

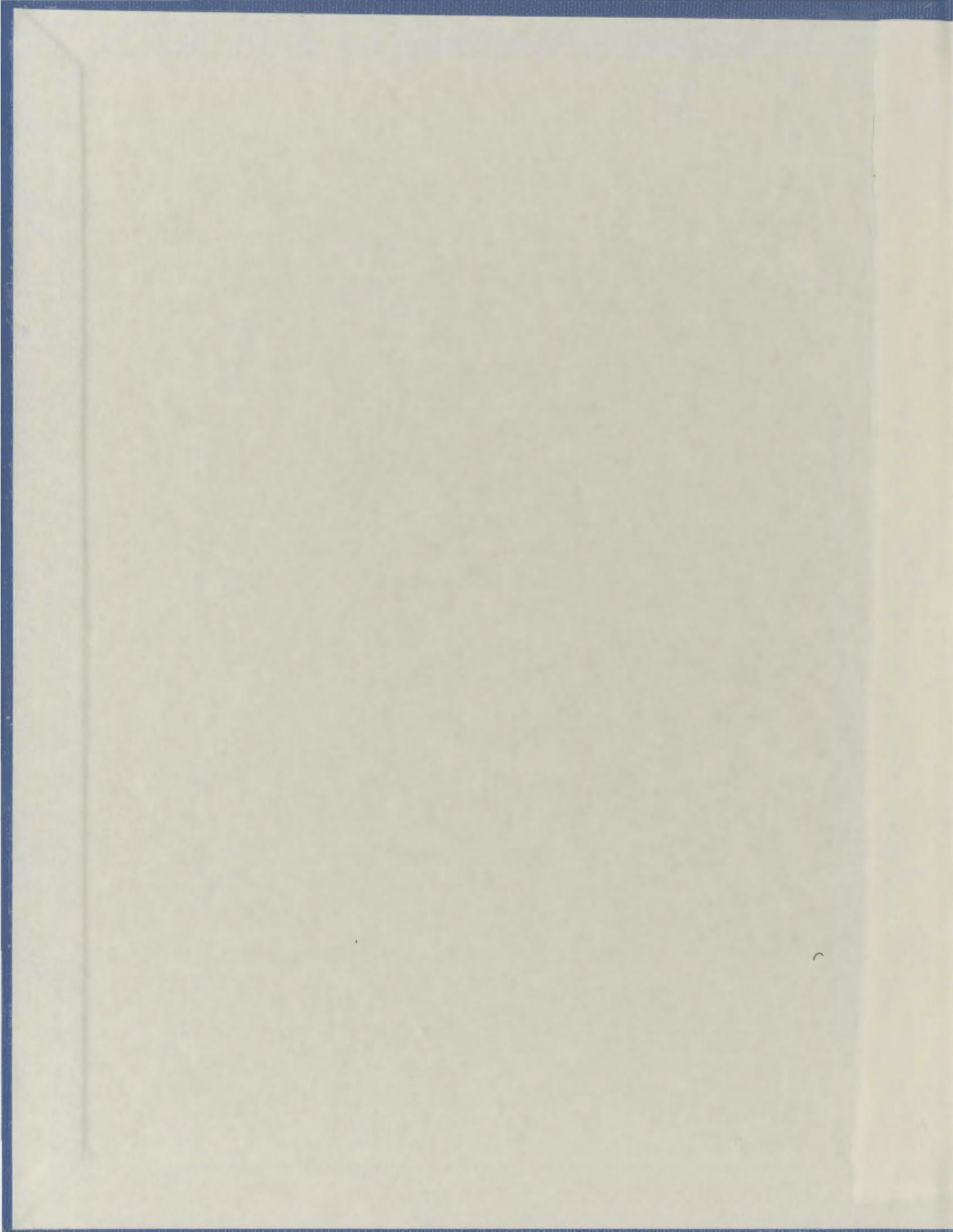
THE VOID IN DELEUZE:
DIFFERENCE AND THE GOOD

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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THE VOID IN DELEUZE : DIFFERENCE AND THE GOOD

by

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School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

Deleuze seeks to pry philosophy from the hands of those who would, grounding their judgments in a supposedly transcendent reality, distort or fail to recognize the true nature of things in the changing world. This task for a philosophy of the future, intended to project us beyond such moral categories as "good" and "evil" in favour of the alternative *ethical* categories, "good" and "bad", is to be achieved, Deleuze thinks, by overturning Platonism. Plato's doctrine of the forms is held by Deleuze to be an example of the corruption of metaphysics by the will to judge, characteristic of Christian morality (whose origins in Platonic philosophy are undeniable). For Deleuze, the philosopher is primarily a producer of concepts, not an agent who generates through judgment. Chapter One sets the agenda for the thesis by opening questions about what is good for the human agent, specifically in terms of the relation between an agent and the products s/he might produce. A brief account is given of Deleuze's position on goodness, offered in the light of his criticisms of the Platonic tradition. Questions are raised about what measures Deleuze takes to avoid transcendence, and about what consequences might follow from this move. Chapter Two attempts to rescue Plato from some of Deleuze's more serious charges, and does so by considering Plato's concept of the Good in relation to his accounts of measure and of the *chora*, a concept of place. Contemporary Plato scholarship is used to show questionable presuppositions in Deleuze's account of Plato, for instance regarding the physics of the Platonic universe, the status of transcendence, and the nature of the *eidos*, or form. Chapter Three examines Deleuze's own metaphysics of Difference, Multiplicity and Event, in relation to traditional atomism, the philosophy of time (duration) of Henri Bergson, and certain alternative theories of event. The relation of event and action is explored in the context of naming and intention. Chapter Four presents Deleuze's theory of the Event as a theory of the Void, in relation to Deleuze's monism, and to time, goodness, and negativity. The relation between Deleuze's theory of the Event and his Ethics is further developed, in order to open questions about the motivation for and nature of action in Deleuzian philosophy. Chapter Five synthesizes the various themes, and contrasts Deleuze with Plato on the question of the good for the agent, love, and action, all in relation to Deleuze's Stoicism.

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I wish to thank the Memorial University of Newfoundland School of Graduate Studies for financial support.

My parents, Bernard and Diane, have given and given and given, in every way. They know I appreciate it, but they cannot know how much.

Perhaps all of my teachers will find evidence of their influence on me in this essay, but I suspect James Bradley, William Barker, and Peter Trnka will discover that I have grown fascinated with themes long dear to them. I am grateful they were generous with their insights.

For two academic years, during my undergraduate programme, I was employed at the Memorial University of Newfoundland Writing Centre, where I worked as a tutor under the direction of Virginia Ryan. Those who worked there know what things are possible when people listen to each other.

I have talked more philosophy with John Parsons than with any other. Without John and his faculty of memory, this thesis would not have been possible, for I could never have remembered myself on my own.

Acknowledgments are often for declaring those debts one could never settle, but I shall resist the temptation to shrug mine off, and promise instead to make good of the wealth of thought entrusted to me by my advisor, John Scott. I dreaded the revision stage of this project, dreaded to look hard at what I had done. Yet at some point during the editing process, this paper began to feel like my own. For his philosophical midwifery, but for countless other things too, I thank John Scott, eternally.

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Abbreviations

Texts by Deleuze

<i>BG</i>	<i>Bergsonism</i>
<i>DR</i>	<i>Difference and Repetition</i>
<i>F</i>	<i>Foucault</i>
<i>FL</i>	<i>The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque</i>
<i>LS</i>	<i>Logic of Sense</i>

Texts by Deleuze and Guattari

<i>AO</i>	<i>Anti-Oedipus</i>
<i>TP</i>	<i>A Thousand Plateaus</i>
<i>WP</i>	<i>What is Philosophy?</i>

Texts by Plato

<i>Rep</i>	<i>Republic</i>
<i>Tim</i>	<i>Timaeus</i>

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Out of Breath, Laughing

We are fortunate that Foucault said so many silly things about Deleuze and his work. Once, for instance, he said that the twentieth century might one day come to be called “Deleuzian.”¹ Deleuze suggests it might be a little joke on Foucault’s part, and so dismisses it.² It is, however, a joke that has for years preoccupied commentators. (Ian Buchanan, for instance, recently edited a collection for the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, entitled, *A Deleuzian Century?*). Philosophy has always had its heroes, but one senses in this question something of the pop-status that philosophy has achieved today, in some quarters at least, even if the question remains philosophical.³ Philosophy does seem to have become, or is now showing itself to be, theatre: a little comedy, games and jokes, performed publicly by stars to the delight of commentators who might more aptly be called fans.

Perhaps that – or certainly that – but not only that. Why would Foucault label the twentieth century “Deleuzian”? Deleuze would have us forget this joke between friends, but what is he hiding? Is he merely a little shy? We have to be suspicious; Deleuze says, after all, that a philosophy book should be part detective novel.⁴

¹ Michel Foucault, “Theatrum Philosophicum,” in *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 165.

² A joke, Deleuze thought, that was “meant to make people who like us laugh, and make everyone else livid.” See Buchanan’s introduction to a special edition of *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, entitled, *A Deleuzian Century?* (ed. Ian Buchanan, *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, , v. 96, (Summer 1997)).

³ Ian Buchanan notes that “[P]ainting Deleuze’s portrait is not merely desirable – the fond wish of nostalgia, but a necessary move in the larger game of penetrating Deleuze’s thought” (Ibid., 383).

⁴ But who/what is the sleuth, for Deleuze? “A book of philosophy should be in part a very particular species of detective novel, in part a kind of science fiction. By detective novel we mean that concepts, with their

Commentators have tried to sort out how Foucault's comment might be true, pursuing the question of how Deleuze's philosophy is a philosophy fit for the twentieth century. That's one approach. But if the twentieth century is indeed fit to be called Deleuzian, Foucault's comment is certainly no joke.

No, that will not do. Perhaps, instead, it was a harmless joke, a little wit. Deleuze, the thinker of the molecular, the minor, the multiple: surely it would be glorious irony if his name were one day to represent an entire century of human thought and action. Do Deleuze's concepts have such a power of replication?

We recall, also, that Deleuze draws from Nietzsche the project for a "philosophy of the future."⁵ Now Foucault seems to mock Deleuze: "A Deleuzian century?" – surely not his *own*! If Foucault is right, Deleuze's philosophy is a philosophy of the present, not at all of the future. Not very *untimely*, one would have to say. Of course, we are being facetious – untimeliness in thought, as both Deleuze and Foucault know – is not so much a matter of being outside of one's time and *in another*, but a matter of being displaced in time, or perhaps of embracing what is always out of step with the present. And Deleuze takes the reversal of Platonism as the task for twentieth century philosophy, as though Nietzsche meant very simply that "future" which would be Deleuze's present.⁶

zones of presence, should intervene to resolve local situations. They themselves change along with the problems. They have spheres of influence where (...) they operate in relation to 'dramas' and by means of a certain 'cruelty'"(Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, tr. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), xx).

⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Vintage Books, 1989).

⁶ *DR*, 59. See also Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, tr. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 253.

Deleuze remarks in *L'abécédaire* that Foucault had such presence that upon entering a room, he transformed it into something else.⁷ This struck Deleuze as unenviable. And we know, too, that Foucault's celebrity is much greater than Deleuze's. Perhaps in gesturing away from himself and toward Deleuze, Foucault was performing a sort of philosophical practical joke. That is to say, the joke is in the reactions of critics and commentators alike who are suckers for such delicious aphorisms, but in their delight fail to grasp the irony of what it might reveal. We must restrain ourselves from erupting into laughter at the thought that not only Deleuze but *we too* are the victims of such a practical joke, that this thesis is a pie in the face.

Since even philosophy needs them, shall we play the straight man?

1.2 A Eulogy for the Engineer's Boy?

In 1995, Gilles Deleuze committed suicide, ending the pain of a severe respiratory illness that had plagued him for years. The final act in a life of pure immanence becomes our point of origin for an encounter with Monsieur Deleuze.

To begin on such a note – to begin at an *end* – is painful, too. And to begin a philosophical essay with a biographical detail: such a decision must be *justified*. By what right do we introduce into a critical paper such gossip? We are encouraged *to separate*

⁷ From the section "F" on Fidelity. Pierre-André Boutang, *L'abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze, avec Claire Parnet*, (1996). Deleuze's comments on Foucault's power to transform are *not* metaphorical. (The question of the *form* is central for us.) Such is the power of the event – a focus for us at the end of Chapter Three and in Chapter Four. Where is the evidence for such a transformation as the one effected by Foucault, reported by Deleuze? As evidence for such claims cannot be located in propositions, we will not be straying beyond limits Deleuze himself would defend when we refer not only to what Deleuze says in the film, but to his manner generally and what it suggests.

life from philosophy, *to return to the text*⁸. Philosophy, after all, is concerned with Truth, the Real. We get into trouble when we ignore argument and begin listening to philosophical storytellers, biographers. Philosophy might lose touch with the real and become a game. This threat has forced those concerned with the philosopher's role as *truth-seeker* to nuzzle up close to scientists, whose work, we are to believe, gradually leads us asymptotically closer to Truth about the world.

And yet Wittgenstein, silent on matters of Ethics (unphilosophical matters), mystifies us as a human being perhaps more than as a philosopher. Schopenhauer's misogyny, Kant's afternoon stroll, Heidegger's Nazism: we wonder whether any of these details are accidental to the work of these philosophers.

So what is philosophy?

This is the question Deleuze and Félix Guattari set out to address in what would be the final significant text bearing Deleuze's name: *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* It is notable that Deleuze and Guattari pose the question *after* a lifetime spent doing philosophy, as though one carries out the act of philosophizing only later to see exactly what it was one was doing. Philosophy is what they, *philosophers*, have been doing. The first significant response comes in the introduction:

We can see at least what philosophy is not: it is not contemplation, reflection, or communication. This is the case even though it may sometimes believe it is one or other of these, as a result of the capacity of every discipline to produce its own illusions and to hide behind its own peculiar smokescreen. It is not contemplation, for contemplations are things themselves as seen in the creation of their specific

⁸ It is interesting to recall that Heidegger directs us away from the artist and the audience and toward the *work of art itself*. See Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Basic Writings: from Being and Time (1927) to the Task of Thinking (1964)*, 2nd revision and expanded edition, trans. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977, 1993), 143-212. Coming to grips with Heidegger 'the man' in relation to Heidegger 'the philosopher' has been one of the central *philosophical* agendas over the past hundred years. See George Steiner, *Martin Heidegger* (New York: Viking Press, 1979, c1978).

concepts. It is not reflection, because no one needs philosophy to reflect on anything. It is thought that philosophy is being given a great deal by being turned into the art of reflection, but actually it loses everything. Mathematicians, as mathematicians, have never waited for philosophers before reflecting on mathematics, nor artists before reflecting on painting or music. So long as their reflection belongs to their respective creation, it is a bad joke to say that this makes them philosophers. Nor does philosophy find any final refuge in communication, which only works under the sway of opinions in order to create 'consensus' and not concepts. The idea of a Western democratic conversation between friends has never produced a single concept. The idea comes, perhaps, from the Greeks, but they distrusted it so much, and subjected it to such harsh treatment, that the concept was more like the ironical soliloquy bird that surveyed [survolait] the battlefield of destroyed rival opinions (the drunken guests at the banquet). Philosophy does not contemplate, reflect, or communicate, although it must create concepts for these actions or passions. [...] To know oneself⁹, to learn to think, to act as if nothing were self-evident – wondering, 'wondering that there is being,' – these, and many other determinations of philosophy create interesting attitudes, however tiresome¹⁰ they may be in the long run, but even from a pedagogical point of view they do not constitute a well-defined occupation or precise activity. On the other hand, the following definition of philosophy can be taken as being decisive: knowledge through pure concepts.¹¹

It is obvious that Deleuze and Guattari are struggling to understand what value philosophy has, given, for instance, that artists and mathematicians need not wait for philosophers to reflect on art and mathematics. Contemplation is not philosophy at all, since the products of contemplation are but the raw material upon which philosophy must

⁹ Deleuze finds the Socratic question inadequate. That is not to say it is not valuable, or that Deleuze does not provide his own formulation of the problem. Consider: "To contemplate is to draw something from. We must always contemplate something else – the water, or Diana, or the woods – in order to be filled with an image of ourselves" (DR, 75).

¹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari have here, surely, Heidegger as their target. Peter Trnka has correctly pointed out in his examiner's report on an earlier draft of this paper that commentators on whose work I draw in chapter two are sympathetic to some of Heidegger's views. A word may therefore be due regarding the decision to use their material. Deleuze distrusts 'consciousness,' and is consequently profoundly at odds with Heidegger, the phenomenologist. (See footnote 17 for further comment on this matter.) And yet the two belong together in a very select group of philosophers concerned deeply with the nature of *event*, *thought*, and *difference*. As it could not be an objective of this paper to address in depth the relation between these two thinkers, we must be content in our assessment of Deleuze to register his own objections to Heidegger's philosophical project. It is quite certain that Heidegger's wondering at Being is insufficient for Deleuze, and that Deleuze has a superior sense of humour to the grave Heidegger. Beyond this, we need say nothing about their relation for now, since it is emphatically *not* my agenda in this paper to use Plato as a soldier for Heidegger against Deleuze.

¹¹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, tr. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) 6-7.

do its work. And philosophy as communication is mere consensus-production for Deleuze, who displayed throughout his career a distaste for philosophical conferences, preferring to pursue his thought privately.¹² It is possible to communicate philosophy, though philosophy is more than communication.

Deleuze thus attempts to hold open a place for properly *philosophic activity* – activity distinct from other sorts of activities. Philosophy is not handmaiden to the scientists – or, better, it is that and much more. It is handmaiden, too, to art, mathematics, and politics. But so are all of these activities handmaiden to philosophy. States, works of art, and concepts are all engineered; the philosopher is one engineer among others, capable of devising a unique product that will encounter and engage with the products of scientists and artists alike.¹³ The question of this thesis can now be made explicit. What is the relation between knowledge and production? How and what does a philosopher know through the production of pure concepts? Is Deleuze’s answer to the question - What is philosophy? – a good answer?

Philosophers often do produce concepts, but dispute arises over the motivation for the production of concepts, and over the question whether philosophers begin to go wrong when they begin this constructive activity. The logical positivists in the first half of the twentieth century thought that the history of metaphysics was filled with concepts that do nothing other than confuse us about the real. Concepts that do not *apply* to anything; names that do not *refer* to anything: such were, they claimed, the products yielded by the

¹² Deleuze taught philosophy, however, and this makes us wonder what exactly it was about conferences that bothered him so. Did he need the integrity of a single project or course - or voice? In *L'Abécédaire*, he expresses considerable preference for the written word, in the section “C, as in Culture”.

¹³ Deleuze's father was an engineer/inventor before the First World War. See Boutang, “E, as in *Enfance*”.

history of philosophy – by philosophers carried away with themselves. In an opposed tradition of philosophy, Richard Rorty, though perhaps not as antagonistic toward the *use* of such concepts, would say that these concepts are not *adequate* to any thing-in-itself, to the *real*. He is happy enough to remain *inside the text*. Where the logical positivists want concepts to be adequate to the real, Rorty abandons any notion of a real *outside the text*. What are we doing when we use language, when we *name*?

Deleuze's position falls somewhere between these two extremes, as we shall see. He was famously not worried about any supposed imminent *end* of philosophy or thought, and felt that he was doing philosophy in the traditional sense of the term. But there can be no doubt that, despite his empiricist leanings, Deleuze cannot identify himself with the logical positivists. What we are *not* doing as philosophers, as far as Deleuze is concerned, is representing an unchanging real. Deleuze says of himself in his book *Foucault*: "I am a cartographer."¹⁴ Is language an attempt to picture to oneself and locate those 'things' which are outside the text? Is that what he means by *mapping*?

If so, it would be difficult to see how he is to be distinguished on this from the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*. But Deleuze's account of mapping is not to be confused with the picturing of the *Tractatus*:

Make a map, not a tracing. The orchid does not reproduce the tracing of the wasp; it forms a map with the wasp, in a rhizome. What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious. It fosters connections between fields, the removal of blockages on bodies without organs, the maximum opening of bodies without organs onto a plane of consistency. It is itself a part of the rhizome. The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind

¹⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, tr. Sean Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 44.

of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation. Perhaps one of the most important characteristics of the rhizome is that it always has multiple entryways. In this sense, the burrow is an animal rhizome, and sometimes maintains a clear distinction between the line of flight as passageway and storage or living strata (cf. the muskrat). A map has multiple entryways as opposed to the tracing, which always comes 'back to the same.' The map has to do with performance, whereas the tracing always involves an alleged 'competence'.¹⁵

While we will not be concerned with them explicitly in this paper, such concepts as "rhizome" and "body without organs" should not be dismissed as metaphorical. They alert us to Deleuze's view of what it is we are actually doing when we produce our maps, be they pieces of philosophy, works of art, or political actions. Such acts are experiments in contact with the real – not efforts to reproduce the real, which Deleuze calls "tracing". Tracing has always to do with the *same*, whereas Deleuze's interest, throughout his philosophy, is to think and to produce the *different*. We are not striving when we speak about the nature of the world to achieve some final set of propositions which accurately describe it. Instead, we *map* – rather than *trace* – the changing world; and our mapping activity is both creative and constitutive of the world – that is, we *too* are part of a world that is ever-new, and ourselves and our activities in the world are themselves changing and creative. The real itself is ever-changing, and philosophers and artists (and politicians), cannot hope to represent the real *as it is*; the best one can do through representation is to reproduce a real that *was*. A philosopher must learn to intersect with a

¹⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Volume II*, tr. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 12-3. Note please the claim that maps have to do with *performance* – forming through action. The term calls to mind a certain branch of the arts.

changing, novel real, for he is himself constituted from and somehow part of that changing real.¹⁶

1.3 Locating the Battlefield

Heidegger sent us back to the work of art. Our habit had been to look to the artist or to the feelings and responses of the audience. But Heidegger – not having altogether left Husserl behind him – bid us direct our phenomenological glare¹⁷ toward the sculpture itself. The work of art achieved independence in the twentieth century. We now agree to imagine texts write themselves; having finally had mercy on the tortured author sweating over her typewriter in the hours after a deadline, we criticize the thick-skinned “implied” author of a text.¹⁸

¹⁶ Exactly what relation the philosopher, or any agent, has to the changing real is among our questions in this essay. Deleuze heralds Nietzsche and Kierkegaard for their efforts to engage with a changing real, and chides Hegel for his failure to do so: “[Nietzsche’s and Kierkegaard’s] objection to Hegel is that he does not go beyond false movement – in other words, the abstract logical movement of ‘mediation.’ They want to put metaphysics in motion, in action. They want to make it act, and make it carry out immediate acts. It is not enough, therefore, for them to propose a new representation of movement; representation is already mediation” (*DR*, 8).

¹⁷ By his own claims, Deleuze does not belong (as at least the early Heidegger very obviously does) to the tradition of philosophy that values ‘consciousness’ highly. The phenomenological perspective (Husserl’s *consciousness as consciousness of*) is the culmination of a modernist tradition stretching from Descartes through Kant and Hegel. In his *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, Deleuze writes that “consciousness is inseparable from the triple illusion that *constitutes* it, the illusion of finality, the illusion of freedom, and the theological illusion” (Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, tr. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Light Books, 1988), 20). These illusions, relating to goodness, freedom, and God, preoccupy Deleuze, who connects consciousness with the transcendent, and defines immanence as the *unconscious* (*Ibid.*, 29). Deleuze proposes an immanent good, rather than transcendent Platonic forms, which, as discussed in chapter two, have an intimate relation to the *visual* and thereby to consciousness. He rejects the notion of freedom as conscious choice among possibles, and offers an account of an unconscious, immanent principle of activity we might be tempted to call God.

¹⁸ See Umberto Eco with Richard Rorty, Jonathan Culler, and Christine Brooke-Rose, *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Perhaps the novelist *should* die during the painful birth of her brainchild.¹⁹ She acts too often the part of authority on her own work – or worse, on the creative process – and we have had enough, haven't we, of these tales of missed meals and deadlines in the production of art? Art has a habit of killing, anyhow: it directs whatever force it commands against the social, the political, the historical. It attacks other art, art itself – at times it shackles and tortures itself. All in the generation of the new, of the novel. This is the rule of art – indeed, of life: nothing new without death. It is not strange, then, that for Heidegger – for whom we are all producers – we should also be waiters, beings-toward-death.²⁰ But are we producers only? And does our interest in what is to come lead us to the right kinds of questions about generation? How do we knowingly engage this world of change? How do we deal with the new that confronts us? Is all of Being conditioned by production, to be understood in relation to production?

Deleuze assumes as his project the “reversal of Platonism,”²¹ the task for “a philosophy of the future,” proposed by Nietzsche; his philosophy is an attempt to explain the production of the new, the continual and unending production of a future, the guaranteed return of difference. There are great differences between Deleuze and Nietzsche, of course – though both see Hegel as their primary philosophical enemy, and

¹⁹ See Michel Foucault, “What is an Author,” in *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 113-38. See also Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” in *Image, Music, Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill, 1977).

²⁰ See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1962), 311.

²¹ *LS*, 265. The French “renverser,” translated alternatively by “overturn” and “reverse,” can suggest a violent upheaval, the result of a physical encounter or battle. It can be a synonym for “détruire” (to destroy) or “abolir” (to abolish). Alain Rey and Josette Rey-Debove, ed., *Le Nouveau Petit Robert* (Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert, 1993), 2168. While Deleuze wants to reverse Platonism, in bringing the simulacra to the surface, the project also suggests the overthrowing, as one might overthrow a regime, or the destruction of an oppressive force.

both define their project in terms of Platonic philosophy. Nietzsche's philosophy is anti-systematic in style (and perhaps in content) and relies on aphorism, the philosophical fragment, and poetry. We must also remember that for Deleuze, and perhaps for Nietzsche, the reversal of Platonism is not the rejection of all things Platonic.²²

Nietzsche's work seems itself to be alive; it is chaotic in nature at times, filled with beauty, anger, love – and certainly plenty of traditional philosophy, though stretched stylistically in startlingly new ways. Deleuze, on the other hand, felt no antagonism toward philosophical system building. His other great philosophical inheritance came from the great French process thinker Henri Bergson, from whom Deleuze borrowed the notion of an “open” whole or system.²³

What Nietzsche despised in Plato was the transcendence of the *Good* that seeped into Christianity through Neo-platonism and became the Christian God. According to Nietzsche, God is dead. What is lost with transcendence is an absolute ground for values; Nietzsche himself then undertakes both to trace the history of values (*Genealogy of Morality*) and to ponder the possible future of value (*Beyond Good and Evil*).²⁴ Like

²² “The task of modern philosophy has been defined: to overturn Platonism. That this overturning should conserve many Platonic characteristics is not only inevitable but desirable” (*DR*, 59).

²³ Consider the passage above from *A Thousand Plateaus* in which Deleuze describes the map as “open and connectable in all of its dimensions,” as “detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification.” The nature of system is a crucial one for Deleuze, and will be discussed in detail in chapter three. One way of reading Deleuze's work is to focus on the notion of place and displacement, territorialization and deterritorialization as it appears in the terminology of *A Thousand Plateaus*, and to wonder whether Deleuze did not delight in displacing himself everywhere within Hegel's system – sometimes siding with Greek atomists, professing in *L'abécédaire* that Spinoza is in his heart. (We remember that Hegel himself thought that one must first be Spinozist if one is to be a philosopher). Where Hegelians have often had little trouble sorting out Nietzsche's place in the great Hegelian system, one wonders whether Hegel would have more trouble placing Deleuze.

²⁴ “One should own up in all strictness to what is still necessary here for a long time to come, to what alone is justified so far: to collect material, to conceptualize and arrange a vast realm of subtle feelings of value and differences of value which are alive, grow, beget, and perish – and perhaps attempts to present vividly

Nietzsche, Deleuze rejects transcendence and the very notion of an absolute ground, and wants also to get beyond good and evil. But also like Nietzsche, Deleuze does not want to get beyond *good and bad*. Deleuze everywhere opposes morality, placing in its stead an Ethics, the nature of which we shall discuss in chapters four and five. What kind of good has no evil for its contrary? Are we left with a purely aesthetic criterion of selection if we give up on the concept of evil? Is there a difference between a good life and an artfully-lived life? Deleuze, citing Foucault, says there is:

[E]stablishing ways of existing or styles of life isn't just an aesthetic matter, it's what Foucault called ethics, as opposed to morality. The difference is that morality presents us with a set of constraining rules of a specific sort, ones that judge actions and intentions by considering them in relation to transcendent values (this is good, that's bad...); ethics is a set of optional rules that assess what we do, what we say, in relation to the ways of existing involved.²⁵

There is a difference cited here between the functions of two kinds of rules, those associated with morality and those associated with ethics. The former sort Deleuze describes as *constraining*, rules that by their nature can judge the action or intention in question, since this action or intention must measure up to an unchanging, pre-established, transcendent value. But ethics consists of *optional* rules. At first glance this is an odd status for rules to have, since we are accustomed to thinking of rules as by definition *not at all optional*, but instead as expressions that draw their power to influence actions and intentions from their unchanging nature, from the fact that we cannot choose to throw out the rules whenever we wish. To do so would not be to have optional rules, but to have no rules at all, it seems. And yet it is because we presuppose that the function

some of the more frequent and recurring forms of such living crystallizations – all to prepare a *typology* of morals” (Nietzsche, 97).

²⁵ Deleuze, *Negotiations. 1972-1990*, tr. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 100.

of the rule is to determine action or intention (by exercising judgment) that we struggle to see what an optional rule might be.

Where the constraining moral rule *judges*, the optional ethical rule *assesses*. This verb *to assess* preserves some of the meaning of the verb *to judge*, since there is a moment of appreciation involved, of recognition of the nature of the action or intention in question. But *to assess* does not include the *prejudice* in the verb *to judge*; that is, when someone is judging, she is not only examining the object in question in terms of its own powers, discriminating its own proportions with regard to itself, appreciating differences, measuring itself in relation to its own *ways of existing*. She is drawing the object into her own sphere, as it were, in order to *transcend* the noticed differences and offer a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ – or, perhaps, a ‘this is good, or right’ or a ‘this is bad or evil, or wrong.’²⁶ A certain uncommon behaviour carried out by a person strikes us as somehow dangerous, unhealthy. Morality would have us measure his action by the rules for behaviour; contradiction indicates to us that the action is wrong, and that therefore the actor is either ill or evil. Ethics, as Deleuze has it, proceeds by asking the question: how might this particular behaviour belong to a whole other set of actions in this person’s life, to his ways of existing? Any ‘rule’ we adopt is an attempt to discover some consistency in the person’s behaviour, some thread that opens for us a way to draw together an otherwise disparate set of details and differences in order to see how the behaviour might *work* for

²⁶ “[...] Ethics, which is to say, a typology of immanent modes of existence, replaces Morality, which always refers existence to transcendent values. Morality is the judgment of God, the *system of judgment*” (Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 23).

that person, how it might be *good* for that person.²⁷ This is the kind of *good* that Deleuze is working with, an immanent good as opposed to a transcendent good, where the latter measures *from outside* the kind of actions or intentions that we might support.

For Deleuze, the marriage of metaphysics and morality begins with Plato. Plato's Good is that metaphysical principle of activity responsible for whatever harmony and integrity there is in the world. But it is also that which grounds moral judgments made by human beings. As Deleuze tells it, the Platonic philosophy has long been understood to turn on the distinction between the transcendent world of Forms or Ideas and the world of flux or change. According to this story, which is corroborated certainly by the tenth book of the *Republic* and by certain passages in the *Phaedo*, Plato held that 'objects' in the changing world have whatever discernible form they can be said to have because they are copies of the perfect and unchanging Form that exists eternally in an utterly transcendent world. Deleuze refers to this first distinction as the distinction between models and copies. The model grounds the copy insofar as the copy owes whatever integrity it has to some sort of relationship with a perfect Form. What sort of relationship this is proves to be a crucial issue in the history of philosophy.

This first and familiar distinction in Plato grounds, according to Deleuze, a second, less obvious distinction: that between *types of copies*. Certain copies can be said to be well-founded because they share a crucial *internal* relationship to the Form of which they are copies. Deleuze claims that for Plato this internal relationship can be called one of *likeness*. Copies which are not well-founded, on the other hand, but which have an

²⁷ Is a similar method is carried out when, having decided that an act is evil, the moralist attempts to determine whether the actor is ill or evil? We will return to this matter in chapters four and five.

external relationship of resemblance Deleuze calls *simulacra*. In the language of the Christian tradition, Deleuze helps us to draw the distinction between internal likeness and external resemblance: man was made in God's image and likeness; when man sins, he loses any real likeness to God, though he continues to bear a resemblance to God; that is, he retains the image of God.

Deleuze defines the motivation of the Platonic philosophy in these terms: the objective, for Plato, is to keep these simulacra "completely submerged," to keep them from insinuating themselves everywhere.²⁸ What bears only an external resemblance to the perfect Forms is very dangerous; it pretends, for instance, to have qualities it does not have and might dishonestly seduce those to whom it could pose great threat. Plato's method of *selection* through a process of *division* is intended to distinguish good copies from bad so that the good copies may be able to return, while the simulacra are suppressed.

Transcendence is often abandoned in the history of philosophy after Plato, and the principle of the Good is rejected in favour of principles of activity named neutrally with respect to the question of value; here we think of such principles as *the unmoved mover*, or *Thought thinking itself* (Aristotle), *One* (Plotinus), *duration* (Bergson), *Being* (Heidegger), *creativity* (Whitehead). But the moral flavour of metaphysics is often retained by the subjugation of *difference*, or of the growling world of flux, to the identity of the Form or of the concept, often in its Aristotelian form. Differences are tamed and

²⁸ "[T]o define the totality of the Platonic motivation: It has to do with selecting among the pretenders, distinguishing good and bad copies or, rather, copies (always well-founded) and simulacra (always engulfed in dissimilarity). It is a question of assuring the triumph of the copies over the simulacra, of repressing simulacra, keeping them completely submerged, preventing them from climbing to the surface, and 'insinuating themselves' everywhere" (*LS*, 256-7).

slotted carefully into the categories of representation; no simulacrum escapes the mesh of representation. But the identity of the Form remains that which all copies must approach, or else they are judged to be bad, swept away. Deleuze's own wish is to liberate the simulacra from the oppressive machinery of the history of metaphysics which bears the influence of Platonic transcendence (the Good) and interprets difference always in relation to identity, opposition, analogy, and resemblance. In other words, Deleuze wants to disentangle metaphysics from morality.

This paper explores the ways in which Deleuze attempts to keep the *Good*, as transcendent principle, out of Philosophy, an activity Deleuze described, we remember, as essentially productive in nature. Philosophy is the production of concepts. In chapter three, we shall try to unfold Deleuze's world in text, and in so doing to bring to light the nature of his own first principle, *Difference*. There, and in chapter four, we shall see how Deleuze replaces Plato's world with a world *without judgment*, a world where production is not enslaved to a morality grounded in a transcendence whose function is to nothing other than to ground morality.

But is there a greater horizon than that of production, a horizon within which it is possible to locate the limits of production, to critique production? Where Heidegger²⁹ thought that Plato, and ancient philosophy as a whole, understood Being through production and against the horizon of production, John Sallis shows that for Plato, the inquiry into production is always accompanied by a critique of production, "a marking off

²⁹ And perhaps others – see Günter Figal, "The Idea and Mixture of the Good," in *Retracing the Platonic Text*, ed. John Russon and John Sallis (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2000), 89: "Socrates pictures life as a product and, accordingly, the way we conduct our lives as a form of production." Obviously, important distinctions must be drawn between Plato and Socrates.

of its limits,” as Sallis says.³⁰ Deleuze is aware that for Plato not all is production. In chapter four as we follow Deleuze at every opportunity sealing up any room for the appearance of anything *resembling this transcendent Good*, it will become clear how conscious Deleuze is of the threat that Plato and his Good pose. This metaphor of *sealing* is particularly appropriate, as it is over the issue of place, of emptiness, of no-place, of void, that Deleuze and Plato, with serious consequences at the level of action, part ways.

Since so much rides on the consequences of this reversal of Platonism, we must ask whether Deleuze’s reading of Plato is accurate. To abandon the transcendent Good³¹ on the basis of a production accompanied by a *critique* of production without some attention to Plato’s own account of the production of the physical universe, as we find it in the *Timaeus*, might be premature.

Seeking to explain the creation of the world without reference to an original model (so as to free us from the act of tracing into our own present what *has already been* and to allow us instead the creative activity of *mapping*), Deleuze turns to the origin of Western philosophy. He charges that Plato’s metaphysical principle of the Good is infected by morality.³² Deleuze argues that Plato’s mania for judgment pushes him to reject not the possibility, but the value of novelty. If we could only forget about this

³⁰ John Sallis, *Chorology: On Beginning in Plato’s Timaeus* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 51.

³¹ For clarity in the rest of this introduction, it will be necessary at times to refer to the Good as transcendent, but the question of “*where* is the Platonic Good?” is to be addressed in chapter two.

³² “[T]he will to eliminate simulacra or phantasms has no motivation apart from the moral. What is condemned in the figure of simulacra is the state of free, oceanic differences, of nomadic distributions and crowned anarchy, along with all that malice which challenges both the notion of the model and that of the copy. Later, the world of representation will more or less forget its moral origin and presupposition. These will nevertheless continue to act in the distinction between the originary and the derived, the original and the sequel, the ground and the grounded, which animates the hierarchies of a representative theology by extending the complementarity between model and copy” (*DR*, 265).

question of the good of it, in the moral sense, perhaps we would be better able to deal with the new. But what is it to choose difference over this kind of goodness? What difference does Difference make?

Certainly, we must make decisions, we must choose. Some sort of process of *selection* must be involved; we need words,³³ names, and Deleuze is aware of this. We want to ask: what is the *good* of difference? In silencing the transcendent Good, what sort of world does Deleuze propose? What world is he mapping? What is the cost of silencing the Good? What is the Good *offering, saying to us*, that Deleuze does not hear? Why, if he is so interested in overturning Plato, in having done with judgment, does the Good receive so little attention from Deleuze? Shall we so quickly excuse him for pretending to overturn Platonism without engaging with the difficult question: what *is* the Good? It is a daunting question; one with which Plato himself was uncomfortable. Further, why does Deleuze say so little about his own principle of different/ciation? What is at stake that makes these thinkers hesitate to speak about these mysteries? And what are the consequences of such reticence?

Could Deleuze have learned something from Plato's Good that might have helped him to refocus his philosophy, make it into something less frightening than the unquestioned embracing of difference, the fleeing of sadness and pain, the hopeless gasping for breath in the vacuum? To put the question simply: Deleuze would have us choose the Different over the transcendent Good; do we wish to do the opposite and choose the Good over the Different... or must we choose only one of them?

³³ Thanks to John A. Scott for the reminder that the Greek *legein* (cognate with *logos*) basically means to select, to choose, to attend particularly to. See H.G. Liddell, Robert Scott, and H.S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 1033-4.

Chapter Two: Good and Difference in Plato

“Deleuzianism is fundamentally a Platonism with a different accentuation.”

- Alain Badiou³⁴

2.1 Simulacrum and Idea

In his *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze tackles the philosophical problem of identity, siting it within some ancient texts. He argues that, since Aristotle and the inception of the categories of representation, *difference* has been understood in terms of identity. Deleuze seeks to free difference from the chains of identity, and to defend the claim that beneath identity is the free play of differences. One of his favourite examples drawn from the history of philosophy is that of the subject. The subject conceived in Cartesian terms as self-identical will lose its integrity in Deleuze who speaks, instead, of a larval subject.³⁵ This larval subject is not the underlying self-identical, unchanging substance it is for Descartes, but is produced, rather, by the free play of difference, or change. Identity becomes, for Deleuze, a mere “surface effect.”

According to Deleuze, difference is in trouble even before Aristotle. Plato accounts for the apparent unity of an object in the changing world by reference to an Idea, with which the object has a relation of similarity. A good table is a table that bears a true *likeness* to the model or original, or Idea, “table”. The Idea, as Deleuze says “can only be

³⁴ Alain Badiou. *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, tr. Louise Burchill (Minnesota: Regents of the University of Minnesota, 2000), 26.

³⁵ *DR*, 78.

defined by a positing of identity as the essence of the Same.”³⁶ The origin of a thing’s being is found in its formal cause: *similarity* to an Idea explains the existence of a particular being in the changing world.

Because Deleuze is so often heralded as a thinker of *difference*, Alain Badiou’s comment that Deleuzianism is fundamentally a Platonism “with a different accentuation” is peculiar,³⁷ especially since Deleuze understands his project to be the “overturning of Platonism.”³⁸ But the subjection of difference to identity is not complete until Aristotle, he argues, since:

[T]he Heraclitean world still grows in Platonism. With Plato, the issue is still in doubt: mediation has not yet found its ready-made movement. The Idea is not yet the concept of an object which submits the world to the requirements of representation, but rather a brute presence which can be invoked in the world only in function of that which is not ‘representable’ in things. The Idea has therefore not yet chosen to relate difference to the identity of a concept in general: it has not given up hope of finding a pure concept of difference itself. [...] Aristotle indeed saw what is irreplaceable in Platonism, even though he made it precisely the basis of a criticism of Plato: the dialectic of difference has its own method – division – but this operates without mediation, without middle term or reason; it acts in the immediate and is inspired by the Ideas rather than by the requirements of a concept in general. It is true that division is a capricious, incoherent procedure which jumps from one singularity to another, by contrast with the supposed identity of a concept.³⁹

For Aristotle, on Deleuze’s reading, the only differences acknowledged are those between species. Within a particular species, there are many differences that do not receive further classification.⁴⁰ We might imagine, for instance, how vast the differences in the species *homo sapiens*, which are gathered under a single name. The self-identical concept gathers

³⁶ Ibid., 265.

³⁷ Indeed, this claim appears during an argument in which Badiou characterizes Deleuze as a thinker not of difference, but of the One.

³⁸ Is there not a resonance with Marx’s efforts to turn Hegel on his head?

³⁹ *DR*, 59.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 60.

up things that, though different, receive one name. Such is the nature of representation: what is by nature *not representable* is supposedly *captured* in the categories of representation – but what is not representable, difference itself, is thus given second rank behind the Identical (the concept). According to Deleuze, where Aristotle’s species catches too many fish, Plato considers what would be caught in such a mesh to be “undifferentiated logical matter, an indifferent material, a mixture, an indefinite representing multiplicity.”⁴¹ It is within this mass that Platonic division will begin, with the aim of ordering according to degrees of participation in the Idea. Crudely, then, we can distinguish a range of copies that can be ordered by reference to an objective measure of goodness.

What is not representable in the Platonic universe is the *matter of the simulacrum*: change, flux – the elements of Platonic philosophy inherited from Heraclitean philosophy. The Idea, or Form, in Plato is characterized by Deleuze as a “brute presence”. It is real, not the product of an imagination or of the work of a philosopher, and it appears as the correlate of the Heraclitean flux in Plato, as that which is imitated in that changing world during the *mimetic* process which results in copies that owe their sustained, fragile, integrated being to those Ideas of which they are copies. It is in this sense that the Ideas are the correlate of the flux: a brute presence of some sort is thought necessary to account for differences of *quality*, differences in value, in the mass of unrepresentable mixture with which we are confronted.⁴²

⁴¹ Ibid., 60.

⁴² See Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari* (London; New York: Routledge, 1989), 64: “Socrates says that thought begins with a contradictory experience, which Deleuze identifies as an encounter with the simulacrum.” What kind of presence does a simulacrum have?

To use Badiou's language, we might say that in Plato, the emphasis, the *accent*, is on the role of the Good and the Forms in the relationship between the changing world of flux and the unchanging.⁴³ Deleuze's accent is on the flux:

Pure becoming, the unlimited, is the matter of the simulacrum insofar as it eludes the action of the Idea and insofar as it contests *both* model *and* copy at once. Limited things lie beneath the Ideas; but even beneath things, is there not still this mad element which subsists and occurs on the other side of the order that Ideas impose and receive?⁴⁴

What is *unchanging* in Deleuze's metaphysics remains a question here – and Badiou's claim that Deleuzianism is a Platonism with a different accentuation rides on the issue whether there is in Deleuze something that corresponds with the Good in Plato.

But before we can address this question, we must try to discern something of what the Good in Plato might be, especially since Deleuze himself, curiously, seldom writes directly about it, choosing to deal with the reflections of the Good as they appear in other aspects of Plato's philosophy. That is, he does not confront the blinding power of the Good directly, but attempts to locate its effects. Such an approach might receive Plato's own approval.⁴⁵ We will use the subtle metaphysical language of the *unlimited*, and *limited things*, that Deleuze draws from Plato's *Philebus*, where the question is the good *for man*.

⁴³ See Wolfhart Pannenberg, "What is Truth?" in *Basic Questions in Theology: Collected Essays Volume II*, tr. George H. Kehm (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 19: "For Greek thought, the unity of truth excluded all change from it. Change would entail multiplicity, a succession of different forms, and then the full, whole truth, the truth constant, could not be found in anything. It belongs to the essence of truth to be unchangeable and, thus, to be one and the same, without beginning or end."

⁴⁴ *LS*, 2.

⁴⁵ In his own philosophy, as we shall have cause to examine in chapter three, Deleuze employs a similar method, choosing to name and rename his own *different/ciation* (on which more later), but always retreating from any sustained discussion about it, preferring always to describe its effects.

By stressing difference, the unlimited in the Platonic cosmos, Deleuze raises a problem for himself: if the real is changing so radically, how can anything be said about it? If the aim of the philosopher is to *represent* - in language - *the real*, that task is made more difficult for one who posits the real as flux. Heraclitus is perhaps best known for his *fire* (change, flux), but he speaks, too, of the *logos*.⁴⁶ The question of the relationship between *logos* and change is central for Plato, too, who devotes a dialogue named for the Heraclitean Cratylus to the matter.

For Deleuze, stressing the play of difference does not render the philosopher speechless: the philosopher must not, however, be understood as one who *represents* the world in language.⁴⁷ To conceive of the world, thus, as an object to be described, is to believe the fundamental philosophical question to be “What is X?” Deleuze writes of this question, commonly thought to be the central Platonic question (e.g. What is justice?):

It is true that Plato employs *this* question in order to refute those who content themselves with offering empirical responses, and to oppose essence and appearance. His aim, however, is to silence the empirical responses in order to open up the indeterminate horizon of a transcendental problem which is the object of an Idea. Once it is a question of determining the problem or the Idea as such, once it is a question of setting the dialectic in motion, the question ‘What is X?’ gives way to other questions, otherwise powerful and efficacious, otherwise imperative: ‘How much, how and in what cases?’ The question ‘What is X?’ animates only the so-called aporetic dialogues [...] From this point of view, Hegel is the culmination of a long tradition which took the question ‘What is X?’ seriously and used it to determine Ideas as essences [...] [H]ow many theological

⁴⁶ Seth Benardete notes on page 3 of *The Argument of the Action* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000) that Aristotle ignored Heraclitus’ *logos*; perhaps the popularity of *change over word* in Heraclitus is due to the great celebrity of Aristotle’s account.

⁴⁷ One thinks of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* as an extraordinary attempt to picture the world, to represent it, at the cost of *change*. Play, however, in the form of a hidden activity, remains an issue there – absent, but perhaps given some presence in the profound seventh proposition. As is well known, play (language games) re-emerges in later Wittgensteinian work, once he has changed his position regarding the representational role of language. See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1922).

prejudices were involved in that tradition, since the answer to 'What is X?' is always God as the locus of the combinatory of abstract predicates.⁴⁸

In place of a question that calls for an answer in the form of an essentialist description or definition - that is, a representation in language of some real object - Deleuze proposes questions that take account of the given, identify appearances ("...in what cases?") and count ("how much?").

The question "How?" does seek a causal response, but of a limited sort. Where the question "What is X?" can be answered, for instance, as Aristotle would answer it, by appealing to material, formal, efficient, and final cause, the question "how" is interested only in efficient causality.⁴⁹ Deleuze's intention is not to undermine the importance of final and formal cause for Plato, but to distinguish Plato from Hegel, in whose work there is virtually nothing of Heraclitus left (the reason, perhaps, why both Nietzsche and Deleuze abhor Hegel above all others).

Questions like these – how much?, how?, and in what cases? – are queries about simulacra. The demon to be exorcised must be named, must be confronted, after all, and so while according to Deleuze Plato wants to eradicate the simulacra, the latter knows that it is no use ignorantly to reject all that is "unlimited":

Socrates: But when you have grasped, my dear friend, the number and nature of the intervals formed by high pitch and low pitch in sound, and the notes that bound those intervals, and all the systems of notes that result from them, the systems which we have learned, conformably to the teaching of the men of old days who discerned them, to call 'scales,' and when, further, you have grasped certain corresponding features of the performer's bodily movements, features that must, so we are told, be numerically determined and be called 'figures' and 'measures,' bearing in mind all the time that this is always the right way to deal

⁴⁸ *DR*, 188.

⁴⁹ See Michael Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 4-11.

with the one-and-many problem – only then, when you have grasped all this, have you gained any real understanding, and whatever be the ‘one’ that you have selected for investigating, that is the way to get insight about it. On the other hand, the unlimited variety that belongs to and is inherent in the particulars leaves one, in each particular case, an unlimited ignoramus, a person of no account, a veritable back number because he hasn’t ever addressed himself to finding number in anything.⁵⁰

This passage introduces us to what separates Plato from Deleuze, the motivation for counting and measuring: the situational, relative measuring is Plato's attempt to deal effectively with the simulacra so as to determine the nature of the “one” that is sought. The perennial philosophical problem of identity and difference is, for Plato, the problem of the one and the many, of finding whatever unity in difference there may be. The particular version of calculative procedure that Plato chooses as his example in the passage above, is that of the art of music – a favourite of the Pythagorean Plato, since he sees harmony as an obvious example of an integration of differences: a unity produced from a variety.

Knowing the unity of the many is no easy matter, however. Even at the end of the process outlined above, Socrates tells Protarchus that this measuring is the way to get “insight” about the one, as though this exhausting process could never be exhaustive, could never *reveal* the complete nature of the “one” sought. The one still eludes definition. Whether Plato conceives of the questions of “how much, how, and in what case?” as intended to open up that which is ultimately sought (that X in the question, “What is X?”) remains an issue. We can say, however, that these questions do not enable

⁵⁰ *Philebus*, 17c-e, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters*, tr. R. Hackforth, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 1093-1094. Both Stephanus references and references to the Cairns/Hamilton edition are given (in that order) the first time a work of Plato's is cited. For all other citations of Plato, only Stephanus page references are given.

us to *answer* that question;⁵¹ thus, though the God of the Christian tradition is traceable through Augustine and Plotinus to Plato, Plato himself is uncomfortable with the notion of the Good, wary of it. He never offers (nor does he think it possible to offer) a description for the good, nor any explicit solution to the question: *What is the Good?* Indeed, he is uncomfortable with naming the good at all.⁵²

And yet Plato does *name* the many that is being enumerated for study: first, the systems of notes and intervals are called “scales”; and secondly, the physical movements of the performer’s body are called “figures” or “measures”. The terms “scales” and “measures” gesture, by their presence, toward acts of evaluation. He seems to say that when we are confronting the many in search of knowledge of music, we do not begin as though lost in the unlimited; rather, we begin with systems of comparisons between notes and intervals, and with a series of measured motions for our bodies to imitate.

That is, we are always already immersed in a valued world – never in a pure becoming. While becoming does, for Plato, rumble underneath this world of values, there is already a history of values, the consequences of past evaluations. Thus we are immersed in that which bears some essential relation to the Good. But we do not pretend that there is nothing frightening in this – or that there is not a danger that what *will come to be* will be merely the *perpetuation* of values, the *products* of past evaluative acts, acts of measuring and mismeasuring.

⁵¹ See *Philebus*, 18a, where Socrates suggests it may be possible finally to “reach” the one; but to reach and to represent are, of course, radically different acts.

⁵² “Names, I maintain, are in no case stable” (Plato, *Letter VII*, 343a-b, In *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters*, tr. L.A. Post, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 1590.)

2.2 Good, Measure

It appears we are interpreting Plato as equating measure with the Good. Is this a legitimate move, or must we be careful not to collapse the good so quickly into another term? Later in the *Philebus*, Plato writes:

Socrates: [A]ny compound, whatever it be, that does not by some means or other exhibit measure and proportion, is the ruin both of its ingredients and, first and foremost, of itself; what you are bound to get in such cases is no real mixture, but literally a miserable mass of unmixing messiness.

Protarchus: Very True.

Socrates: So now we find that the good has taken refuge in the character of the beautiful, for the qualities of measure and proportion invariably, I imagine, constitute beauty and excellence.⁵³

Shortly thereafter, Socrates claims that the good, which has not been found under a single form, might be secured in the conjunction of three: beauty, proportion, and truth; and he also assents to Protarchus' trinity of beauty, truth, and measuredness, such that proportion and measuredness are equated.⁵⁴ A compound, then, exhibits both *measure* and *measuredness* (proportion). A well-proportioned compound appears well-proportioned. But something else appears as well: measure, itself. Measure shines through the well-measured compound. The Good, then, we may say, has taken refuge in the conjunction of beauty (i.e. measure), or that which shines through a well-proportioned object; proportion (measuredness), or that which has been measured out (of the unmeasured); and truth. The Good is not equivalent to measure, but is somehow caught between measure, proportion, and truth. The Good is hidden in, and by, appearance. As Günter Figal explains, the Good somehow retreats and is concealed as beauty shines through and appears (as the beautiful):

⁵³ *Philebus*, 64d-e.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 65a-b.

[T]he Good is the unity of peras [limit] and apeiron [unlimited]. This unity can only be the fortunate coincidence of the two principles in which form retains the harmonious proportions in the midst of becoming, and the ephemeral nature of becoming comes to anchor in form. The Good would be this unity, if only we did not have to speak of it as the Beautiful. Nevertheless, every time the Beautiful is made manifest, it is still possible to predicate 'good' to the fortuitous unity of peras and apeiron. Thus, in calling the unity 'good,' we are actually referring to the power of the Good, which makes itself felt, precisely at the moment it eludes us and takes refuge in the Beautiful. This is why the power of the 'Good' is beyond all being and can thus serve as the horizon from which it is possible to recognize that something in the realm of being has succeeded in becoming beautiful.⁵⁵

As *limit* limits the unlimited, a mixture is produced. The nature, or location, of the conjunction or joint between the limit and the unlimited will determine whether the good is present. Figal rightly says that the Good is the *unity* of the limit and the unlimited. It is conceivable that, in a particular case limit might not *adequately* limit the unlimited; that is, a sustained and integrating *unity*, indicative of the harmonization of the unlimited's tendencies toward change and dissolution, might not emerge.

In such a case we have a bad likeness, a poorly mixed bit of badly measured messiness – no true unity; and, therefore, we can infer that the Good was/is not present. But since measure and proportion are the qualities of the Beautiful, we must say that the true unity itself appears to us as beautiful, and that the Good is only seemingly present and thus cannot be equated with the unity. Figal concludes that it is the power of the Good that does not appear; the Good is present speciously as the Beautiful in the unifying of limit and the unlimited. The Beautiful testifies to the power of the Good, but is not itself the Good. We have, then, the Good, Beauty (measure, or limit), the Beautiful (unity of Beauty, or measure, and the unmeasured), and the Unmeasured or unlimited. We

⁵⁵ Figal, 94.

could, then, also add the Simulacrum to our hierarchy, as that mixture of Beauty and the Unmeasured in which there is no unqualified presence of the Good.

In the famous sun analogy of the *Republic*, where the Good is compared at length to the sun; we encounter the issues of visibility, or of the shining through of the Good, as well as the power of the Good:

The sun, I presume you will say, not only furnishes to visibles the power of visibility but it also provides for their generation and growth and nurture though it is not itself generation.

Of course not.

In like manner then, you are to say that the objects of knowledge not only receive from the presence of the good their being known, but their very existence and essence is derived to them from it, though the good itself is not essence but still transcends essence in dignity and surpassing power.⁵⁶

The two aspects of the Good that are here drawn out, as that which provides for generation and growth, and as that which lets things be known to be what they are, forces us to explore the relation of “being known” to “appearing”... and even to “being”. Are we not misconstruing the sun analogy by attributing to it an aspect of knowing that has something to do with *appearing*?

Truth, like the Good, would seem to be the sort of thing that cannot itself “appear”. When we say there is truth in a work of art, we do not mean by that that we can point to a particular figure or colour and say, “here is the truth in this painting”. It is equally difficult to point to a proposition and say, “there is truth”; “John is a bachelor” may be a true statement, but the truth of it must be sought somewhere other than on the page. Perhaps it is sought in a correspondence between an idea represented in the

⁵⁶ Plato, *Republic*, Bk. VI 509b-c, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters*, tr. Paul Shorey, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 744. Plato has not forgotten his position here regarding the difficulty of speaking about the good, for the passage above concludes: “And Glaucon very ludicrously said, Heaven save us, hyperbole can go no further.”

proposition and a state of affairs in the world – but in any case, truth does not *appear as truth*. It may, rather, come to presence in the beautiful object. To say that truth appears as the beautiful is to distinguish oneself from a proponent of a correspondence theory of truth, in whatever form.

In this we are in good company. Both Heidegger and Gadamer⁵⁷ draw out this notion of “unconcealing,” of the event-like nature of the appearance of Truth in Plato. Knowledge surely has some relation to Truth.⁵⁸ Heidegger and Gadamer find in the Greeks the notion of truth as somehow “coming to presence,” “unconcealing itself,” “disclosing itself.” The Greek for what is generally translated into English as “truth” is *aletheia*, derived from *Lethe*, which is the River of Forgetting.⁵⁹ So in addition to the coming-to-appear present in the term *aletheia*, there may also be a sense of truth as “unforgotten,” remembered. How are these matters related? What has truth-as-revelation to do with truth-as-remembrance? John Sallis writes:

In the Platonic texts [...] remembrance is thought as union of the *eidōs* that shines through and gathers such things. Here the word *eidōs* [...] has the same sense: that which is seen, the look that something presents when one looks at it, the look that things of the same kind have in common so as to look alike, the look that can be envisioned even when the things that had that look have passed away. In coming to have before one’s vision that enduring look of things that come and go, one

⁵⁷ See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Plato’s Dialectical Ethics: Phenomenological Interpretations Relating to the Philebus*, tr. Robert M. Wallace (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

⁵⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 56-7. The phenomenology that joins Plato, Heidegger, and Sallis is here evident. See John Sallis, *Force of Imagination* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 28-9: “[A]t the centre of the *Republic* one is – at the very least – left wondering whether the beginning that would be the final original will not always have withdrawn into its own veiled image-making, into fathering and sending images of itself without ever imparting itself as such.”

⁵⁹ “[A]nd there they camped at eventide by the River of Forgetfulness, whose waters no vessel can contain. They were all required to drink a measure and each one as he drank forgot all things” (*Rep* Bk. X 621a-b). See Liddell, et. al., 1044, where *Lethe* is given as the name for the river of forgetfulness. See also Liddell, et. al., 64, where “not-forgetting” is given as the second meaning for *aletheia*. The importance of recollection as a theme in Platonic philosophy has its roots in several other dialogues, as well, including of course the *Meno* and the *Phaedo*.

brings those things back in their full presence, indeed in a presence of which they themselves, stamped by passingness, are incapable.⁶⁰

The Greek term eidos, whose plural form, idea, lies behind the infamous ‘theory of ideas’ derives from the earlier Greek (v)ideo and has been smothered in layers and layers of philosophical interpretation. Sallis argues we are hardly able to hear what Plato's “form”, his eidos, *originally* said (or originally *says*). In trying to hear what the word is saying above the static generated by the tradition,⁶¹ Sallis finds that the eidos is that which has some sort of permanence, as a sort of *eternal* look that a thing has, a look that can be remembered, a look that does not pass away as does the unlimited, becoming, change that gives rise to the look. Justification for care over the question of the status of the Forms, or Ideas, is easily found in Plato’s own texts. In the *Timaeus*, he writes:

Is there any self-existent fire, and do all those things which we call self-existent exist, or are only those things which we see or in some way perceive through the bodily organs existent, and nothing whatever beside them? And are those intelligible forms, of which we are accustomed to speak, nothing at all, only a name?⁶²

⁶⁰ Sallis, *Chorology*, 30.

⁶¹ “Does one know *what* the so-called forms are, even if such Greek words as eidos and idea are retained and, through them, the link to vision, to the *look* of things? Does one know even how to ask the question? As soon as one asks *what*, one has already broached – that is, assumed – precisely that which is thought as eidos. The eidos is *what* something is. It answers the question: ti esti. . . ? Thus, if one asks what a form is, one is asking: What is the *what*? That is, one just doubles the question and risks being ensnared in mere double talk. [...] Here one needs, above all, to be on guard against naively projecting back into the Platonic texts a conceptuality and a language that were forged only in and through those texts – or on the basis of what they achieved and at the cost of moving away from them” (Sallis, *Chorology*, 49).

⁶² Plato, *Timaeus* 51c-d, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters*, translated by B. Jowett, ed. by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 1178. See also *Parmenides*, 132b, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters*, tr. Francis Macdonald Cornford, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 926: “But, Parmenides, said Socrates, may it not be that each of those forms is a thought, which cannot properly exist anywhere but in a mind.” A little later (*Parmenides*, 135c-d), however, Plato has Parmenides – the thinker of the One – warn Socrates of the danger of giving up the search for the forms: “But, on the other hand, Parmenides continued, if, in view of all these difficulties and others like them, a man refuses to admit that forms of things exist or to distinguish a definite form in every case, he will have nothing on which to fix his thought, so long as he will not allow that each thing has a character which is always the same, and in so doing he will completely destroy the significance of all discourse. But of that consequence I think you are only too well aware.”

Timaeus wonders precisely what we wonder - are these forms simply names? Already in philosophy's history, in the texts of the philosopher perhaps best known for his doctrine of the forms, there is an explicit awareness of the dubious nature of the forms. It may be the case that the only things that *exist* are those that we perceive. But what is perceived is perceived in the present, and usually it testifies to (appears as though it has come from) something before it. That is to say, what is perceived is perceived as *passing*, and as having had an origin, and as destined toward a conclusion (an end, of some kind).

On Sallis' reading, eidōs, what we call "form", does not seem to be *transcendent* in the radical sense usually thought characteristic of Platonism: that is, we are not to imagine that there is another world in which there would be a Form of table, somehow or other an eternal *entity* (or even a set of relations, or algorithm for the construction of "table") *elsewhere*.

Admittedly, however, the eternal *look* of a thing *is somehow or other elsewhere*: that is, if the flux is taken seriously, whatever is *here* is changing, whereas there is something indestructible, unchanging, eternal in the look of the thing, such that we can recall it. Is it in the past? The entity that had that appearance is certainly gone, and yet somehow the look is not itself past *but present* - in its "full presence" as Sallis says.⁶³ We have, in Sallis' view at least, good reason to wonder whether there is quite the transcendence in Plato that Deleuze seems to attribute to him.⁶⁴

⁶³ How is *presence* to be understood for Plato? As we shall see, it is to be understood in terms of place. Heidegger characterizes it differently in *On Time and Being*, Trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 2: "Being is determined as presence by time."

⁶⁴ "Contrary to what Plato believed, there is no measure high above for these mixtures and combinations of Ideas which would allow us to define good and bad mixtures. Or again, contrary to what the pre-Socratics thought, there is no immanent measure either, capable of fixing the order and the progression of a mixture

2.3 Place and Difference

This question as to *where* the forms are is crucial. As Sallis notes, they are *remembered*, and they are fully present when remembered. The forms are thus at least intelligible – that is, whether we might ultimately grant them some being that does not depend upon their *being remembered by a mind*, they *are* remembered – though they originate in the visible world. Leaving open for the moment the question of the ontological status of the forms, Sallis notices something interesting:

[E]ven though both paradigm and image are distinctively all-inclusive, they are inclusive in decisively different ways. The difference has primarily to do with place; that is, what distinguishes the kind of inclusion characteristic of the visible cosmos is that, unlike intelligible inclusion, it holds together in an extended place beings that with respect to one another are in different places within the comprehensive place. It is as if in the transition from intelligible to visible something like place came into play, letting things be set apart as they are gathered into the comprehensive visible cosmos. As the chora, which seems like place, will prove always to have come into play in the very opening of difference.⁶⁵

The chora is the place which accommodates the gathering up of (maintained) differences into identity; whereas intelligible inclusion does *not* preserve the differences, but subjects differences to identity: the relation is one of parts to whole, where the identity of the whole destroys the integrity of the parts as distinct differences. What is afforded by *place*, Sallis thinks, is the possibility for difference to be maintained in such a way that there remains a *community* of differences, without this being a community of parts to a whole.

in the depths of Nature (*Physis*); every mixture is as good as the bodies which pervade one another and the parts which coexist" (*LS*, 130-1).

⁶⁵ Sallis, *Chorology*, 60.

We can now proceed to consider the question of the generation of the world, to investigate the physics of the *mimetic* process to which we referred above. The clue we need in order to engage with the question *how* the many is generated is, as John Sallis suggests above, the nature of the place in which (*where*) it is generated. What, then, is this strange chora, that it should accommodate the one and the many if indeed, as Sallis seems to suggest, it does?

It appears in the *Timaeus*, a dialogue in which Plato unfolds a physics intended, at least in part, as an alternative to the Democritean, atomistic physics.⁶⁶ For the ancient Atomists, the issues of difference and identity were fairly simple: there are absolute differences between self-identical atoms which fall in what Edward S. Casey calls “strict void”, a (no-)place which is completely inert, which is pure nothing: it would be misleading to say that it even relates atoms to each other, though in some sense or other the atoms are *in* the void. Any identity in an Atomistic world of this nature beyond the self-identity of the atoms is *illusion*: the apparent identity of compound substances is simply that – *apparent*. Within that void, contact between atoms is possible, and they may become entangled, but aside from brute physical contact, there is no community whatsoever. In contrast to such a world, the Platonic universe includes a genuine

⁶⁶ “In the revolution of the universe are comprehended all the four elements, and this being circular and having a tendency to come together, compresses everything and will not allow any place to be left void” (*Tim*, 58a-b). See also Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 33: “Plato’s primary opponents in the *Timaeus* are the ancient Atomists, who held that cosmogenesis occurs by the interaction of discrete bits of matter within a circumambient empty space (kenon). Empty space itself possesses no predetermined routes, much less any qualities of its own. Nor does it possess places or regions; in its radical placelessness, it is a prime candidate for what I have called the ‘strict void’ and ‘no place.’ In contrast to this model, the Receptacle is richly plenary. The only real emptiness it knows occurs in the form of the tiny interstices at the edges of the regular figures that come to fill it out. Neither outside itself (for there is nothing *outside* the Receptacle) nor within itself is there any sheer emptiness.”

community of differences; the *choric* place is not radical placelessness,⁶⁷ and consequently, the position of a “one”⁶⁸ on the chora affects the entire community of ones. And perhaps more significantly, the “ones” here are even less obviously self-same than Democritean atoms.

Part way through the dialogue named for him, Timaeus forges a new beginning, characterized by the appearance of the chora, described below as a “third kind” – a kind ignored by Deleuze in his characterization of the Platonic metaphysics:

This new beginning of our discussion of the universe requires a fuller division than the former, for then we made two classes; now a third must be revealed. The two sufficed for the former discussion. One, which we assumed, was a pattern intelligible and always the same, and the second was only the imitation of the pattern, generated and visible. There is also a third kind which we did not distinguish at the time, conceiving that the two would be enough. But now the argument seems to require that we should set forth in words another kind which is difficult of explanation and dimly seen. What nature are we to attribute to this new kind of being? We reply that it is the receptacle, and in a manner the nurse, of all generation.⁶⁹

In addition to the intelligible pattern and its imitation is the chora, or receptacle, which is not merely the site of generation, but also nurses that which is generated. Later, we find Timaeus characterizing the chora as a mother, in a trinitarian analysis modeled on the conception of a child, when he says, “we may liken the receiving principle to a mother,

⁶⁷ “A region is not just a formal condition of possibility. It is a *substantive* place-of-occupation. *Chora*, translated both as ‘region’ and as ‘space’ by Cornford, connotes *occupied place*, for example, a field full of crops or a room replete with things [...] A choric region is substantive without being substance: rather than a thing, it is a locatory matrix *for* things. Such a region is finally a matter of place rather than space – if ‘place’ implies finite locatedness and ‘space’ infinite or indefinite extension. Despite its curious adumbrations of the modern idea of space as something invisible, the Receptacle remains above all a scene of implacement” (Casey, 34).

⁶⁸ The quotation marks should remind that what is at stake is the nature of these “ones,” as we shall soon see.

⁶⁹ *Tim*, 48e-49b.

and the source or spring to a father, and the intermediate nature to a child.”⁷⁰ Ultimately we are pursuing the question of the status of the source, whether it is transcendent for Plato. But since the source is *absent*, though there is a role throughout the *Timaeus* for self-same being, we delay comment about its nature while we attempt to discern something further about the nature of the receptive principle.

Objects, in a changing world generated by the source and the receiving principle, testify to a union of these two parents:

[A]lso we must acknowledge that one kind of being is the form which is always the same, uncreated and indestructible, never receiving anything into itself from without nor itself going out to any other, but invisible and imperceptible by any sense, and of which the contemplation is granted to intelligence only. And there is another nature of the same name with it, and like to it, perceived by sense, created, always in motion, becoming in place and again vanishing out of place, which is apprehended by opinion jointly with sense. And there is a third nature, which is space [*chora*] and is eternal, and admits not of destruction and provides a home for all created things, and is apprehended when all sense is absent, by a kind of spurious reason, and is hardly real - which we, beholding as in a dream, say of all existence that it must of necessity be in some place and occupy a space, but that which is neither in heaven nor in earth has no existence.⁷¹

Timaeus says of this receptive principle that it is: “[a]n invisible and formless being which receives all things and in some mysterious way partakes of the intelligible, and is most incomprehensible.”⁷² The receptacle must be invisible and formless, and must not distort the image of that which will appear on its reflective surface.⁷³ The *chora*, to reflect faithfully⁷⁴ the qualities of the visible which is to take *place* in it, must not contaminate the image or distort it with properties of its own. It *mirrors*, serves as a place

⁷⁰ Ibid., 50d.

⁷¹ Ibid., 52a-b.

⁷² Ibid., 51a-b.

⁷³ The receptacle “never departs at all from her own nature and never, in any way or at any time, assumes a form like that of any of the things which enter into her; she is the natural recipient of all impressions, and is stirred and informed by them, and appears different from time to time by reason of them.” (*Tim*, 50b-c).

⁷⁴ See Casey, 33.

that is almost *not*⁷⁵ a place at all – is empty enough to enable the act of production to take place, revealing as visible a sharp image.

Though the receptacle is formless, it is *active*. Timaeus compares its activity to a winnowing, such that the generated images that pass over the receptacle affect its motion, and are themselves affected by the previous motion of the reflective surface:

[B]eing and space and generation, these three, existed in their three ways before the heaven, and ... the nurse of generation, moistened by water and inflamed by fire, and receiving the forms of earth and air, and experiencing all the affections which accompany these, presented a strange variety of appearances, and *being full of powers which were neither similar nor equally balanced*, was never in any part in a state of equipoise, but swaying unevenly hither and thither, was shaken by them, and by its motion again shook them, and the elements when moved were separated and carried continually some one way, some another. As, when grain is shaken and winnowed by fans and other instruments used in the threshing of corn, the close and heavy particles are borne away and settle in one direction, and the loose and light particles in another.⁷⁶

The *chora*'s motion preserves the motion of particles whose bodies have been swept away. An image that in one sense no longer is leaves traces of its being for that which is to come. What this means is that though the reflective surface has no form and thus does not impose its own character on that which is to cross it, it is the site of a gift giving, of the leaving of an inheritance in the motion of the bowl. The nurse of generation is *full* of

⁷⁵ See John A. Scott, "Having a Need to Act," in *Transformations of Urban and Suburban Landscapes*, ed. Gary Backhaus and John Murungi (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), 131: "In the *Phaedrus* we meet the charioteer who acts as the articulating focus for the differentially integrated action joining the horses. The charioteer takes-and-gives in the same act. The charioteer adds nothing, and achieves everything. He reflects the horses' motions to each other. If the charioteer adds anything he runs the risk of instant destruction. Using the language of the *Timaeus*, the charioteer is the *chora*,-- the receptacle – the time/place that lets the horses each do different things together as an integrated whole."

⁷⁶ *Tim*, 52d-53a, my emphasis. Here is the role of difference, which is absolutely fundamental. There would be no reason to imagine that any particle would be *good* by virtue merely of being what it is, and that others would be bad by nature, and that the *chora* in the simple act of allowing particles to separate themselves exercises a moral judgment over them: "The nature of the light and the heavy will be best understood when examined in connection with our notions of above and below, for it is quite a mistake to suppose that the universe is parted into two regions, separate from and opposite to each other - the one a lower to which all things tend which have any bulk, and an upper to which things ascend against their will" (*Tim*, 62c-d).

powers – is filled with the powers of the images, is shaken by them, but also has its own capacity to receive and to pass on particles. When a new image comes to pass on the receptacle, it will encounter a shaking bowl - it will encounter in its own present the motions of past images, as they are preserved in the vibrations of the place.⁷⁷

The place operates, through its capacity to receive, as that which enables the flux to be separated into its components. The particles are shuffled off, separated out, according to their own nature; like becomes a neighbour of like, but by reason not of a similarity to the neighbour, nor of a difference to that which is unlike it, but by virtue of its relationship with the receptacle. That is to say, the direction of a particle is a function of its own character and motion, and of the motion of the chora.⁷⁸ The chora, then, is that which allows for the measuring to take place; as that which never departs from its own nature and remains selfsame, it will allow beings to measure themselves out against one another.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ It remains significant that the place is not such as to distort, of its own nature, the forms that cross its surface, for this maintains the integrity of the relationship of past motions to present motions. In this way, place is responsible for the integrity of time - time, which is always subordinated to motion for Plato.

⁷⁸ The trouble becomes, though, that over time it is possible that an imbalance of a certain set of particles in the flux could radically alter the motion of the receptacle, so that new particles that come to take the place of old ones might well be rather different, since they were given their place by some interaction between themselves and a novel set of motions. If this is the logic of being, then our contemporary neighbours (those who share the same time *and* space as us) may well carry a truth about ourselves, and our children may react to us violently.

⁷⁹ John A. Scott (private correspondence) directs us to *Phaedo* 99c, where the Greek expression deuteron ploun, usually translated from the Greek by the comparable idiomatic English phrase “makeshift,” is employed in a discussion about the way in which dialectic works. Literally, the phrase deuteron ploun, a sailing term, means “second sailing.” Scott says, “Navigators do two ‘sailings’ as they triangulate by a totally remote but effectively present, star. I suspect some vestige of this navigational paradigm remains in dialectic as Plato and Aristotle develop it. It may well evoke the measured movement of a vessel between the two co-ordinate points in a triangulation, an indirect, reflective, ‘navigational’ approach which defines the dialectical procedure Socrates describes at *Phaedo* 99c, based as it is on the integration provided by a *separate* good that links not only those practicing a dialectical discourse, but also the particulars’ participation in their form.” Deleuze takes issue with Plato over the *separateness* of that which guarantees the integrity of the world. Is the chora sufficiently *separate*, or *different*, from that which is in flux to satisfy Plato’s concern that the good be uncorrupted by that which is changing?

At the outset of the *Timaeus*, the theme is set clearly:

Socrates: One, two, three, but where, my dear Timaeus, is the fourth of those who were yesterday my guests and are to be my entertainers today?

Timaeus: He has been taken ill, Socrates, for he would not willingly have been absent from this gathering.

Socrates: Then, if he is not coming, you and the two others must supply his place.⁸⁰

How does the absence of the fourth help to focus the dialogue? As soon as we recognize an absence, we must decide how to fill it, since nature abhors the void. But what is that one who is missing? How do we know what place he would have filled, since his place is determined by his relation to ourselves? The absence of the fourth, precisely because he *is* missed, and his place *must be filled*, affords us an opportunity to see something of ourselves.⁸¹ It is here, then, that measure and proportion become important.

As the place of connectivity,⁸² as the site of the interaction of differences, the chora is also the site⁸³ of *measuring*, where the fragile, distinct – that is, different – identities in the physical world encounter each other and are *limited by* each other. John Russon reminds us of the point above about the role of the agent in the universe, as one

⁸⁰ *Tim*, 17a-b.

⁸¹ The manner in which Timaeus and the other two must repay the debt to Socrates incurred by all four, including the one now absent, is a fascinating matter. For it is truly impossible to do anything other than produce a new absence (in the form of debt) from the interest produced in the previous day's discussion.

⁸² See Casey, 48: “[P]lace is [not] simply the opposite of void, as if it were merely a matter of replacing the void with a plenum. Even the place-proffering Receptacle, though it is expressly designed as a critique of the void of the Atomists, is not, strictly speaking, a plenum. Place includes much indissociable absence – as depth, as distance, as difference of location, as dislocation itself. Place neither fills up a void nor merely papers over it. It has its own mixed, ambiguous being. But one of its essential properties is its *connectivity* – its power to link up, from within, diversely situated entities or events.” Where the void for the Atomists has no capacity to connect atoms, to integrate the differences between them so as to produce new identities, the *chora*'s nature is to do this exactly. It affords the genuine opportunity for a community of differences.

⁸³ See John Sallis, “Traces of the Chora,” in *Retracing the Platonic Text*, ed. John Russon and John Sallis (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2000), 64: “There can be no question, then, but that the chora will remain to some extent in force after the god's return. At the very least it will limit what the artisan god can achieve in his cosmic fabrication; it will limit the productive operation of divine or noetic causes.”

identity in difference that sustains itself, in Heraclitean fashion precisely *by differing from the other it encounters at the site that is the chora*:

For us, to be is to be recognizing the differing, this striving. Our soul differs – is determinate – as the ability to differ from the whole sphere of differences *as differences*. It is our soul which is the space of universal differing – the chora – or, as Aristotle says of mind (which he describes as Timaeus describes the chora), the place of all forms. Mind is the cause of all things being able to be what they are, because it is the space of recognition – the space of comparison in terms of forms, that is, in terms of the good as such.⁸⁴

We begin to see roles that appeared to be played by the transcendent Good now overtaken by the activity of the chora. The chora is that which reflects the beautiful images: it is the site of the production of the Beautiful, and its own mirror-like emptiness is what enables beauty to appear. The chora also serves to *connect* differences, thus, by receiving them and holding them together in a communal site, it gives rise to an act of *measuring* where the integrity or unity (the good) of one is generated by one's differing from that into community with which it is brought by the chora. How does this work?

There are two forces at work: force of integration and force of strife. John Russon notes the force of integration as *harmonizing* or *equalizing*: “To harmonize is to equalize, to bring together, into the generative tension which is the space of comparison and measure, to bring into ‘with.’”⁸⁵ The force of strife opposed to this reaches its extreme form in the image of *war* and *battle* upon which Sallis focuses in his discussion of the *Republic* in *Chorology*, where he says that “war is the most extreme figure of motion, the figure of motion brought to its traumatic extreme in such a way that at its very moment of

⁸⁴ See John Russon, “We Sense that they Strive: How to Read (the Theory of Forms),” in *Retracing the Platonic Text*, ed. John Russon and John Sallis (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2000), 80.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 76.

completion it reverts into the withdrawal of all movement, the rigor of death, the silent immobility of lifeless bodies lying on the battlefield.”⁸⁶

The potential for this extreme case of opposition – a *too radical* differing which destroys the identity of the other – is always there. It is what Plato perceives as the threat of the flux (what Deleuze calls the *mad becoming*) the danger of destroying the limit (the other) which maintains the integrity of the self. The metaphor of the battle runs throughout the Platonic dialogues. We find a particularly helpful example in the *Sophist*:

Stranger: Well, what name shall we give to the practitioners of this art [the art of refutation]? For my part I shrink from calling them Sophists.

Theaetetus: Why so?

Stranger: For fear of assigning to them too high a function.

Theaetetus: And yet your description has some resemblance to that type.

Stranger: So has the dog to the wolf – the fiercest of animals to the tamest. But a cautious man should above all be on his guard against resemblances; they are a very slippery sort of thing. However, be it so [i.e. let them pass for Sophists], for should they ever set up an adequate defense of their confines, the boundary in dispute will be of no small importance.⁸⁷

The issue, again, is that of resemblances, similarities – the possibility of deception, the similar appearances of radically different beasts, and the dangers of not knowing the one from the other. But what we notice here in the *Sophist* is that, while Socrates warns that one should be on guard against resemblances, the similarity is allowed to pass *given that the boundary will be in dispute should the beast begin to defend itself as that which it may merely appear to be*. The danger of the mistaken identity of false simulacra, of misnaming, looms, but it is cradled within the dialectic between the two interlocutors who share a place and depend upon each other to maintain the integrity of the discourse (and

⁸⁶ Sallis, *Chorology*, 28.

⁸⁷ Plato, *Sophist*, 230e-231b, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters*, tr. Francis Macdonald Cornford, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 973.

ultimately of each other) by measuring against the other, always.⁸⁸ The boundary, the limit, *must be in dispute – or else it becomes dangerous*. How dangerous it would be to unfold a definition of justice if one could not count on one’s interlocutors to take such a thing seriously enough to challenge it as absurd, as comical, when it turns out to offer too little at the level of action.⁸⁹

2.4 The Economy of Being: (Naming the) Limits of Production

In the *Parmenides* – a dialogue that begins, we recall, in the marketplace – Plato explores through Parmenides, the thinker of the One, the economics of Being. Early in the dialogue we see what is crucial for Plato – that the assertion of the One is impossible without the implication of the many. Zeno, the great philosophical offspring of Parmenides, discusses his book, which defends the thesis “Being is” by attempting to render the claims in favour of change and motion (and, thus, the many) more absurd than Parmenides’ own claim. Zeno’s paradoxes were generated as a plurality of defenses for his philosophical father; it is as though the giver (Parmenides) of that which is self-same (the One) incited the response of a dangerous and destructive (multiple) *Other* which could be fended off, perhaps, only by the giver’s child (Zeno).

⁸⁸ See Russon, 80: “It is as mind that the good can be as the being of the difference, as the demand that we strive for the good together. Giving thought to the good together, we give space to the good together – we give space to determinateness.”

⁸⁹ See *Rep*, Bk. II 372e: “Good, said I. I understand. It is not merely the origin of a city, it seems, that we are considering, but the origin of a luxurious city. Perhaps that isn’t such a bad suggestion, either. For by observation of such a city it may be we could discern the origin of justice and injustice in states. The true state I believe to be the one we have described – the healthy state, as it were.” Socrates knows the comedy here – a comedy that is possible only because the interlocutor resists bursting into laughter and insists on the serious nature of the dialogue.

Zeno, the character from the *Parmenides*, says of his book of paradoxes: “This book, then, is a retort against those who assert a plurality. It pays them back in the same coin with something to spare.”⁹⁰ We cannot fail to notice that Zeno is engaged in a generative struggle here – one in which, indeed, *interest* is generated. The very dynamic of Being is to produce more than there was; the One can be such only through a Many against which it asserts itself. And there is a suggestion that this is indeed a *mimetic* process, as Zeno notes in the same section of the dialogue that before he could decide whether to publish his book, to let it see the light, someone had copied it “surreptitiously.”

There is in Plato’s own texts nothing *settled* with regards to the One and the Many; between them, on the other hand, there is motion – the motion of the Many proceeding forth from the One, and perhaps of the Many being recollected back into the One. We have reason then to relax over the seemingly contradictory positions attributed to Plato: the fascistic Plato, he who would value the One at a cost to the Many, and the Heraclitean Plato, who embraces change and appears concerned over the practical, lived consequences of any speculation that would devalue the manifold, that would be detached from the activity of the agent. But what is the act that enables the agent to be engaged in the flux?

Deleuze acknowledges at the outset of the *Logic of Sense* that for Plato there is a peculiar relation between language and the mad becoming – it is obvious, for instance, in

⁹⁰ *Parmenides*, 128d-e.

the *Cratylus*. The issue is one of challenging the other, of measuring the other.⁹¹ So much in Plato depends, then, upon the *response* of that which is challenged.⁹² If the challenge is too great, the other is destroyed (as in the case of war). If the challenge is too weak the object takes flight from, eludes the name. Sallis says:

One begins to realize that Timaeus was not speaking loosely when he declared that the logos seems to necessitate attempting to reveal a third kind. One could even say that, for the move from the twofold to a third kind, logos is the touchstone. When it touches or attempts to touch fire and the others, they take flight in a manner that is incomparable to anything that occurs within the compass of the twofold. However imperfect a couch may be in comparison to its paradigm, it can be called *couch* without proving already to have been becoming something else. Not only the paradigm but also the product made in its image is sufficiently selfsame and determinate that they can to a degree sustain the name; later Timaeus will say explicitly that the image shares both the name and the look of the paradigm (see 52a). Only fire, air, water and earth are fugitives from *logos*, indeed in such a way that their very flight points to a third kind that would harbour them outside the twofold. One could say that the flight of such self-extinguishing indices as fire traces a way beyond the twofold of paradigm and image. Their flight traces a passage, a way out to the receptacle in which they would be received and held. It is thus that they are traces of the chora, namely, as traces indicating the way to the chora.⁹³

Deleuze's "line of flight" is thus not without philosophical precedent. This dynamic of flight from one's name is dramatized in Book I, Chapter 19 of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, where a universal is directed toward particulars which flee from it as in a rout in battle. There is a point, however, at which one responds to one's name: that is the place where identity in difference is established. When Deleuze characterizes the human animal

⁹¹ The Ancient Greek *katagoreusis*, from which we get our term "category", means "accusation". See Liddell, et. al., 887b.

⁹² "[I]f anyone, in imitation of that which we call the foster mother and nurse of the universe, will not allow the body ever to be inactive, but is always producing motions and agitations through its whole extent, which form the natural defense against other motions both internal and external, and by moderate exercise reduces to order according to their affinities the particles and affections which are wandering about the body, as we have already said when speaking of the universe, he will not allow enemy placed by the side of enemy to stir up wars and disorders in the body, but he will place friend by the side of friend so as to create health" (*Tim*, 88d-e).

⁹³ Sallis, "Traces," 61.

as essentially more a fleer than a fighter, we have in mind Socrates (in battle, in court, in prison) and Aristotle (on the run), and we wonder whether a man can be either without being both.

What sort of battle are we fighting? Are we not helping Deleuze to slay the *father* in Plato's texts by attempting to make the transcendent immanent, by suggesting, with John Sallis, that the Forms might themselves have an origin in the flux – and that the being that belongs to what is in flux somehow involves a *return* to this origin? Why do we want to kill the father? Why help Deleuze, why abandon transcendence? What kind of desire is it that insists on bringing the outside in?

Chapter Three: Difference and Event in Deleuze

“Because antinaturalist philosophers did not want to consider the void, the void encompassed everything. Their Being, their One and their Whole are artificial and unnatural, always corruptible, fleeting, porous, friable, or brittle. They would rather say that “being is nothing” than recognize that there are beings and there is void – that there are simple beings within the void and that there is void within compound beings.”⁹⁴

- Deleuze

In the above passage, from an essay on Lucretius in the appendix to *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze engages with the one/many problem and indicates his preference for the naturalistic philosophy of such Atomists as Democritus and Lucretius. Like Deleuze’s philosophy, Democritus’ atomism is a philosophy that stresses difference. What we note first about the latter is that there are *many* atoms, and that there are both atoms and a void in which they fall freely. Atoms for Democritus are self-same, however, so that this philosophy does not claim difference without positing identity simultaneously: the difference between atoms presupposes the unity of each atom. Nevertheless, the universe is not to be described as *one* without serious qualification to that claim: the atoms do not belong to the universe as parts to a whole.

More significant than the difference *between atoms*, however, is the difference *between atoms and void*. This difference is not so easily understood to presuppose *identity* as such; or, better, it is not *explained* by this identity, or cannot be reduced to the comparison of two unities. We have already seen that the totality of atoms does not form a whole which might be called self-identical, and it is difficult to imagine in what sense the void, which is strictly speaking, no-place, could be self-identical.

⁹⁴ LS, 268.

Deleuze has popularized the term “multiplicity,” which has its roots in mathematics – and in philosophy in the works of Henri Bergson, whose influence upon Deleuze’s thought was profound. We hear often that Deleuze is a thinker of the multiplicity, a philosopher of Difference, and straight off the misconceptions abound. Both enemies and friends of Deleuzian philosophy rage against confusions over this issue of *what difference, or multiplicity, is* for Deleuze.

Constantin V. Boundas, as we shall see, believes that with the theory of the multiplicity, Deleuze⁹⁵ overcomes the philosophical problem of the one-many. Indeed, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, we find Deleuze and Guattari excitedly forwarding the equation PLURALISM=MONISM, confirming that despite the emphasis on *difference*, Deleuzian philosophy must be understood as a novel effort to think difference and identity together.⁹⁶ Boundas wants to ensure that Deleuze’s multiplicity is not thought to be another term for the many; multiplicity encompasses the one *and* the many.

Alain Badiou, a staunch opponent of Deleuze’s, happily agrees with Boundas that Deleuze’s so called philosophy of difference is not a philosophy of the many. According to Badiou, however, it is precisely *because* Deleuze’s philosophy is not a philosophy of the many – of true difference, as Badiou would have it – that it is reducible to yet another version of a philosophy of the One.

If the multiplicity is *not* the many of the Democritean atomists, why does Deleuze claim that there are simply beings and void? We feel a pull in two directions. Badiou and

⁹⁵ Or Deleuze-Bergson, as in Constantin V. Boundas, “Deleuze-Bergson: an Ontology of the Virtual,” in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. Paul Patton (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

⁹⁶ Such is the thesis of Todd May’s “Difference and Unity in Deleuze,” in *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, eds. Constantin V. Boundas and Dorothea Olkowi (New York; London: Routledge, 1994), 33-50.

Boundas will not allow Deleuze to be called an Atomist in the Democritean sense, and we may find out that they are right to object to such designation. This chapter will attempt an unfolding of these multiplicities, of Deleuze's metaphysics of difference. It will turn out that, to a point, I too share the reading proposed by Badiou⁹⁷ and Boundas. But to *what point?*⁹⁸

3.1 Deleuze and Bergson: Multiplicity and Difference

According to Bergson, "philosophy has never frankly admitted [the] continuous creation of unforeseen novelty."⁹⁹ In his view, change or becoming has always been trivialized and misunderstood by thinkers for whom the real is the unchanging. Again, the Platonists with their transcendent, perfect, and unchanging Ideas are the target: "[T]hey imagined that Being was given once and for all, complete and perfect. [...] It was Time which, according to them, spoiled everything."¹⁰⁰ The God of Augustine's *Confessions*, for instance, is outside Time such that He has knowledge of what is in man's past, present, and future.¹⁰¹ Bergson argues against this conception that there is a perspective *outside time* that shows time to be mere appearance, an illusion experienced only by beings who cannot foresee a future which already exists.

In the last chapter, we found reason to wonder whether Being is given "once and for all" for Plato himself, or whether the giving of Being might be a continual process

⁹⁷ Badiou, to be fair, will be with me throughout this essay – he will say, for instance, that Deleuze's philosophy is a philosophy of Death, that Deleuze is a Stoic, etc.

⁹⁸ In chapter four, we shall raise again the question of atomism and difference against the background of an organicist, folded Deleuzian universe.

⁹⁹ Henri Bergson, "The Possible and the Real," in *Philosophers of Process*, eds. Douglas Browning and William T. Myers (Bronx, New York: Fordham University Press, 1998), 186.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ See Chapter 11 of Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, trans. F. J. Sheed. (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1943).

which *takes place* at the site of the chora. Bergson would not dispute that copies of Being are produced continually. According to Bergson, these copies, “shadows projected in time,”¹⁰² are not Being; the union of transcendent Ideas is Being, and these are *not* given again and again. Time is but an image of eternity. But if, as Bergson suggests, such theories of the unreality of what passes in time are great errors, why do we find them so compelling?

Bergson claims that our “ordinary logic is a logic of retrospection” which leads us to believe that each newly created, real moment in time is the realization of a possible which preexisted it. When we have the experience of a novel event, we thrust it back into the past, imagining that it is the result of a limitation of a (perhaps infinite) number of possible events which were *to come*. The *real* event is defined as the possible event that preexisted it *plus* some ‘reality’. Such a formulation of the problem highlights how peculiar is the familiar ontology of the real and the possible. Despite how frequently we are caught by surprise by some novel happening, we imagine that if only we had known enough about the ‘state of affairs’ prior to the occurrence of the new event, we would then have possessed a knowledge of that event as a *possibility* which preexisted the real event. That is to say, whether we know it or acknowledge it, the possible preexists and resembles the real.

In place of the possible/real pair, Bergson proposes the pair virtual/actual. Both the virtual and the actual are *real*. The virtual does not become *real* as it is *actualized*; it is perfectly real without being actual. Nor does the virtual *resemble* the actual. The relation of virtual to actual is as cause to effect, as (the activity of) production to the

¹⁰² Bergson, “The Possible and the Real,” 186.

product.¹⁰³ The possible has no productive capacity; the real is the *limitation* of the set of possibilities. If the real is produced, it is not produced by the possible, but by an activity of negation, the negation of all possibilities but the one which is realised: not-x, not-y, but z. The virtual, on the other hand, produces the actual. The actualization of the virtual is a movement of production which yields a product (the actual) that does not resemble the virtual itself or the process by which it is produced (actualization). Deleuze explains:

[I]n order to be actualized, the virtual cannot proceed by elimination and limitation, but must *create* its own lines of actualization in positive acts. [...] [T]he characteristic of virtuality is to exist in such a way that it is actualized by being differentiated and is forced to differentiate itself, to create its lines of differentiation in order to be actualized.¹⁰⁴

Virtuality is revealed to be productive, and to produce by differing *with* itself, that from which it will be different – namely, the actual. But what is this ‘virtual’?

The term, borrowed from Duns Scotus, qualifies the nature of a being’s properties. That which is virtual has the capacity to *produce* in some other being a property which it does not itself ‘have’ formally. In the glossary to their collection of medieval texts, Tweedale and Bosley, drawing from its use in Scotus, offer the following helpful definition of virtual existence:

Some perfection exists in a cause X just in case X does not really (or formally) have that perfection but can cause it to exist in other things. For example, God does not Himself really have the perfection of corporeality, i.e. God is not (formally) a body, but He can cause other things to have bodies, and thus has that perfection virtually. This contrasts with having the perfection ‘formally,’ i.e. as a real feature directly inhering in the subject.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ See Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, tr. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 106: “While actual forms or products can resemble each other, the movements of production do not resemble each other, nor do the products resemble the virtuality they embody.”

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹⁰⁵ Richard N. Bosley and Martin M. Tweedale, ed., *Basic Issues in Medieval Philosophy*, (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1997), 670. See Bosley and Tweedale, 120, for selections from Duns Scotus’ *Ordinatio I*. See also Constantin V. Boundas, “Deleuze-Bergson,” 87: “A virtual X is something

The example chosen for this glossary definition is an appropriate one for us, since *corporeality*, or *materiality*, is the *actual*, that which is produced in the process of actualization. Bergson's claim is that *what is* is not exhausted by what is material; matter is, rather the effect of an efficient causality, a productive process of actualization, that points to the "insistence" (by contrast with material "existence") of what is here called virtual.

It is crucial for Bergson that the virtual is not removed from (that is, transcendent to) the actual, that it is immanent to the effect. Bergson believes this distinguishes himself from Plato, for whom the cause (the Good, or the Ideas) is radically external (or transcendent to) the effect. Deleuze explains the distinction between Plato and Bergson:

[O]nly the Good accounts for the difference of the thing and lets us understand it in itself, as in the famous example of Socrates seated in his prison. Thus Plato needs the Good in his dichotomy as the rule of the choice. There is no intuition in Plato, but an inspiration by the Good. [...] [For Plato, and Bergson in *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*,] What presides over the distribution [*découpage*] of things is evidently their function, their end,¹⁰⁶ so much so that at this level they seem to receive their difference in itself from the outside. But it is precisely for this reason that Bergson both criticises the notion of finality and does not stop with the articulations of the real: the thing itself and the corresponding end are in fact one and the same thing, envisaged on the one hand as the mixture it forms in space, and on the other hand as the difference and simplicity of its pure duration. There is no more need to speak of an end: when difference has become the thing itself, there is no more need to say that the thing receives its difference from its end.¹⁰⁷

which, without being or resembling X, has nonetheless the efficiency (the *virtus*) of producing X. [...] The possible must be realized, and the presence of its realization is subject to two essential rules, resemblance and limitation."

¹⁰⁶ See Plato, *Theaetetus*, 149d-e, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters*, tr. Francis Macdonald Cornford, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 854, where Socrates claims that midwives pride themselves more on *selecting* genealogical lines (matchmaking) than on *cutting* umbilical cord to release the child from the mother.

¹⁰⁷ Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference," in *The New Bergson*, ed. John Mullarkey (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), 52.

On this reading, for Plato the thing and its end are split, and the changing thing, the copy, cannot be itself without receiving its difference from a Good that is completely external to it. The power of difference, of that which makes a thing what it is, is not internal to the thing itself. That which explains what is actual is removed absolutely; with Kant, it has receded from us to such a degree that what remains for metaphysical speculation is only the ‘mixture in space.’ For Bergson, there is no absolute split between the thing and its cause (difference). What appears as a mixture in space, the actual, is the product of a self-differing by the virtual, what he calls *duration*.

Duration, or durée in the French original,¹⁰⁸ is a complex notion. Bergson uses the term to *refer* to an experience that is unrepresentable. The experience is that of time’s *flow*. All attempts to represent the flow of time result in the spatialisation of time, according to Bergson. The experience *can be analyzed, cut up*, but the integrity of the whole is lost in such an activity, and duration cannot be reconstituted from the pieces into which it was originally analyzed. Movement, too, a notion which is intimately connected to the temporal issues, is similarly a whole which cannot be represented.¹⁰⁹ Attempts to represent it result in logical paradoxes, the paradigm examples of which are Zeno’s.¹¹⁰

In what sense can it be said that the *flow of time* is a whole? It is not a closed

¹⁰⁸ Indeed, as *durée* is the irreducible “stuff” of Being, though a rather novel conception of it, John A. Scott may be right to wonder whether in durée the French dur, which is translated into English as “hard,” and which may suggest an albeit unique sense of substantiality.

¹⁰⁹ See Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, tr. Mabelle L. Andison (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946), 15.

¹¹⁰ See Milic Capek, *Bergson and Modern Physics: A Reinterpretation and Re-evaluation* (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1971), 338: “Bergson’s view of Zeno’s paradoxes was consistently held through all his books: the paradoxes arise from the fallacious assumption that motion and time are divisible *in infinitum*, that is, that the only parts of them which are indivisible are geometrical points and durationless instants. This assumption is based on the confusion of the movement itself with its motionless trace in space; it is this motionless trace, not the act of moving (la mobilité, le mouvant), which is infinitely divisible.”

whole, or a set, which would be composed of parts. Duration is change, variation. It is not homogeneous, but heterogeneous in nature. It is an “open whole” defined by a totality of relations that are ceaselessly changing. Deleuze writes, in the course of a discussion of Bergson:

If one had to define the whole, it would be defined by Relation. Relation is not a property of objects, it is always external to its terms. It is also inseparable from the open, and displays a spiritual or mental existence. Relations do not belong to objects, but to the whole, on condition that this is not confused with a closed set of objects. By movement in space, the objects of a set change their respective positions. But, through relations, the whole is transformed or changes qualitatively. We can say of duration itself or of time, that it is the whole of relations.¹¹¹

The open whole, which is duration, the virtual, changes qualitatively. What these “terms” to which the relations are always external *are* remains to be seen. The whole displays a “spiritual or mental existence.” Does this mean that it is illusory, as some epiphenomenal experience that is reducible to something that would be physical and not spiritual?

It is easy enough to imagine that the experience of time is somehow or other a psychological illusion, that the flow itself is not real, that there is an ordering of events along a ‘timeline’, and that our descriptions of the real are possible without reference to a qualitative experience of flow. Such a theory of time has been defended by so-called ‘date-theorists’ such as Bertrand Russell, and more recently, D. H. Mellor. For them, whatever we mean by ‘flow of time’ is surely illusory, purely psychological – to be explained by reference to what is real, i.e. the ordered series of discrete events.

If we are asking whether “duration” for Bergson is psychological in the same way that the flowing present is purely psychological for Russell and Mellor, the answer must

¹¹¹ Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*, 10.

be no. For Bergson, the virtual, as we saw, was perfectly *real*. Duration is not illusion. The real does not change for Russell and Mellor. For them, the ordered series of events is what is real, and the experience of process or flow is illusory. Duration, on the other hand, is the flowing present which drags along its past into a future which is radically *not already there*. Bergson's theory would be called a *tense* theory of time – it does not attempt to reduce the reality of tenses (past, present, future) to the two-term series of events proposed by Mellor and Russell (before and after).¹¹²

Duration does not flow *over* an eternal and unchanging series of actual 'events' on a timeline, as Russell and Mellor would have it. The actual occurrences in the material world do not underlie duration as a real that would ground duration; instead, the material is produced *by* the self-differentiation of duration. A consequence of the derivation of *all that is* from the self-differentiation of duration is that space is not, as for Kant, an *a priori* form, but is itself produced in the differentiation, *a posteriori* to time – and also to matter itself.¹¹³

Deleuze can be called Bergsonian because this ontology of the virtual forms a large part of his own philosophy; we shall see in a moment what Deleuze does with Bergson's duration. It will be helpful, though, to begin by noting that what makes Deleuze's philosophy stand apart from Bergson's, though both offer an account of the

¹¹² See D. H. Mellor, *Real Time* (Cambridge [Eng.]; New York: Cambridge University Press), 1981. For the origins of the distinction between tense- and date-theories of time, see J. Mc. Ellis McTaggart, "The Unreality of Time," in *Philosophical Studies by the late J. Mc. Ellis McTaggart*, ed. S.V. Kealing (London: E. Arnold & Co., 1934), where the same distinction is discussed through reference to A- and B- series.

¹¹³ "Space, in effect, is not matter or extension, but the 'schema' of matter, that is, the representation of the limit where the movement of expansion (*détente*) would come to an end as the external envelope of all possible extensions. In this sense, it is not matter, it is not extensity, that is in space, but the very opposite" (*BG*, 87). We will return to this interesting move in chapter four.

production of novelty, is what we might call the ‘weight’ of the past. In his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Bergson writes:

Inner duration is the continuous life of a memory which prolongs the past into the present, the present either containing within it in a distinct form the ceaselessly growing image of the past, or, more probably, showing by its continual change of quality the heavier and still heavier load we drag behind us as we grow older. Without this survival of the past into the present there would be no duration, but only instantaneity.¹¹⁴

For Bergson, the past is dragged along behind us. While it is true that what is present is what is *actual*, the past is preserved virtually in the present moment. While new presents are endlessly created anew, the past bears upon each new present as a “heavier and still heavier load.” While Deleuze agrees with Bergson on the matter of the insistence of the past in the creation of novel, actual moments – moments which are created, in some sense, ‘out of’ the past – it is precisely to the idea of the past as burdensome that he objects. If in Bergson’s philosophy the past serves to ground the passing of the present moments (the presents which ‘pass’ into a pure, virtual past), Deleuze will introduce a universal “ungrounding” which shatters the repetition of a pure past in each new present moment, freeing, he thinks, an uncompromised production of novelty.¹¹⁵

Deleuze, in *Difference and Repetition*, sets out to account for the production of a novelty that would free itself from the conditions of its production. He begins by drawing Bergson’s concepts of duration and multiplicity¹¹⁶ into his own terminology of difference

¹¹⁴ Henri Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, tr. T. E. Hulme (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1955), 40.

¹¹⁵ See the editor’s introduction in Constantin V. Boundas, ed., *The Deleuze Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 7: “Bergson’s memory/repetition, without the time of the Eternal Return, would tend to immobilize past and present and to disempower the intuition of the irreducible multiplicity that, nevertheless, animates Bergson’s texts. Isn’t Plato’s recollection, after all, a sufficient warning against putting our trust in *mnemosyne* and letting it chase after the shadow of the one?”

¹¹⁶ “It seems to us that Duration essentially defines a virtual multiplicity (*what differs in nature*). Memory then appears as the coexistence of all the *degrees of difference* in this multiplicity, in this virtuality. The

and repetition. The self-differentiating activity of duration becomes in Deleuze's philosophy the complex notion of different/ciation – a term which joins the two processes of differentiation and differenciation. Deleuze writes:

The greatest importance must be attached to the 'distinctive feature' *t/c* as the symbol of Difference: differentiate and differenciate. The totality of the system must be expressed in the complex notion of '(indi)-different/ciation'. It is as though everything has two odd, dissymmetrical and dissimilar 'halves', the two halves of the Symbol, each dividing itself in two: an ideal half submerged in the virtual and constituted on the one hand by differential relations and on the other by corresponding singularities; an actual half constituted on the one hand by the qualities actualising those relations and on the other by parts actualising those singularities. Individuation ensures the embedding of the two dissimilar halves. [...] [S]omething which exists only in the Idea may be completely determined (differentiated) and yet lack those determinations which constitute actual existence (it is undifferenciated, not yet even individuated).¹¹⁷

We should understand these as two distinct processes that do not resemble each other.

Differenciation does not 'take place' in the actual world so much as it *results* in the actual world.¹¹⁸ That is to say, differenciation is the actualisation of the virtual, a single process in which the virtual differs from itself. Differentiation is the reconfiguration of the singular points that make up the virtual. This process, which has to do solely with relations between virtual "terms" or "elements", is the process by which the virtual whole *changes*. Boudas explains:

élan vital, finally, designates the actualization of this virtual according to the *lines of differentiation* that correspond to the degrees – up to this precise line of man where the *Élan Vital* gains self-consciousness" (BG, 112-3).

¹¹⁷ DR, 280.

¹¹⁸ See Salanskis, "Idea and Destination," in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader* ed. Paul Patton (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 61, where Salanskis thus slightly misunderstands things: "There is an 'ideal genesis' called *differentiation*, on which is modeled a *differenciation* in the register of the actual. On the side of the ideal, the problem is determined, its own singular points precipitated, and the parts with their distinctions which will constitute the actual are deduced from this problematic distribution of an ideal polarization in the virtual. Differentiation occurs in the actual space of solutions."

Far from being the entire notion of difference, differentiation is about the production of entities which can find their reason for their production in the Idea-structure. Left to its own resources, the process/production of entities will permit only the discernment of nuances or differences in degree, in which case the notion of difference will be left subordinate to the concept of identity. Different/ciation expresses simultaneously the compossibility of the 'elements' inside the virtual and the divergence of the series in which the virtual is actualized. It is as if the virtualities exist in such a way that they actualize themselves in splitting up and being divided.¹¹⁹

Here we see the virtual grounding the actual, the virtual as the "reason for" the production of actual entities. The virtual here is given yet another name: the Idea-structure,¹²⁰ which is but the configuration of virtual elements, a configuration that differentiates itself.

This Idea-structure is Deleuzo-Bergsonian "multiplicity", which is not to be confused with the many of the Ancient atomists whose Atoms are self-identical, actual, material. To call it a structure suggests it is a stable and self-same set of parts; but this world of singularities is the world of pure becoming, of simulacra, and the term multiplicity is misleading because, like the term "relation," it does not suggest *activity*. As Boundas rightly explains, however, it is crucial that some sort of activity be heard in the term "multiplicity":

Neither 'multiplicity' nor 'the multiple' convey precisely the sense that Deleuze-Bergson wishes to convey. One needs a noun like 'the multiplier' or a gerund like 'the multiplying' as a qualifier of multiplicity in order to capture the sense that Deleuze assigns to different/ciation.¹²¹

Deleuze never tires of naming and renaming his principles, and the consequence can be confusion. Different/ciation is a name for Difference, and also a name for multiplicity.

¹¹⁹ Boundas, "Deleuze-Bergson," 91.

¹²⁰ Deleuze's term "Idea-structure", from *DR*, stands for the configuration of a particular multiplicity. "Ideas are not concepts; they are a form of eternally positive differential multiplicity, distinguished from the identity of concepts" (*DR*, 288).

¹²¹ Boundas, "Deleuze-Bergson," 83.

The Idea-structure is purely virtual, and it is reconfigured through the activity of differentiation; but this activity never takes place without the simultaneous activity of differentiation which produces a line of becoming, the actualization of these virtual Idea-structures, the splitting of the virtual. It would seem that the actual, the product of this differentiation, has no potency whatever here, and indeed one wonders whether this might be an appropriate characterization of Bergson's philosophy. As we shall see, though, it is at this point that Deleuze breaks from his Bergsonism and develops his theory of the counter-actualization of the event.¹²²

The production of these repeating presents in the material world is accomplished by the differentiation; this activity is that by which the material world is given. But when we say that this activity results in the material world, we mean that it is endlessly creating the material, the actual, which, of course, is the domain of the present. The activity of differentiation links the virtual to the actual, however. The problem for Deleuze and Bergson is to account for the creation of present moments, given that they are produced 'out of' a virtual which is not itself 'in the present'. Deleuze invokes the category of the pure past to explain the *passing* of the present: the present which passes must pass 'into' something. It does not pass into a 'present moment that was,' but into the *whole* past, the past which coexists with the present – with the *passing* present. This is the virtual, the pure past – which according to Deleuze is of purely "ontological significance". He writes:

[T]he present *is not*; rather it is pure becoming, always outside itself. It *is not*, but it acts. Its proper element is not being but the active or the useful. The past, on the other hand, has ceased to act or to be useful. But it has not ceased to be. Useless

¹²² My thanks to Peter Trnka for his help in clearing up a confusion on my part regarding the status of counter-actualization in Deleuze's thought.

and inactive, impassive, it IS, in the full sense of the word: It is identical with being in itself.¹²³

Deleuze distinguishes, here, two ‘times’: the time of the present and the time of the past. The series of actual present instants forms just one series of time, and the repetition which draws together these presents is described as a “bare repetition”. A second synthesis of time is the synthesis of the pure past, which Deleuze calls the “clothed” repetition. Each of these repetitions has a unique relationship to *difference*. Difference, different/ciation, is “between” these two repetitions. Difference is not located in the first series of present moments, the bare repetition, obviously a repetition of the same; all differences in the actual, material world are subordinated to identity, for reasons we saw in chapter two. Difference-in-itself *produces* the actual, and it is insofar as it “draws off” a virtual difference that the material world is constituted, but difference is not *located* in the material world.

The second repetition, the clothed repetition, the repetition of the pure past, “includes” difference. This pure past, as we saw, is “identical with being in itself”, and somehow difference is trapped *between* this repetition and the repetition of the material world. We might say that, for Deleuze, Difference relates Being to Becoming, or in other words, there is a difference between being and becoming. Since the pure past is not constituted as present instants are constituted, but grounds the passing of these present instants, it is *a priori* to the production of new presents. Whatever difference there is seems indeed to be rolled up in this past, such that we wonder where novelty has gone. Because the passing of presents is grounded in the past, difference is ‘included’ in a past

¹²³ BG, 55.

that contains whatever differences are to be produced. It is here that Deleuze must break with Bergson.

Instead of a drawn-off difference (in the series of presents) or a difference included in a pure past, Deleuze proposes a third synthesis of time, a third repetition, that would be *nothing other than the repetition of difference, the return of the different*: difference is not *included* in this repetition, but difference repeats. As Deleuze says, “Returning is the becoming-identical of becoming itself. Returning is thus the only identity, but identity as a secondary power; the identity of difference, the identical which belongs to the different or turns around the different.”¹²⁴ And again:

We see, then, that in this final synthesis of time, the present and [past] are in turn no more than dimensions of the future: the past as condition, the present as agent. The first synthesis, that of habit, constituted time as a living present by means of a passive foundation on which past and future depended. The second synthesis, that of memory, constituted time as a pure past, from the point of view of a ground which causes the passing of one present and the arrival of another. In the third synthesis, however, the present is no more than an actor, an author, an agent, destined to be effaced; while the past is no more than a condition operating by default. The synthesis of time here constitutes a future which affirms at once both the unconditioned character of the product in relation to the conditions of its production, and the independence of the work in relation to its author or actor.¹²⁵

Ultimately, it is this third repetition that ensures the return of difference and the communication of the many differences that are joined at the level of the virtual.¹²⁶ The pure past is able to ensure only the coexistence of the various levels of the past.

Differences of degree coexist here, are held together by the pure past, included in it. But

¹²⁴ *DR*, 41.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹²⁶ See Robert Piercey, “The Spinoza-intoxicated man: Deleuze on expression,” in *Man and World*, v. 29, no. 3 (July 1996), 272: “The Event corresponds to the ‘good’ or ‘secret’ repetition; the material world corresponds to the ‘bad’ repetition, or the repetition of the same; and the field of events corresponds to the difference lying between the two repetitions.” Does Piercey forget that there are three repetitions? On our reading, the Event, as we shall see, is properly the third repetition; there is a ‘clothed’ repetition at the level of the field of events, and it seems that Piercey may forget this.

the third repetition is the return of the different. It is what ensures the continual production of the novel that renders the repetition of a pure past a mere condition of the production of the new; and it destroys the agent through which the new is realized, the agent of metamorphosis, that through which the creation of a new product is made possible. It is in this repetition that *all* differences communicate. That is, it is this repetition that enables Deleuze to bring together the two distinct processes of different/ciation as one active, dynamic principle, Difference, which by its nature returns (returns the different).

3.2 Activity of Different/ciation

This principle of different/ciation – a creative activity of some kind operating in, and immanent to, the universe it is responsible for producing – is a very complex notion indeed. What sort of activity is it? Philip Goodchild, who laments Deleuze's 'strange materialism', claims that "Deleuze himself subscribes to a 'quiescent atheism' in which all questions and problems concerning God must be removed or forgotten before philosophical thought can begin."¹²⁷ It is true that Deleuze is hostile toward a morality grounded in a transcendent world or Being, and that one of his objectives is to free philosophy from theological tendencies. But Goodchild, who is certainly right to find in Deleuze nothing similar to an Augustinian Christian God, might pursue the issue of God in Deleuze with more success than he thinks. Deleuze seems to agree with Nietzsche on the matter of the death of God. But which God has died? He notes that "It is Feuerbach who is the last thinker of the death of God: he shows that since God has never been

¹²⁷ Philip Goodchild, "A Theological Passion for Deleuze," in *Theology* 99 (1996), 357.

anything but the unfold of man, man must fold and refold God.”¹²⁸ To say that God is nothing but the “unfold of man” is, it seems, to profess atheism. God is the product, unconscious or not, of man, and thus the degree of ‘reality’ we would attribute to Him is considerably less than what Goodchild would require in order to have his theological passion for Deleuze satisfied.

And yet the fold has a particularly interesting status in Deleuze’s philosophy. Jean-Luc Nancy says the fold, for Deleuze, is in a sense Being itself.¹²⁹ Alain Badiou believes the fold is the key concept for Deleuze’s thought, and uses it to make his case against Deleuze - that despite the latter’s attempts to produce a philosophy that accounts for the novel, the different, Deleuze fails to do so precisely because the new can never be anything but a perpetually folding and unfolding One:

It can be said that there is nothing new under the sun because everything that happens is only an inflection of the One, the eternal return of the Same. It can equally be said that everything is constantly new because it is only through the perpetual creation of its own folds that the One, in its absolute contingency, can indefinitely return.¹³⁰

And we find in Deleuze’s texts confirmation for Badiou’s claims where Deleuze writes that “The One remains involved in what expresses it, imprinted in what unfolds it, immanent in whatever manifests it: expression is in this respect an involvement.”¹³¹ And,

¹²⁸ Deleuze, *The Deleuze Reader*, 100.

¹²⁹ Jean-Luc Nancy, “The Deleuzian Fold of Thought,” in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. Paul Patton (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 112. The claim is a problematic one, since only the pure past is what really *is*, and the pure past is not itself the activity of *different/ciation*. We might say that being *belongs* to the fold.

¹³⁰ Badiou, *Clamor*, 97.

¹³¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, tr. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1990), 16.

rather poetically, Deleuze asks, “[E]ven if the production of difference is by definition ‘inexplicable,’ how can we avoid *implicating* the inexplicable at the heart of thought?”¹³² Here we have to note Deleuze’s careful use of terminology: the French verb for ‘to fold’ is *plier*, from which we get a series of terms including “*inexplicable*”, that which cannot be unfolded, and “*implicating*,” or enfolding. In Deleuze’s philosophy, the activity of different/ciation, the *folding* of the One cannot be completely unfolded to the point, explicated. That which produces difference is inexplicable. It is no wonder, then, that Deleuze speaks directly about *different/ciation* so rarely and renames it constantly. The Fold is but one name for that activity.

Should we so quickly suppose that this activity is an immanent Deleuzian God? There are plenty of reasons to suppose so: he names Whitehead’s *Process and Reality* as “one of the greatest books of modern philosophy,”¹³³ a book in which Whitehead proposes a notion of God as *process*; Bergson’s philosophy culminates in the *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, in which process is divine; and Deleuze draws considerably from Spinoza and Leibniz, two philosophers for whom theology and philosophy are not unrelated. Deleuze’s comments on Leibniz’s God give us reason to think that Deleuze is indeed talking about God when he speaks of different/ciation:

[...] God desists from being a Being who compares worlds and chooses the richest compossible. He becomes Process, a process that at once affirms impossibilities and passes through them. The play of the world has changed in a unique way, because now it has become the play that diverges.¹³⁴

¹³² *DR*, 227.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 284-5. A full account of Deleuze and process philosophy would have to include, also, considerable attention to Whitehead.

¹³⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, tr. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 81.

The key point is the *divergence* which is produced by this divine process, which is nothing other than an energy capable of producing disjunctions, divergences.¹³⁵

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze discusses directly the question of the ‘identity’ of the *different/ciation*: how can we name it at all, even if we do need to reject these names and create new ones, except if it has some sort of (fleeting) identity. Deleuze writes:

There is no doubt that *there is* an identity belonging to the [dark] precursor, and a resemblance between the series which it causes to communicate. This ‘there is’, however, remains perfectly indeterminate. Are identity and resemblance here the preconditions of the functioning of this dark precursor, or are they, on the contrary, its effects?¹³⁶

There is¹³⁷ an identity: the precursor itself, or difference, is not self-identical; on the contrary, it is in a perpetual state of differing from itself. But identity *belongs* to it; that is, it *has* identity, and is not itself possessed *by* identity. This is crucial to Deleuze, for whom Difference must not be subordinated to identity. That *there is* identity is never in doubt.

But this is not the identity of a transcendent and self-same God. Deleuze writes:

Returning is the becoming-identical of becoming itself. Returning is thus the only identity, but identity as a secondary power, the identity of difference, the identical which belongs to the different or turns around the different. Such an identity, produced by difference, is determined as ‘repetition’. Repetition in the eternal return, therefore, consists in conceiving the same on the basis of the different.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Volume I*, tr. Helen R. Lane and Robert Hurley (New York: The Viking Press, 1977), 13: “[T]he sole thing that is divine is the nature of an energy of disjunctions.”

¹³⁶ *DR*, 119.

¹³⁷ We are reminded of Heidegger’s late essay *On Time and Being*, in which he writes of the *Es gibt*, the “It gives,” or “There gives,” or “There is,” as it can be translated. See Heidegger, *On Time and Being*. Neither Deleuze nor Heidegger conceives of the ultimate principle as a selfsame God.

¹³⁸ *DR*, 41. Note, too, Plato at *Rep*, Bk. VII 518c-d: “But our present argument indicates, said I, that the true analogy for this indwelling power in the soul and the instrument whereby each of us apprehends is that of an eye that could not be converted to the light from the darkness except by turning the whole body. Even so this organ of knowledge must be turned around from the world of becoming together with the entire soul, like the scene-shifting periactus in the theater, until the soul is able to endure the contemplation of essence and the brightest region of being. And this, we say, is the good, do we not?”

We now see how difference-in-itself is repetition-for-itself, as Deleuze claims. Returning is the returning *of* the different; repetition has no in-itself, but belongs to the different. This third repetition is the power of Difference to return. Deleuze writes of a difference “between” two repetitions, the bare and the clothed repetitions, the simple material repetition and the repetition of the whole of the pure past, contracted together, in each passing material present. Difference is trapped between these two. It is the third repetition, or the Eternal Return of the Different, that loosens difference from these two repetitions that use difference (draw off difference) or include it (in the repetition of an unchanging pure past).¹³⁹

The complexity of the metaphysics of difference is a consequence of what difference is. Difference is what is, but since what is must be different, difference is not only Being – but also Becoming. Difference is not phenomenon, but the “noumenon closest to the phenomenon” for Deleuze. The phenomenal world, the actual, material world, is the product of an actualization of the virtual.

The difference afforded by Deleuzian “multiplicity” is not different *enough* for Badiou, who finds in Deleuze yet another variation on a philosophy of the One. And yet it seems that Badiou and the more sympathetic commentator Boundas, from opposite sides, share a reading of Deleuze’s philosophy of Difference – as though the ‘object’ (to speak loosely) were not in doubt. And Deleuze makes an especially interesting case for our

¹³⁹ “If we consider all three serial kinds – the connective synthesis on a single series, the conjunctive synthesis of convergence, and the disjunctive synthesis of resonance, we see that the third proves to be the truth and the destination of the others, to the degree that the disjunction attains its positive and affirmative use. The conjunction of zones makes visible therefore the divergence already present in the series which it coordinated globally, and the connection of a zone makes visible the wealth of details already contained in the series which it apparently harmonizes” (*LS*, 229).

study of how such philosophical systems (objects) *belong to agents who engage with them*. He endlessly opposes mere representation and advocates, rather, a more engaged¹⁴⁰ philosophy, where “encounters” are sought. This, he thinks, is where history of philosophy becomes constructive and productive, where we do not ask what texts *mean* but *how they work*.

To adopt Deleuze’s program for reading is already to be Deleuzian; we are asked to *evaluate* the texts, to engage with them, as Deleuze himself does.¹⁴¹ Ian Buchanan suggests that this is prerequisite to a proper reading of Deleuze. It is as though one’s freedom as a reader is compromised from the outset, or even before, such that it is impossible *to choose to be Deleuzian*. The text claims its reader; one does not choose a text, but is chosen by it. That this compromises a certain notion of freedom, the freedom to select among ‘possibles,’ is already obvious; and indeed, as we shall see, Deleuze concedes this notion of freedom, defending rather a notion similar to that we find in the Stoics.

The religious overtones of this account of philosophy are not accidental. While Deleuze writes with disdain for the transcendent, and for a certain *theological* brand of philosophizing, and while he is undeniably Nietzschean in many senses, we cannot ignore that he declares himself a Spinozist, and that he borrows greatly from the thought of

¹⁴⁰ Deleuze claims to forget everything he learns, claims to learn only in relation to a project, claims not to be encyclopedic, and to find something to be feared in those who are, such as Umberto Eco, for whom Deleuze claims to have deep respect. See “C, as in Culture,” in *L’Abécédaire*.

¹⁴¹ We should be wary of this “as”, since it indicates an *imitation* of Deleuze’s activity; oceanic differences always rumble beneath the appearance of imitation, according to Deleuze. Plato, too, is preoccupied with the importance of engaging with a text in the *Phaedrus*, where the reception of Lysias’ discourse is at stake. See also Plato, *Protagoras*, 342b-347b, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters*, tr. W.K.C. Guthrie, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 335-40.

Bergson. For Bergson and Spinoza, God's *nature* is at stake, and they each offer accounts of this nature which are at odds with much of their respective theological traditions.¹⁴² It thus remains an open question for us whether it is to speak *metaphorically* to say that our *souls* are at stake when we engage with Deleuze's texts.¹⁴³ Have we already been called? Must we be Deleuzian, or *can we resist the force of the pull* toward his philosophical system? It may turn out that what is at stake in this philosophy is the nature of resistance; the horizon for us, then, is political.

We wonder whether it is possible *not yet to be Deleuzian*. At least it is possible not yet to know one is Deleuzian. We begin our investigations, which may *reveal* who we are, or which may *result* in who we are, by pursuing the tension we find between the claims made by Badiou and Boundas and the claims we find in the passage with which we began this chapter.

3.3 Event

Deleuze, we must remember, defined his project in relation to Platonism. For Plato, on Deleuze's reading, there are gradations of Being, or degrees of participation in those perfect Forms, or in the Good; metaphysics and morality are inseparable. Forms are defined as "Good". Simulacra, in the world of Becoming, are judged to be more or less good to the degree that they participate in the Forms of which they are copies. Indeed, in Deleuze's terminology, the simulacrum, which is a bad copy or an *instance* of becoming

¹⁴² It is not difficult to multiply examples of thinkers who rethink God's nature, without abandoning the idea entirely. Whitehead is a good example; Deleuze calls *Process and Reality* one of the great books of modern philosophy. Both Whitehead and Deleuze are Leibnizian, too. And Deleuze draws considerably from Duns Scotus. What Deleuze abhors is transcendence and the moralizing that is grounded in it.

¹⁴³ At *Protagoras*, 312c, Socrates warns Hippocrates of the dangers of entrusting one's soul to another (in this case to Protagoras).

that eludes the action of the Idea, is judged to be evil by Plato, who seeks to eliminate it. But we sense a tension in Deleuze, especially when he begins to speak in terms of noumenon and phenomenon, terms from a Kantian, not a Platonic, Idealism. Deleuze thinks of Kant as an enemy, of course, since Kant posits a transcendent reality in which is judgment is rooted. But Deleuze's own philosophy, which he calls a "transcendental empiricism" or an "empiricism of the Idea," certainly draws considerably from Kant. We cannot help but wonder whether there isn't in Deleuze's separation of ontological levels a corresponding difference in *value*¹⁴⁴, when so much happens at the level of difference and becoming (the virtual level), leaving the material world to be the realm of "bare repetition", a product which has no potency of its own. What prevents this philosophy from being another example of the *devaluation* of the actual in relation to some other level of Being?

We might begin by reminding ourselves, firstly, that there is no absolute division between registers, such that *over here* or *behind everything* we find the virtual. The actual is really only one face or one mask of Difference – a face or mask that is not banished from Difference. The lines of becoming or differentiation are not destructive lines of rejection, but lines of production. There is no judgment here that the actual is *bad* in any

¹⁴⁴ The concern appears in feminist writings about Deleuze, and about Deleuze and Guattari. See Nicole Shukin, "Deleuze and Feminisms: Involuntary Regulators and Affective Inhibitors," in *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*, ed. Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 150: "For Deleuze and Guattari, doing is seldom connected with voluntary effort, since a body is defined in terms of its virtuality rather than its actuality. So the accumulated labour, the uncounted, unpaid body hours of women, insofar as they have sedimented a majoritarian history and reinforced domesticity, are inconsequential compared with the pure possibility that idles within a girl. [...] Deleuze may incline too far towards the involuntary, neglecting nuances of actual woman for the sake of a feminine infinitely in potentia, but it would certainly be no better to place excessive weight on the actual and foreclose what is possible for women. Somehow a balance must be struck." The concern that action, and the actual generally, do not matter for Deleuze is unfounded. It seems, on the contrary, that he is very much concerned with the nature of action, indeed.

sense. It is not even the case that all “becoming” flows in one direction, from the virtual to the actual. Deleuze writes of “counter-actualization”, a process intimately connected to his theory of the event.

The term ‘event’ is common enough. Earlier in this chapter, we noted its use by such thinkers as Russell and Mellor, whose conception of the event could hardly be called “spiritual” or “mental.” But the term “event” appears in such various contexts, philosophical and otherwise, that we risk misunderstanding Deleuze’s very specific use of the term. He warns us against thinking, for instance, that the media deal in events:

I don’t think the media have much capacity or inclination to grasp an event. In the first place, they often show a beginning or an end, whereas even a short or instantaneous event is something going on. And then, they want something spectacular, whereas events always involve periods when nothing happens.¹⁴⁵

An event has some relation to the temporal series of passing present moments, but it is not *limited* by this series, such that we could say that at time *t* event ‘*x*’ begins or ends. The event stretches beyond the discrete moments of time, seems to ride along atop the actions of material bodies that exist in the present. Deleuze distinguishes the field of events from the field of actions:

In an airplane hijacking, the threat of a hijacker brandishing a revolver is obviously an action; so is the execution of the hostages, if it occurs. But the transformation of the passengers into hostages, and of the plane-body into a prison-body, is an instantaneous incorporeal transformation, a ‘mass media act’ in the sense in which the English speak of speech acts.¹⁴⁶

Here it becomes obvious that the event is not itself some series of states of affairs whose beginning and end we might mark. The event, Deleuze says, is preserved eternally; it

¹⁴⁵ Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 159-60.

¹⁴⁶ *TP*, 81.

does not disappear with the passing of the present.¹⁴⁷ It challenges good sense, which is always, for Deleuze, the sense of direction (the vector from the present toward the future), and which has to do only with the time of bodies and action.

Is Deleuze drawing extraordinary conclusions from something rather simple? Indeed, a plane can become a prison, if certain actions occur, but what ontological status should we grant to the new description of the body in which certain actions occur? That is, does something new come into being with the very description of what is? Indeed, that is a possible avenue, though it might only shift the problem rather than resolve it. What, after all, is an action? We can admit the appearance of certain motions of bodies in space, but what constitutes an *act*? Where one brandishes a revolver (or threatens to), whether it is loaded, whether one is in a public building: conditions like these, each of which presupposes a description filled with its own presuppositions, give us cause to doubt that we can trust in the motions of material bodies; it does seem as though something is involved in the situation that is incorporeal *though real*. Paul Patton shows that this Deleuzian theory of events has a counterpart in the Anglo-American philosophical tradition:

Anscombe argues that because actions involve intentions and because having an intention presupposes some description of what it is one intends to do, it follows that the same spatio-temporal occurrence may correspond to a series of actions: moving a lever up and down, pumping water, poisoning a well and so on. Human actions can be identified as actions of a particular kind only by taking descriptions into account. This thesis about the dependence of actions upon descriptions implies that the nature of actions is not exhausted by any particular description or set of descriptions. [...] In Anscombe's view, since the same spatio-temporal

¹⁴⁷ “[T]he living present [...] happens and brings about the event. But the event nonetheless retains an eternal truth upon the line of the Aion, which divides it eternally into a proximate past and an imminent future” (*LS*, 63).

occurrence may constitute more than one action and therefore be described in a variety of ways, it follows that the nature of actions is essentially indeterminate. For Deleuze, there is a similar indeterminacy associated with the event proper or pure event, since this is not reducible to the manner in which it is incarnated in particular states of affairs.¹⁴⁸

Intention helps to determine the nature of an action, here. Actions are understood as being motivated by intent – or in certain cases as being unconscious – but in every question regarding an action, the issue of intent must be raised. Does the plane become a prison body if the gun is not loaded? Or if the person brandishing it is mentally incompetent and unaware what he is doing? If the passengers are determined to act as though the whole field of relations has changed, something has indeed passed in the complex field of spatio-temporal motions, ideas, emotions, perceptions (conscious and unconscious), and the event emerges. If there is no *counter-actualization* of this event, if the passengers, for instance, do not recognize the new set of relations issued in by the act that has taken place, it might still be the case that the plane has become a prison (so long as the name ‘prisoners’ can belong to individuals unconscious of their circumstances). To react to the event, to counter-actualize it, is to begin to own the event for oneself. It is to recognize that the event has taken place (unconsciously, in part, since events are constituted in part by unconscious perceptions and dispositions), that one *belongs* to the event unless one can act in accordance with the new field of relations and thereby come to own what has happened, to own up to what has happened to one. The passenger who does not get the sense of the situation, who does not recognize that the plane has been transformed into a prison, might casually stand up and head for the bathroom, only to become a victim. We

¹⁴⁸ Paul Patton, “Redescriptive Philosophy: Deleuze and Guattari’s Critical Pragmatism,” in *Micropolitics of Media Culture* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2001), 35-6.

get some sense of the complexity of the situation, however, when we appreciate that a courageous act in such a situation might be to *test* the event by behaving as though it hadn't taken place. In that case the casual passenger's intention constitutes his action in part – and action that already begins to issue in yet another event, perhaps even a reformation of the plane-body from the prison-body – and determining the nature of his act (naïve? Or perhaps sly?) might require yet another attempt to grasp the event and to counter-actualize, this time on the part of the person holding the gun.

We might draw conclusions to which Patton does not appeal. He chooses to emphasize the “indeterminacy” of actions and events; what we must note is the presence of language – or better, the presence of the material *in* language, which is to say that no action takes place outside language. *Naming* is the issue here - and not a reckless, irresponsible naming.¹⁴⁹ Anscombe's point is not to defend the indeterminacy of actions. The action does not *depend* upon the description, as though any description of a spatio-temporal occurrence is the description of an action, where one is no better than the next. The description bears some relation to the occurrence, and the action sits somewhere between matter and language. Descriptions can be bad for Plato, Aristotle, and G. E. M. Anscombe. This does *not* mean that the descriptions ineffectively *represent* the spatio-temporal occurrence. It may mean that they do not provide a place for the recognition of the action that integrates a series of spatio-temporal occurrences.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ On the gravity of the act of naming, consider Paolo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: The Seabury Press, 1970), 76: “To exist, humanly, is to *name* the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new *naming*. Men are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection.”

¹⁵⁰ See Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, tr. Jonathan Barnes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), Bk.II, Ch. 19.

Getting the description right, which requires both naming and a capacity to *hear* when something about the account of the situation sounds slightly out of tune, is the central problem for every agent in the above example. Naming is an attempt to orient oneself in relation to what has happened. One ‘names’ the situation, categorizes it, *accuses* it of being ‘x.’ If the event somehow responds to the name that it has given – if the infinite set of details, the particulars, are somehow harmonized, integrated, understood as belonging together under the name we have given it, one can then begin to act in relation to the event, and thereby to own it, rather than to be bullied by it. In the case in question, once one has apprehended that it the plane is a prison body, a whole set of actions becomes available – of which it is possible some might be able to thrust back through the virtual a shock wave capable of resetting the variables and beginning a new event, even a reformation of the plane body from the prison body (as would be achieved were the gun to be seized from the hand of the hijacker). The implication is that a failure to apprehend the event leaves us in danger of being destroyed by our inability to act within the complex set of relations that to a large extent determines us. Often, this leaves us unable to act at all.¹⁵¹

Naming is important for Deleuze, but commentators, like Buchanan, feel uneasy discussing such things, reminding themselves that Deleuze and Guattari want them to ask not what books *mean* but how they work. Any talk of *right names* or *good names* sets off alarms, and for good reason: Deleuze is certainly not interested in *representing* the real in names. (Perhaps, though, as we’ve suggested, Plato is not interested in this either.) What

¹⁵¹ It is interesting to note this example of Deleuze’s regarding the event – an event which by its nature probably interrupts the possibility of communication between passengers, and thus leaves the passenger to apprehend for him/herself, in solitude one might say, the nature of what has happened.

was the cause of Deleuze's distaste for philosophical conferences and the 'discussion' which takes place at symposia? It was not a radical skepticism, a firm belief that nothing valuable could be said anywhere. After all, he wrote voluminously, taught, and engaged in interviews on occasion. Naming, for Deleuze, is not necessarily, however, an activity to be shared by philosophers. It *can* be, perhaps, if a world is created in which two thinkers are joined together, as he and Guattari came to be. The thinker is essentially solitary for Deleuze, but this is a novel solitude – a solitude which is the solitude of a discrete world, not of a *subject*. Deleuze has no aversion to talking with and forming a block of becoming with another human being; he does this with Claire Parnet in *Dialogues*, and he does this with Guattari several times. But while all worlds do *communicate*¹⁵² in the One, in the third Repetition, in the Event – all of these terms name that which enables the communication of disparate series – this is a *molecular* communication, a community of singularities, not a community of subjects. The whole remains *open* for Deleuze, which means that a true pluralism is possible.

We have not yet sorted out what Deleuze believes the thinker does, though it has a relation to events and to naming. In the next chapter, we pursue this theme of the atomism of worlds. The thinker produces concepts that have a relation to sense and to the event. It is through the counter-actualization of events, that is, through the production of sense, that an actor can become worthy of what happens to him.

¹⁵² “What brings destiny about at the level of events, what brings about an event to repeat another in spite of all its difference, what makes it possible that a life is composed of one and the same Event, despite the variety of what might happen, that it be traversed by a single and same fissure, that it play one and the same air over all possible tunes and all possible worlds – all these are not due to relations between cause and effect; it is rather an aggregate of noncausal correspondences which form a system of echoes, of resumptions and resonances, a system of signs – in short, an expressive quasi-causality, and not at all a necessitating causality” (*LS*, 170).

Chapter Four: Deleuze and the Void

*"[H]ow far can we unfold the line without falling into a breathless void, into death, and how can we fold it, but without losing touch with it, to produce an inside copresent with the outside, corresponding to the outside? It's a matter of 'practices.'"*¹⁵³

*" 'Where' is the battle? "*¹⁵⁴

- Deleuze

4.1 Void and Time

Though concerns have been raised, for instance by Alain Badiou, regarding Deleuze's monism, Deleuze has married his thought to that of the Ancient Atomists and indeed has a great deal to say about the nature of plurality. In this chapter we will show how Deleuze handles the concept of 'void' with care, and with extraordinary results. We wonder whether Deleuze's philosophy is best characterized as a philosophy of time, as suggested by the Bergsonian influences we explored in the last chapter, or as a philosophy of place. It is true that at the metaphysical and physical level, Deleuze devotes a great deal of attention to both. Perhaps the balance will be tipped by considering his philosophy at the political and/or ethical level. Does Deleuze really understand place as well as he does time?

That the void should become so important in this philosophy is remarkable, given Deleuze's assault on the Negative. Another objective in this chapter is to show just how hard Deleuze works to rid his philosophy of the plague of negativity; and how it forces him to rethink the nature of need, desire, lack, evaluation, comparison. The last section of

¹⁵³ Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 113.

¹⁵⁴ *LS*, 101

this chapter explores the consequences of this fundamental rethinking of key philosophical issues, and becomes the subject of the last section of this chapter.

Robert Piercey characterizes the ontological “fields” in Deleuze’s philosophy in his essay titled suggestively, “Deleuze: The Spinoza-Intoxicated Man,” as such: “[W]e have a tripartite division of ontological fields: the Event; events, or ideal states of difference which ‘communicate’ in the Event; and the world of material objects, which is the ‘spatiotemporal realization.’”¹⁵⁵ The choice of terms is appropriate: there are three ontological *fields*, though we must take care not to think that such a distinction means that there are three separate *worlds*, as though the field of ideal states of difference were ‘outside’ the field of material objects. Deleuze’s reflections on the nature of place begin to become very interesting at this point.

The material world, or the world of simple presence, is the site of extension, where *space* originates, *a posteriori* to the extended beings. The first plane is, nonetheless, the plane of space.

The second field, the field of events or ideal states of difference, is a field of non-being, though, as Deleuze says, not of negativity:

We have seen that Ideas are genuine objectivities, made up of differential elements and relations and provided with a specific mode - namely, the ‘problematic’. Problems thus defined do not designate any ignorance on the part of a thinking subject, any more than they express a conflict, but rather objectively characterise the nature of Ideas as such. There is indeed, therefore, a me on, which must not be confused with the ouk on, and which means the being of the problematic and not the being of the negative.¹⁵⁶

Thus, the second field is the field of the problematic, of (non)-Being as Deleuze writes it,

¹⁵⁵ Piercey, 272.

¹⁵⁶ DR, 267

meaning to indicate that this is a field of potency, not of radical negativity or empty nothingness, but which gives rise to the sensible, to material being at the spatiotemporal level. This, as we saw, is the nature of the virtual field. This is not a field of *absolute* not-Being, where that would be characterized by an *inert* character. This is the field of problematic being, of a potency which is not actual, but which will yield the actual. Difference is “intensive” as opposed to extensive. As Deleuze writes, “Intensity is not the sensible but the being *of* the sensible.”¹⁵⁷ This field of intensity is problematic insofar as its effects are *beings*, and thus deserves to be called the *being* if this term means *cause*. That is why, above, Deleuze brackets the “non”, since there is a positive, potentiality to this virtuality, which is yet *not* actual, which recedes from actuality even in producing it. This character justifies the decision to give this problematic level a pair of names: non-Being and Being – or, together, “(non)-Being.”¹⁵⁸

What appears to us as ‘place’ is only extension, and this has, for that reason perhaps, gradually ‘replaced’ the *richer* notions of place that we find in Plato and Aristotle, for instance. Deleuze is careful not to make extended space *a priori*; in fact, he claims that space is *a posteriori* to the material beings that we declare to be ‘in space’. Space, rather, is in these bodies.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 267.

¹⁵⁸ In the passage above, Deleuze calls that second field the field of the me on, which must not be confused with the ouk on. Is there in Deleuze’s philosophy room for a third ontological field, a field that would be the ouk on? The field of the Event? That in which all being communicates would then be radical not-Being, or *void*. See Liddell, et. al., 1266, where the authors deal with the usage of those operators from which to me on and to ouk on are derived, and offer the following: “ou, the negative of fact and statement, as me of will and thought; ou denies, me rejects; ou is absolute, me relative; ou objective, me subjective, - the same differences hold for all compds. of ou and me.” It must be remembered that Deleuze always has in mind Hegel as an opponent, and that there is a resistance to a philosophy preoccupied with the being of the *negative* rather than of the *problematic*, but in his argument against the subordination of difference to the negative as it is pushed to its limit, which forms the core of *DR*, Deleuze nowhere advocates abandoning the question of the being of the negative.

But because space is derived from the actual, and the actual is the product of the virtual, space is the product of the virtual, and we could say that space remains within the virtual; the material world is not distinct from the virtual, we remember, but is a “last nuance” of duration. The virtual thus grounds the actual. But what about Deleuze’s universal ungrounding?

We discover that the ground is overturned when we find that the self-differentiating virtual has a peculiar relationship to *void*, radical or absolute placelessness, no place. We learn where Deleuze’s world, folded as Badiou is fond of saying, breaks with a Leibnizian world:

[T]he Baroque Leibniz does not believe in the void. For him it always seems to be filled with a folded matter, because binary arithmetic superimposes folds that both the decimal system - and Nature itself - conceal in apparent voids. For Leibniz, and the Baroque, folds are always full.¹⁵⁹

Deleuze’s admiration for Leibniz is deep, as we have seen, but ultimately Leibniz is a moral thinker, though an admittedly complex one, and his Best of all Possible Worlds is an effort to save some version of the Platonic Good in the form of a divine process which ensures the harmony of the world. The way to get past morality is through the void; but Deleuze, whose worlds are, as Badiou rightly claims, full and folded, cannot reintroduce the void as ‘space’ in which the folds are simply located.

In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze gives us the crucial clue, attributing the discovery of the void to the Stoics:

The Stoics had already elaborated a very elegant theory of the Void, as at once *extra-Being* and *insistence*. If incorporeal events are the logical attributes of beings and bodies, the void is like the substance of these attributes; it differs in

¹⁵⁹ *FL*, 36.

nature from corporeal substance, to the point that it cannot even be said that the world is 'in' the void.¹⁶⁰

If the virtual were to be *in* the void, the void would serve to ground the virtual; instead, the void is that which ungrounds the virtual, the pure past. But what does it mean to say that the void is the 'substance' of the incorporeal events? What is it to be extra-Being and insistence? We can come to understand the nature of the void only through that of which it is the substance, the event.

According to Piercey, events are ideal states of difference, and they "communicate" in a single Event. Deleuze says they do not belong to the present which "makes them exist", but to the "unlimited Aion, the Infinitive in which they subsist and insist."¹⁶¹ Deleuze distinguishes these two "times" which have some relationship to events:

There are two times, one of which is composed only of interlocking presents; the other is constantly decomposed into elongated pasts and futures. There are two times, one of which is always definite, active or passive; the other is eternally Infinitive and eternally neutral. One is cyclical, measures the movement of bodies and depends on the matter which limits and fills it out; the other is a pure straight line at the surface, incorporeal, unlimited, an empty form of time, independent of all matter. [...] It is the incorporeal Aion which has been unfolded. [...] This Aion, being straight line and empty form, is the time of events-effects. Just as the present measures the temporal realization of the event - that is, its incarnation in the depth of acting bodies and its incorporation in a state of affairs - the event in turn, in its impassibility and impenetrability, has no present.¹⁶²

The definite, "active or passive" time of which Deleuze speaks here he elsewhere calls "Chronos." This temporal series, as we saw earlier, is constituted by 'interlocking' presents that pass. The actual (active) presents are grounded by the passive, the pure past.

¹⁶⁰ *LS*, 347.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 53-4.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 62-3.

An event cannot be said to *have* a present, as the past ‘has’ the present for Deleuze.¹⁶³

Events are freed from this circle and subsist or insist on the Aion, that which enables the communication of all events, the time of events-effects:

A position in the void of all events in one, an expression of the nonsense of all senses in one, univocal Being is the pure form of the Aion, the form of exteriority which relates things and propositions¹⁶⁴. In short, the univocity of Being has three determinations: one single event for all events; one and the same aliquid for that which happens and that which is said; and one and the same Being for the impossible, the possible, and the real.¹⁶⁵

Univocal Being is the pure form of the Aion, the third repetition from *Difference and Repetition*. In this passage, Deleuze’s complex metaphysics is drawn together. Univocal Being is the Event, the position in the void for all events, that which by holding them together in that void enables them to communicate¹⁶⁶. In the *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze writes of the “esoteric word [...] a non-identifiable aliquid” – where aliquid is the Medieval Latin philosophical term for *difference*. In a single field of difference, things and propositions are related. The field of difference gives rise to states of affairs (through the process of actualization), which embody events, ideal states of difference; but without these states of affairs, there are no events. From one ‘side’ of things, then, the events are ‘born’ of the actual.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Is Bergson’s image of the past as rolled up in the present in Deleuze’s mind when he declares the time of Chronos to be cyclical?

¹⁶⁴ “The Aion is precisely the border of the two [tables or series], the straight line which separates them; but it is also the plain surface which connects them, an impenetrable window or glass. It circulates *therefore* throughout the series and never ceases to reflect and to ramify them. It makes one and the same event the expressed of propositions and the attribute of things” (*LS*, 64).

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 180.

¹⁶⁶ “Metaphysical surfaces (*transcendental field*) is the name that will be given to the frontier established, on one hand, between bodies taken together as a whole and inside the limits which envelop them, and on the other, propositions in general” (*LS*, 125).

¹⁶⁷ “[A]t the limit of dense bodies, an event is incorporeal (a metaphysical surface); on the surface of words and things, an incorporeal event is the *meaning* of a proposition (its logical dimension); in the thread of

Deleuze claims that “sense” is the “event” itself,¹⁶⁸ and that “[t]he most general operation of sense is this: it brings that which expresses it into existence; and from that point on, as pure inherence, it brings itself to exist within that which expresses it.”¹⁶⁹ It is not easy to see how sense can itself bring about that which expresses it. But where for Bergson, the relation between the virtual and the actual is always directed, such that the actual is produced by and grounded by the virtual, Deleuze’s ungrounding repetition enables the interplay of these two fields. The virtual series and the actual series communicate by means of the great Event which relates them, but which belongs to them, and does not ground them – for how could a *void* ground?

4. 2 Ethics in the Void

Ian Buchanan focuses on the process of *counter-actualization* of events, as it appears in Deleuze’s philosophy. While we are composed of singularities, and thus it is difficult to say that ‘we’ are actual – indeed, we bathe in the virtual, in the being of the problematic, in Idea – this does not mean we do not make attempts at a “global integration” of the local “larval” selves of which we are composed. Deleuze is concerned only to oppose the idea of a *given* subject; that is to say, of an identity beneath all differences to which becomings might belong or happen. Thus Buchanan writes:

The event is the sense *we make* of what happens. We might bemoan a misfortune, or resign ourselves to it, or take charge of it (become worthy, in other words), by saying, as Joe Bousquet did, we were born to embody it. To the extent we take

discourse, an incorporeal meaning-event is fastened to the verb (infinitive point of the present)” (Foucault, “Theatrum,” 175).

¹⁶⁸ *LS*, 22.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 166.

charge of events we counter-actualize what occurs, we see beyond actions and live the purity of the event, the crystal of sense awaiting us in all phenomena.¹⁷⁰

Here the Stoic inheritance in Deleuze's philosophy becomes apparent. Counter-actualization is a name for the act of taking *ownership* of what happens to oneself, of *measuring up* or becoming "worthy" of what we suffer.¹⁷¹ Deleuze himself writes:

The actor thus actualizes the event, but in a way which is entirely different from the actualization of the event in the depths of things. Or rather, the actor redoubles this cosmic or physical actualization, in his own way, which is singularly superficial - but because of it more distinct, trenchant and pure. Thus, the actor delimits the original, disengages from it an abstract line, and keeps from the event only its contour and its splendor, becoming thereby the actor of one's own events - a *counter-actualization*.¹⁷²

There are two actualizations, then: one that seems to produce the individual who seems herself to be, in turn, necessary for the second, the counter-actualization. It is to this that Alain Badiou points when he wonders "[w]hether the Event with a capital 'E' might not be Deleuze's Good. In light of the way it requires and founds the temperament of 'the free man,' this would seem probable."¹⁷³ Badiou notes the capital "E" – denoting the single event that enables the communication of the various events. This Event indeed does enable the communication of the various lines of becoming that move from the virtual Idea-structures to the actual world. But it is also, as the straight line of the Aion, the border between propositions and things, and thus "exists" on the surface of, and depends upon the production of, propositions.¹⁷⁴

Badiou discovers what is crucial for Deleuze – that this complex ontology of the

¹⁷⁰ Ian Buchanan, *Deleuzism: A Metacommentary* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 79.

¹⁷¹ See editor's introduction of Boundas, ed., *The Deleuze Reader*, 9: "Real *amor fati* is not in the acceptance of the actual state of affairs, but in the 'counteractualization' of the actual, so that the virtual event that inheres in it may be, for the first time, thought and willed."

¹⁷² *LS*, 150.

¹⁷³ Badiou, *Clamor*, 27.

¹⁷⁴ One is reminded of Heidegger's comments about the relation between Dasein and Being.

Event is indistinguishable from an Ethics that accompanies it.

Nothing more can be said, and no more has ever been said: to become worthy of what happens to us, and thus to will and release the event, to become the offspring of one's own events, and thereby to be reborn, to have one more birth, and to break with one's carnal birth - to become the offspring of one's events and not of one's actions, for the action is produced by the offspring of the event.¹⁷⁵

The novelty that Deleuze seeks to accommodate in his philosophy has a relation to the actual field; action itself is produced by the "offspring" of the event. Deleuze seeks to explain change, rebirth, metamorphosis – and such change is simply not possible for that which is entirely carnal. Freedom has nothing to do with choosing among possible outcomes. Freedom is purely spiritual in nature, freeing oneself from the cruelty of the actual world, and measuring up to the actual by willing and releasing the event.¹⁷⁶

This is undeniably a brand of Stoicism, and indeed the *Logic of Sense* is if nothing else an elaboration of and renewal of a Stoic ethics. We see Deleuze elaborating a sophisticated atomism:¹⁷⁷

The metamorphoses or redistributions of singularities form a history; each combination and each distribution is an event. But the paradoxical instance is the Event in which all events communicate and are distributed. It is the Unique event, and all other events are its bits and pieces...¹⁷⁸

Deleuze's atoms are not actual bits and pieces of matter, but events which communicate

¹⁷⁵ *LS*, 150.

¹⁷⁶ How much does Deleuze owe here to Kant? Nothing like freedom is imaginable in the world of appearances, in the phenomenal. Certainly Deleuze's explorations of the virtual are, as we have seen, his pursuit of that which Kant deemed beyond the power of the faculty of cognition (though, of course, not beyond pure reason in its practical application). Through this process of counter-actualization, whose vector runs from the actual toward the virtual, Deleuze does suggest that an encounter with the phenomenal may force a redistribution of virtual singularities.

¹⁷⁷ It is already obvious in *DR* that Deleuze's philosophy is 'atomistic': "[T]he Epicurean atom still retains too much independence, a shape and an actuality. Reciprocal determination here still has too much the aspect of a spatio-temporal relation. The question whether modern atomism, by contrast, fulfils all the conditions of a structure must be posed in relation to the differential equations which determine the laws of nature, in relation to the types of 'multiple and non-localisable connections' established between particles, and in relation to the character of the 'potentiality' expressly attributed to these particles" (*DR*, 184).

¹⁷⁸ *LS*, 56.

and are distributed ‘in’ the Unique event (Event), Deleuze’s void. As he says, “The atom is that which must be thought, and that which can only be thought.”¹⁷⁹ We have already noted that the Event is the pure and empty form of time, the Aion. Deleuze has pursued the concept of the void further than those thinkers who insist upon understanding it as *spatial*. It is in pushing thought to this limit that Deleuze goes beyond Kant, we might say, by finding the (no)-place where time and space are not absolutely different: they are traceable to the void.

Remarkably, Deleuze finds the clue to this discovery in Plato: “Plato rightly said that the instant is *atopon*, without place. It is the paradoxical instance or the aleatory point, the nonsense of the surface and quasi-cause.”¹⁸⁰ The paradoxical instance is the Event, the void, the “place where the event bursts forth as sense.”¹⁸¹ We can now return to the fascinating suggestion of Badiou’s that Deleuze’s Event is his version of Plato’s Good. The Event, for Deleuze, is the void – an instant, what Deleuze calls in his essay on “Lucretius and the Simulacrum” the “time smaller than the minimum of continuous time.” The void is thus temporal for Deleuze. While there are temporal issues related to the operation of the Good, for Plato, time gives way for him to the active nature of place.

Deleuze’s Platonism becomes visible when we consider that, for him, “The event is the identity of form and void. It is not the object as denoted, but the object expressed or expressible, never present, but always already in the past and yet to come.”¹⁸² As we saw in chapter two, Plato’s *chora* was the place of the appearance of forms, though it is in

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 268.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 166.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 137.

¹⁸² Ibid., 136.

nature itself *formless*, entirely *empty*, and capable therefore of reflecting the forms. When a form passes on the chora, is it inseparable from that chora? If so, we might be inclined to say that there is an identity of form and chora. This passing would then be the cause of the identity, the explanation of the identity. We recall that the chora is a receptive place, capable of receiving and passing on the form that will fleetingly occupy it. Any supposed identity of form and chora would have to be fleeting, achieved only insofar as the chora receives and passes on the form that is *present*, if only long enough to become absent.

But for Deleuze, the key issue is that the event is never *present*. For Plato, the act of receiving and passing-on which takes place *on* the chora (or perhaps *is* the chora) is necessarily present if any identity is to be maintained. It remained a question at the conclusion of our second chapter where the Good is in relation to this active chora, but we have reason to be cautious, since Plato insisted upon the radical otherness of the Good, of how crucial it is that it be able to avoid corruption by the changing world of appearances, of forms. Is the act of the chora sufficiently incorruptible? Is the chora itself, strange as it is, sufficiently *other*? When we ask, “where is the Good, for Plato?”, are we justified in wondering whether the introduction of this *chorology* might not have been Plato’s late effort to ask, with incredible caution, repeatedly stressing the nature of the *Timaeus*’ “bastard” discourse, how much presence the Good has *here*? The *Republic* itself demonstrates that the Good has *presence through its absence*, though it is not itself ‘present.’ Is the same the case for Deleuze’s event?

We have been given reason to doubt that the Event is the Good, since the Event seems itself to be the void, the third repetition, the pure and empty form of time, the Eternal return of the Different. In “Lucretius and the Simulacrum,” however, Deleuze

pursues Epicurus' concept of the clinamen, which has itself a peculiar relation to the void. The clinamen is often thought to be a strange motion by which atoms freely falling in the void suddenly swerve and become interlocked, forming compounds. Deleuze argues that the clinamen is for Epicurus actually an *originary* motion, that which gives the atom its originary direction, without which there would be no collisions.¹⁸³ The clinamen is called a "differential of matter" and a "differential of thought".¹⁸⁴ For Deleuze, it is that which allows the atomic lines to collide; it is the energy of a disjunctive synthesis. The clinamen, then, is an ancestor to Deleuze's *different/ciation*, his Difference. Deleuze's own philosophy, a transcendental empiricism, a "pluralistic mysticism",¹⁸⁵ is a modern reworking of Epicurus' theory, the strangeness and sophistication of which is not appreciated if the clinamen is seen as superfluous to a bare materialist philosophy.¹⁸⁶

The reason why we cannot easily collapse Deleuze's philosophy into a Platonism is that the former refuses any ground. Which is Deleuze's reworking of Plato's Good? – the Event (void, Repetition) or *different/ciation* (clinamen, Difference)? The dilemma is false, since for Deleuze, there is necessarily difference *and* repetition, where the latter is the *returning* of the former, and not its ground.

While Badiou stresses Deleuze's Platonism, he admits what seems undeniable:

¹⁸³ Ibid., 269.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 269.

¹⁸⁵ In *DR* (57), Deleuze cites the poet B. P. Blood, about whom, as Deleuze notes (311-2), William James wrote a paper entitled "A Pluralistic Mystic," published in the *Hibbert Journal* in July of 1910. Would Deleuze object to such a characterization of himself?

¹⁸⁶ Deleuze indicates elsewhere that there has been a long confusion about what kind of materialism the ancient atomists proposed: "[T]he atom of the ancients, from Democritus to Lucretius, was always inseparable from a hydraulics, or a generalized theory of swells and flows. The ancient atom is entirely misunderstood if it is overlooked that its essence is to course and flow. The theory of atomism is the basis for a strict correlation between Archimedean geometry (very different from the striated and homogeneous space of Euclid) and Democritean physics (very different from solid or lamellar matter)" (*TP*, 489).

that Deleuze opposes transcendence of all kinds. If Deleuze has a ‘version’ of the Good, it is certainly not something external and unchanging, something in which we might ground judgment.¹⁸⁷ Aware that for Plato, “the good must always have its contrary”,¹⁸⁸ and wary of the tyranny of the negative as it appears in Hegel,¹⁸⁹ Deleuze systematically seals off the vacuum, fills up the world (which is ‘in’ that great void, time), leaving no room for the Good to seep in.

4.3 Having and Needing

John Russon, a commentator on Plato and on Hegel, shows how Plato accounts for “determinateness,” what makes a thing what it is, what makes it different: “To be a determinateness is thus to be a striving - a striving to be *this* and not *that*, and this striving to be *not that* is thus a pursuit of itself, which means it projects a good in terms of which it is to be measured - what Aristotle would call its *telos*.”¹⁹⁰ Identity is here a function of negativity. I become what I am by striving not to be x, y, z. Deleuze’s philosophy of difference is aligned, however, against this logic of identity and negativity, and the method of evaluation (measuring) that often accompanies it:

Those formulae according to which ‘the object denies what it is not’, or ‘distinguishes itself from everything that is not’ are logical monsters (the Whole of everything which is not the object) in the service of identity. It is said that

¹⁸⁷ See Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, tr. Daniel W. Smith & Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), especially the essays entitled, “To Have Done With Judgment,” and “Plato, the Greeks.”

¹⁸⁸ *Theaetetus*, 176a.

¹⁸⁹ “[T]he stakes here are indeed the negative and the positive in the absolute: the earth girded, encompassed, overcoded, conjugated as the object of a mortuary and suicidal organization surrounding it on all sides, *or* the earth consolidated, connected with the Cosmos, brought into the Cosmos following lines of creation that cut across it as so many becomings (Nietzsche’s expression: let the earth become lightness...)” (*TP*, 510).

¹⁹⁰ Russon, 79.

difference is negativity, that it extends or must extend to the point of contradiction once it is taken to the limit. This is true only to the extent that difference is already placed on a path or along a thread laid out by identity...¹⁹¹

Here, it is obvious that what truly offends Deleuze is the Hegelian culmination of the reign of identity and the negative, the roots of which are certainly to be found in the Pythagorean and Parmenidean streams in Platonic philosophy. We must be careful to note, however, that Deleuze is sensitive to the *striving* of which Russon speaks, and even of the importance of *projecting* a 'good' in Aristotle's, and perhaps not in Plato's, use of that telic principle.

Deleuze everywhere provides an insightful, if counter-intuitive rethinking of the nature of a phenomenon generally presented in terms of the negative. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze opts against analysis, refusing to treat natural *limits* as "breaks" or "interruptions". As he and Guattari write, "[B]reaks or interruptions are not the result of an analysis; rather, in and of themselves, they are syntheses. Syntheses produce divisions..."¹⁹² For Deleuze, everything is production. He does not allow himself, therefore, to interpret the striving of the soul as anything other than a productive activity; it cannot be inspired by an *emptiness* or a *neediness*.

Deleuze traces the problem of a *needy desire* to Plato: "To a certain degree, the traditional logic of desire is all wrong from the very outset: from the very first step that

¹⁹¹ Deleuze goes on: "Hegel's circle is not the eternal return, only the infinite circulation of the identical by means of negativity" (*DR*, 49-50).

¹⁹² *AO*, 41. Obviously here with psychoanalysis (that other awful consequence of the negative) as his target, Deleuze will not allow *holes* in the universe, further confirming our account of his temporalization of the void. See also *TP*, 32: "It is not even sufficient to say that intense and moving particles pass through holes; a hole is just as much a particle as what passes through it. Physicists say that holes are not the absence of particles but particles travelling faster than the speed of light. Flying anuses, speeding vaginas, there is no castration." John Sallis, however, following Plato's decided preference for construction and synthesis, faithfully names these same limits "beginnings".

the Platonic logic of desire forces us to take, making us choose between *production* and *acquisition*.”¹⁹³ Deleuze has in mind here the method of division employed in the *Sophist* and in the *Statesman*, though the themes are equally present in the *Republic*, the *Protagoras*, and the *Timaeus*. At stake here is the problem of possession – how one acquires what one desires and how objects acquire and possess the *properties* that are their *limits*. Certainly Plato insists upon the importance of *having*, and of its fundamental ontological difference from *producing* what is possessed. But for Deleuze, who says in *Anti-Oedipus* that “everything is production” and in *The Fold* that “being is having,” there is no need to choose one over the other, as he suggests Plato does.

In order not to have to select only one of the two processes of acquiring and producing, Deleuze is forced to reconsider the nature of possession. He altogether refuses to conceive of desire as grounded in a radical absence, as inspired by lack¹⁹⁴ or need¹⁹⁵ – in short, by what he sees as the negative.¹⁹⁶ The negative/positive relation of perfectly balanced contraries is of no interest to Deleuze. Desire is not the need for the lost object, the object of a reminiscence, that which would ‘complete’ one, that part missing from a given whole. Instead, “[D]esiring-production is pure multiplicity.”¹⁹⁷ Desiring-production

¹⁹³ *AO*, 25.

¹⁹⁴ “Desire does not lack anything; it does not lack its object. It is, rather, the *subject* that is missing in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject; there is no fixed subject unless there is repression” (*AO*, 26). Also: “Lack (*manque*) is created, planned, and organized in and through social production. [...] It is never primary; production is never organized on the basis of a pre-existing need or lack” (*AO*, 28).

¹⁹⁵ “Desire is not bolstered by needs, but rather the contrary; needs are derived from desire: they are counterproducts within the real that desire produces” (*AO*, 29).

¹⁹⁶ John Scott in his “Having a Need to Act” defends the position that need is precisely something one can have - and in that sense, at least, is not negative but positive. Deleuze would say, quite literally, that “nothing” has this need.

¹⁹⁷ *AO*, 42.

is the multiplicity, the state of free differences¹⁹⁸ that give rise to atomic lines of becoming, and that communicate but do not form parts of a (closed) whole.

In order to explain need and lack without reference to the negative, Deleuze makes them a matter of time and “interest” when he writes that “a being does not correspond to our expectation and we grasp it purely as lack, the absence of what interests us.”¹⁹⁹ “Lacking” requires a reference to the future and expectation. For Deleuze, what is absent is not *really* needed – it was merely what we *expected*, what interested us. What interests us are encounters, collisions – or rather, interests are themselves encounters and collisions, they are produced, and are rooted in the virtual realm of differences, of (non)-Being, of Idea-structures, of question-problem complexes.²⁰⁰

For Deleuze, “interest” does not *belong* to a network of needs, for need is at the active level, and interest is generated in the virtual; needs are the consequence of the free production of interest. The result is an economy without debts,²⁰¹ a world free of judgment.²⁰² Where interest is produced by the self-differing of the virtual, Deleuze

¹⁹⁸ See Dorothea Olkowski, “Morpho-logic in Deleuze and Irigaray, in *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*, ed. Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 88: “Butler refers to Deleuze’s notion of desire as ‘emancipatory’, ‘a precultural eros’, ‘an originally unrepressed libidinal diversity’, and ‘an ahistorical absolute’ (Butler 1987: 213-15). Such qualifications are damning in Butler’s view, since in her estimation, it is principally the willingness to locate desire in purely social and historical terms that elevates the work of Michel Foucault above his (approximate) contemporaries Deleuze, Derrida, and Lacan. Given Butler’s Hegelianism, only to the degree that historicisation takes place can philosophy effect its break with the Hegelian system that always already accounts for any rupture with itself.” Butler’s faith in history is not shared by Deleuze or Plato.

¹⁹⁹ *BG*, 17.

²⁰⁰ “[The P]osing and solution of a problem [...] appears to Bergson to be more important than the negative determination of need” (*BG*, 129).

²⁰¹ “If exchange is the criterion of generality, theft and gift are those of repetition. There is, therefore, an economic difference between the two” (*DR*, 1). Is Deleuze at odds with Nietzsche on this matter?: “One *has* to repay good and ill – but why precisely to the person who has done us good or ill?” (Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 91).

²⁰² “What’s interesting isn’t whether I’m capitalizing on anything, but whether there are people doing something or other in their little corner, and me in mine, and whether there might be any points of contact, chance encounters and coincidences rather than alignments and rallying-points (all that crap where

would say of debt that it has no capacity to drive generation, but that its being belongs in the actual register, a sort of surface effect of the free play of interest. Eugene Holland notes that, “Deleuze, by contrast [with Derrida], is not concerned with reaffirming any debts - not even selective or figurative ones.”²⁰³ And yet we find Constantin Boundas, among the best of Deleuze’s commentators,²⁰⁴ adoring, loving²⁰⁵ Deleuze *too much* to be properly Deleuzian, struggling with, but insisting on his, debt to his “maître”:

We who contributed to this issue of *Man and World* gladly acknowledge a debt to Deleuze - a debt of thought and a debt of life. He has been a teacher to us; and we now say this in the way that he himself, without ceasing to be critical of discipleship, did once say of Sartre, ‘il a été mon maître’. But this memorial issue does not attempt to pay debts. Somehow they do not matter now. Our intention here is rather to celebrate a life.²⁰⁶

A celebration – an expressive and joyful celebration. Perhaps Boundas’ response to his awareness of debts is the only one of which the “free man” is capable. This relation of debt to freedom is at the heart of our study. On Deleuze’s (Foucauldian) analysis, the relation is clear. “Control is short-term and rapidly shifting, whereas discipline was long-

everyone’s supposed to be everyone else’s guilty conscience and judge). I owe you lot nothing, nothing more than you owe me. I don’t need to join you in your ghettos, because I’ve got my own” (Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 11).

²⁰³ Eugene W. Holland “Marx and Philosophies of Difference,” in *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, v. 96, no. 3 (Summer 1997), 535.

²⁰⁴ But not the only one also to *owe* something to Deleuze... See Jean-Clet Martin, “Philosophy of the Concrete,” in *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, v. 96 (Summer 1997), tr. Alex Martin, 627: “We owe Deleuze thanks for having taught us the practice of a concept that need not be dialectical. The oeuvre he has given us to think is probably the finest philosophical creation since Hegel. Accordingly, Deleuze is the knight of thought, a knight who moves neither in a straight line nor diagonally, but, as on a chessboard, by jumps, leaving a gap in his wake that drives him on to another series. And it is this jump that we call *becoming*: becoming mule or mandarin, on the back of a nomadic concept.”

²⁰⁵ See Korsten, “Is Bess a Bike? Gender, Capitalism and the Politics of a BwO in Lars von Trier’s *Breaking the Waves*,” in *Micropolitics of Media Culture: Reading the Rhizomes of Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. Patricia Pisters (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2001), 147: “In their reworking of the Oedipus complex, Deleuze and Guattari argue that Freud had it wrong on several levels but was right in: ‘having determined the essence or nature of desire, no longer in relation to objects, aims or even sources (territories) but as an abstract, subjective essence - libido or sexuality’. An analogy to this conception of desire is one aspect of the idea of love as it was propagated by Jesus: love as an abstract subjective essence that is not confined to one person, but that is free-floating and can be bestowed on anyone.”

²⁰⁶ Constantin V. Boundas, ed., “Introduction,” *Man and World* 29, no. 3 (July 1996): 234.

term, infinite, and discontinuous. A man is no longer a man confined but a man in debt.”²⁰⁷

Which do we prefer? Deleuze’s philosophy is an attempt to deal with the way in which power, in its endless conquest of humanity, enslaves us at every turn through ever-new methods of ‘discipline’ and ‘punishment’. Commenting on Foucault, Deleuze’s response indicates the distance he does obtain from the Stoics, through a little joy, a little humour:

Foucault never looked on writing as an aim or an end in itself. This is precisely what makes him a great writer and imbues everything he writes with an increasing sense of joy and gaiety. The Divine Comedy of punishment means we can *retain the right to collapse in fits of laughter* in the face of a dazzling array of perverse inventions, cynical discourses and meticulous horrors. A whole chain of phenomena, from anti-masturbation machines for children to the mechanics of prison for adults, sets off *an unexpected laughter which shame, suffering or death cannot silence*. The torturers rarely laugh, at least not in the same way. Vallès has already contrasted the revolutionaries’ unique sense of gaiety in horror with the horrible gaiety of the torturer. Provided the hatred is strong enough something can be salvaged, a great joy which is not the ambivalent joy of hatred, but the *joy of wanting to destroy whatever mutilates life*.²⁰⁸

Is this a defensive laughter? There seems to be no real touch of *ressentiment* about it.

What sort of laughter is this?

It is a shallow laughter, a laughter of the surface; and Deleuze knows it. He thus remains, *unwillingly*, a Stoic²⁰⁹, bearing the great burden of sadness: “One of the most profound constants of Naturalism is to denounce everything that is sadness, everything that is the cause of sadness, and everything that needs sadness to exercise its power.”²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 181.

²⁰⁸ *F*, 23. Italics mine.

²⁰⁹ Badiou agrees: “[T]his philosophy is essentially, just like Stoicism (but not at all like Spinozism, despite the reverence in which Deleuze holds Spinoza), a philosophy of death” (Badiou, *Clamor*, 13).

²¹⁰ *LS*, 279.

Ultimately, what joins Deleuze to Plato is an uncompromising honesty. Deleuze never hides his sadness; he seeks, through concepts, to alleviate it. That he bears a burden is undeniable. In *L'abécédaire*, he reflects on the misuse of *Anti-Oedipus* by those who took it as a license to destroy themselves through what Deleuze would call a 'fascist' use of drugs, an ever-present danger. His conscience bears the weight, but it is *too heavy*. We hear him echo Nietzsche: *Let the earth become lightness*.

4.4 Encountering Self and Others

My claim that Deleuze is 'sad' or 'happy'²¹¹ could not reasonably be interpreted to mean that I have some sort of direct access to, incontrovertible evidence of, the *quale* of 'sadness' or 'emotional pain' appearing inside his conscious experience, as this would require the immediacy characteristic of being Gilles Deleuze. This leaves us with three options when it comes to commenting on the psychology of the other: (1) say nothing whatever; (2) ask the person how s/he feels and trust the evidence s/he gives, and/or review unsolicited claims about his/her own psychological states; (3) make a judgment based not solely on the claims offered by the supposed authority (the person in question), but on any and all evidence available from a critical examination of the context in which claims are made, the body language of the speaker, facts of the person's life, etc.

²¹¹ Dr. Peter Trnka suggests in his examiner's report that I should omit from this final draft what he calls my "attempts to psychologize Deleuze's problems." I have since revised certain portions of the thesis in accordance with Dr. Trnka's appropriate cautioning on these delicate matters, and I am thankful to him for his careful eye. As I have elected to decline respectfully to make certain changes, I offer here my justification for a certain set of observations that may seem instances of such psychologizing. (Ambiguity in the examiner's report must prevent me from presenting what follows as though the occasion for this particular footnote, or any other occasion, is a specific instance to which Dr. Trnka means to refer.)

There are, no doubt, some who would propose we choose the first option, considering all psychological evidence to be outside the bounds of philosophy. This strikes me as a hasty and presumptuous course of action, considering that human beings live largely inside a web of ideas, feelings, memories, etc. – all of which must be explained in any comprehensive philosophical account of the real.

The second option is perhaps thought a safe middle ground, insofar as we admit a certain amount of evidence based on our trust that our subject is honest. The unstated premise here, however, is that honesty and truth have a necessary correlation. This ‘safe’ ground is in fact a hazardous zone, fenced-off arbitrarily and dangerously, considering that the need to be honest (or the feeling of being honest) is itself a mental phenomenon. (That is not to mention the linguistic problems regarding the conversion of a ‘sense of things’ into a proposition to be trusted regarding some mental phenomenon.)

The third option, the one I am here taking, is feared for the great complexity involved in forming a judgment. Such judgments *must be* received critically and subjected to constant revision, for the presentation of any new data can at times shatter the conception supported by the past judgment made. This is not the place to defend an account of how one judges, though the very thrust of this paper is to suggest that such judgment, if it is possible, needs a social place, an integrated place, in which objections can be raised. With regard to the psychological, that is to say, there is no safe ground whatever; we cannot risk leaving it out of the discussion, we cannot trust naively that the power to name one’s own psychological states is possible in seclusion, and we cannot have a clear and final account of any individual, characterized as he or she is by infinite complexity, psychological and otherwise.

Deleuze himself, I suggest, proceeds by some version of the third option outlined above (and the distinctions between my own approach and that of Deleuze might form the spine of another paper). This is the Nietzschean thread in Deleuze's philosophy, for Nietzsche writes:

Gradually it has become clear to me what every great philosophy so far has been: namely, the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and *unconscious* memoir; also that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy constituted the real germ of life from which the whole plant had grown.²¹²

We are mining the unconscious, as Deleuze himself advises (see our introductory chapter). To rule out from the beginning any *moral* impetus in Deleuze's philosophy because he consciously works to rid his philosophy of morality is presumptuous. This, in part, is what we mean when we say we must resist being *already* Deleuzian.

Granted this point, then, though Deleuze himself proposes an ethics that does not define itself through sadness, though he prefers to speak of joy, we are free to wonder why this does form one of the motivations of his entire philosophy. We cannot do so, of course, without considering his philosophical justification. Neither, however, can we do so without presenting for consideration the moment mentioned in the text above, during section 'D for Désir' in *L'abécédaire* in which Deleuze admits to feeling responsible for those who mistakenly used *Anti-Oedipus* as an excuse to destroy themselves. Yet he finds it impossible to assign blame to anyone who goes too far (as in the case of drugs or drink). Here there is undeniable sadness in Deleuze over the consequences of his actions, but more significantly over the case in which a person turns him or herself into pulp, though one gets the sense that Deleuze feels helpless. I suggest that to treat this

²¹² Nietzsche, 13, my italics.

phenomenon is as available for discussion is not to psychologize Deleuze's problems. For our objective is not to judge Deleuze as sad, but to present this moment as a missed opportunity for him, an opening we shall seize, to ask the question whether his philosophy gives the agent the power to act in response to such sadness, to make judgments in the social realm capable of generating not only something with the power to break down the causes of self-destruction, but also the *forgiveness*²¹³ Deleuze might have been unconsciously needing.

That Deleuze seems to be handcuffed in relation to the question what to do, if anything, about those for whom one feels responsible, those who stand to destroy themselves forces us to question his account of joy and sadness, since he does consider these in relation to action: "[...] only joy is worthwhile, joy remains, bringing us near to action, and to the bliss of action. The sad passions always amount to impotence."²¹⁴ What does it mean to say that sadness, or guilt or shame, etc., 'amount' to impotence? If he wishes to say that while sad, depressed, we are far from action – we feel impotent – then the case in question is proof of that, since Deleuze seems to have nothing to offer for the 'victims' of *Anti-Oedipus*. We might grant that joy brings us near to action – but is there no virtue in the moment of fragility, in the moment of weakness? Might there be a place in the process of determining what action, of many that might potentially bring joy or be characterized by joy, for sadness – as a recognition of something that is lacking, that is needed?

²¹³ Regarding the relation between irreversibility in action and forgiveness, see Hannah Arendt, "Labor, Work, Action," in *The Portable Hannah Arendt*, ed. Peter Baehr (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 2000), 181: "The possible redemption from the predicament of irreversibility is the faculty of forgiving, and the remedy for unpredictability is contained in the faculty to make and keep promises."

²¹⁴ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 28.

But what is meant here by joy and sadness? Deleuze says: “[...] we experience *joy* when a body encounters ours and enters into composition with it, and *sadness* when, on the contrary, a body or an idea threatens our own coherence.”²¹⁵ There is something threatening Deleuze’s coherence in the case from *L’abécédaire*, something that threatens to break down the self, to interrupt the joy of action where action is an attempt to produce, to put into motion something that could create the new – in the form of a concept that might effect a counter-actualization of that painful real. But is the problem the occasional *moment* of sadness, or the threat of becoming trapped in a contagious melancholy? Deleuze writes:

How can one keep from destroying oneself through guilt, and others through resentment, spreading one’s own powerlessness and enslavement everywhere, one’s own sickness, indigestions, and poisons? In the end, one is unable even to encounter oneself.²¹⁶

Unable even to encounter oneself – leaving little hope of knowing the self. How, then, to justify this going beyond, this attempt to encounter the other, fraught as it is with conflict that seems always to give birth to guilt and resentment in varying measures? Since the sad passions seem to be part of our psychological landscape, since eliminating them entirely is not likely possible, even if it were desirable, what are we to do? Please, begs Deleuze, at least do not spread this sickness. And his request must fall upon us as noble, since he is surely right that much horror and pain is bred by horror and pain. Here is a request that commands the exercise of Nietzsche’s four virtues: “courage, insight, sympathy, and solitude.”²¹⁷ But is that lonely subject, the one we cannot ever encounter (as even Plato

²¹⁵ Ibid., 19.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 23.

²¹⁷ Nietzsche, 226.

would say), to be abandoned? Is there no competition among these virtues? What shall we say of the needy subject who has the courage to try to know a self he cannot encounter? – if his pursuit requires him to forsake his solitude?

Chapter Five: Action and Direction

*“Idealism is the illness congenital to the Platonic philosophy and, with its litany of ascents and downfalls, it is even philosophy’s manic-depressive form. Mania inspires and guides Plato. Dialectics is the flight of ideas, the Ideenflucht. As Plato says of the Idea, ‘it flees or it perishes...’ And even in the death of Socrates there is a trace of a depressive suicide.”*²¹⁸

- Deleuze

*“Whatever is done from love always occurs beyond good and evil.”*²¹⁹

- Nietzsche

Deleuze and Plato propose rival philosophies of flight. For Plato the ideas take flight, and we take flight after them. Deleuze, as we saw in the introduction, wants his concepts to survey, to fly over, the battlefield. The concept, Deleuze says, is the event. He says also that “sickness and death are the event itself.”²²⁰ What distinguishes Deleuze from Plato is that the former chooses *AND* where Plato must choose *OR*.²²¹ For Plato, the Idea flees *or* perishes; the art of dialectics depends upon the binary choice that the agent *must make*. For Deleuze, relations are external to their terms, to the singularities. It is the conjunctive synthesis of the AND, the conglomerations of atomic terms (together with an energy of disjunction, Difference), that defines the Deleuzian philosophy. Where Plato’s Idea flees *or* perishes, Deleuze’s concept flies *and* dies, eternally. For Socrates, the choice is to flee Athens or to drink the hemlock. He chooses the latter. Deleuze’s suicide by

²¹⁸ *LS*, 128.

²¹⁹ Nietzsche, 90.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 108.

²²¹ See Michel Serres, *The Natural Contract*, tr. Elizabeth MacArthur and William Paulson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 54: “This need for agreement about properties is behind Socrates’ real-time demand to his partners in dialogue, which we find so tiresome, concerning every single word and thing. In fact, he is requiring that they continually sign this sort of contract, which underlies, in minutest detail, Plato’s dialogue.”

defenestration,²²² which must have seemed to him “expressive” rather than depressive, is at once flight and death.

5.1 Thanatos and Eros

Deleuze refuses to see death as privation; his amorphous, folding One *is*, and death (which from the perspective of the active self²²³ is *loss*), understood in terms of a privation or negation, is equally (once we escape phenomenology) a creative folding of this amorphous One. Deleuze and Guattari write, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, “In one way or the other, the animal is more a fleer than a fighter, but its flights are also conquests, creations.”²²⁴ “Everything is production,”²²⁵ for Deleuze and Guattari, even taking flight.; deterritorialization and reterritorialization are but two motions *of a single act*. The phenomenological subject is not *a priori* for Deleuze, it is not eternal. Since it must be formed, the subject cannot be defined merely by its capacity to shelter itself, to protect itself, to build artificial limits – or even to *name* natural limits – in an effort to care for what already is. The subject cannot hide, but must be in (creative) flight:

Subjectification, that’s to say the process of folding the line outside, mustn’t be seen as just a way of protecting oneself, taking shelter. It’s rather the only way of confronting the line, riding it: you may be heading for death, suicide, but as Foucault says in a strange conversation with Schroeter, suicide then becomes an art it takes a lifetime to learn.²²⁶

²²² See Craig Whitney, “Obituary of Gilles Deleuze” *New York Times* (7 November 1995), D21.

²²³ *DR*, 98-9.

²²⁴ *TP*, 55.

²²⁵ *AO*, 4.

²²⁶ Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 114.

Life as the practice *not only of death, but specifically of suicide*. Why? Socrates' death, according to Deleuze, is "depressive"; he is *depressed* by the incredible weight of the outside, transcendent, Good. Deleuze's outside is but a fold of the inside – and his *own* suicide is but the surface expression of the depths. More profound is the "one dies", the decline of impersonal virtual singularities, than the "I die," for Deleuze.

Being is having²²⁷ - for Deleuze as for Plato - but much depends on the nature of the property relation. There is no self-same S to which Ps can belong, and having is not an issue of appropriation, indebtedness, or *reception* for Deleuze. This is a having that has nothing to do with 'having need.' It is having as "Relation": an impersonal interconnection of external relations, a connective synthesis without the need for Hume's "sensitive plate"²²⁸ to *receive* because time is what ensures the synthesis.

Deleuze believes that by rooting out all traces of the negative and sealing up his One, he can explain the novelty of the world more completely. Earlier we saw him locate the philosophical history of confusion about the nature of desire in Plato, who makes us choose between "acquisition" and "production". Deleuze's desire is productive, where Plato's *eros* is generative. Deleuze, who everywhere opposes the hunt for *origins*, is not interested in 'fathering' and 'mothering,' in generation.²²⁹ Whatever is accomplished by Plato's description of the demiurge in the *Timaeus* as father *and* maker must for Deleuze be achieved without references to beginnings or ends: everything must happen in the middle, for him. We pursue, then, the question of *love* in Deleuze, to see whether

²²⁷ "It is as if philosophy were penetrating into a new element and were putting the element of Having in place of that of Being" (*FL*, 109).

²²⁸ *DR*, 70.

²²⁹ "[B]y making familial relations the universal mediation of childhood, we cannot help but fail to understand the production of the unconscious itself [...] For *the unconscious is an orphan, and produces itself within the identity of nature and man*" (*AO*, 48-9).

something important is lost in the assimilation of generation to production. For is not Deleuze's charge against Plato that the latter wants to be rid of simulacra – that he does not have enough love for all creatures?²³⁰

Badiou, so critical of Deleuze on so many points, is prepared to stand together with him on this issue of love:

This is a trait of Deleuze that I particularly appreciate: a sort of unwavering love for the world as it is, a love that, beyond optimism and pessimism alike, signifies that it is always futile, always falling short of thought as such, to *judge* the world.²³¹

If Badiou is correct,²³² this “unwavering” (perhaps unconditional?) love of Deleuze's for the world is without a trace of eros, of rage. Love like this is enlightened, and the cultivation of it might well be the precondition for *thought*. But one wonders whether we should never *fall short of thought*. This love, after all, is spiritual in nature and bears some relationship to generation. But is this rather paternal or maternal love by itself generative? Does a love without judgment generate anything at all?

²³⁰ Whether Plato genuinely sought to emerge from the cave, whether he held contempt for that which is imperfect, is of course a crucial question. At 130e of the dialogue named for him, Parmenides chastizes Socrates for despising hair, mud, and dirt. What about this love for that which is incredibly particular - mud, dirt, hair? Is this not a love for that which seems to be furthest from Being?

²³¹ Badiou, *Clamor*, 44.

²³² See Barbara M. Kennedy, *Deleuze and Cinema: The Aesthetics of Sensation*, 2: “But maybe that's the romantic in me ... this I can never relinquish and maybe can never really be the true academic, certainly never a true Deleuzian... much too romantic for that! Such honesty and integrity are not part of the Deleuzian masquerade, discretion, disguise, deceit and delights. Perhaps I fell in love too soon with a philosopher who denied too much (certainly love – and yet at times his work is distinctly reminiscent of the romantics of the German tradition – but that's another project?), decried too much and lost his humanity to the forces of the cosmos, the forces of the real, becoming-imperceptible.” Kennedy is, I think, mistaken to suppose that honesty is not possible through disguise, but her characterization of Deleuze is revealing.

Sexual love, for Deleuze, is not about union, but multiplicity. It is not about generation, but production.²³³ Deleuze, in this very rich passage, asks:

What does it mean to love somebody? It is always to seize that person in a mass, extract him or her from a group, however small, in which he or she participates, whether it be through the family only or through something else; then to find that person's own packs, the multiplicities he or she encloses within himself or herself which may be of an entirely different nature. To join them to mine, to make them penetrate mine, and for me to penetrate the other person's. Heavenly nuptials, multiplicities of multiplicities. Every love is an exercise in depersonalization on a body without organs yet to be formed, and it is at the highest point of this depersonalization that someone can be *named*, receives his or her family name or first name, acquires the most intense discernibility in the instantaneous apprehension of the multiplicities belonging to him or her, and to which he or she belongs.²³⁴

There is a moment of appropriation, of seizing, in the above account – though the motivation for this, the question of what it is that drives us to *select* this person over that person is not mentioned. The extraction is performed by the lover, and we get no sense of the needs of the beloved. Does this account of love begin too late, begin after the courtship, after the two have been drawn together by some neediness for each other?

There is nothing in the above account of love that bears a trace of emotion about it, since that for Deleuze would be to engage with the question at the conscious register. But is love solely about the kind of composition that excites Deleuze, above? Or is the beloved, the other, completely engulfed by the endless packs of the lover's self, totally depersonalized? Doesn't love involve not only submission but also resistance to the other? Deleuze will deny that love is a tension, but is it not precisely here, in this most

²³³ "How can we conceive of a peopling, a propagation, a becoming that is without filiation or hereditary production? A multiplicity without the unity of an ancestor?" (*TP*, 241). See also: "Making love is not becoming as one, or even two, but becoming as a hundred thousand" (*AO*, 296).

²³⁴ *TP*, 35.

clinical²³⁵ account of that divine topic – which has inspired so much of the world’s most passionate, violent, and beautiful writing, including that of Plato’s *Symposium* – that something seems thoroughly incommensurate with our experience? And since the good for Deleuze is defined in a fashion that mirrors the definition of love, as above, we wonder whether there is *enough* difference in this philosophy, whether there is enough strength, enough courage to maintain a difference that tends toward its own dissolution.²³⁶

5.2 Knowing and the (Semblance of) the Self

Deleuze remains Platonist insofar as his philosophy is a response to the command, “Know thyself”. He does not submit to the question, does not presume that there is a ‘self’ to be known, and ultimately argues that the self is to be produced. Consequently, the boundaries of identity are forever being inscribed and erased. And not solely at the level of the person (even if always at the level of the self...):

Was there ever a Palestinian people? Israel says no. Of course there was, but that’s not the point. The thing is, that once the Palestinians have been thrown out of their territory, then to the extent that they resist they enter the process of constituting a people.²³⁷

Deleuze is concerned to explain the constitution of a “people” - because a people must be *constituted* if it is to be at all. Though an account of identity that defends the radical constructivism of the self might inspire a reflex reaction of opposition from some

²³⁵ Ronald Bogue characterizes Deleuze’s style as one suggestive of “Dryness, coldness, objectivity, indifference, the detached clinical gaze of the forensic surgeon.” Is the lover a forensic surgeon? See Ronald Bogue, “Deleuze’s Style,” *Man and World* 29, no. 3, (July 1996), 252.

²³⁶ “The good is when a body directly compounds its relation with ours, and, with all or part of its power, increases ours” (Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 22).

²³⁷ Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 126.

commentators, since we really do feel that the self is *given*, such an account explains very nicely those identities (a national identity, for instance) which seem far more fragile.

Is a people constituted through love? Through the interpenetration of multiplicities? Or by the capacity to *resist*, to enter into a tension with the other? There must be an integration.²³⁸ The mere assembling of assemblages does not constitute an identity. Deleuze's "love" is productive, but productive of what? Where is the resistance to penetration in Deleuze's account of love from *A Thousand Plateaus*, the resistance so crucial to the instantiation of a people? And what is this resistance? Can it be the conjunctive synthesis of the AND, where no tension seems possible? Is resistance difference? A disjunctive synthesis? If it is difficult to conceive of Palestine as a Common-place (or painful to conceive of what takes place there today as commonplace), it is equally difficult to conceive of it as a Fairyland.²³⁹

Deleuze has thrown open the question of the relation of love to difference, of love and the Different, the new. In his attempt to give a truer account of the production of the new, has he not lost sight of the dynamic of love, of generation - of that which will give rise to the new as same? In his *Symposium*, Plato plays with the same themes, the propagation that we seek:

So you see, Socrates, that Love is not exactly a longing for the beautiful, as you suggested.

Well, what is it then?

²³⁸ Deleuze plays with the word 'plan,' which means both 'shot' and 'plane'. Thus, he writes, "But from our point of view for the moment, the notion of shot [*plan*] has sufficient unity and extension if it is given its full projective, perspectival or temporal sense. In fact a unity is always that of an act which includes as such a multiplicity of passive or acted elements" (Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, tr. Hugh Tomlinson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 25). The plane, which appears in much of Deleuze's work and is developed particularly in *WP* is in some sense platial. Place, for Deleuze, can be the place of unity if it is given its temporal sense.

²³⁹ "Fairyland is opposed to the Common-Place" (*LS*, 79).

A longing not for the beautiful itself, but for the conception and generation that the beautiful effects.

Yes. No doubt you're right.

Of course I'm right, she said. And why all this longing for propagation? Because this is the one deathless and eternal element in our mortality. And since we have agreed that the lover longs for the good to be his own forever, it follows that we are bound to long for immortality as well as for the good – which is to say that Love is a longing for immortality.²⁴⁰

Deleuze agrees: generation is to do with deathlessness. It is precisely in contrast to this biological sense of the eternal, the iteration of needy selves that seek immortality in the endless reproduction of themselves, that Deleuze proposes his theory of the event which is itself “death”. For Deleuze, the new is always new,²⁴¹ and it is not reproduced so easily. What is there miraculous about the reproduction of life? It is rather a common occurrence, after all – and carried out without a great deal of difficulty. Perhaps it is exaggeration to go so far as to say that Deleuze does not value life - but how can one who has so much *distaste* for that which *is not different* be said to love the world so uncompromisingly?

When Jean-Luc Nancy claims that Deleuze's philosophy is one of continuous creation,²⁴² we have to be cautious. What returns is the Different, but it always brings with it a becoming-identical that yields genuinely ‘established’ old forms. If we have only a philosophy of a given-once versus a given-repeatedly, then Nancy is right. But which is it?

Deleuze strikes an interesting note, but dismisses an important question:

²⁴⁰ Plato, *Symposium*, 206e-207a, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters*, tr. Michael Joyce, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 558-9.

²⁴¹ “The new, with its power of beginning and beginning again, remains forever new, just as the established was always established from the outset, even if a certain amount of empirical time was necessary for this to be recognised” (*DR*, 136).

²⁴² “His philosophy is a matter of continuous creation (always Descartes...)” (Nancy, 112).

The schizophrenic is the universal producer. There is no need to distinguish here between producing and its product. We need merely note that the pure 'thisness' of the object produced is carried over into a new act of producing. The table continues to 'go about its business.' The surface of the table, however, is eaten up by the supporting framework.²⁴³

Deleuze is right to note that the table is "eaten up" by the framework and that it "goes about its business" – this is the acknowledgement of a teleology at work, implicating the agent in the act. The universal producer is assimilated into the production: here, the Heideggerian note is struck. But Deleuze, in a fashion admittedly different from that of Heidegger, is here *silenced* by Being. One needs to know how to produce through action, a process in which one's identity is necessarily lost, obliterated, hidden, deferred, or overturned.²⁴⁴

But one *does* need to distinguish producer, producing, and product, or risks losing the capacity to critique the process of production and to select new projects. It is the soul as place (chora) which is hidden in the acts which 'take place' on it, and which is thus only *located* by "tracing". When Deleuze chooses mapping over tracing, is it with Derrida in mind? Derrida acknowledges a debt, of which he is reminded by traces of a giving. Deleuze has sealed off the path.

In so doing, it seems he has forfeited the subject. 'One' is now at best is capable of a counter-actualization, a rebirth through one's events. This is a modest philosophy. But is there not something virtuous in this modesty? What do we lose when we demand that we never fall short of thought? Are we rendered immobile, perhaps, by a great fear of

²⁴³ *AO*, 7.

²⁴⁴ Which verb we should choose of "to hide", "to obliterate", or "to defer" is an important question.

tumbling into that abyss over which we leap, of descending into the cave? Does not Deleuze finally himself *fall* short of thought? Or is his death his final becoming-Plato?

5.3 Direction and Action

We are talking about direction and action. How do directing and acting belong together? Through motion, through the intersection, communication, and integration of motions, through encounters of moving bodies. Deleuze has a vivid sense of this.²⁴⁵ Somehow language will be, for Deleuze, the place where direction and action meet, the place where the ‘purity’ of change and becoming is tested for natural interruptions: “It is language which fixes the limits (the moment, for example, at which the excess begins), but it is language as well which transcends the limits and restores them to the infinite equivalence of an unlimited becoming.”²⁴⁶ It is Deleuze's love for the transcendence of language over its limits,²⁴⁷ and his respect for the purity of becoming, which ultimately renders him motionless.²⁴⁸ Deleuze is a nomad in language, not in the actual world; he does not believe he is living in the “house of Being”, navigating the sea of Being.

If resistance is not opposition, what is it? Deleuze's whole metaphysical system is designed to block out any generative tension. By choosing external relations over internal relations, Deleuze does away with the place of the Good – the place that two elements

²⁴⁵ His extended meditations on cinema are important here.

²⁴⁶ *LS*, 3.

²⁴⁷ Jean-Luc Nancy says of Deleuze's philosophy that: “It is a philosophy of nomination and not of discourse. It is a matter of naming the forces, the moments and the configurations, not unravelling the meaning or following it back. Naming, in itself, is not a semantic operation: the point is not to signify things but rather to index by means of proper names the elements of the virtual universe” (Nancy, 111). He does not, however, provide an attractive alternative, paying lip service to a “following back” but understanding discourse as a matter of signification and not of reception and listening.

²⁴⁸ We remember that Deleuze left France on only a couple of occasions. He traveled instead through literature.

share, such that they are implicated in each other's being and are therefore justified in making claims upon each other. Since value cannot, for Deleuze, be generated by the shared neediness of two internally-related beings, he must propose an alternative account of valuation. His alternative account, still entangled in the Platonic language of limit, is as follows:

There is a hierarchy which measures beings according to their limits, and according to their degree of proximity or distance from a principle. But there is also a hierarchy which considers things and beings from the point of view of power: it is not a question of considering absolute degrees of power, but only of knowing whether a being eventually 'leaps over' or transcends its limits in going to the limit of what it can do, whatever its degree. 'To the limit' it will be argued still presupposes a limit. Here, limit [*peras*] no longer refers to what maintains the thing under a law, nor to what delimits or separates it from other things. On the contrary, it refers to that on the basis of which it is deployed and deploys all its power; hubris ceases to be simply condemnable and *the smallest becomes equivalent to the largest* once it is not separated from what it can do. The enveloping measure is the same for all things, the same also for substance, quality, quantity, etc., since it forms a single maximum at which the developed diversity of all degrees touches the equality which envelops them. This ontological measure is closer to the immeasurable state of things than to the first kind of measure; this ontological hierarchy is closer to the hubris and anarchy of being than to the first hierarchy. [...] The words 'everything is equal' may therefore resound joyfully, on the condition that they are said *of* that which is equal in this equal, univocal Being: equal being is immediately present in everything, without mediation or intermediary, even though things reside unequally in this equal being.²⁴⁹

The limit here is not imposed from outside. Deleuze knows that valuation is a "transcendence", a going beyond a limit; he wishes only not to have fixed limits. He is sensitive to the violence of a naming which lasts. The "enveloping" measure is the *same* for all things. It is a measure in terms of a being's own good; the only significant difference is a very significant one: limit is the limit of power and not of need.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ *DR*, 37.

²⁵⁰ Aristotle and Deleuze fall on two sides of the question of action: the latter need not ever limit power, and has (seemingly) no need of a phronetic knowledge that would inform the choice of when to break. "The

Deleuze is concerned about the potential for disaster when he advocates unlimited production. It appears as a musing in *A Thousand Plateaus*:

You think you have made yourself a good BwO, that you chose the right Place, Power (Puissance), and Collectivity (there is always a collectivity, even when you are alone), and then nothing passes, nothing circulates, or something prevents things from moving. A paranoid point, a point of blockage, an outburst of delirium: it comes across clearly in *Speed* by William Burroughs, Jr. Is it possible to locate this danger point, should the block be expelled, or should one instead 'love, honor, and serve degeneracy wherever it surfaces'? To block, to be blocked, is that not still an intensity?²⁵¹

Because limit and blockage cannot be conceived of as privation or natural interruption, Deleuze feels somewhat handcuffed.²⁵² When we need to ensure becomings, to free motion, we encounter that which interrupts.

In his discussion of cinema, Deleuze shows that he does not oppose limits, but fixed limits. We find him opposing Plato to the Stoics here:

In any case, framing is limitation. But, depending on the concept itself, the limits can be conceived in two ways, mathematically or dynamically: either as preliminary to the existence of bodies whose essence they fix, or going as far as the power of existing bodies goes. For ancient philosophy, this was one of the principle features of the opposition between the Platonists and Stoics.²⁵³

Both Aristotle and Deleuze try to get rid of the Good, Aristotle by naming it once,²⁵⁴ Deleuze by naming it again and again, by sealing up the folded world and by making time and place come together in the Event, the Void. There is no 'room' for the Good in Deleuze's thought, and Alain Badiou gives us the clue as to why:

final act, the *telos* as Aristotle called it, is not so much what something is good for as it is what is good for the naturally existing subject," (Scott, "Having a Need to Act," 127).

²⁵¹ *TP*, 152.

²⁵² He warns: "Never believe that a smooth space will suffice to save us" (*TP*, 500). The aim is always to free becomings, but...

²⁵³ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 13.

²⁵⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, tr. G. Ramsauer (New York; London: Garland Pub., 1987), Bk.I, Ch.I, in 1. Thanks to John Scott for this point.

If the thought of the Multiple put forth by Deleuze-Leibniz is so fleeting, if it is the narration, devoid both of gap and outside, of the folds and unfolds of the world, this is because it is neither in opposition to an other thought, nor set up on the outskirts of an other. Its aim is rather to *inseparate itself from all thoughts*, to multiply *within* the multiple all possible thoughts of the multiple.²⁵⁵

This is the Open Whole, relation, the inseparation of the thought of the Multiple from all other thoughts. This is Deleuze's brand of 'love' - a multiplication without destruction, where thoughts do not enter into a generative tension or opposition, but inseparate themselves from other thoughts. Distance begins to become a crucial matter. Deleuze knows he can never annihilate Hegel, but merely distance himself from the latter.²⁵⁶ The incredible sadness that Deleuze feels, and against which he writes always, trying to distance himself from that which creates such pain, is the consequence of belonging to the world - to a world whose history is bloody. Thus Deleuze speaks of Primo Levi:

I was very struck by all the passages in Primo Levi where he explains that the Nazi camps have given us a 'shame at being human.' Not, he says, that we're all responsible for Nazism, as some would have us believe, but that we've all been tainted by it: even the survivors of the camps had to make compromises with it, if only to survive. There's the shame of being men who became Nazis; the shame of being unable, not seeing how, to stop it; the shame of having compromised with it; there's the whole of what Primo Levi calls the 'gray area.' And we can feel shame at being human in utterly trivial situations, too: in the face of too great a vulgarization of thinking, in the face of TV entertainment, of a ministerial speech,

²⁵⁵ Alain Badiou, "Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*," in *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas and Dorothea Olkowi (New York: London: Routledge, 1994), 54.

²⁵⁶ Though not necessarily with success. See Slavoj Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real!: Five Essays on September 11 and Related Dates* (London; New York: Verso, 2002), 68-9. Žižek calls attention to another of Badiou's criticisms of Deleuze: "[...] Alain Badiou drew attention to how, if ever there was a philosopher who, apropos of any topic whatsoever, from philosophy to literature and cinema, repeated and rediscovered the same conceptual matrix again and again, it was Deleuze. The irony of this insight is that this, precisely, is the standard criticism of Hegel - whatever he is writing or talking about, Hegel always manages to squeeze it into the same mould of the dialectical process. Is there not a kind of poetic justice that the one philosopher about whom one can in fact make this claim is Deleuze, the anti-Hegelian? And this is especially pertinent with regard to social analysis: is there anything more monotonous than the Deleuzian poetry of contemporary life as the decentred proliferation of multitudes, of non-totalizable differences? What occludes (and thereby sustains) this monotony is the multiplicity of resignifications and displacements to which the basic ideological texture is submitted."

of 'jolly people' gossiping. This is one of the most powerful incentives toward philosophy, and it's what makes all philosophy political. In capitalism only one thing is universal, the market. There's no universal state, precisely because there's a universal market of which states are the centers, the trading floors. But the market's not universalizing, homogenizing, it's an extraordinary generator of both wealth and misery. A concern for human rights shouldn't lead us to extol the 'joys' of liberal capitalism of which they're an integral part. There's no democratic state that's not compromised to the very core by its part in generating human misery. What's so shameful is that we've no way of maintaining becomings, or still more of arousing them, even within ourselves. How any group will turn out, how it will fall back into history, presents a constant 'concern.' There's no longer any image of proletarians around of which it's just a matter of becoming conscious.²⁵⁷

Deleuze admits no responsibility, but feels "tainted" by the horrible episodes in world history – specifically, *of his own time* – and also by the utterly trivial fallings-short of thought. It is as though the *destiny* of the great Event is in our domain, is something about which we are fated to deliberate. What does it mean for us to be tainted? How do we react to sadness and horror? - By finding a crystal of sense in it, Ian Buchanan reminds us. This patient exploration/creation, this Deleuzian mapping, which is inseparable from a surveying, ultimately should afford us some opportunity to *evaluate* ourselves. What is shame but a self-recognition in the light of the good, the recognition of a distance between what one has become (or is becoming) and what it would be good to be? For Deleuze, reflection cannot itself be philosophy, since it is that powerful incentive toward philosophy, that which stimulates philosophical activity. It opens us to our own failures – and those of our world – and it inspires sadness and shame.

Is it our objective to save morality? In what sense might we try to save it? As it stands, here, we might wonder whether it would have a purely negative value, defined in relation to an Ethics that we must also consider: morality as the shared realm of judgment,

²⁵⁷ Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 172-3.

the realm in which one freely gives up, submits, the final power to decide about the value of one's own actions. While we cannot attribute to Deleuze the claim that one *knows* when one is Ethically good – that is, it may be possible not fully to be worthy of what happens to one, one's actions may not fully express one's powers, etc. – there is in Deleuze an explicit will to get rid of the notion of a final judgment. Such would be the power only of a transcendent God, though there can be no doubting the pain that judgment causes. But what might it mean to hold out final judgment – perhaps an infinitely deferred final judgment, yet a judgment that *would* insist on raising the issue of the completeness? What might it mean to have one's existence structured not by the end of one's consciousness, not by one's death, but by this infinitely deferred finality? Of course if one wishes to have no guilt, no shame, no sadness, etc., it becomes imperative that one do away with even a deferred finality, for it is precisely this overhanging end that brings to light one's own failings – which are not necessarily failings to exercise a power. The nature of an act – a courageous, necessary, perhaps justifiable act, like the writing of a 'dangerous' book like *Anti-Oedipus* – is such that it might indeed thoroughly exhaust the actor's potential, and it might even be a thing he had to do. But might there be in a humble acceptance of certain consequences a glimmer of morality – which is more than the sympathy that Nietzsche names as one of the chief virtues? For in solitude, there can be insight into the nature of the destruction of the persons one affects, there can be sympathy for them. But what would constitute courage in this case? The courage to endure the pain? Or the courage to risk one's own soul for that of the other, the courage to tie one's own fate more closely to that of the other, to embrace and love the other in a potentially disastrous, destructive, sad manoeuvre, in hopes of maintaining a space in

which we too can be retrieved? Perhaps we are stretching here. But what would drive us to stretch this way, if not our sense that we are ourselves becoming lost – unable to forgive ourselves or to have forgiven the unhappy consequences of our actions. Are we ultimately suggesting that this course of action's aim is the redeeming of our own souls?

As we raise again this question of the soul, we must remind ourselves that, if indeed it has the character of chora, we are not returning uncritically to an assumption of identity. Rather, such a *place* would be the site where the fluxing differences are preserved and considered as together in their differences. For identity is composed of and threatened by precisely those forces so well described by Deleuze. And yet, we do recognize both an ever-incomplete activity of unification, and a fracturing of that unified self, of its disappearance again *almost* into nothing. To concern oneself with the world is not to move wholly 'beyond' the self, since the self never finds itself in isolation from the world. And yet in our appreciation of the joined fate of *myself* and *my world*, do we fail to notice how this conjunction demands of us the strength to encounter, and not to engulf and appropriate, otherness? That is to say, there is no denial of the self (no morality in that sense) in the desire to establish a place of discourse in which I can assert my judgment about the other, since my fate rests in the world itself.

Is this a desire *to last* as an integrated unit, or to be resurrected, to be saved, to live eternally – in some form, at least in memory? Even if there a way to be more fully myself than in the full exercising of my powers, in the sense of deploying, or putting something into motion, it might be asked what good could come of such a return to the self. We must ask, what might become available if we were to open the realm of the political, of resistance, sacrifice, and submission? Of morality, understood as that shared place in

which we allow ourselves to be considered not *only* in terms of our own powers and intentions, but in which we are held responsible for our sins (act or omission) – in which we do accept that role that consciousness does have (as that site at which we try to transcend that which composes us, to integrate the differences)? Does the fate of things rest on this power of judgment? Or is it thoroughly risked by it?²⁵⁸

Consciousness, as often as not, rationalizes, selects for us the path likeliest to protect itself. Are our molecular powers likelier to bring us to happiness? Is the hesitancy to concede the moral a case of too much pride? Am I guilty of that great sin²⁵⁹ – as though the world depended upon me for its being, just as I depend upon it? Is it to go too far to assert that only this kind of resistance, this commitment to one's *own* needs, is the mechanism by which difference can function to give presence to the good?

5.4 Text as Therapy?

To what degree Deleuze's philosophy was determined by sadness, it is difficult to say. But philosophy as concept-generation seems to us to be a response inspired at least in part by the sad passions. In spite of his considerable joy in producing concepts, Deleuze's sadness remains the condition for such production – his sadness a gift of the heavens to

²⁵⁸ One wonders whether the second war in the Gulf might have introduced a new stage in the impotence felt by the public, insofar as the doubt over the justification for the war was widespread and the role played by discourse at the international level *seemingly* (to the public) was minimal. Though this event has occurred at the outset of a new century, insofar as we are, at this stage in history, aware in advance of political actions over which we have no control, actions which often have unthinkable consequences, might we wonder whether the twentieth century was Deleuzian? For it is Deleuze's courage to think these consequences, and his metaphysics is a defense of the power of thought (through the production of concepts) to enable man to be free in an epoch characterized by the growing sense of absolute impotency.

²⁵⁹ Though we must always be cautious with Nietzsche, let us not ignore the proud tone here: "My judgment is *my* judgment: no one else is easily entitled to it – that is what [...] a philosopher of the future may perhaps say of himself" (Nietzsche, 53).

him, his despair an awareness of the lack of the Good. Even in Deleuze's full, folded, monistic universe, the Good seems at times to be absent, and inspires through its recession into absence a great sadness, an emptiness, a neediness *for* that absent Good. He and Plato share the same desire, meeting the horrors of the cave, to drag the sunlight in. Plato failed, in Deleuze's estimation, to do any good by borrowing from the Good.

What could Deleuze do but write away from it? Name it, point to the incredible evil it causes, and then write away from it. Heidegger's Being, Augustine's God, Plato's Good: we realize late that from the outset our souls were claimed, that they belong to 'something' that needs them, and that we are equally in need of 'it'. If this is true, we need to wonder how we can *have* the Good, or Difference, or God, etc. This project is equally Plato's, Aristotle's... and Deleuze's. In the end, he can have it only by consigning himself to a lifetime fleeing the sadness it can inspire. Deleuze destroys himself by folding the Other too much into himself, instead of preserving the only thing capable of maintaining even a fragile Gilles Deleuze: its difference.

He offers us the choice actively to forget what is so dreadful or to be burdened by it forever.²⁶⁰ We must *actively* forget, because the pure past does not. Perhaps the mark of wisdom in Deleuze is his recognition that the final and ultimate Good can never be present – and perhaps it is this that prevents him from tending toward a fascism, or equally from embracing a violent revolutionary tendency, each of which indicates the erotic desire for the presence of the Good. Deleuze seems to know that man will never be free at the “molar” level, that laws which might be necessary by nature oppress and free simultaneously, though this relationship of tension in the actual register should not be

²⁶⁰ “The genius of eternal return lies not in memory but in waste, in active forgetting” (*DR*, 55).

read into the nature of Idea-structures. What Deleuze finds so shameful, instead, is that we do not know how to maintain molecular becomings – the only route we have to freedom.

These becomings are revolutionary, though they are not intended to give rise to a final end-state. Deleuze is not in search of the City of God. Does this mean that his philosophy is not utopian? One wonders whether ethics is possible without the creation of a place for goodness. Jean-Luc Nancy seems to doubt that this world – this place – is Deleuze's preoccupation:

One could say that other philosophies are occupied with matters of the world, matters of all kinds, while this one is occupied, strictly speaking, with nothing: it neither judges nor transforms the world, it effectuates it as otherwise, as a 'virtual' universe of concepts. This thought does not have 'the real' for an 'object' – it has no 'object.' It is another effectuation of the real, admitting that the real 'in itself' is chaos, a sort of effectivity without effectuation.²⁶¹

This philosophy is occupied with nothing, with void – and the victories Deleuze has may be due to his hesitation to judge the world. Nancy is mistaken to say that Deleuze does not transform “the world”; that indicates a preference on Nancy's part for the simple presence of a body in space, as though the world did not have its own potentiality. Concepts are events, and Deleuze's point is precisely that they *do* transform the world. This philosophy is, as Deleuze claims, a constructivism.

5.5 Conclusion: An Eating Disorder?

So what are we building? Is Deleuze advocating an unlimited production of “concepts”? Why production over reception? Why does Deleuze's response to the horrors

²⁶¹ Nancy, 110.

of the world consist in re-stocking the world with givens? Whatever his reasons, he does not advocate mindless chattering. It is significant that Deleuze himself detested interviews and philosophy conferences,²⁶² and also that he disliked eating. In *The Logic of Sense*, the two are inextricably linked, and it is the consumption of words and of food that he finds intolerable. Deleuze is in the peculiar position of supporting endless production of novelty, and of claiming that everything is production, but also of rejecting so much of what is said:

We sometimes go on as though people can't express themselves. In fact they're always expressing themselves. The sorriest couples are those where the woman can't be preoccupied or tired without the man saying, 'What's wrong? Say something...', or the man, without the woman saying..., and so on. Radio and television have spread this spirit everywhere, and we're riddled with pointless talk, insane quantities of words and images. Stupidity's never blind or mute. So it's not a problem of getting people to express themselves but of providing little gaps of solitude and silence in which they might eventually find something to say. Repressive forces don't stop people expressing themselves but rather force them to express themselves. What a relief to have nothing to say, the right to say nothing, because only then is there a chance of framing the rare, and even rarer, thing that might be worth saying. What we're plagued by these days isn't any blocking of communication, but pointless statements.²⁶³

Is it accidental that Deleuze chooses to speak here about couples? The problem is one of love, though it is debatable whether Deleuze sees it. We are plagued by pointless

²⁶² "Opinion is the rule of correspondence of one to the other; it is a function or a proposition whose arguments are perceptions and affections, and in this sense it is a function of the lived. For example, we grasp a perceptual quality common to cats or dogs and a certain feeling that makes us like or hate one or the other: for a group of objects we can extract many diverse qualities and form many groups of quite different, attractive or repulsive, subjects (the 'society' of those who like cats or detest them), so that opinions are essentially the object of a struggle or an exchange. This is the Western democratic, popular conception of philosophy as providing pleasant or aggressive dinner conversations at Mr. Rorty's. Rival opinions at the dinner table – is this not the eternal Athens, our way of being Greek again? [...] One might object that Greek philosophers were always attacking *doxa* and contrasting it with an episteme as the only knowledge adequate to philosophy. But this is a mixed-up business, and philosophers, being only friends and not wise men, find it difficult to give up *doxa*" (*WP*, 145).

²⁶³ Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 129. See also *FL*, 134: "It is as if Leibniz were delivering us an important message about communication: don't complain about not having enough communication for there is always plenty of it."

statements because we are so frightened of sadness, of loss, of losing that which we so desperately need. Deleuze does know, in any case, that the objective is to find something *worth saying*: this is a philosophy in search of the good name, just as is Plato's.

Brian Massumi writes, in his "deviations" from Deleuze and Guattari, "Don't toe the line - be superlinear. Don't plod the straight and narrow path down the aisle - marry the void."²⁶⁴ Indeed, this is a deviation from Deleuze, since one does not marry the void, according to Deleuze; one has nothing to do with it. The void is not *other*, and neither is it localizable within the subject. There is no marriage here, no eros, no needy love. It should not surprise us that love is above all what must be eliminated if we are to do away with sadness, for surely nothing inspires more sadness than love. But is Deleuze likely to find what is worth saying, a value, a good, if he leaves us no place for this good to be measured, no internal, reflective, needy place which is transformed by the presence of the Good? No soul, no chora? Is it not fatal for Deleuze, the true Stoic, tumbling without direction in an emptiness one cannot embrace, that indeed he is in the void - and that the void, tragically, is not in him?

²⁶⁴ Brian Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 41.

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Filmography

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