse, as Herodotus shows: only fools would fight for a woman. She couldn't have been the real reason, the pragmatic / skeptical Persians say.

Homeric war is a systematic necessity on two scales. Above the subject we find the need to regulate the circuits of surplus solar energy production, distribution, and consumption, while below the subject we see the need to manage the traumatised warrior body. Preventing such violent bodies from hanging around the court, by the way, is a "rational" reason for war from the perspective of the sovereign: send them out on adventure: Trojan Wars, Crusades, whatever the reason, just get them away from home! Since this holds as well on the "other" side, we see the need for war, the need to kill off these excess warriors.

So we can see that for the ancients the excuses for war are contingent, while war itself is a necessity. And thus we must recognise the mystification involved when Homer credits to a transcendent being or force the workings of an immanent system: he gives name of "Zeus" or "fate" to this systematic necessity arising from the interlocking of political physiology and geopolitics.

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Facticity and Contingency in Louis Althusser's Aleatory Materialism

MAX HENNINGER

That the philosophical work of the late Louis Althusser is "pivotal in the reelaboration of Marxism for the twenty-first century" is a claim whose validity is perhaps not immediately obvious.[1] At first glance, the conception of 'aleatory materialism' that Althusser develops in his fragmentary notes from the 1980s is a far cry from the well-known reading of Marx formulated in earlier works such as *Pour Marx* and *Lire le Capital* (both first published in 1965).[2] In essays such as *Le courant souterrain du matérialisme de la rencontre* (written in 1982), Althusser devotes most of his attention not to Marx, but to authors who are referred to only marginally – although often at important points in the argument – in his earlier publications: Lucretius, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Spinoza, Rousseau, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Deleuze, and Derrida.[3] To be sure, he points out that his remarks on these authors "are only preliminary to what I would like to clarify with regard to Marx."[4] Yet this remark has not always received the attention it deserves. Consequently, the question of how to assess the significance of Althusser's aleatory materialism – both within the Marxist tradition and within the development of 20th century philosophy more generally – has remained something of a conundrum.[5]

This article is intended as a contribution to that current in the interpretation of Althusser's work which insists both on the theoretical importance of late essays such as *Le courant souterrain* and on their relevance to Althusser's lifelong engagement with the Marxist tradition. This current of interpretation breaks with the tendency to read Althusser's last essays in purely biographical terms, and in particular by reference to the dramatic events that characterized the final years of his life.[6] Taking seriously the claim that Althusser's reflections on aleatory materialism are part of a larger "reelaboration of Marxist theory" allows one to see that

1 This claim is advanced by Antonio Negri in: Max Henninger, *From Sociological to Ontological Inquiry: Interview with Antonio Negri*, Italian Culture 23 (2006), pp. 153-166: 159 (hereafter *FSOI*). In this interview, Negri characterizes Althusser's late work as "extremely interesting, but also risky in terms of the way the argument was constructed" and even as "desperate" (ibid.). Negri's most extensive reflection on the legacy of the late Althusser can be found in *Notes on the Evolution of the Thought of the Later Althusser*, in Olga Vasile, Antonio Callari, and David F. Ruccio (eds.) (1996), *Postmodern Materialism and the Future of Marxist Theory: Essays in the Althusserian Tradition*, Hanover, NH, Wesleyan University Press, pp. 51-68 (hereafter *NE*).

2 Louis Althusser (2005), *Pour Marx*, Paris, La Découverte (hereafter PM); Louis Althusser, Étienne Balibar, Roger Establet, Jacques Rancière (1996), *Lire le Capital*, Paris, Quadrige (hereafter *LLC*). English editions: Louis Althusser (1970), *For Marx*, Ben Brewster (trans.), New York, Pantheon; Louis Althusser, Étienne Balibar, Roger Establet, Jacques Rancière (1970), *Reading Capital*, Ben Brewster (trans.), London, New Left Books.

3 Louis Althusser (1994), *Le courant souterrain du matérialisme de la rencontre*, in *Écrits philosophiques et politiques*, vol. II, Paris, Stock/IMEC, pp. 539-579 (hereafter *CSMR*). English translation in: Louis Althusser (2006), *Philosophy of the Encounter. Later Writings, 1978-1987*, Michael Goshgarian (trans.), New York and London.

4 *CSMR*, p. 561. All translations from foreign language texts are by the author.

5 The debate on aleatory materialism is gradually beginning to develop in fruitful ways outside of France. In the Anglophone world, this is largely due to the publication of Gregory Elliot's *Ghostlier Demarcations. On the Posthumous Edition of Althusser's Writings*, Radical Philosophy 90 (1998), pp. 20-32 (hereafter *GD*). Important milestones of the French debate can be found in Pierre Raymond (ed.), *Althusser philosophe* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1997). See also André Tosel, *Les aléas du matérialisme aléatoire dans la dernière philosophie du Louis Althusser*, Cahiers philosophiques 84 (2001) 7-39. Much useful work has come from Italy, such as Federico Dinucci's *Materialismo aleatorio. Saggio sulla filosofia dell'ultimo Althusser* (Pisa: CRT, 1998). The present article is strongly indebted to the interpretation developed by Vittorio Morfino in *Il materialismo della pioggia di Althusser. Un lessico*, Quaderni materialisti 1 (2002), pp. 95-122 (hereafter *MPA*).

6 On this tendency, see *MPA*, p. 95. Morfino points out that the "Althusser case" – Althusser's strangulation of his wife and subsequent internment – has often either obscured the theoretical significance of essays such as *CSMR* or led to them being interpreted as mere side-products of Althusser's autobiography (1992), *L'avenir dure longtemps*, Paris, Stock/IMEC. English edition: Louis Althusser (1993), *The Future Lasts Forever*, Richard Veasey (trans.), New York, The New Press.

the concepts of facticity and contingency developed in the course of those reflections – concepts that might be characterized as 'radically empiricist' by virtue of their tendency to emphasize the importance of the (aleatory) event and question the notion of transcendental laws – are highly relevant to the Marxist analysis of the 'historical tendency' and of the 'mode of production.'

One of the working hypotheses that underpin the following remarks is that the apparently haphazard selection of philosophers Althusser comments on in his later work can be made sense of by focusing on his interpretation of the atomist tradition, or that what Althusser has to say about Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and others is largely premised on his reading of Democritus, Epicurus, and especially Lucretius. As will be seen below, the concept of the *clinamen* – developed by Lucretius in Book II of *De rerum natura* – is invoked by Althusser to formulate a critique of teleological and anthropocentric elements in Marxism. While that critique involves noteable departures from traditional interpretations of atomism, it displays a number of affinities with certain tendencies in the work of contemporary scholars, such as Antonio Negri, who have seen in the atomist tradition – and in its reelaboration in the work of 17th century philosophers such as Spinoza – the conceptual tools for developing a Marxist analysis that does justice to the role of the aleatory and the contingent in political experience.[7]

7 See especially Antonio Negri (1981), *L'anomalia selvaggia. Saggio su potere e potenza in Baruch Spinoza*, Milan, Feltrinelli (hereafter *LAS*); André Tosel (1984), *Spinoza ou le crépuscule de la servitude*, Paris, Aubier; Pierre Macherey (1990), *Hegel ou Spinoza*, Paris, La Découverte; Antonio Negri (1992), *Spinoza sovversivo*, Rome, Pellicani; and Étienne Balibar (1997), *Spinoza, l'anti-Orwell – la crainte des masses*, in *La crainte des masses: politique et philosophie avant et après Marx* (Paris, Galilée, pp. 57-99. English editions: Antonio Negri (1997), *The Savage Anomaly. The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics*, Michael Hardt (trans.), Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press; Antonio Negri (2004), *Subversive Spinoza*, Timothy S. Murphy, (trans.) Manchester, Manchester University Press.

Louis Althusser's Aleatory Materialism: Synthesis or New Beginning?

The debate on how continuous Althusser's writings on aleatory materialism are with his earlier reading of Marx is ongoing. Nonetheless, the view that Althusser's later writings reflect "a unilateral inflection of a recurrent Althusserian tendency" is increasingly being accepted as accurate.[8] Even when Antonio Negri speaks of a veritable "*Kehre*" in Althusser's development as a thinker, he uses the term to suggest not so much a radical break as a reconfiguration of the original conceptual apparatus.[9] Vittorio Morfino has argued convincingly that a number of themes present in works such as *Pour Marx* and *Lire le Capital* persist in the work of the late Althusser.[10] Morfino suggests that the appearance of discontinuity characteristic of Althusser's last work results mainly from the often poetic and impressionistic style evident in essays such as *Le courant souterrain*.[11] Here, it will be important to remember that these (fragmentary) essays were never prepared for publication by Althusser, and that he would presumably have re-worked them stylistically if he had chosen to publish them. On a methodological level, this entails that interpretations of those essays should focus on their theoretical content rather than allow themselves to be distracted by Althusser's sometimes slapdash formulations.

Morfino's synchronic reading of aleatory materialism has made an important contribution towards efforts to shift attention away from Althusser's mode of exposition. Morfino sets out to establish a "lexicon" of the late Althusser's key concepts. Morfino distinguishes five such concepts: the void, the encounter, facticity, the conjuncture, and contingency. Whether or not this list might be usefully expanded is not a

8 *GD*, p. 28.

9 *NE*, p. 83.

10 See *MPA*, pp. 86-87, where Morfino lists five persistent themes: the notion that history needs to be understood in radically anti-teleological terms, as a "process without a subject"; the primacy of the relation over the elements; theoretical anti-humanism; the view that philosophy has no (pre-defined) object; and the definition of metaphysics in terms of Origin, Subject, Object, Truth, End (*Fin*), and Foundation (*fondement*).

11 *MPA*, p. 87.

question this article will concern itself with.[12] It will focus instead on the concept of facticity. It is in his treatment of this concept – which is, to be sure, intimately bound up with the others, and in particular with those of the encounter, the conjuncture, and contingency – that Althusser's debt to the atomist tradition, and to Lucretius in particular, is especially evident, and it is there that Althusser most strongly endorses a 'radically empiricist' view of experience and the event, characterized by a radical rejection of the notion of transcendental laws of development.

Lucretius and the Atomist Tradition

It is worth emphasizing the degree to which Althusser's reading of atomism departs from certain traditional interpretations of Democritus, Epicurus, and Lucretius. For example, Wilhelm Windelband's account of what he calls the ancient "materialist system" might almost be read as a catalog of what doesn't interest Althusser in the atomist tradition.[13] Windelband focuses on what the atomist tradition has to say about human perception, suggesting a continuity between that tradition and British empiricism, especially its Lockean variant.[14] This leads Windelband to read atomism in terms of distinctions such as appearance/reality and quantity/quality. While not necessarily inaccurate, this reading has little in common with Althusser's.

Windelband discovers in Democritus and his followers a proto-Lockean distinction between the primary and the secondary characteristics of objects, and – more generally – between appearance and reality.[15] For Windelband, the atomist tradition is empiricist in the sense

12 Morfino himself briefly entertains the possibility that the concept of the aleatory might be included in the list, but rejects this possibility on the basis of the argument that the aleatory is really the sum total of the other concepts he cites (*MPA*, pp. 87-88).

13 See Wilhelm Windelband (1980), *Das System des Materialismus*, in *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie*, Tübingen, Mohr, pp. 93-98 (hereafter *LGPh*).

14 See *LGPh*, pp. 95-96.

15 While Windelband does not say so, his reading of atomism seems to be strongly informed not just by Lockean empiricism, but also by the Kantian distinction between phenomena and noumena. In many ways, the atom ends up resembling the Kantian 'thing in itself.' It is worth comparing Windelband's discussion of atomism with his account of the the thing in itself: *Das Ding-an-sich*, in *LGPh*, pp. 493-508.

that it takes (sensory) experience as the starting point for a reflection on the physical conditions of experience: "Thinking must deduce from perception that which explains perception."[16] The proto-empiricist project Windelband attributes to the atomists involves causally explaining human perception in terms of the shape and motion of the atoms that make up the physical world ("the shape and motion of the atoms, which make up the true being of appearance").[17]

The distinction between quantity and quality is superimposed by Windelband on that between appearance and reality. According to Windelband's interpretation of atomism, if the world of appearance or sensory perception is one of qualities (such as colours), the atoms in terms of which appearance is causally explained need to be thought of in purely quantitative terms: "The task of science is therefore to reduce all qualitative relations to quantitative relations, demonstrating which quantitative determinations of absolute reality determine qualitative states of appearance."[18]

Windelband's highly schematic interpretation might be criticized on several points. One might ask, for example, whether the 'primary characteristics' of an object, such as the shape of the atoms composing it, can really be fully explained in quantitative terms, and whether this is indeed what Democritus sets out to do. There is no need to develop such a critique here. It is enough to note again that an interpretation of atomism that attributes as central a role to the quantity/quality distinction as Windelband's does is very far removed from Althusser's reading. This is mainly because Althusser is not interested in interpreting atomism as a theory of perception. Althusser emphasizes that the interaction of the atoms is constitutive not just of the phenomenal world, but of facts *tout court* – it is constitutive of a world that extends far beyond the sphere of human perception, both temporally and spatially. Had he commented on Windelband's reading, Althusser would almost certainly have criticized it as anthropocentric, or as excessively focused on human experience (and, more specifically, human perception).

16 *LGPh*, p. 94.

17 *Ibid.*

18 *Ibid.*

What interests Althusser most in atomism is a concept that Windelband's discussion, which focuses on Democritus, hardly mentions: the Lucretian (and possibly Epicurean) concept of the *clinamen*, that infinitesimal movement by which atoms plunging through the void deviate from their path and encounter one another in order to constitute a composite entity.[19] It is interesting to note that another classic commentary on ancient atomism, that of Friedrich Albert Lange, comes much closer to Althusser's conception of aleatory materialism, and that it does so by virtue of paying more attention to the specific features of Lucretian atomism, in particular by emphasizing the significance of the concept of the *clinamen*.[20] Lange notes that the *clinamen* is the conceptual key to understanding the constitution of the universe as described by Lucretius, and he does not hesitate to admit that this concept is "highly peculiar."[21] On Lange's reading, the atomist invocation of the *clinamen* is little to do with the central question of Lockean empiricism ('How can human perception be causally explained?'). Its main concern is cosmological and even ontological ('What are the primary elements that constitute the universe, and how does the process of constitution occur?'). Lange dwells extensively on atomism's central premise – the eternal movement of the atoms through the infinite void – and points out the radicality of the analysis developed by Lucretius on the basis of this premise. In Lucretius's *De rerum natura*, the universe is an ever-changing combination of atoms, and every object is a particular and contingent expression of the general possibility of inter-atomic combination.[22]

19 See Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, II 216-292 (hereafter *DRN*). This passage is the *locus classicus* for the concept of the *clinamen*. It is also the first formulation of the concept, notwithstanding the fact that some variant of the *clinamen* is often speculatively attributed to Epicurus. Althusser writes: "I leave to the experts the question of who introduced the concept of the *clinamen*, which one finds in Lucretius but which is absent in the fragments of Epicurus. The fact that it was 'introduced' suggests that this concept was [...] indispensable to the 'logic' of the Epicurean hypotheses" (*CSMR*, p. 541).

20 Friedrich Albert Lange (2003), *Das Lehrgedicht des Titus Lucretius Carus über die Natur*, in *Geschichte des Materialismus und Kritik seiner Bedeutung in der Gegenwart*, Leipzig, Manuscriptum, pp. 109-136, esp. 121-122 (hereafter *GM*).

21 Lange attributes the *clinamen* to Epicurus and says: "The device he uses to explain the constitution of the world is highly peculiar" (*GM*, p. 121).

22 Cf. *GM*, pp. 119-120, where Lange cites the following passage from *De rerum natura* as one of the most accomplished formulations of the atomist position: *Nam certe nequo consilio primordia rerum / Ordine se suo quaeque sagaci mente locarunt / Ned quos quaeque darent motus pepigere perfecto, / Sed quia multa modis multis mutata per omne / Ex infinito vexantur percita plagis, / Omne genus motus et coetus experiundo / Tandem deveniunt in talis disposituras, / Qualibus haec terum consistit summa creata, / Et multos etiam magnos servata per annos / Ut semel in motus conjectast convenientis ,/ Efficit ut largis avidum mare fluminis undis / Integrant amnes at solis terra vapore / Fota novet fetus summissaque gens animantum / Floreat et vivant labentis aetheris ignis* (*DRN* I 1021-1034). The importance of this passage consists in (1) its emphasis on the dynamic and composite nature of the universe and (2) the rejection of the teleological concept of design.

Most importantly, Lange recognizes that interpreting every particular entity and even the universe in its entirety as the product of fortuitous or aleatory encounters between the atoms implies a radical rejection of every teleological worldview. Lange speaks of the "uncomprosing destruction of the concept of the End" and notes: "This is the cornerstone of the entire materialist worldview, an element of the system that modern materialists have not always done justice to."[23] It is precisely this radically anti-teleological element of atomism that is developed in Althusser's aleatory materialism.

"A materialism of the encounter, and hence of the aleatory and of contingency"

Althusser begins his essay *Le courant souterrain* by pointing out that he wishes to retrieve what he calls the tradition of aleatory materialism – a tradition that he claims begins with ancient atomism and persists up to Derrida – from its numerous misinterpretations: "To deliver this materialism of the encounter from its suppression, to uncover what it implies both for philosophy and for materialism, to understand its hidden effects where they unfold silently – that is the task I propose to undertake."[24]

23 *GM*, p. 119.

24 *CSMR*, p. 540. Althusser's claims on the continuity between atomism and the thought of 20th century philosophers such as Deleuze and Derrida are never comprehensively argued for. The validity of the claim cannot be explored in this article, which will merely point out some affinities between Lucretius and Spinoza in order then to focus on the conclusions that Althusser's reading of the *clinamen* leads him to draw about Marxism.

If one had to identify the central component of what Althusser calls "aleatory materialism," then it would almost certainly have to be its radical distinction between event and meaning. The anti-teleological thrust of Althusser's reflections finds its most important expression in the recurring claim that no event or fact precedes its meaning. Althusser calls this the "non-anteriority of Meaning" and identifies it as the most important claim of ancient atomism, understood as the (anti-Platonic and anti-Aristotelian) *incipit* of the tradition of aleatory materialism.[25] For Althusser, to explain the constitution of the universe in terms of the *clinamen* means extending the principle of the "non-anteriority of Meaning" to everything that exists. The *clinamen* thus becomes the radical negation of every worldview that postulates a transcendental Cause or Reason for the existence of the world: "That the origin of every world, of every reality and every meaning is due to a deviation, that the Deviation and not Reason or the Cause is the origin of the world conveys an impression of the audacity of Epicurus's hypothesis."[26]

It is worth emphasizing the radicality of this last statement – its own "audacity." As is well known, the fortuitous *clinamen* has long been an embarassment to those scholars who want to make ancient atomism a system of thought fully consistent with straightforward notions of

25 *CSMR*, p. 541. Notwithstanding the strongly dated character of many of his hypotheses and his problematic concept of a pre-Christian liberalism, Ellis Havelock has correctly emphasized the anti-Platonic and anti-Aristotelian thrust of ancient atomism. See Ellis Havelock (1964), *The Liberal Temper in Greek Politics*, Harvard, MA, Yale University Press. Havelock focuses on Democritus, exploring the way in which the pre-Socratic philosopher conceptualizes history as a "natural evolving process" rather than as the "fixed quantity into which Platonism sought to convert it" (117). Havelock also stresses the anti-teleological element in atomism: "But man, unlike the animals, has an 'open future,' only in part predictable [...]. Here, what would be a defect in the eyes of Platonism (i.e. lack of knowledge) is for Democritus a human asset" (119). As with Windelband's interpretation of Democritus, what would almost certainly have provoked Althusser's criticism (besides Havelock's valorization of liberalism) are the anthropocentric and humanist overtones of these claims. Nonetheless, Havelock's interpretation of Democritus touches on a number of themes dear to Althusser, as will be seen below.

26 *CSMR*, p. 541. Again, Althusser attributes the concept of the *clinamen* to Epicurus even though it is properly formulated only in the work of Lucretius. He assumes the continuity between Epicurus and Lucretius is stronger than the philological evidence warrants.

causality.[27] It is precisely this problematic element of the atomist worldview that Althusser finds most appealing. The question begged by the Lucretian account of the *clinamen* ('Why do the atoms deviate from their pre-determined path and clash to form the composite entities that make up the universe?'), a question typically interpreted in the terms of debates over free will and determinism, never even arises for Althusser.[28] For him, the *clinamen* does not so much pose the problem of human freedom as constitute an ontological premise concerning the primacy of the contingent fact with regard to the meaning attributed to it. This problem extends far beyond the sphere of human experience; it concerns being *tout court*, of which human experience is only a particular (and by no means the most important) manifestation.

The *clinamen* becomes the basis of Althusser's "materialism of the encounter, and hence of the aleatory and of contingency."[29] Whatever meaning is attributed to the clash of the atoms needs for Althusser to be recognized as a meaning attributed after the fact, such that the universe – as the ultimate product of the *clinamen* – presents itself first and foremost as an example of brute facticity, or of a mere Heideggerian "There is."[30] The universe is an "accomplished fact" (*fait accompli*) to which meaning can certainly be attributed, but every such attribution is of necessity *post factum*.[31] Meaning is constructed within and on the basis of a facticity that

27 On the "riddle" the *clinamen* represents with regard to the concept of causality, see *GM*, p. 122.

28 Arguably, this is another point at which Althusser takes liberties with the philosophical tradition, since Lucretius himself explicitly links the *clinamen* to the question of human liberty. Cf. *DRN* II 277-292 and *GM*, p. 122. The question of human liberty will be returned to later in this article.

29 *CSMR*, p. 540.

30 See *CSMR*, p. 542.

31 Cf. *CSMR*, p. 542: "The world can be called the accomplished fact, within which, once the fact has been accomplished, the reign of Reason, Meaning, Necessity, and the End installs itself. But this accomplishment of the fact is nothing but a pure effect of contingency, since it depends on the aleatory encounter of the atoms resulting from the deviation of the *clinamen*." Althusser capitalizes the word 'Meaning' (*Sens*) in order to suggest the concept of an absolute or transcendental meaning – one that precedes the constitution of the universe that occurs by means of the *clinamen*. Althusser's entire argument is devoted to demonstrating that there can never be such an absolute or transcendental meaning. To say that meaning only becomes possible on the basis of contingent events (encounters between atoms) is to say that meaning has no non-contingent or necessary foundation, or that is is always derivative with regard to the instrinsically 'nonsensical' facticity of these

is itself not preceded by meaning, which is to say that whatever sense is attributed to the universe, or indeed to any of the facts that constitute its particular manifestations, is grounded contingently, not absolutely. This is the central claim of Althusser's aleatory materialism, variants of which he immediately sets out to identify in all those philosophers who attributed special significance to the concepts of the aleatory, the contingent, and the conjunctural.[32]

It was suggested above that Althusser's theory of aleatory materialism is ultimately intended as a critique of certain tendencies within Marxism. This point (which will be developed below) is worth recalling here because it helps explain why Althusser attributes such importance to the *clinamen* even as he somewhat brashly sidesteps traditional interpretations of the concept. As ought by now to be clear, philological accuracy and attention to scholarly debates are of little concern to Althusser. He invokes the *clinamen* in order to argue for a particular concept of philosophy, one he ultimately wishes to deploy against teleological interpretations of Marxism. For Althusser, taking seriously the non-anteriority of Meaning entails what he defines as a radically materialist and anti-metaphysical concept of philosophy – one that insists on the absence of any pre-determined or transcendental order. The non-anteriority of Meaning implies that the first and most important task of philosophy is to register the contingent fact, the concrete *datum*, without postulating an antecedent meaning or reducing the fact to the product or expression of an order that is itself not contingent.[33]

events.

32 Althusser attributes special significance not only to Heidegger's formulation "There is" (*Es gibt*) but also to Wittgenstein's definition of the world as "everything that is the case" (*CSMR*, pp. 542-543). He then goes on to discuss elements of aleatory materialism in the work of Machiavelli (pp. 543-546), Spinoza (pp. 548-552), Hobbes (pp. 552-556), Rousseau (pp. 556-561), and Marx (pp. 561-576). By focusing on Spinoza and Marx, this article must forego discussion of the other philosophers interpreted by Althusser. The decision to focus on Spinoza and Marx is justified first and foremost by the special attention Althusser devotes to them. As will be seen below, the affinities between Lucretian atomism and Spinoza's ontology are too striking – and too central to Althusser's conception of aleatory materialism – to be left aside; Marx deserves to be discussed for the simple reason that Althusser's entire theory of aleatory materialism is ultimately intended as a critique of the teleological and anthropocentric elements of Marxism.

33 Cf. *CSMR*, p. 542: "What does philosophy become under these circumstances? It is no longer the enunciation of Reason or of the Origin of things, but the theory of

The Perils of Facticity

The question that immediately arises is of course whether the *clinamen* does not risk itself becoming one of those "Origins" that Althusser is at pains to warn against. Can Althusser's valorization of facticity avoid treating the "non-anteriority of Meaning" as a new, albeit disguised "Meaning"? Is Althusser's account of facticity not a perilous one in the sense that it constantly risks its own transformation into the very thing it polemicizes against? The problem is a complex one that can be adequately addressed only by a more nuanced account of Althusser's concept of facticity.

Althusser elaborates on the non-anteriority of Meaning by referring to a metaphor he is fond of citing when explaining his distinction between materialism and idealism. This is the metaphor of the man who steps onto a train without consulting the schedule. It is intended to characterize what Althusser calls the materialist approach to philosophy as one that treats history as a process (the moving train) whose origin and end remain unknown (the absent schedule).[34] Althusser's aleatory materialism might be seen as a radicalization of this conception of materialism, characterized by "the negation of every End, of every teleology, be it rational, worldy, moral, political or aesthetic."[35]

As was suggested above, there is a double strategy at work here. First, a distinction between event and meaning is tacitly or explicitly introduced. This distinction then serves as the basis for the claim that

their contingency and the recognition of the fact, the fact of contingency, the fact that necessity is subjected to contingency, the fact of the forms that 'give form' to the effects of the encounter. It is no longer anything but a constatation..." This would seem to be a reformulation of the well-known Althusserian claim that philosophy has no (pre-determined or transcendental) object.

34 Cf. *CSMR*, p. 561: "To the old question: 'What is the origin of the world?' this materialist philosophy replies: 'The void?' – 'Nothing' – 'I start with nothing' – 'There is no beginning, because nothing ever existed apart from what is'; hence 'There is no obligatory starting point for philosophy' – 'Philosophy does not begin with a beginning that is its origin' but rather 'jumps on the moving train' and, by its own strength, 'mounts the current' that has been moving eternally before it like the river of Heraclitus."

35 *CSMR*, pp. 562-563.

every event or fact precedes the meaning attributed to it, or that the attribution of meaning is always contingent on the brute facticity of the event or fact itself. Althusser insists on the absolute primacy of the fact, thereby rejecting what might be called the hypostasis of meaning. Yet as Vittorio Morfino notes, "the fact risks itself becoming a hypostasis."[36]

To understand how Althusser attempts to avoid this risk (of which he is quite aware), it has to be remembered that 'fact' is only another name for the contingent constellation produced by the *clinamen*. The fact is always a relation, an ensemble of dynamic elements (the atoms). To the extent that it suggests stasis and unity, the word 'fact' is misleading, since what is meant is neither static nor unitary, but dynamic and multiple. This entails that the fact is inherently unstable; whatever regularity we observe in the world is ultimately nothing but temporary invariance. From this Althusser derives the claim that the 'laws' that govern history and the world are not so much transcendental and transhistorical structures as more or less probable 'tendencies' in the Marxist sense.[37] Their past and future validity is never certain, being dependent on conditions that are themselves neither transcendentally guaranteed nor transhistorical or immutable. As Althusser says elsewhere, "the tendency can take a direction that is unforeseen, because it is aleatory."[38]

If the concept of the fact must always be related back to that of a dynamic multiplicity (the swerving atoms that form fortuitous and inherently unstable constellations), one might conclude from this that

36 *MPA*, p. 101.

37 On the Marxist concept of the tendency (the classic example of which is the "tendency of the rate of profit to decline" as formulated in *Capital* and the *Grundrisse*), see Antonio Negri (1997), *Crisi dello Stato-piano*, in *I libri del rogo*, Rome, Castelvecchi, pp. 48-52 and Antonio Negri (1998), *Marx oltre Marx*, Rome, Manifestolibri, *passim*. English editions: Antonio Negri (1988), *Revolution Retrieved*, E. Bostanjoglou and P. Saunders (trans.), London, Red Notes; Antonio Negri (1984), *Marx Beyond Marx. Lessons on the Grundrisse*, Harry Cleaver, Michael Ryan and Maurizio Viano (trans.), New York, J.F. Bergin.

38 Louis Althusser (1988), *Filosofía y marxismo. Entrevista por F. Navarro*, Mexico City, Siglo ventiuno, p. 36. Cf. *CSMR*, p. 568: "Even at the moment of greatest stability, the necessity of the laws that emerge from the connection provoked by the encounter is haunted by a radical instability, which explains what we have so much trouble understanding, because knowing that the laws can change offends our sense of 'regularity.'"

while Althusser insists on the primacy of the fact with regard to the meaning attributed to it, he does not treat the fact as absolutely primary. It could be said that facts are themselves preceded by the fortuitous encounters or *clinamena* that constitute them, being nothing but the constellations produced by these *clinamena*.[39] The contingent conjuncture would then be both primordial with regard to the fact and constitutive of it. Althusser consistently – although perhaps not always succesfully – attempts to avoid such a rigid distinction between facts and the process by which they are constituted. For his argument to work, every slippage between the fact and its constitution must be avoided, such that every fact is ultimately contemporaneous and perhaps even identical with its constitution.

Rather than developing a distinction between the factual and the pre-factual, Althusser shifts onto the safer terrain of the distinction between contingency and necessity, arguing for the absolute primacy of the former with regard to the latter: "Which is to say that instead of thinking contingency as a modality of or exception from necessity, one must think necessity as the becoming-necessary of the encounter of contingent entities."[40]

What is worth stressing here is Althusser's characterization of the atoms as "contingent entities." This characterization is indicative of what is perhaps the most radical (and risky) part of Althusser's argument. Althusser wants to argue that even the atoms (the 'elements' that make up the fact) do not pre-exist their encounter. In a radical departure from Lucretius, Althusser proposes that we should think of the atoms themselves as being constituted by the *clinamen*. Otherwise, the notions of stasis and necessity expunged from Althusser's theory by means of its characterization of the fact as an unstable multiplicity would return 'through the backdoor,' as characteristics of the atoms. Althusser's

39 On this point, see *MPA*, p. 104.

40 *CSMR*, p. 566. Cf. *MPA*, p. 104-105: "There are political, ideological, and philosophical conjunctures; the conjuncture is the worldly fact that presents itself to practice, which is only ever possible in the interstices of this fact, to the extent that it inserts itself in the relations of force that constitute the fact as such. And yet the conjuncture is not a transcendental structure, but rather con-juncture, the interconnection of elements, an encounter that rests on the abyss of what did not take place and what no longer takes place."

idiosyncratic appropriation of ancient atomism ultimately – and paradoxically – leads him to call into question the very existence of the atoms as eternal entities. The most daring passages in Althusser's essay suggest that nothing at all precedes the *clinamen*: "To the point where one can maintain that the very existence of the atoms results from nothing but their deviation and encounter, before which they dispose merely of a phantom-like existence."[41]

To be sure, to attribute to the (pre-*clinamen*) atoms a "phantom-like existence," as Althusser does here, is not quite the same as saying they do not exist *tout court*. Althusser's argument becomes uncharacteristically ambivalent at this point. What exactly does "phantom-like existence" mean – is it existence or not? It seems clear that the ambiguity of the expression serves precisely to avoid the binary opposition existence/non-existence, and the double bind this opposition entails. The double bind can be formulated as follows: Either the atoms pre-exist the *clinamen*, in which case they constitute something akin to an "Origin," or they do not, in which case the *clinamen* itself becomes the "Origin" (not just of the universe but also of the atoms themselves). In either case, it seems impossible to maintain the negation of the "Origin" that Althusser argues for. The problem cannot be solved on these terms – and Althusser never attempts to do so. Not only does he never answer the question of what exactly is meant by "phantom-like existence," but he in fact refuses to pose it.

The reason ought by now to clear. The very posing of the question would lead Althusser onto the terrain he wants to avoid – that of metaphysics, understood as the science of ultimate origins (or of the "Origin"). The philosophy of aleatory materialism operates precisely by bracketing the questions of the Origin and the End. It "boards the moving train without consulting the schedule," proceding on the basis of what might be termed a "materialist *époché*," a radical exclusion of everything that transcends the concrete *datum*.[42] Althusser's use of the adjective "phantom-like" might be interpreted as expressing his refusal to venture beyond this limit, which separates the empirical world from the sphere of

41 *CSMR*, p. 542. This is without doubt the most radical formulation of what Morfino calls "primacy of the relation over the elements of the relation" (*MPA*, p. 86).

42 I am borrowing the term "materialist *époché*" from Antonio Negri (2001), *Lenta ginestra. Saggio sull'ontologia di Giacomo Leopardi*, Milan, Millepiani, p. 140.

metaphysical "phantoms." This is the point in Althusser's argument at which aleatory materialism might be understood as a form of 'radical empiricism.' It is also the point at which Althusser's aleatory materialism resists its interpretation as a straightforward reprisal of ancient atomism. Aleatory materialism is, at best, an anti-metaphysical atomism, and perhaps even an atomism without atoms.

No doubt it is here that Althusser's theory is most open to attack. An unsympathetic reader might simply 'close the book' and declare Althusser's refusal to elaborate a pre-*clinamen* ontology an unacceptable omission. Yet what such an unsympathetic reading of aleatory materialism would identify as the theory's weakest point, or even as a cheap trick, might also be interpreted as a challenge to the reader – that of deciding for him- or herself whether or not to cross the line into the science of origins or remain within the terrain staked out by Althusser, that of a radically immanent conception of the universe.[43]

"A horizon of bare corporeality and savage multiplicity"

Here, no attempt will be made to venture beyond this liminal point of Althusser's theory. Rather than proceeding on the path of metaphysics, the concluding section of this article will relate Althusser's aleatory materialism back to the horizon of Marxist theory. First, however, it is worth exploring the affinities of Althusser's approach with certain recurring ideas in the philosophy of Spinoza – a thinker to whom Althusser attributes a special role in any attempt to craft a non-teleological and anti-humanist Marxism.[44] Before discussing the specific contributions that Althusser's aleatory materialism sets out to make to the "reelaboration of Marxism," Spinoza's ontology – an ontology characterized by "the exclusion of every finality, of every religion and every form of transcendance" – will be used as a vantage point from which to better understand Althusser's larger philosophical project.[45]

43 On the concept of immanence as it relates to aleatory materialism, see *NE, passim*.

44 See Althusser 1992, pp. 209-211; *CSMR*, pp. 548-552; Louis Althusser (1998), *Solitude de Machiavel*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, pp. 184-188; and *MPA*, pp. 91-92 and 95.

45 *CSMR*, p. 552.

Spinoza's admiration for Democritus, Epicurus, and Lucretius is well known.[46] Three specific elements of Spinoza's own philosophical system are worth mentioning here, in so far as they entail a philosophical stance that corresponds not just to the general anti-metaphysical thrust, but often also to the particular claims of Althusser's aleatory materialism. These three elements are: the reformulation of the Cartesian *cogito* in the second axiom of Book II of the *Ethics*, the critique of anthropocentrism in the appendix to Book I of the *Ethics*, and the atomist theory of individuals developed in proposition 13 of Book II of the *Ethics*. While these three elements of Spinoza's philosophy cannot here be explored as comprehensively as they merit, even a brief survey of them ought to clarify much of what Althusser intends by aleatory materialism.

The second axiom of Book II of the *Ethics* famously combines brevity with philosophical radicality. *Homo cogitat*, the axiom states. Althusser rightly stresses its deliberately reductive character, pointing out that Spinoza here brushes aside the entire domain of epistemology by substituting the central question of that discipline ('What are the conditions of knowledge?') with a simple statement of fact ("Man thinks").[47] A prime example of what has just been called the "materialist *époché*," the axiom brackets everything that precedes the fact in order to treat that fact not as a 'conclusion' whose 'premises' need to be verified metaphysically, but rather as a 'premise' in its own right. This move is anti-metaphysical in the sense that it insists on the absolute priority and sufficiency of what is empirically given – the human organism that engages in intellectual activity – reversing the Cartesian temptation to establish a transcendental or logical guarantee for the empirical fact.[48]

46 See letter LVI in Carl Gebhardt (ed.) (1914), *Spinoza. Briefwechsel*, Leipzig, Felix Meiner, p. 231.

47 See *CMSR*, p. 550, where Althusser comments on this axiom as follows: "Nothing remains to be said about the great problem that has obsessed all of Western philosophy since Aristotle and most of all since Descartes: the problem of knowledge, and its double corollary, the knowing subject and the object of knowledge. These great problems, which cause such a stir, end up reducing themselves to nothing: *'Homo cogitat'*, 'Man thinks,' that's how it is, it's the constatation of a fact, that of the 'it's like that,' that of an *'Es gibt'* that announces Heidegger and recalls the facticity of the fall of the atoms in Epicurus."

48 Cf. Hans Jürgen Krahl (1970), *Erfahrung des Bewußtseins*, Frankfurt, Neue Kritik, p. 13, where the Cartesian approach (that of the *cogito*) is characterized as follows: "What must not be questioned is pure thought, the 'I think.' That this 'I think' disposes of a material substance, a body, that it is an empirical I, already falls

The critique of anthropocentrism formulated in the appendix to Part I of Spinoza's *Ethics* makes it clear that the thinking entity that is man is by no means the privileged object of philosophy's constatations. On the contrary, Spinoza argues that one of philosophy's primary tasks consists precisely in the refutation of those anthropocentric and teleological illusions towards which the human organism has historically demonstrated a particular inclination. On Spinoza's account, these illusions have a twofold cause. They arise from the alliance of a pre-philosophical ignorance with the desire for self-preservation. This fateful combination leads to the recurrent misinterpretation of fortuitous events as the benevolent or malevolent actions of superhuman beings (*naturae rectores*). Spinoza's philosophical criticism is aimed at the illusion (*superstitio*) that the objects we encounter in the world must have been created with some purpose in mind, simply because they are useful or harmful to us. Against this view, which transposes the means/end distinction operative in the sphere of human action to the universe in its entirety, Spinoza insists that all notions concerning the universe's purposiveness are illusions (*figmenta*). He adds that explanations of the universe that refer to a hypothetical divine will are nothing but a "refuge for the ignorant" (*ignorantiae asylum*).

Spinoza's argument is reminiscent of many passages in *De rerum natura*. In particular, it recalls the Lucretian critique of teleological conceptions of the human organism and the critique of religious superstition (which can be found not just in Lucretius, but also in Democritus and Epicurus).[49] Both merit attention in so far as they imply a notion of freedom that discussions of free will centered on the *clinamen*

inside the domain of what can be doubted. This starting point of Cartesian doubt, whose consequences for the history of philosophy were considerable, and which treats only pure thought as certain, already tends towards treating thought and the concept as the only true reality." The materialist critique of the *cogito* is a recurring theme in 20th century critical Marxism, especially in its German and Italian currents. Besides the work of Krahl, it is worth mentioning Franz Borkenau (1973), *Vom feudalen zum bürgerlichen Weltbild*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, esp. pp. 304-368, and Antonio Negri (1970), *Descartes politico o della ragionevole ideologia*, Milan, Feltrinelli.

49 See *DRN* I 62-79 (the Lucretian critique of religion) and IV 834-43 (the Lucretian critique of teleological conceptions of the human organism). See also *GM*, pp. 119-120.

tend to overlook. As noted above, Althusser expresses his disdain for the recurrent debates on whether or not the *clinamen* constitutes a convincing demonstration of human freedom.[50] Following him, one might argue that if there is a powerful notion of freedom in the atomist tradition (and perhaps in the wider tradition of aleatory materialism that includes Spinoza and other, later philosophers), then it is to be looked for in the critique of (religious and metaphysical) superstition. Spinoza certainly takes human freedom to consist less in a radical negation of causality than in a process of philosophical emancipation – and, ultimately, ontological empowerment – that promises deliverance from the servitude (*servitus*) and constraint (*religio*) that comes with the anthropocentric and teleological illusions of religious superstition.[51]

The element of Spinoza's critique of religion most relevant to Althusser's aleatory materialism is without doubt the critique of teleology.[52] The strategy implicit in the critique of religion consists first

50 Althusser argues that the first formulation of aleatory materialism, the one that develops the concept of the *clinamen*, "was interpreted early on as an idealism of liberty, and thereby suppressed and distorted" (*CSMR*, p. 540). This criticism might be said to ho hold true, for example, of Lange's interpretation of Lucretius (*GM*, p. 122). Against interpretations such as Lange's, Althusser argues that the *clinamen* needs to be thought of not as an assertion of human liberty *tout court*, but rather as an indication that what presents itself as the phenomenon of 'human liberty' needs to be seen as a particular manifestation of a more general eruption of contingency within a world of apparent necessity. Ultimately, however, and as was seen above, Althusser wishes to reverse the terms of the problem, such that it is no longer contingency which arises within necessity, but rather an illusion of necessity which arises on the basis of a radical contingency. On this point, see MPA, p. 107.

51 In *Spinoza's Revelation: Religion, Democracy, and Reason* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004), Nancy K. Levene notes that Spinoza's term "servitude" (*servitus*) refers "not simply [to] a state of unfreedom, in the way we might speak about a tree or a rock, but a state of disempowerment at least partly exarcerbated by human beings. To Spinoza, it is crucial to understand the degree to which (and the ways in which) we are at the mercy of other natural things, for failing to do so precisely compounds, indeed constitutes, our bondage" (19). On the Lucretian critique of religion (*religio*), see *GM*, p. 114. Lange emphasizes the uncompromising character of the Lucretian condemnation of religious superstition: *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum* (*DRN* I 101).

52 By "Spinoza's critique of religion" I intend only the critique formulated in the appendix to Book I of the *Ethics*, not the more developed critique found in the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, which is the object of Leo Strauss's classic study, *Die Religionskritik Spinozas als Grundlage seiner Bibelwissenschaft* (Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1930). To be sure, Althusser attributes considerable importance

and foremost in the destruction of every worldview characterized by the anthropocentic attribution of a human-centered purposiveness to the facts that constitute the universe.[53] Not unlike the Lucretius of Book III of *De rerum natura* (who formulates an incisive critique of the unspoken assumptions that underlie the fear of death), Spinoza criticizes the pre-philosophical attitude for its inability to abstract from the contingent and particular experience of the single individual. Lucretius criticizes those who are terrified by the prospect of their own death by arguing that they wrongly identify their present condition as sentient beings with the fate of the corpse that will remain when they no longer exist; Spinoza criticizes those who fail to arrive at a non-anthropocentric conception of the universe for refusing to analyze the universe in a way that abstracts from their own contingent interests.[54] Both arguments entail a critique of those worldviews (both pre-philosophical and philosophical) that fail to move beyond the particular condition of the sentient and desiring subject. In the most extreme cases, these approaches stray from Althusser's principle concerning the non-anteriority of Meaning, wrongly attributing a pre-determined or transcendental meaning to the totality of facts that is the universe.

Turning now to proposition 13 of Book II of the *Ethics*, we find Spinoza analyzing this totality of facts in a manner that is heavily indebted to atomism's "gigantic clash and linking up of infinite numbers of atoms."[55] In proposition 13, Spinoza sketches a rudimentary physics that develops what Antonio Negri has called a "horizon of bare corporeality and savage multiplicity," a physics that reduces the world to an ensemble of "physical interconnections and combinations, of

to the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, and refers to it repeatedly (eg. *CSMR*, pp. 549-552). Space does not allow for exploring this strand of Spinoza's thought (and its interpretation by Althusser). English edition of Strauss: Leo Strauss (1965), *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*, E.M. Sinclair (trans.), New York, Schocken Books.

53 On the concept of strategy as it applies to Spinoza, see Laurent Bove (1996), *La stratégie du conatus. Affirmation et résistance chez Spinoza*, Paris, Vrin.

54 On the Lucretian critique of the fear of death, see *GM*, p. 126: "In his fear of death [...], man contemplates the body that rots in the earth, is devoured by flames or torn apart by wild animals, and he does so in such a way that he secretly retains the notion that he himself will have to suffer that condition. Even in denying this notion, he continues to entertain it and fails to sufficiently remove himself (the subject) from life."

55 *CSMR*, p. 565.

associations and dissociations, fluctuations and concretizations."[56] On Spinoza's account, every material entity (*individuum*) is nothing but a transient constellation of interacting bodies (*corpora*), a relatively stable ensemble of elements that share a common speed of movement or remain clustered together motionlessly until they are scattered by other, moving bodies. The affinity with Lucretian atomism – and in particular with the Lucretian claim that the universe is nothing but the contingent actualization of one combinatory possibility provided for by the eternal motion of the atoms in the void – is obvious. Spinoza's insistence that simple bodies differ only with regard to their mobility or immobility, or with regard to their speed of movement, also implies a concept of relational (rather than substantive) difference akin to Althusser's refusal to analyze what the atoms might be outside of their contingent interaction. Most importantly, the Spinoza of proposition 13 places considerable emphasis on the unstable and dynamic character of the universe.[57] In Althusser's words, he conceptualizes the universe as "a unique totality that is not totalized but lived in its dispersion."[58]

Considered together, the reformulation of the Cartesian *cogito*, the critique of anthropocentrism, and the theory of individuals elaborated in proposition 13 of the *Ethics* suggest a critique of metaphysics intimately related to Althusser's insistence on the non-anteriority of Meaning. Within the "horizon of bare corporeality and savage multiplicity" developed in the *Ethics*, Spinoza consistently avoids (and in fact explicitly criticizes) the temptation to consider empirical reality as anything other than the transient product of contingent encounters. The universe includes an entity capable of projecting meaning onto it (the human individual), but this projection of meaning is itself nothing but one particular – and in no way privileged – instance of a facticity that refuses to be reduced to teleological, anthropocentric, or – as Althusser would say – humanist explanatory models.[59]

56 *RD*, p. 233. See also LAS, pp. 91-94 and 100-105, and Alexandre Matheron (1969), *Individu et comunauté chez Spinoza*, Paris, Minuit, pp. 25-30.

57 On this instability, which Antonio Negri has interpreted in terms of the Baroque theme of transience, see LAS, pp. 100-105.

58 *CSMR*, p. 551.

59 Althusser emphasizes that what is illusionary is the totalization of meaning (its treatment as "Meaning"). There is, of course, regularity in the universe, but it is not transcendentally guaranteed; the "meaning" that can be derived from such regularity is always situated and conditional. Cf. *CSMR*, p. 569: "For this too is a fact, a *'factum,'* that there is order in the world and that knowledge of this world involves recognition of its 'laws.'" Althusser's choice to place the word "laws" in quotation marks alludes to his critique of the concept of a necessary and transcendental regularity. As shown above, a central claim of this critique is that facticity is always prior to meaning, just as contingency is prior to (apparent) necessity.

60 *CSMR*, p. 561.

61 *CSMR*, pp. 569-576.

62 *GD*, p. 28.

Returning to Marx

Following these remarks on Spinoza, it is worth recalling what Althusser says about his own survey of the various exponents of aleatory materialism: "All these historical remarks are only preliminary to what I would like to clarify with regard to Marx."[60] Spinoza's critique of teleological and anthropocentric illusions and his evocation of a dynamic corporeal universe have been surveyed here precisely because they elegantly capture the main elements of Althusser's materialist critique of Marxist concepts such as that of the 'mode of production.' This critique needs now to be considered in more detail.

The problems of Marxism are present throughout Althusser's essay – although often in the form of a subtext, or 'between the lines.' It has already been suggested that Althusser's reflections on contingency can be read as a valorization of the Marxist concept of the historical tendency and, more specifically, as an emphatic argument for the necessity of a rigorous distinction between 'tendencies' and absolute 'laws.' Other Marxist concepts – such as those of 'class' and of the 'mode of production' – are explicitly cited in *Le courant souterrain*, and often at crucial points in the text. The entire concluding section of Althusser's essay is in fact a reflection on these two concepts.[61] One might therefore assert that – notwithstanding his extended commentaries on Lucretius, Spinoza, and others – Althusser never stopped "reading *Capital*." Understood in this way, aleatory materialism is indeed an "inflection of a recurrent Althusserian tendency" and a philosophical project that cannot be radically separated from his early work on Marx.[62]

Yet while the political theory Althusser sketches in certain passages of *Le courant souterrain* remains Marxist, its Marxism is a critical and to

some extent a revised one. Althusser explicitly says of aleatory materialism that "it opposes itself, as an entirely different thought, to the various received forms of materialism, including the materialism commonly attributed to Marx, Engels, and Lenin, which is a materialism of necessity and teleology, like every materialism of the rationalist tradition, and in this sense a transformed and disguised form of idealism."[63]

This passage clarifies what exactly it is that Althusser wants to criticize in the Marxist tradition. His conception of aleatory materialism presents itself both as an attack on and an alternative to those tendencies within Marxism that reduce history to a purposive movement whose stages ('revolution,' 'socialism') and final destination ('communism') can be known in advance, like the items on the idealist's train schedule. These tendencies – which arguably found their most comprehensive expression in *Diamat*, the 'dialectical materialism' that became state doctrine under Stalin – might be characterized in terms of a hypostasis of the concept of historical 'progress' and an excessive faith in necessity (whose counterpart is a fateful undervaluation of contingency).[64]

63 *CSMR*, p. 540.

64 *Diamat* is of course not the only expression of these tendencies, which are present in many classic expositions of Marxism. For example, the remarks on capitalism as "rule of the past over the present" in Georg Lukács (1968), *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein*, Berlin, Luchterhand, p. 314 *et passim*, might also be read as symptomatic of the teleological and 'progressive' Marxism Althusser attacks (English edition: Georg Lukács (1971), *History and Class Consciousness. Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, Rodney Livingston (trans.), London, Merlin Press). On Lukács's "construction of history that follows the scheme of linear progress", see Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge (1974), *Klassenbewußtsein als Zurechnungsmechanismus – Georg Lukács*, in *Oeffentlichkeit und Erfahrung*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, pp. 417-420 (English edition: Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge (1993), *Public Sphere and Experience. Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere*, Miriam Hansen (trans.), Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press). The valorization of progress characteristic of early 20th century Marxism met with an uncompromising critic in the Walter Benjamin of the *Theses on the Philosophy of History*. On Benjamin's critique, see Michael Löwy, *"Against the Grain." The Dialectical Conception of Culture in Walter Benjamin's "Theses" of 1940*, in Michael P. Steinberg (ed.) (1996), *Walter Benjamin and the Demands of History*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, pp. 206-213. It is worth noting that one absolutely essential element of Althusser's approach is entirely absent in Benjamin, namely the concept of radical contingency.

Althusser is well aware that many statements in Marx effectively prepared the ground for *Diamat*. On the final pages of *Le courant souterrain*, Althusser explicitly rejects certain statements by Marx as false, playing them out against other statements more in line with aleatory materialism.[65] One danger Althusser identifies in Marx's textual legacy is that of prompting interpretations of 'class' and 'capital' that treat these categories not as relational and dynamic, but rather reify them or reduce them to static and transhistorical entities.[66]

Yet aleatory materialism's relevance to the reelaboration of critical Marxism is most evident in Althusser's remarks on the concept of the 'mode of production.' In a passage that alludes to the well-known chapter on 'primitive accumulation' in the first volume of *Capital*, Althusser explains that every 'mode of production' needs to be conceptualized in terms of an encounter. In the specific case of the capitalist mode of production, this is the encounter between the "moneyed man" and the proletarian (the man who has nothing to sell but his labour-force): "In countless passages, Marx explains to us that the capitalist mode of production is born from the 'encounter' between the 'moneyed man' and the proletarian stripped of everything except his labour-power."[67]

Crucially, the encounter of the "moneyed man" and the proletarian is a contingent one, like the clash of the atoms in the *clinamen*. The

65 See for example *CSMR*, p. 573. This tendency to play Marx out against himself is of course a recurring feature of Althusser's work. It might indeed be seen as a reprise of his earlier tendency to play out a mature, post-humanist Marx against a young, humanist Marx, via the notion of the 'epistemological break.' See PM, *passim*.

66 Fredric Jameson has argued that the "simple-minded and unmixed" concept of class as a "primary building block of the most obvious and orthodox ontologies" needs to be dismissed in favor of an interpretation of social reality in which classes functions as "elements or essential components [that] determine each other and must be read off and defined against one another." Fredric Jameson, *Marx's Purloined Letter*, in Michael Sprinker (ed.) (1999), *Ghostly Demarcations*, New York and London, Verso, pp. 27-67: 47-49. This argument, which is very much in line with Althusser's approach, might be usefully compared to Harry Cleaver's insistence that Marx's concept of 'commodity fetishism' is part of a larger critique of reification that entails conceptualizing capital itself as a relation, rather than as a static entity. See Harry Cleaver (2000), *Reading Capital Politically*, Edinburgh: AK Press, p. 82 *et passim*.

67 *CSMR*, p. 570.

encounter is constitutive of an "accomplished fact": "'It so happens' that this encounter took place, and led to a 'connection,' which means that it did not dissolve as soon as it occurred, but rather has lasted and become an accomplished fact, the accomplished fact of this encounter, provoking stable relationships and a necessity the study of which furnishes its 'laws,' tendential to be sure – the laws of development of the capitalist mode of production."[68]

The implications for political practice are clear. What Althusser expects from Marxist practice is not an (idealist) quest for a "Meaning" anterior to the "accomplished fact," or for a transcendentally guaranteed historical *telos* – a quest that might be seen as analogous to the 'metaphysical' temptation to develop a pre-*clinamen* ontology – but rather a 'radically empiricist' capacity to remain within the domain staked out by the fact itself, exploring its internal relations in order to intervene in them with the audacious gesture of the materialist who "boards the moving train." This capacity to 'remain within' is perhaps the prime characteristic of the Marxism Althusser envisions. It is both an ascetic and a courageous Marxism, capable of doing without the (false) sense of assurance provided by teleological *figmenta*, and capable of accepting the radical contingency of the facticitiy within which it is situated – in short, a Marxism that takes seriously the principle of the non-anteriority of Meaning.[69]

68 Ibid. Althusser points out that the "elements" that "encountered" one another during the era of "primitive accumulation" (the 17th century) were already present in the Italian city states as early as the 13th and 14th centuries, although they formed no lasting connection (*prise*) then, for contingent reasons. Cf. *CSMR*, p. 571.

69 "One can put this differently: The totality that results from the 'connection' of the 'encounter' is not anterior to the 'connection' of the elements, but posterior, and this means that it the 'connection' might not have occurred, and indeed that 'the encounter might not have taken place.'" *CSMR*, p. 571. Althusser goes on to say the following: "For what is a mode of production? We have said, following Marx: a particular 'combination' of elements. [...] These elements do not exist in history so that a mode of production may exist; they exist in a 'floating' state prior to their 'accumulation' and 'combination,' each of them the product of its own history, none of them the teleological product of the others or of their common history" (ibid.). In this second passage, the continuity between aleatory materialism and the reading of *Capital* formulated in Althusser's early work is particularly evident. Cf. for example *LLC*, p. 454, where the combinatory nature of the 'mode of production' is elaborated on.

As Althusser points out, such a Marxism is characterized by a radical alterity with regard to every conception of history that has not been purged of the idealist dialectic, that "element of mysticism" – or of *superstitio*, as Spinoza might have said – that has long constituted a privileged point of attack for the critics of Marxism.[70] This, the rejection of the dialectic, is one consequence of aleatory materialism whose significance – both for Marxism and for the philosophical tradition more generally – can hardly be overestimated. It leads directly back to the work of the young Althusser, a work characterized by the ongoing effort to demonstrate the originality of the Marxist conception of history with regard to the transcendentalist *figmenta* of Hegelianism, and indeed of the entire idealist tradition.[71] Formulated in the course of a survey of philosophical resistance to the metaphysical hypostasis of meaning, from ancient atomism to French poststructuralism – a survey that is bold and perhaps even "desperate," but also, in its own way, extremely rigorous – Althusser's 'radically empiricist' conception of facticity becomes his final contribution to a post-dialectical "Marxism for the twenty-first century."[72]

70 The phrase "element of mysticism" is taken from Edmund Wilson (1940), *To The Finland Station*, Garden City, NY, Doubleday, p. 189. Althusser explicitly distinguishes his conception of the 'mode of production' from what he calls the "dialectical scheme of production" (*CSMR*, p. 575). In doing so, he implicitly endorses that current of French poststructuralist philosophy that set out to formulate a non-dialectical conception of the event, and whose most important exponent is Gilles Deleuze. On the poststructuralist critique of the dialectic, see Michael Hardt (1993), *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy*, Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota Press, pp. i-xvi. It is worth noting that the critique of the dialectic is an important component of numerous heterodox currents of 20th century Marxism. See for example Herbert Marcuse (1969), *Zum Begriff der Negation in der Dialektik*, in *Ideen zu einer Kritischen Theorie der Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, pp. 185-90, and Antonio Negri (1977), *Il lavoro nella Costituzione*, in *La forma Stato*, Milan, Feltrinelli, pp. 27-110, esp. pp. 108-110.

71 Cf. *PM, passim*.

72 *FSOI*, p. 159.

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Immanent Description and Writing From...

STUART GRANT

Between 2002 and 2006 a group of philosophy and performance studies postgraduates and academics from the University of Sydney, Australia conducted phenomenological research in audiences – in theatres, sports stadiums, places of worship, seminars, and living rooms. The initial aim of the project was to describe the experience of being in audiences, to provide a first-person empirical/experiential study in an area that had previously been dominated by textual, semiotic and sociological research. However, as the study progressed, and its object became revealed as the transcendental intersubjective essence, Gathering to Witness, it demanded not an empirical study rooted in a description of experience, but an empiricism based in a writing which turned towards the ground of possibility of experience itself.

Immanent Description

Edmund Husserl wrote of the importance of his former teacher, Franz Brentano, to the project of phenomenology:

> Many people view phenomenology as a continuation of Brentano's psychology. However highly I estimate this work of genius, and however strongly it (and other writings of Brentano's) has affected me in younger years. it must still be said that Brentano has remained far from a phenomenology in our sense...Nevertheless he has gained for himself the epoch-making service of making phenomenology possible. He

> presented to the modern era the idea of Intentionality, which he derived out of consciousness itself in immanent description.[1]

Brentano's *Psychology from an Empirical Viewpoint* is usually cited as a precursor to phenomenology because of the insight that the "intentional inexistence...of an object" is an essential feature of mentality.

> Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on.[2]

In the above assessment, Husserl specifically credits Brentano with having "presented to the modern era the idea of *Intentionality*, which he derived out of consciousness itself in immanent description".[3] It is not only the discovery of intentionality that the founder of phenomenology credits here, but also the means by which it was revealed – from within, through immanent description. This methodological stroke is as "epoch-making" as the phenomenon it was devised to describe. Immanent description - in Brentano's case, the turning back towards itself of consciousness in examination of its own structure - is one of the founding pillars of phenomenological method. Without it, Husserl's life work would have run a very different course. And all subsequent phenomenology, to the extent that it is reductional, is, in some way, immanent description.

Anthony Steinbock catches it:

> Phenomenology is a type of reflective attentiveness that occurs within the very experiencing itself. As phenomenologists, we describe the experience of the "object" only within the

1 Husserl, E., (1982), *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Vol I, General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, Fred Kersten (trans.), Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, p. 59, *hereafter IPPP.*

2 Brentano, F., (1973), *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 88.

3 *IPPP*, p. 59.

experiencing of the object, while simultaneously glancing at a distance, as it were, out of the corner of one eye.[4]

For the purposes of this essay, immanent description is simply the describing of the experience of a phenomenon from within that phenomenon. The modes of immanent description detailed here were developed as part of a Performance Studies PhD thesis, in the context of an empirical study of the experience of attending in different audiences - at theatres, places of worship, sports stadiums and in separate living rooms around TV sets - as a response to the need to describe the underlying phenomenon of being in Audience. The research was conducted by a small group of trained phenomenologists attending to performances as a group.[5] Specific reductions, of the ways in which the other audience members were given, of the ways in which the place and times of the attendance were experienced, of the patterns of the ebbs, flows and intensities of attentionality, of laughter and applause, were conducted with the purpose of laying out a description of the experience of being in audiences from within those audiences in the service of the overall aim of a concentration and extraction of the essence *Audience*, eidetically reduced as *gathering to witness*.

The study of audiences is traditionally framed in terms of either reader-response theory, sociology or psychoanalysis. The object is 'the spectator', studied either in terms of processes of meaning making or desire, or in questions of what sort of people attend what sort of performances in what sort of numbers under what sort of conditions. The aim of the audience groups was to add to these objective studies, a subjective experiential first-person study of the experience of audience members, with some corroboration and attunement through working in a group.

Audience is conceived here in terms of Emmanuel Levinas's concept of *living from...*, as a nourishing element with which life contents

4 Steinbock, A., (2004), '*Affection and Attention: On the Phenomenology of Becoming Aware*', Continental Philosophy Review 37: 21-43, p. 40, hereafter *AA*.

5 The full description of the group methodology, of the tradition it drew together, the theoretical underpinning, and of the process as it unfolded, is the subject of a previous publication: Stuart Grant, (2006), 'Practical Intersubjectivity', Janus Head, 8(2): 560-580.

itself and in which it exalts. Audience, in the density and complexity of its together-towards intentionality is a medium from which life lives towards its meanings, values and belongings, which in turn give themselves to nourish life.[6]

However, the difficulty is that in Audience, the overt intentionality towards the performance which calls for witness is necessarily turned away from the participation in the audience through which that performance is experienced. The relations which constitute Audience - between the individual Audience members, between the foreunderstandings which enable the performance to be experienced, between the audience members and the times and place of the performance - are relatively more passive than the assumed simple intentional relation between a spectator, conceived as a knowing subject, and its object, the performance it has come to witness.

The subject, site of relentless, full-blown reduction to ownness, bringing down its judgements and making its proclamations, shouts down the sensitivities and susceptibilities of the intersubjectivity of the immersion, and remains blind to its own genesis, exercise and structure; adequating, comparing and containing the performance within itself, presenting the performance to itself as its own, as a "good performance," one that I liked, didn't like, have seen better versions of, which touched and moved me, could have been more this or less that, which left me cold, astounded, confused, which disagreed with my politics, filled me with rage. And yet this subjectivising obsession of everything, containing the world as its object, depends upon its blindness and ignorance, its naïveté to the eddies and flows of Audience which buoys it up, gives it back to itself, and upon whose currents it froths up and trickles away.

Because of this, Audience itself remains barely perceptible, indirectly experienced, showing only secondarily, in its adumbrations on the bodies of the audience members, in the spattering of laughter and applause, in the fidgeting and silent concentration. The task of the study became the showing of the hidden structure and constitution of a phenomenon which does not readily lend itself to the thematising glare;

6 Levinas, E., (1969), *Totality and Infinity*, Alphonso Lingis (trans.), Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, pp. 110-114, hereafter *TI*.

and in the process, to follow the contours of the intersubjective ground from which the individual subject emerges as a possibility.

To write of audiences from within audiences, as immanent description, to look "out of the corner of one eye"[7] towards my own involvement in an audience, to steal reflexive glimpses from and towards the immersive element, to tap into and bring back the conditions of the immersion through writing became the primary aim of the study. It was necessary to formulate a writing from the element of Audience. By turning to itself in the phenomenological attitude, the subject catches itself in the act, in its glimpse of itself not as its own object, but as its own coming forth. Thwarted from the judgements and taken for grantedness of the natural attitude, the subject embarrasses itself in the indiscreet flash of its own limits.

The question: was it possible to proceed towards a writing which *carries* the phenomenon, expresses it as its instance, rather than capturing it, as its other?

But Steinbock warns of the need for humility in this disposition within the phenomena,

> The motivation for phenomenological reflective attentiveness is best understood as a kind of submission...we become vulnerable to the givenness of the matter's self-givenness, and subject to the experience in the description...even if we try to describe the phenomena "abstractly" or "theoretically," we open ourselves implicitly to the direct experience of them, and in so doing, open ourselves to being "struck" by them...in being true to how the phenomena give themselves, they may demand a transformation of our lives, a critique of our plans, our agenda, our theories or constructions...and this being guided, being lured, being enticed by the phenomena is precisely the affective force of the matter exercising its allure on us in the reflective attentiveness of the phenomenological attitude.[8]

7 *AA*, p. 40.
8 *AA*, p. 41

Steinbock describes something here which sounds very much like Levinas's "most passive, unassumable, passivity, the subjectivity or the very subjection of the subject."[9] The phenomenological disposition implies "submission," "subjection," "we open ourselves," "being struck," "transformation of our lives," "critique of our plans," "being guided... lured...enticed." This is not an ascertaining, grasping knowledge, but one which nevertheless requires care, discipline and close listening.

It is necessary, in opening ourselves to the phenomena, in this case to the being in Audience in which we find ourselves conducting our questioning, to remain sufficiently exposed, sufficiently vulnerable so as to not allow the tyranny of the subject to shout down the phenomena, but to withhold, in the true spirit of the reduction, our plans, our agendas, our presuppositions, and to allow ourselves to be guided by the phenomenon, to allow the phenomenon to be our element, to let it become us, and to describe its becoming us.

In this way phenomenology raises us to its dignity, in service to the things themselves.

> Certainly, we cannot be pure in this non-intrusion of the self, though we do want to get as much as we can; so, we are always failing to some extent because we are finite in the face of inexhaustible presence. And if there is too much self-interest, we can distort the descriptions/experiences to such an extent that the whole process becomes compromised; no longer is there merely something left out of account, but we become mere academics, mere professionals.[10]

Or worse still, mere ideologues, barrow-pushers, pot-bangers.

Certainly, we push on always under Merleau-Ponty's famous assertion of the impossibility of the completeness of our reductive task, because, paradoxically, we are given by the task as we give ourselves to it. In the withholding of self, in the dis-position of self, the "*forgetfulness*

9 Levinas, E., (1981) *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*, Alphonso. Lingis (trans.), Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, p. 55, hereafter *OB*.
10 *AA*, p. 41.

of self as openness to the allure,"[11] which allows the phenomenon to show itself in its givenness, we are given back to ourselves; the withholding of self allows a modification of self, through imbibing that which exceeds it.

An openness to the medium allows the element to become me, to nourish me; and if living from elements is nourishment - a gustatory and digestive relation - then writing from elements is a digestive aid. As I am immersed into Audience, giving myself over to it, dis-posing of myself in the lure of belonging together with others to the performance, withholding my judgements and presuppositions in order to experience their conditions, attentive to the flashes of my own immersion in the phenomenon, I am doubly enriched.

> The task in phenomenology, then, is not to become inured to the affective forces of the phenomena, but literally to dispose ourselves to them, with humility, since the self-givenness of the phenomena ultimately is not our doing – or not our doing alone. In this way, phenomenology, of all reflective postures, is the most attentive disposition, and in this sense the most yielding, the most dis-positioned.[12]

To achieve the turn to the experience from within the flow of its unfolding, it is neither necessary nor possible to bracket the whole experience, but merely to turn towards the mundane unquestioned modes of its givenness. My job is to turn towards the way Audience is given to me, to the way it buoys me up, to my exposure and susceptibility to the others present or not present who bear upon my being in Audience, to the specific demands of the place in which Audience gathers; to the way Audience commands my attention and concentration to the performance, and to the way Audience gives me over to the performance.

So, in turning my attention towards the building in which the performance occurs, or to the way in which my own predispositions give the performance to me, or to the effect of the proximity of the person seated next to me, and withholding my mundane attitude of intentional comportment towards the aesthetic judgement or meaning of the performance, I begin to apprehend the givenness of my attendance in a

11 *AA*, p. 40.
12 *AA*, p. 41-42.

particular audience, and through the intentional analysis of that givenness, open the possibility of the transcendental phenomenological reduction of Audience as it is given in all audiences. By describing the modes of givenness from within, I can directly intuit that which would remain hidden from objective analysis or interview with audience members "in the wild."

> What phenomenology really wants to bracket, then, is a self-imposition so as to let the phenomena flash forth as they give themselves; what we become dispassionate about is ourselves through a literal dis-position of the self from the scene, and by so doing, dispose ourselves to be struck in which ever way the phenomena give themselves. This is not idle or random curiosity in things that we generate from ourselves, but an active remaining open while stepping back, a dis-position that has a directedness because it is motivated by the self-givenness of the matters themselves. Thus, the conversion peculiar to phenomenology of which Husserl speaks in the Crisis and elsewhere, is a conversion peculiar to the practice of phenomenology, it is the forgetfulness of the self as the openness to the allure.
>
> In order to reflect within the very experiencing itself, as phenomenology does, and in order to describe the experiencing as it unfolds, we cannot arbitrarily limit the way in which phenomena appear.[13]

Transcendental Immanence

The transcendental constitutive dimension of humanity is lived as intersubjective involvement and immersion. At our most essential level, there "is no separation of mutual externality at all"[14] as would be found apparent at the mundane worldly level. Rather, in the epoché, there is

13 *AA*, p. 40.
14 Husserl, E., (1970), *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 255, hereafter *CES*.

revealed "a pure intentional, mutual internality"[15] in which we all find ourselves immanent to the "all-communal phenomenon 'world.'"[16] The description of the intentional implication in the phenomenon of world, not just 'the world,' but in any communally lived world-phenomenon, such as Audience, needs to be explicated, not from a proposed outside, objective God's eye-view, but from within my immersion and involvement, which is, after all, my only true standpoint, the only position I can take in regard to it. Such is the necessity of immanent description.

After a detailed examination of various positions within the work of Husserl and his commentators and descendants on the question of dependencies and contingencies in the relations between the *primordial I* and the *open intersubjectivity*, Dan Zahavi contends:

> For Husserl, intersubjectivity is not some relation, within the world, that is to be observed from the outside; it is not something transcendent to consciousness, or some sort of system or structure in which consciousness would be founded. And Husserl's reference to intersubjectivity by no means implies giving up a starting point in a philosophy of consciousness...The very opposite is the case: intersubjectivity is a relation between me and the other or the others, and correspondingly, its treatment and analysis must necessarily take the I's relation to others as its point of departure...It is only from the standpoint of the individual I that intersubjectivity can be phenomenologically articulated and displayed.[17]

So, phenomenologically speaking, I can only approach intersubjectivity from within my relations with others, from my own standpoint. To assume the possibility of an objective view of intersubjectivity would be absurd. The challenge is to frame reductions or other methodological devices that will give me my involvement with the others, to isolate my living of the relations themselves, first in a mundane

15 *CES*, p. 255.
16 *CES*, p. 255-256.
17 Zahavi, D. (1996), *Husserl and Transcendental Intersubjectivity*, Elizabeth Behnke (trans.), Athens, Ohio, Ohio University Press, p. 79.

perspective, and then to place those findings within a transcendental *epoché* to reveal and articulate their transcendental dimension.

How such a task might proceed is another matter altogether. Whether Husserl's approach can be effected in its letter and law is a highly contentious question. The apparent impossibilities in the transcendental method led Heidegger to the necessity of completely reframing the task. But equally, the orientation implicit in the transcendental reduction, towards essential philosophical categories which describe the relations and principles at a fundamental level, is nevertheless not only a useful task, despite, or perhaps because of its infinition, but one which propelled the primary impetus of Heidegger's project, and certainly those of all later phenomenologists.

Nevertheless, for the work from audiences to proceed, it was necessary to find some way towards a method, a way of thinking, studying and writing which served to elucidate the relations between me, the others and the soup in which we are immersed; a soup which is something other than the totality of all our involvements.

Solipsistic Beginnings

Even though it is the experience of Audience, a transcendental intersubjective phenomenon, which is being described, it can only be described from within my own individual perspective. I have no access to it except through my own experience of it. The only method at my disposal "is through an interrogation of myself, [one that appeals to] inner experience."[18]

The ontological status of transcendental intersubjectivity, as the ground from which subjectivity emerges for itself, cannot be perceived by a subject as "an objectively existing structure in the world,"[19] allowing of a third-party description, but can only be revealed through the individual

18 *CES*, p. 202
19 Zahavi, D., (2003), 'Husserl's Intersubjective Transformation of Transcendental Philosophy,' in Welton, D. (ed.), *The New Husserl: A Critical Reader*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, hereafter *HITTP*.

subject's participation in it. For Zahavi, this highlights the necessary reversibility of the relation between subjectivity and intersubjectivity:

> Transcendental intersubjectivity can be disclosed only through a radical explication of the ego's structures of experience. This does not only indicate the intersubjective structure of the ego, but also the egological attachment of intersubjectivity. Husserl's accentuation of the fundamental importance of the ego must be seen as an accentuation of the fact that intersubjectivity, my relation to an Other, always passes through my own subjectivity. Only from this point of view are intersubjectivity and the plurality of constitutive centres phenomenologically accessible.[20]

So despite my contention in this study of Audience (and, I believe, Husserl's contention in the carrying out of the primordial reduction) that the transcendental intersubjectivity is primary, or as put conversely by Merleau-Ponty, "the solipsist thing is not primary,"[21] that the reduction to the *solus ipse* is merely a "thought experiment,"[22] or a methodological expediency, it does, nevertheless, provide the sole apparent road of access to the revelation of the intentional web of transcendental intersubjectivity.

Consequently, this study moves from my own necessarily solipsistic beginning in a previous hermeneutic study I had conducted on my own experience in audiences, to my still solipsistic participation among others in the group intentional work for this study, to the solipsisms of those others, and the attunement with them, through painstaking listening and reduction of my own viewpoint, into the web of intentional relations revealed through the co-subjective corroborations, in which I posit myself an object for the others, and on to the constitution of the "primordial *We*."[23]

20 *HITTP*, p. 241-242.
21 Merleau-Ponty, M., (1964), 'The Philosopher and His Shadow', in *Signs*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, p. 173, hereafter *PS*.
22 *PS*, p. 173.
23 *PS*, p. 175.

My Experience

As I have stated, the essential level of transcendental intersubjectivity can only be initially approached through *my own* perspective from within it.

> Only by starting from the ego and the system of its transcendental functions and accomplishments can we methodically exhibit transcendental intersubjectivity and its transcendental communalisation.[24]

It is necessary to first describe the psychological ego as it is held in its worldly correlations, then "in an essential system of forward steps,"[25] exhibit the transcendental ego "that each human being bears within himself,"[26] in order to then approach the ultimate intersubjective constitution of the world in its objectivity and reality.

In the naïveté of the natural attitude of attending in audiences, subjectivity is heightened. The individual audience member, through their attention to and interestedness in that which calls for witness, is in a hothouse of their own judgements, tastes, beliefs and affections. Whether sensibly focused in an isolating darkened auditorium, or joined facing each other in shared attestation to their sobriety in an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting with its remedial emphasis on the anonymous 'we', or whether celebrating the glory of God, buoyed on other voices in hymns of praise, the individual bearing witness is bearing witness to their own taste, faith, judgements and feelings. The road to the experience with others is always through 'my' experience of them. This is the methodological necessity which motivates Husserl's primordial reduction to ownness as the first step in the explanation of the experience of others and the genesis of community.

The reduction is practised by the meditating phenomenologist on their own experience. In the group method, the members of the group first go into audiences and describe their own experience. The intersubjective

24 *CES*, p. 185-186.
25 *CES*, p. 186.
26 *CES*, p. 186.

stage of validation, verification and attunement comes later, even though it is a fundamentally intersubjective phenomenon that is being described.

In the natural attitude, being in audiences is an experience. As such, its explication must begin as the explication of that experience. As an experience, it is an experience that happens to *me*. As *my* experience, the question of what is happening in an audience and how it might be most effectively studied then becomes a question of how the experience unfolds *for me* and *other me's* with whom I discuss the experiences. I do not want to pretend that my experience of being in an audience is some discreet, studyable, easily objectified thing such as frogsperm or theatre building design in eighteenth century Budapest. Our understanding of frogsperm is limited only by our knowledge of physics, chemistry and biology. We can analyse its molecular structure, immobilise it, inactivate it, map its genes, freeze it, boil it, touch it, alter it, see it and make predictions about it. We could devise a study, based on other proven studies, of the effects of given conditions on its potency, measured in numbers of individuals spawned, and might, as a result, contribute to the saving of a species. With theatre building design we can measure dimensions, study architectural fashions and engineering innovations, analyse building materials and draw on historical records to determine use patterns. We could pore over civic records and personal memoirs, establish dates, detect patterns of distribution of theatres in the city, examine the usage of interior space within the buildings, and relate it all to social, cultural, aesthetic conditions and values of the time. In the case of audiences we could count numbers of people, survey their demographics, test psychological, hermeneutic and semiotic theories on the behaviour of audience members, but still never touch the experience of being in an audience itself. Audience is another thing altogether. There are no pre-mapped co-ordinates against which we can hang our findings for validation.

How do I measure my carriedness by the laughter crackling around the auditorium sweeping me up, igniting my own vocal and respiratory apparatus into a cough of laughter which joins me to the others in belonging? How does it differ from the separation from the others I feel during an uncomfortable throat-clearing cough, perhaps disturbing a silent attentive moment of pathos? Certainly my experience is apprehendably different in an audience of two hundred property

developers, stockbrokers, academics and art bureaucrats at the Opera House, than among three punks at a small pub, but there is no objective standard against which I can measure my sense of belonging, or predict the likelihood of someone else's gasp of delight mirroring or picking up and carrying my own.

My experience of a situation, and the experience of others in that situation can only be explicated through description. Any measurants must be allowed to give themselves through a sustained and diligent listening and holding to the description of appearances in the faith that the phenomenon under study will give itself. This is phenomenology. It is a methodology specifically designed for the exploration of the mysterious, the hidden and the taken for granted. It makes the familiar strange so that the things and states of affairs with which we are habitually engaged show themselves in their constitution, beyond their social or economic use value and practical applications. Frogsperm and theatre buildings can be exhaustively theorised in terms of their functions, causes and purposes. It is possible to study the informative or entertainment purposes to which individual audience members claim to put their attendances to audiences in their daily lives, (psychology, ethnography and sociology, with their techniques of survey and interview would be adequate to this task) just as it is possible to observe that frog sperm of a certain consistency is more likely to achieve fertilisation. But if I were merely to describe the feelings of indignation or righteousness which I experience in an audience of a play or a film concerning an issue which affects me, or ask people what they thought of a performance, or why they watch a particular TV show, I am still not studying Audience. I am merely restating and interpreting my own and others' opinions.

A phenomenological description of attending to audiences reveals a hidden level, beneath the entertainment, the instruction and the worship, beneath what the people think they are doing there; a level at which all these worldly concerns reveal themselves as *gathering to witness in offer of completion*. This is Audience, revealed at the transcendental level.

An audience gathers somewhere for a time in some way under given conditions. When that for which it gathers finishes, the audience disperses and becomes, in most but not all cases, too indistinct to claim

its continued existence as the audience that it was. But another performance of the same show or ritual brings a new audience, which is in some way a continuation of the previous audience, or at least participates in the broader historical audience which has borne witness to that ritual or play or team or value. If, on one night of a run of a show, two people walk out in disgust, the audience left in their wake still exists, but its character and the experience of the other audience members will be changed by their departure. When I attend to a performance of *Hamlet* by the Bell Shakespeare Company at Sydney Opera House on a Thursday night, I not only enter the audience of these people in this room for these two hours, but also the audience which has seen any performance of *Hamlet* whatsoever; I also enter the audience who have attended and will attend Shakespeare's plays at any time. For other purposes, I can be construed as entering the Thursday night Opera House audience, and the Bell Shakespeare audience. Any given audience is a manifestation of transcendental intersubjective Audience, a ubiquitous fundamental condition of human life, an intentionality of gathering-together-towards-to-witness, but it is only from within the experience of the phenomenon that this gathering and this witness can be apprehended. This is the business of phenomenology.

Writing From...,

To allow the revelation of the immersiveness of Audience, the being in, among and between, in the eddies and flows, the giving over to gathering, the completion of witness; all revealed by the flick of the switch, the change of attitude to the transcendental, as the condition of the worldly intentionality of the taking up of a position in relation to a performance, demands a concrete method which reflects, or perhaps more accurately, instantiates its structure.

In immanent description there is no transcendent object. There is the saying of the being-in of the immersion. The question is how to say this immersion. Certainly, it begins with the description of an experience, but this framing – as description - suggests the discreet distance of a subject's regard for its object. What is needed here is an emergence, an inscription or invocation, an eruption of Dufrenne's intimacy in the aesthetic experience:

> No longer an aim or mere intention toward but a participation with...not merely to be conscious of something but to associate myself with it...(in) an act of communion...we are dealing rather with the acquisition of an intimacy."[27]

Heidegger would demand that we

> Let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself (Heidegger 1962: 58).[28]

Merleau-Ponty, in the same spirit, warns,

> Our relationship to the world, as it is untiringly enunciated within us, is not a thing which can be any further clarified by analysis; philosophy can only place it once more before our eyes and present it for ratification.[29]

And Levinas's concept of *living from* elements, provides the model by which it might be possible to sustain a research practice which could carry the intimacy to fruition as an expression of its fecundity. I live from audiences; I am in them. They affect me and give me myself and the others in Audience as we offer completion to the performances which call for witness.

> To posit oneself corporeally is to touch an earth, but to do so in such a way that the touching finds itself already conditioned by the position, the foot settles into a real which this very action outlines or constitutes – as though a painter would notice that he is descending from the picture he is painting.[30]

This is a different relation from that which a consciousness has with its objects through a knowledge which 'sees' or 'grasps', and which reduces the world to the status of the other of its thought. Rather it is an immersion in elements. In this relation "the world I live in is not simply

27 Dufrenne, M., (1973), *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 406.
28 Heidegger, M., (1962), *Being and Time*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), p. 58.
29 Merleau-Ponty, M., (1962), *Phenomenology of Perception*, (New Jersey: The Humanities Press, 1962).
30 *TI*, p. 128.

the counterpart or the contemporary of thought...it nourishes me and bathes me...it is aliment and medium."[31]

In the structure of the intentionality of consciousness, thinking represents objects to itself. In *living from...*, the structure of representation does not hold. "What I live from is not in my life as the represented is within representation."[32] The direction of intentionality is reversed. Rather than an *experiencing* consciousness going out towards a transcendent object, the direction of *living*, is *from* an element.

It seems obvious that the attempt to describe my being in Audience would benefit from an approach informed by this remarkable reversal of intentionality and its relationship with the things of the world. And this is not just because of the elusiveness of the objectivity of Audience, but more importantly because I am *immersed* in Audience; *it constitutes me as I constitute it*. The relationship would be betrayed by the attempt to lay it out as an object of my thinking.

But first, the question needs to asked of how it might be possible not only to conduct a study from within an element, but to report on the experience in such a way that the relationship is not betrayed, that the experience does not elude or turn away from the thematic glare of thinking, but somehow unfurls in the writing. What is required is a writing which comes as a measured and careful listening, a *writing from...*,.

Levinas tells us something of the way in which such a writing might follow that to which it listens. The element

> is not reducible to a system of operational references and is not equivalent to the totality of such a system...(it) has its own density...a common fund or terrain, essentially non-possessable, "nobody's" earth, sea, light, city...which envelops or contains without being able to be contained or enveloped.[33]

31 *TI*, p. 129.
32 *TI*, p. 128.
33 *TI*, p. 131.

He evokes the navigator at sea to illustrate how the relationship with the element might be taken up. The navigator makes use of the sea and the winds, obeys their laws, but does not "transform them into things."[34] If we were to take Audience as a thing, it would show us a side which we could describe as a partial adumbration, but as element we bathe in it; it is liquid, oceanic.

But still, the question remains, what sort of a writing is possible from elements. It is not even a question of a writing adequate to the task, because adequation itself presupposes an object. What is necessary is a writing that *proclaims* Audience, an *announcement* or a response, or attestation that does not try to contain Audience within a system, but which carries it forth, as an expression of it, allows it to gather itself, gives it breath, says it, performs its task. To whatever extent such a writing might be possible.

Conveying and Betraying

As a non-thematisable, a discretion, Audience can not be encompassed by knowing, but can only be conveyed in its saying. It must be delivered over as its own expression; but this conveying is always a betrayal, an indiscretion, and as Levinas remarks, this betrayal is "probably the very task of philosophy."[35]

> The beyond being, showing itself in the said, always shows itself there enigmatically, is already betrayed. Its resistance to assemblage, conjunction and conjuncture, to contemporaneousness, immanence, the presence of manifestation...[36]

Audience is a transcendental intersubjective phenomenon. Transcendental intersubjectivity, as transcendental, does not show itself in the natural attitude, does not manifest. The practice of the transcendental reduction, to the extent that it is possible, claims to reveal hidden transcendental structures. But the products of the transcendental

34 *TI*, p. 131.
35 *OB*, p. 7.
36 *OB*, p. 19.

reduction, to be useable, meaningful, to be measured for their worth in some aware living, need to be brought back for assessment, conveyed within the natural attitude. It is at this moment, where that which, in its essence, remains hidden, is brought into the indiscreet thematic glare, that the suspicion of betrayal will always lurk.

The problem is that "as soon as it is conveyed before us it is betrayed in the said that dominates the saying which states it."[37] This is the methodological problem which Levinas set out to solve in *Otherwise Than Being*. Although he encountered the problem in the context of the attempt at the great philosophical task of bearing witness to the before and beyond of Being, and this essay attempts only to lay out a transcendental intersubjective essence, apparently very much in Being, the same methodological scandal embarrasses this work.[38] And the question, having been outlined, must not be shirked.

37 *OB*, p. 7.

38 I think that although Levinas encountered the problem in the facing of a realm beyond Being, that it is, if not the same problem, then a very close relative of the phenomenon which renders the reduction infinite despite Husserl's yearning for totality, which Heidegger casts as the turning away of Being, which Merleau-Ponty tried to heal with the reversibility of the flesh, which makes the ethnographer tread lightly, watching himself out of the corner of his eye at all times, and which made Derrida delight in his perpetual disappearing act. I am also aware that even though I am using Levinas's terminology and methods that I am not being faithful to the letter of his interpretations. He understood Being as eminently thematisable, as the showing of that which shows, prepared to lay itself bare for the perusal of the reducing phenomenologist. I am not so sure about this. And I suspect that his saying of the before and beyond Being, as an attempt to circumscribe the limits of Being, reveals, in its own constitutional incapacity to be shown in a pinned-down said, the stubbornness of Being itself, in its perpetual turning away from knowledge and perception. I think the moment of the showing of the before and the beyond of Being would be the moment in which Being shows itself in its fullness. And I see no evidence for the occurrence of this event under the scope of human perception. Further, I think that if Levinas is understood to be holding a hard-line Sartrean realist-existentialist position, somehow conceiving Being as nothing other than that which shows, the thereness of that which is there, then I think the phenomenon which he is calling the beyond of Being is a reinterpretation of the same phenomenon which Heidegger called Being. (But as I have stated many times, I'm not in the business of judging the relative merits of the work of the great phenomenologists).

It is not enough to merely note the inevitability of the betrayal and then be satisfied with a pragmatic resignation to the acceptance of infinitely never-quite-getting-there, performing knowingly inadequate reductions and attaching a self-forgiving clause of the awareness of limitations, even if such admission of failure be the only truly possible outcome. On the contrary, it is necessary not only to proclaim the possibility of a writing which conveys without betraying, but to make some attempt to perform it. Or at the very least provide, in Husserlian mode, a thorough accounting for the betrayal. However insane the task might sound.

And Levinas, as he begins his foray into the beyond of Being characterises the insanity of the task of proclaiming "a kerygma that identifies the innumerable aspects of its manifestation", which "enters into the current flow of language in which things show themselves,"[39] with

> The Nietzschean man above all was such a moment. For Husserl's transcendental reduction will a putting between parentheses suffice – a type of writing, of committing oneself with the world, which sticks like ink to the hands that push it off? One should have to go all the way to the Nihilism of Nietzsche's poetic writing, reversing irreversible time in vortices, to the laughter which refuses language.[40]

Saying

> Saying states and thematises the said, but signifies it to the other, a neighbour, with a signification that has to be distinguished from that borne by words in the said.[41]

It is Levinas again who has outlined the shape, given the direction, and diagrammed the contours for the sort of writing that is being proposed here. In his differentiation of the saying from the said, the saying, which gets lost, absorbed in the said as soon as the said is

39 *OB*, p. 8.
40 *OB*, p. 8.
41 *OB*, p. 46.

formulated, but which is the very coming forth of the said, must be distinguished or "reached in its existence antecedent to the said."[42] The saying, which moves inevitably towards its own disappearance in the said, occurs in proximity, addressed to another, and the writing from Audience, whatever it says, must hold to the saying, as articulation of the intersubjectivity which is the very proximity of the neighbour. The writing must hesitate, as the momentary showing of the saying, flickering before its disappearance in the said. And the moment of hesitation is the moment of responsibility, of contact.

So the writing that comes from Audience, from within the intersubjectivity, insofar as it seeks first to make contact with the others, seeks to come from within the contact with the others to let the saying which makes that contact be shown, to be "a modality of approach and contact...over and beyond the thematisation and the content exposed in it...as a modality of the approach to another."[43]

In this writing, this saying which is giving over to the other, we expose ourselves to each other, we are in the "supreme passivity of exposure."[44] This is the passivity of Audience; not the passivity of a receptor awaiting a message, but a passivity more passive, the giving over to immersion in the concerns of otherness, with the other, in Audience, in offer of completion to that which calls for witness. A traumatic abdication of sovereign subjectivity.

Audience obsesses us, lays siege to us, is all around us, we give ourselves over to it, we are immersed in it. And likewise we give ourselves over to the writing which comes from Audience. We offer ourselves to each other as to the audience, we attempt to write the passivity, that this is happening to me, this is the besiegement, this is the disturbance, these eddies and flows in which I am swept up, this is my exposure to that to which I am exposed; handing myself over to allow the coming forth of myself and the others, in attestation to that to which we bear witness.

42 *OB*, p. 45.
43 *OB*, p. 47.
44 *OB*, p. 47.

No matter what we purport to say, it is the way of our saying it to the others with the others, as another, a counterpart, the way we are giving it to the other for their scrutiny and perusal, that catches this. It is not simply an intention to address a message or communication, but *the contact which is the condition of the message and the communication*, an attempt to stay with the saying as a response to a call from the element through which we are others for each other. It is an abdication, a submission, a call for help. "What is happening to me? Is it happening to you as well?"

Rather than making a statement, it asks a question. It asks: "Are you there? Are you there with me in this?" The same question that Audience asks of its members, that the performance asks of its audience in its call for completion: "Are we in this together? Are we of this value? Do we have this faith? Do we submit to this intersubjectivity?" And the writing does not aim at an object, but seeks to emerge questioningly from the immersion. Not to put forth a statement that proclaims me: "This is who I am, what I believe, this is my subjectivity," but: "Are you here with me? How are we implicated together in this?"

Again, it is not as "a modality of cognition" that this saying derives its saliency.[45] It is "the risky uncovering oneself, in sincerity...the breaking up of inwardness...exposure to traumas, vulnerability."[46]

The passivity of Audience is in its giving over to the call of the performance for completion, giving over to vulnerability, to affection, to offer oneself up as the completion for which the performance calls. And just as the audience member gives himself over in offer of completion of the performance, the writing from audience gives itself over to offer of completion by the others in the audience, by becoming counterpart, one of the others.

And the only verification, the only certainty, is not in the ultimate givenness of myself in my thought, but in being another among others, each one other for each other one, dissolved in the intersubjective soup.

45 *OB*, p. 48.
46 *OB*, p. 48.

A Note on Declension, Voice and Mood

This is not a writing which can occur in the active nominative singular. It is not as an "I think" or "I intend" that the exposed audience member is written, but in the accusative, dative, or ablative case, by with, from, to and for the others. The writer is always framed as affected by: "this is happening to me," "it makes me feel such and such," or in the passive voice: "I am horrified, I am bored, I am shocked," or else as the object of the performance or the audience: "the chant carries me away," "it thrills me, saddens me, amazes me," "let me be the vehicle of your faith o Lord."

And if the nominative is used, it is often used in the plural: "We enter the auditorium, we applaud for minutes on end, we are seated in the darkness".

Or the writing can be addressed in the vocative interrogative to the others: "Did you feel, did you notice, how did you...?" The second person, singular and plural, effects an abdication of self in the writing by asking for the other, giving over to the others, seeking to be with. And the interrogative saying to the other holds the uncertain subjunctive moment of hesitation in which the said might fail to hit its target.

These forms of address, these pronomial declensions, moods and voices, are examples of possible imposed artificial instruments in the writing which might actively serve to distance the writer from the position of sovereign subjectivity which arises naively to dominate and contain its always forgotten immersion in Audience. The hidden relations, the us-ness, the shared submission, the giving of the value, recede too readily in silent modesty behind the barking subject, spouting the certainty of its tastes and preferences.

But in the "you," the "we," the "me" in the accusative case (which for Levinas is the originary mode of the subject, which comes forth as responsibility to the summons, the accusation of the other), the pontificating, bellicose, opinionated, perpetually self-verifying subject can be kept provisionally at bay, at least at pen's length, to some extent

circumvented, in an act of abdication, to reveal the original accusative coming-forth which the subject abhors, and upon whose denial it shakily takes its illusory stand.

Afterthought

Whether this approach might be labelled a "superior empiricism," a transcendental empiricism, or any sort of empiricism, or whether it is an idealism, is of little consequence here. The work in audiences and the revelation of Audience, is predicated on a tradition which stems from Kant's transcendental project, and finds its realisation in possibilities released by Levinas's attempt to clarify the meaning of transcendence in the work of Husserl and Heidegger. It is also deeply rooted in phenomenology's profoundly empirical tradition of the description of experience aiming at essence. And perhaps most interestingly, it occurs at the juncture, previously conceived as paradoxical, where the study of the Humanities in its various manifestations approaches Dilthey's question of a science in which "life grasps life."[47] Through the inspiration of Levinas, who revealed more clearly than any other thinkers a register of possibility where subject and object might be encountered in their genesis, this work draws together a tradition for which the once seemingly impossible task of the experience and saying of the transcendent becomes not only thinkable, not only conceivable, not only doable, but commonplace.

47 Dilthey, W., (1976), 'Construction of the Historical World', *W. Dilthey: Selected Writings*, Hans Rickman (ed. and trans.), Cambridge Cambridge University Press, p. 181.

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Lights in the Dark: The Radical Empiricism of Emmanuel Levinas and William James

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In his "Letter on Humanism," Heidegger critiques metaphysics as the attempt to replace the clearing with a being.[1] If Heidegger's description is right, then Emmanuel Levinas is emphatically metaphysical. The metaphysical charge has been at the root of a variety of critiques that describe Levinas's ethics as impractical, idealistic, incoherent, theological and naïve. There is something misleading in these characterisations, since what ends up being metaphysical in Levinas is just the face of another human being, a face that is never static or clear but always particular, moving, and out of reach. "Face" is not a "solving name"[2] that offers a key to the universe. The face is the site of a crossroads in Levinas's philosophy. Neither phenomenon nor form, it falls between the cracks of traditional phenomenology and traditional metaphysics, landing somewhere ambiguously between the two in an intensely real, up close, and empirical half-ideality. The flashes of faces in a crowd – each one unique. This is not a neat picture. It is certainly not the pastoral picture conjured up by Heidegger's imagery: the plowed and sown fields and tree-lined clearings. One might say that Levinas's

1 Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," in Krell, D. F. (ed.) (1993), *Martin Heidegger: Basic Philosophical Writings*, San Francisco, HarperCollins, pp. 234 – 35.

2 James uses this phrase to describe the "primitive quest" of Metaphysics. He writes, "the world has always appeared to the natural mind as a kind of enigma, of which the key must be sought in the shape of some illuminating or power-bringing word or name. That word names the universe's *principle*, and to possess it is, after a fashion, to possess the universe itself. 'God,' 'Matter,' 'Reason,' 'the Absolute,' 'Energy' are so many solving names. You can rest when you have them. You are at the end of your metaphysical quest." James, W. "What Pragmatism Means," included in Menand, L. (ed.)(1997), *Pragmatism: A Reader*, New York, Vintage Books, p. 97, hereafter *PR*.

metaphysics is just a return to the crowds, streets, and noise of a more urban landscape. Heidegger has a poetic counterpart in Wordsworth, walking in the meadow among the "dews, vapors, and the melody of birds, / And labourers going forth to till the fields."[3] Levinas's poetic counterpart is more like Whitman, crossing Brooklyn ferry:

> Flood-tide below me! I see you face to face!
> Clouds of the west – sun there half an hour high – I see you also face to face.
>
> Crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes, how curious you are to me!
> On the ferry-boats, the hundreds and hundred that cross, returning home, are more curious to me than you suppose,
> And you that shall cross from shore to shore years hence are more to me, and more in my meditations, than you might suppose.[4]

Envisioning Heidegger alongside Wordsworth and Levinas alongside Whitman helps differentiate their respective emphases. In some ways it is just a difference between landscapes and cityscapes, each with their own dignity. Yet it is also a difference between an account that prioritizes a setting (the world, nature, *Being*), and an account that prioritizes *characters* (*beings*) – the "crowds of men and women attired in their usual costumes."

The "face to face" that Levinas makes the crux of his philosophy is meant to repopulate the Heideggerian world. Yet the encounter Levinas describes is too situational and sensible to be metaphysical and too transcendently un-experiential to be physical. Human, yet out of reach, the face complicates traditional philosophical categories and makes Levinas's philosophy particularly difficult to situate. Although Levinas

3 Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Book IV, lines 338–339, in De Selincourt, E. (ed.) (1970), *Wordsworth The Prelude or Growth of a Poets Mind*, , New York, Oxford University Press, p. 62.

4 Whitman, W. *Crossing Brooklyn Ferry*, section I, in Wilbur, R. (ed.) (1959) *Whitman*, New York, Dell Publishing Co., The Laurel Poetry Series, p. 164.

criticises the language of "experience" for being the language of totality and opts for "metaphysics" in his description of ethics, the face belies a strange empiricism. To miss this is to let his philosophy hover without a ground. He does not have solid ground. There is no bedrock. Instead, it is the ground provided by another person, a weight and density that moves. Without the embodied touchstones provided by human beings, Levinas's philosophy would be theology and his hope the distant hope of a world yet to come.

Faces are ideal and real without either of these terms canceling the other out or having the huge and dense meaning philosophy can give them. It is a weak ideality, a thick but traversable reality. Faces express something ideal here on earth. This mixture of ideality and reality, along with an urban sense of plurality, has roots in the philosophy of pure experience William James called "radical empiricism." Underscoring the "pragmatic ethos"[5] at work in Levinas opens new lines of work and criticism distinct from a heavily theological vein of French phenomenology, "Levinasian" readings of Levinas, or discussions that pit religious faith and mysticism against practical reason. There are many ways of reading Levinas or highlighting specific trains of his thought. Some readings make the ethics Levinas offers look sublime, beautiful, or angelic. Others make it look disastrous, impossible or masochistic. What if it is simply messy, unpredictable, and minimal? What if it is closer to the "pluralistic empiricism" William James described as "a turbid, muddled, gothic sort of affair without a sweeping outline and with little pictorial nobility"?[6]

My claim is that there is a "pragmatic ethos" in Levinas and a striking coincidence between Levinas's phenomenology and William James's "radical empiricism."[7] Reading Levinas in light of James defuses

5 This is a term Richard Bernstein uses in his paper "Pragmatism, Pluralism and the Healing of Wounds." In the paper he identifies "pragmatic ethos" with 5 interrelated themes: 1) anti-foundationalism, 2) a thorough-going fallibalism, 3) a de-centering of the subject, 4) contingency and chance and 5) plurality. One can find versions of all of these themes running through Levinas. Richard Bernstein, "Pragmatism, Pluralism and the Healing of Wounds," in *PR*, pp. 387 – 389.

6 James, W. (1996), *A Pluralistic Universe,* Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, p. 45.

7 Derrida also compares Levinas's thought with empiricism. In the final pages of "Violence and Metaphysics" he writes, "the true name of the renunciation of the

the mysticism often associated with Levinas's ethics and allows for a deflationary reading that establishes distance from what Dominique Janicaud has called French phenomenology's "theological turn."[8] I would like to unlink the chain Janicaud constructs making Levinas the site of a theological turn that shatters the promise of the phenomenological method and winds up as "Marionesque givenness."[9] Levinas and James attend to ambiguity, resist the impulse to categorise particulars under sweeping universals, realise that new problems require new answers, and prioritise particularity over generality. Both of them could be read as either pragmatic pessimists or realistic optimists. Either way, they sketch a precarious, non-naïve hope that will necessarily look bleakly hopeless to staunch idealists and overly ideal to staunch realists.

My goal here is to outline a coincidence between Levinas and James through an examination of the opening chapter of Levinas's first published book, *Existence and Existents*. I open with an argument for why reading *Existence and Existents* sets the stage for any reading of Levinas. In section 2, I situate Henri Bergson as the pivot between Levinas and James and explore Bergson's promising, but ultimately illusory conception of time and escape that defines Levinas's point of departure. In section 3, I argue for the influence of William James on Levinas's adoption of embodied descriptions of indolence and

concept, of the a prioris and the transcendent horizons of language is *empiricism*. It is the *dream* of a purely *heterological* thought at its source. A *pure* thought of *pure* difference ... We say the *dream* because it must vanish *at daybreak*, as soon as language awakens. "Derrida, J. "Violence and Metaphysics," in Bass, A. (trans.) (1978) *Writing and Difference*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, p. 151. Derrida is overtly critical of empiricism insofar as he thinks it holds no place for the transcendent power of language. Contrary to Derrida, Dominique Janicaud accuses Levinas of not being empirical enough in *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn."* Caught between a rock and a hard place, Levinas cannot satisfy either Derrida's quest to overcome dualistic hierarchies between empiricism and metaphysics or Janicaud's effort to restore phenomenology to Husserl's "return to the things themselves!" An investigation of Derrida's and Janicaud's understandings of empiricism goes beyond my scope here, but in holding Levinas next to William James, I am suggesting an empiricism neither Derrida nor Janicaud considers.

8 Janicaud, D. "The Theological Turn of French Phenomenology," in Prusak, B. G. (trans.) (2000), *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn," The French Debate*, New York, Fordham University Press.

9 *Ibid.* p. 65.

awakening. These descriptions signal a pragmatic turn in Levinas that brings his phenomenology into contact with James's radical empiricism. In section 4, I discuss the consequences of radical empiricism on James's and Levinas's conceptions of experience and religion. Section 5 concludes with an image for the minimal, but pragmatic hope characteristic of them both and underpinning Levinas's ethics.

<I>

Existence and Existents lays the groundwork for much of Levinas's later writings yet remains free of some of the language that has become synonymous with his ethics. Many of the phases associated with Levinas ("ethics as first philosophy," "face to face") have become cliché and risk being worn out. *Existence and Existents* provides access to new vocabulary and can help us pass under the radar of traditional Levinasian scholarship. In this first book Levinas both continues and breaks with the phenomenology of his teachers (Husserl and Heidegger) and explores a less-well demarcated area somewhere between phenomenology and pragmatism.

Levinas began writing *Existence and Existents* as a prisoner of war in a French labour camp in the years between 1940 and 1945. The overt philosophic effort of this first book is to articulate an alternative to Husserl's transcendentally ideal ego and Heidegger's ontology. While Husserl stands somewhat in the background of Levinas's critique in *Existence and Existents*, serving as a touchstone for Levinas's version of phenomenology, one he elsewhere calls "another phenomenology, even if it were the destruction of the phenomenology of appearance and knowledge,"[10] Heidegger stands in the foreground as a more decisive point of departure – like a shore Levinas's thought seeks not only to touch but to erode in hitting up against it. Levinas makes this clear in his introduction, making Heidegger the first name to appear in the text. He confesses,

10 Levinas, "Transcendence and Intelligibility," in Peperzak, A.T, Critchley, S., Bernasconi, R. (eds.) (1996), *Basic Philosophical Writings*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, p. 153.

> If at the beginning our reflections are in large measure inspired by the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, where we find the concept of ontology and of the relationship which man sustains with Being, they are also governed by a profound need to leave the climate of that philosophy, and by the conviction that we cannot leave it for a philosophy that would be pre-Heideggerian.[11]

Noting his debt, Levinas recognises the importance of going through Heidegger to arrive at a new possibility for philosophy that might go beyond Heidegger. The "climate" of Heideggerian philosophy is something he spends his life contesting by asking about a different possibility for meaning, one that is irreducible to the meaning of Being "*in general*" (EE 2) and centered instead on the meaning of the interpersonal. Levinas ultimately bases his "other" phenomenology on the primacy of sensibility over consciousness and the situational encounter with the face of another person.

Levinas envisions escaping Heidegger's "climate," but his fixation on imprisonment is not a philosophic reaction. The thought of radical confinement comes directly from his lived experience of isolation – a real separation from the world and not, as with Descartes, an imagined or staged retreat. Levinas's captivity, the deaths of his family members, and the political climate proceeding and following his imprisonment inform his first book and all of his subsequent work. Experience dictates the themes and style of his writing from his descriptions of horror, trauma, and insomnia in the 1940s to the question of whether we are duped by morality in the 1961 preface to *Totality and Infinity*.

Existence and Existents opens as if Levinas is trying to hold tightly to an intellectual model: a clean, dispassionate train of thought and argument that does not get bogged down with the details of concrete circumstances. There is a self-conscious sense of how a philosophical text is supposed to proceed. Yet to read *Existence and Existents* is to experience the dissolution of this intellectual remove and to find oneself, at the end, wading in details. As the details come to the forefront, Levinas begins to break with traditional philosophic language and to forgo the

11 Levinas (1978), *Existence and Existents*, Lingis, A. (trans.), Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, p. 4. All subsequent references will be made in text as EE.

typical structure of philosophic argumentation – replacing theses, proofs, and evidence with a series of compounding descriptions. There is an effort here to come up with a mode of expression that will say the unsayable and show something unshowable – something Levinas remains concerned with for the rest of his life.

Existence and Existents returns us to a raw scene. There are threads Levinas casts here, along with a sense of urgency and confusion, all of which gets tied together or neatened over the course of his later work. All the threads are there in this first book, and in some ways it is easier to see what is at stake in seeing the bare threads loosely splayed. The text reads more like a narration someone can only give in the midst or immediate aftermath of tragedy: a strangely lucid running account that has not had the chance or the time for the reflection, editing, and faltering that will, later, make the story both leaner and more complicated.[12]

<II>

The themes of escape and rupture dominating *Existence and Existents* are inspired by Levinas's direct experience, but also reflect the profound influence of Henri Bergson's innovative account of time, creativity, and change. Bergson signaled a break with Kantian idealism in France, and his early writings of the 1920's were among Levinas's foundational philosophical influences.[13]

One can trace an explicit link between Levinas and William James back to their mutual admiration for and unique revisions of Bergson's work. In a letter from 1903 Bergson wrote to James, "French students passing through Cambridge...must have told you that I was one of your greatest admirers, and that I have never passed up an opportunity to express the great sympathy I have for your ideas to my listeners."[14]

12 *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence* has this remove and self-consciousness. It has more structure and shows Levinas's development of a grammar and language that, compared with his earlier writing, can seem overly complicated.

13 For one history of this and other influences, see Moyne, S. (2005) *Origins of the Other, Emmanuel Levinas Between Revelation and Ethics,* Ithica, Cornell University Press, pp. 21 – 56.

James, proclaimed, "Bergson alone has been radical."[15] He went on to praise Bergson's style, at the same time confessing, "Bergson's originality is so profuse that many of his ideas baffle me entirely. I doubt whether any one understands him all-over, so to speak."[16] Both James and Bergson insisted on the independence of their work and their mutual surprise of finding each other, later, so closely allied in spirit and realm of investigation. James in particular felt that the coincidence of their thought despite their physical distance from one another testified to a genuine *Zeitgeist* and a convergence of pragmatism and phenomenology that had yet to be fully explored.

Levinas is one place to look for that uncharted convergence. Second only to Heidegger, Bergson is the most cited name in *Existence and Existents*. Levinas emphasised Bergson's profound influence on his early thinking and on phenomenology generally. In an interview with *Autrement* in November 1988, he responded to a question about his "contact" with the tradition of philosophy by acknowledging phenomenology and Heidegger, and then saying "I have hardly emphasised the importance (which was essential for me) of the relationship – always present in the background of the teaching of those masters – to Bergson." He continues,

> I feel close to certain Bergsonian themes: to *durée*, in which the spiritual is no longer reduced to an event of pure 'knowledge,' but would be the transcendence of a relationship with someone.... Bergson is the source of an entire complex of interrelated contemporary philosophical ideas; it is to him, no doubt, that I owe my modest speculative initiatives.[17]

14 Bergson, "Villa Montmorency, 6th January 1903," in Ansell Pearson, K. and Mullarkey, J. (ed.) (2002), *Henri Bergson: Key Writings*, New York, Continuum, p. 357, hereafter *HBKW*.

15 James, "Bergson and his Critique of Intellectualism," in McDermott, J. (ed.) (1977), *The Writings of William James: A Comprehensive Edition*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, p. 566.

16 *Ibid.* pp. 560 – 61.

17 Levinas, "The Other, Utopia and Justice," in Smith, M. B. and Harshay, B. (trans.) (1998), *Entre Nous, On Thinking-of-the-Other*, New York, Columbia University Press, p. 224.

Later, in the foreword to *Proper Names*, Levinas lists his beginning interests in philosophy, describing how he "marveled, while still in school, at the prospects for renewal recently introduced by Bergson's conception of *durée*."[18]

"The prospect for renewal" becomes a driving theme of Levinas's early work. In *Existence and Existents*, he invokes Bergson's concept of *durée* and *élan vital* – a vital impulse and creative urge to begin anew that is distinct from the ruthless forward march of Darwinian natural selection. *Durée* has a special place for Levinas, since it represents the priority of fluidity and change over permanence, opening the possibility of real novelty. Bergson reverses the classical hierarchy of the stable over the fluid, insisting that linear, measurable time derives from a more original experience of lived duration and endurance. This sense of living time makes room for the possibility of a radically new beginning – a possibility Bergson calls "creative evolution."

Despite the lure of this thought and Bergson's impact on him, Levinas concludes that Bergson sets the stage for Heidegger's ecstatic temporality by describing time as "entirely contained in the subject" (EE 96). Reduced to subjective intuition, Bergsonian temporality leaves no opening for transcendence or infinity – terms critical for Levinas's account of ethical subjectivity. Levinas thinks Bergson is right to reorient temporality around fluidity but wrong to describe the experience of fluidity in terms of a private or interior consciousness. Levinas embraces Bergson's idea of a "creative evolution " - the idea that "to exist is to change, to change is to mature" – but contests the idea that "to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly" or that evolution is "creation of self by self."[19] Ultimately, Bergson's conception of time precludes the experience of a populated, intersubjective – *ethical* – world.

Existence and Existents is a sober text that is somewhat at odds with the exuberance of a creative life force. Not surprisingly Heidegger is

18 Levinas, "Foreword," (1975), *Proper Names*, Smith, M. B. (trans.), Stanford, Stanford University Press, p. 3.

19 Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, in *HBKW*, p. 174. This Bergsonian theme bears resemblance to Stanley Cavell's sense of "moral perfectionism" with its emphasis on the self and the future – Heideggerian emphases that Levinas ultimately contests.

the first name to appear in the book, but where one might expect to see Bergson's name, the second name in Levinas's text is Baudelaire and his image of "true travellers ... parting for the sake of parting" (EE 12). The line comes from "*Le Voyage*," the last poem in *Les Fleurs du Mal*. The entire stanza reads:

> But the true voyagers are only those who leave
>
> Just to be leaving; hearts light, like balloons,
>
> They never turn aside from their fatality
>
> And without knowing why they always say: "Let's go!"[20]

To part for the sake of parting, without knowing why, to always say, "Let's go!" This is the attitude Levinas describes as "an evasion without an itinerary and without an end" (EE 12). Baudelaire's "*vrais voyageurs*" leave naively, without anxiety and without the thought of fate or death. They don't know where they are going or where they will end up. They simply set sail. They represent an idea about a beginning that breaks with the past and the future, an idea about beginning in the midst without any attempt to reach a destination or circle back to some place one has been before. This is the thought of a beginning unburdened by history and indifferent to destiny. A clean slate.

"To set sail and cut the moorings" (EE 15) is Levinas's figure for an escape from ontology and a new approach to the meaningful centered on a radical beginning that has a concrete shape: another person. These first thoughts about beginning recall Hegel's preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and Husserl's definition of first philosophy as a "philosophy of beginning," but Levinas has Heidegger firmly in mind as he questions the authenticity of a beginning directed by an end. Is there another way of beginning, without projecting or returning?

20 *Mais les vrais voyageurs sont ceux-là seules qui partent*
Pour partir; coeurs légers, semblables aux ballons,
De leur fatalité jamais ils ne s'écartent,
Et, sans savoir pourquoi, dissent toujours: Allons!
Baudelaire, "Le Voyage," *Les Fleurs du Mal, 2e Edition, 1861*. Reprinted in Hurtgen, A. O. (ed.) (1992) *Tous Les Poemes, White Plains, Longman, pp. 121-125.*

Baudelaire's "true travellers" are in fact setting sail in a move that Levinas ultimately associates with an exhausting dialectic between being and becoming. They are trying to escape existence, to leave without coming back. In the poem they do return, and when asked what they have seen, they reply that they've seen the same things everywhere – the same stuff of life in different shapes the whole world over. They are "weary." They have tried to escape, to flee or kill time, and instead of setting sail in a final, ecstatic departure, they return to say:

O bitter is the knowledge that one draws from the voyage!

The monotonous and tiny world, today

Yesterday, tomorrow, always, shows us our reflections,

An oasis of horror in a desert of boredom![21]

Time has no exits. There is no way of escaping the world since there is no way of escaping oneself or seeing things from the beginning: separate, distinct, and free. Levinas insists, "existence drags behind it a weight – if only itself – which complicates the trip it takes" (EE 16). Later he stresses, "to simply say that the ego leaves itself is a contradiction, since, in quitting itself the ego carries itself along – if it does not sink into the impersonal" (EE 100). The "tiny world ... shows us our reflections." To begin from the beginning one would have to begin without taking oneself along, without the baggage of one's own ego. How then to escape? If it is impossible to shake free of yourself, how can you start over?

<III>

The promise offered by Bergson's *élan vital* ends up being a rather naïve escapism. In the end, it does not have enough weight or velocity to be a total escape or a completely new beginning. The hope fueled by this

21 *Amer savoir, celui qu'on tire du voyage!*
Le monde, monotone et petit, aujourd'hui,
Hier, demain, toujours, nous fait voir notre image:
Une oasis d'horreur dans un désert d'ennui!

idea – a beautiful hope – is tempered by a realistic vision of what one can do given the impossibility of an entirely new beginning. It's a lovely picture of setting sail, and Levinas gives us only the promising first lines of Baudelaire's poem in *Existence and Existents* – only the departure and not the return. He leaves off at the first stanza and leaves it to his reader to discover what the *vrais voyageurs* discover. Using Baudelaire as Bergson's poetic counterpart seems like a way of honouring Bergson and acknowledging the force of his idea. It is, however, a false start, and one can read Levinas's wish that starting over was as simple as setting sail, a wish coupled with his recognition that it is only a dream, that there is something much more heavy and difficult at work.

This somewhat reluctant distancing from Bergson could be read as pessimistic. But it could also be read as a pragmatic turn in Levinas – a turn in particular towards the "realistic spirit" William James associates with his radical empiricism. James describes radical empiricism as a "mosaic philosophy ... of plural facts" that is radical by virtue of its focus on "direct perceptual experience."[22] He admits that this sort of empiricism is "like that of Hume and his descendents" (WPE 42) insofar as there is an emphasis on "the part, the element, the individual" (WPE 41). However, James claims that his empiricism differs from Hume's insofar as James counts the connectedness, or the "conjunctive relations" (WPE 44) between experiences as integral to the possibility of any experience at all. The real sense of connection and plurality is meant to save James's version of empiricism from skepticism and an ultimately despairing sense of the futility of trying to piece things back together from a set of disjointed particulars. Connectivity is not a supersensible "third thing," but something James expresses in the *Principles of Psychology* as "a feeling of *and*, and a feeling of *if*, a feeling of by."[23] The feeling of connectedness has just as much reality or truth as the weight of a stone in your hand (no more, no less). James thinks traditional empiricism, reacting to rationalism, overemphasises the "*imperfect* intimacy" [my emphasis] (WPE 47) holding things together. If rationalism over-optimistically unites everything, empiricism over-pessimistically

22 James, "A World of Pure Experience," in (1996), *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, p. 42. All subsequent references will be made in text as *WPE*.

23 James, W. (ed. Miller, G. A.) (1983), *The Principles of Psychology*, Harvard, Harvard University Press, pp. 245 – 246.

dislocates everything. Radical empiricism aims for a hesitation between unity and disconnection.

Radical empiricism is meant to get at the real feeling of things in all their shifting weight and disjoint significance. The emphasis on plurality and experience disallows recourse to an ideal situated somewhere beyond or above the real that is the touchstone for transcendental idealism. But there is another arc within everything real, the tracing out of something thinly, vaguely, or provisionally ideal that can only be described as an ambiguous sense of plurality or endurance that trails off indefinitely. No experience is separate or final, and James concludes, "Our fields of experience have no more definite boundaries than have our fields of view. Both are fringed forever by a *more* that continuously develops, and continuously supersedes them as life progresses" (WPE 71).

James is, in fact, the third proper name to appear in *Existence and Existents*, providing Levinas with a description of "indolence." One page after citing Baudelaire's "true travellers," Levinas invokes "William James's famous example" (EE 13) to describe an aversion to awakening. Indolence is a way of being stuck in the moment, incapable of getting started. Levinas turns to James for the description of the seemingly endless gap "between the clear duty of getting up and the putting of the foot down off the bed" (EE 13). The first chapter of *Existence and Existents* focuses on that gap and revolves around descriptions of fatigue and work that indicate a non-heroic struggle. In some ways these are moods like Heidegger's anxiety, curiosity or fear, but instead of highlighting a finding or losing of *oneself*, they show "a disquietude which his own existence awakens in man" (EE 105). They signal events in which existence feels bodily and heavy as something one has to face up to, take on, or put on as one might put on a heavy coat.

It is not hard to see James's appeal for Levinas as a prisoner in a labour camp. James is a master of examples that crystallise as recognisable feelings of weight or density. In the chapter entitled "Bergson and his Critique of Intellectualism" in *A Pluralistic Universe*, James writes about the unmanageable thickness of what he calls "sensible reality" and insists that "to get from one point in it to another we have to

plough or wade through the whole intolerable interval. No detail is spared us; it is as bad as the barbed-wire complications at Port Arthur, and we grow old and die in the process."[24] Sometimes there is no way of getting at something just by thinking oneself there with the ease of what James calls "conceptual reality" that "skips the intermediaries as by a divine winged power" (PU 248). James is interested in Bergson's idea about the primacy of perception, which he applauds as a return to "the despised sensible flux" (PU 248). Bergson argues that sensible reality has a visceral thickness impenetrable by concepts alone, requiring a return to "that flux which Platonism, in its strange belief that only the immutable is excellent, has always spurned" (PU 252). James takes this insight as an occasion to differentiate between "theoretic knowledge," knowing about things, and something else he calls "living or sympathetic acquaintance" (PU 249). "Theoretic knowing" knows from a distance, but "sympathetic acquaintance" is the direct experience James insists rounds out "theoretic knowledge" with an impenetrable, fleshy density.

"Skipping the intermediaries" is one way of describing Levinas's criticism of Heidegger. For all its equipment, being-alongside and in-the-midst, the "world" Heidegger describes ends up feeling surprisingly empty and weightless. Even "falling," which could indicate a gravity, looks more like the plastic bag weightlessly drifting in the opening scene of the film, *American Beauty*. Drifting is tied to a conception of thinking that Heidegger makes explicit in his essay "Building, Dwelling, Thinking." He explains,

> When I go towards the door of the lecture hall, I am already there, and I could never go towards it at all if I were not such that I am there. I am never here only, as this encapsulated body; rather, I am there, that is, I already pervade the room, and only thus can I go through it.[25]

The drift of thought can touch down anywhere. Heidegger is already here, there, and everywhere, pervading the room and escaping through the door he has yet to exit. He doesn't need to walk, just to think. But intending to

24 James, "Bergson and his Critique of Intellectualism" in (1996), *A Pluralistic Universe*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, p. 247. All subsequent references will be made in text as *PU*.

25 Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," in Hofstadter, M. (trans.) (1971), *Poetry, Language, Thought*, New York, Harper & Row, p. 157.

make an exit and actually making an exit are not the same thing. This where we are left at the end of Beckett's *Endgame* – with Clov's intention to exit and the vision of him standing there "dressed for the road. Panama hat, tweed coat, raincoat over his arm, umbrella, bag. He halts there by the door, impassive and motionless, his eyes fixed on Hamm, till the end...."[26] We never see him leave.

Thinking doesn't get one through the door. Levinas and James agree that intentions by themselves, however good, are never good enough. Levinas makes this explicit, insisting:

> We are responsible beyond our intentions. It is impossible for the attention directing the act to avoid inadvertent action. We get caught up in things; things turn against us. That is to say that our consciousness, and our mastery of reality through consciousness, do not exhaust our relationship with reality, in which we are present with all the density of our being.[27]

For both James and Levinas a critique of intellectualism coincides with a criticism of disembodied forms of thinking. To be "present with all the density of our being" is to be in a relationship that is more intimate and complicated than "knowing." There is something inherently messy and specific about reality that resists and overreaches every intention, a residual resistance. "Theoretic knowledge" is a way of knowing what James admits "may indeed be enormous ... it may dot the whole diameter of space and time with its conceptual creations; but it does not penetrate one millimeter into the solid dimension" (PU 250). He continues, "Thought deals solely with surfaces. It can name the thickness of reality, but cannot fathom it, and its insufficiency here is essential and permanent, not temporary" (PU 250).

Sometimes you have to wade through the whole deep, sensible swamp. Thinking won't get you through and what you really need is something less essential and more real. This sense of wading without recourse to an imaginable or thinkable end – the sense of being in the thick of things – is descriptive of what Levinas calls "moments of human

26 Beckett (1958), *Endgame*, New York, Grove Press, p. 82.

27 Levinas, "Is Ontology Fundamental?" in *Entre Nous, On Thinking-of-the-Other*, pp. 3-4.

density" (EE 7). Such moments show "the concrete forms of an existent's adherence to existence, in which their separation already begins" (EE 10). The first chapter of *Existence and Existents* opens with situations where action feels endless, impossible or useless and with forms of repetitive work and labour that dismantle the sense of work.[28] Levinas fixates on a situation where all the thinking or intending in the world will not bring you any closer to traversing the minimal and at the same time infinite interval between waking up and putting your foot down on the floor. There is space indicated by that gap, an opening in the present where things unfold differently than through a struggle to be authentically towards one's own "certain and yet indefinite"[29] future. It is a struggle to begin and not a struggle to end.

There are grey areas (making up a lifetime) between birth and death where one finds that being born wasn't enough of a beginning, or that death isn't enough of an ending. Indolence is one example of feeling left without the effort required to begin or end, as if the velocity of birth, of your thrown-ness into the world, wore off too soon or hasn't carried you far enough. Yet exhaustion, insomnia, and the sometimes impossible effort required to rise to the next day all indicate in their sensible density ways of rising despite yourself, rising when you don't want to, when you think, when you *know*, you can't or won't; when you are "weary of everything and everyone, and above all weary of [your]self" (EE 11). This minimal rising gesture (get up, put on your coat, go out) indicates an effort and a dignity in the midst of the darkest times. Life doesn't leave you alone. It is as if there are a thousand lives everyone lives out, endless beginnings and endings, and never the smooth path stretching forward and back. It is "an ill-paved road" and we are "jolted about by instants each of which is a beginning all over again" (EE 13).

28 These are situations where nothing adds up, disrupting the Hegelian dialectic driven *forward* by negation. Howard Caygill notes this disruption and calls Levinas's description of limit situations "a deflationary reversion ... deflating the opening move of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which departs from the indication of 'this' or 'that' toward a universal or abstract notion of something." Another way of saying this would be to say that Levinas describes a situation of being stalled at sense-certainty, stalled at "this." Howard Caygill (2002), *Levinas and the Political*, London, Routledge, p. 54.

29 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Macquarrie J. and Robinson, E. (eds.) (1962), San Francisco, Harper & Row, p. 356.

<IV>

Heidegger provides the launching point for *Existence and Existents*, Baudelaire provides a picture of escape, and James tempers Baudelaire's true travelers with a sober description of how hard it will be to get started at all. Things become increasingly "realistic" as Levinas moves from Heidegger's mythical "clearing" to the deck of Baudelaire's ship, and finally to James's bed. There is a closing in on the most intimate and solid thing. It is an attempt to think about confinement in the most confined space, to think about how it really feels, and then to ask about what kind of hope is available given *this* reality.

Experience invades a subject. *Existence and Existents* begins with a sense of maturity overly mature, too old too soon, and a parting glance back at something that feels like youth (and freedom) left behind. Experience puts its pin in you. There is no escape to a pure before, no way of going back behind or naively forward like Baudelaire's "*vrais voyageurs*" hoped to do. Instead there is the memory of a distant time, another life in another form – childhood, nature, freedom, a dream - and the tangible reality of a now that has divided everything into a "before and after" or a "now and then."

If Baudelaire's "*vrais voyageurs*" stand for the illusory promise of escape offered by Bergson, it is a point of departure that gives way almost immediately to weariness and the indolence that stalls effort. There are reasons for seeing the digression from Bergson to James as Levinas's own attempt to come up with an increasingly realistic description of life, death, escape, and time. In particular, Levinas cannot help including a psychological account of what time feels like in particularly hard and dense moments and how that time clings to you for the rest of your life.

This is something darker. It is something that James expressed in recounting a haunting memory of an epileptic patient in an asylum. He transcribes the description from a letter he attributes to a French

acquaintance "evidently in a bad nervous condition"[30] (VRE 179) – but it could easily be James himself describing the boy:

> A black-haired youth with greenish skin, entirely idiotic, who used to sit all day on one of the benches, or rather shelves against the wall, with his knees drawn up against his chin, and the coarse gray undershirt, which was his only garment, drawn over them covering his entire figure. He sat there like a sort of sculptured Egyptian cat or Peruvian mummy, moving nothing but his black eyes and looking absolutely non-human. This image and my fear entered into a species of combination with each other. That shape am I, I felt, potentially....it was as if something hitherto solid within my breast gave way entirely, and I became a mass of quivering fear. After this the universe was entirely changed for me altogether (VRE 179).

The sense of things being "entirely changed for me altogether" is a radical shift. There are some experiences that one goes through, some scenes that transpire and leave everything intact. You can move through some things seamlessly (*this* to *that*, *here* to *there*). But there are other kinds of "pivotal human experiences" (VRE 155) that are unending and upending. Then it is as if, even at a distance, "sensible reality" has a hold on you and there is no movement from this to that. These experiences provoke a change and perhaps especially maturity, but added to this is a compounding sense of being insufficient to the task of coming through such a change, of bearing certain kinds of memories or beginning again, by oneself. There is a lasting sense of what James calls "this experience of melancholia" (VRE 163) that seemed to him to have "a religious bearing." That is to say, the upshot of such melancholia is a profound sense that something external and outside of one's own experience is required to get one through to another side, to begin again, make a new turn or simply orient in an "entirely changed" universe. James found

30 James, W. (2002), *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, New York, The Modern Library, p. 179. All subsequent references will be made in text as VRE. In his Introduction to *The Writings of William James, A Comprehensive Edition*, John McDermott suggests that this passage is closely linked to passages from James's diaries from 1870, a year identified with his "Crisis" texts and his suicidal tendencies. In the chapter on "The Sick Soul," in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, James tells us he will have to draw from personal experience, writing "Since these experiences of melancholia are in the first instance absolutely private and individual, I can now help myself out with personal documents" (VRE 163).

outside support in "scripture-like texts," mantras he could repeat to himself: "'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden,'" without which he writes, "I think I should have grown really insane" (VRE 180).

James writes about religious experience in terms of a "more" with which we feel ourselves connected.[31] The "religious" dimension of the "bearing" is just this outward gesture and ambiguous contact with "more," a leaning on the shoulder of someone or something else. In The *Varieties of Religious Experience*, James differentiates between "institutional" and "personal" religion, saying he is only concerned with the latter. He goes on to describe "personal religion" as "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine" (VRE 36). A few pages later he continues: "Religion, whatever it is, is a man's total reaction upon life" (VRE 40). This is a broad and loose description of "religion," so broad that it is hardly recognisable as anything other than the basic fabric of a person's life, the things that persist meaningfully through any number of setbacks or collapses, the things that stand when everything else falls. Such things for James happened to be the "scripture-like texts" that helped to bear him through when everything solid seemed to be slipping away. A mantra, a photograph, a line of poetry, an object, a person: any of it could serve as a touchstone and function like those scriptures, allowing the entire world to balance on the tip of a single, saving point.

Like James, Levinas describes being supported by something from the outside, but in Levinas's case, the saving point of contact is called a face. Like James, Levinas also invokes a certain "melancholy"[32] that becomes descriptive of a mature hope and indicates being tinged with experiences that have invaded and wounded the psyche. For both Levinas and James, melancholy becomes a pivot mood. Something impinges from the outside. The subject is not ultimately self-sufficient. She finds that bearing up requires facing out.

31 See "Conclusions" to VRE, 528 ff.

32 In particular, Levinas describes a "melancholy that does not derive from anxiety." Levinas, *God, Death, and Time*, Hamacher, W. and Wellbery, D.E. (eds.) (2000), Standford, Stanford University press, p. 100.

Facing out toward a source of ambigious "more" is the name for a gesture that both James and Levinas identify with religion. It is an open and vague sense of religion and not a specific dogma or set of beliefs. What is "religious" in their thought turns out to be an emphasis on plurality and a notion of experience as fundamentally excessive. Levinas in fact identifies religion with "the exceptional situation where there is no privacy" (BPW 29). This is a religion of the inter-human, of being attuned to and able to be moved by another person who remains irreducible to one's intentions. It is something Levinas calls "horizontal religion, remaining on the earth of human beings."[33] The only temple for this religion is the crowded streets, and the only after life is the life of another person who lives on after you. It is not an issue of belief. Life entails the *experience* that there is more life than one's own life, a visceral experience of a world populated with an infinite number of faces.

<V>

If Levinas's ethics is a "turbid, muddled, gothic sort of affair" (PU 7) in the spirit of James's radical empiricism as I have suggested, then it does not give us principles or rules we might learn and follow. If prescriptions are what we are looking for, Levinas will be disappointing. But perhaps he gives us something better. Levinas, like James, writes about an inner lining of hope. It is not just any variety of hope, but the kind of hope available in the most hopeless times. It is a hope found in other people and banal decencies, the hope inscribed in Levinas's description of ethics as these words: "After you."[34] There is a very real kind of promise he writes about that is not terribly complicated and certainly not mystical. It is the promise that, in the absence of any ethical guarantees and faced with the reality that things will, and do, fall apart, we retain a capacity to be decent and dignified. The possibility of saying "After you" remains open. This is not an account of love, friendship, trust, benevolence or justice. There is no big promise or full, exuberant hope. Rather, Levinas writes about the hope allowed by the repetition of

33 Levinas, "Hermeneutics and the Beyond," in *Entre Nous, On Thinking-of-the-Other*, 70.

34 "(We) say, before an open door, "After you, sir!" It is an original "After you, sir!" that I have tried to describe." Levinas, E. (1985), *Ethics and Infinity, Conversations with Philippe Nemo*, Cohen, R. A. (trans.), Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, p. 89.

the seemingly least significant gesture. "After you." It is a decent thing to say. Often we say it without thinking about it. We even say it without saying it out loud - with a nod of the head or a sweep of the hand. Levinas pauses at this gesture, asking us to think about it so that, when it becomes less simple (as it inevitably will), we won't forget how uncomplicated it once felt.

We should not feel overwhelmed by being responsible for everything, because our "everything" is limited by the time we have to be responsible. In most cases, what we can do or accomplish will be less than ideal. Yet Levinas insists this is the margin of ethics, the margin of the human. Ethics works at the level of the ordinary – and Levinas insists all along that it can be summed up by the two words, "After you." It is surprising how hard it is to leave the "you" unqualified – to leave this minimal and at the same time huge ambiguity, to leave that opening open to every face.

Reading Levinas with James should help us see the minimalism of Levinas's ethical claims and the pragmatism of his hope. Hope does not always come in the form you first expected. Sometimes you find it in the least likely place. If you find it, it is unlikely that you find it once and for all. Philosophers tend to gaze up looking for a peak to climb for the best view. Levinas turns us around and brings us down to earth. He brings us all the way down to the closest, most dense things – to the people we live among, their expressions and faces. We have to give up the idea of a single peak with the best view. But we gain a new landscape that looks more like a place we could actually inhabit. We lose the overview, but we gain an infinite number of close-ups.

I will close with an image for this flashing, impermanent and nonetheless significant variety of hope that can be found throughout James and underpinning Levinas's vision of ethics. In his remarkable essay, "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings," James defends the idea of plural, indefinite meanings. He underscores our susceptibility to "a certain blindness" to the things that are meaningful in another person's life and generally to "how soaked and shot through life is with values and meaning which we fail to realise because of our external and insensible

point of view."[35] We fail to recognise what is meaningful because we fail to see as significant the things that don't register as significant *for us*. This failure is a failure of empathy that has consequences for how we treat others, but it is also a failure of wonder, curiosity, or imagination that has consequences for our own experiences of meaning and value in the world. It is a failure of vision that makes the world smaller, closing off whole chapters that we might otherwise be able to read.

James's example for an inner, invisible lining of meaning comes from Robert Louis Stevenson's essay "The Lantern Bearers." Stevenson describes what it was like to be "a boy with a bull's eye" under his topcoat. A bull's eye was a tin lantern that "smelled noisomely of blistered tin" and "never burned aright."[36] It had little or no practical value as a lantern and functioned only as a symbol of membership in the group of lantern-bearers who would fasten the old lights to their belts. Stevenson describes carrying the lantern hidden under his coat and meeting another lantern-bearer: "...there would be an anxious 'Have you got your lantern?' and a gratified 'Yes!'" (CB 632). The lanterns burned invisibly inside the boys' heavy coats and imbued them with a noble sense of purpose and community inexplicable to an outside observer who could see only the heavy topcoats and not the lights dimly burning underneath. Yet the lantern, the secret knowledge of its being there, gave the boys a hidden ground of joy about which Stevenson concludes,

> The essence of this bliss was to walk by yourself in the black of night, the slide shut, the top-coat buttoned, not a ray escaping, whether to conduct your footsteps or to make your glory public, - a mere pillar of darkness in the dark; and all the while, deep down in the privacy of your fool's heart, to know you had a bull's-eye at your belt, and to exult and sing over the knowledge (CB 632-33).

The ground of a person's joy or sorrow is rarely, if ever, fully visible. We are prone to a certain blindness about what makes things

35 James, "What Makes a Life Significant," in *The Writings of William James*, p. 645.
36 James, "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings," in *The Writings of William James*, p. 632. All subsequent references will be made in text as CB.

significant, about where meaning lies. This blindness is not only with respect to others, but also with respect to ourselves, to the grounds of significance in our own lives that we routinely miss or take for granted. The negative claim of James's essay is: don't presume. We cannot see the bull's eye beneath the topcoat, and so we never know the whole story. The negative or limiting claim is coincident with James's belief that radical empiricism attends to the "imperfect intimacy" of things. Things are connected in a loose, shifting way and we should always be skeptical of claims to total resolution or knowledge, skeptical of final labels or ultimate definitions. But there is also a positive claim. This is the claim that we can become increasingly open and tolerant observers and participants in the world. We can, with practice, be more intimate with one another, see the glimmer of the bull's-eye, or at least be open to the possibility of it's being there – open to the possibility of others as unique "pillars of dark in the darkness." We don't have perfect intimacy or full disclosure, but thankfully we don't need either.

The darkness is very dark. This is something Levinas and James would agree about. But there are also lights in our midst. In the last pages of his 1966 essay, "Nameless," Levinas returns to the Second World War and writes:

> In the accursed cites where dwelling is stripped of its architectural wonders, not only are the gods absent, but the sky itself. But in monosyllabic hunger, in the wretched poverty in which houses and objects revert to their material function and enjoyment is closed in on all sides, the face of man shines forth.[37]

"The face of man shines forth," like a blinking light. Levinas writes from the double perspective of hope and despair. It is the hopefulness found in despair – demanded out of despair – the vertigo sensed in the face of abandonment met with an unimaginable return. Levinas's lights are faces, and he argues for their expressive, hidden depths. There is something like the "sting of the real" in Levinas, and it is the sting of these blinking lights. We never see them entirely or all at once, but they surround us like an infinite number of flickering close-ups, a crowd of

37 Levinas, "Nameless," in *Proper Names*, p. 139.

faces, a sea of sometimes dimly and sometimes brightly burning bull's-eyes.

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Empiricism, Facticity, and the Immanence of Life in Dilthey[1]

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> Fundamentally, all our actions are altogether incomparably personal, unique, and infinitely individual; there is no doubt of that. But as soon as we translate them into consciousness they no longer seem to be.
>
> —Friedrich Nietzsche,
> *The Gay Science* (299-300)

1 Unless otherwise noted, Dilthey references are to the pagination of the *Gesammelte Schriften* (GS) and, when available, the translations of the *Selected Works* (SW): Groethuysen, B. (ed.) (1959), GS 1: *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften: Versuch einer Grundlegung für das Studium der Gesellschaft und der Geschichte,* Fourth Edition, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht; Misch, G. (ed.) (1957), GS 5: *Die Geistige Welt: Einleitung in die Philosophie des Lebens. Erste Hälfte: Abhandlungen zur Grundlegung der Geisteswissenschaften,* Second Edition, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht; Groethuysen, B. (ed.) (1956), GS 7: *Der Aufbau der Geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften,* Second Edition, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht; Groethuysen, B. (ed.) (1960), GS 8: *Weltanschauungslehre: Abhandlungen zur Philosophie der Philosophie,* Second Edition, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht; Johach, H. and Rodi, F. (ed.) (1977), GS 18: *Die Wissenschaften vom Menschen, der Gesellschaft und der Geschichte: Vorarbeiten zur Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften (1865-1880),* Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht; Johach, H. and Rodi, F. (ed.) (1997), GS 19: *Grundlegung der Wissenschaften vom Menschen, der Gesellschaft und der Geschichte,* Second Edition, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht; Makkreel, R. and Rodi, F. (ed.) (1989), SW I: *Introduction to the Human Sciences,* Princeton, Princeton University Press;Makkreel, R. and Rodi, F. (ed.) (2002), SW III: *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences,* Princeton, Princeton University Press; Makkreel, R. and Rodi, F. (ed.) (1996), SW IV: *Hermeneutics and the Study of History,* Princeton, Princeton University Press; Makkreel, R. and Rodi, F. (ed.) (1985), SW V: *Poetry and Experience,* Princeton: Princeton University Press; (trans. Zaner, R. M. and Heiges, K. I.) (1977) DP: *Descriptive Psychology and Historical Understanding,* The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff.

1. Dilthey's Contexts: The Empirical without Empiricism

The "Epistemological Fragments," written between 1874 and 1879, record Wilhelm Dilthey's early attempts to reshape empiricism in ways that would be more adequate to the fecundity of experience. From the beginning of his philosophical endeavors, Dilthey was interested in approaching and articulating the empirical without subsuming experience under the abstract principles of association and atomistic sense-qualities of empiricism. Dilthey would later summarise this project with the expression "Empirie, nicht Empirismus" (GS 19: 17). Dilthey's formulation of the primacy of the empirical, freed of empiricist doctrine so as to include its historical and linguistic context, confronted two conflicting ways of describing the empirical in the Nineteenth-century: whereas romanticism and historicism emphasised the irreducibly singular and holistic character of experience, such that each form of life and individual was intrinsically irreducible to any other, empiricism and positivism located truth in the epistemological construction of sense data and justified this "positive factual" strategy by appealing to the model of the empirical natural sciences. Dilthey raised the issue of the empirical in light of the historical and natural sciences, historicist facticity and positivist factuality.[2]

The question of the empirical can be pursued from the direction of what is experienced or from the direction of the one who experiences. Yet both are interconnected in an experiential context or nexus (*Zusammenhang*).[3] Dilthey, from his early to later works, was concerned

2 Unlike Heidegger, Dilthey did not systematically distinguish *Tatsächlichkeit* and *Faktizität*. Yet different senses can be distinguished by how he used these words: whereas a positivistic fact can be underivable (GS 1: 222), it cannot be ungraspable (GS 1: 243) and still be factual in a positivist sense. *Tatsächlichkeit* as facticity indicates that which in being given resists being grasped (in this context, he wrote of the immeasurable and unfathomable). *Tatsächlichkeit* as factuality refers to the given as a graspable and apparently stable element of theoretical knowledge.

3 Dilthey described three senses of "whole" in Schleiermacher: (1) organising inner form, (2) system, and (3) relational context or *Zusammenhang* (SW IV: 679). Whereas organic inner form refers to an immanent teleology and the idea of a system points to the completeness of totality, *Zusammenhang* indicates the contextuality that is singularity in relation to infinity. Dilthey could thus even write of individuality as the form of the whole (SW IV: 709) such that knowing the whole means knowing it as a concrete multiplicity and singularity.

with how explanatory scientific thought, interpretive understanding of others, and self-reflection (*Selbstbesinnung*) can arise and depart from, be informed by and potentially transcend, the givenness and facticity of this experiential life-nexus. This issue motivated Dilthey to interpret the validity of logic and the sciences in relation to the historicity and linguisticality as well as the social and psychological contexts of lived experience.[4] According to his rationalist and transcendental critics, e.g., the Neo-Kantians and the Husserl of the *Logos* essay, Dilthey was advocating a merely psychological or sociological analysis of knowledge.[5] Dilthey's examination of the conditions of life, and their expression in individual and social life, was accused of undermining reason by asserting historicism, psychologism, relativism, and skepticism.[6] Although Dilthey challenged a dogmatic and unreflective rationalism that refuses to attend to the phenomena, the abstract reductions mentioned in these polemics contradict the skeptical and anti-systematic tendencies of his thought. This "moderate skepticism" and rejection of the possibility of systematic totality are constitutive of his radically anti-reductive approach to experience.[7]

4 Dilthey's interest in the psychological is part of his relating phenomena back to their experiential context in the activities, events, and structures of human life — which are centered in the feeling, thought, and will of the individual and the relation of the body to its world in the bodily feeling of life (GS 18: 175). The significance of the body is richly developed in his essay on the external world (GS 5: 90-138).

5 This conflict concerned the legacy of Kant's philosophy, since both Neo-Kantianism and Dilthey shared a common debt. Whereas Neo-Kantians like Rickert took the First and Second Critiques as the primary point of departure, the *Critique of Judgment* orients Dilthey's thought. See Makkreel, R. (1992), *Dilthey: Philosopher of the Human Studies*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, p. 21-25.

6 Husserl and Rickert are not completely wrong to designate Dilthey a skeptic. The young Dilthey called his approach a "moderate skepticism," which had the suspension of explanation as a consequence (GS 18: 3). Yet Dilthey did not deny the validity and value of knowledge by investigating their experiential contexts. It is not such inquiries but the overreaching of reason that creates the conditions for radical skepticism (GS 7: 161). There is no unconditional doubt in Dilthey but something more akin to the skepticism of the ancients and Hume, which doubted knowledge and theory to affirm the value and dignity of practical social-historical life.

7 Accordingly, "[T]here is only harmony in ideal representations. Every presentation of the real contains oppositions which preserve singularity" (GS 7: 331).

In an almost Daoist like argument, Dilthey's rejection of system—as the illusion of a complete and final teleological ordering of things according to one principle or cause—does not entail a denial of contextual wholes, which like a horizon can never be fully fathomed.[8] Instead of constructing a metaphysical or speculative system that subordinates all phenomena and elements of experience according to a universal law, Dilthey traced the products of human thought and activity back to their formative contexts, which include their facticity as well as validity. He therefore described his method in the *Introduction to the Human Sciences* as relating: "every component of contemporary abstract scientific thought to the whole of human nature as it is revealed in experience, in the study of language and history . . . " (GS 1: xviii/SW I: 51). Yet this raises the very issue of the character or nature of the empirical, i.e., not only how experimental science but how experiential life is possible.

What is the empirical such that it is not exhausted by either the explanatory claims of scientific experience (*Erfahrung*) or the lived experience (*Erlebnis*) of ordinary life? Is experience primarily to be understood as combinations of atomistic psychological data, as conceived by Nineteenth-Century empiricism and positivism, or is it intrinsically historical and holistic, as described by the historical school? Is knowledge only a system of cognitive scientific propositions (*Erkenntnis*) or does it involve some kind of reflective and contextual understanding of self and other (*Wissen*)? Dilthey's first published systematic work, *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, needs to be interpreted in the context of this debate that he responds to by seeking to "combine a historical approach with a systematic one" (GS 1: xv) in order to correct the one-sidedness of empiricism and historicism.[9] Both properly stress experience and fail to

8 According to the young Dilthey, the whole cannot be explained, whether as nature or history, and there is no philosophical need to constitute or construct such a whole, least of all as it has been done in the philosophy of history (GS 18: 15, 47). Dilthey differentiated the contextual whole from the abstract systematic whole, for example, in discussing the holism of early modern hermeneutics (GS 14: 603-605; SW IV: 40-42).

9 What Dilthey called the "historical school" was later labeled "historicism." There is much confusion about what historicism means. Karl Popper (1961) misconstrues historicism as the ability "to predict the future course of history" in *The Poverty of Historicism*, London, Routledge, p. v, identifying it with "the possibility of a theoretical history" (ibid. vi). Popper confuses the historical school's emphasis on

adequately and appropriately envision what experience signifies. Whereas empiricism is lost in the abstract conception of experience as reducible to discrete units of sensation and formulaic rules of association, historicism is abandoned in the infinite variety of concrete multiplicity because of its lack of effort at conceptualisation and justification.

This conflict between empiricism and historicism has been employed to interpret Dilthey's reception of John Stuart Mill's "positivism" and Schleiermacher's "romanticism." For example, Gadamer suggests that Dilthey's historicism and scientism did not overcome but remained caught in the aporia of "Schleiermacher and Mill."[10] However, Gadamer ascribes these contradictory labels without clarifying the issue of experience. His contention underestimates Dilthey's productive thinking of this aporia and his rethinking of experience through its contextual-holistic character (*Zusammenhang*) and facticity (*Tatsächlichkeit*).

Such facticity evokes the conditions, the operational contexts, and the limits of experience. The givenness, materiality, and positivity of things not only potentially limits and disrupts our knowledge and mastery of the world, it makes it possible and is at the same time its affair. Knowledge is not somehow contrary to life, as asserted in irrationalism, but is part of its expression and self-articulation. Dilthey distinguished but did not radically separate facticity from factuality, or experiential self-

the singularity and uniqueness of forms of historical life (what "historicism" usually means) and other Nineteenth century tendencies committed to an explanatory history that would provide a definite theoretical knowledge of history and predict its future course (i.e., Comte and Marx). Popper's critique of holism consequently conflates interpretive holism (oriented to context) and explanatory holism (oriented to system).

10 H.-G. Gadamer criticised Dilthey's captivity in the aporia of romanticism and positivism in "Wilhelm Dilthey nach 150 Jahren: Zwischen Romantik und Positivismus." Orth, E.W. (ed.) (1985), *Dilthey und Philosophie der Gegenwart*, Freiburg, Karl Alber, 157-182. Dilthey's "scientism" amounts to neglecting the ontological in affirming the relevance of the empirical and the sciences to philosophical reflection in Gadamer (1995), *Hermeneutik in Rückblick*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 9 and 186. Gadamer misses the moderate skepticism at work in Dilthey's account of worldviews, when he suggests that his "scientism" culminates in the "sociology of knowledge" through the philosophy of worldviews (ibid. 394). Dilthey continues the enlightenment project (self-knowledge of self-legislation) through the means of history and hermeneutics (ibid. 176-77).

interpretation from experimental inquiry—unlike Heidegger and Gadamer.[11] An advantage of Dilthey's approach is that it does not entail the bifurcation of the transcendental and empirical, the ontological and the ontic, which sets philosophical and scientific inquiry into opposition and mutual avoidance. While genuinely engaging the phenomena of language, history, and culture, Dilthey's thought offers an alternative to the linguistic, historical, and cultural idealism that continues to influence contemporary philosophy.

At least two senses of facticity are at work in Dilthey: (1) the singularity and multiplicity of historical facticity, which defy theoretical comprehension into a systematic totality and require the infinite work of description and interpretation; (2) the givenness of positive factuality, which is the basis, object, and potential limiting condition and other of rational and scientific inquiry.[12] According to Dilthey, experience and its sense are not self-created and imposed onto the world without remainder. The world is more than what I or we believe it to be. Experience is constituted in encounter and through resistance, through the givenness and materiality of a plurality, and to an extent by unmastered and uncontrollable resistance. The empirical is the condition, the field, and the limit of experience. Since it is a plurality of different provenances, the subject can be confronted with a resistance that is neither subsumed by cognition nor overcome by creation or the will, precisely because it is both singular and positive.

Facticity thus suggests the problematic character of assumptions about intelligibility, meaningfulness, and purposiveness. It is an infinitude of richness and texture, the "depth of the flesh of the world" that cannot be made thematic as figure, which withdraws from understanding and thereby exposes understanding to its own conditional context. It is the "brute facticity" or "givenness"—which in being given is not necessarily

11 For a more detailed account of the development and import of Heidegger's notion of facticity, see my articles: "Questioning Practice: Heidegger, Historicity and the Hermeneutics of Facticity." *Philosophy Today* 44, 2001 (SPEP Supplement 2000), 150-159; "Heidegger and the Ethics of Facticity" in Raffoul, F. and Nelson, E. S. (eds.) (forthcoming), *Rethinking Facticity*, Albany, SUNY Press.

12 Compare F. Rodi's exploration of Dilthey's approach to facticity and its role in his critique of metaphysics in "Diltheys Kritik der historischen Vernunft - Programm oder System?" Dilthey-Jahrbuch 3, 140-165, note especially pp. 153-155.

understood—that suggests the birth that engenders and the death that haunts life. As in Sartre's description of facticity, it is ambiguous what is being "given" and what "taken." Deleuze and Guattari formulated this as the dilemma of achieving consistency without losing the infinite.[13] Facticity is, on the one hand, the "facts" of articulation and appropriation, theory and scientific inquiry. On the other hand, it suggests that which resists and potentially undermines articulation, appropriation, and other modes of human comportment. Facticity is both the opportunity of knowledge and access to the world, but it can also limit, reverse, and throw into question such endeavors. The forces of life manifest themselves in the realisation of human purposes and in the counter-purposive (GS 7: 202).

Human activities are referred back to their context in life in which they inevitably partake—not in general or as a predetermined necessity but as receptivity and responsiveness, i.e., individuation. Dilthey presented his readers with the alternative of a historically informed and holistic empiricism that calls for the conceptual effort of being responsive to the phenomena or things themselves. By not denying life or refusing knowledge, this modified empiricism challenges traditional metaphysics as well as its modern rationalist and irrationalist incarnations.

2. Reading Dilthey after Deleuze

In the preface to the *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, Dilthey affirmed the principle that "All science is experiential" and that experience has to be understood in relation to the mind and sensibility of the one who experiences: "all experience must be related back to and derives its validity from the conditions and context of consciousness in which it arises, i.e., the totality of our nature" (GS 1: xvii). Yet Dilthey departed from empiricist and Kantian epistemology by arguing for the historical character of these conditions and contexts. This totality—note that Dilthey uses this word in the sense of a contextual whole rather than in the contemporary sense of a closed system—indicates the multiplicity

13 Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1994), *What is Philosophy?*, Tomlinson, H. and Burchell (trans.), G.New York, Columbia University Press, p. 42.

of historical life (GS 7: 157), which consists of the plural yet intersecting structures and processes of the life-nexus (*Lebenszusammenhang*).

As with Deleuze, plurality entails resisting the monism of the philosophers and the need to have recourse to empirical inquiry. As Dilthey demonstrated in the *Ideas*, multiplicity implies dynamic interrelations without implying an ultimate identity or unity.[14] Although it would be anachronistic and incorrect to conclude that Dilthey is a philosopher of difference in the contemporary sense, it should be noted that Dilthey does not use the word "totality" in a Hegelian sense of an absolute meditation or unification. Dilthey diagnosed the destructive potential of the pursuit for unity, when absolutised or pushed beyond its legitimate role in abstraction and conceptualisation, yet he also recognised the legitimacy of pursuing coherence, consistency, and unity in scientific knowledge. Dilthey thus distinguished totality as the multiplicity of immeasurable things from unconditional unity systematised according to one ultimate principle. This is clear, for example, from his objection to the repression of the "totality of human nature" in the metaphysical conceptualisation of all as one (GS 18: 142). Dilthey's relational context is consequently a heterogeneous and manifold space. Instead of suggesting the hierarchy of mediation and integration, which persisted in romanticism and historicism despite its stressing of the unique and the fragmentary, *Zusammenhang* evokes the differentiated spatiality and immanence of Deleuze's milieu, plane, and field.

Since it inappropriately narrows and levels lived experience (GS 18: 143), Dilthey also questioned the idea of a final unity that could unify human nature into one basic capacity or force (GS 18: 146). Although Deleuze explains the repetition involved in Bergsonian creativity and Nietzschean will as inherently differentiating and self-overturning, Dilthey's analysis suggests that difference can be thought only from differences and not derived from even the most self-deconstructing of principles or forces. Dilthey's response to this issue is at odds with efforts to provide a basic identity or privileged locus to difference instead of acknowledging its myriad provenances.[15]

14 See Dilthey's discussions of multiplicity as opposed to unity in the *Ideas* (GS 5: 175, 196, 213, 235/DP: 58, 77-78, 93, 114-115).

15 This reverses Heidegger's argument from Dilthey's ontic multiplicity to ontological difference, or the formal indication of difference, in GA 27: *Einleitung*

Dilthey's thinking of the empirical and scientific inquiry can be reoriented in light of its proximity to Deleuze's anti-canonical and anti-metaphysical confrontation with the tradition, according to which the empirical is multiplicity and empiricism is pluralism. This pluralism means: "the abstract does not explain, but must itself be explained; and the aim is not to rediscover the eternal or the universal, but to find the conditions under which something new is produced (creativeness)." Thus empiricism is not about unities and identities but multiplicities.[16] Dilthey's empiricism—i.e., the empirical without doctrinal empiricism[17]—is likewise concerned with (1) the plural provenance of things; (2) explaining the abstract and universal from experiential givenness rather than eliminating the singular plural of experience, and, finally, (3) the conditions of formation (*Wirkungszusammenhang*) in which the new and original occurs in the context of the old.

However, (1) and (3) already imply a divergence between Dilthey and Deleuze's sources, especially concerning the possibilities of life-philosophy. Deleuze's analysis of life-philosophy relies on the understanding of experience as the emergence of difference through repetition and the self-overturning creation of life. Its sources are primarily found in Bergson and Nietzsche and secondarily James and Whitehead. Although we can use this analysis to reconsider the import of Dilthey's works, it does not fully apply.[18] Dilthey does not conceive becoming, change, and process as bio-cosmological principles but rather articulates them as historical-cultural and interpretive phenomena. In his

in die Philosophie, Frankfurt, Klostermann, 1996, 347-348.

16 Deleuze, G. and Parnet, C. (1987), *Dialogues,* Tomlinson, H. and Habberjam, B. (trans.), New York, Columbia University Press, p. vii.

17 Despite Dilthey's demand for "the empirical, not empiricism," many critiques of Dilthey are based on the claim that he is an empiricist, ignoring the issue that not all empiricisms are equal. See, for example, Mohanty, J. N. (1985) , *The Possibility of Transcendental Philosophy,* The Hague, Nijhoff, p. 108; Mohanty, J. N. (1997), *Phenomenology: Between Essentialism and Transcendental Philosophy,* Evanston, Northwestern University Press, p. 69.

18 Heidegger distinguished Dilthey's historical life-philosophy from the biologically oriented life-philosophy of Bergson and James and opts (at this point) for the former, whereas it is the latter that inspired Deleuze. See Heidegger M. (1993), GA 59: *Phänomenologie der Anschauung und des Ausdrucks*, Frankfurt, Klostermann, p. 15.

confrontation with Nineteenth-Century thought from Idealism and Romanticism to Bergson and Nietzsche, Dilthey rejected the possibility of a self-revealing force or pure intuitive life.

The immanence of life does not imply the transparency of a bare life, the positivity of pure facts, or the possibility of a direct grasping of the self in self-knowledge. We do not know the self—whether as substance, process, or fact—and the phenomenality of experience neither depends on nor directly reveals one underlying principle or force of life. In the givenness of life and history, there is not only significance and positivity but also the facticity of dispersion, interruption, and separation (*Abstand*). The work and play of understanding, inference, and interpretation are called for by the confrontation with the complexity, precariousness, and otherness involved in historical life, such that the certainty of intuition, tradition, science, religion, and reason shows itself to be uncertain.

For Dilthey, hermeneutics is the consequence of moderate skepticism, which does not doubt the phenomenality of the world, as we shift from the oneness and identity of the metaphysics of creation and self-creation to the intersecting multiplicity of formation. Human life as lived is never simply biological life—regardless of whether the biological is thought to be vitalistic or mechanistic, teleological or anti-teleological, divinely ordained or naturally ordered. Historical and symbolic conditions are the context and milieu for the activities, expressions, and structures that allow the interpretation and explanation of individual and society.[19] Life is understood and interpreted via the expressions, signs, and symbols that make it a singular life. Human reality is historical, that is, singular in a plural context, and thus a question of individuation in the face of historically mediated physical, biological, and social conditions and contexts.[20]

19 K. A. Pearson (1999) argues that the "inventive Bergsonism" of Deleuze also connects life and history, specifically biophilosophy and late capitalist modernity, in *Germinal Life*, London, Routledge, pp. 4 and 22. In an early study of Bergson, published in 1956, Deleuze wrote: "If difference itself is biological, consciousness of difference is historical" (Cited in *Germinal Life*, p. 22). Deleuze later rejects "history," because of its associations with identity and systematic totality.

20 Also compare the discussions of Dilthey and Bergson in Ermarth, M. (1978), *Wilhelm Dilthey: The Critique of Historical Reason*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, pp. 86-87 and Makkreel,R., (1992), pp. 110-115. Dilthey criticised

The interpretive or hermeneutical dimension refers to phenomena that are constituted in relation to evaluations, intentions, norms, prescriptions, purposes, rules and values. However, this dimension is seen in the context of the enactment and facticity of these phenomena rather than from a perspective that detaches them from their worldly social-historical embodiment, such as occurs in the subordination of the objects of the "cultural sciences" to questions of norms and values—understood as "goods" independent of desire, facticity and particularity (Rickert, 1986, 39)—in Neo-Kantianism.[21] It is a primary illusion of the substantialism of metaphysics—as well as the representationalism of disenchanted epistemology—to believe that the transcendent, transcendental, and ontological are knowable outside of and without reference to the immanence and phenomenality of the experiential and empirical. The moment of transcendence and the transcendental conditions of life occur within immanence and should be receptively articulated from immanence itself.[22]

Bergson's focus on intuition and pure expression, instead advocating an indirect approach through the interpretation of historically and symbolically mediated expressions. How the self is articulated, and can thus begin to be understood, is through its structures, signs and manifestations since the self is structured by its world and networks of signification. Dilthey thus rejected an intuitive method in which the self directly grasped itself in uninterrupted self-presence. D. Wood (2001) notes of Derrida's reading of Husserl: "Even the purest self-presence is permeated by signs, by language, by imagination." *The Deconstruction of Time*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, xxvii. The originary cannot be saved from representation (*ibid.* p. xxvi). Dilthey's moderately skeptical hermeneutics involves an infinite deferral through *history, language, and materiality* such that the self-evidence of intuition and introspection are problematised.

21 In his *Kulturwissenschaften und Naturwissenschaften*, Stuttgart, Reclam, 1986, Heinrich Rickert asserts that the cultural sciences include all of the human sciences "except for psychology" (*ibid.* p. 42). Psychology is excluded as it concerns facts that can be generalised rather than the individuating values that define the cultural sciences (*ibid.* pp. 44-45, 74). For Rickert, the difference between the cultural and natural sciences consists in the fact that the former are individuating and the latter generalising (*ibid.* p. 8). By including psychology in the natural sciences, Rickert rejected Dilthey's argument that psychology is (1) interpretive rather than only explanatory and (2) fundamentally about individuation (*ibid.* pp. 86-87).

22 Although Levinas critiques Heidegger as a philosopher of immanence, Heidegger himself—especially during the second-half of the 1920's—identified the ontological and transcendental. Not only does he argue that this is an interruption and stepping out from beings but also that fallenness is from the height of transcendence (GA 27: 207-208).

Dilthey's emphasis on the plural and singular is informed by and always referred to his understanding of *Zusammenhang*; that is, context, nexus, and relatedness. The historicity of human life implies the perspectival, interpretive, and conditional character of that life. Human understanding is consequently caught in the movement between the singular and its context, without being able to reduce one to the other and thus fully conceptualise either, which he called the hermeneutical circle.[23]

Deleuze, following Bergson, would like to think becoming without history.[24] For Deleuze, history remains an essentially Hegelian category. History is to be confronted and rejected as a kind of identity, unity, and systematic totality. Like Deleuze, Dilthey also sought to undermine the teleologies, systems, and identities of the philosophy of history. However, Dilthey does not do so in order to reject history as such but rather to develop a different notion of history that does not ignore and subsume the singularity and complexity of historicity. That is, Dilthey opened and set free the singular-plural happening of history.[25] History is not the realisation of a subject or a project, nor is it simply an object of inquiry, but is an event that structures human life. The question of history is accordingly both an issue of the upsurge and event that can, for example, define a generation and an epoch. It is also a question of the "who" that attempts to interpretively understand itself, others, and its world in the context of its situation.

23 The hermeneutical circle occurs between the whole and the singular as a relation of meaning and facticity rather than universal law and particular fact or cause and effect. As such, the whole and the singular evade reduction through teleological, functional, or efficient causal explanations. The hermeneutical circle is seen in the "as" character of understanding, differentiating it from the speculative circle that subsumes the determined "part" under a determinate system. The "whole" as nexus is defaced by the reduction of multiplicity to systematic totality, since such efforts fail to master the unfathomable richness and excess of differences (*Unterschiede*; GS 5: 235).

24 G. Deleuze and C. Parnet, *Dialogues*, viii.

25 The phrase "singular plural" is borrowed from J.-L. Nancy's analysis of Heidegger's "each time" (*Jeweiligkeit*) and "each time my own" (*Jemeinigkeit*) in R. Richardson and A. O'Byrne (trans.) (2000), *Being Singular Plural*, Stanford, Stanford University Press.

Like Deleuze, Dilthey insists on the primacy of the experiential, but experience is not only informed by "life" but also by historicity of that life. Against the notions of pure becoming and production found on other 19th-century thinkers, Dilthey considered formation as that which is not simply produced by a subject or agent (whereas creation and production imply a subject or agent creating its world).

Although Carnap and others later utilised the word *Aufbau* in the sense of epistemic "construction," Makkreel and Rodi have shown how Dilthey used it in the sense of "formation." The formation of the historical world refers to its articulation in the human sciences which themselves theoretically reflect this historical world (SW III: 1). Makkreel and Rodi consequently argue that Dilthey's theory of the human sciences is not merely an epistemology (*Erkenntnistheorie*), but a theory of knowledge (*Theorie des Wissens*) that relates knowing to its context. Whereas epistemology seeks to establish the foundations of conceptual cognition (*Erkenntnis*), Dilthey located the epistemology of the human sciences within a larger context of knowledge (*Wissen*).[26] This knowledge is unfolded in relation to embodiment and the life of the body[27] as well as social practices and historical forms of life. Knowledge encompasses not only the conceptual cognition of reality, but also the values and purposes established about it. Not only does human life fall under knowledge, knowledge of the human world falls within that world. As a worldly bodily being, it is never only cognitive (GS 1: xvii/SW I: 50).

Dilthey accordingly situated the human sciences, which are determined by their respective object and how the object is given (SW III: 38), in relation to a pretheoretical life-nexus and its forms of elementary

26 R. Makkreel explores this distinction in "The Cognition-Knowledge Distinction in Kant and Dilthey and the Implications for Psychology and Self-Understanding." *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, vol. 34, pt. A, no. 1, pp. 149-164.

27 Human embodiment is part of Dilthey's strategy of relating phenomena to their inter-phenomenal context. Dilthey's critique of historical reason proceeds from the life-context in its complexity and concreteness to the conceptual cognition of the sciences and reflective awareness (*Besinnung*). Such reflection, made possible by prereflective reflexivity (*Innesein* or *Innewerden*) with its double meaning of "sense" (*Sinn*) as meaning and bodily awareness, forms the basic movement of Dilthey's thought.

or ordinary (prereflective) understanding.[28] These are tied up with the temporality, historicity, and structures of social life; with an epochal "objective spirit." Objective spirit indicates the ways in which the past has been objectified and continues to shape contemporary practices and it is analysed in the human sciences as cultural systems and the external organisation of society. A significant characteristic of the *Formation* is the development of the notion of "productive system or nexus." This translation of *Wirkungszusammenhang* suggests a historical efficacy or productivity prior to any analysis of it as either causal or teleological.[29]

The human sciences include the study of dynamic interconnected systems that articulate the intersection of meaning, value, purpose, and force. Dilthey interpreted these temporally, such that meaning primarily concerns how humans are determined by their past, value is based on their present feeling of life, and purpose is projective striving into the future in the face of productive forces *(Kräfte)* which cannot always be predicted or controlled.

Through the analysis of action, Dilthey presents life as a realm of multiplicity and possibility (and the virtuality crucial to Bergson and Deleuze[30]) that individuates itself through its activity. Actions can be considered in their situation and life-context, figure and background, and are the enactment of life in relation to a purpose or goal such that in the act the multiplicity and fullness of life (understood as possibility)

28 For Dilthey, understanding provides access to scientific objects but is first and foremost world opening (SW III: 226). All—even prereflective and elementary—understanding is interpretive, since we lack transparency and cognise others and ourselves indirectly (SW III: 108). Consciousness is intrinsically impure because related to the facticity of bodies, languages, and histories. Since (1) we know ourselves and others through actions, life-expressions, and effects—instead of introspection or intuition—and (2) understanding faces breakdowns and is confronted by the distant and strange, elementary and intuitive forms of understanding are compelled to higher and more complex forms of understanding and interpretation; i.e., hermeneutics.

29 SW III: 4. In addition to his introduction of SW III, see R. Makkreel, "The Productive Force of History and Dilthey's Formation of the Historical World." *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, vol. 57, no. 226, pp. 495-508.

30 Dilthey's correspondent York von Wartenburg is the source of Heidegger's use of virtuality. Unlike York and Heidegger, Negri argues that virtuality is only one strategy among others for Dilthey in his "On Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus." *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1995.

becomes something particular (GS 7: 206). Here too validity claims can be made about the rightness and wrongness, correctness and incorrectness, appropriateness and inappropriateness of actions. These actions are evaluated according to purposes, norms and values which themselves can potentially become matters of communication. But as Makkreel notes in his introduction to SW III, the force of life does not only manifest itself as purposes but can also manifest itself "in dreams of future happiness, in the play of imagination with possibilities, in indecision and fear" (GS 7: 202).

As discussed above, facticity is both the opportunity of knowledge and access to the world, but it also limits, reverses and throws into question human purposes including knowledge. Dilthey's thought therefore indicates the inherently experimental character of knowing. The temporality of human experience is not eternity and thus knowing is never at an end. The empirical confronts us with a temporality without closure and a future without finality. We do not know the future: (1) The study of history informs how we approach and are oriented toward the future but it cannot guarantee prediction and control given the unexpectedness of the future and (2) new truths are not only progressively accumulated but are contradictory with each other and those of the past (GS 18: 25-27). The world, through what Dilthey describes as its facticity, materiality, and tendency towards resistance, interrupts and disturbs every discourse claiming truth. The unexpected, the new, and the future enter into the present as the "still not" and the "always not yet." Dilthey describes such moments of anarchy occurring in relation to art, when the situation occurs in which the "artist is forsaken by rules" and "a new way of feeling reality has shattered the existing forms and rules, and when new forms of art are striving to unfold" (GS 6: 104/SW V: 31). Anarchistic disturbances and the shock of the new cannot last as these impulses are normalised through their reproduction and new dominant paradigms are established, and necessarily so according to Dilthey (ibid). Although reflection (*Besinnung*) can establish a new equilibrium and new self-understanding in response to the conditions of the times, which defines a generation and epoch, it cannot avoid thereby the facticity of such an interruption and the specter of its return.

3. The Question of *Lebensphilosophie*

Dilthey opposed the social-historical mediation of life against the claim that life can be intuited in its purity. Dilthey rejected "life-philosophy," in a critique that resonates with Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche, because it remained metaphysical in its desire to find the unconditional and undifferentiated, as well as in not recognising the historical, geographical, and personal conditionality of the human condition (GS 8: 198). Dilthey interprets, oddly enough given Deleuze's interpretation of the will to power as constant disruption, Nietzsche as a philosopher of totalisation in undermining all limits and in transforming one form of life into an unconditional and unlimited absolute (GS 8: 198-199). The individual is separated from its historical conditions in a celebration of subjectivity that isolates it in the "cult of genius and great men" and separates it from all content in reducing the variety of individual life to will and desire (GS 8: 201).[31]

Dilthey's critique of metaphysics prevents him from endorsing speculative materialism or a scientifically informed metaphysics. Against any attempt to conflate metaphysics and science, Dilthey argued for the independence, necessity, and worth of scientific inquiry. But for Dilthey, considerations of science cannot escape questions of reflection and the self-reflection of inquirers. Such reflection includes the need to investigate the differences between the sciences—for example, the tasks and understandings necessary to the theory and practice of the human sciences as independent sciences. This preservation of the individual sciences against the dreams of metaphysics and the unity of science constitutes the superiority of idealism and historicism over positivism: They "make better use of the legacy of the empirical human sciences" (GS 1: 24). Dilthey defends the empirical by insisting on the singular-plural character of experience. He understands experience as a relation between plural singulars and plural contexts. This means that the individual needs to be approached as an intersection of a multiplicity of relations and systems (GS 1: 51) and yet, infinitely pursued and deferred, the individual remains ultimately ineffable (GS 5: 330/SW IV: 249).

31 Also see Ermarth's and Makkreel's discussions of Dilthey and Nietzsche (Ermarth, 1978, 319-320; Makkreel, 1992, 158-159).

Although Dilthey presented the *Introduction to the Human Sciences* as a philosophical elaboration of the insights of the historical school, this elaboration needed to clarify the confusion and one-sidedness of historicism. The emphasis of the historical school on pure empiricism, on a pure description of the singular and individual, leads to its failure in abstraction and generalisation, i.e., in articulating contexts, structures, and uniformities. The historical school, according to Dilthey, lacked any insight into epistemology, whether Kantian or empiricist, and the epistemic, logical, and psychological conditions and processes necessary for the sciences, including the human sciences that are the primary concern of historicism (GS 1: xvi). Dilthey argued that historicism must be transformed through an analysis of consciousness in its context as the primary concern in considering the character of experience. Yet this transformation cannot simply subsume the insights of the historical school under traditional metaphysics and epistemology. The cognitivism of the Cartesian heritage of rationalism, empiricism, and Kant needs to be reevaluated from the perspective of the plurality of the intersecting forces and structures of human "nature." The transcendental is not collapsed into the factuality of ordinary empiricism but reconfigured in relation to the experiential and interpretive character of historically and worldly embodied life. Dilthey's articulation of the immanent "categories of life," which deeply influenced the young Heidegger, and the "acquired nexus of psychic life" challenge traditional empiricist accounts of knowledge and the self. Dilthey's hermeneutical strategy is also equally a critique, correction, and transformation of the empiricist and historicist projects.

Knowledge is the experimental self-interpretation of life and that life is more than cognition and representation.[32] Dilthey suggested the conditional character of both representation and intuition by arguing that we are aware of what is given in experience without the given being thereby known. The given is not simply self-evident but can remain in its givenness resistant, non-transparent, and even impenetrable (GS 8: 40). Thought is only complete in itself when it is isolated from feeling and will. This completeness is unreal, since the possibility of its disruption haunts it. For Dilthey "[T]here is only harmony in ideal representations.

32 Makkreel notes in the introduction to SW III that conceptual cognition (*Erkenntis*) is representational for Dilthey but knowing (*Wissen*) need not be.

Every presentation of the real contains oppositions which preserve singularity" (GS 7: 331).

Representational thinking remains within the intentionality and phenomenality of consciousness and cannot reach the materiality of the world that is experienced in the resistance to will and feeling through the body (GS 5: 102-103). For Dilthey, it is the tension of the lived body and its environing world that allows for the differentiation of self and world in their cogivenness and difference (compare GS 5: 105-108). Thought, which strives to transcend its basis in life and the world through claims to universal validity, is a function of life (GS 19: 318-320/SW I: 474-476). Thought occurs within life and so cannot step outside of life by finding a certain external standard (GS 19: 347). Self-consciousness is accordingly already a consciousness of the world, and human life occurs and acts in relation to an environment or milieu, an epoch or age (GS 5: 200-201/DP: 82). The world and self are given only insofar as they are cogiven in the tension of mutual dependence and a difference that cannot be sublimated (GS 5: 124). That is, the self and the world are cogiven as *there* (*da*).[33] This thereness is the basis of and limit to a theoretical knowledge of the world and the self (GS 8: 16, 18, 39, 54). The modes of human life are to be articulated from out of their worldly comportment, their "being-there-within life" (*Darinnensein im Leben*; GS 8: 99).

This does not mean that the turn to historicity implies an immersion in a pure brute singularity, which could only be passively received as a fate, without categories and thought or without the struggle and conflict (*Widerstreit*) which means that there is no escape from the violence of the multiplicity and difference of experience itself. It therefore cannot be appropriately described as an immanence and immediacy without transcendence, remainder, and interruption. Dilthey and Deleuze both distinguish immanence as multiplicity from the immanence as totality and transparency critically discussed by Levinas.[34] Dilthey's work thus does

33 Dilthey unfolded the import of this *da* throughout the manuscripts collected in GS 19: 70, 86, 152-153, 178.

34 T. Chanter (2001) clarifies Levinas's identification of immanence and totality in *Time, Death and the Feminine*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, p. 46. Yet it is clear from Dilthey and Deleuze that these need not coincide and can conflict. Whereas Deleuze shows the alterity and multiplicity of immanence in Bergson and Nietzsche, Dilthey advanced a philosophy of reflective and interpretive immanence

not simply contrast the universal and the particular, the whole and the singular, but places these into the question of their multiple intersections. Therefore, this work does not simply set representation and explanation into opposition with narrative and description, nor does it preclude one in the name of the other.

4. Conclusion

Dilthey's experiential pluralism calls for persistently taking up the contextuality and immanence of life from which we can receptively and reflectively interpret life from out of itself. This does not ignore the incommensurability and multiplicity of life but brings attention to it and intensifies it. The immanence of life is excessive and therefore is not necessarily the closure of totality critiqued by Levinas and others. It is an immanence that interrupts being reduced to a conceptual system and yet is not immune from understanding, reflection, and doubt.[35] Life is not only irreducible to rationality but to the irrationality of creation, power, or will in *Lebensphilosophie*. Life is always more than what can be created, willed, and produced. For Dilthey, "life remains will, facticity, history, i.e., living originary reality" (GS 1: 141). Life is not relative. It is immanent, as Deleuze says, in not being immanent to anything other than itself. It is "a life."[36] When Dilthey analyses individuality to its vanishing point, its ineffability, it is precisely as a life that is immanent to itself and irreducible to a general order. To be responsive to an individual life, qua its individuality, it is necessarily to turn to the testimony and witnessing of autobiography, biography, and fiction and poetry. Such responsiveness is not a mere reaction to things since it calls for narrative and reflection.

that defies totalisation. The young Dilthey echoes Levinas's critique of the loss of transcendence in the metaphysical participation typical of Greek and German thought: "The thought that the *logos* is present in humans is diametrically opposed to my approach. This *parousia* has become through . . . Plato and Christianity the middle point of German philosophy" (GS 18: 200-201).

35 Heidegger praised such antisystematic tendencies early on, although he criticised them during much of the 1920's. The young Heidegger remarked, foreshadowing later self-descriptions of his own thought, Dilthey "verzichtet auf Abschluß und Fertigwerden" and his work remained "vorläufig, unvollendet und unterwegs." See M. Heidegger, "Wilhelm Diltheys Forschungsarbeit und der gegenwärtige Kampf um eine historische Weltanschauung. 10 Vorträge," F. Rodi (ed.), Dilthey-Jahrbuch 8 (1992): 143-180, citations are respectively from pages 149 and 150.

36 Deleuze, G. (2001), *Pure Immanence*, New York, Zone Books, p.27.

Dilthey engages the symbolic, the imaginary, and the virtual in order to address and interpret the individual both contextually, as an intersection of multiple orders, and individually via her own self-understandings and interpretations.

Against the reification of either transcendence or immanence, or their dialectical synthesis in speculative thought, Dilthey unfolded the immanence of life as fundamentally open and plural. This immanence is fractured, and it is a whole of relations without constituting an unchanging identity or closed totality. As Deleuze writes of Bergson, the whole is never given and always virtual.[37] This virtuality does not refer, of course, to being unreal but to the process of actualisation of the immanent itself.[38] For Dilthey, such actualisation occurs as the self-expression and articulation of immanent life. Immanence is non-transparent in the sense that it is by its very meaning irreducible to a systematic foundation or unity outside of itself. Life, in articulating itself from out of itself, cannot step outside of itself and go behind itself to unlock its secret essence. Life accordingly cannot be formulated in a system of concepts that would leave no remainder or excess, no antinomies or aporias,[39] which are necessary to the articulation of that life *as* life and any kind of responsiveness to that life.

Knowledge can preserve the singular only by realising its own finite and conditional character. If knowing is empirical and interpretive, then we need to intensify rather than restrict our relation to the empirical through experimentation—not only scientific but also artistic and religious. Since concepts are at most fragmentary totalities (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, 23), and thus always referred back to their own contingency, "We are never finished with what is called accident" (GS 7: 74). Human finitude signifies the need to go out into the world and to engage in empirical inquiry. It also entails that empiricism, whether inferior or superior, cannot escape the question of interpretation. Such an interpretive or hermeneutically-oriented empiricism, suitably rethought for our own context, might begin to provide a salutary alternative to both scientistic positivism as well as the interpretive and linguistic idealism

37 Deleuze, G. (1991), *Bergsonism*, New York, Zone Books, p. 104-105.

38 Deleuze, G. (1983), *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, New York, Columbia University Press, p. 31.

39 See GS 5, in particular 143, 156, 196.

that continues—albeit in weaker forms—to dominate much of philosophy. Analogously to Deleuze's reactivation of philosophers such as Bergson and Whitehead for contemporary reflection, I hope this essay will contribute to bringing attention to forgotten alternatives and possibilities in the works of Dilthey. Yet a repetition of Deleuze in relation to Dilthey cannot help but be disparate and perhaps a monstrous variation.

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Duns Scotus' Concept of the Univocity of Being: Another Look

PHILIP TONNER

<I>

Interest in the philosophy of John Duns Scotus is no longer confined to medievalists. In Europe a renewed interest in Scotus amongst philosophers influenced by the works of Martin Heidegger and most recently by Gilles Deleuze has resulted in a series of "fresh looks" at Scotus' philosophy. Particularly, those readers of Scotus influenced by Heidegger have breathed new life into Scotus' concept of *haecceitas* (thisness), finding in it a principle of individuality and unrepeatability unique to the medieval thinkers that would ultimately prove influential in the very early stages of the advent of existential philosophy.[1] Renewed interest among European philosophers with Scotus is not limited just to the concept of *haecceitas*. Following the turn from epistemology to ontology characteristic of European thought in the twentieth century, there has been renewed interest in Scotus' philosophy of being, a philosophy that establishes a qualification of the medieval philosophy of analogy: any determination of being as analogical presupposes the

1 Such readers of Scotus, in the context of Heidegger scholarship, include Kisiel, Van Buren and Caputo. The following works deserve special mention: Kisiel, T. (1993) *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time,* University of California Press; Caputo, J. D. (1982) *Heidegger and Aquinas,* Fordham University Press; Van Buren, J. "The Earliest Heidegger: A New Field of Research" in Dreyfus, H. L. and Wrathall, M. A. (ed.) (2005), *A Companion To Heidegger,* Blackwell. For Heidegger's early engagement with Scotus and the little known Scotist author Thomas of Erfurt, see Heidegger, M. (1978), *Duns Scotus' Theory Of The Categories And Of Meaning*, Robbins, H. (trans.), Illinois, De Paul University Chicago.

univocity of being. Scotus established that the univocity of being is the logical presupposition of analogy.

Scotus readers influenced by Deleuze's philosophy may now consider Scotus' philosophy of univocity as the first elaboration of a view that constitutes something of a "secret history" of philosophy.[2] Deleuze argued in his 1968 *Difference and Repetition* that a certain concern for univocity can be seen running from Scotus to Spinoza to Nietzsche and was ultimately taken up in the twentieth century first by Heidegger and then by Deleuze himself. What is particularly important for Deleuze is the fact that while being is univocal, is said in one and the same sense of everything of which it is said, it is nonetheless "modally quantified" into finite and infinite.[3] "Quantity" here means the "greatness" or "intrinsic excellence" of a thing, its intensive magnitude which measures its excellence or that of its nature and this excellence can be finite or infinite in degree.[4] Quantified being, as King has shown, is an "intrinsic mode" of being.

The idea of intensive magnitudes feeds into Deleuze's appropriation of Scotus' concept of *haecceitas*, individuation. By "being" Deleuze has in mind intensive multiplicities – multiplicities of colour, heat, motion or rest, affects, and so on. To predicate any such multiplicity of a thing is tantamount to saying that that thing is in the process of being individuated in terms of such intensive properties – properties which differ in kind from specific differences, qualities or forms as well as from extensive properties, material parts or so-called "accidents", remembering that for Scotus the *haecceitas* or individual unity of a thing is "more than numerical". This is why "being" for Deleuze "is" a process of differentiation or individuation which nonetheless cloaks itself under the qualities and material parts of individuals. Deleuze writes:

2 See Deleuze, G. (1994), *Difference and Repetition,* Patton, P. (trans.), The Athlone Press, hereafter *DR.* See also Ansell-Pearson, K. (1998), *Germinal Life The difference and repetition of Deleuze*, Routledge; de Beistegui, M. (2004), *Truth and Genesis Philosophy as Differential* Ontology, Indiana University Press; Colebrook, C., "Univocal" in Parr, A. (ed.) (2005), *The Deleuze Dictionary*, Edinburgh University Press, pp. 291-293.

3 See King, P. "Scotus on Metaphysics" in Williams, T. (ed.) (2003)*The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, Cambridge University Press, p27.

4 *ibid.* 27.

> When we say that univocal being is related immediately and essentially to individuating factors [i.e. *haecceitas*], we certainly do not mean by the latter individuals constituted in experience, but that which acts in them as a transcendental principle: as a plastic, anarchic and nomadic principle, contemporaneous with the process of individuation, no less capable of dissolving and destroying individuals than of constituting them temporarily; intrinsic modalities of being, passing from one 'individual' to another, circulating and communicating underneath matters and forms. (DR: 38).

Owing to the significance Deleuze attributes to Scotus' philosophy, particularly his philosophy of univocity, it is necessary to take a fresh look at it. We shall do so by returning to the medieval philosophical debates surrounding the notion of being. From there it will be possible to approach Scotus' philosophy.

<II>

The metaphysical framework within which the medieval philosophers operated was profoundly influenced by the Aristotelian heritage. That framework included the doctrine that reality can be divided up into substances and accidents.[5] Substances, such as Socrates, are individual things. They are the ultimate subjects of predication and are also, from an ontological point of view, fundamental. Corporeal substances are composites of matter and form. In particular, the form of a living corporeal substance such as Socrates is his soul: soul is that which structures matter in such a way that it is constituted as the 'living flesh and blood' of a particular body.[6] Accidents such as height and colour are

5 Here we follow S. MacDonald and N. Kretzmann "Medieval Philosophy" in Craig, E. (ed.) (2005), *The Shorter Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Routledge, pp. 650-651.

6 The concept of the soul (*psychê/psuchê*) in Aristotle is complicated. It is best regarded as a general principle of 'animal life'. It is by no means restricted to "human" life; rather, it is extended by Aristotle to all living things. To this extent, the translation of the Greek concept by the English word *soul* remains unsatisfactory. The soul in Aristotle is a scientific concept and is linked to the category of organic life; it occurs in the text in the context of discussions regarding

further kinds of form that take an individual substance, such as Socrates, as their substrate. As such, accidents depend for their existence on substances and in turn account for the ontologically "derivative" characteristics of substances.

Such a metaphysical view of reality is broadly continuous with the Aristotelian substance ontology. There is further continuity between Aristotle's and medieval Aristotelian-scholastic ontology that is paramount with regards to the related issues of univocity, equivocity and analogy. For Aristotle, everything encountered in human perception is a being. If that being is, for example, a particular person, then that being *is* a substance. If the encountered being is, on the other hand, a colour or size, then that being *is* an accident and requires for its existence a substance to inhere in.[7] If the being exists "here and now" as the object of perception then it is actual, whereas it is potential if it is still to come, requiring an efficient cause to become actual. If a being undergoes change, then it is temporal and is composed of matter that ceases to have one form and begins to have another. Beings without matter and therefore without potentiality are just "being" in contrast with "becoming."[8] Such things are the primary examples of being and all other beings *are* beings by focal reference to the primary things. This is the Aristotelian doctrine of being as reconstructed by Owens.

As theology, Aristotle's universal science deals with the primary kind of being upon which all others depend. When Aristotle claims that first philosophy *is* theology then, so commentators such as Irwin hold, this implies that the general discussion of being and substance provides the basis for a special discussion of divine substance.[9] This then prompts the traditional distinction between special metaphysics dealing with the Deity and general metaphysics dealing with being in general (*ens commune*). In fact, on Irwin's interpretation, the different characteristics

growth and locomotion and so on. On this see Gallop, D. "Aristotle: Aesthetics and philosophy of mind" in Furley, D. (ed.) (1997) *Routledge History of Philosophy, Volume II, From Aristotle to Augustine*, Routledge, p. 91.

7 In our exposition we follow J. Owens "Aristotle and Aquinas" in Kretzmann, N. and Stump, E. (ed.) (1993), *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, Cambridge University Press, p. 45, hereafter *AA*.

8 *AA*, p. 45.

9 See Irwin, p. 59.

of substance are also taken as features of divine substance: primary substance is identified with form rather than with either matter or the compound of the two and divine substance, as pure form, is therefore devoid of matter. Primary substance is numerically one and divine substance is ultimately one and indivisible. Primary substance is actuality rather than potentiality and divine substance is pure actuality devoid of potentiality. Primary substance is soul not body and divine substance is pure intellect without body.[10]

Primary substance is the form and actuality of a sensible being (such as Socrates) which has other properties and is composed of matter. Aristotle takes the existence of divine substance that is without matter, multiplicity, parts and potentiality, to be an ontological prerequisite for the existence of sensible substances. Aristotle refers to the divine substance on occasion as "living," as one divine mind and as the ultimate cause of the entire universe:

> And God also has life; for the activation of thought is a life, and He is that activation. His intrinsic activation is supreme, eternal life. Accordingly we assert that God is a supreme and eternal living being, so that to God belong life and continuous and eternal duration. For that is what God is.[11]

Now, Aristotle's philosophy is separated from the scholastic philosophy by more than just the gulf of around a thousand years; it is also separated by the advent of monotheistic and creationist philosophical theology.[12] In our restricted discussion of metaphysics it is instructive to note, as Owens cautions us, that Aristotle is not concerned with "existence" as a specifically philosophical notion.[13] Aristotle is concerned with God as the ultimate cause of the physical universe but not with God as its Creator, since the universe is eternal. As Owens suggests, the issue of the universe's needing a Creator does not arise for Aristotle since efficient causality is seen as originating motion rather than bestowing existence: the universe is dependent upon the divine substance and the divine substance, though the first cause of motion, is itself not in motion.

10 *ibid.* p59.

11 Aristotle, (1998), *Metaphysics*, *Lambda 7*, Lawson-Tancred, H. (trans.), Penguin, 1072b-1073a.

12 This is why the Greek *theon* should not be capitalised as "God."

13 *AA*, p. 45.

All beings depend upon the Aristotelian divine substance through final causality (the goal or good towards which an activity, process or change is directed) for their being.[14] The divine substance is the final cause of all the motions, circular and rectilinear, and changes in the universe.

When in the middle ages the Aristotelian philosophy of being was approached by Christian thinkers, such as Aquinas, it provoked a distinct response. Owens makes the point that Aquinas' reading of Aristotle's philosophy of being was conditioned by his reading of Scripture where the creation of the universe *ex nihilo* by God is revealed. In philosophical terms, this entails that God is the first efficient cause of all beings and further that God is the primary being. With the revelation of God *qua* Creator we reach the Aristotelian-scholastic paradigm and God is seen as the primary being to which all other beings have focal reference. For Aquinas the "name" of God is revealed in *Exodus* in terms of being: as we read in the Vulgate translation, "*Ego sum qui sum*," "I am who am".[15] As Owens points out, "being" is both the name and nature of God and He, the primary being, is revealed as a loving parent both concerned for and interested in His creation that He conserves in being. And by virtue of His efficient causality God is also 'all-pervasive.' In this regard it is worth noting, as Brentano does in his *On The Several Senses of Being In Aristotle*, Pico de la Mirandola's assertion that "without Thomas Aristotle would be mute".[16]

In terms of Aquinas' appropriation and transformation of certain key concepts in Aristotle (among others the concepts of essence and existence), the early text *On Being and Essence* (*De Ente et Essentia*) remains central. The philosopher's concepts undergo here a distinctive reconfiguration that includes reference to the philosophical concept of God:

> Just as being is said absolutely of substances, but only in a secondary, qualified sense of accidental qualities, the same too

14 *AA*, p. 45.
15 *AA*, p. 46.
16 Brentano, F. (1975), *On The Several Senses Of Being In Aristotle*, George, R. (trans. and ed.), University of California Press, p. 120. The extent to which this remark is intended to invoke the notion of God alone is a matter for scholarly interpretation.

> is true of essence. Some substances are simple and others complex. Essence is found in both, although more truly and nobly in the simple, which are the causes of the complex – at least the first simple substance, God, is.[17]

For Aquinas God alone is being essentially: the existence of a creature is necessarily other than its essence and is given the creature by God's efficient causality.[18] As Owens puts it, being is given by God *qua* primary efficient cause through His creation, conservation and concurrence in every creature's activity. In this sense the being of God and the being of creatures is separated by an "infinite abyss" and further, as Owens emphasises, with Aquinas the being of things becomes expressed by the term existence. Since only in God, who is the first and pure act, subsisting existence (*esse subsistens*) is being essentially, every other being must receive being as an actuality bestowed from outside by an efficient cause: "...each thing whose existence is other than its nature has its existence from another."[19]

Owens argues that by virtue of such a framework Aquinas can follow the Aristotelian reasoning from sensible beings, which are a mixture of actuality and potentiality, to an actuality devoid of potentiality, and for Aquinas the pure actuality arrived at is infinite existence. And whereas for Aristotle sensible things are actual by virtue of their form, for Aquinas sensible beings, composites of form and matter, are made actual by existence: existence is the actuality of finite things and is always distinct from the nature of the thing.[20]

Now for Aquinas metaphysics or first philosophy has as its object being *qua* being or being in general (*ens commune*) and it is precisely in terms of this science that Aquinas faces up to the problem of the analogy of being. The problem Aquinas faced was posed in terms of the unity of

17 Aquinas, T. "On Being and Essence" in McInerny, R. (trans. And ed.) (1998), *Thomas Aquinas Selected Writings*, Penguin, p. 32, hereafter, *BE*.
18 Rather than give a detailed scholarly account of Aquinas's reading of Aristotle in *On Being and Essence* – which would be desirable in a sustained account of Aquinas's metaphysics that seeks to establish comprehensively his debt to Aristotle – we shall only attempt a partial reconstruction of Aquinas's metaphysical position more generally. This will involve reference to the scholarly literature.
19 *BE*, p. 42.
20 *AA*, p. 48.

the concept of being. It is: "what kind of unity does the concept of being possess if it is to apply to all beings and if it is to apply across the categories of being?" His answer is that being is predicated analogically and not purely univocally nor purely equivocally. Analogy is the middle ground between univocity and equivocity. Aquinas maintains the Aristotelian principle that being "is said in many ways" against the Parmenidean principle that being (or "that which is") is used in just a single way.[21] For example, according to the Aristotelian-Thomist view the term being can be said as substance and as accident; the term applies to both at once.

The problem of analogy arises for Aquinas at two 'levels'.[22] First, the problem may be confronted at the level of beings discovered in sense experience and subsumed under being *qua* being or being in general. This may be regarded as the "horizontal level" of the problem of analogy: horizontally, it is the problem of how the term being can be applied to substance and the other categories. Second, the problem of analogy can arise at the "vertical level:" here the problem is expressed in terms of the explanation of how the term being (and other names) can apply to different kinds of substances, including finite created substances and also God.

To take the horizontal level first: a predicate is employed univocally when it is employed several times with the same name and definition or meaning. So, for example, the term "animal" is employed univocally when it is said of a dog and of a human being. By contrast, a predicate is employed equivocally when there is sameness of name but difference of meaning. Thus, "dog" may be employed of a four-legged animal, a fish and a star. In contrast with these two extremes, a predicate is used analogically when different things that differ in definition are nonetheless related to some one thing. Illustrating this point, Aquinas uses an example deployed by Aristotle:

> Everything that is healthy is spoken of *with regard to* health. So, one thing is said to be healthy by dint of preserving health, another by dint of producing it, another by being a sign of it,

21 We follow J.F. Wippel's account in "*Metaphysics*" (hereafter MP) in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, pp. 85-127.

22 The terminology of 'horizontal' and 'vertical levels' is borrowed from *MP*, p. 89.

> another by being capable of having it...It is in just this way that that which is, although spoken of in many ways, is nevertheless always spoken of with regard to a single principle.[23]

The term "health" can be said of something, blood for example, in so far as it is a sign of health. It can be applied to a medicine in so far as it is a cause of health; it can be said of an animal's body since it is the subject in which health is present; in all these deployments, "health" relates to the fundamental sense of the term, the health of an animal. Such predication is grounded in the fact that the secondary analogates are related to the same "end," in this case health. As Aquinas puts it:

> Something is predicated analogically when it is predicated of many things whose accounts differ but are attributed to one and the same thing, as when healthy is said of the body of an animal, of urine and of a potion: it does not signify the same thing in all of them...But all these definitions refer to one end, namely to health.[24]

Alternatively, analogical predication may be based on the secondary analogates being related to one "agent" or efficient cause (in this way the term "medical" can be employed of, for example, a person or an instrument, since in each deployment the relationship to one efficient cause or agent is maintained, in this case, the art of medicine). Further, analogical predication may be grounded on the secondary analogates being related to one subject: it is in this way that being is used analogically of substance and the other categories, for example, quality. Such accidents or categories are named being by virtue of their relation to, specifically, inherence in, substance.[25] Thus Aquinas' view is that substance is the primary analogate because of its "higher" ontological status.

23 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, *Gamma 2*, 1003b.

24 T. Aquinas "On the Principles of Nature (1252-6)" in McInerny, R. (ed. And trans.) (1998), *Thomas Aquinas Selected Writings*, Penguin, p. 29. In this context Aquinas is dealing with univocity, equivocity and analogy and states that "Being is predicated analogically." This is a useful collection of his works. See also the older collection Pegis, A. C. (ed.) (1944), *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas* Volume One, Random House. Aquinas's *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, J. P. Rowan (trans.), (Dumb Ox Books, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1961) also contains useful material.

25 *MP*, p. 91.

With this reference to the higher ontological status of substances the vertical dimension of the problem of analogy is intimated. Aquinas' philosophy of analogy is grounded on sameness and difference that exist in reality and it is Aquinas' view that in reality there are different degrees or levels of being (*entitas*). Essentially, there are different kinds of substances that exist within the created universe. This is the doctrine of the hierarchy of being, and underpinning this view is a metaphysics of participation.[26] Beings participate in existence, the act of being or *esse*, but *esse* does not participate in anything else and there is only one being that does not participate in *esse* but is *esse* or subsisting existence: this being is God. Every other being receives its perfection by virtue of its participation in *esse*.

The metaphysical view of a hierarchy of being was widespread in medieval philosophy. The view itself originates in the pagan ancient world and predates Aquinas in its elaboration by Christian philosophers. The principal thinker in this regard is perhaps Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (or Denis the pseudo-Areopagite) who elaborated the *Celestial Hierarchy* and the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*. In the most general terms, this hierarchical view of being holds that there is a scale of being that ranges in ascending order from inanimate beings, through living beings to purely rational beings and ultimately to the most self-sufficient, rational being, God.[27] Aquinas himself accepted this view and held that the highest degree of being in a particular genus participated in the lowest degree of being in the genus immediately above it.[28]

The philosophy of analogy elaborated by Aquinas was a natural ally of this vertical, hierarchical conception of reality. Since, it is held, the doctrine of analogy maintains God's absolute transcendence to creatures, the being of God and the being of creatures are separated by an absolute gulf. Aquinas rejects the view that names (such as being) are predicated

26 See Aquinas, "How are Things Good? Exposition of *On the Hebdomads* of Boethius (1257)" in *Thomas Aquinas Selected Writings*, pp. 142-162.

27 See "Hierarchy of Being" in Quinn, P. (2005) *Philosophy of Religion A-Z*, Edinburgh University Press, pp. 93-94.

28 Here we follow J. Marenbon and D.E. Luscombe "Two medieval ideas: eternity and hierarchy" in McGrade, A. S. (2003), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 51-72.

of God and creatures univocally. Otherwise, it is argued, God would not be transcendent. Also Aquinas rejects the equivocal predication of names of God and creatures since, by equivocity, there would be no common ground or sense between these names and any hope of natural knowledge of God would disappear. Therefore, Aquinas defends analogical predication of certain names of God, particularly of the pure perfections.[29] When a name is applied to God and to a creature it is said analogically precisely because of the relationship that the creature has to God who is both its "principle and cause." Despite the absolute gulf separating the being of God from that of creatures, as Aquinas holds, every effect is "like" its cause. This likeness of creature *qua* effect to God *qua* uncaused cause is the metaphysical ground for the predication of divine names by analogy.[30] With this overview in place we are now in a position to introduce the problem of univocity as it unfolds in the philosophy of Duns Scotus.

<III>

In his *Categories* Aristotle argued that predicates are either substantial (essential) or accidental. Substantial predicates treat of the kind of thing that the *subject* is. Accidental predicates, by contrast, treat of the non-essential attributes of the subject. However, this classification is limited. In the treatises collectively referred to as *The Metaphysics* the notions of 'being' and 'unity' emerge as features of things that exceed the classificatory scheme of the *Categories*.[31] In medieval thought such features came to be known under the title of the *transcendentals*. Duns Scotus was one of the most significant of the scholastics to pursue a philosophy of being in terms of the transcendentals.

29 The pure perfections and perfect-being theology was developed by Anselm and was later endorsed by Scotus. See, Cross, R (2005), *Duns Scotus on God*, Ashgate, pp. 49-50.

30 *MP*, pp. 116-117.

31 Rather than dealing with this qualification of the classificatory scheme of the Categories in chronological terms, it may be that right from the start Aristotle regarded such terms as trans-generic. Determining this point would require consideration of, in addition to the *Categories* and *Metaphysics*, texts such as the *Topics*, a work thought to be of the same period as the Categories.

Although Scotus' philosophy can be read in relation to the Thomistic philosophy of analogy, the critical bent of his work was aimed primarily not at Thomas but at Henry of Ghent (1217-93).[32] Henry was a neo-Augustinian critic of Aquinas and the most important theologian of the preceding generation. It would be a misreading to see in Scotus a simple rejection or negation of the positions held by Henry but it is true that Scotus forged his own position in reaction to Henry's, particularly with regards to Henry's philosophy of being. In large part Scotus takes Henry's positions as his point of departure. As such, Scotus' genius cannot be fully appreciated without some appreciation of Henry's philosophy. In particular, Scotus' thesis of the univocity of being can be read as a critical reaction to Henry's distinctive interpretation of the traditional doctrine of the analogy of being. Thus, it is appropriate to read his qualification of the Thomistic philosophy as a by-product of his *qualified* attack on Henry. In essence, this qualification is not that analogy is wrong; it is, rather, that analogy presupposes univocity.

The exact nature of Henry's philosophy of being is still a matter of scholarly debate. R. Wielockx points out that since the work of scholars such as J. G. Caffarena, W. Hoeres and J. Decorte, Henry's philosophical reputation is beginning to recover from the criticisms of Paulus that maintained that Henry's version of analogy was wrecked on the reef of internal contradiction.[33] On this view, while Henry's version of analogy, which was only a marginal concern of his, followed the general Aristotelian framework arguing from creatures to Creator but eventually tended towards equivocity and the dissolution of the theory, the main thrust of his metaphysics took him down a path that led him to deduce the notion of God from the notion of being and further to deduce the notion of creatures from his notion of God. Henry's view, continuous with Avicenna and preparing the way for Scotus, is that being is the first notion to come to presence in the mind of a subject and that it is univocal. However, it is Wielockx's contention that Henry flatly rejects any "univocal community" between creatures and Creator and in sharp contrast upholds only a community of analogy between the two orders.

32 See Dumont, S., "Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus" in Marenbon, J. (1998), *Routledge History of Philosophy Volume III Medieval Philosophy*, Routledge, p. 297. On Scotus, see also: Cross, R. (1999), *Duns Scotus*, Oxford University Press. On medieval metaphysics see: *MP*.

33 Wielockx, R., "Henry of Ghent" in Gracia, J. J. E. and Noone, T. B. (ed.) (2003), *A Companion to Philosophy in The Middle Ages*, Blackwell, pp. 296-304.

In the thirteenth century, as Dumont reminds us, the Aristotelians held that the term "being" was not univocal but analogous.[34] Analogy was regarded as the middle way between univocity and equivocity. If the term "being" were univocal then it would maintain the same meaning (*ratio*) across all its instances. If it were equivocal then its meanings would be totally diverse without connection whatsoever. As analogous, being has different but nevertheless related meanings and the term applies primarily and properly to God and secondarily (or by extension) to creatures. Analogy, so it was argued, cuts the right path and maintains that God transcends creatures, a doctrine that, it was argued, is contradicted by univocity. If being were univocal, so the argument goes, God could not be properly said to transcend a creature since his being and the being of the creature would carry the same meaning and this would imply that they belong to the same order. Also, *contra* equivocity, analogy maintains that God is naturally knowable, since by analogical reasoning it is possible, however imperfectly, to reason from creature to God. If being were equivocal such reasoning would be impossible precisely because of the lack of commonality between senses of being. If God's being *is in no sense* like that of creatures, then *in what sense* can we be said to know anything regarding His being?

Radically, Scotus broke with the view that being was analogical and argued that there must be a notion of being (and of the other transcendentals) that is univocal to God and creatures and also to the ten categories. His theory of univocity is particularly concerned with responding to Henry's philosophy of analogy that, as Scotus believed, made explicit the problems facing the doctrine in accounting for the human being's natural knowledge of God. A central dimension of this debate was one of the recurring issues of the medieval period. This was the problem of reconciling the possibility of attaining at least some knowledge of God's divine nature from our knowledge of creatures while at the same time maintaining His absolute transcendence of them. In order to preserve God's absolute transcendence it is important to stress that His divine nature has nothing creaturely about it. God has no *reality* in common with creatures. The problem then becomes: how can any knowledge of God be gained from the creature?

34 Here we follow Dumont, S. D. "John Duns Scotus" in *A Companion to Philosophy in The Middle Ages*, pp. 353-369.

Henry and Scotus both held that natural knowledge of God was possible and both faced up to the consequent problem regarding the transcendence of God. Henry held that any knowledge to which the human intellect could lay claim regarding any particular created thing was, at one and the same time, knowledge of God.[35] Henry's attempt to account for the creature's natural knowledge of God was bound up with his revised version of the traditional doctrine of analogy. According to that doctrine, being and the other transcendentals apply to God in a primary sense and to creature in a related secondary sense. As Henry says:

> Being therefore does not belong to God univocally ... nor purely equivocally ... but in a middle way, namely, by analogy, because it signifies one thing primarily and principally and the other as in some way ordered, related, or proportional to what is primary ... And in this way, being in the most common sense primarily signifies God ... secondarily creature.[36]

Conceived in such a way, the doctrine of analogy is ontotheological. It takes the primary instance of being, the *focal reference* or *meaning* to which everything else is related by analogy, to be a being of a particular kind, God. The doctrine of analogy was a natural ally of the medieval hierarchical vision of the universe.

As Dumont reads it, Henry's position took the philosophy of analogy to its furthest-most point. Scotus, by contrast, went all out for univocity. He declared that being and the other transcendentals were univocal, not only when applied to substance and accident, but also when applied to God and creature. On his view, only univocity could establish the creature's natural knowledge of God. Henry argued that the concept of being ultimately reduced to two completely separate notions (*rationes*). First, infinite being that is proper to God and, second, finite being or the universal concept of being proper to the categories and to creatures. These two concepts exhausted being; there could be no third notion (*ratio*) distinct from finite being and infinite being that would be univocal

35 See Blond, P. "Introduction" in Blond, P. (ed.) (1998), *Post-Secular Philosophy Between philosophy and theology*, Routledge, p. 6.
36 Henry of Ghent (*Summa*, a.21 q.2 [ed. 1520, I, f.124r]) quoted in Dumont, p. 299.

to God and creature since univocity would collapse God's transcendence. In opposition to this, Scotus argued that a univocal concept of being is necessary if any claim to natural knowledge of God is to be justified:

> I say that God is conceived not only in a concept analogous to the concept of a creature, that is, one which is wholly other than that which is predicated of creatures, but even in some concept univocal to Himself and to a creature.[37]

Scotus argued that Henry could not consistently hold that being resolved itself into two discrete notions with no conceptual community between them and that natural knowledge of God could be deduced from creatures. Of his arguments for univocity, the most famous one is that from "certain and doubtful concepts:"

> in this life already a man can be certain in his mind that God is a being and still be in doubt whether He is a finite or an infinite being, a created or an uncreated being. Consequently, the concept of "being" as affirmed of God is different from the other two concepts but is included in both of them and therefore is univocal.[38]

This argument rejects Henry's view that there could be no univocal concept of being because being resolves itself into two analogous notions, one proper to God, the other to creatures. Scotus' point is that since it is possible to doubt whether God is finite or infinite while still being certain that He is a being, the concept of being is not simply reducible to Henry's two notions. Rather, the concept of being is distinct from the concepts of infinite and finite being.

That the first premise of the argument is true is taken by Scotus to be evident from the fact that any given intellect cannot be at once doubtful and certain of the same thing at one and the same time. That the second premise is true is attested by the fact that past philosophers have disagreed over whether the first principle is finite or infinite, material or immaterial, while maintaining that it is nonetheless a being. From this it follows that the concept of being must be distinct from finite and infinite, God and creature, and be equally applicable to all of these. That God is or

37 J. D. Scotus, *Philosophical Writings A Selection*, Wolter, A. (trans.), Hackett, p. 19.
38 *Ibid.* p. 20.

is not an infinite or a finite being is a matter of demonstration. But demonstration of this fact *must* start from something certain about God since otherwise it would proceed from doubtful premises. As such, the concept of being must be admitted as certain as distinct from the concepts of finite and infinite. If this is not admitted, then no reasoning regarding God would be possible. The univocity of the concept of being is therefore necessary for reasoning about God to be possible. For this reason Scotus claimed that theologians who explicitly denied a concept of univocal being implicitly relied on it in discussion of God. As he says: "every inquiry regarding God is based upon the supposition that the intellect has the same univocal concept which it obtained from creatures".[39]

Scotus is not flatly rejecting analogy. There must be some grounding concept of being shared univocally by analogous and proper notions as they apply to God and creature. If there were not, then these concepts would not in fact be analogous. Rather, they would be purely equivocal and natural knowledge of God would be impossible. What Scotus rejects is the theologians' reliance on analogy as sufficient for determining a concept of God since, as Dumont puts it, an intellect's grasp of a relation (in this case analogy) is posterior to its grasp of the terms so related. As such, analogy presupposes a grasp of being proper to God and creature.[40] Scotus is explicitly confronting Henry of Ghent who implied that predicates when applied to God and creatures are equivocal. Against this Scotus insists that if Henry were right, then every argument which moved from creature to God (or back again) would be fallacious, involving a *fallacy of equivocation*.

A univocal concept for Scotus is a concept that possesses such unity that to affirm and deny it of one and the same thing would be a contradiction. As such, univocal concepts can serve as the middle term of a syllogism. If a term has more than one meaning then it can be truly affirmed and denied of one and the same thing. Aquinas' example is the word "dog," simultaneously applicable to a four-legged animal, a fish and a heavenly body. Thus, Fido both is and is not a "dog:" he is *qua* four-legged animal and is not *qua* fish or heavenly body. Scotus' concept of

39 *Ibid.* p. 25. In our reconstruction of Scotus's argument we follow, in addition to his text, S.D. Dumont "John Duns Scotus" in *A Companion to Philosophy in The Middle Ages*, pp. 353-369.

40 See Dumont in *A Companion to Philosophy in The Middle Ages*, p. 356.

univocal being, being-without-qualification, not finite, not infinite, prior to determination, signifies *just being*. With this signification being can be affirmed of both creature and Creator and cannot be both affirmed and denied of anything without contradiction.

Being can be said of God and creatures in the *same sense* in terms of their respective opposition to nothingness. Scotus' point is that even though God and creature are opposed to nothingness in different ways, they are nonetheless opposed to nothingness. If a concept of being is formed that implies opposition to nothingness, then this concept can be predicated univocally of God and His creatures. Scotus further held that unless it is possible to form a univocal concept or term that can be used as the middle term of a syllogism, then no argument from creatures to God could ever be valid. Scotus takes it as a fact (but not dogmatically – he has argued for the position) that it is possible to form a univocal concept of being that is indifferent to such notions as finite and infinite, created and uncreated.

<IV>

Univocal concepts work hard in Scotus' metaphysics. Univocity is not restricted only to being. Every metaphysical investigation of God will involve univocity if it is to stay true to the matter of thought. Investigation of the pure perfections (such as wisdom) will also involve sufficient commonality and thus univocity. This is so since, for example, asking about God's wisdom the questioner must first consult his or her experience of imperfect creaturely wisdom and then abstract from the notion of wisdom all of these creaturely imperfections until he or she arrives at the *ratio formalis* of wisdom; by so doing we arrive at *wisdom in itself*. The questioner can then predicate wisdom (or any other univocal concept) of God in the way appropriate, that is, *perfectly*. If the questioner were not able to form such a *ratio formalis* then it would follow that no knowledge of God would be possible. This would be so since it would be inappropriate to predicate a concept or attribute of God as it is manifest imperfectly in creatures.

It is worth noting that for readers of Scotus influenced by Deleuze it is at this point that a significant point of criticism of Scotus' position emerges. According to Deleuze, an ontology of univocity must ultimately be immanent and in his secret history of philosophy Scotus' limitation is revealed in his ultimate reliance on transcendence, in this case the transcendence of God.[41] Scotus' ontology of univocity may have given being a "single voice" but, from Deleuze's perspective, it did not go far enough. For Scotus, the univocity of the concept of being has a basis in reality because every actual being – whether finite or infinite – is actually opposed to nothingness. Thus, the univocity of the concept of being has a foundation in reality since being itself is conceived as the opposite of nothingness. But Scotus does not hold that there is an actually existing being that is neither finite nor infinite, neither contingent nor necessary and so on. He believes, rather, that univocal being does exist, though only at the conceptual level. There is a *concept* of univocal being neutral to the alternatives of infinite and finite and so on, which can be predicated of both of them. Thus the doctrine of univocal being is a doctrine about predication, nothing more. The doctrine is therefore on the side of logic rather than metaphysics. As Deleuze says in *Difference and Repetition*, for Scotus,

> being is understood as univocal, but univocal being is understood as neutral, *neuter*, indifferent to the distinction between the finite and the infinite, the singular and the universal, the created and the uncreated...[Scotus]...neutralised being itself in an abstract concept.[42]

Scotus remains important but from Deleuze's point of view a considerable advance in the elaboration of univocity is made with Spinoza precisely because univocal being is no longer neutralised: with Spinoza univocal being becomes "expressive" and "affirmative." With this advance the secret history of philosophy in terms of univocity is well on course to the realisation of univocity in the Nietzschean doctrine of eternal return.

41 See Williams, J. "Immanence" in Parr, A. (ed.) (2005), *The Deleuze Dictionary*, Edinburgh University Press, p. 127.
42 *DR*, p.39.

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Schelling's Positive Empiricism

RASMUS UGILT

In this paper I investigate Schelling's late philosophical project. I argue that it entails an empiricist thought of unprecedented novelty. This becomes clear though comparisons with Kant and Spinoza that focus on the ideas of construction and potentiality. In Kant and Spinoza we find two distinct positions on the possibility of truth-capable philosophical construction. Spinoza constructs a system of philosophy utilising a geometrical method, whereas Kant finds such constructive activity to be nothing more than the production of dogmata, which are devoid of any epistemological value. I argue that Schelling successfully navigates between these two positions by inverting the relation of possibility and actuality as it is found in both Kant and Spinoza. Here possibility is only conceived as that which can turn into actuality. Potentiality itself is never considered as something that contains an actuality of its own, nor is it adequately investigated how actuality itself becomes potential. On my account what Schelling does, in his positive empiricism, is to solve these problems by redefining the relation of potentiality and actualisation.

Introduction

Schelling's late philosophical project is a puzzling matter. His distinction between positive and negative philosophy has been thoroughly discussed by several notable interpreters[1] ever since his philosophical re-emergence in Berlin in 1841/42, and yet there seem to be very little (if any) agreement as to what it at all is supposed to convey. Schelling's claim to empiricism has done little to reduce the confusion. How is it

1 Philosophers such as Friedrich Engels, Søren Kierkegaard, Horst Fuhrmans, Walter Schulz, Jürgen Habermas, Manfred Frank, Axel Hutter and Slavoj Žižek have all in various ways discussed Schelling's late philosophy and its relation to the philosophical projects inherent to- and following upon that great philosophical melting pot, which has been given the label "German Idealism".

possible that an alleged idealist philosopher, "the great Schelling" who conceived of a Philosophy of Nature as the philosophy of *infinite and immediate subjectivity*,[2] could end up describing himself as an empiricist? His definition of positive philosophy as "empirical apriorism" in opposition to the negative "*a priori* empiricism"[3] (in the lectures on the philosophy of revelation that have been published by his son in *Schellings Sämmtliche Werke*) does not seem very informative, and quite open to interpretation. That he, however, in the lectures on the very same topic in Berlin 1841/42 (a transcript was published by H.E.G Paulus in 1843 against Schellings will) defines positive philosophy as "*a priori* empiricism",[4] seems to complete the move from confusion to sheer contradiction. The fact that the latter is quoted from a transcript of course leaves room for the possibility that Paulus simple misheard or misunderstood what Schelling was saying. Such a possibility, however, is of little help if we wish to enquire what Schelling meant by positive philosophy and empiricism.

Confusion and contradiction also seem to be adequate descriptions when one considers the reception of Schelling's late philosophy as a whole. Classically here Horst Fuhrmans believed Schelling's positive philosophy to be a project radically different from the "science of pure thinking"[5] dominant of German Idealism, whereas Walter Schulz insists upon the very opposite: that Schellings late philosophical project marks the completion of German Idealism.[6]

Considering that Fuhrmans is the interpreter who thus makes a clear cut between Schelling and the idealist project it would perhaps be a

2 See Schelling F.W.J. (1997), *Sämmtliche Werke*, Herausgegeben von Elke Hahn, Total Verlag, I, 10, 100. (Hereafter *Werke*).

3 See *Werke*, II, 3, 131.

4 See Schelling F.W.J. (1977), *Philosophie der Offenbarung 1841/42*, Herausgegeben von Manfred Frank, Suhrkamp, p. 147 (Hereafter *PO*).

5 Fuhrmans H. (1940), *Schellings Letzte Philosophie. Die negative und positive Philosophie im Einsatz des Spätidealismus*, Berlin, Junger & Dünnhaupt, p. 138. See also Hutter A. (1996), *Geschichtliche Vernunft. Die Weiterführung der Kantischen Vernunftkritik in der Spätphilosophie Schellings*, Frankfurt a. M., Suhrkamp, e.g., p. 19ff.

6 See his Habilitationsschrift: Schulz W. (1955), *Die Vollendung des deutschen Idealismus in der Spätphilosophie Schellings*, Stuttgart and Cologne, W. Kohlhammer Verlag.

viable option to follow his line of interpretation if one, as it is the case here, would want to investigate the empiricist tenants of Schelling's late philosophical project. However as Schulz (and later on Axel Hutter) has clearly shown, Fuhrmans' notion of the empiricism in late Schelling seems utterly inadequate.[7] Fuhrmans argues that Schelling identifies negative philosophy with the philosophical project of Idealism, which is capable of giving a logical explanation of essence, but quite incapable of understanding existence. Logical reasoning is thus able to account for the necessary conditions of being, but completely unable to explain what it means that these conditions can be fulfilled. That there is being at all and not merely nothing remains a mystery for logical reasoning. In Fuhrmans' reading the fact that there is being at all, therefore, becomes the "positive" fact which is to be investigated *a posteriori* in the positive philosophy of revelation. Fuhrmans thus moves Schelling into close vicinity of Jacob Böhme, whose theosophical thought clearly was a source of inspiration for Schelling. Still, Schelling always seem quite clear in distancing himself from Böhme, whom he applauds for being sceptical of a purely rationalistic philosophy, but whom he also criticises for being completely without stringent philosophical ambition: "That positive philosophy cannot be the same as theosophy [along the lines of Böhme], is evident from the fact alone that it is defined as philosophy and as science, since the former abstains from calling itself philosophy and, instead of working from the principles of science, wants to speak out of

7 Interestingly enough it is the Fuhrmans line of interpretation that is persued by both Habermas and Žižek in their renunciations of the thought of late Schelling. Their interpretations aim at bringing forth the radical, progressive thought of Schelling's so-called *Weltalter* period. See Habermas J. (1971), "Dialektischer Idealismus im Übergang zum Materialismus – Geschichtsphilosophische Folgerungen aus Schellings Idee einer Contraction Gottes", in *Theorie und Praxis. Sozialphilosophische Studien*, Frankfurt a. M., Suhrkamp, (This text on Schelling is absent from the English translation of Theorie und Praxis, but a translation of it has been published recently in Norman, J & Welchman, A (ed.) (2004), *the new schelling*, London, Continuum). See also Žižek S. (1997), *The Abyss of Freedom*, The University of Michigan Press, and Žižek S. (1996), *The Indivisible Remainder. An Essay on Schelling and Related Matters*, London: Verso. Although I agree with both Habermas and Žižek that the philosophy Schelling initiates (but never finishes, as was the case with all of his late philosophical projects) in the manuscripts of "The Ages of the World" provides the foundation for many of the philosophical ideas that were to follow upon the demise of German Idealism, I am less convinced that Schelling with his late distinction between positive and negative philosophy falls back into some sort of reactionary dualism between theoretical and practical reason.

pure immediate insight [*Schauen*]."[8] The problem for an interpretation such as Fuhrmans's is that when it argues for the complete and utter separation of positive and negative philosophy, it seems to move positive philosophy out of reach of logical rational thought, meaning that it is forced to rely upon a sort of mystical intuitive "*Schauen*" of the sort found in Böhme. This seems wrong simply because of the fact that Schelling explicitly distanced himself from Böhmian theosophy, but also, and more importantly,[9] because it seems to be clearly contradicting the definitions of positive philosophy given above. Regardless whether positive philosophy is to be understood as "empirical apriorism" or as "*a priori* empiricism", it still seems evident that there must be some *a priori* element in positive philosophy. And that alone should adequately prove that Schelling is at quite a distance from Böhmes mystical intuitive "*Schauen*".

"*A Priori* Empiricism", "Empirical Apriorism"

Still, the question remains: how are we then to understand the positive/negative divide and the various definitions "*a priori* empiricism" and "empirical apriorism", if not along the lines of Fuhrmans?

What is needed at first is some terminological clarity. I will here make the assumption that it is the definition from *Werke* that is the adequate one. Negative philosophy is to be understood as "*a priori* empiricism" positive as "empirical apriorism". This makes sense if one considers another description Schelling gives of negative philosophy in PO. "Negative philosophy is only concerned with the entities of experience as objects of possible knowing [*erkenntnis*]. Its connection to reality is merely coincidental. Negative philosophy would be true even if nothing at all were to exist. It is logic, apriorism of the empirical".[10] Such a description fits very well with the idea of apriori empicism in a Kantian sense, where the transcendentally determinable pure forms (of intuition and understanding) are the structures to which phenomenal entities

8 Schelling, *Werke*, II, 3, 126-127. See also *PO*, pp. 145-146.

9 After all it wouldn't be the first time in the history of philosophy that an interpreter arrived at an understanding of a thinker that could be deemed more adequate than the thinkers own self-perception.

10 PO, p. 147.

necessarily must confine themselves if they are to be anything at all for human consciousness. Therefore, I take this to be the general idea of a negative philosophy in Schelling: The logical investigation of the pure forms to which objects must necessarily fit, if they are to be real at all.[11] Given that "*a priori* empiricism" is the adequate definition of negative philosophy (both according to the *Sämmtliche Werke* and PO) I feel justified in assuming that "empirical Apriorism" can be taken to be the adequate definition of positive philosophy.

To be able to get a clear understanding of what is entailed in positive philosophy as "empirical apriorism", it will be helpful to consider more closely how such an "*a priori* empiricism" is formed in the Kantian edifice. Crucially here, Kant is relying upon a notion of mathematical construction, which will be very relevant when we later on proceed to discuss Schellings "empirical apriorism".

Kant on Philosophical and Mathematical Construction

Classically, empiricism can be thought of as a doctrine that relies upon the idea that abstract laws are arrived at through generalisation of empirically present singularities. The Humean sceptical challenge, which Kant thought essential to meet, can be described as the denial of the possibility that the rules governing the derivation of the abstract and general from singularities could be given by the singularities themselves. The singularities themselves do not tell us how we are to subsume them to general laws. Therefore, we cannot, according to the humean sceptic, give any necessary and certain account of how abstract and general laws are arrived at through experience of object.[12]

Kant's transcendental countermove consisted in noting that the singularity understood as the unity of perceptual experience, would

11 Notice here the classical idealist appropriation of Kantian philosophy. Where Kant restricts his investigation of the pure forms of objects, to the question of how an object must necessarily be formed in order to be a possible object *for human consciousness*, the idealist move consist in asking how an object must necessarily be formed in order to be a possible object *at all*.

12 See e.g., Hume D. (revised by P. H. Nidditch) (1978), *A Treatise of Human Nature, Second Edition*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, p. 73ff, and 155ff.

necessarily have to primarily be a synthetic unity; that we are at all able to perceive a singular "something", and not merely the blur of a manifold of experience, goes to say that the singularity is a synthetic construct. Given that a singularity must necessarily be thus synthesised in order to be anything for us, we have a way of determining *a priori* the rules that govern this constructive activity: these are the rules that govern our specific human sensual and intellectual faculties, and crucially the way in which these faculties are connected. In Kant we therefore have an idea of an *a priori* construction of experience.

To get the proper Kantian understanding of this we need to make a crucial distinction. This is the distinction between mathematical and philosophical construction. Construction for Kant is the connection of the universality of a concept and the particularity of an intuition.[13] Intuition should here be understood as divided into empirical/phenomenal intuition and the pure sensation of the forms of sensibility: space and time. Mathematical construction is thus the kind that establishes a connection between the universality of a concept and the pure forms of sensibility. This means that the mathematical construction of a concept is also always the construction of a concrete particular. In this way a triangle *is* the particular constructed in the connecting of the pure concept of a triangle and the pure form of space. Kant therefore claims that the so-called mathemata (mathematical concepts) necessarily correspond to an object, a concrete particular in the pure forms of sensibility.

Concerning philosophical construction Kant is more of a sceptic. Philosophical concepts are not restricted to denominating objects in the pure forms of space and time. Philosophical concepts pertain to real objects of empirical intuition. This means that there is no possibility for the acquisition of knowledge through the philosophical construction of concepts. The use of construction for the acquisition of knowledge is only possible in the field of mathematics. Philosophical construction can only construct a model (or better a schema) of a *possible* object, but not the object itself. The philosophical construction of the concept of causality does not produce causality itself, but instead only a schema to which empirical objects must necessarily fit, if the determining power of

13 Kant I. (1929), *Critique of Pure Reason*, Norman Kemp Smith (trans.). London, MacMillan, B 614, hereafter *CPR*.

judgement is to be justified in calling them causal.[14] Whereas one is obviously mistaken if one conflates the schema of causality with actual causality, it is more complicated to identify the error where the constructed concept denominates an over-empirical (*übersinnliches*) object - such as God. Dogmatists have been tempted to see an analogy of the mathematical construction of the concept of a triangle and a philosophical/theological construction of the concept of God. The prime example of such a philosophical dogmatism is of course found in Spinoza, who constructed a system of philosophy from the concept of absolute substance or God.[15]

The crucial mistake here consists for Kant in a modal confusion. Mathematical construction is the creation of *actual* mathematical objects. On the other hand philosophical construction can only be a determination of the *possibility* of an object. Philosophical construction can only amount to the construction of schemata of objects, but not the objects themselves. Thus a philosophical construction of the concept of God can only amount to a determination of what God would be like, if he were to be understood as existing in the real world.[16] Kant's analogy of the "100 Thalers" is the supposed knock-down argument here. The mere possibility of "100 Thalers" quite clearly does not amount to the same as 100 actual Thalers in my pocket. In the same way that it is impossible to prove the existence of 100 actual Thalers from the conceptual construction of 100 possible ones, it is impossible to prove the actual existence of God from the philosophico-theological construction of the concept of God.

14 Kant defines the schema of causality in the following way: "It consists, therefore in the succession of the manifold, in so far as that succession is subject to a rule." *CPR*, B 183.

15 See Spinoza, B. (1955), *Ethics and De intellectus emendatione*, Everyman's Library, London, New York.

16 That would be the construction of the schema for the concept of God. It would be a construction of a model to which an empirical intuition would have to resemble in order to hold as an intuition of God. However, since the concept of God is the concept of a thoroughly over-sensible being – a being which cannot be subjected to the forms of sensibility, such a construction is clearly impossible.

On Possibility and Actuality

Kantian empiricism thus becomes the paradigmatic example of *a priori* empiricism. It is "*a priori*" because it insists upon the necessity of the construction of the categories as transcendental schemata for the possibility of empirical knowledge. It is "empiricism" because such empirical knowledge is attained through sensuous experience of singulars that are subsumed to the schematised categories.

The mature Schelling indeed finds such a philosophical programme worthy of attention and continued investigation.[17] Only it cannot be the whole story. The rigid distinction between mathematical and philosophical construction seems unattractive to Schelling. Crucially, the Kantian attempt at a modal clarification described above is really the opposite according to Schelling. As we shall see below, the Kantian way of construing the modalities ends up resulting in it being impossible to comprehend the relation between necessity and freedom. At first however, we will concentrate on the argument Schelling gives against the Kantian distinction of mathematical and philosophical construction in *Über die Construktion in der Philosophie*.[18] Here he criticises the notion of a pure intuition as it figures in Kant. As we have seen this notion is crucial for the Kantian suggestion that there is a kind of mathematical construction, which is the construction of an actual concrete singularity. Such a mathematical construction is the combination of a universal concept and pure intuition.[19] Schelling finds that Kant cannot uphold this notion of a pure intuition in the restricted form that is given to it by the fact that a philosophical construction is deemed impossible. Through this restriction pure intuition becomes backwards dependant upon sensible intuition. The argument goes as follows: Kant insists that pure intuition is possible. But pure intuition is restricted to the kind that makes mathematical construction possible. Within the Kantian edifice there seems to be only one viable option for the validation of such a restriction.

17 He finds Hegel to be the philosopher who in the most adequate manner completes such a philosophy as a system. Thus Hegel becomes the champion of negative philosophy. See e.g., *PO*, pp. 121-122.

18 In *Werke*, I, 5, 126ff.

19 In the case of arithmetical construction it is the combination of a pure concept and pure time, in the case of geometrical construction it is the combination of a pure concept and pure space.

That would be to say that mathematical construction in pure intuition is possible, because it determines the forms of a possible empirical object. This, however, would mean that the way to determine which kinds of pure intuition are possible would be to find out which kinds of empirical intuition are possible. The result is that it is not because pure intuition is formed as it is that sensible intuition must necessarily take the forms it does. Rather it must be the other way around. It is because sensible intuition is formed as it is that pure intuition takes the form it does. While this may be the case, it is certainly not a possible solution for a Kantian who wishes to uphold the status of mathematics as a pure *a priori* constructive science. Schelling can therefore conclude that if mathematical construction is possible, other forms of construction (philosophical) are possible as well. "*Either* all intuition is sensible [...] *or* a different form of intuition is possible, one that would entail the immediate, pure unity of the universal and particular."[20]

Kant cannot uphold his notion of mathematical construction without admitting that other kinds of construction are possible as well. Moving on from here we are thus left with two options. Either we stick with the restricted notion of construction, which would mean that we would have to reduce all construction to the construction of schemata: objects constructed in pure intuition would only count as the formal intuitions which empirical objects necessarily must resemble if they are to be real at all (or as it would go in Kant ... if they are to perceptible to a human observer). That would make the relation of pure intuition to sensible intuition one of possibility to actualisation. Here we have the Kantian formalism where logical operations can only amount to a discussion of which possible forms actual objects must necessarily possess.

The other immediate option would be to allow for a full-blown notion of philosophical construction. This would be the Spinozistic road. It would mean insisting upon there being something inherently actualised

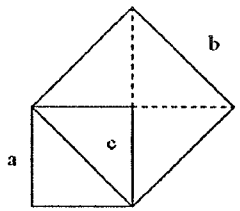
20 Toscano A., "Philosophy and the experience of construction", in Norman J. and Welchman A. (ed.) (2004), *The New Schelling*, London and New York, Continuum, p. 116. Toscano offers an excellent discussion of some of the themes I'm touching upon here relating them to the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. He does not, however, relate them to Schelling's late philosophical project and the divide between negative and positive philosophy as I am doing here.

about the concepts that are constructed *a priori*. Kant's monetary argument here in fact seems to work very well against its creator. Because, is not the very way in which we conceptually construct the 100 Thalers a very important factor in the determination of the value of the 100 Thalers in my pocket? Do not phenomena such as inflation and devaluation in a very real way affect my economic "*Vermögen*"? And would it not be just to argue that such phenomena (at least in part) are determined by human conceptual activity?[21]

Schelling too insists upon the notion of an actualised potential. However, he does it in a way that brings him beyond both the Kantian dualism of mathematical and philosophical construction, without subscribing to all of Spinoza's thought regarding construction. We will see how this is spelled out once we have taken a look at Spinoza's geometrical version of philosophical construction.

Between Necessity and Freedom

The construction of a geometrical concept should be understood as the proof of that concept. To prove that "the square erected upon the diagonal of a square covers exactly twice the area of the original square" is to construct the squares in question:[22]



21 This argument has recently been put forward by Žižek in a presentation at The 2006 Annual General Meeting of The British Society for Phenomenology: "The Writings of Slavoj Žižek", St. Hilda's College, Oxford, April 2006.

22 This example is found in Hutter A., *Geschichtliche Vernunft*, Frankfurt a. M., Suhrkamp, p. 78. Hutter, however, does not address the constructive aspects of the proof. It should also be mentioned that the proof is used extensively by Socrates in Plato's dialogue *Meno*. See Plato, *Meno*, 83C-85B.

Hutter remarks that that for the mathematically untrained the evidence of the proof does not spring to mind immediately. However, as soon as it is pointed out that the larger square (b) covers exactly four times the area of the triangle (c) that consists of two sides of the original square (a) and the diagonal, it immediately becomes clear that the larger square (b) indeed does cover twice the area of the original square (a).

What interests Schelling in this example is the feeling of necessity one experiences in the moment one is able to construct the proof. The Schellingian question therefore is the question of the experience of such a combination of construction and necessity. If construction is taken to be the creation of something, if it is taken to be the making of something new or to be exact: if it is taken to be an expression of *freedom*, how are we then to understand such a free construction which is crucially necessitating? How is it that an experience of freedom can also be an experience of being necessitated?

The idea of philosophical construction as it is conceived by Spinoza is built around this link between necessity and freedom. What is the Spinozistic *causa sui* if not exactly such a curious combination of freedom and necessity? Spinoza thoroughly denies any identification of freedom and the will. Freedom is not the freedom to choose between a given set of options. Rather freedom is to be understood as being determined by ones own necessity. In Spinoza of course the only being whose freedom is conceived as absolute is God. God is the absolute substance: that from which all of reality necessarily emerges. There is nothing before or after God. As such God is not the creator of the world; he is reduced to being the absolute and rational order of the world. Spinoza's geometrical method consists in constructing cosmos from the principle that is given by God as the absolute substance. Thus proving that principle in the same way as the sentence "the square erected upon the diagonal of a square covers exactly twice the area of the original square" was proven through its construction above. This way of establishing the truth of the principle not only proves the principle as such; it also shows the relation between the principle and the system – between God and his attributes and modes. This relation is that of geometrical necessity. The result is a radical form of determinism: the beings of the world (including human beings and their actions) are not determined merely by the principle of nature through natural or physical

necessity, but through geometrical necessity. Freedom in the sense of being able to choose otherwise – freedom as the power of the will to interfere with the order of being – is completely undermined through this geometrical construction of the world. And purposely so. To Spinoza such notions of the will can be nothing but stories told to make worldly existence bearable. True freedom conversely can only consist in the realisation that there is indeed only necessity.

There is another feature of Spinoza's concept of freedom that should be noted as well. Since the system is based upon a geometrical notion of necessity, where explaining a thing means to construct it from its principle or ground, we find that it is a system that has been purified of final causes. The world is no longer a cosmos where all things strive towards their proper place. That Spinoza's system is a system of pure immanence therefore not only means that that human (and divine) transcendence of the will is made impossible. It also means the abolishing of any ontological hierarchy. Abolishing the ontological hierarchy with God above, pure material below and human beings somewhere in the middle makes it impossible to justify state power through reference to the divine. Instead one can argue in Hobbesian fashion that the state is only legitimate as an expression of the will of the people. It is this thought and its potentially revolutionary consequences that attracted the early Schelling to Spinoza, and contrary to what interpreters such as Habermas and Žižek believe, the attractiveness of this thought remains with Schelling throughout his philosophical career (or so at least I argue here).

In other words there is something in Spinoza's idea of freedom which Schelling continues to appreciate. By identifying freedom and necessity Spinoza makes the idea of an ontologically superiour God impossible. Divine freedom can only consist in identification with necessity, just as it is the case with human freedom. God therefore cannot be an entity over and above the world, but instead he is reduced to being a principle that determines the world as a system. The Spinozistic identification of freedom and necessity therefore seems to be an effective remedy against both the notion of a transcendent God and the notion of freedom as choice.

A Little Too Self-Evident?

To the mature Schelling, however, there is an inherent fault in the Spinozistic system. There seems to be something inherently problematic about a philosophy which, through a geometrical method, establishes that the world is indeed geometrically structured. It is as if the world is being placed upon the procrustean bed[23] of geometrical method, the result being that it indeed seems geometrically determined. Those who proceed in such a fashion seem to be running the risk of being blinded by the perfection of their own method.

To take a short literary excursion they run the risk of repeating the Prefect's error in Edger Allen Poe's *The purloined Letter.* In this short story the Prefect has with great persistence and sense of detail using a thoroughly geometrical method searches the premises where the purloined letter with certainty is known to be, only to come out empty-handed. Blinded by his own thoroughness in searching for the missing letter he never discovers that it was right in front of him all the time. Indeed the point of the short story is revealed right at beginning by the Prefect himself. Having explained the predicament he is in he tells the narrator and his friend Dupin: "The fact is, we have all been a good deal puzzled because the affair is so simple, and yet baffles us altogether." To which Dupin answers: "Perhaps it is the very simplicity of the thing which puts you at fault [...] Perhaps the mystery is a little too plain. [...] A little too self-evident". The Prefect of course cannot accept the idea that his problem should be "a little too self-evident".[24] As it turns out, however, this is exactly the case. The minute measurements of every cabinet, drawer and closet that the Prefect undertakes in the search for that illusive hidden compartment which should contain the stolen letter, end up being simply a measure of the geometry of the house, as it turns out that the letter is placed clearly within the view of anyone in a card-rack. The geometric method ends up offering nothing more than an investigation of geometrical matters of fact. The analogy to the Spinozistic system should be fairly obvious here. Spinoza seems to be *all*

23 Procrustes being the fiend who according to the legend placed people on an iron bed, stretching their bodies so that they might be long enough for it if they were to short, or cutting their limbs off if they were to large.

24 Poe E. A., *The Purloined Letter,* published 1845, full text available at http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/POE/purloine.html.

too successful in utilising his geometrical method. Spinoza can construct the world from his principle of substance only because it is a geometrical perception of the world that he is constructing. Thus Spinoza's geometrical method only succeeds in capturing geometrical reality and not in showing that reality itself is geometrically structured.[25]

Where Kant's efforts to deny the possibility of philosophical construction ended up forcing us to understand transcendental possibility to be inversely dependant upon empirical reality, if we are to uphold the restricted idea of construction (as seen above), Spinoza on the other hand introduces a full-blown notion of philosophical construction only to put reality onto the procrustean bed of geometry. Interestingly enough it is potentiality that suffers in both of these cases and not actuality as one perhaps would be inclined to think, which I will try to make clear below.

In the case of Kant we have already seen how it is impossible to conceptualise possibility in such a way that it is understood as having a reality of its own. In the Kantian edifice possibility is only understood as possible actualisation, never as actualised possibility. Another way of putting this would be to say that possibility in Kant is completely devoid of potency. Possibility is conceived as pure logical form. In other words: there is no real potentiality in Kantian philosophy, where potentiality is understood as something more than mere logical possibility (i.e., as something powerful or forceful that can bring actuality about).

In the case of Spinoza on the other hand there simply is no real possibility, because that which is constructed through his geometrical method is not to be understood as transcendental possibility in the

25 Spinoza did himself in fact deal with the problem in his *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* where he tries to distinguish those definitions which should count as real (and thus pertaining to objects of the real world) from those that are merely conceptual. See Spinoza, B., *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, translated by R. H. M., Elwes. Full text available at http://authorsdirectory.com/b/spint10.htm. 93-94. However, it should be no surprise that the so-called real definitions are understood as those definitions that enables the construction of the geometrical object in question. And as we have seen, through the discussion of pure intuition in Kant, such construction only amounts to the construction of the necessary *form* of real objects, but not of reality itself.

Kantian sense, but rather as reality as such. As Alberto Toscano notes there is a striking similarity between Schelling's critique of Spinoza and that of Gilles Deleuze. This is Deleuze's formulation: "The Necessity in Nature is that there will not be any relationships which are not effectuated. The entirety of the possible is necessary, which means that all relationships have been or will be effectuated. Nature is the totality of effectuations of all possible, and therefore necessary, relationships. This is identity in Spinoza, the absolute identity of the possible and the necessary."[26] It is reality as such that is produced through Spinoza's geometrical method; merely possible conceptual structures are as such real, if they can be constructed in space, and if they cannot be thus constructed, they are not possible in the first place.

This should make it clear why Kant in terms of providing an adequate concept of potentiality indeed does provide a step forward compared to Spinoza. In Kant at least we have a purely formal concept of possibility, albeit one that does not amount to any real concept of potentiality. In Spinoza on the other hand it seems as if we have no real concept of possibility at all, since any possibility is necessarily actualised. Geometrical construction is thought to deliver reality as such and not a possible reality that is subsequently to become actualised.

So while Schelling does find Spinoza to have a critical point in identifying freedom and necessity, because it enables him to abolish the idea of an ontological hierarchy as well as the idea of freedom as choice, he still needs to reconfigure that relation of identity in such a way that it does not result in the idea of potentiality becoming unthinkable.

Potentiality Re-Examined

What we are looking for in Schelling is a concept of potentiality that enables us to navigate between Kant's logical formalism and Spinoza's geometrical constructivism. As noted Schelling's idea of negative philosophy – of *a priori* empiricism – does resemble Kant's transcendentally founded empiricism quite perfectly. We have also found

26 Quoted in Toscano, A, 'Fanaticism and Production: On Schelling's Philosophy of Indifference', *Pli* 8, 1999, 46-70.

that the problem in Kant that made it impossible for him to transcend the paradigm of negative philosophy was an overly restrictive concept of philosophical construction. However, through the inspection of Spinoza's geometrical notion of philosophical construction we have found that a straightforward acceptance of this idea will not suffice to solve the problem. What we have found is a common root to the problem of construction as it appears in both Kant and Spinoza; this is the notion of potentiality. Neither in Spinoza nor in Kant do we find the tools to adequately think a notion of potentiality that is beyond the concept of mere logical possibility.

This brings us to the point where we can take on Schelling's characteristic of negative philosophy as such. We shall see that it pinpoints the issue of potentiality. Through that we shall see how Schelling solves the problem, and thus completes the step from negative to positive philosophy. That will enable us to perceive clearly the novelty of Schelling's positive empiricism.

What characterises negative philosophy is a close link between being and reason. Schelling formulates it this way: "As all knowing [*Erkennen*] relates to a Being, so does the infinite potency of knowing[27] relate to the infinite potency of Being."[28] What this goes to say is that the totality of being can be investigated, interpreted and ultimately understood by human reason. Crucially is of course the notion that it is the *infinite potency* of knowing [*Erkennen*] that corresponds to the *infinite potency* of being. The move accomplished by reason in negative philosophy is therefore one of identifying the potency behind every moment of being. The presupposition necessary for such a philosophical project is therefore that every moment of being is preceded by its own potency. To Schelling, however, this relation of potency and being is exactly the reason why negative philosophy in the end must necessarily fail. Two reasons can be given for the necessity of such failure. First of all the above mentioned presupposition that every moment of being is necessarily preceded by a moment of potency means that the totality of being can be explained by reason through its potency (its concept). And second of all such a relation of potency and being means that potency itself can only be conceived as something which can possibly come into

27 "The infinite potency of knowing" is Schellings concept of reason.
28 *PO*, p. 100.

being. Potency itself does not contain any being of its own and therefore it comes to resemble Kantian formal possibility – potency understood in this way is indeed completely impotent.[29] Strangely enough therefore, the presupposition that every moment of being is preceded by a moment of potency results in an ontology that is founded on actuality. The preceding potency does not have any real ontological status; it is again a merely logical possibility for something to acquire ontological status, but once it has thus come into being it is no longer understood as potency. The truth of being is thus actualised being.

Schelling's way of solving these problems in one sweep is to introduce a new concept of being: *the un-preconceivable being* (das unvordenkliche Sein) – The Being that is not preceded by any potency. If it were, it would not be un-preconceivable, because then it would be possible for reason to think it through its preceding potency. This Being therefore, is a Being that reason cannot comprehend *a priori*. It must necessarily be dealt with *a posteriori* – or empirically. The philosophy that takes this idea of being as its starting point is positive philosophy – Schelling's positive empiricism. This move clearly brings Schelling beyond the first problem of negative philosophy noted above. As such the un-preconceivable being is formulated in direct opposition to the presupposition of negative philosophy, namely that every moment of being is preceded by a moment of potency. This move, however, does also enable Schelling to think a concept of potency that is more than mere potential actualisation. The reason for this is quite simple. That un-preconceivable being cannot be preceded by any potency does not mean that is cannot be a potential itself – secondary to its un-preconceivable being (or *post actum* as Schelling puts it[30]). Only is it impossible for being to be potency as an immediate result of its un-preconceivable being. In order for it to be that, it is necessary that it is posited as something different from it original un-preconceivable being. But once being is posited in such a way, it is a potential that is a being on its own, in this way "Being would be sublated [*aufgehoben*] to *potentia potentiae*, to a potency, which has potency in its own hand."[31]

29 *PO*, p. 165.
30 *PO*, p. 162.
31 *PO*, p. 162.

One should notice that Schelling's formulation here is in the subjunctive. This is because it is impossible to *a priori* deduce the positing of un-preconceivable being as *potentia potentiae*. Since it is impossible to infer from the concept of un-preconceivable being that it will be posited in such a way, it can at first only be assumed that it will happen. If being comes to be posited as potentiality however, its becoming so can only be understood as an expression of will. Schelling explains: "Because for itself, for [un-preconceivable] Being, it does not make a difference whether it takes on Being or not. It is the Being that precedes all concepts and all potency. It is indifferent towards both adopting being and the opposite. *Possibility only exists if it wills it.*"[32]

As long as it remains un-preconceivable, Being is indifferent towards its own being. In order to emerge as something other than un-preconceivable being, it must transcend indifference and express a will. The way in which the will is expressed is crucial. This is clear through a comparison with the way the will functions in negative philosophy. Within that context Schelling writes: "Every transcendence as a *potentia ad actum* is nothing other than a transcendence from not-willing to willing."[33] Negative philosophy describes the movement from potentiality to actualisation. Just as it is the case in positive philosophy Schelling here finds that the fundamental movement of being is one that should be understood as will. The difference is that we in negative philosophy, where the fundamental movement is that from preceding potency to actualisation, find that the will still possesses a teleological moment. The move from mere possibility to full actualisation is driven by an impulse that drives the lower towards the higher. To use the vocabulary of the Essay on Freedom, will is understood as the *longing* [*Sehnsucht*] of potentiality to become actualised.

On the contrary, in positive philosophy the will is not directed towards some particular end; it is not directed towards the actualisation of a potential. Here instead we find that will is directed towards being as un-preconceivable, not in order to actualise a potential (as in negative philosophy), but instead to posit it (pure actualised being) as a potency (as actualised potentiality or *potentia potentiae*).

32 *PO*, p. 162.
33 *PO*, p. 103.

What is investigated in Schelling's positive philosophy is therefore not being in its movement from potential to actualisation (as is the case in negative philosophy), but rather being in its becoming potential. Such positing function cannot be logically deduced, as it is primarily an expression of will. It can only be investigated *post actum*. Schelling's positive empiricism is therefore an investigation into how true potency appears.

Thereby we also find that Schelling has brought us a step further concerning the issue of philosophical construction in comparison to Kant and Spinoza. As long as the discussion of the notion of philosophical construction remains an issue that is to be solved between these two, it is a question of which kinds of constructive activity are deemed epistemologically valid. Consequently what is being left out is the issue of what is being constructed. Both in Kant and in Spinoza it is presupposed that what is being constructed is something actual. The constructive activity as such is that which brings the merely potential (merely conceptual) into actualised being. The Schellingian way out here consists in reversing the relation of actual and potential being. What is posited in Schellingian construction is not an actualisation of the merely possible. Instead it is actualised being that is posited as a potential (as *potentia potentiae*).

In this way philosophical construction is possible in a genuine way. What is constructed philosophically is not a new reality, but rather a new possibility or potentiality. It is in this way that it can be said that the constructive activity brings something new into being. The new that comes into being is a new potentiality – in the robust sense of an actualised potentiality, not as a mere potential actualisation.

Conclusion

Having said that we are also in a position to describe what lies at the heart of Schelling's duality between "*a priori* empiricism" and "empirical apriorism". In *a priori* empiricism constructive activity is able to establish the conditions that objects of experience must necessarily meet

if they are to come into existence at all. In empirical apriorism philosophical constructive activity is able to construe reality itself as a potential.

What is being suggested by Schelling's idea of a positive philosophy is that philosophy should do more than describe actual and possible worlds. Instead philosophy should have an awareness of how philosophy (and perhaps other conceptual activities) has a capacity for bringing new possibilities about – for making actuality potent in a new way.

From this understanding of empirical apriorism we can now see clearly what goes wrong when one interprets Schelling's late philosophical project along the lines of Horst Fuhrmans.[34] Seen from the angle of Fuhrmans, Schelling's empiricism if fact becomes a sort of empiricism that he has clearly surpassed; Fuhrmans' version of Schellingian empiricism is an empiricism without the constructive activity we have investigated so far. As mentioned above Fuhrmans' interpretation implies that positive philosophy in the late Schelling indicates a radical break with the logical reductionism of idealistic philosophy. Instead, positive philosophy should *take its departure* from the positive fact of existence – the fact that there is being and not merely nothing. It should thus consist in a non-conceptual perception (a more or less Böhmean "*Schauen*") of that which comes into existence. Schelling gives quite a striking description of how such a philosophical project differs from his own: "If now positive philosophy is opposed to rationalism, then it cannot, according to contemporary philosophical use of language, be allowed to resist being called empiricism. All of these lines of thought, however, take departure from something, which appears in experience, be it the wonder of Christ and his appearances, be it an overwhelming sensation or an immediate intuition of the divine. Positive philosophy, on the other hand, neither proceeds from Being as it is present in pure thinking, nor from anything that is present in experience." He concludes a few paragraphs below: "However, if positive philosophy does not proceed from experience, it can still *move towards* experience."[35]

34 This as mentioned is the way Habermas and lately Žižek have chosen to do it, albeit as a way of dismissing Schelling's late project in favour of the philosophy of *The Ages of the World*.

35 *PO*, pp. 146-7.

Pointing out that positive empiricism moves towards experience, instead of taking its departure from it, may sound like a simple rhetorical move, but from what has been said above it should be clear that it is not. What separates Schelling's empiricism from other kinds is that it, instead of merely registering what is entailed in experience, takes an active constructive part in the world of experience. The mark of positive philosophy is that it itself brings something new about.

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Spinoza's Third Kind of Knowledge as a Resource for Schelling's Empiricism

CHRIS LAUER

For critics of Hegel's system, Schelling has always been a problematic ally. While he offers some of the most influential and penetrating criticisms of the Hegelian *Aufhebungsdialektik* (the term Schelling uses to distinguish it from his own *Erzeugungsdialektik* or 'dialectic of production'),[1] his late philosophy of mythology is such a jumble of *a priori* and *a posteriori* reasoning that it is difficult to discern what sort of alternative it presents.[2] Indeed, Habermas has argued that the late Schelling's emphasis on eternity counteracts the anti-Hegelian impulses in his thought and ensures that his vision of history is just as closed as Hegel's.[3] Essential to Schelling's efforts to avoid this fate is the new empiricism he calls for in his 1833-4 Munich Lectures *On the History of Modern Philosophy*.[4] After showing that Hegel's *Logic* can secure its starting point only by ensuring that the Concept is never challenged by reality, Schelling advocates a return to the empiricist conviction that the Concept always only follows reality. Yet after demanding of Hegel, 'but what if concepts can be shown which that

1 Beach, E. (1994), *The Potencies of God(s)*, Albany, SUNY, pp. 84-5.

2 For a concise summary of major objections to Schelling's later philosophy, see Beach, pp. 143-6.

3 Habermas, J. (trans. Midgley, N. and Norman, J.) "Dialectical Idealism in Transition to Materialism: Schelling's Idea of God and its Consequences for the Philosophy of History," in Norman, J. and Welchman, A. (ed.) *The New Schelling*, London, Continuum, esp. p. 75.

4 F. W. J. Schelling (1994), *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, Bowie, A. (trans.), Cambridge U. P, hereafter *HMP*, p. 189; I/X: 198. All references to Schelling's works following a semicolon will be to the standard German edition, Schelling, K. F. A. (ed.) (1856-1861), *Schellings sämmtliche Werke*, Stuttgart-Augsburg, J. G. Cotta, in the format "series/volume: page."

system knows nothing about, or which it was only able to take up into itself in a completely different sense from their real [*ächten*] sense?',[5] Schelling is at a loss for how to express this difference in senses systematically.

While Schelling's efforts to think through this difference are bewildering, even more frustrating is the carelessness with which he treats his most natural ally. Like Schelling, Spinoza is driven to empiricism not out of suspicion of *a priori* knowledge but out of the need to reconcile a robust account of human freedom with a purely natural explanation of the human organism. Both philosophers agree that we must know *some* things *a priori*, and yet human freedom depends on such knowledge being neither the exclusive ground of our knowledge nor an obstacle to genuinely novel experiences of nature. While each philosopher is committed to the methodological assumption that nature comprises a system which admits of nothing outside of itself, they each put this principle of immanence under a great deal of strain in the effort to show that human freedom demands exposure to as many modifications of nature as possible.[6]

Given these affinities and the recent flourishing of studies of both Spinoza and Schelling as models of an anti-Hegelian empiricism,[7] it can be jarring to see how uncharitable and even downright stodgy Schelling's readings of Spinoza can be. Though Schelling questions the philosophical potential of anyone who 'has not at least once in his life lost himself in the abyss of Spinozism,'[8] none of his published or surviving unpublished writings delve into the specifics of Spinoza's epistemology of bodies, and he is generally reluctant to admit the similarities between his own late empiricism and Spinoza's. This lack of sympathy might have resulted in part from simple hermeneutic inertia: in his early writings, Schelling saw

5 *HMP*, p. 144; I/X: 139.

6 Cf. EIVP38. All translations of the *Ethics* come from Samuel Shirley's translation (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992). References below follow this pattern, where "EIV" refers to Part IV of the *Ethics* and P38 to Proposition 38.

7 See especially Lawrence, J. P. (2003), "Spinoza in Schelling: Appropriation through Critique," Idealistic Studies 33: 2, 175-193. See also Deleuze, G. (1994), Difference and Repetition, Patton, P. (trans.), Columbia U. P., hereafter DR, which enlists both Schelling (pp. 190-1) and Spinoza (p. 140) to combat Hegel's dissolution of difference.

8 *HMP*, p. 66; I/X: 36.

Spinoza as a rationalist aiming to deduce all of nature from a single principle,[9] so it would not be too surprising if he continued to ignore Spinoza's empiricist side even as he came to see the need for a return to empiricism in philosophy. In this essay I intend to show that Schelling's "dialectic of production" also prevented him from taking up Spinoza's materialistic brand of empiricism. In the first part of the paper, I will present Schelling's argument for a renewed empiricism, and in the second part I will show what Spinoza's discussions of the third kind of knowledge have to offer this project. To conclude, I will argue that while Schelling's stated objections are not sufficient grounds for ignoring Spinoza's contributions to a potential post-idealistic brand of empiricism, there are still major difficulties in incorporating Spinoza's theory of knowledge into the late Schelling's project.

Schelling's late empiricism

To anyone following Schelling's career systematically, this turn to empiricism is something of a surprise. Though Schelling had incorporated new discoveries from the empirical sciences into his works at every stage of his career, he was not an empiricist in any meaningful sense until the 1820s at the earliest.[10] Even his three early works on the philosophy of nature[11] subordinate empirical studies of such fashionable phenomena as electricity and magnetism to reason's impulse toward identity, seeking mainly to show *a priori* that reason and nature are originally identical.[12]

9 *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie*, I/IV: 113.

10 Brown, R. (1977), *The Later Philosophy of Schelling: The Influence of Boehme on the Works of 1809-1815*, Lewisburg, Bucknell U. P., pp. 251-2.

11 In *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* (1797), Schelling explains Kant's observation in third *Critique* that only reason has access to the self-organising structure of organisms by showing that reason itself has the structure of organic life. In the 1798 *On the World-Soul*, he argues that reason not only has the structure of organic nature, but is the very source of this structure in nature. And in the 1799 *First Projection of a System of Nature Philosophy*, he makes reason the end of nature by presenting the sequence of inhibitions that allows nature to develop into a reason capable of knowing itself.

12 Because of the overriding rationalistic tendencies of these texts, some have argued that results from the empirical sciences played no role at all in their development. Cf. Snelders, H. "Oersted's Discovery of Electromagnetism," in Cunningham, A. and Jardine, N. (ed.) (1990), *Romanticism and the Sciences*, ed. Cambridge U. P., p. 232. For a more charitable reading of the role of the natural sciences in Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*, see Esposito, J. (1977), *Schelling's Idealism and Philosophy of Nature*, Lewisburg, Bucknell U. P., p. 82.

In those passages where Schelling does grant empiricism a place in *Naturphilosophie* he emphasises that the empirical matters only within the context of the specification of the unconditioned.[13] Indeed, references to empiricism in these works are mostly critical, suggesting (in response to Kant's third *Critique*) that a purely empirical understanding could never account for teleological structures in nature.[14] Insofar as empiricism is to play any role at all for the early Schelling, it must be exiled from the process of philosophy and restored "to its original nakedness."[15] Empiricism must, that is, be a bare affirmation of experience that makes no pretensions to grounding philosophical knowledge.[16]

As Schelling moved into his period of "Identity Philosophy" in the first five years of the nineteenth century, he became even more insistent that philosophy "deduce" all knowledge from the simplicity of the absolute. Thus while his 1801 *Presentation of My System of Philosophy* is self-consciously modeled on Spinoza's *Ethics*,[17] it focuses on reworking Spinoza's failed attempt to link God to his finite modes and ignores empirical concerns entirely. While the *Presentation* devotes a great deal of effort to laying out the ontological place of nature, it passes over the actual experience of nature in silence.

Unsatisfied with this silence, Schelling would later dismiss this early work as a merely "negative philosophy" closed off from reality.[18] Unlike positive philosophy, which transcends mere logic by asking why there is something rather than nothing, negative philosophy merely asks what being must be like, given that it is.[19] After showing in his 1809

13 Schelling (2004), *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, Peterson, K. (trans.), Albany, SUNY, p. 22; I/III: 24, hereafter *FO*.

14 Cf. Esposito, p. 82.

15 Schelling, *Introduction to the Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*, translated in *FO* (op. cit.), p. 201; I/III: 282.

16 Cf. Nancy, J. (1993), *The Experience of Freedom*, McDonald, B. (trans.), Stanford U. P., p. 53.

17 *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie*, I/IV: 113.

18 *HMP*, p. 133; I/X: 125.

19 Tilliette argues that the distinction between the negative and positive philosophies is not the same as a distinction between rationalism and empiricism, since positive philosophy, in seeking to say something meaningful about the supersensible, also

Freedom essay the impossibility of accounting for freedom within a system that begins with divine understanding,[20] Schelling began searching for a way to account systematically for genuine novelty in the world's development. If philosophy ever hopes to transcend the self-reflective circle of Hegel's system and relate the Concept to something real and independent of itself, then it will have to develop a positive account of the relation of God's essence to His existence.[21] So long as we assume that existence simply follows from essence, the possibility of freely existing modes of nature will remain opaque to us, since we will have no way to differentiate the determination of essence from the freedom of existence. In order to transcend mere reflection on the links between concepts, philosophy must conceive of a free relationship between the human and the divine.

Schelling argues in the Munich Lectures that this requires a rejection of the rationalism of post-Kantian German idealism and a return to the empiricist conviction that knowledge of existence cannot be fully grounded *a priori*. When Kant postulated reason as the arbiter of conceptual transcendence, Schelling argues that he only postponed reason's overdetermination of the supersensible. As soon as Kant made God an idea of reason, it was only a matter of time before the idealists discovered that this idea must guide reason not only regulatively, but constitutively. If reason forms an idea of God prior to any encounter with the world, Fichte and other idealists saw, then reason's adequacy to the world depends on its ability to conceive God without remainder.[22] But Schelling takes his *Freedom* essay to have shown that human freedom depends on the ground of God being inconceivable (even if we can formulate a system in which all existence follows from the divine

looks beyond experience (Tilliette, X. (1970) *Une philosophie en devenir*, Paris: Vrin, v. 2, p. 49). While this distinction is useful in laying out the methodology of the late philosophies of mythology and revelation, it does not help us understand what Schelling means in the Munich Lectures when he explicitly calls for a new empiricism.

20 Schelling (1987), *Philosophical Investigations of the Essence of Human Freedom and Related Matters*, in Behler, E. (ed.) *Philosophy of German Idealism*, Hayden-Roy, P. (trans.), New York, Continuum, hereafter *PI*.

21 Cf *HMP* 147; 1/X: 143-4: "The whole world lies, so to speak, in the nets of the understanding and reason, but the question is *how* exactly it got into those nets, since there is obviously something other and something *more* than mere reason in the world, indeed there is something which strives beyond these barriers.

22 *HMP* 189; 1/X: 198

understanding). Faced with a choice between freedom and a priori knowledge of God, the later Schelling opts for freedom. But this rejection of rationalism implies a sort of empiricism, for 'empiricism, by always only deducing the existence of God, like the existence of another personality, from empirical, experiential traces, features, footprints, or characteristics, thereby founds that agreeable *free* relationship to God which rationalism cancels [*aufhebt*].'[23] A free relationship with God is one that can *experience* freedom and not just presuppose it, for any doctrine that places freedom beyond all experience denies the possibility of a contingent and evolving relationship with God. The only philosophy that could conceive the world as freely created would be a science of experience.[24]

The word "science" (*Wissenschaft*) here is important, since it emphasises that this new empiricism cannot be grounded on a mystical experience of God. Experiencing a free relationship between nature and God does not entail direct access to God independent of His essence, for such an experience would dissolve if it could not establish the link between God's essence and existence. The problem with fideists like Jacobi and mystics like Boehme is not that they claim that their experiences of God do not allow further explication, but that they cease to question the link between natural necessity and human freedom.[25] Though Schelling does not believe that a system can be grounded exclusively in thought, he is not willing to abandon the drive for system in general. While a system that dumps all existence into the divine understanding is incompatible with the experience of freedom, so is the assumption that divinity can be captured in a single experience. We can experience ourselves as free only to the extent that we recognise ourselves as having a vocation (*Bestimmung*), which in turn requires us to *work toward* divinity, building up our knowledge of it piecemeal.[26] Without the mediation of a negative philosophy that can explain the relationship between God's essence and natural necessity, every vision will be

23 *Ibid.*

24 *Ibid.*

25 Since Boehme is not content simply to have mystical experiences, but opens up new possibilities for conceiving their *nature*, Schelling takes his mysticism more seriously than Jacobi's irrationalistic fideism (*HMP*, p. 183; 1/X: 190). In the end, though, Schelling still concludes that Boehme's thought is incomplete without a negative philosophy to supplement it.

26 *HMP*, p. 182; 1/X: 188.

incommunicable and inadequate to the progressiveness essential to any full experience of freedom.

The philosophy that Schelling envisions (but does not develop) in the Munich Lectures is thus one that would fuse the scientific rigor and dialectical structure of a negative philosophy showing *what* being must be with the empirical insight of a positive philosophy showing *that* being is. To what extent Schelling's later philosophy succeeds in accomplishing this synthesis is not something I will be addressing here, but we have seen at minimum that it must not reduce experience to a mere dialectical moment.[27]

Spinoza's Empiricism

Since we only have fragments of Schelling's strained attempts to develop this project through the philosophies of mythology and revelation and less than a third of any version of *The Ages of the World*, I submit that it will be more profitable to begin exploring its viability through Spinoza's much more developed system—a suggestion that Schelling barely considers. The only point in the Munich Lectures where Schelling even comes close to recognising Spinoza as an empiricist appears in a passage meant to draw a contrast between Kantian rationalism and pre-Kantian empiricism. In setting the stage for the hyper-rationalism of Fichte, the early Schelling, and Hegel, Kant's error is not his claim that God can only be a practical postulate of reason, but his assumption that any knowledge of God would have to be *a priori*. While Schelling does not dispute Kant's critiques of the ontological and cosmological proofs for the existence of God, he argues that they fail to reach philosophers like Spinoza, for whom God can be known empirically.[28] By arguing that our knowledge of God continually grows as we learn to be affected by more of his modes in more ways, Spinoza avoids Kant's rationalistic approach to God without falling into the defeatism of Hume's empiricism.

27 Nancy develops this thought further, arguing that while it is in a sense necessary for self-conscious beings to be free, and while freedom entails accepting responsibility for this necessity (p. 46), there must also be a sense in which we experience freedom not in its necessity, but in its simple presence (p. 53).

28 *HMP*, p. 103; 1/X: 86.

At first this claim seems like a strange one for Schelling to make, given that he ignores Spinoza's empirical leanings nearly everywhere else, and the entire *Ethics* presupposes that we can know God's existence *a priori* (EIP11). And yet, I maintain, it is precisely this attention to reason's aprioricity that allows Spinoza to develop the sort of empiricism Schelling is seeking. By leading us to the point where we can grasp God's existence and hence love him intellectually (EVP32C), Spinoza's *ratio* provides the necessary mediation between foreknowledge of God's essence and the open-ended experience of his nature. The path to a superior empiricism would thus lead from Spinoza's second kind of knowledge to the third, whereby reason's universal knowledge of what is common to all things would become the intuition of divinity in all things.

But before we trace this path, it is important to note that pure reason does not provide a shortcut to empiricism. If our only aim were to avoid the totalisation of Hegel's Concept, it could be argued that Spinoza erects a bulwark against Hegel simply by asserting that thought is not a substance, but merely one of an infinity of attributes.[29] If thought has its being in another being (i.e., is not self-sufficient), then we know without any further systematic work that it must leave itself to secure its own ground. Hegel himself makes precisely this point in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, arguing that Spinoza's system remains incomplete because it fails to acknowledge that its basis lies in the intellect's apprehension of substance through the attributes.[30] Since thought is merely one of many[31] attributes, no matter how adequate its knowledge of bodies is, it must still admit the existence of something exterior to it and thus will never return to its beginning. If our goal were merely to avoid such a closure, then it would seem that Spinoza succeeds simply by laying down the principles of his system.

29 Pierre Macherey explores some problems with this argument in "The Problem of the Attributes," Stolze, T. (trans.)(hereafter *PA*) in Montag, W. and Stolze, T. (ed.) (1998), *The New Spinoza*, Minneapolis, U. Minnesota P.

30 Hegel, G. W. F. (1995), *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, 3 vols., Haldane, E. and Simson, F. (trans.), Lincoln, U. Nebraska P., vol. 3, p. 287, hereafter *LHP*.

31 At *LHP*, p. 260, Hegel incorrectly states that there are merely two attributes, and at HMP, p. 68; 1/X: 39 Schelling makes the same mistake.

However, there are both textual and programmatic reasons to reject this shortcut. First, while all of Part I's propositions about the nature of God rest upon the attributes through which the intellect perceives the essence of substance (EIDef4), this does not imply that the system is grounded on an act of the intellect. As Macherey rightly notes,[32] Spinoza distinguishes between perceiving and the more active conceiving, carefully stating that attributes are the means by which the intellect *perceives* substance.[33] The intellect thus cannot be the ground of Spinoza's system, or even of its account of the relation between God and his attributes, since the word "perceives" implies that knowledge of substance comes from beyond the intellect. And since the system is not grounded in a rational act of the intellect, we cannot assume that it resists closure just because thought is only one attribute among many. The system could still close off the possibility of human freedom by swallowing the differences between modes into a monolithic substance.

But in addition to these textual concerns, such a shortcut would also fail to provide the robust empirical answer to Hegelianism that Schelling wants. For, of course, there are any number of ways to conceive of thought's non-self-subsistence, none of which are automatically compelling solely through their recognition of the limitations of thought. For Schelling, an epistemology can only pose a viable alternative to Hegel's system if it gives us a way to conceive of these limitations systematically. It is not the openness of the system or thought's failure to return to itself that brings us into positive philosophy, but an experience of God as simultaneously grounding the human vocation in nature and leaving humanity free to expand its knowledge through novel experiences of the divine.

As we have seen Schelling argue in the Munich Lectures, such an experience could only come from an experience that offers immediate access to divinity and yet is also in accord with rational knowledge of God's essence. In Part II of the *Ethics*, Spinoza suggests that in addition to imagination and reason, there is a kind of knowledge that "proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of some of the attributes of God to an adequate knowledge of the essence of things" (EIIP40S2). That is, it is a sort of knowledge that relies on reason's ability to identify

32 *PA*, p. 73.
33 EIIDef3Exp.

"common notions"[34] among beings and yet proceeds not by deduction from universals, but by the immediate experience of God's essence—precisely the sort of knowledge that Schelling is seeking in the Munich Lectures. Spinoza is careful to distinguish this third kind of knowledge from the first kind (imagination or opinion), which grows out of extrapolations from inconstant experiences (EIIP40S2). Although both kinds arise from particular experiences without moving through the universal, by linking its object to God's essence the third kind is able to avoid the confused referentiality of the first (EIIP41).

While some commentators have argued that it is incoherent for knowledge to be both immediate and the result of an adequate knowledge of God,[35] Deleuze has shown that any other knowledge of God's essence is inconceivable. Because common notions find properties that several modes hold in common, God cannot be the object of a common notion.[36] And since reason can only conceive of its objects through common notions (EIIP40S), God cannot be an object of reason. But since reason can only have adequate ideas of individual modes by conceiving them through the idea of God's eternal essence (EIIP45), it is reason's very effort to conceive God's essence that turns into intuitive knowledge. Adequate knowledge of the link between finite things and God's essence cannot be simply an act of reason, but it is also not something wholly other to reason. When we follow our common notions up to the idea of God, we pass over into intuition without having to leave reason behind.[37]

34 Because they can only arise from external bodies like any other affection of the mind and yet are also freely produced *a priori*, these "common notions" introduce their own problems, many of which are quite similar to the ones Schelling spent his earliest writings trying to solve. Cf. Schelling (1980), *Of the I as Principle of Philosophy*, in *The Unconditional in Human Knowledge: Four Early Essays*, Marti, F. (trans.), Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, p. 67; I/I: 157. Since the third kind of knowledge grows out of reason's application of common notions (EIIP40S), any systematic account of intuition would have to explain their possibility. For a discussion of Spinoza's answer to this problem, see Y. Yovel, "The Second Kind of Knowledge and the Removal of Error" in Yovel, Y. (ed.) (1994), *Spinoza on Knowledge and the Human Mind*, Leiden, Brill.
35 Bennett, J. (1984), *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*, Cambridge U. P., p. 370.
36 Deleuze, G. (1988) *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, Hurley, R. (trans.), San Francisco, City Lights, p. 57.
37 Ibid., p. 58.

The third kind of knowledge thus does not replace the second kind, but merely supplements it. In determining whether anything does or does not pertain to the essence of God, the third kind of knowledge is entirely superfluous. Both the second and third kinds of knowledge allow us to distinguish truth from falsity (EIIP42), and thus everything that can be known about nature can be known through universals. Nevertheless, the third kind of knowledge offers a purchase on human existence that mere reason cannot equal. Because intuitive knowledge always concerns something immediately confronting the mind, it inspires a much more powerful love of God than the abstract knowledge that all things depend on God (EVP36S; E1P25S). Thus although it is not any truer, knowledge of the third kind is still better able to overcome passions inhibiting an intellectual love of God. By allowing us to perceive individual modes of God simply and freely, rather than under a universal, intuition can overcome the necessity of reason and love each thing in nature as it appears (EVP5; EVP33S). Thus Spinoza shows how the faculty that conceives the world as governed by natural necessity can become the intuition of freedom without having to posit a sharp division in human knowledge.

Schelling on Spinoza

Unfortunately, Schelling overlooks the promise of this account of the third kind of knowledge and falls back on two main criticisms of Spinoza throughout his career. First, because it fails to bridge the gap between God and his finite modes, Spinoza's system is 'the most incomprehensible that has ever existed.'[38] For though Spinoza develops a perfectly consistent account of divine substance, he fails to show any relation between this substance and the finite modes through which we encounter it. While he establishes a necessary connection between things and God, Schelling writes in the Munich Lectures, 'he does not establish the sort and means of this necessary connection.'[39] This objection is both unfair and misleading. While the *Ethics* does, indeed, fail to conceive the relation between the essence of God and finite things *rationally*, Schelling himself takes his own *Freedom* essay to have proved that no system could draw such a link purely through reason without denying human freedom. What Spinoza does offer is an account of how reason can become a different sort of knowledge that can know individual modes of nature adequately without the mediation of a universal.

Schelling's second major objection is more serious, but still does not justify ignoring Spinoza's contributions to empiricism. In his *Stuttgart Seminars* Schelling calls Spinoza's system static and inanimate,[40] and in the *Freedom* essay he calls it lifeless and mindless (*Gemüthlos*).[41] The argument is that since Spinoza tries to explain all of nature through the mechanistic physics he develops in the lemmata of Part II, he is unable to account for nature's dynamism and self-organisation, which forces him to deny spontaneity in the human organism (EIIP35S). The account of self-organisation developed in Schelling's nature philosophy, and especially his *First Projection of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* (1799), is undoubtedly an improvement over the rather rudimentary account of corporeal identity developed in the *Ethics*, but in his turn to positive philosophy Schelling

38 Schelling, (1988) *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature*, Harris, E. E. and Heath, P. (trans.), Cambridge U. P., p. 28; I/II: 36.
39 *HMP*, p. 67; I/X: 37.
40 Schelling, (1994), *Stuttgart Seminars*, in *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory: Three Essays*, Pfau, T. (trans.), Albany, SUNY P., p. 214; I/VII: 443.
41 *PI*, p. 230; I/VII: 349.

argues that no account of natural necessity—even one as rigorous as the Naturphilosophie[42]—will be able to intuit divinity and freedom in nature. While any philosophy is incomplete if it cannot explain the possibility of human freedom in a world governed by necessary natural laws, philosophy will also have to learn how to experience the actuality of human freedom in relation to God.[43] For Spinoza, this is a task for intuition, not physics. Understanding the mechanistic laws of nature is useful for helping us avoid passive emotions, but it is only through intuition that we grasp the relation of individual modes to God.

Why, then, after insisting that philosophy must move beyond the merely formal movements of negative philosophy into a philosophy aiming to present the positive actuality of the world does Schelling continue to see Spinoza as a merely negative figure who collapses all differences into natural necessity? From a Schellingian perspective, the problem with Spinoza's system is not that he does not see the need for a positive philosophy, but that he fails to complete the project of negative philosophy. According to Schelling's conception of a system, it is not enough to say that an infinite substance must have infinitely many attributes. Given that substance manifests its essence under the attribute of extension—Schelling assumes for his own systematic reasons that extension must come before thought[44]—there must be a reason why it also manifests itself under the attribute of thought. It is all well and good to assume that divinity must manifest itself in some way,

> But how does infinite substance come to posit not only what is extended but also the concept of the same? . . . To this question there is only one answer, or it can only be explained in one way, namely by assuming that the infinite substance in positing what is extended, or positing itself as what is extended, does not completely exhaust itself.[45]

What Spinoza's system cannot account for (and what it cannot even recognise as a problem) is how thought constitutes being's excess over

42 *HMP*, 114-33; I/X: 99-125.
43 *PI*, p. 256; I/VII: 382.
44 "For what is extended is obviously the first, that alone which is truly primary, of the two. Thinking only *relates* to what is extended and could not be at all without it" (*HMP*, p. 68; I/X: 39).
45 Ibid.

matter. In the wake of Adorno and Deleuze, this is a rather unfashionable thought,[46] but it is nonetheless essential to Schelling's conception of system. Any system of philosophy will have to trace the development of being into its particular finite modes, and for negative philosophy, this entails showing why nature must develop into beings capable of thought.[47] If Schelling is to be our model for a post-idealistic empiricism, then we will have to find a way to preserve the idealistic notion that matter requires thought, which would lead us beyond the intuitive contentment of Spinoza's joyful empiricism.

46For both Adorno and Deleuze, of course, it is precisely the opposite sort of excess (that of matter over thought) that philosophy needs to theorise. Adorno, Theodor W. (1973), *Negative* dialectics, E. B. Ashton (trans.), Continuum, London, p. 11. DR, xx-xxi.
47 Schelling's most sustained treatment of this problem was his 1798 *On the World-soul*, esp. I/II: 357-80.

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What is Transcendental Empiricism? Deleuze and Sartre on Bergson

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Introduction

One of the most challenging aspects of the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze is his transcendental empiricism; his belief that philosophical practise should line up with an empiricism endowed with the attribute of being transcendental. Such an oxymoron may generate hostility and diffidence, but it is actually precise and appropriate as soon as we more attentively regard Deleuzian thought at its place in contemporary philosophy. Deleuze, against the mainstream tendencies of contemporary French thought, decides that Bergson should be pivotal for future philosophy. The recovery of Bergsonism, which begins with his first writings of the 1950s, is a coherent theme through to *L'actuel et le virtuel*, dated 1995. This choice is markedly outstanding when one considers the decline of the fortunes of the Bergsonian philosophy, which by the 1930s is overwhelmed by the growing phenomenologico-existentialist movement. Bergson's philosophy is harshly (and sometimes unjustly) criticised by the Sartre generation but, nevertheless, influences the divergences from the Husserlian philosophy proposed by Sartre or Merleau-Ponty.[1]

Bergson was so important for the culture of his time that his influence could hardly be forgotten, and remained present, if not

1 On this topic see Florence Caeymaex (2005), *Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Bergson Les phénoménologies existentialistes et leur héritage bergsonien*, Hildesheim, OLMS and Rocco Ronchi (1990), *Bergson, filosofo* dell'interpretazione, Genova, Marietti.

explicitly, in the following generations. Some excesses, some simplistic criticisms can be interpreted as resulting from the desire for liberation from such a formidable heritage, which suffered from the consequences of success and the related simplifications of Bergsonian philosophy. Deleuze is an extraordinary reader of the adventures of Bergsonism, and we propose that this Bergsonism is a suitable approach to understanding his own peculiar empiricist project. Deleuze, also influenced by the studies of his master Jean Hyppolite,[2] gave special attention to the relationship between Bergson and the existentialistic phenomenologies: this comparison, or dialogue, is always present – if not explicitly – in all of his major writings. Such a relevant role is due to the fact that defining the contact points and the divergences between these thoughts allows Deleuze to determine his own field of research.

In *The Movement Image* Deleuze says that 'the reasons of phenomenology and the reasons of Bergson are so different that their own opposition should guide us'.[3] This declaration, very neat and programmatic, is confirmed by what Deleuze writes in the preface for the American edition (1988) of his *Bergsonism*, significantly called 'A return to Bergson'.[4] Here Deleuze summarises in three key points the actuality of Bergsonism facing the challenges of changing society, life and science:

- Intuition
- Science and metaphysics
- Multiplicity

Deleuze remarks on the similarity of these points with the main interests of phenomenology. He does not go on, however, to encourage a convergence with Bergsonism (just mentioning developments in psychiatric phenomenology leading to a "pathology of duration"), but clearly distinguishes the thought of Bergson and his own Bergsonian lineage from phenomenology. Nevertheless, Deleuze's original Bergsonism would not have been possible without his experience of

2 Cfr. Hyppolite, J. (1971), *Figures de la pensée philosophique*, Paris, P.U.F, Vol. 1 pp. 448-49.

3 Deleuze, G. (1985), *Cinéma 1. L'Image-mouvement*, Paris, Minuit, p. 84, hereafter MI. All the quotations contained in the present paper have been translated by the author. References to English versions are mentioned for the of convenience the reader.

4 G. Deleuze, G. (1991), *Bergsonism*, Tomlinson, H. and Habberjam, B. (trans.), New York, Zone Books, pp.115-118.

phenomenology. In particular, Sartre plays a particularly important role in the genesis of the Deleuze-Bergsonism project, especially Sartre's early phenomenological writings (*La transcendence de L'Ego, L'imagination e l'Imaginaire*). Our aim here is to analyse some passages of Sartre's texts, which we consider crucial for understanding the Deleuzian enterprise of secularising Bergsonism. Such a comparison is not aimed at establishing a continuity or even a tradition - which is hardly present - but just to outline some moments of a conversation, a *dialogue* (in the Deleuzian sense of the word) between three of the greatest modern French thinkers: Bergson, Sartre and Deleuze.

A complex legacy

Bergsonism, especially as cultural vogue, was a huge phenomenon between the 19th and 20th centuries, but in the late post-war period his reputation declined markedly. In 1959, the conference "*Bergson et nous*"[5] was held in Paris to commemorate the centenary of his birth. During the conference Bergson was perceived and treated by the participants as a figure belonging to the past. This impression can be summarised by quoting Henri Lefebvre, 'We read Bergson books as if we were visiting an exhibition of furniture or photographs from La belle époque'.[6] The French university after the liberation was dominated by the so-called *three H*'s generation (*H.* standing for Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger). Bergson was considered as a long-lasting, and sometimes embarrassing, legacy.[7] The post-war generation of philosophers felt it necessary to fight Bergsonism and favoured the dissemination of Husserlian

5 AA.VV *Bergson et nous* in Bulletin de la société française de philosophie (Paris: Colin, 1959).

6 See also: Descombes, V. (1979), *Le méme et l'autre. Quarante-cinq ans de philosophie française (1933-1978)*, Paris, Minuit, p.21: "If there is a sign of the changing attitude – riot against Neo-Kantism, eclipse of Bergsonism- is for sure the returning back to Hegel"

7 Merleau-Ponty was probably one of the most careful in handling the complex legacy of Bergson. He contested how unjustified it was to consider the Bergson philosophy as old, academic material, whereas Bergson himself had been opposed by the University conservatives and appreciated by irregular thinkers such as Peguy or Sorel.

Phenomenology within France. A conference in 1959, ironically also the centenary of Husserl's birth, resulted in a stand for Husserl against Bergson, despite the several points of contact between the two philosophers (the role of intuition and the importance of a return to the immediate datum, for example). The French philosophers chose to follow Husserl to reach the goal that Bergson appeared to have been unable to reach. We may say that the efforts of Husserl and Bergson derive from some common needs, such as the redefinition of the relationship between science and philosophy, and the overcoming of psychology. Psychology flourished during the late 19th century, but its results needed to be set into a philosophical framework. Psychology considered on one side images as solid fragments in the flux of consciousness, and on the other side movement as being inside things, bodies, space. The opposition of the physical world of movement and of the psychological world of images did not allow for making sense of the passage from one to the other.

According to Deleuze, the duality of image and movement was the most important division the psychological schools were not able to cope with:

> This means that on the one hand we find images inside the consciousness and, on the other hand, movements inside bodies. This division entails many difficulties, and the prominent reactions to this crisis were phenomenology and Bergsonism.[8]

Many French philosophers chose to follow the way of phenomenology with the emerging phenomenological-existentialist movement. A major issue was to clearly distinguish the philosophy of Bergson from the phenomenological method, even paying the price of biased interpretations. The need to oppose Bergsonism was especially strong among those philosophers who shared an active but hidden Bergsonism. Especially with Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, the adoption of the phenomenological method took place through a close confrontation with Bergson. Nevertheless, this tendency was above all endorsed by Sartre. The major effort of his early works is largely to resolve

8 Deleuze, G., Cours Vincennes - St Denis, 05/01/1981: Bergson, *Matière et Mémoire*, http://www.webdeleuze.com/php/sommaire.html. See also Deleuze, MI, p.83.

Bergsonian problems through the introduction of the concept of intentionality. In fact, despite his strong criticisms, Sartre's problems can be said to still be Bergsonian, concerning the redefinition of the concept of consciousness, which should be liberated from the chains of psychological and idealistic interpretations. It is important to underline that Sartre and Bergson shared the common historical problem of finding an alternative to the mainstream solutions proposed by psychology and Neo-Kantism. Bergson still faced on one side the Lachelier Kantism, and on the other side the followers of Comte, Taine, Spencer, and the psychological debate contained in the *Revue* Philosophique[9] directed by Théodule Ribot, which was the very laboratory of 20th century French philosophy. Later, Sartre worked in a relatively similar atmosphere, between the heritage of positivism and Leon Brunschvigc's idealism, which would be central to the education of French philosophers between 1909 and 1941. The young Sartre studied Bergson while seeking the answers he needed to emancipate himself from both psychological and idealistic conceptions of consciousness.

Husserl contra Bergson / Bergson contra Husserl

Sartre states that his personal philosophical baptism took place whilst reading the *Essai* by Bergson, and it is well-known that Bergsonism has a special role in the development of the Sartrean philosophy. Nevertheless, along the lines of his time in terms of historical preferences, Sartre elected to follow phenomenology as the best way to reach immediate data. Phenomenology provides an efficient method to solve problems, which are often *in toto* Bergsonian, related to the duality of consciousness and movement and to the statute of image. Sartre, in agreement with Bergson, wishes to move away from the then dominating Neo-Kantian stance and to move beyond the psychic. Here comes the necessity of clarifying in detail the differences between phenomenology and Bergsonism. This clarification is usually attained by paying the price of biased interpretation, where Bergson is presented within a psychological perspective. Actually, Sartre depicts Bergson as the main

9 Cf. Meletti, M. (1996) *Théodule Ribot* in *Dictionnaire du monde religieux dans la France contemporaine, vol.IX ‚Sciences religieuses*, Paris, Editions Beauchesne, and (1991) *Il pensiero e la memoria. Filosofia e psicologia nella "Revue Philosophique" di Théodule Ribot (1876-1916)*, Milano, Angeli.

exponent of the what he calls *alimentary philosophy*, where reality is transformed into an assemblage of contents for an omnivorous consciousness, and knowing is seen as a process of assimilation, *digestion*. Here, the ego is a big stomach or a big tank, and consciousness is a victim of a naturalistic interpretation. Sartre opposes the Husserlian characterisation of intentionality to a Bergsonism, which is set at the same level as the associationist psychology and naïve empiricism.

In the book *L'Imagination* (1939), Sartre strongly criticises psychological theories of the image, taken as responsible for interpreting the image as *a copy of the thing, as existent as the thing*. Bergson is at the centre of Sartre's argument, being blamed for giving to the image an ambiguous double status, similar to that proposed by psychology. From this perspective, image is the representation of the perceived, which is stored in consciousness as soon as the moment of perception is completed. Sartre states that Bergson's theory of the image is not emancipated from the image-object perspective, and is a prisoner of what Sartre calls the "illusion of immanence", namely the inability to recognise the original transcendence of consciousness. The detailed analysis of the Bergsonian position is aimed at clearly distinguishing the positions which reduce images to things, from the intentional phenomenological consciousness, which is transcendental, empty and immediately temporal. The image is a consciousness, a particular approach towards its object, but is never identical to the object itself. According to Sartre, intentionality gives back to consciousness an active role – 'An image is a certain kind of consciousness, an act, not a thing.'

This structure of intentionality, which highlights the creative abilities of consciousness, its emancipation from the representational model, and its temporal nature, does share Bergsonian features, but is nevertheless largely diversified from the Bergsonian position, since Sartre denies any similarity and severely criticises the characteristics of the Bergsonian consciousness. One of the passages of Sartre's criticism of the Bergsonian concept of consciousness (developed in the first chapter of *Matter and Memory*) is worth quoting:

> Instead of consciousness being a beam of light illuminating things, it is a luminosity flooding the subject. There is no illuminated matter, but rather, a phosphorescence diffused in

> every direction that becomes actual only by reflecting off certain surfaces which serve simultaneously as the screen for other luminous zones"(...)"There is a reversal of the classical comparison: Consciousness is not a light going from the subject to the thing, but a luminosity going from the thing to the subject.[10]

Every reader of Deleuze can recognise here about the same words used by Deleuze in *The Movement - Image*. Nevertheless, Deleuze uses these words with a positive connotation in order to present the novelty of Bergson's Philosophy. Deleuze gives a capital role to the reversal of the philosophical tradition pointed out by Sartre. Deleuze says:

> We have a break with the whole philosophical tradition, which posited light by the side of spirit, making of consciousness a luminous ray rescuing things from their innate obscurity. Phenomenology does fully gain this ancient tradition, differentiating itself only by opening to exterior. Conversely for Bergson are things to be luminous in their selves, without anything to light them up. Namely, it's not the consciousness to be the light, but the whole gathering of images to be the consciousness immanent to matter. The opposition between Bergson and phenomenology is radical about this issue.[11]

According to Sartre, intentionality delivers consciousness from solipsism by reinstating transcendence and breaking the claustrophobic immanence of consciousness. Consciousness is a force, an activity, is like an explosion breaking the prison of immanence, *'s'éclater vers'*,[12] exploding towards. For Deleuze instead, the Bergsonian inversion of the classical comparison between light and consciousness is a liberation from the illusion - present in the whole History of Philosophy and still active inside Phenomenology- of conceiving immanence as a prison instead of recognising that the real prison is in the transcendence and its different kind of universality (Essence, Transcendental, Communication). Deleuze

10 Sartre, J. P. (1936), *L'imagination*, Paris, P.U.F, p. 45 hereafter IM.

11 MI, p 89-90.

12 Sartre, J. P. (1939), *'Une idée fondamentale de la phénoménologie de Husserl : L'intentionnalité'*, in *Nouvelle Revue Française*, 304 pp.31-35 (*Intentionality: a fundamental idea of Husserl's phenomenology*, J. P. Fell (trans.), Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology 1, no 2, 1970, 4-5; also in D. Moran and T. Mooney eds., *The Phenomenology Reader*, pp. 382-4) hereafter IFIH.

says that 'the inversion of the values should get to the point of letting us believe that immanence is a prison from which transcendence can save us."[13]

The theoretical plane here is strongly linked to the plane of the history of philosophy. Deleuze develops a philosophy of immanence and recognises in the first chapter of *Matter and Memory* the materialistic text *par excellence*. Of course, phenomenology criticises *Matter and Memory* for its spiritualistic results. Deleuze stages the encounter between Bergson and Husserl within the horizon of their shared problems. This encounter soon becomes a contrast. The opposition is summarised by Deleuze by repeating a sentence (a true refrain-sentence throughout his works) certainly inspired by Sartre's attitude in his early works:

> If Husserl could say all consciousness is consciousness of something, Bergson instead replies all consciousness is something.[14]

While Sartre read here an expression of the old associationistic mistake of substantialising images (*illusion of immanence*), Deleuze, with a powerful inversion,[15] makes of this sentence an important call for the rights of immanence: consciousness is no more in need of being adherent to something, eminence is no more given, consciousness is a thing in the flux of matter. We are always on the same plane. What is important from a Deleuzian point of view is the restoration of the plane of immanence. It is the pre-philosophical condition, the cut into Chaos that allows the spread of philosophy. Such a plane does not imitate anything transcendent, but opens onto experience as "*rencontre*", organised in a transcendental field. We are going to see that Sartre will be again the guide followed by Deleuze for the articulation of a subjectless transcendental field.[16]

13 Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1991), *Qu-est ce la philosophie*?, Paris, Minuit, p. 45, hereafter WIP.

14 Deleuze, MI, p 83-84

15 On the role of the opposition to Phenomenology in the development of Deleuze's Bergsonism, see: Alliez, E. (1995), *De l'impossibilité de la phénoménologie sur la philosophie française contemporaine*, Paris, Vrin.

16 Descombes links to Jean Hyppolite the invention of the expression subjectless transcendental field: "Hyppolite finds in Fichte the possibility of generating the transcendental I from a pre-objective and pre-subjective field". See: Bento Prado, B. (2002) *Présence et champ transcendental*, Hildesheim, OLMS, p. 101.

Fracturing the I: the Transcendental Field

Je est un autre (I) : Sartre critics of reflection

As seen above, Deleuze finds a precise description of what he means by a plane of immanence in the account given by Sartre of the first charter of *Matter and Memory.* Through a complication of voices and a proliferation of the viewpoints, which are typical of Deleuzian thought (free indirect speech), the words of Sartre become Deleuze's voice and activate what is latent in Sartrean thought, *i.e.* his reading and digestion of Bergsonism. Sartre, who has never been subject of a specific essay by Deleuze – who instead writes on many contemporaries, from Foucault to Carmelo Bene - is always recalled when Deleuze discusses a crucial issue: the subjectless transcendental field.

In the phenomenological reduction, Sartre is particularly interested in developing the concept of intentionality and in rescuing it from the constituent transcendental subjectivity, which implies a re-falling into the trap of Idealism. This position can be found in *The Transcendence of the Ego* (1936),[17] one of the earliest works by Sartre. Sartre considers the egological modulation of consciousness made by Husserl in the first book of *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology*[18] as dispensable and deleterious. The transcendental I is the death of consciousness. Sartre says: 'One can even suppose a consciousnes is performing a pure reflective act which delivers consciousness to itself as a non-personal spontaneity'.[19] According to Sartre, every reflection presupposes an unreflected consciousness, which cannot be determined by reflection, being itself the condition of reflection. For Sartre, it is possible to suppose a reflective act of consciousness without introducing a personal spontaneity. He claims 'a transcendental field becoming impersonal or rather pre-personal'. In such a field the subject – the Ego - would be a transcendent object like any other object, posed by a self-perceiving

17 Sartre, J. P. (1936), *La Transcendance de l'Ego. Esquisse d'une description phénoménologique* in 'Recherches philosophiques' (Paris) n.6, pp.85-123, hereafter TE

18 Husserl, E. (1980), *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, The Hague, Nijhoff.

19 TE, p 98

consciousness. 'The *Moi* is just the noematic correlative of a reflective intention'.[20]

Sartre's thesis is that this unreflected act of reflection does not need an egological modulation. Under these conditions, the consciousness can be pure intentionality, free from interiority, a complete outside, *clear like a strong wind.*[21] Here, Sartre's aim is to eradicate the specular view of consciousness and to overcome the model of representation. Sartre underlines that the typical mistake of associationistic psychology – common also to Bergson – is the full identification of consciousness with its objects. Let us think of an eye reflected on a mirror. The mirror reflects the eye but cannot reflect the glance: An eye is different from a glance. The reflective operation can reproduce the I as an object, but not a consciousness in its active functioning. Sartre says that 'the consciousness who said "I", properly speaking, is not the consciousness who thinks'.[22] The *living pole* is different from the *reflected pole*: they can coincide only at a distance. Consciousness is empty and is absolute distance, but, thanks to this distance, the living pole can recognise itself in the stranger on the mirror, which continues to be a stranger. This is what Sartre means by applying to consciousness the poetic words by Arthur Rimbaud "*Je est un autre*" " *I is another"*, with the purpose of describing the distinction between the living and the reflected pole.[23] Such a poetic expression refers to the reflexive operation, which, by providing the I, provides a transcendental object and not a consciousness in its active functioning.

Summarising Sartre's position, we find that:

- the transcendental field must become impersonal or pre-personal;
- the I (*Je*) is just the active face of the passive me (*moi*) *belonging to the transcendent Ego as unity of transcendental unities;*
- the unification of consciousness does not need a synthetic I, because it is already unified by the phenomenological retentions and protensions.

20 TE, p 107
21 IFIH, p. 30.
22 TE, p. 100.
23 TE, p. 127

Therefore, the spontaneity of consciousness cannot emanate from an I, but is primarily individuated and impersonal. Sartre says, "transcendental consciousness is an impersonal spontaneity."[24]

Here, Sartre wants to withdraw phenomenology from its Kantian orientation and from the necessity of doubling the I with a transcendental Ego as the form of absolute consciousness. He wants to emancipate critics from being just able to judge by right and not by fact. This is at the root of his presentation of Husserlian intentionality as a complete outside, a *being-outside-itself* of consciousness, an exteriority that lets consciousness be always already in the world.

Je est un autre II: Deleuze and the Transcendental Form

Deleuze often recalls Sartre's installation of an impersonal transcendental field as a representation of the plane of immanence. Starting from The *Logic of Sense*, to *The Movement-Image* and *What is Philosophy*?, until his very last text *Immanence: A life...*, Deleuze depicts Sartre as the one who has brought such a possibility into the history of philosophy. Also, Deleuze uses the poetic words by Rimbaud "*Je est un autre",* following the proliferation of voices that is distinctive of his thought. The repetition of the Rimbaud's words is not aimed at proving the transcendence of the Ego, but at pursuing immanence and elaborating the possibility of an empiricism that is also transcendental. Like Sartre, Deleuze wants to achieve a critique where the conditions are not given *de jure* (possible) but *de facto (real)*, and where the transcendental is not modelled on the empirical. As is well known, "*Je est un autre"* is one of the four poetic formulas used by Deleuze to describe Kantian philosophy.[25] Deleuze considers the introduction of time in its pure form as the greatest merit of Kantianism. This time is described with the poetic words taken from Shakespeare's Hamlet - "Time is out of joint". According to Deleuze, Kant brought a novelty to philosophy by introducing the problem of a difference of nature between faculties. Deleuze says:

24 TE, p. 127.
25 Deleuze, G. (1993), *Critique et clinique*, Paris, Minuit, p.40-49 hereafter CC.

> Kant explains that the Ego itself is in time, and thus constantly changing: it is a passive, or rather receptive Ego, which experiences changes in time. But, on the other hand, the I is an act which constantly carries out a synthesis of time, and of that which happens in time, by dividing up the present, the past and the future at every instant. The I (Je) and the me (Moi) are thus separated by the line of time which relates them to each other, but under the condition of a fundamental difference. So that my existence can never be determined as that of an active and spontaneous being."[26]

For a short while, Kantianism is crossed by heterogeneity, thus going beyond the dogmatic Image of Thought and beyond the power of Recognition. Here we find the Outside, the Unformed, as a pure and empty form of Time. That is why in Kantianism it is possible to say " *I is an other".* For a short while, with Kantianism the *I Think* has neither mirror to be reflected in – i.e. the Transcendence of the Transcendental - nor Outside where recognising itself, i.e. the old Transcendent. Such an I is a fissured, fractured Ego, disintegrated by the encounter with Time in its pure form. Such an Ego is a constant theme in Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition.* According to Deleuze, the first huge Kantian revolution can be seen in the introduction into philosophy of a time which is no longer regulated by cycles. This is time as the Immobile form of Changing, i.e. *Aiôn.* (as modus of the virtual). This stoic word is not eternal but an unlimited form of what is not Eternal, the form of pure difference, something very close to the Bergsonian concept of Duration.

Deleuze says:

> Time signifies a fault or a fracture in the I and a passivity in the self, and the correlation between the passive self and the fractured I constitutes the discovery of the transcendental, the element of the Copernican Revolution.[27]

We are going to see that his repetition of Rimbaud's formula occurs within the concept of Time, as opposed to the concept of Consciousness.

26 Deleuze, CC, p. 43.
27 Deleuze, G. (1969), *Différence et Répétition*, Paris, P.U.F, p. 117, hereafter DR.

We can say that for both Deleuze and Sartre "*Je est un autre/I is Another*" is a representation of the transcendental form. But the nature of this transcendental is very different. On the side of Sartre this is the phenomenological transcendence of a consciousness whose unification does not need an I. For Deleuze, this transcendental form is an encounter with a Temporality which is neither the empirical flow of time nor a cyclical Time, but *Aiôn*, in its endless power of division. For Deleuze, Transcendental is the form of distinction between *a passive self and a Fractured I*. In Sartre, the formula *I is another* allows for a transcendental field, "impersonal or pre-personal" producing the I as "Je" and the I as "Moi", where object and subject are constituted through "Transcendental ecstasies" in a play of Intentionalities with a Temporal nature. However, in Sartre, the temporal essence still has the form of a Cogito which is adherent to a consciousness. Sartre overcomes the Kantian model of the unification of consciousness, the Transcendental I, but centres of individuation are still presupposed, persevering in the form of a consciousness, which, in spite of being impersonal, is unified by temporal retentions and protensions.

For Deleuze, the possibility of liberating the transcendental field from transcendence relies on overcoming the unification of consciousness.

Deleuze says:

> One must begin with a world in which consciousness is not yet revealed though it is co-extensive with the entire transcendental field. One cannot yet establish any distinctions within it: neither subject nor object.[28]

Deleuze understands the importance of Sartre's efforts, but considers his theory of the transcendental field still a prisoner of the consciousness-form and of the related object-subject partitioning. The flux of the lived is no more adherent to a transcendental subjectivity, but the exteriority of the Ego is the condition of access to a preliminary intersubjectivity, where objectivity can be found.

28 Deleuze, G., *Immanence...Une Vie,* in Lapoujade, D. (ed.) (2003) *Deux régime de fous, textes et entretiens (1975-1995)*, Paris, Minuit. pp. 359-363.

Je est un autre III: Others (Autrui)

A further issue is how to overcome the solipsism of consciousness. This is one of the major problems of phenomenology: reaching a theory of intersubjectivity as transcendental field. The Sartrean discovery of an Ego completely external to consciousness is a great attempt to escape the problem of solipsism and grounds the possibility of accessing the Others' Ego.

Deleuze accords this merit to Sartre, stressing the importance of his results for the theory of the Other. *Autrui* is such an important concept in Phenomenology and in contemporary French philosophy,[29] and Deleuze affirms Sartre's importance in first considering the Other as an independent structure, irreducible to the subject or to the object. In *Being and* Nothingness,[30] Sartre calls this structure "the Look," and analyses the possibility for the other of becoming an object under the look, and vice versa the power of the others' look to nullify the subject by objectivising it. Here, Deleuze agrees with Sartre's individuation of the Other as a separate structure, preliminary to the subject-object division, but, regarding *The Look*, he criticises the continued oscillation "from a pole in which the Others (autrui) is reduced to the state of object, to a pole in which it is subject."[31] Sartre recognises the *a-priori* character of the Other's structure, but by calling it *The Look*, he falls again in the traps of subject and object. This problem can be better understood comparing it with Bergson's concept of matter as opposed to that of phenomenological consciousness. According to Deleuze, phenomenology is still part of the ancient tradition of conceiving consciousness as the light which illuminates things. The only difference is that phenomenology, "instead of a light for interiors, opens up to the exterior, as if intentionality of consciousness were the ray of an electric light". Phenomenology is loyal to the western tradition, being victim to the intellectualist prejudice of trying to preserve the Other inside the same. Instead, according to Deleuze, and Bergson, the image is luminous in itself, and needs a black screen reflecting its light.[32] Deleuze refers to this as a *double regime of images*: an intrinsic reflexivity which constitutes the violence of images.

29 Szymkowiak, M. (ed.) (1999), *Altrui*, Paris, Flammarion.
30 Sartre, J. P. (1943), *L'être et le néant. Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique*, Gallimard, Paris, p. 310-368.
31 Deleuze, DR p. 334.

On one side, we find the image an abyss of virtuality and the most undifferentiated state of matter, pure auto-propagating light. On the other side, we find its reflected double, the image as procedure of the exercise of Thought, the Outside, correlated to an Inside perceptively defined, organism, a membrane which shapes itself by contrasting the outside and screening the image.

In the article *Michel Tournier and the world without Others*[33] (about the Michel Tournier novel, *Friday*[34]), Deleuze elaborates a different Theory of the Other. Tournier reinterprets the adventure of Robinson Crusoe on the isle of *Espérance*. First, Robinson tries to escape his solitude by optimising production - as rest of the I-subject - and by minimising consumption - as overcome of the object. This simulacrum of society is going to resist until the disappearance of all the differentiating elements, all the *parameters of intelligibility*. The isle becomes pure vision, the subject-object relation is broken, and the becoming-animal of Robinson can start. One day Robinson forgets to turn up the clepsydra, and the final mutation can take place. The Other is wholly abolished, also as simulacrum, things lives in *verticality without thickness* and time is reduced to a point. Once the perceptive power and the sense of time are lost, the isle is given in its a-humanity, in the pureness of its elements, of which Robinson becomes the double.

But, what has happened? Deleuze says that what is primarily missing from the perceptive field is the "structure of the Other."

> The Other is the structure that conditions both the whole of the field and its functioning. This allows the constitution and the application of the previous category. It is not the I, but Other as structure which makes perception possible.[35]

32 Cf. Deleuze, G. (1990) *Pourparler*, Paris, Minuit, p. 77. "Bergson shows that image is luminous or visible in itself. It just needs a black screen, preventing from moving in every direction with others images, preventing the light from propagating in every direction (...) The eye is not the camera, but the screen".

33 Cf. Deleuze, G. (1969), *Logique du sens*, Paris, Les Editions de Minuit, pp. 350-372 hereafter LS.

34 Tournier, M. (1968) *Vendredì ou les limbes du Pacifique*, Gallimard, Paris.

35 Deleuze, LS, p. 357.

The Other is *the a-priori structure* of a possible world. Deleuze, beyond the obvious reference to the Leibniz's "possible world", here talks about some "*Sartrean echoes*" for the primacy of the structure of the Other on the subject-object division. The concept of *Autrui* is so central for Deleuze up to the point that it will be the concept-example in *What is Philosophy*?[36] Here Deleuze describes again *Autrui* as the "expression of a possible world in a perceptive field, where it is no more neither subject of the field nor object of the field, but the condition for which are redistributed not only subject and object, but also figure and background... it is the condition of every perception."

Therefore, we can say that the structure of the Other is particularly important, again as affirmation of a Bergsonian perspective against the foundation of intersubjectivity proposed by phenomenology. As for what concerns the subjectless transcendental field, Deleuze seems here to take again a Sartrean intuition (namely, the priority of the structure of the Other) to its extreme consequences, avoiding falling into phenomenological traps, and creating, along a Bergsonian line, an alternative way of thinking.

Towards an Empiricism of the Virtual: Time, Presence and Subjectivity

What Deleuze cannot accept in phenomenology (and still in its Sartrean anti-egological formulation) is the *cogito* form. Sartre, maintaining the unification of consciousness presupposes again a *cogito* inside Thinking. Deleuze says:

> Since Thought is the proper dynamism of a philosophical system, it can not be referred, as in the Cartesian cogito, to a concluded, already constituted, subject: Thought belongs to that terrible movement that can be tolerated only under the condition of a larval subject.[37]

When escaping the model of *reconnaissance*, what is going to change is the dislocation of subject and object. The individuation of a

36 WIP, p. 24.

37 DR, p. 156

new object for thought brings also the mutation of the subjective dislocation. This will be the variation of the points of view, which are not immanent *to* things (this would be bad immanence, still adherent to something) but *of* things themselves.

Deleuze writes:

> Every point of view should also be the thing, or the thing should belong to the point of view. The thing should not be anything identical, but deconstructed in a difference, where the identity of the seen object, as well as the identity of the seeing subject, disappear.[38]

Remarkably, Deleuze puts his conception of time, as an articulation of virtual and actual derived from Bergson, in the same place where Sartre puts his view on phenomenological consciousness. According to Deleuze "the plane of immanence contains simultaneously the actualisation as a relationship between the virtual and other terms, and the actual as a term which the Virtual exchanges with."[39] This play between actual and virtual allows Deleuze to make the distinction between determination through ordinary points, mere actualisation where forms are shaped on empirical data, and singularisation through distinctive points, to be determined for each case. Here, we find the Bergsonian claim for an *integral experience*, where the role of intuition as method of philosophy is allowed to reach the true articulation of the real, always different for each object.

Thanks to the actual-virtual exchanges, Deleuze removes himself from the error of considering transcendental consciousness as shaped on what it is supposed to found. The possibility of thinking experience in its purity does not mean to phenomenologically reduce the empirical data to something originary and identified with an *a priori*-form. For Deleuze, experience is pure as long as it is liberated from the *cogito*-shaped partitioning between a subject and an object, between form and matter. Here, pure means that the Difference is no longer constrained within forms. Consequently, the object of experience in Transcendental

38 *Ibid.* p. 79

39 Deleuze, G., *L'actuel et le le virtuel*, in Deleuze, G. and Parnet, C., *Dialogues* Paris: Flammarion, p.185.

Empiricism is no more the mere empirical datum. Transcendental empiricism is neither the encounter with immediate data, nor the adherence to a Transcendental lived. Here, experience must be understood as an effort, an encounter with a peculiar object, which has the power to entail, to generate Thought. The conditions of such an object cannot be general, but always particular and always different. For Transcendental Empiricism, there are no facts, or simple lived experiences, but Events as virtual emissions of Singularities. Events are what are constantly divided by the Transcendental form of time, which is the nature of the circuit of virtual. Transcendental Empiricism preserves the deeply Bergsonian sense of opening the possibility of unifying action and vision, the reflected and the living pole, in a pure experience 'above that decisive turn, where, taking a bias in the direction of our utility, it becomes properly human experience'.[40] Therefore, this experience is not the dumb, purified experience of phenomenology, but instead is an effort, as thinking is neither natural nor spontaneous.

This is how Bergson describes his Superior Empiricism:

> The faculty of Seeing, turned upon itself, should be one with the act of Willing. These painful efforts, against nature, can be brutally accomplished but can be hold just for few instants.[41]

This is what Deleuze means by saying that the philosophical effort consists in giving consistency to the virtual. Deleuze's empiricism of the virtual has as its core the transcendental form of time, "*Time out of its joint*",[42] i.e. that which cannot be represented, the outside which make us idiots, seers, philosophers. Time should not be confused with presence. Equating presence with time let us believe that everything – at least *de jure* – is still given. Deleuze wants to show the effectiveness of time, the "*hesitation*" - in Bergsonian terms - that is entwined with the creative power. The whole of duration should be understood in its virtuality; time should be subtracted from Presence.

40 Bergson, H. (1896) *Matière et mémoire*, Paris. Alcan, p. 205.

41 Bergson, H. (1948), *L'Evolution créatrice*, Paris, PUF.

42 This Time is described with the poetic words taken from Shakespeare's Hamlet: "*Time is out of joint*" see in Deleuze, CC, p.40.

Sartre and Deleuze diverge exactly on the implications of Bergson's discovery of the temporal essence of consciousness, as is no wonder if the virtual is what is forgotten by Sartre in Bergsonism. The centrality of the notion of virtual and the related actual-virtual circuit is ignored by Sartre. Sartre could not recognise the Bergsonian novelty of the virtual without failing in his reduction of Bergsonism to the positions of associationism or naïve empiricism. According to Deleuze, philosophy has been traversed by an alternative shared by metaphysics and transcendental philosophy, 'the choice between an undifferentiated abyss, Formless not-being and a form eminently individuated. Metaphysics and Transcendental Philosophy agree in conceiving singularities as already prisoners of a supreme or superior I'.[43]

The Deleuzian operation is to determine a transcendental field, impersonal and pre-individual, which has no similarity with the corresponding empirical fields, and which cannot be confused with the undifferentiated depth. Deleuze conceives a special kind of vitalism in order to overcome this alternative; we could call this a "logic of life", or, with the proper definition of *Difference and Repetition* given by François Zourabichvili, 'a logic of intensive multiplicity as the concept of time'.[44] At the level of sense, we find the inclusive disjunction where sense and non-sense are not in simple opposition, but are present to each other. At the level of subjectivity, we do not find the adherence to a transcendental I, but to an ego fractured by the pure form of time, which is ruled by actual – virtual circuits. This is the great legacy of Bergsonism which is kept active by Deleuze.

Starting from his first book on Hume, the main issue in Deleuze's philosophy has always been the problem of empiricism and subjectivity. In this book, Deleuze was already interested in elaborating a theory of subjectivity where the subject is a result, "where the datum is no more given to the subject, but is the subject which constitutes itself in the datum".[45] In the most intense circuit of the virtual-actual it is possible to

43 Deleuze says that "Metaphysics and Transcendental Philosophy agree in conceiving singularities as already prisoners of a supreme or superior I" in LS, p. 129.

44 Zourabichvili, F. (1994), *Deleuze. Une philosophie de l'événement,* Paris, P.U.F, p. 85.

find the pure form of Time, *Aiôn*, which Deleuze calls *crystal*.[46] As seen before, this is the form of the transcendental, where both a fractured ego and a passive self are present. This form of time is not an internal experience but the Outside we are internal to, the form of change, of Becoming. That is why Deleuze can paradoxically state that the only subjectivity is time. Here, it is important to be careful and to avoid misunderstandings, such as thinking duration as interiority, or as an ontological memory close to a substantialisation of time. We can say that the modus of the virtual is the only possible subjectivity. The virtual as time, as *Aiôn* is not internal but is the Outside we are internal to:

> Subjectivity is never our subjectivity: It is Time, i.e. the virtual. The actual is always objective but the virtual is always subjective [...] It is pure virtuality divided in affects and being affected. 'The affection of self with the self' as definition of Time.[47]

Along this line, individuation and the undifferentiated abyss can coexist in a logic of vital intensity. Transcendental empiricism is such a limit-concept ruled by a logic of intensive multiplicity. We do not find Essences or Transcendences, we find just a pure plane of immanence *where immanence is immanent only to itself* and where the absence of a transcendental subjectivity makes the distinction between ontological level and transcendental level ineffective and superfluous. We are dealing neither with essences, nor with forms. Deleuze provides an empiricism of the virtual, a logic of intensive difference, based upon a principle that Deleuze indicates using different names assimilated from different philosophers: *Virtual, Duration, Will to Power, Multiplicity*, etc. which all concern the production of singularities in the experience as opposed to a logic of essences.

45 Deleuze, G. (1991), *Empiricism and Subjectivity, an Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature,* Boundas, C. (trans.), New York, Columbia University Press.

46 We must underline that Deleuze's concept of crystal, conceived as the most intense circuit of coalescence between actual and virtual is elaborated also to overcome the ambiguous concept of *Imaginaire*. There would be much to say about this concept and the role played by the Sartre works on the Imagination, but this is outside the scope of this paper.

47 Deleuze, G. (1985), *Cinema 2. L'image-temps*, Paris, Minuit, p. 111.

Transcendental empiricism and its logic of intensive difference is the main issue of Bergsonism taken up again by Deleuze, and can be better understood inside the described dialogue between Sartre and Deleuze on Bergson.

Conclusions

We have underlined that, in spite of Sartre's adverse attitude towards Bergson, Sartre and Bergson share the effort to go beyond the psychic and to find a philosophical alternative to realism and idealism, since they both want to abandon the specular view on consciousness and emphasise its temporal essence. These common goals are somehow negated by Sartre in order to introduce the phenomenological method and to differentiate it from Bergsonism. Nevertheless, in his criticisms of Bergson, Sartre remains a great reader of Bergson and Sartre's philosophy is elaborated in a permanent hidden dialogue with Bergson.

Deleuze embraces and reverses Sartre's point of view on Bergson in order to revitalise Bergsonism against the mainstream philosophy of his generation, i.e. existentialist phenomenology. The armoury of criticisms of Bergson developed by Sartre are, with a powerful inversion, directed against phenomenology, liberating Bergsonism from stereotypes and biased interpretations. The importance of Sartre in the elaboration of Deleuzian Bergsonism should not be undervalued. The reference to Sartre occupies a strategic position throughout Deleuze's writings. Deleuze did not write anything specific about Sartre, but the need to return to Sartre's thought is constant. Also in his very first text, written when Deleuze was 20 years old , *Du Christ à la bourgeoisie*[48] *(1946),* we find a long quotation of the end of article from Sartre's *Une idée fondamentale de la phénoménologie de Husserl: L'intentionnalité.* Even if the source of the quote is not declared, we can here recognise the very nature of the relationship with Sartre, that is a true *dialogue*, a complication of the points of view, where it is often not possible to discern *who* is talking. In an article written in 1964 for the French magazine *Arts* one month after

48 Deleuze wrote a bibliography in 1989 from which his writings prior to1953 are excluded.

Sartre's refusal of the Nobel prize,[49] Deleuze said that 'Sartre has been my master'. This is true as long as we assume that the disciple is not supposed to follow the thoughts of the master but should activate what was latent and inexplicit. In this sense we can say that Deleuze has discerned and improved the hidden Bergsonism of Sartre.

49 "Il a été mon maître" in Lapoujade, D. (ed.) (2002), *L'île déserte et autres textes, Textes et entretiens 1953-1974*, Paris, Minuit. At the beginning of *Dialogues*, Deleuze remembers his two Professors, Ferdinand Alquiè and Jean Hyppolite, saying that something went wrong with them. Here comes Sartre, his virtual master, opposed to his real masters. Deleuze says that Sartre was at the Liberation a breath of fresh air. He invented new surprising connections in the history of philosophy and delivered a generation from the chains of the academy. Deleuze says that 'Sartre was our "Outside".'

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A Superior Empiricism: The Subject and Experimentation

SIMONE BIGNALL

Deliberate, transformative political practice requires the collective deployment of a strategy. Strategy is self-consciously expressed from a position of subjectivity. The subject is thus the *cause* of transformative action, which is organised via the strategy it expresses. However, according to Deleuze and Guattari, a subject - like all forms of being - is a virtual assemblage, made actual. On their view of ontology, a subject emerges only as an *effect* of its becoming. But how can a subject then be a cause of the becoming of being, when it is actually an effect of this process? What makes a body or a self, the active agent of its own formation as subject? As a produced effect or *object* of social relations of power and desire, how can a *subject* come to have a position that is critical and capable of taking those social relations as the object of his/her intentional action? When s/he only exists as a position already given, already made actual, how can the subject actively and strategically choose his/her position, speak his/her chosen strategy and cause the transformations s/he wills?

This essay will consider what notion of the subject is possible for constructivist philosophy like Foucault's or Deleuze and Guattari's. I will begin by considering the nature of the body as conceived by Deleuze and Guattari, in light of their complementary concept of the body-without-organs (BwO). I will then draw from their analysis of empirical experimentation and the art of composition in order to define subjectivity as a 'styling' of becoming, which posits the agent as a strategic performance of selfhood that necessarily refers to the social forces of

power and desire which compose it and which it embodies.[1] In this performance, the subject is simultaneously cause and effect, an experimental 'folding' of an already effected, actual self upon an immanent, virtual and causal pre-subjective plane.[2] This folding makes it possible for a subject to attempt the active styling of the process of actualisation through which self and society come to be.

...

Deleuze and Guattari think of a body as a complex assemblage of elements organised into an enduring pattern of relationship. In this sense, 'body' does not simply refer to a particular discrete entity, such as a human body, but to any form of stable organisation or being. Their idea of a body is therefore abstract, encompassing all kinds of things that can be characterised in terms of the stability of their form, including both material bodies, and bodies of knowledge or ideas.[3] Thus, the relationship between wasps and orchids or between grammatical predicates constitutes types of bodies (a sex organ and language, respectively), just as cellular and morphological relations between organs constitute animal bodies, or relations between people constitute social bodies.

1 My analysis of subjectivity and 'style' here draws from Colebrook, C., *A Grammar of Becoming: Strategy, Subjectivism and Style* in Grosz, E.(ed.) (1999) *Becomings*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, pp. 117-141

2 See also Deleuze, G. (1986), *Foucault*, Paris, Minuit, pp. 94-124, hereafter *F.*

3 A strand of feminist criticism is directed towards the abstract nature of this body, the body-without-organs and the strategy of becoming-woman, arguing that these concepts fail to address specifically female experiences of the body and subjectivity, and thus mask a politics of masculine normativity. By the end of this essay, it should be apparent why I disagree with these criticisms: Deleuze and Guattari's abstract BWO only exists alongside a concrete body that actualises it. In considering the female body and it's construction as feminine, they would insist that this concrete form can only be properly understood with reference to a determining abstract and virtual BwO, which guarantees that actual conceptualisations of female experience and 'nature' could always be transformed and become-otherwise. See, for example, Jardine, A. (1985), *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, pp. 208-223; R. Braidotti, "Discontinuing Becomings: Deleuze on the Becoming-Woman of Philosophy", *Journal of the British Society of Phenomenology* 24/1, 1993, pp. 44-55; see an alternative reading by M. Gatens, *Through a Spinozist Lens* in Patton, P. (ed) (1996), *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, Oxford and Cambridge, Blackwell, esp. pp. 171-176; also Fraser, M., "Feminism, Foucault and Deleuze", *Theory, Culture and Society*, 14/3, 1997, pp. 23-37; P. Goulimari, "A Minoritarian Feminism: Things to Do with Deleuze and Guattari", *Hypatia*, 14/2, 1999, pp. 97-120.

In the third chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*, they describe the formation of a body in considerable detail, by referring to the 'geology' of its organisation.[4] Here, 'geology' does not simply describe the formation of rocks and mineral forms, but properly refers to the general phenomenon of organisation and the process of ordering that is common to the formation of all bodies. They begin by asserting that, prior to any possible conception of bodily form, there exists a 'body without organs' (BwO), elsewhere described as a 'plane of immanence'. The BwO is "permeated by unformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions, by free intensities or nomadic singularities, by mad or transitory particles".[5] Thus, the BwO is the undifferentiated material mass of elements that are yet to be organised into discrete forms of order. The BwO is the disordered chaos that becomes disciplined and settles into ordered forms, as its free moving elements cohere into regular and stable relationships that bind them into complex associations (bodies). The virtual BwO can therefore be expressed in infinitely variable ways, as an infinite variety of actual bodies or forms. Whereas bodies exist as actual forms or formed matter, a BwO exists as force. Yet virtual force (BwO) is always immanent in actual form (body), since force is the binding that associates elements to produce a complex bodily entity.

In their 'geology', Deleuze and Guattari give the name 'stratification' to this emergence of order upon the chaotic surface of the BwO.[6] "Stratification is like the creation of the world from chaos, a continual, renewed creation".[7] 'Strata' emerge when transient and unstable relations of force morph into rigid or locked relations of form. Strata then describe 'belts' of ordered matter, which operate by "imprisoning intensities or locking singularities into systems of resonance".[8] That is, they are "acts of capture" in which the disorganised and flexible relationships of force that occur as chance encounters between free elements, become pinned down, 'sedimentary', inflexible and predictable. Strata are the systems of organisation or classification

4 Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1987), *A Thousand Plateaus*, Massumi, B. (trans.), Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, pp. 39-75. Hereafter *ATP*.
5 *ATP*, p. 40
6 *ATP*, p. 40
7 *ATP*, p.502
8 *ATP*, p. 40

that attract and trap disorganised matter. They collect disordered bodies and slot them into their particular system of organisation, creating a consistency that emerges as coherence. Strata are, then, signifying systems that arrange bodies into meaningful orders. For Foucault, strata are the discourses and practices that establish a 'regime of truth' particular to a social context.[9] Deleuze and Guattari list three major strata as examples of these systems of resonance: physicochemical, organic, and anthropomorphic.[10] Furthermore, each major stratum is comprised of substrata, which differ in certain respects, even though they share common principles of consistency with each other and with the major strata they comprise. For example the classification system of organic life is comprised of two major substrata: 'plant' and 'animal', which differ from each other in terms of the cellular elements they combine, even while they both exist as modes of a common organic organisation, or life.

The problem addressed by Deleuze and Guattari in "The Geology of Morals" is the problem of organisation.[11] How does something take its meaningful form as a consistency that emerges from chaos? They explain that this creation of consistency occurs because "there is a single *abstract machine* that is enveloped by the stratum and constitutes its unity".[12] This 'abstract machine' is best thought of in terms of the production abstractly generated by social interactions. The 'abstract machine' of social interaction and utterance produces or 'articulates' a stratum by establishing a grammar or a code – a system of rules for the organisation of coherence.[13] Strata are then 'articulated' in two moments or phases.

9 In his early work *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault still assumed a certain duality between discursive and non-discursive formations and hence retained an implicit commitment to the concepts of ideology and repression, which he then deconstructed in his later works, *Discipline and Punish* and *The Birth of the Clinic*. In these later works, then, Foucault formulated his theory of power as normalisation and discipline, and this conceptualisation was subsequently refined in the *History of Sexuality* with the idea that the disciplines not only have a normalising effect; they are also constitutive of reality. See Foucault, M. (1972), *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Sheridan, A. (trans.), London, Tavistock; *Truth and Power*, Interview with A. Fontana and P. Pasquino, in Gordon, C. (ed.) (1980) *Power/Knowledge*, Brighton, Harvester, pp. 109-133; *Power, Right, Truth* in *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 92-108.
10 *ATP*, p.502
11 *ATP*, p.41
12 *ATP*, p.50

"*The first articulation concerns content, the second expression*".[14] In the first productive moment, the 'abstract machine' selects elements for composition. In the second, it establishes a code or rule of connection between elements and consolidates these connections into quasi-permanent relations and stable structures. A stratum is therefore defined by the particular content of its parts and by the specific mode of combination they express in relation to each other. The stratum is accordingly characterised by the diversity of the elements that compose it, and also by the unity of its composition, since it exhibits a single and characteristic rule for the formal connections between its elements. Furthermore, strata differ from one another, either when their constituting elements differ, or when their rule of assembly differs.

All strata are then abstractly comprised of forms, substances and codes. However each stratum is characterised by the particularity of its forms and substances, and the specificity of its codes. Nonetheless, strata are not fixed or closed systems of meaning or coherence, but are vitally mobile and relative to other strata and substrata. A body might occupy many classifications simultaneously, and can transfer between strata. The surrounding strata and substrata thereby constitute a 'milieu' that furnishes material for the composition of a particular stratum and constitutes an exteriority that ensures a stratum is always open, since its composition shifts with respect to the relations it enters into with other elements and other strata. Deleuze and Guattari exemplify this in their discussion, which mixes strata of biology and geology, sharing their elements and complicating their rules of coherence in a way that changes the consistency of each stratum as they come into contact and undergo a mutual 'becoming'.[15] The neighbourhood of surrounding strata, as well as the underlying chaos that is the body without organs, thereby constitute a 'milieu' in which any particular strata or organisation of meaning subsists. At its points of contact with this milieu, the strata is fundamentally unstable, as its elements combine, shift, transfer and pass between nearby strata, or change form according to the particular modes of composition they enter into with respect to the codes of assembly

13 Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1983), *Anti-Oedipus*, Hurley, R., Seem, M., and Lane,H. (trans.), Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, p. 33: "The prime function incumbent upon the socius has always been to codify the flows of desire, to inscribe them, to record them". Hereafter cited as *AO*.

14 *ATP*, p.44, also 502

15 *ATP*, p.40

defining other stratum. There are, therefore, possible 'passages' between milieus, enabling movements of destratification or the partial decomposition of established regimes of signification.

In one sense, then, a stratum is a body, in that it is a unity or a consistency of elements organised into a form of coherence by the fixture of their relations. However, in a more precise sense, strata are really 'systems' of bodies that share a consistency of composition. Accordingly, Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between strata as the formations of abstract machines, and bodies as concrete assemblages. This distinction is important here, as the concept of the assemblage provides scope for agency in the constructive process of the formation of ordered, actual being.

For Deleuze and Guattari, then, "assemblages are already different from strata".[16] An assemblage is produced within a stratum, but properly operates in the zone of indiscernibility or instability where the stratum touches the milieu of its neighbourhood with other strata.[17] An assemblage is fundamentally a 'territory' that is carved out from the milieus. It is extracted in pieces from the various strata that make up the milieu. These pieces are then combined into a complex body by establishing a 'rhythm' that keeps the different parts working together. Thus, an assemblage is formed in a piecemeal fashion from strata and from the perspective of the particular stratum that 'grounds' it, and has its own principle of consistency or development. For example, from the grounding perspective of a 'psychology' substratum, a wasp is a collection of animal cells (organic strata, animal strata) bonded together (physicochemical strata) to express an insect form (organic strata and animal and insect substratum) that displays certain regular behaviours with respect to orchids and spiders (plant and animal strata, insect and arachnid substrata). The wasp is a body: it is an assemblage composed from a variety of strata, is considered from the perspective of a particular strata that grounds its territory at any particular time (this perspective is essentially mutable), and expresses a rhythm or consistency of form that emerges with respect to its internal principle of development, the code of expression that specifies its form as wasp.

16 *ATP*, p.503

17 *ATP*, p.503

It is not yet apparent how these notions of the body, strata and assemblage enable an understanding of subjectivity or agency. What is the correlation of wasp to human subject? As we shall see, subjectivity emerges in the play of assemblage as both noun (n) and as verb (v).[18] A body, such as a wasp, is an assemblage(n) that is composed of particular defining elements and expresses a particular form. But some bodies can also be *acts* of assemblage(v), which work to "*make* the world by organising forms and substances, codes and milieus, and rhythms".[19] The subject then emerges as a type of 'residue' to the formative process, *as or with* this act of assemblage(v), alongside the assemblage(n) that is produced.[20]

We might best access the subject in Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy by first recalling that they have a strictly Spinozist view on the relationship between mind and body: the mind is the idea of the body. For them, the body is an assemblage(n): a 'territory' produced within a stratum, always with reference to the contextualising milieu of other strata and the body without organs. Thus, the mind is the idea of this body, the idea of this assemblage(n) that is simultaneously body and non-body, structure and non-structure. Mind is effected as soon as there is an assemblage(n), but subjectivity is not yet active until the mind begins the act of thinking the body in relation to the body without organs. And subjectivity is *enacted* only through the set of practices that involve making oneself a body without organs. The mind/body then becomes a subject, through practice. Through a certain effort, the assemblage(n) becomes an assemblage(v). In chapter six of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari instruct their readers how to undertake this task:

> This is how it should be done: Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialisation, possible lines of flight, experience them,

18 This is clear in the original French, where assemblage means both the action 'assembling' and the resulting structure or 'assemblage'. The use of 'assemblage' as a verb in English is, however, not common usage, hence perhaps the common misapprehension about this term in readings of Deleuze and Guattari's work.

19 *ATP*, p.502 (my italics)

20 *AO*, p.17, 20: "the subject is produced as a mere residuum alongside the desiring-machines".

> produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. It is through a meticulous relation with the strata that one succeeds in freeing lines of flight, causing conjugated flows to pass and escape and bringing forth continuous intensities for a BwO. Connect, conjugate, continue: a whole "diagram", as opposed to still signifying and subjective programs. We are in a social formation; first see how it is stratified for us and in us and at the place where we are; then descend from the strata to the deeper assemblage within which we are held; gently tip the assemblage, making it pass over to the side of the plane of consistency. It is only there that the BwO reveals itself for what it is: connections of desires, conjunction of flows, continuum of intensities. You have constructed your own little machine, ready when needed to be plugged into other collective machines.[21]

Unravelling these somewhat obtuse instructions enables a better understanding of the kind of agency possible in this philosophy where the subject is not *causa sui*, nor the primary location of cause at all, but rather the developed effect of a productive process.

The first instruction - to 'lodge' oneself, 'experiment' and 'deterritorialise' - must be understood in terms of the conditions of possibility of thinking or existing at all. For Deleuze and Guattari, the aim of thought is to think actual being in terms of the process of its actualisation, for only this allows the proper understanding of the nature of things. Thought therefore requires an effort to think being as it 'first' exists as a body without organs: a chaotic virtual unity, which then differentiates into distinct forms of order. Understanding things properly involves understanding how and why they have come to be as they are, namely by being cognisant of the process of the "development of forms and the formation of subjects" and the ways in which the virtual plane of immanence codes possible and actual relations between elements and thereby "assigns the eminent term of a development".[22]

21 *ATP*, p.161

22 *ATP*, p.265

The body without organs is presubjective and preconscious, but can only be discerned retrospectively, from a position capable of conscious and active thought.[23] The developmental or organisational principle of the plane of immanence "is always concluded from its own effects",[24] but in itself remains 'hidden':

> at every moment [it] causes the given to be given, in this or that state, at this or that moment. But the plane itself is not given; it is by nature hidden. It can only be inferred, induced, concluded from that to which it gives rise.[25]

Thus, to think of oneself as a body without organs, one cannot *be* a body without organs. To think, one must occupy a concrete position of conscious being: one can only think as a self, as an actually embodied being, as a body 'lodged upon a stratum'. The purpose of subjective thought, then, for Deleuze and Guattari, is not to strive towards the impossible goal of 'absolute destratification' in order to become a formless BwO or to experience the pure creative positivism of unrestrained desire. Indeed, they warn:

> Outside the strata or in the absence of strata we no longer have forms or substances, organisation or development, content or expression. We are disarticulated; we no longer even seem to be sustained by rhythms.[26]

To think adequately, one must seek to consciously inhabit one's position, to be conscious of one's location and one's perspective, and from that position to observe and analyse the kind of assemblage one has become, to interrogate and transform this identity and the assemblages one creates in society with others. For Deleuze and Guattari, then, there must always be a subject who thinks, and strata that organise thought. Their philosophy does not announce the death of the subject, and they do not insist upon the fragmentation and collapse of meaning.

23 Deleuze, G., "Immanence: A Life...", *Theory, Culture and Society*, 14/2, 1997, pp. 4-5
24 *ATP*, p.266
25 *ATP*, p.265
26 *ATP*, p.503

However, they do insist that although a body is always enmeshed in the institutions, discourses and practices that assign meaning and identity and regulate social relations and positions, these strata are never closed in upon themselves, but always open to an external, contextualising milieu. The site of the body itself, the assemblage(n), is the point where strata overlap and form conjunctions. However, these conjunctions are rarely seamless, but most often partially disjunctive: the difference between strata forms a zone of undecidability where meaning potentially shifts and mutates. Thus, by cultivating an awareness of the assemblage(n) one embodies, and hence of the 'meticulous relation' one has with the strata one occupies at any given moment, it becomes possible to identify these zones of undecidability: the sites in one's own self where one's identity is multiple and perhaps contradictory – simultaneously mother and professional, daughter and partner, public and private, selfish and caring, independent and bonded, active and passive, and so forth. These apparent points of disjunction in one's own identity, where one occupies multiple classifications and meanings simultaneously and where the occupation of one strata alters the position assigned by another, signal points where the constituting discourses are unstable. It is in seeking out and finding such points of instability, Deleuze and Guattari suggest, that a person becomes most 'advantageously placed' to 'experiment' with the assemblage(n) they embody and with the BwO they might access in order to become identified otherwise.

The instruction to 'experiment' is not at all to be understood as a poor substitute for political engagement, nor as an encouragement to engage with a vague or unspecified difference or with 'alternative lifestyles' as such. In fact, Deleuze and Guattari mean something quite specific, rigorous and radically transformative by their suggested practice of experimentation. Beginning with the conduct of a close self-examination that attends to one's relationship to the discourses and conventions that give meaning to identity, experimentation firstly involves problematising the self by thinking identity in terms of its inconsistencies, internal disjunctions and contradictions. This might be done by experimentally positioning one's complex identity in relation to dominant social discourses, which tend to reduce complex identity to simple features assimilable to the terms of the discourse. Alternatively, positioning one's identity in relation to 'minor discourses' might reveal a site of movement in oneself, where one's assumptions are challenged and

shifted. Locating these fissures of signification in oneself thereby simultaneously makes apparent points of instability in the social discourses that constitute identity.

The second moment of experimentation is then made possible by applying pressure to these points of discrepancy or instability of the strata. By focussing upon the fragile points in a system of social meaning, it becomes possible to experiment with the meaning assigned by certain strata. By locating the points at which significance shifts and by experimentally combining strata in unorthodox ways, it becomes possible to question and transform established meaning through changing the context of its production. This aspect of experimentation thereby focuses upon the strata, and not simply upon the self. Here, the aim of experimentation is to find systemic 'lines of flight' and flows: the conditions and moments where established significations collapse and transform, making possible passages, bridges and shifts in established structures of meaning.

Identifying the 'flows and continuums' particular to a system of strata thereby enables its description in terms of "what comes to pass and what does not pass, what causes passage and what prevents it".[27] Such a description works as a 'diagram' of a social apparatus: a dynamic mapping of the strata that form its established discourses and practices, the milieu given by their arrangement in relation to each other, and the slippages and morphing that indicate the lines of escape from these established strata.[28] This diagram thereby images a social formation, making it possible for us to 'see how it is stratified for us and in us and at the place where we are'. From another perspective, the diagram shows the strata as 'striations' that have formed upon the surface of the BwO: strata are here diagrammed as rigid, ordered forms, but remain open to the chaotic movements of the plane of immanence or consistency, from which they have developed their particular formations.

Thus, the diagram with its images of order and flux – the fundamental chaos, the emergent strata and the flows that escape them - enables access to the idea of the BwO immanent to any formation of self

27 *ATP*, p.152
28 *ATP*, pp. 141-148; *F*, pp.34-44

or society. Furthermore, once we are conscious of this immanent formlessness of any actual regime of signification, it becomes possible to analyse the process of emergence that has taken place upon the BwO. At this point, it becomes possible to ask of a body: which elements have combined to produce this body? And: how do they combine in order to produce this body? What principle of organisation directs their conjunction? In other words, *what is the content and expression of this stratum? What is the content and expression of this assemblage? How has this body been articulated?*

We exist as actual assemblages, composed from strata that have themselves emerged as distinct and particular structures of meaning, through a process that regulates chaotic force relations into ordered forms. However, this process of ordering is not inevitable and does not follow a predestined path of development. There is indeed something of a dice throw in emergence: the chance meeting of elements, the fortuity of their agreement and combination into a complex body, the unhindered endurance of their relationship safe from destruction by other bodies encountered by coincidence along the way. Becoming conscious of the immanent BwO accordingly allows us to perceive the actual as a contingent "connection of components that could have been different", [29] which then opens up a further activity of experimentation.

Before we come to this activity, however, it is useful to recall that "the BwO is desire; it is that which one desires and by which one desires".[30] In reaching the BwO, then, we reach *desire*, the productive plane of composition, which causes forms to emerge and which consists solely of attractions, connections and intensities of associative force between bodies. In reaching the BwO, the focus of experimentation therefore shifts once more: initially from self to strata, and now to desire. At this point, then, Deleuze and Guattari urge a strategic experimentation with desire itself, which involves actively selecting elements for association and arranging their composition. Desire is the force of association that combines elements to produce an assemblage: experimenting with desire involves intervening with the productive process in order to create and cause a new emergence of being. In the act

29 Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1994), *What is Philosophy?*, Burchell, G. and Tomlinson, H. (trans.), London: Verso, p. 93.
30 *ATP*, p.165

of experimenting with desire, the body thereby also makes itself an "assemblage capable of plugging into desire, of effectively *taking charge* of desires".[31] This, therefore, is the point at which strategy and causation properly emerge in the experimenting subject.

In the act of 'taking charge' of the desires that constitute one's self, this self as assemblage(n) becomes an agent of assemblage(v). Deleuze and Guattari distinguish types of bodies in terms of the particularity of their content and expression. In this way, they outline a distinction, not only between strata and assemblages, but also between the two different types of assemblage. Like strata, assemblages are articulated doubly.[32] The first articulation concerns content: the quantity or range of element types that comprise the body. And the second articulation involves expression: the 'principle of connection' between these elements that defines the quality or style of the form that emerges from their interrelations. However, in assemblages, content also concerns the action and passion of the elements. The body becomes the subject of its own formation when it actively selects certain elements that comprise it, and actively arranges these in deliberate styles of relation. For every assemblage, it therefore becomes necessary to ask what kind of body it is, or *what can the body do*: does it actively select its elements and deliberately arrange its emergence as such? Is the assemblage simply an object (the passive result of an emergence of form that occurs spontaneously or through the agency of another body), or is it also a subject (capable of the active styling of an emergence of form)? For Deleuze and Guattari, then, the subject is conceptualised precisely as the kind of being that actively intervenes in the process of 'desiring-production', to select content and shape the expression of the reality that is being produced. The subject therefore experiments with desire to shape its own particular emergence as such, as well as styling the emergence of other social assemblages that embody the strata. The subject is formed in the act of productive assembly, alongside and contemporaneous with the event of actualisation he/she works to bring about.

There are, of course, limits to this constructive and styling activity of the subject, which is never free to construct the world at will. For Deleuze and Guattari, the subject-assemblage always acts within the

31 *ATP*, p.166, my italics
32 *ATP*, p.40, 41

constraints of his/her existence as a "collective enunciation".[33] By this, they mean that a subject is 'articulated' as a territory or assemblage drawn from a *collection* of strata, and hence is 'spoken' and 'acted' through multiple and various discourses and practices. As we have seen, it is this constitutive multiplicity of discourses that enables the subject to locate within his/her identity the points at which their meaning overlaps and shifts. The 'collective enunciation' of the self as assemblage thereby enables the critical practice of experimentation and transformation. However, as we have also seen, this practice does not involve the total collapse of meaning or social structures. A subject must remain 'lodged upon a stratum' in order to think or exist at all. In fact, a successful practice of chosen actualisation involves the conduct of series of *partial destratifications or deterritorialisations*, in which only certain, selected aspects of actual being are identified as unstable, then critically decomposed and actively reconstructed, while other aspects remain consistent and momentarily uncontested, allowing the subject to exist in continuity even through the process of its transformation.

Accordingly, the subject is always significantly (even dominantly) constituted by existing discourses and practices, in ways that may not be immediately transparent. There are always rigid social strata that the subject acts within, even while acting against other strata. The task of locating points of instability in established strata is constrained by this rigidity and this lack of transparency. However, these constraints are themselves not final. They might always be shifted through the practice of experimentation by combining apparently fixed strata in novel ways, which then create points of disjunction where they potentially unsettle each other's coherence, and become revealed as unstable. The subject-assemblage is therefore always simultaneously an assemblage(n) and an assemblage(v). A body is only ever a partial subject; even when causally active, it remains partly passive. As an object constituted through social discourse and practice, a self is always at least partly defined by others. Being constituted by strata that are the product of collective actions and expressions, the subject is therefore a 'collective enunciation' in another sense. That is, the subject is not simply constituted by a collective of discourses and practices, but also by the social collective that produces these discourses. One is always partly constituted by one's social others,

33 *ATP*, p.79-80

whose 'articulations' collectively emerge as strata, in ways which might not be those actively chosen by oneself.

The practice of 'experimentation' involves the careful empirical analysis of one's constitution, and of the constitution of social strata. In each case there is a need to analyse these bodies in terms of the nature of their composition, and wherever possible, strive to actively select the content and expressions that articulate the world. The practice of experimentation thus describes the ethical and selective movement of Nietzsche's 'eternal return'.[34] A given assemblage 'returns' to its immanent 'origins' as BwO or desire, in order to actively select content for its composition. In the process of active formation, only that which is reselected and hence affirmed, will be chosen to 'return' once more to the recomposed form. Furthermore, only that style of expression that is actively chosen, hence affirmed, will return as the recomposed form:

> The lesson of the eternal return is that there is no return of the negative. The eternal return means that being is selection. Only that which affirms or is affirmed returns.[35]

The affirming test of the eternal return is thereby the basis of Deleuze and Guattari's suggested practice of experimentation, and it is through experimentation that one is then able to critique, transform and affirm the forms of being one lives as and with. We are now better able to perceive that agency always involves both power and desire, and that both power and desire can define a body as either active or reactive. For each body, there is a need to identify its composition and style, to define its internal powers and desires in terms of their active or reactive effects, and for each body the aim is to actively select its composition, with respect to creating the kind of emergence that responds to collectively agreed ideals.

On this view, there is never a state of existence unimpeded by relations of power. Agency is not action that is free from impediments. Freedom cannot be conceptualised as a transcendent ideal state 'beyond' politics, or as the goal of a political struggle to end oppression. Nor is freedom well understood here as a possession or an inalienable right of

34 Deleuze, G. (1983), *Nietzsche and Philosophy,* Tomlinson, H. (trans.), London, Athlone Press, pp. 68-71. Hereafter *NP.*

35 *NP,* p. 189

individuals. Thus, neither Berlin's "two concepts" or MacCallum's "triadic" concept of positive and negative liberty fit neatly to Deleuze and Guattari's model of subjectivity.[36] Nor can freedom here be conceived as self-mastery or as mastery over others, for here the subject is always also a part-object for others. As in much modern political theory, freedom does concern self-determination, but here, one does not determine one's own actions outside of another's sphere of influence, since a body is a force always in relation to other forces, and one's character is constituted by the influence and interplay of these forces.

In fact on the view elaborated here, freedom involves an act of 'folding' upon the virtual conditions of determination, which shape the actual determining structures, which constitute the self. Self-determination is therefore asserted not simply against the immediate determining structures and relations of force in which the self is embedded, but against the primary forces of emergence that produce these structures in the first place. Freedom here concerns an availability of choices, but the choices themselves are not simply already available, but must be actively created. In fact, this is how freedom is here properly identified: as a *practice* of creation and transformation, as a *practice* of effective power and desire. Freedom exists as the practice of experimentation, at the various levels of focus: the self, the strata and the BwO. More precisely, freedom is the practice of experimentation with actual bodies, in order to actively transform them. However, these 'corporeal transformations' are facilitated by "incorporeal transformations" at the level of the BwO.[37] Incorporeal transformation is the practice that involves selecting virtual content for the composition of a complex actual body, and arranging this content in chosen forms of power- and desire-relations. These relations define the quality and degree of their affect on each other, and thus 'styles' the complex body they combine to compose.

36 Berlin, I., *Two Concepts of Liberty* in Sher, G. and Brody, B. (eds) (1999), *Social and Political Philosophy: Contemporary Readings*, Orlando, Harcourt Brace, pp. 624-636; Against Berlin's separation of positive and negative forms of liberty, MacCallum's triadic concept holds that any act of freedom contains both positive and negative elements: X is free from Y to do Z. For a definitive discussion of Berlin, MacCallum and others on 'freedom', see Gray, T. (1990), *Freedom*, Hampshire, MacMillan.

37 *ATP,* pp. 80-88

Thus, for Deleuze and Guattari, freedom is exactly the empirical *practice* of subjectivity. Freedom is found in the act of assemblage(v), which effects the subject at the same moment as it produces the assemblage(n). The subject is, then, a complex expression of freedom and of power, a complex siting or situation, which enables the identification of constitutive meaning as sometimes fluid and transforming, at other times rigid and resistant to change. The subject does not 'have' expression, but emerges as the act of expression. The subject does not 'have' a style, but emerges as a styling of the productive process of actualisation. The subject does not 'have' a strategy, but is itself a strategy of assemblage. The subject is not already given as the determining location of causation: the subject is an event, a virtual made actual, is acted as an effect of actualisation. However, the subject becomes a cause of itself and the world, when it actively folds back upon itself and upon the social and productive forces of desire and power that produce the actual, in order to actively select and qualify that productive process.

For Deleuze, this 'folding' involves the empirical practice of experimentation, for it is only by entering into actual compositions with other bodies that we are able to form the Spinozist 'common notions' that mark an increase in our powers of acting and understanding, which in turn enable us to become active, seek out and cause agreeable and joyful compositions with other bodies.[38] Perhaps most importantly, then, the subject is a performance of sociability. Through this performance, the subject positions him/herself as an element in a social assemblage. He/she approaches others with an attitude of desire and a style of political engagement appropriate to the construction of a favoured complex social body, which emerges from these interactions. Furthermore, through the utterances that take place in these performances of sociability, the subject helps to effectuate the strata, the system of social coherence that emerges with the consistent repetition of such utterances across a social field.

38 See also Armstrong, A., *Some Reflections on Deleuze's Spinoza: Composition and Agency* in K. Ansell-Pearson (ed.) (1997), *Deleuze and Philosophy: The Difference Engineer*, New York, Routledge, esp. p. 48ff

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The Politics of Creation

Peter Hallward (2006), *Out of this world : Deleuze and the philosophy of creation*, London, Verso.

HENRY SOMERS-HALL

> "'*Comprendre et ne pas s'indigner*": this has been said to be the last word of philosophy. I believe none of it; and, had I to choose, I should much prefer, when in the presence of crime, to give my indignation rein and not to understand.'
>
> *-H. Bergson, 1914*[1]

Peter Hallward's study of Deleuze aims "to go right to the heart of [his] philosophy"[2] through the charting of one "broadly consistent course", that of the implications of Deleuze's presumption that Being is creativity. In charting such a course, Hallward is able indeed to provide what is a thorough and consistent interpretation of the work of Deleuze, showing admirable familiarity with both bibliographical and thematic aspects of the Deleuzian system. In asserting that there is an essentially stable project throughout Deleuze's philosophical development, Hallward draws on the full resources of Deleuze's writing across (almost) all major domains, and there is certainly some truth to his claim that the guiding theme of Deleuze's philosophy is creativity. If philosophy is to be seen as the creation of concepts, surely our primary task is to unravel the concept

1 From the essay, *Life and Matter at War*, taken from Bergson, H. (1915), *The Meaning of the War*, available at www.gutenberg.org, hereafter *LMW*.

2 Hallward, Peter (2006), *Out of this world : Deleuze and the philosophy of creation*. London, Verso, p. 1, hereafter *OW*.

of creation. In performing this task of identifying both conceptual slippages and continuities between the various terms and periods of Deleuze's writings, Hallward is indeed able to present the work of Deleuze as providing a coherent interpretation of Being. In doing so, Peter Hallward rejects an explanation of Deleuze's system based on the parallels with modern scientific models, instead rightly resituating Deleuze within the tradition of philosophy. Fundamental to this is the recognition of the importance of Bergson as a key precursor, which means that Hallward does not fall into the trap of interpreting Deleuze as a thinker of the multiple through a false reading of Deleuzian difference as diversity. In his interpretation of Deleuze, however, Hallward displays a degree of hostility to what he takes to be both the aims and the consequences of Deleuze's ontology. In his focus on creation, which 'precedes' the individual itself as differentiated, Hallward will argue, Deleuze is only able to fulfil his magical formula, "PLURALISM = MONISM"[3] by subordinating the organism to the process of creation itself. This is because creation, which generates the plurality which Deleuze wishes on the surface to take account of, cannot itself partake in this plurality, for to do so would be to reduce creation to pure actuality itself, and the actual, Hallward argues, is not real. The task of the organism, if we are to follow Deleuze, is therefore to "recapture in individual existences, and follow to the source from which it emanates, the particular ray that, conferring upon each of them its own nuance, reattaches it thereby to the universal light."[4] This process, which Hallward characterises through the idea of subtraction, is the key to a new relation between the fields of philosophy, science, and art. Whilst art "dilates our perception,"[5] opening us up to the possibility of experiencing the virtuality of the world, its effect can only be negative. As the work of Francis Bacon shows, the aim of art may be to paint forces, but ultimately this can only be achieved through the trace which is left on the canvas. "Art 'enriches our present but scarcely enables us to go beyond it' into the virtual continuity of time as a continuous whole."[6] Art is thus this process of following to the source our own individual existences. To move beyond this, however, we require philosophy, the "smile without the cat, as it were."[7] On Hallward's reading, it is philosophy's aim to

3 *OW*, p. 29, referencing *Bergsonism*, p. 29 and *Thousand Plateaus*, p. 20-21
4 *OW*, p. 85, quoting *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 305
5 *OW*, p. 133
6 *OW*, p. 133
7 *OW*, p. 132, quoting *What is Philosophy*, p. 29

extract from the state of affairs the pure (virtual) event, and thus to sever ties with actuality altogether. In this move, philosophy becomes mysticism, "fully spiritualised and dematerialised,"[8] and thus a moment of pure affirmation. Reliant on this movement are all of the positive traits of Deleuze's philosophy,[9] but this also leads to one particular trait which makes Deleuze's position politically absolutely untenable. The move to a philosophy of the virtual means a move to a philosophy of absolute affirmation, within which the political action of the creature in the face of oppression no longer has meaning. One escapes the world through a line of flight which takes 'one' (if this term can still find any applicability) to the extra-worldly. The consequences of this for political action seem devastating for Hallward. On the one hand, any idea of such a thing as solidarity, or even opposition, seems to become impossible. If our aim is to return to the universal light (or even simply if there is such a universal light), then the possibility of either of these stances, which rely on our relations as creatures to other creatures, becomes impossible. The singularity of creation obscures the possibility of any kind of difference between things, as all things are really one, making relation impossible. Instead, we simply have difference differenciating itself. Action is dissolved in the whole. "By doing what it can, an individual only provides a vessel for the power that works through it, which alone acts – or rather, which alone *is*. What impels us to 'persevere in our being' has nothing to do with us as such."[10] What this makes problematic is any kind of genuine engagement with concrete political situations, at a time when such an engagement is clearly called for. Instead of this, on Hallward's reading, Deleuze is arguing that one should move to pure contemplation of the world. "The real preoccupation of [Hallward's] book concerns the value of this advice."[11]

Moving from description to evaluation of *Out of this World*, Peter Hallward's book provides a persuasive interpretation of Deleuze's work, and makes a real contribution to the study of Deleuze, showing how the various branches of knowledge which Deleuze discusses and delineates interrelate, in particular showing an incisive understanding of the role art

8 *OW*, p. 133.
9 *OW*, chapter one does a good job of highlighting these traits, and their interrelations.
10 *OW*, p. 163.
11 *OW*, p. 7.

plays within Deleuze's system of difference. As Peter Hallward himself makes clear from the start, however, *Out of this World* is not meant to be read as a guidebook to Deleuze's thought. Instead, in developing his interpretation of Deleuze, Hallward is providing himself with the tools for a critical assessment of the value of Deleuze in a world where action is desperately needed. Whilst Hallward's interpretation of Deleuze is coherent and rich, it downplays large thematic aspects of his system which are inconsistent with the thrust of Hallward's argument. My aim in this review article will be to see how reconsidering these aspects of Deleuze's system may be able to assuage some of the worries Peter Hallward holds about the concrete implications of becoming Deleuzian. Ultimately, I feel that the conclusions to which Hallward is drawn may indeed be valid, but without a more sympathetic relation to these other aspects of Deleuze's position, these conclusions remain ungrounded. The key areas which I wish to look at will be the two themes of difference and affirmation as they play out in Deleuze's logic of multiplicities. In an afterword written in 1988 to his work, *Bergsonism*, Deleuze calls for a return to Bergson, and it is this theme which I believe is key to understanding Deleuze's philosophy. Importantly, much of what Hallward says of Deleuze, he also applies to Bergson, recognising the key role which Bergson plays in the development of both technical and thematic aspects of Deleuze's philosophy of difference. I think the difficulties of Hallward's interpretation can be resolved by paying attention to these three themes which Deleuze believes are necessary for "the transformations of life and society."[12]

Intuition

As Hallward notes, the inspiration for the two key categories of Deleuze's work, the virtual and the actual, are developed by Bergson. Beyond this, Deleuze recognises three aspects of Bergson's philosophy which are key to his transformative project. It is these three aspects, the theory of intuition, the theory of multiplicities, and a reconfiguration of the relation of science to metaphysics, which I feel are misstated in *Out of this World*. Whilst all three of these points are interrelated, we shall begin by outlining Bergson's theory of intuition. Whilst intuition sounds like a

12 Deleuze, G. (1988), *Bergsonism*, Tomlinson, H. & Habberjam, B. (trans.), Zone Books, USA, p. 114, hereafter *B*.

process well in line with Hallward's charges of mysticism, intuition refers to the process whereby one moves from an understanding of the world in terms of a spatial multiplicity to one of duration. As Hallward notes, for Bergson, one's 'creatural' relations to the world are governed fundamentally by pragmatic considerations. For Bergson, our everyday understanding of the world is governed by the notions of discrete bodies and geometrical relations, something akin to Descartes' notion of substance. Such a relation holds, for Bergson, because what governs the correspondence of our categories to those of the world is not truth, but efficacy. The organism which can understand the world in such a way as to allow its effective manipulation survives, and it is through understanding the world in geometrical terms that one is able to manipulate the world, and thereby survive within it. In understanding the world in terms of geometrical structures and discrete bodies, we are able to apply our understanding to the world through the techniques of geometry and measure. In doing so, however, there is a tendency, which is also exhibited by the world itself, towards a spatialisation of time. The result would therefore seem to be to make the intuition of duration impossible, as is shown through an analysis of Zeno's paradoxes, or Russell's rejection of the idea of duration on the basis of logical considerations alone. The insight picked up by both Deleuze and Bergson, however, is that we *do have* an intuition of duration, and it is this which makes it both possible and necessary for philosophers such as Zeno and Russell to deny this intuition. We may here draw a contrast between the 'scientific' understanding of the world, in which we may progress along the line of time as fast as we choose, and the durational understanding of time, highlighted by Bergson through the example of the sugar water. In waiting for the sugar to dissolve in the water, I am confronted with an event of a duration which must take time to complete. This is the opening to another conception of time, which cannot be represented in the purely metric terms of scientific analysis. As Deleuze puts it, "intuition, as [Bergson] understands it methodically, already presupposes duration."[13] It is from this point that the method of intuition begins, through an attempt at the suspension of the categories of analysis which overlay and interfere with this intuition. That which is suspended for Deleuze is both a habit of thought and an image of thought. We will return to the question of habit later in our discussion. It is the method of intuition which would seem to drive Hallward to associate the term

13 *B*, p. 13

subtraction with Deleuze's method, as a process whereby the creatural is put out of action by the creative. We can see that the idea of the creative is what is at the beginning and end of Bergson's method, and we can see how the notion of subtraction can be understood through this putting out of play of the habits of thought developed by the creature. There is, however, another sense to intuition which is not captured by either of Hallward's notions of subtraction or abstraction, notably the end result of this process, whereby we arrive at a positive theory of duration. This is given for Deleuze by the theory of multiplicities.

Multiplicities

From the first aspect of Bergson's philosophy which should be taken up in any renewed Bergsonism, we move to the second, the logic of multiplicities. We have already given some characteristics of the first multiplicity through its characterisation in terms of geometry and extension. This is the multiplicity of the understanding. From these characteristics comes the assertion by Bergson, supported by Deleuze, that within the multiplicity of pure space, any creativity is impossible, as once we are dealing with that which is constituted, all that can change is the relations between the constituted elements. "A group of elements which has gone through a state can therefore always find its way back to that state, if not by itself, at least by an external cause able to restore everything to its place. This amounts to saying that any state of the group can be repeated as often as desired, and consequently that the group does not grow old."[14] We instead merely have alterations in the organisation of bodies, rather than the generation of genuine novelty; displacement rather than creation. This first idea of a multiplicity is the idea of a Euclidean multiplicity, and is the multiplicity to be rejected. Whilst the method of subtraction - subtraction of habit – leads us away from a conception of the world purely governed by this first kind of multiplicity, pure actuality in Deleuze's terms, that which is left after this moment is not in any sense of the word *less* than the actual. Let us look at an example from Bergson which clarifies this relation:

14 Bergson, H. (1984), *Creative Evolution*, Mitchell, A. (trans.), University of America, USA, p. 8, hereafter *CE*.

> 'If I choose a volume in my library at random, I may put it back on the shelf after glancing at it and say, "This is not verse." Is this what I have really seen in turning over the leaves of the book? Obviously not. I have not, and I never shall see, an absence of verse. I have seen prose.'[15]

As Bergson goes on to argue, it makes no sense to posit a formless language to which is somehow added either poetry or prose. Instead what is encountered is a different kind of order to the one expected. In like manner, it makes no sense to consider the actual as form given matter or matter given form. Instead we have a relation between two different kinds of order, on the one hand the order of pure actuality, the first multiplicity, and on the other pure virtuality, a multiplicity different in kind. In this context, one cannot simply 'subtract' one kind of multiplicity in order to discover the other. This recognition of the two kinds of order is implicit in the method of intuition itself, which would not function if duration was merely the absence of space. Whilst Hallward seems to recognise this point in his criticisms of Zizek, for whom virtuality in the early Deleuze is straightforwardly a moment of extinction,[16] as well as his discussion of the differential calculus, the tendency to regard virtuality as somehow less than actuality forms the basis of his interpretation of the understanding of virtuality as being the death of the organised body rather than the discovery of the body without organs (but with order). Whilst Hallward claims to provide an analysis of what he calls subtraction, for Bergson, this method would be one of addition, the concept of actuality combined with the concept of negation.

When we looked at the first kind of multiplicity and asked what differentiation means in this context, differentiation came down to the relative positions of bodies within a space. Change is defined purely in terms of displacement. The second kind of multiplicity, which Deleuze takes from Riemann (Deleuze will claim that Bergson was familiar with Riemannian geometry), instead takes as primary the notion of space itself. Here, change is defined through deformations intrinsic to the spatiality of the multiplicity. Whilst one can provide a rigorous mathematical understanding of such a space (and I think this possibility is key to

15 *CE*, p. 220.
16 *OW*, p. 87.

Deleuze's philosophy), we can get a sense of what Deleuze is talking about by looking at Sartre's rejection of the idea of the transcendental ego which Sartre replaces with what Deleuze describes as an "impersonal transcendental field, not having the form of a synthetic personal consciousness or a subjective identity."[17] For Kant, it is essential to the possibility of thinking a manifold that we posit a subject. "It must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations."[18] The reason for this is that in all perception, we are confronted by a multiplicity of actual elements which make up the manifold. If we are to see these elements as somehow related to each other, we need some kind of unifying framework, as "a set of distinct thoughts of the elements of the whole can never be equivalent to the thought of the whole itself."[19] What is required in this case is the addition of a structure which brings these elements into relation with one another, which will play a merely formal role in this process of synthesis, in this case the transcendental ego. It is this which allows the transition from the multiple to the multiplicity. What Sartre recognises instead, borrowing from results from both *Gestalt* psychology and Bergsonism, is that the distinct elements which together make up the manifold in fact unify themselves transversally through the characteristic that the events of the manifold do not merely appear as discrete elements, as the objects in the field take their own time to unfold, meaning that the manifold possesses its own order. Rather than requiring a formal framework of association, they bleed into one another as they take time to unfold. The world, in taking time to unfold itself, therefore has a natural unity provided by the duration of this unfolding. Once we recognise that the world has an order to itself, we no longer require the transcendental ego as an ordering principle. In fact, the introduction of the transcendental ego prevents the recognition of the order of the world, as for Sartre, the two kinds of order are fundamentally different. Whereas the transcendental ego provides order through the coordination of relations between discrete parts, the natural order of the world is closer to the interpenetration of events. What this means is that if we were to employ the notion of a transcendental ego, then we would necessarily misunderstand this nature, as the precondition

17Deleuze, G. (1989), *The Logic of Sense*, Lester, M. & Stivale, C. (trans.), Athlone Press, UK, p. 98.

18 Kant, I. (1965), *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kemp Smith, N. (trans.), St. Martin's Press, USA, p. 152.

19 Allison, H. (2004), *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*, Yale University Press, USA, p. 164.

for the functioning of the transcendental ego is a field of discrete elements to be related, so that its application would involve a necessary process of disordering before reordering. This reduction of the continuous to the discrete multiplicity always remains a possibility, however. The reason that I bring up this move against the transcendental ego, which Deleuze claims is 'decisive', is that it cuts to the heart of the idea of affirmation at play in the work of Deleuze. What Sartre shows is the possibility of escaping the argument which Deleuze sees in thinkers such as Schopenhauer, which *does* lead to the kind of contemplative withdrawal which Peter Hallward will no longer find in Deleuze: "When one no longer says I, individuation also ceases, and where individuation ceases, so too does all individual singularity. Since groundlessness lacks both individuality and singularity, it is therefore necessarily represented as devoid of any difference."[20]

What Kant presents with the concept of the transcendental subject is the paradigm case of the (Euclidean) spatial multiplicity; the function of the ego is effectively to provide a space for the discrete elements to come into relations with one another. What Sartre recognises is the possibility of what Deleuze will characterise as a Riemannian concept of multiplicity. Whilst the structure of this second multiplicity is, as Hallward rightly notes, one in which the logic of relation and negation no longer applies, this does not mean that there is in any sense less differentiation within this multiplicity. We no longer have a multiplicity of elements which can be brought together in a relation of solidarity by a process of demarcation and collection of entities within an extensive area. Instead, something like solidarity involves the coalescence of interpenetrative events which together intrinsically give the nature of the group. As the categories of negation, of defining a thing as this-and-not-that, which one finds applying to entities in the midst of a Euclidean space now no longer apply, we instead require a new concept of unity, and this is provided through differential, rather than discrete relations, as within a Riemannian virtual multiplicity, there is no space apart from its singularities through which to define relations of exclusion and inclusion which Deleuze takes to be at the heart of the use of negation within Euclidean actual multiplicities. The singularity of the virtual does indeed mean the end of the creature as distinct, but this does not mean the end of

20 Deleuze, G. (1994), *Difference and Repetition*, Patton, P. (trans.), Athlone Press, UK, p. 276, herafter *DR*.

all differentiation unless we equate differentiation with negation. Once again, the idea of subtraction must be rejected as this notion is incomprehensible across two multiplicities which differ in kind. In failing to recognise this point, Hallward allies himself with Hegel, repeating Hegel's charge against Spinoza that within a system of affirmation, the individual dissolves into the homogeneity of the absolute. He asserts this even though recognising that for Deleuze, the absolute cannot be seen as homogeneous. It is precisely this charge that Deleuze attempts to refute with his argument that a true concept of difference, rather than difference between concepts, is required if we are to escape representationalism.

Science and Metaphysics

The last of the trinity of ideas that Deleuze takes as key for a return to Bergsonism is a renewed relation between science and metaphysics. Hallward downplays the relation between Deleuze and science for two reasons, one good, and one bad. On the one hand, as Hallward points out, the emphasis on the scientific aspect of Deleuze's thought can obscure the fact that Deleuze's work is situated clearly within the field of philosophy, in particular, Bergson and Spinoza. In making a decision to downplay the scientific relations of Deleuze's thought, Peter Hallward is therefore able to open up a whole series of discussions about Deleuze's place and coordination with figures from the history of philosophy. One must make a distinction between the specific scientific content of Deleuze's thinking, and the general relation to the sciences Deleuze is proposing, however. Whilst Hallward mentions this relation and its connection to philosophy at the conclusion of his work, it is important to note that science plays an important role which counterbalances the tendencies towards virtuality which Hallward has highlighted. Thus, whereas art traces a path from actuality towards virtuality, science inverts this direction, tying the virtual to specific states of affairs. What is interesting about Deleuze's discussion of science is not that it reinstates science, but rather that it calls forth a new relation of science and philosophy. Bergson's analogy taken from the differential calculus makes clear what this new relation entails.[21] If we take the case of a simple curve, two possible representations of this curve are possible. On the one hand, we can see the curve as a simple, continuous line which defines a certain trajectory. This is in a sense the

21 *CE*, p. 31.

interpretation of the line under modern geometry, as Bergson here recognises. With any such line, however, it is always possible to decompose the line into an infinite series of infinitesimally short straight segments. Here, what is taken as simple is not the unity of the curve, but rather the elements which are taken to form the structure of the curve itself. It should be clear for the tendency of the discussion that here Bergson is equating the original, continuous curve with the creative, and the analytical procedure with the spatial. Taking the curve as a series of straight lines means that the simplicity is replaced by an impossibly great degree of complexity, as well as falsifying the phenomenon itself, which is to be understood as continuous. What is important is that Bergson does not reject the spatial in his move to the durational. Instead he calls for a reevalutation which puts both of these features in their proper places. "And, so far as we can see, the procedure by which we should pass from the definition of a certain vital action to the system of physico-chemical facts which it implies would be like passing from the function to its derivative, from the equation of the curve to the equation of the tangent giving its instantaneous direction."[22] Virtuality does not replace actuality for Bergson, or in fact for Deleuze, but rather gives sense to it.

This brings us to the title of Hallward's book, *Out of this World*. As I have tried to show, much of the force of Hallward's argument comes from the idea that in moving away from actuality, we are forced to give something up, in the form of solidarity, action, and relation. He thinks it is these kinds of relations to the world which are given up by the move to the Deleuzian interpretation of being. Following Heidegger, we need to recognise, however, that an understanding of what the world is to which we are relating is fundamental to our judgement of the relationship we are to take to it. Again we can say with Heidegger that this consideration must be triggered by some kind of event. It is when the key sticks, and my typing is interrupted that I notice the relation to my keyboard which I previously held was not one of a simple relation to an object standing over and against me, but rather one of involvement and concern. The failure of my relation to the world as ready-to-hand opens me up to the understanding that that in fact was a definitive characteristic of my being-in-the-world. The situation, as I have tried to show in my discussion of the method of intuition, is similar for Deleuze, hence the emphasis on the idea of shock in his system. Such a preliminary intuition of the failure of

22 *CE*, p. 32.

the description of the world in terms of pure actuality drives us to a conception of the world which recognises its virtuality also. But in this case, it makes no sense to talk of a move out of "this" world, as the movement itself is the opening of a new conception of the world itself. To talk of a movement out of this world is to mistake this movement to a more adequate ontology of the world itself for a rejection of actuality in favour of virtuality. Whilst from the outside of Deleuze's thinking, if one does not see the limitations of actuality, such a move will seem like a pure moment of transcendence, and whilst Hallward recognises that univocity and immanence are fundamental to Deleuze's interpretation of the world, he is constantly straining against this interpretation with his references to the spiritual tendencies of Deleuze's philosophy. These tendencies are to be found in his thinking, but their purpose is largely to bring about the kind of transformation which we saw Bergson proposing in his philosophy of science; a recognition that without virtuality, actuality becomes senseless. As Deleuze frequently notes, the object is double, both virtual and actual, and in both of these determinations it is real. It is only if we understand both the virtual and the actual through the categories of actuality that we arrive at the sharp separation which Hallward wishes to draw. Rather than recognise the virtual and actual as fixed states we should recognise them as tendencies, between which art, science and thought traverse, real articulations of being, the difference in kind coming about through the difference in degree. Without this, Deleuze's discussion of science becomes puzzling, insofar as he claims that it inverts the direction of art. More than this, in tracing a path to actuality, which on Hallward's reading is the unreal, it is difficult to see how science could have any authentic meaning whatsoever. In fact, it is only through the interplay of these two aspects of being that creativity, what Hallward takes to be the central feature of Deleuze's philosophy, becomes possible. As the issue of creativity is tied to that of action, I will discuss both of these together.

Politics and Action

The difficulty with the idea of action is that if it is to be understood purely in terms of actuality then, for Deleuze, and also on Hallward's reading, action becomes entirely devoid of creativity. This is the force of Deleuze's analysis of the image of thought. Actuality involves the mere

recombination of elements. Thus the problem to be solved by an action becomes reduced to a classroom exercise. "The master sets a problem, our task is to solve it, and the result is accredited true or false by a powerful authority."[23] What is important here is not the authority which justifies the solution, but rather that the solution has already been understood in the problem being posed. In setting the problem, the master verifies the existence of a solution. The solution is simply the recombination of elements. Thus what we talk of as action purely invoking concepts of actuality would be for Deleuze something more like habit or behaviour. Whilst everything takes place on the same plane, all we can have is the most bare repetition of the juxtaposition of elements. Instead of this idea of a purely actual relation to things, Deleuze proposes the necessity of a moment of virtuality within the problematic itself. Understanding the problematic as a virtuality means that the solution to the problem, in the form of an actuality, belongs to a different order, or aspect of being. Thus the solution generated is different in kind from the problem. If we take Deleuze's example of learning to swim,[24] an example once again taken from Bergson, we find that what is at play is not the bare repetition of actions, but rather "an innate or acquired practical familiarity with signs."[25] The act of learning to swim cannot be simply the mechanical repetition of certain actions (the 'do as I do' of the bad teacher), but must rather be the recognition that one is forming an interpenetrative relationship with the event of the wave itself. True action involves the actual solution of a virtual problem. It is this movement which takes us beyond mere habit, or mere repetition. In fact, it is this movement which is the key to the central concept in Hallward's interpretation of Deleuze. We have ruled out the possibility of creativity as involving pure actuality, as this would lead to pure repetition, or, in Bergson's terms, pure displacement. Creativity is instead to be found in this interrelation between actuality and virtuality. What makes the solution a creative solution is that it is different in kind from the virtuality which creates it. Of course, once we accept that creativity involves both virtuality and actuality, and that it is this which unifies the virtual and actual, then the question of the world out of which Deleuze is proposing to go no longer makes sense. In fact the world of Deleuze cannot be understood without both of these aspects carrying weight. As Hallward emphasises, there is a tendency in Deleuze to prioritise the virtual over

23 *DR*, p. 158.
24 *DR*, p. 22.
25 *DR*, p. 23.

the actual. The meaning of this priority is not to escape actuality, but rather to override the force of habit by which the intellect tends to understand in terms of actuality alone. All too often *Out of this World* talks of creativity as if it was a property of virtuality, whereas in fact it is a process of transformation. Bergson puts this forward in a view of society in his essay, *Life and Matter at War*:

> What would happen if the mechanical forces, which science had brought to a state of readiness for the service of man, should themselves take possession of man in order to make his nature material as their own? What kind of world would it be if this mechanism should seize the human race entire, and if the peoples, instead of raising themselves to a richer and more harmonious diversity, as *persons* may do, were to fall into the uniformity of *things*? What kind of society would that be which should mechanically obey a word of command mechanically transmitted; which should rule its science and its conscience herewith?[26]

Our response to this situation is not to be conceived of as one of rejection of materiality, but rather of making sure that mechanism is understood in relation to virtuality. In the light of this, our opposition to understanding of the world as pure actuality is not to consist of a withdrawal from the world, to become a beautiful soul. Rather, what is required is direct engagement. In his discussion of the First World War, Bergson writes:

> On the one side, there were forces spread out on the surface; on the other, there was force in the depths. On one side, mechanism, the manufactured article which cannot repair its own injuries; on the other, life, the power of creation which makes and remakes itself at every instant.[27]

Thus, for both Bergson and Deleuze, creation is intimately tied to action; in fact, it is both the motor and cause of action. Deleuze's philosophy is "geared to the indiscernible and imperceptible"[28] only in order to allow a return to action freed from habit. I have tried to argue

26 *LMW*.
27 *LMW*.
28 *OW*, p. 86.

here that Hallward's rejection of Deleuze rests on a misconception of several aspects of his philosophy. First, Hallward does not take seriously the idea that creation takes place between the virtual and the actual. This leads him to misinterpret Deleuze's focus on virtuality as a rejection of actuality, rather than as a move to open the possibility of a genuine understanding of the actual. Second, Hallward does not recognise the import of Deleuze's claim that the virtual is not to be seen as an undifferentiated abyss. What Deleuze is providing is a theory of two different multiplicities, and two different logics. Whilst Deleuze does reject the idea of relations between virtual singularities (conceived of as we might conceive of actual relations), this does not mean that the virtual is not differentiated. When Deleuze writes that the virtual "is not multiple, it is One, in conformity with *its* type of multiplicity"[29] this does not exclude the fact that within this singular multiplicity, there are a multitude of different durations. Rather, just as the actual is defined through relation, the virtual is through interpenetration. "All Ideas coexist, but they do so at points, on the edges, and under glimmerings which never have the uniformity of a natural light...Ideas are distinguished from one another, but not at all in the same manner as forms and the terms in which these are incarnated."[30] If one does not understand this, the move to virtuality will be seen as one of subtraction rather than as creation. Related to this, for Hallward, Deleuze's rejection of actuality is also a rejection of action. As I have tried to show, for Deleuze, an understanding of virtuality is entailed by any true action that moves beyond mere habit. Ultimately, Hallward's worry seems to be that in accepting the reality of the virtual, we no longer govern ourselves, as that which is responsible for us is different in kind from us. We are the enaction of the virtual, rather than actors ourselves. Whilst finding ourselves in this position is a constant danger for anyone who takes Deleuze's ontology seriously, it is only truly problematic if we fail to see the virtual and actual as two aspects of the same reality. The formula with which we began, 'pluralism = monism,' captures this intuition, but to forget this formula is to betray another fundamental aspect of Deleuze's philosophy, the univocity of being. For Deleuze, all action within the world brings this point back to us, as it is a precondition of all action that we are, if not the same flesh, the same event. It is only if we forget this insight that Hallward's proposition, that Deleuze can take us 'out of this world,' becomes comprehensible.

29 *B*, p. 85.
30 *DR*, p. 187.

Peter Hallward's intent in *Out of this World* is laudable, and the insights into the obscurities of Deleuzian metaphysics are frequently incisive. In providing an interpretation of Deleuze that takes proper account of the movement towards the virtual which is a definite tendency of his system, he provides a necessary counterpoint to the interpretations which consider solely the actual. In pushing the balance too far the other way, however, the overall interpretation of the work suffers. The real aim of the book is not to discuss the 'truth' of Deleuze's account of metaphysics, but rather the 'value'. This opens him up to two challenges which, I think, in this book he does not meet. First, to attribute value to something, one must discern what it is that one is valuing. It is this challenge I have tried to raise in this review article through a focus on those features of Deleuze's metaphysics which are underplayed or absent in Hallward's interpretation. The tendencies which Hallward sees in the Deleuzian view of the world are also present in his metaphysics, and Peter Hallward brings these to the fore admirably. The second challenge to his project as I see it comes from his raising questions only in terms of the consequences of Deleuze's position. Even if one agrees that Deleuze's politics is ultimately valueless, if Deleuze's metaphysics is the metaphysics of the world, then Deleuze's politics is also the politics of the world. Without moving from the value of Deleuzianism to its veracity, I do not see how a project such as Hallward's can succeed.

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Radiance and Vulnerability: On Reading Dorothea Olkowski's The Universal (in the Realm of the Sensible)

Dorothea Olkowski (2007), *The universal (in the realm of the sensible) : beyond continental philosophy*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

JOSEPH D. KUZMA

"Entre les phrases...dans l'intervalle qui les sépare..."
Proust

<I>

To engage with the materiality of the text: to negotiate a passage beyond mere signification, into the realm of the sensible: to drift between words, hesitating like a swimmer: to come up for air: to pause in newly emergent spaces, immersing oneself in the unremitting quality of waves and moonlight – is this not the very pleasure afforded us by the act of reading?

"What I enjoy in a narrative is not directly its content or even its structure," writes Barthes, "but rather the abrasions I impose upon its fine surface: I read on, I skip, I look up, I dip in again."[1] Through this alternation of strokes and breaths, contractions and dilations, the act of reading incessantly disrupts itself, wounding the continuity of comprehension, and allowing for a radical indeterminacy to emerge in the moment of hesitation. Here, in this interval between phrases, we find ourselves immersed, suddenly, within a vibrant textual materiality

1 Roland Barthes (1976), *The Pleasure of the Text,* trans. Miller, R., London, Jonathan Cape, pp. 11-12.

ceaselessly reinventing itself, extending far beyond the limits of what can be signified.

When the touch of the page, its soft grain, and the luminosity glancing off its surface can no longer be distinguished from the so-called content of the work, a sensible initiation has occurred. An initiation, moreover, birthed of an extreme vulnerability to what is most subtle: the absorption and emission of light.

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But it is well known that philosophers should not read this way. Philosophy, after all, demands of us that we assume the critical attitude – an analytical position *on the outside*, where ideas, concepts, and theories might be learned and assimilated on the basis of our comprehension of idealised, immaterial verbal constructs.

And yet, what if it were the case that a certain work of philosophy, a singular and innovative work, demanded to be read in another way, a way hitherto undiscovered? Might it yet be possible for a philosophical text to not merely *teach* us philosophy, but teach us to read anew as well?

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Discontinuity – "a break, a gap that implies the impossibility of remaining within the existing system and the absolute necessity of escaping it. Moreover, there is no going back; it impossible to run the tape of discontinuity forwards then backwards. In this sense, a discontinuity is catastrophic."[2]

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2 Dorothea Olkowski (2007), *The Universal (In the Realm of the Sensible)*, Co-Published: Edinburgh University Press and Columbia University Press, p. 204, hereafter *URS*.

Since its publication in 1999, Dorothea Olkowski's *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation*, with its insightful explication of Deleuze's so-called Bergsonism, has become widely acknowledged as one of the central texts in the discourse. It is therefore highly significant that Olkowski's newest work, *The Universal (In the Realm of the Sensible)*, marks such a radical departure from the mainstream of continental philosophical thought.

Olkowski positions *The Universal* in a space of rupture between two systems, two scales, and two sets of primary processes – each being unique and irreducible to the other. The difficulty inherent to her text, which is inseparable from its profundity, lies in the stylistic nuance with which she interweaves both sides of this breach. Writing from the very heart of the excluded middle, in a position of indeterminacy *between* two systems of thought, Olkowski is not satisfied with merely posing a critique of the limits of Deleuze's philosophy of immanence – her text offers nothing short of a new methodology and ontology which she claims are "oriented in relation to formal, mathematical structures but able to be coherently and consistently asserted apart from them in terms of what is called *sensibility*."[3]

Yet it may be that the re-orientation of philosophy which Olkowski proposes, with its emphasis on extreme vulnerability to luminous absorptions and emissions, demands of us, in turn, a new mode of reading – a mode of reading which spatio-temporalises itself in relation to our sensible engagement with the resplendent materiality of the philosophical text. A mode of reading, moreover, whose rules are not bound to pre-given categories of relation, but which modulate and transform themselves incessantly with the arrival of light, and subtle influences, from out of a past which was never present. Above all, this mode of reading would demand of us that we slow down, suspending thematisation and textual analysis long enough to absorb and emit that radiance which generates, at every moment, a space and time which are uniquely *our own*.

3 *URS*, p. 2.

<II>

Speed is evasion.

This was the fundamental lesson, it might be recalled, of Milan Kundera's "existential mathematics" -- the novelist's theoretical formulation of "a secret bond between slowness and memory, between speed and forgetting."[4] According to Kundera's formula, the person moving at intense speeds often does so in order to effectuate a voluntary amnesia, not global, but lacunar, which ensures the forgetting, or exclusion, of a particular moment of the system.

Kundera writes:

> A person who wants to forget a disagreeable incident he has just lived through starts unconsciously to speed up his pace, as if he were trying to distance himself from a thing still too close to him in time...In existential mathematics, that experience takes the form of two basic equations: the degree of slowness is directly proportional to the intensity of memory; the degree of speed is directly proportional to the intensity of forgetting.[5]

Might this formula, when considered in a different context, offer us the possibility of becoming attentive to the patterns of exclusion inherent to various *philosophical* systems, namely, by means of a sustained, critical analysis of the speeds, or velocities, which traverse a philosopher's textual and conceptual spaces?

For instance, what might a philosopher's fascination with unlimited speeds reveal about those concepts or relations which consciously, or unconsciously, are excluded from his system? Could an obsession with infinite velocities betray the wound of some deep trauma which demands to be forgotten, some unspeakable affliction which one would prefer not to relive?

4 Milan Kundera (1996), *Slowness*, Asher, L. (trans.), London, Faber and Faber, p. 34, hereafter *KS*.

5 *KS*, p. 34-5.

This line of questioning assumes a heightened resonance when posed to the philosophical system of Gilles Deleuze. For if the degree of speed is proportional to the intensity of one's desire to forget, as Kundera claims, then the infinite speeds which populate Deleuze's plane of immanence must surely be suggestive of an almost unimaginable desire to forget, to exclude, to suppress – something. But *what*?

In *The Universal*, Olkowski offers us transit into the very heart of this question through a sustained interrogation of precisely those mechanisms of exclusion, so often left unchallenged within the history of philosophy spanning from Plato to Deleuze, which have implicitly suppressed the realm of sensibility and intimacy, the realm of what is most *one's own*. She wants us to consider whether these mechanisms of exclusion might be an unavoidable consequence of those very ontological structures which have been brought into play -- and to which we have been passively subjected; and furthermore, whether these ontological structures might refer, ultimately, to an underlying set of mathematical presuppositions which implicate the entire philosophical tradition, up to the present day, in a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of space and time.

Thus, from the very outset, Olkowski's text proposes "a critique of the *limits* of the particular formalist, mathematical structure used by Deleuze, the manifold of continuous space-time of dynamical systems theory."[6] Olkowski argues that the specificity of each body, or particle, located within the Deleuzian manifold will always be contingent – and yet, how it comes to be related to other particles, other bodies, is necessarily prescribed in advance by a set of unchanging, *a priori* laws governing all interaction.

Consider the following passage:

> For classical dynamical systems, such as those described by Gilles Deleuze, the rules of motion are given; they are the Kantian transcendental Ideas that prescribe what can and ought to be done. What may be contingent are the particular particles themselves, that is, what particles enter into any given

6 *URS*, p. 1.

> trajectory and in what order? In Deleuze's terms, which affects, which percepts, which concepts, and possibly even which prospects and functives? This cannot be predicted, thus every configuration of particles produces not only a different world, but an unpredictable world. But what do not alter are the rules themselves that specify the movement and interaction of particles. Moreover, in these worlds, space and time are given, not emergent. They are the pre-existent manifold...[7]

In this excerpt, we are led to consider three essential components of Deleuze's dynamical system: (1) the space-time manifold, (2) the particular particles entering into various trajectories, and (3) the rules of motion or interaction governing these particles. What Olkowski wants to argue, is that if these rules, which are productive of the organisation and disorganisation of the manifold, are indeed inextricable from the pre-given spatio-temporal structure in which they are embedded, then the modes of relationality proper to the dynamical system will never change. We will be limited, in advance, to a repetition, albeit a very complex one, of the same limited kinds of relations and interactions which have already occurred. It is only natural, therefore, for us to question whether Deleuze's system, despite its valorisation of difference, is truly capable of satisfying "our craving for a...changing world, a startling and beautiful world, a world of pleasure and pain, love and hate?"[8]

Clearly, we must come to terms with that which is necessarily excluded by any system whose space and time are given in advance, and whose rules never change. But perhaps we should begin by asking: what exactly are these rules which circumscribe relations and interactions? And in what sense are they essential to the way in which the plane of immanence, as a dynamical systems space, comes to be organised and disorganised?

Let us recall the words of Deleuze and Guattari: "We require just a little order to protect us from chaos."[9] Here, in this phrase, the necessity of the regulative principles is clearly intimated -- for without these

7 *URS*, p. 3.
8 *URS*, p. 39.
9 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1994), *What is Philosophy?* Tomlinson, H. (trans.), London, Verso, p. 201.

principles, how else could the ordering and unification of the chaotic manifold be achieved? How else might the sprawling, Spinozistic plane of immanence be organised into a "systematic unity of nature... objectively valid and necessary?"[10]

According to Olkowski, it is in response to this demand that "the regulative principles of connection, disjunction, conjunction as an ontological structure...have been accepted almost without question [by]...the transcendental idealist [and] transcendental empiricist."[11] These regulative principles, which are derived from the logical categories of relation, *create nothing* but order everything.[12] And yet, in their very exclusivity and pre-givenness, they preclude any new forms of relationality from emerging.

Thus, when Olkowski claims that "the devil is in the principles governing the ordering and connection"[13] what she means is that the limitation of the Deleuzian model of continuous, smooth space lies in the way in which its structure of external, proximate differentials "circumscribes [all] encounters, restricting them to singular events that resemble, connect, [or] are conjoined to or disjoined from one another."[14] For insofar as this circumscription is embedded within the very fabric of a space-time manifold, there can be no reprieve. We are bound, irrevocably, to the fate of "connecting fragments [merely]...to sunder them."[15] In other words, the incontrovertible law of disjunction must be understood to comprise the very axiomatic of nature. Its inexorability is well expressed by the ominous name which Deleuze assigns to it: *the dark precursor.*

In this context, to attain Spinoza's so-called third kind of knowledge means nothing other than to affirm the *necessity* of this endless fragmentation and re-conjunction. A fragmentation, moreover, which occurs incessantly, and with "infinite velocity."[16] Brought face to face with the inevitability of violent disjunction, life on the chaotic

10 *URS*, p. 68.
11 *URS*, p. 173.
12 *URS*, p. 81 & 64.
13 *URS*, p. 74.
14 *URS*, p. 104.
15 *URS*, p. 123.

manifold becomes "always a matter of moving quickly"[17] -- of evading the rapidly reforming territorialisations and avoiding our impending dissipation. But amidst these dizzying, infinite speeds, what becomes of the writer, the producer of texts?

"Whether she wills it or not, whether she thinks it or not," claims Olkowski, "she will be torn apart, she will be Promethean, which is to say, schizo, and if not schizo, then catatonic, neurotic, paranoid."[18] There is no escape, for at any moment, she may find her body, her relationships, her work "brutally torn apart, tossed in every possible direction, then reorganised so as to be torn apart again..."[19]

And yet, if the perpetual intensification of speed only exacerbates the recurrence of this incessant fragmentation, it also offers itself up, rather ironically, as our greatest ally. For in the face of this endlessly recurring trauma of dissipation, the prospect of infinite velocity offers the promise of a blissful forgetting – a suppression, moreover, of that very intimacy which finds itself invariably torn apart, so painfully rent.

This is a point well understood by Kundera, who writes: "Our period is obsessed by the desire to forget, and it is to fulfil that desire that it gives itself over to the demon of speed; it picks up the pace to show that it no longer wishes to be remembered; that it is tired of itself, sick of itself; that it wants to blow out the tiny trembling flame of memory."[20] Following from this, we ask whether the noted obsession with infinite velocities which preoccupies Deleuze might suggest precisely a calculated attempt to suppress the faint echo of some traumatic experience, an experience of shattered intimacy? An attempt, moreover, to forget that unendurable truth that we are nothing but living poetry torn to pieces: fragments bound together only to be dispersed?

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16 Gilles Deleuze (1988), *Spinoza, Practical Philosophy.* San Francisco, City Lights Books, p. 130.
17 *URS*, p. 86.
18 *URS*, p. 86.
19 *URS*, p. 103.
20 *KS*, p. 115.

All of this raises the interesting question about how Olkowski's text is to be read. Surely we would be foolish to suppose that her text remains somehow impervious to the axiomatic of fragmentation and disjunction which she so eloquently articulates. Indeed, as long as we remain bound to the Deleuzian manifold and its categories of relationality, *every* text will be torn apart and re-conjoined -- hers being no exception.

What we would like to suggest, however, is that the radicality of Olkowski's text lies precisely in its insistence upon being read outside the Deleuzian system, outside the pre-given manifold which comprises so much of its subject matter. It seeks, instead, to be read from a position of luminous indeterminacy, in the context of a radically new ontology. Instead of offering us a set of *a priori* rules for textual engagement, Olkowski suggests that we become vulnerable, first and foremost, to those subtle, almost imperceptible influences which might allow new modes of relationality, and consequently, new modes of reading to emerge.

<III>

Let us acknowledge, at this point, that any attempt to provide a formal, systematic recapitulation of Olkowski's ontology, let alone, an account of its far-reaching ethical and political implications would undoubtedly lead us beyond the modest scope of this article – and moreover – would pale in comparison to the vivid interweaving of mathematical and poetical formulations which distinguish her actual text. We propose to limit ourselves, therefore, to an outline of those key conceptual and structural innovations which break most decisively from the Deleuzian doctrine.

In the broadest of terms, Olkowski is interested in developing an account of ontological relationality which posits the emergence of space and time on a discrete scale while remaining wholly commensurable with a notion of interiority – or what she calls the "mystery inseparable from

one's own."[21] Now, the emphasis on ownness, a theme which has come to be almost universally excoriated in contemporary philosophy, must not be seen here as a naïve return to some psychoanalytical or phenomenological framework. Let us remember, for instance, the severe problems associated with Husserl's famous second-order reduction to the "sphere of ownness" in Meditation V. His intent, as is well known, was to delimit the intentional nexus to solely those experiences which were constitutive of himself as an ego. The *sense* of this primordial monadological experience would then, through the act of bestowal, become transferred to the Other – imparting her, so to speak, with the very sense which was *my own*.

Olkowski is describing something radically different. Her claim is that ownness must be understood in terms of the convergence of a vast, but not infinite, network of luminous, causal influences which form and inform one's ever-changing spatio-temporal perspective within the universe. And these influences, moreover, whether they are seen, heard, scented, or even touched, come to our sensibility, necessarily, from out of the past.

But we would be wrong to confuse this with some merely personal past -- for what Olkowski has in mind is rather a causal, or *ontological* past, namely, "the past states in the world intersecting with one another... richly textured combinations of circumstances, incidents, ideas, so many images, so many states spinning toward us, toward one's own panorama, then radiating away from ourselves, a spectacle linked to all others."[22]

In two crucial expository passages, Olkowski writes:

> The causal past of an event consists of all the events that *could* have influenced it. The influence must travel from some event in the past at the speed of light or less. Light rays arriving at an event form the outer boundary of the past of an event and make up what is called, by physicists, the *past light cone of an event*...[23]

21 *URS*, p. 87.
22 *URS*, p. 48 & 102.
23 *URS*, pp. 3-4.

> ...[but] rather than a single cone, a single event, we think about a causal network of interconnected states for which every perspective and every state consists of a multiplicity (not an infinity) of cones linked to one another, influencing one another.[24]

In the mathematical language which Olkowski occasionally adopts, these combinatorial, causal structures can be referred to as *spin networks* – a name originally posited in the early 1970's by physicist Roger Penrose to denote networks giving rise "to self-organised, critical behaviour"[25] on a discrete, or quantum scale. At this level of micro-scales, space and time are no longer given in advance as a continuous manifold; rather, they are generated anew at each moment amidst the arrival of intersecting light rays. As Olkowski writes, "the past...arrives at the present and by arriving, creates the space and time in which [an] event happens as well as the event itself."[26] This self-generation of space and time on a discrete scale is what Olkowski refers to as spatio-temporalisation – and its importance to her ontology cannot be overstated.

For what is being proposed here, is that the generation of each unique perspective, each sphere of ownness, is a combinatorial effect of the convergence of a "multiplicity of pasts, pasts constructing new spaces and times as they...mix."[27] In other words, it is precisely the improbable intersection of multiple luminous influences which ensures that each spatio-temporalisation is irreducibly unique, irreducibly *one's own*. And yet, this sphere of ownness is always, by necessity, internally implicated within a regional, or even global network insofar as the influences which spatio-temporalise my perspective, have interpenetrated with those influences which are, at this very moment, spatio-temporalising yours.

When the ontological past reaches you, at any given moment, it engenders "a remarkable view of the past of the world, a point of view shared by no one and nothing, yet overlapping with that of others insofar as their pasts and yours have intertwined wherever you and others have

24 *URS*, p. 36.
25 *URS*, p. 36.
26 *URS*, p. 220.
27 *URS*, p. 106.

been exposed to the same influences, where you have influenced one another."[28]

It is crucial to note that the very scale and subtly of these absorptions and emissions introduce, into the very heart of Olkowski's novel ontology, a sense of radical indeterminacy, insofar as I can never be sure precisely which richly layered combination of radiant influences has contributed to my own spatio-temporalisation at each moment. I may never know the subtle ways in which my causal past has interpenetrated with a vast multiplicity of other pasts. And it is on the basis on this indeterminacy that Olkowski makes the controversial claim that our experience of the so-called violent passions, love and hatred, can be said to involve, fundamentally, "a felt relation to...all of the world."[29] For if the person I love is constituted amidst the convergence of multiple luminous influences spinning out across vast relational networks, then my love for him must encompass each discrete, global event which may or may not have contributed to his unique spatio-temporalisation.

Let us take special note of the way in which duration, in this account, reclaims its rightful privilege. For if neither space nor time, nor the rules governing them, can be given all at once, then everything becomes a matter of *waiting* for the light to reach us. Unlike Deleuze's system, with its One-All present everywhere and at once, the ontology proposed by Olkowski thrives upon the indeterminacy provoked by the cosmological limit imposed by the speed of light. There are no infinite velocities at play here, and for this very reason, each moment of hesitation assumes a profound significance.

For in this very moment, radiant data from a far distant past might arrive, engendering new senses, new forms of relationality, and new modes of textual engagement. When this radiance arrives, bathing each newly generated space in a subtle incandescence, there are no words to describe what has just occurred -- it is the miracle of luminosity becoming palpable.

28 *URS*, p. 33.
29 *URS*, p. 119-20.

<IV>

Consider how author Clarice Lispector describes this event of sensible initiation: "Today, July 25, at five in the morning, I fell into a state of grace. It was a sudden sensation, but extremely soft. Luminosity smiled in the air: precisely that. It was the world sighing. I don't know how to explain it...It's unsayable..."[30]

The grace described here is not of a religious variety, nor is it the kind famously described by Sartre; rather, it is an experience inseparable from the most intimate of sensible pleasures. It is the pleasure of luminosity smiling in the air: the very luminosity which bathes each of Olkowski's pages in rich textures, saturating the edges and seams, generating discrete spaces, and threatening, at every moment, to inundate the semiotic structure itself. Irreducible to representation and incomprehensible to thought, *it is the entire world sighing*. A world whose past states intersect with one another, engendering a unique spatio-temporalization that is you – the reader.

What we are proposing here, as a response to Olkowski's challenging and innovative work, is a mode of philosophical reading which, in turn, spatio-temporalises itself and evolves in relation to the radiant textuality which it encounters. To read within the realm of the sensible would demand of us that we approach this text always for the first time, wide-eyed and dazzled by the miracle of luminosity which saturates each page in layers of the past.

Could it be that here, in this nexus of intersecting radiance and heat, where space and time are continually generated anew, that the primacy of meaning and signification might at last be displaced by the most subtle of textual pleasures? One thing is certain, if this displacement is to occur, it will require of us, as readers and critics, that we "venture to risk vulnerability."[31] The extreme vulnerability, moreover, of "an interval in which we slow our projects and agency, [and] intuit images left by the

30 Clarice Lispector (1989), *The Stream of Life*, Lowe, E. and Fitz, E. (trans.), Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, p. 71.
31 *URS*, p. 21.

myriad sensibilities."[32] For it is here, in this very fissure -- this interruption in which the act of reading wounds itself -- that our engagement with the text may engender, for the very first time, a readerly sensibility truly and irreducibly *one's own*.

Indeed, by slowing down and suspending our obsession with the comprehension and analysis (literally: breaking-up, *ana-luein*) of philosophical texts, it might yet be possible for us to learn to read, not only words, but spaces as well -- or better yet, to conceive of new "logics and languages influenced by the unperceived, unknown past that nonetheless inhabits us, like light rays diffracting into spectra."[33]

But this sensible mode of reading will demand of us an almost unprecedented visceral attentiveness to the qualitative texture of the page itself – its hue, its grain, and the sparks of light which glance across its surface. It will require, moreover, a vulnerability to those myriad "frequencies [which] do not register perceptually."[34] Frequencies which may evoke little more than a vague awareness of "something incomprehensible, difficult to pinpoint."[35] For it is precisely within this incomprehensibility, this disruption of thematisation, that a novel and unprecedented manner of textual engagement will emerge.

Let us remember Proust's account of how, in approaching a certain text, he found himself drawn, inexplicably, to the space "between the sentences...the interval separating them." He writes: "the silence was still filling the pause...and more than once, while I was reading, it brought me the perfume of a rose which the breeze entering through the open window had spread in the upper room...and which had not evaporated for seventeen centuries."[36]

Does this not describe the very birth of a unique textual sensibility? A sensibility, moreover, which is generated *between the*

32 *URS*, p. 120.
33 *URS*, p. 23.
34 *URS*, p. 47.
35 *URS*, p. 47.
36 Marcel Proust, *On Reading Ruskin*, Autret, J. *et al.* (trans. and ed.),New Haven, Yale University Press, p. 128.

phrases, in the midst of a slow-down, a disruption of comprehension in which the past arrives in the present? Along these lines, we are proposing that Olkowski's text, through the ontology which it posits, implores us to inaugurate new modes of textual engagement – not just for literary texts, but for philosophical ones as well.

To read *The Universal* we must begin by making ourselves vulnerable to the light which fills each emergent textual space anterior to signification. In doing so, we find ourselves situated within a sphere of luminous indeterminacy, within a "shifting, interacting network of relations, a multi-faceted milieu, an incandescent atmosphere of sensibilities."[37] Here our engagement with the text is no longer circumscribed in advance by the *a priori* laws of the manifold, since both our reading, and the sensibility which guides it, are generated anew at each moment.

"The emergence of spatiality and temporality," writes Olkowski, "are one with the sensible and creative situation."[38] And just as space and time are generated anew, so too is our reading continually transformed in relation to those myriad influences spinning toward us from the ontological past. In other words, the act of reading is never completed. Its openness is ensured by the productive intervals which we continually forge, allowing the past to arrive -- fecundating the very fabric of each page and bathing it in the soft, radiant textures of Eurynome's moonlight.

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The uniqueness of Olkowski's text both stylistically and ontologically makes it difficult for us to see in *The Universal* anything other than the founding moment in the development of a new kind of written philosophy; a kind which radically transcends the limits of what has come before insofar as it invites us to read in ways hitherto unimaginable. And yet to accept this invitation, to encounter radiance in the midst of vulnerability, is to leave behind, necessarily, the possibility

37 *URS*, p. 119.
38 *URS*, p. 183.

of ever consolidating, or completing the text. Is this a trade-off we are willing to accept?

And if we encounter, at this very point, the end of what is called continental philosophy -- we recognise that this end has not been achieved through the force of some negation, and even less through the positing of a new ideology – but rather, effectuated subtly, through a sensible initiation in which the movement of philosophical reading is forever transformed.

For to offer a traditional philosophical appraisal of *The Universal* would demand of us that we consider it a closed, textual unity – a body, like any other, to be torn apart and re-conjoined at infinite speeds. But this is precisely what Olkowski denies us. Moreover, in the context engendered by her powerful and innovative work, the notion of textual elucidation runs up against its very inadequacy, for how can one *elucidate* that which is already suffused in light?

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Review of

Stephen Zepke (2005), *Art as abstract machine : ontology and aesthetics in Deleuze and Guattari, Studies in philosophy,* New York, London, Routledge.

Simon O'Sullivan (2006), *Art encounters Deleuze and Guattari : thought beyond representation, Renewing philosophy,* Houndmills, Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

DARREN AMBROSE

Alain Badiou once observed that Gilles Deleuze's work was an attempt at a 'philosophy "of" nature' understood as a 'description in the thought of the life of the world, such that the life thus described might include, as one of its living gestures, the description.'[1]

Both of these recently published books on Deleuze & Guattari's 'onto-aesthetics', Zepke's *Art as Abstract Machine: Ontology and Aesthetics in Deleuze and Guattari* and O'Sullivan's *Art Encounters Deleuze & Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation*, echo to some degree Badiou's original insight with regard to the connection being established in their thought between ontogenesis and aesthetic and philosophical expression. Both Zepke and O'Sullivan accord a profound significance to Deleuze & Guattari's *description* of a *co-creative* realm between the ontological and the aesthetic, and both argue passionately, and at times quite differently, for the creative, political and social implications of Deleuze & Guattari's *machinic* and *living* model of the arts.

1 A. Badiou, 'Review of Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*' in Boundas, C. & Olkowski, D. (ed.) (1994), *Gilles Deleuze and the Theatre of Philosophy*, London & New York, Routledge, p. 63.

Zepke clearly echoes Badiou when, at the beginning of his book, he describes the essentially impossible aim of Deleuze & Guattari's onto-aesthetic project as the attempt to 'create a thought, a sensation, a life that participates in the world's joyful birth of itself: a dancing star.'[2] He explores throughout the book the mutual implications of impossible co-creation between ontology and aesthetic expression in Deleuze & Guattari's collaborative work, including *Anti-Oedipus*, *A Thousand Plateaus* and *What is Philosophy?* as well as Deleuze's sole authored studies of cinema and painting. He shows how across these different works a certain descriptive understanding of art is developed. Art is understood as an 'autogenesis expressing the world' through the construction of new types of experience in 'monuments of sensation'. Art is nothing, he claims, if it is 'not this ongoing expression of life in the construction of living machines.'[3] For him the impossible implications of such a co-creative understanding of the new 'living machines' of art are signalled by Deleuze's Kierkegaardian claim regarding the impossible 'which can only be restored within a faith...Only a belief in the world can reconnect man to what he sees and hears.'[4] Zepke claims that the autogenetic conditions of artistic creativity, as expressed by Deleuze & Guattari, imply an entirely new and transformed type of relation to the world, a new form of belief solicited by the abstract 'living machines' of art. On their understanding art is a new abstract and living mechanism capable of increasing our power by liberating us from the existing limits of representation. Art is the freedom to experiment on our actual conditions of existence and produce something new – a new body, a new sensibility adequate to a life of ontological invention. As Zepke writes - 'Art is an experience of becoming, an experiential body of becoming, an experimentation producing new realities.'[5]

However, in his introduction Zepke argues that his work on Deleuze & Guattari's machinic onto-aesthetics is not merely descriptive in character but represents an imperative towards a form of machinic constructivism and the new forms of associated belief in the world that the artwork solicits. He begins by drawing upon Deleuze & Guattari's

2 S. Zepke (2005), *Art as Abstract Machine: Ontology and Aesthetics in Deleuze and Guattari*, London & New York, p. 8, hereafter *AAM*.
3 *AAM*, p. 5.
4 G. Deleuze (1989), *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, H. Tomlinson & R. Galeta (trans.), London, Continuum, p.223
5 *AAM*, p. 4.

insight (what he terms their recurrent 'first principle') that the crucial function of the 'abstract machine' is not to represent but rather to engage in constructing 'a new type of reality' *to come*. He claims that the abstract machine 'is the vital mechanism of a world always emerging anew, it is the mechanism of creation operating at the level of the real...a new world opens up, a living world in which nothing is given except creation.'[6] The abstract machine's role is to act as a type of guide towards this radical becoming, or to be a vector of creation or probe-head. Art, according to Zepke is *the* privileged site of corporeal experimentation in Deleuze & Guattari's work, and the experimentation involved in their account of onto-aesthetics involves a constant interplay between the finite and the infinite, the material and the immaterial, the actual and the virtual. It is at this point that Zepke introduces the major innovation of his understanding of Deleuze & Guattari with his claim that this constant interplay can best be described and understood as a form of 'atheistic mysticism', where art is understood as the construction of enigmatic 'local absolutes' or finite instantiations of infinity. Such an account of their thought as mystic atheism is somewhat controversial (a point happily conceded by Zepke), which is underscored, for example, by Peter Hallward's recent critical reading of Deleuze's apparent mystical and otherworldly thought and its prevalent gestures of 'flight from the actual' in *Out of This World*.[7] In clear opposition to the view exemplified most recently by Hallward, Zepke argues that 'mystical atheism' is the real condition of Deleuze & Guattari's pragmatic constructivist philosophy and essentially underpins their work as a form of immanent and anti-representationalist politics of becoming. This is, in fact, an understanding of Deleuze & Guattari shared by both Zepke and O'Sullivan. As Zepke writes - 'Mysticism is the experience of immanence, of the construction/expression of the at once infinite and finite material plane on which everything happens.'[8]

Zepke emphasises the degree to which Deleuze & Guattari's mystic atheism/onto-aesthetics signals a 'politics of lived experience, a realm of experimentation that opens life up to alternative modes of being, affirming new realties, new communities, and new methods of self-

6 *AAM*, p. 2.
7 Hallward, P. (2006), Out *of This World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation*, London, Verso.
8 *AAM*, pp. 6-7.

organisation."[9] For him, Deleuze & Guattari's conception of art is as a form of applied 'bio-politics', a political experiment with 'life as it is lived'. In order to develop this highly original insight into their thought Zepke proceeds to draw upon three of Deleuze & Guattari's most significant fellow travellers – Nietzsche, Spinoza and Bergson. In the first two chapters of the book he explores what he terms certain 'ethical-aesthetic' issues through a detailed analysis of Nietzsche and Spinoza. The aim of these chapters is to delineate an entirely new and transformative 'image of art' that serves as an important philosophical prelude to his consideration of 'specific affectual assemblages' in subsequent chapters. The first chapter considers the 'Artist-Philosopher' and the question of the critical ethics of affirmation expressed in Nietzsche's philosophy, and assesses the degree to which this is echoed in Deleuze & Guattari. The chapter contains a detailed discussion of the *critical* function of affirmation in Nietzsche's account of the Eternal Return and its precise function with regards to the overcoming of nihilism. For Zepke, this discussion of Nietzsche serves to delineate one of the defining principles adopted by Deleuze & Guattari's onto-aesthetics, namely the critical and violent process of destruction, counter-actualisation and counter-effectuation necessarily involved in affirmation:

> Affirmation is therefore like a leap of faith, a leap into the chaos of the world in order to bring something back, in order to construct something that expresses life beyond its sad negation.[10]

This important opening chapter serves to remind us that for Deleuze & Guattari the construction of an onto-aesthetic machine requires an ethical choice, a selection and an affirmation. For Zepke, only in this critical and deterritorialising way can the abstract machine 'break matter out of its overcoded forms' and put it back into contact with its vitality, 'its living flows, its inhuman and inorganic nature.'[11]

The second chapter deals further with the ethical questions associated with Deleuze & Guattari's mystic atheism/onto-aesthetics through an analysis of Spinoza. Zepke develops a rich and illuminating account of the contours of Spinozist ontology and argues for an essential

9 *AAM*, p. 9.
10 *AAM*, p. 8.
11 *AAM*, p. 8.

link between Spinoza's third kind of knowledge (beatitude) and what he terms 'the art of atheistic mysticism'.[12] For Zepke a certain mystical understanding developed within Spinoza's 'intense expressions of the infinitude of God/Nature' serves to further liberate the 'image of art' from the auspices of representation. Indeed, for Zepke:

> Spinoza offers an alternative understanding of art, one in which it expresses the productive dynamics of being, and so places its ontological function on the same plane of immanence as its expressive existence.[13]

Zepke thus effectively argues in these opening chapters that a unique blending of 'Nietzsche's physiology of overcoming' and 'Spinoza's mystical trajectory of reason' constitutes Deleuze & Guattari's new image of art. His subsequent chapters focus much more on analysing specific affectual assemblages in relation to Deleuze & Guattari's onto-aesthetics – i.e. cinema and painting. Chapter three concentrates on Deleuze's cinematic philosophy and develops an account that emphasises the transformative potential associated with visionary and mystic aspects of new cinematic expression. In exploring this particular aspect Zepke draws upon Bergson's philosophy and demonstrates its significance within Deleuze's account of the two distinct forms of cinema – Movement-Image and Time-Image. Interestingly, Zepke credits Bergson (in addition to Spinoza) for being partly responsible for the mystical or spiritual dimensions that Deleuze associates with contemporary film. For example, when writing of Deleuze's development of the Time-Image Zepke writes:

> Bergson's 'Spirit' is immanent to life as what gives life, a type of thought utterly material, but one that takes us beyond the rational limits of human being. This life is what Deleuze believes the spirit of cinema discovers as the vital movement that animates its images…It is the immanent and inorganic life of duration, expressed in the perceptive mechanism of the brain as it constructs the new. The problem for Deleuze will therefore be to show how the cine-brain "ascends" to the immanent and virtual plane of duration without transcending its actual images,

12 *AAM*, p. 73.
13 *AAM*, p. 75.

> to show, in other words, how the cine-brain constructs images in such a way as to express their spiritual dimension.[14]

In addition to this informative discussion of Bergson in relation to Deleuze's understanding of the spiritual development of cinema, Zepke also considers the role Peirce's semiotics play in Deleuze's cinematic thought, the historical role of montage, faciality and the visionary contours of the new Crystal-Image in cinema, before concluding with a useful discussion of modern cinema's anti-representationalist 'powers of the false' considered here as its ultimate artistic power. He highlights Deleuze's Nietzschean insight with regard to modern cinema's capacity to raise the false to power and thus liberate the image from 'appearances as well as truth':

> The Crystal-Image enjoys the power of the false ontologically, for it is the vital power constructing and expressing an absolutely immanent and univocal duration, no longer a duration as the "outside" of time, but an "internal outside", a creative "will" of cine-thought emerging in a new cinematic aesthetics.[15]

Zepke demonstrates how the new image's power of the false (through its effective *suspension* of the actual world) is co-extensive with philosophy's non-representationalist capacity for thinking the *real*. This, as he acknowledges, is what Deleuze (adopting the notion from Spinoza) terms the 'Spiritual Automaton' presented to thought by modern cinema. This is a form of cinema, a new image of art, capable of producing an image of the invisible and the unthinkable for thought – 'a visionary power of inorganic life as the unthinkable that makes us think and see something impossible to think and see.'[16]

An account of the visionary power being solicited by modern cinema is further developed by Zepke in the following chapter on painting. An account of the 'creative process, the "art" of absolute deterritorialisation', which Zepke argues is prevalent in all artforms, is presented here via a meditation on the specific artform of painting. He provides a very clear and convincing account of the processes of relative

14 *AAM*, p. 82.
15 *AAM*, p. 105.
16 *AAM*, p. 114.

and absolute deterritorialisation undertaken by painting (a critical ethics of composition and assemblage in the material of paint) through an engaging case study of Venetian painting and Modernist abstraction. Crucial to Zepke's account here is his account of the precise significance of the German art historian Willhelm Worringer to Deleuze & Guattari's processual model of destratification and abstraction in painting.

Chapter five sees Zepke develop one of the most sophisticated and detailed readings yet to appear in English of Deleuze & Guattari's onto-aesthetic model of the artwork as presented in their final collaborative work *What is Philosophy?*[17] This chapter involves a critical discussion of their model in relation to the models of Romanticism and Modernism. He argues for an understanding of Deleuze & Guattari's model as a form of 'mystical modernism' which he carefully differentiates from Romanticism. For him their model entails a 'final mystical evaporation of a distinction between art and its creative chaosmic Life' through its concentration upon a *haecceity* account of sensation:

> The machinery of modernist art produces a molecularised material and captures and renders sensible its chaosmic forces…This implies a move beyond Romanticism as a pure expressionism, to an art capable of constructing the universe, and a transformation of "Nature" into a "mechanosphere"… Modernism, Deleuze & Guattari argue, is an art – an abstract Machine – whose matter-function no longer obeys a romantic or classical form, but constructs a material expression adequate to the chaosmic forces it has released – no longer expression through disjunction, but expression through construction.[18]

Arguably, one can hear the echo of Badiou's description of Deleuze's onto-aesthetic expressionism most strongly at this point in Zepke's book. Indeed, he goes on to observe that 'in creating a finite that restores the infinite art embodies an ongoing and infinite creationism.'[19] He concludes this important chapter by again insisting upon their being a powerful link between this quasi-mystical modernist understanding of the artwork and a pragmatic and experimental 'politics of existence'. Thus,

17 Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1994), *What is Philosophy?*, Burchell, G. and Tomlinson, H. (trans.), London, Verso.
18 *AAM*, pp. 174-5.
19 *AAM*, p. 182.

insofar as the artwork performatively expresses a powerful consonance with the becoming of Life (co-creation), Zepke argues that art performs a crucial act of resistance to the *given* – 'all the opinions, perceptions and affections which tell us who we are and that prevent us from creating – from truly living.'[20] For him, Deleuze & Guattari's model ultimately proposes a view of art as creating new forms of life as the very means for resisting the stultifying existing forms of actuality– 'outside our stratifications, our comfortable organicism, and opinionated thoughts. Art seethes in the 'primitive swamps of life' currently confined to the edges of our biological maps, but appearing in sensations that overflow human perceptions and affections to take us somewhere else.'[21]

In chapter six Zepke produces perhaps the most concentrated analysis of what he terms a 'specific affectual assemblage' of his whole book through a series of reflections on Deleuze's most detailed work on the art of painting – *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*.[22] Zepke carefully unfolds some of the key notions that Deleuze develops for understanding the art of painting within his specific analyses of Bacon's attempt to 'paint the convulsions of the flesh'. This includes the Diagram, the Figure, Haptic Seeing, Colour Modulation, the Body-Without-Organs, and Deleuze's opposition to Phenomenology. Over the space of thirty pages Zepke produces an extremely compelling and insightful commentary on Deleuze's *Logic of Sensation*. Arguably, this is the single best piece of philosophical work to yet appear in English to properly address and deal with the full detail and complexity of Deleuze's analyses of painting.

Zepke concludes this impressive and original book by returning us to his opening reflections on the role of the abstract machine with regard to breaking with and going beyond the human condition – 'How to break through limitations on life in order to extend our compositions as far as the infinite, to succeed in a becoming-universe?'[23] For him the answer to this problem resides within what he terms throughout the book a mystical art, yet one that remains atheist, an art capable of constructing and

20 *AAM*, p. 182.
21 *AAM*, p. 183.
22 Deleuze, G. (2004), *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, Smith, D. (trans.) London, Continuum.
23 *AAM*, p. 219.

expressing a universe through the haecceity of sensation, the infinite through the finite, an art that is capable of restoring a sense of life as *infinite becoming*. He ends by reflecting upon the challenge represented by Deleuze & Guattari's particular onto-aesthetics – which he names the challenge of belief or faith. Since, he argues, our normative and organic relation to the world has been fractured and irreparably broken, the artwork's task is to restore to us a renewed relation to the world, a relation governed by transformed ontological coordinates. The nature of this renewed relation, as Deleuze himself acknowledges, is one of belief. Zepke concludes his book by addressing us with this challenge directly:

> This is the faith of the truly intoxicated, an atheistic belief in this world as a being-in-the-world, a mystic materialism without any transcendent dimension. This is the belief that our sensation encompasses man and the world in a cosmic co-creation, and is, finally, our belief in art, the belief necessary to art.[24]

Simon O'Sullivan's book, *Art Encounters Deleuze & Guattari*, shares Zepke's concern with a pragmatic renewal of thought *beyond representation*. O'Sullivan is also concerned with the degree to which the artwork harnesses an engaged politics of becoming that is co-creative with the ontogenesis immanent to Life. O'Sullivan's particular emphasis, which is differentiated from Zepke's emphasis on mystic atheism, resides in the exploration of creative potentials for a politics of becoming in Deleuze & Guattari's onto-aesthetics through the nature of the 'encounter'.

O'Sullivan begins his study by reflecting upon Deleuze's claim in *Difference and Repetition* regarding the link between the encounter and what 'forces us to think'. These opening reflections really underpin the entire ethos of this book which argues passionately, eloquently and polemically for the pragmatic value of genuine affective encounters with artworks in 'opening up new worlds and new territories.'[25] He contrasts the genuine encounter with the object of recognition that he claims, following Deleuze, merely serves to confirm the 'world we inhabit' together with our own existing subjectivity. The object of recognition is

24 *AAM*, p. 228..
25 O'Sullivan, S. (2006), *Art Encounters Deleuze & Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation*, London & New York, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 3, hereafter *AEDG*.

always, O'Sullivan notes, a representation of the actual, and is indicative of the habitual quality of the non-encounter. With a genuine encounter our world and our normative sense of self is challenged and disrupted. It is as if, Deleuze claims, when writing of contemporary cinema – 'you can't escape the shock which arouses the thinker in you'[26] This is not, O'Sullivan observes, merely disruptive, rather it is *productive* – it is 'the affirmation of a new world...a way of seeing and thinking this world differently.' This, he claims, is the genuinely *creative* aspect of the encounter – the encounter insistently obliges us to *think otherwise*. He notes that disruption and affirmation are the two elements of the genuinely creative encounter, and that it is within the artwork that these two elements can be successfully brought into conjunction. Art, for O'Sullivan, is the name 'of an object of an encounter', but also the 'name of the encounter itself'. Like Zepke, O'Sullivan recognises the ethical-aesthetic dimension of the onto-aesthetic realm, the irreducibly *critical* dimension of the artwork in the effort to go beyond representation, to counter-actualise and encounter the life of becoming associated with the virtual or spiritual dimension. This is precisely the value for O'Sullivan of Deleuze & Guattari's onto-aesthetics, that it can offer us another way of thinking about the encounters we have with modern and contemporary art, beyond representation, 'towards matter and its expressive potentialities'.[27] For him the whole process of encounter is about opening up creative possibility precisely by challenging and resisting the very structures whereby possibility, potentiality and creativity are closed down or kept at bay.

The novelty and significance of O'Sullivan's study is contained precisely in way he aims to subject Deleuze & Guattari's work to this same creative process, the way he, like Zepke, inscribes an ethical or political imperative into his reading and his mobilisation of Deleuze & Guattari. For O'Sullivan this is absolutely vital if their original insights concerning the fundamental possibility of a *renewal* of thought offered by encounters with art are to be maintained. It is crucial, he argues, not to render Deleuze & Guattari in an overly academic fashion and as a consequence effectively reduce their onto-aesthetic thought to just another set of methodological givens. Rather, he insists, a way has to be

26 Deleuze, G. (1989), *Cinema 2 : the time-image,* Tomlinson, H. and Galeta, R. (trans.), Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, p. 156.
27 *AEDG*, p. 6.

sought which preserves its performative dynamism and creative potential. It is thus necessary to approach their thought in a very particular way. O'Sullivan argues that 'we need to repeat the energy and style of his writings without merely representing his thought.'[28]

He therefore proposes to undertake a series of *productive* thought-experiments with Deleuze & Guattari rather than scholarly exposition, or as he puts it, 'different attempts at bringing Deleuze into contact with different milieus.'[29] This essentially takes the form of a very personal archive of encounters with modern and contemporary art which involve the selective utilisation of certain conceptual resources drawn from Deleuze & Guattari's thought, sometimes in a highly unorthodox fashion. His highly original approach is an extremely effective and successful utilisation of Deleuze & Guattari as philosophers of the encounter, and signals an important means for exploring the unusual contours of his (and our) affective encounters with the living machines of art. The five chapters that make up the book can be summarised as dealing respectively with the following themes associated with encounters – connectivity, affectivity, collectivity and subjectivity, the virtual and the 'fold'.

In his first chapter O'Sullivan outlines a distinct model of *connectivity* associated with encountering an artwork which is drawn from Deleuze & Guattari. The particular notion mobilised here is that of the 'rhizome' as introduced by Deleuze & Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*. He writes of how the notion of the rhizome might be utilised to challenge certain orthodoxies within Critical and Poststructuralist theory (indeed O'Sullivan credits it with doing precisely this in his own work) insofar as it appears to have the capacity to express novel transversal connections, new forms of alliance and heterogeneous forms of communication. He argues that the rhizome introduces a new non-arborescent image of thought that is extremely significant with regard to reflections upon the *challenging* nature of art-practice and its connections to other mileus and a broader ontology of life. This leads O'Sullivan into a discussion about the artwork as a type of rhizomatic 'machinic assemblage' with a prescribed set of functions. Here, he writes, 'we no longer ask the interminable question: what does art, what does this

28 *AEDG*, p. 6.
29 *AEDG*, p. 6.

artwork, mean? But rather, what does art, what does this artwork, do?'[30] By refocusing attention on the way an artwork as a machinic assemblage connects to other machines, to other mileus, together with the question of how it *functions* in its connectivity, is to move, O'Sullivan claims, to a fundamentally expanded account of art-practice, one that seems much more relevant to encounters with modern and contemporary art. The new forms of connectivity, signalled by the notion of the rhizome, allow for fundamental remappings of the affectual topology of art and specific artworks, which would allow 'for different affects and possible trajectories to arise'.[31] O'Sullivan concludes the chapter with some thought-provoking remarks concerning the degree to which this expanded rhizomatic understanding of art-practice may allow for art history to remap an entirely alternative genealogy of the affectivity of art together with a simultaneous remapping of an entirely new genealogy of subjectivity (or *beyond* subjectivity):

> To reactivate the frozen event that is art, to map out the 'past' of the object but also allow the future potentialities, to map out the rhizomatic connections through time and space, and at the same time, everywhere and always to think about ourselves as being in rhizomatic connection with our objects of study and to allow these creative connections, these mappings, to transform such objects and ourselves...Indeed this project might also be characterised as ethical inasmuch as it involves exploring our potential for becoming and our potential for self-overcoming.[32]

In chapter two O'Sullivan, in arguing for a move beyond representation and a return to a fundamentally *affective* experience or encounter with the artwork, turns his attention to Deleuze & Guattari's haecceity model of the artwork in *What is Philosophy?* In constructing what he terms the 'ethicoaesthetics of affect', he augments this account with references to certain notions derived from Deleuze's *Logic of Sensation*, specifically the figural, the diagram and the probe-head. In justifying his appeal to the primary significance of affective encounters with artworks, O'Sullivan refers initially to Spinoza's account of joyful encounters, 'beatitude' and immanent affectivity. He proceeds to provide a rich and detailed account of the following notions drawn from *What is*

30 *AEDG*, p. 22.
31 *AEDG*, p. 36.
32 *AEDG*, p. 37.

Philosophy? and *The Logic of Sensation* – percept, affect, blocs of sensation, abstract lines, monuments, probe-heads and becomings. O'Sullivan argues passionately and effectively for the realisation of these concepts in any adequate account of the fundamentally *affective* encounters with artworks, encounters beyond *recognition* and *representation*. He ends his chapter again with some highly suggestive remarks concerning the implicitly future-oriented nature of the affective artwork, given its challenging and disruptive quality, the fact, as O'Sullivan states, that it is 'ontologically different':

> It is not made for an already constituted audience but in fact calls its audience into being...In presenting us with a new composite art encourages us to feel and reason in new ways... Such art produces a line of flight from within already constituted territories so as to produce new modes of becoming and new worlds for a people yet to come.[33]

These remarks serve as a prelude to O'Sullivan's subsequent discussion of collectivity, subjectivity and the Minor in chapter three. Here O'Sullivan turns his attention towards a reflection on what he terms the 'political effectivity of art'. He begins with a consideration of the notion of the Minor drawn from Deleuze & Guattari's collaborative study of Kafka,[34] where the notion is developed as a certain type of politically resistant writing capable of disrupting the existing set of Major dominant cultural codes, stratifications, practices etc. via a sophisticated activation, through language, of Minor or Molecular transformative tendencies. Deleuze & Guattari argue that the articulation of a minor language of resistance always involves the activation or calling into being of a non-existent form of collectivity (a 'people to come'). It is this last idea associated with minor literature that O'Sullivan seeks to mobilise and apply to contemporary art practices (or what he terms encounters with certain forms of 'minor art'). O'Sullivan emphasises not just the critically resistant aspect of minor art (i.e. its refusal or negation of the Major), but what he terms its 'affirmative function', or the degree to which it involves the creation, or bringing into being, of new forms of subjectivity and

33 *AEDG*, p. 68.
34 Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1986), *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, Polan, D. (trans.), Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

collectivity – 'A minor art is involved in the invention and imagining of new subjectivities as well as turning away from those already in place.'[35]

Here O'Sullivan emphasises, much as Zepke does in his work, the essentially constructivist and politically engaged aspect of experimental and counter-actualising art-practice, i.e. its crucial role in constructing new worlds, new thoughts and forms of bodily affects, and new forms of subjectivity and collectivity. He argues:

> For both Deleuze & Guattari there is an emphasis on our pragmatic involvement in the material production of our own subjectivities. Is this perhaps a call for an expanded notion of what art-practice is? Certainly it is to realise that one of the roles of art – understood as an activity of creatively interacting with the world – is precisely the production of subjectivity...In such an understanding of the ethicoaesthetics of subjectivity, art history might become replaced by a kind of art chemistry and art cartography, the mapping out of new complexes and of the possibilities of life that these new complexes allow.[36]

The book concludes with two chapters where O'Sullivan is much more concerned with presenting rich and absorbing case studies of encounters with certain forms of contemporary art. He draws upon Deleuze & Guattari's onto-aesthetics and provides himself a rich array of conceptual resources to produce a dazzling and philosophically sophisticated series of reflections on the transformative affect of these encounters. Chapter 4 consists of O'Sullivan's reflections on two notions drawn from Deleuze & Guatari's philosophy, the virtual and the plane of immanence. In developing a reading of both of these interrelated notions there is an impressive excursus into a case study of two projects by the landscape artist Robert Smithson, the *Yucatan Mirror Displacements* and the *Spiral Jetty*. This particular case study is a really compelling example of the type of creative and productive account that can and should be developed by those wishing to mobilise Deleuze & Guattari's onto-aesthetics *non-reductively* into reflections upon the field of actual art-practice. The final chapter completes this original and valuable work with a highly unusual but much needed consideration of Deleuze's work on

35 *AEDG*, p. 76.
36 *AEDG*, p. 97.

The Fold and the neo-Baroque.[37] O'Sullivan briefly introduces some of the major elements involved in Deleuze's work on Leibniz and the Fold before immediately mobilising them in a productive way with an account of what O'Sullivan terms 'folding in painting'. This account of painting concentrates its attention on the specific example of Gerhard Richter's work. O'Sullivan concludes with an intriguing and productive account of the neo-Baroque in Deleuze, and argues for the neo-Baroque as an articulation of a radically new form of nomadic subjectivity. O'Sullivan concludes the work with an experimental and performative manifesto, (drawn from his reflections on different types of encounter with art thought *through* and *with* Deleuze & Guattari) for what he terms 'an imagined future collective'. The manifesto which closes O'Sullivan's impressive study concludes with the following lines, which share the same imperative expressed within Zepke's work:

> Our practice affirms transformation: we are concerned less with mundane consciousness than with cosmic consciousness. We believe in a Baroque practice as the only appropriate response to these troubled and terror-stricken times.[38]

37 Deleuze, G. (1992), *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, Conley, T. (trans.), London, Continuum.
38 *AEDG*, p. 157

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The Centre welcomes visits by academics from other institutions, either as Visiting Scholars or on a more informal basis. Those wishing to visit are invited to contact the Director, Michael Bell (Michael.Bell@warwick.ac.uk)

Contact

The Centre's Office is located in the Department of Philosophy, in the Social Studies Building (S2.70). Queries by email may be addressed to the Centre's secretary, Mrs Lynda Hemsley (L.D.Hemsley@warwick.ac.uk)

'*Creative Evolution*, one hundred years on'
Biology, Ecology, Complexity

A conference on Bergson's seminal text *Creative Evolution*

Bergson envisaged "creative evolution" as a collaborative research project between science and philosophy, with the common aim of understanding life. He wrote that creative evolutionism "will only be built up by the collective and progressive effort of many thinkers, of many observers also, completing, correcting and improving one another." The conference will further this "collective and progressive effort."

Session 1: Biology
Paul-Antoine Miquel (University of Nice)
Miguel de Beistegui (University of Warwick)

Session 2: Ecology
Pete Gunter (University of North Texas)
John Pickering (University of Warwick)

Session 3: Complexity
Brian Goodwin (Schumacher College, Milton Keynes)
Robin Durie (University of Exeter)

9 November 2007, University of Warwick

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/philosophy/news/creativeevolution2007/

Notes for Contributors

- Submissions should be sent to *Pli*, Department of Philosophy, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK.
- They should be printed in double line spacing and be accompanied with a copy on disk in rich text format or word document format. If possible, an e-mail address should be included for any further correspondence.
- Accepted submissions will be printed from the electronic copy supplied. Footnotes will be printed at the bottom of the page. Italics and other typographical features (such as accents and text in Greek) will be printed as they appear in the electronic copy (so do not underline items that will eventually appear in italics, such as titles of books, for example). All submissions should be supplied in and will be printed in Times New Roman font.
- Footnote references should conform to the style of the following examples:

  I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), hereafter *CPR*.
  G. Deleuze, *Foucault* (Paris: Minuit, 1986), p. 24.
  D. W. Conway, 'Genealogy and Critical Method', in R. Schacht, ed., *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 318-33, esp. p. 320.
  D. Sedley, 'Epicurus, On Nature Book 28', *Cronache Ercolanesi* 3 (1973), 5-83, p. 56.

In general, submissions should follow the guidelines outlined in the *MHRA Style Book*, 5th edition (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1996).