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Novelty, Transformation and Change

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What does Foucault think is New about Neoliberalism?

JOHN PROTEVI

Among Foucault's few forays into analysing contemporary political rationality is his analysis of neoliberalism.[1] By examining two recently published lecture courses of his at the Collège de France—*Sécurité, territoire, population* (delivered in 1977-78)[2] and *Naissance de la biopolitique* (1978-79)[3]—we will be able to expose the Deleuzian nature of Foucault's differential historical methodology, as well as what he thinks is new about neoliberalism.

Foucault's Realism and Interactive Realism

Foucault offers a non-progressivist and non-hylomorphic reading of history. These two qualifications are linked. First, although Foucault's genealogy does not provide a progressivist narrative, he does wish to provide tools by which the governed can understand the rationality that informs the way they are governed and thereby better resist intolerable governance. To the (in)famous demand that Foucault provide a normative

1 I would like to acknowledge the very helpful comments of (in alphabetical order) Miguel de Beistegui, Chris Blakely, Lee Braver, Leonard Lawlor, Jeff Nealon, and Steven Shaviro. I also wish to acknowledge the support of a Manship Summer Research Grant from the College of Arts & Sciences at Louisiana State University.

2 M. Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population*, ed. M. Senellart (Paris: Gallimard/ Seuil, 2004); *Security, Territory, Population*, trans. G. Burchell (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); hereafter *STP*.
Note: in all subsequent references with two citations, the first indicates the original French, the second the English translation.

3 M. Foucault, *Naissance de la biopolitique*, ed. M. Senellart (Paris: Gallimard/ Seuil, 2004); *The Birth of Biopolitics*, trans. G. Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); hereafter *NB*.

'standard', we can reply that he does; it's just that he trusts the governed to know when intolerable governance needs resisting without having to wait for a philosopher to bless their resistance by having it match some universal standard. In other words, Foucault is suspicious of philosophy's predilection for speaking in place of others (rather than beside them in solidarity). Second, Foucault's reading is non-hylomorphic in the sense that he does not think, as does Kant for example, that the 'raw material' of history is senseless, 'just one damn thing after another' as the saying goes, and thus, in order to ward off a nihilistic disgust, in need of the imposition of a progressivist narrative grounded in a putative natural purpose (that is, a purpose transcendent to historical events). Kant writes about human history: "It would appear no law-governed history of mankind is possible ... We can scarcely help feeling a certain distaste on observing their activities as enacted in the great world-drama ... everything as a whole is made up of folly and childish vanity, and often of childish malice and destructiveness.... The only way out for the philosopher ... is for him to attempt to discover a *purpose in nature* behind this senseless course of human events."[4] In this regard, Kant's position on history parallels his view on cognition, in which we feel the need for the understanding to impose order on the chaotic sensory manifold in order to ward off scepticism.

Foucault, on the other hand, holds that there are orders immanent in historical events with no need of being grounded in or constituted by a transcendent natural or subjective ordering. Rather, Foucault adopts a quite straightforward historical realism. His work consists in proposing a "grid of intelligibility" that *reveals* these immanent historical orders by showing how they were "possible".[5] Now it is true that these historical orders are only revealed by certain grids of intelligibility, and that these are chosen in order to help us with a "history of the present," one relevant to our concerns as people governed by neoliberalism. Nonetheless, these historical orders are revealed rather than constituted. These immanent orders are power-knowledge *dispositifs* informed by modes of political rationality inherent in real historical practice; these *dispositifs* function as "regimes of truth" which constitute objects able to be judged as true or

4 I. Kant, 'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose', in H. Reiss, ed., *Kant's Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 41-53 (pp.41-42), emphasis in original.

5 *NB*, p. 35/34.

false. The reason these immanent orders require a "grid of intelligibility" for their discovery—and cannot be seen via a simplistic "historicism" that tracks changes in the accidental properties of an underlying substance—is that Foucault sees them as multiplicities in the Deleuzian sense, that is, dynamic differential systems of "incessant transactions" among multiple and ever-changing practices.[6]

It's important not to confuse this historical realism with Foucault's celebrated genealogical analysis of the constitution of the objects of the human sciences, to which he compares his analysis of the constitution of the objects of the liberal and neoliberal power-knowledge *dispositifs* and their regimes of truth (e.g., various forms of *homo economicus*). I qualify the ontological status of these objects as 'interactively realist' in the sense that they are not dependent on a human subject or intersubjective community, but are, in Foucault's terms, "marked out in reality" as a result of the *dispositif* of practices that constitute them.[7] 'Interactive realism' is basically the same as what Ian Hacking calls, in an update to his important essay 'Making Up People', the "looping effect" of a "dynamic nominalism."[8] That is to say, the interaction of the constituting practices and the constituted objects is extended in time and is structured by feedback loops, so that the expectation of an action increases the probability of that action. We also know this phenomenon by two other terms: 'self-fulfilling prophecy' and 'methodology becomes metaphysics', as when a policy based on an assumption creates the conditions that produce behaviour conforming to that assumption.[9]

6 *NB*, p. 79/77.

7 *NB*, pp. 21-22/19.

8 I. Hacking, 'Making Up People', in *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*, ed. by Weller, Sosna, and Wellberry (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986). The updated version to which I refer was published in the *London Review of Books* 28, 16 (2006); only this version contains the phrase "looping effect."

9 For an article examining just such a looping effect in contemporary practices based on the assumptions of Rational Choice Theory producing the neoliberal *homo economicus*, see E. Ostrom, 'Policies that Crowd out Reciprocity and Collective Action', in H. Gintis, S. Bowles, R. Boyd, and E. Fehr, *Moral Sentiments and Material Interests: The Foundations of Cooperation in Economic Life* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2005), pp. 253-275.

So to repeat: Foucault does not *constitute* a regime of truth or *dispositif* as the object of his historical knowledge by hylomorphically shaping a senseless historical raw material but *reveals* it as an immanent, differential, and non-substantial historical reality by means of a grid of intelligibility. It's just that his historical realism reveals the power-knowledge *dispositifs* informed by modes of political rationality and forming regimes of truth *as* interactively realist, that is, as capable of constituting objects marked out in reality (and not just in discourse, that is, not just objects of knowledge).

Foucault's Differential methodology

Foucault sees neoliberalism as a novel mode of the art of governing, that is, a new mode of social power. We will track the way in which Foucault shifts from war as the grid of intelligibility for social relations to 'governmentality', which concerns the 'conduct of conduct', the shaping of the way people live their lives in quotidian detail. In *STP* and *NB* Foucault will concentrate on governmentality as an exercise of political rationality (as opposed to the conducting of conduct in families, religious groups, etc.). We can note some preliminary distinctions with regard to changes in political rationality in order to orient ourselves: the juridical sovereign rules men as subjects of right, while liberal government supplements juridical sovereignty with the management of people qua *homo economicus* as natural exchanger in natural markets; neoliberal government manages people qua *homo economicus* as self-entrepreneurs in artificial competitive markets.[10] To understand the novelty of neoliberalism, then, we need to understand the previous modes or strategies of the 'art of governing' as a political art, that is, as a state practice reflected in a political rationality: 17th and 18th century *raison d'Etat*, the 18th century physiocratic challenge, 18th and 19th century classical liberalism, and 20th century neoliberalism.

To establish the context for the discussion of the art of governing men, we need to go back to '*Il faut défendre la société*' (delivered 1975-76).[11] Here Foucault conducts a genealogy of the war model for social relations. At this period of his work, Foucault held to what we can call a Nietzschean-Deleuzian concept for analysing social relations. To understand social power we have to see macro-level social relations (those between "experts and subjects" or "men and women" or "bourgeoisie and proletariat") as emerging from a "micro-physics of power" by means of an integration of a multiplicity of force relations.[12]

We have two questions here: (1) what is the ontological status of the social field as a multiplicity of force relations? (2) Is 'war' a good model, a good 'grid of intelligibility', for seeing social relations as emergent from such a multiplicity?[13]

Foucault proceeds in '*Il faut défendre la société*' by inverting the Clausewitzian saying that 'war is politics by other means', or better, by showing that Clausewitz had himself inverted an older discourse whose formula 'politics is war by other means' had put war as the model or "grid of intelligibility" for social relations.[14] In *fact*, Foucault finds that war as a grid of intelligibility has been "posited" for our historical discourse [*c'est cette grille d'intelligibilité qui a été posée pour notre discours historique*].[15] In other words, while a statement from an earlier discourse about, say, the Trojan origins of the Franks, would be neither true nor false for us, statements in the discourse in which the grid of intelligibility for social power is war would have a truth value for us: they could be demonstrated to be either true or false.[16] Indeed, Foucault himself had

10 The term 'supplement' alerts us to an important nuance. It is not the case that liberal or neoliberal government abjures the subject of right, for civil society as the concrete correlate of liberal and neoliberal government has two abstract "aspects": humans as subjects of right and as *homo economicus* (*NB*, pp. 299-300/295-296).

11 M. Foucault, *Il faut défendre la société*, eds. M. Bertani and A. Fontana (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 1997); *Society Must Be Defended*, trans. D. Macey (New York: Picador, 2003); hereafter *DS*.

12 G. Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* (Paris: PUF, 1968); *Difference and Repetition*, trans. P. Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994). "In this regard, four terms are synonymous: actualise, differentiate, integrate, and solve [*résoudre*]" (*DR*, p. 272/211).

13 Interestingly enough, Foucault does not mention emergence via integration in 'Theatrum Philosophicum,' his review of *Difference and Repetition*, though he does discuss multiplicity. See *Dits et Ecrits I* (Paris: Gallimard Quarto edition, 2001), p. 958 and *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 185.

14 *DS*, p. 145/163.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

used the war model rather straightforwardly in *Surveiller et punir*, published in 1975 ("the study of this micro-physics presupposes ... that one should take as its model a perpetual battle rather than a contract").[17]

As a result of conducting his genealogy of the war model in '*Il faut défendre la société*', Foucault comes to question it tentatively in *Histoire de la sexualité I: La volonté de savoir*, published in 1976, that is, during the year in which the 'Society' lectures were delivered.[18] There, war is no longer seen as a grid of intelligibility which reveals a regime of truth governing a particular historical discourse. Rather, it is seen as an option for 'coding' the multiplicity of force relations, that is, an optional and precarious 'strategy' for integrating them:

> Should we turn the expression around, then, and say that politics is war pursued by other means? If we still wish to maintain a separation between war and politics, perhaps we should postulate that this multiplicity of force relations can be coded—in part but never totally—either in the form of 'war,' or in the form of 'politics'; this would imply two different strategies (but the one always liable to switch into the other) for integrating these unbalanced, heterogeneous, unstable, and tense force relations.[19]

The context for this remark, we should recall, is subtle and ambiguous. It comes in the 'Method' section of Part IV of *HS1*, '*Le dispositif de sexualité*.' The ambiguity of Foucault's position is set up by his remark a moment earlier when he discusses power as de-centred: "power's condition of possibility, or in any case the viewpoint which permits one to understand its exercise ... and which also makes it possible to use its mechanisms as a grid of intelligibility of the social order, must not be sought in the primary existence of a central point".[20] Here we see Foucault's famous ambivalence toward Kant: no sooner does

17 M. Foucault, *Surveiller et punir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975); *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979), hereafter *SP*, p. 35/26.

18 M. Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité, tome 1: La volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976) ; *The History of Sexuality, volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. R. Hurley (New York: Random House, 1978); hereafter *HS1*.

19 *HS1*, p. 123/93.

20 Ibid.

he say "condition of possibility" than he has to nuance it.[21] Thus at this point Foucault has 'power' as the grid of intelligibility and 'war' as an active strategy of political practice; looking at the social field in terms of power lets us see war as a possible strategy for integrating a multiplicity of force relations, whereas power 'itself' can only be seen if we look at it *as* such a multiplicity: "It seems to me that power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organisation".[22]

So to sum up, the 'multiplicity of force relations' is the grid of intelligibility for power, which is in turn the grid of intelligibility of the social field. This grid of intelligibility reveals a dynamic social ontology, an interactive realism, in which war is a strategy for action in the social field, a way of integrating the multiplicity of force relations that constitute that field and thereby constituting the protagonists of political history as engaged in a 'war by other means'. The looping effect or self-fulfilling prophecy here should be clear: it's almost a cliché to say that naming yourself and others as warriors tends to create the reality in which others treat you as such and you respond in kind since they have just proved your point!

Perhaps dismayed at the results of his genealogy of the war schema, which shows one of the main origins of it in the 'race war' theory of Boulainvilliers and the 17th and 18th century French reactionary petty nobility, as well as the final imbrications of it in contemporary state racism and biopower,[23] Foucault moves in the fourth lecture of *Sécurité* to "governmentality" as the model for social relations, as its grid of intelligibility. Rather than social relations being seen as war, we are asked to see social relations as the "conduct of conduct," as the leading of men's lives in quotidian detail. There is still the Nietzschean-Deleuzian concept

21 An extended study of Foucault that takes the relation to Kant as a major theme is B. Han, *Foucault's Critical Project: Between the Transcendental and the Historical* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). The title of Han's French original is instructive in regard to our interrogation of the relation of Foucault's realism toward historical order and the interactive realism he discovers therein: *L'Ontologie manquée de Michel Foucault*.

22 *HS1*, pp. 121-22/92.

23 *DS*, pp. 229-233/258-261.

of integration of a multiplicity of differential elements and relations as embedded in the interplay of power and resistance in practices, but the grid of intelligibility is no longer war, but governmentality. It's not that this standpoint is more clearly interactively realist—if anything, it's harder to see the looping effect here—but it does enable us to see more subtle relations. And, along with the change in the grid of intelligibility comes a change in the nature of the relata; it is no longer 'force' relations, but relations of 'actions', as we read in 'The Subject and Power': power is the "action on the action of others." Thus with governmentality, we still find a differential field, but one of actions rather than forces: "to govern … is to structure the possible field of action of others."[24] With the advent of governmentality as the grid of intelligibility for power, 'forces' are no longer the object of the study of power *tout court*, but are now that which *raison d'Etat* posits as the object of analysis for the state: a state's 'forces' consist in its wealth, its army, its population (as sheer number of subjects).[25]

In governmentality, then, the other has to be a subject, a free person: "power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free".[26] Now we must avoid reading Foucault as if a concern with subjectivity comes to replace a concern with power. Rather, subjectivity is the mode in which power operates in governmentality; the conducting of the conduct of our lives is done by inducing us to subjectify ourselves in various ways, as sexual subjects, or indeed, as self-entrepreneurs.[27]

In any case, we should note that the use of governmentality as a grid of intelligibility for social power necessitates a complementary inversion: in order to understand governmentality in its specificity we have to see it as a mode of power. Thus the "point of view of power"

24 M. Foucault, 'The Subject and Power', afterword in H. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 220 and 221.

25 *STP*, p. 321/313.

26 M. Foucault, 'The Subject and Power', afterword in H. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 221.

27 For a strong argument on the inducing of subjectivity in contemporary governmentality as a mode of power, see J. Nealon, *Foucault Beyond Foucault: Power and its Intensifications since 1984* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).

itself allows us to see in pastoral practices "intelligible relations between elements that are external to each other".[28] With this strategic logic that preserves the heterogeneity of the relata, we avoid both a Hegelian dialectical logic that would resolve the contradictory relata at the price of rendering them homogeneous,[29] and we also avoid the framework of 'ideology' in which the political is a mere 'translation' of the economic. For Foucault, if we don't take the "problem of the pastorate, of the structures of pastoral power, as the hinge or pivot of these different elements external to each other—the economic crises on one side and religious themes on the other—if we do not take it as a field of intelligibility … we are forced to return to the old conceptions of ideology," conceptions which do not enable us to grasp the specificity of governmentality as a site for the concrete "strategies and tactics" of practices.[30]

Avoiding a Circular Ontology of the State

By deploying his differential historical methodology and thereby establishing governmentality as a grid of intelligibility, Foucault is able to avoid a "circular ontology of the state".[31] This avoidance is related to the controversy over Foucault's alleged lack of a normative standard. If one has a state-centred politics, one needs a normative standard by which to judge state actions. Although Foucault does not have a state-centred politics, that does not mean we cannot deal with the state; in fact, we can deal all the more effectively with it by avoiding an exclusive focus on it. There are thus two benefits to Foucault's differential historical methodology here: (1) it enables him to analyse a much greater slice of the multiplicity of concrete instances of power by moving outside the horizon of the state to the field of governmentality; (2) moving outside the horizon of the state to the differential field of governmentality practices allows us to de-substantialise the state, to see it as emergent from that differential field, as an 'episode', *une péripétie* or turning point, in the history of governmentality. We thus see that the normative standard

28 *STP*, p. 219/215.

29 *NB*, p. 44/42.

30 *STP*, p. 219/215-216.

31 *STP*, p. 362/354.

has to be respect for the resistance of the governed to intolerable governance, rather than a means for philosophers to judge state action.

Foucault always wants to avoid positing a transhistorical constant, a 'universal' that is simply treated differently in different epochs.[32] To take a famous example, in *Surveiller et punir*, it's never the case that he wants to examine how the prison changes from absolutism to liberalism. That would be a closet substantialist metaphysics in which the prison is a substance that receives different properties. We recall that Aristotle demonstrated the parallel between the grammatical subject receiving different predicates and the ontological substance receiving different properties. For Aristotle and a large part of the tradition, the substance is the identity underlying the change, providing an ontological continuity, preventing a lapse into nothingness during change and/or preventing a needless proliferation of entities. Foucault analyses this substantialist model as 'historicism'.[33] Foucault instead proposes a genealogy of constitutive practices; we are accustomed to calling this his 'nominalism'.[34] From this perspective, the absolutist monarch didn't have prisons at his disposal. He had a mechanism, enclosure, which was put to a certain function: enclosure for protection to await later punishment. If we had to give a name to the place, the building, where the enclosure happened, it would be better to call it a 'jail'. You only get prisons with a new *dispositif*, where the mechanism of enclosure is put to a different function, punishment (and penitence, and rehabilitation, etc.).

Let us return, again briefly, to the Foucault-Deleuze relation as seen in Foucault's invocation of historical novelty as a shift in the way a multiplicity gets integrated. As we recall, in *STP* and *NB* the grid of intelligibility is governmentality, which prevents us from hypostasising the state as a substance, and lets us avoid what Foucault will call 'state phobia'. In an important passage in *Naissance* Foucault concentrates on the 'statification' of governmental practices. But this does not mean starting by analysing the 'essence' of the state and then trying to deduce current practices of state governmentality as accidents accruing to the substance defined by that essence. For Foucault, flatly stated, "the state

32 *NB*, pp. 4/2-3; 64/63.

33 *NB*, p. 5/3.

34 T. R. Flynn, *Sartre, Foucault and Historical Reason. Volume 2: A Poststructuralist Mapping of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

does not have an essence"; it is not "an autonomous source of power".[35] Rather it is only the "effect, the profile, the mobile shape [*découpe mobile*] of a perpetual statification [*étatisation*] or perpetual statifications [*étatisations*] in the sense of incessant transactions which modify, or move, or drastically change, or insidiously shift" multiple practices such as finance, investment, decision-making, control, and relations of local/central authorities.[36] The state has no essence; it is not a substance with changing properties, but what Deleuze would call an Idea, a multiplicity, a system of differential elements and relations involved in "incessant transactions."[37] Foucault continues with his nominalist anti-essentialism: "The state has ... no interior. The state is nothing else but the mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentalities".[38]

To repeat, then, Foucault's move to governmentality as the horizon for examining the state enables a nominalist anti-essentialism that, in seeing the State as a multiplicity, outflanks the 'state phobia' against which he rails in both its left and right wing manifestations. We can see Foucault delight in demonstrating that left wing attacks on neoliberalism as a growth of the state are only repeating what the neoliberals had advanced in their "inflationary" critique.[39] In discussing his move outside the state to governmentality as a horizon for historical intelligibility, Foucault recalls that in previous work he had moved outside institutions, functions, and objects.[40] For instance, going outside institutions enables a genealogy of relations of power. A genealogy is the integration of a multiplicity of heterogeneous elements, as opposed to a causal and substantialist narrative, which Foucault will call a 'genetic analysis'. By focusing on multiplicity and integration we can replace a "genetic analysis through filiation with a genealogical analysis ... which reconstructs a whole network of alliances, communications, and points of support".[41] Similarly, we move outside (alleged) functions to a general

35 *NB*, p. 79/77.

36 Ibid.

37 With 'incessant transactions' we have a strong echo of the Deleuzian notion of a multiplicity as a structure of continuous variation. Relatively implicit in *DR* (e.g. p. 326/253), continuous variation is a major concept throughout *Mille Plateaux*.

38 *NB*, p. 79/77.

39 *NB*, p. 195/189.

40 *STP*, p.122/118.

41 *STP*, p.123/117.

economy of power of strategies and tactics, manifest even in failures of the prison's supposed function.[42] And in moving outside objects we reach a field of constitution of objects rather than contenting ourselves with the historical modifications of the putatively same object.[43]

Foucault proposes a similar displacement for the state: can we go outside the state? There is an immediate problem: is not the state the totalising field for all these 'outsides' of institutions, functions, and objects? Can we ever get outside such a horizon for social being?[44] In notes that were not read out at the time the lectures were delivered, Foucault writes that it is not a method he wants to defend from this objection; it is more like a change in point of view producing positive effects (this is an example of what one could call Foucault's pragmatism). Again, the focus in a genealogy is on the different means of integrating a multiplicity of socio-economic processes and governmentality practices. Foucault suggests that studying military discipline is not a matter of studying state control of its military institution, for this would be a substantialism entailing the study of different accidental properties surrounding the unchanging essence of the state and its army. Rather, a genealogy of military discipline connects it to a series of problems – floating populations, commercial networks, technical innovations, models of community management – problems which are the very ones out of which the state emerges as a solution. Thus we see military discipline is an integrator of a differential field, being composed of "techniques with operative value in multiple processes"; the state does not provide the horizon for understanding this multiplicity, for it is itself immanent to it.[45]

In naming his differential historical methodology, Foucault insists upon the difference between a genealogy and a 'genetic' analysis, which proceeds by identifying a unitary source that splits into two.[46] To establish

42 *STP*, pp.121/117-18.

43 *STP*, pp.121-22/118.

44 *STP*, p. 123/119.

45 Ibid.

46 We see here a merely terminological difference with Deleuze. In *DR*, the conditions of real experience (not merely possible experience) form an "intrinsic genesis" (*DR*, p. 200/154). But insofar as this genesis is the integration of a differential field, we see that 'genesis' in *DR* is equivalent to 'genealogy' for Foucault, albeit that Deleuze works in an ontological register and Foucault in an epistemological register.

intelligibility, he asks, "could we not … start not from unity, and not even from … duality, but from the *multiplicity* of extraordinarily diverse processes".[47] It's important to emphasise that this multiplicity is ontological, as is its integration. Foucault continues that establishing the intelligibility of these processes would entail "showing [*montrant*] phenomena of coagulation, support, reciprocal reinforcement, cohesion and *integration*".[48] Again, not to belabour the point, but the key word here that betrays Foucault's realism is "showing"; the phenomena are not constituted by Foucault the subject of knowledge, but shown in their reality. And, again to repeat, their reality is differential; in the classic Deleuzian manner, the integration of a multiplicity produces an emergent effect: "in short it would involve showing the bundle [*faisceau*] of processes and the network [*réseau*] of relations that ultimately induced as a cumulative, overall effect, the great duality".[49] Foucault's emergentism is clear as he concludes this very important passage: "At bottom, maybe intelligibility in history does not lie in assigning a cause that is always more or less a metaphor for the source. Intelligibility in history would perhaps lie in something that we could call the constitution or composition of effects. How are overall, cumulative effects composed? How is nature constituted as an overall effect? How is the state effect constituted on the basis of a thousand diverse processes …? [*Comment se composent des effets globaux, comment se composent des effets de masse? Comment s'est constitué l'effet Etat à partir de mille processus divers …?*]".[50] It's the processes that constitute the state as their effect, not Foucault as subject of knowledge; Foucault's contribution is to provide the grid of intelligibility that reveals this differential emergence at work in historical reality.

In *Sécurité*, Foucault's differential emergentism thus provides us with a genealogy of the modern state on the basis of the history of governmental reason. In the 19th century we see the breakup of the administrative state's police apparatus into different institutions: economic practice; population management; law and respect for freedom; and the police (in the contemporary sense of a state apparatus that intervenes to stop disorder). These are added to the diplomatic-military

47 *STP*, p. 244/238; emphasis added.

48 *STP*, pp. 244/238-239; emphasis added.

49 *STP*, p. 244/239.

50 Ibid.

apparatus.[51] But it's crucial to see that the administrative state's police apparatus that is here broken up was itself differential; it was not a unitary source. It arose with *raison d'Etat* which is itself "something completely different [which] emerges in the seventeenth century".[52] The administrative state emerges from a "cluster [*faisceau*] of intelligible and analyzable relations that allow a number of fundamental elements to be linked together [*lier*] like the faces of a single polyhedron".[53] We note the by now familiar Deleuzian language of the linking together of differential elements and relations.[54] Foucault here lists four elements: the art of government thought as *raison d'Etat*; competition of states while maintaining European equilibrium; police; and the emergence of the market town and its problems of cohabitation and circulation (themselves being, quite obviously, a differential field of multiple processes and practices). So police is part of a larger *dispositif*, and is itself concerned with a multiplicity of all the factors going into providing for the being and well-being of men, that well-being which, in a fascinating phrase, Foucault qualifies as a "well-being beyond being [*ce bien-être au-delà de l'être*]".[55] More precisely, police integrates relations between the increase of those forces and the good order of the state.[56] Police does not deal with things but with "forces" that arise from adjusting the relations among the rates of increase of multiple processes. As noted before, here we see forces as elements of the state as analysed by *raison d'Etat*.

With *Naissance*, Foucault enriches his discussion of novelty in history with a more explicit focus on the notion of 'regimes of truth'. Identifying the novelty of liberalism and neoliberalism entails using as a grid of intelligibility the institution of 'regimes of truth', which are defined in terms reminiscent of those for 'episteme' in earlier works: "the

51 *STP*, p. 362/354.

52 *STP*, p. 346/338.

53 Ibid.

54 The editor of *Naissance* notes the appearance of similar language defining a genealogy in terms of "singularity" and "multiple determining elements" in a roughly contemporaneous essay by Foucault (*NB*, p. 50n8/49n8).

55 *STP*, p. 335/328. Is the mere "being" of men here just physical survival that forces men back onto themselves in desperate selfishness, while "well-being" allows for productive relations among men? So that free socialite is dependent on a guarantee of the necessities of life? In another context, we might attempt to draw out the classic questions of the relations of *oikos* and *polis*, of necessity and freedom, from this small phrase of Foucault's.

56 *STP*, p. 321/313.

set of rules enabling one to establish which statements in a given discourse can be described as true or false".[57] For instance, the question of liberalism is that of a new "regime of truth as the principle of the self-limitation of government".[58] Compared to *raison d'Etat*, classical liberalism constitutes a new question, the self-limitation of the government to allow the natural mechanisms of exchange markets to operate, just as *raison d'Etat* asked about the "intensity, depth, and attention to detail" of governing for the sake of the maximum growth of power of the state.[59]

Existence and Possibility

Let us conclude our discussion of Foucault's methodology with a look at two fascinating passages which display his nuanced position in which a grid of intelligibility reveals the interactive realist constitution of objects of a *dispositif*. The first concerns the claim that posing the question of the regime of truth of liberalism amounts to the "same problem" Foucault dealt with concerning madness, disease, delinquency, and sexuality.[60] Foucault's investigation of the historical constitution of these objects is not a matter of showing them to be "wicked illusions or ideological products to be dispelled in the light of reason." However, although they are not illusions, Foucault will not want to say that they "exist," although he will claim that they are "something" which is "marked out in reality." Foucault writes regarding his previous investigations, "it was a matter of showing [*montrer*] by what conjunctions [*interférences*] a whole set of practices—from the moment they became coordinated with a regime of truth—was able to make what does not exist (madness, disease, delinquency, sexuality, etcetera), nonetheless become something [*devienne cependant quelque chose*], something however that continues not to exist".[61] In other words, the grid of intelligibility is historical realist, in that it *shows* how practices constitute objects as "something," even as the reality of that something is not simple or brute 'existence' but is interactively real. The question of the constitution of such objects as established by the relation of

57 *NB*, p. 37/35; *SD*, pp. 145/163-64.

58 *NB*, p. 21/19.

59 Ibid.

60 *NB*, p. 21/19.

61 Ibid.

objectifying practices and a regime of truth necessitates that we distinguish between 'existence' and being "marked out in reality." Studying the constitution of such an object is not the demonstration of an "error" or an "illusion" but entails asking ourselves "how a particular regime of truth, and therefore not an error, makes something that does not exist able to become something. It is not an illusion since it is precisely a set of practices, real practices, which established it and thus imperiously marks it out in reality [*le marque ainsi impérieusement dans le réel*]".[62]

There's much more to be said here than the essay format permits. We might be able though to propose that "to exist" here means "to have the status of an object of natural science," whereas "being something" that is "marked out in reality" means "to have the status of an object of the human sciences in their full status as power-knowledge complexes in a dense and concrete *dispositif*."[63] Joseph Rouse's standard treatment of the point highlights Foucault's extreme caution in avoiding the term 'existence', which Rouse uses willingly. Rouse notes that even before his researches into power-knowledge, Foucault is "committed to a strong nominalism in the human sciences: the types of objects in their domains were not already demarcated, but came into existence only contemporaneous with the discursive formations that made it possible to talk about them."[64]

A clue to Foucault's late caution regarding the term 'existence' appears in his perennial opposition to phenomenology. In explaining another instance of his avoidance of the term 'existence' in discussing his previous work on the constitution of the objects of the human sciences, Foucault cites his desire to oppose himself to phenomenology: "All in all, it was a matter of doing the opposite of what phenomenology has taught us to say and think, that phenomenology that said, roughly: Madness

62 *NP*, pp. 21-22/19.

63 On natural science versus human science, see Dreyfus and Rabinow pp. 162-64 on *SP*, pp. 262-264/226-227, where Foucault explains that the power/knowledge *dispositif* of the human sciences lies in the disciplines and examination. The mark of the human sciences is that they can't get free of examination the way the natural sciences did. For a full discussion of this and other points, see Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

64 J. Rouse, 'Power/Knowledge', in G. Gutting, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 92-114 (p. 93).

exists, which does not mean that it is something [*ce qui ne veut pas dire que ce soit quelque chose*]".[65] Foucault refers here to the "irreality" of the noema as intentional object; the noema exists, but it does not exist in the mode of things. Foucault must, of course, avoid phenomenology, as it is caught in the empirico-transcendental couplet diagnosed in the analytic of finitude of *Les mots et les choses*; his attempts at a non-subjective constitution of objects are precisely what we know by the names of archaeology and genealogy.

Foucault's own non-phenomenological formulation in *STP* of the ontological status of objects constituted by a particular regime of truth is, if anything, even more cautious and nuanced than it is in *NB*, where at least he says that such an object "becomes something." But in the context of opposing himself to phenomenology in *STP* Foucault can only say that his denial of 'existence' to the objects of a regime of truth is not a complete denial of being: "We can certainly say that madness 'does not exist,' but this does not mean that it is nothing [*mais ça ne veut pas dire qu'elle ne soit rien*]".[66]

In all these formulations, we can note here a remarkable difference from *L'archéologie du savoir*.[67] There, Foucault for the most part writes of the "appearance" of objects "formed" by a discursive practice. But in at least one passage we read that objects "exist.": "Il [l'objet] ne se préexiste pas à lui-même, retenu par quelque obstacle aux bords premiers de la lumière. Il existe sous les conditions positives d'un faisceau complexe de rapports".[68] Here we see a differential field ("complex cluster of relations"), but the objects of that field are worthy of the term 'existence'.

We cannot continue with these most delicate issues, which have occupied a good number of the best scholars. So, having discussed Foucault's use of Deleuzian concepts in the epistemological register, and his struggles to nuance his ontological commitments, we will conclude our discussion of his differential methodology with a second problematic

65 *STP*, p. 122/118; translation modified.

66 Ibid. The editor of *STP* provides two useful notes to similar expressions elsewhere in Foucault's writings. See *STP*, p. 135n9/131n9 and 10/10.

67 M. Foucault, *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969); hereafter *A*.

68 *A*, p. 61.

text. Concerning the establishment of the market as the site of veridiction for liberalism as a governmental practice, Foucault insists that we not look for "the cause" of this novel constitution. Instead, if we are to understand this historical novelty we have to understand the "polygonal or polyhedral relationship" between multiple elements which are themselves changing rates of change of heterogeneous processes: "a new influx of gold ... a continuous economic and demographic growth ... an intensification of agricultural production".[69] This is a clear example of a Deleuzian multiplicity: a system of differentially linked processes exhibiting changing rates of change. Foucault follows up by claiming that in order to "establish the intelligibility [*effectuer ... la mise en intelligibilité*]" of the process by which the market became a site of veridiction one must "put into relation the different phenomena [of economic growth, etc.] [*la mise en relation de ces différent phénomènes*]".[70] So far so good; rendering something intelligible comes from the integration of a multiplicity that preserves the heterogeneity of the processual elements. Foucault continues on with an odd bit of quasi-ontological modal analysis that is the key for our understanding of the realist ontological status of the regime of truth as that which is revealed by a grid of intelligibility (as opposed to the interactively real status of the objects of a regime of truth). Establishing the intelligibility of the process by which the market became a site of veridiction is a matter of "showing how it was possible [*Montrer en quoi il a été possible*]." We do not have to show that the establishment of such a site of veridiction "would have been necessary [*qu'il aurait été nécessaire*]"; this would be a "futile task." Here is the key: neither do we have to show of the process that "it is a possibility [*un possible*], one possibility in a determinate field of possibilities [*un des possibles dans un champ déterminé des possibles*]." Rather, to establish the intelligibility of a historical novelty consists in "simply showing it to be possible [*Que le réel soit possible, c'est ça sa mise en intelligibilité*]".[71]

This is difficult to reconcile with Deleuze, given his well-known adoption of the Bergsonian critique of the possible-real relation as opposed to the virtual-actual relation.[72] Nonetheless, we might be able to salvage something by focusing on Foucault's denial that the

69 *A*, p. 35/33.

70 Ibid. Translation modified.

71 Ibid.

establishment of the intelligibility of a historical novelty consists in showing it is one possibility in a determinate field of possibilities. For that's Deleuze's main target in adopting Bergson. The virtual as differential field gives rise to individuated entities, but is not itself composed of individuated entities; at most it consists in potentials for individuation processes. This seems to resonate with Foucault's denial of a "determinate field of possibilities" in which the novelty under consideration was an individuated member. So as long as Foucault insists that intelligibility entails the putting into relation of multiple processes we can see the phrase "showing it was possible" in terms of establishing the differential field of processes (influx of gold, economic and demographic growth, etc.) out of which the market as site of veridiction was actualised. What we can say is that Foucault's showing a regime of truth as an immanent historical reality meets Deleuze's requirement that one show the conditions of possibility of "real experience" in the integration, resolution or actualisation of a differential field.[73]

Neoliberalism and the Art of Governing

In conducting his genealogy of governmentality as a mode of social power, Foucault begins with an analysis of 'pastoral power' in Christian history as a concern with both the individual and the whole. After distinguishing the Christian pastorate from the theme of the shepherd of men in Hebrew and Greek thought, Foucault dwells on the famous paradoxes of the good shepherd: he must care for the whole flock, but he must also leave the whole flock to tend to the lost sheep, whose individual salvation is his task. Foucault thus established pastoral power as one of the historically first individualising practices, the grid by which he had previously analysed the human sciences, which come into being with 19th century disciplinary society.[74]

We should recall that the move to governmentality is a move 'outside' the state. In this way, Foucault can show the great turning point

72 G. Deleuze, *Le Bergsonisme* (Paris: PUF, [1966] 1997); *Bergsonism*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1988), pp. 99-101/96-98; *DR*, pp. 272-74/211-212.

73 *DR*, p. 200/154.

74 *STP*, p. 132/128.

(*péripétie*) that is the "statification" (*étatisation*) of governmentality.[75] The first great episode here is the administrative/absolute state and its political rationality of *raison d'Etat*, analysed in *Sécurité, territoire, population*. This is only a nascent form of the political art of governing men, as it is still caught in the paradigm of sovereignty.[76] As reflected in *raison d'Etat*, the art of government is directed not to the well-being of each individual, but to the growth of the State to its full potential in strength and wealth, justifying controlling interventions by means of discipline, mercantilist regulation, and police. Although still caught up with sovereignty, *raison d'Etat* as promulgated by the *politiques* can be contrasted with the medieval/juridical notion of sovereignty with its concerns with legitimate origins (precisely what was contested by race war theory) and with salvation of men in the afterworld by the action of the wise prince who acts in accordance with natural, cosmic, and divine law, what Foucault will call a "cosmological-theological continuum" or "cosmological-theological framework [*cadre*]".[77]

Nascent liberalism as seen in the 18th century physiocratic critiques of the regulatory and administrative police state is still within the ambit of *raison d'Etat*, though modified in important ways. First, by the naturalness of social processes and by the way civil society is brought forth as the correlate of the state wishing precisely to provide the freedom for operation needed by those processes.[78] Second, by the birth of political economy as a science which is independent of the state's knowledge of itself and yet needing to be taken into account by the state.[79] Third, by the way population emerges as a new problematic object so that the natural population and natural economic processes entail limits on state governmental intervention as control.[80] The physiocratic state's art of government must now manage and no longer control through rules and regulation; this management aims to remove artificial impediments and to

75 *STP*, p. 253/248.

76 *STP*, p. 105/102.

77 *STP*, pp. 239/232-34; 356-57/349.

78 *STP*, p. 357/349.

79 *STP*, pp. 358-59/ 50-51.

80 In the administrative/mercantilist/police state, population was still a negative term, the absence of de-population that would sap the state's power; it had no natural mechanisms (*STP*, p. 283/277).

let natural processes work.[81] Finally, we see that for the physiocrats, the problematic of freedom is not simply that of the rights of individuals over against sovereign power, but also the freedom of economic activity, the circulation of goods and people in urban space, and the action of markets.[82] The key, as we can see, is that with the development of political economy in its first, physiocratic, phase, we find the establishment of population as a correlative reality with its own natural thickness and mechanisms; population is thus the "operator" in the transformation.[83] A final note is important: the physiocratic art of government has a complete knowledge of the economy,[84] and it is directed to releasing natural economic mechanisms via apparatuses of "security," which Foucault examines in terms of treatment of *disette* or "dearth," contrasting them with mercantilist regulation.[85]

Classical liberalism then challenges physiocracy by showing the inability of the sovereign to have full knowledge of the economy. Foucault demonstrates this with a wonderful reading of the metaphor of the invisible hand in Adam Smith's work.[86] The culmination of Foucault's analysis gives us the astonishing prospect of a Deleuzian liberalism, as seen in the "atheistic" character of its demonstration of "the impossibility of a sovereign point of view over the totality of the state." We can do no more than note the following as deserving of much further study: "Liberalism acquired its modern shape precisely with the formulation of this essential incompatibility between the non-totalisable multiplicity of economic subjects of interest and the totalising unity of the juridical sovereign".[87] Postponing the vast work this sentence imposes on us, we see the upshot of this cleavage between irreducible economic multiplicity and totalising sovereignty in government's self-limitation and the creation of a zone of non-intervention, the famous laissez-faire, which is designed

81 *STP*, pp. 359-60/351-52.

82 *STP*, p. 361/353.

83 *STP*, pp. 78-81/76-79.

84 *NB*, p. 288/285.

85 *STP*, p. 50/47.

86 *NB*, pp. 283-86/278-81.

87 *NB*, p. 286/282. We would have to consider the relations of Foucault's notion of liberalism and Deleuze and Guattari's notions of deterritorialising and decoding, but axiomatising, capitalism in *L'Anti-Œdipe* and *Mille Plateaux*. For a beginning on this task, see E. Holland, *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

to allow natural market mechanisms to function as based on the natural inclinations of *homo economicus* to exchange with others.

Neoliberalism, however, Foucault insists, is something other than liberalism;[88] neoliberals "break" [*rompent*] with classical liberalism;[89] we must "avoid at all costs" seeing neoliberalism as a mere "repetition" of classical liberalism after a Keynesian interlude.[90] So for Foucault neoliberalism is a modification of the art of governing as an exercise of political sovereignty; it is another turning point in the history of the state seen through the grid of governmentality. Its novelty consists in an interventionist state which creates conditions for the artificial or purely competitive market in which *homo economicus* makes choices as rational self-entrepreneur.[91]

For Foucault, neoliberal macroeconomics is not so much a shift from the Keynesian objective of full employment to the monetarist control of inflation (although it does of course entail that as well), as it is a change in government's relation to market structure. For classical liberals, the market was a natural mechanism for the exchange of commodities. For the neoliberals, the market is an ideal structure of competition, fragile and in need of construction and support. Thus neoliberalism is not laissez-faire, but interventionist, though neoliberal

88 *NB*, pp. 136/130-131.

89 *NB*, p. 123/119.

90 *NB*, p. 136/131.

91 The secondary literature on Foucault and neoliberalism is already extensive. Among the major texts are G. Burchell, 'Peculiar interests: civil society and 'governing the system of natural liberty," in G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 119–50; B. Cruikshank, 'Revolutions within: self-government and self-esteem', in A. Barry, T. Osborne and N. Rose. eds., *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism and Rationalities of Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 231–51; N. Rose, "Governing 'advanced' liberal democracies," in A. Barry, T. Osborne and N. Rose, eds, *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-liberalism and Rationalities of Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 37–64; M. Bonnafous-Boucher, *Un libéralisme sans liberté* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001); T. Lemke, 'The Birth of Bio-Politics—Michel Foucault's Lecture at the Collège de France on Neo-Liberal Governmentality', *Economy & Society* 30 (2) (2001), pp. 190-207; J. Donzelot, 'Michel Foucault and liberal intelligence', *Economy and Society*, 37 (1) (2008), pp. 115-34.

intervention into society occurs at the level of the conditions of market, and its intervention must take the form of the "rule of law".[92]

Let us repeat the key contrast. Classical liberals want the market to be a free natural zone where government can't interfere, precisely to let the invisible hand provide for social benefits from individual self-interest. There's a whole anthropology here of the natural *homo economicus* as only an abstraction from concrete man living in civil society, of which the juridical subject is another abstraction. But the important thing for classical liberals, ignored by the neoliberals, is the Smithian analysis of moral sentiments and the need for government to provide the moral framework that the market erodes.[93] So the classical liberal formula is "protect the market from government in order to allow social benefits from natural exchange."[94] The neoliberals say we must proceed on two paths: (1) we must have government intervention at the level of the conditions of the market in order (2) to spread the enterprise form throughout the social fabric. So the neoliberal formula here is "use government to change society to constitute an artificial and fragile market."

For Foucault, the American neoliberals are more radical than their German counterparts. They share the desire to intervene at the level of market conditions to support fragile competition. But for government/market relations they also want to refuse to shield government from market relations: they want to submit all government actions to cost-benefit analysis. But this is just macro-level reflection of the move to insert market relations throughout the social fabric. This is not simply the drive to privatise government services; it also entails making the surviving government agencies into enterprises, so that we must ask what is the bottom line for, in the American system, agencies such as Amtrak, the Post Office, the National Parks, and so on). And this

92 *NB*, pp. 176-179/171-174.

93 S. M. Amadae, *Rationalsing Capitalist Democracy: The Cold War Origins of Rational Choice Liberalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

94 Conversely, the Keynesians say: embed market in society, because the government must protect society from the bad social effects caused by laissez-faire as creating a zone of market freedom. The problem for the Keynesians is the anthropology of the classical liberals, which doesn't take into account animal spirits as they differ in the entrepreneur vs speculator. So we need government support for effective demand.

is not just the drive to make any multi-unit organisation into a collection of enterprises (each department in a university has its own bottom line and its own contribution to the university bottom line: e.g., loss of subventions for university presses). It goes further than that: each individual becomes an enterprise, a self-entrepreneur.

Conclusion: Neoliberalism as Mode of Subjectification

To conclude, we can mark the differences of Foucault's reading from the class struggle reading of neoliberalism in David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*.[95] Among the major differences between the two is Harvey's emphasis on macroeconomics, in which the turn from Keynesian full employment commitments to monetarist control of inflation serves to discipline the working class.[96] Although Foucault certainly notes this aspect of neoliberalism, it is not a major focus,[97] no doubt partially because his lectures predate the savage hike in interest rates by US Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker in 1981 on which Harvey focuses.

Another key difference between Foucault and Harvey is the latter's claim that neoliberalism adhered to "free market principles of neo-classical economics" and hence was "deeply opposed to state interventionist theories, such as those of John Maynard Keynes".[98] As we have seen, Foucault insists that the neoliberal state is intensely interventionist and not at all devoted to *laissez-faire*; the key is to distinguish between Keynesian interventions *into the market* and its price mechanism (by stimulating effective demand via state purchases of goods and services, for instance) and neoliberal interventions *into society* to set up the conditions for competitive markets.

But perhaps the most striking difference between the two is revealed by Harvey's claim that neoliberal states treat "labour and the

95 D. Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

96 Ibid. p. 25.

97 *NB*, p. 145/139.

98 D. Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 20.

environment as mere commodities".[99] This classical political economy standpoint cannot be reconciled with Foucault's treatment of Gary Becker's human capital theory, which undercuts the (Marxist) treatment of commodified labour power and enables Foucault to inscribe neoliberal governmentality in his history of subjectification practices. In other words, for Foucault, neoliberal governmentality conducts our conduct by inducing us to subjectify ourselves as self-entrepreneurs concerned with obtaining a return on our human capital.[100]

So for Foucault, we best see the radicality of American neoliberalism by concentrating on its mode of subjectification. And the most radical mode of *homo economicus* is reached when the self-entrepreneur takes up the challenge of managing its genetic capital.[101] Although Foucault felt the need to apologise for introducing the "science fiction" aspects of genetic capital,[102] we are now deep into an era in which 'biocapital' is an unavoidable horizon for social-political-economic analysis; as we might expect, these analyses invariably take Foucault as one of their starting points.[103]

99 Ibid. p. 70.

100 *NB*, pp. 227-232/221-226. J. Read, 'A Genealogy of Homo-Economicus: Neoliberalism and the Production of Subjectivity', *Foucault Studies* 6 (2009), pp. 25-36.

101 K. Thompson, 'The Spiritual Disciplines of Biopower', *Radical Philosophy Review* 7 (2004), pp. 59-76.

102 *NB*, pp. 233-235/226-229.

103 The field of 'biocapital' studies is both important and expanding. Among others see N. Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself: Biomedicine, Power, and Subjectivity in the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); K. S. Rajan, *Biocapital: The Constitution of Postgenomic Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); and M. Cooper, *Life as Surplus: Biotechnology & Capitalism in the Neoliberal Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008). Cooper reminds us that Chicago School neoliberals are still beholden to neoclassical concepts of market equilibrium and constrained utility maximisation. We clearly see this as basis for Becker's human capital model, which assumes that households produce commodities by combining market goods and time "in quantities determined by maximising a utility function of the commodity set subject to prices and a constraint on resources" (G. S. Becker, 'A Theory of the Allocation of Time,' *The Economic Journal* 75 (299) (1965), pp. 493-517 (p. 516). Cooper points to the importance of non-equilibrium models within neoliberalism's biocapital and derivatives markets, which each involve bets on a multifactorial future. For a daring attempt to isolate a logic here that also includes Bush-Cheney era US imperialism, see R. Martin, *An Empire of Indifference: American War and the Financial Logic of Risk Management* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

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When Time Preceded Eternity: Schelling's Conversion to History

ASHLEY U. VAUGHT

Through his early work and the *Identitätsphilosophie*, Schelling's view of time and eternity corresponds to the metaphysical tradition that identifies the temporal modality of eternity with knowledge of the highest truths and most perfect being. Against this, successive temporality, or time, remains always an imperfect, partial vision, which is the condition for the revelation and the 'existence' of finite things. Time belongs to that which shall not always be. This tradition has always affirmed the principle that true knowing can only grasp what does not suffer being otherwise.

Yet in his *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809), Schelling departs from that tradition, so as to think more rigorously the function of temporality in relation to human freedom and divine revelation. The increasing importance of temporality and its character, particularly vis-à-vis eternity, is a foreshadowing of the movement Schelling shall later make towards 'positive philosophy', in which the facticity of existence opposes the solipsism of 'negative' reason. Schelling's 'conversion' to history is not to be understood in terms of the conviction that temporality must be anchored in the knowing subject, as he indicates in the *Stuttgart Lectures* (1810).[1] Rather, this movement bears on the function of time for eternity. In the *Freiheitsschrift*, Schelling claims that being requires becoming for its own formation, its *Bildung*. "Being becomes aware of itself only in

1 "There is no *external* time; all time is subjective" ('Stuttgart Lectures', In *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory*, trans. T. Pfau [Albany: SUNY Press, 1994], pp. 195-243, p. 205; *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. K.F.A. Schelling [J.G. Cotta, 1856-1861], 7, p. 431; hereafter *SW*).

becoming".[2] To put this differently, eternity knows itself only through time. This formula is reproduced *both* in God's dependence on his revelation in creation and in human history, *as well as* in the dependence of the eternal act of self-actualisation of each human being on the self-organised life they endure.

In what follows, I examine this reassessment of time and its elevation above eternity in the *Freiheitsschrift*. In the first part, we witness the primacy of the eternal act of self-actualisation as it gives birth to the 'universal productive will'. This will is the expression of the design of the divine understanding. Natural history exhibits a certain self-organisation corresponding to the primacy of this universal will in its direction of the evolution of nature, through different forms of life up to the 'creation' of human being. The appearance of the human being is the final stage in the unfolding of natural history. In the second part, we closely observe the eternal and temporal dimensions of human freedom. In human freedom, the essence of the individual is produced through the eternal act of self-actualisation. The latter appears to possess a similar teleological force in the moral life of the individual, as did the 'universal productive will' in the evolution of natural history. Yet the account of one specific form of moral life—that of the convert—indicates, by contrast, that temporality effectively determines the eternal act of self-actualisation. In my conclusion, I pose several questions about the way to comprehend the meaning of human freedom and the primacy of moral life.

The context for the treatment of time and eternity in the *Freiheitsschrift*, namely, the problem of conceiving freedom, recommends a Spinozistic privileging of eternity over time, which would be consistent with other earlier works by Schelling. For example, in *Bruno* (1802), eternity was undoubtedly the metaphysical horizon for the account of the relation of philosophy to its outside (art, mythology). The primary difficulty for the *Freiheitsschrift*, in this context, is to present human freedom without reducing it to an inferior cognitive view of eternity. In *Bruno,* the finite is generally conceived in this manner.[3] But

2 *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. J. Love and J. Schmidt (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), p. 66; hereafter *FS*. See also *SW*, 7, p. 403.

3 There, Schelling conceives three levels of cognition and being, which he calls the finite, the infinite, and the eternal. It is of course remarkable that Schelling insists

Schelling wants to turn Spinoza on his head, in a proto-Marxian sense. In other words, Schelling wants to make Spinozistic substance turn on its modes. This intention corresponds exactly with Gilles Deleuze's own avowed intention in interpreting Spinoza.[4]

To see why we might expect Schelling to advance a Spinozist hierarchy of eternity over temporality, we need only look at texts like *Bruno*. Although *Bruno* is concerned with the relation of philosophy to its outside, the emergence of finite beings plays as central a role as it had throughout his work. Yet until the *Freiheitsschrift*, works such as *Bruno* (which Schelling even places in a lineage of work with the former) repeatedly subordinate human freedom to the pacifying force of the absolute. In the *Freiheitsschrift,* Schelling makes human freedom the principle of the development and fulfilment of God's existence. In so doing, he raises the finite temporality of human freedom above eternity.

Schelling's true insight in the *Freiheitsschrift* is two-fold. First, Schelling must move beyond the strictures of the critical and modern philosophy that associates totality with a merely conceptually rigorous whole. In other words, Schelling must surpass Descartes' anti-anthropomorphic identification of God with the infinite. "The entire new European philosophy since its beginning (with Descartes) has the common defect that nature is not available for it and that it lacks a living ground".[5] Although Schelling here remarks on the concept of nature, both God and nature are the recipients of his newly conceived 'living ground', which is in the *Freiheitsschrift* 'the ground' of God's existence, separate from that existence. Much later in the text, he writes that all life must have a condition,[6] and this goes for nature as well as for God. The dark ground is the condition for nature and for God's existence. Second, Schelling understands human freedom as the capacity for good and evil. This conceptualisation is only possible now that a 'dark ground' has been presented as the condition for all existence. Human freedom finds its abyss in the event in which the principle of the dark ground within the

on identifying temporal modality with ontological status. F.W.J. Schelling, *Bruno, or On the Natural and Divine Principle of Things*, trans. M. Vater (Albany: SUNY Press, 1984), pp. 148-152.

4 G. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. P. Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 40.

5 *FS*, p. 26/*SW*, p. 356.

6 *FS*, p. 62/*SW*, p. 399.

human soul rises above the 'universal will' or the will of the understanding that directs the teleological development of all of nature. With this context in hand, we are ready to approach the *Freiheitsschrift*.

From the beginning of the *Freiheitsschrift*, the traditional attributes of God are displaced by the division of God into existence and ground, as well as by the precedence of the dark ground to the divine light. Like the *Weltalter* drafts to follow, here Schelling strives to present the genesis of the divine 'personality' and the conditions necessary for God's being. Schelling fashions the 'dark ground', at least in part, to explain the fact of the coexistence of human freedom and God's existence in all of what is. "[I]ndividual freedom is surely connected in some way with the world as a whole … [thus] some kind of system must be present, at least in the divine understanding, with which freedom coexists".[7] To explain this coexistence without quickly snuffing out the limited powers of individual freedom, Schelling postulates a ground in God that is not God. This ground is the condition for the actuality of human freedom.

The first traditional attribute to suffer displacement by Schelling's account is the notion of God's eternity, which here discovers its genesis. By God's eternity I mean the positing of the 'representation', first solicited by an irrational 'yearning'. The yearning is properly an expression of the dark ground, but the "representation" is that "through which, since it can have no other object but God, God sees himself in an exact image of himself".[8] This representation is the divine understanding itself. The divine understanding and the yearning "become a freely creating and all-powerful will and build in the initial anarchy of nature [the dark ground] as in its own element or instrument".[9] I identify the divine understanding with God's eternity for two reasons. First, the divine understanding is effectively the cause of creation, although this divine understanding is itself something generated—and as we will see, it undergoes a reciprocal process of formation by the created world. This description resonates with Leibniz's view of the divine understanding, which was necessarily the eternal cause of the created world and had pre-conceived all possible worlds in order to determine the best.[10] Second, all

7 *FS*, p. 9/*SW*, p. 337.

8 *FS*, p. 30/*SW*, pp. 360-361.

9 *FS*, p. 30/*SW*, p. 361.

10 I part with Heidegger's insistence on the eminence of Leibniz throughout the *Freiheitsschrift* (M. Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise 'On the Essence of Human*

forms of temporality are conceived in relation to cognition, following Schelling's comments in the *Stuttgart Lectures*. The divine understanding is the first and ultimate form of cognition in the *Freiheitsschrift*.

Yet God's eternity must be qualified as an eternity not to be confused with endless (and therefore indeterminate) or even total duration. Divine eternity cannot be endless duration, because in the dark ground it finds a limit (although arguably it is not a determinate limit). Divine eternity also cannot be total duration, as it is clearly preceded by a dark ground that would lie outside its exhaustive, totalising aims. All claims of a before and after are alien to this temporality, as Schelling understands it: "Here there is no first and last because all things mutually presuppose each other, no thing is another thing and yet no thing is not without another thing".[11] The reciprocal causation within eternity likens it more to a circular temporality. The divine understanding finds in the dark ground the condition for its own existence. But the dark ground as well is nothing before it is opposed to the divine understanding. As we will see, divine eternity also has a sense of circularity in its relation to the ends (and beginnings) of creation. But there eternity will intersect with successive temporality.

Freedom', trans. J. Stambaugh [Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985], p. 38, esp. pp. 83-96). Instead, I would argue that Spinoza remains, beyond the *Identitätsphilosophie*, the philosopher with whom Schelling grapples. Most commentators link the *Identitätsphilosophie* with the apogee of Spinoza's influence over Schelling's thinking. This view is particularly wrong in consideration of the continued provocation of Jacobi's *Pantheismuststreit* polemic. Spinoza must be recalled as the progenitor of that debate, as well as the primary referent behind the word *pantheism*. The entire introduction of the *Freiheitsschrift* is devoted to unravelling the meaning of pantheism—the text is a clear defense of pantheistic metaphysics—and Spinoza's view there plays a crucial role. His view there of Spinoza's pantheism is both tremendously banal and novel. It is banal in that he claims, like all of his predecessors, that Spinoza is an acosmist, who by reducing creatures to God effectively de-actualises them. But his view is quite novel in that he claims this occurs through a dramatic generic difference between things and God. As far as I know, the *Freiheitsschrift* is the only place where Schelling so describes this "gulf" separating God and things in Spinoza. Such a view is quite favourable to Schelling's own quite novel attempt to reclaim the concept of "immanence" as a proximity to God increasing proportionally to the freedom of a created being. Thus, the most free beings are also the most "immanent" beings. On this view, for Schelling all created beings are "transcendent" in relation to Spinozan substance.

11 *FS*, p. 28/*SW*, p. 358.

When speaking of divine eternity, Schelling unsurprisingly finds himself bound by the limitations of language and the necessity to term creation a sort of 'moment'. The 'yearning' that solicits the divine understanding does, as a 'yearning', imply a duration leading to some epochal emergence or break. That emergence doesn't properly occur in the rise of the divine understanding, but in the 'act' of creation that the divine understanding and this 'yearning' cooperatively produce. Together, the divine understanding and this yearning are a will of the understanding, which is the primary power giving shape to the dynamic, yet formless ground. This is God's existence in the created world, and as such the invention of successive temporality, time, constitutive of the natural world. To amplify this point: the divine understanding is synonymous with God's eternity. The divine understanding is the concept or image through which God grasps himself. That self-conception effectively produces itself in the created world—bringing God's existence into being. Duration or succession belongs to existence.

As presented, Schelling's notion of divine eternity appears to serve as a transcendental principle for temporal succession. The successive time of creation is itself dependent upon the creative power exercised through the divine understanding in concert with the yearning of the dark ground. This will of the understanding, as Schelling will call it, bears an eternity that causes and brings into being God's existence in creation. But although we might speak of the chronological *and* logical priority of the eternity of the divine understanding, God's existence in creation shall in turn 'moment' God's essence. To see this, we need only consider the different stages of creation.

The first stage of creation brings the natural world into existence. In this we include presumably the universe and earth, as well as plant and animal life, or, in brief, body: "The forces split up … in this division are the material from which the body is subsequently configured. … [Following which appears,] the vital bond which arises in division—thus from the depths of the natural ground, as the centre of forces—however, is the soul".[12] This soul appears in perhaps plant (as irritability) but certainly animal life (sensation, autonomous locomotion). The soul is the bond of two separate principles—the universal will and the self-will—

12 *FS*, p. 31/*SW*, p. 362.

emerged from the opacity of the body. A veritable evolution appears in the animal kingdom developing to a soul in which this bond unites two principles equally independent of one another, whereas hitherto the universal will had constantly been dominant. The human soul possesses these two wills in equal power and opposition to one another.

The word 'evolution' is, to my mind, therefore not inappropriate in describing the development of created nature. Unlike Darwinian evolution, certainly, no external criterion determines the selection and continued genesis of creatures. Creation bears a truly internal teleological principle in the will of the understanding or universal will, as it directs the development of the bodied world to its end, the human being. Natural history is successive and asymmetrical. Given that the divine understanding directs this natural evolution through the will of the understanding's creative power in nature, eternity remains a transcendental principle in which natural history merely bears out the pre-conceived design of the divine understanding. Eternity is a principle of self-actualisation—the creation of an essence that is then mirrored in corporeal existence. Natural creation, by contrast, is an unfolding self-organisation, in which all development reflects the essence 'pre' -conceived within eternity.

I introduce the terms self-organisation and self-actualisation to emphasise the vital functions of time and eternity, respectively. By self-organisation I mean the teleological organisation of a being that unfolds in successive temporal existence. In self-organisation, we see the domination of a being by a rational principle, which in the case of God's *existence* is the divine understanding. Self-organisation is a becoming in time, but a becoming that is directed. By self-actualisation I understand the actualisation or creation of an essence, which occurs 'in' eternity and cannot be reduced to a temporal becoming. Self-actualisation is a radical non-anticipated happening. It is a spontaneous essence producing act in which arguably—in the case of God's existence—neither the divine understanding nor the dark ground is alone active, but in which the dark ground is certainly the principle of solicitation. The dark ground incites self-actualisation. Below I will show how these same functions of time and eternity, self-organisation and self-actualisation, appear in human being.

We may, however, pose some temporary conclusions concerning

the relation of time and eternity in God. First, the eternity of the divine understanding functions as a transcendental principle that shapes and gives order and direction to successive the temporality of natural creation. Second, this transcendental relation is consistent with the onto-theological tradition that precedes Schelling. Third, the succession of time in natural history is incomplete, as we have only reached the creation of human being and, as Schelling puts it, the "possibility of evil", or the opposition of the two wills. Nevertheless, the creation of human being is the teleological endpoint of natural history.

Human history overturns the happy teleological order of natural history. In natural history, the universal will had dominated the development of created beings. This development reaches its acme in the equiposition of the universal and self wills of the human being. Human freedom, is, however, *both* the selection *and* the affirmation of one of those two wills, *both* in temporal experience of human life *and* in the eternal event of self-actualisation. As we examine these different temporal modalities of human freedom, it will become apparent that successive, phenomenal human experience is primary in relation to the eternal event of self-actualisation. In his account of human freedom, Schelling observes at least three distinct moments. The first considers the *possibility* of good and evil, the second turns to the *actuality* of good and evil, and the third compares several different moral characters. Schelling's oblique treatment of the moral character of the convert will provide ground to reconceive the hitherto transcendental force of self-actualisation, and think the priority of temporality over eternity.

We have above briefly presented the possibility of human freedom, rehearsing the development of natural history in the creation of (human) bodies with souls possessing equipotent wills (the universal and self wills). In human being "there is the whole power of the dark principle and at the same time the whole strength of the light".[13] These two principles form the structure or the basis of the freedom of the human being for good or for evil—and this is for Schelling a fundamental insight of the *Freiheitsschrift*. It is not enough to conceive freedom as an exception from the strictures of the spatio-temporal, as a kind of spontaneity. The latter was Kant's insight, as Schelling notes.[14] Rather, we will see that

13 *FS*, p. 32/*SW*, p. 363.

14 *FS*, p. 21/*SW*, p. 351. Presumably Schelling is referring to the cosmological description of freedom in the "Third Antinomy" of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

human freedom contains a strictly successively temporal component in the lives of different moral characters. But the positive concept of freedom comes, at least in Schelling's description, not from its temporal dimension, but from the will's capacity for good and for evil. This corresponds to the metaphysical conditions that are necessary for freedom to coexist by God's intellect, namely, that there is a part of God that is not God.[15]

The possibility of human freedom, however, is not wholly explained by the equiposition and the separability of these two wills, for this is a condition that does not *actually* obtain. Instead, Schelling merely describes this as the condition for human being; human being is not the separation of those wills, but their unification. "Selfhood as such is spirit [the identity of both principles], however it is at the same time raised from the creaturely into what is above the creaturely; it is will that beholds itself in complete freedom, being no longer an instrument of the productive universal will in nature, but rather above and outside of all nature".[16] The selfhood of the individual is necessary for its freedom, for its independence from the "universal will."[17] As we will see below, this selfhood is what precipitates the eternal event of self-actualisation. Selfhood has two basic choices (as well as several variations thereon); first, it "can strive to be as a particular will that which it only is through identity with the universal will" and this would be tantamount to the selection of the "good spirit"; or it "steps out from its being behind nature, in order as general will to make itself at once particular and creaturely, [and] strives to reverse the relation of the principles, to elevate

15 One of the consequences of this condition is *not*, as one might expect, that a being is more free insofar as they are separate from God—in other words, the closer they are to the "dark principle". This conclusion would seem to follow from the requirement that freedom demands a separate principle. Instead Schelling claims that a being is "more immanent" to God insofar as these two principles of the soul are separate from one another. "[O]nly what is free is in God to the extent that it is free, and what is not free is necessarily outside of God to the extent that it is not free" (*FS*, pp. 18-19/*SW*, p. 347). Schelling transforms the meaning of immanence to denote ontological proximity rather than spatial proximity and/or causal overdetermination.

16 *FS*, p. 33/*SW*, p. 364.

17 Note that by freedom Schelling here means independence, whereas at other points Schelling will describe human being's highest freedom as the affirmation of the universal will.

the ground over the cause" and this is evil.[18] To amplify, the good spirit describes the subordination of the particular will to the universal, whereas the evil spirit raises itself above the universal will to become the dominating principle.[19]

We have now described the possibility, or the structural account, of the freedom of the will. But for Schelling this is insignificant in relation to the eternal event of self-actualisation and the life of self-organised spirit. I mean to emphasise that freedom is *not* separate from its temporal modalities. Schelling must describe the metaphysical conditions of freedom. Yet the actuality of freedom is more important, insofar as it is the life of human being that is the way by which God is revealed, and this actuality occurs both in eternity and in the temporality of human experience.

The account of self-actualisation precedes Schelling's description of the different moral lives, and this would lead one to believe that self-actualisation is an event that occurs before human life. Schelling will deny that the word *before* would apply here, as we are speaking of an eternal event, yet it is quite evident from Schelling's language that he intends the eternal self-actualisation to precede human life, even if only logically. The actuality of evil occurs with the 'solicitation' of this equiposition of wills to break their stalemate.[20] As in emergence of the divine understanding, the dark ground incites self-actualisation. The equiposition of the wills must be broken. This does not mean that the will of the ground, which solicits this act of choosing, is the determining force. It also does not mean that equiposition of will represents a state of indetermination.

Instead Schelling invokes a "higher necessity", "an inner necessity springing from the essence of the acting individual itself".[21] It constitutes the "inner necessity" of the human being because it is what makes that person who he or she is. Despite these accents on necessity, Schelling perceives this necessity as perfectly identified with freedom. Thus, there

18 *FS*, p. 33/*SW*, p. 365; p. 34/*SW*, p. 365.

19 In fact, Schelling gestures towards at least four different moral characters, including the life of "religiosity", or that of the good spirit; that of the sinner, or of the evil spirit; that of someone exhibiting *akrasia*; and that of the convert.

20 *FS*, p. 41/*SW*, p. 374.

21 *FS*, p. 49/*SW*, p. 383.

is a strange kind of circularity in Schelling's account of this "inner necessity", not unlike the way that Fichte claims that the ego is its own act.[22] This analogy is particularly suggestive because this act "produces" consciousness.[23] Presumably, Schelling means by consciousness not merely the transcendental form of consciousness, but the moral character of the individual. This is what is at issue. The type of spirit that will eternally dominate the will: "as man acts here so has he acted from eternity and already in the beginning of creation".[24] Schelling embraces a notion of predestination in this limited conception, as opposed to the traditional notion by which the essence of man is the result of a 'groundless' decision of God. For Schelling, this 'decision' is the act of each individual.

As I said above, there is a strange circularity to this eternal act, not only insofar as it "is not to be thought as prior in time" and insofar as an act of self-actualisation is an act by the self which is effectively being produced, but also because this act of self-actualisation is a kind of 'second creation' that repeats the 'first creation'. By the 'first creation' Schelling understands the emergence of the will of the understanding from the yearning of the dark ground. The 'second creation' is the act by which the individual, according to an 'inner necessity', determines her essence. The act whereby the essence of a human being is produced *repeats* the act where by God and creation came into being. Even a fourth sense of this circularity appears when we consider Schelling's description of this eternal "act" as what "does not belong to time but rather to eternity; it also does not temporally precede life but *goes through time* (unhampered by it) as an act which is eternal by nature".[25] Self-actualisation "goes through time [*durch die Zeit*]". Despite the fact that Schelling explicitly states that self-actualisation does not 'belong' to time, eternity possesses some kind of relation to time. What can be said with certainty is that self-actualisation is an act of determination that is not *over*, but is continually being-determined; it is not a becoming-determined.[26] How it goes through time we shall see below.

22 *FS*, p. 50/*SW*, p. 385.
23 *FS*, p. 52/*SW*, p. 386.
24 *FS*, pp. 52-53/*SW*, p. 387.
25 *FS*, 51/*SW*, pp. 385-386. My emphasis.
26 Obviously, even the presentist language of "being-determined" is inadequate in speaking of eternity, as it is imbued with the sense of temporal succession.

Does this mean that in life the individual's moral character becomes, but not in eternity? Perhaps, if 'becoming' has been reduced to denoting simply the temporal modality at issue. The logical precedence of this eternal act to the moral life of the individual would suggest that the temporal modality is merely that—a modality, and therefore inessential in relation to the ontological event taking place. But that view is mistaken, although this only becomes clear when we look at moral life.

The first accounts of the self-organisation of moral life again reify the transcendental priority of eternal self-actualisation. "It is true in the strictest understanding that, given how man is in fact created, it is not he himself but rather the good or evil spirit in him that acts".[27] This is the reason why the moral character of the individual presents him as he has been from all eternity. The thoroughly determined moral character thus betrays a teleologically organised 'becoming', and in this regard parallels the teleological evolution of created nature.[28] "Because there is the highest harmony in creation, and nothing is as discrete and consecutive as we must portray it to be, but rather in what is earlier that which comes later is also already active".[29] No moment passes that is not already bound up with the destiny of creation. The teleological resonance in this passage is unmistakable.

Yet the case of the moral convert complicates this teleological account, and leads Schelling to some unpleasant, yet perhaps unavoidable conclusions. If in the good or evil individual, strictly speaking, the spirit acts, in both respects a teleological meaning is unquestionable. Yet Schelling curiously raises the question of the moral convert, who is moved from the life of evil to that of the good—by some sort of assistance.

But suppose now that human or divine assistance—(man

27 *FS*, p. 54/*SW*, p. 389.
28 It is for this reason that I again adopt the language of self-organisation to describe the moral life of the individual. By self-organisation, in addition to the temporal becoming in time, I think of the way that Kant speaks of a "self-organising" being in the *Critique of Judgement* (1790). "[T]he possibility of the parts … must depend on their relation to the whole. … the parts of the things combine into the unity of a whole because they are reciprocally cause and effect of their form." I. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. W. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), pp. 252-253 (§65).
29 *FS*, p. 52/*SW*, p. 387.

> always requires some assistance)—may destine an individual to convert to the good, then, that he grants the good spirit this influence and does not positively shut himself off from it, lies likewise already in the initial action whereby he is this individual and no other. That is why in the man in which this transformation has not taken place but in which the good principle is also not completely extinguished, the inner voice of his own better nature, in terms of what he now is, never ceases to exhort him to such transformation, just as he first finds peace within his own inner realm through a real and decisive turnaround and, as if only now the initial idea had been satisfied, finds himself reconciled with his guardian spirit.[30]

Schelling's reference to "assistance" is beguiling: how, if an individual's spirit is what acts, can she be 'assisted' in conversion? The account of the convert implies that the good spirit holds back in reserve until a moment when through a sort of "magical stroke," the conversion occurs.[31] The evil spirit is therefore active within the individual until, at an unspecified, ostensibly inexplicable moment, the individual *reconciles* with the good spirit. We also know from this passage that, at least when the evil spirit is in ascendance, the good spirit is normally "extinguished [*erstorben*]". Does Schelling mean the power of the universal will has died in this case? If so, whether this is the case for the self-will when the good spirit dominates is unclear.

The language of this passage corresponds to the human experience of conversion—the before and after of conversion—yet according to the concept of an eternal self-actualisation, this is impossible. How then are we to think this conversion within the space of eternal self-actualisation? It must be the case that the human essence is eternally in an active state of being-determined, not becoming-determined. But can being-determined sustain transformation? It cannot sustain indeterminacy or contingency,[32] and this requires us to answer this question negatively. One solution, however, is offered if we posit the temporal existence of the human being

30 *FS*, p. 54/*SW*, p. 389.

31 *FS*, p. 52/*SW*, p. 387. Schelling uses this expression, "magical stroke", to capture the spontaneity of the event of the self-actualisation, yet it seems that, in a different sense, it is equally applicable here.

32 *FS*, pp. 50-51/*SW*, p. 384-385.

to be a determining force of self-actualisation. Can the moral life of the individual in turn affect her *spirit*? This would not only be possible, but necessary, if human assistance intervened and precipitated conversion.[33]

In turn, such a function of moral life would explain why human life is, whatsoever, and it would coincide with the function that human freedom plays for divine revelation. For Schelling, the only way pantheism may be consistent with a concept of human freedom is if the latter is a crucial moment in the unfolding of God's revelation. To put this back into the context of divine creation, natural history expresses a teleology that is overcome by the *event* of self-actualisation of the finite individual. The freedom exemplified in human being is not merely the selection of the dominant will in self-actualisation, but also the affirmation of that will in the self-organised life of the individual. Similarly, God becomes what he is through his revelation in creation: "Being becomes aware of itself in becoming."[34] In other words, the ontological act of creation is not complete in its eternal modality and its temporal aspect is not reducible to a mere moment of the latter. Rather, we find that temporality equally *goes through* eternity.

But it is not enough to posit a symmetrical relation between eternity and temporality, such that the latter equally affects the former. We must go a step further and acknowledge the paradoxical purposivity of human history as the goal of divine revelation. In particular, we must inquire into the validity of creation as a purposive act and the meaning of creation to the degree that it is conceived as the means by which the divine revelation is complete. At present, we are poised to join commentators like Dale Snow and Michelle Kosch, who comprehend the *Freiheitsschrift* as an account of moral voluntarism or a theory of human character.[35] But to conclude, as I seek to, that temporality *precedes*

33 Divine assistance could mean as little as it does for Augustine, when he speaks of the help that we received when we turn our will to God. That is, it could mean simply that the will's free choice of the good, or God, is the assistance or help that the convert receives.

34 *FS*, p. 66/*SW*, p. 403.

35 D. Snow, *Schelling and the End of Idealism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), p. 155ff. M. Kosch, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling and Kierkegaard* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 88-89. In Snow's defence, her account is very rich and multifaceted, developing significantly the account of metaphysical pantheism in relation to what she shall call a "theory of character." Kosch, by contrast, seems genuinely flummoxed by the *Freiheitsschrift*.

eternity does not mean raising the accounts of moral life above the metaphysical speculations of the text, so as to ground the latter in something immediately and unproblematically coherent. Such accounts facilitate the appropriation of Schelling as a proto-existentialist thinker. Although such conceptual anticipations of existentialism exist, Schelling is profoundly *not* an ethical thinker.[36]

The speculative confusion of the conclusion of the *Freiheitsschrift* is not a mere problem of dressing his notion of "moral voluntarism" in mystical, onto-theological, pantheistic language. In recovering the primacy of moral life in relation to the eternal self-actualisation, Schelling has revealed the limitations of tidy, conceptual accounts of divine personality.[37] For this reason he will claim that God is life, not merely a system.[38] By this he means the following: God *is* a system in respect of the divine understanding, which is an idea of creation as it exists and unfolds. Divine understanding foresaw the evolution of natural history and the creation of human being. But divine understanding—God's eternal essence—finds its condition in the ground, which is both the material of creation and what interrupts the teleological organisation of nature and human being. In respect of the ground, God is a life.

Yet Schelling allows the theological resonances of the *Freiheitsschrift* to distract from the orientation of his account. Whereas earlier passages sung of the "indivisible remainder" of the ground,

36 Schelling is to metaphysics as Spinoza is to ethics. Which is to say, the affective, experiential language of Schelling's texts may lead us to the conclusion that he is concerned with ethics. Insofar as ethics or practical philosophy concerns freedom, this may be true. But Schelling thinks primarily in terms of metaphysical problems which happen to coincide with certain ethical problems. In particular, Schelling remains stubbornly focused on the meaning of finitude throughout his work. Whereas the non-experiential, quasi-technical language of Spinoza's *Ethics* and the primacy of its metaphysics thereto, has had the horrible consequence of confusing scores of German readers (including Schelling) into believing Spinoza was a metaphysician, when in fact he was concerned with human flourishing.

37 Although this is not the place to develop this theme, the *Freiheitsschrift* conceives the limitations of reason in favour of the understanding, and this constitutes a fundamental reversal in the cognitive hierarchy that persisted throughout the *Identitätsphilosophie*. For example, in the 'Presentation of My System of Philosophy', Schelling begins by identifying reason with being and subordinating *Verstand* ('Presentation of My System of Philosophy [1801]', trans. M. Vater, *Philosophical Forum*, 32:4 [Winter 2001], pp. 339-371, at p. 349).

38 *FS*, p. 62/*SW*, p. 399.

Schelling broaches the questions of the purpose of creation and of the reason God permitted evil. Such questions necessarily lead to inadequate, impotent answers and self-destructive speculation. Thus, Schelling finally is drawn to speak of the radical separation of the *Nichtsein* of the ground from *Sein*, the reduction of evil to non-being.[39] This is the point at which Heidegger believes Schelling has fallen "back into the rigidified tradition of Western thought without creatively transforming it."[40] Schelling has reinscribed the anarchic possibilities of human freedom back into the complete revelation of God. Ironically, when evil has been reduced to non-being, God loses the "life" which excepted Him from system.

In conclusion, on my view, the teleological trappings of Schelling's account of creation demand resolution in the complete submission of God to the vicissitudes of human history. In other words, in order for this unique teleology to complete itself, it must empty itself wholly into human being and human freedom. Where a conclusion to divine revelation remains, human freedom is simply instrumentalised.

39 *FS*, p. 67/*SW*, p. 404.

40 Heidegger, *Schelling's Treatise*, p. 161.

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Novelty, Temporality, Negativity: Event-Metaphysics with Jean-Luc Nancy

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Introduction

French philosophy of the past fifty years has discussed one term more than any other, the term namely, of 'event,' *événement*. While the contributions of Deleuze, Badiou and others are well known in this context, Jean-Luc Nancy's attempt has been largely ignored to date. In recent years Nancy has returned to his event-theory, but now referring to it more explicitly as a "creation ex nihilo." As a thinker working under the aegis of Heideggerian philosophy, Nancy must confront his event-theory with the constraints imposed by Heideggerian *Seinsgeschichte*. In other words, at least *this* event conception cannot return to an onto-theological positing of alterity. For other thinkers, the postulation of an absolutely singular alterity in an event does not pose a problem viz. a metaphysics of presence. However, Nancy's attempt importantly avoids that metaphysics and its implication of a classical dialectic of break and continuity.

It is important to note that what drives this constraint, or limit, on the discourse on the event, is that the latter is defined essentially negatively. An event stands in a relation of negativity with respect to some term representative of continuity. Regardless of how continuity is then accounted for it remains that the essence of the event – conceived of as anomaly – is inexorably tied up with negativity. (It should also be noted, parenthetically, that the French word *événement*, in contemporary usage, prior to any philosophical reflection at all, already designates more than the idea of any particular occurrence or event, it carries very much the connotation of something extraordinary, carrying some modicum of novelty or at least of surprise, indeed of anomalousness.) Hence, if Nancy

can read negativity otherwise – and this is his aim, not to separate event from negativity but to reinterpret it – then he may have been able to overcome the constraint imposed by the metaphysics of presence.

Succinctly formulated, Nancy's most novel contribution to the discourses surrounding events is that he *rethinks the central issue of negativity in an effort to escape a 'metaphysics of presence'*.

In the following we will propose an event-metaphysics, *based on* ideas to be found in Jean-Luc Nancy's thinking of creation *ex nihilo*. While he has spoken of creation *ex nihilo* in a number of places, we will privilege the essay 'Surprise de l'événement',[1] and refer to other writings in ancillary fashion. This is not only because the metaphysical structure of eventlikeness (*événementialité*) is amply sketched out here, but also because this text was originally addressed to Alain Badiou. Since we cannot develop all the details of this conception in the space allotted, we will emphasise two aspects: time and negativity, and only hint at others such as space, sense or structure. We will proceed largely by way of historical glosses on material implicitly referred to by Nancy in his highly 'constructivist' writing. His conception of the New, we claim, is clearly not reducible to a line-break model. Nor does it result, most importantly, in the sort of reactionary leftist ontology which, in the interest of singularity, ends up reinstating a theology of absolute alterity or of the messiah.

Quid and *Quod*

In what constitutes the first step on his path, Nancy begins by recuperating a traditional metaphysical distinction: the one between thatness and whatness.[2] The eventness of the event, what makes an event

1 J.-L. Nancy, 'Surprise de l'événement', in *Être singulier pluriel* (Paris: Galilée, 1996).

2 The history of this distinction is almost as old as the history of philosophy itself. Pierre Hadot had attributed it to the 'anonymous commentary' (possibly by Porphyry) on Plato's *Parmenides,* while Jean-François Courtine (arguing against Hadot), in his *Suarez et le système de la métaphysique* (Paris: PUF, 1990), claims an Aristotelian author, by insisting on the terminology of *energeia-dynamis* in the commentary. Relatedly, Kevin Corrigan has defended the possibility of reading certain Plotinus texts as sources for the distinction between *to on/to einai*, and therefore as the source for *quid/quod*. See 'Essence/existence in the Enneads', in *Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, ed. L. P. Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.,

precisely an event (and not, say, a state of affairs, a *Sachverhalt*) is to be found in its *thatness*. Not *what* happens, not the outcome or the result of the occurring, its ontic content or its quiddity, its whatness – this, he suggests, is rather what is aimed at in the notion of an advent, '*avènement*.' Rather, the eventness of the event is in its thatness, or *that* it occurred or happened. On this side we find the sheer, the pure, the mere, the 'fact' of happening. This thatness is thus the pure arising or emergence of the event. Now, one might here argue that this is tantamount to ascribing an essence to events as such. However, on Nancy's conception, or more specifically, in Nancy's language, it is neither necessary nor desirable to essentialise *thatness*. If we separate what happens from the happening, then in a second step we efface that definite article: so the eventness of the event is not in *the* happening, in *the* arising but rather in happening, in arising, in emerging – without necessarily unifying the latter into a one, into a simple. In other words, the thatness which constitutes the event points to 'happening' and 'emerging,' verbs deprived of a unifying definite article. The difference here is the one between the infinitive of the verb on the one hand, and on the other, the verbal noun, the verb treated as a substantive and then as substance.[3]

What has been said so far is well known from other sources. We have simply connected the eventness of the event with pure happening irrespective of that which happens or 'pure emergence;' as he says, "*pur survenir.*" This pure happening is also called pure in the further sense that it is detached, or cut-off from what might precede it. In other words, the insistence on the sheer and empty *thatness* means that the emergence is not emergence out of something, subsequent to that something, or following from it, determined by it or subject to it as to a ground. The *thatness* of pure happening does not point to an *arche* or to a prior element in a sequence. Happening is not situated in a temporal series. It is

1996), pp. 105-129.

3 Derrida has noted that this refusal of a definite article is a recurrent topos in all of Nancy's writings. See *Le Toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy* (Paris: Galilée, 2000), p. 35. It is also exploited by Deleuze in *The Logic of Sense* and will be familiar to students of the Stoic analysis of language. Taking the Deleuzo-Stoic conception to the extreme would mean that instead of analysing propositions of the form S is P, and constructing a metaphysics correlative thereto, we should instead begin with phrases of the form gerund1 performs gerund2, or G1 G2s, i.e. 'arborescence greens' as opposed to 'the tree is green.' This obviously calls for a different logic than the Aristotelian one, and will also imply a different metaphysical system too.

not to be conceived of as an instant in a sequential or serial conception of time. With this distinction, Nancy is glossing, in his own way, Heidegger's critique of the concept of time. To be more precise, we would say that he adopts Heidegger's delimitation of the legitimacy of now-time, thereby assuming the limits of this concept, as well as its difference from other temporalities. But if Nancy adopts the critical side of Heidegger's approach, this is not to imply necessarily that he equally accepts all the other possible temporalities formulated by Heidegger. The concept of time to be presented below thus does not claim to correspond to Heidegger's ecstatic-horizonal temporality.

The Temporality of the New, *ex nihilo*

In order to determine, at least preliminarily, what the temporality of the New might be, we must move beyond the gloss on Heidegger and consider a key implication of his critique of Now-time as drawn by Nancy. From the distinction between a sequential and an eventlike, or a happening, temporality we can seize on the idea that the latter is not preceded by anything, that it does not allow a structure of anteriority. It is, literally, preceded by nothing, by nothingness. If the happening is not in a sequence of nows, in a series, then it emerges not out of what went before, not out of something else, not *ex aliud*, but out of nothing, *ex nihilo*. So, on Nancy's conception, the happening of the event, its pure thatness, is unprecedented and thus quite strongly *ex nihilo*. It is the interpretation of the negativity inhering in this *ex nihilo*, in this *nihil*, which is most interesting in Nancy's texts.

This last move, which leads to the *ex nihilo,* also puts us into the proximity of Kant; Nancy quotes from the second *Analogy*: "...eine Wirklichkeit, die auf eine leere Zeit folge mithin ein Entstehen, vor dem kein Zustand der Dinge vorhergeht, kann ebensowenig, als die leere Zeit selbst apprehendiert werden"[4] The temporality of eventness is thus to be unfolded based on these two references, to Heidegger and to Kant, but – and this is distinctive of Nancy in the context of French philosophy – without falling into the trap which is the *Kantbuch*. In order to appreciate this we need to recall some of the detail of Kant's language and its context. We cannot digress now into a full exegesis of that context, namely the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence, and we will here admittedly

4 I. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, (Hamburg: Meiner, 1990), A192/B237.

only offer a very general report of basic terms. When Kant, in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, argues in favor of the transcendentally ideal nature of time, he is, one must always remember, arguing against both the Leibnizian and the Newtonian concepts of time. Whereas the former advanced a theory which conceives time as essentially relational, as constituted by nothing more than temporal relations,[5] the latter, Newton, was a proponent of an 'absolute' time.[6] Such an absolute time would by definition be independent of the objects in it and would serve as universal framework or reference frame, a where-in for appearances. Kant of course criticises both options; his argument against the second alternative, against an existing, real, absolute time, is of relevance to us because of the terminological connections that it includes. The essential moment of the argument is that an absolute, object-independent (thus 'empty') time would be imperceptible. What is important for our concerns, is to note that in this context, in order to arrive at this conclusion, Kant assumes an equivalence between a real, existing, 'time itself' and the concept of an 'empty time.' In other words, in order to maintain that time itself as framework cannot be perceived it has to be thought of as emptied of objects (or appearances which would be the objects of our perceptions). No perception without *perceptum*. This is to say that in Kantian language the notions of 'absolute time,' 'time itself,' and 'empty time' are functionally equivalent, and that they are so, as necessary premises for Kant's arguments in the *Transcendental Aesthetic.*

The next set of references, important to Nancy's interpretation of the temporal structure of eventness, is linked to the *Analogies of Experience* (though this is the textual anchor always referred to by Nancy, one could also look elsewhere in the first *Critique*, e.g. to the first *Antinomy*). Here we turn to the fact that Kant explicitly rejects the idea of a beginning from out of nothing, i.e. explicitly rejects the possibility of an *ex nihilo*. The argument here is much the same as above. It is claimed that a beginning from out of nothing, or a being following upon a non-being, is imperceptible precisely because the antecedent nothing cannot be perceived for itself just as 'empty' time cannot be perceived. Once again,

5 He declares this succinctly in the third letter to Clarke; see *Leibniz. Opera Philosophica...*, Pars Prior, ed. J. Erdman (Berlin: Eichler, 1840), p.752.

6 In the *Scholium* between the definitions and the laws of motion, at the beginning of the *Principia*, Newton defines absolute time as independent of objects and hence relations. *Philosophia Naturalis Principa Mathematica* (London: Royal Society, 1687), p. 5.

important for us is that on the way to arguing against the *ex nihilo*, Kant again makes a conceptual connection which proves useful beyond the confines of his own interests, namely the link between the inception *ex nihilo* and the notion of 'empty' time. The possibility of a beginning out of nothing is disputed because it's 'nothing' would be equivalent to 'empty' or 'absolute' time.

These two Kantian strands tied together imply an equivalence between inception *ex nihilo* and, by way of 'empty' time, time 'itself.' Here we begin to gain a glimpse into the temporality of eventlikeness (*événementialité*) according to Nancy.

Thus to reiterate, after a Heideggerian distinction between different temporalities (and *a fortiori* different types of presence), we have come to associate the thatness of happening with a non-sequential temporality (and implicitly, again, a non-sequential presence). Though adopting the Heideggerian limitation of sequential time, we do not however link eventlikeness with ekstatiko-horizonal temporality. Rather, with Kant's help, we try to think the non-sequential temporality of happening, or the temporality of an emergence *ex nihilo*, as 'empty time' or 'time itself.' Of course we cannot lose sight of one important fact, namely, that Kant disputed the legitimacy of these notions which he links together.

If inception *ex nihilo* is linked to 'time itself,' it is only to claim that they are both equally impossible; statements to this effect abound in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, the *Analogies of Experience* and in the first *Antinomy.* What is more, recalling the context and argumentative target of Kant's analysis, we might be led to suspect that the temporality of eventlikeness, this concept of 'time itself' which is resuscitated by Nancy is tantamount to an affirmation of a pre-critical, Newtonian concept of absolute time. Is Nancy simply transgressing Kantianism in the direction of a Newtonian temporality? If this were to be the case, then the 'time itself' which is being appealed to would be essentially a permanent unchanging substance.

The idea of non-sequentiality certainly seems to point in this direction, for without sequence there is neither before nor after, neither preceding nor succeeding, neither a no-longer nor a not-yet. Hence, 'time itself' would become synonymous with some form of presence if not permanence. To break away from the pull of this direction of thinking, Nancy suggests a novel notion of presence and the present. The present at

issue here neither passes away nor was it ever outstanding. And yet this present is not static and self-same either. This seeming paradox is dissolved by Nancy's 'prepositional' concept of presence. He suggests that we finally take seriously the prepositional prefix *prae-* in *praesens*, and that we introduce it into the meaning of the word present. The *pre-* designates an advance that is to be understood dynamically, in other words, as a preceding oneself or a relation to self, where the preceding is accomplished in a process. (We will meet this dynamicisation or processualisation of the preposition again, below, in the case of the *ex* in *ex nihilo*) Present then, is not a presence to self, a coinciding and identity with self, but rather a presence which includes a difference. The prepositional understanding of presence points to its relational and structural character, the relation however is not a relation to some other presence (when we do away with sequence we lose this possibility), it must remain a relation to itself. Here we see Nancy essentially suggesting a figure of an auto-emergence, a self-differential, at the heart of the *pre-* in presence. "Cette présence … est prae-sentia, être-toujours-en-avant-de-soi, *sortant de soi ex nihilo*."[7]

Behind the notions of advancing and preceding, especially 'being-ahead-of-oneself,' the reader may recognise a variant of Heideggerian *Vorlaufen.* Although Nancy doesn't explicitly use the vocabulary of ekstasis and horizon, he seems to have freely appropriated some insights from that conception of temporality. The exteriority of ekstasis is certainly there, now in the preposition in *pre-*sence, but it is figured in the structuralist vocabulary of relation. The *pre-* of *pre-sence* is the *ex-* of *ekstasis*. The transport out of self is in the advance before oneself in presence. Irrespective of an intellectual debt, what we need to underline is that the identity of the presence of eventness is not a pure and unitary given because it is constituted by a relation. The temporality of happening, thus, does insist on a notion of presence, albeit a novel one, freed from notions of past and future but also fundamentally structured and not a pure indivisible atomic unity.

Does this notion of temporality invoke a concept of permanent substance, as Kant did in the first *Analogy*? This would be fitting since, historically, an idealism of substance is not far off when speaking of structure and relation. As far as Kant's text is concerned, it is of course

7 J.-L. Nancy, 'Dies illa. D'une fin à l'infini, ou de la création', in *Jean-François Lyotard – L'exercise de la différend* (Paris: PUF, 2001), p. 97.

nothing other than his understanding of substance that allows him to deny the possibility of a beginning out of nothing. According to the theory propounded in the first two *Analogies*, any change, *Veränderung*, takes place, *geschieht*, in time and as such, i.e. follows upon some other state of affairs in a sequence. Indeed, the concept of change is defined as opposite predicates, the two states, inhering to some single subject. As the title of the second *Analogy* states, temporal sequence follows the law of causality and hence, the change in time is a causal relation between two states. From the very definition of change it is clear that some subject must remain permanent so as to be the carrier of the predicates, or otherwise put, there must be some instance to which the sequential states can be attributed. This permanent carrier of change is Kant's concept of substance. But this legitimation of the concept of substance is then dependant on the idea of temporal sequence – the repudiation of which was the starting point in our reading of Nancy. From all this it follows quite formally that the non-sequential temporality of eventlikeness brought in connection with the idea of an inception *ex nihilo* articulates a differential presence without permanent substance.

Negativity, Neutrality

After these interpretative appropriations of Heidegger and Kant, one might expect Nancy to turn to Hegel. After all, having associated the emergence in an event with a fundamental instance of negativity, we would only need to conceive this latter as negating itself, hence as determinate negation, and we would then have fully recovered the Hegelian passage from being and nothing through becoming and on to determinate existence, by way of the 'fecundity' of dialectical negativity (this would be the opening of Hegel's objective Logic, *Sein, Nichts, Werden, Dasein*). This is precisely where Nancy's rereading of negativity sets in. It is oriented fundamentally as an alternative to Hegelian negativity in order to avoid reestablishing a dialectic of break and continuity carried forward by determinate negation and sublation.[8]

8 D. Calabro follows these questions but oriented more towards Hegel's *Phenomenology* and tries to assimilate Nancy into a movement of post-Hegelians containing Merleau-Ponty among others. See *Dis-piegamenti: Soggetto, corpo e communità in Jean-Luc Nancy* (Milano: Mimesis, 2006). But her notion of a "double movement of negation continually folded back on itself" is, of course, not enough to exit the 'fecundity of dialectical negativity,' indeed it is nothing but the definition of determinate negation.

But if a fecundity of negativity is being set aside here, then so is its opposite, a sterility. In other words, Nancy's metaphysics of the New does not simply turn to a *negative* dialectic in place of speculative *Aufhebung*.[9] The pair sterility/fecundity, or passivity/activity, positive/negative only encloses this discourse precisely back into what it attempts to exit. Rather than these pairs, Nancy labels negativity in-operative and thus puts it fundamentally under the sign of neutrality.[10] The concepts of 'neutrality' and 'in-operativity' can be developed most fruitfully, we suggest, by reading them through the long history of the contestation of Kantian problems that we refer to as German Idealism. Various lines of flight leading out of Hegel's logic have taken the form of transformations of negativity and it is thus not surprising to see Nancy refer to these tropes in his intervention. We will propose Schelling and Blanchot as two post-Hegelians whose thinking of neutrality and in-operativity resonate well with Nancy's thought.

As far as Blanchot is concerned, Nancy's appropriations of his thought are explicit. Here one would pursue not only the term '*neutre,*'

9 The thinking of neutrality that we are advancing here, with help from Nancy, is not to be confused with the 'negative dialectics' of an Adorno, or of a young Hegel. It would seem to us that the struggle against Hegel's logic has made a caricature of its target for a long time. The philosophy of neutrality, on the other hand, proposes other, less reductive paths to pursue that same struggle. The evolution in Hegel's conception of dialectic and logic has been incomparably reconstructed by Klaus Düsing in *Hegel und die Geschichte der Philosophie* (Darmstadt: Wiss.Buchg, 1983) and *Das Problem der Subjektivität in Hegel's Logik, Hegel-Studien Bh 15* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1976). It is instructive to report some of his insights and references, given the lack of an English translation. It must be recalled that at the beginning of his career, Hegel still held to a distinction between logic and metaphysics: here, the dialectic is termed 'negative' because it can only exhaust the categories of thinking, it is only "the negative side of the knowledge of the Absolute." (Hegel, *GW* 4 [Hamburg: Meiner, 1968], 207). The intuition of the Absolute on the other hand, remains outside the domain of the dialectic. This is also Hegel's interpretation of the dialectic of Plato's *Parmenides* in conjunction with the Kantian doctrine of Antinomies, a negative dialectic which ends in scepticism, given the equal validity of contradictory theses. A negative dialectic is the task of *Reflection*, whereas *Speculation*, in abandoning the law of excluded middle, affirms contradiction positively. The later Hegel who identifies logic with metaphysics then faults the *Parmenides* because "The third, affirmative, negation of negation is not expressed." (cited by Düsing from unpublished archival material as *Pinder Nachschrift*, p.217). For a detailed development see *Das Problem*, pp.75-109.

10 Deleuze is the other notable thinker who develops the idea of a neutral event.

but also the notion of *désœuvrement*, as it is thematised in Banchot's criticism and employed in his *récits*.[11] It is possible to distinguish two forms of the negative in Blanchot: one that is 'at work,' employed, and another that remains the 'non-work of inoperativity.'[12] Nancy's in-operative negativity must be read through this 'non-work.' The neutrality of inoperativity has many figures in Blanchot, among them patience. Of this latter, he writes that it escapes everyday action without being inactive. Indeed, it is intuitive that while patience is not a working, or a bringing about, it is not necessarily a static immobility either. The 'activity' of patience, he writes, is "singular, hardly graspable, essentially different from what one is accustomed to call acting and doing."[13] The figure of a patience that is neither active nor inactive points us also to a conception of death, or better: of dying as Blanchot relates it to the poetical work. The intersection of these two concepts in neutralised negativity, death and the figural, forms the basis for Blanchot's imperative: "We must be the figurers and the poets of our death."[14] But why introduce death into a relation with the figural and the poetic? Because Blanchot understands literary language, following Mallarmé, as essentially negative. But that is not all. On the one hand, the poetic name is the absence of the thing named (this is its negativity), but on the other hand, literary language is profoundly and originarily suspense, ambiguity, equivocation and double-meaning.[15] Which is to say that the poetic conjoins a neutrality to negativity, intertwining them in its very linguistic constitution. If the figural is the site of such an ambivalence between activity and passivity of the negative, hence of a neutrality, then it is easy to see how it will bring us back to death. For death, too, has a privileged relation to negativity, and Blanchot finds this neutralised negativity of

11 See above all M. Blanchot, *L'Espace littéraire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1955), and also *L'écriture du désastre*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1980). Reading Blanchot in the context of post-Hegelianisms requires a certain nuance: while we can read a subtle thinking of neutrality under his pen, we must distinguish this from the much less innovative approach to Hegel that is relatively banally indebted to Kojèvianism. This other side is perhaps most patent in 'La littérature et le droit à la mort', in *La Part du Feu* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949).

12 M. Blanchot *L'écriture du désastre*, p. 182: 'le non-travail du désœuvrement.' All Blanchot translations are my own.

13 On patience, see above all: 'L'œuvre et l'espace de la mort', in *L'espace littéraire*, pp. 160-162.

14 Ibid.

15 M. Blanchot, 'Approche de l'espace littéraire' in ibid., pp. 33-53, esp. pp.48-49, but also the end of 'La littérature et le droit'.

death figured, among other places, in Mallarmé's *Igitur*. "As if before being my death, a personal act whereby my person deliberately finds an end, death had to be the neutrality and the impersonality where nothing is accomplished, the empty infinite power which consumes itself eternally."[16] To see death as the neutrality where 'nothing is accomplished,' we need to recall Blanchot's interpretation of the awaiting [*attente*] of death: "Waiting transforms the act of dying into something which it is not sufficient to reach in order to stop waiting." Or again: "Waiting... does not let death happen as that which could satisfy the waiting, but keeps it instead in suspense, in dissolution and at every instant surpassed by the empty sameness of waiting."[17] In other words, the negativity of death undergoes a transformation in waiting; without *telos*, in suspense, waiting becomes indifferent, dying becomes a neutral negativity.

If it is possible to discern, in Blanchot, two approaches to negativity and two concepts of the negative, it is also possible to disentangle (and unravel) two approaches to death. One would be closer to the (familiarly Kojèvian[18]) Hegel of the *Phenomenology*, the other would be more narrowly Heideggerian. This latter would, despite all appearances, be tributary to *Sein und Zeit* and to the analysis of death and of modality presented therein.[19] It is, in fact, Heidegger's interweaving of possibility and impossibility in the concept of death that furnishes Blanchot with a basic matrix which then engenders formulations such as 'impossible necessary death,' or 'unlived experience,' [*expérience*

16 Ibid., p. 141.

17 M. Blanchot, *L'Attente L'Oubli* (Paris : Gallimard, 1962), p.55.

18 While it is plausible to group together (as does Calabro, in op. cit.) Hyppolite, Kojève, Bataille and Merleau-Ponty to form a genealogy of syncretic readers of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, who pursue, in some manner, a vague synthesis of Hegel and Heidegger, it would be mistaken to confuse Blanchot wholly with that movement – to say nothing of Nancy! This other, less Kojevian, less *Phenomenology*-centred, genealogy would be distinguished, in our opinion, by its affirmative appropriation of Structuralism.

19 "Despite all appearances," since many would try to distance Blanchot and Heidegger on death. But in our opinion what they share is far more fundamental than what separates them. Perhaps, we might speak here of a speculative sameness, without identity. Derrida, for his part, accentuates the divergences, as e.g. between *Jemeinigkeit* and death's 'jamais individuelle' according to Blanchot. See *Demeure* (Paris: Galilée, 1988). But when *Aporias* is added to the interpretation, it looks as if Derrida is more interested in deconstructing the opposition between Blanchot and Heidegger, starting from the fulcrum of modality.

inéprouvée]. These syntagms can be read as so many instances of a thinking of neutrality that "...cannot stop with either of the opposed terms, but cannot surmount the opposition either."[20] In looking closer, it becomes necessary to say that this conception of neutralised negativity (in which we can glimpse "beyond the dialectic"[21]) goes beyond the received interpretation of the *neuter* as *ne-uter*, as neither-nor. In all of these formulations of neutrality, such as possibility-impossibility, it is impossible to content ourselves with one of the two terms, to decide for one of the two sides, but what is more, we cannot for as much dispense with the terms either, for it is not a question of positing a *tertium quid*. Which is to say that the terms are not so much refuted as retained. The logic of the neuter requires that we declare 'neither possible, nor purely impossible, but not a third term either, and hence: both possible and impossible.' The neutrality which we find in Blanchot is thus the co-articulation of a *neither-nor* with a *both-and*.[22]

For as much as the above comments might seem abstract, we can give them a more historical determination by recalling how Schelling thinks neutrality. In his Identity-philosophy, Schelling thematises neutrality through the term *Indifferenz*, or also "absolute identity,"[23] a notion which then relays forward in his later writings. The network of concepts employed by Schelling to express neutrality can be said to display a curious feature that we would term a 'generativity' that is neither sterile nor fecund, hence neither a speculative dialectic nor a negative one. To explicate this neutrality we must proceed in two steps, first recall the relation between neutrality and the logical forms of negativity, second, insist on the language used to describe the relation that holds between these concepts. In the *Weltalter*-philosophy, for example, indifference is synonymous with indiscernability or indistinction, i.e. the impossibility of a univocal distinction between two terms or two

20 Ibid., p.121.

21 Ibid.

22 And this is why we would withdraw *this* interpretation of neutrality from the critiques addressed by Derrida to the solely negative version thereof (see for example the essays on Levinas and Bataille in *L'Ecriture et la différence* [Paris: Galilée, 1967]).

23 For example in the *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie*, *AS* 2 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1995), §16, §32. This is Schelling in 1801, i.e. very much in contact with Hegel's early conception of logic. On their relation see Düsing, op. cit. Schelling does not use the term dialectic, much less negative dialectic.

principles. Here, he names indifference simply *Ununterscheidbarkeit*.[24] When the terms in question cannot be distinguished, they are said to be *ineinander*, in each other, interlaced or interwoven.[25] But this relation of being in each other really implies that they share a certain number of predicates. But the sharing of predicates by the terms that are interlaced does not imply their *Einerleiheit*, or their being one and the same. Two terms in indifference are not unified even if indifference expresses a *Gleichgültigkeit*, literally an equi-valence.[26]

But Schellingian neutrality, in the concept of indifference, is more than pure and simple passivity, more than a merely mute and sterile logic without efficacy of any sort. In the essay on freedom, for example, he describes the relationship between the logical terms 'duality' and 'opposition' in terms of a genetic constitution, which is a language very close – though not identical – to creation. Indifference 'posits' duality, out of which then opposition 'breaks forth.' Clearly then, Schellingian neutrality has a generative capacity. The duality of *Grund* and *Existenz*, he says, is preceded by a *Wesen*, which he names the *Ungrund*. In the *Ungrund*, oppositions are impossible to distinguish, indeed, they are not present in it, and the *Ungrund* is thus *Indifferenz*. But the neutrality of indifference is such that, while it does not contain opposition, it does include terms in 'disjunction.' Such disjunctive predication of the terms means that indifference posits duality. Insofar as this duality is the condition of possibility of opposition, then we can say that in the sequence *Ungrund* – disjunction – duality – opposition, we have a transcendental hierarchy of constitution. However, this is only a preliminary diagnosis. The step from such a sequence of conditions to a generation is easily implied by Schelling's alternating between the language of 'immediately positing,' with that of 'bursting forth,' *hervorbrechen* and similar such terms bespeaking a process. There exists a whole host of affective metaphors with which Schelling attempts to illustrate this indifference, including *Drang* (stress) and *Streben* (drive) or

24 *Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen* (1810), *AS* 4 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1995), p.40.

25 *Die Weltalter. Erstes Buch: Die Vergangenheit Druck 1,* (1811), *AS* 4 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1995), p.245.

26 Ibid., p.238: "It is this existential Sameness [*Gleichheit*], or the Sameness of both Principles in relation to the existing, that we have referred to as Equi-valence or Indifference [*Gleich-Gültigkeit oder die Indifferenz*]. Critics ... have taken this existential Sameness for a Oneness [*Einerleiheit*] of the Principles, a confusion which cannot be excused by the sloppy expression both are one [*beyden seyen Eins*]."

tendency. Indeed, a recurring motif in Schelling's writing through various periods, consists in the idea of a continuing, enduring struggle between opposed impulses or tendencies. This continuation of conflict and of opposition constitutes the *Lebensgeschehen* or the happening, the event of life. The opposition is reproduced infinitely, and a phoenix is born of the ashes of the conflict, re-igniting the opposition. While we are, here, only citing these figures without explication, our aim is merely to underline that for Schelling what would seem at first to be transcendental dependencies are actually process of engendering. The *Ungrund* generates duality, opposition, etc., and it does this essentially by way of the doctrine of disjunctive predication. Again, we cannot develop the latter doctrine here (but notice that it is a theory that is to be played out at the level of predication and conjunction, hence language), regardless of its positive content, this doctrine allows Schelling to affirm that the *Ungrund* is both indifferent towards the two terms or principles, and generative of their opposition. What we are suggesting then, is that the Schellingian *Ungrund* is the site of a neutrality which, on the one hand, is distinguishable from Hegelian speculative negativity, and on the other hand, manifests a generativity.

Invoking the generativity of neutrality in Schelling raises a textual question of sorts. The suspicion might arise that we are attempting to relate Nancy's philosophy of creation *ex nihilo* to Schelling's theology of creation. This conjecture will have to be disappointed. Schelling was critical, throughout his writings, of the idea of a creation *ex nihilo,* though not adversely opposed to a notion of creation as such. Indeed, in conformity with the oldest tradition of Platonism we cited at the outset, he interprets creation not as an archaic origin but as metaphor or allegory for preservation or conservation. His own positive interpretation of creation is thus nothing other than the circular alternation of conflictually opposed forces. Eventually, Schelling will bring this circular opposition of forces together with the language of contraction and expansion, pointing, at the same time, quite eclectically, both forward towards metaphors of modern cosmology and backwards to mysteries of esoteric Kabbalistic traditions. Such an image of the universe as a systolic-diastolic, beating heart, is not foreign to Jean-Luc Nancy. And in fact, in conversation with the present author, he made explicit reference to the Kabalistic doctrine of creation as "Zimzoum." We cannot here pursue a truly historical study that would bring out what we perceive as the asymmetries between the two conceptions. Suffice it to say that if we can

find in Schelling a thinking of a generative neutral negativity independent of both Hegelian and negative dialectic, then we have also found a concept of creation independent of both *kenotic* and *steretic* images and their doctrines of negation.

While Schelling and Blanchot might seem like disparate sources, they can both be read within the context of the Hegelian legacy, and it is within that context that we would place Nancy. It is important to underline that the neutrality reconstructed from such sources allows Nancy to avoid espousing a 'negative dialectic.' This has also been pointed out by Werner Hamacher.[27] He contrasts, e.g., Nancy's frequent expression 'either, or, at the same time,' [ou bien, ou bien, à la fois] with the more customary 'both one, and the other, at the same time,' [et l'un, et l'autre, à la fois] the latter being closer to Hegel's mature conception of dialectic. What is more, on his reading, the figure of neutrality is often legible in Nancy's use of the word 'or' (*ou*), a non-dialectical conjunction, or in logical parlance a disjunction. This prevalence of syncategoremata (conjunctions, prepositions) in the construction of a metaphysics, as compared to the relative importance of nouns, contributes again to the above mentioned refusal of substance. It is not only in the avoidance of the definite article and the multiple constructions based on prepositions (such as ex-), but also in the use made of disjunctions that Nancy articulates his metaphysics of neutralised negativity.

We can bring together the contextual sources referred to above, in order to see more clearly how the operation and the 'work' of negativity are being stifled in Nancy's conception of neutrality. Negativity then, is neutral and indifferent with respect to activity and passivity, but this indifference is nonetheless a relation between negativity and that opposition. Neutrality is being understood here as a third, neither/both active/passive. But why and how articulate the neither and the both together? Negativity is not merely passive and sterile because it relates

27 See his remarkable series 'Ou, séance, touche de Nancy, ici' and in particular the first episode in *Paragraph* 16 (2), (1993), pp. 224-229. His remarks on Nancy's relation to Heidegger are still the most astute to date. (Also interesting: Hamacher notes that in the traditional histories of metaphysics there is a predilection for nouns in the historical narrative: *idea*, *ousia*, subject, spirit, etc. In contrast, the underlining of prepositions and conjunctions in Nancy, can then be seen as a drift towards linguistic unities which, in natural languages, do not have an autonomous meaning.)

after all to some *quiddity*. The negativity in question here, in the emergence *ex nihilo*, is after all involved in a co-articulation of the *nihil* together with that which emerges, a something. At the same time, negativity is neither cause nor origin of that something and hence displays no fecundity, productivity or activity (which in the classical dialectical variant is a negativity strictly turning back upon itself to produce the negation of negation). If negativity is being termed neutral, then it is because we cannot determine it *unambiguously* with respect to the paradigm sterility/fecundity, passivity/activity. Neutrality is thus indeterminate in the sense that it exhibits inter-determination, non-resolvable, irreducible, inter-determination. This, in turn, makes negativity immediately into an indeterminate plurality or a non-quantitative multiplicity. Though it is not decomposable into isolatable units, it is nonetheless a unique 'together' or a unique many. Such an inchoate plurality is grasped, according to Nancy, in the notion of tension, and tension turns out to be key phenomenon in his thinking of event. Associating neutralised negativity with tension grasps simultaneously the latency, or potential-like character of neutrality but also, it addresses the sense in which negativity contains some manner of oppositionality, agonality, or disparateness. A tension, after all, points to a discord preventing a harmonious wholeness, a discord which is, thereby, not quite an effectual force.

Spanne: Tension and Space

There is a further aspect of Nancy's thinking of tension which is not directly visible in English translation – it turns on a possibility found not so much in French as in German, in Heidegger's German. Nancy's use of the word tension, after all, translates Heidegger's term *Spanne*.[28] This word *Spanne* and its derivatives, *gespannt*, *Spannweite*, *Spannung*, point to two directions of meaning. On the one hand, we find the familiar connotations of strain, discord, difference, hence *Spanne* as tension. On the other hand, we can go in the direction of the idea of a gap, a span in the spatial sense, a reach, an *écart* or a *diastema*. Here *Spanne* is a stretch

28 See 'Spanne' in *Le Sens du monde* (Paris: Galilée, 1993). Heidegger's usage of this term, it should be noted, and its place in his account of temporality exhibit an important difference from Nancy's usage. To explore this would be beyond our present scope.

of space. The two senses intersect in an image, suggested by Nancy, of the archer's bow bent back, strung and taut. In this tensed configuration, the bow reaches a limit, a breaking point, while also spanning a certain breadth of space. The two intersecting senses of *Spanne*, tension and spatiality, are also found in that semantical constellation in French around *tendre*, *se tendre*, and *tension*. Of course a sarcastic reader would here object to this as a pun, a play on words. It is important however to notice that this is in fact a conceptual move. What Nancy is introducing here, is a notion of space, or of spatiality, which is different from both the isomorphic, homogeneous and continuous space represented ordinarily in the mathematised sciences (one need only think of classical mechanics, v = dx/dt) and different as well from the spatiality of lived experience (*Erlebnis*).[29] The spatiality invoked here is at once, and not secondarily, in a second step, but immediately conditioned and determined. It is in its very definition tensed. Nor is this tensed space an infinite continuum. It is on the contrary discrete, determinate and finite: a gap, a stretch. This tensed span of space, or as he alternatively calls it, this distension, clearly does not refer to what we usually would have referred to as lived space or experiential space, *un espace vécu*. This is not the space in which I can move my hand around, place objects, etc. Nor is it identical to the spatiality manifested in the pragmatic doings of a Dasein, as theorised in *Being and Time*.[30] This novel, post-phenomenological, concept of space has been developed quite far in Nancy's recent writings on painting and music. We will not unfold that thematic here, but simply report two points: the space of distension, which is the space of sense, is constituted virtually and relationally, it is premised on the derivation of identity from difference. Secondly, the exteriority of this distensive space is genetic, processual and transitive, not pre-given or *a priori*. Contrary to much speculation on the part of Nancy's readers, distensive space has less reliance on the work of Merleau-Ponty or Husserl and more on a novel intersection of Hegel and Structuralism.

29 Hamacher too, links space with tension but does it through a linguistic analysis of disjunction. See episode two of his series on Nancy in *Paragraph* 17 (2) (1994), pp. 103-119.

30 We have insisted on the autonomy of this space over and against phenomenological theories of space; this needs to be justified at length and we shall do so elsewhere. Ian James, in his useful *The Fragmentary Demand* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2006), presents Nancy's reflections of space precisely the other way around.

We are now in a position to appreciate Nancy's interpretation of the *ex nihilo*, the peculiar co-articulation of *nihil* and *quid* which underlies his notion of creation, in the phrase "*La négativité se tend.*" Negativity is tense, strained, hence agonistically determined, but also negativity extends (itself) spatially, unfolds, stretches out; it is dis- and ex-tension.

Rupture

Building further, we can say that since distension is not a continuous, isomorphic space, then it is also not a continuous magnitude, one which we could arbitrarily increase or decrease all the while preserving the nature of the given. Rather, as previously said, distension is radically finite and discrete. It is a spatial gap which is traversed, as it were, by a tension, it's breadth is already and immediately at a limit. Hence if we say that negativity unfolds or spreads itself, *se tend*, then this augmentation is also a qualitative change, a change in its very nature.[31] In other words, the tension of negativity is at a limit and its transgression is a break, both a break and a leap. Here again, both *rupture* and *saut* are translating the two connotations in Heidegger's usage of the German word *Sprung*. This idea of a break and leap is of course a further twist on the notion of a spacing, an *espacement*, or a production of a spatial gap, an *écartement*.

It is in this same vein that the *saut* or leap is thematised. As Nancy writes at one point: "*Il saute dans le rien.*" Which one would obviously be tempted to translate as: He/It leaps into the nothing. But of course the leap here is not of any particular entity leaping. It is indeed to be understood much like the impersonal 'il y a,' *il saute dans le rien*. There is, *Es gibt*, a leap in negativity. This rupturing leap is identified as the very articulation of the difference between negativity and quiddity, between the nothing and something. The leap is precisely the '/' in *nihil/quid*. Let us recall that happening had been identified with emergence *ex nihilo*, hence with the very formulation nihil/quid. The '/' takes the place of a relation which one would, ordinarily, fill with causality and with sequence: first there is a nihil, then, afterwards, later there is a quid, caused by the former. The particularity of Nancy's conception of happening as nihil/quid was precisely that negativity was not being attributed causal, active, or productive power and that it was not lodged prior in a series of nows. This particular, and peculiar, articulation

31 This formulation recalls quite explicitly Deleuze's interpretation of what Bergson called qualitative multiplicity.

of a difference between the *nihil* and the *quid* has now turned out be characterised as leap and break, as *Sprung*, but also and importantly Nancy calls it dispute and conflict and cites Heidegger's term *Austrag*. It is indeed with discord as translation for *Austrag* in mind that he writes, "The discord constitutes the event."

We are now able to see further in the phrase 'discord constitutes event.' Constitution is being understood genetically here. In other words, event is the genesis of discord. Happening, as the articulation *nihil/quid*, is thus structured, literally structured. The seed of the structure is precisely the articulation of negativity and quiddity in the break/leap. This articulation, like the thought circumscribed by *Austrag*, is a differential, diacritical relation which, in transpiring, imbues its relata with their sense. The transpiring or taking place of this differential, diacritical relation is the event as riven origin out of which quiddity, what-ness, onticity can be thought. The status of the origin should not however lead to the idea that there would be an other instance, a *tertium quid* which would be origin as 'source.' Indeed, if the discord, or *Austrag*, is called differential and diacritical it is precisely to avoid this subreptive transformation of the *nihil* into some thing. Differential and diacritical means devoid of any own identity, value or content. All of these: identity, value, content, are posterior. Nor are space and time being thought as origin, as formal and precedent, in Kantian terms. Rather, the discord is purely this, a logical, abstract fold or cut which opens space and time. To speak didactically for a moment, in a transcendental constitution-hierarchy we would find at bottom, at beginning, in *princeps* the *nihil*. Its leap, its break, its distension and extension, is *austraghaft*, discordant. The discordant relation structures pure emergence *ex nihilo*. One might say that with this notion the true apogee of Nancy's event theory is attained.

Conclusion

With this last interpretation we would seem to have come far enough to be able to answer the original question under which we organised the present remarks. Once again, an important limit or constraint on event metaphysics is the insight that any construal of an event as interruption only begs the question as to the ontological priority of what was interrupted. Conceiving of eventness as a-nomaly, classically, sets up an opposition between a totalising notion of continuity

and a radically exterior negation of that nomos. In such a dialectic of break and continuity, the continuity, as reference point, or base concept, only reaffirms the conceptual priority of a self-same presence. We have tried here to eschew that metaphysics with another one, inspired by Jean-Luc Nancy's theory of creation *ex nihilo*. Of course, many facets of this thinking have been left unconsidered here. However, in following Nancy's path we have been able to hold on to an intimate proximity of negativity with eventlikeness, or eventhood, and thus have preserved a sense of event as anomaly. Yet, this anomaly is, importantly, not defined by an unproblematically negative reference to a nomos. Rather, we suggested that reflection on the *ex nihilo* allows us to slowly transform its negativity into a *neutrality*, which for its part, was elaborated with the help of Blanchot and Schelling. If we have shown that the negativity of eventness is to be thought of along such post-Hegelian lines, then its temporality too must be distinguished from that of an interrupted seriality, and we attempted to do this with Kant and Heidegger. The crucial concept, which we have only too briefly mentioned here, is of course that of distension – the particularly spatial notion encapsulating Nancy's notions of temporality and negativity. The tensed space of distension, we suggested, leads us to intuitions of a break and a leap, *saut* and *rupture*, *Sprung*, which however are neither a break *with* time, nor a leap *out of* time. It is not a being-out-of-joint of time that constitutes events for Nancy (and we can distinguish him here from many of his contemporaries). Rather, we propose to think a break *as* time, a leap *as* 'time itself.' In other words, we attempt to take the determination of a distensive event into time itself, we think time itself *as* the originary break. This event-discourse thus sketches a metaphysics of interruption *as* time itself, as opposed to that of interruption *of* a temporal continuum, it thereby presents an event-theory which dispenses with the presupposition of a conceptually prior continuity.

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The Possibility of the New: Adornoian Lessons for Psychoanalysis

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I.

At the heart of the remarkably diverse field of psychoanalysis is a fundamental practical orientation toward freedom. Minimally, psychoanalysis aims to embolden analysands' aptitudes to respond to themselves, others, and the world in ways that would not be *as* determined by prior conflicts, unmet developmental needs, and the like as was the case previously. It aims at the freedom to risk some availability to that which has been tendentially muted or distorted by the entrenched forms of selective attention to which our psychic and developmental histories have given rise, i.e., at a margin of freedom from firmly established propensities to corral experience into frozen slots of fantasy and thus from compulsions to respond to certain sorts of persons or situations in self-defeating, destructive, or rigidly constrained ways. Seeking to interrupt the automatism and rigidity of defences, striving to unsettle our (self-)destructive and (self-)distorting habits of (self-)assessment and response, psychoanalysis aims – minimally – at emancipating feeling, fantasy, and thought, at the institution of psychic space.[1] Freedom from the cognitive and behavioural expressions of the immediacy of impulse or the overriding urgency of unmet developmental need is a necessary condition for freedom to reflectively pursue a course of life, a condition for a life that one can *lead*, a life one can call one's own.

1 For a further elaboration of this notion of psychic space, see J. Kristeva's *New Maladies of the Soul*, trans. R. Guberman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

Ideally, however, psychoanalysis aims to foster much more robust forms of freedom. For instance, it aims at not just sponsoring some availability to but cultivating our capacities to immerse ourselves in and negotiate anew with that by which we are captivated, claimed, or moved, at the freedom to sensitively and reflectively engage that which touches and moves us – often in disquieting ways – and thus at the freedom to forgo the compulsive pursuit of highly compromised securities and satisfactions. Attempting to breathe life into desiccated forms of self- and world-relation, that is, supporting sustained attention to that which has been buried under the weight and suffering of our psychic status quo, psychoanalysis seeks to promote the freedom of experience in a capacious and emphatic sense of the term. It seeks to sponsor robust responsivity to concrete others and features of experience, to sensuously compelling inclinations or impulsions – wishes, hopes, dreams – that might yet pave the way for a future more satisfying than can even be imagined from here. More concretely, through techniques designed to slacken resistances to the desire to know oneself, one's history, and one's world, psychoanalysis aims at the freedom of more expansive and attuned perceptions of and responses to the impact and import of concrete others on one's life and the freedom to acknowledge and assume responsibility for one's impact on others. Thereby, it seeks to induce and support enhanced emotional availability and vitality, greater lability of cathexes, and augmented adaptive relationality. To pursue freedom from crippling anger, guilt, or anxiety (say, from the cognitive and relational inhibitions brought on by a stern superego), from the hypercathexes that are the flip side of repression or the libidinal corollary of defensive idealization (generally, from stultifying engrossment in visions of the good), or from melancholic hyperinvestment in and rigid identification with lost love objects is to pursue freedom for affective vitality and intimate connectedness with concrete others, for cognitive and social exploration ("reality testing") and creativity, for the chance to live and love otherwise. At the limit, psychoanalysis seeks to facilitate capacities to initiate and innovate, to begin and begin again, and thereby to usher in and reckon with the unanticipated, the emphatically new.[2]

2 It is no wonder that the rhetoric of and interest in freedom recurs so prominently throughout otherwise quite disparate analytic traditions. Freud speaks of the promise of psychoanalysis to yield a "freer or superior view of the world" (*The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. 2, trans. and ed. J. Strachey in collaboration with A. Freud, assisted by A. Strachey and A. Tyson [London: Hogarth Press, 1953-1975], p. 282; hereafter *SE*),

But how effective can the pursuit of these robust forms of freedom be if, as most analysts agree, we are ensconced in and dead set on reproducing the past? On standard psychoanalytic premises, we are systematically prone to repudiate each new dawn in order to reinstall the affective, cognitive, and relational coordinates of a world we (dimly) know ourselves to have lost yet cannot let go of, a failed world provisioning only fragile securities and compromised satisfactions, yet in which the precarity of securities and compromised character of satisfactions provide the impetus for ongoing attempts at its resurrection.

specifically of freeing psychic energy from the maintenance of repressions and inhibitions and for the ego (*SE* 20: p. 256). Shortly thereafter, and in a similar vein, Herman Nunberg figures the desirable consequences of analysis in terms of a multidimensional freedom: "the energies of the id become more mobile, the superego becomes more tolerant, the ego is freer from anxiety and its synthetic function is restored" (*Allgemeine Neurosenlehre Auf Psychoanalytischer Grundlage. Mit Einem Geleitwort Von Prof. Sigm. Freud* [Bern-Berlin: Verlag Hans Huber, 1932] p. 360). The interest in and rhetoric of freedom are especially prominent in ego psychology. In Hartmann's (1959) view, "the patient comes to . . . the analyst . . . in the hope of being freed from limitations of his capacity for work and his enjoyment of life" ('Psychoanalysis as a Scientific Theory' in *Essays on Ego Psychology* [New York: International Universities Press, 1964] p. 341); Waelder (1936) specifies the aim of analysis as "freedom from anxiety and affects, or freedom to perform a task" (cited in ibid., p. 10). For Fromm, psychoanalysis aims at nothing less than freeing individuals to serve as the vanguard of society (cf. *Let Man Prevail: a Socialist Manifesto and Program* [London: Call Association, 1960]; *The Sane Society* [London: Routledge; Kegan Paul, 1956]). Though his technique and the specific ends to which it is put diverge substantially from both Fromm's and those of ego psychology, Loewald too characterises the desired ends of analysis as the achievement of a certain sort of freedom: "To the extent to which the individual remains entangled in his unappropriated id or disowns it, as in repression . . . he is driven by unmastered unconscious forces within himself. He is free to develop, to engender his future, to the extent to which he remains or becomes open to his id and can personalise, again and again on various levels, his unconscious powers" (*Psychoanalysis and the History of the Individual*. [New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1978], p. 25). As one commentator on Klein has put it, psychoanalysis aims at "defamilialisation, the freedom of the individual from paternal and maternal imagos" (Zaretsky in *Reading Melanie Klein*, Phillips and Stonebridge, eds. [London: Routledge, 1998], p. 33). On Kristeva's model, a crucial goal of contemporary psychoanalysis is the freedom of a vitalised imagination, indeed the freedom "to permit illusions to exist" (*Tales of Love*, trans. L Roudiez [New York: Columbia University Press, 1987], p. 18). For Rand and Torok, psychoanalysis aims to effect the free circulation of speech and life (*Questions for Freud: The Secret History of Psychoanalysis* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997], p. 44).

In a psychoanalytic lexicon, the question would be, how can we hope to welcome the new if transference is inevitable?[3]

By transference, analysts tend to mean the experience of and propensity to respond to events and persons on the basis of interpretive models (psychic templates) that are cognitively and functionally inappropriate to – gross distortions of – the present context, or at least motivated by developmental deficits, defences, and the like (e.g.,

In recent years, the rhetoric of and explicit interest in freedom has reached something of a fevered pitch. For Bollas, "mental illness is a freezing of the unconscious" (*Cracking Up: The Work of Unconscious Experience* [London: Routledge, 1995], p. 180) and, correspondingly, "psychoanalysis is a radical act – freeing the subject from character restraints and intersubjective compliances through the naturally liberating and expressive medium of free association . . . . the fundamental agency of change in psychoanalysis is the continuous exercise of this freedom" (*ibid.*, p. 69). Jiménez (echoing Ferenczi and Alexander yet displaying clear commitments to the object relations tradition) underscores the prospect of freedom via psychoanalysis in the most vivid terms: "as well as the repetition of past patterns, 'something more' takes place in the experience of the patient with his analyst. A genuine emotional contact is established, with an intimacy and a freedom up to that time never previously experienced in the interpersonal history of the patient. This allows the patient to transcend the limits of old models of relationships sustained by anxiety or by the attachment to bad objects" ('After Pluralism: Towards a New, Integrated Psychoanalytic Paradigm', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 86 (2006), pp. 1487-1507 (p. 1491). In the relationalist, intersubjective, and Lacanian traditions, concern for freedom, and specifically for freedom to encounter the new, often takes pride of place in the elaboration of the desirable ends of analysis. Cf. S. Mitchell's *Influences & Autonomy in Psychoanalysis* (London: The Analytic Press, 2005), esp. pp. 58-9; Stolorow and Atwoood's 'Three Realms of the Unconscious' in Mitchell and Aron eds. *Relational Psychoanalysis: The Emergence of a Tradition* (London: The Analytic Press, 1999), p. 371; and B. Fink's *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Technique* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), esp. p. 10.

3 In 'Five lectures on Psychoanalysis', Freud claims that "transference arises spontaneously in all human relationships just as it does between the patient and the physician" (*SE* 11: 51). In *An Autobiographical Study*, he amplifies the claim, contending that transference "is a universal phenomenon of the human mind and in fact dominates the whole of each person's relations to his human environment (*SE* 20: 42; also cf. Freud's *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* (*SE* 7: 3-119) and H. Muslin and M. Gill's commentary in 'Transference In The Dora Case', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 26 (2) (1978), pp. 311-329)). Ferenczi ('Introjection and Transference' in *Contributions to Psychoanalysis*, trans. E. Jones [Boston: Richard G. Badger, 1950; original work

experiencing and responding to a person who is not your mother as if s/he were in order to achieve certain satisfactions one does not know how to secure or will not risk securing otherwise). Transference refers to the transferring of expectations, desires, fears, needs, etc. from emotionally important figures or contexts – these may be *ab initio* fantasies or fantasmatic reconfigurations of experience – onto later figures or contexts in order to secure certain satisfactions or meet peremptorily urgent developmental needs. Manifesting as sedimented patterns of object

published 1909]) quickly corroborated the early Freud's claim to the pervasiveness of transference, and by 1913 Jung had extended Freud's claim about the ubiquity of transference to the point where transference was now to be considered the basis for normal human relatedness (cf. Jung's 1946 'Psychology of Transference' in *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. Read, Herbert, Fordham, Michael, and Adler, Gerhard, trans. R.F. C. Hull, Vol. 16, pars. 353-539 [New York: Pantheon, 1954]; also cf. A Samuels's 'Transference/Countertransference' in *The Handbook of Jungian Psychology: Theory, Practice and Applications*, ed. Renos K. Papadopoulos [London: Routledge, 2006], p. 177-195, for a contemporary Jungian reiteration of the claim). Klein underscored the ubiquity of transference throughout her career (reconfigured in terms of projective identification and the like), especially in her 1952 'The Origins of Transference' in *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works*, Vol. 3 of *The Writings of Melanie Klein* (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1975), pp. 45-56, and her inheritors have underscored her (and their) adamant adherence to the ubiquity of the transference thesis (cf. E. Bott Spillius's 'Melanie Klein Revisited: Her Unpublished Thoughts on Technique' in *Encounters with Melanie Klein: Selected Papers of Elizabeth Spillius*, ed. Roth and Rusbridger [London: Routledge, 2007]; and Clifford Yorke's 'Freud or Klein: Conflict or Compromise', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 75 (1994), pp. 375-385). Lacan, who ordinarily went to great lengths to underline his disagreements with Kleinian theory, echoes the claim about transference ubiquity in *Seminar Book I. Freud's Papers on Technique*, ed. J.-A. Miller, trans. J. Forrester (New York: Norton, 1991), esp. p. 109; 'The Mirror Stage' in *Ecrits*, trans. B. Fink (London: W.W. Norton & Co, 2007), pp. 75-81; and Seminar XI. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, J-A Miller ed., trans. A. Sheridan (London: W.W. Norton & Co, 1998), and his inheritors have continued to press the point (cf. Alexandre Leupin's *Lacan and the Human Sciences* [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991]). Kohut has advanced this thesis as well in *How Does Analysis Cure?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), as has Loewald ('Transference-countertransference', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 34 [1986], pp. 275-288), Kristeva (*Tales of Love*, trans. L. Roudiez [New York: Columbia University Press, 1987]), G. J. Gargiulo ('Authority, the Self, and Psychoanalytic Experience', *Psychoanalytic Review* 76 [1989], 149-161), S. Mitchell (*Hope and Dread in Psychoanalysis* [New York: Basic Books, 1995]), and M. Gill, 'Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy: a Revision', *The International Review of Psychoanalysis*, 11 (1984), 161-179; also

attachment and relation, deep-seated wishes and conflicts that dominate self- and world-relations, character structures, fantasy fixations, defensive tendencies, and the like, transference predigests experience in accordance with standing psychic demands, devastating the fragile incursion of futurity before it can be given a chance to unfold.

Transference tends toward totalisation. It operates through a passionate insistence into the fore of certain features of phenomena that, because they resonate with unconscious imperatives or developmentally driven needs, take upon amplified, even all-consuming import. And under the long shadow cast by those features of experience that take upon exaggerated prominence at the behest of transference pressures, other features of experience go ill-attended, suffering neglect and withering from misrecognition. Under the sway of transference pressures we succumb to the most extreme forms of exaggeration and distortion: a motivated focus on certain features of experience that resonate – however obliquely– with longstanding concerns comes at the cost of diminished attention or even obliviousness to other features of experience that may well warrant consideration and in whose folds another future may reside. Transference tends toward a stagnant dialectic of blindness and insight: exaggerated, hyperbolic inflations of certain matters coincide with extreme deflations of others. Dominated by the needs and/or desires

cf. M. M. Gill and H. L. Muslin's 'Early Interpretation of Transference', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 24 (4) (1976), 779-794, and J. Hall, *Roadblocks on the Journey of Psychotherapy* (New Jersey: J. Aaronson, 2004). The claim is also prominent in attachment theory, as evidenced by Bowlby, *Separation: Anxiety & Anger. Attachment and Loss Vol. 2.* (London: Hogarth Press, 1973); *The Making and Breaking of Affectional Bonds* (London: Tavistock, 1979); *A Secure Base: Clinical Applications of Attachment Theory* (London: Routledge, 1988), and later literature in this tradition such as J. H. Obegi and E. Berant's *Attachment Theory and Research in Clinical Work with Adults* (New York: Guilford Press, 2008) and Andersen and Chen's 'The Relational Self: An Interpersonal Social-Cognitive Theory', *Psychological Review*, 09 (4) (2002), 619-645. The claim to the ubiquity of transference has even received some corroboration by empirical research: cf. S. M. Andersen and M. S. Berk's 'Transference in Everyday Experience: Implications of Experimental Research for Relevant Clinical Phenomena', *Review of General Psychology* 2 (1998), 81–120; G. Gabbard's 'A Neuroscience Perspective on Transference', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1286 (2006), 189-196 and Westen and Gabbard's 'Developments in Cognitive Neuroscience: II. Implications for Theories of Transference', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 50 (2002), 99-134.

expressed by transference, we dominate in turn: transference names the overriding urgency to treat others as mere occasions for reelaborating patterns of perception and reaction modelled on perceptions of and responses to, say, one particular, engrossingly important other, developmental impasse, or the like. Locked into the forms of sensitivity (patterns of attention and neglect, value-orientations, etc.), beliefs, and expectations that constitute transference, we are caught in a stream of rigidly established perceptual and relational forms and the psychohistorical currents they bear, unable to respond to the specificity of experience, indeed doomed to recapitulate failed forms of experience.

Worked over by the unresolved difficulties that motivate transference, experience bears witness to a past that refuses to pass on, a past whose encumbering presence saps the viability of sustained engagements with the possibilities onto which the present opens. That is, with greater or lesser intensity, we are bound to experience the present and the futures it anticipates as they resonate with the past or as an occasion for repeating and somehow trying to master or work though past conflicts, disappointments, etc.[4] On standard psychoanalytic premises, transference is inevitable. When it manifests outside the clinic, we tend to call it a symptom, a character structure, a style, "just the way s/he is," and so on.[5]

4 Some, however weak, version of the drive to redevelopment is, I take it, part of just about all psychoanalytic theory – Lacanian theory being a possible exception. For explicit articulations of the thesis, cf. Kohut's *How Does Analysis Cure?*; Winnicott's *Playing and Reality*; Ghent's 'Masochism, Submission, and Surrender: Masochism as a Perversion of Surrender' in Mitchell and Aron eds. *Relational Psychoanalysis: The Emergence of a Tradition*, pp. 211-242, esp. p. 214; and C. Bollas' *Forces of Destiny: Psychoanalysis and the Human Idiom* (London: Free Association Books, 1996).

5 Though Freud's manifest Enlightenment commitments and his belief in the ability of the analyst to overcome countertransference to the point of becoming a neutral and objective mirror suggest otherwise, even he occasionally suggests that projection is a normal element of perception and that transference is both inevitable and all-pervasive: "It must not be supposed . . . that transference is created by analysis and does not occur apart from it. Transference is merely uncovered and isolated by analysis. It is a universal phenomenon of the human mind, it decides the success of all medical influence, and in fact dominates *the whole* of each person's relations to his human environment" (*SE* 20, pp. 79-80; emphasis added).

II.

Can the ubiquity of transference thesis be affirmed on grounds other than those provided by the first-person experience of analysis? Or from another angle, how can those who have come to affirm this thesis on the basis of analytic experience make it compelling to others? To demonstrate the ubiquity of transference, that it is not something that just happens in the clinic, and thus the difficulty of achieving the more robust emancipatory ambitions of psychoanalysis, especially insofar as they concern sustained engagements with the new, one could put the point about the inevitability of transference in Kantian terms. We will approach the Kantian grounds for commitment to the ubiquity of transference thesis from two angles: determinative judgement and reflective judgement.

The intensity of Kant's interest in determinative judgements answers to his conviction that, ideally, scientific practice can deliver an empirically and logically determinate knowledge of the system of nature, that is, systematically integrated and deductively complete (thus hierarchically ordered) knowledge of the laws that govern the relations of all natural substances. A necessary condition for objective knowledge is the formation of logically complete concepts: concepts that completely express the rule or formula of the objects they comprehend; concepts that cannot be surprised by experience and so are shorn of every modicum of indeterminacy and fully immune from falsification; concepts that are immutable registers of reality.[6] Such concepts would be fully insulated from transformations consequent upon their application to new objects; their meaning would only alter as a result of their incorporation into higher level laws: upon the systematic integration of all such concepts, the meaning of each concept would be absolutely stable. Such concepts would *determine* the meaning of the objects they comprehend rather than be dictated to by experience.[7] They would be complete in themselves – static rules that give the meaning of experience and so express maximal independence from the vicissitudes of observation conditions – and only relatively incomplete vis-à-vis the systematically integrated totality of all such concepts. Determinative judgements are judgements that apply

6 I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. by Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), A571-2/B599-600.

7 "If the universal (the rule, the principle, the law) is given, then the judgement which subsumes the particular under it is *determinative*" (I. Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. W. Pluhar [Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1987], p. 18/179).

concepts of this sort, judgements that evacuate intuitions of all cognitive value except that of being tokens of a concept's given rule.

The empirically valid concepts applied through determinative judgements are difficult to develop, however, because sensory input massively underdetermines conceptual content – or in Kant's idiom, intuitions without concepts are blind.[8] Without the methodological security afforded by scientific practices of progressive abstraction and systematisation, more specifically, absent regulation by the progressively refined conceptual deliverances of valid scientific inquiry, we are bound to filter experience through physiologically, psychologically, culturally, and historically contingent structures of receptivity and imaginative proclivities, thus producing concepts that risk reflecting the constitution (e.g., needs, habits, and desires) of the perceiver rather than the subject-independent structure of the world. So, on the one hand, absent the fulfilment of the scientific ideal and thoroughgoing adherence to its deliverances, transference, broadly understood as a matrix of interlocking forms of selective attention and neglect that may be more responsive to the state of the perceiver than to the object itself, is ineliminable. Or at least a suspicion of transference is ineliminable (in the idiom of many Enlightenment figures, this suspicion translates as a suspicion of anthropomorphism). And even if the scientific ideal were maximally realised, phenomena that exceed its grasp, objects that cannot be (best) construed as tokens of known types or that cannot be seamlessly integrated into the systematic elaboration of the law-governed interaction of all substances,[9] will still risk construal through transference-like pressures. Indeed, their impact on the sorts of beings we are may be a condition for their intelligibility altogether.

On the other hand, even if the scientific ideal were fully realised and scientific methodology resolutely adhered to as the sole source of valid knowledge, which is to say, even if the scientific ideal were to succeed in hegemonising the terrain of rational cognition, subject-independent, interest-free knowledge may remain elusive, indeed illusory. If science is a continuation of the drive to self-preservation, the

8 *CPR*, A51/B75.

9 E.g., all matters essentially ephemeral (say, historical, political, artifactual, and perhaps even certain natural phenomena or aspects of natural phenomena that are not properly rule-ish) or, however weakly, abrasively particular and so, however weakly, concept transcendent.

knowledge yielded by even the ideal completion of the scientific project, though genuine, would, in its deepest recesses, reflect the sensitivities and urgencies of the human condition. Might science's magnification of those aspects of the natural world that, as of yet, exceed our control testify to its being driven by an awestruck experience of nature as frightening excess? Does not the unappeasability of science, the sceptical propulsion manifest in ongoing resistance to any cognitive satisfaction in advance of the replete satisfaction that would obtain only upon the attainment of total comprehension and control, testify to its awestruck fright? Does not scientific knowledge reflect the vulnerabilities and consequent sensitivities and urgencies of our animal nature? The suggestion here is that science figures the world from the perspective of the frightened, ever so permeable, and largely inept animals we were (ontogenetically and phylogenetically) and remain, from the perspective of animals who, even after an unusually long period of helplessness (infancy and early childhood), are unable to secure nutrition and safety, let alone achieve more complex goods, without the classification and control of our environments that science (or its antecedents) affords. Tendentially, science keys attention to what seems mightier than us or is otherwise resistant to human mastery, to what threatens the success of our various pursuits and even our very existence, to nature (and perhaps to the reified nature culture has become) as excess and terror. Orienting attention to what is repeatable and manipulable, science attests to our interest in self-preservation and reflects perceptions of the (natural and perhaps social) environments in which we seek to preserve ourselves as largely hostile. (Does the claim that science has a transference-like structure not become strengthened when that hostility manifestly abates yet the form of science is unimpacted?) Equally, science's relegation of matters that fail to obviously impact our instrumental engagements with the world to the void of frictionless speculation, i.e., "mere metaphysics," bespeaks the same. If, both initially and persistently (though in transmuted form), science is a continuation of the drive to self-preservation, then science would be a regime of selective attention and neglect, motivated by the pressures of need, delivering knowledge that, however genuine, cannot insulate itself from the charge of interest and the selectivity of attention interest entails. Finally, to the extent that cultural commitments to science as the sole source of rational knowledge intensify, and especially when culture attempts to rationalise its institutions and practices by modelling them on the form of scientific inquiry (progressive abstraction and systematisation), the concomitant inflations and deflations, exaggerations

and distortions that mediate scientific knowing are replicated endlessly, becoming the reified substance of life itself. To name one effect among many, not just in science, but now in culture at large insofar as it makes claims to rationality, novelty becomes a signal of irrationality to be eradicated. To the extent that science succeeds in hegemonising the meaning of rationality, culture becomes prone to forsake the new for the sake of mechanically reiterating its operative forms, regressing into myth and barbarism in the same movement through which it secures rational progress. Science, which aims to eliminate transference, has the form of transference.

Support for the ubiquity of transference thesis comes more easily from the angle of reflective judgement. Reflective judgement occurs when "the particular is given and the universal has to be found for it".[10] Practices of reflective judgement through which phenomena are conceptually comprehended – in other words, the formation, acquisition, and application of empirical concepts – are, at least until the ideal of science is fully realised, guided by historically sedimented patterns of judgement (in part motivated by and reflecting psychological needs and cultural regimes of salience) that (1) limit the responsiveness of these judgements to the uniqueness of the events in whose midst we find ourselves, and (2) confer the sense of certainty and finality associated with determinative judgements onto reflective judgements, making it difficult to notice and thus correct the partiality of their framing operations. Reflective judgement, and thus our comprehension of various objects, is, for the most part, informed by patterns or habits of attention – the effects of individual and transindividual history – that key us to elements of a situation that would otherwise remain obscure ("pathology" in Kant's sense is thus a source of insight, albeit on Kant's terms, insight in need of experimental validation) yet cannot but distort our comprehension of this situation or fail to take its full toll. On an austere reading of Kant, only the completion of the scientific ideal could bring the inflations and deflations, the ongoing errancy of reflective judgement to a rest.[11]

10 I. Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 15/179.

11 Of course, the austere reading of Kant is not the only viable one. The question is whether reflective judgement must give way to determinative judgement, is merely the subjective condition for the latter, or is a moment of determinative judgement that unsettles the latter's aspirations to closure. The question, in other words, is whether reflective judgement is "merely psychological," a trial and error process we go through until we get the concept "right" – this is what Kant tends to believe, or at least wants to believe – which, in turn, is something only the ideal completion of science can guarantee, or is an indelible and epistemically significant feature of any judgement, amounting to an in principle unending negotiation between the indeterminate yet structured significance of the phenomena and its conceptual elaboration. The latter interpretive option will be developed below when we discuss Adorno's notion of the sensuous particular, the non-identical, etc. For a more direct development of the claim that reflective judgement undermines determinative judgement's aspirations, cf. J.M. Bernstein's *The Fate of Art: Aesthetic Alienation from Kant to Derrida and Adorno* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennslyvania State University Press, 1992), esp. chapter 1; and *Adorno: Disenchantment and Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), esp. pp. 306-318.

III.

Or, if we are (rightly) distressed by the metaphysical hypostatisation of the dichotomy between form and phenomena in either version of the Kantian account, we could put the point in Adornoian terms. Along with Adorno, we could say that we are possessed of a penchant for identitarian violence – subsuming unique particulars into pre-given forms – that will remain inordinately exacerbated so long as we are unreconciled to internal and external nature, that is, so long as we are ridden by mutually supporting intra-psychic and objectively (i.e., socio-economically) determined conflicts.[12] Reason as compulsory identification, for Adorno, bespeaks immersion in dangerous environs that we feel compelled to organise, classify, and control.[13] Reason as compulsory identification or reification (a term that picks up on the sense of finality discussed above) suggests a need for defence resulting from a sense that our needs will remain unmet – viciously neglected – if we do not actively transform our environment into a world hospitable to them. Thus, so long as we suffer and cannot trust our social institutions and

12 For Adorno's explicit commentary on the interarticulation of intra-psychic and social suffering, see 'Sociology and Psychology', trans. Irving Wohlfarth, *New Left Review* 46/ 7 (1967/8), pp. 67-80/79-97; *Minima Moralia*, trans. E. Jephcott. (London: Verso, 1974); hereafter *MM*.

13 Concepts, Adorno suggests, "are moments of the reality that compels their formation, primarily for the purpose of controlling nature" (*Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton [New York: Continuum, 1973], p. 11; hereafter *ND*). Or as he puts the point elsewhere, "[s]elf-preservation is the constitutive principle of science" (*Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. J. Cumming [New York: Seabury Press, 1972], p. 86; hereafter *DE*).

fellow human beings to sufficiently alleviate our suffering,[14] so long as we fail to flourish and suspect that the social conditions for flourishing are not forthcoming, the impulsion to abstract from and all but ignore concrete, sensuous particularity or novelty – specifically, its excess vis-à-vis our cognitive and instrumental intentions – for the sake of a reified world-view that seems to respond to the imperative for instrumental control will remain in place.[15] If we understand transference as psychic subsumption defensively motivated by needs for regularity, predictability,

14 "[T]hose subjects for whom the whole apparatus [of production] is set in motion," Adorno notes, are " . . . forget[ten] and only incidentally also satisfie[d]" by it (*ND*, p. 254/257). Note: throughout the footnotes, whenever feasible reference is given first to the English translation and then to the German original of Adorno's writings.

15 Sensuous particularity and novelty approach the same from different angles, the former from the side of the object, the latter from the side of the subject. Sensuous particularity names the qualitative, contextual uniqueness of the object, its inexchangability (unremitting exteriority or self-enclosure), what resists and remains apart from conceptual identification, what makes it *this* object and not just *an* object of some type. Novelty names the disquiet and disorientation a subject suffers as her cognitive and practical horizons are dislocated, her presumptions of self- and world-mastery undone, by the captivating insurgence of the object's qualitative specificity, specifically by the object's indeterminate indication of a cognitive and relational future beyond what can be foreseen. Novelty recalls us, if only for a passing moment, to our abiding passivity, thus to our capacity to undergo and perhaps to express an anticipatory solidarity with what may yet be. The experience of novelty is the experience of an object that, hijacking the subject's attention and unsettling her sense of what to make of or do with it, gestures towards the unknown, towards freedom: a signal of hope. It is also the experience of the subject as an object: the experience of the novel is the experience of our gaze returned, objectifying us. Novelty is an experience of alarm – shock and shudder – to which the subject succumbs as she finds herself captivated by, indeed beholden to, an object that unsettles her horizon of expectations, indeed her very sense of self, refuses to assimilate to the cognitive and practical protocols through which objects are ordinarily encountered, and exerts a pressure for a careful, responsive reckoning (including self-reckoning). The experience of novelty is thus the experience of the concomitant decontexualisation of subject and object. The new is not the "next" but what raises the question of what comes next, and thereby, what has been happening all along. Akin to Benjamin's "now-time" [*Jetztzeit*], novelty names an experience of interruption and defamiliarisation, an experience of the object's pressure against cognitive and practical intentions that would reduce it to known paradigms and protocols, its pressure for recognition on its own terms, for reckoning with the cognitive and practical futures toward which it dimly gestures. The novel is always unsolicited, thus invariably disturbing, offering at most a fleeting glimpse of the futurity inhering in it before succumbing to oblivion.

and thus whatever prospects for control over our lives and social world are left to us, then at least in a world such as our own transference is inescapable.

However, the point made about the (limited) productivity of Kantian "pathology" holds for Adorno too. It is not that identitarian reason is simply wrong and violent; it does attune us to certain features of the world, namely its possibilities for conformity to our projects and intentions[16] . . . or at least to *certain* projects and intentions, namely those that are available in a world where (1) objects and others appear primarily as resources for or superfluous to our designs, and (2) though individual self-advancement is the reigning ideology, actual opportunities for intervening in and shaping the social world, and thus the course of our lives, are severely constrained. For our purposes, it is important to note that at a certain level there is nothing wrong with transference (or resisting the full force of the new); it is not something that analytic or other social practices should try to eradicate altogether.[17] If, via

16 Though violent and reductive when it presumes to be emancipated from significant dependence on its objects, conceptual abstraction is something "we cannot do without, for it is the medium of self-preserving reason" (*ND*, p. 179).

17 First of all, Adorno insists that identity thinking is as inevitable as the drive to self-preservation, thus it is hardly lamentable in itself: "to think is to identify" (*ND*, p. 5); "classification is a condition for cognition" (*DE*, p. 220); "the will to identify works in each synthesis" (*ND*, pp. 151/147-8); "mind arose out of existence, as an organ for keeping alive" (*MM*, p. 328/243). It is only identity thinking's claim to totalisation that is to be resisted, for it is with this claim that scientific cognition and the social practices modelled on it become (1) self-defeating (because in the context of abstraction, "a thing is what it is only by becoming what it is not," namely its generic essence (*DE*, p. 11/37-8); or as Adorno and Horkheimer put the point more trenchantly, "In the mastery of nature, without which mind does not exist, enslavement to nature persists. By modestly confessing itself to be power [*Herrschaft*] and thus being taken back into nature, mind rids itself of the very claim to mastery which had enslaved it to nature" (*DE*, p. 31/63)), and (2) violently unjust to their objects (because committed to disenfranchising the cognitive standing of the object by repudiating dependence on it, specifically, dependence on the object's material configuration as a proto-cognitive yet meaningful guide for conceptual/discursive elaboration that cannot be, or at least may not be, exhausted by the latter). And it is not even as if identity's tendency to tantalisation is to be resisted at each turn; rather, identification is to be given full reign until, "in a final movement," it is made to turn against itself, revealing its products as coercive, mythic, but a semblance of identity. Furthermore, Adorno is quite clear that identity thinking is a force of liberation, especially in comparison with positivism's

transference, one extracts pleasure or comfort from an occasion in a manner that neither harms others nor contributes to one's own suffering (in *Playing and Reality*, Winnicott suggests that tapping archaic wishes and feelings and lavishing them onto later circumstances is a condition for a sense of excitement, vitality, and keen interest in the world[18]), there is nothing to gripe about. Unfortunately, and especially for those who find themselves in the clinic, this is often not the case. Likewise, if via progressive abstraction and systematization medicine can be improved, secure dwellings can be constructed, industry can develop the capacity to fulfil the basic needs of all, and law can establish the ground for coherent agency by securing a horizon of predictable behavioural expectations, there is hardly cause for lament. Again, unfortunately, for those who find themselves in the grip of rationalised social institutions administered by those whose focal concern is profiteering, self-interest, and social control,

fetishisation of the given, the culture industry's attempt to do the work of synthesis for us (*DE*, p. 124), and the reified meaning-effects of religion, tradition, political authority, and so forth: "[t]he effort implied in the concept of thought itself, as the counterpart of passive contemplation, is negative already – a revolt against being importuned to bow to every immediate thing" (*ND*, p. 19). To forsake identification would be to bow to the immediate, thus "to bring about directly the barbarism that culture is reproached with furthering indirectly" (*MM*, p. 44). More boldly, Adorno even claims that "[w]ithout the unity and domination of reason, nothing like freedom would ever have been thought in the first place, let alone brought into being" (*ND*, p. 262/265). However invidious in its totalising self-articulation, identity-thinking, precisely because sourced in a drive to self-preservation, is a source of hope . . . hope against itself.

Second, identity thinking is *required* as a moment of the forms of complex cognition that resist identity thinking's claims to totalisation: "Language as expression of the thing itself and language as communication are interwoven. The ability to name the matter at hand is developed under the compulsion to communicate it, and the element of coercion is preserved in it; conversely, it could not communicate anything that it did not have as its own intention, undistracted by other considerations" (*Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. S. Weber Nicholsen [Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993], p. 105/339; hereafter *HTS*); "full, unreduced experience" is to be had nowhere but "in the medium of conceptual reflection" (*ND*, p. 25/13); "concepts alone achieve what the concept prevents" (*ND*, p. 53); "What would lie in the beyond makes its appearance only in the materials and categories within" (*ND*, p. 140).

Third, principled accession to the full force of the new is hardly a viable option. The new may be a terrible danger as much as a vital chance. Cf. J. Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. P-A. Brault and M. Nass (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005) and M. Hägglund, *Radical Atheism: Derrida and the Time of Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008).

18 D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (London: Routledge, 1995).

the failure of these institutions to make good on their promise turns them into endless sources of suffering. The self-sacrifice such institutions enjoin remains uncompensated; reason itself becomes unreasonable.

IV.

Though transference or "reason as identification" may be all-pervasive or at least extraordinarily prevalent under current objective conditions, it is not altogether inescapable. Following Adorno, we can locate the conditions for and limits of breaking free from the inertia of transference, the conditions for and limits of genuine, sustained encounters with the new. Adorno, in other words, can help us explain why psychoanalysis is helpful when it is and why psychoanalysis is an "interminable" practice in a world such as our own. For our purposes, Adorno's key contention is that identification can only be an identification of the non-identical: identification itself assumes an unsubsumable, abrasively unique particularity (the object in its *hacceity*[19]) that is abstracted from in the course of identification.[20] Concepts cannot but depend on the pre-conceptual, the sensuously particular, if knowledge is genuinely knowledge *of* an object rather than a spontaneous posit.[21] Were we to deny conceptuality's dependency on the concrete particular – the mimetic moment – we would either have to forego every hope for realism and assume the full consequences of a wild idealism or assume that we are merely stimulus-response machines, in which case there

19 By *hacceity* is meant the non-fungible particularity of the time- and place-bound object that gives rise to its experiential density, thus its weak concept transcendence. *Hacceity*, synonymous with Adorno and Benjamin's notion of "aura," grounds the need for any conceptual identification, which can only comprehend the object in its substitutability and generality, to be supplemented by an array of more concrete descriptions if the truth of the object, *this* object, is to be approached. Cf. *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. R. Hulot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 112; hereafter *AT*.

20 "In truth, all concepts, even philosophical ones, refer to nonconceptualities" (*ND*, p. 11); "to refer to nonconceptualities . . . is characteristic of the concept" (*ND*, p. 24/12); the concept is indelibly "entwined with a nonconceptual whole" (*ND*, p. 24/12); "No concept would be thinkable, indeed none would be possible without the 'more'" (*ND*, p. 112/106); subject/concept and object each "necessarily require the other in order to be thought at all" (*Philosophische Termioilogie*, Vol. 2. [Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1973] p. 220). Also cf. *ND*, p. 139/145.

21 "If this moment [the expressive or mimetic moment, the moment of the non-identical] were extinguished altogether, it would be flatly incomprehensible that a subject can know an object" (*ND*, p. 45).

would be no way to explain concept formation, acquisition, and development or cultural differences in conceptualization.[22]

However, this insight is no cause to rejoice. On Adorno's account, at least in a world such as our own, tendentially, dependence on the pre-conceptual can be reflectively acknowledged only in muted forms, e.g., as indeterminacy[23] (the failure of phenomena to immediately cohere with their concepts, psychic templates, or transference schemas) or as guilt (the retrospective experience of the violence of the concept, which is at

22 I take it that the problem with explaining concept development (extensions of the concept unforeseen by the rule that the concept (as yet) is, but which nonetheless "work"; extensions wherein the meaning of the concept is recast through its application) on the assumption that we are stimulus-response mechanisms is obvious. The problem with explaining cultural differences on this model is similar: validity is supposed to issue from the automaticity of response to sensory input, but cultural differences in conceptualisation challenge the very idea of automaticity, or at least its scope. Conceptualisation would seem to be, necessarily, conceptualisation of an indeterminate though conceptualisable object of experience via patterns of salience if cultural differences in conceptualisation are not to be comprehensible without condescension. But to admit that regimes of salience are potentially uncirumventable and that the object is, in principle, an ongoing source of differential discursive elaborations, challenges the idea, or at least the scope, of automaticity. The problem with explaining concept formation and acquisition (while avoiding vulgar nominalism) is slightly trickier. The stimulus-response paradigm cannot explain concept acquisition because its notion of stimulus is too pure, too immediate, too external. It needs stimuli to be completely unstructured, emphatically unmediated, in order to make the claim that the work of conceptualisation is nothing but empirical induction (or some similar automatism), but we cannot build concepts from such stimuli because the work of the reproductive imagination through which sense impressions are associated would have nothing to work with, nothing to regulate its operations. Without admitting that either (1) concept formation and acquisition necessarily assume operative concepts or suchlike organisers in virtue of which resemblances can be discerned as resemblances (Platonism), which the stimulus-response paradigm cannot admit on pain of betraying its commitment to the immediacy and exteriority of stimuli, or (2) stimuli are not wholly unstructured, that they are not brute givens but organised in some discernible way, i.e., that stimuli are necessarily mediated by the body and/or the indeterminate meaningfulness of the object's material configuration, basically, if concept formation and acquisition require some advance familiarity with, some sense of the significance of, the phenomena one is developing or learning the concept(s) of, then there would be no way to explain how a concept was ever selected as the or a correct concept for this object. In brief, if phenomena were not already available in some proto-conceptual way, and if this availability were not in some way a normative regulator of concept formation and acquisition, how could the concepts ever pick out the phenomena? A story about social conditioning seems too weak: it fails to explain the intra- and inter-personal consistency with which concepts are formed from extremely heterogeneous sensations. Oftentimes, the properties of the objects classified are so heterogeneous that appeals to induction cannot explain the consistency with which particular forms of classification are employed, and an appeal to social conditioning begs the question. Further, treating concept formation and acquisition as purely empirical questions fails to explain the significance certain concepts come to have in environments where, for the most, they are of marginal significance. Sometimes concepts appear, if at all, only marginally in social environment yet take on a relatively great weight for the one acquiring them. On the last two points, cf. Lawrence Hirschfeld's *Race in the Making: Cognition, Culture, and the Child's Construction of Human Kinds* (Boston: The MIT Press, 1998). Equally, a story about hardwiring seems too strong. Aside from running headlong into the cultural differences problem, it cannot explain (in a satisfactory way) how we go wrong conceptually, that is, fail to activate a concept given the right sensory input.

once forward-looking, pushing for, indeed binding us to develop, forms of reparation or restitution that, tendentially, we know not how to provide). This is to say, the recognition of "concrete particularity" under conditions that compel identitarian abstraction is itself tendentially abstract and ill-fated. In a world where we are compulsively integrated into social forms of perception and object-relation (we are free to be creative so long as our creativity manifests as art and not as world, as private style and not social institution) and in which deviance risks utter catastrophe (economic and social marginalization, or worse), acknowledgement of conceptuality's dependence on the pre-conceptual tends to be either (1) nearly negligible, unsustainable, ultimately amounting to a fleeting experience of indeterminacy that may briefly give us a general glimpse of the harsh forces of ideological interpellation and is for this reason abstract and all but impotent, or (2) consigned to aesthetic experience, merely individual ethical experience, or love, and is thus socially insubstantial. For us, pre-conceptual acknowledgement is not a matter of being keyed to – robustly acknowledging our ongoing dependence on – the multifaceted uniqueness (the historical, social, economic, and otherwise human meaning) of concrete, particular objects or others and shaping our world in response to them.[24] Though we try for

23 "The non-identical is not to be attained immediately as something positive" (*ND*, p. 161/158).

24 "[N]o matter how hard we try for linguistic expression of such a history congealed in things, the words we use will remain concepts. Their precision substitutes for the thing itself, quite without bringing its selfhood to mind; there is a gap between words and the things they conjure. Hence the residue of arbitrariness and relativity in the choice of words as well as the presentation as a whole" (*ND*, pp. 62/52-3).

this in love, our capacities for world-shaping are never up to the task of discovering what it would be to remain attuned and responsive to the beloved. For Adorno, only complex acts of critical interpretation and mimesis can excavate and, in the margins of the social, briefly sustain this experience.

To experience the uniqueness of the object/other in a more sustained fashion, to responsibly reckon with its novelty or natality, the untold futurity inhering in it, that is, to break free from a large portion of the socially conditioned force of transference, would require a massive and coextensive transformation of objective conditions and subjectivity. What would be required is the slackening of the imperative to conceptual appropriation and instrumental control to the extent that the object/other would be able to insist itself into our attention not just fleetingly but in a manner that organises and orients our attention. Thus what would be required is a world in which (1) the satisfaction of those needs to which the imperative of conceptual appropriation and instrumental control are responsive would provide respite from the purposeful (i.e., subject-centred) orientation to the world (e.g., large scale economic and social transformations that would render social institutions much more responsive, indeed preemptively responsive, to a broad range of human needs;[25] also, developments in the sphere of intersubjectivity along the lines of social solidarity, friendship, intimacy, and the like that would provision sufficient satisfactions to preempt narcissistic withdrawal)[26] and (2) an enhanced porosity, or in a certain sense, relaxation, of the subject is socially facilitated, along with a strengthening of its capacity to metabolise and reflect upon without dominating (bringing back to pre-given purposes or concepts) that onto which it is opened.[27] What is required for the latter is twofold. First, mimetic aptitude: cultivated

25 This would amount to defeating subjective idealism at the level of social practice. If subjective idealism is motivated by the fear that any measure of object-dependence (reliance on immediate impressions just as much as on the cognitive deliverances of tradition, political authority, religion, etc.) is a source of irrationality, which translates into the thought that reason *must* autonomously legislate if objectivity is to be secured, and if the concern with securing objectivity is sourced in fright of nature's (and later, culture's) inhospitability, then provisioning a livable world would fulfil, and so moot, the intention of subjective idealism. Its defeat would reside not in its disproof, but rather in its loss of relevance.

26 Cf. 'Die Revidierte Psychoanalyse', *Soziologische Schriften I.* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1972), pp. 373-9.

adeptness at sustaining forms of receptivity wherein the object/other can compel transformations of the subject that register its significance, that is, forms of "active" object-dependence wherein the claims levelled by the object can be attended and, through the subject's responsiveness to them, elaborated. What is required here is nothing less than a culture of impotence, that is, not just private sphere tolerance but cultural support for and prizing of our capacity to be undone by objects and others, to undergo periodic crises and perchance rebirths, to be deeply impacted – captivated, even obsessed – by and find ourselves unavoidably devoted to, in the power of, that which moves us and irremediably exceeds us.[28]

27 "In what are, at the present historical stage, most often called oversubjective judgements, what really happens is that the subject has really automatically echoed the consensus omnium. It could restore the object to its own rights, instead of being satisfied with a bad copy, only where it resisted the least common denominator of such objectivity and freed itself qua subject. Objectivity today depends on that emancipation, rather than on the tireless repression of the subject. The oppressive power of the objectified within subjects, a power that blocks them from becoming subjects, also blocks knowledge of the objective" (*ND*, pp. 172-3/170-1). The form Adorno privileges for displaying the strengthening of reflection through the relaxation of subjectivity is constellative practice: cf. *ND*, pp. 52-3/61-3, 162-6/164-8, and *AT*, p. 274ff.

28 "Only a thinking . . . that acknowledges its lack of function and power can perhaps catch a glimpse of an order of the possible and the nonexistent, where human beings and things each would be in their rightful place" (*Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. H. W. Pickford [New York: Columbia University Press, 1998], p. 15/471); "Folly is truth in the shape that human beings must accept whenever, amid the untrue, they do not give up truth" (*ND*, p. 404/396). Religion would be one version of a culture of impotence; but so too would be – to anticipate the following note – a certain aspect of Hegelian dialectics: "Hegel is able to think from the thing itself out, to surrender passively, as it were, to its authentic substance . . . . Hegel everywhere yields to the object's own nature . . . but it is precisely this kind of subordination to the discipline of the thing itself that requires the most intense efforts on the part of the concept" (*HTS*, pp. 6-7).

As a precautionary note, let us underscore that the enhanced porosity sponsored by a culture of impotence needs to be coupled with, indeed interwoven with, cultural forms that support critical reflection. The former without the latter risks the disasters detailed in 'Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda', (*The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, Arato and Gebhardt, eds., New York: Urizen Books, 1978), *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), and *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. As Adorno puts it in the context of *Aesthetic Theory*, "when one is inside works of art, reenacting them, the enigmatic quality [e.g., what it means for an artwork to be purposive but without purpose, thus what it means for the artwork to be an artwork under conditions of

Second, reflective/critical aptitude: cultural and historical sensitivities and philosophically refined reflective capacities that, to say the least, are not fostered by current social practices[29] or educational institutions.[30] The development of critical aptitude would require, minimally, economic autonomy (say, the replacement of monopoly capitalism by economic institutions that substantially rely on individuals collectively projecting and pursuing complex ends), political autonomy (say, the development of accessible democratic institutions and forms of life in which matters of common concern are subject to collective deliberation, and so in which

expansionist social rationalization] makes itself invisible" (*AT*, p. 183/176). Or as he expresses this point in *Negative Dialectics*, "[t]he illusion of taking direct hold of the Many would be a mimetic regression, as much a recoil into mythology, into the horror of the diffuse, as the thinking of the One, the imitation of blind nature by repressing it, ends at the opposite pole in mythical domination" (*ND*, p.158; also cf. *ND*, p. 18 and p. 48 on the need for critical reflection, even identity thinking, as a check on the arbitrariness of expression). On the strengthening of the subject through its relaxation, cf. Adorno's *Zur Lehre von der Geschichte und von der Freiheit*, ed. Tiedemann (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp), p. 326.

That the relaxation of the subject itself requires extensive psycho-social transformation can be shown by even a cursory glance at its minimal conditions for realization. Minimally, what would be required is (1) confidence that acknowledging significant and ongoing dependence will not be manipulated to humiliate, dehumanise (e.g., feminise), or otherwise abuse – thus, at the very least, a fundamental reworking of gender norms and perhaps a reorientation of secular culture's attitude toward religion; (2) substantial diminishment of the socially manipulated anxiety that releasing oneself even a bit from socially normative forms of perception will result in irreparable disintegration, bringing one to a point of no return, of "psychotic" breakdown and so permanent social abjection – thus robust confidence in the beneficent intentions of social, economic, and political institutions and enhanced social tolerance for and perhaps routinising of play and other manners of indulging concern with the trifling, insignificant, and amorphous; (3) availability to the "relaxed self-surrender to all kinds of association and happy nonsense" that is "cut short by entertainment on the market" – thus massive transformations to the culture industry, especially in regard to its reliance on the pleasure of stereotype recognition (*DE*, p. 142; cf also *DE*, p. 227 and 'Essay as Form' in *Notes to Literature*, Vol. 1, trans. S. Weber Nicholsen. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, p. 4); and (4) confidence that forms of expression not immediately commensurate with reigning forms of intelligibility will be given a chance by, and can even transform, the latter – thus what Kristeva would call a tendential integration of the semiotic and the symbolic.

29 "When big industrial interests incessantly eliminate the economic basis for moral decision, partly by eliminating the independent economic subject, partly by taking over the self-employed tradesman, partly by transforming workers into cogs in labour unions, the possibility of reflection must also die out" (*DE*, pp. 177-8/198).

there is an ongoing demand to develop reasons for action that can be shared with and rationally assessed by others), and other such institutional transformations that promote cognitive refinement, e.g., the capacity to bear and even enjoy cognitive ambiguity and complexity, that is, to bear or even enjoy reflective engagements with that which is imperfectly legible and to some extent incalculable and unpredictable, as political and economic situations most often are. Without such large scale transformations of subjectivity and objectivity, without the dissolution of possessive individualism, immiserating forms of economic organization, and the opacity and unavailability for intervention of social institutions, the concreteness of the object simply amounts, for the most part, to the fleeting experience of its non-immediate fit into our conceptual apparatuses and instrumental designs. And part of the problem is that, given the imperatives of cognitive and practical domination and their motivators, the non-immediate fit of object/others into our conceptual apparati and instrumental designs is registered as anxiety and thus feeds the "need" to dominate.

So even if it is analytically true that identification presupposes an experience of the non-identical, it may be that the experience of the non-identical is, for the most part, a socially or even anthropologically distant event, or at least largely consigned to social marginality: childhood and aesthetics/ethics/love, respectively. In other words, at least for the inhabitants of the Northwest corridor of the world, and likely not just there, even the abstract experience of concrete particularity (now available primarily as the experience of indeterminacy) may be but a dim memory: the memory of play. It may be that the totalising forces of social integration generate conditions under which objects and others are predominantly predigested, socially mediated to the point of naturalization from just about the get-go. Social conditioning may run that deep; the impact of the culture industry may be that profound. Even if one is privileged enough to have developed reflective capacities in any way sufficient for thoughtful reflection on experiences of indeterminacy and the concrete particularities they screen, such experiences are

30 Together, these requirements mean to translate Adorno's claim "to use the strength of the subject to break through the deception of constitutive subjectivity" (*ND*, pp. xx/10). I take it that *Negative Dialectics* means to initiate or retrieve such practices, most explicitly in Part III. Cf. *ND*, p. 407/399, *DE*, p. 18/46, and *DE*, p. 32/64.

increasingly rarefied.[31] However, even if the experience of indeterminacy (abstract concreteness) is for the most part consigned to individual or anthropological anteriority or cultural marginality, are there not yet those fortunate souls who are able to retain a sense of childlike wonder throughout the course of their lives? Are there not lovers of various sorts? But to what degree one has really attained distance from a hegemonic regime of intelligibility and the forces that conspire to produce efficient, instrumentally rational, and socially integrated subjects, to what extent one's wonder and experience of indeterminacy are themselves determined, mediated, and unfree, is a persistent question.

But on the other hand, Adorno may be right that there cannot but be an extra-conceptual attunement to the object, something like an intellectual intuition of the object, if identification is to get off the ground. The language of intuition here is not meant to corroborate the sceptical Kantian (or Sartrean) distinction between a mere, meaningless sensory manifold and the intelligibility afforded by the subject's imposition of meaning onto it. Quite to the contrary, the point – the point that, let's say, Kant circulated around but never quite discovered in the *Critique of Judgement* – is that this distinction is inherently untenable. If we are to avoid vulgar nominalism and thus avoid undermining the prospects of valid knowledge in advance, and equally, if we are to avoid the worst excesses of subjective idealism, e.g., Kant's contention that "[r]eason does not here follow the order of things as they present themselves in appearances, but frames for itself with perfect spontaneity an order of its own according to ideas, to which it adapts the empirical conditions, and according to which it declares actions to be necessary, even though they have never taken place, and perhaps never will take place",[32] it seems necessary to admit that the application of concepts cannot be either arbitrary or wholly spontaneous, that their validity requires a certain sort of fit with the sensations or appearances they comprehend, and thus that the objects these sensations or appearances are sensations or appearances *of* are themselves structured in some way, meaningful if not fully discursive.[33] Moreover, mustn't we admit that there is no conceptual rule

31 Cf. 'Privilege of Experience' in *ND*, pp. 40-42/50-53.

32 *CPR*, B576/A548.

33 "[W]hat is combined is always only what goes together anyway. Otherwise, synthesis would be nothing but arbitrary classification" ('Subject and Object', trans. Arato and Gebhardt in *The Adorno Reader*, ed. O'Connor [Oxford, Mass: Blackwell, 2000], p. 755/149).

to guide the application of a concept, for then we would need a rule for the application of the rule, and end up in an infinite regress?[34] If so, it seems plausible to assert that for the concept to latch onto and render intelligible the sensory manifold, it must be guided in some extra-conceptual manner. This is what Adorno calls the moment of mimesis. The most plausible candidate for this guiding operation would be a notion of sensory experience, or more broadly, affection, as itself discerning particular features of the object and, let's say, allowing its sensuous configuration to manifest as sufficiently akin to available concepts for us to be able to begin to narrow down the range of concepts appropriate to the object. Sensation provides a sketch of the object. Though, as was remarked above, it is still a question to what extent sensation is, under contemporary conditions, itself regulated in advance, always already socially mediated. To what extent have we been integrated into a horizon of mechanistic stimulus-and-response? Though perhaps we can never be sure about this under conditions of tendentially totalising social integration, it seems plausible that the object must be experienced *as* sufficiently like our concept of it for the concept to be selected as the right one (or as one of a range of viable concepts to be tested).

And perhaps this insistence of sensuous particularity persists beyond our first or first few identifications. It may be that up to a certain point (let's call it the point of naturalisation: the point at which the object/other can no longer appear apart from its conceptual determination expect in exceptional circumstances that involve, say, the crisis or breakdown of our schemas) sustaining the identitarian reduction of the object (learning to live with the concept) involves a dim persistence of the dimension of non-identity. Perhaps this dimension persists only in distorted form: not even remotely as a full awareness of the object as socio-historically or otherwise contextually concrete and particular, but just as indeterminate. Or perhaps only in a mediated form of indeterminacy: indeterminacy marked by the subtle hesitation in employing a concept or a certain enduring indecisiveness (or as Adorno would say, guilt) about such employment may be how sensuous particularity perseveres (and is distorted) within a social world bent on totalising integration. This means that the violence of identitarian reason itself gives us reason to believe that we yet have the capacity to comprehend the object, at least provisionally and to a limited extent, in its

34 *CPR*, B171-2.

concrete particularity, in its excess with respect to sedimented patterns of judgement or intentional determination as such. Which is to say, there is yet hope for freedom.

On Adornoian terms, though transference/identity thinking is all-pervasive, it is not damning, absolutely fixed or frozen. Further, on Adorno's terms, transference *intrinsically* presupposes the capacity, when sufficiently supported, to come to awareness *as* transference; in principle, we can come to see ourselves as transferentially motivated.

To exploit this capacity, which is what psychoanalysis seeks to do, is to open ourselves to an acknowledgement, however dim and unsustainable, of the abrasive particularity of the figures or situations we transferentially distort, to the figures who or situations that, were we to learn to respond to them otherwise than according to our pronounced dispositions, may yield another future . . . for us and for them. Psychoanalytic practices that promote tolerance for or even pleasure in emotional and cognitive ambiguity; foster habits of patient self-reflection; seek to unsettle petrified forms of object assessment and relation; inspire confidence that the compromised satisfactions and securities we have managed to attain are not all that are on offer; release imagination, thought, and psychic energy from defensive demands; key attention to and sponsor hope for the future one desperately seeks but cannot acknowledge one wants to see realised; express confidence that the dangers one recurrently seeks to avoid but does not really expect can be lived without, and so on seem designed to cultivate this sort of responsivity, thus to unleash the future from the forces that compel the static replication of the same, from the suffering that *is* this stale repetition.

However, these Adornoian musings also suggest that there are profound limits to the freedom at which psychoanalysis and other emancipatory practices aim. To "liberate" the individual from her psychohistorically conditioned shackles is to release her into the normative order of possessive individualism and reified bourgeois culture, and so a very limited emancipatory gesture indeed. In a world such as our own, analysis is interminable – a fate hyperbolically figured by a Woody Allen-like situation in which after 10 years of analysis, finally, one makes a big breakthrough . . . and lays down on the couch – because the genuine and qualitatively rare forms of successes it can

achieve, coupled with its socially conditioned failures and the difficulty of addressing these failures in analysis due to the privileging of the intrapsychic, leads to a situation in which unrelieved suffering tends to inspire reinvigorated investment in analysis, sometimes to the point where interest in the practice itself tends to accrue an as if autonomous momentum, an obsessive quality – or more soberly, to the point where analysis, at last in its institutional form, is terminated due to the feeling that its possibilities have been exhausted. With Adorno in mind, we can say that the full force and curative potential of psychoanalysis, or more broadly, the possibility of experiences of the new, requires massive objective and subjective transformations. Not all pathology is social pathology, but pathology as well as reparative responses to it suffer from the social. Even if its reflective comprehension, along with practices that support the alleviation of the miseries it thrives on, may release possibilities its totalising tendencies cannot altogether suppress, "Wrong life cannot be lived rightly".[35]

35 *MM*, p.39.

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Change, Agency, and Interdependent Affordances: The Outlines of a Modest Ontology

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What gets counted as agency – the capacity to bring about change according to one's dispositions – depends on who is doing the counting. If one is a Deleuzian, to deny agency to, for example, non-living beings bolsters undesirable claims about human exceptionalism while reinforcing myths of independent action within an intra-dependent world. Agency and change, for a Deleuzian, are products of material, immaterial, contextual and sensorial inputs, potentialities, and limitations; agency might be understood by the Deleuzian as a product of what Karen Barad would call sited and embodied "intra-actions"[1] between the sensing "human" and the significantly agential "natural" environment. As Barad explains, existence "is not an individual affair. Individuals do not preexist their intra-relating."[2] Barad, drawing on her work in theoretical physics, notes that "time and space, like matter and meaning, come into existence, are iteratively reconfigured through each intra-action, thereby making it impossible to differentiate in any absolute sense between creation and renewal, beginning and returning, continuity and discontinuity, here and there, past and future."[3]

From this point of view agency is not something that is enacted in isolation, nor is it something restricted to human beings. We are not individual agents roaming across a field of open-ended options that we can completely freely contribute to, or take advantage of. Rather, agency – becoming active, causing change – is a consequence of, and dependent upon, relationships, contexts, connections, and collectivities. Indeed, to

1 K. Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).
2 Ibid. p. ix.
3 Ibid.

suggest that we are *individual* agents – acting alone! – is, for Deleuze, the height of absurdity since were we to be truly *isolated* individuals, we would have nothing upon which we could direct the very agency our independence presupposes.

Since Deleuzians are compelled to emphasise the necessarily *relational* nature of agency – and of creativity – we are faced with the task of reformulating our understanding of agency by reformatting our understanding of how our actions (and the actions of non-human entities) can come to fruition at all. If it is not we – alone – who are acting as agents, who or what is active? For Deleuze it is necessary to expand what we mean when we talk about 'ourselves' by recognising that our ability to become active is always an expression of pluripotency, an expression of a system of interdependent forces that are expressed *through* multiplicitous sets of individual human and non-human 'agents'.

Aurelia Armstrong describes the familiar Deleuzian trope that because agents are always acting within and across networks, and are themselves composite assemblages of material and immaterial forces, they can enhance their agential abilities by entering into various capacity-enhancing relationships or agreements. To do so requires, for example, that human agents ask not "what does this relationship mean?" but "what can this relationship do?" What must be shown, as Armstrong states, "is *how* agreements can be produced, how powers can be combined, and how relations between powers can be organised [so] that these powers *aid* rather than *restrain* one another, add to rather than subtract from one another."[4] Armstrong observes that Deleuze's (not to mention Spinoza's and Nietzsche's) articulation of agency is one that opposes "liberal" accounts of agency that tend "to construe freedom [or agency] in individualistic terms, as a right or 'private possession' of an isolated individual"; instead, Deleuze "posits agency as an irreducibly collective or combinatory process." Armstrong continues:

> The primary focus of Deleuze's investigation is the processes of collectivisation which produce [...] composites or combinations of individuals with greater power and multiplicity, and individuals as modalities of these greater

4 A. Armstrong, 'Some Reflections on Deleuze's Spinoza: Composition and Agency', in *Deleuze and Philosophy: the Difference Engineer*, ed. by K. Ansell-Pearson (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 44-57, esp. p. 50.

> individuals. The *growth of agency* is shown to consist in a process of becoming-active, in the increase and enhancement of 'individual' powers through their combination with the powers of other, compatible individuals and things.[5]

Agency according to Deleuze and as described by Armstrong is not something limited by *our own* capacities and will, so much as it is enabled and enhanced by the *individual* forces that constitute the situations in which we find ourselves and by the individuals we are acting *with*. It is not so much our will that extracts activity and events from the objects that surround us as it is the objects that surround us that provide us with what Deleuze describes as the "complete conditions"[6] necessary for specific events to unfold during each and every moment. Deleuze and Guattari's is an ontology that recognises the necessarily interdependent interaction of the world's constitutive parts, the variegated resonances that vibrate across immanence. Theirs is a world of complementarity, counterpoint, mutual beneficence, and co-generosity. Insofar as this is the case, individual agency is not merely our own but is contingent upon the existence of collectivities that act. As Spinoza observes:

> A body that moves or is at rest must be caused to move or stop moving by another body, which has also been caused to move or stop moving by another, and that again by another, and so on, to infinity. [...] How a body is affected by another body depends on the natures of each; so that one body may be moved differently according to differences in the nature of the bodies moving it. And conversely, different bodies may be moved differently by one and the same body.[7]

Prioritising compability, then, demands that we consciously understand – if only abstractly or imprecisely – what constitutes the conditions of our existence. This is certainly Spinoza's demand since as far as he's concerned "everyone must admit" that "all men are born

5 Ibid.

6 G. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 159.

7 B. Spinoza, *Ethics Demonstrated in Geometrical Order*, trans. by J. F. Bennett (2004) <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/index.html> [accessed 12 Sept. 2009], p. 30.

ignorant of the causes of things" and that "all men want to seek their own advantage and are conscious of wanting this"; he goes on:

> From these premises it follows that men think themselves free, because they are conscious of their choices and their desires, are ignorant of the causes that incline them to want and to choose, and thus never give the faintest thought – even in their dreams! – to those causes.[8]

Spinoza here implores us to remember our *limitations* when we think about the agency of things. We must *modestly* begin thinking about agency – a richly complex expression of multiplicity – by recalling from where this thinking begins: our perspectivally-limited myopic positionality that *itself* is merely an effect of a vast, complex, and ever-shifting network or environment. Indeed, I would like to suggest that the radical reciprocality of the agents that constitute these networks might compel us to ask: Why do theories that focus on networks and interconnectivity perpetuate the idea that individuals exist at all, or that agency, capacities, and even creativity are expressions of *individual* actors (whether human or non-human, networked or not)?

In other words, wouldn't it be more accurate to suggest that the 'agency' of 'individuals' is *so* profoundly relational that to speak of agents or of individuals at all is to describe an incomplete picture. After all, how can any individual action occur or any individual capacity be expressed in the absence of that upon which that action is enacted, or without that action being, essentially, made possible by another so-called 'individual'? If we follow this logic, individuals and their capacities do not precede actions; rather, 'individual' actions are *made possible by relations*, and it is these relationally dependent actions that produce what we call 'individuals' as a sort of *effect*. Agency, then, is always a *collective enunciation* that issues forth and comes into being as the *effect* of interdependent relationships, and any capacity we have as individuals is not an individual capacity at all but is itself an effect or a product of a relationship. My suggestion is that the presumption that individuals exist must be challenged by pointing out that every creative act, event, or expression is only possible when there is something to act upon, and that any particular entity's capacities are made possible by what other entities

8 Ibid. pp. 18-19.

or environments afford (and vice versa). In other words, every expression of creativity or creation is an expression of co-creativity or co-creation, produced not by individuals but by the relationships themselves.

It follows that *we* don't increase *our* capacity to act by entering into complex relationships; rather what we call *we* is merely an *effect of a relationship from the very beginning*. *Our* agency, then, is *never our own*; actions only exist *between* 'individuals' who are themselves constituted at each moment by their interrelation. For this reason, we might say that it is not the desiring, willing individual who is the agent (whether human or non-human); rather, the agent is the intra-dependent *desiring assemblage* itself.

According to such a framework the human is not only decentred but *seems* disempowered. The human subject – whether multiplicitous or not – is no longer an agent but an effect. We, so to speak, do not *persist* in time but are perpetually *constituted* at each moment as a product of ever-changing relationships. The oft-cited suggestion by Spinoza that *we don't know what our bodies are capable of* overlooks the possibility that our bodies and our capacities to affect and be affected are not our own but are the *products* of mutually constituting interactions.

Entities, then, insofar as they are expressions of affordances which are themselves products of relations do not – in any stable sense – *exist*, but come to be *recognised* as existing (by us) by the relative consistency and coherence of their capacities; similarly, an entity's capacities (insofar as we can isolate them abstractly) only become capable of affecting if they are able to be received by other constellations of forces, etc. We must resist the temptation to define and determine the capacities of things based on our rather narrow all-too-human access to them.

The rest of this paper will examine some of the theoretical and ethical *significance* of an ontology wherein the centrality of the *human* agent is resituated within *and as a product of* an extended field of human and non-human relational 'agencies'. I suggest that such a decentring invites us to cultivate what I call 'modest ontologies', ontologies that begin with an acknowledgement that our human capacity to act is not our own but is, in a very real sense, *offered to us*[9] by what James Jerome

9 Throughout this article my use of conventionally anthropocentric terms to describe non-human actions is deliberate, though perhaps mildly provocative, and should be read not as a further anthropomorphisation of the world, but as an extension of agency-like capacities and motivations to non-human things and forces.

Gibson has described as affordances, literally *the capacities of things* that derive from intra-relation. My intention is not to prescribe what precepts or values or specific ethical norms modest ontologies might enact, but to suggest that since ontological positions routinely precede actions and ethics a modest ontological starting point has the potential to yield ethical positions and logics more amenable to our interdependent world we've always lived in.

Gibsonian Affordances and Interdependent Agencies

Gibson describes an affordance as something "that refers to both the environment and the animal in a way that no existing term does," implying the "complementarity of the animal and the environment."[10] Affordances however, according to my reading of them, are actionable possibilities of things that come to be mobilised differently relative to different relationships, stimuli, and contexts; that is, affordances do not precede their emergence, nor do they exist prior to the relationship that gives rise to their actualisation.[11] Deleuze and Guattari objectify the interdependent world of affordances using a tick as an example. The tick, they tell us, is "organically constructed in such a way that it finds its counterpoint in any mammal whatever that passes below its branch, [...]. This," they posit, "is not a teleological conception but a melodic one in which we no longer know what is art and what nature."[12]

What an object or a situation affords, then, it affords to something or someone else. Our affordances, for example, exist for others, but only come to exist in the presence of others; that is, we would be remiss to regard affordances as being *inherent* capacities of individual entities since there is nothing inherent about an affordance that only comes into being when given the opportunity to come into being by an other, or by others.

10 J. J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1986), p. 127.

11 Gibson, on the other hand, would be more inclined to suggest that entities *have* inherent priorities that come to light in certain situations but not others.

12 G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 185.

Gibson concurs, noting that affordances emerge from environments. An environment, for example, affords "respiration or breathing; it permits locomotion; it can be filled with illumination so as to permit vision; it allows detection of vibrations and detection of diffusing emanations; it is homogeneous; and finally, it has an absolute axis of reference, up and down. All these offerings of nature, these possibilities or opportunities [are] *affordances*."[13] At the same time, of course, the breathing or locomotion afforded to an inhabitant *of* the environment *by* the environment not only affords life and movement to the inhabitant, but affords the environment its environment-ability, so to speak. Each allows – affords – the other's existence.

What I want to emphasise, again, is that these actionable possibilities and melodic[14] relationships of counterpoint are not *produced* by the individual human, animal, tick, wasp, or orchid; rather, the human, animal, tick, wasp, and orchid are continually *granted* capacities, identities, agencies *by the melodic relationships*. The relationship comes first, the individual agent comes second (as an aftereffect, interpretation, or judgement).

Being-with Affordances

To build an ontological position upon an understanding that relations come first is to recognise that the capacities inherent to what we conventionally might describe as "individuals" rely, in full, on the existence of other, so called, individuals. That is, to be able to *do*, entities *do not act alone*. Entities cannot merely *be*, but must *be-with*.

Jean-Luc Nancy's writing compels us to reconfigure the notion of Being (singular) – a notion intrinsically linked to conventional understandings of "the human" as top-dog-organism – by thinking Being as being-with: "it is necessary to refigure fundamental ontology [...] with a thorough resolve that *starts from the plural singular of origins*, from *being-with*."[15] For Nancy, Being presupposes *coessence*, what he

13 J. J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1986), pp. 18-9.
14 G. Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 319, 346.
15 J.-L. Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 26.

describes as a "being singular plural."[16] Coessentiality, observes Nancy, the "being-with," is not something added on to "some prior Being" but is always at Being's "heart"; for this reason, Nancy argues, it is "absolutely necessary" to rearrange the conventional "order of philosophical exposition" that regards the "with" and the "other" as always subservient to Being-singular.[17] Nancy urges us to think Being as a being-with, to think of existence as relational, and to recognise that the "I" and what the "I" is capable of is *constituted in the first instance* by an "other" – whether human or non-human. Action implies and requires relation. *Individuals do not exist*, since individuals (were there to be such things) have no capacities of their own.

We could suggest, then, that affordances are not even properties of individuals, but of the contexts, situations, environments, and multiplicities themselves. In other words, it is not simply entities that produce affordances, but affordances that produce the characteristics and effects that constitute the entity's existence. At the same time – and again, more generally – it is not the causes (of entities and affordances, respectively) that produce effects, but the effect's *potential* to exist that affords the causes.

To begin to think of the capacities of objects, contexts, or humans using some version of Gibson's affordances compels us, at once, to recognise the infinitely variable potential permutations available to us and the world in which we live; significant too, however, is that we are compelled to recognise that the panoply of options available to 'things' is restricted by the *specific relationships* into which they enter and the *particular affordances* these relationships allow. We are left having to grapple with the knowledge that an object's or an environment's affordances – its very characteristics and qualities and potentialities – are *fundamentally determined* by an individual's or an environment's spectrum of receptivity, by what relationships are capable of doing or producing. So, insofar as an entity or a circumstance is merely composed of its respective qualities and capabilities – by what it can do – its existence relies on and is determined by the existence of something upon which these capabilities can be exercised.

16 J.-L. Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).
17 Ibid. p. 30.

In Spinozist terms entities will have different capacities to affect and be affected based on the affective capacities of the situation in which they find themselves, by the affective capacities *of the capacities* of the context itself, such that the relationships that constitute a given situation could be described as individual agents in their own right, affording this or that capacity to the individuals the relationship is producing.

We might, perhaps, be tempted to regard affordances or capacities as latent potentialities or Deleuzian virtualities. But rather than imagining that capacities or virtualities hide out in objects waiting to be actualised – as Graham Harman seems to suggest in his ambitious object-oriented "speculative realism"[18] – we might be able to think of capacities, affordances and so on as being produced at each moment *by the relationship* entered into, as not having *any* reality prior to their being generated in and by the present relationships that produce capacities and virtualities as products.[19]

Here, of course, we potentially have a situation of infinite regress wherein the object's capacity to have a capacity, or capacity to enter into relations in the first place, is itself a hidden – or latent – capacity housed deep within. But this capacity – for change, for example – is, we could imagine, not itself a capacity so much as it is a condition, an *a priori* condition that affords capacities the conditions for their existence.

This interconnection of so-called *individual* subjects and objects, this blurring of the lines between acting and being acted upon objectifies

18 G. Harman, *Guerrilla Metaphysics: Phenomenology and the Carpentry of Things* (Chicago: Open Court, 2005).

19 I am interested, too, in how an emphasis and prioritisation of *relationality* contributes to ongoing theoretical research on the idea of *virtuality*. My argument is that Deleuze's virtuality could more productively be understood as describing the immaterial potentiality of *relationality itself*, rather than as a sort of transcendent realm of potentiality. That is, it is the relationships *themselves* that are virtual insofar as they are immaterial but fully real, and insofar as they *produce the effects* and *entities* (and agents and affects) we encounter in the actual world. Moreover, because individuals and their capacities are actualised differently at each moment according to the relations in which they find themselves, their capacities do not pre-exist their actualisation, but are generated and made possible at the very moment of actualisation by what these relations afford. In other words, the virtual might be that which exists contemporaneously with the actual *as relation*, and the virtual relation, in turn, produces actuality as an ongoing effect.

the degree to which we are products of the world we live in, determined by the world's affordances, capacities, and propensities. We encounter and experience this world as evolving sets of enabling constraints wherein the capacities of things, and of ourselves, are constantly producing *one another* and adapting one to the other as an utterly interdependent and differentiating expression of univocal relationality. This is a world where there is no potential that exceeds the circumstances; as Deleuze explains, "relations [...] are realised according to circumstances, and the way in which these capacities for being affected are filled."[20]

So while affordances may differ "from species to species and from context to context" they can't be regarded as "freely variable" since, as Ian Hutchby reminds us, while a tree "offers an enormous range of affordances for a vast variety of species, there are things a river can afford which the tree cannot, and vice versa."[21] This situation requires that we make a concerted attempt to attune ourselves to the world around us. As Hutchby argues, we need to pay more attention to "the material substratum" that undergirds "the very possibility of different courses of action."[22]

Implications of a World of Affordances

We are left then with environments, entities, and individuals that express and are expressions of a profound reciprocity. Taking reciprocity seriously, in turn, can compel us to cling less vigorously to anthropocentric conclusions about what is and is not an agent, or what does or does not merit ethical consideration. Furthermore, insofar as the world around us *can* be regarded as beneficial to us (since it both produces and sustains us), we can interpret its beneficence as a form of non-human generosity, as a sort of earthly invitation to accept its offerings and, in turn, to reciprocate in kind (since it is, presumably, in our best interest to keep it healthy). While we tend to ask of the world, "What can you do for me, or, provide for me?" we might get more mileage – not only for ourselves but for our progeny – by subsequently or

20 G. Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988), pp. 125-6.

21 I. Hutchby, 'Technologies, Texts and Affordances', *Sociology*, 35 (2) (2001), 441-456, esp. p. 447.

22 Ibid. p. 450.

concurrently asking: "What, non-human world, can I do for *you*?"; or better: "What might we accomplish together?"[23]

Additionally, and further decentring the human as the arbiter of what does or does not exist, it is worth emphasising that the majority of affordances exist without being consciously perceived by us, without being thought or sensed. Affordances emerge out of the contexts and arrangements that are adequate to their emergence (whether we're aware of them or not).

What becomes significant, when we attune ourselves to the world of affordances, to the Spinozist world wherein all creation is an expression of interdependent affecting and being affected, are the ethical implications of an ontology that regards the world as one wherein all constituents are participating in co-creative enunciations; of a contrapuntal world wherein entities *rely on one another* to bring one another into being, and where one entity cannot be valued over another out of hand since any relative value exists relative to and because of interconnected and dependent relationships.

I'd like to suggest that such an ontological schema – one wherein the human is modestly conceived as at once created and creative, decentred, determined, and dependent – demands an ethical response equally sensitive to the interdependent reciprocal nature of all relationships. This would be an ethical logic that derives its content from an ontological perspective that regards the human as just one more effect of relationally generated affordances. This would be an ethics that begins with a recognition – and this recognition's accompanying modest ontology – that the role of the human is currently, and has always been, subsumed within a field of impersonal forces *generous enough* to grant us existence and afford us our capacities. Such an ontologically-derived ethics could result in a further challenge, for instance, to ecologically destructive understandings of the non-human world as available to us merely to be used and exhausted. As Nigel Thrift suggests, our world "should be added to, not subtracted from."[24]

23 This argument, of course, objectifies the ecological dimension of extending agency to non-humans and of recognising our modest – if not insignificant – position within an interdependent world.

24 N. Thrift, 'From born to made: technology, biology and space', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 30 (4) (2005), 463-476, esp. p. 474.

A modest ontology, then, does not subscribe to a teleological logic, but an emergent one. One whose suppositions can only be 'defined' by the world's most recent permutations and that unfolds according to the mutable determinations of the world's ongoing expression. A modest ontology may be modest, but it is not weak, nor unambitious. Rather, its modesty can best be thought of as referring to an attitude – a modest attitude – that resists positing rigid categories and does not cling to the apparent stability of individuals or identities or identities because these, after all, *cannot* accurately be said to exist. What exists, then, are relationships and the affordances and forces these relationships produce in an ongoing process of adaptation and differentiation. In other words, modest ontologies can only make modest claims about reality and its events and constituents because those who subscribe to them recognise the radical contingency and contextual dependency of everything that exists. Adherents to modest ontologies realise that what they experience as themselves are only the passing effects of a world created through processes of mutual beneficence and co-generosity, of a world defined by radical "complementarity," as Andrea Scarantino has proposed.[25]

Modest ontologies will be those wherein anthropocentrism has been decentred and processes of affecting and being affected, of affording and being afforded, populate an emergent and immanent "plateau" of novel and processual innovation. The human occupies this immanent domain as an experimenter and problem solver, working *with* the materials and qualities that have been afforded, without expectations that exceed the limitations of the world on offer. The nonhuman world is at once integral and integrated into human functioning and must be heeded and considered if the human is to exist, successfully, in perpetuity, as an organism whose existence depends on extended affecting and affectable environments. Because a modest ontologist recognises the interdependent and contextual contingency of things (and of relations) and acts according to an ethics that is adequate to such an ontology s/he might be inclined towards a strategy for dealing with others – others, let's remember, that literally *produce* the reality the ontologist enjoys – that privileges, for example: negotiation over declaration, revision over precision, reconciliation over resentment.

25 A. Scarantino, 'Affordances Explained', *Philosophy of Science*, 70 (5) (2003), 949-961, esp. p. 950.

Modest ontologies take *limits* seriously because they are built upon an understanding of the world as a realm of mutual reliance and interdependency. Following Deleuze and Guattari, adherents to modest ontologies would regard "universal history" as "the history of contingencies, and not the history of necessity. Ruptures and limits, and not continuity."[26] Moreover, a modest ontology is an ontology that acknowledges that what a body can do is itself limited by the networks of relation a given body enters into. As Deleuze and Guattari explain: "We call the latitude of a body the affects of which it is capable at a given degree of power, or rather within the limits of that degree. Latitude is made up of intensive parts falling under a capacity, and longitude of extensive parts falling under a relation."[27]

Limits, it should be noted, occupy an under-discussed dimension of Deleuze (and Guattari's) work, functioning as the bulwark encountered when a body, for example, finally discovers what it is capable of. Deleuze's emphasis on the importance of appreciating the role played by limits is exemplified in the following passage:

> [I]t 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 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. This 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.[28]

26 G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), p. 140.
27 G. Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 256-57.
28 G. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 37.

Anthropo-Limitation Through Agential Extension

Contemporary theorists have been very receptive to ontological frameworks (like Deleuze's or Whitehead's) that re-situate (or limit) the human within an extended agential realm of interrelated actors. Building on Alfred North Whitehead's suggestion that no "actual entity" rises beyond, or exceeds, "what the actual world as a datum from its standpoint – its actual world – allows it to be,"[29] recent anti-anthropocentric theorising has attempted to move beyond the merely *descriptive* dimension of these positions to examine their *ethical import*.

Nigel Thrift, for one, has argued for an understanding of the world as manifesting *distributed* forms of intelligence, what he has termed "intelligencings".[30] He suggests that the reality of these intelligencings "can and do teach us how to be" and therefore have "an important ethical dimension."[31]

Thrift's objective is to shift our conventional notion of *ourselves* as intelligent to other actors, and more specifically to other actors-in-relation (for it is only through intra-relation that actor's intelligencings are expressed); as Thrift observes, "intelligence is not a property of an organism but of the organism and its environment."[32] Thrift's ontology draws its influences from biological discourses insofar as his efforts move beyond "obvious organismal boundaries" towards a recognition of what he terms the "superorganismal," which refers to the idea that organisms are extended beyond the rigid confines we sometimes feel compelled to put them in.

Keith Ansell-Pearson echoes Thrift's extension of boundaries in his vitalism-inflected observation that behaviour can no longer, in light of developments in philosophy and science, be "localised in individuals" but must be treated "epigenetically as a function of complex material systems" that cut across "individuals (assemblages) and which transverse

29 A. North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: an Essay in Cosmology* (Free Press, 1978), p. 83.
30 N. Thrift, 'From born to made: technology, biology and space', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 30:4 (2005), 463-476, esp. p. 463.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid. p. 464.

phyletic lineages and organismic boundaries (rhizomes)."[33] For Ansell-Pearson this demands a re-articulation of agency as something distributed across time and space, always actively feeding back in novel ways and so contributing to the world's creative unfolding.

Like Ansell-Pearson and Thrift, N. Katherine Hayles argues that that the human can no longer be regarded as "the source from which emanates the mystery necessary to dominate and control the environment"; rather, the "distributed cognition" of "the emergent human subject" must be seen as just another metaphor for "the distributed cognitive system as a whole, in which thinking is done by both human and nonhuman actors."[34] A further expression of distributing widely what we understand to be our own unique human faculties can be found in Alphonso Lingis' work, wherein he describes how what we are capable of is not thanks to ourselves but utterly reliant upon everything else. Lingis observes, "Not only do objects make thought do-able," they also "make thought possible. In a sense," Lingis goes on, "as parts of networks of effectivity, objects think."[35]

The theoretical work being done to unsettle the division between us and the world, or agents and objects, is finding especially fruitful expression in the realm of eco-theorising wherein the overwhelming prospect of our own extinction as a result of our ecocidal activities has obliterated the perception that it is useful or in our best interest to distinguish between humans and nature; indeed, we are realising more each day how such conventional dualism and *individualism* could mean the difference between life and death. How we think about our relationship with the rest of the world has become a most compelling issue inside and outside of the academy, with social, political, aesthetic, philosophical, and, as we have been suggesting, ethical significance.

What these emergent areas of debate and discourse reveal is the degree to which the conventional discursive divisions between ourselves and our environments, between active and inert, between subject and object, between alive and dead, have exposed the ways our senses (and

33 K. Ansell-Pearson, *Germinal Life: The Difference and Repetition of Deleuze*. (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 171.
34 N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 290.
35 A. Lingis, *The Imperative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), p. 99.

subsequently, our ontologies) have a propensity to function not as an accurate mirror of reality but as a reality "filtering mechanism,"[36] a mechanism better at *annulling* potential relationships and modes of agency than exploring or embracing them; that is, our senses and ways of understanding the world are premised more on logics of exclusion and division than inclusion and radical immanence. While this has perhaps served us well in the past, in the face of contemporary concerns it is no longer tenable. Is it not odd that it takes an apparently imminent ecological catastrophe to compel us to see something other than our individual selves in the mirror?

The increasing emphasis on our being embedded within, and a product of, "nature" sees a resurgence of everything from Spinozist pantheism to Whiteheadian identification of the fallacious bifurcation of nature being taken up by theorists across the disciplines. Formerly niche ways of understanding nature – and its attendant influences and creative capacities – have suddenly taken on new and potent metaphysical significance, operating as a foil for outdated metaphysical dualisms. As Whitehead says: "Wherever a vicious dualism appears, it is by reason of mistaking an abstraction for a final concrete fact."[37]

Tim Ingold, for example, speaks of the need for a re-animated version of animism as one way of confronting the disenchantment of the world and our separation from it. For Ingold, a reinvigorated animism has the potential to open us up to the ability of the world to astonish. Ingold notes how animism encourages an attitude of world inhabitation rather than of distant observation; an animist perspective, he suggests, is – like a modest ontological perspective – a "way of being that is alive and open to a world in continuous birth."[38] For Ingold a re-animated world is one wherein the "Western tradition of thought" re-assumes its ability to be astonished by acknowledging, generously and with wonder, that the world is active, emergent, agential, and alive.[39] An animated world is one wherein "dynamic, transformative potential" is distributed across an

36 J. Lorimer, 'Nonhuman charisma', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 25 (5) (2007), 911 – 932, esp. p. 916.
37 A. North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), pp. 244–5.
38 T. Ingold, 'Rethinking the animate, re-animating thought', *Ethnos*, 71:1 (2006), 9-20, esp. p. 9.
39 Ibid.

entire "field of relations" filled with "more or less person-like or thing-like" beings perpetually bringing "one another into existence"; this animacy, states Ingold, is not a derivative of an infusion of "spirit into substance, or of agency into materiality," but is an *a priori* animacy that is "ontologically prior to [...] differentiation."[40]

The Inevitability of Modesty

My argument, then, is that *if* we regard the world as a realm of extended and interdependent agency where creative capacities are produced by the intra-relation of human and non-human actors alike we are poised to relinquish our understanding of ourselves as more valuable or special than other beings and entities. That is, a modest ontology *can* be regarded as an inevitable response to our experiences of and encounters with a world of which we are but an *effect*.

Modesty, here, derives from our self-consciously reassigning the human to a less dominant position within a non-hierarchical landscape of mutually dependent "agents." Moreover, it would not be a stretch to suggest that subscribing to a modest ontology *is itself* an ethical act if we assume that it has the potential to lead the subscriber to a more open relationship with things based on the realisation that our capabilities are defined by our relationship to them and the affordances these relationships allow.

Modesty – both ontological and ethical – is the inevitable (and perhaps not *initially* desirable) demand of a world full of relationally dependent entities and effects. This, I would like to suggest, is an inevitable modesty that too easily could be interpreted as punishment for our overly grandiose delusions of the past. However, any initial response to modest ontological conclusions as undesirable overlooks the merits of modesty itself and risks remaining trapped by anthropocentric predilections. Indeed, feelings of resentment toward modest ontological conclusions reveal the tensions that exist not only between us and what we think of as nature, but also between our modest and more grandiose selves. Resentments, however, have no place in a modest ontology premised upon openness to otherness – an ontology wherein our self-interest is tempered by a recognition of our shared existence.

40 Ibid. p. 10.

There is much to be gained from assuming a modest ontological position. One positive consequence of openness and de-centring "the human" would be, as Ingold argues, the accompanying astonishment and wonder that could result from not putting "the human" first, ontologically speaking. Ingold states: "Astonishment, I think, is the other side of the coin to the very openness to the world that I have shown to be fundamental to the animic way of being"; he suggests that this sense of naïve (or generous, depending how you understand it) wonder is possible if we can commit to "riding the crest of the world's continued birth."[41]

Unfettered openness – the kind that might come about when we cease trying to assert ourselves and our cosmic importance onto existence – could result, also, in our becoming vulnerable: vulnerable to ourselves, to others, to dangers, to being disappointed. This vulnerability, Ingold observes, *might* appear (to ourselves or others) as a form of "timidity or weakness," or as proof of a lack of "rigour" deriving from "primitive" beliefs: "The way to know the world, they say, is not to open oneself up to it, but rather to grasp it within a grid of concepts and categories. Astonishment has been banished from the protocols of conceptually driven, rational inquiry."[42] Ingold goes on to ask whether the animist's – or modest ontologist's – avoidance of answers is inimicable to science or the pursuit of knowledge? On the contrary, of course. Rather, recognising our *lack* of rigid answers has always opened us up to *new* questions, *new* ways of knowing, and *new* – potentially more creative – ways of being.

Conclusion: No False Modesty

Deleuzian and Gibsonian ontological logics, I am suggesting, provide us with a series of *reasons* for adopting a modest ontology; that is, their respective attempts to radically decentre the human by reassigning and extending agency begins with and is informed by the opinion that we are simply one entity within an extended and networked multiplicity. Significantly, modest ontologies do not enact a false modesty, nor an excessively morally-grounded humbleness, nor do they require excessive self-deprecation, etc. Rather, modesty is an experientially-informed conclusion based on the informed perception that creativity is ubiquitous and continuous and that our own capacity to be a creative agent within this field of novelty is a function not of our own

41 Ibid. p. 18.
42 Ibid.

wonderfulness, but of an extended range of actors upon which we are utterly dependent.

Basically, my supposition is that a modest ontology, open and receptive to contextual, relational, and non-human agents and agency, is better able to equip us to act within and across a world upon which we depend for our existence. An understanding of agency and creativity that modestly recognises this interdependence is one that recognises *how* creativity and agency is shared, generated, and dependent upon the affordances and capacities produced by relationships. Creativity, then, is the world's most common characteristic, and is produced not by individuals but across endlessly interdependent interconnections. Similarly, agency is the world's most omnipresent product, but this is an agency not located *in* individuals but as an effect *of* relations. The individual subject or object has no capacities or potentialities of its own but is granted abilities, dispositions, propensities by what a given relationship, context, or environment affords. From such a perspective no creative context or agent is inconsequential, and when nothing is inconsequential everything becomes, according to its capacities, affordances, dispositions, a *necessary* participant in creation.

Modesty, as described here, is not the conclusion of a modest ontology but the beginning. To be modest in the face of overwhelming and uncountable creative events is also to be open to ubiquitous creativity, to be willing to listen rather than act, to participate and share in creation rather than to impose one's all-too-human desires in order to naïvely intervene in already-underway creative processes. This is not to suggest that an anthropocentric imposition of human creativity *on* the world (rather than a creating *with* the world) produces *less* novelty; novelty, after all, will be produced with or without us. I am suggesting instead that openness and a modest attitude in response to creation is more likely to produce human-favourable creations that benefit us *and* the environments that afford us the opportunity to discover what we and our relationships are capable of becoming.

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The Mouth Freed For Thought

SAMUEL MCAULIFFE

Creation—as selection and finishing of the thing selected.
- Nietzsche[1]

I.

The thought that accedes to the creation of which it is capable will necessarily recast the relation in which it would be otherwise held to its condition, that on account of which it will have been able to think. Insofar as this creation can be said to be in process, and insofar as it delineates itself as such, it will not leave the disposition of this relation unaffected. This is one sense of a proposition that appears repeatedly in the course of Deleuze's philosophy (as though iteration belonged to or was formative of this sense itself). It is on each occasion forwarded in the context of determining the relation that inheres between the thought that creates and the condition by which it does so. "To think is to create – there is no other creation – but to create is first of all to engender 'thinking' in thought."[2] If the reflexive relation held forth here is not simply a tautological reinstatement of what thought already is, this is because, encompassed as such, the latter will find itself comprehensively reconfigured. The act of thinking taken to be essentially synonymous with that of creation, whilst

1 F. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1967), §662.

2 G. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Athlone Press, 1994), p. 147; hereafter *DR*. Variations may be found in *DR*, p. 114; *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. H. Tomlinson (London: Athlone Press, 1983), p. 108; hereafter *NP*; *Proust and Signs: The Complete Text*, trans. R. Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p. 97; and *The Logic of Sense*, ed. C. V. Boundas, trans. M. Lester and C. Stivale (London: Athlone Press, 1990), p. 128; hereafter *LS*. (When necessary references to the original text, *Logique du sens* [Paris: Minuit, 1969], follow those to the English edition).

irreducible to thought as it would be otherwise given (an incommensurability indicated not least by Deleuze's use of quotation marks here: "'*thinking*' in thought"), is nevertheless an act at the same time intrinsic to thought, borne by it alone (the preposition leaves no ambiguity: "'thinking' *in* thought"). It is this constitutive difference thus named, the difference that the act of thinking is itself said here to consist in, which will thereby render the recasting of thought's relation to its condition possible, insofar as such difference for Deleuze refers not merely to what is given but "that by which the given is given." Lacking the act of thinking by which creation "first of all" delineates itself, the relation of thought to its condition would remain undisclosed and unaccounted for. And, conversely, it is only through the traversal of this relation that the act in question may be delineated. "The conditions of a true critique and a true creation are the same: the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself and the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself."[3]

For the Deleuze of *The Logic of Sense* this "genesis" resides within and finds its expression through the problem of the "mouth." "Only the victory of the brain, if it takes place, frees the mouth to speak..." or rather, frees it in order *to think*: "... the mouth somehow liberated for thought."[4] There would therefore belong to thought an essential relation to the mouth, a relation on the basis of which it would be possible for thought to determine (and to do so on more than one occasion) this entity's heretofore established function. What the mouth does, and hence what the mouth as such *is* – this would not remain unchanged by the act of thinking as it occurred, and the sign of thought's event having come to pass, its "victory", would each time consist precisely in the instigation of this change (the transition from a mouth which does not speak to one that does; from a mouth which speaks to one that would think). A re-determination of this order would therefore rest upon a capacity to encounter the sense in which the entity in question, insofar as it is given, has been given thus and not otherwise. Only a relation that sought to interrupt this being-thus and not otherwise could stand to make of it something else entirely, reconfiguring its manner of being, such as it is given. And it is this that makes of the thought that has this transformative relation as its fundamental concern a question of creation. A creation which would have the sense of neither an addition to nor partial

3 *DR*, p. 138.
4 *LS*, pp. 223; 240.

amendment of what already is (the actualisation, the bringing into existence of a new, yet qualitatively undistinguished being, an action that would remain subsumed under the rule of the identity), but instead this very thing – that which already is, the given being itself – transformed in its essential constitution. No longer the being it had, until then, been. And the creation which thought here stands to become would above all else be comprised of an act whose immanence to that which it acts upon must be considered absolute: the mouth freed *by* thought *for* thought. Between thinking (the act) and the mouth (the acted upon) no possible form of separation, no instance of division could be said to persist. Such would be both the condition and result of the creation implied here – thought's freeing the mouth (to think). Perhaps *The Logic of Sense* has no other question (or, said otherwise, perhaps each of the "series" it presents, animated by its own particular problem, would nevertheless make its way towards this one): to establish the conditions of this "victory of the brain," to disclose what this victory would *in principle* mean, and to do so on the basis of this victory itself.[5]

But what is it that the event of thinking triumphs over here? What is it that the mouth must be freed from? And in what sense would thought have the mouth as its (essential) concern?

Central to the analysis undertaken in *The Logic of Sense* is an interrogation of the relation between a thing in its reality and its linguistic (that is to say, propositional) denomination. If neither one nor the other constitute in themselves the "object" of such a logic, their relation – albeit when considered in a certain form – is the region to which the analysis is devoted and from which it will extract its discoveries: "Everything happens at the boundary between things and propositions."[6] It is within this context that Deleuze attributes to "the mouth" its rigorously determined and yet paradoxical meaning: it expresses *at once* the being of the body and the being of language, things and the propositions that

5 We should not pass over the force of the paradox in emergence here: Thought will have to create that which will have enabled it to think, that without which it could neither think nor be thought. But perhaps this paradox is the law that informs every event of creation: "Creation and self-positing mutually imply each other because what is truly created, from the living being to the work of art, thereby enjoys a self-positing of itself, or an autopoetic characteristic by which it is recognised." See G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* trans. G. Burchell and H. Tomlinson (London; New York: Verso, 1994), p.11; hereafter *WP*.
6 *LS*, p. 8.

concern them, *and in addition* the strict duality of these entities with regard to one another. As such the oral zone finds itself initially split between two equally necessary yet mutually exclusive functions – "to eat or to speak."[7] Neither may be neglected and yet to engage in one leads to the exclusion of the other. The experience of the incommensurability of this "alternative" is precisely the problem of orality. As a region this latter may therefore be defined as the point of intersection of the two series – "body/language," "to eat/to speak" – foregoing however the possibility of their even momentary coincidence; a direct, unmediated relation between the respective terms of each series cannot from the point of view inherent to either series be entertained (at most it remains extrinsic in nature). The mouth may eat (here "eating" means to encounter a body in its depth, the coexistence of bodies in their depths – with the mouth thus understood as one body amongst others, "a pure orality" and nothing else) or the mouth may speak (whereby the body's depths are traversed by "a movement of the surface," giving an intimation of an incorporeality that, if inseparable from the body, cannot be reduced to it). But it will struggle to undertake these activities at one and the same time. The one is predicated on the temporary suspension of the other. And by no means accidental, this disjunction is, on the contrary, precisely that through which the mouth comes to be constituted. (A disjunction the solution to which cannot therefore consist in its simply being subtracted from the region in question, in that orality has in this disjunction its very condition.) Language itself will have become possible only insofar as the speaking mouth is distinguished from the sonority of the mouth engaged in the act of consumption ("To render language possible thus signifies assuring that sounds are not confused with the sonorous qualities of things, with the sound effects of bodies, or with their actions and passions. What renders language possible is that which separates sounds from bodies and organises them into propositions, freeing them for the expressive function. It is always a mouth which speaks; but the sound is no longer the noise of a body which eats…").[8]

This, then, is what confers upon the mouth its central importance. It is the region that in itself retains a trace of the coming into being of language (the first stirrings of a surface), insofar as the affirmation of the

7 *LS*, p. 23.

8 *LS*, p. 181. The appendix devoted to Lucretius invokes the same moment: "Noises from the depth, for example, become voices when they find in certain perforated surfaces (the mouth) the conditions of their articulation" (*LS*, p. 274).

language's difference from the body's physicality (its depth) becomes for the first time possible there. The mouth's formation thus poses explicitly the question of *genesis*, or rather, it yields the possibility of fundamentally recasting our relation to this point of emergence. (It is in this sense that the mouth's *paradoxical* structure must be insisted upon: "The force of paradoxes is that they are not contradictory; they rather allow us to be present at the genesis of the contradiction."[9]) Hence the fundamental role occupied by the mouth in the system constructed by *The Logic of Sense*: insofar as it testifies to language's emergence in this form, it allows the analysis to demonstrate its break with the vicious circle to which the logical procedure of the proposition finds itself condemned when attempting to account for the condition of language on the basis of language alone. A proposition – in accordance with the laws of predication that govern it – is only ever able to refer to its conditioning ground indirectly; it thus remains subject to "the infinite regress of that which is presupposed", to a "circularity between ground and grounded" the origin of which remains to it constitutively concealed.[10] Hence Deleuze's insistence that it matters little if the condition by which language is given is sought in the region of the body or that of the idea, so long as it remains from the point of view of the conditioned only ever presupposed. The positing of either in the form of a presupposition remains determined by an extrinsic reference that is not itself accounted for ("It is not clear, however, by what miracle propositions would participate in the Ideas in a more assured manner than bodies which speak or bodies of which we speak… And are bodies, at the other extreme, better able to ground language? […] As Chrysippus says, "if you say 'chariot,' a chariot passes through your lips," and it is neither better nor more convenient if this is the Idea of a chariot"[11]). It is only with the discovery of the mouth's specific determinacy that this "infinite regress" may be interrupted.[12]

9 *LS*, p. 74.

10 *LS*, pp. 28; 18-19.

11 *LS*, p. 134.

12 In *The Logic of Senses'* terminology the mouth is that which facilitates the transition from a "static" to a "dynamic" account of genesis. In the course of the "Twenty-Seventh Series of Orality," and precisely in the context of the mouth's paradoxical constitution, Deleuze writes: "It is no longer a question of a static genesis which would lead from the presupposed event to its actualisation in states of affairs and to its expression in propositions. It is a question of a dynamic genesis which leads directly from states of affairs to events, from mixtures to pure lines, *from depths to the production of surfaces*, which must not implicate at all the

And yet despite this, the mouth cannot encompass this difference between the body and language *as such*; it remains always already divided between these two antagonistic functions whose co-presence it cannot itself bring to presence. This, then, is what *thought* would be for Deleuze: that which is able to overcome the separation to which the mouth is subjected, without, however, collapsing the necessary disjuncture over which the mouth presides, the disjuncture without which language would not be. Only thought is capable of internalising this distinction, of recasting, that is, the difference between bodies and language (and their respective dimensions, depth and surface) under the law of immanence.[13] Or, more precisely, only thought in its capacity to create, insofar as the affirmation of a "positive distance" between eating and speaking – a relation no longer predicated on a "movement of the negative or of exclusion" – will require the re-creation of what the mouth is.

Now to think of thought in terms of its ability to yield a point of absolute immediacy between the two series in question, and conversely, to think of this immediacy as belonging to thought and thought alone – this is synonymous in its entirety with what *The Logic of Sense* understands *an event* to be. "The event subsists in language, but it happens to things":[14] it is the means by which a body and its respective proposition may each be shown to essentially partake in and of the share

other genesis" (*LS*, p. 186). One trait that informs this distinction between the two forms of genesis, then, is the difference (and it is absolute) between an instauration whose condition may be only "presupposed" and one that relates to its condition "directly" – that is to say, immanently, and in the absence of any form of deduction (and thus separation). If, "from the point of view" of the static genesis, eating and speaking are "two series *already* separated at the surface" (ibid.; my emphasis), the dynamic genesis is that which is able to account for this "already" – as every thought of creation must do.

13 The specific coordinates which make up the problem in question here – thought and the mouth (to eat *or* to speak) - would themselves be an expression of the necessity pursued throughout Deleuze's project – to think difference *in and of itself*: "But what does it mean to make divergence and disjunction the objects of affirmation? As a general rule, two things are simultaneously affirmed only to the extent that their difference is denied, suppressed from within... We speak on the contrary of an operation according to which two things or two determinations are affirmed *through* their difference... This divergence is affirmed in such a way that the *either* ... *or* itself [in our case *either* eating *or* speaking] becomes pure affirmation" (*LS*, pp. 172-74).

14 *LS*, p. 24.

of univocity that will allow for the thought of their convergence. Indeed for Deleuze this is precisely what univocity is: "Univocity means *it is the same thing which occurs and is said*: the attributable to all bodies or states of affairs and the expressible of every proposition."[15] And yet this may be asserted only insofar as that of which the event in its univocity is said here to consist – "the *attributable* to all bodies or states of affairs and the *expressible* of every proposition" – is understood as being above all else at once *irreducible to* yet *inseparable from* the two series through which it passes (passes through and in so doing enjoins). If this was not the case, if the "attributable" and the "expressible" *could* be identified completely with or dissociated completely from either the body or language, the event would leave these series exactly as they are: constitutively estranged (the mouth divided between *either* eating *or* speaking). And not therefore "the same thing." It is as if the event fell between things and propositions (this explains its irreducibility), without however falling beyond them (there is no transcendence at work here, and this is what "inseparable from" qualifies). "Comparing the event to a mist rising over the prairie, we could say that this mist rises precisely at the frontier, at the juncture of things and propositions."[16] Only by being encompassed therein do the two series come to be enjoined without their being rendered one and the same.[17]

"The event subsists in language, but it happens to things:" for it to do so in adherence with the double imperative of univocity (*irreducible to ... inseparable from*) it must therefore be treated as that which, first of all, on the side of language "exists in the proposition, but not as a name of bodies or qualities, and not at all as a subject or predicate. It exists rather only as that which is expressible or expressed by the proposition,

15 *LS*, p. 180; my emphasis.

16 *LS*, p. 24.

17 It is not therefore in the name of a form of monism that the dualism between body and language is undone here (*LS*, p. 24). The univocity of which the event is an expression belongs no more to one than to the other. Deleuze's formula for this elusion – "the same thing" determined as a "disjunctive synthesis"; the same as that which differs – is well known: "The univocity of Being signifies that Being is Voice that it is said [*l'être est Voix, qu'il se dit*], and that it is said in one and the same 'sense' of everything which is said. That of which it is said is not at all the same, but Being is the same for everything about which it is said" (*LS*, p. 179; cf. p. 300); "Being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said, but that of which it is said differs: it is said of difference itself" (*DR*, p. 36; cf. p. 304).

enveloped in a *verb.*"[18] The expressivity in question here is not to be confused with – in fact for Deleuze it must be resolutely opposed to – the "ordinary" modality of reference inherent to the proposition: denotation [*la désignation*]. If the latter can be said to refer to an attribute it is only ever the predicate of the proposition itself, which is in turn attributed to the proposition's subject,[19] and this can but leave denotation a referential form closed in upon itself. Estranged irrevocably from the being to which it refers (its reference has always already implicitly conceded this separation).[20] The event, on the contrary, *expresses* without mediation an attribute located precisely on the side of the division from which denotation is locked out – on the side of things themselves.[21] Yet it does so (and herein lies the sense of its univocity) whilst remaining where it is: on this side of language. Without, that is, taking leave of the proposition, or, more precisely, its taking leave of the proposition is never done with, endless and inexhaustible. And precisely by occupying language in such a way, the event circumscribes the dimension through which the proposition is opened up; the "ring" formed by denotation that ensured the proposition was from its perspective closed off is "unrolled," "uncoiled," or "unwound."[22] The verb – "not an image of external action, but a process of reaction internal to language" – is that through which this expressive movement finds itself traced out, a movement which, in its incessant coming and going, must be taken as one of *becoming*.[23] If to

18 *LS*, p.182.
19 *LS*, p. 21.
20 *LS*, p. 12.
21 *LS*, p. 21.
22 *LS*, p. 184.
23 *The Logic of Sense* continually submits language to this economy of movement and stasis, wherein names, substantives and adjectives, constituting as they do the "limits, pauses, rests, and presences" by which the denotative operation is guided and secured are always opposed to the "pure becoming" of the verb, a becoming through which the former are "carried off," "swept away" (*LS*, pp. 3; 24). Although – it must be qualified – the verb having attained a precise and singular form: that of the infinitive (*LS*, pp. 184-85). Only thus does it accede to the becoming which allows it to be dissociated from the denotative relations of the proposition, and only thus does it engender the expression that continually carries it over to the other side of the division (which, as with every becoming, thereby achieves a point of indiscernibility with what in its being it was not, without however forming a unity with or resemblance to the latter). As soon as the verb is deprived of its infinitive form, as soon as it is attributed to something other than itself and made a means for an end from which it is estranged, its ideality recedes, its becoming is interrupted, and the expressive dimension it until then

every concept proper there belongs a "conceptual persona" through which it achieves its explication, then the concept of expression *The Logic of Sense* presents here could be said to have as its correlate Carroll's "ideal little boy, stuttering and left-handed."[24] It is he who has learnt what it means to inhabit language from the point of view of what is expressible or expressed, a treatment of speech that can but continually de-posit the points of station of the denotative. The one who stutters redirects language towards its share in the event, giving it over in its totality to the movement by which it passes into its outside (all the while maintaining itself in the act of this passing). And here the opposition between the depth of the body and the surface of language finds itself transformed: "One could say that the old depth having been spread out became width. The becoming unlimited is maintained entirely within this inverted width… Events are like crystals, they become and grow only out of the edges or on the edge. This is, indeed, the first secret of the stammerer or of the left-handed person: no longer to sink, but to slide the whole length in such a way that the old depth no longer exists at all, having been reduced to the opposite side of the surface. *By sliding, one passes to the other side*, since the other side is nothing but the opposite direction."[25]

And similarly, on the side of bodies – for not only we remember does "the event subsist in language, *but it happens to things*" – there is again a difference in kind in place between the denotative function and that pertaining to the event. This with regard to what *of* a body each in turn relates to. An exercise of denotation appeals to the presupposed identity of a being and is always aimed at this being's given actuality, what Deleuze speaks of as "the edible nature of things": "… the denoted thing is essentially something which is (or may be) eaten. Everything

encompassed is covered over: "'*To green*' indicates a singularity-event in the vicinity of which the tree is constructed. '*To sin*' indicates a singularity-event in the vicinity of which Adam is constituted. But '*to be green*' or '*to be a sinner*' are now the analytic predicates of constituted subjects – namely, the tree and Adam" (*LS*, p. 112).
24 *LS*, p. 24.
25 *LS*, p. 9; my emphasis. A movement that knows neither beginning (from the point of view of expression "language is therefore endlessly reborn" (*LS*, p. 167)), nor linear progression ("Creative stuttering is what makes language grow from the middle, like grass; it is what makes language a rhizome instead of a tree, what puts language in perpetual disequilibrium" See G. Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London and New York: Verso, 1998); *Critique et Clinique* (Paris: Minuit, 1993), p. 111; hereafter *ECC*).

denoted or capable of denotation is, in principle, consumable and penetrable."[26] A form of reference arranged around a relation to the given that is without concern, that cannot account for precisely that – the sense of its being-given (a thing is consumed or denoted then in the absence of this sense). Hence denotation's fundamental alignment with thought put to work in its weakest modality, that of recognition: "this is a table, this is an apple, this the piece of wax, Good morning Theaetetus;" "the relation of designation [*désignation*] is only the logical form of recognition."[27] With the event an entirely different dimension of a being is in question. One that cannot be submitted to the exercise of recognition, and yet one without which the thing recognised would not be what it is. It is this that sees the event "attributed to bodies, to states of affairs, but not at all as a physical quality [this is what is or can be denoted]; rather, it is ascribed to them as a very special *attribute*, dialectical or, rather, noematic and incorporeal"; "The attribute is not a being and does not qualify as a being; it is an extra-being."[28] We understand then the reason why Carroll's "ideal little girl" – the persona that could be said to embody this incorporeal attribute – is an "anorexic."[29] Certainly not because she abstains from eating altogether, instead her hunger is directed solely towards this incorporeality that forms (at) the surface of a body and not its "edible quality" (this is why "only little girls understand Stoicism", the art of thinking at the surface).[30] She knows what it means "'*to eat*' distinct from food and its consumable qualities." Together the "ideal little boy" and the "ideal little girl" constitute the respective modalities of language and body by which the problem of the mouth may begin to be rethought. Why "ideal"? Because the conditions they express are determined by and refer us to not a lived reality – an affectation of the boy who speaks or the girl who eats – but *a condition of thought as such* (insofar as the "personalised features" of conceptual personae are always "closely linked to the diagrammatic features of thought and the intensive features of

26 *LS*, pp. 25-26; cf. p. 183.
27 *DR*, pp. 135; 154.
28 *LS*, pp. 182; 21. Hence "the event is *properly* inscribed in the flesh and in the body" (*LS*, p. 221), "embodied or actualised in them", but not *as* something embodied or actualised: "entirely different from their physical qualities" (*LS*, p. 167). Does this not explain why it is empiricism alone that can conceive of the event (*WP*, p. 48; *LS*, p. 20), yet the concerns of this empiricism must be considered precisely transcendental in nature?
29 *LS*, p. 24.
30 *LS*, p. 10.

concepts"[31]). Each persona traverses the side of the division on which he or she is found, making their way towards the other. A stammering mouth that sees language pass over into the world of the body. An anorexic mouth that consumes on this side of the body a cipher of incorporeality: "food for thought."

The expressivity of the verb (the a-propositional belonging to the proposition) and the incorporeality of the attribute (the a-physical belonging to the body) coincide without remainder in the event. The attribute is what the verb becomes: "'To green'... is not a quality in the thing, but an attribute which is said of the thing";[32] the verb is that through which the attribute insists: "A proud and shiny verb has been disengaged, distinct from things and bodies, states of affairs and their qualities, their actions and passions: like the verb 'to green,' distinct from the tree and its greenness, the verb 'to eat' (or 'to be eaten') distinct from food and its consumable qualities, or the verb 'to mate', distinct from bodies and their sexes – eternal truths."[33] But they do not thereby forfeit their respective determinations. Their coincidence (*irreducible to... inseparable from*) is the meaning of the law of univocity wherein they will appear as "the same entity"[34] yet without a single degree of their difference being diluted: "this is not a circle. It is rather the coexistence of two sides without thickness, such that we pass from one to the other by following their length."[35] Differentiated on both sides of the division in which body and proposition are found – in terms of both the nature of its reference ("the expressible" on the side of language) and what it is this reference refers to ("the attributable" on the side of bodies) – *the event is that which is able to traverse this division itself*.[36] It is then the precursor

31 *WP*, p. 69.
32 *LS*, p. 21.
33 *LS*, p. 221.
34 *LS*, p. 182.
35 *LS*, p. 22. What Deleuze understands *sense* to be is precisely the signature of this coexistence; hence his insistence that the event must be considered synonymous with sense itself. "We will not ask therefore what is the sense of the event: the event is sense itself" (*LS*, p. 22; cf. p. 167).
36 Not only then does the event fall between things and propositions, the mist arising at their juncture, in addition and at the same time it falls between the thing in itself and the proposition in itself. In the case of the proposition for example, denotation and expression are related "like two sides of a mirror, only what is on one side has no resemblance to what is on the other... To pass to the other side of the mirror is to pass from the relation of denotation to the relation of expression... This is the

of a heretofore unprecedented relation between eating and speaking. "The event is related to one of these series as a noematic attribute, and to the other as a noetic sense [imparted by the expressivity of the verb], so that both series, to eat/to speak, form the disjunct [*le disjoint*] for an affirmative synthesis, or the equivocity of what there is for and in univocal Being [*l'équivocité de ce qui est pour un Etre lui-même univoque, dans un être univoque*]."[37]

II.

Nevertheless with the event alone the analysis of *The Logic of Sense* has not yet reached its completion. Given that neither the dimension of the body nor that of the proposition are in their own terms capable of consolidating the instance of univocity threaded through them by the event – even if they are precisely what this univocity is comprised of; even if only on its basis do they themselves come to be – what is required is a dimension from the perspective of which it would be possible to read this instance, which would be able to register the taking place of the event in itself. (Said otherwise, in the absence of such a dimension the univocity through which the convergence of the two series may be formulated risks being dissimulated.) It is in response to this

final displacement of the duality: it has now moved inside the proposition" (*LS*, p. 25). And again we see this passage into expression must be considered co-extensive with becoming: "the law of becoming (to choose a thing from itself)" (*LS*, p. 33). Not the submission of a thing to a rule of division but the accentuation of that within it by which it is left transformed.

37 *LS*, p. 241/335. This is why the event understood as such is not only that with which the practice of philosophy is primarily concerned but that whose contour this practice will in its execution necessarily share (*WP*, pp. 33-34). Hence thought's relation to the propositional form must be considered in accordance with precisely the same law: if philosophical thinking passes through the proposition, it cannot be said to end there; the thought it expresses with the concept it creates has no other locus and yet *precisely as the thought that it is* it cannot be reduced to this locus entirely. Occupying the proposition as what is therein expressible or expressed and not what is denoted, the perspective of thought is that of sense: "The failure to see that sense or the problem is extra-propositional, that it differs in kind from every proposition, leads us to miss the essential: *the genesis of the act of thought*" (*DR*, p. 157; my emphasis; cf. *WP*, pp. 22; 80; 137-38). When philosophy falls back upon the proposition completely, when it ceases to mark its essential distinction from it, when its concept extracts its problem from what a proposition denotes and not what it expresses, then it can no longer be said to think – that is, to create.

demand that *The Logic of Sense* opens onto "another geography," the terrain of which will be defined by Deleuze as a "mental" or "metaphysical" surface, a "surface of pure thought." From this surface the event is inextricable. Indeed, if only there do we encounter the ordinates of the event's constellation (attribute and verb), then correlatively, its coming to fruition will always also be implicated in the metaphysical surface's disclosure. Thus Deleuze can write: "Consequently, to the extent that the incorporeal event is constituted and constitutes the surface, it raises to this surface the terms of its double reference: the bodies to which it refers as a noematic attribute, and the propositions to which it refers as an expressible entity."[38] What then can one say of this surface? Where, with regard to the respective dimensions of the two series, are we to locate its emergence? And how are we to conceive of this locality itself?

Deleuze's initial definition of the topology in question is as follows: "Metaphysical surface (*transcendental field*)[39] is the name that will be given to the frontier established, on the one hand, between bodies taken together as a whole and inside the limits which envelop them, and on the other, propositions in general."[40] This surface finally proffers a relation between the two series in which their univocity – "the form of exteriority which relates things and propositions"[41] – may arrive at its own "articulation." And if this results in a "*distinct* distribution of bodies and language",[42] distinct from precisely the exclusive arrangement of things and propositions initially given, this distinction will therefore consist in a re-distribution of the two series so that, whilst their difference continues to be affirmed, they are from one another no longer estranged. As the "frontier" running between bodies and propositions the metaphysical surface "is not a separation, but the element of an articulation": "[T]his line-frontier would not enact the separation of series at the surface if it did not finally articulate that which it separates. It operates on both sides by means of one and the same incorporeal power [*puissance*], which, on the one hand, is defined as that which occurs in a state of affairs and, on the other hand, as that which insists in

38 *LS*, p. 182.

39 To note only in passing: we see that the metaphysical surface is implicated in – more than this, that it may be considered synonymous with – nothing less than the construction of the transcendental field itself.

40 *LS*, p. 125.

41 *LS*, p. 180.

42 *LS*, p. 125; my emphasis.

propositions."[43] One could say then that the metaphysical surface produces something like a creation of dimension, of perspective, and the viewpoint it introduces – which is that of thinking itself – belongs to neither the body nor the proposition but *entirely to the form of their relation* insofar as this relation is taken to be that which is necessarily articulated. Not that this leads to the abandonment of body or language ("It is not that nourishment has become spiritual nourishment"[44]), rather, the plane is reached upon which both are included in their difference from each other, whereupon their univocity *can only* be affirmed with the force of a necessity that cannot be interrupted. "The idea of positive distance belongs to topology and to the surface. It excludes all depth and all elevation, which would restore the negative and the identity."[45] To pass into the between of bodies and propositions is the condition of this affirmation, it is, for *The Logic of Sense*, what it means to think. And insofar as this perspective of the "between" afforded by the metaphysical surface cannot be said to pre-exist its being traversed, it therefore entails an instance of creation. Not through the introduction of something other than what before it there was, but the re-configuration or re-positioning of the body and language already there: "*reorientation* of the entire thought and a new geography."[46]

But if the metaphysical surface discloses "another geography" it does so "without being another world."[47] It does not posit a beyond with which to account for its reconfiguration of that which is. The frontier into which body and language are drawn is resolutely of the world and its capacity to render the world transformed rests upon its being so. It does not then repeat – but precisely interrupts – every form of separation ("all depth and all elevation"). And such is its importance for Deleuze: the inception of a point of view that constitutively undoes all transcendence. Concerned as it is with bodies "as a whole" and propositions "in general," the creation in which it engages touches what is given in its totality (if something of the order of the given, however minimal, were exempted from the transformation undertaken, then the modality of creation could not be said to be engaged); nothing can be said to lie beyond it for upon it everything that is will find itself inscribed – as well as everything *that is*

43 *LS*, p. 183; cf. p. 167.
44 *LS*, p. 221.
45 *LS*, p. 173.
46 *LS*, p. 132.
47 *LS*, p. 99.

not: even *not thinking* or *what cannot be thought* ("the crack of thought") are somehow present to it[48] – and it is as such that the metaphysical surface may truly be determined a configuration of absolute immanence. Now, understood in this way, a point of critical importance arises here with regard to the specific nature of the relation in which the metaphysical surface and the surface of language are themselves held.[49] Of course in itself the surface formed with language alone lacks the means by which to immanently collate its activity with the depths of the body. Its formation as a surface is predicated on the body's expulsion or repression. This surface and depth cannot for this reason coincide. Hence it is not to be mistaken for the metaphysical surface (that for which such a means is precisely not lacking), above all, at the moment when there is perhaps the greatest risk in doing so: when the two surfaces meet, when language as a surface finds itself encompassed by this other surface in turn. For Deleuze this moment – and upon it the analysis depends – sees the metaphysical surface emerge as nothing other than the "lining" or "doubling up" [*la doublure*] of the first surface, that of language; not in the form of the latter's "evanescent and disembodied resemblance" (this would be to succumb to the possible confusion between the two), but its being folded over upon itself in an action – "the production of surfaces, their multiplication and consolidation" – that is precisely able to include the dimension of the body until this moment excluded: "This doubling up is the art of establishing this continuity in a way which permits sense, at the surface, to be distributed to both sides at once."[50] Or elsewhere, in the pages of *Essays Critical and Clinical* devoted to Lewis Carroll, the structural dimensions of the author's "universe" are determined, with perhaps even greater clarity, in terms of "the depth, the surface, and the volume or rolled surface."[51] Within the folds of this "rolled surface" the preceding dimensions – "the depth" (body) and "the surface" (language) – are enveloped. Their intersection achieved and the "continuity" between them secured. For example, the verb that, traversing the surface of language, gives itself there as the movement by which the ring of the

48 *LS*, pp. 137; 208.
49 A relation Deleuze himself admits is a difficultly conceived one. He speaks of "the complex relation between the two surfaces" (*LS*, p. 248), conceding it is perhaps even neglected by the analysis of *The Logic of Sense*: about "the mystery" that lies in the "passage from one surface to another" "we have said almost nothing" (*LS*, p 238).
50 *LS*, p. 125/168-69.
51 *ECC*, p. 22/35.

proposition is "unrolled" (*déroulé*)[52] – is this unrolling not the very same movement by which the creation of the surface of thought appears "rolled" (*une surface enroulée*)? Hence that which is "doubled" in this fashion yields no additional content of its own; it consists of nothing save for the immanent inclusion of the two other dimensions (an inclusion that sees them transformed, insofar as in the absence of this additional geography such a relation is unthinkable).

This permits us to bring into relief an ambiguity Deleuze does not himself address directly – is this doubled constitution of thought not the reason why the mouth engaged in eating (the mouth at the stage of a "pure orality" related only to the body) must be freed by thought *twice*? Once for language and then *once again* for thought itself, the "victory of the brain" consisting of two distinct blows which belong however to a single struggle (a struggle from which nothing is exempted: "Between this mouth ["the organ of depths"] and this brain ["the inductor of... the metaphysical surface"] everything occurs, hesitates, and gets its orientation")?[53] Because an affirmation (in this case, of the difference between language and the body, speaking and eating) in itself has no sense, it thus requires, in its very singularity, a repetition by which its singularity may be ascertained. That is to say, a true affirmation – and this means: an affirmation that *creates* – is always double: "there must be a second affirmation in order for affirmation itself to be affirmed. Affirmation must divide in two so it can redouble [*Il faut qu'elle se dédouble pour pouvoir redoubler*]."[54] In the absence of its repetition an affirmation remains "a simple function, a function of being or of what is";[55] only by being repeated does its transformative function come to the fore. (A creation – the coming to presence of what has no precedent, of the absolutely singular and unique – always calls for a repetition by which the difference of which it consists may be given consistency; it is this that ensures a creation will always be in excess of the presence to which it comes.)

Beyond an affirmation doubled there lies nothing: insofar as it is repeated it concedes no beyond; everything that is and is said is therein included. The paradox being that this second affirmation upon which

52 *LS*, p. 184/254.
53 *LS*, p. 223.
54 *ECC*, p. 103/130.
55 *NP*, p. 183; cf.. pp. 186-89.

everything rests adds to the first nothing new: being simply the affirmation of the initial affirmation itself – its redoubling: yes, *yes* – it has no content of its own yet in its absence a constitutive transformation could not be said to have taken place. Thus if it is repetition that transforms, we see why thought's freeing the mouth for language alone is in itself not enough. Even if freeing it once more for thought (the initial affirmation repeated) stands to bring forth nothing other than what already is, it is absolutely necessary if the problem of the mouth is to be resolved. The thought that creates is necessarily double. Its initial affirmation, producing language as a surface over and against the depths of the body must be repeated, and this is why the surface, when thought has been accomplished, is a surface doubled.[56]

Where then does the formation of the metaphysical surface leave the mouth, that which presided over the initial problem of mutual exclusion between the two dimensions, things and propositions? In the closing series of *The Logic of Sense* proper Deleuze does not neglect to return to precisely this question.

> What happens if the mental or metaphysical surface has the upper hand in the pendular movement? In this case, the verb is inscribed on this surface – that is, the glorious event enters a symbolic relation with a state of affairs, rather than merging with it; the shining, noematic attribute, rather than being confused with a quality, sublimates it; the proud Result, rather than being confused with an action or passion, extracts an eternal truth from them... This is the verb which, in its univocity, conjugates devouring and thinking: it projects eating on the metaphysical surface and sketches out thinking on it [*C'est le verbe dans son univocité qui conjugue dévorer et penser, manger et penser, manger qu'il projette sur la surface métaphysique, et penser qu'il y dessine*]. And because to eat is no longer an action nor to be eaten a passion, but rather the noematic attribute which corresponds to them in the verb, the mouth is somehow

56 Hence Deleuze's insistence that "the expression of thought" is comprised of two equally essential moments: "The most general operation of sense is this: it brings that which expresses it [language] into existence, and from that point on, as pure inherence, it brings itself to exist within that which expresses it" (*LS*, p. 166); without this second phase the first would be lost.

> liberated for thought [*la bouche est comme libérée pour la pensée*], which fills it with all possible words.[57]

At the metaphysical surface the condition of reciprocal exclusion imposed upon the two series cannot fail to be undone. That on each side of the division invested with the capacity to overcome this division – together constituting the differential unity of the event – finds itself at this surface finally liberated. The confirmation of this? Precisely that the mouth – until this point the evidence of an extrinsic distribution of the series: the mouth which *either* eats *or* speaks to the exclusion of the other – is now transformed so as to testify to the very opposite. Between the configuration of the mouth upon the metaphysical surface and that to which it was before this subjected no possible point of symmetry, no facet of resemblance may be discerned, because the passage from the one to the other entails a qualitative transformation – "Nothing ascends to the surface without changing its nature"[58] – ensuring each of the series it expresses are restructured in accordance with an entirely different law. The mouth at the metaphysical surface – an event conceivable only on the basis of a properly transcendental empiricism – henceforth testifies to the complete indiscernibility of what occurs and what is said. [59] At this surface the mouth is able to speak (the verb) and to eat (the attribute) in a single univocal exercise. Raised to its "second power",[60] the mouth's respective functions are configured upon a single plane (words may be eaten, bodies may be spoken) the consequence of which is that the oral zone is at no point separated from the totality of what it can do.[61] And it is the mouth freed for thought that is the signature of this transformation: univocity gives itself through the mouth's having become that on account of which thought thinks. Deleuze continues:

57 *LS*, p. 240/334.

58 *LS*, p. 165; cf. 175; 220.

59 And so it is on account of the mouth that the system established by *The Logic of Sense* can be said to have achieved its "transcendental" task: to construct "a 'supremely' or transcendentally intimate 'centre' which is nothing other than the relation between sense itself and the object in its reality. *Relation and reality* must now be engendered or constituted in a transcendental manner" (*LS*, pp. 96-97).

60 *LS*, p. 246.

61 Carrying something to its "second power" always means this for Deleuze: to bring to an end a thing's separation from what it can do, thereby taking it to the limit of all it is capable of (*NP*, pp. 57; 59).

> The verb is, therefore, '*to speak*'; it means *to eat/to think*, on the metaphysical surface, and causes the event, as that which can be expressed by language, to happen to consumable things, and sense, as the expression of thought, to insist in language. Thus '*to think*' also means *to eat/to speak* – to eat as the 'result,' to speak as 'made possible.' The struggle between the mouth and the brain comes to an end here.[62]

Does the logic informing Deleuze's deliberation here not demonstrate the necessarily double nature of the affirmation that creates? The initial definition of speech immediately and necessarily supplemented by a second, that of thought (and the two taken together completing our understanding of the struggle between mouth and brain)? *Speaking* meaning eating/thinking; *thinking* meaning eating/speaking: just as the concepts of a system form "multiple waves, rising and falling," with the plane of immanence being "the single wave that rolls them up and unrolls them,"[63] it is as if whatever the specific determinacy of a single fold one were to encounter upon this immense surface (folds of which this surface would in truth be comprised), it would ultimately be a variation of a single activity, an expression of one and the same univocal event, which would alone be capable of consolidating the difference – from both its counterpart and from itself – of each fold.

"The struggle between the mouth and the brain comes to an end here." The end hereby announced by *The Logic of Sense* – heralded by the mouth reconfigured so as to express the univocity of all that is or happens and all that is said – this end will not then consist in the recuperation of an origin that was from the first always already present (with reference to the "delicate problem" of "where to begin in philosophy", the beginning that would mean "eliminating all presuppositions", Deleuze explicitly warns against this: "if it is a question of rediscovering at the end what was there at the beginning… the fact remains that all this is still too simple, and that this circle is truly not tortuous enough"[64]). Nor can the arrival at or attainment of this end in any sense be assured in advance and from the outset of its outcome ("Only the victory of the brain, *if it takes place*, frees the mouth to speak…" There is no necessity that ensures this "victory" will occur, the possibility of its

62 *LS*, p. 240.

63 *WP*, p. 36.

64 *DR*, p. 129.

non-occurrence cannot be entirely dispelled). Thus insofar as it is re-inscribed upon the metaphysical surface, the mouth freed for thought testifies to an act of creation whose relation to its condition will have constitutively foregone the presupposition of either an already constituted origin or end. That is to say, it will have engendered "'thinking' in thought."

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The Irruption of Novelty in Badiou's *Being and Event*: A Dialectical Materialist and Psychoanalytic Response

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Introduction

The advantages of Alain Badiou's philosophical position innovatively allow for something new to emerge in the realm of concrete, material being without having to posit a traditional metaphysical substance as its cause. Badiou's articulation of a mathematical ontology, following the "Cantor-event/creation"[1] of transfinite set theory, claims to be a presentation of "being-qua-being."[2] Badiou maintains Being is essentially multiple and transfinite set theory is able to formalise the pure multiple. However, the parameters and rigorous strictures of mathematical ontology, according to Badiou, are unable to account for the emergence of the new, the event, because the latter is "that-which-is-not-being-qua-being."[3] Nonetheless, the event may arise by way of an "evental site,"[4] that is, through a specific process laboured by post-evental subjects implementing the temporal structure of the future anterior ("will have been") when performing a generic forcing of truth.

Following a brief sketch of notions such as Being and event, their possible separation in Badiou's philosophy causes one to suspect residues of idealism in his theory of the event. Also, it is worth remarking that if it is the case that Badiou's notion of truth exists beyond the immediate reality of the subject, this concept causes serious areas of concern regarding his materialist commitments. Through my investigation, I hope to further reconcile the latent components of idealism in Badiou's theory

1 A. Badiou, *Being and Event,* trans. O. Feltham (New York: Continuum, 2005), p. 6; hereafter *BE*.
2 *BE,* p. 8.
3 *BE,* p. 189.
4 *BE*, p. 175.

of the event by supplementing it with Jacques Lacan's theory of the psychoanalytic act and the practice of dialectical materialism. By expanding on Lacan's insights into the quasi-religious connotations of materialism and its relation to the consummation of the actual practice of psychoanalysis, I will demonstrate that Badiou's conception of truth can account for phenomena such as subject formation and the event while being absolved from any claim of a metaphysical/onto-theological 'One-All' as the substantive ground or catalyst for these irruptions in Being. While Badiou's concepts of truth and subject are beneficial for new philosophical exploration, I will address certain areas of Badiou's thought that are reminiscent of philosophical idealism.

I.

The Structure of Badiouian Ontology: The Count and the Re-Securing of the Count

Starting from the radical life affirming choices of existentialism, Badiou unorthodoxly claims that "mathematics is ontology" out of an initial decision which is unavoidable. Following Heidegger and Sartre, Badiou maintains that one is always-already thrown into a particular situation, thus without the vantage point of a transcendent view from nowhere. From this point internal to the situation, Badiou thinks it is necessary to ask and provide the answer to the Parmenidean question of philosophy: is Being one or many? Standing from this *Ungrund* of choice, Badiou insists that Being is many/plural; for him, one must always begin with axiomatic decisions that cannot be legitimated by the criterion of a third party perspective. Given that the nature of Being is essentially multiple, it follows that "the one is not."[5] However, this claim is a "meta-ontological thesis"[6] due to the fact that such a statement does not appeal to any discursive *praxis* (mathematics, poetry, etc.) for an answer to the question of Being.

For this reason, Badiou intervenes on the philosophical scene because if Being is multiple, it is necessary for a mathematical theory to describe the full extent of how the multiple functions and what consequences are entailed by the non-existence of the unity of Being *an*

5 *BE*, p. 23.
6 *BE*, p. 13.

sich. Since all situations are predicated upon and presuppose a plurality of things, presentations, objects, Badiou vehemently emphasises that transfinite set theory, as the theory of the multiple, is the privileged discipline to articulate or formalise what one can say about being-qua-being because of the need for a theory which delineates how multiplicity without a one operates as such.

Although unity is a semblance, one should not underestimate the power of illusions and appearances that seem to display a 'one-ness' at an everyday pragmatic level. For Badiou, the operation of "the count-as-one,"[7] a verb-like operation/process that lacks any substantial being or existence, weaves together the expansion of multiples into degrees and frequencies of consistency, thus rendering Being comprehensible into identifiable components and regional areas of unity. Despite a deep animosity towards Kantian transcendental idealism, the count-for-one vividly resembles a synthetic operation that has always-already acted upon a situation and modified it so as to make reality and experience stable and harmonious.[8]

Through the structural operation of the count, situations are formed into "consistent multiplicities,"[9] that is, each situation has a particular count that comes to bear upon that region of reality and make it intelligible. Conceding that situations contain instances of unity only as an effect of the count, Badiou recognises that situations are built upon an

7 *BE*, p. 24.
8 For a more developed and nuanced understanding of the omni-present influence of Kant on Badiou's systematic thought, I refer the reader to Adrian Johnston's 'Phantom of Consistency: Alain Badiou and Kantian Transcendental Idealism' that explicitly draws parallels between the count for one's indebtedness to a transcendental schema that unifies the 'manifold (i.e. the multiple) of representations' for experience. According to Johnston, the count for one "keeps Badiou within the orbit of Kant's critical philosophy." He even remarks "the necessary, always-already there invention of a count-for-one imposes certain constraints and limitations on thought's relation to the (inconsistent) multiplicities of being per se." Thus, it is not an error to draw a similarity between Badiou and Kant on the count-for-one while keeping in mind, as a matter of charity, that Badiou set out to eradicate the Kantian themes of finitude and idealism in contemporary philosophical discourse. See p. 349, 353, A. Johnston, 'Phantom of Consistency: Alain Badiou and Kantian Transcendental Idealism', *Continental Philosophy Review*, 41 (3) (2008), 345-366.
9 *BE*, pp. 25, 30.

ensemble of many ones on the basis of "consistent multiplicity."[10] However, it does not follow to posit an underlying unity or absolute consistency behind the cohesion of a particular situation because "being-qua-being" is neither one nor many, but rather a proliferation of multiples of multiples with only the void as the limit point; thus, Badiou terms being-qua-being "inconsistent multiplicity."[11] It is essential to bear in mind that "inconsistent multiplicity" is a retroactive inference that one posits out of always-already being structured in a given situation and, moreover, that this multiplicity precedes the operations of unity performed by the count-for-one.

In spite of this anarchic, non-rational expansion of multiplicity, Badiou thinks inconsistent multiplicity should be rendered thinkable through a coherent and rational discourse in which the function of the count performs an act whereby a symbolic language, such as transfinite set theory, displays the presentation of the multiple. Accordingly, Badiou concludes "ontology is a situation ... the ontological situation [is] *the presentation of presentation.*"[12]

The elements that comprise the content of any situation, for Badiou, are normal, excrescent, singular and void terms. Lurking in the background of these terms, Badiou follows the basic framework of Cantorian set theory by formulating that given the structure of any given situation, the constitutive elements of that particular set give rise to a redoubling of the initial terms of the situation, the power-set. Badiou holds the power-set to represent the meta-structure of the original situation.[13] Thus, any ontological situation contains the architectonic of a double-layered structure: "the count and the count of the count."[14] While the former manipulates situations into 'consistent multiplicities,' the power-set also needs to be re-secured and protected from a chaotic overflow of instability of its members via an "operation of a second count."[15] However, since Badiou wagers that all situations operating under the 'count-as-one' are infinite, the meta-structure functions as an

10 *BE*, p. 25.
11 *BE*, p. 28.
12 *BE*, p. 27.
13 *BE*, p. 83.
14 *BE*, p. 103.
15 *BE*, p. 94.

"irremediable excess"[16] over the initial situation. On this point, Badiou introduces the qualifications of terms being either presented, represented, a combination of presentation/representation or lack thereof.

While normal terms are presented by the original count and represented by the count of the count, excrescent terms function as an excessive outgrowth of the original situation – they are represented, but do not fully register at the conscious level of experience. To reinforce order and stability, a second count re-secures excrescent terms. However, Badiou regards normal and state-secured excrescent terms as 'non-evental', for they fall under the radar of their respective forms of counting. To make way for the possibility of the event, Badiou assigns singular and void terms an evental status because they contain the ability to disrupt the balance of ontology and escape the roll call of their respective counts.

The Impasse of Ontology and the Possibility of An Event

According to Badiou, ontology prohibits the opening for an event, for the latter does not have a place in the fundamental, ontological situation where self-belonging is "illegal."[17] In more precise terms, Being proscribes events because they break the regulations and laws of the status quo. According to Badiou, the event emanates from "what-is-not-being-qua-being"[18] and is not to be understood as a mere nothing. For example, Badiou proposes that a given situation gives rise to a "state of the situation,"[19] from which some elements are recognised as legitimately belonging to the situation and others are passed over in a given state of affairs; the latter terms do not show up and Badiou posits them as "what-is-not-being-qua-being."[20]

In this process whereby elements are divided and carved up with rigid distinctions and modes of belonging, the ingredients that make up the event are correlative to the elements that are on the periphery of the situation. Nevertheless, the elements that make up the event, "what-is-

16 *BE*, p. 97.
17 *BE*, p. 229.
18 *BE*, p. 189.
19 *BE*, p. 103.
20 *BE*, p. 189.

not-being-qua-being,"[21] are not reducible to sheer nothing. In more explicit terms, evental terms contain a degree of ontological weight and exhibit the ability to enter into reality, but they escape the operations of counting. In Badiou's parlance, "parts exist which in-exist."[22] In this case, the parts that in-exist in relation to ontology are singular and void terms; thus, while singular terms are minimally present, they lack the recognition that normal terms possess.

Counter-intuitively, the notion of the event generates "undecidability" as to whether it truly belongs or does not belong to the situation.[23] In the possibility of the event, a chasm opens up and reveals something missing within the scope of ontology. With regards to presentation and representation, the possibility of an event points to a gap in the architectonic of structure and meta-structure, that is, the event denotes "the point of impasse in which being resides."[24] Such weak points are crucial to point out in socio-symbolic matrices because a (political, mathematical, structural) system's own conditions tend to fail and not secure a given situation from the open possibilities of malfunctioning and imbalance. For this reason, Badiou defines "evental sites" as combinations of singular and void terms because they harness the conditions to disrupt and invert the ontological situation.

What makes singular and void terms exceptional are the characteristics that describe how they relate, or more specifically, how they do not relate to the ontological situation. For instance, singular terms are predicated on presentation, but not representation. However, Badiou claims that "belonging/presentation" is an original relation; thus representation and inclusion are reducible to the relation of belonging.[25] Perceiving this relationship as primary and essential, this claim calls for singular terms to militantly and collectively demand such representation and recognition.

On the other hand, void terms are neither presented nor represented–they are, in and of themselves, sheer inconsistency. Badiou appeals to mathematics to cast light on how void terms function as such.

21 Ibid.
22 *BE*, p. 98.
23 *BE*, p. 182.
24 *BE*, p. 83.
25 *BE*, p. 81, 83.

For him, the void is "the first multiple."[26] Hence, it follows that the 'count-as-one' is unable to pacify the threat of the primordial void. Given that post-Cantorian ontology demonstrates that no situation can count everything, (i.e. the One is not), the claim that there exists an incalculable directly follows from the former proposition. Hence, the uncounted multiples compose the void and it thereby eradicates any possibility of a metaphysical system that claims to encompass the magnitude of Being.

More importantly, once one posits the existence of the void (i.e. that 'the nothing exists'), "nothing names the unperceivable gap between presentation as structure and presentation as structured presentation."[27] Thereby, the nothing haunts the stability of structure and meta-structure by delineating the "torsion"[28] in Being by its sheer presence. Another consequence of indicating the reality of the void implies that "[it] is by this very fact included in everything."[29] As a result of the omni-presence of the void/empty-set of transfinite set theory, ontology is at the mercy of the void, for it threatens to interrupt the ebb and flow of Being and is universally included in every particular situation. The significance of both singular and void terms remains essential for the structure of the evental site because they harbour "the necessary, but not sufficient conditions for the event."[30]

The Rapport Between The Evental Site and The Event

To pinpoint the conditions for what Badiou calls 'the event', the evental site plays an intimate role in what could possibly cause a disruption in the ontological situation. Singular and void terms are the simple points for something 'unforeseeable' to come into being. In Badiou's terminology, evental sites are "on the edge of the void,"[31] for they are correlative to the fundamental situation, but hinge on the condition that "the dissemination of such a multiple does not occur in the

26 *BE*, p. 59.
27 *BE*, p. 54.
28 *BE*, p. 94.
29 *BE*, p. 86.
30 A. Johnston, 'From The Spectacular Act to the Vanishing Act; Badiou, Žižek, and the Politics of Lacanian Theory' in *Did Somebody Say Ideology? : Slavoj Zizek in a Post-Ideological Universe*, Fabio Vighi and Heiko Feldner, eds. (New Castle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp. 41-77 (p. 44).
31 *BE*, p. 175.

situation."[32] evental sites separate themselves from the ordinary situation because a situation confronts its own void terms in an evental site; indeed, such an encounter provides a positive condition for an event. An evental site, however, does not necessarily entail an event. If Badiou were to claim that events necessarily flow out of the evental sites, such theorisations about the novel could be reduced to a crude theory of historicity in which historical and political events could be ingrained and pre-determined in the normal movement of social entities.

Far from proposing a teleological theory of history, Badiou posits a strict separation of the event from its evental site. The evental site is nevertheless crucial because the hierarchy of the count is unable to assimilate singular and void terms. The elements that make up the evental site function as some sort of exterior 'Other' vis-à-vis the state. But since these parts are immanent to a situation, the event can be "wagered"[33] or assumed to have taken place from the position of undecidability.

The Event: Intervention and Fidelity

For Badiou, events, the irruption of the novel in Being, are 'rare' and 'abrupt'. Strictly speaking, events are not commonplace occurrences that appear on a frequent basis. In short, the event is an "appearing/disappearing"[34] moment, a glimpse of the novel that offers itself as an "infinite proposition" to an individual, or what Badiou calls in his *Ethics* "the living animal."[35] In response to the infinite possibilities of the event and the multifarious ways in which one may positively respond or adamantly oppose it, an individual or set of entities may notice that an event of immense magnitude with far reaching potential consequences has taken place. Moreover, Badiou avoids appealing to what is presently rational within the given situation when these individuals/potential subjects affirm something out of nowhere has occurred. Namely, there is no *a priori* certainty that can legitimate and provide assurance that something new has happened which totally defies the rules of the prevailing socio-symbolic matrix of the situation.

32 *BE*, p. 516.
33 *BE*, p. 221.
34 *BE*, p. 191.
35 A. Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. P. Hallward (New York: Verso, 2001), p. 10; hereafter *Ethics*.

However, the event, 'in-and-of-itself', is insignificant and not sufficient unto itself. Badiou specifically points out that all events imply two events: "an intervention is what presents an event for the occurrence of another. It is an evental between-two."[36] Badiou defines the first event as that which "a multiple whose [sic] belonging to the situation is undecidable."[37] From the initial point of the sequence of events, the undecidable, to the second event by an act of wagering that the event belongs to the situation, the second event requires two necessary ingredients for the fulfilment of the first event: 'intervention' and 'fidelity'.

For Badiou to prove "there is some newness in Being,"[38] intervention is a rigorous procedure that lays out the consequences that follow thereafter from the anomalous manifestation of the first event. To avoid regressing into the deceptive framework of the One, the Event, for it to be worthy of the name, generates a "two."[39] In the act of recognising the event, potential subjects or anyone that is lured to it retroactively posits the first event and names the second one in tribute to the original. The very process of intervening and assuming the cause of the initial event constitutes the second event; thereby, the two becomes something that is "post-evental"[40]

However, the process of intervening and reworking the ontological situation on the basis of the event possibly gives rise to subjective commitment. Such possibilities in the intervention stage gives Badiou reasons to resort to the term "fidelity"[41] to describe the many ways of being faithful to the event. One may deny the event or become a martyr of it, but such gestures are partial manifestations, for the event, in its implications, is infinite. In light of this idea, fidelity is strictly related to the labours and militancy of post-evental activity, "It is the diagonal which unites the first event to the second,"[42] but on the condition that it "as procedure, is not."[43] Fidelity is diametrically opposed to an

36 *BE*, p. 209.
37 *BE*, p. 201.
38 *BE*, p. 290.
39 *BE*, pp. 206-07.
40 A. Badiou, *Manifesto For Philosophy*, trans. N. Madarasz (New York: SUNY Press, 1999), p. 91; hereafter, *MP*.
41 *BE*, p. 232.
42 *BE*, p. 216.
43 *BE*, p. 294.

anonymous process like the count; on the contrary, it is an effective and specific investigation of the situation in lieu of the event. But to cast more light on the concept of fidelity, the specifications that Badiou assigns to subject and truths will need to be introduced to clarify the actual interlocutors of the event and those who actually complete the work of intervention and fidelity.

Truth Versus Knowledge, Forcing via The Future Anterior

For Badiou, the purpose and ultimate aim of post-evental fidelity is to alter what counts as knowledge through the productive forcing of truth, thereby transforming what constitutes knowledge. Although philosophy tends to equivocate between knowledge and truth, Badiou separates this false unity for important reasons. Badiou maintains truth forces a new paradigm of knowledge, "[it] punches a hole in knowledge."[44] Badiou's interpretation of truth is object-less insofar as an object is predicated on the current and present conditions of knowledge.[45]

At any rate, Badiou's conception of truth is at odds with "conservative, constructivist thought."[46] The basic problems with such conservatism consists in the fact that such schools of thought disavow the reality of universals by confining themselves to the standard linguistic protocols of the situation and foreclose the possibility of the event. The basic operations of knowledge, according to Badiou, are based upon "discernment and classification,"[47] and he declares that these modes of inquiry are antithetical to universal truth by particularising and grouping entities in the world.

In contrast to discernment and classification, truth is open to all (i.e. universal) insofar as it is not taken as a given, predicated on the "language of the situation."[48] Badiou believes universals are connected to truth insofar that they are not already established in given situations with standard operating languages and encyclopaedias; positively speaking, truths and universals are "indiscernible"[49] relative to the status quo.

44 *MP*, p. 37.
45 *MP*, p. 91.
46 *BE*, p. 290.
47 *BE*, p. 292.
48 *BE*, p. 288.
49 *BE*, p. 392.

Universal truths can only be constructed following an evental sequence that locates a collective experience in a particular situation. In other words, truth, while always a particular truth of the conditions of philosophy, art, politics, science, and love,[50] occupies an openness in which it is accessible to the zero-level of flesh and blood individuals.

A truth, nevertheless, is always a particular truth and not a general unfolding of Being contra Heidegger; a truth follows from an event and runs counter to a given, fixed world of knowledge. In virtue of the "indiscernibility" and randomness of truth, Badiou asserts a radical contingency of Being in which he establishes a criterion of truth based on the generic, the fact that it contains "a little bit of everything"[51] when viewed from the perspective of a state-secured language of the situation and regime of knowledge.

On the basis of Badiou's knowledge/truth distinction, the upshot of this clarification demonstrates the genesis of truth and how it integrates itself on a prevailing horizon of knowledge. For clarification, four particular moments internal to the post-evental truth process are essential to show how truth changes the manner in which knowledge is perceived. First, Badiou specifies that truth proceeds and originates out of an event. Thereafter, those who assign an "illegal and anonymous nomination"[52] via mobilising excrescent terms that have not been secured by the second operation of counting become subjects of that particular anomalous manifestation of the event. The illegality at stake is the prohibition of self-belonging (Russell's paradox) posited by the limits of ontology. In more explicit terms, the very act of recognising the event is an autonomous and absolute act assumed by individuals who 'interpellate' themselves into becoming subjects of that event by going against the grain, diagnosing the incompleteness of reality in a subversive tone of illegality by bearing witness to the event.

In the act of assigning self-belonging, post-evental subjects appeal to excrescent, "supernumerary names,"[53] specifically those terms that are not secured by the operations of the second count. As noted earlier, excrescent terms are not reducible to sheer nothing; they are represented,

50 *BE*, p. 18.
51 *BE*, p. 371.
52 *BE*, p. 229.
53 *BE*, p. 391.

but not presented. But in conjuring excrescent terms in the post-evental truth process, these unaccounted for terms take on a new signifying dimension that was previously left unnoticed. In bringing these terms to the ontological situation, new presented and singular terms come forth: "it presents innumerable new multiples."[54]

The fourth and final condition is intimately bound up with Badiou's messianic faith in the syntax of the future anterior. This temporal notion supplements the power of 'generic forcing' in the production of new truths. The act of forcing, although mathematical in nature, relies on a poetic dimension of language. The contours of everyday grammatical syntax are prone to a certain blindness of this rich texture of language because in the act of appealing to excrescent terms in a post-evental sequence, reworking the connotations of signifiers appears to be senseless according to the established language of the situation. In this suspicion of an evasion of meaning and glorification of mystical non-sense, the future anterior anticipates a later point in time in which an excrescent signifier that represents a particular truth 'will have been understood.' That is to say, from the viewpoint of the situation, "the subject generates names whose referent is in the future anterior: this is what supports belief."[55] Formulating with conviction that a truth will change the content of knowledge in the future is an act that occurs by means of believing in the effectiveness of the future anterior.

Although the future anterior supports the belief, 'forcing' performs the ritual of belief. By drawing itself on the principle of the 'indiscernible', forcing holds fast to a particular truth. Since the generic is non-exclusive and "subtracted from any particular knowledge,"[56] forcing has palpable effects on every member of a given set. For the sake of order and changing the very operators of discernment, forcing is always a forcing of truth. Thus, Badiou's notion of truth requires the complement of forcing: "Truth requires the ultra-one of the event. The result is that it forces a decision."[57] At the very moment of forcing, a strict definition of subjectivity appears: "forcing is the fundamental law of the subject."[58]

54*BE*, p. 408.
55*BE*, p. 398.
56*BE*, p. 348.
57*BE*, p. 430.
58*BE*, p. 403.

Badiou's Account of Subjectivity

According to Badiou, a subject is possible if and only if an event occurs, providing the basis for a specific truth production. What makes Badiou's definition of a subject peculiar is that it claims not to reflect anything like an idealist form of subjectivity. Ruling out anything that would resemble Kant's transcendental unity of apperception (i.e. an attachment of 'I think' to *Vorstellungen*) or Fichte's self-positing I, Badiou insists a subject is unnecessary for a foundation of experience. Badiou also cancels a notion of subjectivity predicated on anything like Hegel's negativity of the subject and the psychoanalytic notion of subject *qua* an over-determined being in the symbolic order of language.

On a positive side, Badiou postulates that a subject is a finite fragment, a mediator, of infinite truth: "a truth alone is infinite, yet the subject is not coextensive with it"[59] The subject, although limited by its material finitude, is the very dynamic activity that provides for a transition from one world of knowledge into a new world based on a specific truth, one that is more appealing and seductive than the previous world that was stagnant and mundane. Moreover, the subject is necessary to the act of forcing in which a new situation is decided. A subject "decides an undecidable from the point of the indiscernible."[60] Because the subject has nothing to anchor itself within the present situation, Badiou formulates an idea of the indiscernible as a "transcendental object of faith."[61]

Given that a subject can bear witness to a truth that exceeds its very being, Badiou potentially sacrifices his materialist convictions in the prior and following moments of the individual/subject dynamic when appealing to concepts that are deposited with overtly religious connotations. Adrian Johnston suggests the use of religious language in post-evental fidelity opens up the possibility for idealist metaphysics to "highjack" materialism.[62] Thus, given that Badiou is very keen to detect anything camouflaging itself as religiosity or idealism in philosophical

59*BE*, p. 395.
60*BE*, p. 406.
61*BE*, p. 376.
62 A. Johnston, 'What Matter(s) in Ontology: Alain Badiou, The Hebb-Event, and Materialism Split From Within', *Angelaki Journal For Theoretical Humanities*, 13 (1) (2008), pp. 27-49 (p. 38).

discourse, does the possibility for inhabiting an infinite truth create tension in Badiou's philosophical edifice? On this issue, I will address critiques pertinent to Badiou's materialism.

II.

Žižek's Critique of Badiou's Materialism

According to Johnston, Badiou and Žižek both share the pre-supposition that the nature of reality (Being) is fundamentally inconsistent and non-totalisable.[63] For Žižek, a refined materialism endorses the non-existence of the Lacanian 'big Other' and in the case of Badiou's supposed materialism, "the Event is nothing but its own inscription in the order of Being, a rupture in the order of Being on account of which Being cannot ever form a consistent All."[64] On the one hand, Badiou fits the description for what Žižek holds to be a materialist given that "being-qua-being" is essentially an infinite expansion of multiples without the anchor of an atomic substrate. However, this description is only valid for Badiou's account of ontology. On one type of reading of Badiou, Žižek notices a stark separation of Being and event. For this reason, Žižek "claims to detect the hidden kernel of a certain sort of idealism that tries to pass itself off as a variant of materialism."[65]

Moreover, Žižek regards Badiou's distinction between being and non-being (more technically, "what-is-not-being-qua-being") to be antithetical to a materialist ontology because for a materialist, non-being would have to be explained on the extant world of what already exists in Being. The consequences entail, at least for Žižek, explaining terms that consist of non-being (void and singular terms) as born out of terms that are reducible to Being (normal and excrescent terms).

Thus, Žižek's criticism ultimately rallies for an abandonment of Badiou's claim that "mathematics is ontology," because this thesis imposes "too much regularity to Being."[66] For Žižek, the points that need

63 Johnston, 'Spectacular Act', p. 49.
64 S. Žižek, 'From Purification to Subtraction; Badiou and The Real' in *Think Again: Alain Badiou and the Future of Philosophy*, P. Hallward ed. (London: Continuum, 2004), pp. 165-181 (p. 179).
65 Johnston, 'Spectacular Act', p. 50.
66 Johnston, 'Spectacular Act', p. 51.

further clarification in Badiou's ontology are the status of "the pre-evental production of the event, the genesis of an Event [sic] out of (material) being"[67] and an examination of "the gap between the pure multiplicity of presentation and its representation."[68] In light of Žižek's, criticisms, Part III of *Being and Event* will be revisited to understand why pre-evental production is essential for a fully consistent materialism compatible with an event.

Part III of Being and Event–Being: Nature and Infinity

For Badiou, materialism does not necessarily entail an evolutionary, positivist naturalism. Badiou's materialism vividly reflects a strong anti-naturalism, for events cannot be accounted for by the workings of consciousness or human cognition. Rather, the occurrence of events emerges from undecidability in formalist mathematics. Furthermore, Badiou also distances himself from the Marxist theory of historical materialism. As a consequence, Badiou breaks with the historical materialist notion of nature. Badiou arrives at the conclusion that the mathematisation of nature destroys the belief that Nature organises itself into a totality. Given that "Nature does not exist,"[69] the idea of Nature is reducible to a consistency based upon natural and mathematisable multiplicities.

Moreover, Badiou insists that nature is inherently normal, homogeneous, and well ordered. Unlike the inherent antagonisms of social relations and libidinal dynamics *à la* Marx and Freud, "nature does not contradict itself."[70] Through the lens of nature, the laws of causality and the dynamics of social relations are inherently stable. While it is possible to describe and locate natural multiplicities, Badiou thinks nature is too orderly to investigate for the possible production of an event. Žižek would agree with Badiou insofar as nature, similar to the idea of the Lacanian 'big Other' is non-existent. But for Žižek, the presences of natural multiplicities are tangible properties that can be investigated through an ideological critique prior to an event. For Žižek, what appears to be well ordered and stable, rendered consistent by the count as one, is nevertheless rife with contradictions.

67 Johnston, 'Spectacular Act', p. 50.
68 Žižek, 'Badiou and The Real,' p. 174.
69 *BE*, p. 140.
70 *BE*, p. 128.

In a different respect, the gesture of resigning materialism to the formal sciences haphazardly opens the door to "religious and spiritualist metaphysics."[71] If Badiou were to accept and recognise the scientificity of naturalism, it would be unnecessary, for his project, to assimilate religious language and rhetoric.[72] With the developments of the contemporary natural sciences, Badiou's claim on the consistency of nature would undermine itself because "nature is inconsistent and heterogeneous, permeated by holes, gaps, and lags."[73] In other words, the very stuff of natural multiplicities, their arrangements and antagonisms in politics and natural sciences, are able to signify and signal to areas in which an event may arise.

In this manner, taking a closer look at the Hegelian concept of negativity[74] in regards to natural multiplicities loosens up Badiou's exclusive investigation of singular and void terms for a possible event. However, the main drawbacks of a strict inquiry of natural multiplicities brings into question Badiou's notion of historical sequences. For Badiou, historical sequences are the exact inverse of the non-evental normal run of things; more specifically, they run counter to the mechanisms of structure and meta-structure because they are typified by events. Although Žižek wants to argue for some hidden flaw between presentation and representation, Badiou addresses this problem by virtue of historical/evental sequences. But on the same token, the definition of what constitutes a historical sequence is much more broad and open-

71 Johnston, 'What Matter(s)', p. 27.

72 "Badiou's persistent use of the theologically saturated signifier grace for a process of evental subjectification ... is one of the more visible symptoms of the return of the religious repressed once the vast majority of the sciences have been categorically prevented from informing what presents itself as materialist ontology," Johnston, 'What Matter(s)', p. 35.

73 Johnston, 'What Matter(s)', p. 31.

74 According to Hegel, "Spirit gains its truth only through finding itself with absolute rupture ... [it] is that power only insofar as it looks the negative in the face and dwells in it." However, wouldn't it be appropriate to extend this model, without the teleological suggestions, in seriously inquiring into the places and states of affairs in which an event may suddenly emerge? That is, by situating the natural multiplicities within the situation, the internal contradictions that move them become vividly salient and may signal the certain inconsistencies in Being that are essential for the possible coming of events. See, G.W.F. Hegel, *Preface to the Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Yirmiyahu Yovel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 129.

ended for Žižek. For this reason, it is urgent for Badiou to rethink the criterion of a historical sequence by capitalising on the labours of the negative in relation to natural multiplicities.

Nevertheless, the most important aspect of Žižek's critique of Badiou regards the transition of a flesh and blood individual becoming a subject. Žižek brings into question the peculiarities about the 'flesh and blood animality' that allows this entity to become a subject, "a finite moment of the generic procedure."[75] Thus, Žižek writes:

> One should be careful then, not to miss the fundamental gesture of Alain Badiou. As a materialist, in order to be thoroughly materialist, he focuses on the idealist topos par excellence: how can a human animal forsake its animality and put its life in the service of a transcendent Truth? In short, Badiou repeats within the materialist framework the elementary gesture of idealist anti-reductionism.[76]

Žižek is quick to note how the Badiouian subject is not reducible to its sheer, finite being.

In Badiou's case, mathematical structures can neither exhaust nor explain the genesis of subjectivity. While Žižek urges the reader to reflect on how and why a human animal would ever consider sacrificing itself for a truth that exceeds its very being, he does not go far enough. That is to say, what are the qualifications and abilities a pre-Badiouian subject requires to cognise an event and a truth? The keen, reflexive nature of perception, to simply recognize and intuit a truth out of an event, in the confusion of the present milieu would count as an essential capacity for the individual in becoming a subject.

On this basis, Badiou's condemnation of the flesh and blood individual, something that is inherently selfish by ways of its ability to feel pleasure or pain, is unwarranted as a general claim because there is something inherently unique about this organism that grants it to be taken up by the unknown/indiscernible, that is, truth.

75 *MP*, p. 108.

76 Žižek, 'Badiou and The Real', p. 169.

Mathematical Materialism or Dialectical Materialism?

Drawing inspiration from Lacan, Badiou formulates a materialism in which mathematics "touches a Real." The status of this real is formalised by a theory of the pure multiple. Since Badiou thinks "being-qua-being," which is both thinkable and knowable, can be displayed through a symbolic language, Heidegger's foundation of ontological difference plays an essential role in mathematical materialism. According to Johnston, to be a materialist and employ the ontic/ontological distinction is problematic on a number of levels.[77] In response to charges of idealism, Badiou insists that his philosophy does not claim to make any distinctions between transcendence and immanence.[78] But how is this statement tenable if one posits ontological difference to set up a distinction between tangible ontic referents in relation to a purified and untainted notion of being-qua-being?[79]

For instance, in his 2006 *Logic of Worlds*, Badiou advocates a materialist dialectic in an atmosphere absorbed in post-modern late capitalism. He believes the forcing of truths by bodies relative to situations is a remedy to this ideologically saturated world. However, gaining an insight into the elements of these truths and how one forces them, it becomes clear that there is an idealist/religious notion underpinning the language of truths (grace, transcendental object of faith, fidelity, and so on). Thus, two pieces of evidence show that mathematical materialism is an offshoot of idealism: ontological difference and the language that sustains and buttresses post-evental truths. On this account, Badiou, in order to be a consistent materialist, would have to support a philosophy predicated upon a reworked dialectical materialism.

According to Bruno Bosteels, Badiou contributes to the Marxist theory of dialectical materialism, for philosophy always finds itself amidst its four conditions: art, politics, science, and love.[80] For Bosteels, the contemporary aim of dialectical materialism is to register and evaluate "the scientificity of science in [its] specific difference from ideological practices."[81] Following Althusser, ideology is the very stuff that simultaneously signifies and hides one's conditions of existence. In lieu

77Johnston, 'What Matter(s)', p. 28.
78Johnston, 'What Matter(s)', p. 32.
79Johnston, 'What Matter(s)', p. 44.
80*MP*, p. 35.

of this double function of ideology, dialectical materialism, in the form of a science, has to be up to the task of debunking ideological illusions and misrecognitions. Bosteels also notes that dialectical materialism supports the claim of the "non-All" of Being and situates itself as a theoretical "process of internal division."[82] Bosteels recapitulates Badiou's aversion to idealism, insofar as " it [idealism] consists in denying the divisibility of the existing law of things."[83] Properly understood, dialectical materialism provides the framework for conceptualising the (imaginary) unity holding a given world together by positing antagonisms at the "nucleus" of Being.

Via a reworked dialectical materialism, the spectre of idealism can be disposed of as an imaginary placeholder of religious tendencies; that is, the fantasy of an onto-theological system of Being is suspended. However, recognising the idealist layers of reality is only one step in the dialectical process: "pinpointing the absent cause remains a dialectical yet idealist tactic, until this evanescent point of the real is forced in order to give consistency to the Real as a new generic truth."[84] At this point, diagnosing the incompleteness of reality is still caught up in identifying a transcendent external cause as the support of a given world. Going one-step further than an idealist, the very leverage of a dialectical theory resides in the weight and pressure of a subjective intervention that gives 'consistency to the Real'. In Bosteels' eyes, the forcing of a truth is Badiou's greatest contribution to the dialectical materialist cause.[85]

To counter Žižek's notion of the separation of Being from event, Bosteels advocates a dialectical reciprocity of these theoretical terms. Through a more dynamic interplay of Being and event, Badiou's insistence on immanent truths, truths relative to situations, protects his theory from being charged as laden with idealist threads and concepts. On this condition, Bosteels indirectly suggests that Lacan's notion of the Real should be supplemented with dialectical materialism for an inherently purified theory devoid of idealist inclinations.

81 B. Bosteels, 'Alain Badiou's Theory of the Subject: The Recommencement of Dialectical Materialism?' in *Lacan: The Silent Partners*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 2006,) pp. 115- 168 (p. 117).
82Bosteels, 'Dialectical Materialism?' p. 132.
83Bosteels, 'Dialectical Materialism?' p. 139.
84Bosteels, 'Dialectical Materialism?' p. 141.
85Bosteels, 'Dialectical Materialism?' p. 159.

III.

Why Go Beyond Lacan? Forcing Lacanian Psychoanalysis and Dialectical Materialism

To resolve the idealist tensions in Badiou's 'mathematical materialism', it is essential to reinvigorate the notions of dialectical materialism and the psychoanalytic act in the wake of an event. In regards to the adequacy of dialectical materialism, this brand of materialism has to meet the challenge of Lacan's discovery of idealism/religiosity at the centre of past and recent materialisms.[86] Materialism defends the claim that matter is the primordial phenomenon that generates, produces, and obstructs the world of existents. As Johnston notes in Lacan's reading of eighteenth century philosophical ethics, the Marquis de Sade constructs a world upon matter and transposes it into a simulacrum of God. To efface these mistakes, a coalition of different disciplines must 'force' a framework of a pure materialism that is prepared to explain one of the traditional components of idealism–subjectivity. Thus, Johnston writes,

> A challenge to which a novel contemporary constellation involving alliances between factions within philosophy, science, and psychoanalysis must rise: the challenge of formulating a fully secularised materialism, a God-less ontology of material being nonetheless able to account for those things whose (apparent) existence repeatedly lures thinkers onto the terrain of idealist metaphysics.[87]

Furthermore, the task of materialism is actually double; it must be able to explain the onto-genesis of subjectivity out of the crude extant matter of material being while simultaneously proving that idealism is actually unable to explain its own object, the subject of philosophy.

In post-Kantian critiques, materialism has been pinned down as a determinist, reductive, and dogmatic framework. Thus, contemporary materialism is in the position to reverse these assailments and prove idealism wrong by increasing its focus on human freedom and

86 A. Johnston, 'Conflicted Matter: Jacques Lacan and the Challenge of Secularising Materialism', *Pli: Warwick Journal of Philosophy*, 19 (2008), pp. 166-188 (p. 166).
87 Johnston, 'Conflicted Matter', p. 169.

subjectivity. As we have seen, Bosteels' definition of dialectical materialism meets the criteria for what Lacan has in mind.

The Big Other and Knowledge

What makes Lacan's account of subjectivity promising for a materialist project is its attempt to demonstrate the non-existence of the 'big Other'. Phrased in Badiou's language, the encyclopaedic determinant of knowledge, parallel with the Other/the subject supposed to know, loses its capacity to sustain the structure and meta-structure when a subject forces a generic truth procedure. Lacan stipulates that if this notion (the barred Other) is not taken into account, "one remains mired in idealism and theology."[88]

However, the barred Other simultaneously implies that "in the absence of every version of this Other, what remains lacks any guarantee of consistency right down to the bedrock of ontological fundaments."[89] By positing strife and torsion on the centre stage of ontology, one must be wary of Badiou's conception of natural multiplicities and materialist mathematics in order to reap the benefits of his contributions to dialectical materialism, more specifically, the possibility for events and the forcing of generic truth procedures. That is to say, to attain a truly materialist philosophy, Lacan's version of psychoanalysis employs a discourse in which one passes through, via traumatic experiences, anamnesis, and transference, the stages of religiosity and idealism.

Discerning the Indiscernible, Giving Life to Object (a)

While it is not my aim to recount Badiou's critique of Lacan, I would merely like to show how the psychoanalytic act harbours the richness of post-evental subjectivity without the aid of religious rhetoric. Sam Gillespie goes even as far to suggest that the distinctions between Lacan and Badiou should be suspended.[90] Gillespie also adds that Lacan is the main interlocutor and source of inspiration for Badiou's account of subjectivity.[91] Following this connection, the essence of the Badiouian

88 Johnston, 'Conflicted Matter', p. 171.
89 Johnston, 'Conflicted Matter', p. 172.
90 S. Gillespie, *The Mathematics of Novelty: Badiou's Minimalist Metaphysics* (Australia: Re.press, 2008), p. 109; hereafter *MN*.
91 *MN*, p. 121.

event is the short-lived flash that it radiates on a potential subject, a manifestation to name the event and intervene on its behalf. However, Badiou's concepts of intervention and fidelity fail to give an adequate account of the emotional underpinnings embedded in the post-evental experience. It is Lacan, Gillespie claims, who shows "how subjects are gripped by events"[92] through the psychoanalytic concepts of the Real and object (a).

The version of the Real that Gillespie alludes to is not the Real extracted by formalist mathematics. Rather, it is the traumatic Real that an analysand brushes up against when a signifying impasse occurs in the medium of symbolisation and association, "a manifestation of [an] anti-constructivist tendency, given that it [the Real] remains of being in the aftermath of the failure of meta-language."[93] In recognising that a meta-language governing the world is fundamentally an idealist fantasy, the idea of an onto-theological One-All, novelty can still be attained by sublimating and giving content to what Lacan calls object (a). Insofar as the Real is indirectly made manifest by dreams, fantasies, and language, object (a) provides a path to turn a past traumatic experience into an intelligible occurrence and constructive discourse.

Gillespie locates the significance of Lacan's contributions to the Badiouian event on the basis that both the event and object (a) are not reducible to a hyper-individualist phenomenalism. On the contrary, they provide "supplements to presentation itself that makes the move from a purely subtractive theory of presentation to a direct determination of the indeterminate possible."[94] Taken in this sense, Gillespie is claiming that one can discern the indiscernible, to use Badiou's terms, in a psychoanalytic fashion. For a transition from abstracting from the situation into the goal of institutionalising a universal truth, the event requires aspects of the psychoanalytic act in which the 'big Other', taken as a representation of knowledge, is dissolved and overcome with the invention of new signifiers.

92 *MN*, p. 104.
93 *MN*, p. 109.
94 *MN*, p. 109.

The Art of Punning and Forcing Excrescent Terms

According to Ed Pluth, the appropriation of the psychoanalytic act for the invention of a new signifier typifies how Lacan conceptualises human freedom. In a similar way, Badiou is concerned with the enigma of human freedom and how subjectivity fits within a structuralist framework. On an apologetic and anti-reductive reading of Lacan, Pluth holds signifiers to be fundamentally ambiguous, lacking "a specific reference,"[95] for they are for the express purpose of evoking meaning. Contra Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, Pluth emphasises that the Lacanian subject is not reducible to language, but rather "the subject is produced by an interaction of signifiers and the subject is also produced by a resistance to signification."[96]

What this reading implies for Badiou is that language plays an integral role to materialism, albeit in a non-constructivist manner. Unlike Badiou's condition of subjectivity as following the happening of an event, a psychoanalytic subject is considered to be implicated in a world that pre-exists him or her, a world categorised by the registers of metaphor and metonymy. Lacan suggests the body is "over-written" with such signifiers that manifest themselves in the way in which the subject experiences *jouissance*. However, to discover the original sources of these signifiers, a psychoanalytic act, which is "always transgressive,"[97] integrates "signifiers quasi-autonomously and their use amounts to a repetition and an extension of a signifying impasse."[98]

In the manner of reconciling the maladaptive subject to a world that appears to be closed and structurally sealed, the creation of new signifiers and puns identify a lack in the world constituted by knowledge. According to Pluth, "the signifier that a pun produces has a double tendency–it tends toward both meaning and non-meaning... In the place of an expectation of meaning, puns respond with an enigmatic X."[99] For Badiou's treatment of forcing, punning is correlative in using excrescent terms to present singular terms for the sake of changing the very way

95 E. Pluth, *Signifiers and Acts: Freedom in Lacan's Theory of the Subject* (New York: SUNY Press, 2007), p. 26; hereafter *SA*.
96 *SA*, p. 46.
97 *SA*, p. 104.
98 *SA*, p. 98.
99 *SA*, pp. 108-09.

knowledge is conceptualised. Simply put, punning 'punches a hole in knowledge,' by combining a strange admixture of terms immanent to the situation that will then have been understood under a new paradigm of knowledge.

Nevertheless, Badiou maintains that the Lacanian Real functions as a "transcendent cause,"[100] – this reading altogether should be avoided for the sake of salvaging a contemporary dialectical and psychoanalytic materialism. In defence of Pluth's reading of the Real, the Real acts within the symbolic order of language when a subject "garbles"[101] a new signifier. As we have seen, Badiou's philosophy is also made problematic by certain idealist elements. Be that as it may, to counteract both of these charges of idealism, the psychoanalytic act provides enough evidence to suggest that going beyond Lacan will not be adequate for a full-fledged materialism. Badiou claims in Meditation 37 of *Being and Event* that Lacan makes a mistake by assuming "that there were always some subjects."[102] On a closer reading of Lacan, the assumption of the subject of the signifier as a given is permissible. However, the subject of an act is not to be taken as a sheer given, for this subject is indeed a rare novelty.

In Pluth's words, "the very insistent or 'ex-ceding real' that Badiou wishes to see taken into account and included in a theory of the subject is present in Lacan's theory of the act."[103] Far from supporting a non-existent vantage point of the imaginary-symbolic-real triad, Lacan endorses a real that can be confronted in the symbolic through inventing a new signifier by way of an act. By the gesture of integrating the psychoanalytic act and dialectical materialism with the Badiouian event, both subversive and dangerous to the status quo, materialism is preserved as the sole embodiment of explaining subjectivity and providing a refreshing breath of the novel in the realm of existence.

100*SA*, p. 125.
101*SA*, p. 109.
102*BE*, p. 434.
103*SA*, p. 128.

Conclusion

While it may appear that Badiou remains entrapped in an idealist tradition of philosophy, it is actually the case that he is simultaneously constructing and revivifying concepts that place materialism on a new ground. By showing how truths and subjects are formed out of particular events, there is no longer reason to believe that reality, or philosophy for that matter, can be considered finished projects. Along with reworked notions such as subject and truth, associated with the insights of dialectical materialism and psychoanalysis, they can be pulled out from under the baggage of past philosophical systems by indicating that until now, subject and truth have been misunderstood; thus, they are relatively new concepts in need of practical use.

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Europe, or the Infinite Task by Rodolphe Gasché

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Whether or not it intends to do so, philosophical inquiry constantly wrestles with questions of universality and particularity, of reason and its limits, of history and perspective, and always of the task of philosophy itself. In Rodolphe Gasché's *Europe, or the Infinite Task*,[1] these questions are raised through an in depth study of a single concept: Europe. While philosophers have discussed the specificity of European thought throughout the Western tradition, it may not be obvious from the start that Europe is in fact a philosophical *concept*. Preempting such a concern, Gasché does not hold that Europe's conceptualisation has been stable, as if 'Europe' were some fixed idea whose content remains static throughout an intellectual history. Gasché does, however, trace the development of what is called Europe through four figures associated with the phenomenological tradition: Husserl, Heidegger, Patočka, and Derrida. And as Gasché follows this concept by way of its phenomenological history, he simultaneously reveals the crucial significance of such an investigation. For while 'Europe' might not immediately strike one as essentially philosophical or philosophically essential, from within the European phenomenological tradition, it certainly proves to be both.

That Gasché is concerned with the conceptual possibilities of Europe is true to the thought of those philosophers he portrays. None of the thinkers presented in this book reduce the significance of Europe to its geographical, political, in short, its empirical existence, but rather contemplate the meaning of Europe in its figurative-conceptual nature. Husserl is the first thinker Gasché examines, since it is Husserl with whom the phenomenological method is inaugurated and thanks to whom

1 R. Gasché, *Europe, or the Infinite Task: A Study of a Philosophical Concept* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009). Hereafter references are given in the main text with page numbers in brackets.

'Europe' as a phenomenological theme is decided upon. Gasché concentrates on the later Husserl's unfinished *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* and the lecture on 'Philosophy and the Crisis of European Humanity' for the most part, although it becomes clear that Husserl's explicit engagement with Europe and its Greek heritage yields insights that hark back to the very fundamentals of the phenomenological project.[2] For it is the phenomenological method as such that Europe signifies for Husserl, the possibility of an apodictic science which would ground the objective sciences. In order to explicate this claim, Gasché follows Husserl's turn to the novel demand that initiates Greek philosophy "to assume [...] responsibility by accounting for one's claims and actions rather than having recourse to inveterate beliefs and ingrained habits of thinking" (27). It is crucial to the conceptual history traced in this book that this idea of universal reason *irrupts* in Greece as a foreign demand for self-justification, throwing the familiarity of everyday life into a certain upheaval.

In Chapter 2, Gasché works through Husserl's description of the transformation of this universality by the Renaissance sciences. Because the Renaissance refrains from questioning the fact that it inherits an idea of universality from Greece, it becomes a less critical project than that of the original rational science. Specifically, Husserl identifies this unthinking character in the reception of geometric truths, which Galileo —who exemplifies the modern sciences for Husserl—takes to be *self-evident* truths, in effect distancing the philosopher from the particular perspective from which the universal truth is accessed. "[B]y taking the achievements of these disciplines for granted, Galileo had become oblivious to geometry's and mathematics' origin in the life-world that alone makes them meaningful for humankind" (55). As a result, the universality appealed to by the modern sciences is one of utter abstraction. The renewal of the Greek science, which is thus a more fundamental task than that of the objective sciences, is a phenomenology that attends to the structures of universal experience Husserl calls the life-world. In the third and final chapter Gasché devotes to Husserl's thought, he describes the project of examining the life-world as a response to the crisis of the European sciences and attempt to reestablish the demand for

2 E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: an Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. E. Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970).

universal reason in its Greek spirit. It is in these opening chapters that, despite the dynamic nature of the concept under investigation, we are introduced to a handful of themes that will continue to be associated with Europe for subsequent thinkers: responsibility, universality, and the foreign.

The following three chapters are devoted to Heidegger and are possibly the most challenging in this book. This may be because the theme of 'Europe' is not as straightforward in Heidegger as it is in Husserl, Patočka, and Derrida. However, this is in no way to suggest Heidegger is unconcerned with what Europe might mean. To be sure, thinking the Occident (*Abendland)* is crucial for Heidegger, who like Husserl, sees the European inheritance of Greek philosophy and the future possibilities of that reception as the very task of philosophy. Furthermore, Gasché manoeuvres through Heidegger's texts with a precision and sensitivity that shed light on Heidegger's thought on Europe without ever sacrificing the nuance of the philosopher.

Gasché proceeds with a reading of Heidegger's *Introduction to Metaphysics*, where the question of Europe is implicated in the question of Being.[3] To understand how this is the case, Gasché looks to Heidegger's contention that the Occident—as the non-Greek—receives the question of Being sent by Greek thought. Specifically, this reception is one of *descent*. However descent should be read in a twofold manner. On the one hand, the question of Being is forgotten in Occidental thought, and in this way the specificity of Greek philosophy enters concealment thanks to Europe's "inevitable failure" to "reflect on Being itself" (100). However descent is also a going down towards a new dawn, towards another beginning, another *Orient*. The chapters on Heidegger thus attempt to come to grips with this possibility: "By harking back to the Greek beginning, Europe is to be superseded by the site of a new history that has been sent on its way in a more primordial fashion" (101).

In order to think the possibility of another beginning, Gasché considers the difference between Europe in its Husserlian and Heideggerian articulations. Whereas Husserl identifies the Greek heritage of Europe, and thus the philosophical import of the concept, with the universal *forms* of experience, Heidegger holds that what Greek thought

3 M. Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. G. Fried and R. Polt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

offers is a singular *force*—the very force of a fundamental questioning (112). The idiomatic nature of the question of Being, then, raises further questions about the particular privilege accorded to those who inherit the question, namely the German people. But as Gasché argues, Heidegger's reservations about universal reason—that it implies a metaphysics of subjectivity—also prohibit a conception of a German people in a biological or racial sense. For Heidegger, a German people would be properly German only once these racial notions were surpassed and it were the question of being that defined the historical people. If this is correct, then dwelling with the question leads to a radical destabilisation of the subject. Gasché writes:

> The question of Being is not only a strange question; it is also one that demands that an individual, or for that matter, a people, depart from oneself—from understanding oneself in the self-referential terms of, for instance, the natural, the biological, the native, the ethnic—and face the strangeness, darkness, and insecurity of the to-come, in order to have a historical-spiritual fate to begin with. (116)

Gasché argues that while there was a *strangeness* about the idea of Europe from the start—revealed by a fascinating etymological analysis of 'Europe' as well as Husserl's insistence that the demand for rationality irrupts from outside Greece—the strangeness associated with Europe becomes all the stranger with Heidegger, as the question of Being "affects, claims, and disappropriates the human being." (122). In order to elucidate the nature of this unfamiliarity, Gasché pursues Heidegger's claim that the strangeness of Being is at its most startling in tragic poetry. It is for this reason that Gasché deals at length with Heidegger's reading of *Antigone*, the quintessential work of tragedy. For it is Antigone who takes unhomeliness upon herself: "[Antigone] carries to full fruition this essential possibility of being properly unhomely. Not only is she thrust into excess and torn into downfall, but her intrinsic unhomeliness is such that she becomes at home within it" (183). Finally, Gasché explicates how a historical people—and how a Europe—might become at home with the uncanny.

Jan Patočka is the third figure Gasché turns to in *Europe*. Two chapters are devoted to the Czech phenomenologist, who is certainly the least often acknowledged of the thinkers discussed in this book. These

chapters not only focus on the issues at hand, but also serve as an insightful introduction to Patočka for those unfamiliar with his work. This, of course, is no accident, for just as the task of philosophy is tied to questions of Europe for Husserl and Heidegger, so too does Patočka see the conceptual possibilities of Europe as essentially related to the pursuit of thought.

Gasché begins Chapter 7 with Patočka's criticism of Husserlian phenomenology, which in turn introduces the ontology of Patočka, informed by Heidegger's *Being and Time*, as a phenomenology of a fundamentally temporal-corporeal world, constituted by three movements. It is the third of these movements that is the essence of human being and is intrinsically related to the Platonic idea of care for the soul—the "embryonic idea of Europe" (221). As an encounter with being as such, which is other than the self, the third movement is understood as a life of devotion, as the self lived outside itself, living for the sake of being, letting beings appear in their being (220).

In order to expound this possibility of a life of devotion, Gasché describes what Patočka sees as the everyday experience of decline, the bare fact of the finitude of beings. In contradistinction to this universal experience lies the historical moment of Greek philosophy, defined by a thinking of *eternity* and the eternity of being. The care of the soul is thus offered by philosophical thought as 'resistance' to finitude: "[T]he human, by caring for the soul, bracketing as it were the universal experience of decline, achieves a (however futile) freedom from decline, and entropy, and hence a certain ideality or spirituality—in other words, a kind of immortality" (226). The chapter then follows what exactly a care of the soul entails, and thus how a Europe that overcomes its finitude might do so. For Patočka, the philosophical concern with the manifestation of being or *showing* as such precedes problems of truth and falsity, as well as the question of the meaning of being. Therefore, the care of the soul as the germ of philosophy proper is bound up with the most fundamental thought, that of the appearing of phenomena. In being *for* being, the self is no longer self-contained, but open to exteriority, to the appearing of alterity. Here Gasché reveals once again how something foreign is essential to a phenomenology that takes up Greek philosophy, even when the philosophical significance of 'Greece' is described in radically different terms. And since it is Greek philosophy that has a

conceptual claim on Europe, the alien becomes irreducibly constitutive of what it is to be properly European.

In Chapter 8 Gasché reads Patočka's genealogy of 'cares' of the soul, found in his *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*.[4] Patočka analyses the transformations undergone since the Greek inception of this idea in order to combat what is distinctly European in the modern world —the acceptance of finitude—by looking for the possibility of a new Europe that would properly engage with its Greek heritage. After the philosophy of Athens, where responsibility to the Good denotes the essential human way of being, the Roman care of the soul becomes a primarily political, intersubjective care, one in which the citizen is concerned with the good of the State. Then, in Christianity, the interior life of the soul and "a relation to absolute truth—to God as a Person" becomes the responsibility of the self (246). What is crucial about the transformation undergone in Christianity is that the subject is related to the *mysterium tremendum*, since the self is "the addressee or donee of self-forgetting and self-denying Goodness, of a gift, in short, which is so immense that the human can never ever hope to adequately respond to it" (257). The greatness of Europe, according to Patočka, is this Christianisation of Greek responsibility and care of the soul. However Christianity as we know it fails to live up to its promise, since it remains indebted to Plato. Because the care of the soul is dominated by the demand for *knowledge* of the Good carried over from Platonism, a responsibility that might be *prior* to knowledge is obscured. Yet *heretical* Christianity—a future Christianity and Europe—would be emancipated from its Greek heritage and its program of knowledge. This possibility is examined in the ninth chapter of *Europe, or the Infinite Task*, which begins Gasché's engagement with Derrida.

Derrida's *The Gift of Death* provides Gasché with the opportunity to transition from Patočka's thought on Europe to that of Derrida's, since the first two chapters of *The Gift of Death* concern *Heretical Essays*.[5] Reading Patočka, Derrida contends that the responsibility invoked by Christian Europe implies a more fundamental responsibility: the responsibility to the history that gave rise to Christian care and

4 J. Patočka, *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, trans. E. Kohák; ed. J. Dodd (Chicago: Open Court, 1996).

5 J. Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, trans. D Wills (Chicago; London: Chicago University Press, 1992).

responsible living—the very Greek notion of the care for the soul with which a heretical Christianity would attempt to cut ties. By focusing on the question of inheritance, Gasché reads in Derrida "a novel concept of responsibility—that is, a novel conception of Europe". More fundamental than the specific requirements of Christian responsibility would be a responsibility to the conditions from which that Christian conception grew. However, Derrida also acknowledges the importance of Patočka's insistence that the European reception of Christian, that is, *non-Greek* responsibility, is essential to what Europe is or might become. And thus, Derrida's critique of Patočka allows him not only to return to the significance of Greek heritage, but also to affirm Patočka's interest in non-Greek or post-Greek responsibilities, since it is the denial of heritage as such that is above all irresponsible. Inheriting both traditions, we are responsible for all the risks that accompany the demand for transparency of Greek universality as well as all the potential dangers residing in a Christian responsibility of singularity, that is, the responsibility to secrecy and the utter impossibility of providing reasons. This double inheritance, then, amounts to inheriting the "*aporia* of *responsibility*".[6] Yet such an impasse is the situation of Europe with its manifold—Greek, Christian, and other—origins.

The lack of a pure European origin, however, in no way limits the significance of Greece. Instead, Gasché argues that there may still be a certain endorsement of a Greek privilege in Derrida's work. Greece is granted this position thanks to the language by which philosophy might communicate with its others. For it is in the universal language of Greek thought that Jewish, Arabic, Christian, Roman, and Germanic philosophies may be engaged—and engaged precisely on their own terms, as *other* than Greek (293). "[W]hat makes philosophy in its Greek form unique is that it inscribes within itself the place of the other, including that of the totally-other" (295). Gasché puts it as follows:

> If the question of the origin of philosophy (which, in a certain way, is philosophy itself) allows for this double possibility—namely, for being thoroughly Greek (yet universal) while being at the same time marked by extrapositionality and hence being non-European (though universal as well)—is it not precisely because the Greek logos *is* this relation to alterity, and is thus constituted by this very possibility of suspending its Greek origin in order to turn itself (or to let itself be turned) not simply into [its] other—that is, another self-identity—but into the passage into (the) other itself? (296)

6 Ibid. p.24, cited in *Europe, or the Infinite Task* p.284.

Gasché convincingly argues that for Derrida "Greece is the origin of Europe because of this 'indestructible and unforeseeable resource of the Greek logos'"[7] and furthermore that this priority "derives precisely from its intrinsic nonidentity" (295). This nonidentity that allows philosophical thought to open up to a radical alterity has, of course, been inscribed in the philosophical text. Derrida, therefore, does not simply focus on the seeds of European thought as the previous figures have—the irruption of rational science, the irruption of the question of Being which immediately is forgotten, the irruption of the care for the soul. Rather, a deconstructive sensitivity to the *interruptions* of philosophy, to what is radically non-Greek within Greek thought, allows Derrida to recognise the singularity of Greece as that which becomes "the figure of a non-closure upon itself, allowing it to welcome alterity into the logos" (297). Europe is thus Greek insofar as it is constituted by an irreducible openness to the other.

In his Epilogue, Gasché admits that by the time the thought of Europe reaches Derrida, and especially 'after' deconstruction, the emphasis on alterity is so great that Europe might not be appropriately named Europe at all. But to continue to employ the proper name is to take the memory of Europe and the transformations of this concept seriously. It is to recognise that as Westerners, we inherit the multiple—and at times contradictory—responsibilities that Europe demands of us. Furthermore, evoking the name 'Europe' to signify these demands in no way precludes non-European thinkers from performing a movement towards rational justification, notions of responsibility, or openness to others—non-Western history can attest to this with absolute certainty. The concept as Gasché interprets it cannot possibly delimit the geographical-political entity that is given these philosophical privileges/responsibilities, since the concept cannot even secure its own meaning! If there is anything essential to this concept, Gasché shows that it is the very tendency to be transformed, a genuine openness to alterity that leaves 'Europe' exposed to both the greatest as well as the most monstrous other.

7 J. Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. A. Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), cited in *Europe, or the Infinite Task*, p.295.

Gasché concludes by returning to the question of universality and the common misunderstanding that universality denies singularities. Throughout *Europe, or the Infinite Task*, Gasché is rigorous in showing how the universal always has an emergence at a particular location, and while this may disturb a crude notion of universality, "the finitude of the universal implies no relativism whatsoever" (344). Finally, although questions of particularity, universality, and singularity are classical philosophical questions raised in numerous ways throughout various intellectual histories, it may be that phenomenologists take up such questions as uniquely pressing, since it is the *method* of phenomenology that immediately regards the relations between these terms in an exceptional way—suggesting that it may also be the Husserlian method as such which plays a decisive role in determining responsibility and alterity as recurring themes of the concept under examination. In tracing the changes the concept 'Europe' undergoes through these four thinkers, Gasché provides nothing less than a path to think the dramatic shifts in a history of phenomenology—a history of transformations of the philosophical task as the philosophers of the European world inherit it from Greece (and its others). Such a successful analysis warrants our utmost attention. By engaging with Gasché's *Europe*, we not only receive the history of this phenomenological study, but within it begin to secure the resources to reflect on what this strange concept might become.

Pli invites submissions for Volume 22, on the topic of Contingency

Recently, contingency has been reassessed (Meillassoux, *After Finitude*) in ways which bring that notion back into the centre of the contemporary philosophical debate. For the next volume of *Pli* we welcome papers that aim to understand or shed new light on this important notion.

"The root of freedom in God is the possibility or contingency of things, by which it happens that innumerable things are found which are neither necessary nor impossible, from which God chooses those which do most to testify to his own glory." Leibniz, *Contingency and Necessity*.

"In this externality, the determinations of the Notion have the show of an *indifferent subsistence* and *isolation* [*Vereinzelung*] in regard to each other, and the Notion, therefore, is present only as something inward. Consequently, Nature exhibits no freedom in its existence, but only *necessity* and *contingency*." Hegel, *Encyclopedia*.

"The Logos breaks up into hieroglyphics, each one of which speaks the transcendent language of a faculty. Even the point of departure—namely, sensibility in the encounter with that which forces sensation—presupposes neither affinity nor predestination. On the contrary, it is the fortuitousness or the contingency of the encounter which guarantees the necessity of that which it forces to be thought." Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*.

Possible topics include:
- Contingency, necessity and probability.
- The necessity of contingency in Quentin Meillassoux.
- Early modern understanding of contingency in Leibniz and/or Spinoza.
- Contingency after Kant.
- The Hegelian rehabilitation of the principle of sufficient reason.
- Nietzschean becoming.
- Contingency and Heideggerian 'facticity'.
- Contingency and the Event.

Notes for Contributors

- Submissions, no longer than 8,000 words should be sent by email to: plijournal@googlemail.com. Alternatively submissions can be sent in the form of a single hard copy plus a copy on disk as a Word or RTF file.

- Accepted submissions will be printed from the electronic copy supplied. Footnotes will be printed at the bottom of the page. Italics and other typographical features (such as accents and text in Greek) will be printed as they appear in the electronic copy (so do not underline items that will eventually appear in italics, such as titles of books, for example). All submissions should be supplied in and will be printed in Times New Roman font.

- Footnote references should conform to the style of the following examples:

G. Deleuze, *Foucault* (Paris: Minuit, 1986), p. 24.
G. Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale (London: Athlone Press, 1990), hereafter *LS*.
LS, p. 56.
D. W. Conway, 'Genealogy and Critical Method', in R. Schacht, ed., *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 318-33, (p. 320).
Margaret Olin, 'Touching Photographs: Roland Barthes's "Mistaken" Identification', *Representations* 80 (2002), 99-118 (p. 112).

In general, submissions should follow the guidelines outlined in the *MHRA Style Guide*, 2nd edition (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2002).

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