

The Insubordinate Multiple: A Critique of Badiou's Deleuze

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L'histoire des hommes est la longue succession des synonymes d'un même vocable.

Y contredire est un devoir.

René Char

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the thesis and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgment is made in the text of the thesis.

Jonathan Roffe

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Abstract

The published work of Alain Badiou includes a varied and fascinating series of engagements with that of Gilles Deleuze. These engagements run from outright polemic ('Le flux et le parti: dans le marges de *l'Anti-Oedipe*') to assiduous summaries and contrasts ('L'événement selon Deleuze'), but are capped by the 1997 *Deleuze. Le clameur de l'être*. This latter text presents a sweeping characterisation of Deleuze's project as committed to thinking the fundamental unity of being as such, in contrast not just with the orthodox reading of Deleuze, but also many of Deleuze's own explicit statements to the contrary, in which he presents himself as a philosopher devoted to the theme of multiplicity.

This thesis presents the argument that Badiou's reading of Deleuze, though striking, is fundamentally misplaced. It does so by examining in close detail Badiou's arguments for this reading, bringing it into contact with the relevant detail of Deleuze's own work, in particular his *magnum opus* *Difference and Repetition*. Further – and in accordance with Badiou's own demand – this critical examination situates Badiou's account of Deleuze in the context of his work at the time of this crucial engagement, namely *Being and Event*. *In nuce*, the argument presented here is that Deleuze is indeed a philosopher of difference, that his characteristic claims about the nature of being, the virtual and the event do not commit him to a philosophy of the One as Badiou claims. *The Clamor of Being*, however provocative, cannot stand as a justified reading of the Deleuzian corpus.

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Introduction

Stealth. Fighters and bombers made of such subtle alloys and by such sophisticated construction that they are no longer detectable by radar. The invisible aircraft. So impossible to locate that it can no longer even locate itself and loses track of its own position (three of the planes crashed during testing). Its strategic objective is a paradoxical one since, being invisible but real, and thus the opposite of a decoy – which is unreal but made to be seen – it is most likely, nonetheless, to come up against decoys. If it comes up against an equally 'invisible' enemy plane, war will be impossible, the two enemies having been blacked out. Should it be destroyed, we can console ourselves with the thought that even its disappearance will pass unnoticed! All in all, it is a total technological victory. But it may also perhaps be a crass error: as is well-known, when playing hide-and-seek, you should never make yourself too invisible, or the others will forget about you. This is doubtless why the plane was presented to the public, even though this conflicts with its role as a weapon of stealth.

Jean Baudrillard, *Cool Memories II*

The history of a disjunctive synthesis

Over what were to be the final years of his life, Gilles Deleuze engaged in a long written correspondence with Alain Badiou. Badiou, in the light of his *magnum opus Being and Event* (*L'être et l'événement*), published in 1988, had come to see Deleuze's philosophical project as the closest among those of his contemporaries to his own, and in turn saw Deleuze as his key rival in the attempt to present a philosophy of multiplicity and immanent being. This correspondence, unfortunately never published due to Deleuze's dissatisfaction with its abstract tone (DCB 6/14), concluded at the end of 1994, shortly before the latter's death. In 1997, Badiou published *Deleuze. Le clameur de l'être*¹ as a final letter to Deleuze, a summary of their epistolary disagreements, and a restatement of the critical appraisal of Deleuze's thought first expressed directly to Deleuze himself.

The Clamor of Being is presented as a work of demystification, an attempt to reinstate a classical image of the latter's philosophy in the face of a pervasive attempt to cast him as a thinker of "the heterogeneous multiplicity of desires." (DCB 8/17) In the place of the caricature, "A faithful portrait of the master."² The central claim of this work is justly infamous: that Deleuze, far from being a philosopher dedicated to propounding the fundamental status of multiplicity and difference, is rather concerned with the ultimate status of ontological unity: "Deleuze's fundamental problem is most certainly not to liberate the multiple but to submit thinking to a renewed concept of the One." (DCB 10/19) Ranging across a number of Deleuze's works – above all his two key monographs from the late sixties, *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense* – Badiou presents a surprising and, for some, shocking account of a philosopher who was in a general sense thought to be already understood.

Badiou's portrait of Deleuze was (and remains) particularly confronting for many who considered themselves partisans of his thought. The response of Arnaud Villani, who declared that "this is a false book, the falsest book imaginable"³ is characteristic: "in the place of the most beautiful movement of life, [Badiou] has only proposed an abstract field, he only manages to strike up a dirge."⁴ And, while Villani himself, along with many others, sided with Deleuze, yet others again manned the barricades on behalf of Badiou.⁵ *The Clamor of Being* thus became the epicenter of a remarkable conflict in thought – whether judged as salutary or maleficent.

¹ I will throughout refer to this work as *The Clamor of Being*, principally in order to avoid the repetition of Deleuze's proper name, already in ample use in the following pages.

² DCB xii; quoted by Louise Burchill, translator of Badiou's *Deleuze*. The phrase is Badiou's, spoken to Jean-Clet Martin upon presenting the latter with a copy of the book.

³ Arnaud Villani, "La métaphysique de Deleuze," *Futur Antérieur* 43, 1998, viewed online at <http://multitudes.samizdat.net/spip.php?article410> (accessed 5/7/2007).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The most recent text on this side of the the debate is Peter Hallward's *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* (New York: Verso, 2006), which, while deviating from Badiou's reading on a number of points, certainly pursues its objectives in the wake of *The Clamor of Being*.

...

The epistolary sequence concluded by *The Clamor of Being* is rooted in an engagement with Deleuze's thought that begins much earlier. Its first incarnation is entirely polemical in nature, and is manifested in *Théorie de la Contradiction*, published in 1975, and two texts from 1976, all of which directly attack the aspect of Deleuze's philosophy which Badiou will later declare to be inessential, namely the account of desire and multiplicity found in *L'Anti-Œdipe* (1972).

Théorie de la contradiction, a thoroughly Maoist presentation of contradiction and the dialectic, adds "saint Gilles (Deleuze), saint Félix (Guattari)" and "saint Jean-François (Lyotard)" to Marx's Saint Max (Stirner). For Badiou, their philosophies, committed as they are to "propulsive desire, evasive flux," to "the heterogeneous", and to the critique of "all organization" and "'totalitarian' Marxist-leninism", merely repeat "word for word" the kind of claims that Marx and Engel's *German Ideology* needed to "tear to pieces" in order to present a cogent revolutionary program.⁶

The same critical rejection is registered in *De l'ideologie*, a presentation of a fascinating Maoist *logical* communism, written with François Balmès and published in 1976.⁷ There, after citing Deleuze and Guattari's praise of the Reichian theme, according to which fascism must not be explained by recourse to misrecognition or illusion but rather in terms of what the masses in fact desired, Badiou writes:

This opposition between an argument on the basis of 'illusion' and an argument on the basis of 'desire' is itself argued on the basis of a rejection of reality. The reality is that the masses, under the general effect of the great 'physical' defeats of the proletariat [. . .] have seen their organic capacity for resistance in no way annulled, but rather weakened, and in a profound way.⁸

The concept of desire provides no insight for political analysis, but rather obfuscates and confuses, according to Badiou.

Finally, "Flux and the Party", the single most substantial text dedicated by Badiou to Deleuze before *The Clamor of Being*, oscillates between a rhetorically wide-ranging promotion of Marxist-Leninism, a mockery of *Anti-Oedipus*, and what border on *ad hominem* attacks on Deleuze himself.⁹

⁶ Alain Badiou, *Théorie de la contradiction* (Paris: Maspero, 1975), 61.

⁷ The final sentence of this text reads: "The proletariat is not the inventor of ideological resistance: it is its principle logician." Alain Badiou and François Balmès, *De l'idéologie* (Paris: Maspero, 1976), 123. On this work of Badiou's, see Bruno Bosteels, "The Speculative Left," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 104(4), 2005, 751-67, esp. 755-8.

⁸ Badiou and Balmès, *De l'idéologie*, 38.

⁹ "Deleuze would like to be to Kant what Marx is to Hegel, Deleuze stands Kant on his head: the categorical imperative, but a desiring one; the unconditional, but materialist; the autonomy of the subject, but the subject as a fluid flux. Sadly, if you invert Kant, you find Hume, which is the same thing – and Deleuze's first academic crush [. . .] On the toboggan of Desire, the head bobs down and up again, until it doesn't know one side from the other, object from subject, any more. All in all, that this be the Good or that, Evil, is just a reversible matter of mood, with not much consequence: always act so that the maxim of your action does not, strictly, concern anybody." Alain Badiou, "Le Flux et le parti (dans les marges de *L'Anti-Oedipe*)," in *La Situation actuelle sur le front de la philosophie*, eds. Alain Badiou and Sylvain Lazarus (Paris:

Badiou's key contention here is that the political metaphysics of *Anti-Oedipus* is effectively a renewed form of Kantian philosophy in its most traditional sense. We are presented, Badiou loudly inveighs, with nothing more than the Kantian notions of freedom, the autonomous subject, and the Good: "Deleuze and Guattari don't conceal this very well: return to Kant, that's what they came up with to exorcise the Hegelian ghost."¹⁰ And, as in *Théorie de la contradiction*, Badiou presents this approach as entirely irrelevant to contemporary political struggle, concluding by writing: "Look at them, these old Kantians who pretend they're playing at scattering the trinkets of Culture. Look at them: the time is nigh, and they're already covered in dust."¹¹

While the initial overt moments of this debate – Badiou notes that related sentiments were expressed verbally around this period (DCB 2/8-9) – revolved around politics and polemic, the next discussion takes the form of a considered philosophical critique, found in the 1982 *Théorie du Sujet*.

Badiou claims here that Deleuze adopts one of the two theses characteristic of materialism ('there is only matter', the thesis of the One) at the expense of the other ('matter is primary in relation to thought', the thesis of the Two). Interestingly, Badiou finesses this by claiming something that *The Clamor of Being* and the texts which follow it would fundamentally reject: he characterises Deleuze's materialism as an "ultra-leftism", stating that "the leftist deviation adopts the perspective of flight. It is a radicalism of novelty that breaks all mirrors." (TS 223)

This sequence, which poses Deleuze as a combatant external to Badiou's own program, is to a significant degree resolved in *The Clamor of Being*, and in Badiou's interesting review of Deleuze's *The Fold*.¹² These texts, while remaining critical, proceed on the basis of the recognition that he and Deleuze share a number of fundamental tenets. In particular, Badiou notes the following points as indicative of a common ground of sorts:

- the rejection of the idea that philosophy and metaphysics are exhausted or have come to their natural end;
- the elaboration of philosophy of the multiple; in particular
- the importance of the concept of multiplicity;
- the thesis of ontological immanence; and

Maspero, 1976), 24-41; "Flux and the Party: In the Margins of Anti-Oedipus," trans. Laura Balladur and Simon Krysl, *Polygraph*, 15/16 (2004), 79 (translation modified).

¹⁰ Ibid., 79tm.

¹¹ Ibid., 84. The irony of Badiou's early critique of *Anti-Oedipus* is that this work *is* Kantian in a significant respect overlooked by Badiou's brash attack – Deleuze even states that it "had a Kantian ambition, it should be read as a kind of *Critique of Pure Reason* at the level of the unconscious" (DRF 289). However, Badiou's critique lands wide of the mark insofar as it presents the Kant of *Anti-Oedipus* as an unmodified version of the Kant of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, overlooking the important transformations of the Kantian project that are undertaken there, and more significantly, in *Difference and Repetition*. The nature of Kant's role in Deleuze's philosophy is returned to below in chapter four.

¹² Alain Badiou, "Le Pli: Leibniz et le baroque," *Annuaire Philosophique 1988-1989* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1989), 24-41; "Gilles Deleuze, The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque," in *Gilles Deleuze and the Theatre of Philosophy*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski (New York: Routledge, 1994), 51-72.

- the affirmation that thought is bound up with singularity

The critique that Badiou offers, then, is made possible by the assessment that, in fact, he and Deleuze “constituted [. . .] a paradoxical tandem.” (DCB 4/12) To be more precise, the possibility of a *more refined and exact disagreement* became possible for Badiou as a result of an emerging closeness between his work and Deleuze’s with respect to fundamental philosophical questions, an opening for a new kind of debate, one which would “cut straight to the *sensitive point* at which different conceptual creations separate.” (DCB 5/13)

Whether or not this mode of engagement is in fact put into play in *The Clamor of Being* will be examined later and in some detail, but what is striking is that the texts published on Deleuze after this tend increasingly to emphasize the differences between the two projects, rather than their closeness, and the goal of obtaining the sensitive point of divergence is more and more replaced with an external opposition of two blocs of thought. And, while the genre of these more recent statements remains philosophical, some of the rhetorical flavour of ‘Le flux et le parti’ begins to return. ‘One, Multiple, Multiplicity,’ Badiou’s somewhat bewildered defense and restatement of *The Clamor of Being*, while beginning “*at the point of greatest proximity*” (TW 68) depicts Deleuze’s philosophy as a “natural mysticism” (TW 80) which impoverishes (TW 70) and metaphorises (TW 75) mathematics, and neutralizes formal thinking as such by submitting it empirical sensibility.¹³

In the chapter devoted to Deleuze in Badiou’s 2006 *Logiques des Mondes*, entitled ‘The Event in Deleuze,’ the increasingly disjunctive quality of the latter’s approach is even more evident. Badiou claims there that “a quite good axiomatic of what I call ‘event’” (LM 406) can be arrived at by inverting Deleuze’s philosophy of the event. Most recently of all, in the notes which close his *Petit Pantheon Portatif*, Badiou is to be found presenting the two respective positions in starkly opposing terms: “Finally: Platonism and anti-Platonism.”¹⁴ This is in keeping with the claim found in *Logiques des Mondes* that “there are in effect only three crucial philosophers in my eyes: Plato, Descartes and Hegel. Note that these are precisely the three that Deleuze could never manage to love.” (LM 552)

Thus at the end of this lengthy engagement, the theoretical commonalities whose recognition underpinned the epistolary sequence at the end of Deleuze’s life, replacing the rhetorical hostility of “Flux and the Party”, is finally disassembled, to be replaced with an unbroachable stand-off. The “non-rapport” (BE 1/6tm) is made complete.

Argument and scope

Despite these recent developments, and this potted lengthy polemic, there is no question that *The Clamor of Being* is at the very centre of Badiou’s engagement with Deleuze. It is not only the single longest moment of this history, but it unfolds in a systematic fashion that is much less pronounced

¹³ Many of the same notes are sounded in “Deleuze’s Vitalist Ontology”, a text from the same – immediately post-*Clamor of Being* – period.

¹⁴ Alain Badiou, *Petit Pantheon Portatif* (Paris: La Fabrique, 2008), 175.

elsewhere. As Badiou's works on aesthetics and politics are to *Being and Event*, so are "One, Multiple, Multiplicity" and "Deleuze's Vitalist Ontology" to *The Clamor of Being*. Thus the goal of this thesis is to carefully and critically examine the account of Deleuze's philosophy presented by Badiou in this work.

I will argue with respect to each significant point made by Badiou in *The Clamor of Being* that he misunderstands and misrepresents Deleuze's philosophy. More importantly, however, I would like to show that the thesis that Deleuze's is a metaphysics of the One functions not as a conclusion drawn on the basis of a careful study of the latter's texts, but as an initial axiom, a filter or lens through which the material under consideration is perceived. It is principally this mode of approach that leads Badiou astray from the very beginning, and that the divergence between the account in *The Clamor of Being* only increases as Badiou's reading moves into the more difficult terrain of concepts like the eternal return and the nature of thought.

...

After proposing the initial thesis of his reading (the thesis of the One) and parsing Deleuze's methodology with this point in mind, *The Clamor of Being* includes four central chapters, devoted to the virtual, time and truth, the event and the subject. These topics are familiar ones when considered against the broader backdrop of Badiou's philosophy. In fact, they repeat the four key moments of Badiou's *opus magnum* *Being and Event*: being, event, subject, truth. This by itself would warrant an examination of the latter text with an eye to divining some of the background to *The Clamor of Being*: such parallels are not fortuitous. However, I also strongly concur with Badiou when he states, in response to critics of *The Clamor of Being*, that if they

intended to show [. . .] that my claims about Deleuze conformed to the theses of my book *Being and Event*, it would still be necessary, as Deleuze himself at least attempted, to encapsulate the singularity of that work. We would then have something a little broader and a little better than a defense and an illustration of a textual orthodoxy.
(TW 68)

Responses of this kind – perhaps exemplified by Jose Gil's 'Quatre méchantes notes sur un livre méchant'¹⁵ – have done little to perpetuate philosophical debate, and much to reinforce orthodoxy in thought, something that Deleuze was against in the strongest terms.

As such, the first chapter in what follows will be devoted to an elaboration of these key moments in *Being and Event*. In keeping with Badiou, and with an eye to later moments of the thesis, I will focus in particular on Badiou's use of set theoretic mathematics in this account.

It would be possible to object that such an approach to Badiou does little to situate it adequately with respect to the other moments in his thought. On this view, one would need to provide not just a summary of *Being and Event*,

¹⁵ Jose Gill, 'Quatre méchantes notes sur un livre méchant,' *Futur Antérieur* 43 (1998)
<http://multitudes.samizdat.net/Quatre-mechantes-notes-sur-un> (accessed online on 2/11/08)

but of Badiou's philosophical trajectory as a whole. In the current context, I do not think such an analysis is necessary, even should there be the requisite space to do so. The locus of the philosophical commitments involved in the explicit critique of Deleuze found in *Théorie du Sujet*, *Being and Event* and *Logiques des Mondes* – that is to say, the properly philosophical moments in the *differend* at hand – are fundamentally located in the second of these three texts. The debate turns around the nature of being itself, the relative status of the event with respect to being, the status of truth in philosophy and the capacity for radical change to be introduced into a given situation. This remains the case in the most recent texts, including for the most part (as we will later see) “The Event in Deleuze,” the chapter of *Logiques des Mondes* dedicated to the prolongation of the disagreement here in question. Thus the background to Badiou's reading of Deleuze is principally to be found in *Being and Event*, and in the texts that extrapolate and enrich its central claims, concerning mathematics (*Number and Numbers*, *Conditions*, *Court traité d'ontologie transitoire*), philosophy (*Manifesto for Philosophy*), art (*Handbook of Inaesthetics*) and politics (*D'un désastre obscur*, *Metapolitics*), not to mention a number of significant articles that clarify these issues, structural concerns, and those pertaining to the status of love. We might call this set of texts the ‘*Being and Event* sequence’, and it is this that the first chapter of this thesis will outline.

The subsequent chapters present a response to *The Clamor of Being*. Chapters two and three are devoted to the most general claims made therein about Deleuze's basic ontological commitments, and the methodology of his thought. The remaining chapters (four through seven) deal with the categories of the virtual, time and truth, the event and the subject respectively. Taken together, as I noted above, it is the discussion of these themes that constitutes the main substance of Badiou's reading. It is on the basis of this confrontation between Badiou's reading of Deleuze and the letter of Deleuze's text that I will come to assert that Badiou has not managed to equal the latter, and that his conclusions are therefore ungrounded.

•••

To this point, examinations of Badiou's reading of Deleuze have been either specific to certain concepts, insufficient with respect to the breadth of their treatments of *both* philosophical positions, or prohibitively partisan.¹⁶ This thesis aims to present a fully fledged reading and critique of Badiou's account of Deleuze's philosophy, and a defense of the latter's metaphysics on the points of contention.

A final matter of scope is worth noting. What is at issue here is not an attempt to promote Deleuze's philosophy of the multiple in its entirety over

¹⁶ Exemplary of the first category is Daniel W. Smith's very significant intervention on the topic of the two respective positions in the philosophy of mathematics, “Badiou and Deleuze on the ontology of mathematics,” in *Think Again* ed. Peter Hallward (London: Continuum Press, 2005), 77-93; the second might be represented by Ray Brassier, in his “Stellar Void or Cosmic Animal? Badiou and Deleuze on the Dice-Throw,” *Pli* 10 (2000), 200-216, in which an inadequate presentation of Deleuze's metaphysics facilitates an overly quick rejection of his philosophy of chance; finally, Villani's “La métaphysique de Deleuze,” which I have already mentioned, is a case of partisanship trumping a balanced assessment of the debate.

Badiou's own, a tendentious approach, especially given the limits of what is possible here. As I have noted already, it is rather to reassert and reformulate Deleuze's philosophy in the face of Badiou's failed critique. In keeping with this approach, there will not be a presentation of Deleuze's philosophy as a whole in what follows. I will be topically guided by Badiou's own decisions, which are both highly selective and heavily biased in any case towards Deleuze's own key metaphysical texts, *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*. However, in relation to Deleuze's *oeuvre*, something further is at issue, for the very status of the *unity* of Deleuze's work is part of what *The Clamor of Being* stakes itself upon. Is there in fact a unified account of being in Deleuze, a unified account of time and of thought? Do each of Deleuze's texts attest to a single "monotonous" (DCB 15/26) thematic concern, as Badiou claims? In sum, while the reading of Deleuze presented here is certainly selective, it will respond to the need to examine as thoroughly as possible the claims that Badiou makes about Deleuze's philosophy, and in turn will provide in an auxiliary fashion the grounds on which to reflect on this broader issue of Deleuze scholarship that Badiou maintains.

Chapter One: Badiou's *Being and Event*

Between the psychology of the mathematician and logical deduction, there must be a place for an intrinsic characterization of reality.

Albert Lautman, *Essai sur les notions de structure et d'existence en mathématiques*

Alain Badiou's *Being and Event*, along with the texts surrounding it, present and draw upon a formidable and surprising theoretical armature. Of principal import in this regard is the general framework in which the work of Plato, Mallarmé and post-Marxian political thought are brought together, a framework constituted by set-theoretic mathematics.

The goal of this chapter is to give an account of the four cardinal points of Badiou's analysis, namely being, event, subject, and truth, by relating them to the mathematical resources that are put in service of their elaboration. As I have argued in the Introduction, these four points are not only the guiding moments of what I called earlier the *Being and Event* sequence, but also the guiding moments of *The Clamor of Being* and more generally Badiou's reading of Deleuze.

After relating the nature of the connection between mathematics and ontology on Badiou's account, and the more important if peculiar relation this entails between mathematics and being, we will first of all examine how he uses this relation to account for the structure of being. This will in turn allow for a proper means to situate the concept of the event, which is irreducible to being in any ontological sense, to situate the concept of the subject as the means by which the event is grasped from within being, and to situate the category of truth as the illicit product of the subjective fidelity to the event. We will conclude here by considering the trajectory of change in Badiou.

"Ontology = Mathematics"

We must begin, though, by asking a preliminary question: what precisely does Badiou mean by mathematics? Certainly philosophy and mathematics have always been engaged in a close if quixotic relationship. From Plato to Husserl, Frege, and Lacan, mathematics forms what we should consider to be one of the borders of philosophical discourse. However, the various ways of coming to grips with this relationship have frequently been vexed and contradictory. The injunction which, it is often claimed, was to be found above the door to Plato's academy, for example – 'let no-one who is not a

geometer enter here'¹⁷ – seems to indicate the significance of mathematics for thinking, but nowhere does he pass beyond an allegorical or analogical use of geometry in order to approach the more important issue of truth. The Fregean and Russelian attempt to found mathematics and ultimately determine the rational structure of thought itself upon the minimal ground of symbolic logic, in turn, rests in no way upon the *ratio* of human experience, as did Kant's presentation of the irreducible element of sensible matter at work in all mathematical thought.¹⁸ Lacan's famous claim that "only mathematisation reaches a real,"¹⁹ in contrast to both Plato and Frege, strips the figure of the matheme of any reference to physical reality or human experience – indeed, of any *reference*, strictly speaking, at all – and situates mathematics beyond the enclosure of knowledge altogether, at the point where discourse loses all traction at the border of the Real (the real itself, indeed, being nothing but a border which brooks no transgression, a border with one side).

Despite the rooting of his project in the history of modern and contemporary mathematics, and despite the fact that Badiou will locate himself above all as a disciple of Plato, his position rests closer to Lacan than to the other important figures on this preliminary list.

The key to following the nature of this Badiouan investment is to see that mathematics is in no way a representational or logical (in the sense of a universal calculus of thought [cf. BE 39-40]) discourse. As Badiou claims at the beginning of *Being and Event*, "Strictly speaking, mathematics *presents nothing*." (BE 7/13) That is, mathematics is a discourse radically unconcerned with the question of meaning; it is solely a syntactic discourse and places no weight on semantics. Unlike language in any general sense, which has both a grammatical structure and a system of reference, mathematics is a discipline bound in the end to meaningless marks.²⁰ This is

¹⁷ This well-known anecdote (*mèdeis ageômetrêtos eisitô mou tèn stegên*) is first reported by Joannes Philoponus in the eleventh century, so there is at least some doubt as to its veracity. At the same time, as indicated above, there are important precedents in Plato's extant work that would allow us to consider geometrical thinking as privileged. For example, the famous passage from the *Meno*, in which Socrates induces a slave boy to double the area of a square, is a metonym for the broader goals of this dialogue, namely the promotion of something like a *mos geometricos* in the pursuit of truth. Similar points are made in a more compressed fashion in Book Seven of the *Republic*.

¹⁸ The *locus classicus* of this theme in Kant is to be found early in his *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics that will be able to come forward as Science*, ed. and trans. Carus and Beck (New York: Prentice, 1994), §§ 8–10. A more recent version of a similar view, this time embedded in a phenomenology of learning, can be found in George Lakoff and Rafael Núñez, *Where Mathematics Comes From: How the Embodied Mind Brings Mathematics into Being* (London: Basic Books, 2000).

¹⁹ Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XX: On Feminine Sexuality, the Limits of Love and Knowledge*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: WW Norton and Co., 1999), 131.

²⁰ In this sense, Badiou's account of mathematics is united with the formalist program propounded by David Hilbert around the turn of the century, despite his fairly strained and uncomprehending recourse to Kant. For Hilbert, all mathematical thought was grounded in the being of "extra-logical discrete objects, which exist intuitively as immediate experience before all thought," quoted in Paul Bernays, "Hilbert's significance for the philosophy of mathematics," in *From Brouwer to Hilbert. The Debate on the Foundations of Mathematics in the 1920s*, ed. Paolo Mancosu (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 195. This text presents a very good summary of the Hilbert program, but see also Hilbert's "On the Infinite" (a justly famous presentation of his basic ideas [SB 369-92]) and Philip Kitcher, "Hilbert's epistemology," *Philosophy of Science*, 43 (1976), 99-115.

why Badiou will elsewhere see these marks as the very stuff of mathematics, and thus ontology, itself: “the potency of the pure letter” (MP 107).²¹

Such a thesis is prey to an easy misunderstanding, one that Badiou wishes to immediately address – namely, one might interpret this claim as if it pertained to being itself. As such, mathematics would be ontology simply because being itself is mathematical and would therefore require accounting for on its own terms. In contrast to such a view, Badiou will write that

The thesis I support does not in any way declare that being is mathematical, which is to say composed of mathematical objectivities. *It is not a thesis about the world but about discourse.* It affirms that mathematics throughout the entirety of its historical becoming, pronounces what is expressible of being qua being. (BE 8/14; emphasis added)

Rather than describing being qua being, then, mathematics is the sole discourse capable, in the manifold acts that constitute it, of “inscrib[ing] being as such.” (TW 12) More poetically, as Badiou puts it in “Philosophy and Mathematics”, “The only power that can be attuned to the power of being is the power of the letter” (TW 80)²²

Thus Badiou abandons all reference to the glimpse of the substantial real that marks ontology in many of its most familiar formulations. In its place, only marks, letters, scribble. This is not to say that mathematics qua ontology is not the effectuation of the unity of being and thought for Badiou: it certainly is. However, this unity is in fact brought about only under the most restrictive, minimal conditions. It is not the plenitude of being that answers to ontological thought, but the almost-nothing of the letter. In other words, there is no ontology of presence for Badiou, the presencing of presence in thought, but instead an ontology which marks the absence of being qua being through the agency of the letter. Quoting Lucretius, Badiou provides an elegant summary of this point:

‘A small transposition is sufficient for atoms to create igneous or ligneous bodies. Likewise, in the case of words, a slight alteration in the letters allows us to distinguish ligneous from igneous.’ It is in this agency of the letter, to take up Lacan’s expression (an agency here constituted by the mark of the void), that the thought of what lets itself be mathematically exhibited as the immemorial figure of being unfolds. (TW 46)²³

With these points in mind, we can see how far Badiou’s self-proclaimed mathematical Platonism is from the conventional understanding of this term.

²¹ Elsewhere in this same work, Badiou claims letters as the “literal essence of science,” (MP 75) quoting Rimbaud (“Weak-minded people, beginning to *think about* the first letter of the alphabet, would rush into madness”), and asks “what is mathematics ultimately other than the decision to use letters to *think*?” (MP 75)

²² More recently, in the notes that close *Logiques des Mondes*, Badiou refers to an argument presented by Justin Clemens in “Letters as the Condition of Conditions for Alain Badiou”, *Communication & Cognition*, 36, 1-2 (2003), 73-102 – which argues for just such a view of the status of mathematics in Badiou’s thought – as having “taught me about myself.” (LM 557)

²³ From “La question de l’être aujourd’hui” (CT 25-38).

In contrast to constructivism, which insists on an intentional account of referentiality in mathematics, traditional mathematical Platonism claims that mathematical discourse has a real, absolute or 'ideal' referent. For Badiou, mathematical discourse has no referent. In the words of Quentin Meillassoux, "mathematics [consists] of a series of operations applied to signs which, ultimately, signify nothing."²⁴ Thus we could say that Badiou is – quite literally – a Platonist *avant la lettre*.

Now, while there are many salient features of mathematics which make the equation with ontology, it is decisive that Badiou present the equation as the *consequence of a decision*, one which is not revealed until the opening of the first chapter. The decision in question is the gamble he takes in asserting that there is *no fundamental unity of Being*: "This decision can take no other form than the following: the one *is not*." (BE 23/31)

The One and the Multiple

The first Meditation of *Being and Event* begins by presenting an impasse and, as I have just noted, a decision. The impasse in question is the result of what Badiou claims is a central equation which has dominated the history of Western thought, namely the equation of being and unity: "the reciprocity of the one and being is certainly the inaugural axiom of philosophy." (BE 23/31) For Badiou, this equation has led to nothing but ruinous results for the thought of being, results that were already well accounted for in the chicanes of Plato's *Parmenides*: given that the being is one, the multiple can have no being; but what is presented or manifested of being is always multiple, leaving us with no access whatsoever to being qua being, but only its secondary or degraded manifestations.

In order to free ourselves from the revolutions of this "turnstile" (BE 23/31tm), the inaugural axiom must be replaced with another, Badiou's own: that being and the one are not reciprocal, and in fact it is on the basis of a reciprocity between being and the multiple that the thought of being must proceed. Thus what Badiou's decision presents us with is a fundamental commitment to the concept of multiplicity, and an assertion of its ultimate nature.

The solution to this problem relies, Badiou says, on "mastering the gap between the presupposition of a being of the one (which must be rejected), and the thesis of its 'there' is." (BE 23/31tm) Here Badiou is invoking Lacan's distinction between the claims 'the One exists' and 'there is (some) Oneness'.²⁵ What is at issue, then, is less the status of being qua being than the status of the unification of multiples. That is, what must be accounted for is the *fact* of unity.

Badiou's procedure here is instructive. Rather than attempting to establish a direct account of what undergirds unity – which would immediately

²⁴ Meillassoux, "Contingence et absolutisation de l'un", unpublished ms. of a paper presented at a conference at the Sorbonne on "Métaphysique, ontology, hénologie", 19.

²⁵ The discussion in question, which is indexed to a reading of Heidegger on the pre-Socratics and to the German *Einheit* (the 'oneness' in question) can be found in Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book III: The Psychoses, 1955-1956*, trans. by Russell Grigg (New York: Norton, 1993), 124.

reintroduce the One as an agent if not a structure of existence, in something like the manner of Fichte – he asserts that we can theorise the moment of unification – we can *name* it. Indeed, Badiou gives this operation a number of names, each for a different purpose. The operation itself he designates as the *count-as-one* (*compte-pour-un*), and its result a *situation*. That is, every unified multiplicity, or *one-multiple* is the result of a count-as-one, and results in a situation. This one-multiple is also determined by Badiou as a *consistent multiplicity*, insofar as the count renders what is subject to no rule minimally determined, or *structured*.

The most generic term, however, that Badiou applies here is *presentation*. A situation is a presented multiple. The terminology here is revealing: Badiou is opposing to all ontologies of presence (of the One) an ontology of presentation, which admits that being is *unified* while resisting the conclusion that such is its natal state. Each of these terms, however, plays an important part in Badiou's ontology, as we will see. From an *ontological point of view*,²⁶ however, we can state the fundamental unity of these terms: situation, presentation, presented multiple, structured multiple, the result of the count-as one, consistent multiplicity.

Once we assert this fundamental moment of unity, Badiou notes, a certain fact becomes legible to us. If what presentation presents to us are multiple-ones, consistent multiplicity, then it is possible in the light of this to retroactively posit a prior state before the count, a state which we nonetheless have no direct access to. Being qua being – subject in no way to the count – can be posited as pure multiplicity, multiple-without-oneness, or what Badiou calls *inconsistent multiplicity*. The fact of structure, that is, allows us to posit an ante-structural regime, and it is this latter which is the real object of ontology for Badiou.

Put another way, we can say that for Badiou, what ontology reveals is the difference between being as such and beings, which is to say situations. It is within the ontological situation (and ontology must be a situation for Badiou, given that it too is a structured or presented multiple) that structure as such is presented.

The ontological situation [is] the *presentation of presentation*. If, in fact, this is the case, then it is quite possible that what is at stake in such a situation is being qua being, insofar as no access to being is offered to us except presentations. At the very least, a situation whose presentative multiple is that of presentation itself could constitute the place from which all possible access to being is grasped.
(BE 26-7/35-6)

²⁶ This is not the case universally, as we will detail later. From the point of view of an inhabitant of a non-ontological situation, presentation is not legible as structure but rather as normality. Thus, as Ray Brassier notes, while Badiou frequently uses the set of concepts attached to presentation interchangeably with those related to structure, this obscures an important disjunction of the two points of view. See "Presentation as anti-phenomenon in Alain Badiou's *Being and Event*", *Continental Philosophy Review* 39:1 (2006), 59-77.

In sum, we can say that the logic of all presentation – structure – is revealed as such uniquely in ontology, which is but the name for that situation in which presentation as such is explicable (note that this claim does not commit Badiou to any particular answer to the question ‘what is ontology?’).

Even once we have adopted this point, however, a problem remains, since this proposal assumes we have the capacity to think the relation between inconsistent and consistent multiplicity. A demand is thus placed upon ontology if Badiou is to maintain his commitment to the rejection of the equation between being and unity: “What is required is that the operational structure of ontology discern the multiple without having to make a one out of it, and therefore without possessing a definition of the multiple.” (BE 29/37)

Thus Badiou’s presentation so far makes clear that any ontology worthy of the name needs to have a pair of peculiar traits: it must be a discourse whose ‘object’ is no object at all but multiplicity as such, and it must – in order to maintain the status of this multiplicity – treat it *implicitly*, that is, axiomatically rather than descriptively. The discourse in question, as Badiou argues in Meditation Three, is the branch of mathematics known as axiomatic set theory.

Set theory

Despite the fact that Badiou affirms the equation of ontology and mathematics throughout the history of the latter, it is only with Georg Cantor’s invention of set theory in the mid to late nineteenth century that we are finally afforded the means to think the relation in an adequate form (TW 45; 47).²⁷

This is precisely because set theory provides the capacity to think multiplicity as such. It provides a means of discussing groups of elements as *groups*, without treating the elements themselves; that is, it treats multiples as multiples.

What are these multiples multiples *of*, precisely? The strict answer is that the multiples are *multiples of multiples*. This is decisive: sets are not, for Badiou, sets *of* discrete objects, but rather the presentation of an irreducible multiplicity without a solid ground in objectality. While it is easy – and accords with common-sense – to discuss sets as if they were collections of objects (boxes of fruit, sacks of bats, etc.), this is already to commit a fundamental mistake, eradicating the central virtue of set theory. Such would be to confuse phenomenal experience with a theory of multiplicity comprehensively extracted – or, to use a polysemic term from Badiou’s conceptual arsenal, *subtracted* – from empirical reference. Indeed, a key figure in the elaboration of set theory post-Cantor, John von Neumann, once wrote that “One understands by ‘set’ nothing but an object of which one knows no more and wants to know no more than what follows about it from

²⁷ This element of Badiou’s account opens up a series of problems that cannot be addressed here, but which revolve around the meaning of the equation of mathematics and ontology prior to the advent of set theory – prior, that is, to the capacity in mathematics to think multiplicity as such, and therefore being. Questions of teleology also present themselves.

the postulates.”²⁸ Of these postulates – now known as the axioms of set theory – we will see more shortly, but the motive behind von Neumann’s ‘don’t ask don’t tell’ claim here is of a piece with Badiou’s demand for an ontology: that the discourse in question maintain only an implicit grasp of its ‘object’.

We can understand this point with reference to the single relation at the heart of set theory, the relation of belonging. Thus we write $\alpha \in \beta$, that is, ‘ α belongs to β ’. While sets can and often are written with recourse to the logical sign of equality =, it is always belonging which is primitive. Thus the following

$$\alpha = \{a, b, c\}$$

can also be written in terms of belonging:

$$a \in \alpha \ \& \ b \in \alpha \ \& \ c \in \alpha$$

Now, the relation of belonging is the set theoretic version of the primary operation in Badiou’s ontology, that is, the count-as-one: the only structure. However, one decisive difference holds. Whereas the count-as-one in general is the source of all unity in being, disposing of one-multiples, belonging counts set-multiples as one in an implicit or external manner. We have already touched on this point: the difference between the ontological situation and others is that the former takes for its regime of presentation the presentation, or structure, itself. Thus, rather than subjecting multiplicity to unity, set theoretic discourse treats unity – or rather the process of unification *itself* as the object of unity. We will see the disparity between ontology and non-ontological situations a number of times again as the chapter continues.

After the initial inception of the theory by Cantor, it was Ernst Zermelo who did the most to elaborate set theory in a way that would cement its prominence and importance for mathematics. Responding to a problem that Cantor had fruitlessly pursued in the last years of his career – a problem concerning the structure of order in the succession of infinite numbers called the Continuum Hypothesis which we will discuss shortly – Zermelo proposed a new and, to some of his colleagues, highly controversial mathematical tool to settle Cantor’s problem, the infamous Axiom of Choice (AC).²⁹

However, what became even more decisive for the elaboration of set theory beyond its Cantorian roots – and necessary for an adequate response to the paradoxes being elaborated in mathematical logic by Bertrand Russell and

²⁸ Quoted in Shaughan Lavine, *Understanding the Infinite* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), 132. The somewhat controversial history of set theory that occupies Lavine for the first half of this book departs in a striking way from the orthodox account (of which Badiou is an orthodox member). While it falls well outside the current thesis, a close examination of the alternative theses contained herein would be fruitful in light of Badiou’s use of set theory.

²⁹ For an unparalleled discussion of this axiom, its precursors and the nature of the criticisms which surrounded Zermelo’s explicit use of it, see Gregory Moore *Zermelo’s Axiom of Choice, Its Origins, Development, and Influence* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1982).

others – was Zermelo’s introduction of the axiomatic method into set theory.³⁰

Axiomatic set theory – in contrast to what Badiou, in line with a familiar mathematical history, calls ‘naïve set theory’, which takes ‘set’ to refer to a foundational referent – treats sets as the implicit result of certain rules of construction and regulation. Strictly speaking, in axiomatic set theory, there are no sets which exist prior to the installation of the axioms. They are constructed on the basis of certain axiomatic ontological claims, and all subsequent sets are deduced on the basis of these commitments – new sets exist insofar as they are ‘separated’ (according to the Axiom of Separation) from the other sets which the axioms license to exist. Thus what is at issue is not sets *per se*, but the implicit mastery of multiplicity, *at arms length* as it were. Indeed, for Badiou, the move from object-based (in which sets are the objects of intellectual intuition of some kind, as in Cantor) to axiomatic set theory is a veritable Copernican revolution, since it displaces the apparent centrality of any exhaustive conception of set in favour of seeing set-hood as the consequence of the axioms.

Zermelo’s initial axiomatic treatment of set theory was succeeded by a number of others, both in the tradition of Zermelo and diverging from it, either radically (Quine’s New Foundation set theory or NF) or relative to certain key details (the von Neumann-Bernays-Gödel axiom set, or NBG).³¹ The dominant version of set theory today – and the version that Badiou relies upon – is known as ZF (or ZFC if the Axiom of Choice is included), which is a version of Zermelo’s system with certain modifications introduced by, among others, Abraham Fraenkel (hence the ‘F’), Azriel Levy and Yehoshua Bar-Hilel.³² It consists of nine axioms (in no particular order, Separation, Foundation, Pairing, Union, Null Set, Infinity, Extension, Replacement and Power Set).³³

In turn, this list of nine can be broken into two groups. On the one hand, the existential axioms – so called because they assert the existence of certain sets – are the axioms of the null set and infinity. The first asserts that there is a set which has no members,³⁴ while the second asserts that there is a set of the natural numbers.³⁵ The seven remaining axioms, on the other hand,

³⁰ On the notion of ‘axiom’ in set theory, see the exceptional piece by Solomon Feferman, “Does Mathematics Need New Axioms?”, unpublished ms. of a 1997 lecture, available at <http://math.stanford.edu/~feferman/papers/newaxioms.pdf> (accessed 14/6/2007),

³¹ The essential difference between ZF and NBG set theory is that the latter is finitary – that is, while ZF includes not just axioms but axiom-schemas, which regulate an indefinite number of set-theoretic operations, NBG does not.

³² In fact, the history of the elaboration of what is now called ZF is extremely complex; many of the axioms were individually challenged, reworked, or radically recast – the history of the Axiom of Separation, for example, one of the least controversial of ZF, was the object of a series of arguments involving not just Zermelo and Fraenkel, but also Hermann Weyl and Thoralf Skolem. On this, see Fraenkel’s “The notion ‘definite’ and the independence of the axiom of choice” (SB 285-9). Thus, the indexation of the maturity of axiomatic set theory to Fraenkel, Bar-Hilel and Levy’s 1958 *Foundations of Set Theory* is convenient but misleading.

³³ In fact, two of these – Separation and Replacement – are rather axiom schemas than axioms, which is to say second-order formulations which represents an indefinite number of particular axioms; that is, an axiom-schema is a model of the application of an axiom.

³⁴ Formally: $\exists \alpha \sim \exists \beta (\beta \in \alpha)$ – that is, there exists a set α for which no set β is a member

³⁵ Formally: $\exists \alpha [\emptyset \in \alpha \ \& \ \forall \beta (\beta \in \alpha \rightarrow \{\beta\} \in \alpha)]$ – that is (for reasons that Badiou elaborates in Meditation 11 of *Being and Event*), there exists a set whose members are the null set, and every successor in the series of ordinals to the null set.

concern the legitimate operations that may be executed on the basis of the empty set and the first infinite. The exception to this account is the axiom of foundation, whose significance is solely regulatory in nature.³⁶ In non-technical language, it asserts that no set can have itself as a member, thereby foreclosing the existence of paradoxical sets (such as the set invoked by Russell: the set whose members are all the sets which aren't members of themselves). Foundation can thus be thought of as a 'gate-keeper' axiom, a claim reinforced by the fact that there are, at present, no other uses that the axiom can be put to.

To see how the axioms of set theory apply to multiples, we will take two examples. First, the axiom of (unordered) pairing, which asserts that, given any two sets, there is a third whose members are the members of the two original sets. So, given

$$\alpha = \{a, b, c\} \text{ and } \beta = \{d\}$$

we can assert the existence of a set δ such that

$$\delta = \{a, b, c, d\}^{37}$$

The second example worth invoking is one of most important axioms of set theory, the Axiom of the Power Set,³⁸ which we will return to on a number of occasions in what follows. Put simply, it states that, given any existing set α , a new set (written $P(\alpha)$, the power-set of α) exists whose members are all of the parts of the original set. For example, if we have

$$\alpha = \{a, b, c\}$$

$$\text{then } P(\alpha) = \{a, b, c, \{a, b\}, \{a, c\}, \{b, c\}, \{a, b, c\}, \emptyset\}$$

We can see then that the members of $P(\alpha)$ have all of the members of α , but also every possible internal grouping of α too, including the penultimate member above (which is termed the maximal subset), and the last, \emptyset , which signifies the null set $\{ \}$. These internal groupings are either called *parts* or *subsets* (in French the technical term is *partie*), and thus we can see why this axiom is sometimes called the subset axiom. While on the topic, another feature of power sets (one whose consequences will be decisive for Badiou) is that the number of their members can be stipulated relative to the number of members in the original set: for α with n members, $P(\alpha)$ has 2^n number of members. This is clear in the above case, where α has three members, and $P(\alpha)$ has 8 ($=2^3$). Generalising then, we can say that the power set is of a greater size or – following Cantor – greater *power* than the original set. Indeed, it was the introduction of the power set as a means for generating new sets that put Cantor on the course that would lead him to the

³⁶ Formally: $\forall \alpha [\sim(\alpha = \emptyset)] \rightarrow \exists \beta (\beta \in \alpha \ \& \ \beta \cap \alpha = \emptyset)$ – that is, for all non-void α , there is a β which belongs to α , and whose intersection (written \cap) with α is empty. More simply again, every non-void set has one member from which it is disjoint.

³⁷ Formally: $\forall \alpha \forall \beta \exists \gamma \forall \delta (\delta \in \gamma \leftrightarrow \delta = \alpha \vee \delta = \beta)$. Though I cannot deal with this claim here, the axiom of pairing is not at work in *Being and Event* in any significant way, leading one to ask to what extent Badiou's use of the axioms is in fact related to their intra-mathematical use.

³⁸ Formally: $\forall \alpha \exists P(\alpha) [\forall \beta: \beta \in P(\alpha) \leftrightarrow [\forall \delta: \delta \in \beta \rightarrow \delta \in \alpha]]$ – that is, for every set α , there is a related set, written $P(\alpha)$, whose members are all of the subsets of α .

Continuum Hypothesis, the unresolved (and as we now know, unresolvable) issue that he spend the last part of his career working on, and which ruined his vision of a universe of sets saturated with order: the problem of the order of ever larger infinite sets. I will return to this below.

What is the broader consequence of the fact that set theory – the ontological theory of multiplicity – is axiomatic for Badiou? Simply, it confirms set theory as a thought equal to being itself, because it operates on the level of an implicit grasp of the multiple, without counting-it-as-one: “Axiomatisation is required such that the multiple, left to the implicitness of its counting rule, be delivered *without concept*, that is, *without implying the being-of-the-one*.” (BE 43/55) Thus, both of the requirements of ontology are met in set-theory: it is a rigorous thought of the multiple with an implicit (non-absolutising) grasp on its implied ‘object’.

The order of discourses: ontology and meta-ontology

At this juncture, some points about the relative status of ontology with respect to theoretical thought more generally is required. In this regard, it is of the highest importance for Badiou that ontology is neither one element of philosophy or philosophy *tout court*. For Badiou philosophy itself is external to ontology: “*philosophy is originally separated from ontology*” (BE 13/20). While the reason for this is outside of our concerns here, we can easily see that this puts *Being and Event* itself in a difficult position.³⁹ Certainly it is not a book of mathematics, and yet it puts the highest value on a mathematical grasp of being, however implicit. Thus we are led to ask about the status of Badiou’s text itself *vis-à-vis* mathematics.

On this point, Badiou proposes an original “stratification of discourses” (BE 13/20):

Our goal is to establish the meta-ontological thesis that mathematics is the historicity of the discourse on being qua being. And the goal of this goal is to assign philosophy to the thinkable articulation of two discourses (and practices) which it is not: mathematics, science of being, and the intervening doctrines of the event, which, precisely, designate ‘that-which-is-not-being-qua-being’.
(BE 13/20)

As such, we must understand *Being and Event* as a book of philosophy which engages with the meta-ontological register of discourse, that is, the order of discourse given over to drawing the consequences for philosophy of mathematics. Further, as a book of philosophy, it will attempt to provide a systematic account not just of the philosophical consequences of ontology, but also those categories which (for reasons we are yet to see) cannot be

³⁹ What is involved is Badiou’s theory of conditions, which are four in number (science, including mathematics, art, politics and love), which are the endeavours which the possibility of philosophy is founded upon. To confuse mathematics with philosophy, then, is to confuse the ground with what it grounds, or, to use the Lacanian term favoured by Badiou, it is to suture philosophy to science. Certain problematic consequences arise here for Badiou, as soon as we attempt to align what he calls his discourse of meta-ontology (as explained above) with the idea of mathematics as ante-philosophical. Unfortunately, this, along with much else, must be left aside here.

grasped *in person* according to the discourse of ontology: those concerning the event, the subject, and truth. In person here means ‘as such’: while meta-ontological discourse can certainly thematise the formal requirements of, for example, subjective intervention (in the form of the Axiom of Choice [Meditation Twenty-Two]), the ontological structure of the event (through illegal self-belonging, relative to the Axiom of Foundation [BE Meditation Twenty]) and even the construction of a truth (with regard to the concepts of generic sets and forcing in the work of Paul Cohen), none of these allow us to rationally conceive particular events, theoretically grasp actual intervention, discern indiscernible truths.

All of these points lead to the following conclusion: that mathematics itself, insofar as it is present in *Being and Event*, is not present as mathematics alone. A certain meta-ontological transliteration of set theory constitutes the bulk of the discussion. As the above citation continues,

The demonstration of the thesis prescribes the usage of certain mathematical fragments, yet they are commanded by philosophical rules, and not by those of contemporary mathematics. In short, the part of mathematics at stake is that in which it is historically pronounced that every ‘object’ is reducible to a pure multiplicity, itself built on the unpresentation of the void: set theory.
(BE 13-14/20)

Being and structure

With these preliminary points made, it is possible to provide a sketch of the central ontological or meta-ontological claims presented by Badiou in *Being and Event*, claims which may be dealt with according to the theme of structuration.

As we have already seen, being, insofar as it is presented, is presented as unified, as one. The operation that Badiou describes as the count-for-one which brings about the stability or *structure* of presentation is also the threshold of intelligibility for the ontological situation. Thus, as we have also seen, presentation is nothing other structure minimally manifest for Badiou: “This is the most general definition of *structure*; it is what prescribes, for a presented multiple, the regime of its count-as-one.” (BE 24/32) Minimal consistency, closure, the grounding of quiddity as such: this is the role of structure considered in this minimal sense.

However, through the course of *Being and Event*, Badiou introduces an increasingly ramified account of the distribution and hierarchies of additional structural elements attendant to situations. Assuming that we take the word in a logical rather than spatial sense, we can say that there are four *levels* of structure which Badiou elaborates: presentation itself (the situation), representation (meta-structure or the *state* of the situation), order (the intrinsic structure of nature and the internal structural thresholds of the situation) and the regime of knowledge and legitimate nomination (what Badiou calls the encyclopedia). These four levels allow a very full account of what constitutes presented being; further, it is only once all four of these levels are properly understood that Badiou’s novel accounts of the event, the subject and truth

become comprehensible, above all because in each of these cases, what is involved is a fundamental rupture with a certain level of structure.⁴⁰

The first level of structuration is nothing other than the situation itself. As we have seen, once the decision is taken to reject all ontological foundations in the figure of the one, and in light of the fact that being is certainly subject to unity of some kind, we are led, Badiou asserts, to the conclusion that there is an act or activity according to which the multiple is determined as a unity. This can only be the most foundational definition of structure, as Badiou notes. We are now in a position to see how Badiou introduces the concept of the void, a decisive element of his meta-ontological account into his account. Given that being-qua-being is inconsistent multiplicity – a fact which becomes legible as a result of the count-as-one – we seem led to ask the question: ‘multiples of what?’ What precisely is the *substance* of being? Indeed, this question itself contains a threat to Badiou’s entire endeavour up to this point, for to introduce a concept of substance here would be to return the figure of the One to the heart of ontology. In this case, it would be to transform Badiou into Spinoza. In order for Badiou to remain faithful to the opening decision of *Being and Event*, the multiplicity in question cannot fall back on a prior substantial unity. Furthermore, to posit that inconsistency is multiple multiplicity simply postpones a direct confrontation with the question at hand. If we deductively unfold the consequences of this opening decision, we seem to be left with only one possible answer: that inconsistent multiplicity is a multiplicity of *nothing*. In turn, in order for this consequence to be formalised within the discourse of being, “ontology [will be] therefore required to propose a theory of the void.” (BE 57/70) The further consequence of this is that being, considered in its greatest generality, is *nothing*, and that every determined or structure being is, in essence, *nothing*: the void “is the first multiple, the very being from which any multiple presentation, when presented, is woven and numbered.” (BE 59/70)⁴¹ Leibniz’s famous question – ‘why is there something rather than nothing?’ – and the lineaments of his answer are thus radically overturned by Badiou. For in fact it is not a matter of an alternative: being is essentially nothing, and every something is in turn the integration of an infinitely disseminated nothing.⁴² In Badiou’s terms, “the apparent solidity of the world of presentation is merely a result of the action of structure, even if nothing is outside such a result.” (BE 93/109) On the basis of this set of claims, Badiou will assert that every situation is attended by the nothingness of being in a

⁴⁰ Indeed, many discussions of Badiou’s philosophy currently in circulation do not do justice to all four of these levels, and therefore present anaemic and ill-formed treatments of the higher-order concepts like the subject and truth. An example of this would be Andrew Gibson’s *Badiou and Beckett* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), a study whose account of the nascent subjectivity Badiou spies in Beckett (as a case of the more general logical of subjective fidelity) is undermined by the paucity of attention to the categories of the language of the situation and its encyclopedia.

⁴¹ The further question, that we will not deal with directly here, namely how Badiou is able to determine the void as multiple, is addressed in “Void and Excess” (BE 86-9), part of Meditation Seven, where he presents an argument *ex falso sequitur quodlibet*. This allows the conclusion that the null set is an ordinal in Meditation Twelve.

⁴² There is a substantial equivocation here in Badiou’s use of the terms ‘nothing’, ‘nothingness’, ‘the nothing’, etc. which is helpfully drawn out in Justin Clemens’ “Doubles of Nothing: The Problem of Binding Truth to Being in the Work of Alain Badiou”, *Filozofski vestnik*, 26, 2 (2005), 21-35.

specific localized sense, which he will name 'void'. The void is, for Badiou, the name for the nothing of being as it pertains to a given situation.

Now, the void of a situation poses a certain structural threat to the situation (and here we are noting a point which will run through *Being and Event*, a point which is essential for the very possibility of events, subjects and truths). The void of a situation remains unrepresented (and, *a priori*, unrepresentable) within the situation in question. Consequently, the structuration effected by the count-as-one does not count everything in the situation. The situation as structure is therefore insufficient because it cannot regulate the void, which is a part of every situation.

What is required is another level of structure capable of 'recognising' or getting a hold of the void. Such is the role of what Badiou variously calls the second count, the count of the count, metastructure, representation or the state of the situation.⁴³ The pertinence of each term is clearly determined in relation to the account of the situation discussed above, with the exception of the last. Regardless of the terminology in question, the second level of structure is to secure and buttress, but also extend, the first level of structure. Or, as Badiou puts it in somewhat more empirical terms,

The thesis that all presentation is structured twice may appear to be completely *a priori*. What it amounts to in the end, though, is something that everybody observes, and which is philosophically astonishing: the being of presentation is inconsistent multiplicity, but despite this, it is never chaotic. (BE 94/111tm)

This is a helpful explanation: the exorbitant level of order in presentation cannot be accounted for by the first level of structure, the unity or "oneness" of the situation. (BE 94/111) But we can add the following, isomorphic characterisation too: that meta-structure subjects the first structure itself to structuration (it counts the count).

Precisely how does this second count work – or rather, on what does it come to bear? In contrast to the first count, which only secures the unity of multiplicity from 'without', as it were, the second count subjects the members of the situation themselves to structuration, it constitutes a regime of structured parts of the situation: "Every part receives the seal of the one from the state." (BE 97/114) Thus Badiou's definition of the state of the situation:

The domain of metastructure is parts: metastructure guarantees that the one holds for inclusion, just as the initial structure holds for belonging. Put more precisely, given a situation whose structure delivers consistent one-multiples, there is always a metastructure – the state of the situation – which counts as one any composition of these consistent multiples. (BE 97/113)⁴⁴

⁴³ As I have already indicated in n26 above, Ray Brassier points out the necessary incommensurability between representation and metastructure, also noting that Badiou frequently elides the difference between the two, presenting them as interchangeable.

⁴⁴ Why does Badiou use the word 'state' here – and predominantly in the rest of the book – to characterise the meta-structural level of structuration? His answer is frank, if troubling: "Due to

The mathematical precursor to this idea of the state or metastructure is to be found in the axiom of the power set, which we have already seen. The power set, let's recall, presents all of the possible divisions of the set on which it is based – it has as its members all of the parts of the first set.

It is also key at this point to recall that \emptyset , the null-set, is a member of $P(\alpha)$, even though it is not a member of α itself. This provides Badiou with the mathematical grounds for his meta-ontological assertion that the second count counts the void of a situation, thus securing the stability of the situation in a way that the first count did not. Furthermore, it is clear that the second count is literally a structuring of parts in the set theoretic sense. To this we must add that \emptyset – regardless of the nature of α in relation to $P(\alpha)$ – is always a member of the power set. In other words, the null set is *universally included*. We can therefore see why Badiou will say that the second order of structure structures what evaded the first, namely the void. While the void is a part of every situation, the first count fails to grasp this, while the second always recognizes it. The null-set is not necessarily a *member* of every set, but is always a *part*.

At this point, then, we have two levels of organization in being, presentation and representation, situation and state. How adequate is the second to the first? In other words, does state necessarily entirely and exhaustively fix the structure of a situation? This is not necessarily the case, for Badiou. By insisting on two levels of structuration, we see the possibility emerge for two kinds of structural evasion. Should every multiple in the situation also be represented, we have what Badiou will call a normal multiple, whose paradigm case in *Being and Event* is Nature [BE 128/146]. However, it is possible that there is at least one multiple in a situation which is presented but not represented: these Badiou will call *singular multiples*. On the other hand, it is possible that there are multiples which are not presented but are nonetheless represented within a multiple: these Badiou calls *excrecent multiples*.

Table 1: Normal, Singular, Excrecent

	Presentation/Belonging	Representation/ Inclusion
Normal multiples	all elements belong	all elements are included
Singular multiples	all elements belong	at least one element is not included
Excrecent multiples	at least one element does not belong	all elements are included

A situation can contain singular multiples, and it can contain excrecent multiples. This fact – a consequence of the nature of structure for Badiou –

a metaphorical affinity with politics.” (BE 95/111) Given his commitment to a radically literalist or inscriptive account of mathematics, it seems at least a little problematic that it is by way of metaphorical association that key terms are defined.

is what opens the possibility for change to occur. Looking ahead, we can say that these two multiples are the forms in Badiou's philosophy of two important cases: *things without names*, and *names without things*. Or again, *an evental site* is a singular multiple, and a *truth* is an excrescent multiple.

Language and the encyclopedia

We turn now briefly to the final level of structure in being, that pertaining to language and knowledge. We have seen the possibility emerge of a non-adequation between the two levels of structuration figured by the situation and the state. It is important to note, though, that for Badiou while we are able to specify singularity and excrescence as possible features of a multiplicity – according, let's say, to logic of situational being – Badiou insists that if we adopt any available point of view from *within* a situation, such abnormal multiples are not available as objects of knowledge or experience. If ontology points out that such unnatural multiples *can* exist, any inhabitant of a situation can only point to the apparent universality of nature, the order of *Murphy's* “nothing-new”, the “there is nothing new under the sun”. In fact, nature is not just normality for Badiou, it is also the regime of oppressive and thorough *determination*.

Why is this the case? The answer is that, for Badiou, our capacity to know and indicate aspects of our situational being is predicated on the exhaustive structure of the state. What is knowable – what Foucault early in his work referred to as what was “in the true” – is established by the structuring effects of the state. This means that singular multiples are literally unknown and unknowable in fact, even if we can indicate their possibility in principle. What Badiou calls the encyclopedia is nothing but the manifestation of representation at the level of conscious thought.

Language plays a correlative role. For Badiou, “Language – or any comparable apparatus of recognition – is the legal filter for groupings of presented multiples. It is interposed between presentation and representation.” (BE 287/318-9) Language provides the rational means for the connection of being and knowledge, being and its possible legitimate deployment. As such, language is like the map of the empire envisioned by Borges in “On Exactitude in Science”:

In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ In *Collected Fictions*, trans. Andrew Hurley (London: Penguin, 1999), 129. Borges' other treatment of the map, that of the *mise-en-abîme* representation of England – from his “Partial Magic in the *Quixote*” – suits Badiou's philosophy less well, being essentially a paraphrase of Leibniz' universe of ponds-within-ponds; it is much closer to Deleuze. Badiou does however admit the following in his Meditation on Leibniz's philosophy in *Being and Event*: “who, today, would philosophically desire Candide's little vegetable garden rather than Leibniz's world where ‘each portion of matter can be conceived as a garden full of plants, and as a pond full of fish’, and where, once more, ‘each branch of a plant, each member of an animal, each drop of

Indeed, in summing up his discussion of language, Badiou emphasises

the clockwork minutiae of the filter it places between presentation and representation, or belonging and inclusion, or the immediacy of the multiple, and the construction of legitimate groupings – its passage to state jurisdiction.

(BE 309/342)

Just as the state grasps the situation in every legitimate configuration, language is the means by which this partitioning of being can enter into thought and knowledge.

It is by thinking language in this way – as the net of names which undergirds the encyclopedia – that we can see that excrescent multiples are just as inaccessible as their singular counterparts. An excrescent multiple is, after all, only manifest at the level of representation. However, because it is not legitimated through contact with the situation according to the net of language, its being is reduced to an aberrant growth on the surface of knowledge, but one which is indiscernible from the point of view of knowledge and language at the same time. Excrescent multiples are indeed parts of the situation, representations, but they are unmoored from that which they represent, haunting language in silence no less than they shadow knowledge without effect.

...

Let me now summarise the four levels of structuration here discussed. First of all, the situation is structured by the count-as-one, and is in turn subject to the meta-structuring of the state, which renders structure as such exhaustive. Furthermore, the situation is internally *ordered*, and thus more or less completely *normal* or *natural*, with the potential exception of singular or excrescent members, which are nothing but the possibility that something may change, and certainly no guarantee. Finally, every part of the situation as discerned by the state is subject to the connective regime of language, which is in turn linked up in a totalising encyclopedia of knowledge or claims to veridicity.

The exhaustive nature of these four levels deserves to be insisted upon. As I noted at the beginning of this section, it is only when the extent of structuration is understood that Badiou's theses on events, subjects and truths – and the radicality of the procedures which establish them – can be properly grasped.

Now, the following tables summarise some of the key elements discussed in this chapter. The first demonstrates the important differences in point of view available from ontological and non-ontological situations respectively, while the second delineates the aspects of structuration discussed thus far.

its humours, is still another such garden or pond'?" (BE 315/349) Perhaps, however, Borges has the final word: "The inventions of philosophy are no less fantastic than those of art." (131)

Table 2: Ontological and Non-Ontological Points of View

	The Ontological Situation	Non-Ontological Situations
Structuration	structure/metastructure: (re)presentation is grasped as structure from the point of view of ontology	(re)presentation
Inhabitant	the ontologist: the being of excess, and the gap between situation and state are discernible from the ontological point of view; the possibility that a situation is historical can be formulated here	the inhabitant of the situation: from an intra-situational point of view, the situation seems entirely; no possibility of change or chance is discernible; nature appears to be universal

Mathematics and the problematic of the subject

Now, in certain respects, to present Badiou's thought by starting with his engagement with mathematics is to mislead. If we examine a wider trajectory, what becomes apparent quite quickly is that it is the concept of the subject which comes first, and which precedes his mature account of ontology in *Being and Event*. Returning to the Introduction, we read the following somewhat surprising claim: recounting the development of the equation of mathematics and ontology, he writes that

The entire history of rational thought appeared to me to be illuminated once one assumed the hypothesis that mathematics, far from being a game without object, draws the exceptional severity of its law from being bound to support the discourse of ontology. In a reversal of the Kantian question, it was no longer a matter of asking 'How is pure mathematics possible?' and responding: thanks to the transcendental subject. Rather: pure mathematics being the science of being, how is a subject possible?
(BE 5-6/12)

Also in the Introduction, Badiou claims that the development of *Being and Event* occurred in response to a problem that was left aside in his 1982 book, *Théorie du sujet*. He indicates that this problem concerned the elaboration of an ontology that could support the claim of this earlier book, simply that "there 'was some' subjectivisation." (BE 4/10) He presents *Being and Event*, therefore, as the elaboration of an ontology that the earlier work required, much as Bergson presented his own metaphysics as the metaphysics lacked by science.

This is clearly modest. Not only do Badiou's much earlier treatments of mathematical topics reveal key parts of the approach that is presented systematically or according to their consequences only in *Being and Event* – I am thinking here of the pieces published in *Cahiers pour l'analyse*, "La subversion infinitésimale" and the striking "Marque et Manque: à propos du zero" – Badiou's materialist commitments run throughout his writings and

set up a number of the presuppositions of the ontology of *Being and Event*. Even a hasty or partial reading of the 1969 *The Concept of Model* reveals a concern with theorising mathematics and logic in a way that disembeds mathematics from certain theoretico-political commitments.⁴⁶ Furthermore, it is not strictly speaking the case that *Théorie du Sujet* lacks any treatment of ontological questions, there is at least a very little ontology: indeed, it includes a novel discussion of materialism.⁴⁷

Indeed, as I noted in the Introduction, it is in this context that Badiou mounts the first explicit critique of Deleuze's metaphysics in relation to the central claim of *The Clamor of Being*: that Deleuze is fundamentally committed to the unity of being, a unity which subtends individual differences.

Having said this, it is clear that in Badiou's earlier formulations of his project, what is lacking is a sufficiently broad framework in which it is possible to account at the same time for the nature of being, the being of structure, the nature of subjectivity and its capacity to breach structure and thus institute change within being itself. In sum, while Badiou's earlier work contains fragments of a systematic treatment of the subject, and the nature of the regime in which the consequences of its actions are unfolded, it is only with the full-blown mathematical ontology of *Being and Event* that his theory of the subject really comes into its own. For in Badiou's philosophy, the subject is in no way the one who at root *experiences* being (well or poorly): the subject is the one who *changes* it.

In what follows, the central concepts of event, subject and truth will be examined twice: once from the point of view of ontology, and once from the point of view available from non-ontological situations. In other words, we will examine the abstract framework within which Badiou formalises the nature of these concepts, and then turn to the instantiation of these concepts from the point of view of the subject (*né inhabitant* of the situation). To speak of the undecidability of the event, the chance escapades of the subject, and the indiscernibility of truth, ontology reaches the point at which its discourse is exhausted, and it is at this precise point that the subject as the one who intervenes begins its laborious commitment to the situation-wide recognition of the event and its consequences.

The evental site

We can begin the discussion of Badiou's presentation of the formal requirements for the advent of subjectivity, truth and change by returning to the distinction, discussed above, between normal, singular and excrescent multiples. In particular, it is singularity which interests us here.

Recall that a multiple is singular if it presented in a situation but not represented. That is, it is subject to the first count, but it is not further specified by the second. Thus singular multiples – which are not represented

⁴⁶ On this early book of Badiou's, see the summary article by Ray Brassier, "Badiou's materialist epistemology of mathematics", *Angelaki* 10:2 (2005), 135-150.

⁴⁷ The entire section 'The materialist return of materialism' deals in one way or other with this topic, but the ontological points are mainly outlined in the chapter beautifully entitled "The insoluble salt of truth" (TS 195-205); in *Being and Event*, it is rather the case that truth is at its highest moment, dissolved in knowledge. As we will see below, what the subjective act of forcing accomplishes is the becoming-knowledge of truth, the becoming-rule of the exception.

– are not subject to nomination, and thus they *cannot be known*. What singular multiplicity ultimately figures for Badiou is the ground of the possibility of change. While belonging to the situation, it forms a peculiarly indiscernible location beneath the regime of order and knowledge from which the unexpected might emerge, hence its meta-ontological moniker: *evental site*.

Let's remark the ontological primordially of the evental site with respect to the event. Simply put, without an evental site in a situation, there can be no event. The site is an *ontologically* necessary condition for the event. While the event comes in a *certain respect* from beyond the situation, it is the fact that a site exists which makes possible everything which follows. In this regard, we should take note of two designations given to the evental site by Badiou: "that it is *on the edge of the void*," and that it is "foundational." (BE 175/195) To grasp the sense of these nominations, we need only recall the nature of the structuration that pertains to singular multiples. Being presented but not represented, singular multiples are only subject to the single requirement of membership, and *nothing besides*. Thus all we are licensed to say that evental sites – *if there are any* (a question which both ontology and intra-situational knowledge are absolutely powerless to decide upon) – belong to the situation. In order to know anything further about these singular members, we would need to enquire about the members of the singular multiples – their subsets or parts. But the mechanism which provides this information is representation, mathematically figured by the Power Set, is precisely the mechanism which by definition does not come to bear on the evental site. Thus, while the evental site is a member of the situation, its parts are not: the evental site is "a multiple such that none of its elements are presented in the situation." (BE 175/195) Or, to return to the designation in question, the evental site is on the edge of the void. While the count-as-one fixes its belonging to the situation as such, it remains in every other respect a vacuole of structure, a wormhole of the void tentatively sutured to the situation. Thus we can also say that the evental site is "foundational" with respect to its very being, since it reveals something that representation works precisely to obscure and diminish: that the situation is nothing but the void subject to structuration.

Finally, Badiou will insist, ~~the possibility that~~ the singular multiples which are evental sites can always be subjected to representation and thus normalisation. The converse is however impossible: there is no way in which a natural situation lacking all singularity could become an historical one. As we have abundantly seen, the regime of order is both total (or "global" [BE 176/196]) and insidious, pertaining to every possible organization internal to representation; no possibility remains latent in nature for the irruption of historicity.

History for Badiou is thus in no way the ordered and linear (we might even say, transitive) progression in which temporality, "burdened with the past and pregnant with the future",⁴⁸ unfolds, but rather in essence a transgressive interruption of nature: the event, paradoxically grounded in an

⁴⁸ This is of course the magisterial phrase of Leibniz, from "The Principles of Philosophy, or the Monadology"; see *Philosophical Essays*, ed. and trans. Ariew and Garber (London: Hackett, 1989), 113.

indiscernible multiple of a situation, punctures the order and regularity of *being*, and comes to constitute a new order, a new regime of names and a new encyclopedia. As Badiou writes, “Historicity is thus presentation at the punctual limits of its being.” (BE 177/197) What still remains to be described, however, is the course by which this is to take place.

The event

Relative to the somewhat exhaustive stipulations pertaining to being and its presentation, Badiou’s account of the event – which has only three essential ‘qualities’ – is quite brief. There are a number of reasons for this. Given the treatment of knowledge and language in *Being and Event*, it should be clear that the event cannot be made subject to the regime of knowledge or to the legitimate nomination that constitutes the kernel of language, it is radically indiscernible from the legitimate point of view. What we see in Badiou’s attempt to characterise the event, notably in Meditation Seventeen (‘The Matheme of the Event’) is mathematical discourse at its full reach in relation to what is not being-qua-being. Indeed, the presentation of the structure of the event leads rational thought to a fundamental antinomy (as Badiou puts it quite pointedly: “There is no acceptable ontological matrix of the event” [BE 190/212]) Probably the most significant reason however for the minimal treatment of the event itself by Badiou will become clearer as we proceed, but amounts to the following: what matters is less the event itself than its *consequences*, consequences which the event does not cause, but which are the result of the agency of the subject. It is the subject which *practically* overcomes the theoretical impasses inherent in the ontological treatment of the event.

Thus far, all we know about the event is that it is localised in the situation at the evental site. Now, there are three points of view – to repeat a point touched on a number of times in passing above – that we can adopt in elaborating the nature of the event: the point of view of ontology, the point of view of an inhabitant of the (non-ontological) situation in which the event has taken place, and that of a subject of this event.⁴⁹ Here we will elaborate on what is available from the first, abstract and formal, point of view, and turn at the end of the chapter to a discussion of the latter two, except to state the following. What ultimately distinguishes the general point of view in a situation and that of the subject is that the latter affirms that an event has taken place which belongs to the situation in question. The former, ostensibly the inhabitant of the situation, does not and cannot make such an affirmation, since nothing represented in the situation licenses any claim about the belonging of a indiscernible multiple to the situation. Once again, then, it is the practical resources of the subject which will allow the suspension of the rules of objectivity – isomorphic with structuration in the final analysis – with respect to the event. The transition from inhabitant to subject, the “recognition” (BE 202/224) of the event, and the aleatory course of the subject itself are all dynamic processes. The ontological account of event is on the other hand static, which is to say once more that ontology

⁴⁹ Let me be clear that, for Badiou, the ontological situation is an historical one, and that events have taken place within it. Such, for example, was the Galilean subordination of nature to measurement, the emergence of the theory of infinitesimals, and, of course, the Cantorian elaboration of a discrete notion of the infinite.

can in no way grasp the event in-itself, but only elaborate its form *were there to be an event*. Thus the subject, in fidelity to the event, elaborates the real consequences of this event for the situation. In turn, the ontologist presents the formal structure of the event, while for the inactive inhabitant of the situation in question, quite simply the event is not.

Our concern here is with the form of the event such as it can be delineated by a mathematical ontology. This form, as Badiou presents it, has three aspects: the mathematical formalisation of the event, the contravention of the Axiom of Foundation, and the undecidability of the belonging of the event to the situation.

Meditation Seventeen takes up the task of presenting what Badiou calls the *matheme* of the event, that is, its mathematical (and thus literal) formalisation, and drawing out its most immediate consequences. The *matheme* itself is presented quite directly by Badiou:

$$e_x = \{\alpha \in X, e_x\} \text{ (BE 179/200)}^{50}$$

The definition reads: an event of the site X has as its members every member α of the site X , and itself; or, in Badiou's words: "Take, in an historical situation, an evental site X . *I term event of the site X a multiple such that it is composed of, on the one hand, elements of the site, and on the other hand, itself.*" (BE 179/200tm) We see first of all that the elements of the event's site are all members of the event. In this way, the event is clearly bound to a situation; it is the event of the site X in an historical situation. Secondly, the evental multiple is, like the evental site, a singular multiple. Badiou's account of this – that certain members of e_x are also members of the evental site, which are not represented, and as a result the event cannot be represented either – is only one of two important reasons that this is the case. The second pertains to the other member of the evental multiple, which is the evental multiple itself. As a result of this self-belonging of the event, from the point of view of ontology this *matheme* is strictly illegal, on the basis of the axiom of foundation (which precludes self-belonging). This is why Badiou argues that the Axiom of Foundation in its meta-ontological form prohibits the event from being.

This brings us to what I listed as the third essential formal quality of the meta-ontological conception of the event for Badiou: undecidability. For Badiou, it is "of the very essence of the event," (BE 201/205) that the answer to the question 'does the event belong to the situation?' be undecidable. Now, we have already seen one reason why we might be led to assert that the event does indeed belong to the situation, which is that its members include the members of the evental site, which certainly does belong to the situation in question (it is an evental site of its situation). However, there is an obstacle to unproblematically asserting that this is the case. This obstacle is that one member of the evental multiple – namely, *the event itself* – may not belong to the situation. Now, this problem clearly emerges as a result of the relation of self-belonging, inducing a certain kind of "circularity." (BE 181/202) In any case, it is clear that nothing within the situation allows us to

⁵⁰ I have made a minimal change to this formulation: where I write ' α ', Badiou uses ' x ', which threatens some confusion in relationship to the subscripted ' X ' appended to ' e ', even if the formulation above loses the direct connection between the site X and its elements x .

directly resolve this undecidability. What is required is a certain intervention on behalf of the event.

In sum, while we can formulate a matheme of the event in the ideography of set theoretic mathematics, the undecidability native to the event can in no way be resolved with reference to mathematics itself, or to what pre-exists it in the situation:

There cannot exist any regulated and necessary procedure which is adapted to the decision concerning the eventuality of a multiple. In particular, [...] the state of a situation does not guarantee any rule of this order, because the event, happening in a site – a multiple on the edge of the void – is never resecured as part by the state. Therefore one cannot refer to a supposed inclusion of the event in order to conclude in its belonging.
(BE 201-2/223-4tm)

Clearly then, Badiou's ontology as we have seen it here is conditional in two respects. First of all, ontology is powerless to treat what is not being *qua* being, in this case figured by the axiom of foundation. Secondly, though, Badiou's entire account of the intervention of a faithful subject ultimately comes to nothing if there are no events. This is why, at certain points above, I have appended the modifying phrase 'if there are any' to certain formulations. In other words, what *Being and Event* presents, with respect to the latter concept and everything which follows from it, is an account of the structure of the event, choice, nomination, construction and forcing *if* an event takes place. Without an actual event to embody this treatment, it remains (to paraphrase Russell on Leibniz) a castle floating in the air.

This leads us to ask, of course, what form the event takes from within the situation to which it pertains. Again, we must distinguish between two cases. The first case is the point of view of the inhabitant of the situation. Such an inhabitant, a normal multiple in the situation, and therefore subject to the quadripartite structuration of all situations (the count-as-one, the state of the situation, subjection to order and to the regime of knowledge/language), has absolutely no capacity to recognise the eventual site (since it is unrepresented and therefore disjunct from language/knowledge). Further, since this point of view is resolutely grounded in the regime of representation, for them there cannot be any event. For the inhabitant of the situation, nothing deviates from normality in any respect. Now, the subject is like the inhabitant of the situation in that they too lack any direct knowledge of the advent of the event. On the other hand, with respect to the event, the difference is decisive: where the inhabitant of the situation has no reason to assert anything about any event, since from the point of view of the state, nothing can be either known or named, the subject *believes* that an event has taken place, and stakes themselves upon this belief.

The remainder of the project of *Being and Event* concerns the means by which this initial moment of fidelity – the intervention of a subject on behalf of the event – can be unfolded in the direction of real change. The sequence that he pursues can be divided into three phases: choice and nomination, the construction of a truth, and forcing.

Choice and nomination

The first issue we are currently presented with – assuming an event has taken place – is that of deciding the undecidable with respect to the event. This decision can have no basis in an organised and rational procedure, determined *a priori*. Thus what is called for is an unprincipled choice. In set theoretic terms, Badiou has recourse to the axiom of choice, which, of which he claims that, “*within ontology, the axiom of choice formalises the predicates of intervention.*” (BE 227/251)⁵¹

Meta-ontologically speaking, Badiou glosses this initial moment of the subject by thematising the meaning of intervention: “I term intervention any procedure by which a multiple is recognised as an event.” (BE 202/224) This apparently straightforward claim quickly bifurcates – indeed, in the space of two pages – in *Being and Event*. Badiou comes to claim that this act of intervention itself involves an ensemble of acts. In particular, we can isolate three necessary acts or “aspects” (BE 203/225): the *recognition*, strictly speaking, of the event, the *decision* with regards to its belonging in a situation and its *nomination*.

The first two of these are “impossible to separate.” (BE 203/225) After all, the subject in question is a subject of a particular situation, and its capacity to discern and decide are rooted therein. In a certain sense, then – and this is what Badiou thinks that AC formalises – the primordial act of the subject is to make a claim on the event.

A paradox seems to assert itself here, however: insofar as the undecidable is decided, it vanishes as exceptional. The event maintains itself as such for less than a moment, its paradoxical existence has the duration of the decision itself. Reminiscent of the canonical discussion of the figure of incest in Derrida’s *Of Grammatology* (but also the discussion the same topic in that grimoire, *Anti-Oedipus*),⁵² the structure revealed by Badiou is the following: before the intervention, the event has no being; afterwards – for the subject which wagers itself on the event in question – it is no longer an event. Like noon, the event’s fruition is immediately eclipsed at the moment of its effect. “Scarcely has the decision been taken than what provoked the decision disappears in the uniformity of multiple-presentation.” (BE 202/224)

In other words, the decision with regards to the belonging of the event to the situation liquidates the sense of the recognition. The recognition-decision axis, like a see-saw, tips from one to the other, revealing a certain paradox

⁵¹ Simply put, the axiom of choice (AC) asserts that there exists a choice function, which is to say that, given any set, a second set exists whose members are members chosen from the subsets of the original set. Formally, we write: $(\forall \alpha)(\exists f) [(\beta \in \alpha) \rightarrow f(\beta) \in \beta]$ – or in other words, “for every existent multiple α there corresponds an existent function f , which ‘chooses’ a representative in each of the multiples which make up α .” (BE 224/248) This has been without a doubt the most controversial of all of the axioms that constitute ZF.

⁵² Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 263f. With respect to *Anti-Oedipus*, the theme of the incest prohibition – its shifting position and force vis-à-vis social formation – is a theme returned to throughout the third chapter of that work. Indeed, one could trace the book’s entire explanatory path by explaining why exactly the prohibition exists as an unrealised structural reality in non-capitalist society, and why it is that the capitalist social formation uniquely brings about the twinned phenomenon of the possibility of incest and the realization of a consequential prohibition in a meaningful sense.

at the heart of the inaugural moment of the subject. This paradox is in fact a paradox of action on Badiou's account, and not a logical antinomy. Its import is that the event, the spur to all change in a situation, cannot itself be an active part of the fidelity to the event that defines the course of the subject. (Dis)apparition, the event has no direct effects; the subject must enact these on its behalf. It does so not on the basis of the event itself, but on the basis of the *name* of the event.

Thus the third term, nomination: "The essence of the intervention consists [...] in naming this 'there is' and in unfolding the consequences of this nomination in the space of the situation to which the site belongs." (BE 203/225) The subject *names* the event, and uses this as the fulcrum to reorganise the situation.

This term, however, introduces its own problems, whose resolution will be decisive for the rest of the course of the subject for Badiou. From where can the subject draw the name of the event? Given that all events are by definition unprecedented in a situation, there is no signature waiting to be appended to them. Furthermore, if the name of the event is drawn from what already exists *vis-à-vis* the nominative aspect of the encyclopedia, it will erase precisely what the subject wants to preserve in the order of nomination which is no longer available in its being, namely the novelty of the event with respect to the situation: "the effect of homonymy would immediately efface everything unrepresentable named in the event." (BE 203/225)

Badiou's novel solution to this problem is to posit that the name must be drawn from the evental site. Thus "the initial operation of an intervention is to *make a name out of an unrepresented element of the site to qualify the event whose site it is.*" (BE 204/226tm) Now, it is clear that we cannot pick the name of any member in particular from the site to be the name for the event, since the evental site is a singular multiple with respect to the situation, and thus unrepresented by the state. In fact, the members of the site are not presented in the situation at all – they are *void*. So there is no way that a particular name can be chosen. What the subject can do, however, is take the unrepresented members – in their anonymity – as the mark of the event. So, if we recall the matheme of the event,⁵³

$$e_x = \{\alpha \in X, e_x\}$$

or 'the event of the site X has as its members all of the members α of the evental site, along with itself', the subject takes α , the representative name for the unrepresentable, as the name for the event. The name of the matheme of the event is e_x ; the name for the event is e_x .

The fact that it is the name of the event and not the event 'in person' which is the support in the situation of the course of the subject is decisive, and foreshadows what will be the key moment of the process, that of *forcing*, which Badiou designates as the law of the subject. As we will see, the final moment in the drawing of the consequences of the evental novelty will also

⁵³ I have, once more, substituted α for x in order to avoid any confusion between the elements of the event site, and the site as such.

be an affair of names, this time the names which the subject, in fidelity to the event, has gleaned from the situation in the attempt to find the means to express the weight of the change that has gone *almost* unnoticed.

In sum, and in terms of its practical efficacy, the event is a vanishing mediator between the current situation and the same situation which the subject holds changed in anticipation, an anticipation hooked to an irregular and anomalous name.

Truth

We now arrive at the point in Badiou's theoretical endeavour where the concept of truth is introduced. This is an essential moment. Indeed, for Badiou, the category of truth is central to the very notion of philosophy, a point amply attested to in both *Being and Event* and the works surrounding it, particularly *Manifesto for Philosophy*. However, the concept of truth in question radically departs from the notion of adequation which has dominated its treatment in Western thought since Plato. Badiou's definition of the category of truth is distinguished from this traditional account above all with reference to four points.

First of all, as will be apparent from our earlier discussion, truth must be radically disjunct from knowledge. Indeed, the most frequent non-technical description of truth offered by Badiou is indeed the Lacanian injunction: "a truth is always that which makes a hole in knowledge." (BE 327/361) In fact, the relationship between truth and knowledge is not only antagonistic but rather a certain kind of dialectic, as we will see below, since the ultimate destiny of a truth is to become new knowledge. This leads Badiou to propose a distinction between truth on the one hand and veridicity on the other. The latter term pertains to the regime of knowledge in a situation, its encyclopedia. A given statement can be judged to be correct or incorrect, veridical or erroneous, with respect to the encyclopedia. However, truth can never be judged as such from the point of view of representation, the point of view of the inhabitant of the situation. In sum,

we will term *veridical* the following statement, which can be controlled by a knowledge: 'Such a part of the situation is answerable to such an encyclopedic determinant.' We will term *true* the statement controlled by the procedure of fidelity, thus attached to the event and the intervention.
(BE 332/361)

Secondly, as the above citation already indicates, there is in the first instance no Truth *per se*, but rather plural truths, each irreducible to each other. It is the task of philosophy, an essentially *a posteriori* task, to demonstrate the compossibility of plural truths, and therefore to construct a general category of truth. The advent of a truth, however, is always solitary and unique. This point not only rejects the so-called coherence theory of truth, but also the traditional adequation account, insofar as the latter posits truths whose epistemological and ontological status is univocal; while there may be many truths about different things on this account, they are interconsistent.

Third, it is essential to see on Badiou's account that truths do not pre-exist either events or faithful subjects. Rather than being facts of the matter open to the participation of all, truths are *constructed* by subjects. Rather than being idealities, they are materially real: the substance of a truth is always found in the situation for which the truth in question is an indiscernible multiple.

Finally, in contrast to the traditional view whereby truth is what is eminently available to thought (this is certainly the Platonic view, for example), for Badiou truth is strictly speaking *indiscernible*. This not only means that it cannot be the direct subject of knowledge or language (a point we have already noted), but that it cannot be the subject of ontological discourse. In other words, there can be no ontological theory of truth *per se*. "The process of a truth [. . .] entirely escapes ontology." (BE 355/391)

Given this final point, we are confronted once more with a familiar problem: the actual composition of a truth by a subject in a situation can in no way be the object of knowledge (even by the subject in question), and thus it is impossible to present a direct formal account of the nature of truths. What the subject 'knows' is only that they have adopted a new point of view on the situation made possible by fidelity to an event. As we will see, the *activity* which follows from this fidelity is precisely the construction of a truth and the attempt to include this truth in the situation as knowledge. None of this applies to the point of view of ontology, however, which has a merely formal and passive point of view. However, it is possible to formulate the nature of a truth with respect to the situation *insofar as it is an indiscernible multiple from the point of view of the situation*. In other words, if there was to be a formal account of truth in ontology, it would be a formal account of an indiscernible part of a set, a part moreover, which cannot be constructed according to any criterion or formula. Such a theory does indeed exist – the account of generic sets, first theorised by Paul Cohen in 1963.

Thus – to repeat a structure which we have seen a number of times – despite the fact that truths *per se* remain completely beyond the capacity of the discourse of ontology, what ontology *can* provide is a formal account, external to any particular situation or truth thereof, of the structure of truths. Or, to use a distinction used by Badiou himself, while ontology cannot theorise truths directly, it can formalise the *being* of truths in general: "The compatibility of ontology with truth implies that the being of truth, as generic multiplicity, is ontologically thinkable, even if a truth is not." (BE 355/391)

The mathematician Paul Cohen is a decisive figure for Badiou. We will see shortly that his procedure of forcing provides Badiou with a formal account of the way in which situations can be changed from within. But it is the category of the generic, also found by Badiou in Cohen's work as I have said, which is key for Badiou:

If one category had to be designated as an emblem of my thought, it would be neither Cantor's pure multiple, nor Gödel's constructible, nor the void, by which being is named, nor even the event, in which the supplement of what-is-not-being-qua-being originates. It would be the *generic*.
(BE 15/22)

In essence, the category of the generic allows Badiou a way of formulating the being of what – in a situation – evades the domination of the state and the exhaustive deployment of nomination and knowing which seems to reduce the possibility of change to nothing.

Now, how exactly can such a generic multiple, a truth, be constructed? The answer to this brings us to the next phase of Badiou's account of the subject, which concerns the infinite once more. Indeed, another version of the same question would be: what does the subject do after recognising the event and deciding its belonging to the situation? In short, the answer is that the subject *tests* the existing situation with an eye to the event, engaging in what Badiou calls *enquiries*. As we will see, is it the sum of the positive results of these enquiries which Badiou will call truths.

What precisely is an enquiry? A subject, faithful to an event, examines members of the situation that they encounter to which they have decided the event has taken place. In each case, they determine whether or not the member is compatible or can be connected to the name of the event. Thus we can define fidelity itself as “a situated operation which depends on the examination of situations. Fidelity is a functional relation to the event.” (BE 233/258) Badiou elaborates the following formal notation for this procedure in the following way. The activity of enquiry itself is written \square , which reads “connected for a fidelity,” (BE 234/259) and in turn ‘ $\square e_x$ ’ reads ‘connects for a fidelity with the event of the site ‘X’’. Now, there are two possible results of any such testing of a fidelity, depending on whether the member of the situation can be positively connected to the name of the event. Thus we can write, in Badiou's ideography,

$$a \square e_x$$

$$b \square e_x$$

$$\sim(c \square e_x)$$

Or, a and b are both connected for a fidelity to the event e of the site X, whereas c is not thus connected. Streamlining this way of formalising enquiries, Badiou later (in Meditation Thirty-One) proposes that we can write $x(+)$ or $x(-)$ to indicate that the member x of the situation in question is connected by fidelity to the event or it is not. The formulations above can be rewritten thus: $a(+)$, $b(+)$, $c(-)$. It is this latter that provides the formal version of an enquiry for Badiou: “we will term *enquiry* any finite set of such minimal reports.” Thus, in our example, the enquiry is written as the set $\{a(+), b(+), c(-)\}$. It is the enquiries which constitute the tissue of subjective fidelity to an event. And, quite surprisingly, they are also the very tissue of truth itself. Badiou's definition of truth departs directly from this consideration of enquiries: “a truth groups together all the terms of the situation which are positively connected to the event.” (BE 335/369) Thus we can formalise a truth in the following way:⁵⁴

$$Tr_e = \{x(+)_1, x(+)_2, x(+)_3 \dots x(+)_n\}$$

⁵⁴ The ideograph Tr_e is my own formulation; Badiou does not formalise truth as such in the course of *Being and Event*.

That is, a truth of the situation α is the set of all the members of α which are positively connected by fidelity to an event e of α . Picasso's *Demaiselles d'Avignon*, a meaningless mess for some (including many of Picasso's friends), seems to others to bring about a rupture in the very nature of art, and for these subjects, faithful to this event, the entire world of art must be subject to a reordering in accordance with this new index for conceiving it.

A few observations call to be made at this point. First of all, it certainly seems that Badiou's definition of truth departs far enough from any established understanding of this category to warrant asking whether it can justifiably fall under this title. However, we can recall that, for Badiou, truth is what is irreducible to the order of knowledge, to all received wisdom and accepted nominations, a position certainly endorsed throughout the history of philosophy, and what indeed has led philosophers to situate themselves on the side of truth and against opinion and *doxa*. Furthermore, as we will see in the next section of this chapter, truth is the single possible source of the renovation of knowledge, for the injection of novelty into the doxological-epistemological regime. Once again, this is not foreign to its common acceptance.

Secondly, we can recognise in Badiou's definition of truth – an indiscernible multiple of a situation – as *excrement*. That is, it is represented, but not presented. Recall that what is at issue in the construction of a truth is the creation of a subset of the situation, and thus it engages with the regime of representation. However, there is no more fundamental structure involved in truth than this. The indiscernible representation which constitutes a truth refers to nothing presented which precedes it. For the same reason, we can see on these grounds why Badiou writes at one point that the “thought of fidelity is counter-state (or sub-state).” (BE 236/261) The upshot of a construction of a truth is that a new order of representation (however indiscernible) is being created from the point of view of an event rather than that of the need for securing the presentation of being from the threat of the void.

These latter observations, however, lead us to an apparently serious flaw in Badiou's argument. A subject, in fidelity to the event, begins to construct a truth in a situation, that is, assembles a subset of the situational multiple. Now, given that what the state of a situation ultimately signifies is the total and exhaustive cataloguing of every possible subset of the situational multiple, isn't the generic truth, itself a subset, already counted? In other words, regardless of the particular subset that the subject is engaged in assembling, it seems that *it will already be captured by the state-knowledge-language apparatus*. In other words, for all its indiscernibility, a truth seems to be a multiple whose very construction draws it into the representative mesh of the state. Indeed, as Badiou notes, even a cursory examination of the faithful procedure of enquiries reveals a profound affinity with the encyclopedia (“It is the enquiry which lies behind the *resemblance* of the procedure of fidelity to a *knowledge*. [BE 331/365])

Thus, in order to retain its indiscernible status, and its capacity to introduce something new into the situation, there must be something further to Badiou's account – namely, there must be a way to describe an intrinsic difference between truth and all the other inclusions in the situation. As

Badiou puts it, “our problem is finally the following: on what condition can one be sure that the set of terms of the situation which are positively connected to the event is in no manner already classified within the encyclopedia of the situation?” (BE 336/370)

Badiou, quite aware of this problem, which he addresses directly in Meditation Thirty-One, ‘The Thought of the Generic and Being in Truth’, insists on two crucial points, or rather two characteristics of generic truth-multiples. Both of these concern the subtraction of truths from knowledge. In order to make possible the real subtraction of truth from the order of the veridical, something must distinguish them. The first requirement that Badiou insists upon is that every generic truth be infinite. Why? Because every finite part of the situation is well and truly grasped by the state. As we have seen, each enquiry (itself a finite moment in the course of a fidelity) is already a legal part of the situation, a fact which led us to consider this problem.

Hence the law, of considerable weight: *the true only has a chance of being distinguishable from the veridical when it is infinite*. A truth (if it exists) must be an infinite part of the situation, because for any finite part, one can always say that it has already been discerned and classified by knowledge.
(BE 333/367)

However, it seems strange to assert that a generic truth is a completed infinite, since it is the object of a continual process undertaken in finite moments by a subject. On what grounds can Badiou justify such a claim? The answer is obtained, once more, with recourse to set theory. Here, Badiou is relying upon the concept of the infinite first elaborated by Cantor. The long tradition of treating the infinite as the *apeiron*, the unlimited, makes obvious sense of the fact that we can elaborate a progression of the ordinal numbers indefinitely: for any number n we also can have $n+1$, then $(n+1)+1$, and so on. The Cantorian insight, formalised in Zermelo’s Axiom of Infinity, is that the succession of ordinals can be treated as *complete*, and dealt with as a completed infinite. This is likewise Badiou’s point about truths. While we can think of them as indefinitely supplemented by the subject, we can also grasp them as completed infinite series, with the qualities pertaining to them as such. Furthermore, viewing truths as finite processions is to some degree false from the subject’s own point of view, on Badiou’s account. From this point of view, a truth is a multiple in the process of becoming-infinite – or, even better, a truth is the body of consequences of an event which is grasped by the subject in the future anterior: truth will have been completed. It is from this point of view that the subject will attempt to interrogate the state of the situation and force the indiscernible truth into the light of day.

But another problem presents itself for Badiou at this point. Even if we consider truths to be essentially infinite, it remains the case that there are many such infinite multiples in every situation, which the state has no trouble exhaustively representing – the principle example here is nature itself, which is both integrally infinite and completely structured in every respect. A further determination is required.

We know that every part of the situation is represented by the state in a certain fashion, that is, according to a legitimate nomination and with

respect to the encyclopedia. Badiou's resolution of the problem of exhaustive static determination is to demonstrate that a truth must be a multiple at least one of whose members guarantee that it is subtracted from any representation. To grasp his point here, let's consider an infamous example, that of Borges' account of a "certain Chinese encyclopedia" which proved such an inspiration to Foucault:

Animals can be divided into:

those that belong to the Emperor,
embalmed,
those that are trained,
suckling pigs,
mermaids,
fabulous,
stray dogs,
those included in the present classification,
those that tremble as if they were mad,
innumerable,
those drawn with a very fine camelhair brush,
others,
those that have just broken a flower vase,
those that from a long way off look like flies.⁵⁵

In fact, this is precisely *not* encyclopedic in Badiou's sense. What it presents are a series of determinations which cannot exist in a given encyclopedia at one time, since they ruin the nomination 'animal', robbing it precisely of its determinate capacity. Rather, this is a fine example of a generic multiple.⁵⁶ Every truth, for Badiou, includes at least one 'stray dog', a member which ruins the capacity for the state to grasp the multiple in question according to a category which pre-exists it. Indeed, this is the very meaning of generic multiple for both Badiou and Cohen: a multiple which cannot be constructed according to any pre-existent rule since it contains at least one element which evades every particular rule. Thus we finally arrive at our destination, a definition of truth which allows us to distinguish it completely from knowledge:

We shall therefore say: a truth is the infinite positive total – the gathering together of x(+)’s – of a procedure of fidelity which, for each and every determinant of the encyclopedia, contains at least one enquiry which avoids it.
(BE 338/372)

⁵⁵ This famous passage is to be found in "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins," most easily found in *Selected Non-Fictions*, ed. Eliot Weinburger, trans. Esther Allen and Suzanne Levine (New York: Penguin, 2000), 231

⁵⁶ With the exception, of course, of the determination "those included in the present classification," since this contravenes the Axiom of Foundation. As Badiou himself notes on a number of occasions in the final meditations of his text, while generic multiples are indiscernible from the point of view of the inhabitant of the situation, this does not mean that they are exempt from the axioms of set theory. See the following note on this point.

Forcing

At this point, we have seen the greater part of the mechanism whereby the undecidable event is conceived by Badiou as something like the formal cause of the construction of a truth, under the *aegis* of the faithful subject. These matters take up almost the entirety of *Being and Event*, the first thirty-four (of thirty-seven) meditations. The final three meditations, which are as tantalising as they are formally challenging, provide the elaboration of an answer to a final question: given that the subject, in fidelity to the advent of an event, has constructed a generic truth, what becomes of it? Is the conclusion of this chance escapade the construction of indiscernible vacuoles in the fabric of state domination? Certainly not, for Badiou. The final movement in this process concerns the manner in which indiscernible truth intrudes upon the existing state of the situation, making room within the encyclopedia and the language which it supports for a new representation, a new knowledge. Thus the ultimate destiny of a truth is to become new knowledge.

Such a conclusion is inherent in the subjective point of view. After all, the very act of deciding for the belonging of the event to a situation amounts to asserting that this event which has taken place *matters* for the situation. The essence of subjectivity for Badiou is a stake upon the decisive import of something which, from the point of view of any inhabitant of the situation, remains impossible to register. The construction of a truth, in turn, is an attempt to formulate what we have seen Badiou call a “counter-state (or sub-state),” (BE 236/261) an alternative representation of the situation which takes as its criteria the connection or otherwise of its parts with the name of the event. The end of such a process must of course be to make the indiscernible discernable for all. The mechanism whereby this takes place is *forcing*.

The technical detail necessary to elaborate the mathematical concept in question here – like that of the generic, first elaborated by Paul Cohen in the mid- to late-sixties – is of an exponential difficulty in relation to the deployment of set theory we have seen in passing so far and well exceeds our current concerns. Suffice it to say (in the broadest possible terms) that the technique of forcing provides the means whereby sets can be supplemented in very discrete and precise ways in order to test axiomatic claims within specific contexts.⁵⁷ However, instead of simply introducing multiples into the set in question, it provides for an indirect procedure, involving the supplementation of a related set whose members are *names for the multiples in the initial set* with additional names. We thereby infer new content in the initial set as a consequence, even though the new content

⁵⁷ The sets in question are in fact models of ZF, and the principle use that Cohen himself puts forcing to is the proof that we can construct a model of the set-theoretic universe in which all the axioms of ZF but AC hold, and in which the continuum hypothesis is false. Cohen thereby completes the investigation first begun by Godel, who demonstrates the contrary claim (ie., that ZF+AC+CH is consistent if ZF is): see Kurt Godel, *Consistency of the Continuum Hypothesis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940) Cohen’s method can also provide the same result as Godel’s without invoking the Axiom of Constructibility (which Badiou discusses at length and from a number of angles in part six of *Being and Event*), but in any case the upshot of these results is that the consistency of either or both AC and CH with ZF is strictly undecidable. For the most developed formulation of Cohen’s project, see his classic *Set Theory and the Continuum Hypothesis* (New York: W. A. Benjamin, 1966).

isn't a set that we can 'pick out' according to any criteria (for example, the new name refers to a set that can't be indicated with 'all the even numbers', 'all the numbers less than 0.5,' etc). Or, again, the goal of forcing is to provide a rational means to discuss the existence of a subset which can't be grasped according to any of the current names available. In a fine passage, Badiou writes that what is at stake is

modifying and enriching not the situation itself, but its language, so as to be able to name in [the situation] the hypothetical elements of its extension by the indiscernible, thus anticipating – without presupposition of existence – the properties of the extension.
(BE 375/412)

We can now turn once more to the meta-ontological register. The key to understanding any subjective fidelity on Badiou's account is to see it as antagonistic towards the state. Contrary to his earlier assertion in *Théorie du Sujet* that the subject is a "minotaur lacking a Theseus" (TS 54), the subject is in fact Theseus himself, tracing an errant line irreducible to the maze of structuration in order to overcome the minotaur of the state. Now, the mistake would be to think that, in the light of this, the goal of subjective fidelity is the permanent cessation of the mechanism of the state, an anarchism. The fact is, as we have already seen, that the state is not an occasional socio-political reality on Badiou's view, but an essential element of every situation. The state is not just the legislator of existence, but also the guard rail of consistency. Thus the subjective antagonism towards the state of the situation in question ultimately takes the form of a rivalry, the constitution of an alternative state. Keeping in mind that a subject is always the faithful subject of an event, the antagonism towards the state only ever takes the form of a demand that *the consequences of the event be recognised by the state*, a demand that of course necessarily ruptures the present state itself. This demand is of course nothing other than the meta-ontological counterpart of forcing, which Badiou does not hesitate to term the very law of the subject. The specific mechanisms involved here are complex – a point clearly indicated by the prodigious difficulty of the latter meditations – but can be outlined with the aspects of Badiou's theory we currently have, with the addition of his concept of the *subject-language*.

At present, we know that the advent of the subject comes with the joint moment of deciding the belonging of the event to the situation and naming it. Badiou insists, as we know, that these are two aspects of the same moment. The name of the event is the first and most fundamental element in the subject language. It offers the ground for the elaboration of a regime of names which is not predicated on the nominative excess of the state. According to Badiou, what proceeds from the first moment, as we have seen, is the enquiry process, where the multiples in the situation are all 'examined' with respect to the name of the event; a generic truth results. At the same time, however, what is generated by the subject is an ever-increasing store of *names*: "*every subject generates nominations.*" (BE 397/435) Taken together, these constitute what Badiou calls the *subject-language*.

However, given the nature of language in *Being and Event*, it is clear that something peculiar must be at work in the case of the subject-language – nomination is, after all, *the* mark of discernibility. Everything discerned has a

name: this is the lesson for Badiou of Gödel's Axiom of Constructibility, whose logic was already presented in a refined form in the philosophy of Leibniz. This is to say, in other words and in terms we have already seen, that everything with a name is represented in the encyclopedia. In the case of the subject-language, however, the names in question *cannot* have a referent in this sense, because the generic truth in question is indiscernible. The subject-language must thus be engaged in a regime of suspended nomination. The names in question, themselves proper to the situation, take as their referent elements of the generic truth-multiple, but without any guarantee of being on this nomination. In a poetic phrase, "On the surface of a situation, the generic procedure is signaled in particular by this nominal *aura* which surrounds its finite configurations, which is to say its subjects." (BE 398/436)

Let's note something else important here: that the generic truth being constructed by the subject is *indiscernible to the subject themselves*. The laborious work of construction is never committed to the care of the subject by being itself: the subject never receives the wink of the real. Here, the point of view of the subject and the passive inhabitant of the situation coincide with respect to the order of knowledge. From the latter point of view, the subject language is completely void of designation, it is empty:

the external witness [...] considers that [it] make[s] up an arbitrary and content-free language. Hence, any revolutionary politics is considered to maintain a utopian (or non-realistic) discourse; a scientific revolution is received with scepticism, or held to be an abstraction without a base in experiments; and lovers' babble is dismissed as infantile foolishness by the wise. (BE 398/436)

The subject is (perhaps surprisingly) in precisely the same position *but only relative to the order of knowledge*. Indeed, there is no objective proof that their talk has a referent. But in the place of the baffled and realistic scepticism of the external witness, there is in the subject a faith in the event and in the truth supposed to be in the process of construction according to their enquiries.

Badiou's claim here turns around the peculiar temporal point of view adopted by subjects vis-à-vis truths. In meta-ontological terms, what is concerned is the making-veridical of a truth. Furthermore, given that any veridicity is sanctioned by the state, this making-veridical makes discernible – makes a member of – the previously indiscernible truth.

From the point of view of the subject, the truth in construction is not just the ensemble of the positive result of enquiries: it is indeed *truth*, something fundamental and decisive, while unrecognised. What the subject is in fact engaged in when making enquiries is finding the means to assert that this truth belongs to the situation, that it should be recognised as veridical. In other words, from the very first enquiries, the subject is not testing the truth to consider its veracity, but testing the situation to see how the truth can be revealed as *veridical*. Put in another way, the subject already believes that the truth is veridical, and acts in a commensurate manner. The subject treats the truth as the knowledge that it *will have been*. Thus Badiou writes that "the subject-language unfolds in the future-anterior: its referent, and thus the

veracity of its statements, depends on the completion of a generic procedure.” (BE 523/535) Thus also one of Badiou’s definitions of forcing: it works by constraining “the correctness of statements *according to an anticipatory condition* [ie., the enquiries] *bearing on the composition of an infinite generic subset*.” (TW 127-8) In a sense, then, a faithful subject is attempting to view the world as if they were nothing but a regular inhabitant of a situation, but this situation *in the future*, in which the truth laboriously but indiscernibly constructed would be a normal part of the representational structure.

In Badiou’s account, this takes place according to a very close analogy with the act of forcing itself. The names which constitute the subject language are treated as the names that will have been for certain claims about the generic truth-multiple. Thus the subject-language is engaged in a dialectical relationship between their status as suspended names for elements of a generic truth on the one hand, and being legitimate nominations for a situation which will have come into existence on the other. In turn – and this is the furthest consequence of the activity of the subject – the referents of the names of the subject-language will have been discernible members of the situation. Thus, according to the future legitimacy of the names in the subject-language, the generic truth will have been made normal, presented as a member of the situation, and now legally represented by the state-language-knowledge apparatus. For the subject, then, forcing is not a matter of theoretical capacity, but rather practical efficacy. The only power that the subject has – and thus the only possibility for novelty to emerge in a situation – is to act according to a new order in the future anterior that they themselves are constructing.

We are now finally in a position to summarise the course of the subject in its entirety:

The ultimate effect of an eventual caesura, and of an intervention from which the introduction into circulation of a supernumerary name proceeds, would thus be that the truth of a situation, with this caesura as its principle, forces the situation to accommodate it: to extend itself to the point at which this truth – primitively no more than a part, a representation – attains belonging, thereby becoming a presentation. The trajectory of a faithful generic procedure and its passage to infinity transform the ontological status of a truth: they do so by changing the situation ‘by force’; anonymous excrescence in the beginning, the truth will end up being normalised.
(BE 342/376)

Formalised, and in somewhat more prosaic terms, the following table provides an account of this process from the three points of view furnished by Badiou in *Being and Event*:

Table 3: From Event to Situational Change

	Ontology <i>structural perspective</i>	Situational Inhabitant <i>passive member</i>	Subject <i>active participant</i>
Evental Site	Formulated as a singular multiple	Indiscernible (since unrepresented)	Indiscernible (since unrepresented)
Event	Formulated as a paradoxical set; contravenes Foundation	Events do not take place	Declaration of fidelity: an event has taken place
Subject (I): Choice/Nomination	Principle of unprincipled choice: AC	Nothing exceeds the language/knowledge of the situation; nothing requires nomination	Nomination of the event; decision of the undecidable: the event belongs to the situation
Subject (II): Truth	Formulated as an infinite (and thus complete) generic set	Indiscernible (since unrepresented); nothing exceeds the encyclopedia, being is saturated with knowledge	Enquiries and the construction of a generic truth (of which the subject is a finite part)
Subject (III): Forcing	Cohen's mechanism for the supplementation of models	The subject-language is without content; nothing exists to which it refers; there is nothing to force	Elaboration of a subject language, whose referent is indiscernible; future anterior point of view is inhabited, truth is forced as knowledge(subject is the inhabitant of a proposed new future situation)
Renovated situation	Truth becomes knowledge; is formalised as static completion	Nothing has changed; apparent change is simple reordering	Truth becomes knowledge; is experienced as dynamic commitment and gradual change

Two final points call to be made. First, while generic truths can be taken to be infinite, that is, complete, subsets of the situation, we know that in fact they are constantly being constructed (at least while there are subjects faithful to the event which spurs this construction), and that their completion is never actual: situations, being infinite, contain an infinite amount of material to be subject to enquiry. Thus the entire course of fidelity is perpetual, and its consequences, what can be forced with respect to the

state of the situation, are likewise potentially unending. To speak, then, of the completion of a fidelity is to once again adopt a formal ontological point of view in place of that offered by the subject, which – insofar as it remains a subject and thus continues the process of fidelity – keeps going on.

Secondly, it is worth asking what this extensive formal account of the course of the subject amounts to with respect to this course from the subject's own point of view. Indeed, the tripartite distinction I have elaborated here reflects the various elements of this formal structure, but does not well account for the course of the subject directly. Indeed, for Badiou, there is only one activity of the subject posterior to the moment of recognition–subjectivation–decision, which is the activity of drawing the consequences of this decision for the situation and its state. Thus we can comprehend the sense of Badiou's claim that, in *Being and Event*, "inasmuch as there is an active element to the subject it is to be found entirely in the process of forcing. Because subjective capacity amounts to drawing the consequences of a change, of a new situation."⁵⁸ Rather than seeing this as a repudiation of the necessity of the enquiries, and a modification of the relationship between the subject and the event, Badiou's claim neatly separates the active dimension of the subject from its formal carapace. The recognition of an event, the construction of a generic truth and the forcing of this truth are all part of a single movement, whereby the subject, faithful to an event, begins to rearrange the structure of their situation, one piece at a time. A generic truth is in the course of this movement constructed, and this truth is forced, but it is a mistake to consider each element, in the process of its occurrence, as segmented. The course of the subject is a singular, continuous and sinuous movement. Thus, where the formal categories of Badiou's meta-ontology provide an account of the structural elements of the course of the subject, in reality the subject is the continued elaboration of a single kind of act whereby the advent of the event eclipses the apparently unsurpassable horizon of the state.

Conclusion

An event occurs. The subject is born in a moment of recognition, which is also the moment of nomination, and thus also the act of deciding affirmatively on the belonging of the event. In accordance with a continuing fidelity to this event, the subject tests the members of the situation to see if they can be positively articulated to the event through the name they have illegally declared. The ensemble of the positive results of these enquiries is a truth, which is generic or indiscernible with respect to the state-language-knowledge apparatus. The subject forces the veridicity of this truth with respect of the contemporary structuration of the situation, thereby changing it by introducing new names and new knowledge, with an eye to the completed infinitude of the truth in question. Such is the course of the subject according to Badiou's account in *Being and Event*. In his own words, he summarises it as follows:

⁵⁸ "Beyond Formalisation: An Interview [with Peter Hallward and Bruno Bosteels]," trans. Bruno Bosteels and Alberto Toscano, *Angelaki* 9:2 (2003), 132.

A subject is what deals with the generic indiscernibility of a truth, which it accomplishes amidst discernible finitude, by a nomination whose referent [an event] is suspended from the future anterior of a condition. A subject is thus, by the grace of names, both the *real* of the procedure (the enquiring of the enquiries) and the *hypothesis* that its unfinishable result will introduce some newness into presentation. A subject emptily names the universe to-come which is obtained by the supplementation of the situation with an indiscernible truth.

(BE 399/438)

Thus we arrive at the end of the great arc that governs *Being and Event*, a great book of speculative thought. We now have in hand a solid understanding of the main categories of Badiou's thought during the period of his most sustained and detailed treatment of Deleuze, namely being, the event, subject and truth. This provides essential background for the reading of *The Clamor of Being* which is to follow. By making sense of these categories as Badiou understands them, we will be able to see as we proceed the manner in which his own particular way of understanding such cardinal concepts inflects and even at times dominates his reading of Deleuze. It is to this that we will turn now.

Chapter Two: Is Deleuze a Philosopher of the One?

Behind difference there is nothing.
Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*

Introduction

The claim which determines Badiou's entire reading of Deleuze is infamous: "This philosophy is organised around a metaphysics of the One." (DCB 17/30) As philosopher of the One, Badiou claims that Deleuze has for the most part been remarkably successful. We are dealing, that is, not with a failed or impossible philosophical project, but one which Deleuze has more or less successfully executed on behalf of contemporary thought.⁵⁹ The closing lines of *The Clamor of Being* invoke Deleuze as "truly a most eminent apostle" (DCB 102/150) of the Spinoza for whom Being is radically unary in nature. If, as I will come to argue, Badiou's argument on this point fails, then the veracity of the rest of his reading of Deleuze is profoundly undermined.

This chapter does not endeavour in itself to argue for this conclusion. My goal here is to briefly canvas the central aspects of Badiou's interpretation, and to consider some preliminary points of reference in Deleuze. In other words, this chapter initiates a procedure of *testing*, in which Badiou's claims about Deleuze are contrasted with the Deleuzian text. As we proceed, an increasingly rich picture of Deleuze will progressively determine both Badiou's Deleuze and Deleuze himself.

Portrait of Deleuze as a neo-Plotinian

The argumentative chain by which Badiou asserts this fundamental claim of his reading of Deleuze is founded upon what the former describes as a kind of pre-ontological move or decision of Deleuze's, and is followed by what Badiou characterises as the "two abstract theses in which this principle is unfolded." (DCB 24/39)

Badiou begins the first chapter of *The Clamor of Being* by noting a claim that Deleuze makes throughout his work, from *Bergsonism* onwards: that the One-Many dyad is insufficient for thinking either difference or being. However, Badiou claims that Deleuze's renunciation of this dyad is not radical, and that rather than moving to another concept to replace it, Deleuze in fact deploys the dyad hierarchically, asserting the supervenience of the One over the Many. He writes that, "as always with Deleuze, going beyond a static (quantitative) opposition always turns out to involve the *qualitative* raising up of one of its terms." (DCB 10/19) Thus, in contrast to his reception as one of the "bearded militants of 1968" (DCB 12/22), a serious and philosophical reading of Deleuze reveals that it is the One rather than the Multiple which is raised to the superior position.⁶⁰

On the basis of this decision in thought, Badiou claims, we can identify in Deleuze's philosophy two correlative theses. The first of these concerns the superior side of the dyad, the One. According to Badiou, Deleuze does not think that Being is One in either a numerical sense ("thought has already abdicated if it supposes that there is a single and same Being." [DCB 24/39])

⁵⁹ Interestingly, as we'll see in chapter four below, Badiou's only substantial immanent critique of Deleuze's philosophy is that it *fails* to maintain its status of a thought of the one and slips into a form of dualism.

⁶⁰ Indeed, Badiou claims to have been was "among the first, if not the first, to have treated Deleuze as a philosopher." (TW 69) In the final chapter below, the question of the relationship between quality and quantity in Deleuze is directly addressed.

or as a quasi-mystical tautological thought (“the One is the One” [DCB 24/39]). Rather, the ipseity of Being is formulated through the claim that the unity of Being is not broken by the “existence of multiple *forms* of Being.” (DCB 24/39) The philosopher that Badiou evokes in companionship with Deleuze at this point is Spinoza: “this is true of Spinoza’s Substance, which is immediately expressed by an infinity of attributes.” (DCB 25/40)⁶¹ Thus Badiou’s first thesis is that, for Deleuze, “the multiple acceptations of being must be understood as a formal multiple, while *the One alone is real*.” (DCB 25/40); emphasis added) Neither numerical, logically tautological or formal, the unity of being is – in keeping with the reference to Spinoza – fundamentally substantial or quidditative.

The assertion of the merely formal nature of the multiple, or the regime of the plurality of beings, is Badiou’s second thesis. Badiou writes that “In each form of Being, there are to be found ‘individuating differences’ that may well be named beings [. . .] beings are local degrees of intensity or inflections of power that are in constant movement and entirely singular.” (DCB 25/40)

Badiou indeed goes on to strengthen this claim: given that “there is, definitively, only the One-All,” (DCB 25/40) the ontological status of the multiple is effectively *nothing in itself*. This is perhaps a surprising claim to make of Deleuze. Badiou notes here (and at a number of other key junctions of his text that we will return to) that

the price one must pay for inflexibly maintaining the thesis of univocity is clear: given that the multiple (of beings, of significations) is arrayed in the universe by way of a numerical difference that is purely formal as regards the forms of being to which it refers (thought, extension, time, etc.) and purely modal with regards its individuation, it follows that, ultimately, the multiple can only be of the order of simulacra. And if one classes – as one should – every difference without a real status, every multiplicity whose ontological status is that of the One, as a simulacrum, then the world of beings is the theatre of the simulacra of Being.
(DCB 26/41)

In short, given that Being falls on the side of the One, the multiple (or beings) have no being of their own: they are phantoms, *phantasmata*, mere simulacra. For Badiou, Deleuze’s philosophy relentlessly plunges the apparent reality of beings into the more fundamental realm of the One-All, and as a result the former appear essentially and increasingly “irreal, indetermined, and finally non-objective.” (DCB 53/81)

Now, this characterisation bears the greatest similarity to an ontological position with a long and complex history in Western philosophy, what Deleuze calls the *emanative* schema. Emanative ontologies assert precisely these two theses, whereby the apparent richness of the material world is but a manifestation of a superior reality. The great figure at the root of this tradition (of course, that is, other than Parmenides) is Plotinus, and a version

⁶¹ We might immediately question this analogy on the grounds that for Spinoza, Substance is indeed numerically one. This issue will be somewhat addressed below in the discussion of emanative ontology.

of his philosophy is quite legible in Badiou's account of Deleuze. The quote above finishes with the following thought:

Strangely, this consequence has a Platonic, or even Neoplatonic, air to it. It is as though the paradoxical or supereminent One immanently engenders a procession of beings whose univocal sense it distributes, while they refer to its power and have only a semblance of being.
(DCB 26/41-2)

If there is any doubt about Badiou's view on this point, we need only consider the passage that opens his *Number and Numbers*, published four years after *Being and Event*:

The Greek thinkers of number related it back to the One, which, as we can still see in Euclid's *Elements*, was considered not to be a number. From the supra-numeric being of the One, unity is derived. And a number is a collection of units, an addition. Underlying this conception is a problematic that stretches from the Eleatics through to the Neoplatonists: that of a procession of the Multiple from the One.
(NN 7)

In keeping with this view, the role of the philosopher is that of the seer, in the literal sense of the word: the one who sees through the ephemera of apparent reality to the *profundus* of the One. And this is precisely what Badiou claims is decisive for the philosopher on the Deleuzian mold (and we will see this in more detail in the next chapter when the issue of Deleuze's method is examined): "We have to admit an equivocity of *that of which* Being is said: its immanent modalities, that is, its beings. But this is not what is fundamental for the philosopher." (DCB 25/41)

Is Deleuze a philosopher of the One?

In order to challenge Badiou's central argument – for this is what I would like to do – it is not enough to simply cite the many passages in Deleuze that would seem to depart from Badiou's presentation – a procedure which may be necessary but would not be sufficient. What is required is the examination of the consequences of this central claim as it is unfolded in Deleuze's philosophy, when compared with the consequences Badiou draws from his reading. It is the gap between these consequences that indicates the fidelity or otherwise of Badiou's reading to Deleuze's thought.

As I noted above, these consequences are elaborated throughout the entire course of Badiou's engagement with Deleuze. This means that a final judgment must be withheld until all of the key issues have been examined. As I have indicated in the Introduction, the chapters which follow engage with five such issues, issues which are also at the heart of Badiou's own philosophy: method, the structure of being (the virtual in Deleuze), truth (in relation to time for Badiou), the event, and finally the subject (and the nature of thought). Here, I will seek to briefly, in an introductory mode, examine certain specific texts found throughout Deleuze's philosophy which depart from Badiou's reading as we have seen it above. Each of them presents more or less starkly a philosophical investment that deviates from the

presentation of Deleuze as finally a philosopher of the One. These moments are: the theme of substantive multiplicity; the nature of univocity as Deleuze accounts for it; the nature of simulacra; the theme of crowned anarchy; and Deleuze's own account of emanation (and what he considers to be its definitive supercessor, expression). Each of these introduces *in fine* a dissonance into the refrain of the One.

From One-Many to substantive multiplicity

The first remark that demands to be made here concerns in a direct fashion the alleged primacy of the One: contrary to Badiou, Deleuze's rejection of the One-Multiple *dispositif* is never followed by "the *qualitative* raising up of one of its terms." In fact, this critical rejection is "always" (DCB 9/19) followed by a very different move, namely by replacing the entire dyad with a new concept, that of a non-adjectival and substantive concept of multiplicity, irreducibly plural in nature. In Badiou's account of Deleuze's ontology, the word 'multiplicity' only ever appears in places where it is clearly interchangeable with the word 'multiple' (eg. DCB 26/41), which erases at the level of terminology this very important theme in Deleuze.

It is all the more peculiar that Badiou does not recognise the perennial nature of this move of Deleuze's, because he time and time again asserts that the fundamental conflict between his thought and that of Deleuze concerns the status of multiplicities.⁶² And in Deleuze's philosophy, the theme of multiplicity is *everywhere premised by a critique not of the relative subordination of the One to the Many, but by rejecting this dyad outright*. While many examples might be called upon, I will present only two: the first is from *Bergsonism*, in the text that Deleuze first introduces his interest in the concept of multiplicity, the second is an example that Badiou himself introduces in discussing this topic, found in Deleuze's later work *Foucault*. These texts, published twenty years apart, show no divergence at all in their characterisation of multiplicity, something which cannot be said for many of Deleuze's other concepts, as we will see in the following chapters.

While the second chapter of *Bergsonism* presents itself as an analysis of the psycho-personal theory of duration elaborated by Bergson early in his work, it is in fact largely dedicated to elaborating Bergson's theory of multiplicity, drawn from GBR Reimann and strongly endorsed by Deleuze, who writes:

Too little importance has been attached to the use of this word 'multiplicity'. It is not a part of the traditional vocabulary at all [. . .] The word 'multiplicity' is not there as a vague noun corresponding to the well-known philosophical notion of the Multiple in general.
(B 38-9)

Later in the same chapter he adds that

A very important aspect of the notion of multiplicity is the way in which it is distinguished from a theory of the One and the Multiple. The notion of multiplicity saves us from thinking in terms of 'One and Multiple.' [. . .] In fact, it is the category of multiplicity [. . .] which enables us to condemn the mystification of a thought that

⁶² For example DCB 47-8/71-2.

operates in terms of the One and the Multiple.
(B 44; 47)⁶³

Despite the fact that this account of multiplicity is embedded in a discussion of Bergsonian *durée*, in *Foucault* we find similar points in an entirely different (if not antithetical) context. Speaking of Foucault's concept of the *statement* [énoncé] as it is found in *The Archeology of Knowledge*, Deleuze claims that

They are multiplicities. It was Riemann in the field of physics and mathematics who dreamt up the notion of 'multiplicity' and different kinds of multiplicities. The philosophical importance of this notion then appeared in Husserl's *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, and in Bergson's *Time and Free Will*⁶⁴ [. . .] But the notion died out in these two areas, either because it became obscured by a newly restored simple dualism arising from a distinction made between genres, or because it tended to assume the status of an axiomatic system. Nonetheless, the core of the notion is the constitution of a substantive in which 'multiple' ceased to be a predicate opposed to the One [. . .] Multiplicity remains completely indifferent to the traditional problems of the multiple and the one [. . .] *There is neither one nor multiple.*

(F 13-4tm; emphasis added)

In both cases, two points are evident: on the one hand, in no way does Deleuze proceed from a rejection or critique of the One-Many dyad to an assertion of the qualitative supercession of the One. In fact, to the contrary, Deleuze perennially claims that the One-Many dyad *as such* must be surpassed by a new or renovated concept of substantive multiplicity. What is also remarkable about these passages is the sense that they are directly addressing Badiou's presentation of Deleuze as a thinker of the One. It seems quite implausible to maintain this claim of Deleuze in the face of his direct rejections of the alternatives and misunderstandings that the concept has been subject to. Of course we must add that Deleuze's theory of multiplicity may in itself be insufficient. This point though in no way weakens the persistent role of multiplicity as the concept which overthrows the entirety of the One-Many dyad for Deleuze – a point which *The Clamor of Being* never registers. Also strange is the fact that, given Badiou's numerous assertions that the root of the divergence between himself and Deleuze lies in their respective theories of multiplicity, he seems to have failed to grasp the very first philosophical move that sets up everything else that Deleuze will come to say about multiplicity as such – but we are not there yet.


⁶³ In fact, B 38-47 presents a lengthy and extremely sharp critique of the One-Many dyad, as concepts that "like baggy clothes, are much too big," (B 44) lacking in the precision necessary for a thorough-going ontology capable of thinking the import of duration for the theory of being.

⁶⁴ The translator of *Foucault*, Seán Hand, provides his own translation of the title of Bergson's *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* [*Essay on the Immediate Given of Awareness*]. The standard English version of the text, however, is entitled *Time and Free Will*, which I have substituted here.

The univocity of being⁶⁵

Despite the concept of univocity being one of the more well-known tropes in Deleuze's philosophy, its sense and specific role is not grasped as well as it might be. The following citation, which contains the subtitle of Badiou's *Deleuze* is exemplary:

There has only ever been one ontological proposition: Being is univocal. There has only ever been one ontology, that of Duns Scotus, which gave being a single voice. We say Duns Scotus because he was the one who elevated univocal being to the highest point of subtlety, albeit at the price of abstraction. However, from Parmenides to Heidegger it is the same voice which is taken up, in an echo which itself forms the whole deployment of the univocal. A single voice raises the clamor of being.
(DR 35/52)

We can begin our explication of the meaning of univocity for Deleuze by noting this surprising reference to Duns Scotus. In a series of ces, Nathan Widder demonstrates four fundamental aspects of Scotist univocity that must be kept in mind when reading Deleuze's treatment of the concept, found for the most part in important moments of both *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*.⁶⁶

Firstly, the concept originates with and finds its sole champion in (as a part of the pantheon of figures that Deleuze discusses) the work of Duns Scotus himself. While in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze also lists Spinoza and Nietzsche as thinkers of univocal being, neither of these philosophers speak of univocity as such. Secondly, the key resource for Scotus is the philosophy of Aristotle. In fact, for Scotus, it is Aristotle who is the first thinker of univocity. The sense of the famous Aristotelian dictum according to which 'Being is not a genus'⁶⁷ on Scotus' account is that the various genres or primary senses in which being is said (substance, modality, time, etc.) are said equally. He writes that

it is clear that "being" has a primacy of commonness in regard to the primary intelligibles, that is, to the quidditative concepts of the genera, species, individuals, and all their essential parts, and to the Uncreated Being.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ On Deleuze's account of univocity, see the definitive presentation by Daniel W. Smith, "The Doctrine of Univocity. Deleuze's ontology of immanence" in *Deleuze and Religion*, ed. Mary Bryden (London: Routledge, 2001), 167-183.

⁶⁶ See "The Rights of the Simulacra: Deleuze and the Univocity of Being," *Continental Philosophy Review* 34, 4 (2001), 437-53; the fifth chapter of *Genealogies of Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); and "John Duns Scotus" in *Deleuze's Philosophical Lineage*, ed. Graham Jones and Jon Roffe (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 27-43.

⁶⁷ Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, ed. and trans. Jonathan Barnes (London: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), Bk. 2 §7; 57. For an unusually clear reading of this text, see the remarks from Heidegger's 1931 lecture course, "Oneness of Being – Not as Genus but as Analogy", in *Aristotle's Metaphysics Theta 1-3: On the Essence and Actuality of Force*, trans. Brogan and Warnek (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 27-34 and ff.

⁶⁸ John Duns Scotus, *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Allan Wolter (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 4.

Thus – in accordance with Badiou’s reading of univocity and the thesis of the One in Deleuze – univocity for Scotus, as he says, is fundamentally quidditative in nature.

This leads us in turn to the third point. While every being is equal in this quidditative sense, *particular* beings cannot be thought exclusively according to univocal being. For Scotus, something exceeds univocity, namely particular beings, or what he calls *haecceities*. Thus ontology and individuation come to be treated separately for essential reasons. In other words, it is only quidditative reality – or to be more precise, reality *qua* being – which is univocal; the reality of particular haecceity exceeds this consideration, is unintelligible to human reason, and thus falls beyond the ambit of affirmation.⁶⁹ It is for this reason that Deleuze describes Scotus’ thought of univocity as neutral in nature (DR 39/57), asserting a common Being in general while being unable to affirm the univocal status of beings as such.

Fourthly and finally, Deleuze’s account of univocity on his own terms definitively breaks with the Scotist position, and in two respects (both of them related to Scotus’ Aristotelian heritage).⁷⁰ At the level of greatest generality, he rejects the use of categories in thinking being insofar as they multiply the senses of being. Thus for Deleuze Aristotle’s account only manages a quasi-univocity of being, deployed across the categories, which is to say that the univocity Scotus finds in Aristotle is there subordinate to an ontological equivocation which ruins it. On the other hand, Deleuze wants to extend univocity to singular individuals, which Duns Scotus’ philosophy expressly forbids. In particular, the ultimate goal for Deleuzean univocity is the affirmation of the univocal being for precisely haecceities as such, the anomalous, difference-in-itself. The locus of Deleuzean univocity is thus an inversion of Scotus’: rather than providing an ontology capable of including beings of the greatest extrinsic difference in the same quidditative sense of being, it is the rights of sub-conceptual differences which are at issue.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Though they are in principle intelligible: “I grant that the singular is *per se* intelligible as far as it itself goes. But [...] it is not *per se* intelligible to some intellect – say, to ours.” Duns Scotus, John, “Six Questions on Individuation from His *Ordinatio*, II. d. 3, part 1, qq. 1-6” in *Five Texts on the Mediaeval Problem of Universals* Ed. And Trans. V. Spade (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishers, 1994), 112 n192.

⁷⁰ Deleuze’s critique of Aristotle which opens Chapter One of *Difference and Repetition* already outlines the locus of these critiques: at both ends of the spectrum of difference (the categories and individuation), Aristotle’s philosophy constitutes a failure of nerve. On the one hand, the most precise that the conceptual thought of difference can become on Aristotle’s account is the level of species (differences between individuals are inessential or beneath intelligible distinction), and thus no *ratio existendi* in the Leibnizian sense – and here is one reason for Leibniz’ manifest superiority *vis-à-vis* Aristotle – could every be provided for individuals (why this singular being here and now?) On the other hand, Being as such can just as little be subject to thought, since it is only intelligible through the categories. In other words, the quasi-univocity of the categories actually forecloses any capacity to think the univocity of Being.

⁷¹ Of course, as Deleuze is quite aware, Scotus’ decisions in this regard are wedded to his theological commitments. The following text from *Expressionism in Philosophy* is emblematic: “univocity in Scotus seems compromised by a concern to avoid pantheism. For his theological, that is to say ‘creationist’, perspective forced him to conceive univocal Being as a *neutralized, indifferent* concept [...] With Spinoza univocity becomes the object of a pure affirmation.” (EPS 67) This passage echoes and expands upon the text found at DR 39 mentioned above (“That is why he only *thought* univocal being”).

As these points already make apparent, it seems that Deleuze' use of univocity – and particularly his deviation from the Aristotelianism of Duns Scotus – is a poor fit for Badiou's reading. The fourth point is particularly instructive, for Badiou claims in passing that it is "Duns Scotus who is perhaps the most radical" (DCB 24/39) thinker of univocity for Deleuze (when compared with the Stoics, Spinoza and Nietzsche). Later in the chapter, when we turn to a discussion of Spinoza, more will be said on this point.

As we have seen, Badiou's account of univocity in Deleuze is presented as two complementary theses. When we examine Deleuze's own formulation of the theme, we find the same form, but a content which deviates from Badiou's presentation. The first of these propositions we have already seen: being is said in a single way. There is in no way a "division within Being or plurality of ontological senses." (DR 303/387) We have seen how this corresponds to the posit of the One prior to all beings on Badiou's account. Deleuze's second thesis though is provoked by the recognition that this first claim leaves itself open to a certain potential misinterpretation: "It is true that such a point of view is not sufficient to prevent us from considering these senses [of being] as analogues and this unity of being as an analogy." (DR 35/52) We can add, in light of Badiou's reading, that Deleuze's first thesis is not sufficient to prevent us from considering the unity of being in question as *the* substantive reality from which all other beings proceed as simulacra or emanations. This is because the first thesis says nothing about the manner in which this univocity relates to beings as such – that is to say, several possibilities exists for resolving this question. Beings may be expressed analogically (Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas), non-analogically but still equivocally (Descartes, Leibniz), emanatively (Plotinus, Proclus, Maimonides) or univocally. Thus Deleuze adds the following crucial thesis, which is repeated as a corrective to the first at a number of places in both *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*:

We must add that being, this common designated, in so far as it expresses itself, is said in a single and same sense of all the numerically distinct designators and expressors [. . .] In effect the essential in univocity is not that Being is said in a single and same sense, *but that it is said, in a single and same sense, of all its individuating differences or intrinsic modalities*. Being is the same for all these modalities, but these modalities are not the same. It is 'equal' for all, but they themselves are not equal. It is said of all in a single sense, but they themselves do not have the same sense. The essence of univocal being is to include individuating differences, while these differences do not have the same essence and do not change the essence of being [. . .] it is said of difference itself. (DR 36/53; emphasis added)

While for Deleuze what is decisive in this formulation is that what is univocally expressed is difference (keeping in mind one of the charges of *Difference and Repetition*), for us here it is the fact that what is affirmed by univocal being is not itself as One, but beings in themselves. This second thesis is supplemented by the claims of *The Logic of Sense*: it is not just beings, but also events and sense themselves which are said in the same way. There is no division in Being between beings, the sense which they

themselves express, or the events which inhere in changes in states of affairs. (LS 180/211)

What then ultimately does the unity of univocity refer us to, if not a substantive unity as Badiou would have it? Finally it comes to this: univocity signifies the unity of the *manner in which beings are expressed*. There is no Substance behind beings, a point that Deleuze's theory of time reaffirms, as we will see in chapter five. Beings all express or maintain their being in the same way, although they themselves are differences.

In this respect, it is interesting to note that in his review of *The Fold*, Badiou asserts of Deleuze's ontology that it is, like Leibniz', a mannerism. This text, published several years before *The Clamor of Being*, differs from the latter on the topic of univocity, touching something essential in Deleuze's project. Indeed, mannerism is a fine term to describe Deleuze's ontology. The two theses of univocity in Deleuze can be condensed into the single claim that beings are all expressed in the *same manner*, even though they differ, both from each other and (intrinsically) from themselves.

In sum then, and contrary to Badiou's reading, Deleuze's ontology seems to have no place for Being as such, Being as the supreme *Ens*, radiant in its splendid isolation.⁷² The substantive here is completely dissolved in favour of a modality or a manner of being. To use the Bergsonian-inflected terminology found in the Conclusion of *Difference and Repetition*, the ground of beings, when followed around the bend beyond which experience can no longer grasp it, completely dissolves in both form and content, becoming pure difference.⁷³ This is why Deleuze's discussion of univocity turns finally to a reformation of the Nietzschean theme of the eternal return, insofar as, for Deleuze, what the eternal return categorically excludes from being is any unity, fundamental or otherwise. Thus he writes that

eternal return is the univocity of being, the effective realisation of that univocity. In the eternal return, univocal being is not only thought and even affirmed, but effectively realised. Being is said in a single and same sense, but this sense is that of eternal return as the return or repetition of that of which it is said. The wheel in the eternal return is at once both the production of repetition on the basis of difference and the selection of difference on the basis of repetition.

(DR 41-2/60-1)

⁷² This is not to say that "There is no Deleuzean ontology," as François Zourabichvili claims. The key stake in Deleuze's most important works is that ontology must become an ontology of difference, an ontology of multiplicity, and no longer an ontology of the one – the same claim, let's recall that opens *Being and Event*. It is Zourabichvili's assent to the necessity of this connection that motivates his rejection of ontology: "If Deleuze's philosophy has an orientation, it is certainly this: the extinction of the name of 'being', and, as a result, that of ontology." *Une philosophie de l'événement*, in Marrati, Sauvagnargues and Zourabichvili, *La philosophie de Deleuze* (Paris: PUF, 2005), 6; 7. Likewise, I think it an exaggeration to claim that "It is not ontology in itself that interests Deleuze, but rather [...] the moment of its history in which the thesis of univocity emerges," (9) since Deleuze clearly and in numerous texts engages with clear relish in discussions of non-univocal ontological positions.

⁷³ In chapter four, devoted to the theme of the virtual, we will return in some detail to Deleuze's theory of the ground, in order to examine Badiou's claim that the former's philosophy includes a classical theory of the ground.

In other words, the manner in which being is unified excludes in principle any settling out of identity, unicity or the One. Indeed, the eternal return involves the inverse of a centrifugal movement: instead of everything solid consolidating itself at the foundation, it is cast out in favour of what is fortuitous or different. Anticipating discussions to follow in later chapters, for Deleuze univocity only succeeds insofar as it subjects beings to an ultimate ungrounding. It is only when difference itself is the object of affirmation that being becomes univocal, irrevocably unmoored from the foundation of the One. We will return to many of these points over the coming chapters.

Before continuing, however, let's note another important piece of evidence against Badiou's reading of Deleuze. As we have just seen, Deleuze's emphasis in the presentation of univocity in *Difference and Repetition* is on difference and the multiple, not the one. This is why he writes that "the essential in univocity is not that Being is said in a single and same sense, but that it is said, in a single and same sense, of all its individuating differences or intrinsic modalities." (DR 36/53) It is therefore peculiar to see Badiou dismiss this aspect of Deleuze's account with the strong words we have already seen: "We have to admit an equivocity of *that of which* Being is said: its immanent modalities, that is, its beings. But this is not what is fundamental for the philosopher." (DCB 25/41)

Simulacrum⁷⁴

If we turn now to Badiou's treatment of the second half of the One-Many dyad (having considered univocity as the eminent figure for the first), we know that the Many are figured – on his account – as lacking in any being of their own. They are emanations of the One, which Badiou defines with one of Deleuze's most well-known terms, *simulacra*. A being is a simulacrum of Being. It is far from certain, however, that Deleuze's own account of simulacra can be squared with Badiou's use of the term in his account of Deleuze's ontology.

Despite Deleuze's claim to Jean-Clet Martin that, "it seems to me that I have totally abandoned the notion of simulacra, which was never of great importance," (DRF 339) there is no question that this concept played a key role in both *Difference and Repetition* (where it is dealt with in a number of different contexts) and *The Logic of Sense* (where it organises four of the five appendices at the close of that work).

What role does it play there? In the first instance, the concept of the simulacrum appears in Deleuze in the context of his version of the overturning of Platonism.⁷⁵ What is in question here is the structure that Deleuze takes to be at the heart of Plato's philosophy, namely the relationship between the Forms (or Ideas), material or empirical copies of these Forms (what Plato calls *icônes*), and the perverse copies of these

⁷⁴ See Daniel Smith's superlative and exhaustive article, which presents the entire course of this concept in Deleuze's thought: "The concept of the simulacrum: Deleuze and the overturning of Platonism" *Continental Philosophy Review* 38 (2006), 89-123.

⁷⁵ It is worth noting that this much cited appendix (first published in 1967) to *The Logic of Sense* is in fact a very close rehearsal of the end of the first chapter of *Difference and Repetition*.

copies (what Plato calls *phantasmata* and Deleuze *simulacra*).⁷⁶ Plato's philosophy, as a result, frequently takes the form of a test of claimants: who is just? what is love? who should rule? who is the philosopher (or rather, who is the sophist?) This is also the grounds on which Plato denigrates the figure of the artist or the poet, insofar as they have commerce with the third tier, false copies (the painting presents a likeness of something in the material world which itself a proper or legitimate copy of the Form in question).

Put differently – and this is at the heart of Deleuze's account of the issue – what matters for Plato is the capacity to distinguish between the first-order copies of the Forms (the just man in accordance with the Form of Justice) on the one hand, and the second-order copies of copies, those semblants which differ internally from that which they appear to copy, the simulacra, on the other: the ultimate sense of the tripartite division of model/copy/simulacrum is “to screen the claims and to distinguish the true pretender from the false one.” (LS 254) For it is only the first that bear the Form in question with propriety, whereas the latter only *appear* to be legitimate copies, while lacking any interior or essential relation with the Forms at all.⁷⁷

Deleuze draws from this the point central to his championing of the concept of simulacrum:

If we say of the simulacrum that it is a copy of a copy, an infinitely degraded icon, and infinitely loose resemblance, we then miss the essential, that is, the difference in nature between simulacrum and copy [. . .] The copy is an image endowed with resemblance, the simulacrum is an image without resemblance.
(LS 257/297)

What lies at the heart of the Platonic effort to distinguish the good copy from the bad is the fact that the simulacra contains an explosive creative power which Deleuze will later go on to call the power of the false, the capacity to integrally *produce* reality without any recourse to a transcendent model, rather than represent what are apparently the most profound elements which pre-exist *in reality*. And whereas for Plato this is what was most dangerous or subversive about them, this is precisely what Deleuze considers to be

⁷⁶ The concept of the simulacrum is of course pursued by other thinkers too, most famously perhaps by Jean Baudrillard – the *locus classicus* (if such a term is appropriate for this harlequin figure) is without a doubt *Simulations*, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman (New York: Seimiotext(e), 1983). Closer to Deleuze, however, is Pierre Klossowski, who Deleuze devotes key passages in *Difference and Repetition* to, along with an appendix (“Klossowski, or Bodies-Languages”). On Deleuze's use of and interest in Klossowski, see Ian James “Pierre Klossowski” in *Deleuze's Philosophical Lineage*, 339-55; on Klossowski's thought more generally, see Ian James' fine study *The Persistence of a Name* (London: Legenda, 2001). See also Ashley Woodward's piece in *Interpretations of Nietzsche*, ed. Ashley Woodward (London: Continuum, forthcoming), on Klossowski's reading of Nietzsche, which had an important impact on Deleuze.

⁷⁷ Now, Deleuze also notes that, at least in the *Sophist*, there is a moment at which the entire edifice begins to lose its structural integrity: “Plato discovers, in the flash of an instant as he leans over its abyss, that the simulacrum is not simply a false copy, but that it calls into question the very notion of the copy . . . and of the model” (LS 294). This is the reason why Deleuze notes in *Difference and Repetition* (128) that the overturning of Platonism begins in Plato himself. On this point, see Gregory Flaxman's ‘Plato’ in *Deleuze's Philosophical Lineage*, in particular 18-24.

their profound value for any serious ontology. For the concept of the simulacra, productive and untethered, accounts for being itself. Rather than being fallen and second-hand copies of things and Forms, “The thing is the simulacrum itself, the simulacra are the superior forms.” (DR 67/93tm)

The key point in summary is thus the following: rather than expressing one half of the One-Many dyad, simulacra is meant to convey something about *beings in general*, namely that the structure of being as such in no way involves a division between the regime of the ideal, self-identical, superior, supereminent and that of inferior material, ephemeral products. Rather, being must be thought *solely* as simulacra: “By simulacrum we should not understand a simple imitation but rather the act by which the very idea of a model or privileged position is challenged and overturned.” (DR 69/95) It would be exceedingly difficult to understand the affinity Deleuze feels with the ontology of images espoused by Bergson, nor the philosophy of the cinema which is related to it, without grasping this point.

This point is itself only intelligible once Badiou’s radical division between the One and simulacra is left to one side. However, one part of this account is correct here: simulacra are indeed beings, singular existents, for Deleuze. They are images without any corresponding model. However, this does not mean that they are but ontological epiphenomena, flickers crossing the synapses of Being: they are what is integral to being as such. The One appears in turn as an epiphenomena of the play of simulacra, and *not the reverse*.

Crowned anarchy and the disjunctive synthesis

In the course of the first chapter of *The Clamor of Being*, Badiou touches on one of the more evocative images found in Deleuze’s *Difference and Repetition*, that of ‘crowned anarchy’, which is introduced in the discussion of univocity that we have seen above. There, Deleuze writes:

The words ‘everything is equal’ may therefore resound joyfully, on condition that they are said of that which is not equal in this equal, univocal Being [. . .] Univocity of being thus signifies equality of being. Univocal Being is at one and the same time nomadic distribution and crowned anarchy.
(DR 37/55)

To this, Badiou responds: “One should not be misled by the use of the word ‘anarchy’ to designate the nomadism of singularities, for Deleuze specifies ‘crowned anarchy’, and it is crucial to think also – indeed, to think above all – the crown.” (DCB 13/23) For Badiou, this is because the crown is the sign of the One, the mark carried by each individual being of its ultimate ground in the One-Being.

Once more, however, Badiou’s reading of this moment proceeds by substantialising the moment of univocity rather than grasping it as manner. Ultimately, the role of the ‘crown’ here is the role of univocal affirmation of what is crowned, namely the in principle non-hierarchical nature of being. In other words, what is crucial to think is the *manner* in which the anarchy of beings (DR 37/55) is crowned, and how this allows us to distinguish it from

the hierarchy involved in analogical accounts of being (what Deleuze calls “the first hierarchy” [DR 37/55]).

This point can also be used to grasp in an initial manner, the sense that Deleuze wishes to give to the term ‘disjunctive synthesis’.⁷⁸ On Badiou’s account, what of central importance here is the moment of synthesis, where each of the disjunctive singularities or simulacra are brought together or grounded in the supreme reality of the One. However, this is very much to the contrary of the Deleuzian text. If we turn our attention to the key central chapters of *The Logic of Sense* (notably those devoted to causality, singularity, genesis and the compossibility of events), which we will come back to in chapter eight, a different account can be found. It is certainly the case that Deleuze claims a unity of all events in a single Event. What is in question, however, is precisely the nature of the unity involved. It is this that characterises what Deleuze calls “*Eventum tantum*,” (LS 176/207) and here Badiou’s error seems to involve forcing the figure of the One on the nature of the internal relations characteristic of this Event.⁷⁹

“Divergence and disjunction are affirmed *as such*.” (LS 172/201; emphasis added) But, Deleuze continues:

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, suppressing from within, even if the level of this suppression is supposed to regulate the production of difference as much as its disappearance. To be sure, the identity here is not that of indifference, but it is generally *through identity* that opposites are affirmed at the same time, whether we accentuate one of the opposites in order to find the other, or whether we create a synthesis of the two. We speak, on the contrary, of an operation according to which two things or two determinations are affirmed through their difference, that is to say, that they are the objects of simultaneous affirmation *only insofar as their difference is itself affirmed*.

(LS 172/201-2; latter emphasis added)

The import of this statement is clear: that the disjunctive synthesis that characterises the relations between events, and thus describes the structure of the single Event as such, can only be grasped once the theme of identity is superseded in the direction of a unilateral and immanent account of

⁷⁸ And indeed to the formulation of the theme of ‘nomadic distribution’, introduced at the same time as that of crowned anarchy. Of course, the former suits Badiou’s purposes less well, since it is difficult to abstract a moment of substantial unity in this case (the proposed ‘crown’ in crowned anarchy). In any case, nomadic distribution (a theme that can be found in a number of key texts, including both *Difference and Repetition* and *A Thousand Plateaus*) signifies a distribution lacking any external principle of ordering: beings are arrayed according to their relations with each other, lacking any ultimate *ratio* or *logos*.

⁷⁹ Badiou’s assertion that “this Event with a capital ‘E’” is in all likelihood the “Deleuze’s Good” (DCB 27/44) can indeed be agreed with here, *but only on the condition that* the three central characteristics of the Good in Plato are repudiated: its ontological status as ‘beyond being’, its structural status as self-identical or as ideal ipseity, and its moral characteristic. The Event in Deleuze is certainly that which ruptures the order of material causality, or rather is the champion of a sense which is irreducible to material reality. The apparent eminent unity of this Event will be discussed below in chapter seven.

difference as positive distance.⁸⁰ What is at stake, then, in disjunctive synthesis, is the manner by which differences co-exist *as such*. The synthesis in question does not go beyond this manner of co-existence: it is this manner. The synthesis has no higher moment – or rather, in the spirit of Deleuze’s account of disjunctive synthesis itself, this synthesis is in fact the highest form of synthesis, because it involves no subordination to a finality beyond what is engaged in the synthesis itself.

This quote is revealing in two other respects as well, firstly insofar as it challenges one aspect of Badiou’s central claim about Deleuze. Here Deleuze is insisting that it is difference which inhabits identity, rather than being – on Badiou’s account – excluded from it. It is difference which is superior, interior, and supereminent (in a certain genetic if not ontological respect) to the One. In addition, Deleuze describes and repudiates the very mechanism that Badiou locates at the heart of the assertion of the primacy of the One. To quote again,

As always with Deleuze, [this] going beyond a static (quantitative opposition) always turns out to involve the qualitative raising up of one of its terms. And, contrary to the commonly accepted image [. . .] it is the occurrence of the One – renamed by Deleuze the One-All – that forms the supreme destination of thought.
(DCB 10-11/19)

If indeed this was Deleuze’s central *modus operandi*, it would serve him poorly. In the place of such a movement, in which the reconciliation of opposites is achieved by realizing them within a unity that accentuates one term in relation to another, to the other, Deleuze is – as we have already seen in a schematic form – seeking to secure difference in relation to difference.

Emanation and expression⁸¹

Now, as we have already seen, Badiou’s claim about the status of the One in Deleuze’s philosophy also includes a correlative thesis concerning difference, or the many, namely that beings are simulacra or emanations of this One, epiphenomenal effects whose being is at best ephemeral. Thus his central proposition concerning Deleuze’s ontology is that it is emanative in nature. Badiou’s claim that, for Deleuze, “the univocal real of Being that supports [. . .] difference within itself and distributes to it a single sense,” (DCB 26/42) is an excellent formulation of the emanative schema, where Being is a unique One-Agent, irreducible and distant from its productions and yet their active source. It is worth insisting on this point because

⁸⁰ This idea is briefly discussed in the context of Deleuze’s treatment of intensity in the final chapter of *Difference and Repetition* (DR 234/301-2), a text I will return to below.

⁸¹ A number of the points made here find their compacted form in Deleuze’s short but powerful essay on Maurice de Gandillac, “Les plages d’immanence” (DRF 244-6). We read, for example, the following: “without a doubt the theory [the neo-Platonist theory of emanation] never ceased to [...] subordinate immanence to transcendence, to measure immanent Being according to transcendent Unity.” (244-5) Indeed, it would be possible for this thesis to be entirely structured around this article, which moves from a general consideration of the figures of transcendence and immanence in ontology, to the history of philosophy, and then to the decisions that mark a philosophical life.

Deleuze himself engages directly with emanative forms of ontology, and rejects them in favour of an espousal of expressivism.⁸²

The main text in question is found in his long study of Spinoza, *Expressionism in Philosophy* [*Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*], entitled "Immanence and the Components of Expression". This chapter is devoted to a consideration of the development of certain philosophical themes found in Spinoza's immanent theory of being, notably the development of emanative ontological schemas. Deleuze's essential claim is that post-Platonic philosophy elaborates a new ontology in reaction to Plato, an ontology which is emanative in nature – that is, it concerns a higher unity or One from which particular beings proceed, but which these beings have no causal efficacy in relation to, or degree of reality to be compared with. This post-Platonic emanative ontology finds itself mutated in contact with Christianity, on the side of philosophy, but it also gives rise to or makes room for an alternative schema with which it has much in common, namely expressive ontology, according to which (taking Spinoza as an example), "Substance expresses itself to itself." (EPS 185)

The history of this strain of ontological consideration, whose only real other is the dominant analogical account of being which dominates Christian theology under the influence of Aristotle, carries us on Deleuze's account from Plotinus to Spinoza, a history characterised by a certain compromise between the two positions: "Expressive immanence is grafted onto the theme of emanation, which in part encourages it, and in part represses it." (EPS 178) It is with Spinoza's philosophy (or at least this is the account that is presented in *Expressionism in Philosophy – Difference and Repetition*, the other half of Deleuze's doctoral work, differs in an important respect we will see below) that expressive ontology makes a complete break with its emanative traveling companion. In turn, it is this feature of Spinozism relative to the history of ontology since Plato that Deleuze wishes to champion:

The significance of Spinozism seems to me this: it asserts immanence as a principle and frees expression from any subordination to emanative or exemplary causality. Expression itself no longer emanates, no longer resembles anything. And such a result can be obtained only within a perspective of univocity. (EPS 180)⁸³

⁸² Daniel W. Smith's summary of Deleuze's engagement with the thesis of univocity I noted above includes the same recognition of the emanative scheme in Badiou's interpretation as I have tried to elicit here. He notes, for example, that Badiou "wrongly presents Deleuze's 'univocal ontology' as if it were a neoplatonic 'philosophy of the One. For instance, when Badiou writes that, in Deleuze, 'the paradoxical or super-eminent One engenders, in an immanent manner, a procession of beings, whose univocal sense it distributes' (DCB 26), he is giving an exact description of an *emanative* ontology, not a univocal one. In general, Badiou combines transitive, emanative and immanent elements in his treatment of univocity", "The Doctrine of Univocity", 181-2n19.

The closest Deleuze ever gets to such a view is in the final chapter of *Bergsonism*, in which he draws attention to a rough analogy between Bergson's virtual and the One of "the Platonists" (B 93) – which is, indeed, not very close.

⁸³ It is therefore strange to read Keith Ansell-Pearson's assertion to the contrary in *Philosophy and the The Adventure of the Virtual* (London: Routledge, 2002), when he writes that "In his major study of Spinoza [...] Deleuze's innovation was to pay careful attention to the notion of

Nonetheless, as we have seen, Badiou claims an emanative theory of being for Deleuze. On his account it is less Spinoza than Augustine who must be considered the primary model. For the latter, as Deleuze presents him, “God expresses himself in his Word or in an exemplary Idea; but the exemplary Idea expresses the multiplicity of creatable and created things. [. . .] Expression is like a radiation that leads us from God, who expresses himself, to the things expressed.” (EPS 179) Radiation (a term that Deleuze uses a number of times in this chapter) is an excellent description of what Badiou calls the simulacra of beings, which have only a “semblance of being” (DCB 25/42) on their own terms. Being, or God, would be the pure causal source of these flickers of radiation, playing themselves out on the surface of the immaculate and perfect Sphere.

Now, there are a number of key points of contrast between emanative ontological accounts and what Deleuze takes to be the strictly expressivist account in Spinoza. In the current context, however, it is the issue of causality that presents itself as the most significant. This is because, for Badiou, the One is the sole causal force, being, after all, all that exists (once more, the issue of causality will be returned to on a number of occasions in what follows). What characterises Deleuze’s ontology on Badiou’s account, in turn, is a claim about the causal origins of actual beings in relation to the One. Indeed, on Deleuze’s account, the issue of causality is primary.⁸⁴ The nature of the causal relationship between being and its expressions is precisely what is at issue. Deleuze writes that

While an emanative cause remains in itself, the effect it produces is not in it, and does not remain in it. Plotinus says of the One as first principle or cause of causes: ‘It is because there is nothing in it that all things come from it.’ In reminding us that an effect is inseparable from its cause, he is thinking of a continuity of flow or radiation. (EPS 171-2)

In Spinoza, the alternative to this account of emanative causality (and the poverty of existents that it implies) is the famous *causa sui*: “God is the cause of all things in the same way that he is the cause of himself.”⁸⁵ Rejecting the strictly external nature of the relationship between being and its expressions, Spinoza for Deleuze is the philosopher for whom efficient causality is *the* decisive causal modality. There is no ultimate *telos* of being, nor is there an order of formal reality which has any direct causal efficacy on existing beings (modes).⁸⁶ There is no ontological gap in Spinoza between cause and effect, and every “power is always an act or, at least, in action.”

expression and to show that [...] there are traces of emanationist thinking in Spinoza . . . “ (112)

⁸⁴ This point is strongly argued by Michael Hardt in his *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1993), where *causa sui* assumes a central role in his reading of Deleuze’s philosophy.

⁸⁵ EIP25S.

⁸⁶ This is not to say that other *non-causal* formal elements are not in play. In fact, Deleuze’s account of modal essence in Spinoza holds that it maintains an *expressive* relation with the world of modal existence, in the same way that virtual Ideas relate to the world of actuality in *Difference and Repetition*. For a *tour de force* account of this parallel in Deleuze’s work, see Simon Duffy’s *The Logic of Expression* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), esp. chapter five.

(EPS 93)⁸⁷ Thus Deleuze writes of Spinoza that, “Far from emanating from an eminent Unity, the really distinct attributes constitute the essence of absolutely single substance. Substance is not like a One from which there proceeds a paradoxical distinction; attributes are not emanations” (EPS 182)

Let me insist once more that Deleuze considers Spinoza’s riposte to the complex tradition of emanative ontology a complete success, just as he considers himself a Spinozist in this sense. To quote once more: “The significance of Spinozism seems to me this: it asserts immanence as a principle and frees expression from any subordination to emanative or exemplary causality.” (EPS 180)

This point can also be put in relation to the Platonic theme of participation, concerning which, Deleuze says, “everything may, it seems, be traced back to.” (EPS 169) In effect, emanative and expressive ontologies propose inverse accounts of the nature of the relationship between being and its modalities. The emanative scheme inverts (EPS 170) the Platonic account by concerning itself no longer with particular beings (and asking how they manage to participate in the Ideas), but with that which beings participate in:

The participated does not in fact enter into what participates in it. What is participated remains in itself; it is participated insofar as it produces, and produces insofar as it gives, but has no need to leave itself to give or produce. Plotinus formulates the program of starting at the highest point, subordinating imitation to genesis or production, and substituting the idea of a gift for that of a violence. What is participated is not divided, is not imitated from outside, or constrained by intermediaries which would do violence to its nature. Participation is neither material, nor imitative, nor demonic: it is emanative. Emanation is at once cause and gift: causality by donation, but by productive donation. True activity comes from what is participated; what participates is only an effect, receiving what it is given by its cause.

(EPS 170)

Despite the originality of this view, Deleuze once more aligns himself with Spinoza, for whom

to participate is to have a part in, to be a part of, something. Attributes are so to speak dynamic qualities to which correspond the absolute power of God. A mode is, in its essence, always a certain degree, a certain quantity, of a quality. Precisely thereby it is, within the attribute containing it, a part so to speak of God’s power always participate directly in divine substance.

(EPS 183)

On the expressivist account, “Substance expresses itself to itself.” (EPS 185) We might say in sum that that, for emanative ontologies, participation ultimately tends towards insignificance, since the beings that participate in

⁸⁷ This is also Deleuze’s point in relation to Gilles Châtelet’s Aristoteleanism: “Immanence, the field of immanence, consists of a Power-Act relation. The two notions are inseparable, only existing in correlation. It is this which makes Châtelet an Aristotelian,” *Périclès et Verdi. La Philosophie de François Châtelet* (Paris: Minuit, 1996[1988]), 8.

the One do so at an irremediable divide, or rather according to a radical distinction between the activity of Being and the passivity of its products; for expressive ontologies, it is participation as such which defines the unity of being (there is no One as such, but only the universal *fact* of participation).⁸⁸

Now, to these points we must add that Deleuze, despite nominating himself on many occasions as a Spinozist, ultimately considers the Spinozist philosophy of expression to have a profound weakness. This weakness concerns precisely the priority and primacy of a unified substance therein. After praising Spinoza as the thinker who charged the principle of univocity with an affirmation (the affirmation of expressions as such, rather than of a principled being in general) that Duns Scotus could or did not, Deleuze turns to the third in his trinity of thinkers of univocity, Nietzsche, in order to supplement or radicalise Spinoza himself. On what grounds? In Spinoza, there still remains a difference between substance and the modes.⁸⁹

Spinoza's substance appears independent of the modes, while the modes are dependent on substance, but as though on something other than themselves. Substance must itself be said of the modes and only of the modes. Such a condition can be satisfied only at the price of a more general categorical reversal according to which being is said of becoming, identity of that which is different, the one of the multiple, etc. That identity not be first, that it exist as a principle but as a second principle, as a principle become; that it revolve around the Different: such would be the nature of a Copernican revolution which opens up the possibility of difference having its own concept, rather than being maintained under the domination of a concept in general already understood as identical. (DR 40-1/95)

This striking passage, which seems to contain the kernel of a Deleuzian philosophy of being irreducible to Badiou's account of it, could not be clearer: the problem with Spinoza is the manner in which his account of substance enacts a subordination of difference (the modes) to identity. The final page of *Difference and Repetition* is equally to the point: "All that Spinozism needed to do for the univocal to become an object of pure affirmation was to make substance turn around the modes – *in other words, to realise univocity in the form of repetition in the eternal return.*" (DR

⁸⁸ It is at this point that the ontology pursued by the late Merleau-Ponty tends towards contact with Deleuze. For an argument in this direction, see Jack Reynolds and Jon Roffe, "Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty: Immanence, Univocity and Phenomenology," in *Journal of the British Society of Phenomenology* 37, 3 (2006).

⁸⁹ Deleuze in fact seems to say the opposite in the original French: the passage cited above begins with the claim that "Nevertheless, there still remains an *indifference* between substance and modes [*Pourtant subsiste encore une indifference entre la substance et les modes*]." (DR 40/59tm; emphasis added) There is nonetheless a justification for the inversion in the English translation, however deliberate or accidental, of difference for indifference. The indifference Deleuze is speaking of is relative to the indifference manifested by Scotus with respect to the univocal affirmation of singularity, which, despite Spinoza's advances, returns in the form of a short-changing of the independent ontological status of the mode. In other words, it is precisely insofar as there is a radical ontological *difference* between substance and modes in Spinoza that the modes themselves can only be a matter of *indifference* from the point of view of the affirmation of univocal being.

304/388) The expressive manner of being must no longer be subject to a substantive unity.

So when Badiou asks of Deleuze's allegiance to Spinoza, "What else would a self-proclaimed disciple of Spinoza be concerned with" but the One (TW 78), the response is, of course, as follows:

What interested me most in Spinoza wasn't his Substance, but the composition of finite modes. I consider this one of the most original aspects of my book. That is: the hope of making substance turn on finite modes, or at least of seeing in substance a plane of immanence in which finite modes operate.
(EPS 11)

In other words, what is decisive in Spinoza's philosophy is that "it asserts immanence as a principle and frees expression from any subordination to emanative or exemplary causality," (EPS 180) and what remains problematic is its remaining subordination of the principle of immanence to a primordial substantive unity.

Conclusion

Rather than expounding conclusive claims, the goal of this chapter has been to introduce the idea that there is a meaningful gap between the Deleuzian text and Badiou's reading of it with respect to some themes significant to both Deleuze and to Badiouian construal of his work.

In brief, it seems in an initial sense in which Badiou's direct claims that Deleuze propounds an ontology of the One appear to a large extent mistaken. There is certainly a preoccupation with ontological unity in Deleuze, but this unity is the unity of *manner* rather than the unity of *substance*. The *univocity* of beings, the *being* of the simulacrum, *crowned* anarchy, and the *synthesis* of disjunctives refer us not to a substantial unity or ontological priority of unity (or the One) over diversity (or the Many), but to the manner by which difference can be thought in its being on the basis of an *exclusion of the One*. We might even say that what makes Deleuze unique as a philosopher is the extent to which he provides a rational means of thinking difference (or multiplicity) and the nature of the relations which hold between them. Certainly this is what the concepts examined here are testament to, whether or not we judge them successful.

However significant this divergence may seem at this junction, what has been indicated here must be taken as preliminary, and indeed for Badiou as well. In *The Clamor of Being*, the claim that Deleuze is a philosopher of the One is not supported entirely or even for the most part at the level of the latter's various direct claims about ontology. Rather, Deleuze demonstrates his commitment to such a philosophy in the very way in which his philosophy unfolds – it is as much a methodological commitment or orientation (according to Badiou) as a doctrine. It is the methodological substrate of *The Clamor of Being* that we turn to now.

Chapter Three: Questions of Method

Intuition is the jouissance of difference.
Deleuze, 'Bergson's Conception of Difference'

Introduction

As we have seen briefly in the previous chapter, Badiou's central claim regarding Deleuze – that his philosophy is oriented around the thesis that Being is One – deviates substantially from a number of important moments in the latter's work. However, the strength of Badiou's argument is that this thesis, while being posited as central and uniquely important, is developed in relation to a range of key concepts in Deleuze. As I have already noted, and as we will see in the following chapters, these concepts mirror the four key concepts in *Being and Event*: being (the One, the virtual), the event, truth and subject (thought). In other words, Badiou's claim is not that Deleuze's philosophy is explicitly a meditation on the single question of the One – indeed, he insists from the beginning of his text that the surface of the Deleuzian text is constituted by a massive profusion of particularities (cinema, Kafka, Kant, Carmelo Bene, mathematics, etc. . . .) As Badiou notes, the word 'Being' is one that Deleuze "only uses in a preliminary and limited manner." (DCB 28/45) Rather, Deleuze proceeds by examining a vast array of particular 'simulacra' (*qua* equivocal and ephemeral emanations of the One) in order to establish in thought their common being in the One:

In a considerable part of his work, Deleuze adopts a procedure that, starting from the constraint exercised by a particular case-of-thought – it does not matter if it concerns Foucault or Sacher-Masoch – consists in trying out a name of Being and in constructing a protocol of thought (that is to be as automatic as possible) by which the pertinence of this name can be evaluated with respect to the essential property that one expects it to preserve (or even to reinforce in thought): namely, univocity.
(DCB 28/45)

Thus the fruit of Badiou's reading of Deleuze should be judged not on the explicit endorsement of the emanative theme of the One, but rather with respect to the way that it manifests itself in the particular cases that traverse and constitute Deleuze's thought.

The key to such a reading of Deleuze is presented by Badiou in terms of the former's *method*, to which the lion's share of chapters two and three of *The Clamor of Being* are devoted. That is, on Badiou's account, we can identify a certain structure in Deleuze's treatment of particular cases which engage them in the figure of the One, a structure which is common to all of Deleuze's texts from beginning to end: a virtuoso series of "monotonous productions." (DCB 14/25) It is this insistence of method which forms the hinge around which Badiou's account turns, and on which, more than the thesis of the One, his reading of Deleuze turns. This chapter will thus be devoted to an examination of Badiou's account of Deleuze's method in *The Clamor of Being*, relative to Deleuze's thought.

(Methodological) Theses three and four: nomination and intuition

With the emanative structure in mind, Badiou's account of Deleuze's method can be figured in two moments, or, by adding them to the two ontological theses of the previous chapter, as the third and fourth key claims of *The Clamor of Being*.

The first of these (third thesis) is the following: that in order to think the ontological source of a particular simulacrum, one must think according to a pair of names, the first for Being as One, and the second for the simulacrum which emanates from it. “in order to say that there is a single sense, two names are necessary.” (DCB 28/45) Or, more strongly, “it is by experimentation with as many nominal doublets as is necessary that the verification, under constraint, of the absolute unity of sense is wrought.” (DCB 29/46) Thus ontological thought is essentially a test, an essay. The test operates on the ore of the multiple in order to render the pure matter of the One – or rather, like Descartes’ meditator who examines the idea of the infinite he possesses for that which, beyond his finitude, has marked him, Deleuze would examine each flash of the multiple for what, beyond it, makes its being possible.

At issue according to Badiou is a profound problem – which he takes the methodological establishment of double nomination to solve – concerning the relationship between ontological discourse and being, a problem as we have seen that Badiou is keenly aware of, and deals with directly in the first Meditation of *Being and Event*. In *The Clamor of Being*, and in accordance with Badiou’s construal of Deleuze’s project, the problem is presented as follows:

What, indeed, would be the appropriate name for that which is univocal? And if Being is said in a single sense, how is the sense of this ‘single sense’ to be determined? Or, yet again: is it possible to experiment, to test, whether a name of Being makes sense of univocal sense?
(DCB 27/44tm)

This is the question underlying the third of Badiou’s key theses Deleuze’s philosophy: if the sense of being is unified, how can discourse adequately grasp it, since discourse (being discourse *about*) seems *prima facie* to split the unity of sense? Let’s recognize here a demand in an inverted form that played an important role at the start of *Being and Event*, namely the demand to think being in a fashion appropriate to its character. For Badiou, it is the inexplicable multiplicity of being that calls for an appropriately implicit and axiomatic method; on Badiou’s account, Deleuze’s investment in the philosopheme of the One that demands a novel method involving double nomination.

Badiou’s answer to this question posed on Deleuze’s behalf is – in light of the previous chapter – not difficult to anticipate: for Deleuze, the second name is but a means to discover the superiority of the first, and thus its own inessential character. Like Wittgenstein’s ladder, their use is provisional: “Clearly, this emphasis on the Two is purely introductory.” (DCB 34/54) Certainly, the name chosen for simulacra relative to the One must not be arbitrary; it must provide support to thinking. Its use is finished, however, once the simulacrum in question is adequately articulated with the One. Deleuze’s thought would thus operate in a fashion somewhat analogous to the Jewish mystical tradition, in which the use of various names for God

substitutes for the use of the original and Ineffable Name, whose correct pronunciation has been lost.⁹⁰

To characterise Deleuze's methodology in this way is however preliminary. In fact, double nomination only furnishes us with a structural account of Deleuze's philosophy, one which is more or less derivative of Badiou's fundamental thesis. In chapter three of *The Clamor of Being*, Badiou turns to an account of how such a thought in fact works – the dynamism at the heart of the structure. If Deleuze perennially proceeds by invoking nominal pairs, it is to describe the terminal moments of a *movement of thinking*, only one of which is essential.

On the basis of this fundamental thesis, Badiou claims that Deleuze's method for thinking the One and the multiple together cannot involve what could be described as the three most prominent philosophical methods, running from Plato to Hegel and beyond. The first is Aristotelian in nature, and proceeds by thinking Being according to categories which are proper to Being itself. Given that Deleuze is above all a thinker of the One, Badiou argues, such a method could never be assented to:

The true philosophical method must absolutely refrain from any dividing up of the sense of Being by categorical distributions, or from any approximation of its movement by preliminary formal divisions, however refined these may be. The univocity of Being and the equivocity of beings (the latter being nothing other than the immanent production of the former) must be thought 'together' without the mediation of genera or species, types or emblems: in short, without categories, without generalities.
(DCB 32/51)

Now, in turn, and for related reasons, a second candidate must be rejected, namely *dialectics*, which relies above all on the category of mediation. The case that Badiou recalls here is Hegel, for whom mediation is embedded in the movement of determinate negation. For Deleuze, "insofar as Being is affirmation through and through, the negative is totally impossible." (DCB 32/51)⁹¹ The third possibility that Badiou rules out for Deleuze is what might

⁹⁰ Borges' "Tigers" reveals the underlying structure of this "lost" name: that it is, rather than being lost, in fact hidden, requiring the most dedicated and ascetic search in order to discover it. The narrator in this tale indeed finds the name of God, but written on the skin of the tiger who will be his executioner. In pursuing the ascesis of nomination in search of the absolute, we arrive at the meeting point of mysticism and death so well expounded in the work of George Bataille. See, for example, his "Sanctity, Eroticism and Solitude", in *Eroticism*, trans. by Mary Dalwood (San Francisco: City Lights, 1986), 252-64. At some distance from Bataille, though nonetheless close to a certain mysticism, we find here a parallel once more between Badiou's Deleuze and Plotinus. In the sixth *Ennead*, Plotinus argues that we cannot really address the One properly in language, and that even the name 'the One' itself remains preliminary and external. See in particular, *The Enneads*, translated by Stephen MacKenna (London: Penguin Books, 1991), §6.9.5, where we read that "strictly no name is apt to it, but since name it we must there is a certain rough fitness in designating it as unity with the understanding that it is not the unity of some other thing."

⁹¹ In fact, far from rejecting the figure of the dialectic, Deleuze wishes to rehabilitate it, stripping from it both its investment by Plato in the ultimate nature of unity and the Hegelian emphasis on negativity, thereby returning it to the regime of the problematic. We will see this movement in the next chapter, given over to a discussion of the virtual in Deleuze. Also, to be fair, it is important to note that for no thinker of any importance is the dialectic simply a methodological trope: certainly for neither Plato nor Hegel.

be characterised as *external intellectual intuition*, whereby thought, independent and according to its own capacities, grasps being directly, and without mediation. Here, Badiou recalls the Descartes of the *Meditations*, who thinks his own being in the ambient context of a natural light proper to it.⁹² In sum, Badiou asserts, on the basis of his fundamental ontological commitments, Deleuze's method in thought must be *acategorical, anti-dialectical, intrinsic to being and only possible under its mandate*. Thus we are led to the fourth central thesis presented by Badiou, that Deleuze's method is an intuitive method:

A thought without mediation, a thought constructing its movement beyond all the categorical divisions that it has first been tempted to use as a means of protecting itself from the inhuman neutrality of Being, can only be – as Bergson so sovereignly set down – an *intuitive thought*. Deleuze's method is the transposition in writing of a singular form of intuition.
(DCB 35/54-5; emphasis added)

Deleuze's method, for Badiou is – *must be* – intuitive in nature.

There are four significant characteristics of Deleuze's method of intuition on Badiou's account. The first is that, contrary to Descartes' approach, the intuition in question is what might be characterised as *internal intuition*. Thought proceeds *within* the movement of univocal Being, and does not examine it from without according to any kind of natural light. We do not examine Being and its emanations from a point of view at a distance from their relation, but rather think Being from within Being itself. This presents thought as intuition with a primary characteristic, namely that while it begins in what seems to be the regime of the clear-distinct, the world of beings-simulacra, it must plunge into what grounds these, namely the confused-obscure One. Thought

has to plunge into the clear intensity to grasp its confused-being, and revive the 'deadened' distinctness of the separated being by uncovering what of it remains obscure: namely, the living immersion that is precisely dissimulated by its isolation.
(DCB 35-6/56)

We might note in passing that this reconstruction of a Leibnizian moment in Deleuze by Badiou proceeds according to a veritable scrambling of the terms in question. At issue in Leibniz (and, following him, Deleuze), is never an opposition between the clear-distinct on the one hand and the confused-obscure on the other, but rather a distinction between the clear-confused (pertaining in Deleuze to the actual) and the distinct-obscure (pertaining to the virtual). Despite quoting passages from the same section of *Difference and Repetition*, Badiou seems to have completely overlooked the following remarks: "We cannot overemphasise the importance of a remark that Leibniz constantly makes in his logic of ideas: a clear idea is in itself confused; it is

⁹² This structure, though evident in all of Descartes' methodological texts, is nowhere clearer than in "The discovery of truth according to the natural light", *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol 2, ed. and trans. Cottingham, Stoothoff and Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 26-7.

confused *insofar as it is clear*.” (DR 213/275)⁹³ And, a little later, “The nature of the [virtual] Idea is to be distinct and obscure.” (DR 214/276) As we will see in the next chapter, at issue here for Deleuze is in no way the task of rendering either the confused distinct or the obscure clear – these characterisations are ontological in nature, pertaining to ideas and their actualisation as such. We might even say that to task thought with such activity is to make a meaningless claim in relation to Deleuze’s philosophy: above all because this structure is, as we will see, at once the condition of ‘subjective’, conscious thought, and thought itself, essentially unconscious in nature. In our final chapter, when the topic of thought is discussed in detail, we will further see that the figure of the individual, completely overlooked in Badiou’s account, is of decisive significance for Deleuze, but a peculiar individual, playing the role of a mutable focal lens, rather than that of a conscious agent.

The second characteristic of Deleuzian intuition on Badiou’s account concerns precisely its active nature, the manner in which it moves between the double nomination of simulacrum-being and Being-One.⁹⁴ This “athletic trajectory of thought,” (DCB 36/56) proceeds in the first instance under the impulsion of a particular case, a particular being or simulacrum of Being. As we will discuss in more detail below, these cases in Deleuze are more often than not particular figures, or bodies of work which answer to their proper names: Foucault, Bergson, Nietzsche, Proust, and so forth, but also concepts or practices, such as literature, cinema, repetition or essence. What though is the force of this impulsion? Or rather, according to Badiou, the question is: what do such impulsions force us to think? The answer, as no doubt will be expected, is the univocity of Being. In particular, what the method of intuition thinks is the fact of the univocity of Being *insofar as* its sense is unbroken by its expression in the case in question.

Thus intuition begins with an impulsion, and proceeds to affirm univocity in a particular case, and in turn, according to the necessity of this impulsion, affirms the univocity of Being as such. This is what separates it from the Cartesian model of intuition, replacing the intellectual *Augenblick*⁹⁵ with a “progressive,” and yet unified “description of the whole.” (DCB 35/56)

Thirdly, and as a result of this trajectory of intuition and its internal nature, we must realise that thought cannot be considered to be a regime apart from Being. In fact, Badiou asserts, “*when we have grasped the double movement of descent and ascent, from beings to Being, then from Being to beings, we have in fact thought the movement of Being itself*.” (DCB 40/63) Or, as he states later, “the power of the One qua thought is [. . .] precisely this: there is only one intuition.” (DCB 69/105-6) Here we are only one step away from what Badiou will come to suggest in the final chapter of *The Clamor of Being*, namely that Deleuze everywhere triumphantly asserts the

⁹³ This is common Leibnizian theme is to be found in even his very early published work (“Meditations on Knowledge, Truth and Ideas,” [1684] *Philosophical Essays*, 23-7), 24.

⁹⁴ If the reader can forgive the repetition of this sentiment, we will turn in more detail to the active/passive division and its role in *The Clamor of Being* on two occasions: with respect to the virtual in the next chapter, and in relation to thought in the last.

⁹⁵ Quentin Meillassoux has recently coined the quixotic phrase “dianoetic intuition” to describe an analogue of this act of thought. See *Collapse*. Vol. 4 (Falmouth: Urbanomic Press, 2007), 433.

famous Parmenidean claim: “The Same is at once thinking and being.” (quoted at DCB 78/117) Thought truly takes place when this claim is asserted on the basis of an impulsion of a particular case, of every being-simulacrum which emanates from the One.

Fourth and finally, intuition as method is characterised as a restrained movement or movement of restraint. It does not – contrary to the image of Deleuze that Badiou evokes as the opening of his text – support the view of Deleuze as the thinker who affirms the mess of the world, but rather Deleuze as the thinker for whom the abandonment of empirical variety is essential to philosophy. This is ultimately why Badiou attributes Deleuzian philosophy with proposing “an ethics of thought that requires dispossession and asceticism.” (DCB 17/30) The goal of philosophy here is only achieved by way of a certain kind of intellectual reduction, more radical and far reaching than its Husserlian counterpart. Everything accidental to the particular case must be progressively stripped away according to a rigorously methodological ascesis, one which suspends “everything inessential” in order to return to what is primary and “indestructible,”⁹⁶ that which gives the case in question its sense, its being, namely: the One. Thus the looped trajectory of intuition proceeds by the disposal or denigration of the secondary features which allow one being-simulacrum to be distinguished from another, in favour of returning thought to the common ground of all beings-simulacra.⁹⁷

So, in sum, Badiou claims that:

when thought succeeds in constructing, without categories, the looped path that leads, on the surface of what is, from a case to the One, then from the One to the case, it intuites the movement of the One itself. And because the One is its own movement (because it is life, or infinite virtuality), thought intuites the One.
(DCB 40/63)

Now, across a number of interpretive registers, the Deleuzian text itself seems to be in some tension with the account that Badiou provides of it. In what follows, three of these points will be discussed in some detail. The first concerns the nature of Deleuze’s explicit engagement with the theme of intuition, which, as Badiou himself notes, is in the context of his reading of Bergson. The second point concerns Deleuze’s account of the theme of method as such in *Difference and Repetition*. Third, there remains the possibility that, even should Badiou present an inaccurate view of the explicit account of method in Deleuze, there exists an implicit method that, though at odds with the surface of Deleuze’s text, properly accounts for its movement. In all three cases, I will argue that Badiou’s account is not only false, but that it does more to obscure what is really at stake than clarify it. I will also suggest that the account of Deleuze’s method in *The Clamor of Being* fails to support Badiou’s reading of Deleuze as a philosopher of the One.

⁹⁶ Alain Badiou, *Beckett: L’incroyable Désir* (Paris: Hachette Livre, 1995), 19.

⁹⁷ See also TW 77-8 on the empirical as the regime of cases and the transcendental as the regime of the One.

Intuition in Deleuze's Bergson

As I have just indicated, for Badiou, the method of intuition in Deleuze is substantially derived from his Bergsonian filiation. Indeed, it is in this part of his text that Badiou asserts that "Deleuze is a marvelous reader of Bergson, who, in my opinion, is his real master," (DCB 39/62) and that it is the amalgam thinker "Bergson-Deleuze" (DCB 40/63) who considers intuition as an intrinsic thought of Being as vital process. Thus, in analyzing Badiou's claim, we are fully justified in looking towards Deleuze's readings of Bergson for proof of his support of intuition as method – indeed, in Deleuze's work, it is only in this context that such a method is discussed. Can we draw on this idea of method in characterizing Deleuze's own philosophy as Badiou claims?

Contrary to the account of intuition as it appears in both modern rationalism, where intellectual intuition of various kinds is the source of truth in thought (Spinoza's third kind of knowledge, for example, or in the paradigmatic form given to it by Descartes in the second *Meditation*), and in Kantian critical philosophy (where the role of intuition is relativised and accounted for on the basis of the passive receptivity of the faculty of sensibility), Deleuze takes Bergsonian intuition to be a critical and rigorous method in thought. As Deleuze isolates it (B 13-35), there are three aspects of Bergson's account of intuition as philosophical method: it is problematising, differentiating, and temporalising. In the first case, intuition as a method devotes itself to the criticism⁹⁸ of poorly formed concepts. To take the example of the concept of possibility (not just any example for Deleuze as we will see in the next chapter), we can say with Bergson that the possible is not a more basic concept than the real, but rather a more complex one, in which the concept of a real state of affairs has added to it a lack of reality. As a result, it is a mistake to consider the possible to be the more primordial of the two, and a ground for the conditioning of the real. It is rather an extrapolation which obfuscates that which it is extrapolated from. The goal of the method of intuition is, in each case, to divide concepts into their constitutive elements in order to uncover illicit structures – such as we find in the case of possibility, but also non-being, negation, unity, etc.

In the second case, we can characterise intuition as a differential method. This is already the case with respect to the first characteristic. Bergson extends this point, however, to claim that intuition as method is essentially concerned with differences in kind, as opposed to differences in number or degree. It aims to establish profound or fundamental division rather than remaining caught up in superficial or merely apparent divisions.

The key example in this regard that Deleuze considers is the division, central for Bergson, between spatiality and temporality. In one of the essential moves in his reading of Bergson, Deleuze extracts from him a rigorous

⁹⁸ In the opening chapter of *Bergsonism*, Deleuze is clear that the illusory problems that populate thought are not simple errors that can be done away with, and in this sense we never arrive at a truth freed from all fiction. This is, as Deleuze notes, a Kantian theme: "Although Bergson determines the nature of false problems in a completely different way and although the Kantian critique itself seems to him to be a collection of badly stated problems, he treats the illusion in a similar way to Kant. The illusion is based in the deepest part of the intelligence: it is not, strictly speaking, dispelled or dispellable, rather it can only be *repressed*." (B 21)

ontological treatment of temporality, irreducible to any claim for the primordially of extended spatiality. What the method of intuition reveals is the difference in kind between these two posits on the nature of being. Bergson goes even further though, on Deleuze's account, since the method also reveals – beyond the difference in kind between matter and duration – the fact that within extended matter itself there are only differences in degree, and duration is itself characterised as intrinsically difference in kind.⁹⁹

We must also add the following observation, which is crucial. Bergson's method of intuition, for Deleuze, does not insist on a radical ontological dualism in the manner of Plato or Descartes, where the sensible or extended worlds are considered to have less being, or to be less essential. Rather, the claim is that only by proceeding from differences in degree at the level of spatiality to differences in kind (both between space and duration, and within duration itself) are we able to provide an account of how it is that the differences in kind come about. In this sense, it springs from a methodological orientation that is indeed Platonic but which refutes the orienting dualism which dominates the lion's share of Plato's metaphysics:

Intuition as method is a method of division, Platonic in inspiration. Bergson is aware that things are mixed together in reality; in fact, experience itself offers us nothing but composites. But that is not where the difficulty lies.

(B 22)

The difficulty lies rather in explaining composite being itself on the basis of more fundamental differences. As Deleuze notes on a number of occasions, this is what gives Bergson's method something of the character of transcendental philosophy,¹⁰⁰ something that Deleuze's own theory of the transcendental will extend some way towards a more Kantian framework, as we will see in the next chapter: "Intuition leads us to go beyond the state of experience towards the conditions of experience. But these conditions are neither general nor abstract. They are no broader than the conditioned: they are the conditions of real experience." (B 27)

In the third case, Deleuze understands the method of intuition as founded on the primordially of duration. Intuition takes duration as its element, and grasps problems and concepts from this point of view. As in the case of the second characteristic with respect to the first, this temporalising aspect to intuition encompasses the first two characteristics also. In the first case, it is a matter of seeing that the spatial or extensive conception of being is what grounds the possibility of many of the poorly formed concepts found in philosophy ("Space only ever presents, and the intelligence only ever discovers, composites, eg., the closed and the open" [ID 47]); in the second, the goal is to produce an account of differences in kind which ultimately turn

⁹⁹ These claims, as we will see, are retooled – in a somewhat counter-Bergsonian fashion – by Deleuze in the final chapter of *Difference and Repetition* in order to characterise intensity. On this concept, see chapter eight below.

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, the discussions at B 23, 27, and 29 with respect to the transcendental. See also the following sentiment from Deleuze's earlier piece 'Bergson's conception of difference': "This method is something other than a spatial analysis, more than a description of experience, and less (so it seems) than a transcendental analysis." (ID 49)

around the differences of kind between matter and duration on the one hand and on the other the role that differences in kind play within the constitution of duration itself. In short, what this third characteristic states is, on the one hand, that duration is the proper medium of thinking, and on the other that duration itself is characterised by a primordial multiplicity. Deleuze argues that it is the method of intuition which motivates the unfolding of Bergson's thought. At the same time, however, as the third characteristic of this method asserts, it is only on the basis of an adequate account of being as duration that thought can grasp being itself. Thus the possibility of ontology is grounded in being itself in a certain sense.

In light of this brief characterisation, a number of points deserve to be emphasised in contrast with Badiou's account. Where Badiou asserts of intuition in Deleuze that it proceeds by thinking according to the movement of being itself, this is clearly at odds with the *critical* aspect of the account that we find in Deleuze's text itself. That is, rather than being ascetic, reductive or minimalist in nature, Bergsonian intuition *multiplies* the terms of the analysis, locating a given object in the context of more complex relational structures. This is what allowed us above to characterise it as a differential method. Furthermore, it is fundamentally conceptual in nature. Its object as method is not Being itself, even if it is oriented by ontological commitments, but concepts.

Nonetheless, something like the dual-term structure that Badiou elaborates does seem to be at work here, between differences in kind and differences in degree. Furthermore, one of these terms (differences in kind) is provided with a more profound ontological sense than the other. Both of these similarities, however, are less telling than they first appear. On the one hand, for Bergson on Deleuze's reading, the ultimate telos of the method of intuition is to show that both differences in degree (and spatial categories) and differences in kind (and temporal categories, along with the structure of the relationship between them) are together constitutive of being. On the other hand, while duration is without a doubt ontologically primary in a certain sense, this primacy is not exclusive according to the manner in which Badiou wishes to describe it. In fact, as I have already noted, here we find the kernels of something like a properly transcendental philosophy, whereby duration is the condition for both differences in degree, differences in kind, and their mixture. In sum, we would be mistaken in thinking that this priority is an exclusive one reserved for duration, difference-in-kind as such, alone. If the third aspect of the method, which insists on proceeding according to temporal rather than spatial categories, is so important, it is because only such a temporal view can account for the co-existence of space *and* time, whereas other methodological approaches precisely exclude a consideration of duration in advance, by construing it on the basis of spatial categories and thereby reducing its difference in kind from spatiality rather than highlighting it. Rather than proceeding extrinsically from cases of the order of spatiality to the super-eminence of temporality as the sole real in the structure, intuition proceeds by insisting on the genetic and integral *perichoresis* or interpenetration of spatial categories within temporal ones,

and of the transcendental rather than super-eminent status of being as duration.¹⁰¹

Finally, we cannot overlook the fact that duration itself, even characterised in Badiou's terms, is for Bergson on Deleuze's account *without any fundamental unity*. This is the central claim of Deleuze's 'The Conception of Difference in Bergson' (ID 43-72), namely that the pure past, duration as such, is a differential structure lacking any prior or eminent unity. At the heart of being, there is only difference. Thus, even if we overlook the incongruity between Badiou's account of intuition and that which Deleuze finds in Bergson, we would have to conclude that his reading fails on this point, insofar as it is not the One which finds itself ultimately affirmed, but difference. This is what will lead Deleuze to claim in a striking phrase that "Intuition is the *jouissance* of difference." (ID 45) A number of these points will be supplemented in the next chapter when we come to examine the theme of the virtual as Deleuze elaborates it.

On method

Beyond the theme of intuition, however, the broader issue of method in Deleuze deserves examination. In a brief passage at the close of chapter three of *Difference and Repetition*, whose brevity in fact is somewhat misleading since it brings together a long meditation on the nature of faculties of thought, Deleuze directly addresses the question of method, subjecting it to a strong and direct critique, if in the Kantian mode, a critique whose goal is not to dismiss but to properly locate the role of the category of method relative to the nature of thought.

Its essential coordinates, which will be supplemented later in chapter seven when the question of the relationship between thought and subjectivity is examined, are as follows. While this text is presented as a critique of the postulates of what Deleuze calls the dogmatic image of thought, its most important aspect is the elaboration of a new theory of thought, which is in turn embedded in a surprising theory of the faculties. Here Deleuze is engaging in an aspect of the Kantian philosophical tradition, namely the doctrine of the faculties.¹⁰² Deleuze's internal break or modification of this long tradition concerns, on the one hand, the supposed *pre-existence* of faculties (that is, capacities, facilities in thought) which would be capable of grasping what is presented in experience, and on the other, the supposed *common exercise* of the faculties. It is this static and harmonious view of thought that Deleuze wants to replace with a dynamic, genetic and discordant view, one which (in the final postulate of the eight that he identifies in the dogmatic image of thought) casts the concept of method in a critical light.

¹⁰¹ Deleuze makes this point very strongly in "Bergson, 1859-1941" – see in particular ID 34-6, a passage that begins with the telling words "Do we not [...] see that dualism is a moment already surpassed in Bergson's philosophy?"

¹⁰² In his short but vast treatment of the Kantian system, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, Deleuze will go as far as to claim that the "doctrine of the faculties forms the real network which constitutes the transcendental method" (KCP 10)

In opposition to this view, Deleuze proposes on the one hand that the capacity to think a given matter is in no way innate or structurally implicit in the architecture of thought. Indeed, perhaps the most dominant theme of *Difference and Repetition* with respect to thinking is an elaboration and extension of the famous Heideggerian maxim according to which “Man can think in the sense that he possesses the possibility to do so. This possibility alone, however, is no guarantee to us that we are capable of thinking.” (quoted at DR 144/188)

For Deleuze, we must presuppose a fundamental inability to think, one which can only be forced into activity on the basis of something happening to it: “Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*.”

(DR 139/182) The same point is expressed (in a magnificent text) in relation to philosophy:

Thought is primarily trespass and violence, the enemy, and nothing presupposes philosophy: everything begins with misophy. Do not count upon thought to ensure the relative necessity of what it thinks. Rather, count upon the contingency of an encounter with that which forces thought to raise up and educate the absolute necessity of an act of thought or a passion to think.
(DR 139/181-2)

Thus we are led in the first instance to reject the arguably dominant tradition in Western philosophy pertaining to the relationship between thought and its object. We can characterise the central thesis of this view in the following way: thought is an activity capable of recognising and, on this basis, cognising whatever object is presented to. Deleuze’s inverse claim, as we have seen, is that thought is not innate, and must be engendered in thinking itself in *response* to an encounter for which there is no pre-existing schema. To use Artaud’s more colourful phrase: thought is not an innate capacity, but one which emerges upon the whipping of innateness. (DR 148/192)

What is required then is an account of how thought becomes capable of thinking its object. We are forced – and here we come upon a theme found throughout Deleuze’s mature work, one which is indexed primarily to the names of Leibniz and Solomon Maïmon (whose relation to Deleuze we will touch on in the next chapter) – to move beyond the Kantian account of faculties as the agents of external conditioning, and in their place to found a theory of the faculties concerned with the internal genesis of thought as such. It is a faculty of thought which arises on the basis of an encounter, and which renders thought possible in this regard on subsequent occasions. Deleuze’s own theory of the faculties thus revolves around the claim that it is the faculties themselves that are generated in thought in the first instance. An encounter raises a singular act of thought up to its level, elaborates or focuses a capacity to think *this Thing* whose own powers and dimensions are radically unknown, but which nonetheless addresses itself only to it.

On the other hand, Deleuze opposes the view that faculties are by their nature harmonious in operation. This is related to the previous point, since the genesis of a faculty in thought relies upon a moment which in principle cannot be grasped by another: hence the need for such a genesis.

Rather than all the faculties converging and contributing to a common project of recognising an object, we see divergent projects in which, with regard to what concerns it essentially, each faculty is in the presence of that which is its 'own'.

(DR 141/184)

We can characterise faculties in thought – in their primary sense – as *monomaniacal* in operation. What concerns each faculty concerns it alone, and it operates as if its object is the sole moment in being and thought. Thought engages no fundamental common sense, but a disparate and disjunct ensemble of operations which cannot communicate with one another through any ideal form of the object which they all share.

We ask, for example: What forces sensibility to sense? What is it that can only be sensed, yet is imperceptible at the same time? We must pose this question not only for memory and thought, but also the imagination – is there an imaginandum, a phantasteon, which would also be the limit, that which is impossible to imagine?; for language – is there a loquendum, that which would be silence at the same time?; and for the other faculties which would find their place in a complete doctrine – vitality, the transcendent object of which would include monstrosity; and sociability, the transcendent object of which would include anarchy – and even for faculties yet to be discovered, whose existence is not yet suspected. For nothing can be said in advance.

(DR 143/186-7)

Finally, for Deleuze, thought only becomes the familiar, habitual structure, the operation of faculties in harmony in the calmness of an uninterrupted interiority, on the basis of these more fundamental harrowing and monomaniacal torsions in thought. In *Difference and Repetition*, this is formulated in terms of two manners of the operation of faculties: transcendent in the first instance, with respect to that which only the newly engendered faculty is equal to, and transcendental, when it settles into a general and quasi-hypothetical mode.

How does method relate to this problematic? The postulate of method, for Deleuze, formalises the dogmatic image of thought with respect to the presuppositions made about the operation of thinking as it relies upon the other doxological features we have already seen (recognition, the common exercise of the faculties on an object supposed self-same, the innate capacity of thought with respect to its object, and so forth). A method for thinking proceeds on the basis of these assumptions, it concerns “the calm possession of a rule enabling solutions.” (DR 164/214)¹⁰³ Deleuze writes that

We never know in advance how someone will learn: by means of what loves someone becomes good at Latin, what encounters make them a philosopher, or in what dictionaries they learn to think. There is no more a method for learning than there is a

¹⁰³ It is in these pages that Deleuze introduces the memorable trope of a “philosopher-monkey” who “opens up to truth, himself producing the true, but only to the extent that he begins to penetrate the coloured thickness of a problem.” (DR 164-5/214)

method for finding treasures, but a violent training, a culture or *paideia* which affects the entire individual [...] Method is a manifestation of a common sense or the realisation of a *Cogitatio natura*, and presupposes a good will as though this were a 'premeditated decision' of the thinker.
(DR 166/215)

In sum, method in thought is precisely what formally doubles the natural movement of thinking. Method indeed characterizes thought as *ascetic* in nature, as Badiou has claimed, since it renounces any need for artifice: thought moves appropriately of its own nature. Method formalises this supposedly native capacity.

Three points by way of summary. Firstly, the account of thought that Deleuze elaborates here seems particularly ill-suited to the account of his method adumbrated by Badiou in a more specific sense. On Badiou's presentation of Deleuze, let's recall, a true thought of the One takes place when thought divests itself of what is extraneous in a particular case, and engages itself in the very movement of the expression of this One in the case. For Deleuze, though, what is fundamental in thought is an incapacity, and an incapacity *in each* case. But what is key is that any given case that we become capable of thinking is thought only as *such*. The kind of generality that Badiou ascribes to the method of intuition could only ever be a secondary, placid thought, one content to remain within the structures developed under earlier, traumatic and *repressed*, conditions.

Secondly, if we recall one of Badiou's preliminary points regarding the method of intuition – namely that it must not be confused with a certain Cartesian intuition according to the clear and distinct, an extrinsic intuition – Deleuze's point here becomes even more forceful. For to insist that Deleuze has a fixed method in thought is, on Deleuze's account, to insist that he has submitted thought to precisely the model of thought he is so bent on criticising. Indeed, Deleuze suggests in his Preface to the English translation of *Difference and Repetition* that this chapter "now seems to me the most necessary and the most concrete, and which serves to introduce subsequent books." (DR xvii) To misunderstand the critique of method, then, is to (at the very least) misunderstand what Deleuze took to be central to a reading of his work after 1968.

Thirdly and finally, it is strange to assert of Deleuze that he has a clear, established and everywhere repeated method, given his critical reappraisal of the very idea of method itself. We must either claim that Badiou has misunderstood the nature of Deleuze's method, or that Deleuze does not have a fundamental method. Both of these options seem to undermine Badiou's entire analysis. We can also admit a third option: that Badiou has recognised in Deleuze's philosophy a method which the latter did not or could not admit was at work there. This is certainly a possibility, and one which nothing we have said so far rules out. Its consequences, however, would seem to be as problematic for Badiou as for Deleuze himself, since it would imply that Deleuze's thought is quite incoherent, rent in two by conflicting and unreconstructed commitments.

The *de facto* question of method

Nonetheless, such an hypothesis deserves consideration: is there not perhaps a method deployed by Deleuze which is neither some analogue of the doxological one criticized in *Difference and Repetition* nor a Bergsonian one? Does Deleuze have a *de facto* method that his in principle objections or commitments do not come to bear on?

Given that a complete answer to this question would take us well beyond the coordinates of the current study, three examples will have to suffice, chosen somewhat arbitrarily but with an eye to the (apparent) variety of Deleuze's work. In any case, the point here is that should notable exceptions to Badiou's thesis be discovered in particular cases, the applicability of the general claim – especially in light of what has already been presented in this chapter – loses a significant measure of its validity. After all, if Deleuze's philosophy is "monotonous" (DCB 14/25) in nature, evidence of Badiou's claim about method should be able to be found everywhere.

The first example I will take is Deleuze's early study *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. How does this work proceed? Deleuze's method here has two notable features, features which are arguably shared with his other studies of individual figures. On the one hand, and in opposition to a common view which takes Nietzsche to be above all a poetic ruminator who expresses himself in disconnected aphoristic works, Deleuze's Nietzsche is a systematic metaphysical thinker of the highest order, whose work comprises an holistic theory of being and morality, time and subjectivity. As Graham Jones forcefully argues in his *tour de force* treatment of *Difference and Repetition*, "The key to Deleuze's approach [. . .] is the fact that he invariably seeks a nascent systematicity in the work of other thinkers," finding in Nietzsche a systematic philosophy that others have, for whatever reason, been unable or unwilling to.¹⁰⁴

The surprising opening lines of the work already present us with this coherent systematicity: "Nietzsche's most general project is the introduction of the concepts of sense and value into philosophy." (NP 1) This notion of Nietzsche's "general project" is carried through the study from beginning to end, which not only presents this project according to the attainment of an far-reaching and systematically coherent metaphysics, but it also unfolds on the basis of a belief in the diachronic unity of Nietzsche's work. This systematic reading finds its locus in the detailed analysis of the series of concepts concerning force, power and will, culminating in a tabular contrast (NP 146) between the active and reactive types, according to the categories of variety, mechanism, principle, product and quality of the will-to-power.

On the other hand, Deleuze's presentation of Nietzsche foregrounds concepts that aren't normally considered to be at the heart of the latter's project. The notable case here is the concept of difference which he installs at the very heart of Nietzsche's system as he presents it, in terms of irreducible differences in force which have no common measure or ground: "There are nothing but quantities of force in mutual 'relations of tension.'"

¹⁰⁴ Graham Jones, *Difference and Determination*, unpublished ms., 34.

(NP 40)¹⁰⁵ This emphasis, like the drive to systematicity, can be found in all of Deleuze's studies of other figures, even in places where it seems at least initially at odds with the philosopher in question, for example Bergson.¹⁰⁶

Second, *Difference and Repetition*, arguably Deleuze's key work. This book is structured around an approach that is so obvious that it is often perhaps overlooked. Certainly, it is Deleuze's mature statement of his own philosophy, no longer presented from within the thought of a single writer. However, this 'own philosophy' emerges out of an immense series of confrontations and negotiations with other figures in the history of Western thought. One would be hard pressed to find a significant thinker between Plato and Heidegger that Deleuze does not meaningfully engage with, not to mention the array of non-classical or less-well known philosophers. Here, if we can speak of a method, it would be characterized primarily as a *method of reading*. Deleuze's own philosophy emerges piecemeal, a harlequin's cloak stitched out of the fabric of the whole history of Western thought.

But the more meaningful difference from his earlier work is to be found in the concepts which orient this large-scale reconstruction of philosophy since Plato. While the book proposes a thorough and thoroughly novel genetic ontology, it connects at every point of its trajectory with the twinned themes of difference and repetition. Whatever else it manages to accomplish, it really is an explication of these themes. Deleuze's preface is both clear and perfectly summary with respect to the argument that follows:

Two lines of research lie at the origin of this book: one concerns a concept of difference without negation, precisely because unless it is subordinated to the identical, difference would not extend or 'would not have to extend' as far as opposition and contraction; the other concerns a concept of repetition in which physical, mechanical or bare repetitions (repetition of the Same) would find their *raison d'être* in the more profound structures of a hidden repetition in which a 'differential' is disguised and displaced.

(DR xix-xx)

In light of these points, it would seem that Badiou's assertions about Deleuze's method are also misplaced in this case. It might however be objected that the general goals of *Difference and Repetition* are besides the point, insofar as it still presents numerous claims about the univocity of being. This however is not at issue here. Even should one agree with Badiou about the core of Deleuze's philosophy, it seems mistaken to assert that *Difference and Repetition* manifests the double trajectory of a method of intuition, a work that constituted of a complex series of engagements with the history of philosophy that make contact with the concepts of difference and repetition, on the way to proposing a genetic ontology – not a paean to the multiple productions of the one.

¹⁰⁵ Of course, we are not concerned here with the issue of whether Deleuze is right to read Nietzsche in this way, only to note that he does so. For an argument against Deleuze's prioritising of difference in his reading of Nietzsche, see Vincent Pecora's "Deleuze's Nietzsche and Post-Structuralist Thought" *Substance* 14, 3 (1986), 39.

¹⁰⁶ Paul Atkinson addresses this issue in his presentation of Deleuze's reading of Bergson in *Deleuze's Philosophical Lineage*, esp. 239-41.

I turn finally to the *Cinema* volumes, which Badiou draws on quite heavily. While packed with discussions of ‘cases’ – particular films or bodies of cinematic work by particular directors – two methodological features are discernible. The first bears on the cinema as such. Despite the fact that both volumes are packed with discussions of specific movies (which might perhaps be considered ‘cases’ in Badiou’s sense), not to mention the celebrated commentaries on Bergson, Deleuze is not interested in bringing all of these cases in line with any account of the One. Rather, and this is a point which even a cursory examination reveals, both *Cinema* books present a complex and ramified taxonomy of cinematic signs.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, the original preface of *The Movement Image* begins with the following words: “This study is not a history of the cinema. It is a taxonomy, an attempt at the classification of images and signs.” (MI xix) The categories of movement-image and time-image are themselves general categories in this taxonomy, which the respective books deal with in terms of the many subsidiary categories beneath them and their interrelations and transformations.

The second feature concerns the relationship between philosophy and cinema, and thus more directly engages with Badiou’s claims about Deleuze’s method. In well-known passages at the close of *The Time Image*, Deleuze makes explicit the relationship he thinks holds between cinema (in Badiou’s terminology, a body of cases) and philosophical thought.

For many people, philosophy is something which is not ‘made’, but is pre-existent, ready-made in a prefabricated sky. However, philosophical theory is itself a practice, just as much as its object. It is no more abstract than its object. It is a practice of concepts, and it must be judged in light of the other practices with which it interferes. A theory of cinema is not ‘about’ cinema, but about the concepts that cinema gives rise to and which are themselves related to other concepts corresponding to other practices, the practice of concepts in general having no privilege over others, any more than one object has over others. It is at the level of the interference of many practices that many things happen, beings, images, concepts, every kind of event.
(TI 268tm)

A key term here is ‘interfere’. It describes the manner in which Deleuze envisions the relationship between philosophy and cinema, and presages the treatment of the interrelations between philosophy, science and art in *What is Philosophy?* and, in a different way, *The Fold*. Philosophy – qua thought – is neither inferior, consequent (as it is for Badiou himself) or superior to the artistic practice of the cinema in principle, but in a complex relationship in which the two discourses *trouble* each other. Because of this, there is no question that cinema and particular cinematic moments or images could be grist for the mill of a Deleuzian philosophy oriented around the One.

¹⁰⁷ The interview “Portrait du philosophe en spectateur” (DRF 197-203) is particularly clear on this point. There, Deleuze presents his (perhaps somewhat surprising) attitude towards taxonomies: ““There is nothing more amusing than classifications, tables. They are like the skeleton of a book, its vocabulary, its dictionary [. . .] Nothing is more beautiful than the classifications of natural history.” (DRF 266)

Considering these three examples – all of them significant works in Deleuze’s *oeuvre* as Badiou himself acknowledges – not one of them conforms to Badiou’s general picture of the double trajectory of intuition bound to the dyad of the One and the Many. Not only do they differ from each other, a not-insignificant point that we will not pursue here, they all present modes of thought which dwell on the matter at hand – perhaps from an unusual or biased perspective – and elaborate on that matter from within. The locus of the thought at work in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, in *Difference and Repetition*, and in the *Cinema* works is to be found *within* Nietzsche, *within* the complex history of Western thought, *within* cinema, and not beyond it, in a supereminent unity of being.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented three conclusions in the light of Badiou’s account of Deleuze’s method, which he characterizes as an immanent intuitive movement which doubles the movement of being itself. The first conclusion is that Deleuze’s extended and explicit treatment of intuition as method, found in *Bergsonism*, in no way resembles Badiou’s account of such a method. Secondly, I argued that Deleuze’s only detailed intervention with respect to the concept of method as such argues against the preeminence of this category for creative thought. Here, Deleuze is no partisan of method, and certainly not of a method. Finally, I presented three actual cases in Deleuze’s own work in order to test the possibility of whether or not there is a *de facto* or implicit method to be found that might converge with Badiou’s account. Once more, the answer is negative. No meaningful trace of the Badiouan proposal has been found to support his reading of Deleuze on this point.

Before passing to the first of the nominal pairs that Badiou takes to be exemplary of Deleuze’s thought, one final point must be emphasised. Whatever the extent to which Badiou’s account of Deleuze’s method seems a poor fit, the intuitive method as Badiou presents it is both of a piece with the fundamental thesis of his reading (the supremacy of the philosopheme of Being as One), and quite coherent. However, when we examine *The Clamor of Being* itself, it is *not according to his assertions about this method that Badiou proceeds*. Of the four chapters which complete the body of the book after the account of method, only the first deals with a nominal pair arrayed across the supposedly fundamental division of Being (fundamental One)/Simulacra (fictional Multiple), which deals with the famous Deleuzian couplet of the virtual and the actual. The following chapters operate with half of the division alone, that devoted to the One. *The Clamor of Being* is thus somewhat paradoxical in structure, given over to a repetition of Badiou’s central thesis rather than to reading Deleuze according to the method that the former claims to have found there. That is, while the virtual/actual division lines up quite well with Badiou’s third thesis, the three subsequent pairs (time/truth, eternal return/chance, the fold/thought) all pertain to the One and not its multiple simulacral effervescence on Badiou’s own account.

However, even in the light of this point, and the deviations that mark the gap between Deleuze’s explicit accounts of intuition and method and Badiou’s characterisation of them, it is possible that Badiou has accounted for Deleuze’s project on the level of concepts. In other words, while nothing in Deleuze seems to explicitly affirm the supereminence of the One, nor the use

of a global method for the affirmation of this One, it is possible that the key concepts which animate the Deleuzian corpus are nonetheless marked by the figure of an ultimate Being. In other words, the validity of Badiou's book must itself be tested with respect to particular cases. The cases in question are the objects of the four chapters of *The Clamor of Being* which form the body of this text, and which are devoted as we have seen to four sets of concepts. Only on the basis of the chapters to follow here can we be justified in asserting the inaccuracy of Badiou's reading of Deleuze.

Chapter Four: The Virtual

It seems that our able author claims that there is nothing virtual in us ...
G.W.Leibniz, *New Essay on Human Understanding*

One or many virtuals?

The heart of Badiou's critique of Deleuze is to be found in his reconstruction and critique of Deleuze's virtual/actual distinction. Indeed, the assertion that "Virtual" is without any doubt the principal name of Being in Deleuze's work" (DCB 43/65) makes clear an important touchstone of Badiou's reading, namely that while he thinks that Deleuze's philosophy unfolds through the exposition of a series of hierarchical pairs, these pairs are subject to a hierarchy at the top of which we find the virtual and the actual. As a result, it is no surprise to find numerous repetitions of the claims about this distinction throughout *The Clamor of Being*, even when it is not the virtual/actual distinction as such which is at issue.

There is no doubt that the concept of the virtual is a particularly important and unique concept in Deleuze. Should we try to offer a preliminary definition of this concept, however, we find ourselves within a thicket of problems, one of which seems particularly pressing. The term virtual can be found at numerous points in Deleuze's work, beginning with the early texts on Bergson in the fifties, through *Difference and Repetition*, and up to and including his final article "Immanence: A Life . . ." Between these various presentations of the virtual, however, there are displacements in the sense of the term, its precise role in the given text, and the concepts with which it is associated. In some cases, these displacements seem minor, and in others, the differences are surprising and perhaps profound. As with many of Deleuze's key concepts, it is less a matter of fixing a general definition than it is – to borrow an apt turn of phrase Joe Hughes presents in relation to the concept of the body without organs – a matter of recounting a life-story of the central ideas that return on more than one occasion across Deleuze's *oeuvre*.¹⁰⁸

In addition, there are a number of concepts in Deleuze's early work which seem to act as precursors to aspects of the later presentations of the virtual. These concepts do not only include the apparent Bergsonian heritage of the term 'virtual', and its affiliation with memory (though this aspect of the virtual is itself not constant in Deleuze), but also Nietzsche's will-to-power as discussed in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, and Spinoza's modal essence as presented in *Expressionism in Philosophy*.¹⁰⁹ These points seriously considered cast some doubt on the possibility of obtaining a coherent and global definition of the virtual.

Nonetheless, this is the approach that Badiou adopts in *The Clamor of Being*, which includes elements from a number of presentations of the concept, and in particular those in *Difference and Repetition*, *The Time Image*, and *What is Philosophy?*, but without in any way distinguishing them. The homogenizing tendencies in this approach are certainly in keeping with his view that Deleuze's metaphysics is "monotonous" (DCB 14/25) in nature. And yet, in approaching the concept of the virtual on the basis of this assumption, much is obscured. It would seem that Badiou puts the cart before the horse, making an interpretive decision before examining the

¹⁰⁸ Joe Hughes, *Deleuze and the Genesis of Representation* (London: Continuum Press, 2009), 75.

¹⁰⁹ I have addressed the parallel to Spinoza above in n86; both comparisons are touched on again below in n223 and n254.

material in question. Here, at least, Deleuze's putative monotony is a procrustean bed providing the means to lop off those claims that do not fit the interpretive schema.

This chapter will not attempt a thorough genealogical approach to the virtual in Deleuze's philosophy – a project that would be itself a substantial piece of work. Instead, I would like primarily to examine what is a decisive text in Deleuze's various elucidations of the virtual, that provided in chapter four of *Difference and Repetition*. This text is not only the lengthiest and most explicit on the topic, but it also provides the most comprehensive set of connections between Deleuze's concept and what he considers to be its precursors in other writers; it also forms a part of what is one of the key works in the Deleuze's *oeuvre*, other aspects of which we will engage with later in this thesis in relation to time and thought. Such an approach also avoids the more egregious reductive tendencies that Badiou's reading lends itself to. Instead of asking 'what is the virtual?' the question becomes 'If Badiou's account of the virtual cannot be squared with what is for all intents and purposes the most detailed and developed text in Deleuze on this matter, then how can this account be considered valid in a broader sense?' And even were it true that some other, less significant text might confirm some of Badiou's assertions, we would arrive at an account of a fundamental split in Deleuze's philosophy – which would once more confirm that Deleuze's thought is not the homogenous enterprise that *The Clamor of Being* asserts.

Badiou's reconstruction of the virtual/actual distinction

Let me begin by presenting a summary of Badiou's argument on this point which, for all its brevity, is not always clear. He begins by asserting that Deleuze's philosophy, like his own, is not a critical project in the Kantian sense (and is therefore "classical" [DCB 45/69]),¹¹⁰ being instead a metaphysics of the ground, where "the term 'ground' can legitimately be given to that which is determined as the real basis of singular beings" (DCB 45/68) Badiou then asserts that the virtual, on Deleuze's account, is the ground of the actual. Relying on the characterisation of the plane of immanence in *What is Philosophy?* – and on the discussions of this topic in his correspondence with Deleuze – Badiou goes on to assert the "absolute pre-predicative givenness" (DCB 46/70) of the virtual, its priority not just in relation to being but also in relation to thought: "the virtual here is the ground as the 'there is' preceding all thought." (DCB 46/70) And, in turn and on the basis of this analysis, Badiou proceeds to offer a critical summary of the virtual thus grasped as primordial ground of the actual:

¹¹⁰ Let me note that Deleuze indeed indicates that he is a classical philosopher, but, unlike Badiou, does not consider this nomination to mean non- or anti-critical in the Kantian sense. Consider the following text that also speaks to Badiou's reading on a number of registers: "I believe in philosophy as system. The idea of system is compromised when it is related to the coordinates of Identity, Resemblance and Analogy. It is Leibniz, I believe, who was the first to identify system and philosophy, in a manner to which I too adhere. Thus questions concerning 'the overcoming of philosophy' or 'the death of philosophy' do not concern me. I feel myself to be a very classical philosopher. System, for me, must not only be in perpetual heterogeneity, but must be a *heterogenesis*, something, it seems to me, which has never been tried." (DRF 338) Deleuze's claims about philosophy and system can be found, both explicitly and in the manner in which he presents his work, throughout.

- 1) the virtual as ground is the Being of beings, or its immanent power. As such, the actual, actual beings or existents, are products or creations – indeed, they are “simulacra” (DCB 49/74);
- 2) the virtual must not be confused with the possible, because it is fully real. Its reality resides in its dynamic agency;
- 3) the virtual is in no way indeterminate; it is fully determined, and also determining, once with respect to the actual, and once with respect to itself – virtualities problematise other virtualities
- 4) the virtual and the actual cannot be radically separated; they are two halves of every object, but also the two composite images of each image; here Badiou sees the “stumbling block for the theory of the virtual” (DCB 51/78) – the virtual cannot be an image, since it is the productive power which brings images about (“the virtual [. . .] cannot itself be an image” [DCB 52/78])
- 5) the virtual and the actual are in fact indiscernible; the fact, consequently, that the virtual is completely determined means that the actual is essentially indetermined: “The more Deleuze attempts to wrest the virtual from irreality, indetermination, and non-objectivity, the more unreal, indeterminate, and finally non-objective the actual (or beings) becomes.” (DCB 53/81)

In conclusion, Badiou argues that the “heroic effort” (DCB 53/80) constituted by Deleuze’s attempt to unfold an ontology of the virtual is doomed to failure:

In this trajectory of thought, the Two is established in the place of the One. And when the only way of saving – despite everything – the One, is by resorting to an unthinkable Two, the indiscernibility is beyond remedy, and the reconciling and obscure metaphor of the ‘mutual image’, one says to oneself that, most decidedly, the virtual is no better than the finality of which it is a version.
(DCB 53/81)

Before returning to these characterisations more thoroughly and indeed more critically, one cannot help but notice something peculiar about Badiou’s line of argument in this final statement: it comes to the conclusion that, all things considered, Deleuze’s philosophy of the One is *in fact* a philosophy of the Two.¹¹¹ The claim that Deleuze is a philosopher of the One seems to lose traction – at this point which Badiou himself calls essential, no less. If the theory of the virtual commits Deleuze to an irremediable split in his ontology, surely an assiduous reading of his philosophy ought take this into account, and present it as an unreconstructed dualism?

¹¹¹ Alberto Toscano expresses a similar puzzlement in his joint review of *The Clamor of Being* and Badiou’s *Manifesto for Philosophy*, “To Have Done with the End of Philosophy,” *Pli* 9 (2000), 220-38.

The virtual in *Difference and Repetition*: Kant, Maimon and differential calculus

I turn now to *Difference and Repetition* in order to briefly present a number of orientating points for the discussion to follow. As I have noted above, it is in chapter four, 'The Ideal Synthesis of Difference',¹¹² that the most important and concentrated presentation of the virtual is to be found.

In this notorious chapter, while Deleuze draws on many references, there are arguably three principle articulations with other thinkers: Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, the philosophy of Solomon Maimon (Kant's important contemporary and critic), and mathematics, specifically the differential calculus.¹¹³ Here I will address, in outline at least, each of these three.

Kant's presence in Deleuze's work is profound and long-standing, extending well beyond his *Kant's Critical Philosophy*. Even *Anti-Oedipus*, that supposed grimoire of anarchy, includes an important if heavily modified use of synthesis in the Kantian mode, to the extent that Deleuze himself encourages us to read this work as "a kind of *Critique of Pure Reason* for the unconscious." (DRF 289)¹¹⁴ In the fourth chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, however, Deleuze lays out the central rafts of his critical reappropriation of Kant, which is focused on the Kantian theory of Ideas (while also including decisive discussions of the theory of faculties and the schemata). This theory is a central aspect of the first *Critique*, insofar as this work involves reassessing the role of reason, and its capacity to engage with objects of thought which have no experiential correlate. For Kant, the goal of such a reassessment is to properly locate the activity of reason by, on the one hand, establishing the boundary of reason's activity *vis-à-vis* experience, and on the other, to maintain that reason's claims do play a positive, if non-constitutive, role. Deleuze's goal, in turn, will be to take up and radicalize this already radical Kantian theory of Ideas in order to provide a theory of what he will call the virtual.

¹¹² Paul Patton's translation has this title as 'Ideas and the Synthesis of Difference' for Deleuze's 'Synthèse idéale de la différence'. While the motive of this choice is certainly justifiable – given that the phrase 'ideal synthesis' is prey to an obvious misunderstanding – to my mind its most problematic consequence is that it has the potential to mislead the reader into thinking that the synthesis of difference for Deleuze is entirely treated in this chapter, in relation to the virtual, i.e., that the synthesis of difference occurs entirely at the ideal level (in a sense to be determined below). However, there is a concomitant synthesis of difference which pertains to intensity presented in *Difference and Repetition* whose role in the metaphysics presented there is already overlooked.

¹¹³ For an incisive account of the chicanes that characterise Deleuze's relationship with Kantian metaphysics, see Christian Kerslake's *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy: From Kant to Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), aspects of which can be found in his "Deleuze, Kant and the question of metacritique," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 42, 44 (2004), 481-508, and "The Vertigo of Philosophy: Deleuze and the Problem of Immanence," *Radical Philosophy* 113 (2002), 68-91. See also James Williams' treatment of this relationship, specifically as it pertains to the transcendental, in his *The Transversal Thought of Gilles Deleuze* (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2005), chapter 2. Both Levi Bryant's *Difference and Givenness* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008) and Joe Hughes' recent works – *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition* (London: Continuum Press, 2009) and *Deleuze and the Genesis of Representation* – place a heavy emphasis on this role.

¹¹⁴ On this point, once again see Hughes, *Deleuze and the Genesis of Representation*, 55-7.

The central characteristic of Kant's conception of Ideas for Deleuze is their problematic status. The opening passage of the first edition preface of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is exemplary:

Human reason has this peculiar fate that in one species of its knowledge it is burdened by questions which, as prescribed by the very nature of reason itself, it is not able to ignore, but which, as transcending all its powers, it is also not able to answer.¹¹⁵

This "fate" is what directs Kant's critical philosophy, but this passage already indicates the nature of reason itself which is, as Deleuze puts it, "the faculty of posing problems in general" (DR 168/218). Later, we read in the Transcendental Dialectic that a concept of Reason must be considered as a "*problem* to which there is no solution."¹¹⁶ What do these characterisations mean for Kant himself? Unlike the concepts of the understanding which, along with the spatio-temporalised manifold of sensation provided by sensibility, constitutes experience for Kant, the concepts of reason – what Kant calls Ideas – are regulative in nature.¹¹⁷ They serve to organize the accumulation of experience along axes or with respect to an ideal horizon (cf. DR 169/219), thereby providing a unity which sensibility and the understanding cannot themselves engineer.¹¹⁸

Now, in what sense are Ideas, for Kant, problems without solutions, that is, intrinsically problematic? Ideas, taken as regulative concepts, in posing horizons or orientations for the accumulation of experience, are not themselves part of experience. God, totality and the soul never receive the stamp of the real. Like Gatsby's green light, they serve as a focal point towards which experience gestures or accumulates (for example, the Idea of the world, or totality, serves to organize or orient the multiplicity of scientific endeavor) the various particular epistemic claims that arise through

¹¹⁵ Kant, CPR Avii

¹¹⁶ Kant, CPR A328 B384; see also A646 B674.

¹¹⁷ Of course, the problem for Kant is that this regulative function is frequently exceeded – hence the need for a critique of *pure* reason, i.e. a use of reason which is disjunct from the matter provided through sensibility and the structure provided by the understanding. As Deleuze notes, however, we make a mistake if we think this is the most important aspect of Kant's account of Ideas, even if it is his starting point: "if, according to Kant, reason does pose false problems and therefore itself gives rise to illusion, this is because in the first place it is the faculty of posing problems in general." (DR 168/218) This is characteristic of Deleuze's approach to Kantian reason more generally. While he will not hesitate to insist that "[i]n many ways understanding and reason are deeply tormented by the ambition to make things in themselves known to us," (KCP 21) a theme that is discussed and admired in *Difference and Repetition* (135-6/178-9), on balance he spends much more time emphasising the positive character of reason.

¹¹⁸ There is a fascinating comparison to be drawn here between Kant's conception of Ideas and Deleuze's early work on Hume. In *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, Deleuze makes the point that, while the principles of association can provide experience and knowledge with stability and regularity, it remains undirected. It is the principles of the passions which provide a *direction* or *telos* to this accumulation: "Association gives the subject a possible structure, but only the passions can give it being and existence. In its relation to the passions, association finds its sense and its destiny." (ES 120) Ultimately, then – and here we also find echoes of the famous Kantian claim with respect to the primacy of practical reason – "reason can always be brought to bear, but it is brought to bear on a pre-existing world and presupposes an antecedent ethics and an order of ends" (ES 33). Is this common theme another indication of the deeply Kantian nature of Deleuze's relationship to Hume (recalled mockingly by Badiou in his review of *Anti-Oedipus*)? Certainly – but we must take care with the nature of the Kantianism we invoke.

experience – but totality as such remains beyond the reach of science. Whatever advances take place with respect to the growth of knowledge, the Idea of totality is always gesturing for more, repeating its question, always luring the investigator on towards the *next* experiment.

Thus (and this is a point I will return to below) Ideas have an irreducibly indeterminate aspect, like an object that is missing a part that can never be ultimately replaced but by a series of surrogates, each immediately superseded. It is also why Kant, and then Deleuze, will insist that Ideas are intrinsically problematic in nature. It is also the basic means by which the latter will characterize the virtual: as the regime of problematic Ideas.

Problematic must therefore be understood in this case in a way which deviates from its common acceptance. There is nothing negative or lacking in the Idea which makes it problematic. Problematicity is an objective feature of Ideas, a structural or formal determination. Rather than being problems currently without solutions,¹¹⁹ the problem of the receptivity of light, for example, is solved or rather *resolved* in various contexts (eyes of various kinds, antennae, etc.), but is never solved once and for all.

‘Problematic’ does not only mean a particularly important species of subjective acts, but a dimension of objectivity as such which is occupied by these acts. An object outside experience can be represented only in problematic form; this does not mean that Ideas have no real object, but that problems *qua* problems are the real objects of Ideas.
(DR 169/219tm)

As we will later see, in the process of actualisation (or the advent of solutions, in this context), the virtual problematic Idea tends to be obscured, a theme discussed throughout our examination of the virtual. That is, actualisation is attended by a transcendental illusion, in which the instance of the solution obscures the being and the role of the problem in its constitution.

These schematic remarks already lead us to the thought of Solomon Maïmon.¹²⁰ While working within the broadly understood framework of

¹¹⁹ Such is the result of the mistake of taking problems to be derived from propositions which have no clear or decided upon designation that Deleuze critiques in Chapter Three of *Difference and Representation* under the title of the postulate of modality, or solutions.

¹²⁰ A proper assessment in the English literature of Maïmon’s role in Deleuze’s thought is problematised by the fact that very little is available in translation, with the exception of an extract of his biography, and the short “Letter of Philateles to Aenesidemus” in *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism*, trans. and ed. George di Giovanni, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2001) This state of affairs looks to be shortly remedied, however, with a recently announced translation of the *Essay* due in the coming year. A number of excellent secondary texts are however available in English, notably Meir Buzaglo’s *Solomon Maïmon: Monism, Skepticism and Mathematics*, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002, the collection *Salomon Maïmon: Rational Dogmatist, Empirical Skeptic*, ed. Gideon Freudenthal (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003). Here, I have principally consulted Fredrick Beiser’s magnificent study of the context and reception of enlightenment philosophy *The Fate of Reason* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987). There are an increasing number of studies on Maïmon from the point of view of Deleuze’s philosophy. In “Salomon Maïmon’s Philosophy and Its Place in the Enlightenment: Wandering in the Land of Difference” in *Salomon Maïmon: rational dogmatist, empirical skeptic* Ed. G. Freudenthal (Boston: Kluwer Academic Press, 2003), Michael Roubach mentions Deleuze’s

critical transcendental philosophy, Maïmon subjects the Kantian system to a number of severe critiques. We will focus here on the critical attitude he adopts towards the regulative account of Ideas. The Kantian account of transcendental philosophy proceeds on the basis of what Deleuze calls a hypothetical mode of reasoning, since it aims to establish the conditions for *possible* experience. Maïmon (in his Humean mode) objected that, even should the Kantian system be internally coherent, we still have no way of establishing whether or not it *in fact* applies – it may indeed be that the entire apparatus of the *Critique* is nothing but a castle hovering in mid-air. What transcendental philosophy ought to aspire to, for Maïmon, is provide an account of the *real* conditions of *actual* experience. This is why Deleuze insists that “Maïmon’s genius lies in showing how inadequate the point of view of conditioning is for a transcendental philosophy.” (DR 173/225)

Now, Maïmon’s remarkable – neo-Spinozist, neo-Leibnizian – solution to the *de facto* question of genesis involves arguing that experience is generated *within thought*, and the genetic elements at the root of this process are Ideas, the “principles for the explanation of the genesis of objects.”¹²¹ If we take Leibniz’s example of the sound of the sea,¹²² an example often returned to by Deleuze, we can say that the wave as an object of experience is not given as such, but is rather a sum or composition of the many infinitesimally small *petites perceptions*, the noise of each droplet crashing on the beach, and that this composition takes place in thinking itself. Furthermore – and the sense and significance of this claim will become clear later in this chapter – these Ideas must be thought of as differential in nature. Every object of experience is generated according to the integration of the differential relations that hold amongst these many infinitesimal ideal elements.

How does this account of Ideas as genetic differential principles explain the genesis of objects in thought? For Maïmon, Ideas are not ‘ideals’, not forms in the Platonic sense, but rather transcendental rules for the constitution of idealities in thinking. In the words of Samuel Atlas, they are “the ultimate lawful relations of objects.”¹²³ The genesis of a certain experience of the colour red, for example, involves the synthetic integration of the differential relations in the regime of colour, producing the experience as a result.

reading of Maïmon very suggestively, but unfortunately only in passing. Graham Jones’ *Difference and Determination* (op. cit) presents a strong argument for considering Maïmon a key figure in Deleuze’s development, particularly insofar as he manages to synthesise Kant and Leibniz around the theme of the Idea as differential genetic condition. See also his excellent and comprehensive “Solomon Maïmon” in *Deleuze’s Philosophical Lineage*. In his *Difference and Givenness*, Levi Bryant mounts a strong argument in favour of considering Maïmon as the key precursor to Deleuze’s philosophy, even if Bryant’s Deleuze is, in the final analysis, overly schematized, a clear and distinct construction of the author that normalizes too many obscure things. Finally, Daniel W. Smith presents the key aspects the Deleuze-Maïmon complex in both his “Deleuze, Hegel and the Post-Kantian Tradition” (op. cit), one of the earliest and the best pieces on Maïmon, and the more recent “The Conditions of the New,” *Deleuze Studies* 1 (2007), 1-21.

¹²¹ Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 298.

¹²² Leibniz uses this example in numerous places, which Deleuze enumerates in *The Fold* (154n9/116n9). An exemplar though is certainly to be found in the preface of his *New Essays on the Understanding*, ed. and trans. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 54.

¹²³ Samuel Atlas, *From Critical to Speculative Idealism: The Philosophy of Solomon Maïmon* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965), 62.

In sum, then, Maïmon's critical reassembly of the Kantian paradigm as we have very briefly discussed it, leads to two consequences for the theory of Ideas: 1) Ideas are elements in the production of experience, and not merely the regulation of these products – they are *genetic* in nature – and 2) Ideas are neither thoughts nor ideal and fixed forms, but real transcendental differential structures.

We need only add two deviations from Maïmon instituted by Deleuze before mentioning the latter's use of the calculus. The first takes issue with Maïmon's theory of the faculties. In solving another of the problems posed by Kant's philosophy (the seeming impossibility of accounting for the communication of the two radically different faculties of the sensibility and the understanding), Maïmon (in his Leibnizian mode) collapses the two into the understanding, grasping sensation as a degraded or inferior act of intellection. Likewise, he does away with the faculty of reason, locating Ideas (the genetic instances of experience) within the understanding. For Deleuze, this is an unacceptable solution. Not only does it bring its own problems with it,¹²⁴ we can also see how it reinstates a certain peculiar form of common sense, insofar as it assures the internal harmony of all thought, which would take place within the single ordered regime of an infinite understanding. As Deleuze forcefully argues in chapter three of *Difference and Repetition*, once we discard the unquestioned assumption of native faculties in thinking, and ask ourselves about the advent of a particular capacity in thought, we are led to conclude that this advent has no relationship to other existing faculties, being the product of a violent and irreducible encounter, and consequently must maintain a disjunctive and non-harmoniously violent relationship with other faculties. To locate the genetic elements of experience within a single faculty is to once and for all exclude change from the world, imagining a peaceful (if mournful, for Maïmon) silence at the heart of being.

The second difference between Deleuze and Maïmon is more significant, even if it is not as well marked on the surface of the Deleuzian text. Maïmon, following Kant, is concerned principally with the twinned issues of experience and knowledge. His *Essay* thus begins with a reformulation of the question of *a priori* knowledge which Kant also introduces in the opening pages of the first *Critique* (the famous theme of the synthetic *a priori*).¹²⁵ For

¹²⁴ "According to an objection often made against Maïmon, Ideas, understood as the differentials of thought, themselves introduce a minimum of 'given' which cannot be thought; they restore the duality of infinite and finite understanding, which function respectively as the conditions of existence and the conditions of knowledge, and which the entire Kantian Critique nevertheless proposed to eliminate." (DR 192-3/249) Deleuze's solution to these issues, discussed above, is stated in the sentences which follow this indictment: "This objection, however, applies only to the extent that the faculty of Ideas according to Maïmon is the understanding, just as it was reason according to Kant; that is, in either case, a faculty which constitutes a common sense and cannot tolerate the presence within itself of a kernel on which the empirical exercise of the conjoint faculties would break [...] This is no longer so when Ideas are related to the transcendent exercise of a particular faculty liberated from any common sense." (DR 193/249)

¹²⁵ See Kant, CPR Introduction, and in particular part six, "The General Problem of Pure Reason," B 19-24; at the start of Maïmon's *Essay*, we read: "The question is therefore: how is *philosophy*, insofar as it is *pure a priori knowledge*, possible? The great Kant has underlined this question in his *Critique of Pure Reason* [...] The propositions of transcendental philosophy are equally synthetic [as are those of physics] but their principle is not experience (perception)

Deleuze, however, much more is at stake. The goals of a genetic transcendental philosophy have become not just to account for knowledge and experience, but for reality as such including knowledge and experience but no longer limited to them. Now, it is true that such a project is not entirely anathema to Maïmon, but this is because of his Leibnizian idealism, where the experience/knowledge pair exhausts the fundamental range of being. Deleuze though is no idealist, and is forced therefore in the direction of a transcendental empiricism capable of explaining not just phenomenal manifestation but sensible reality itself.¹²⁶

Finally, let's turn to Deleuze's use of differential calculus.¹²⁷ The status of the calculus in his work can be summed up in the following fashion: it provides a

but [are] rather the *principles or necessary conditions of experience*." Solomon Maïmon, *Essai sur la philosophie transcendente*, trans. Jean-Baptiste Scherrer (Paris: Vrin, 1989), 35-6.

¹²⁶ Joe Hughes presents a strong counter to this position in his *Deleuze and the Genesis of Representation*, in which he argues that Deleuze is at root a genetic phenomenologist, in search precisely of the genetic rules for subjective experience. A proper consideration of this claim is beyond the scope of this thesis (though I will have a little more to say on this point later in the final chapter), one issue worth noting quickly is that Deleuze insists throughout his work, and indeed in the pages of *Difference and Repetition*, that it is not just human beings but all things which are contractile in nature, which in-habit the time of the present. Hughes is forced, by his approach to Deleuze, to neglect this claim which would open his account up at its very starting point (the starting point of the dynamic genesis of representation) to the non-human and indeed non-organic (the stalks of wheat and the embryonic turtles of *Difference and Repetition* give way to the social codification of all flows in *Anti-Oedipus* and then the slow symphony of the earth itself in *A Thousand Plateaus*). An important misstep in his argument seems to be an overly narrow reading of the category of representation in *Difference and Repetition* (the key passage here is 'Ideas and Representation', *Deleuze and the Genesis of Representation*, 117-18).

¹²⁷ In recent and contemporary work on Deleuze, there have been effectively four key investigations into the role of mathematics in his thought. The first and most widely known of these is provided by Manuel DeLanda's various accounts of Deleuze on the basis of a thorough-going account of complexity theory. I refer in particular to his *Intensive Science, Virtual Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2002). The problem with DeLanda's work in the current context is the (not necessarily problematic) lack of discussion of Deleuze's own use of mathematics, in favour of extending the framework of *A Thousand Plateaus* in the direction of the formal sciences. Secondly, Daniel W. Smith has published a number of related interventions on the matter of the Badiou/Deleuze opposition on the status of mathematics (see Smith, "Badiou and Deleuze on the ontology of mathematics"), particularly as it relates to the former's axiomatic approach in comparison with the latter's problematics. Smith clearly demonstrates that at issue here is quite a profound *differend*, whereby from Deleuze's point of view axiomatic set theory is understood as a rigidification and calcification of creative movements in mathematical thought, while from Badiou's vantage point, Deleuze demonstrates what Russell Grigg elsewhere amusingly calls a "Canute-like reluctance to accept one of the most magnificent achievements of modern mathematics." (Grigg is speaking of Badiou's critique of Jacques-Alain Miller and the late Lacan's use of mathematics and logic, in "Lacan and Badiou: Logic of the *Pas-Tout*" *Filozofski vestnik* v.26, n.2 [2005], 7-19). The strength of Smith's interventions is that it presents an entirely adequate and full-bodied account of Deleuze's point of view on the matter. Thus, in this case, my claim that adopting Badiou's points of emphasis in reading Deleuze is certainly vindicated, for what Smith provides in defending Deleuze against Badiou may not have been required before, the problematic status of mathematics in Deleuze being previously obscure in nature. Third, we arrive at the very revealing historical reconstructions currently being undertaken by Christian Kerslake around Deleuze's relationship to esoteric (which is to say *occult*) accounts of mathematics, particularly in relation to Hoene Wronski and his champion in 20th century France, Francis Warrain. This reconstruction (to be found both in his contribution to *Deleuze's Philosophical Lineage*), and his own work on Deleuze's Kantianism, *The Problem of Immanence in Kant and Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009). The strength of Kerslake's approach, on this topic and indeed many others, is double: 1) to note that the letter of Deleuze's text often does not provide enough material to make final determinations about the sense of its own fundamental claims (eg. "when we see Deleuze returning to the notion of mathesis in *Difference and Repetition*, explicitly appealing to ideas from Wronski, and making a clear

decisive, rigorous and structurally complex means to adequately think and richly detail the nature of the constitutive problematic ideas espoused and developed through the encounter with Kant and Maïmon's metaphysics, but beyond the confines of both Kant's subject-oriented thought (calculus provides a means to think problems as such, without reference to any surface of experience) and Maïmon's error at the level of the doctrine of the faculties (calculus provides a way to think problems as such, without reference to any need to have recourse to a pre-existent ontologically ideal framework).¹²⁸

The introduction of this branch of mathematics into the discussion is in the first instance provided with reference to three earlier thinkers: Maïmon himself, Hoëne Wronski and Jean Bordas-Desmoulin. Furthermore, they are introduced not as mathematicians, but as members of what Deleuze calls an "esoteric history of differential philosophy." (DR 170/221) In the same passage, he will indicate that "a great deal of heart and a great deal of truly philosophical naivety is needed in order to take the symbol dx seriously." (DR 170/221) Both remarks call for comment by way of introduction.

With respect to a differential philosophy, framed by reference to this obscure trinity, it is clear that in comparison with Badiou Deleuze's use of the infinitesimal calculus will be marked by a greater distance from a strictly intramathematical deployment.¹²⁹ Indeed, we would be right in characterizing it as a kind of creative and critical reconstruction of the history of the calculus, one which highlights features of the calculus which will be

statement that he is concerned with an 'esoteric' use of the calculus, we need to take a step back and ask whether we have at our immediate disposal all the necessary means to understand what is going on in Deleuze's philosophy of difference"; and 2) to be as thorough as possible when attempting to assemble the necessary means, which is to say to proceed without discarding material which crosses the boundaries of 'respectable philosophy' into more murky intellectual regions. Kerslake's *Deleuze and the Unconscious* (London: Continuum, 2007) is a text-book case of such a method, which yields many profound and valuable results. Finally, Simon Duffy is engaged in an ongoing attempt to articulate Deleuze's philosophy within the context of more general movements in mathematics, logic and their philosophical avatars. I refer in particular to *The Logic of Expression* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), which presents a profound account of the role of differential calculus in the thought of Hegel and Deleuze, in the general context of Spinoza's metaphysics. His central achievement is to present a much richer account of the mathematics invoked by Deleuze, sometimes only tangentially. It is at present therefore the high water mark with respect to our understanding of the role of the calculus in Deleuze.

¹²⁸ Beyond this, Deleuze departs from Salomon Maïmon - who is dubbed the 'Leibniz of the calculus' - in another sense here. The former will reject (as we will see below) any role for the infinitesimal (*qua* unthought quantity in the understanding) in favour of differential Ideas thought in a strictly structural sense. The irony here is, as we will also see shortly, that this aligns him less with the founding figures of a dynamic geometrical theorization of the calculus, and more with figures like Cauchy and Weierstrass. This is not to say that Deleuze's reading of the calculus divorces it entirely from the figure of genesis - to the contrary. It rather embraces both the modern reading which "dissociated calculus from any phoronomic or dynamic considerations," (DR 183) while remaining committed to a connection between the differential and genesis in the form of a *static* genesis, a "genesis without dynamism." (DR 183) The significance of this static nature of ideal genesis will become apparent and even decisive once more in the final chapter below.

¹²⁹ Of course, it is worth noting that no branch of modern mathematics has been treated in such a para-mathematical sense than calculus, and figures like the three Deleuze invokes are evidence of this. That is to say that in no other case is the strictly mathematical sense of a body of thought more invested throughout modern thought with values and goals which exceed this strict sense. Christian Kerslake provides a number of touchpoints in this regard in his aforementioned "Hoëne Wronski and Francis Warrain" in *Deleuze's Philosophical Lineage*.

specifically of use for a far-ranging differential philosophy, which is to say those features that will play an important role in his construction of the theme of the virtual.¹³⁰

With respect to the second citation, we find here the reference to the key element of Deleuze's reconstruction of the calculus: dx itself. Let's recall that, according to the common account, differential calculus is that mathematical method to derive information about the status of a function at a given point on the graph of that function. In strictly geometrical terms, it provides the means to determine the gradient of a tangent at any point of the function in question. As is well known, both Newton and Leibniz introduced independent formulations of this method, and in these cases, the applications of the calculus concerned rather determinations in the measurement of moving bodies. There, the issue was to calculate the rate of change (the acceleration or deceleration of moving things) in this movement. In these cases, and in general in the quotidian understanding and use of differential calculus, the process of differentiation moves from the function to the derivative or differential relation – which is to say that the differential is subsequent (literally derived) from the function.

In contrast with this view, the history of mathematics has considered differential calculus in a series of more complex ways.¹³¹ In the first instance, both Newton and Leibniz in different ways considered the calculus as inextricably bound up with infinitesimal quantities. Without going into the details, this is because the calculation of the gradient of a tangent for a variable function (ie., a function which is not itself a straight line) involved for them the approximation of the derivative. We can already see why this is the case using the crude examples introduced above: what is being sought is

¹³⁰ It is due to this creative and complex relationship to calculus that I consider Duffy's frequent recourse to the developments in Robinson's *Non-Standard Analysis* – which provide a rigorous if indeed 'non-standard' formal means to include infinitesimals within axiomatic number theory and analysis – is in a certain fashion beside the point, though it is clear that Deleuze was familiar with this work, which he cites with respect to Robinson's analysis of the figure of the monad (see FLB 129-30/177-8). Neither the reductive approach of 19th century mathematicians (above all, perhaps, Weierstrass) nor the recuperation of the infinitesimal by Robinson (or equally in the theory of surreal numbers pioneered by John Conway, on which Badiou's *Number and numbers* rests [see NN 107-8 for a thumbnail sketch]) are significant here, simply because Deleuze's treatment of the calculus involves a complex movement of metaphorical extraction and amplification. In fact, the discussions of the calculus in the fourth chapter of *Difference and Repetition* is marked by an oscillation between two possible roles of this theory – as salutary instance on the one hand and as general theory of the virtual on the other – in Deleuze's work, an oscillation that Deleuze does not (to my mind) adequately manage to master. He makes reference to these two faces of his account on a number of occasions, but the final and key passage can be found at DR 181/235, around the theme of a *diaphora* proper to Ideas. This issue, which goes well beyond the scope of my argument here, is a topic that deserves serious critical attention.

¹³¹ Badiou himself published a striking and insightful intervention on the topic of the infinitesimal and its relation to the infinite and the limit in his "Subversion infinitesimale," in *Cahiers pour l'analyse*, 9 (1968), 118-37. As is typical in the work from this period, all of Badiou's influences are on display all at once: Cantor, Lenin, Lacan and Hegel all jostle together around a detailed analysis of the treatment of the infinitesimal by Weierstrass and Robinson. And, as with other pieces of this period too, it closes with a sentiment that is at once heavily marked by Badiou's Althusserian heritage as it is with Badiou's own abrupt and powerful rhetoric: "Quality, continuity, temporality and negation: categories subordinate to the objectives of an ideology. Number, the discrete, space and affirmation: or, better, Mark, Punctuation, Gap [*Blanc*; a term that will, by *Being and Event*, be definitively replaced with *Vide*] and Cause: categories of scientific processes." (136)

effectively the rate or ratio of change, which the differential calculus is looking to provide through the differentiation of a function at a point – hence the paradoxical formulation sometimes used to characterize the goal of differentiation with respect to changes in speed: the measure of an *instantaneous rate of change*. The fact that differential calculus was inextricably bound up with infinitesimal quantities for Leibniz in particular is due to the fact that what differentiation actually produces is the rate of change not of an instant or a fixed point on a curve, but of an infinitely small portion of the curve, or an infinitely short period of time. These infinitesimals were defined as smaller than any given number, without being equal to zero.

Now, while Leibniz had no trouble invoking strange, intriguing and apparently paradoxical notions in his philosophy, the figure of such infinitely small quantities sat uncomfortably with many of the early readers of his work on differential and integral calculus, the most well-known example being of course George Berkeley whose empiricist repudiation of the infinitesimal in *The Analyst* includes the famous rhetorical question: “May we not call them the Ghosts of departed Quantities?”¹³² In the nineteenth century mathematicians worked to find an alternative way of formulating the method of differential calculus while disposing of these problematic quantities, a movement that began with Bolzano and Cauchy¹³³ and reached its terminus in the work of Karl Weierstrass, the main figure in the elimination of the infinitesimal from analysis.¹³⁴ Weierstrass’ means of excluding the infinitesimal from the calculus involved replacing the implied dynamic movement of approximation with the postulation of a static limit. He did this by effecting a shift in the terrain on which differential calculus operated. In Simon Duffy’s words, for Weierstrass

it was necessary for the idea of a function, as a curve in the Cartesian plane defined in terms of the motion of a point, to be completely replaced with the idea of a function that is, rather, a set of ordered pairs of real numbers. The geometric idea of ‘approaching a limit’ had to be replaced by an arithmetised concept of limit that relied on static logical constraints on numbers alone.¹³⁵

He continues shortly afterwards by noting that “the calculus was thereby reformulated without either geometric secants and tangents or infinitesimals; only the real numbers were used.”¹³⁶ Weierstrass’ arithmetical approach, known as the epsilon-delta method (borrowing terminology from Cauchy’s

¹³² George Berkeley, *The Analyst, or a Discourse Addressed to an Infidel Mathematician* (London: Tonson and Draper, 1734), §35, 59.

¹³³ On Cauchy’s treatment of the calculus vis-à-vis in particular the status of infinitesimal quantities, see Carl Boyer, *The history of the calculus and its conceptual development* (New York: Dover, 1959), 275.

¹³⁴ Again, Simon Duffy marks this peculiarity, both in *The Logic of Expression*, and also in his summary paper “Schizo-math: the logic of differentiation and the philosophy of difference,” *Angelaki* 9:3 (2004), 199-215. There we read the following: “Ironically, one of the mathematicians who contributed to the development of the differential point of view of the infinitesimal calculus is Karl Weierstrass, who considers the differential relation to be logically prior to the function in the process of determination associated with the infinitesimal calculus; that is, rather than determining the differential relation from a given function, the kinds of mathematical problems that Weierstrass dealt with involved investigating how to generate a function from a given differential relation.” (Duffy, “Schizo-math”, 204)

¹³⁵ Duffy, “Schizo-math”, 202.

¹³⁶ Duffy, “Schizo-math”, 203.

work), provided the foundation for all uses of differential calculus up until the work of Abraham Robinson, whose work on non-standard analysis provided an alternative rigorous (though not uncontroversial) method.

Deleuze takes on board a number of these developments in his metaphysical account of the calculus, and engages in a double inversion of the common interpretation of the calculus. In the first case, he will agree with the elimination of the infinitesimal *qua* infinitely small quantity from the thought of the differential calculus, but with an important caveat. On this he is explicit: “it is a mistake to tie the value of the symbol dx to the existence of infinitesimals.” (DR 170)¹³⁷ Later he writes, in recognition of this series of historical developments that “The interpretation of the differential calculus has indeed taken the form of asking whether infinitesimals are real or fictive. From the beginning, however, other issues were also involved.” (DR 176/228) So Deleuze agrees with Weierstrass that infinitesimal quantities indeed have no part to play in a rigorous formulation of the calculus, nor by extension in his metaphysics of the calculus or a differential philosophy,

This does not mean in turn that the differential itself has no ontological status at all for Deleuze. Rather, it is by insisting on the differential as a decisive ontological category that we become able to arrive at an acceptable alternative formulation of the relationship between the differential and quantity (the relationship that is explicitly marked by Deleuze [DR 244f/314f] and which, in broad terms is the sole interest of the final two decisive chapters of *Difference and Repetition* as such). In relation to the material we have just seen on Kant and Maïmon, it is easy to see exactly where this ontological status of the calculus will be located: “Neither real nor fictive, differentials express the nature of a problematic as such, its objective consistency along with its subjective autonomy.” (DR 178)

The second key move Deleuze will make is again indebted to Weierstrass, who reoriented or rather inverted the relationship between the differential and the function. This is to say, a point emphasized very heavily in Simon Duffy’s work, that Deleuze adopts the differential point of view on the calculus, rather than the point of view afforded by the function it is related to. As Duffy puts it, “According to Deleuze’s reading of the infinitesimal calculus from the differential point of view, a function does not precede the differential relation, but rather is determined by the differential relation.”¹³⁸ Consequently, “The differential relation is used to determine the overall shape of the curve of a function primarily by determining the number and distribution of its distinctive points, which are points of articulation where the nature of the curve changes or the function alters its behaviour.”¹³⁹

Beyond these two very schematic points, one further important emphasis is placed by Deleuze on the calculus, this time concerning the nature of relations between differentials. While formulated in terms of a fraction, the

¹³⁷ Indeed, the key point of Deleuze’s departure from Salomon Maïmon, who is dubbed the ‘Leibniz of the calculus’ in *Difference and Repetition* (DR 170-1/222), is the rejection of the place of the infinitesimal (*qua* unthought quantity in the understanding) in favour of differential Ideas (divorced from any reference to infinitesimals) present across all faculties. See DR 192-3.

¹³⁸ Duffy, “Schizo-math,” 204.

¹³⁹ Duffy, “Schizo-math,” 203-4.

relation dy/dx does not figure a ratio or quotient – the understanding of the relation held by Leibniz, for example. In one sense, this follows from the anti-quantitative reading of the calculus indicated above, (and it is in this context that Jean Bordas-Desmoulin is explicitly invoked). Deleuze writes: “The relation dy/dx is not like a fraction which is established between particular quanta in intuition, but neither is it a general relation between variable algebraic magnitudes or quantities. Each term exists exclusively in relation to the other.” (DR 172/223tm)¹⁴⁰ The upshot of this point is that the being of dx or dy is in itself indeterminate, requiring relations with other differentials to obtain a minimal level of determination (a point I will return to below). In other words, we must speak of differentials not as ideal objects, but as relational ‘all the way down’, and indeed, as we will see shortly, elements in a relational multiplicity.

We can pause and note the irony, therefore, at one of Deleuze’s famous definitions, according to which the elementary principle of empiricism is that relations are external to their terms (see, for instance, D 55), which is exactly what this conception of the calculus involves. The most significant theoretical resource which is marshalled in the support of this thesis anywhere in Deleuze’s work is not a reference to *A Treatise of Human Nature*, to the empiricisms of Russell (who is often invoked alongside this thesis), Whitehead or Husserl. It is rather the differential calculus, and its metaphysical extrapolation, which lies at the root of the most rigorous formulation of Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism.

In sum, then, Deleuze considers differential calculus to provide, in Daniel Smith’s words, as “the primary mathematical tool we have at our disposal to explain the nature of reality, the nature of the real – the *conditions of the real*.”¹⁴¹ This is the case insofar as 1) we conceive of the differential, in the wake of Weierstrass, as the logically prior genetic instance, rather than a derivative product; 2) we conceive of the differential without any intrinsic reference to quantity, including the infinitely small quantities of the Leibnizian infinitesimal 3) and we conceive differentials as irreducibly relational in nature, definable only in relation to one another. All of these points will be replayed in a number of ways in the final two chapters of *Difference and Repetition*, evidence of which we will see in what follows. And it is this way of thinking differential calculus that lead to one of the more striking passages in *Difference and Repetition*:

If Ideas are the differentials of thought, there is a differential calculus corresponding to each Idea, an alphabet of what it means to think. Differential Calculus is not the unimaginative calculus of the utilitarian, the crude arithmetic of calculus which subordinates thought to other things or to other ends, but the algebra of pure thought, the superior irony of problems themselves – the only

¹⁴⁰ Maïmon himself makes this claim early in his *Essay*: “These differentials of objects are what we call noumenon, but the objects themselves which spring from them are phenomenon. The differential of every object in itself is, with respect to intuition, equal to zero ($dx=0$, $dy=0$, etc.) Their relations, however, are not equal to zero. On the contrary, they can be given in a determinate manner in the intuitions from which they arise.” Solomon Maïmon, *Essai sur la philosophie transcendente*, trans. Jean-Baptiste Scherrer (Paris: Vrin, 1989), 50.

¹⁴¹ Daniel W. Smith, “The Conditions of the New,” 14.

calculus 'beyond good and evil'.
(DR 181-2/236)

These points present us with some basic elements which Deleuze will transform into his theory of the virtual in *Difference and Repetition*. In sum, the virtual is the transcendental regime of differential Ideas, which operate as problematic moments – ideal grains of sand in the shells of oysters – in the constitution of material reality and the experience of it. This constitutive vision is underpinned not by reference to a fundamental subjectivity, whether that of a *res cogitans*, an idealist self in the mode of either Kant or Fichte, but rather to a framework provided by a metaphysical reading of the calculus from the differential point of view.

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With these points in mind, we return now to Badiou's own five-part characterization of the virtual, adding detail to the sketch we have just provided as we proceed.

The virtual and the ground

We start with Badiou's opening claim, that despite Deleuze's philosophical 'punning' on the concept of ground, that there is a conception of the ground in Deleuze, and this ground is the virtual. Can the virtual be defined as "the ground of the actual"? (DCB 42)

The theme of the ground is an often overlooked but in fact very important part of the argument of *Difference and Repetition*, even if its most explicit discussion on its own terms is to be found in the conclusion. There are, Deleuze argues, two characteristics of the ground. On the one hand, the ground, properly understood, "rises to the surface" (DR 28/44):

Something of the ground rises to the surface, without assuming any form but, rather, insinuating itself between the forms; a formless base, an autonomous and faceless existence. The ground which is now on the surface is called depth or groundlessness.
(DR 275/352)¹⁴²

There are a number of aspects of this characterization that I will leave aside, but we must at the very least assert that the ground clearly cannot be characterized as a transcendence, but must rather be thought of as the regime of *immanent determination*. In the place of the insistence that there must be a ground that is substantial (Spinoza), ideal (Plato) or takes the form of a subjective act (Descartes in one respect, Fichte in another), Deleuze will insist that we only grasp the ground in its fundamental operation when we realize that it precisely undoes all of these unities, unmooring them from any fixed reference point, casting them adrift in the most profound way.

¹⁴² This citation recalls the lengthy and complicated theory of the metaphysical surface in *The Logic of Sense*, which unfortunately must be left aside here. Joe Hughes manages to present some of the key elements in a short and helpful passage in *Deleuze and the Genesis of Representation*, 35-8. See also, "Genesis of the Surface I: The Theory of Drives," and "Genesis of the Surface II: Negation and Disjunction," in Nathan Widder, *Reflections on Time and Politics* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 121-42.

On the other, the ground must not only be able to provide sufficient reason as such – that is, an account of the nature of determination insofar as it 'makes the difference' (DR 29/43) – it must also provide the sufficient reason for that which obscures it, namely the regime of identity or the actual. This is what characterizes Deleuze's project in *Difference and Repetition* as a genetic philosophy, insofar as critique is extended to the point where even what is subject to critique can still be accounted for on the genetic level.

This is why Deleuze claims that, while "something of the ground" is aligned with groundlessness or determination, the ground *per se* is caught up in a much more complex torsion. In a striking passage, Deleuze presents the topology of the ground in the following terms:

sufficient reason or the ground is strangely bent: on the one hand, it leans towards what it grounds, towards the forms of representation; on the other hand, it turns and plunges into a groundlessness beyond the ground which resists all forms and cannot be represented. If difference is the fiancée, Ariadne, then it passes from Theseus to Dionysus, from the grounding principle to the universal 'ungrounding'.
(DR 275/349)

That is, the ground as such, the regime of determination, is *bivalent*. In one respect, it finds itself "attracted by the representation that it grounds," tending towards a "fall into the grounded," but in another constitutes an originary groundlessness. (DR 274/351) Thus, to employ a famous Leibnizian philosopheme, identity and difference are both grounded, where the latter is grounded in being itself (or rather, *is* being itself) while the former is a well-grounded illusion or fiction, what Kant would come to call a transcendental illusion.¹⁴³ Or rather difference itself is the ground of identity, the multiplicitous fog on which islands are grounded, whose clarity mistakes the nature of the fog to which it owes its *ratio existendi*.

Ground, understood as both immanent and bivalent, is thus a key Deleuzian concept, or rather Deleuze's formulation of the ground is what expresses a central set of convictions: it is only when the ground is considered as immanent, and as that which grounds both representation and what is beyond all representation that an adequate metaphysics is possible. All of Deleuze's critical remarks found in *Difference and Repetition* in particular can be phrased in relation to this double requirement. Both Hegel (intrinsically) and Leibniz (extrinsically, thanks to his theological commitments, what Badiou calls his 'popish theology'), do not manage to make the ground immanent, even though they both account for the ground as the ground of both representation and what exceeds it. Aristotle makes the opposite error, for in his thought the ground is indeed immanent (the immanence of form to matter),¹⁴⁴ but the conceptual nature of the ground

¹⁴³ Kant, however, by maintaining that the transcendental is to be thought at the level of the conditioning of possible does not manage to see either the general scope of this genetic form of illusion or its variety of (non-epistemological) forms. This is effectively the substance of the charge against Kant that Deleuze presents in his discussion of the fifth postulate of the dogmatic image of thought (DR 153-4/198-200).

¹⁴⁴ Of this dyad, Deleuze writes that "the form-matter couple is not sufficient to describe the mechanism of determination: matter is already informed, form is not separable from the model

here only accounts for representation (what is grasped by concepts) and not what exceeds them. Plato fails on both counts: the ground is transcendent (the Ideas as self-identical moments of transcendence, or what Gilles Châtelet called 'coups de transcendence'),¹⁴⁵ and cannot account for what exceeds representation (the simulacra).

The case of Kant is however the most striking: his philosophy is an incredible mixture of bold new attempts to raise the ground to the surface, which is to say banish transcendence ("Kant is the one who discovers the prodigious domain of the transcendental. He is the analogue of a great explorer – not of another world, but of the upper and lower reaches of this one" [DR 135/176]) which is nonetheless distorted by remnants of transcendentals (the categories, the thing-in-itself, the derivation of the so-called transcendental aspects of experience from the empirical, the unquestioned status of geometrical extension *vis-à-vis* sensible experience). In turn, while representations dominate Kant's account of the possibility of experience, the Ideas as problematic instances which give sense to this experience are irreducible to this schema, themselves non-representational and anempirical.

Having arrived at an outline of Deleuze's theory of the ground as immanent and bivalent determination, we already seem at a distance from Badiou's somewhat anemic account. There is a decisive point to be added, however. Without moving too far into the territory of a later chapter, we should ask ourselves to what Deleuze is referring while making these points: what is this ground in Deleuze's case? The answer is: *time*. It is time that, for Deleuze, is bivalent, lending its syntheses to the establishment of an order of good and common sense, and at the same time subjecting this order to a radical

of the *species* or that of the *morphé*, and the whole is under the protection of the categories. In fact, this couple is completely internal to representation" (DR 275/352-3) Later, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, this critical attitude blossoms into an entire ontological schema, by way of Louis Hjelmslev's semiology, in the third plateau "The Geology of Morals". There, Deleuze and Guattari argue for a complex quadripartite scheme involving not just form and content but also matter and expression, where forms and matters each must be further determined in terms of the matter and expression proper to them. Using this structure, Deleuze and Guattari theorise a whole range of states of affairs from materiality to subjectivity. For a somewhat convoluted account of this structure, see Gary Genosko, "Guattari's Schizoanalytic Semiotics: Mixing Hjelmslev and Peirce", in *Deleuze and Guattari: New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy, and Culture*, ed. Eleonor Kaufman and Kevin Jon Heller (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 175-190. Hjelmslev also appears on a number of occasions in the books on *Cinema*.

¹⁴⁵ Châtelet, Gilles *Les années de démolition* (Paris: Editions d'Hallier, 1975), 263. This passage in which this formulation (which surely pleased Deleuze) is to be found is quoted by Deleuze in his short *Péricles et Verdi: La Philosophie de Gilles Châtelet* (Paris: Minuit, 1988), 8. The entire very interesting passage, which comes to bear on the current discussion, reads as follows: "In philosophical terminology, we call any principle posed at once as a source of all explanation and as a superior reality transcendent. The word is pleasing, and I find it convenient. Impertinence, however great or small, from the leader of a small group to the president of the United States, from psychiatrist to managing director, functions through leaps of transcendence [*coups de transcendence*], as the drunk does with hits of red wine [*coups de vin rouge*]. The medieval God has been splintered, but without losing its force and profound formal unity: Science, the Working Class, the Party, Progress, Health, Security, Democracy, Socialism – the list would be too long – are some of its avatars. These transcendentals have taken God's place (which is to say that it is still there, omnipresent), exercising with a greater ferocity their tasks of organization and extermination."

overturning or ungrounding.¹⁴⁶ The syntheses of habit and memory work to create and conserve a stable surface, while the disjunctive synthesis constituted by the eternal return undermines this stability. Thus we can recall well-known passages such as the following:

The first synthesis, that of habit, is truly the foundation [*fondation*] of time, but we must distinguish the foundation from the ground [*fondement*] [...] Habit is the foundation of time, the moving soil occupied by the passing present. The claim of the present is precisely that it passes. However, it is what causes the present to pass, that to which the present and habit belong, which must be considered the ground [*fondement*] of time. The foundation of time is Memory.

(DR 79/108tm)

In turn, it would be hard to avoid noticing that Deleuze's "punning" on the theme of ungrounding (*effondement*), as Badiou calls it, is always and only ever undertaken in the name of the eternal return: "the ground has been superseded by a groundlessness, a universal *ungrounding* which turns upon itself and causes only the yet-to-come to return." (DR 91/123tm)¹⁴⁷

All of these points will need to be supplemented in what follows, but we are certainly in a position to assess Badiou's claim that the virtual plays the role of the ground in Deleuze and the implications of this claim. First of all, this assertion is literally false, and finds no support in the text, where the positing of foundation and ground, their interrelation, and their concomitant 'ungrounding' are all concepts relative to the temporal order. It may be objected that, since Badiou equates both the virtual and time with the One, that this is no significant point (the equation of time and the One or being will be examined later in the next chapter). However, the issue here lies with the equation of the virtual with the concept of ground, for which there is absolutely no precedent in Deleuze's text.

Secondly, we can see against the backdrop of this analysis the peculiarity of Badiou's series of claims about the theory of the ground in Deleuze, viz.:

- 1) that the ground is repudiated by Deleuze due to its moral character;
- 2) that this "restricted" or stereotypical conception of ground is an insufficient one
- 3) that further, Deleuze himself has a more substantial though esoteric view of the ground, which is the virtual

As we have just seen, the theory of the ground is in no way repudiated by Deleuze in any form. Neither is it fair to say that, thanks to its moral

¹⁴⁶ An interesting and useful discussion of time as ground in Deleuze's philosophy is to be found in Véronique Bergen's *L'Ontologie de Gilles Deleuze* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001), 203-9. Bergen's book is characterised by an admirable attempt to draw Deleuze closer to Hegel, an attempt that is worthwhile even if in this case the result happens to obscure the real differences (and attribute the key features of Deleuze's philosophy directly to Hegel), rather than bring about an effective *rapprochement*. There are certainly many "secret affinities between Hegel and Deleuze," (664) worthy of examination.

¹⁴⁷ The modification only returns the italicisation to *effondement*, missing in the English.

character, it is repugnant to Deleuze. Indeed, the very strength of Deleuze's genetic theory of the ground is that it can account for the advent of conservative or moral structures themselves (the bivalence of the ground). This is why Deleuze insists that "to ground is always to ground representation" (DR 274/351). To consider this theory of the ground hidden or esoteric is also clearly mistaken, since the discussion of the ground relative to time is explicit and to be found throughout *Difference and Repetition*. If it is a secret at all, it can only be a *secret de Polichinelle*, or a purloined letter that Badiou, playing the role of the authorities, cannot see right in front of him, looking as he is for something that is necessarily hidden. All one can say in response is that, should Deleuze have a more esoteric account of the ground, it is indeed well hidden.

Virtual, possible, real, dynamic

The theme of the ground as Badiou treats it does little to bring us close to the issue of the virtual in Deleuze. The second of Badiou's claims, on the other hand, takes us to the heart of the Deleuzian text. This claim has effectively two aspects. The first reminds us of a perennial theme in Deleuze's discussions of the virtual, namely the distinction between the virtual and the possible, and the dangers of confusing them. The second is that the virtual has in Deleuze a full reality (unlike possibility), a reality that is manifest as dynamic agency. We will treat these points in turn.

It is indeed decisive to grasp the distinction between the virtual and the possible for Deleuze. He is at pains to insist that this difference, which can be found already in the two early pieces on Bergson in the 1950's, "[is not] a verbal dispute," (DR 211/273) but concerns two very different ontological points of view. I have already mentioned the critique of the possible as it is found at the start of *Bergsonism* in the course of the elaboration of the method of intuition. There Deleuze argues that the problem with the category of the possible is that invokes a pre-existent reality 'waiting in the wings', entirely real and yet lacking the singular quality of reality. One way to extract the ontological consequences of this is to say that the category of possibility, of a possible world, for example, does not attain an ontological point of view, but only presumes in a hypothetical fashion that possibles have some relation to the world without explaining what this relation is.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, the root of this presumption lies in the view that non-existent realities resemble our own, submitting the thought of the variety of being once more to an unjustified assumption of a fundamental regime of identity. We might also invoke here the Maimonian (or what Deleuze often simply refers to as 'post-Kantian') critique of the Kantian metaphysics of possible experience: we may conceptualise alternative possibilities, but why should we dignify them with any fundamental role in organizing actual reality?

This is why Deleuze will say, in a well-known passage, that "the only danger in all this is that the virtual could be confused with the possible." (DR 211/272) It is also why Deleuze will always insist on the *reality* of the virtual:

¹⁴⁸ Chapter six of James Williams' *The Transversal Thought of Gilles Deleuze* stages a useful extrapolation of Deleuze's critique of the possible in relation to the theory of possible worlds found in the work of David Lewis

in the same passage, he writes that “the virtual is not opposed to the real; it possesses a full reality by itself.” (DR 211/273)

However, Deleuze does not stop here, introducing the consequences of distinguishing virtual from possible, consequences which are decisive in the current discussion. He writes that

The possible and the virtual are further distinguished by the fact that one refers to the form of identity in the concept, whereas the other designates a pure multiplicity in the Idea which radically excludes the identical as a prior condition.
(DR 211-2/273)

This passage indicates a quality of the virtual we have yet to introduce directly (although it was the point that the earlier summaries of Deleuze’s use of Maimon and the calculus revolve around): its intrinsic multiplicity. Before I explain this, note the location of the virtual in this passage with respect to the identity/multiplicity distinction. Rather than falling on the side of identity, which is what one would expect should Badiou’s central thesis be correct, it is identity that is associated with the possible instead. Thus, for all his insistence on the importance of distinguishing the virtual and the possible in Deleuze, Badiou refuses and indeed *contradicts* this important rule every time he equates the virtual and a fundamental identity.

What exactly is the relationship between the virtual and multiplicity for Deleuze? The following three points must be noted.

First of all, as is the case with every use of the term multiplicity to be found in Deleuze’s work (as we have already seen above in chapter two), its supposition is meant as a radical foil to any return to identity, any figure of the One. Indeed, *Difference and Repetition* includes many well-known passages to this effect, precisely in its discussion of the virtual:

Ideas are multiplicities: every idea is a multiplicity or a variety. In this Reimannian usage of the word ‘multiplicity’ (taken up by Husserl, and again by Bergson) the utmost importance must be attached to the substantive form: multiplicity must not designate a combination of the many and the one, but rather an organization belonging to the many as such, which has no need whatsoever of unity in order to form a system. The one and the many are concepts of the understanding which make up the overly loose mesh of a distorted dialectic which proceeds by opposition. The biggest fish pass through [...] That the one is a multiplicity (as Bergson and Husserl showed) is enough to reject back-to-back adjectival propositions of the one-many and the many-one type.
(DR 182/236)

And, since we know that the Idea being referred to here is nothing other than the figure of the virtual (“The virtual [...] is the characteristic state of Ideas” [DR 211/273]), it should be clear that Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* will brook no equation of the virtual with the One. This is, of course, directly

counter to Badiou's reading, which asserts that "the virtual is [...] the dynamic agency of the One" (DCB 49/74)¹⁴⁹

The second and third points are both also indicated in the above citation, and concern structure (or organization) and dialectic. Throughout the account of the virtual in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze puts into play the language of structure and indeed structuralism to account for the nature of the virtual.¹⁵⁰ From this structural point of view, we must for Deleuze see the virtual as an infinitely complex multiplicity of co-existing Ideas, themselves irreducibly multiplicitous in nature (and distinguished from one another according to a set of determinations we will examine next).

The Idea is [...] defined as a structure. A structure or an Idea is a 'complex theme', an internal multiplicity – in other words, a system of multiple, non-localisable connections between differential elements which is incarnated in real relations and actual terms.
(DR 183/237)

Furthermore, this structure can be locally characterized according to detailed criteria, criteria which pertain not just to 'individual' ideas but their various ways of relating to one another.¹⁵¹

It may seem surprising to find Deleuze invoking the theme of the dialectic in relation to the virtual. 'Everyone knows', after all, that Deleuze's thought has nothing in common with Hegel, and it would seem therefore that dialectics would be the enemy of Deleuze's theory of multiplicity on this basis – certainly, Badiou takes this approach in his discussion of the dialectic in *The Clamor of Being*, going so far as to begin his treatment of Deleuzian methodology under the heading "An Anti-Dialectic" (DCB 31/49)

That the acceptance of this wrong-headed view marks even Badiou's text is a testament to the power of cliché, for while it is certain that much in Hegel's project is critiqued by Deleuze, he is unwilling to allow the concept of dialectic to be discarded along with the teleology of infinite representation represented in the Hegelian form of dialectical holism.¹⁵² Indeed, a brief examination of *Difference and Repetition* on the topic demonstrates that it is

¹⁴⁹ Consider the following, among numerous examples: "they imply no prior identity, no positing of something that could be called one or the same" (DR 183/237); "Multiplicity tolerates no dependence on the identical ..." (DR 191/247); "Ideas [are] the differentials of thought ..." (DR 192/249)

¹⁵⁰ This is why Deleuze is both engaged in an overcoming of the structuralist paradigm in the name of time and the event, but is also a structuralist in his own fashion, promoting – at least in *Difference and Repetition* – a philosophical view that Graham Jones has called a *chrono-structuralism*. Deleuze's complex relationship to structuralism is perhaps nowhere better exhibited than in his fascinating "How can we recognise structuralism?" (ID 238-69) For a helpful and detailed treatment of this piece, see "Poststructuralism as philosophy of difference: Gilles Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*," in James Williams' *Understanding Poststructuralism* (London: Acumen, 2005), 53-77.

¹⁵¹ See DR 186-7/241-2 for Deleuze's sketch of what might be called a taxonomy of differentiations within an ideal structure.

¹⁵² Deleuze's discussion of Hegel in *Difference and Repetition* is to be found for the most part at DR 42-5/64-5 (and in a parallel, summary text at DR 262-3/338-40), in the context of a comparison with Leibniz on the topic of infinite representation, but in the course of presenting his own version of the dialectic, Deleuze makes frequent reference to the schema of determinative negation, mostly without invoking Hegel by name (see, for example, DR 205-6/265-6)

the Platonic dialectic that Deleuze is most concerned to refute and reappropriate (see eg. DR 66-9/91-5). This reappropriation goes by way of an attempt to entirely resituate the scope of dialectics within the regime of the virtual – Deleuze writes: “dialectic is the art of problems and questions, the combinatory or calculus of problems as such,” (DR 157/204) – according to which Ideas are individuated by the dialectic relations that constitute them: “by ‘dialectic’ we do not mean any kind of circulation of opposing representations which would make them coincide in the identity of a concept [as in Hegel], but the problem element insofar as this may be distinguished from the [...] element of solutions,” (DR 178/231) which is to say, distinguished from the actual.

Taking these ideas of structure, system and dialectic together with the notion of radical multiplicity, we get the following definition of the virtual Idea, which is helpful despite the fact that it awaits the discussion of mathematics later in this thesis for a full explication: “The problematic or dialectical Idea is a system of connections between differential elements, a system of differential relations between genetic elements.” (DR 181/235) The virtual Idea must therefore be characterized as irreducibly multiplicitous, a dialectical system of differential genetic elements and relations.

Now, the value of this discussion of the themes of structure and dialectics is to demonstrate the abundance of characteristics *within the regime of the virtual* for Deleuze, far in excess of Badiou’s account of the virtual as a unary and productive entity. In fact, to maintain such a view involves overlooking almost the entire account of the virtual in *Difference and Repetition*, which so heavily revolve around these kinds of internal complexities. I should add that while these points by themselves are strong grounds for rejecting the truth of Badiou’s reading, the use of differential calculus by Deleuze to further characterize the virtual – not to mention the account of determination within the virtual that we will shortly turn to – also points strongly in the same direction, a point that the penultimate chapter below will seek to explicate.

•••

We are left with a term that Badiou adds to the virtual-real pair, which is that of *agency*. He writes, in a text that echoes many that we have already seen in the previous chapters, that: “We may [...] state that the virtual is (formally) opposed to the actual, as long as we remember that both are real – *the former as the dynamic agency of the One*, the latter as simulacrum.” (DCB 49/74, emphasis added)

Is the virtual active in this way for Deleuze? Let’s note first of all that the active/passive pair plays an important role in Badiou’s reading of Deleuze, one which I will return to directly in final chapter. The issue here, though, is more specific, since it concerns the definition of the virtual itself. We must therefore also separate it from the question of actualization, which will also be pursued below, since what we need to discover is if Deleuze thinks that the virtual is active *on its own terms*, or in other words whether the term ‘actual’ actually adds anything meaningful to the discussion of the dynamism of the virtual as Badiou posits. Is the virtual *in itself* productive?

We turn once more to the text of *Difference and Repetition*. What immediately becomes clear, above all in the crucial chapter four which we

have been examining here, is that the virtual itself has no immediate causal role attributed to it whatsoever. Page after page is devoted to articulating the structure of virtual Ideas with respect to Kant, to Maimon, and to various branches of mathematics, above all differential calculus, but at no point does Deleuze ever present the virtual as an agency on its own terms.

Without introducing the discussions of the complex process of actualization in the final chapter of the book, which also attribute no direct causal role to the virtual, and which I will discuss in the closing chapter, the two themes that come closest to the topic of agency here are those of *genesis* and *actualization*, which we will address in turn.

Deleuze presents his account of the virtual as a rejoinder to the insistence on two classical oppositions, those which hold between event and structure (for reasons that will become clear in chapter seven, devoted to the theme of the event) – according to the idea that the event is what ruptures structure, as it does in Badiou – and between structure and genesis, where genesis poses the same problem as the notion of event, even if it maintains less radical profile (DR 247/191). On the basis of Badiou's reading, we might suppose that the apparent opposition between the latter two categories is resolved by realizing that the (virtual) structure is also the (genetic) agency responsible for the production of the actual.

Such an approach is immediately ruled out by Deleuze himself. The following text is emblematic of the path that Deleuze himself pursues:

genesis takes place [...] between the virtual and its actualization – in other words, it goes from the structure to its incarnation, from the conditions of a problem to the cases of solution, from the differential elements and their ideal connections to actual terms and diverse real relations which constitute at each moment the actuality of time. This is a genesis without dynamism, evolving necessarily in the element of a supra-historicity, a *static genesis*.

(DR 183/238)

In other words, the virtual has no genetic *power*, but rather forms the problematic nexus in relation to which processes of genesis take place. This is why it lacks all dynamism, contrary to Badiou's claim that the virtual is "the dynamic agency of the One" (DCB 49/74).

Turning to the closely related theme of actualization, we find precisely the same state of affairs. At no point in *Difference and Repetition* does Deleuze invoke the virtual as the causal agent in the processes of actualization. These processes, which are complex and multiple (individuation, dramatization, differentiation) will be dealt with directly in the final chapter below, but it is enough here as an *entrée* to the issue to present Deleuze's own direct answer to the question "How is the Idea determined to incarnate itself [? ...] The answer lies [. . .] in intensive quantities." (DR 245/316) It is at the level of intensity – which must not be confused with the virtual in any sense for Deleuze – that actualization takes place.

The essential in all of this is the following: Deleuze's account of both genesis and actualization in *Difference and Repetition* gives the virtual absolutely no active role in the production of the actual. The virtual is actualized, but it is

not the agent of actualization. We therefore have no grounds for agreeing with Badiou's claim of a profound, indeed unique, agency for the virtual.

...

Before proceeding, let me note that Badiou shores up his invocation of the activity of the virtual by referring to Bergson, and he cites both *The Time Image* – the only text he presents in defense of his theory of a dynamic virtual – and its citation of *Creative Evolution* in the following paragraph, which I in turn cite in full:

That the virtual is real – and indeed, that face of the real which is the One – amounts consequently [ie., on the basis of the dynamism of the virtual] to thinking the specific manner in which the One, as the pure power of occurrence of its simulacra, is never given in its totality. This is impossible, because its real consists precisely in the perpetual actualizing of new virtualities. So the affirmation that the virtual is real becomes, in its turn – with Deleuze writing here under the influence of Bergson – a hymn to creation: “if the whole is not givable, it is because it is the Open, and because its nature is to change constantly, or to give rise to something new, in short, to endure. ‘The duration of the universe must therefore be one with the latitude of creation which can find place in it’”
(DCB 49/74-5; citing MI 9)

If this passage is significant at the level of the letter of the text, it is because it manifests very clearly the rhetorical strategy that can be found at many points in *The Clamor of Being*. This strategy involves the systematic collapse of all of Deleuze's work into a proposed single and monotonous philosophical paradigm, where terms like ‘virtual’ have the same meaning across every text, however different in appearance: here, the difference between the use of the virtual in *Difference and Repetition* and the works on *Cinema* is erased, a point I will return to below. The second is to likewise collapse Deleuze's reading of other philosophers into the same paradigm as well. Here, we have the erasure of any difference between Deleuze and Bergson. The correlative consequence of these two erasures is that the theoretical armature of Bergson's thought, increasingly indistinguishable from Deleuze's own, becomes a resource from which Badiou can draw support for his reading of the virtual in Deleuze. Third, and this is perhaps the most telling point in the current context, while the paragraph begins with the virtual, the passage cited from *The Movement Image* does not include any reference to it. This kind of text, so prevalent in *The Clamor of Being*, derives rhetorical force on behalf of its conclusions (or presuppositions) on the basis of a slippage between terms. Here, the virtual is linked to the One, which are both linked to the idea of dynamism, which allows Badiou to conclude from his citation of Deleuze that all three can be yoked in turn to “the latitude of creation”. In place of argument, the force of Badiou's reading is amplified through the harnessing of signifiers.

None of this is meant to challenge the idea that Bergson is of profound importance to Deleuze. Rather, in order to determine the (perhaps shifting) relationship of Deleuze to Bergson's work, we must do more than trade on the material identity of signifiers if we would be worthy of these two intricate bodies of philosophical work.

The virtual and determination

Badiou's third claim regarding the virtual concerns its status vis-à-vis determination, and is two-fold. On the one hand, he insists that we must never consider the virtual as radically indeterminate, "a formless reservoir of possibilities that only actual beings identify." (DCB 50/76) On the other, he will insist that a "virtuality" (DCB 50/75)¹⁵³ is determined by other virtualities, and in turn determines the actual.

We are therefore to understand that the virtual is a ground as a function of a double determination. For while it is determined as a problem, or as the virtuality of an invented solution, it is equally determined by the circulation in the virtual of the multiplicity of problems, or seeds of actualization, because every virtuality interferes with all the others, just as a problem is only constituted as a problematic locus in the proximity of other problems. (DCB 50/76)¹⁵⁴

Once again, as with the discussion of the virtual/possible distinction, Badiou is drawing on points made in *Difference and Repetition*, and once more he seems to adopt the language of determination in a way that ill-suits the text itself.

Deleuze's own introduction of the issue of determination goes by way of the Kantian account of Ideas, which has three correlative aspects (DR 169-70/219-20). Firstly, for Kant, Ideas are objectively indeterminate. The Ideas of God, the soul and totality are indeterminate because their objects can never be given in intuition. However, and this is the second point, they are also *determinable* in relation to objects of experience. This is how the Idea of totality, while indeterminate with respect to a single object of experience, can nonetheless work in a regulative fashion to gather the various moments of knowledge in scientific experimentation around a locus, goal or horizon: "In effect, the undetermined object, or object as it exists in the Idea, allows us to represent other objects (those of experience) which it endows with a maximum of systematic unity." (DR 169/219) Finally, and in light of this second point, there is a sense in which an infinite determination is proper to Ideas also, this time with respect to the rules for cognition that provide objects to reason, namely the understanding. While particular objects of experience work to determine the Ideas in a progressive fashion, it is with respect to the category of the understanding in the first *Critique* that the objectively problematic concepts of Reason find their locus or purposive end.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ The passage in which Badiou uses this noun, begins with the following: "Virtualities, like problems, are perfectly differentiated and determined ..." (DCB 50/75) It is as difficult to know what Badiou means here by 'virtualities' as it is to determine the precise status of this "like".

¹⁵⁴ Perhaps the word "interferes" here is meant to invoke the formulation of the relationship between philosophy and cinema as Deleuze presents it at the end of *The Time Image*: "A theory of cinema is not "about" cinema, but about the concepts that cinema gives rise to and which are themselves related to other concepts corresponding to other practices, the practice of concepts in general having no privilege over others, any more than one object has over others. It is at the level of the interference of many practices that things happen, beings, images, concepts, all the kinds of events. . . ." (TI 280)

¹⁵⁵ The status of the understanding in this respect is, as Deleuze so clearly presents in *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, modified in the second and third critiques, relative to the other faculties.

Deleuze's account of the virtual adopts, with some important changes that borrow heavily from both Maimon and what Deleuze calls a "metaphysical" (DR 176/228) reading of the differential calculus, all three of these aspects of determination in his own account of virtual Ideas. We already know that the name 'virtual' designates an ideal differential field. This field, for Deleuze, is in one sense radically indeterminate. This follows precisely from the fact that it is a differential structure, not a structure based around any given nodes which would be like ideal identities, and manifests one part of Deleuze's commitment to the radical nature of difference: virtual Ideas "imply no prior identity, no positing of a something which could be called one or the same. On the contrary, their indetermination renders possible the manifestation of difference freed from all subordination." (DR 183/237)

But the virtual differential field is not only indeterminate for Deleuze, since it is also subject to a mode of determination that does not eradicate the its proper indeterminacy. The determination in question "is not opposed to the indeterminate and does not limit it." (DR 275/352) This mode of determination Deleuze calls *reciprocal determination*. Thus the virtual is not just an indeterminate differential field, but internally determined by way of relations between differential elements. It is important to see that this approach means that the virtual can be grasped in the mode of its determination but *without imposing any form of identity*. If there were necessary or transcendent modes of structuration that pertained to the virtual as such, then Deleuze's attempt to provide an immanent philosophy would entirely collapse in the same way that Kant's did, since it relied upon the importation of the classical-Aristotelian table of judgment into the immanent field of experience, thereby forfeiting the right to the name 'critical idealism'.¹⁵⁶

The third aspect or face of the determination proper to the virtual departs even further from the Kantian account. This is because of the role that the understanding plays in Kant's philosophy: it is the faculty that provides the rules (the categories) for cognition.¹⁵⁷ Within Kantian philosophy, these rules are necessary conditions for the possibility of experience. For Deleuze, however (for reasons that we have not examined here and which are treated at length in chapter three of *Difference and Repetition*), there are no globally necessary rules for the constitution of thought – even if each Idea brings with it a savage necessity in its role as problematic – and furthermore we know that the Kantian mode of the transcendental is unsatisfactory insofar as it anchors itself within the modality of the possible rather than that of the real. In any case, we have already seen Deleuze's alternative view of what constitutes a rule for thought: virtual Ideas. This is, once again, a thoroughly Maimonian view.

¹⁵⁶ This often made point turns on the fact that, in the *Analytic of Concepts*, Kant takes as the framework for the concepts of the understanding a set of claims which are not deduced from within experience itself, but rather those of classical logic. Put another way, the distinction that he maintains between what he calls "general" and "transcendental" logic (CPR A76-7B102) is not rigorously maintained. This latter manner of presenting the issue is taken up by Badiou in *Logiques des Mondes*, see in particular Book Two Section Four, entitled "Grand Logique et logique ordinaire" (LM 185-94)

¹⁵⁷ "The Idea as a concrete universal stands opposed to concepts of the understanding, and possesss a comprehension all the more vast as its extension is great." (DR 173/224)

What then constitutes the moment that in Kant constitutes infinite or complete determination of an Idea for Deleuze? The answer is to be found in the category of *singularity*, or what Deleuze also calls “the element of potentiality.” (DR 175/227) Simply put, every differential relation that constitutes the differential determination proper to the Idea has a corresponding singularity, or, better, for every such relation a singularity exists that expresses it.

Taking these three moments of determination together, which Deleuze will define as “the figure of sufficient reason,” (DR 176/228) we arrive at the following definition: “the reality of the virtual consists of the differential elements and relations along with the singular points which correspond to them.” (DR 209/269-70) Or, to recapitulate all three points in the terminology of differential calculus which I presented briefly above:

- 1) dx is, in relation to x , “completely undetermined [...] completely undifferentiated” (DR 172/223), and likewise dy in relation to y ;
- 2) however, both dx and dy are reciprocally determined in relation to one another (dy/dx); further,
- 3) there are specific values of dy/dx which are the singularities or distinctive points of the differentiated equation, and which determine the distribution of points in their neighborhood.

Thus Deleuze’s summary claim: “ dx is the Idea [...] the ‘problem’ and its being” (DR 171/222)

With these points in mind, we can return to the question: how does Badiou’s presentation of the role of determination in Deleuze stack up against this account? The first thing to notice is that Badiou’s claim on behalf of the virtual that it is “perfectly differentiated and determined,” and in no way “a kind of indetermination,” (DCB 50/75) is not precisely correct. In fact, as we have just seen, the virtual is *at once* indeterminate and reciprocally determined for Deleuze.

But it is the second half of Badiou’s thesis on this point that – in the light of *Difference and Repetition* – appears particularly strange. He first adds the claim that the virtual determines the actual. One cannot help but notice, though, that determination as Deleuze refers to it in relation to the virtual is pertinent to the virtual *and only to the virtual*. The triple strata of the determination – as we have just seen – is described by Deleuze without any mention of the actual. Readers of *Difference and Repetition* have to wait for the final chapter of that work to see the full story of the virtual/actual relation unfold (as we will have to wait until the final chapter below). Deleuze is very clear on this point. For example, discussing the status of the third moment of determination, he writes that “Complete determination carries out the differentiation of singularities, but it bears only upon their existence and their distribution.” (DR 210/271) In other words, the determination of the virtual with respect to singular points does not carry us beyond their ideal location with respect to differential relations. Likewise, for Deleuze reciprocal determination (as he accounts for it here in *Difference and Repetition*) is a relation proper to the virtual, and constitutes the elementary moment of

structure, but does not require or imply anything at all on its own terms for the actual.

Even more odd is the assertion that virtual Ideas determine one another. When Badiou writes that “the virtual is also the ground for itself, for it is the being of virtualities, insofar as it differentiates, or problematises, them,” (DCB 50/76) one is struck by the apparently paradoxical nature of such a claim. How is the virtual to be the ground (or “being”) of the virtual? Is it that the virtual (qua name for being) is the Being of the actual, and also the Being of virtualities?

On Deleuze’s account, virtual Ideas are problematic, but, as in Kant, they are problematic not in themselves but with respect to the matter on which they come to bear. As in Maimon, they are rules, not for themselves, but for the construction of objects. It is false to claim, as Badiou does, that “a problem (a virtuality) is determined as the differentiation of another problem (another virtuality).” (DCB 50/76) Deleuze will rather insist that “Ideas are complexes of co-existence,” (DR 186/241) with (as I have already noted) a complex set of criteria for distinguishing them from one another (DR 187/242).

Once more then, Badiou’s characterization of the virtual appears as a construction standing at some distance from Deleuze’s work itself. And in the case of determination, we should be clear that it is only in *Difference and Repetition* that this issue is addressed in any more than passing fashion – thus we can feel confident in rejecting the validity of this aspect of Badiou’s reading.

Image and virtuality

As I have already noted above, Badiou’s treatment of the concept of the virtual in Deleuze disregards the inter-textual (not to mention intra-textual) differences in its deployment. Thus, when Badiou introduces the terminology of images into his examination, we are forced to move beyond the text of *Difference and Repetition* – which only uses this terminology once and in passing (DR 209/270-1) – and towards the two *Cinema* books. This is particularly significant because it is with the concept of the virtual image that Badiou’s account turns in the direction of explicit critique. Thus, *a priori*, it is not clear that this critique is relevant to Deleuze’s treatment of the category of the virtual as a whole – even should the critique be a telling one – since it presupposes without argument or demonstration the unity of this category. We might, in other words, take seriously Badiou’s critique of the virtual as it appears in the works on *Cinema* without in any way finding the arguments of *Difference and Repetition* (or *Bergsonism*, or *What is Philosophy?*, etc.) challenged.

This said, let me first recall and elaborate to some extent on the fourth of Badiou’s summary remarks concerning the virtual. He begins by noting a characteristic of Deleuze’s account that is indeed to be found in a number of the discussions of the virtual, which is the presentation of the object as having two halves, one actual and one virtual. For instance, in the passage in *Difference and Repetition* where the notion of the possible is critiqued in favour of the virtual, Deleuze writes that “the virtual must be defined as strictly a part of the real object – as though the object had one part of itself in the virtual into which it plunged as though into an objective dimension,”

(DR 209/270) and asserts later that “every object is double without it being the case that the two halves resemble one another [...] They are unequal odd halves.” (DR 209-10/270) Badiou notes this argument with approval, since it seems to him that “were we to separate the virtual from the actual object, univocity would be ruined, for Being would be said according to the division of the objective actual and the non-objective virtual.” (DCB 51/78)

However, he says, such doctrine brings with it the problem of articulating these two apparently dissimilar faces of the object. It is in response to this question that Badiou writes, and I quote at length in order to present the key moment of the argument:

In my opinion, the answer [Deleuze] gives is far from satisfactory and it is here that I see the stumbling block for the theory of the virtual. This answer stipulates that “Every object is double without it being the case that the two halves resemble one another, one being a virtual image and the other an actual image. They are unequal odd halves.” We can see clearly how Deleuze takes advantage here of the fact that every object, or every being, is a mere simulacrum; for this allows the timely injection of an immanent theory of the double, backed up by an optical metaphor (the possible double status of images). But it is extremely difficult to understand how the virtual can be ranked as an image, for this would seem to be the status proper to the actual, whereas it is impossible for the virtual, as the power proper to the One, to be a simulacrum.
(DCB 50-1/78)

In other words, for Badiou the invocation of the two halves of the object, and the support of a metaphor of the double image, is and can only be a distraction from an abyssal gap between the two orders of being that Deleuze talks about but cannot sew together.

Unfortunately, this paragraph, rather than stating a fundamental objection against Deleuze, manifests a ramifying series of false claims that lead us very far from the Deleuzean theory of the virtual as we find it in either *Difference and Repetition* or indeed *The Time Image*. In response to Badiou, we must insist on three important claims. First of all, we must dispense with the final suggestion that there cannot be for Deleuze an account of the image that is virtual in character. If Badiou was correct in suggesting that Deleuze’s understanding of the virtual could be identified with “the power proper to the One,” such a point would be telling indeed. However, as we have seen in the earlier parts of this chapter, the virtual for Deleuze does not play the role of the dynamic agency, and neither can we think the virtual as it appears in *Difference and Repetition* at least in terms of a unary aspect of Being, given its complex internal characteristics.

Second, it should be clear that if Deleuze’s only response to the nature of the relationship between the virtual and actual had been – as Badiou asserts – simply to state that the two halves are unequal, then it seems unlikely Badiou would not have been the first person to have mounted an attempt at a fundamental critique. Indeed, it beggars belief that Badiou himself would devote a book to Deleuzean thought if it was brought to ruin by a theoretical inadequacy of such gross character. In fact, Deleuze’s answer to the question concerning the relation between the virtual and the actual is

extensive, rigorous and profound, concerning what he calls the intensive *implication* of the relations and singular points proper to the *perpllicated* regime of differential Ideas, the substance of which will be discussed in some detail in the final chapter below. Here, though, we can begin by reminding ourselves in a preliminary manner that Deleuze espouses an expressivist ontology, where the relationship between events and states of affairs, sense and bodies, the virtual and the actual is not conceived on causal grounds, but in terms of the capacity for the former terms to maintain an *expressive* relationship with the latter.¹⁵⁸

The third point turns on the virtual-image relationship. Let's note right away that Badiou's objection to this possibility has the air of a rhetorical foreclosure: the virtual simply *can't* be an image ... If such a proposal seems impossible to Badiou, it is because, it would seem, he has already decided in an *a priori* fashion on the nature of the virtual in Deleuze. In any case, we are left to ask ourselves, in light of this passage, about this relation as it appears in Deleuze's work.

As I have already noted, the treatment of the virtual as image is only present in *Difference and Repetition* very briefly and in passing, finding its locus elsewhere, principally in *Bergsonism* and the works on *Cinema*. The key citations in *The Clamor of Being* are however from *The Time Image*, and it is the doctrine of what Deleuze calls the small circuit of the virtual image and its actual double that we will examine here.¹⁵⁹ This will also allow us to question Badiou's equation – found throughout his engagement with Deleuze, particularly in “One, Multiple, Multiplicity” – of the virtual-actual distinction with that of the large circuit/small circuit.

Though the term ‘virtual’ emerges at a number of points in both *The Movement Image* and *The Time Image*, it does so for the most part somewhat diffidently, as if the term on its own is not entirely significant. Short texts (eg. MI 106) introduce the virtual only to immediately subsume the contents of the claim under other categories. The exception is the chapter dedicated to ‘The Crystals of Time’ in *The Time Image* (TI 66-94).

Deleuze's goal in this chapter is to attempt to pinpoint the essential nature of the image-time relationship, and these investigations conclude in the assertion that “the crystal reveals a direct time-image, and no longer an indirect image of time deriving from movement.” (TI 95) Strictly speaking, the crystal figures what Deleuze will call “the smallest internal circuit,” (TI 68) or the point at which an image reveals its own proper grounding in an obscure local background from which it cannot be separated; this is the point at

¹⁵⁸ Badiou makes a similar error in his interpretation of Spinoza in *Being and Event*, in fabricating a problem for Spinoza's metaphysics in the form of a supposed causal gap between infinite and finite modes. On this reading, along with a critique based in Deleuze's expressivist reading of Spinoza, see my “Badiou and Deleuze on individuation, limitation and infinite modes in Spinoza”, *Continental Philosophy Review*, 40, 5 (2007).

¹⁵⁹ Christian Kerslake presents a helpful account of the relation between the metaphysical aspects of the works on cinema with the project of *Difference and Repetition* in his “Transcendental Cinema: Deleuze, Time and Modernity”, *Radical Philosophy*, 130 (2005). Of perennial import in relation to the Deleuzian engagement with cinema, see Ronald Bogue's *Deleuze on Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2003)

which the image (which is actual) and its virtual double “coalesce” (TI 66).¹⁶⁰ The crystal is thus the smallest figure of the relation between the virtual and the actual in *The Time Image*.

According to Deleuze, these two halves of the crystal – the two images-in-tandem – are equally irreducible, figuring in a relationship described as “reciprocal presupposition” (TI 67; not to be confused with the reciprocal determination discussed above). But they are also for the same reason essentially *indistinguishable*. Now, it is important to be clear on this point. Deleuze’s argument turns around the reciprocal relationship between the two instances *which form the crystal image*. It is not a claim about the virtual and the actual as a whole. The crystal therefore forms not only the smallest circuit, but also an horizon where earth and sky (perhaps we might invoke here the claim in *Difference and Repetition*, according to which “a broken Earth corresponds to a fractured sky” [DR 284/363]) finally become unable to be disentangled. The crystal image is thus also a hinge around which a thought of images revolves. Above all, however, we must take note of the local character of the indiscernibility that Deleuze evokes.

Finally, the two halves of the crystal image are entirely *reversible*: “there is no virtual which does not become actual in relation to the actual, the latter becoming virtual through the same relation.” (TI 67) This is what explains the basic structure that Deleuze is getting at in this chapter. He begins with the claim that “The cinema does not just present images, it surrounds them with a world,” (TI 66)¹⁶¹ which is nothing other than an alternative presentation of the relation between an actual image and its virtual context or, taken together, the large circuit. If the actual and virtual are reversible at the level of the crystal or the small circuit, it is because any image can become a part of the context for any other: the reflection, having taken on a life of its own, now finds itself amongst a world of its own, including that which it is also a reflection of (this is perhaps the central movement of Charlie Kaufmann’s film *Synechode, New York*). If the actual can itself become virtual, it is not so *en masse*, but in the case of particular images. The “world” which surrounds every image, that obscure underbelly of each distinct image into which the image “frays” into and fulgurates from, is the virtual – but what constitutes this world is perpetually shifting, relating to new determinations which are not at present themselves actual.

Note that, for Deleuze, the small circuit is not, contrary to Badiou’s reading, another name for the actual.¹⁶² Rather, both the small circuit and the large circuit both include the virtual and the actual. The difference is one of specificity or generality. Each actual image is indeed in relation to the virtual Whole, or “the world” (this is the large circuit) but is locally intertwined with its own dissimilar double (the small circuit). In place of the structural account

¹⁶⁰ Deleuze’s examples include frequent reference to the figure of mirror in films (eg. TI 98), introducing a perhaps problematic *mis-en-abîme* into his analysis, insofar as it appears he moves from the formal analysis of the images in film to the analysis of the content of the film.

¹⁶¹ In fact, this is why the theory of the virtual provided at this point in *The Time Image* is the ultimate extension of the investigation that begins at the start of *The Movement Image* with regards to the question of the frame and what is beyond it.

¹⁶² For example: “The stakes of philosophy consist in adequately thinking the greatest possible number of particular things (this is the ‘empiricist’ aspect in Deleuze – the disjunctive synthesis or the ‘small circuit’), in order to adequately think Substance, or the One (which is the ‘transcendental’ aspect, Relation or the ‘great circuit’).” (TW 69)

of the virtual in *Difference and Repetition*, we find in *The Time Image* that the difference between virtual and actual is itself a matter of a location or specificity *within a broader structure* constituted by the ensemble of images.

We should also note that, should we examine *The Time Image* for more information about the nature of the large circuit, which is for Badiou a name for the One-All, we find the following text: “*the dream represents the largest visible circuit or ‘the outermost envelope’ of all the circuits.*” (TI 54) Initially it would seem then that the large circuit is dealt with in terms of the relationship between perception and recollection in dreams, essentially following Bergson’s analyses of these phenomena in *Matter and Memory*.¹⁶³ *Dreams* – not the One, and not the virtual-in-itself – insofar as they represent the most relaxed form of the contraction of the recollection-perception matrix.¹⁶⁴ Later, though, Deleuze goes on to extend his analysis in the direction of the ontological. Here is the key passage:

[E]arlier, we were able to assimilate virtual images to mental images, recollection-images, dream or dreaming: these were so many incomplete solutions, but on the track of the right solution. The more or less broad, always relative, circuits, between an actual image and *its* virtual image; on the other hand, they refer to deeper and deeper circuits which are themselves virtual, which each time mobilize the whole of the past, but in which the relative circuits bathe or plunge to trace an actual shape and bring in their provisional harvest. The crystal image has these two aspects: internal limit of all the relative circuits, but also outer-most, variable and reshapable envelope, at the edges of the world, beyond even the moments of world. The little crystalline seed and the vast crystallisable universe: everything is included in the capacity for expansion of the collection constituted by the seed and the universe. Memories, dreams, even worlds are only apparent relative circuits which depend on the variations of this Whole. They are degrees or modes of actualisation which are spread out between these two extremes of the actual and the virtual: the actual and *its* virtual on the small circuit, expanding virtualities in the deep circuits. And it is from the inside that the small internal circuit makes contact with the deep ones, directly, through the merely relative circuits.

(TI 78)

What is perhaps most significant about this thesis in the current context is that the Whole is not the source or origin of the actual, but rather the *de jure* projection of the expanse of the virtual (reminiscent of the refrain of the cosmos celebrated in *A Thousand Plateaus*), not the insistence on a *de facto* substantial ground. In *The Time Image*, Deleuze is clear: we need not go as

¹⁶³ Chapter three, “Of the Survival of Images. Memory and the Mind,” in *Matter and Memory* (New York: Zone Books, 2004), 133-78, passes through the same main stages as Deleuze does in this passage from *The Time Image*. This chapter also includes the famous cone diagram of the virtual past, which we will discuss in the next chapter below, and which Deleuze himself returns to on many occasions.

¹⁶⁴ It is interesting to note that the account of dreaming offered in *Difference and Repetition* is presented not in the context of the virtual at all, but in the form of Deleuze’s enigmatic theory of the Other at the close of the final chapter. See the final chapter of this thesis for a short discussion of the status of the Other in this work of Deleuze’s.

far as the posited Whole (which is not crystallized but only ever *crystallisable*) in order to encounter the virtual, since this latter doubles the present, and permeates every image with its capacity to emerge anew in the world. Omnipresent in the smallest of details, the virtual resonates with its actual double. It is this capacity for novelty that is out of this world, indeed – but not *beyond* it.

...

To summarise then, we can see that 1) Deleuze certainly does account for the virtual as image; but 2) only in a specific context that cannot be extrapolated to others, particularly not to *Difference and Repetition*; and 3) the small circuit/large circuit distinction in *The Time Image* bears no resemblance to the distinction between the virtual and the actual in *Difference and Repetition*.

These three points are sufficient to show that both Badiou's way of framing the issue of the double-sided object, and the objections that he mounts on the basis of this are of no real pertinence to Deleuze's philosophy.

Note on Keith Ansell-Pearson's defense of the virtual

Before proceeding, I would like to consider an alternative defense of the Deleuzian theme of the virtual proposed by Keith Ansell-Pearson in his *Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual*. For Ansell-Pearson, "it is legitimate to describe [Deleuze] as a thinker of the One."¹⁶⁵ Later we read that "We agree with Badiou: Deleuze is a thinker of the One. But he is also a pluralist and an immanently qualified one. There are good reasons for positively hesitating in describing Deleuze as a Platonist of the virtual."¹⁶⁶

The grounds for this agreement are to be found in a common basic assumption on the part of both Badiou and Ansell-Pearson: that Deleuze's project is basically a restatement in different terms of Bergson's metaphysics.¹⁶⁷

Thus, in keeping with Badiou's assertion that "Deleuze is a marvelous reader of Bergson, who, in my opinion, is his real master," (DCB 39/62) Ansell-Pearson frequently asserts their effective unity. The following text is emblematic: "In order to demonstrate in more precise terms the nature of Deleuze's dual commitment to the One and to pluralism (the One of pluralism) I want to give a fairly close and exacting reading of the 1956 and 1966 essays on Bergsonism."¹⁶⁸

In order to defend Deleuze, then, Ansell-Pearson insists on a *different* reading of Bergson on the virtual, the central claim of which is that "In

¹⁶⁵ Ansell-Pearson, *Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual*, 98

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 114. I pursue the allegation of Deleuze's Platonism of the virtual in relation to Badiou's argument in "A Clamorous Encounter: Badiou's Deleuze and Deleuze's Plato" in *Local Arts, Global Knowledge: Geo-political Planes of Expression*, ed. Felicity Colman, Hélène Frichot and Jack Reynolds (New York: Lexington Books, forthcoming)

¹⁶⁷ For strong arguments for moderating the tendency to identify the respective projects of Deleuze and Bergson, see Nathan Widder, "A Discontinuous Bergsonism", and "Repetition and the Three Syntheses of Time", in *Reflections on Time and Politics*, 40-9; 86-99.

¹⁶⁸ Ansell-Pearson, *Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual*, 105.

Bergsonism it is neither accidental nor incidental that Deleuze should repeatedly speak of the virtual as a *simple* virtual.” (99)

Before proceeding, let me note that the invocation of a simple virtual in *Bergsonism* is less than straightforward in four senses. First, it is clearly a claim made on behalf of Bergson, and the appearance of this theme is framed in terms of an interpretive question put to Bergson’s philosophy, and (for Deleuze) resolved therein:

But this [the emergence of divergent lines of actualization] leads to the question of how the Simple or the One, “the original identity,” has the power to be differentiated. The answer is already contained in *Matter and Memory*. And the linkage [*enchaînement*] between *Creative Evolution* and *Matter and Memory* is perfectly rigorous. (B 100/103)

Second, to claim that Deleuze “repeatedly” speaks of the virtual as simple is something of an exaggeration. There are only four such uses of this idea in *Bergsonism*, all of them nominal indexes of the problem of actualization or differentiation rather than the title of a doctrinal thesis, all of them found within the space of half a dozen pages.¹⁶⁹

Third, the reference to simplicity at this general level is immediately complicated at every point of *Bergsonism*, principally because the very idea of a simple Time or Virtual is the manifestation of a unity that is fundamentally more complex than simple – its simplicity, that is to say, does not tell us much about its nature, which is amply attested to at each point in Deleuze’s treatment of Bergson. The following sentiment is *a propos*: “What, then, is duration? Everything Bergson ever says about it comes down to this: duration is *what differs from itself*.” (ID 51)¹⁷⁰ The following from the closing passage of *Bergsonism* emphasizes the same point:

At the outset we asked: what is the relationship between the three fundamental concepts of Duration, Memory and the *Élan Vital*? What progress do they indicate in Bergson’s philosophy? It seems to us that Duration essentially defines a virtual multiplicity (*what differs in nature*), Memory then appears as the coexistence of all the *degrees of difference* in this multiplicity, in this virtuality. The *élan vital*, finally,

¹⁶⁹ “This is why Bergson is not contradicting himself when he speaks of different intensities or degrees in a virtual coexistence, in a single Time, in a simple Totality” (B 94); “a vision of the world is criticized [by Bergson] for only taking into account of differences in degree where, more profoundly, there are differences in kind [...] a dualism is established between differences in kind [...] In the second type it is a genetic dualism, *the result of the differentiation of a Simple or a Pure*” (B 96); “One question becomes pressing: what is the nature of this one and simple Virtual?” (B 96); “But this leads to the question of how the Simple or the One, ‘the original identity,’ has the power to be differentiated.” (B 100)

¹⁷⁰ *Bergsonism* is thus entirely within the spirit of Deleuze’s 1956 summary of Bergson’s thought published in the collection *Les philosophes célèbres*, edited by Merleau-Ponty, in which we read: “We find the entire movement of Bergson’s thought concentrated in *Matter and Memory*, in the triple form of difference in nature, co-existing degrees of difference, and differentiation,” (ID 42) an emphasis that will be repeated in the very title of the other piece on Bergson from the same year – “Bergson’s conception of difference” (ID 43-78). Both texts (not to mention *Bergsonism* itself) demonstrate the extent to which Bergson is, for Deleuze, a thinker of difference and its multiple provenance. Again, one feels as though one could cite interminably on this point, from *Bergsonism*, the other texts on Bergson, and from *Difference and Repetition*.

designates the actualization of this virtual according to the *lines of differentiation* that correspond to the degrees ...
(B 112-3)

All things considered, we might simply translate 'simple' as co-existent in the sense that this passage indicates, a passage that moreover leaves no doubt about the founding role of difference in Deleuze's interpretation of Bergson – should any doubt exist.

Fourth and finally, the use of 'simple' in this strong sense to characterize the virtual is immediately connected to a range of other terms, all likewise capitalized, and all likewise articulated in terms of the movement of actualization (ie., the movement of the *élan vital*): Duration (B 93, 94), Difference (B 93), Time (B 93, 100), Whole (B 93, 100, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107), One (B 93, 100), Life (B 94, 106), Simple (B 96, 100), Pure (B 96), Virtual (B 96), Unity (B 100), Simplicity (B 100), and Nature (B 107). Even such a crude analysis of the surface of the text in the passages of significance for Ansell-Pearson's interpretation reveal the relative insignificance of simplicity in the chain of concepts found there. The figure of the whole or *le Tout* dominates to a significant degree Deleuze's rhetoric there.

Beyond these textual points, a first question with respect to the substance of this interpretation of Deleuze (and no longer simply of Deleuze's Bergson) would concern what exactly this simplicity entails – how can simplicity be distinguished from the ipseity that Badiou's account supposes? Ansell-Pearson states its significance as follows: "In Deleuze, by contrast [with Plotinus], the simplicity of the virtual denotes the pure positivity of being as a power of self-differentiating." (99)

This statement, however, arguably raises more problems than it solves. On the one hand, it is not clear that this distinguishes Ansell-Pearson's position from Badiou's numerous near-identical claims we have examined in this chapter, claims which also come attached to an obligatory reference to Bergson: "the affirmation that the virtual is real becomes, in its turn – with Deleuze writing here under the influence of Bergson – a hymn to creation." (DCB 49)¹⁷¹ And on the other, what justifies this restriction of consideration to *Bergsonism* and the early writings of Bergson from the fifties when the virtual is considered? For when we ask what meaning the alleged *simplicity* of the virtual could mean for the Deleuze of *Difference and Repetition*, or *What is Philosophy?*, we find Ansell-Pearson in precisely the same position as Badiou, that is, lacking any textual means to extend the analysis beyond very specific contexts.

This question becomes particularly pressing when we turn to examine *Difference and Repetition*. There, the status of the virtual past, and the unity proper to it, are confronted with the theme of the eternal return on the one hand, which Deleuze sees as exceeding the purview and range of the pure past (as we will see in some detail in the next chapter), and we also encounter, on the other, the figure of a complex set of structural determinations proper to the virtual as such.

¹⁷¹ See DCB 52/79: "[Deleuze] is guided [...] in all the nodal points of his system, by Bergson."

In other words, we see that the past itself as integral self-differentiating virtuality is exceeded by the eternal return as the pure form of time as such, a point that is as telling with respect to Badiou as it is to Ansell-Pearson, and one which we will turn to later in this thesis. In brief, were we to claim that time has only two fundamental tenses (the passing present and the virtual past), a loop is established whose ultimate ontological consequence is the circulation of a specular identity. Where *Bergsonism* presents the virtual past as the source of the new, *Difference and Repetition* demands that the past be superseded by a further time, one which tears temporality as such in two, and which guarantees absolute difference as fundamental. In addition, as we have just seen, the virtual is a complex of co-existing and reciprocally-(in)differentiated Ideas, each marked by their own proper ideal singularities. It is this point which eludes Badiou – as Ansell-Pearson has it, “he fails to comprehend” the profundity of pluralism in Deleuze’s thought (114). But the danger of the recourse to, and overemphasis of, the Bergsonian motif of simplicity in accounting for the nature of the virtual in Deleuze is that it seems unequal to the pluralism of the virtual it is supposed to embody.

The virtual as the ruin of the actual

We come now to the ultimate moment of Badiou’s characterization and critique of the virtual in Deleuze, in which he presents a critique of the Deleuzian theory of the virtual such that, on his account, Deleuze’s “heroic effort [...] seems incapable of succeeding.” (DCB 53/80) He rounds out his argument by making the following claims:

- 1) the two sides of the object are isomorphic and indeed identical to the two halves of time (“the image-object *is* time” [DCB 52/79])¹⁷² as they are formulated in the famous Bergsonian motif of the two jets;
- 2) this splitting, in both the register of the object and that of time, reintroduce a dualism into Deleuze’s thought
- 3) the spectre of dualism thus conjured is dealt with by insisting on the indiscernibility of the virtual and the actual (or the past and the present, or the two halves of the object): “the only way of saving – despite everything – the One, is by resorting to an unthinkable Two, and indiscernibility without remedy.” (DCB 53/81)
- 4) finally, such an insistence means that there is an impoverishment of the actual to the degree that the virtual is determined: “the complete determination of the ground as virtual implies *an essential indetermination of that for which it serves as a ground.*” (DCB 53/80)

For the time being (once more), we must delay in considering these assertions with respect to the temporal register, since a great deal more background will be required in order to establish the validity of the past-virtual connection. The next chapter deals with these matters. Nonetheless, the charge of an obfuscated dualism can be examined here in the register of

¹⁷² The passage in which this claim is made provides another example of the equivocation that marks Badiou’s argument at many points: “The real object is therefore exactly like time: it is a splitting or duplicity. We can say that the image-object *is* time ...” (DCB 52/79) Badiou’s reader would be justified in asking how these two claims are related.

the two sides of the object that we have been examining over the last few pages. The first question is thus whether or not the double object is a manifestation of an ontological dualism.¹⁷³

Whenever this kind of question emerges with respect to Deleuze, the first thing that must be recalled (as we did in chapter three above) is that Deleuze's explicit claims on this matter reject in the strongest terms any form of pathological dualism. The concepts of univocity and expression, the lengthy critique of emanative, analogical or equivocal ontological positions found in almost all of Deleuze's work from the early texts on Bergson through to "Immanence: A life" cannot be overlooked. This means that all attempts to argue that Deleuze is a dualist must begin by asserting that Deleuze did not or could not recognize this fundamental reality about his own thought – or that he maintained an esoteric dualist philosophy parallel to his explicit rejections of the same view.

Restricting ourselves to the theory of the double object, though, there are two pieces of evidence that – on the back of the claims already asserted in this chapter – weigh heavily against Badiou's interpretation. The first of these concerns the status of Ideas for Deleuze. Let's recall the Kantian and Maïmonian provenance of the problematic Idea in Deleuze. For both thinkers, these Ideas are *transcendental* in nature, points of "ideal *focus*" or "common *horizon[s]*." (DR 169/219) Whatever else we might assert about the status of the Idea in Deleuze, in noting its transcendental nature, we are equally asserting its irreducibility to transcendence and thus to dualism.

It is true that Deleuze's use of the transcendental in this fashion pushes it well beyond the territory that has often been thought to properly belong to it, especially insofar as we take it in its strictly Kantian (transcendental idealist) or phenomenological forms. We need only consider the gap between Kant and Husserl (or indeed even Kant and Maïmon) to see that there is no single transcendental, and that indeed the history of transcendental philosophy has been characterized by one innovation after another. As Miguel de Beistigui eloquently puts it, "Deleuze is perhaps the 'true' inheritor of Kant: not a neo-Kantian, but the Kant of the twentieth century."¹⁷⁴ This claim is followed,

¹⁷³ In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze makes use of the theme of a "secret dualism" to account for the difference between states of affairs (bodies and their intermixtures) and sense-events (the ideal level which, in *Difference and Repetition*, is populated by the virtual). He is very clear, however, to reject any exclusive distinction such as we find in Plato or Descartes, emphasising, on the one hand, that the ideal has the status of an effect (in a manner we will examine in a later chapter), and on the other that this does not imply any division in the sense of being. After explicitly rejecting the equivocal ontology that pertained to such a view in Aristotle, Deleuze writes (siding with the Stoics) that "states of affairs, quantities, and qualities are no less beings (or bodies) than substance is; they are a part of substance, and in this sense they are contrasted with an *extra-Being* which constitutes the incorporeal as a nonexisting entity. The highest term therefore is not Being, but *Something (aliquid)*, insofar as it subsumes being and non-being, what exists and what insists." (LS 7/16tm) As this claim makes clear, the dualism in no way leads to the ontological split that we find in thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, etc. There is a dualism, Deleuze is insisting, but it does not involve a distinction in being. As James Williams points (*Gilles Deleuze's Logic of Sense*, 5), Deleuze is here drawing heavily on the discussion of expression in Spinoza mounted by Deleuze in *Spinoza and the problem of expression*, a discussion I have already glossed above in chapter three.

¹⁷⁴ Miguel de Beistigui, *Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology* (Indianapolis: University of Indianapolis Press, 2004), 21. De Beistigui's definition of the transcendental for Deleuze is nonetheless extremely problematic: for him, Deleuze is "the thinker of the

however, by an important caveat, the content of which we have already had cause to assert ourselves: “But such a characterisation must be immediately qualified. For it is only at the cost of a formidable transformation of the very sense of the transcendental that philosophy will be reasserted as ontology and metaphysics.”¹⁷⁵

On the other hand, there is one other idea or ideal which the notion of the transcendental has always traveled alongside, and that is the idea of *immanence*. Already in Kant, the ultimate point of asserting a transcendental subject as the underpinning of experience is in order to reject – on pain of a return of Humean skepticism – any reference to any transcendent realm which would provide the ground for the validity of knowledge and experience. This is the purely positive notion of immanent critique, which has fueled some incredible endeavours in thought since, including Deleuze’s.

The mathematical point of view presents us with the second resource for combating the claim of dualism with respect to the virtual in *Difference and Repetition*. There, as we have seen in passing, the virtual is related by Deleuze with the regime of differentials (“In short, dx is the Idea” [DR 171/222]). The actual, in turn, must be thought of as the regime of the *integration of these differentials*. Why is this important for thinking about the two halves of the object? Simply because no meaningful reading of differential calculus would posit the difference at the level of being between the differentials of an equation and their integrations. Deleuze speaks of the virtual as the rule for the constitution of objects, or the being of structure, but we might equally say, bringing this way of speaking together with the rhetoric of the double-sided object, that the virtual half of the object is nothing but the differential rules or structure for its own proper actual half. This, as we have also seen, is essential Maimon’s conception of differential Ideas.

On this front we might again recall Kant, for whom an object of experience was only constituted when a sensible manifold was provided with the structuration of the categories of the understanding.¹⁷⁶ Deleuze’s account is very similar to this, while at the same time evacuating the problems that are introduced through Kant’s doctrine of the faculties. But it is also the case that the ultimate determination of objects of experience for Kant relies not just upon a manifold subject to the categories, but also the Ideas of reason that give these objects their coherence in the wider field of experience.¹⁷⁷

So Deleuze’s procedure involves first of all, as we have already seen, retracting any claim for a native faculty to which Ideas might belong, making them extra-facultative (and indeed, according to the arguments in the third chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, proto-facultative) in nature. Secondly, it

transcendental as un-grounding.” As we have already seen, the theme of the ground only emerges in *Difference and Repetition* with respect to time. Whatever else, there seems no straightforward way to equate time and the virtual, which makes this claim at best extremely tendentious.

¹⁷⁵ De Beistigui, *Truth and Genesis*, 21.

¹⁷⁶ Hence the famous assertion that “Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind” (CPR A51B75).

¹⁷⁷ See Christian Kerslake’s excellent summary of this aspect of Kant’s doctrine in “Deleuze, Kant and the Vertigo of Immanence,” in *Radical Philosophy*, 113 (2002), 8.

involves reforming the distinction between the regulative and constitutive division so important to Kant. For Deleuze, Ideas are constitutive but *in the mode of being regulative*: the virtual constitutes the actual by providing rules for the static genesis of the actual. Third, it involves radically resituating the rules of the understanding, which are now located by Deleuze at the level of the transcendental illusions that form the false ceiling of the actual. Universal categories may indeed be features of experience, but features which emerge subsequent to the constitution of reality and the experience of it, rather than prior to it.

These points simply serve to illustrate the point that the rejection of dualism on Deleuze's part is not just a surface phenomenon, but is rather embedded in some of the more rich and technical aspects of his thought. They also indicate that Deleuze's approach is a part of established and venerable philosophical traditions that extend back as far as Leibniz and Kant. The real content of Badiou's final remark about the virtual concerns not dualism but the question of discernibility. The problem with the Deleuzean theory of the virtual, for Badiou, is that it forces us into an increasingly severe evacuation of the actual in our attempts to specify it. More precisely, by attempting to maintain a philosophy like the one that Badiou attributes to Deleuze, we find ourselves ultimately without any means to distinguish between the virtual and the actual. We find ourselves lacking "a mark or criterion [...] by which to distinguish them." (DCB 53/80)

The initial observation we must make here is that, once again, the reference points that Badiou puts into use in order to establish this indiscernibility as a part of Deleuze's thought is a single passage – two pages, to be precise – of *The Time Image*. The extrapolation of these two pages to inflect the rest of Deleuze's thought follows. As we have seen above, however, the theory of the virtual image and its interchangeable virtual double is particular to *The Time Image*, and has no significant counter-part in *Difference and Repetition* or in the broader theory of the virtual in Deleuze.

Nonetheless, we are presented with the question: how is the virtual distinguished from the actual more generally? It is not difficult to dispel such questions with reference to *Difference and Repetition*, and I will mention here only the most important such means of distinction, which returns us to the category of determination. Contrary to Badiou's account of this topic, Deleuze is at pains here to insist that the virtual must be defined, in contradistinction from the actual, as *lacking determination* in a way that the actual is not. Consider, for example, this account of the difference between the virtual and the actual, where Deleuze puts his distinction between differenc/tiation into play:

The question of the *ens omni modo determinatum* must be posed as follows: something which exists only in the Idea may be completely determined (differentiated) and yet lack those determinations which constitute actual existence (it is undifferentiated, not yet even individuated).
(DR 280/358, emphasis added)

It is for this reason that Deleuze assigns a certain positive *non-being* to the virtual in relation to the actual, in order to designate its problematic character: "non-Being is Difference: *heteron*, not *enantion*. For this reason

non-being should rather be written (non)-being, or, better still, ?-being.” (DR 64/89) That the virtual exists in the mode of being of the problematic means that it lacks the forms of determination which give the actual their actuality: the form of object and subject, the entire grid of identity imposed by representation.

But what is even more strange is the fact that Badiou himself offers numerous distinguishing traits – indeed, his whole reading of Deleuze is predicated on radical divisions of this kind. *In this same chapter* where he argues for the ultimate indistinction of the virtual from the actual, he offers many such decisive (if false, as I have tried to show) criteria: the virtual is the Being of beings, where the actual is its product; the virtual is dynamic power while the actual is created simulacrum; the virtual is the process whereby the actual comes about; the virtual is fully determined while the actual is indeterminate.

Further, it is puzzling to find Badiou asserting that the actual is in danger of dissolving into a flickering light refracted by an active and completely determined virtual. After reflecting on such claims for a moment, we might simply note that in many cases, Deleuze presents the virtual as a category which requires an active program of advocacy. That is, rather than seeming like the exemplary obvious moment in his ontology, Deleuze frequently goes out of his way to lend it argumentative resources in order to substantiate its role. We must ask, in the end, why it is that Deleuze is so concerned to establish the category of the virtual in the face of the actual if, in the order of being, things stand in the inverse relationship? Why is it that we find Deleuze “insisting as always on the *reality* of the virtual”? (DCB 46/70) It is as though each definition of the virtual in Deleuze carries with it a certain combative quality, as if this is what will be necessary to assert it as a category in its own right, in the face of the hegemony of the possible and the real, the actual and the material.¹⁷⁸

In sum, it is very strange to see Badiou’s entire chain of argumentation vis-à-vis the virtual, which is for him as we have seen “the principle name of Being in Deleuze’s work,” (DCB 43/65) come down to the invocation of two pages in *The Time Image* and the dubious extraction of consequences from them. It is as if the other commentaries on this theme found throughout his work, including the most substantial such discussions, did not exist. Walter Benjamin once wrote of polemics that they “mean to destroy a book in a few of its sentences. The less it has been studied the better.”¹⁷⁹ Which is of course to say, as Spinoza would no doubt agree, that the ultimate *asylum ignorantiae* is nothing but – ignorance as such.

Conclusion

Badiou begins his chapter by noting the important role that the virtual plays in Deleuze’s philosophy, and in this he is undoubtedly correct. However, in detailing the examination of Badiou’s interpretation, it becomes clear that

¹⁷⁸ Similar questions could be elaborated with regard to the materialist reading of Deleuze: if he is so concerned to do away with the order of ideality, then why does he go to such effort to reinvest this category with a new and surprising significance?

¹⁷⁹ From Walter Benjamin, “The Critic’s Technique in Thirteen Theses,” in *One Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. K. Shorter and E. Jephcott (New York: Verso, 1979), 78.

very little is reminiscent of the Deleuzean texts we have examined, principally the text of *Difference and Repetition*, but also moments of *The Time Image* and *What is Philosophy?*

Badiou's anemic presentation of the virtual in Deleuze, an account which treats all of Deleuze's work on the topic as unified while, as I have argued, failing to engage in a proper examination, leaves everything still to be said. The "entire adventurous character of Ideas remains to be described." (DR 182/236)

Chapter Five: On Truth and Time

The now and the past on earth – alas, my friends, that is what I find most unendurable; and I should not know how to live if I were not also a seer of that which must come.

Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Soon now we shall go out of the house and go into the convulsion of the world, out of history into history and the awful responsibility of Time.

Robert Penn Warren, *All the King's Men*

Introduction

Badiou's discussion of the themes of time and truth constitutes the most peculiar moment in his study of Deleuze. This discussion, found in chapter five of *The Clamor of Being*, is structured around a surprising string of equations such that, by the end of the chapter, the following terms have all been posited as synonymous: time, truth, the virtual, atemporal eternity, Relation, and the One. Here, my concern will be less to argue against this bold string of equations, but rather to deal with the central link, namely the equation of time and truth. We must then discover, at least schematically, what role time and truth play in Deleuze's philosophy, and the manner in which they are articulated.

It is easy to see why Badiou takes this theme to be such an important aspect of Deleuze's philosophy: his own thought, as we saw in the opening chapter, gives an important role to truth as the created foundation of change in situations. Likewise, when Badiou writes – in order to distinguish himself from Deleuze – that “Truths are actual multiplicities with a much higher ‘Dionysian’ value than that accruing to any sort of phenomenological salvaging of time,” (DCB 60/91) the force of his point is once more derived from his own account of the novelty inherent in truth.

Rather, though, than seeing Deleuze as the enemy of truth as such, chapter five of *The Clamor of Being* goes out of its way to argue that Deleuze is the champion of an obscure or esoteric theory of truth irreducible to the familiar representational or “analogical” account:

This other idea of truth, I would suggest, is one that Deleuze, with the violent courtesy that I discern in his style and thought, was to implacably defend: an idea that is all the more devious for giving to truth the name of the false – the *power* of the false – and for the fact that the process of this truth is no longer judgment, but (in conformity with the requisites of the intuition, which, as we have seen, is always a looped trajectory) a sort of *narration*.
(DCB 57/86)

Let's recall that the definition of truth relative to process – if not narrative – is fundamental to grasping Badiou's own definition of truth as the part of the situation gathered according to the faithful movement of the enquiring subject. For Deleuze on Badiou's account, then, truth is narration.¹⁸⁰ Immediately, though, he connects this thesis with his more basic claims in *The Clamor of Being*, deploying the truth/falsity distinction across the space of the virtual and the actual:

For those for whom the univocity of Being requires that it be essentially *virtual*, the theme of truth is necessarily given as *power*. From the viewpoint of this power, the actual forms of beings can

¹⁸⁰ One strange quality of this ascription is the manner in which Badiou immediately conflates truth as narration with truth expressed *through* narration. For example: “The theme of narration as the flexible and paradoxical vector of truth is as old as philosophy itself.” (DCB 58/87) This is strictly irrelevant to the first claim, and considerably weakens its value – after all, narrative as a *vector* of truth returns us straight away to the representational notion of truth, even if “the resources of narration” (DCB 58/87) are required for the expression of all truths.

indeed be considered as simulacra, or anarchic agencies of the false. For truth is coextensive with the productive capacity of the One-virtual, and does not reside as such in any particular actual outcome, in isolation from the rest. Accordingly, the difficulty in this instance is no longer that of isolating forms-of-the-true in the actual, but of linking the anarchy of the simulacra to an immanent affirmation-of-the-true. However, this affirmation exists nowhere else than in its actualisations and the power is really the power of *the false*. (DCB 59/88)¹⁸¹

I could continue this citation at length, but the interpretive or expressive technique that Badiou is employing is clear: the case in question (here, time) is posed by Badiou against the background of the interpretive structure that has already been put in place. Once more, we see the familiar reference to actual simulacra, and to the One-virtual as power.

In any case, it is in the context of assigning to Deleuze the equation of the value of truth to the power of the false that Badiou introduces his discussion of time: “the ‘royal road’ of Deleuze’s idea of the true is his theory of time.” (DCB 59/89) It is Deleuze’s theory of time that will provide the grounds upon which to elaborate this theory of truth.

What, for Badiou, is this theory of time? Badiou’s answer is surprisingly limited – surprising since time is a category that Deleuze returns to again and again throughout his work. The answer, such as it is, is once more stated in terms of the virtual/actual distinction (or, as Badiou writes, it “strictly conforms to the logic of the One” [DCB 61/92]). On the one hand, there is “sensible time – concrete time “ (DCB 61/92). And, on the other, time as “the One qua integral virtuality” and “*the power of the false*,” (DCB 61/91): Being and ground. This division is also presented in Bergsonian terms: “the present is, in fact, a point where the One opens up (but the One is the Open), and there is an intermingling of a variation of the One (of pure duration) and superficial mobility.” (DCB 62/93)

With these two definitions, we can easily see why Badiou might be led to assert that truth is time for Deleuze: they both fall back on the great mediating figure of the One which organizes the entire course of *The Clamor of Being*. Questions remain, though, about the accuracy of such an assessment: how appropriate is this interpretive approach with respect to the categories of time and truth in Deleuze?

Truth

Before examining how closely the time/truth/virtual complex fits with Deleuze’s work, the status of truth as such should be elucidated on its own terms. What is striking is that it is not just in late texts that the category of truth is put to use by Deleuze as Badiou claims (“It is in his *Foucault* that the most appraised texts on truth written by Deleuze are to be found.” [DCB 65/97]). In fact, in some of Deleuze’s earliest works, the concept of truth is given sustained and detailed attention, which is in each case at least

¹⁸¹ Should we not ask ourselves about the equivocation introduced into this formulation (and many others) with the phrase “coextensive with”? Why not a definitive claim? I will return to this kind of problem in the conclusion of this chapter.

minimally positive. Furthermore, the concept of truth is given several sustained treatments in the mature works of the late sixties, which, although they all include strongly critical remarks, certainly do not discard the concept of truth as such, but rather deploy it in a new register.¹⁸²

Truth is first substantially engaged with by Deleuze in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. What is striking about this presentation is that, while including elements of the critique of the category of truth as presented by Badiou, it does not foreclose on the interest of the category as such. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, and then later in *Proust and Signs*, what could be called a *differential theory of truth* is discernible. The critical aspect of the argument will be familiar to readers of Nietzsche: the central question concerning truth is not ‘what is true?’ but rather ‘who wants the truth?’, and what (in the one who wants the truth) wants it? Deleuze firmly upholds the Nietzschean diagnosis that the category of truth frequently masks “values superior to life,” (NP 95) and thereby denigrates life itself.

This is not only the negative or critical moment of the argument, however, for it contains the kernel of a broader assessment, even a transvaluation. The point of view that Deleuze adopts is well expressed in the following text:

There are truths of baseness, truths that are those of the slave. Conversely, our highest thoughts take falsehood into account; moreover, they never stop turning falsehood into a higher power, an affirmative and artistic power that is brought into effect, verified and becomes-true in the work of art.
(NP 104-5)

In sum, it is not truth as such which is a bad or life-betraying category, but the use to which it is put, the goals and investments which animate it. While the figure of the moralist or the priest imbricates the category of truth to reductive and nihilistic ends, it is the artist, the creator, or the figure of the child who manages to invest in it a force which supersedes the connection between morality and truth.

For the artist, appearance no longer means the negation of the real in this world but this kind of selection, correction, redoubling and affirmation [of life, of the will to power]. Then truth perhaps takes on a new sense. Truth is appearance. Truth means bringing of power into effect, raising it to the highest power.
(NP 103)

When truth is invested in the triumph of moral values and the denigration of life, it must be condemned as such. However, when the category of truth is articulated with “the highest power of falsehood, it magnifies the ‘world as

¹⁸² James Williams is, to my knowledge, the only Deleuze scholar to devote significant attention to the important *positive* valence of truth in Deleuze’s thought, and the irreducible import of truth for Deleuze. See, in particular, his study of *Difference and Repetition*, which opens with an invocation of the importance of the distinction between true and false problems for Deleuze, but also his discussion of the role of truth in *Difference and Repetition* in the context of a comparison with Gilbert Harman I have already mentioned above, in *The Transversal Thought of Gilles Deleuze*, esp. 142-5. His entry on the topic of truth is to be found in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 289-90.

error’.” (NP 102) That is, truth becomes articulated not with the faithful copy, but rather with the power to break with the copy and institute something new – all in all, as Badiou argues, “It is quite possible therefore that the processes of the ‘power of the false’ are strictly indiscernible from the repertoire composed by the processes of the power of the true.” (DCB 57/86) This theory is therefore hardly a “secret [. . .] idea of truth,” (DCB 57/86) only available to the reader of Deleuze by implication and association.



The differential account of truth – where the category of truth itself is elaborated, and must be examined, on the basis of the goals in which it is mobilised – is extended in *Proust and Signs*.

The key to the presentation of the category of truth in *Proust and Signs* lies in the use of a theme itself first found in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, but also present in many of Deleuze’s early and middle-period writings, namely the theme of the intrinsic passivity of thought. Thought itself does not naturally think, and it does not innately seek the truth: “The mistake of philosophy is to presuppose within us a benevolence of thought, a natural love of truth.” (PS 16)¹⁸³

In *Proust and Signs*, what engenders the activity of thinking is the experience of a sign. All thought – including the search for truth – begins when the habitual stillness of the subject is interrupted by something which, unrecognised, shocks thinking into unprecedented action. Thus, in a wonderful phrase, Deleuze likens the beginning of thought to the spur of jealousy: “Who searches for truth? The jealous man, under the pressure of the beloved’s lies.” (PS 16) The jealous lover moves in thought under the impetus of signs: a short delay in a phone conversation, an over-long glance, the sudden sense of a new distance, the missing keys ... Here, the regime of signs in question is that of love, but it is equally the other kinds of signs that Deleuze uncovers in Proust – signs, sensuous signs, and the signs of art, which spur thought at each point along the path of apprenticeship.

Now, in this text, we find Deleuze again explicitly positing one of Badiou’s claims about truth: “truth has an essential relation to time” (PS 15) Despite the apparent similarities between the Deleuzean text and Badiou’s account of it at this point, there is a more complex set of issues at stake.

This claim is made in the context of a chapter dedicated to “Signs and Truth”, and the status of the category of truth will be posed in accordance with the temporal status of each domain of signs. In other words, the sense of the category of truth changes with each kind of sign, and the apprenticeship of the sign which Deleuze identifies in Proust’s novel is at the same time the elaboration of truth in a manner which suits the sign in question (this is, once more, the differential aspect of Deleuze’s position). This is why Deleuze writes that “The Search for lost time is in fact a search for truth,” (PS 15) but a search which must be recommenced each time the

¹⁸³ This is obviously connected to the concept of the image of thought, examined in Deleuze’s books on Nietzsche and Proust, principally in *Difference and Repetition*, and in a somewhat different fashion in *What is Philosophy?* (where Deleuze moves  an examination of the dogmatic image as a transcendental illusion to the positing of a  in, mediated in thought, between chaos and cliché, prefigured in *Francis Bacon*). Indeed, the category of truth consistently emerges in Deleuze’s work in the context of a discussion of the image of thought.

searcher enters the orbit of a new regime of signs: “To seek truth is to interpret, decipher, explicate. But this ‘explication’ is identified with the development of the sign in itself.” (PS 17)

In sum, rather than tying the category of truth to the analysis of the existential investments, and ultimately the drives and the will-to-power of particular individuals and societies, as he does in the case of Nietzsche, in *Proust and Signs* it is the regimes of signs themselves that engender the sense in which truth is to be understood (each sign gives rise to an order of truth proper to it) – which is equivalent, as we have seen, to the claim that the interpretation of each regime of signs involves the pursuit each time of truth from the beginning, without any pre-ordained course or goal. Likewise, to return to the theme of time, relative to each regime of signs, the search for truth involves the subordination of thought to a unique temporal structure, and the discovery in thought of a new experience of time.

So we arrive at a unique differential sign-time-truth complex:

the signs do not develop, are not to be explained according to the lines of time without corresponding or symbolising, without intersecting, without entering into complex combinations that constitute the system of truth.
(PS 25)

This statement includes two of the elements that we find later in Deleuze’s theory of time, to which I will return shortly, which problematise Badiou’s interpretation. Time is at once irreducibly complex in nature, and also engaged in a series of different interrelations which, in *Proust and Signs*, engender the various manners in which signs are produced and grasped in the world. Thus, when we read that “truth has an essential relation to time,” (PS 15) we must understand that, for Deleuze, this relationship does not take the form of a unity, and nor does it fall under the category of an ultimate One.

Now, this differential account of truth gives way, in *Difference and Repetition*, to the resituation of the category of truth no longer with respect to signs or time in a direct way, but rather to the category of the problem. It is here that we find the most significant use of the concept of truth in Deleuze’s philosophy.¹⁸⁴ The discussion of the truth and falsity of problems, and the relationship between truth and sense, in one of Deleuze’s most important texts is however a much better indication of the view held by Deleuze himself.

In chapter three of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze presents two intimately connected accounts of truth in the context of his critique of the dogmatic image of thought. In particular, he devotes the sixth and seventh postulates of his account of this image to the status and nature of truth. The first of these claims that, predominantly, truth has been understood as a quality pertaining to language *qua* designation. In other words, it is at the level of the proposition that the question of truth and falsity arises:

¹⁸⁴ Badiou’s claim that it is in *Foucault* that we find the most “appealed texts on truth” (DCB 65/97) is a peculiar one, since the topic of truth is barely touched on there, certainly in a much less significant manner than the early works discussed here.

“designation is taken to be the locus of truth, sense being no more than the neutralized double or the infinite doubling of the proposition” (DR 167/217) In other words, it is propositions that are subject to the judgment concerning their truth and falsity. This is the view of truth that Badiou notes is “founded on the Same of the model and the Similar of the copy,” and of which he rather implausibly claims “it has never been advanced by any philosopher other than as a mediatory image that the philosopher’s entire thought will subsequently be devoted to dismantling.” (DCB 57/85) In contrast, Deleuze will argue that it is sense that is prior to designation, rather than being its phantom double, and that the issue of truth arises in the first instance in relation to sense and not designation: “sense is the genesis or the production of the true, and truth is only the empirical result of sense.” (DR 154/200)¹⁸⁵

In turn, we are led to ask about the specific nature of the truth-sense relationship, which is the topic of the seventh postulate. Again, according to the common view, a problem is a simple reformulation of a proposition: we move from ‘this is a cat’ to ‘is this a cat?’, where the problem is “copied or traced from the propositions themselves.” (DR 158/205) It is only with respect to the solution or answer to the question that truth and falsity come into play, once more subordinating the entirety of the problem-truth-sense complex to the ultimate form of the proposition. “There is, therefore, a seventh postulate to add to the others: the postulate of responses and solutions according to which truth and falsehood only begin with solutions or only qualify responses.” (DR 158/206) Or, in the case of the philosophical extension of this natural prejudice, problems are thought in terms of the possibility of their solution.¹⁸⁶ Deleuze’s intent is once more to critique this primacy of the proposition and the view of the problem that it brings with it. This involves, first of all, insisting on the fundamental and irreducible character of problems (in a way that we saw in the previous chapter). Problems are (as we have already seen in the previous chapter) objective transcendental instances, or what Deleuze here calls “objectivities,” (DR 159/206; see also 164/213) whose solution is neither brought about by the activity of judgment, nor results in the dissolution of the problem, which “insists and persists in [its] solutions.” (DR 163/212) Secondly, and most importantly here, it means that truth and falsity, having been disconnected from the proposition, are conceived as qualifications for *problems as such*. In what sense? What exactly is a true problem as opposed to a false one? The fundamental difference lies in whether or not the problem is taken as a genuinely transcendental structure or not. Whenever thought

is content to trace problems from propositions, it loses its true power and falls under the sway of the power of the negative, necessarily substituting for the ideal objectivity of the *problematic* a simple confrontation between opposing, contrary or contradictory,

¹⁸⁵ I will return to this sentiment below when the issue of the relationship between time and production emerges. We need also to take account of related claims like the following: “What is essential is that there occurs at the heart of problems a genesis of truth, a production of the true in thought. Problems are the differential elements in thought, the genetic elements in the true.” (DR 162)

¹⁸⁶ As in the case of Kant (DR 161). See also Deleuze’s discussion of the history of geometry on this point. (DR 160-61)

propositions.
(DR 164/213)

Thus the distinction between true and false problems is a *critical* distinction, in Kant's sense. A false problem is a problem illegitimately extracted or traced from particular empirical instances. A true problem on the other hand, is the problematic as such, ie., instances of the differential structure of the virtual. I would even hazard a stronger formulation: if we think of problems in terms of solvable formulations derived from prior propositions, then we are not thinking of problems at all in Deleuze's terms.

The primary point of interest in these points from *Difference and Repetition*, given our current concerns, is that truth here maintains, on the one hand, an *adjectival character*. Deleuze's concern is not with the being of truth, but rather with true and false problems, where, to repeat, their truth depends not on correspondence with reality, the mutual coherence of truth claims, nor (as in Badiou) on the construction of a rupture in the order of knowledge, but uniquely on the nature of the problem in question. On the other hand, truth (as a substantive) is subject to a more fundamental regime, that of sense.

In sum, then: Deleuze's philosophy already includes a rich and interesting meditation on the category of truth, one which supersedes any simple pseudo-Nietzschean rejection of its epistemological status. Certainly, this account is in one part critical, and it liquidates the category of truth in any substantive sense. It does so, though, only to relocate truth in a new adjectival sense with respect to problems, and subordinates it to the more significant ontological register of sense.

The two Deleuzean schemata of time

We are still left with the question of whether truth and time come to the same thing in Deleuze's philosophy, or, in other words, whether even this richer understanding of the category of truth in Deleuze doesn't in any case confirm Badiou's account. In order to resolve these matters, I would like to discuss two aspects that are central to Deleuze's philosophy of time, namely the *complexity* of time (which refutes Badiou's insistence on the simplicity of the temporal order in Deleuze), and the *passivity* involved in this account (which complicates the link between temporality and activity or productive power).

Before doing so, however, it is necessary to note that across his work Deleuze does *not* offer a single coherent theory of time, but rather presents two different temporal schemata, one *dyadic* in nature, and the other *triadic*.

The dyadic schema presents time under two aspects. On the one hand, there is lived time, the time of the present. On the other, Deleuze insists on a more fundamental sense of time which accompanies and indeed grounds the other (taking the word 'ground' in the complex sense we saw in the previous chapter). This dyadic schema is found in all of his early work, including *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, *Bergsonism* (both of which operate with reference to a disjunction between the passing present and memory) and then later, *The Logic of Sense* (*Aion* and *Chronos*).

The triadic schema – which is to be found in *Proust and Signs*, *The Time Image*, *Foucault*, and, most importantly, in *Difference and Repetition* – invokes both the past and the present as modalities of time, and, in keeping with the dyadic schema, the past is associated with a much more fundamental transcendental moment. However, the third temporal aspect, which is associated above all with the idea of an ungrounding is presented as more fundamental yet again.

Because of these two tendencies in Deleuze's own texts on time, any claim about the Deleuzian approach to temporality is confronted with a perhaps irreducible difficulty at the outset. However, the very least that can be said, in conformity with the texts, is that the triadic schema plays the absolutely central role in the texts in which it appears.¹⁸⁷ Time as the formal ungrounding of both sequential time (an image of time abstracted from the movement-image) and memory (Mnemosign) in *The Time Image* could not be more central; the crystal-image (hyalosign), an image which ensures an exchange and connection between virtual and actual, still relies upon being freed from the subordination of the sensory-motor schema (or the primacy of movement over time), and this freedom is in the end guaranteed not by another time-image, but by the irrational cut,¹⁸⁸ which guarantees the freedom of time from movement.¹⁸⁹ *Proust and Signs*, as we have just seen, contains an elaborate discriminatory apparatus that applies to signs, regimes of truth, and to time. There, the time of essence (third time, time regained) "gives us an image of eternity [. . .] it is also "an absolutely original time." (PS 26) This ultimate form of time is incarnated as involuntary memory (second time)¹⁹⁰ at the cost of introducing a "minimum of generality" (PS 62), such that "essence is realised in involuntary memory to a lesser degree than in art; it is incarnated in a more opaque manner." (61) This is why Deleuze entitles a key chapter of this book "The Secondary Role of Memory". In turn, however, involuntary memory is vastly superior to the basic habitual or sensible reality of time (first time, lost time)¹⁹¹ Finally, and most importantly,

¹⁸⁷ A partial exception to this is the brief discussion of the future in the final chapter of *Foucault*, where it is linked to the important Foucauldian notion of 'thinking otherwise'. I will treat this text in particular in the final chapter below.

¹⁸⁸ An interesting non-identity exists between the irrational cut dealt with in *The Time Image*, and the theme of the cut or wound in *The Logic of Sense*. In the latter case, the wound belongs to the register of *Aiōn*, the eternally past-future. It is a cut within the time of the event, rather than a cut *in* the time of the passing present. We cannot, inversely, take the event to be a punctual point or cut for Deleuze as it is for Badiou, because of its integral relations with other events according to the modality of the disjunctive synthesis.

¹⁸⁹ On the significance and non-Bergsonian nature of this cut, see Widder, *Reflections on Time and Politics*, 48-9.

¹⁹⁰ Involuntary memory is another of the points on which Deleuze explicitly diverges from Bergson, both in *Proust and Signs* ("Bergson does not ask essentially how the past, as it is in itself, could also be saved for us . . . Proust's problem is, indeed: how to save for ourselves the past as it is preserved in itself, as it survives in itself? . . . It is to this question that involuntary Memory offers its answer" [PS 59]) and *Difference and Repetition* (DR 84-5), which makes exactly the same point again.

¹⁹¹ Likewise, the signs engendered in sensible experience and the signs of love are inferior to those engendered in memory, but the signs of reminiscence are in turn inferior to those of art (which emerge in relation to the differential form of the unconscious), and even to those sensible signs related to the imagination (PS 68-9) I should add that Deleuze in fact distinguishes four registers of time, plus involuntary memory, though these four are broken into two aspects of lost time (passing time and time one loses) and time regained (time regained "at the heart of lost time" [PS 26], and time regained as the time proper to art and essence – as if this register of time is rediscovered in two places at once), thereby maintaining a complex form of the triadic schema.

the category of the eternal return in *Difference and Repetition* is the heart, however enigmatic, of that book. We will turn to this text again below.

Now, the significance of the triadic schema in the works where they appear is one reason to take it as more important than the dyadic schema. We do not need to take this as the decisive point, however, since the very fact that the dyadic position is itself a part of the triadic account is enough to lead us to the conclusion that the latter are more definitive of a Deleuzian philosophy of time. A third more heuristic reason for their significance might also be considered: Badiou's ignorance. As we have already seen, Badiou's account of time in Deleuze is organized around a reading and presentation of the dyadic account. In order to assess the accuracy of his reading, much weight rests upon the extent to which the third aspect of time enriches the dyadic schema.

Temporal plurality

In what follows, I would like to explicate the account of time offered in *Difference and Repetition*, particularly in its second chapter, which is devoted to repetition. This account has several features which make it central in the consideration of Badiou's claims on the status of time in Deleuze. First of all, it is the most detailed and extended account of time found anywhere in Deleuze's work, with the possible exception of *Bergsonism*, which only involves the dyadic account. Furthermore, given that Badiou approaches Deleuze principally as a philosopher, and reads him in terms of a fundamental metaphysical project, it would be difficult to maintain that a work other than *Difference and Repetition* is the locus of this project in Deleuze with respect to time (this point does not hold universally – the theory of the event provided in *Difference and Repetition*, for example, is only a minimal rehearsal for the full-blown account in *The Logic of Sense*).

There are three features of this account that I will not dwell upon here, although they are in and of themselves decisive, namely the broader links Deleuze establishes between time and repetition (and, in turn, the relationship between difference and repetition that is made through Deleuze's meditation on time), between time and biopsychical life, and the characterization of time as intrinsically synthetic in nature, though I will mention all of these aspects in passing.¹⁹² While these aspects of the account contribute important insights, we need not elaborate them here.

¹⁹² This aspect of Deleuze has in recent times been the subject of a number of significant and helpful studies, of which I'll mention four in particular. The first is Keith Faulkner's *Deleuze and the Three Syntheses of Time* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2006). The great strength of this volume is the extent to which it incorporates Deleuze's long discussion of Freud and Lacan into its presentation of time. Levi's Bryant's *Difference and Givenness* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008) systematically treats these three syntheses in detail, and in the context of the entirety of *Difference and Repetition*. Third, in *Reflections on Time and Politics*, a great series of texts that I have already mentioned Nathan Widder devotes a number of passages to these syntheses, principally in the eight chapter ('Difference and the Three Syntheses of Time'). What marks these brief pages out from many other studies is how clearly they manage to account for the complex connections between difference, repetition, synthesis and time in Deleuze. Finally, perhaps the most characteristic element of Joe Hughes' treatment of Deleuze's work (from *Difference and Repetition* to *Anti-Oedipus*) is the dominant role that the account of the three passive syntheses play. Indeed, in his *tour de force* *Deleuze and the Genesis of Representation*, Hughes makes these three syntheses lynchpins of his attempt to unify apparently disparate moments in the Deleuzian text.

Aside from issues of space, we need only examine three more basic qualities of this account to definitively reject Badiou's reading: 1) the plural nature of time on Deleuze's account; 2) the importance and characterization of the third modality of time (concerned with the future and with the figure of the eternal return); and 3) the role played in all three temporal modalities by passivity.

...

What is striking about the account of time in *The Clamor of Being* is that it revolves around a unified picture of temporality. The equations of time, truth, the One, productive power and memory revolve around a monolithic and undifferentiated posit of time as the pure past: "an enormous total 'memory,' which is the being of time as pure duration – that permanent qualitative change where all the past is operative, just like all the virtual." (DCB 62/93) At once glacially still and fired with the essence of change, time emerges as a self-sufficient and unified ultimate metaphysical *quidditas*. It is striking because even cursory attention to the account of time in *Difference and Repetition* would demonstrate that it is irreducibly plural and complex in nature.

Deleuze begins with what he characterizes as "the lived, or living, present." (DR 70/97) This primary sense of time is intrinsically tied to habituation – this living present is brought about through the synthesis or contraction of sensible impressions, but also matter as such: "What we call wheat is a contraction of the earth and humidity." (DR 75/102) The word 'living' in the phrase 'living present' thus extends the purvey of time well beyond the phenomenological experience of human beings. Deleuze's *paean* to habituation opens wide arms to the entire world of the living and to the universe of the inanimate beyond and beneath it:

What organism is not made of elements and cases of repetition, of contemplated and contracted water, nitrogen, carbon, chlorides and sulphates, thereby intertwining all the habits of which it is composed? Organisms awake to the sublime words of the third *Ennead*: all is contemplation!
(DR 75/102)¹⁹³

Now, this lived, habituated present is not meant to be thought of as one part of a three-part puzzle, along with an equal and yet different past and future. On the one hand, as we are about to see, the past and the future are irreducibly different from the present; on the other, the living present has its own past and future, in the form of a protentive and retentive reach or 'shading off'.¹⁹⁴ This is why Deleuze writes in an important and overlooked passage that "It is not that the present is a dimension of time: the present alone exists. Rather, synthesis constitutes time as a living present, and the past and the future as dimensions of this present." (DR 76/105) Speaking of

¹⁹³ It is striking to contrast this quasi-mystical naturalism with the account of the constitution of the physical and biological world found in *A Thousand Plateaus*, notably in the plateau devoted to "The Geology of Morals". Of the two, I am not convinced that the latter presentation is more appealing, or as well founded.

¹⁹⁴ Here Deleuze is clearly following Husserl. See Joe Hughes, "Genetic Constitution," *Deleuze and the Genesis of Representation*, 8-16.

empirical reality, of actuality, there is only the present in time, the lived present, the rich fullness of hunger and satiety. As I will discuss later in this chapter, it is the case that derivative senses of the future and the past (as projected and retained instants) flank the passing present, but also a derivative sense of the present as constituted as the experience of instants – in the first instance. But, insofar as the past and the future are accorded their own temporal status, it is not on the basis of either lived experience or the habitual foundation of the present.

The geometric figure we might align with the living present is the circle. Habitual temporality is conservative and cyclical in nature. We already see both of these aspects in Hume's philosophy, where habit is the foundation for the expectation of the return of the same ('the sun will rise tomorrow').

So time must be thought *in the first instance* as the habitual and contractile time of the present, and as such, we already find ourselves at the border of a dispute with Badiou's portrayal of Deleuze, which entirely focuses on memory, something that Deleuze certainly does not do.

Nonetheless, memory does play an absolutely decisive role in Deleuze's account of time. He introduces it by noting that, should we consider time as solely habitual, we would have no explanation for the *passing of time*:

Although it is originary, the first synthesis of time is no less intratemporal. It constitutes time as a present, but a present which passes. Time does not escape the present, but the present does not stop moving by leaps and bounds which encroach upon one another. This is the paradox of the present: to constitute time while passing in the time constituted [...] The claim of the present is precisely that it passes. However, it is what causes the present to pass, that to which the present and habit belong, which must be considered the ground of time. It is memory which grounds time.
(DR 79/108)¹⁹⁵

Before saying anything else, let's note a few features of Deleuze's position that, even in this short passage, problematise Badiou's reading: there are intra-temporal relations within time (there is little sense in simply claiming that "time is not temporal" [DCB 61/91]); that, in turn, time is not a simple vital Eternity, but constituted by a more complex set of differentiations (which will only multiply as we continue here); also, once we take into account the discussion of Deleuze's own notion of ground (elaborated in the previous chapter), it is not clear that this relationship of grounding between the past and the present can be reduced to the opposition of a virtual and active Memory and an actual and inanimate product.

For Deleuze, then, the habitual time of the lived present requires a ground, which is memory. He claims that, without it, there would be no experience of the present: the present without a past as such is "not physically possible." (DR 76/105) We should recognize here that this claim is quite clearly

¹⁹⁵ This passage is more obscure than many in Deleuze's account of time in *Difference and Repetition*. The explanation for the need of a second time in which the time of the present can pass is much better glossed in *The Time Image*, see in particular TI 78.

analogous to the Kantian procedure of transcendental deduction.¹⁹⁶ Whereas the first time is *empirical* in nature, and is embedded in the regime of the actual – it is psychological, physical, visceral – the second time of memory is *transcendental*. (DR 81/110)¹⁹⁷

In accounting for memory in this transcendental sense, it is to Bergson that Deleuze turns, and it is here that Badiou's account of time in Deleuze most closely resembles Deleuze's own claims. The passing present is constituted on the basis of an enormous and integral virtual memory.¹⁹⁸ This memory is not the active (preconscious) memory of a conscious subject, but memory in an independent ontological sense.

The geometrical figure to associate with memory is that of the cone, as in the famous Bergsonian example first used in *Matter and Memory* that Deleuze frequently invokes. Each level of this cone (AB, A'B', and A''B'') must be considered as the entirety of this pure past, split from the present but also its ground, contracted to a certain degree. The tip of cone is the point at which the past is most contracted, and makes contact with the

¹⁹⁶ See once more James Williams' very helpful discussion of this issue in his *The Transversal Thought of Gilles Deleuze*, chapter two.

¹⁹⁷ This claim in fact can be traced back to *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, where Deleuze is at pains to assert the uniquely empirical character of habitual synthesis at the root of Humean subjectivity: "we defined the empirical problem in opposition to a transcendental deduction and also to a psychological genesis." (ES 119) The principal difference between this account and that provided in *Difference and Repetition*, or rather the development that marks the passage between these works, is that Deleuze comes to see that empirical synthesis by itself is inadequate to account for either the subject or an account of temporality. It is also clear that the register of the psychological becomes for Deleuze not external to habitual subjectivity but a part of it. Thus the attack on psychologism found in *Empiricism and Subjectivity* gives way to a not unambiguous appreciation of the insights of psychoanalysis.

Christian Kerslake has, in private correspondence, expressed reservations about this way of relating the transcendental and the empirical with respect to the syntheses of time. For Kerslake, given that (as we will see shortly) the synthesis of the present founds the more superficial modalities of experiencing time as past, present and future as the succession of instants, we must see even this first synthesis as transcendental in nature. Referring to the quite remarkable set of lectures entitled "Qu'est-ce que fonder?" (available online at <http://www.webdeleuze.com/php/texte.php?cle=218&groupe=Conf%E9rences&langue=1> [accessed 6/06/2008]), he writes that "I [...] think that the passive synthesis of habit is transcendental from the beginning. It has to be, for methodological reasons (to do with the structure of transcendental argumentation) if nothing else." Now, it is true that in "Qu'est-ce que fonder", Deleuze presents this first synthesis as it appears in Hume as a *de jure* rather than *de facto* question, that is, as a foundational and transcendental question rather than a merely causal or empirical one. This is certainly the case, on Deleuze's reading of Hume. Nonetheless, as he claims in both *Empiricism and Subjectivity* and "Qu'est-ce que fonder", the issue is not posed at the same level as in the Kantian critique. In the latter, Deleuze even claims (contrary to the statements in the former we have just seen) that, in terms of the foundation of knowledge, "The principle itself seems psychological," and that while without Hume "there would be no Kant," Hume himself only "posed the problem, but did not answer it." All these points, taken together with the specific (if parenthetical) claim that the first synthesis of time is empirical in nature in *Difference and Repetition* lead me to conclude that Deleuze did not want to think of this synthesis in transcendental terms.

¹⁹⁸ That Deleuze uses the word 'virtual' to account for memory here, as he does in the earlier pieces on Bergson, is perplexing, since it seems difficult if not impossible to align this view with the view proposed later in *Difference and Repetition* and examined in the previous chapter. This is also the case with respect to the designation of a "virtual object" modelled on Lacan's *objet petit a* as the key synthetic element of the second passive synthesis in Deleuze's account of biopsychical life. The most that can be said here is that, insofar as the second synthesis remains bound to the figure of the Same by way of its relationship with habit (discussed below shortly)

present itself. Here, however, we are forced to question or at least nuance Deleuze's presentation of this point in *Difference and Repetition*.

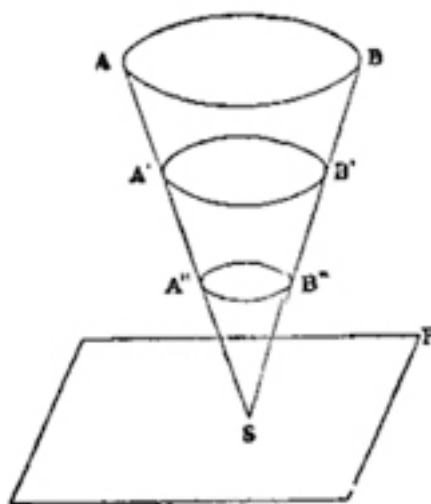


Figure 1: The Cone of the Pure Past

Given the structural relationship between the present and the past envisioned here, the tip of the cone cannot be identical to the present moment as Deleuze has Bergson claim (for example: “each present present is only the entire past in its most contracted state.” [DR 82/111]). To identify the two in this way is to collapse the transcendental structure between present and past which is at the heart of their difference. The most we can say – although the difference may be subtle – is that the tip of the cone is the most contracted form of the past, and it is this contracted moment which co-exists with the ‘present’ present.¹⁹⁹

Now, we must again assert, with Deleuze, that the past thus understood is not just one aspect of time:

The past does not cause one present to pass without calling forth another, but itself neither passes nor comes forth. For this reason the past, far from being a dimension of time, is the synthesis of all time of which the present and the future are only dimensions. We cannot say that it was. It no longer exists, it does not exist, but it insists, it consists, it *is*. It insists with the former present, it consists with the new or present present. It is the in-itself of time as the final ground of the passage of time. In this sense it forms a pure, general, *a priori* element of all time.
(DR 82/111)

We are able to square this with the claim that the living present is the entirety of time only by understanding Deleuze here as talking about the past as transcendental in an important (if not entirely Kantian) sense. It is not that we now notice the real nature of time, and must discard the claims about the

¹⁹⁹ This most contracted point, as we have already seen is what Deleuze will reformulate (relative to the typology of images in cinema) as the crystal-image or small circuit in *The Time Image*: “The actual image and *its* virtual image thus constitute the smallest internal circuit.” (TI 68)

status of the present. Rather, the argument moves from establishing the global nature of habitual time to noting that it requires a transcendental ground, to the elaboration of this ground, without which the global habitual present would not be possible. The past is indeed the *a priori* element of all time, and it is a *priori* in relation to a global lived time whose rhythms and routines mark time for all of nature. While the living present has its own conservative synthesis, it requires a more fundamental synthesis in turn in order to be provided with the continued production of the present to synthesise.

Let me repeat that Badiou's account of memory in *The Clamor of Being*, at least at the points which are irreducible to the general framework of his account, is a more or less faithful presentation of Deleuze's own position. However, beyond this point, there is a sharp break. For Badiou, the Deleuzian treatment of time begins and ends with the posit of virtual Memory. For the Deleuze of *Difference and Repetition* though, memory and habit are together *insufficient* to account for time. Why? Deleuze's answer, in relation to the position mapped out in *The Clamor of Being*, could hardly be more instructive. In an absolutely crucial text, he writes:

The pure past [. . .] is itself [. . .] necessarily expressed in terms of a present, as an ancient *mythical* present. This equivocation, all the ambiguity of Mnemosyne, [is] already implicit in the second synthesis of time. For the latter, from the height of its pure past, surpassed and dominated the world of representation: it is still the ground, the in-itself, noumenon and Form. However, it still remains relative to the representation that it ground. It elevates the principles of representation – namely, identity, which it treats as an immemorial model, and resemblance, which it treats as a present image: the Same and the Similar. It is irreducible to the present and superior to representation, yet it serves only to render the representation of presents circular or infinite [. . .] The shortcoming of the ground is to remain relative to what it grounds, and to be proved by these. It is in this sense that it creates a circle: it introduces movement into the soul rather than time into thought. Just as the ground is in a sense 'bent' and must lead us towards a beyond, so the second synthesis of time points beyond itself in the direction of a third which denounces the illusion of the in-itself which remains a correlate of representation.

(DR 88/119tm)

The problem with the first two temporal modalities is that by themselves they form a circle, oriented around *identity, the Same and the Similar*. However differential the virtual past is in structure, it is nonetheless structured according to the superficial values of identity that are in fact nothing but "a kind of 'effect', like an optical effect," (DR 88/119) erected on the basis of habit, which memory, as the ground of habit, is relative to.

The story so far is thus the following: since the present passes only insofar as there is another time in which it passes, we must posit a second time, memory. Memory and habit, through their very operation, revolve around a specular image of identity that arises only on the basis of their operation. This revolution is thus centripetal, revolving around the axis of identity: the passing present, thanks to memory, never ceases to enrich the well of

eternity, the pure past, but nothing new ever comes about. Habit and memory, then, are not only embedded in the false apparition of unity, but they are also intrinsically conservative in operation. This is not initially meant in a moral sense (although that is a consequence), but rather presents a problem for the theory of time. Simply put, this problem is that if the first two syntheses revolve around the same, how can the different come about? We are confronted with a problem analogous to that which confronted the self-sufficiency of the living present: how can we account for the *advent of the new* if all of time works around the already?²⁰⁰

Deleuze's answer to this question could, under normal circumstances, be described as famous or even infamous: he introduces a wide-ranging set of claims about the time of the future, a third time, inspired by the Nietzschean eternal return. However, Badiou gives no attention in his discussion of time to this pivotal moment in *Difference and Repetition*. When the eternal return enters into his account (in the next chapter of *The Clamor of Being*, which we will turn to in the next chapter here also), it is solely as a figure of chance *with no relationship to time*: "Ultimately, the eternal return is the One as the affirmation of chance, or affirmation of the fact that chance is affirmed in a single throw, which returns as the active being of all casts, of all fortuitous events." (DCB 74-5/113) Here, the interpretive gamble constituted by Badiou's One-All is stretched to breaking point. For it is certainly the case that the eternal return and chance have an intrinsic relationship for Deleuze, but this relationship is inexplicable unless one sees that it is played out *in entirely temporal terms*.

If we can characterize Deleuze's recourse to the eternal return as infamous rather than famous, it is because its difficult elaboration is at the very heart of *Difference and Repetition*, and is thereby connected to every other aspect

²⁰⁰ In a number of places, Jack Reynolds has argued that the structure of the present-future relationship in Deleuze in fact undersells the extent to which a habitual relationship to the world is already open to change and adaptation without the need to posit the ultimate status of a rupture in the figure of the eternal return. See in particular "Deleuze and Dreyfus on *l'habitude*, coping and trauma in skill acquisition," in *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 14:4 (2006), 563-83, where, adopting a Merleau-Pontian position on the lived body, Reynolds claims that we should take habit as the ultimate ground of temporality, and see the ruptures introduced into habituation as secondary, i.e., as material for the modification of habit. I think that the way of posing the question that I have advanced here (what accounts for the advent of the present?) partly evades his concerns, by posing the issue in more formal terms, rather than dealing with the rupture of the future as a traumatic *content* of phenomenal experience. However, the issue is also more complex, since Deleuze certainly does want to insist on the problematic (or, ultimately, and to be more specific, the *problematising*) consequences for the habituated self of the *form of time as such*. The same movement of time which introduces material for habituation is also responsible for irremediably breaking open the habitual circle and forcing anew a confrontation between thought and problem. Time becomes trauma *as such* for Deleuze: hence the connection that he draws between the Kantian renovation of the theory of time and the Holderlinean thesis of the *caesura*. On the role of Holderlin's work in Deleuze, see the extremely helpful discussion of the theme of betrayal in *A Thousand Plateaus* by Ron Bogue, "The Betrayal of God," in his *Deleuze's Wake: Tributes and Tributaries* (Stonybrook: SUNY Press, 2004), 143-60. Nathan Widder demonstrates as clearly as one could hope the way this also provides for a rapprochement between Deleuze and psychoanalysis (hence the extended treatment of psychic systems and the syntheses of time in *Difference and Repetition*). See *Reflections on Time and Politics*, chapter nine, which included the following claim, further to my remarks above in this note: "The Oedipal story [...] refers not to a trauma occurring in time but to the traumatic organization of time itself." (94)

of this remarkable book.²⁰¹ It is, I think, no exaggeration to say that an exhaustive and careful treatment of this question would provide the key to understanding the work – a treatment which, all things considered, remains to be done.

Nonetheless, in the context of this minimalist account of the Deleuzian theory of time, much can be said without plunging into the obscure. Whereas the passing present provides the rich empirical content in temporality, and virtual memory both the transcendental ground for the passing of the present and its virtual depth (as past which has never been present), the future, or the time of the eternal return is the formal condition for time as such. In other words, this third time is a *pure form* imposed upon the other two, and which cracks open the recuperative and conservative circle that they establish in order that something new can come about: “the third synthesis unites all the dimensions of time [. . .] and causes them to be played out in the pure form.” (DR 115/151)²⁰²

Deleuze uses three geometric figures in order to elucidate the nature of the eternal return that can serve as our guides here. The first is the figure of the line, which supersedes that of the circle.²⁰³ To return to the conservative figure of the present-past centripetal complex, Deleuze claims that the eternal return, rather than providing the final stamp of approval, knocks time from its orbit around the figure of identity. In some memorable passages, he evokes the decentering quality of the advent of the future:

The Northern Prince says ‘time is out of joint’. Can it be that the Northern philosopher says the same thing: that he should be Hamletian because he is Oedipal? The joint, *cardo*, is what ensures the subordination of time to those properly cardinal points through which pass the periodic movements which it measures (time, number of the movement, for the soul as much as for the world). By contrast, time out of joint means demented time or time outside the curve which gave it a god, liberated from its overly simple circular figure, freed from the events which made up its contents, its relation to movement overturned [. . .] Time itself unfolds (that is, apparently ceases to be a circle) instead of things unfolding within it (following

²⁰¹ I leave aside here the well-known difficulties concerning the felicity of Deleuze’s interpretation of Nietzsche’s various presentations of the eternal return (in *The Gay Science*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and the *Will to Power* notebooks). To my mind, it is the work of Pierre Klossowski (and in particular *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. Daniel W. Smith [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998]) which plays the mediating role. Certainly, there is a marked difference between the presentation of the eternal return in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* and its treatment in *Difference and Repetition*. See n73 above for a list of the crucial references on this matter.

²⁰² It is in relation to this point that I feel I depart ways with Williams’ excellent text on the issue of the transcendental in Kant and Deleuze, where he claims that Deleuze’s version of the transcendental “cannot admit a pure form.” (*The Transversal Thought of Gilles Deleuze*, 16) Certainly, as Williams argues, the idea of a fixed *a priori* structure which revolves around the mutual figures of the object and the formal subject has no place in Deleuze. The eternal return, however, is the pure form of what is – though it is a form whose purity is deployed in a diametrically opposed way, as the groundless form of difference as such (which is to say that it is the pure form of what is insofar as what is is thought as what becomes).

²⁰³ “I know of a Greek labyrinth that is but one straight line. So many philosophers have been lost upon that line that a mere detective might be pardoned if he became lost as well [. . .]” Borges, ‘Death and the Compass’, *Collected Fictions*, 149.

the overly simple circular figure).
(DR 88/119-20)

It might seem odd to claim that the image of time as a line (time as ordinal) is a radical overthrow of the idea of time as circle (time subordinate to pre-established points: the seasons, the revolution of a day, the passing of hours or other metrics of time). Of the two images, the former seems infinitely more simple than the latter. This peculiarity evaporates the moment we recall what such a change involves for the axis of the circle, namely identity. Let's recall Deleuze's claim: identity is not original, but is rather a product of the way the living present and the pure past come to grips with their proper contents. What the eternal return imposes upon time is an impassive and inflexible NEXT which breaks open the circle and arrays it in the form of a before and an after. The line, in contrast to the circle, has no centre. The postulate of identity that the form of the circle maintains is replaced in turn by the necessity of a series, an always 'and then . . .' This is why Deleuze also speaks of the eternal return (more closely following the letter of the Nietzschean text) as a torturous circle (DR 115/151), which like a centrifuge, casts out everything of the same: "to throw time out of joint, to make the sun explode, to throw oneself into the volcano, to kill God or the father ..." (DR 89/120) And, again, why the figure of the caesura or break, the image of time torn in two, equally well summarises the import of the third synthesis of time. (DR 89/120)

Once more, we are led by Deleuze to pose the absolute or universal import of a synthesis of time, here the eternal return. It is the ungrounding of *all time*. If habit *founds* the possibility of the active synthesis of time, and memory is the *ground* of habit and its active syntheses alike, the eternal return is the final ground, but one which, rather than making possible or providing the sufficient reason for unity and identity as they are manifest in the other syntheses, undoes this unity. We can see then why Deleuze can claim that the eternal return is the return of difference and not identity, since it is identity, the product of the passive syntheses of habit and memory, which are undone by it.

In the final analysis, it seems somewhat amazing that Badiou was able to overlook the fundamental claim at the heart of not just the theory of time in chapter two of *Difference and Repetition* (and, in different ways, in the other works which espouse a triadic theory of time), but in fact the whole work about the significance of the eternal return with respect not to unity or the One, but *difference*. "One misses everything if one disregards such explicit declarations as" (DCB 20/32):

The eternal return is a force of affirmation, but it affirms everything of the multiple, everything of the different, everything of chance *except* what subordinates them to the One, to the Same, to necessity, everything *except* the One, the Same and the Necessary.
(DR 115/152)

This oversight is also what allows for claims such as the following: "the great total past that is one with the virtual, cannot be qualified as temporal because it is the being of time, its univocal designation according to the One." (DCB 62/94) But this is not true for Deleuze, especially in *Difference and Repetition*. In the first instance, the virtual past is itself subject to

another temporal moment, namely the eternal return, so it is integrally intratemporal. Secondly, given the Deleuzian temporal matrix as we find it in *Difference and Repetition*, it is difficult to see what would answer to the name 'the being of time'. If (as Badiou does with respect to the virtual), we understand this as a reference to the *ground* of time, we are once more thrown onto the cruel and impassive eternal return, which is the ungrounding of every ground, and specifically the ground provided for lived time by the virtual past. If it is a question of *determination*, then the eternal return has the final say once more, since every determination of identity, being subject to time, is undone. There is no profound being, no ground, no essence, which is not subject to time in Deleuze's philosophy as it appears in *Difference and Repetition*.

Temporal passivity

But this is not all that Badiou overlooks. The account of time in *The Clamor of Being* also ties together temporality and productive activity. As we have already seen in the case of the virtual, Badiou's Deleuze is one for whom activity and reality are on the side of what is essential: the One and virtuality. Likewise, activity and power are associated with time. Now, when we look at this complex tripartite temporal structure presented in *Difference and Repetition*, we cannot help but to note an essential feature of this account, namely a discriminating and productive distinction between active and passive.²⁰⁴

In fact, the skeletal account of time in *Difference and Repetition* I have presented above is only a fraction of the total picture. Deleuze's presentation of the first time or the time of the present characterizes it not just as an habitual time of the living present, but as a *passive synthesis* of time. This synthesis "constitutes our habit of living, our expectation that 'it' will continue," (DR 74/101) rather than any active capacity of an agent, whether human or otherwise. "Underneath the self which acts are the little selves which contemplate and which render possible both the action and the active subject." (DR 75/103) If the evocation of a world of contemplation provides Deleuze with an opportunity for poetic expression, the world of passive syntheses is no less compelling:

These thousands of habits of which we are composed – these contractions, contemplations, pretensions, presumptions, satisfactions, fatigues, these variable presents – thus form the basic domain of passive syntheses. The passive sense is not defined simply by receptivity – that is, by means of the capacity to experience sensations – but by virtue of the contractile contemplation which constitutes the organism itself before it constitutes the sensations. (DR 78/107)

²⁰⁴ In the final chapter, I will address in some detail the role of the active/passive distinction in Badiou's reading of Deleuze. The formulation of three passive syntheses also plays an important role in *Anti-Oedipus* (though in this context they are not articulated with respect to time, but unite the notion of passive synthesis with the notion of disjunction discovered in *The Logic of Sense*). For a striking account of this role, see once again Joe Hughes' *Deleuze and the Genesis of Representation*, 66-78.

Not only is experience contractile and habitual in nature, but, for Deleuze, the very subjects of experience emerge on the basis of the same passivity. Beneath the habits that we acquire, we ourselves are nothing but a tissue of habits: “We speak of our ‘self’ only in virtue of these thousands of little witnesses which contemplate within us: it is always a third party who says ‘me’.” (DR 75/103) Now, Deleuze extends this analysis of time in the following way: the first order of time, the passive synthesis of habit, is literally fundamental to three *active* temporal modalities, namely the active syntheses of the present, past and future. These are derivative syntheses of time which find their foundation in habit: “these organic syntheses are redeployed in the active syntheses of a psycho-organic memory and intelligence (instinct and learning).” (DR 73/100) At this active level, time is experienced consciously in terms of “active faculties [. . .] reflective representation, memory and intelligence.” (DR 77/106) This is the regime of the clear and distinct, of the parade of instants and their impartial interrogation, the regime of “particularity.” (DR 80/109)

The most serious error of interpretation that one can make of Deleuze’s position on time, therefore, is to invert the passive/active dyad, and install activity at its heart. A key theme of *Difference and Repetition*’s treatment of time is thus a series of reminders of the fundamental nature of passivity (eg. “Given that contemplation never appears at any moment during the action – since it is always hidden [. . .] – it is easy to forget it” [DR 75-6/103]), and critiques of various ways of understanding things the other way around. The most significant case here is Freud, but Deleuze also finds psychology in a more general sense guilty of this error:

The illusions of psychology [have] made a fetish of activity. Its unreasonable fear of introspection allowed it to observe only that which moved. It asks how we acquire habits in acting, but the entire theory of learning risks being misdirected so long as the prior question is not posed – namely, whether it is through activity that we acquire habits ... or whether, on the contrary, it is through contemplating? Psychology regards it as established that the self cannot contemplate itself. This, however, is not the question. The question is whether or not the self itself is a contemplation, whether it is not in itself a contemplation, and whether we can learn, from behaviour, and from ourselves other than through contemplation.
(DR 73/100)

As we have seen, however, above and in the previous chapter, Deleuze also provides a more important reason why we take activity as basic, by arguing that the ground in one aspect tends towards what it grounds. The more profound issue is that transcendental illusion is an unavoidable by-product of the being of a ground. And again, as we have seen in the previous chapter, a common philosophical error Deleuze calls tracing works back in the other direction – by taking activity as primary, a secondary and entirely derivative pseudo-ground is postulated in the image of the active itself.

With the distinction between active and passive syntheses of the present in hand, we can also critically assess another of Badiou’s claims, this time about what he takes as the fleeting actual correlate of virtual memory:

An object is never anything else than an immobile section of duration or instantaneous dimension of the present. It cannot therefore, *in itself*, bear a relation to other objects because no pure present can communicate directly with any other. Presents are simple, transient coexistences.

(DCB 62/93)

What this claim demonstrates – aside from a strange theory of the object that to my mind has no correlate in Deleuze's work – is that Badiou identifies the present with the active synthesis of the present, the analytic and calculative regime of representational consciousness, rather than what is clearly the more important sense of the present in Deleuze, namely the passive synthesis of habit, the foundation of all time. This constitutes a clear short-circuiting of Deleuze's categories.

I turn now to the second synthesis: Memory. As in the case of habit, Deleuze insists that the pure past is engaged in passive synthesis, and, once more, it is contraction that is involved – we have already seen the figure of the cone, in which the entirety of the past coexists at different levels of contraction and relaxation. The difference, however, concerns what is contracted: on the one hand, "successive elements or instants which are in themselves independent of one another," in the habitual synthesis, and on the other in memory, "the entire past, which is itself like a co-existing totality." (DR 82/111)

This second passive synthesis also has a special relationship to the *active* synthesis of the past prosecuted on the basis of the living present. Thus Deleuze writes:

We have seen how memory, as a derived active synthesis, depended upon habit: in effect, everything depends upon a foundation. But this does not tell us what constitutes memory. At the moment when it grounds itself upon habit, memory must be grounded by another passive synthesis distinct from habit. The passive synthesis of habit in turn refers to this more profound passive synthesis of memory: *Habitus* and *Mnemosyne*.

(DR 79-80/108)

In other words, the past involves the synthesis of what were first synthesized by habit. Each present constitutes one level in the gigantic cone, more or less contracted in relation to the present present.

Finally, we arrive once more at the eternal return. Again, Deleuze claims this as a passive synthesis in the same fashion as those pertaining to the present and the past. However, in this case, we must insist on a further point: "The synthesis [of the future] is necessarily static, since time is no longer subordinated to movement; time is the most radical form of change, but the form of change does not change." (DR 89/120) So not only is the eternal return a passive synthesis which subordinates all time to the before and the after, to the centrifuge which affirms only difference, it is also static. Indeed, we have already seen why. Unlike the first two passive syntheses, the eternal return is purely formal, without any content. It is a pure *and then*, or what I earlier called a NEXT, to which the passing of time necessarily submits, a "formal and empty order." (DR 89/120) Superficially, we seem to

be close to Badiou's claim of what is essential in time for Deleuze: "the profound being of time, its truth, is immobile" (DCB 61/92) Is this 'immobile' not Deleuze's 'static'? On Badiou's account, time is essentially immobile insofar as it is the being of all mobility, the power of the false incarnate. It is what provides movement its sufficient reason. For Deleuze, though, the future has no substance, unity or effective causal force (we would even be wrong to provide this *impassive* temporal form with what Aristotle called formal causality).

The diagram on the following page summarises the order of determinations relative to the complex picture of time proposed by Deleuze. The foundation of time is habit, on the basis of which a secondary set of syntheses comes about. These are, effectively, lived abstractions that necessarily obscure the order of foundations-grounds which make them possible, subordinating them to the figure of agency.²⁰⁵ In turn, the passive synthesis of habit is grounded in the pure past, an integral virtual memory which also serves as the ground for the active synthesis of the past (recollection). Finally, all syntheses of time are subject to the groundless ground of the eternal return, a pure static form which breaks open the concentric movement of the present and the past in order to introduce the future.

There are four general points to be taken away from this summary account of Deleuze's theory of time. The first is that, contrary to Badiou's fundamental claims, time for Deleuze is irreducible to the virtual past in Bergson's sense. It ranges across both passive and active syntheses, and engages with the rich lived present of habitual time and the impassive formal imposition of the eternal return as well as the infinite depths of memory. Secondly, as a result, the ultimate ground of time is not the virtual past, but the eternal return, which is the groundless ground from which nothing (no 'being of time', for example) is exempted.²⁰⁶ Third, and given the ungrounding form of the third modality of time, time cannot be equated with the One, nor any other form of unity, since it is precisely this unity that is evicted from being by time. Finally, there is an important sense in which time is allied not with productive power but with a fundamental passivity. Or rather, and this would be the most profound point, the productive power of time is *passive* in nature. Yes, time creates – it creates unities of many kinds, both material and spiritual, ideal and organic, illusory and real – but the mode through which it does this is irreducible to any kind of emanative causality.

²⁰⁵ This is so in much the same way as the movement-image obscures and falsifies time as Deleuze accounts for it in his works on cinema, or the way in which psychoanalysis mistakes the status of the Oedipus complex in relation to desire, inverting the relation between production and lack. The figure of this inversion is the most characteristic manner in which Deleuze presents transcendental illusion in *Difference and Repetition*: "always the candle in the bovine eye" (DR 235)

²⁰⁶ In his own way, then, the Deleuze of *Difference and Repetition* answers the question posed in the final sentence of *Being and Time* – "Does *time* itself manifest itself as the horizon of *Being*?" (Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Macquarrie and Robinson [Oxford: Blackwell, 1998], 488) in the affirmative.

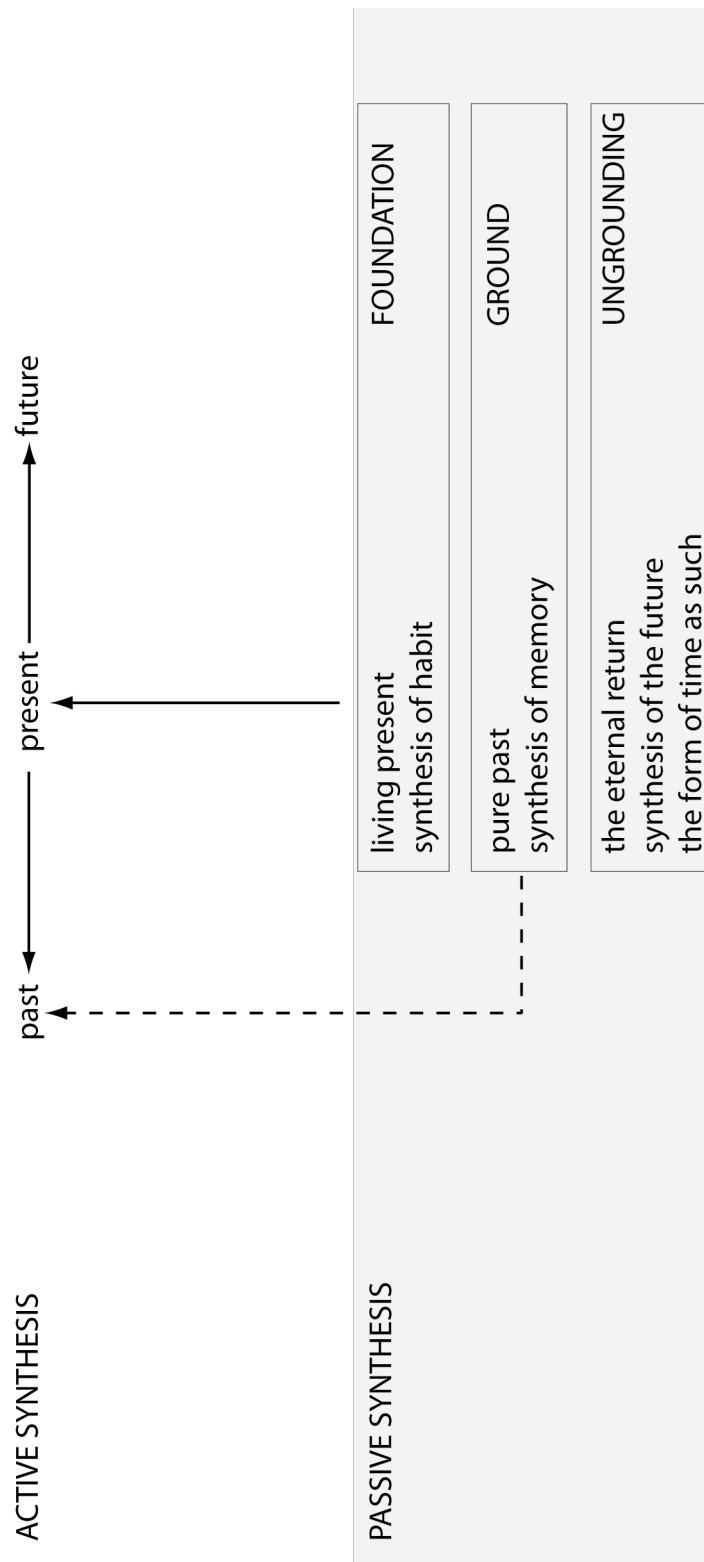


Figure 2: The Complex of Temporal Syntheses

Conclusion

Before summarizing these points: I opened this chapter by noting that it is organized around the elaboration of a serial equation, which claims that time = truth = the virtual = the One = power. While these terms were treated independently here in relation to the Deleuzean text, one should note the internal problems with this equation. Consider the following citations, which are the most important moments in Badiou's text in support of the equality of these concepts in Deleuze:

"This other idea of truth [. . .] is all the more devious for giving to truth the name of the false – the *power* of the false" (DCB 57/86)

"It is quite possible therefore that the processes of the 'power of the false' are strictly indiscernible from the repertoire composed by the processes of the power of the true." (DCB 58/87)

"For truth is coextensive with the productive capacity of the One-virtual" (DCB 59/88)

"All in all, 'power of the false' is exactly the Deleuzean name, borrowed from Nietzsche, for truth." (DCB 59/89)

"Time *is* truth itself" (DCB 61/61)

"As truth, time is not temporal: it is integral virtuality." (DCB 61/91)

"*the temporal power of the false is thought [. . .] as one and the same thing as the eternity of the true*" (DCB 61/91)

"the profound being of time, its truth, is immobile" (DCB 61/92)

"[S]plitting is the *operation* of time as a configuration of the power of the One" (DCB 62/93)

"if time is truth, then the being of time, as the being of truth, has to be able to be thought under a concept from which all temporal dimension has been eliminated." (DCB 63/94-5)

"Truth is ultimately memory" (DCB 64/97)

"truth is the immanent preservation (as virtuality, or as concept) of what, inherent to the One, has testified to its power"²⁰⁷ (DCB 64/97)

The first thing to note is the equivocal character of many of these assertions: rather than asserting claims about the nature of truth as such, they deal rather in the *name* of truth in Deleuze, on the one hand (bringing to mind the analysis of the name and the referent in *The Logic of Sense*), and on the other, an 'indiscernibility' or 'coextensivity' of the activity of truth with the activity of the false. Furthermore, the qualifying phrases 'It is quite possible . . .' and 'All in all . . .' hardly give cause for confidence.

Secondly, while we can string together these equations, it seems difficult to see how they could all be mutually inclusive. How should we understand, for

²⁰⁷ This reference to concepts here is part of the discussion relating to Hegel, not Deleuze.

example, the equation of memory and the power of the false? Or the claim that the *power* of the true must be thought “under a concept from which all temporal dimension has been eliminated”? Or that which allies ‘immanent preservation’ alongside ‘productive capacity’? Similarly, how is it that an ‘immobile time’ can perform the operation of splitting which is proper to it?

Third, given the decisive and rigid distinction established in *Being and Event* between the being of a truth (which is thinkable through Cohen’s theory of generic sets) and truth as such, which is strictly indiscernible, it would seem mistaken to see claims here about the “being of time” and the “being of truth” as being assimilable into claims about time and truth as such – even though in one of the claims above (DCB 63/95), he makes this shift immediately, as if it were perfectly transparent. In the same vein, what can Badiou possibly mean by introducing the thought that “the profound being of time, its truth, is immobile”? What is the truth of time when time is truth? And if the being of time is immobile, what is its relation to process?

Unfortunately, the argumentative back-bone of this chapter, when subject to any sort of scrutiny, begins to appear a bit like the proverbial dog’s dinner.

But what of these individual claims? I have argued here that Badiou’s appreciation of the concept of time in Deleuze is limited in three crucial ways. Firstly, it assimilates the whole treatment of this concept into a Bergsonian framework which ill-suits it, and secondly (and consequently), it entirely ignores the modality of the future, which is at the very heart of the most deliberate and extended discussions of time in Deleuze’s mature work. Even were one to assume that Deleuze is at root a Bergsonian thinker, the role of the eternal return in *Difference and Repetition* presents a clear and unambiguous deviation from, if not Bergson’s philosophy as such – which does not concern us here – then certainly from the Bergson we find presented in Deleuze’s philosophy, and certainly from Badiou’s Deleuze. Thirdly, Badiou fails to grasp the important relationship between time and passivity in Deleuze, a relationship which usurps the equation of the virtual past or memory with ultimate productive activity.

This lack of appreciation is mirrored with respect to the category of truth. Rather than advancing truth (*qua* adequation or analogy) as a straw man, behind which is hidden a more profound taste for a productive and temporally oriented account, Deleuze’s philosophy in the sixties contains a long string of interesting and positive discussions of truth, culminating in the third chapter of *Difference and Repetition*. This picture of truth is differential (there is no single truth, only truths relative to perspectives, regimes of signs or problems), and non-substantive in nature, thereby departing from Badiou’s presentation at its most significant points.

All of these points work against the central contention we are concerned with here, namely the equation of time and truth. Neither Badiou’s account of truth in Deleuze, nor his account of Deleuze’s theory of time, resembles Deleuze’s own claims. Furthermore, neither of Deleuze’s actual positions on time and truth could in any feasible way be identified – how, after all, are we to equate a complex structure of passive and active temporal syntheses with the consideration of the proper regime and prominence of signs, perspectives and problems? Like all speculative equations, the claim that

time is truth for Deleuze promises revelation, but it is, all things considered, a promise that is not delivered on.

Chapter Six: The Event in Deleuze

A singular noun might govern a plural verb. The prepositions were foreign to common usage. Harshness vied with sweetness. The metaphors were arbitrary, or so they seemed [. . .] He did not recite it from memory, he read it, visibly unsure, omitting certain passages, as though he himself did not entirely understand them, or did not wish to profane them. The verses were strange. They were not a description of a battle, they were the battle.
Jorge Luis Borges, 'The Mirror and the Mask'

But at the very instant when the mouthful of tea mixed with cake-crumbs touched my palate, I quivered, attentive to the extraordinary thing that was happening in me. A delicious pleasure had invaded me, isolated me, without my having any notion as to its cause. It had immediately made the vicissitudes of life unimportant to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory, acting in the same way that love acts, by filling me with a precious essence: or rather this essence was not in me, it was me.
Marcel Proust, *By Way of Swann's*

Essence and Event

In a late interview, Deleuze claims that “I’ve tried in all my books to discover the nature of events; it’s a philosophical concept, the only one capable of ousting the verb ‘to be’ and its attributes.” (N 141)²⁰⁸ As we have seen, however, Badiou is manifestly correct in asserting that Deleuze’s philosophy is wedded to ontology, primarily with respect to two themes, as we have seen, those of the univocity of being and of the virtual. We have also seen a great deal of evidence in Deleuze’s own work to support this. Furthermore, it is not until *The Logic of Sense* that the theme of the event is treated in any substantial manner. Even in *Difference and Repetition*, the discussion is limited to a few pages which rehearse in a limited way the key points of the later book, but without granting the event as such pride of place. There he is concerned to specify further the nature of virtual Ideas: “Ideas are by no means essences. In so far as they are the objects of Ideas, problems belong on the side of events, affections, or accidents rather than on that of theorematized essences.” (DR 187/242-3)²⁰⁹

A much better characterisation of Deleuze’s thought of the event – which this citation already remarks – is that it forms one half of a dyad with the concept of *essence*. However, the notion of essence in question must be distinguished from its orthodox acceptation. As we read in *The Logic of Sense*, the two errors with respect to the event, errors which erase its singular character by equating it to other concepts by way of external correlations, are to confuse it with essence on the one hand and accident on the other:

A double struggle has as its object the rejection of every dogmatic confusion between event and essence, and also every empiricist confusion between event and accident.
(LS 53-4/69tm)

In the case of essence, however, we must not overlook the assignation of dogmatism. It is not essence *per se* that Deleuze wants to question in its relation to the event, but essence conceived as ideal purity, ipseity, and transcendence, according to the long tradition that comes to us from Parmenides by way of Plato.²¹⁰ To claim, then, that Deleuze’s philosophy is

²⁰⁸ I think this characterization, like a number of Deleuze’s other claims about the nature of his work (I am thinking of the opening lines of the sketch “The Actual and the Virtual”, for example, which reads “Philosophy is the theory of multiplicities” [D 148]), to be a fairly inaccurate or at least incomplete account of his work on a strictly descriptive level, for reasons that I address in this chapter. On the other hand, I do think they have a significant value as approaches or points of view on his work, somewhat like the role of the problematic Idea. We can, in this way, read Deleuze according to the guiding light of a concept of the event, or in terms of fulfilling an adequate thought of multiplicity, or in terms of the ideal of thought as creative, etc. None of these are by themselves exhaustive; such approaches function by ordering the various elements of Deleuze’s thought around differing conceptual horizons.

²⁰⁹ On the sense of Deleuze’s *agon* with theorematizations, and his championing of the problematic in its place, see once more Daniel W. Smith, “Badiou and Deleuze on the ontology of mathematics”

²¹⁰ Etienne Gilson writes: “When he made this discovery [of being as what is common amongst beings, like water, fire, etc.], Parmenides of Elea at once carried metaphysical speculation to what was always to remain one of its ultimate limits; but, at the same time, he entangled himself in what is still for us one of the worst metaphysical difficulties.” (Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers* [Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1949], 6-7). It is hard not to agree, and to continue to feel (as Plato did in the *Theatetus* as Gilson reminds us) “as much

distributed along a line which proceeds from essence to event, is not to say that he comes to establish an auto-critique. What we in fact find is that a certain *other* concept of essence that Deleuze opposes to essence in the dogmatic sense (in his writings in the late fifties and sixties), and this comes to be both identified with essence in this new sense in some cases, and simply proposed as a replacement to the orthodox account of essence in others.

Put differently, we can say that at least until *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze's philosophy is intended as a philosophy of difference, understood as a philosophy which is devoted to providing difference with the ontological dignity that it has often been denied. We can even formulate this point by saying that Deleuze wishes to establish that difference is what is 'essential', and not identity. While such a formulation is clearly paradoxical in nature – difference being, with respect to the orthodox account of essence, what cannot be essential – this is precisely what he comes to claim. Consider for example the important role that the concept of essence has in *Proust and Signs*, where no qualms are expressed about this term at all. Indeed, Deleuze even goes so far as to claim that "essence is always difference." (PS 75) In *Proust*, Deleuze claims, essence is something like the ultimate ground or reason for all signs, subjective experience, language itself and the meaning that pertains to it. Thus, "[b]eyond the sign and the meaning, there is Essence, like the sufficient reason for the other two terms and for their relation." (PS 91) This is the reason for the ultimate privilege of art (or of the fourth kind of sign, the signs of art) in *Proust*, which provide a means of thinking together all the lesser sign-forms (worldly signs, the signs of love, and sensuous signs). Once more, however, this is not essence as pure ideal identity, but something altogether different: "What is essence as revealed in the work of art? It is a difference, the absolute and ultimate Difference. Difference is what constitutes being, what makes us conceive being." (PS 41)

The following sentiment in *Difference and Repetition* signals at once the nominal value of the term 'essence', and the reason why the concept of the event would come to take a more significant role in what follows:

The events and singularities of the Idea do not allow any positing of an essence as 'what the thing is'. No doubt, if one insists, the word 'essence' might be preserved, but only on condition of saying that the essence is precisely the accident, the event, the sense; not simply the contrary of the contrary: multiplicity is no more appearance than essence, no more multiple than one.
(DR 191/248)²¹¹

fear as reverence" (8) when confronted with the Parmenidean poem. However, it is precisely this apparent "ultimate limit" of human thought that both Badiou and Deleuze wish to challenge. At issue here is the extent to which Badiou has been able to properly grasp the Deleuzian opening.

²¹¹ Note that Deleuze here uses the word 'accident' in another sense than the one which he is later critical of (as the citation above from *Logic of Sense* states). What is in question, of course, is a non-empiricist concept of accident: not a particular secondary manifestation of something essential, but an essence lacking a model: in other words, a phantasm or simulacrum. This is why Deleuze accounts for the task of overturning Platonism in the

While the final phrase is of course apposite to our concerns here, it is clear that Deleuze's issue with the concept of essence is bound to the model of essence based around identity, fixity, and transcendence. This is why, in *The Logic of Sense*, we read both that a superior account of essence involves grasping it "as sense, essence as expressed," (LS 34/48) and at the same time that sense is its superior substitute: "It is true that sense is the characteristic discovery of transcendental philosophy, and that it replaces the old metaphysical Essences." (LS 105/128)

When we move past these works, we begin to see an increasing emphasis on the theme of the event as such. This tendency in Deleuze reaches its peak in *The Fold*, where Deleuze devotes a whole chapter to the event in Leibniz and Whitehead (chapter six, "What is an event?"; FLB 76-82/103-112).²¹² Indeed, while many texts of Deleuze's certainly invoke the concept of event after the key formulations found in *The Logic of Sense*, and with the exception of *The Fold*, Deleuze does not elaborate what could properly be called a theory of the event, and certainly not an alternative theory. In sum, and contrary to the claim of Deleuze's that we began the chapter with, rather than seeing in his work a philosophy of event which overturns any possible philosophy of being, it is rather that the concept of the event – in replacing essence understood as static identity – energises the philosophy of being, providing it with the means to go beyond the dogmatic-empiricist dyad and assert the dignity of the event in the order of ontology itself. The seemingly paradoxical goal is to broaden our conception of being such that it includes – or reinstates – events as *what is essential in being*. It is not the overthrow of ontology that Deleuze attempts to engineer, but its expansion.

In contrast to Deleuze's own intermittent attention to the theme of the event, Badiou's interest in Deleuze's position in this regard spans the entirety of his engagement with Deleuze, and it is not hard to see why.²¹³ For Badiou himself the theme of the event is of absolutely irreducible significance, since it marks the single possible locus for the advent of change, and indeed never has any other alibis, no other names or alternative formulations: it is Badiou's philosophy that ought to deserve the name 'philosophy of the event', and not Deleuze's.²¹⁴ Badiou is led to the category of the event therefore less on the basis of the Deleuzian text than because of his own conviction that any thought of change requires a thought of the event.

On one side, in his review of *The Fold*, Badiou does not hesitate to see the theory of the event, heavily indebted to Leibniz but also Whitehead, as the centre of the book. On the other side, we have a chapter of his recent *Logiques des Mondes* (2007) devoted to 'The Event in Deleuze'. These

following way: "the abolition of the world of essences *and* the world of appearances." (LS 253/292)

²¹² For a discussion of this Chapter, and its connection to Deleuze's more general reading of Whitehead, see James Williams, "AN Whitehead" in *Deleuze's Philosophical Lineage*, 282-99. See also Williams, "Deleuze and Whitehead: the concept of reciprocal determination," in *Deleuze, Whitehead, Bergson: Rhizomatic Connections*, ed. Keith Robinson (New York: Palgrave, 2009), 89-105. I will discuss briefly Williams' account of reciprocal determination in the 'Note' dedicated to his approach to Deleuze in the final chapter below.

²¹³ This is the case with the exception of the short critical remark about Deleuze's alleged materialism we find in *Théorie du Sujet* discussed in the Introduction.

²¹⁴ I am referring, of course, to Zourabichvili's *Deleuze: Une philosophie de l'événement*.

engagements, spanning almost twenty years²¹⁵ in the end come to conclude that Deleuze's view excludes every important feature of the event for Badiou: its excessive status with respect to being, and as a result its capacity to rupture in the most fundamental sense with what is. Indeed, Badiou even goes so far as to insist that the Deleuzian trope of the event ends up presupposing the infamous Leibnizian theme of pre-established harmony ("Deleuze often adopts the Leibnizian principle of Harmony" [LM 408]), even though Deleuze's most memorable claims about Leibniz include the admission that, while "[w]e remain Leibnizian [. . .] accords no longer express our world or our text." (FLB 137/189tm) For Deleuze, this famous claim is an exemplar of the kind of approach to difference that has dominated Western thought, according to which identity is invoked as a necessary external and transcendent criteria.²¹⁶

In light of Badiou's enduring interest, it is surprising to find that no sustained discussion of the event is to be found in *The Clamor of Being*, despite the fact that Badiou somewhat strangely identifies his discussion of the virtual and the actual under the title of "doctrine of the event" (DCB 29/46). However, we do confront there a familiar claim: that the event is an avatar for the One, supported by his reading of one of Deleuze's formulations of the univocity of Being: "Being is the unique event in which all events communicate with one another." (LS 10; DCB 11/20) This lack of direct treatment, however, does not mean that Badiou's text is absent of all discussion of the event, for in fact it is engaged with by Badiou under the joint rubric of the eternal return and chance.

In what follows, then, I will use the brief text found in *Logiques des Mondes* as a means to explore Badiou's claims about the affinity of the event and the One – since this short text on Deleuze also proceeds under the auspice of the central thesis of *The Clamor of Being* – before assessing it in the light of Deleuze's own text. In concluding, I will turn with a critical eye to the relationship that Badiou presents between the eternal return and the event.

Badiou's account of the event in *Logiques des Mondes*²¹⁷

Badiou's 'The Event in Deleuze' offers what it calls "the four Deleuzian axioms of the event." (LM 404) It then moves on to counterpose four axioms

²¹⁵ The period between his review of *The Fold* and *Logiques des Mondes*

²¹⁶ In fact, Deleuze does not hesitate to claim that this is "Leibniz's only error [viz.], to have linked difference to the negative of limitation, because he maintained the dominance of the old principle, because he linked the series to a principle of convergence, without seeing divergence itself was an object of affirmation, or that the impossibles belonged to the same world and were affirmed as the greatest crime and the greatest virtue of the one and only world, that of the eternal return." (DR 51/72-3) This point will be investigated in somewhat more detail below.

²¹⁷ James Williams has recently mounted a very strong critique of Badiou's reading of the Deleuzian event, which, though unfolding in a somewhat different manner to the approach adopted here, arrives at the same conclusion: "though Badiou's interpretation of Deleuze is without doubt of interest and value for the elucidation of Badiou's work, it cannot be taken as the last word either on Deleuze's philosophy of the event, or of its relative worth with respect to Badiou's position. It is simply too much of a reduction, too textually selective and limited, too far removed from Deleuze's idiom and, from an interpretative point of view, too lacking in self-critique in the imposition of an unsympathetic conceptual schema without questions concerning the possible costs of such an approach." See "If not here, then where? On the location and individuation of events in Badiou and Deleuze", *Deleuze Studies*, 3, 1 (2009), 97-123.

of its own, before summarising on the basis of these a Deleuzian conservative religion of the One, for whom the event must not attain the radicality ascribed to it by Badiou. In all essential respects, the argument here is of a piece with that provided in *The Clamor of Being*: the event is, for Badiou, extra-being (without instantiating an ontological transcendence), a radical rupture with everything that is, and impossible to think from within the current network provided by language and knowledge.²¹⁸

The first of the axioms of the event that Badiou ascribes to Deleuze concerns the relationship between the event and the One: “The event is the ontological realisation of the eternal truth of the One, the infinite power [*puissance*] of Life.” (LM 404) In other words, it is the event which names the capacity of the One to produce its emanative effects, that is, beings. This is why he writes that “the event reveals in an immanent way the One of becomings, it makes becoming this One. The event is the becoming of becoming: the becoming(-One) of (unlimited) becoming,” (LM 404) and why the text of Deleuze’s that Badiou uses as an exemplar of this axiom is: “Unlimited becoming becomes the event itself.”²¹⁹

The second and third axioms speak to the relationship between the event on the one hand, and temporality and actuality on the other. Thus of the first (‘The event is always that which has just happened and that which is about to happen, but never that which is happening’ [LS 8/16; cf. LS 63/79-80]), Badiou writes:

The event is a synthesis of past and future. In reality, the expression of the One in becomings is the eternal identity of the future as a dimension of the past. The ontology of time, for Deleuze as for Bergson, admits no figure of separation. Consequently, the event would not be what takes place ‘between’ a past and a future, between the end of a world and the beginning of another. It is rather encroachment and connection: it realises the indivisible continuity of Virtuality. It exposes the unity of passage which fuses the one-just-after and the one-just-before.
(LM 404-5)

This claim of course resonates strongly with the presentation of time in *The Clamor of Being* as discussed in the previous chapter. The event is the emanative power of the One (Axiom One), but this power is a power of unification or connection with respect to time. The event is what articulates one moment onto the next, thereby excluding any possibility of temporal “separation”. (LM 405) The third axiom draws upon one of Deleuze’s most striking formulations in *The Logic of Sense* with respect to the event, that the event is an *effect*:

²¹⁸ For a summary of the movement from *Being and Event* to *Logiques des Mondes* on this point and more generally, see Justin Clemens, “Had we but worlds enough, and time, this absolute, philosopher ...”, *Cosmos and History* 2, 2 (2006), 277-310, esp. “BE→LOW”, 299-302.

²¹⁹ This exact phrase, to my knowledge, does not appear in *The Logic of Sense*. There are a number of passages reminiscent of it, however, for example: “Pure becoming, the unlimited, is the matter of the simulacrum insofar as it eludes the action of the Idea and insofar as it contests both model and copy” (LS 2/10); “the entire first half of *Alice* still seeks the secret of events and of the becoming unlimited which they imply.” (LS 9/19)

the event affects bodies, because it is what they do or support as exposed syntheses. It is the coming of the One through them that they are as distinct nature (virtual rather than actual) and homogenous result.
(LM 405)

For Badiou, then, the fact that events are in a certain sense *effects* constitutes them as something like so many signatures of the ultimate ontological unity in which actual bodies (or states of affairs) participate. In turn, the final axiom also emphasises the role that the event has in unifying particular states of affairs. Citing Deleuze's claim that "a life is composed of a single and same Event, lacking all the variety of what happens to it." (LS 170/199tm),²²⁰ Badiou writes that

The Event, in the disparate material of a life, is precisely the Eternal Return of the identical, the undifferentiated power [puissance] of the Same [. . .] With regard to any multiplicity whatsoever, it is of the essence of the Event to compose them into the One that they are, and to exhibit this unique composition in a potentially infinite variety of ways.
(LM 406)

We have already seen the extent to which such a reading of the eternal return is misplaced. The general point is, however, quite clear: the Event (and no longer events plural) has as its *raison d'être* the unification of dispartes. In methodological terms, the Event is the movement of Being as such, which the singular method of intuition submerges itself in. We arrive, that is to say at the negation of the entire program of *Being and Event*, since Deleuze for Badiou has set out everywhere to write *Being as Event*.²²¹

Here, however, we are still engaged with Deleuze. From these axioms, and the points that they assert or rely upon, I would like to extract what could be

²²⁰ The passage from which this phrase is extracted reads: "What makes an event compatible or incompatible with another? We cannot appeal to causality, since it is a question of a relation of effects among themselves. What brings destiny about at the level of events, what brings an event to repeat another in spite of all its difference, what makes it possible that a life is composed of a single and same Event, despite the variety of what might happen, that it be traversed by a single and same fissure, that it play one and the same air over all possible tunes and all possible worlds – all these are not due to relations between cause and effect; it is rather an aggregate of non-causal correspondences with formal system of echoes, of resumptions and resonances, a system of signs – in short, an expressive quasi-causality, and not at all a necessitating causality." (LS 170/199tm) Given that Badiou's account of the event in Deleuze turns around an ascription of unity, the question of the communication between events is a crucial one, and which I will turn to address below. Let me just note at this point the tendency (exemplified here) for Badiou to quote Deleuze out of context, a tendency which does little to support his argument.

²²¹ As one might imagine, Badiou wishes to challenge each of these points quite radically. Point by point, he will assert his own axioms of the event, which one can see are entirely consonant with what was asserted in my earlier presentation of his philosophy in *Being and Event*: that the event is extra-being, irreducible to an expression of the power of being; that the event breaks with temporal continuity, and offers the possibility of the elaboration of a new time; that the event is in no way an effect, and rather than being attributable to bodies but different from them, it founds the possibility of the construction of a new body (in *Being and Event*, a generic truth, in *Logiques des Mondes*, a new subject-body [LM, Book Seven, "What is a body?"] – and interestingly, the formal presentation of this new theory falls under a title clearly chosen to be antagonistic to the Deleuzian perspective: 'We Know Why a Body Exists, What it Can Do, and What it Can't'); and that the event is not a principle of unity.

characterised as the three key assertions which Badiou formulates with respect to the concept of the event in Deleuze, and which I will examine in what follows:

- 1) the Event must be aligned with the figure of the One, and thus considered as unary, and also ontologically primary with respect to states of affairs;
- 2) events are *effects* and not causes; and,
- 3) as such, they are incapable of providing the basis for the irruption of the new in a given situation

The event in Deleuze

We have already seen a key attribute of the event for Deleuze: that it must be thought as replacing the dogmatic or theorematic view of essence at the heart of a metaphysics of being with a concept of event as *essence*. This point already works against Badiou's reading, specifically the first claim, insofar as it strives to do away with any figure of primary unity (at the level of essential being) in favour of multiple changes (or what we might call the inessential movements of becoming). In what follows, the three claims which organise Badiou's reading of the Deleuzian event will be dealt with. In short, I would like to show:

- 1) that while in one sense, events are certainly effects for Deleuze, they also inhabit a regime which is *quasi-causal* in nature; that is, they are not merely products, but play a key role in the production of states of affairs;
- 2) that events are essentially plural for Deleuze, and the figure of the Event (or *Eventum Tantum*) is not a figure of the One, but of univocity; and
- 3) that on the one hand, events thus understood can be taken to describe the introduction of novelty into a given state of affairs; on the other, events are irreducible to their actualisation, and this evental excess is precisely what allows for the kind of deviation from normality that Badiou sees at work in the event as excessive undecidable multiplicity.

In establishing each of these points, we are also able to demonstrate some striking aspects of the Deleuzian project with respect to events. In the first case, what emerges is a properly transcendental account of events, whose role is to provide the genetic conditions for the emergence of new states of affairs. With respect to the second point, Deleuze provides a remarkable account of the nature of the communication between events which provides new grounds to assert that the univocity of being must not be reduced to any promotion of a quidditative unity. In the case of point three, something like a Deleuzian version of Badiou's subject of fidelity to an event emerges, as I will argue below.

Badiou is certainly right to assert that "*The Logic of Sense* is the most considerable effort on the part of Gilles Deleuze to clarify his concept of the event." (LM 404) While the concept is addressed throughout his later work, as we have seen, it is here that it is treated directly and in the most sustained fashion. Even the chapter of *The Fold* dedicated to the question 'What is an event?', addressed through a discussion of Leibniz and

Whitehead, is in the end less significant, illustrating the earlier positions without exceeding them in any significant direction.²²²

The account of events for Deleuze begins by radically distinguishing between two orders, those of cause and effect, following in the first instance the Stoics,²²³ while drawing heavily on Lewis Carroll. On the one side, we have the order of causes, which operates between bodies: “There are no causes *and* effects among bodies. Rather, all bodies are causes – causes in relation to each other and for each other.” (LS 4/13) Here, bodies are not just medium sized objects, but rather everything that might fall under the category of material beings, thus including bodies as they are normally understood, but also speech, writing, or *marks* in general as the material aspect of language (as opposed to its meaning). Thus the exclamation found in *A Thousand Plateaus* in the context of a later discussion of the Stoics: “Representations are bodies too!” (TP 86) Deleuze will also call bodies in this extended sense *states of affairs*, and here we must certainly understand these to be equivalent to the extended and qualified regime of the actual as it is presented in *Difference and Repetition*. In fact, Deleuze will come to speak of the relationship between events and states of affairs in terms of actualisation. On the other side, we have the regime of effects:

all bodies are causes [. . .] of certain things of an entirely different nature. These effects are not bodies, but, properly speaking, ‘incorporeal’ entities. They are not physical qualities and properties, but rather logical or dialectical attributes. They are not things or facts, but events. We cannot say that they exist, but rather that they subsist or insist, having this minimum of being which is appropriate to that which is not a thing, a nonexisting entity.
(LS 4-5/13tm)

In other words, the causal interaction between bodies produces effects which are not bodies themselves, but ideal attributes *of* these bodies. To refer to one of Deleuze’s favoured examples, when I am cut, the ‘being cut’ must not be seen as an effect rendered on one body by another, but an ideality produced on the incorporeal level. It is a pure ‘to-be-cut’ that is attributed to a body or bodies. Likewise, it is not the case that a tree grows, shrinks, becomes green in spring, and so on. Rather, each of these is an incorporeal effect which inheres in the tree: to grow, to shrink, and even to green (“The tree ‘greens’. . .” [LS 6/15])

This “new dualism” (LS 6/15) is striking: while bodies, taken together, form an integral causal whole (a “unity called Destiny” [LS 4/13]), it is the regime

²²² I am also in agreement with Daniel W. Smith, when he asserts that it is Deleuze’s reading of Leibniz in *Difference and Repetition*, rather than *The Fold*, which is of primary significance, in his ‘Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz’, Jones and Roffe, eds., *Deleuze’s Philosophical Lineage*, 44.

²²³ However, as John Sellars has argued in a series of impressive articles, Deleuze’s use of the Stoics departs quite substantially from the Stoic texts – much more so than with other thinkers he works with and among. For example, as Sellars demonstrates in “*Aiōn* and *Chronos*: Deleuze and the Stoic Theory of Time”, in *Collapse 3* (London: Urbanomic Press, 2008) that “The theory of *aiōn* and *chronos* is an interesting element in Deleuze’s philosophy that takes its inspiration from a speculative reading of the ancient Stoics, but is not an ancient Stoic theory,” 204. See also “An Ethics of the Event: Deleuze’s Stoicism,” in *Angelaki* 11, 3 (2006), 157-71, and “Deleuze and Cosmopolitanism,” in *Radical Philosophy* 142 (2007), 30-37.

which Deleuze will come to identify as *sense* in which effects come to exist (or rather, as indicated above, *subsist*) in their own right.

It is not at all the dualism of the intelligible and the sensible, of Idea and matter, or of Ideas and bodies. It is a more profound and secret dualism hidden in sensible and material bodies themselves.
(LS 2/10)

It is this latter level which characterises the regime proper to events: an event is precisely an incorporeal attribute which certain bodies express as a result of their causal interactions.²²⁴ Thus it is irreducible to the order of causes themselves: “the event is not what happens (an accident), it is rather the pure expressed *within* what happens.” (LS 149/175tm; emphasis added)

Event as effect, event as quasi-cause

Let’s admit the first consequence of this: that Badiou is certainly right to assert that for Deleuze, the event is *an effect*. However, this is only half of the full account that Deleuze presents in *The Logic of Sense*. We have already seen the split imposed between causes at the level of bodies, and events as such. Now, to consider events as effects of bodily interaction or products of states of affairs is to consider them from the point of view of bodies, as it were. Events from this point of view appear particularly “sterile” and “impassive” (LS 100/122) For Deleuze, though, we must also take into account the point of view of the event itself. That is, we must consider the event insofar as it forms a part of a transcendental field: “The idea of singularities, and thus of anti-generalities, which are however impersonal and pre-individual, must now serve as our hypothesis for the determination of this domain and its genetic power. (LS 99/121) Or, correlatively,

Only when the world, teaming with anonymous and nomadic, impersonal and pre-individual singularities, opens up, do we tread at last on the field of the transcendental.
(LS 103/125)

For Deleuze, this second aspect of the event – its part in a transcendental field – is accounted for in relation to five characteristics.

- 1) events (qua singularities) are a part of heterogenous series “endowed with a potential energy”;
- 2) events partake in a process of auto-unification (forming a single Event in which events are articulated);
- 3) the transcendental field, upon which events are arrayed, must be grasped as a surface – that is, as lacking dimensions, immediately in

²²⁴ This schema, it must be noted, is profoundly similar to the account of the relationship between modal essence and existence as Deleuze presents it in *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*. The casual interaction at the level of existing modes (bodies, but also thoughts, and on through the infinite number of attributes) only results in temporary causal alliances between colonies of bodies. However, each configuration of bodies articulates, or rather *expresses*, a pre-existing (or rather, eternal) modal essence. The real point of difference between the two schemas is yet to be seen, and it turns around the complex theme of counter-actualisation, which plays no role in Spinoza’s metaphysics (the route of liberty concerning the affirmation of being as such, rather than the attempt to exceed what is actualised in the name of the affirmation of an event in its excess).

- contact with, inhering in, or “surveying [*survole*]” (LS 104/127tm)²²⁵
states of affairs;
- 4) the transcendental field thus constituted is the locus of sense;
 - 5) finally, singularities-events are problematic in nature; this field of problematic singularities and senses thus provides “the conditions of true genesis.” (LS 105/127-8tm)

The central issue, however, is how these two aspects of the event are interrelated: how can we effect “the passage from sterility to genesis?” (LS 97/118) Or again, “How can we maintain both that sense [or the event] produces even the states of affairs in which it is embodied, and that it is itself produced by these states of affairs or the actions and passions of bodies (an immaculate conception)?” (LS 124/149) The first move that Deleuze makes in response to these concerns is to stipulate that we really do have two different modalities of the event.

When we say that bodies and their mixtures produce sense [or cause events], it is not by virtue of an individuation which would presuppose it. Individuation in bodies, the measure in their mixtures, the play of persons and concepts in their variations – this entire order presupposes [. . .] the neutral, pre-individual and impersonal field within which it is deployed. It is therefore in a different way that sense [and events] is produced by bodies.
(LS 124/149tm)

In other words, “Being a pure effect, it is nevertheless the locus [*lieu*] of a quasi-cause,” (LS 124/150) which is to say that no direct causal relationship holds even though the event plays an irreducible role in the constitution of particular states of affairs. In turn, we must distinguish between the event taken as causal product and the event as problematic instance, but only in order to thereby re-articulate them in an new way. Namely: events, or sense, provide the problematic loci around which the regime of bodies or states of affairs are organised. The very individuation that brings about a state of affairs – a tree, for example – is a structure of singularities-events, and it is the potential energy expressed by this structure that is actualised in the causal relations of bodies. When the same tree is engaged in causal relations, such that it grows, or becomes green, this event is inscribed or included in this structure in turn, redistributing the differential relations between events, and the potential energy bound up by them, in the locality of the singularities in question. Events as effects enter into the distribution of singularities in the transcendental field, thus “partak[ing] of the quasi-cause attached to it.” (LS 125/151)

This account, and the topology that it presents, is one in which the impassivity and neutrality of sense/events from the point of view of the initial

²²⁵ As is made clear much later in *The Fold*, and then in *What is Philosophy?* (WP 210) this operation of the *survol* (‘survey’ or ‘overflight’ rather than the ‘hovering over’ indicated by the English translation of *The Logic of Sense*) is drawn from the work of Raymond Ruyer. See Ron Bogue’s summary of this Ruyerian concept in Jones and Roffe, eds., *Deleuze’s Philosophical Lineage*, 302-3. Deleuze’s explicit use of this concept in *The Fold* (FLB 102-3/137-9) is in the service of explicating the controversial theme of the substantial chain in the late work of Leibniz.

causal chain (causal bodies produce immaterial events/sense) becomes, from the point of view of the transcendental regime of events themselves, engaged in a complex circuit of interactions. In turn, the apparent blind activity found in the depths of bodies must be seen in a second sense too, as an activity which – for all its blindness – displaces and complicates the problems which provided it with its genetic basis. Or, as Deleuze puts it, “the depth acts in an original way, *by means of its power to organise surfaces and to envelop itself within surfaces.*” (LS 124/150) Any particular state of affairs, that is, orients the transcendental field around the interactions that govern its local causal network, embodying or even inhaling the problematic, such that it forms an inner lining or layer across which its activities are played out.

From a more general point of view, this peculiar double structure of causality returns us to the theme of expression that was discussed in chapter three. It is only this category that can adequately describe this disjunctive circuit of events, above all because no direct causal mechanism could ever account for it. Between events and states of affairs, there is a true expressive relationship, in which events (effects) express the consequences of the causal interactions of bodies, and in which events (genetic singularities) are expressive problems in relation to which states of affairs array themselves: the event of battle in which relations of enemies, pitted against each other to the death in the actual, withdraw, and in which there are no direct antagonism, but a complex multiplicitous relation with the battle itself. It is not from the bones that lie in the depths of bodies that an avenger arises; the event itself provides the genetic kernel which every revenge, every act of war, expresses. It is that certain *aliquid*, that *something* which, like the grain of sand in an oyster, engenders the production of novelty in these depths.

***Eventum tantum* and events plural**

We must add that events are internally engaged in expressive relations with each other (they are, Deleuze says, “inter-expressive” [LS 177/208]) – once again, no standard causal or logical mechanism can be used to account for them, even if their relations are irreducibly important in the constitution of reality. Like the reciprocal and differential structure of the virtual outlined in *Difference and Repetition*, the regime of events in *The Logic of Sense* involves a complex serial organization irreducible to a unity.²²⁶ Even after restoring to the event its primacy with respect to the regime of causality, the most formidable of Badiou’s critical points remains. Indeed, if there is any moment in Deleuze’s work which provides real evidence that he is elaborating a theory of the One, it is in *The Logic of Sense*, and it pertains to what Deleuze names, as we have seen, *the Event*, in relation to which events plural are something like components. The following passages are exemplary:

Nothing other than the Event subsists, the Event alone, *Eventum Tantum* for all contraries, which communicates with itself through its own distance and resonates across all of its disjunctions.
(LS 176/207tm)

²²⁶ The serial element of events is admirably accounted for in a variety of contexts in James Williams’ *Deleuze’s Logic of Sense*, esp. 106-110.

And the following, which Badiou himself partially quotes (LM 405):

What makes an event compatible or incompatible with another? We cannot appeal to causality, since it is a question of a relation of effects among themselves. What brings destiny about at the level of events, what brings an event to repeat another in spite of all its difference, what makes it possible that a life is composed of a single and same Event, despite the variety of what might happen, that it be traversed by a single and same fissure, that it play one and the same air over all possible tunes and all possible worlds?
(LS 170/199tm)²²⁷

Clearly, these moments support something like Badiou's two basic propositions about Deleuze: that a unified ontological moment (the Event, *Eventum Tantum*) is primary in relation to its multiplicitous and fleeting emanations (events, plural, qua states of affairs). However, Deleuze's use of these expressions are themselves embedded less in such a structure than in an attempt to grasp the nature of relations between events in their own terms (that is, as ideal singularities).

This point is already indicated by the second citation above: what makes an event compatible or incompatible with another? More specifically, what are the relations between events such that a given body or state of affairs can express or actualise a number of events? We know that the tree becomes green, grows larger or smaller, and so on – that the tree is a locus of actualisations – but how are 'to green' and 'to grow' or 'to shrink' articulated in and of themselves? It is in answering this question that Deleuze is led to posit 'the Event' as a category which accounts for the unique manner of the interrelation of events.

The key passages in this regard are to be found in the two chapters of *The Logic of Sense* (Series Twenty-Four and Twenty-Five) dedicated to the communication of events and univocity respectively. In elaborating an answer to this question, Deleuze proceeds much as he did in *Difference and Repetition* with respect to the thesis of univocity. Once more, three key moments in the history of such an answer are elaborated, each going farther than the previous one. In *Difference and Repetition*, the series in question is Duns Scotus-Spinoza-Nietzsche. Here, the three positions can be aligned with the nominal chain of Stoic, Leibnizian and properly Deleuzean theories, although the latter involves reference to many other figures, Nietzsche included.

Deleuze's method, as he traverses this series, is effectively *subtractive* in nature. He is interested in finding an answer to the nature of the communication between events that does not impose structures or values proper to the regime of states of affairs. In other words, to approach an adequate thought of the interrelation of events, we must subtract every

²²⁷ A similar moment occurs in *Difference and Repetition*, with reference to the replaying of the past in the present: "This is what we call metempsychosis. Each chooses his pitch or his tone, perhaps even his lyrics, but the tune remains the same, and underneath all the lyrics the same tra-la-la, in all possible tones and pitches." (DR 84/114) This is perhaps the first instance in Deleuze's work of a metaphysical formulation of the refrain (or *ritournelle*), a concept found in great extension in *A Thousand Plateaus*, esp. "1837: Of the Refrain" (TP 310-50).

explanatory theme that arises external to the regime of events themselves. The first moment is the Stoics. Deleuze, as we have seen, draws heavily on the Stoic theory of sense in order to elaborate a distinction between ideal sense/events and their actualisation in bodies. And, in the course of their thought, they come to be the first thinkers to attempt to account for the compatibility or incompatibility between events in non-conceptual or alogical terms. To use the example provided by Deleuze, we can oppose two species of butterflies, those which are black and vigorous and those which are grey and weak, but only in terms of the pure events 'to turn grey' and 'to turn black', both of which are equally positive. If a grey vigorous butterfly is a contradiction, it is not because of a logical incompatibility at the level of concepts, or a physical incompatibility at the level of material cause. To impose either of these criteria would be to ascribe to the events themselves characteristics which do not pertain to them.

Nevertheless, the Stoics do not elaborate an alternative to dyadic logic in order to account for the relationship between events. To assert that these two events ('to turn grey' and 'to turn black') are equally positive is not yet to account for their ideal co-existence. Hence, Deleuze claims, "the Stoics may not have been able to resist the double temptation of returning to simple physical causality or to logical compatibilities." (LS 171/200tm)

Thus "the first theoretician of alogical incompatibilities, and for this reason the first important theoretician of the event, was Leibniz." (LS 171/200) Leibniz' genius in this regard is the elaboration of the original category of compossibility. Whereas contradiction is concerned with logical claims (and thus falls on the side of states of affairs), and which cannot account for the co-existence of contrary events ('to grow larger', 'to grow smaller'), compossibility is proposed by Leibniz as a criteria belonging to events as such.²²⁸

Indeed, Leibniz goes even further, restructuring the entire subject-predicate relationship in keeping with this insight: it is no longer predicates as logical (and hence non-contradictory) attributions that pertain to or characterise the subject, but rather *events themselves*, insofar as they are compossible with the entire field of events in the world in which the course of the subject unfolds. This is why Deleuze often insists on the claim that, for Leibniz, God does not create Adam who sins, but rather the world in which Adam-who-sins exists (eg. LS 111/135; FLB 25/35). Alternatively, the world in question is one in which the event-predicate 'to sin' is an attribute of Adam, in compossibility with the entirety of the infinite number of other sequences of event-attributes.

Compossibility therefore asserts that what logical compatibility would consider contrary events might subsist together at the same time, insofar as they are a part of a series which fits into the general regime in question. Here, in keeping with the theory of singularities in the calculus, Deleuze writes

²²⁸ A characteristic statement by Leibniz of this theme, couched in the language of necessary and contingent truths, can be found in "On Contingency" in *Philosophical Essays*, ed. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (London: Hackett Publishing, 1989), 28-30.

Compossibility must be defined in an original manner, at a pre-individual level, by the convergence of series which singularities of events form as they extend themselves out over lines of ordinary points.

(LS 171/201tm)

Equally original is the counterpart of compossibility, impossibility. Rather than being a simple contradiction (as in bivalent logic, and consequently as in any orthodox understanding of the subject-predicate relationship), impossibility concerns two series of events that diverge from each other

Impossibility must be defined by the divergence of such series: if another Sextus than the one we know is impossible with our world, it is because he would correspond to a singularity whose series would diverge from the series of our world, clustered about the Adam, the Judas, the Christ, and the Leibniz we know. Two events are compossible when the series are organised around their singularities extend in all directions; they are impossible when the series diverge in the vicinity of constitutive singularities. Convergence and divergence are entirely original relations which cover the rich domain of alogical compatibilities and incompatibilities.

(LS 171-2/201tm)

However, Deleuze finds the Leibnizian scheme wanting. While providing a striking theory of the relationships between events that would be considered to be contradictory on the dyadic schema of contradiction, one which was lacking in the Stoics, Leibniz's account remains bound to certain "theological exigencies" (LS 172/201) that ruins his ultimate value for the theory of events. At issue here is the famous theme of the best of all possible worlds. On Leibniz's account, God is the one who chooses between all of the possible worlds, according to the twin criteria of the greatest variety and the fewest laws. However, there is a more primary criteria than these, and that is compossibility itself. Of the possible worlds that God chooses between, those which contain impossible series or disjunctive events are ruled out in advance. Thus, Leibniz affirms events in their alogical impossibility only after *a priori* excluding the possibility that these disjunct series might unfold in the same world. In other words, it is only insofar as impossibility is brought under the regime of the One (of integral compossibility) that Leibniz will admit it to being. Or, as Deleuze puts it, Leibniz puts into use the theme of disjunction in a solely negative or exclusive manner.

For Deleuze, this is once more unacceptable: like the Stoics, Leibniz has reintroduced criteria pertaining to a regime external to that of events themselves in order to account for the relations between events. For Deleuze, the key point thus appears to be the following: that we must affirm events in their difference as such if we are to have any theory of the event at all: rather than affirming events with respect to some identity, we must concern ourselves with "an operation according to which two things or two determinations are affirmed *through* their difference, that is to say, that they are the objects of simultaneous affirmation only insofar as their difference is itself affirmed and is affirmative." He continues, writing

We are no longer in any way dealing with an identity of contraries, which would still be inseparable as such from a movement of the negative and of exclusion. We are rather faced with a positive distance of differentials [*différents*]: faced no longer with the identification of two contraries with the same, but the affirmation of distance as that which relates the one to the other insofar as they are 'differentials'.

(LS 172-3/202tm)²²⁹

Here we see the kernel of the third moment, the properly Deleuzian theory of the relations between events. It is impossibility itself, as disjunction, or as intrinsic difference, that must found such a theory. Deleuze's theory finally posits therefore that events are related to one another, in their ideal co-existence, according to a synthesis which brings all differences together without eradicating these differences in any figure of identity. This is the profound theme, of course, of the *disjunctive synthesis*.

In a certain way, the entire debate around Badiou's reading of Deleuze could centre on the explication of this phrase, as we have already seen in chapter two. For Badiou, it is the *synthesis* which is decisive, and which (at the very least) implies a resultant synthetic unity. For Deleuze, however, what is above all to be thought is the role of the disjunct as *the object of synthesis*:

It is not that the disjunction has become a simple conjunction [. . .] The whole question, and rightly so, is to know under what conditions the disjunction is a veritable synthesis, instead of being a procedure of analysis which is satisfied with the exclusion of predicates from one thing in virtue of the identity of its concept.

(LS 174/203-4)

In other words, "The disjunction is not at all reduced to a conjunction; it is left as a disjunction, since it bears, and continues to bear, upon a divergence as such." (LS 174/204) To summarise any critique of Badiou's reading of Deleuze, therefore, we might simply state that he has subordinated disjunction to a supposed conjunction, one which Deleuze rejects outright. The alleged unity of all events in a single Event is not the subordination of differences to an ultimate identity, but the affirmation of eventality as such.

Why, then, does Deleuze so often seem to invoke the very opposite claim? The chapter we have been discussing here finishes with the following claim, one we have already seen:

Nothing other than the Event subsists, the Event alone, Eventum Tantum for all contraries, which communicates with itself through its own distance and resonates across all of its disjuncts.

(LS 176/204)

Deleuze's answer, which is double as we will see, is once again by way of the concept of univocity. In chapter three, I argued that, on the basis of

²²⁹ This idea of difference as positive difference is already present in *Difference and Repetition*, where Deleuze elaborates it in relation to a certain mathematico-logical intuitionism (DR 234/301-2)

Deleuze's presentation of this theme, he should be characterised as an ontological mannerist. The key to grasping the theme of the Event in *The Logic of Sense*, I would contend, relies upon adopting this point of view. The key passage is the following, which opens with a quasi-Badiouan accent:

A position in the void of all events in one, an expression in the nonsense of all senses in one, univocal Being is the pure form of the Aion, the form of exteriority which relates things and propositions. In short, the univocity of Being has three determinations: one single event for all events; one and the same aliquid for that which happens and that which is said; and one and the same Being for the impossible, the possible and the real.
(LS 180/211)

Let's remark the radicality of this claim: it is in no way a monism, and certainly no materialism. Events, impossible idealities (the square circle, *perpetuum mobile*), physical bodies, sonorous matter . . . these all *are* in the same manner. The thesis of the univocity of being thus not only does away with substantive Being in any sense, it also demolishes – or rather demotes – any logical or formal distinction of the order of modality. Whatever the being – subsistent, impossible or eventual beings included – the manner of their being is the same. Once again, at question here is not whether his Deleuze's ontology is in the end capable of being sustained. What is in question is whether Badiou's presentation of Deleuze's ontology accords with Deleuze's own text. And we have seen substantial evidence that it does not.

In other words, the key term in this formulation is *form*: to speak of the univocity of Being is to speak of the unity of the manner in which beings exist, their *formal* unity and not their substantive ground. What then is the Event, the single and same Event? It is the formal unity of all events: in other words, it is disjunctive synthesis as such. Or we might even answer in a Badiouian fashion: *Eventum tantum*, rather than being a substantive of any kind, is the Deleuzean term for eventality, for the properly eventual character of the event.²³⁰ Insofar as an event is grasped in its ideal sense, as a subsistent singularity, it is thought eventually. Thus Badiou is certainly right to state that 'Event' is another term for the univocity of being – on the condition that we treat univocity in its properly Deleuzean sense, divorced from the form of the One.²³¹

²³⁰ An alternative reading to that which I propose here of the *Eventum tantum* is proposed by Joe Hughes, who argues that it figures as the aleatory point that produces all the other ideal events as it circulates (*Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, 136). My problem with such a proposal is that the category of singularity is put to use extremely frequently in *The Logic of Sense*, but the *Eventum tantum* only emerges in a single, very specific context. Hughes therefore seems to be guilty in a small way of the approach to Deleuze that Badiou also mobilises, namely the wholesale collapse of one concept into another, a precarious interpretive move given the detailed – indeed, Baroque – texture of the Deleuzean text.

²³¹ The more extreme claim presented in "Deleuze's Vitalist Ontology" cannot be maintained: "Deleuze constructs an immense, virtuosistic, and ramified phenomenological apparatus in order to write the ontological equation: being = event." (DVO 198) While we might assent to the idea that the unity of all events in the *Eventum tantum* is a form of the claim that all beings are univocally expressed, to claim that Being is Event goes one step further, and this step takes us beyond the Deleuzean text.

Events and novelty: counter-actualisation

As I have noted, chapter twenty-five of *The Logic of Sense* ('Twenty-Fifth Series of Univocity') provides two answers to the status of the Event as such. The chapter opens, reflecting on the theme of disjunctive synthesis with the words: "It seems that our problem, in the course of our investigation, has changed altogether." (LS 177/208) And it is on the following page that the redefined problem is posed:

The problem is therefore one of knowing how the individual would be able to transcend his form and his syntactical link with a world, in order to attain to the universal communication of events, that is to the affirmation of a disjunctive synthesis beyond logical contradictions, and even beyond alogical incompatibilities. It would be necessary for the individual to grasp herself as event; and that she grasp the event actualised within her as another individual grafted onto her. In this case, she would not understand, want, or represent this event without also understanding and wanting all other events as individuals, and without representing all other individuals as events. (LS 178/208-9)

The term individual has a technical definition in *The Logic of Sense* that we have not discussed here (as the correlate to the order of denotation in language, and as infinite analytic proposition), and likewise representation (which here is synonymous with bodies or states of affairs, insofar as they actualise events). Nonetheless, to consider all events as individuals has an immediate sense: it is to directly affirm events as events, and insofar as they are or could be actualised. To affirm oneself as event is to affirm the Event as such (which means to affirm the eventality proper to being, as we have seen), to affirm the irruption of problems into states of affairs.

However, what Deleuze has in mind is more specific than some kind of willing of being as becoming. What is counter-actualisation?²³² With reference to the figure of the Stoic sage, he writes:

the sage waits for the event, that is to say, understands the pure event in its eternal truth, independently of its spatio-temporal actualisation, as something eternally yet-to-come and always already passed [. . .] But, at the same time, the sage also wills the embodiment and the actualisation of the pure incorporeal event in a state of affairs and in his or her own body and flesh. Identifying with the quasi-cause, the sage wishes to 'give a body' to the incorporeal effect, since the effect inherits the cause. (LS 146-7/172)²³³

²³² On this point, the work of James Williams is certainly the key resource. In many respects, the theme of counter-actualisation is the lynch-pin of Williams' reading of Deleuze's philosophy. Particularly striking are the exemplary ethical consequences that Williams draws from this concept and its deployment in *The Logic of Sense* by Deleuze are expounded in a great passage in Williams' work on Deleuze, "Morals and Events", in *Gilles Deleuze's Logic of Sense*, 135-74. Incidentally, this chapter includes a passing discussion of a number of common themes in Deleuze and Badiou on the event (172-3).

²³³ In the French, this passage begins "Là le sage attend l'événement." (172) This "Là" is not marked in the English translation.

So we see initially two aspects in play in Deleuze's analysis. The first consists in a certain orientation towards events which grasps them as excessive with respect to their actualisation, and also therefore with respect to their material cause. Its obverse is described by Deleuze as a certain *ressentiment*: "To grasp whatever happens as unjust and unwarranted (it is always someone else's fault) is, on the contrary, what renders our sores repugnant – *ressentiment* in person, *ressentiment* of the event." (LS 149/174-5tm) In other words, the primary ethical moment is to consider the event as irreducible to the order of causes, which is also the order of blame, and grounds the meaning of moral terminology ("What is really immoral is the use of moral notions like just or unjust, merit or fault." [LS 149/175]) Like Badiou, Deleuze wants no part of a collapse of ethics into a concrete and inviolable moral code.

The second aspect of counter-actualisation concerns – perhaps surprisingly – an act of the will, according to Deleuze, and consists in inverting the view I have of myself as an agent. Counter-actualisation is an act whereby I 'leap in place', (LS 149/175) identifying with myself no longer as simply a body subject to the causal nexus, but instead as the event which is like my genetic condition: in place of the body as such, I identify myself as a mime, or an actor (a humour-actor, Deleuze says, referring to Jöe Bousquet) of the event, no longer invested in what *is* here and now, but instead with what *in* what is here and now that could be otherwise. To counter-actualise is to traverse the path of actualisation diagonally with an eye to how the event could be actualised otherwise. In other words, it is a matter of changing the locus of my actions from immediate (we might even say *efficient*) causality to the quasi-causal event, or from a causal agent to an agent of potential energy. This, in turn, furnishes an entire panoply of motivations, orientations – in short, an entirely new *nature*.

The ethical import of this position provides an illuminating point of view on the enigmatic Nietzschean demand to become what one is.²³⁴ In fact, this is ultimately the single ethical maxim of *The Logic of Sense*, provided that we grasp this 'oneself' (in a now familiar and paradoxical way) as the difference that inhabits me in the form of the event. It is not an esoteric doctrine of action, but a doctrine of action according to which what is esoteric or occult *within oneself* – namely, the event which one embodies – provides the means to assert what has not been embodied in you as a principle of change (and beyond this, the decisive significance of other events in the same way). In turn, ethics in *The Logic of Sense* is irreducible to an act of representational thought, but concerns rather one's most intimate relationship with what one is, some other *thing* within me which is like my specular double, but also the means by which I can grasp the capacity for change as such.

²³⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, ed. Bernard Williams, trans. Josefine Naukhoff and Adrian del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), §335 (entitled, interestingly, "Long live physics!"); 187-9. With respect to this famous claim, Badiou produces a very fine explication: "Nietzsche's 'become what you are' must be understood as follows: you are only that which you become." (DVO 196) Framing it in this way allows us to see exactly Deleuze's point, that ethics cannot mean the striving to become equal to this or that ideal (become honest, become wise, become a philosopher ...), but the striving to become equal to becoming as such, to the event as such.

Can we not recognize, to an important extent, something like the subject in Badiou's sense in the figure of counter-actualisation? As for Badiou, the subject is uniquely oriented by an event which cannot be an object of knowledge or of language (as an object of representation). And as for Badiou, this subject is not (or is no longer) a native inhabitant states of affairs (represented situations), but emerges in response to an event, while, underpinning the subject is the human being who belongs to the order of bodies and the causal realm. As for Badiou, it is only through the subject that novelty in the strong sense is capable of being introduced into states of affairs (situations), and in accordance once more with the event.

However, the differences are just as striking. Whereas the subject-event relationship is strictly exterior in Badiou, for Deleuze the event (or events) that I embody as a counter-actualising subject is what is primary in what I "am". And whereas for Badiou, as we have seen, the event is characterised by its (dis)-apparition, for Deleuze the event eternally (or better, atemporally, the time of the event (Aion) being what evades the present) subsists together with all other events in a complex serial structure. Perhaps most significantly, while Badiou considers that the course of the subject can be accounted for in its being in a completely formal manner, Deleuze is led to include determinants like the body and the will as definitive for an account of counter-actualisation.²³⁵

Contrary to certain characterisations of the event in Deleuze – including Badiou's – which considers the event itself as the locus of novelty in Deleuze's philosophy, bringing with it the idea of a self-elaborating and self-changing being (*Natura sive Machina*), what we find at the heart of Deleuze's theory of the event in its most sustained presentation is rather something very different. Certainly, being must be grasped as becoming. But it is not on the basis of this fundamental state of affairs that the decisive novelty is introduced. Rather, the introduction of novelty in the strong sense relies upon an intervention.

Even the great Deleuzo-Guattarian theme of becoming-other can be thought in the context of the theory of counteractualisation. To engage in a becoming would be to counter-actualise oneself in relation to an event that is beyond what conspired in my constitution as a body or state of affairs. This would also imply a doubling of the movement of becoming itself, in accordance with the two relationships that hold between the event and the individuals which incarnate it. There would be two becomings, one ordained by nature understood as the vast interlocking motions of an inorganic life, while the other would be practiced behind nature's back. The relationship of becoming that holds between the wasp and the orchid concerns actualisation as such, the constitution of reality according to the

²³⁵ Does Badiou's account also include such investments, albeit implicitly? In *Logiques des Mondes*, Badiou introduces a conception of the body into the subjective trajectory, but this body is strictly a *product* and, in at least one sense, a *byproduct*, of evental fidelity. As for the will, we must of course ask: why does someone become faithful to the event? Since there cannot be any necessity in fidelity, it seems inevitable that the will is implied in Badiou's account. This inevitability is treated by Sam Gillespie in terms of the Lacanian concept of *anxiety*, which is posited to answer this question of motivation which is not dealt with by Badiou himself. See Gillespie's fascinating and incisive posthumous work *The Mathematics of Novelty: Badiou's Minimalist Metaphysics* (Melbourne: re-press, 2008), esp. part five, entitled 'Giving Form to Its Own Existence: Anxiety and the Subject of Truth', 95-124.

differentiation of a problematic event; the human being, however, engaged in becoming-animal, is involved in the shadowy double of this fundamental relationship. In becoming-horse, in the manner of Little Hans for example,²³⁶ one attempts to extract from the event that constitutes me an affirmation of the event in its difference as such. To enter into a becoming would be to exceed the individual that one is in favour of other events, other problems, whose existence we can only sense, like a glimmer or an apprehension of a movement beyond our line of sight.

Conclusion: the eternal return, chance and the event

We have already seen Badiou's conclusion that since, for Deleuze, all chance is made subject to the eternal return as such, it stands unified and thus essentially evicts chance (or rather what Badiou calls "the Chance of chances" [DCB 76/116]). It is by critically evaluating this claim that I will conclude here. In fact, it is precisely the same logic that is problematically imposed upon the disjunctive synthesis as the characteristic of the *Eventum tantum* that Badiou also mobilises with respect to the eternal return in relation to chance.

Badiou begins by outlining what he characterises as the three misunderstandings that are liable to befall the doctrine of the eternal return. These he terms the Parmenidean (the eternal return signals the permanence of the One as static Being [DCB 68/102-3]), the cosmological (the return as universal law of the Same imposed on Being) and the statistical or regulatory (the eternal return regulates or organises chaos). In each case, we are confronted with a way of defaulting on Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche's doctrine by returning it to the closure of a fundamental unity. To these three misreadings, he presents what he takes to be the result of "Deleuze's fidelity to the eternal return" (DCB 67/101), namely a fourth alternative: that the eternal return is essentially the affirmation of all chances in a single gesture.

Badiou's response to this presentation is to reject all four options thus outlined (critiquing in passing Deleuze's reading of Mallarmé's *Un Coup de dés*) and, beyond these, "all possible senses of the eternal return of the Same," (DCB 76/115), on the grounds that it is an inadequate thought of chance *per se*.²³⁷

In other words, what is at stake in the thought of the event, for Badiou, is the status of chance itself, *vis-à-vis* being.²³⁸ As we have already seen, the category of chance is central for Badiou's own philosophy: not only is the advent of the event radically disjunct from any capacity for prediction, the very structure and movement of the subject is diagonal or transversal to any category of knowledge in the situation to which it belongs, and thus irreducible to regularity or any thought of order. In other words, chance is the very mark of the event and everything connected to it – all of which are

²³⁶ On the case of little Hans, see TP 264, and also "L'interprétation des énoncés" (DRF 80-103), written with Guattari, Claire Parnet and André Scala, esp. 81-92.

²³⁷ Cf. Ray Brassier's "Cosmic Animal or Stellar Matheme? Deleuze and Badiou on the dice-throw," *PLi* 10 (2000), 200-16, which presents a strong argument in Badiou's favour on this point, but one which, like Badiou, fails to grasp the sense of the dice throw in Deleuze.

²³⁸ I have already argued in the previous chapter that this is a serious oversight on behalf of Badiou, since it is first and foremost a temporal category in Deleuze.

in important senses disjunct to the ordered regularity of re-presented being. Thus we can understand one of the central passages in this chapter of *The Clamor of Being*. Drawing on Deleuze's use of the metaphor of the dice-throw, Badiou writes:

Ultimately, the eternal return is the One as the affirmation of chance, or affirmation of the fact that chance is affirmed in a single throw, which returns as the active being of all casts, or all fortuitous events. But one can just as well say that chance is the One as eternal return, for what makes an event fortuitous is that it has as its unique active power, as its generic virtuality, that which returns – namely, the original Great Cast.
(DCB 74-5/113)

In sum, the Deleuzian thematisation of chance in the figure of the eternal return (even released from its various misunderstandings) does not adequately account for chance on its own terms, rather suturing it to being. While each chance is affirmed by the eternal return, it is only insofar as the eternal return itself, the guarantor of chance, is synonymous with Being and its emanative power. Or, to use Badiou's own phrase, the eternal return in its Deleuzian manifestation excludes the Chance of chances:

It is by chance that a particular chance happens. All in all, the contingency of Being is only completely realised if there is also the Chance of chances. But, for Deleuze, insofar as contingency falls under the law of the One, it is realised in a single stroke. The Chance of chances does not exist – and this is the price paid for Being to be full.
(DCB 76/115-6)

Thus the eternal return for Badiou can only amount to another name for Being, another moment in the affirmation of the One in the serial exercise of a single intuition. Or, in terms of the event: the eternal return is the single Event of being whose being is itself absolute and necessary, but which expresses itself in plural events, each of which is subject to chance. As such, the affirmation of chance (just like the claimed ontological ground of all events in an Event) is of a different regime than chance itself, the regime of the eternal effective One.

Now, Badiou's summary of the potential misunderstandings of the eternal return is instructive and helpful, not just for its quite correct grasp of Deleuze's concerns about the misinterpretations that this concept is liable to, but also because Badiou's own critique includes all three errors. He in fact claims that: the eternal return on Deleuze's account evicts Chance because it insists on the One; it is the One which organises all contingent being; and that the Being of beings is the One. And such claims are precisely the notions that the doctrine of the eternal return, for Deleuze, *a priori* excludes from an ontology of difference.

Indeed, not only are these the claims that Badiou makes of the eternal return, chance and the event, they are of the genre of claims that govern his reading – quite explicitly, as we have seen – of Deleuze as a whole. The aleatory, the simulacra, disjunction, events in their plurality and beings in theirs: all of these postulates are made subordinate to the One. The One (or

the eternal return, or the Event) is the ideal and solely real apex of a pyramid from which its emanative results emerge and towards which they are oriented, a kind of Gnostic reading of Deleuze's philosophy.

We have already seen in the previous chapter that Badiou equates time and being in Deleuze – and we have seen some reasons to question this equation. Badiou's reading of the eternal return is another such reason. Here, we need only recall two qualities of the eternal return, as Deleuze presents it, to put into question the Badiouian account I have just elaborated.

The first of these is the *formal* nature of the eternal return for Deleuze. As we have seen in the previous chapter, rather than being the "the One as the affirmation of chance," (DCB 74/113) the eternal return signals time as form without content: "the empty form of time." (DR 88/119) It is the ultimate form of time imposed at once upon the past and the present (what Deleuze calls the condition and the agent of time, respectively [DR 90/122]), but which equally tears apart that which is made subject to it. As form, it cannot be considered as either substantial or quidditative ground (the One), nor as a power of expression (the emanative power of the One). While, as we have seen in the previous chapter, both the present and the past are wedded to specific content (habituated *corpus* in the first case and virtual past as such in the second), the eternal return signals time finally freed from any subordination to space or object: "Time itself unfolds [. . .] it ceases to be cardinal and becomes ordinal, a pure *order* of time." (DR 88/120) The eternal return "causes neither the *condition* [the past] nor the *agent* [the present] to return: on the contrary, it repudiates these and expels them with all its centrifugal force [. . .] It is itself the new, complete novelty." (DR 90/121-2)

We could also put this point more directly, dispensing with the esoteric chicanes of the Deleuzean account: what the eternal return signifies is that *nothing returns*. The return is simply the expulsion of every possible content of time. Or again, what returns is simply the form of time itself, pure and empty, and it returns to once again fall upon the present and the past and disturb the integrity of beings bestowed upon them by the syntheses of the past and the present.

We might also object to Badiou's claim about the radicality of chance in relation to the event on his own account. For there is one aspect of the event in *Being and Event* which is in no way subject to chance, and that is its structure as discerned by ontology. In other words, there are only events insofar as they are the eternal repetition of the same. It is this *same* that renders the event thinkable. As Badiou himself notes in *The Clamor of Being*, on his account, "the form of all events is the same." (DCB 75-6/114) This means that ontology provides the thought of the Same in every event, even though its advent evades every means available to grasp it other than in the form of a retrospective subjective fidelity.

Secondly, for Deleuze, the eternal return is *differential* in nature: it is the return of difference itself. Badiou elides all of the emphases that Deleuze makes linking the eternal return to *difference as such*, directly articulating the eternal return with the thesis of the One. This is a remarkable feat, since Deleuze's discussions of this topic emphasise few – if any – other aspects as strongly. The doctrine of the eternal return considers repetition itself

not that from which one 'draws off' a difference, nor that which includes difference as a variant, but making it the thought and the production of the 'absolutely different'; making it so that repetition is, for itself, difference in itself.

(DR 94/126)

Once more we are presented with the primacy of difference in Deleuze with respect to any and all unity. But Badiou, on the contrary, attempts to achieve the articulation of the One and the eternal return, thereby bypassing the thought of difference in itself – with reference to the theme of affirmation. For Deleuze, though, it is precisely the differential nature of the eternal return that provides it with its affirmative mandate.

The eternal return is a force of affirmation, but it affirms everything of the multiple, everything of the different, everything of chance except what subordinates them to the One, to the Same and the Necessary.

(DR 115/151)

In an earlier passage that complements this, Deleuze writes:

As for the third time in which the future appears, this signifies that the event and the act possess a secret coherence which excludes that of the self; that they turn back against the self which has become their equal and smash it to pieces, as though the bearer of the new world were carried away and dispersed by the shock of the multiplicity to which it gives birth.

(DR 89-90/121)

This is an exceptional account of the counter-actualisation of the event that we have already seen. But it also signals the rupture, in the regime of the subject, which accompanies the interruption of every figure of unity in the regime of being. The multiplicity that gives birth to unities of every kind is vouchsafed by the ultimate truth of time: time is the affirmation of difference as such . . . "This is how the story of time ends." (DR 114/151)

Chapter Seven: Thought and the Subject

As for me, I have not been the unfortunate messenger of a thought stronger than I, nor its plaything, nor its victim, because that thought, if it has conquered me, has only conquered through me, and in the end has always been equal to me. I have loved it and I have loved only it, and everything that happened I wanted to happen, and having had regard only for it, wherever it was or wherever I might have been, in absence, in unhappiness, in the inevitability of dead things, in the necessity of living things, in the fatigue of work, in the faces born of my curiosity, in my false words, in my deceitful vows, in silence and in the night, I gave it all my strength and it gave me all its strength, so that this strength is too great, it is incapable of being ruined by anything, and condemns us, perhaps, to immeasurable unhappiness, but if that is so, I take this unhappiness on myself and I am immeasurably glad of it and to that thought I say eternally, 'Come,' and eternally it is there.
Maurice Blanchot, *Death Sentence*

These dark forces of finitude are not initially human.
Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*

Active and passive

In the methodological passages near the beginning of *The Clamor of Being*, Badiou argues that any familiarity with Deleuze's thought will reveal that "one could draw up an endless list of the conceptual couples that are organized according to this paramount formal opposition of the active and the passive," and claims that "this duality clearly runs throughout Deleuze's entire work." (DCB 33/52) For Badiou, though, this level of organization of the Deleuzian text must, however, be only treated as rhetorical or preliminary in nature. Thus he adds that

The active/passive duality indisputably exercises a strong influence on Deleuze's philosophical language or, let's say, his spontaneous rhetoric. Nonetheless, it is just as unquestionable that Deleuze does everything in his power to escape from this influence.
(DCB 33-4/53)

Whether or not this is true of Deleuze's rhetoric, what is certain is that Badiou, rather than following what he considers to be Deleuze's lead on this front, persists in organizing his account of Deleuze around this opposition – not on a rhetorical level, but rather on the level of concepts themselves.

This is perhaps most notable with respect to the categories of the virtual and the actual, where Badiou's principle thesis about Deleuze (the primacy of the One) leads him to assert that the virtual is the supreme name for Being in Deleuze's work, associated with plenitude, ultimate ontological status and *activity*. In comparison, the actual is the regime of passive products. Thus we read:

For Deleuze, beings are local degrees of intensity or inflections of power that are in constant movement and entirely singular. And as power is but a name of Being, beings are only expressive modalities of the One.
(DCB 25/40)

The One is life or production
(DCB 39/61)

This kind of claim also underpins Badiou's more general characterization of Deleuze as a vitalist: "What is it in Deleuze that fixes the thought of being to its Nietzschean name, life? This: that being must be evaluated as power." (DVO 193)

In contrast to this claim, I argued in chapter four that the virtual as it is presented in *Difference and Repetition* is to be associated with a certain profound passivity of its own (it does not act, it *is*). Rather than being the regime of production, the virtual there is figured on the order of a transcendental structure in relation to which the actual is organized. How this passage from the virtual to the actual is effectuated is in part the object of the current chapter, for we will see here that, strictly speaking, it is not the virtual (problematic differential Ideas) which causes the actual (or anything else for that matter) but that a complex process of actualization, supported by the category of intensity, revolves around the virtual.

In turn, when the issue of time was addressed in the chapter six, the same hypostatization of activity and passivity was seen to be arrayed by Badiou across a dualistic temporal structure constituted by pure active memory on the one hand, and concrete or sensible time on the other, time subordinate to common sense and pre-intuitive stupidity. Once more, though, as I argued there, this way of grasping temporality in Deleuze overlooks a number of decisive factors, including the ascription of a fundamental *passivity* to the temporal syntheses. Deleuze's analysis in *Difference and Repetition* indeed culminates by referring all time to the third passive synthesis, the time of the future or the eternal return, which is nothing but a pure form, a purely formal and empty time which neither acts nor reacts, but only implacably subjects the passing present and the pure past to unavoidable rupture.

Finally, as we saw in the previous chapter, Badiou's analysis of the event in Deleuze (and the eternal return: "Ultimately, the eternal return is the One as the affirmation of chance, or affirmation of the fact that chance is affirmed in a single throw, which returns as the active being of all casts, of all fortuitous events" [DCB 74-5/113]) entirely collapses it into the proposed Deleuzian One of being. On the other hand, the multiple products of the supreme "Being=Event" (DVO 198) – the dispensed simulacra – are inert. To claim this, though, Badiou has to ignore the many prominent passages in *The Logic of Sense* devoted to the impassivity and sterility of the event.²³⁹ Not only are relations between events irreducible to the mechanisms of efficient causality that govern states of affairs, the relationship between events and their actualization is on the one hand causally inverted (states of affairs cause events), and on the other engaged in an altogether non-active relation (that of serial interlacement) of quasi-causality.

The other significant moment of this theme in Badiou's reading comes in the context of his presentation of Deleuze's account of the subject and thought, in chapter seven of *The Clamor of Being* entitled 'The Outside and the Fold'. While the details will be examined in what follows, Badiou's central contention is that the names Thought, Fold and Subject are in the final analysis also names for the One in Deleuze, and thus the names for the

²³⁹ This radical passivity is a consequence of two aspects of the event: its sterility with respect to direct causal efficacy ("the splendid sterility of the expressed" [LS 32] or what Deleuze will elsewhere call its impassibility), and its irreducibility, as sense, to logical laws of compatibility and exclusion, and to the order of signification, manifestation and denotation (contradiction is not a criteria with which to judge the relations between events, even as they inhere in a particular state of affairs; "to grow" and "to shrink" pertain equally to Alice precisely because they do not relate to one another according to the requirements of standard two-position logic). On this latter front, an interesting comparison with Deleuze's account – found throughout *The Logic of Sense* – of the nature of this extra-being proper to the event is Quentin Meillassoux's discussion of the law of non-contradiction as it applies to beings in *After Finitude*, trans. Ray Brassier (London: Continuum Press, 2008). There Meillassoux argues that, given contingency is an irrefutable principle of being, a contradictory entity (which is, for example, at once green and not-green) could not exist because such an entity is already what it is not, and therefore by definition incapable of change. For Deleuze, such an argument could never be comprehensive because it ignores certain types of beings which cannot be judged on logical grounds, namely events (and more generally the regime of sense). Underlying this contrast is a question about the properly ontological status of becoming – Meillassoux grants to time the possibility of radical change (as in Deleuze's account of the eternal return) but also radical inaction.

productive capacity of this One. In other words, thought indexes that essential region of being which is the virtual One.

Furthermore, it is easy to see why Badiou approaches Deleuze's notion of the subject in this fashion. After all, as we have seen in the opening chapter, his own account is resolutely active in nature. For Badiou, the subject is *nothing but activity* – the subject has no being as such, being the name given to the discriminatory indexing activity in fidelity to an event. Just as in the case of the concepts of the event, of truth and of being itself, we can see here Badiou's method, whereby the categories of his own philosophy manifest themselves on the surface of Deleuze's, thereby organizing it but also obscuring what lies beneath.

Now, Badiou recognizes immediately that Deleuze abandons the figure of the autonomous subject: "this subject *results* from a topological operation that can be situated in the outside, and that it is thus in no way, constitutive, nor autonomous, nor spontaneous." (DCB 90/133tm) Here, Badiou is certainly correct. At issue, though, is not whether the subject in Deleuze is foundational in a Cartesian, Kantian or crude phenomenological sense – clearly, both thinkers are opposed to such views – but rather concerns the relationship between thought and subjectivity.

...

Badiou's reconstruction of thought in Deleuze proceeds in the following fashion. He begins by asserting a group of claims about the centrality of three Parmenidean questions for all philosophy: What is thinking? What is being? And in what sense do we assert that "The Same is at once thinking and Being?" (DCB 79/117) Turning to Deleuze, Badiou insists that, having already established answers to the first two questions – Being is "One, virtual, inorganic life, immanence [etc.]", and thought "disjunctive synthesis and intuition, the casting of dice, the ascetic constraint of a case, and the force of memory" (DCB 79/117-8) – we must "examine in greater depth the theory of [their] interlacement." (DCB 79/118)

To take these questions as primary is, as we know from the opening moments of *Being and Event*, central for Badiou: the overturning of the Parmenidean equation of being and the One founds for him the possibility of a finally adequate ontology. We also know his answer to the question of the interlacement of being and thinking: the null set, the single (empty) point at which the tangent of ontological discourse makes contact with being qua being. For Badiou, though, such a subtractive solution is not available to Deleuze, given his alleged accounts of thinking and being which rest so heavily on the virtues of plenitude and activity. Instead, he claims, Deleuze thinks an aspect of the activity of being itself as thought: "Thought [. . .] is the fold of being." (DCB 87/130) What, though, is specific about this activity of folding that would allow us to distinguish it from the more general activity of the production of inert simulacra? The answer, Badiou tells us, concerns the subject. Thinking is folding, and the activity of folding creates an "internal pocket" (DCB 89/133), which is nothing but the subject as such: "we can say that *the subject (the inside) is the identity of thinking and being.*" (DCB 90/133)

So, on Badiou's interpretation, the productive moment of the One operates in two distinct ways. On the one hand, it produces and continually remakes the regime of the actual. On the other, through a "topological densification of the outside," (DCB 86/130) provides the ground for the advent of thought; thus: "Thinking coincides with Being when it is a fold (the construction of a limit as a fold) whose living essence is the fold of Being." (DCB 89/133)

These claims clearly depend in many respects on aspects of Badiou's reading of Deleuze which we have, in previous chapters, called into question. Nonetheless, as we have throughout, we must take Badiou's claims at face value and assess their accuracy. In what follows, then, three questions will be addressed, in order to once more test Badiou's account against the Deleuzian text: what role is played in Deleuze's work by the concept of the fold? What is the relationship between thought and being in Deleuze? And finally, what is the relationship between thought and subjectivity? The first of these questions directs us, of course, towards *The Fold*, but also to *Foucault*, while the second and third invoke a return to *Difference and Repetition*, where they are resolved in a somewhat surprising way. Once again, I will argue that Badiou's reading here does little justice to Deleuze's own position.

The fold

Let's begin by examining the theme of the fold in Deleuze. Aside from a short text on Heidegger in *Difference and Repetition*, the theme is to be found most at work in two of Deleuze's later books, namely *Foucault* and *The Fold* itself. We will examine each of these in turn, with an eye to the question: what relationship does the concept of the fold have to that of the subject in Deleuze?

The use of the theme of the fold in *Difference and Repetition*, which appears in the context of the note on Heidegger's philosophy of difference in the first chapter (DR 89-91/64-6) is unusual in a number of respects. This is the case not least because Deleuze invokes Merleau-Ponty rather than Heidegger directly – and the two names will appear together again on this point as we will see – who, in contrast to Sartre, "undoubtedly followed a more thoroughly Heideggerian inspiration in speaking of 'the fold [p/l]' or of 'pleating [plissement].'" (DR 64/90tm)

The relevant passage reads as follows:

It seems that the principal misunderstandings which Heidegger denounced as misreadings of his philosophy after *Being and Time* and 'What is Metaphysics?' have to do with the following: the Heideggerian *Not* refers to Being as difference rather than the negative in Being, to questioning rather than to negation. When Sartre analysed interrogation at the beginning of *Being and Nothingness*, he made it a preliminary to the discovery of the negative and negativity [...] Merleau-Ponty, on the other hand, undoubtedly followed a more thoroughly Heideggerian inspiration in speaking of 'the fold' or 'pleating' (by contrast with Sartrean 'holes' and 'lakes of non-being') from *The Phenomenology of Perception* onwards, and in returning to an ontology of difference and question

in the post book *The Visible and the Invisible*.
(DR 64/89)²⁴⁰

This passage is unambiguously concerned with ontological questions strictly speaking, though the fold is invoked in relation to a Sartrean concept that is aligned with subjectivity. When the fold is once more evoked, however, this possibility is clearly not at issue: “This difference [the ontological difference in Heidegger] is not ‘between’ in the ordinary sense of the word. It is the Fold, the *Zwiefalt* [Twofold]. It is constitutive of Being and of the manner in which Being constitutes beings, in the double movement of ‘clearing’ and ‘veiling’.” (DR 65/90tm) The significance of the fold here has no relation to subjectivity as such, but rather describes for Deleuze the fundamental ontological structure in Heideggerian thought.

If we turn our attention to *Foucault*, we find as in *Difference and Repetition* that the invocation of both Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger occurs once more, but this time in what amounts to an identification, at least with respect to the doctrine of the fold. We pass from the “in Heidegger, and then in Merleau-Ponty” of *Difference and Repetition* to “Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty”, (F 110) and then to “Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty” (F 111)

One of the peculiar characteristics of Deleuze’s reading of Foucault is the fact that much of this reading is constructed within the framework of terminology drawn from only one of the latter’s books, *The Birth of the Clinic*.²⁴¹ The relationship between life and death, the importance of Xavier Bichat for this relationship, the pseudo-dynamic of the seen and the said – emphases that repeat themselves time and time again in *Foucault* – all derive from this early work, a work which moreover Foucault himself presents serious criticisms of.²⁴² Thus the invocation of the fold, even if we

²⁴⁰ In the short homage to Sartre after he had refused the Nobel Prize in 1964, “Il a été mon maître,” Deleuze presents almost exactly the same description of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, but this time casts the latter as the philosopher further away from an ideal: “However brilliant and profound, the work of Merleau-Ponty was professorial and depended on Sartre’s in many respects. Sartre willingly assimilates the existence of human beings to the non-being of a “hole” in the world, speaking of little lakes of nothingness. Merleau-Ponty, on the other hand, conceives of them as folds [*plis*], simple folds and pleats [*plissements*]. We can thus distinguish a tough and penetrating existentialism from a more tender and reserved existentialism.” (ID 109) The gap therefore between this text and the composition of *Difference and Repetition* marks therefore a shift on, among other things, the relative value of the concept of the fold. Notably absent from the earlier description is any reference to Heidegger, so we might infer that this change took place as a result of contact with Heideggerian thought, and specifically with the concept of the *Zwiefalt*. Once this superiority of Merleau-Ponty over Sartre on this point is established, it remains unchanged – thus we read in *Foucault* that “Sartre [...] remained at the level of intentionality, because he was content to make ‘holes’ in being, without reaching the fold of Being.” (F 110)

²⁴¹ It sometimes almost seems as if Deleuze finds Foucault’s work animated not by a Nietzschean *Gay Science* but by Bichat’s 1827 *Traité des membranes*.

²⁴² On the one hand, Foucault will come to think that the emphasis on the theme of the medical gaze illicitly invokes the “unifying function of a subject” (*The Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. Alan Sheridan [New York: Routledge, 2002], 60), and on the other, that it traffics too heavily in the terminology of structure, which “threatened to bypass the specificity of the problem presented, and the level proper to archeology.” (Foucault, *Archeology of Knowledge*, 18). Indeed, a thorough going critique of Deleuze’s reading of Foucault remains to be written, and would require a broad and systematic grounding in Foucault’s work as a whole. It seems to me that *Foucault*, according to a peculiar twist of fate, resembles (in a formal manner) nothing as much as Badiou’s reading of Deleuze in many respects – another problematic ‘portrait of the master’, produced in the hollow that follows their death, with the caveat that unlike Badiou,

take it in the terms of the *Zweifalt* or two-fold, only describes the line of Deleuze's argument in *Foucault* in a superficial way, since the pair of two-fold concepts of greatest interest for Deleuze are life and death (via Bichat)²⁴³ and the seen and the said,²⁴⁴ above all in the chapter that nominally is addressed to the theme of the fold (let me note that the concept of the fold indeed only appears in this final chapter). One cannot help but be struck by the almost unbelievable movement of Deleuze's argument in this chapter, which begins by asking about the lacuna in Foucault's writing after *La Volonté du savoir*, only to move, almost immediately, back to Bichat's formulation of life as a struggle with death, before returning us to *The History of Madness*, Raymond Roussel and *The Archeology of Knowledge* in that order.²⁴⁵

In this chapter, Deleuze pursues a complex and not altogether clear exposition of the final period of Foucault's thought, to be found in its explicit form in the second and third volumes of *The History of Sexuality*, namely the supplementation of the analyses of knowledge and power with that of ethics as an aesthetic and ascetic self-fashioning. The latter is explicitly cast by Deleuze as a procedure of folding.

Deleuze emphasises two aspects of this folding activity that initially seem at odds with one another. The first is the idea that folding as a self-reflexive ethical practice is subsequent to the emergence of subjectivity, a reading that is arguably at the heart of Foucault's own understanding of what his work is concerned with during this period.²⁴⁶ We are already subjects with

Deleuze does not go out of his way to insist on the superior nature of his reading (eg. TW 69: "I believe I was among the first, if not the first, to have treated Deleuze as a philosopher.")

²⁴³ It is difficult to agree with Deleuze when he writes that "From *The Birth of the Clinic* on, Foucault admired Bichat for having invented a new vitalism," (F 93) for to make such a claim one would both have to obscure the specifically archeological level on which Foucault's discussion of Bichat occurs, and ignore the very important and famous theme in this early period of Foucault, that of the desirability of the eradication of the figure of the human around which *savoir* in the modern period is woven. Bichat's vitalism, too, would be washed away by the sea of the future that Foucault invokes with such wistful power at the close of *The Order of Things*. It is, however, easy to agree when Deleuze writes of the passages on Bichat in *The Birth of the Clinic* that Foucault's "tone demonstrates sufficiently that he is concerned with something other than an epistemological analysis: he is concerned with a conception of death." (F 95) What is at issue in this conception of death for Foucault finds its true locus not in Bichat but in the irruption of finitude that, while it is certainly marked in morbid anatomy at one level, finds its true foundation in the work of the Marquis de Sade, who is perennially present throughout *The Birth of the Clinic*. Even the light of the medical gaze finds its ultimate parallel not in the being of truth more generally, which would mark an emergence from the darkness of superstition, of "theories and chimeras": it is "the same light, no doubt, that illuminates the 120 *Journées de Sodome*, *Juliette*, and the *Désastres de Soya*." (Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*, trans. A.M. Sheridan [London: Routledge, 2003], 195-6) It is the flash of a mad and abyssal lightning, affixed to the names of Nietzsche, Sade, and Artaud that intermittently illuminates the final passages of Foucault's chapters, not the muted play of the obscure light of life found in a vitalist philosophy of the kind presented by Bichat.

²⁴⁴ Foucault's term here is in fact *l'énonçable*; Deleuze frequently and problematically substitutes this with *le dire*. Not only are statements (*énoncés*) in play in writing as much as speech, they cannot be reduced to the order of language in any strict sense. For a typical, and typically subtractive, treatment of the category of the statement, see Part 3, Chapter 1 of *The Archeology of Knowledge*, entitled "Defining the Statement" (89-98). On the evidence of this work, one could argue that the statement in Foucault could be treated as his term for the virtual.

²⁴⁵ The predominance of the influence of Blanchot is equally striking.

²⁴⁶ Many texts could be referred to at this point, though a very clear presentation can be found in the interview "On the Genealogy of Ethics," in Michel Foucault, *Ethics, Subjectivity, Truth*:

respect to both the regime of knowledge, which Deleuze will characterize in terms of what provides us with both an epistemological and historical location, and also with respect to power, which he characterizes in terms of those relations with others that provide us with a social and political location. (F 100) Deleuze will present the folded relation to oneself as derivative of these two regimes, but nonetheless independent from them. This is even for Deleuze Foucault's "fundamental idea": that there is "a dimension of subjectivity derived from power and knowledge without being dependent on them." (F 101)

Further, Deleuze will insist that the advent of this reflexive possibility has a socio-historical specificity. It is, in the first instance, marked by its specifically Greek origins. He states on two occasions that the Greeks do "a lot less, or a lot more, depending on your choice, " (F 113; 100) than Heidegger's treatment of the history of the forgetting of Being claims. Rather than uncovering the more general movement of the fold of Being and beings, they discover that it is possible to "bend the outside, through a series of practical exercises." (F 100)²⁴⁷ According to Deleuze, this discovery also tends to emerge in a particular context: the self relation is "destined to encounter sexuality." (F 105) Despite this, Deleuze will insist that folding activity of the self with respect to the self is irreducibly *strategic* in nature for Foucault on Deleuze's account.

The first way in which the fold appears in *Foucault* is thus in the form of an ethical relation of self-fashioning, a relation that goes to work on an existing subjectivity according to the agency of that subjectivity – an agency which is moreover bound by very specific conditions, and which does not seem to conform to Badiou's much broader ontological approach. This broader point of view is however embodied in the second modality of the fold that Deleuze discusses. Not only is the activity of folding a specific form of self-fashioning, understood as the modification of the existing self, the fold is also the formal possibility according to which the present, undergirded by the past, is open to the future, the formal possibility of thought and subjectivity as such.

In what sense? This second ontological treatment of the fold in *Foucault* emphasizes the dynamic relationship between the outside and the inside (the specific form of the fold that Badiou himself invokes), where the inside is figured throughout as a reciprocal doubling of the outside. Deleuze will insist heavily on this doubling, referring not just to Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger, but also Roussel and Jarry: "The theme which has always haunted Foucault is that of the double." (F 97-8) This outside is attached to a variety of different names by Deleuze – including "absolute memory" (F 99),²⁴⁸ chance

Essential Works, vol. 1, ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 253-80.

²⁴⁷ Deleuze will also entertain the idea that *only* Western culture as it springs from the Greeks allows for this kind of reflexive subjectification (F 106).

²⁴⁸ Deleuze will even say that "Memory is the real name of the relation to oneself." (F 107) If it is difficult to take this thesis at its word and extrapolate any specific consequences from the link to memory, this is because, on the one hand, he will immediately evacuate all familiar content from the word, and assert that it is "at one with forgetting, since it is itself endlessly forgotten and reconstituted" (F 107) – it is difficult, in other words, to achieve any traction with the term itself on the categories of either the fold or the outside which is folded. On the other

(F 117) and the “unthought” (F 118) – but the two most frequent and important are those of the *past* and *force*. These in turn correspond to the regimes of knowledge and power.

From the point of view of this ontological account of the fold, thought becomes the activity which constitutes the subject within the regime of power-knowledge. This subject is not, though, the intentional subject of phenomenology, but a kind of fugitive and aleatory point: “There never ‘remains’ anything of the subject, since he is to be created on each occasion, like a focal point of resistance, on the basis of the folds which subjectivise knowledge and bend each power.” (F 105) Earlier, Deleuze will describe the outside as “a moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside *of* the outside.” (F 96-7)

These two moments – the ethical and the ontological – are brought together by Deleuze in the following way. He begins by asserting a relation of homology between the two registers, and then a unity across two orders of relative magnitude:

If the inside is constituted by the folding of the outside, between them there is a topological relation: the relation to oneself is homologous to the relation with the outside and the two are in contact, through the intermediary of the strata which are relatively external environments (and therefore relatively internal).
(F 119)

Deleuze will then capitalize on the idea of relative externality to describe the self-relation put to work by the already constituted subject as a local engagement that effects the same kind of reflexive structure that holds more generally between the outside and the inside (or the past and the present), but with the goal of modification rather than institution. We see, in short, a kind of generalization of the figure of the fold across orders of magnitude, a generalization that will attain its greatest scope in *The Fold* as we will see below.

We also see here a certain move that also appears in *Difference and Repetition*, which involves reformulating the relationship between *de jure* and *de facto* conditions. Rather than opposing them in the way we find in, for example, Kant, they form two moments in the continuum of genesis.

But this treatment also finds a double of its own in the account of counter-actualisation in *The Logic of Sense*, where the relationship between sense and events on the one hand and the intermixture of bodies on the other is literally perverted in the name of an alternative movement of actualization. And in accordance with the observations made in the discussion of counter-actualisation above, there is also something reminiscent of Badiou’s own theory of the subject at work here. In particular, let’s recall that the movement of fidelity – nothing other than the construction of a generic truth

hand, Deleuze equivocates with respect to these two positions themselves; that is, he equivocates as to whether memory is *what* is folded (the Outside itself), or whether it is the activity of folding (“time as subject, or rather subjectivation, is called memory.” [F 107])

– is in fact the constitution of a counter-state, an alternative ordering of existent multiples. While the geometric character of the fold is at odds with the static, set-theoretic rhetorical universe that Badiou inhabits, there is a remarkable similarity between this theory of subjective alter-state construction and the self-reflexive work of the fold that creates new ways of thinking and living. In both cases, changes are made in the present in order to open up a different future, and in both cases this future will itself become normal once more, calling for a permanent revolution in subjectivity at the hands of the subject. Finally, both views are ultimately rooted in an ethical framework that lacks any determinate *métier*, relying instead on the continuation of a deviant forward momentum.

What can we take from this complex account with respect to Badiou's reading of the fold in Deleuze? We must agree that in the context of *Foucault*, the fold is indeed affiliated with both the idea of the constitution of subjectivity and with thought. What is misplaced in Badiou's account of these connections is to be found in terms of the orientation that is provided for them in both *Foucault* and in Foucault's own thought. We can index this to a certain distortion in the use of the word 'thought'. If Deleuze's book on *Foucault* is one of the most faithful to its subject on this point, it is because it emphasizes that thinking is never an ascetic subordination of the subject to the movement of being, but a kind of localized displacement of one's position *within* being as it currently exists. Rather than looking up towards principles, or down towards foundations, thought in Foucault looks *around*, it examines the contemporary for points of flexibility. What is at issue is not the fold of Being and beings, or of the virtual and the actual on Badiou's emanative reading, but with (and here Deleuze recalls Michaux): "*life within the folds*." (F 123, underline added) Like the dynamic of the relationship between the virtual and the actual in *The Time Image*, the figure of a generalized ontological Outside (in the large circuit) is in fact only present in terms of a localized *otherwise* (in the crystal, or the small circuit).

The final text devoted to the theme of the fold is, of course, *The Fold* itself. Recalling that, for Badiou, the fold is the figure of subjectivity in Deleuze, we might again note that one cannot unproblematically extract doctrines of Deleuze's own thought from his works on other thinkers. Two further observations about the figure of the fold are worth making.

The first, very general point, would be the following: if we are willing to extend subjectivity in some sense to every monad (as Leibniz himself does),²⁴⁹ then we might very well agree with Badiou's analysis. This is because for Deleuze the figure of the fold is used to explain the elementary relations of compossibility, harmony and the correlative apperceptions and appetites that structure the 'interior' life of every fundamental substance: "A fold is always folded within a fold, like a cavern in a cavern. The unit of matter, the smallest element of the labyrinth, is the fold [...] Unfolding is thus not the contrary of folding, but follows the fold up to the following fold." (FLB 6/9) In other words, the general theory of the fold in the Leibniz book is not a theory of subjectivity, but an ontological account pertaining to existence as such, including the least expressive monads, those of 'brute matter'. This is

²⁴⁹ See, for example, *Monadology*, §19: "all simple substances or created monads can be called souls." Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, 215.

why, later on the same page, Deleuze will write that “The model for the science of matter is the ‘origami’, as the Japanese philosopher might say, or the art of folding paper.” (FLB 6/9tm)

Because Badiou does not, however, want to extent subjectivity to all of being in his reading of Deleuze (Badiou will not insist, with Leibniz, that even the smallest part of matter is the expression of a monad – the distinction between human and animal being as profound and problematic for Badiou as it is for Heidegger), then this reading of the figure of the fold is inappropriate here. In other words, precisely insofar as the theme of the fold is Leibnizian, it is irreducible to the subject as a specific *regional* modality of being. Also, lest we forget, Deleuze himself in works as different as *Difference and Repetition* and *A Thousand Plateaus* will not hesitate to go as far as Leibniz in the extension of ideality to everything which exists, a point that Badiou manifestly overlooks.²⁵⁰

Deleuze’s commentary moves as it were in the direction diametrically opposed to the Badiouan reading. Rather than extending the reach of subjectivity to everything in the style of Leibniz, Deleuze extends the theme of the fold itself beyond the closure of the relationship between thought and being. *The Fold* is indeed a book about (among other things) the Baroque, but it is also one in pursuit of what Deleuze will call a modern neo-Baroque. The final chapter, which closes with its famous invocation of a nomadology that would overturn the principle of closure that governs Leibniz’s metaphysics, is not devoted to a new theory of subjectivity, but is dominated by a treatment of music and painting, as these two move from the Baroque itself forward into our own time (from the closed, infinitely folded world to the open, decentred universe).

Second, it is important to emphasise the ‘multi-directional’ nature of the fold in Deleuze’s treatment of Leibniz. It does not simply mark the limit at which subjectivity (Leibniz’s kingdom of grace) emerges from objectivity (the kingdom of nature), which would be the hinge between what Deleuze will call the upper and lower floors of the monad, but forms the operational moment at every point in the analysis: animals are within animals, “the first fly contains all of the flies to come,” (FLB 8/13tm) the texture of gold is folded within it (FLB 47/63), each effect is folded into its cause, and each effect will itself play the role of the cause for another effect (the principle of sufficient reason).

In general terms – and this is the way in which the Heideggerian *Zwiefalt* will appear in *The Fold* – the fold is the generalized “*entre-deux*” (FLB 10/16) of Leibniz’s philosophy for Deleuze, the elementary form of the relation as such, the “primitive non-localisable connection” (FLB 120/162tm):

Many different answers can be made to the question, *where is the fold to be found?* As we have seen, it runs not only between essences and existences. Of course, it passes between the body and

²⁵⁰ I refer of course to the discussion of habituation and contemplation in *Difference and Repetition* (DR 73-79/101-8), and the third chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*, dedicated to the presentation of the lineaments of a remarkable ontology, in which idealities in the form of abstract machines provide the openings and stimuli for changes in the stratified forms of existence (an existence that itself ranges across the division between the material and ideal)

the soul, but it is already to be found between the inorganic and the organic with respect to bodies, and between the 'species' of monads with respect to souls. It is an extremely sinuous fold, a zigzag ... (FLB 120/162tm)

As a result, it would be difficult to imagine how the mobile and ubiquitous form of connection that Deleuze sees in the fold could be reduced to a single articulation of thought and being, in the way Badiou presents it. Just as difficult, in fact, as it would be to take this ubiquity of the fold and assert it as the virtual itself, the power of articulation. Here, we make contact again with the thesis I presented in the second chapter of Deleuze as an ontological mannerist. It is not that there is Relation, which constitutes the vital force of connection, manifesting unified things at the level of the actual. Instead, we find the rejection of the universal in favour of the ubiquitous. We need only recall one of the most striking passages of *The Fold*, in which Deleuze is contrasting the organic and the inorganic in Leibniz: "Not everything is fish, but fish are teeming everywhere ... There is no universality, but rather a ubiquity of the living." (FLB 9/14tm) In turn, it is not that the fold constitutes the universal root of all beings, but that it is everywhere. In an interview on the occasion of the publication of *The Fold*, Deleuze insists on this point: "Folds are in this everywhere, without the fold being a universal. It's a 'differentiator,' a 'differential.'" (N 156)

...

From these brief and schematic remarks, we can draw the following conclusions about the concept of the fold in Deleuze with respect to Badiou's reading. The three significant moments in which the concept is formulated can only be said to affirm the *same* concept in extremely broad terms. While the reference to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty and the invocation of a fundamental ontological register is found in all three cases, many other important elements change. Consequently, it is incorrect to assert that the fold is the figure that accounts for the relationship between being and thought in Deleuze. Where this theme is present in the strongest terms, viz. in *Foucault*, it must be read not only in terms of the constitution of the subject, but also as the reflexive activity of the subject, an activity moreover that is couched in terms of a (however tentative) historical and geographical specificity.

Intensity

In any case, despite Badiou's claims, there is an alternative source for a much more robust theory of subjectivity and thought in Deleuze. The most developed account is to be found once again in the pages of *Difference and Repetition*. It is true that *What is Philosophy?* develops a thorough-going and nuanced account of thinking as the creation of idealities of various kinds, and that this account is articulated to a theory of order and chaos with a very real ontological sense. However, this work does not elaborate any ontological account of the subject who thinks,²⁵¹ which is a key issue here.

²⁵¹ It would be a crude reading of *What is Philosophy?* indeed that would present the account of conceptual personae as an account of the subject who thinks, though it is one that Badiou does on occasion flirt with in *The Clamor of Being* (eg. DCB 86/128, where Foucault-Deleuze is invoked as one of Deleuze's conceptual personae)

The further benefit of turning once more to *Difference and Repetition* is that in grasping the theories of thought, individuation and subjectivity found there, we are able to refine and further the points made in chapter four about the role of the virtual in Deleuze. The interpretive strategy at work is once more to present an important part of Deleuze's work, rather than to attempt to traverse the whole, a very difficult, if not impossible, task (for all its Sirenian attraction) and certainly something that Badiou does not succeed in doing.

In question is the final chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, 'Asymmetrical Synthesis of the Sensible'. Here, Deleuze answers a number of (quite pressing) remaining questions about the role of the virtual in relation to the actual, specifically concerning the genesis of actuality. I might add that the concerns of the *The Fold* are not entirely absent from this moment in Deleuze's philosophy. It is the philosophy of Leibniz, and particularly his account of the figure of the monad as an expressive individual, which underpins some of the points that follow. Despite the predominance of references to biology in this chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, it is a monadology, however heavily modified, that is key. For Deleuze, it is "only Leibniz [who] approached the conditions of a logic of thought, inspired by his theory of individuation and expression." (DR 253/325)²⁵² And indeed these pages are among the most beautiful in Deleuze – we find here a veritable paean to expression.

Let me very quickly sketch what has already been established of Deleuze's mature ontology in *Difference and Repetition* and elsewhere. We have seen, on the one hand, an unmitigated insistence on the univocity of being: bodies and language, the virtual and the actual, events and states of affairs, all are expressions of being that do not introduce any divisions into being as such. On the other, we have seen the account of the virtual in Deleuze, understood as the differential regime of problematic Ideas, lacking any primary ipseity, and on the other side as it were, the world of the actual has appeared as the regime of solutions to these virtual problems.

This brute *vis-à-vis* of the virtual and the actual *prima facie* provides Badiou's interpretation with some of its force. How could these two aspects of being, so different from one another, enter into communication? It is not hard to see why someone (like Badiou, or Hallward, for example),²⁵³ would be led to claim that one can only have the virtual or the actual, but not both in any full sense. It is not hard to see the rationale for claims like Badiou's:

²⁵² Likewise, the break with the fixed interiority of the monad in favour of a nomadology that marks the final pages of *The Fold* is also decisive, although not heavily marked, in these pages of *Difference and Repetition*. Unlike Leibniz's monad, Deleuze's intensive individual is fluid 'all the way down', without being located within a network of sufficient reason bound to the twinned closure requirement of compossibility and pre-established harmony: "the individual is far from indivisible, never ceasing to divide and change its nature." (DR 257/331) This is a point to which we will return below.

²⁵³ It is important to see that Hallward, despite his affiliation with Badiou's project, in fact presents in *Out of this World* a thesis which is the inverse of the central Badiouian trope of the One in *The Clamor of Being*. Whereas Badiou wants to insist on the radicality of the virtual and the resulting impoverishment of the actual, Hallward argues that for Deleuze the virtual is the ephemeral, the perhaps unattainable source of change and freedom, however desultory the actual is in itself. Underpinning this different thesis (that also supports a critique of Deleuze) is nonetheless the familiar spectre of a problematic interpretive stragatery. In Hallward's case, this involves a continual movement of slippage that insinuates the claims of Deleuze's commentators into the latter's own *corpus*.

“The more Deleuze attempts to wrest the virtual from irreality, indetermination, and non-objectivity, the more unreal, undetermined and finally non-objective the actual (or beings) becomes.” (DCB 53/81) Either the virtual, in its impassive independence, creates its own world of ideal ‘beings’, inscribing them on the inside of an unbreachable limit (this is, for example, Maimon’s solution), or the virtual is seen as an abstraction, a set of (perhaps unavoidable) illusory objects that are at best regulative ideals (Hume, Althusser, Lacan, etc.) and at worst the kernels of psychosis. If Deleuze had only presented these two structurally distinct elements, it is hard to see how the kinds of problems that haunt Plato (participation), Descartes (mind-body interaction) and Kant (facultative extrinsicism) – to name only the most important victims – could be resolved at all. We would be in the presence of another irreducible dualism, whose appeal to univocity would be no more than a scholastic window dressing for a regressive metaphysics. Even the assertion that the virtual is transcendental structure to empirical actuality would be less than convincing. In fact, if this is all that Deleuze’s philosophy had to offer, what would be strange would be the rarity of accusations of dualism.

But this is not all that Deleuze’s philosophy claims – as the saying goes, if things were that simple, word would have gotten around. In fact, at one of the most philosophically advanced moments in all of his work, the final chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, building on the structural account of the virtual, Deleuze presents a theory of the dynamic relationship between the virtual and the actual, and in doing so presents his theory of thought, which is our concern here.

Deleuze is fully aware of this problem (or better, requirement) for a metaphysics such as he proposes. After reiterating, as I have just done, the basic virtual-actualisation-actual structure, he asks: “How is the Idea determined to incarnate itself [. . .]?” (DR 245/316) How is it that this complex ideal differential structure can be expressed in the fixed and ordered world of the actual? The answer to this question takes us to what should be described – I think without any exaggeration – as the furthest extension of Deleuze’s novel metaphysics, a theory of intensity. In response to his own question, he writes: “The answer lies precisely in intensive quantities.” (DR 245/316)

The first part of chapter five of *Difference and Repetition* is devoted to elaborating this theory, principally in relation to thermodynamics.²⁵⁴ For Deleuze, the search for difference-in-itself ends when we arrive at the concept of intensity. He argues that we must give this concept its true import, arguing against claims originating both from science and philosophy (Plato, Kant and Bergson) that it is subordinate to a more fundamental quality or extensity.²⁵⁵ Intensity for Deleuze has three principle

²⁵⁴ A particularly striking moment in the pages that open this chapter is the critique or, better, a reconsideration of the status of the second law of thermodynamics, which makes use of the analysis of the synthesis of habit from earlier in the book (which we saw in chapter six) to show how such a claim about entropy rests upon a well-founded illusion. In short, the concept of entropy relies upon the belief that energy is in itself equal, subject only to external configuration rather than (as Deleuze would have it) internal change.

²⁵⁵ “The Bergsonian critique of intensity seems unconvincing” (DR 239/308); “While he refuses a logical extension to space and time, Kant’s mistake is to maintain a geometrical extension for

characteristics. It is, first of all, irreducibly unequal in nature, it “includes the unequal in itself.” (DR 232/299) To put this in another (and perhaps more explicable) way, intensity is that which is irreducible *in* extended quantity and quality, and that what is irreducible is therefore not subordinate to any regime in which equality could be established. It thus “uncancellable” (DR 233/300) both in the sense that it is necessary for quality and quantity, and insofar as it is not subject to any superior principle through which it can be explicated. This mode of argumentation is clearly transcendental in nature. Deleuze’s claim is that, in order to understand quantity and quality, we are necessarily led to posit intensity as the element which brings them about (he makes this point himself [DR 240-1/310-11] in a way that recalls a similar argument about the relationship between pleasure and the death drive in the text on Masoch [M 111-21]).²⁵⁶ Without positing the reality of intensity, Deleuze argues, we would be unable to explain the advent of qualitative and quantitative differences, which belong to a regime of equanimity and homogeneity respectively.

The second quality of intensity, this irreducibly unequal instance in quantity and quality, is that it affirms difference: “since it is already difference in itself and comprises inequality as such, intensity [. . .] makes difference an object of affirmation.” (DR 234/301) This essentially means that it is absolute – there is no limiting instance within intensity, no native ontological distinction which would determine it in terms external to its proper regime. Finally, the third point which, according to Deleuze “includes [*résume*] the other two,” (DR 237/305) is that, intensity must be thought itself as quantity, but as implicated quantity. Why? This is because, unlike quality which is indivisible, intensity can be divided. What in turn distinguishes it from extended quantity is that, in being divided, it changes in nature. Deleuze gives the examples of temperature and speed here: neither are composed of qualitatively identical quantities of themselves (50°C is not composed of fifty units of 1°C; the same is true of 50km/h), and thus are irreducible to quantity, but they are

it, and to reserve intensive quantity for the matter which fills a given extensity to some degree or other” (DR 231/298); of the God of Plato’s *Timaeus*, Deleuze memorably writes “Never have so many, so diverse and such demented operations been multiplied in order to draw from the depths of an intensive *spatium* a serene and docile extensity.” (DR 234/301) It should be noted, however, that Deleuze takes something important from Plato: “Plato’s greatness lies in having seen that the divisible formed a nature in itself only by including the unequal.” (DR 238/307; 233/300-1)

²⁵⁶ “Only transcendental enquiry can discover that intensity remains implicated in itself,” since “the empirical exercise of sensibility [...] can grasp intensity only in order of quality and extension” (DR 240/309); “For there is in short *something* that the pleasure principle cannot account for and that necessarily falls outside it, namely its own particular status, the fact that it has dominance over the whole of psychic life. In virtue of what higher connection [...] is pleasure a principle, is pleasure a principle, with the dominance that it has? [...] Freud’s problem is a transcendental one.” (M 113) In both cases, the need for transcendental argument is invoked because reliance on the manifest evidence provided by extended and qualified reality is at once unable to explain a range of events of the order of extended and qualified reality (the genetic point – we can’t explain the dominance of the pleasure principle solely by reference to the pleasure principle), and tends to reify or normalise particular cases of extended and qualified reality, illegitimately and mistakenly treating them as normative and/or transcendent in character (the critical point – it is a mistake to take the pleasure principle as sovereign, the kind of mistake that led to ego psychology, because it is indeed provided with its characteristic relation to its field according to a different order of determination).

divisible (unlike qualities), even if this division necessarily produces heterogeneous results.²⁵⁷

Taking these points together, we are presented with the fundamental unequal being of intensity, difference-in-itself, implicated quantity, which is explicated in extended quantity and in quality.²⁵⁸ Intensity is thus the foundational and productive moment in a system which moves from implication to explication.

An example of this implication-explication double that is as excellent as it is pertinent (given Badiou's position on the nature of number) is Deleuze's discussion of the ordinal-cardinal pair in number theory (and in fact much of the presentation of intensity is framed in number theoretic terms). On the one hand, ordinals – Deleuze refers to the natural numbers here (DR 232/300) – are taken to be fundamentally intensive in nature, relying upon an irreducible sense of distance (between two and three, for example, there is a positive distance but one that has no scale of measurement). In order to assemble the basic number line as a pure order, we cannot have any recourse to a fixed metric array, set of points, any cardinal moments, or even a set distance between the numbers, since to do so would be to immediately subordinate ordinality to cardinality. “Ordinal construction does not imply a supposed same unit but only [. . .] an irreducible notion of distance.” (DR 232/300) It is only on the basis of this ordinal distribution, Deleuze claims, that the notion of cardinality (the institution of key points) can be insisted upon, points or hinges²⁵⁹ at which a quantitative change in the sequence takes place. The obvious example here, given the set theoretic material we have at hand from chapter one, is the first infinite number \aleph_0 , the first infinite cardinal whose size is unattainable simply through the process of succession of finite numbers. That is to say that there is a quantitative

²⁵⁷ We might also note the following passage, given the central contentions of *The Clamor of Being*: “The important point is that the divisible [intensity] is defined as that which bears in itself the unequal, whereas the indivisible (the Same or the One) seeks to impose an equality upon it, and thereby render it docile.” (DR 233/300)

²⁵⁸ Let me note the similarity of this schema with the presentation of Nietzsche's ontology in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, but also the account of Spinoza's modes in *Expressionism in Philosophy*. In the first we have a tri-partite distinction: force (which is quantitative), quality (which corresponds to differences in forces), and the will-to-power, which is the genetic element which pertains to qualitative difference and brings them about. Clearly, the account in *Difference and Repetition* splits the will-to-power in half, one side of which falls to the virtual (*qua* ensemble of ideal genetic elements) and one side to the actual (*qua* intensive quantity). In the latter, again a tri-partite scheme, we find: actual modal existence (which is solely quantitative), the characteristic relation that individuates the complex schema of movement and rest of the composite existing mode, and intrinsically differentiated modal essences, to which an existing mode corresponds or expresses given its relations. The big difference between this schema and what we see in *Difference and Repetition* is the lack of direct relation between modal essence and existence. Modal essence clearly corresponds to the virtual, but unlike the virtual, the fact that a given modal existence expresses an individuated modal essence has nothing to do with the essence, and everything to do with (on the one hand) God as the efficient cause of the existing mode and (on the other) the random encounters which characterise modal existence.

²⁵⁹ On a number of occasions, Deleuze insists upon the etymology of the word *cardo* (hinge) in this manner, perhaps most memorably in a powerful passage in *Difference and Repetition* invoking the destructive face of the empty form of time (DR 88-91/119-23), but it is also returned to in a more pedagogical register in “On Four Poetic Formulas which would summarise Kant's philosophy,” (KCP vii-viii).

difference marked by the leap in cardinality between the first and the second orders of the infinite, between ω_0 and ω_1 .²⁶⁰

We should ask ourselves what ontological status, especially in relation to the virtual, intensity holds for Deleuze. The answer – and this is a fundamental point – is that intensity *is the actual*, it is actual being. For all his (important) remarks about the reality of the virtual, and even taking into account the structuring role of virtual Ideas, it is intensity which characterizes the being of the actual, both as implicated intensive quantity and as explicated quality and extensity.

Such a claim may appear controversial, given that the connection between the actual and intensity has not been drawn in the literature on Deleuze's philosophy to my knowledge. It seems clear, however, that it can be established on the basis of indications in this final chapter of *Difference and Repetition*. For instance, discussing the order of logical priority between the elaboration of species and individuation (to which I will turn to in more detail briefly), Deleuze warns against the subordination of the latter to the former with the following words:

In fact any confusion between the two processes, any reduction of individuation to a limit or complication of differentiation, compromises the whole of the philosophy of difference. This would be to commit an error, *this time in the actual*, analogous to that made in confusing the virtual with the possible.
(DR 247/318, emphasis added)

That the actual is intensity is implicit in the very account of intensity supplied by Deleuze. We already know that the actual in its most generic sense is for Deleuze the regime of qualified extension, the world of things and clichés. If we ask ourselves what ontological status this regime has, we must answer that they are ultimately explicated intensity, explicated as an expression of virtual Ideas. However, as we have also seen, Deleuze strongly insists that the explication of intensity, whatever its mechanism (something we have not yet touched upon), does not eradicate or do away with intensity, since it is precisely the uncancellable in all extensity and quality. In sum, then, the actual is irreducibly intensity, whether in its implicated or explicated forms.

The equation of the actual and intensity has a further consequence: that the actual, for Deleuze, is not a fixed state of affairs, but a fluid and charged reality, where the movement of explication grounds and brings about ever new states of affairs. It is certainly hard to reconcile this with Badiou's account, in which the actual is but a series of dead letters sent by the One to itself. Neither can we accept that the virtual "is characterized by the process

²⁶⁰ One might claim – and doubtless Badiou would – that Deleuze is evincing a profound intuitionist orientation in this analysis (he does indeed, not much further on in the text, present a theory of distance, as opposed to negation, on the basis of a Brouwerian inspired logic due to Griss), and thereby abandoning the possibility of a thorough-going rationalist approach to mathematics. Of course, this is not a strike against Deleuze *a priori*, but the more interesting point is to what extent mathematics can do without the figure of distance in a more diffuse, perhaps metaphorical, sense. This issue can be extended to embrace an even more significant set of issues about the capacity of mathematics to be entirely self-sustained – not in terms of an intra-mathematical foundational but as an act and series of acts. Can this series be purged not just of intuitionist tropes, but of any tropical, extra-mathematical operations?

of actualization,” or that “the virtual is this process,” (DCB 49/74), since the entire process of actualization (or differentiation) lies on the side of the actual itself, it is a movement which belongs entirely to the explicative course of intensive difference.

The individual²⁶¹

It is this conception of intensity that allows Deleuze to account for the relationship between the virtual and the actual in a quite refined manner, and, in turn, it provides us with the material to answer the question of the relationship between thought and being. This is accomplished by grasping intensity as *the determinative context and content of actualization*. But, like the virtual, intensity is not for Deleuze homogenous (as we have just seen), but rather has a kind of structuration or determination proper to it, to which Deleuze gives the name *individual*.

The concept of the individual in question must be carefully specified, since it is irreducible to a self or an I, and likewise is not the subject in anything like its traditional sense. For Deleuze, the individual is an ontological and expressive concept that provides us with a way of properly thinking intensity. At this point in our discussion, the category of intensity lacks determinative form. If there is a dynamic movement between implication and explicated intensity, it is hard to see how it should take place.

We must first grasp, with Deleuze, that intensity does not exist in some free and natural state, but is always present as individual intensive difference. To paraphrase the well-known claims of *Anti-Oedipus* about machinic desire, intensity is always individual, and individuality is intensive in nature. Or, as Deleuze explicitly puts it: “All individuality is intensive, and intensive quantities are individuating factors.” (DR 246/317) This figure of the individual is closely related to Leibnizian monad, as I noted earlier. Like the monad, Deleuze’s individual is expressive in nature – individuals express virtual Ideas, their differential relations and singular points. These relations and points are not immediately expressed by individuals in an explicated form, which would be to take individuals as the terminus of the process of actualization. Instead, they are implicated only, nascent formations which await extension and qualification, spatialisation and temporalisation.

Which virtual Ideas are expressed by particular individuals? The answer is once more Leibnizian: in the words of James Williams, “the individual is always an expression of the whole of Ideas.”²⁶² For Deleuze, every intensive individual expresses the entirety (a term which I’ll have more to say of below) of the virtual field, but only a certain fraction of this field clearly. Just as each monad has a zone of clarity which is its perspective or expressive locus, each individual for Deleuze expresses only certain relations and singular points, but not others. This is in part the case because of the nature of the

²⁶¹ James Williams is the only reader of Deleuze that I know who dedicates serious attention of any length to the central role that the figure of the individual plays in *Difference and Repetition*, though admittedly it differs from the account offered here. I refer in particular to his *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 185-96. It is true that this concept (at least in name) is extensively treated in Alberto Toscano’s *The Theatre of Production* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), but in this case it is to my mind much more indebted to Simondon than it is to Deleuze, even in those passages explicitly devoted to the Deleuzian text.

²⁶² Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 185.

virtual as such. We have already seen that Ideas do not have any native identity or unity, but that the determination of an Idea as an Idea involves the mechanism of reciprocal determination – this is Deleuze’s renovated theory of the dialectic. As a result, we cannot speak of the implication of *an* Idea in anything but a metaphorical manner, but only of a region of the whole virtual field, even if most of this field is expressed obscurely, and even if the set of relations and points which are expressed clearly are also intrinsically confused insofar as their differential determination *vis-à-vis* the rest of the virtual multiplicity is not expressed in the individual in question.

The similarity with the monad must not be exaggerated, however, for the differences are also decisive. In particular, Deleuze’s theory of the individual casts off the demand for harmony that so heavily characterizes Leibniz’s philosophy, and likewise the commitment to the compossibility of individuals (the principle of closure). In place of the symphony of perfectly tuned and timed monads, the veritable pianola of being, intensive individuals express a cacophony, a riot of irreducibly different motifs or refrains. If we lose the harmony of Leibniz – a loss that has not been without its attendant suffering – we manage to finally arrive at *sound as such*. In place of the rainbow, an abyssal *white light*.

It is also important to note that the individual, for Deleuze, is not an indivisible and fundamentally unchanging entity. Indeed the opposite is the case:

Individuation is mobile, strangely supple, fortuitous and endowed with fringes and margins; all because the intensities which contribute to it communicate with each other, envelop other intensities and are in turn enveloped. The individual is far from indivisible, never ceasing to divide and change its nature.
(DR 257/331)

Now we can address the question that has led us to this point concerning the relationship between being and thought. For Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition*, thought takes place *at the level of the individual*: “The thinker is the individual.” (DR 253/325) But what does the individual think exactly? Once we grasp that thinking is, at this fundamental level, to be equated with expression or determination as such, we can state that the individual thinks *virtual Ideas*. And, in keeping with the a- and pre-subjective sense of this concept, Deleuze is clearly right to assert that “[e]very body, every thing, thinks and is a thought to the extent that, reduced to its intensive reasons, it expresses an Idea the actualization of which it determines.” (DR 254/327)

But Deleuze goes further, and provides the means to incorporate this definition of the individual into the broader movement of actualization. “The thinker, undoubtedly the thinker of the eternal return, is the individual, the universal individual.” (DR 254/327)²⁶³ This interesting statement provokes

²⁶³ This point is already to be found in the first chapter of *Difference and Repetition* when one looks at it from the point of view of the last (see 50-8/71-82). Indeed, the invocation of the eternal return there, and the alliance Deleuze asserts between the return and the concept of the simulacrum, is a compressed version of the claims he will make on the part of intensity (which there appears under the name of the *disparate*, an excellent term given its etymological sense). This is characteristic of one of the difficulties in the reading of this work, which is not

two further questions. The first is: what are we to make of this universality? In fact, at a point very far from anything discussed in Badiou's analysis, it points us towards a meaningful sense in which we can speak of the unity of the virtual. In and of itself (as we have seen) the virtual has no unity, homogeneity or simplicity of any kind.²⁶⁴ Being an ideal differential structure, no pertinent criteria of unity exist to speak of the virtual itself, and doing so always involves the imposition of an external framework upon it. Where the *whole* of the virtual can be legitimately thought is through the category of the individual. Each individual expresses the entirety of the virtual field, but, in each case, it is a different 'aspect' or 'face' of the virtual; different differential relations and singular points are actualized in each case. It is as though the virtual were an intricate spherical lattice, which is each time and with each individual oriented differently, thereby exposing different relations and singularities. This is the fundamental difference between Deleuze and Leibniz: the non-existence of God. In Leibniz, it is God who clearly conceives the totality, whose zone of clarity is co-extensive with the universe as such. For Deleuze, there is no pre-established harmony between individuals, no final cause in the Aristotelian sense adopted by Leibniz, and no reference to the principle of indiscernibility. In the place of these, we have disjunctive synthesis, virtual-transcendental Ideas, and a threshold (instituted, as we will see, by the eternal return) beyond which are no identicals available for comparison, but only the swarming of difference-in-itself.

The second question is: in what sense is the individual the thinker of the eternal return?

It is because nothing is equal, because everything bathes in its difference, its dissimilarity and its inequality, even with itself, that everything returns – or rather, everything does not return. What does not return is that which denies eternal return, that which does not pass the test. It is quality and extensity which do not return, in so far as within them difference, the condition of the eternal return, is cancelled.

(DR 243/313)

This is a decisive passage which properly locates the eternal return in the system expounded in *Difference and Repetition*. Difference is the material for the eternal return. If the world was finally grounded on an identity or a unity, the syntheses of time could only affirm what is and will always be. Differences, left in second place, would appear only to be erased by the passage of time, a passage of time which would become for differences nothing but "a race to the grave." (DR 238/307)

However, if we establish difference as the ultimate principle, then the syntheses of time instead operate as Deleuze presents them – as establishing at once temporary habitual stabilities (the contraction of distances, the first synthesis) and a co-incident depth of memory (second synthesis) in the face of the eternal return which subjects everything to the "hard" law of being: "what is explicated is *explicated once and for all*," (DR

structured according to an unfolding chain of premises, but presents the same argument several times from several points of view.

²⁶⁴ I refer on the issue of simplicity back to my discussion of Keith Ansell-Pearson near the close of chapter four above.

244/314) and every actualized being, every qualified and extended real, will necessarily be returned time and time again to the intensive maelstrom from which it was born.

So, whereas the syntheses of habit and memory bring about the regime in which individuation is expressed in actuality (according to the process of dramatization, of which more below), the third synthesis of time, of the future, plunges extension and quality back into the implicated order of individuality, where they are only nascent solutions to the virtual problems expressed by the individual. This is why the individual thinks the eternal return – because the individual is nothing but the expression of difference-in-itself, restrained by neither the I nor the self, neither the form of identity nor the law of contradiction.

It is clear, then, that Deleuze's conception of thought thus far has nothing in common with the anthropocentric account that was embraced so profoundly by the individualist tradition that runs from Descartes through Kant to existentialism. In his own way, Badiou's subject – however irreflexive and non-foundational – is a part of this tradition too, insofar as it is *only the subject who thinks*. Thought may be rare, and its capacity dependent upon the advent of the event and its faithful pursuit from inchoate promise to situational change; the subject may indeed be singular (as in art or science), double (as in love) or plural (as in politics) in substance, but there is no question that without a subject, there is no thought. For Deleuze, this is simply not the case. It is the individual – qua structural element of being – who thinks, not a subject. It is in the first instance being that thinks, not the subject. It thinks, principally, by implicating virtual Ideas, and thus originating the process of actualization.

The Parmenidean equation of thinking and being, with which we began, is as a result far more appropriate for Deleuze's philosophy than it is for Badiou's. In the latter, thought touches being at a single material point; in the former, the contact is rich and complex, sustaining the production of being itself.

Note: indi-drama-differenc/tiation

We now have all the key pieces (if in outline) of the complex ontological picture that Deleuze presents in *Difference and Repetition* at hand. Before turning to examine the relationship between subjectivity and thought in more detail, it is worth grasping this picture as a whole, since it will allow us to finish thinking through the work of chapter five by properly situating the virtual and the actual in relation to one another, and thereby demonstrating the quite significant gap between *The Clamor of Being* and *Difference and Repetition* on this point.

Certainly the virtual/actual division is decisive for Deleuze, but it is substantially more complicated than Badiou would lead us to believe. The virtual itself is to be understood as the regime of perpllicated Ideas, a structure constituted by differential relations and their corresponding singularities, lacking any unity or extrinsic orientation. The actual, if anything, is a more complex structure or set of structures. As the final two chapters of *Difference and Repetition* make clear through their gradual explication of the processes of actualization, it has a number of elements or distinct regimes. In the first instance – and against the background of the fundamental reality

of intensity – the actual is characterized as the regime of the individual. Individuals, as we have just seen, are an implicated expression of the entirety of the virtual; they are individual/individuated differences, each singular and different from each other. (“Two intensities are never identical except abstractly,” [DR 254/326] a thought whose tension with Leibniz’s principle of indiscernibles would be worth grasping) To the *perplication* of Ideas (each folded into the others, just as the whole world is in each monad for Leibniz) corresponds the *implication* of Ideas in intensity.

These intensive differences or individuals are in turn *dramatized*, expressed through spatio-temporal dynamisms. While Deleuze is less than detailed in his account of this spatial aspect,²⁶⁵ we have seen in some detail the nature of the temporal dynamisms in question, namely the three syntheses of time. In particular, it is the intensive difference-in-itself, the being of the actual or the sensible (DR 236/304) – indeed, intensity is nothing but another name for the will-to-power (DR 243/313) – which is affirmed by the third synthesis of the eternal return: or, to use Deleuze’s great turn of phrase, intensity is “the only landscape of the eternal return.” (DR 242/312)

The product of this complex movement is of course explicated quantified and qualified actuality, the familiar representational world of ‘middle-sized dry goods’ and clichéd consciousness. We might cite here one case of a favoured example of Deleuze’s, the example of the egg, to play out this discussion in other terms:

The egg, in effect, provides us with a model for the order of reasons: (organic and species related) differentiation-individuation-dramatisation-differenciation. We think that difference of intensity, as this is implicated in the egg, expresses first the differential relations or virtual matter to be organized. This intensive field of individuation determines the relations that it expresses to be incarnated in spatio-temporal dynamisms (dramatization), in species which correspond to these relations (specific differenciation), and in organic parts which correspond to the distinctive points in these relations (organic differenciation).
(DR 251/323)

It is also of real importance to note that the virtual-actual relationship is not an immediate one. It is the differentiation-individuation-dramatisation-explication structure that is fundamental in the account offered in *Difference and Repetition*, not virtual-actual. While “the nominal pair virtual/actual exhausts the deployment of univocal Being,” (DCB 43/65) it is not the case that the simplicity of this *vis-à-vis* exposes the whole of the mechanism at

²⁶⁵ There is a brief and extremely tantalising presentation of three corresponding syntheses of space in *Difference and Repetition* (DR 230-2/296-9). This important part of Deleuze’s account is perhaps yet to be fully articulated, although valuable intimations are provided by Miguel de Beistigui in the final chapter of *Truth and Genesis*, and Gregory Flaxman in his very fine piece “Transcendental Aesthetics: Deleuze’s Philosophy of Space,” in *Deleuze and Space*, ed. Ian Buchanan and Gregg Lambert (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 176-88. Joe Hughes in his *Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition* articulates the proposed account of spatial syntheses onto the passive syntheses of time discussed earlier in *Difference and Repetition*, and onto the tripartite structure of intensity (163-8), an analysis whose subtlety requires close attention. James Williams, finally, addresses the spatial framework in which Deleuze presents his theory of intensity in *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 171-7.

work in actualization. The various stages of this complex process are summarized in the following tabular diagram:

VIRTUAL		ACTUAL	
REGIME	CONTENT OF REGIME	MODE OF DETERMINATION	
ideal differential structure	differential relations and singular points	differentiation	
intensive individual	implicated or intensive quantity	individuation	
spatio-temporal dynamisms	syntheses of space and time	dramatisation	
quality and extensive quantity	qualification and distribution	differentiation	

Figure 3: Indi-drama-differenc/tiation

With these points in hand, we can also address the issue of Deleuze's vitalism, a term that Badiou uses (above all in "Deleuze's Vitalist Ontology") to drive a wedge between his own materialist mathematical ontology and what he takes to be the championing of the 'cosmic animal' in Deleuze's thought. And, as we have seen, Badiou takes the virtual to be the locus of this vital force, the soul of the ubiquitous animality of being. On the basis of Deleuze's account in *Difference and Repetition*, we must assert a very different picture, in which it is *the actual which is characterized by dynamic activity*. In the final chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze often repeats the claim that it is intensity which "creates the extensities and the qualities in which it is explicated," and that "creation is always the production of lines and figures of differentiation." (DR 255/328) Differentiation and not differentiation – the activity of creation and production is engendered by intensity in the first instance. It is the "plenitude" (DR 252/324) of intensity that is the productive force in being, and this is resolutely actual in Deleuze. He is indeed a vitalist – but, at the height of his philosophical endeavour, this vitalism is presented as a vitalism of unequal productive actuality, and not the impassive virtual, whose idealities direct their blind gazes within. The virtual is "unaware of the individual", which brings its problematic force into the heart of the movement in being. The virtual poses problems – but it is the actual which actively resolves them.

Note on James Williams' reading of Deleuze's ontology

The reading of Deleuze on the relationship between the virtual and the actual proposed here is, in many respects, at odds with the strong reading based around the idea that the virtual and the actual are in mutual interaction with one another. The foremost contemporary proponent of this position is James Williams, whose impressive, forceful and original recent works are all oriented by it.²⁶⁶ Given the limited scope of our treatment of Deleuze here, it will not be possible to fully address this reading, though it is central. There are four points though that I would like to touch upon.

Firstly, Williams give great scope to two terms, found almost exclusively in *Difference and Repetition*, in his interpretation of Deleuze: 'reciprocal determination' and 'differentiation'. We have already seen these terms in relation to the virtual in *Difference and Repetition* above in chapter four. In the first case, Deleuze presents the virtual as 'in themselves' undetermined, but reciprocally determined through the differential relations which characterize Ideas. It is this regime of determination proper to the virtual that is further described by the term 'differentiation'. The key point here is that, in *Difference and Repetition*, both reciprocal determination and differentiation are, at least as I have argued above, concepts specifically applied to the virtual. They are 'horizontal' determinations of the virtual, to use a geometrical metaphor. In contrast, Williams uses both terms to characterize the relation *between the virtual and the actual*: Deleuze's dialectical philosophy, rooted in the problematic, is for Williams "the reciprocal search

²⁶⁶ I refer in particular to works I have drawn attention to throughout, namely *Transversal Thought of Gilles Deleuze*, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition* and *Gilles Deleuze's Logic of Sense*. The key argument, in many respects, is repeated in "Deleuze and Whitehead: the concept of reciprocal determination", in *Deleuze, Whitehead, Bergson: Rhizomatic Connections* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 89-105.

for actual and virtual conditions.”²⁶⁷ Indeed, for Williams, there is a process of reciprocal determination between the virtual and the actual, and the determinations of the virtual by the actual (‘upward’ determination, again speaking metaphorically) are called differentiation: “the search for conditions takes place in both directions of the construction of reality: from the virtual to the actual (what Deleuze calls ‘differentiation’) and from the actual to the virtual (differentiation).”²⁶⁸

This renovated category of reciprocal determination, and the idea of differentiation that accompanies it, is given the greatest extension by Williams in his reading of Deleuze. He will not hesitate to claim that “This reciprocal quasi-causal relation between the condition and the conditioned is perhaps Deleuze’s greatest metaphysical innovation and the key to understanding the power of his philosophy.”²⁶⁹

Second, and in contrast with the reading proposed in the preceding passages, for Williams intensity is virtual rather than actual. Near the beginning of his book on *Difference and Repetition*, he uses the following example: “the coconut is both an actual coconut and the intensities or pure becomings it expresses in the encounter with the sensations of individuals (to become hard, to become grainy, to become hairy, to quench, to nourish).”²⁷⁰ On this reading, the relationship between the virtual and intensity is sometimes presented as no relation at all but rather as an identity: “virtual intensity.”²⁷¹ Thus rather than seeing the final chapter of *Difference and Repetition* as an explanation for the way in which the impassive virtual is expressed through actual intensive individuals, Williams will locate the individual on the side of actuality, and claim that this chapter “explains and argues for the way in which individuals are syntheses of virtual Ideas and intensities through a reciprocal determination of the actual and the virtual.”²⁷²

Now, thirdly, I do not think that these claims can be made good on the basis of the text of *Difference and Repetition* alone, by which I mean to say that the categories of reciprocal determination and intensity do not seem to readily accord with the definitions that Williams offers. It is important though to be clear on the nature of this kind of remark. Certainly, maintaining a strict interpretation of certain terms must be put at the service of a broader philosophical agenda, and there is no sense in policing terminological differences without considering the latter – especially given Deleuze’s very elastic use of certain proper names. And in fact there is a broader agenda at work in these interpretive decisions. In short, Williams’ reading, unlike that proposed here (the current treatment of Deleuze following less the contours of Deleuze’s work itself as much as it does Badiou’s reading of it), is itself a synthetic endeavour. Williams’ various works on Deleuze, including the commentaries on *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*, are attempts to illuminate particular structural features of Deleuzian metaphysics as such (without, of course, erasing obvious changes of

²⁶⁷ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 19.

²⁶⁸ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 21.

²⁶⁹ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 176.

²⁷⁰ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 7.

²⁷¹ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 184.

²⁷² Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*, 14.

emphasis and presentation – Williams is a superior reader of Deleuze, certainly far superior to Badiou). Furthermore, the orientation of this synthesis is manifestly to be found in *The Logic of Sense* – the central metaphysical categories and thematic concerns are all to be found there. Evidence for this is to be found at every point. For example, Williams' commentary on *Difference and Repetition* frequently turns to the elucidation of concepts:

- that either do not appear in that work, or are first and most substantially to be found in *The Logic of Sense* – for example, the theme of the expressive nature of infinitives ('to green', 'to wound') of infinitives.²⁷³ The category of reciprocal determination which as I have argued here is not to be found in *Difference and Repetition*, and the interactionist reading of Deleuze more generally, also finds its strongest and most elaborated form in *The Logic of Sense*, a point Williams himself makes: "this double reciprocal determination is the basic form for processes in *Logic of Sense*";²⁷⁴
- that appear in only very minimal form and will be subject to massive expansion in *The Logic of Sense* – the most important example being the concept of the event, which only appears for barely more than a page in *Difference and Repetition* (188-9/244-5), while being one of the central themes of the later work;
- or that take on a new and more systematically important role in *The Logic of Sense*: for example, the important theme of vice-diction,²⁷⁵ a term whose use is almost entirely limited to the approving review of the Leibnizian alternative to Hegelian contradiction (eg. 46/68 , 50/71, and which plays a much more significant role in *The Logic of Sense*.

It is also because of this orientation towards *The Logic of Sense*, I believe, that the concept of counter-actualisation, once more only found in any detail in *The Logic of Sense*, is given such a prominent role by Williams.²⁷⁶ As we have already seen, Deleuze presents counter-actualisation as the means by which we are able to modify our relationship to the events which we are involved in actualizing, thereby modifying ourselves as a result. This creative act is the basis in *The Logic of Sense* for Deleuze's ethics of the event, so admirably treated by Williams in his study. This is why, in the final analysis, I think that what Williams' reading of Deleuze offers us is a systematic reformulation of Deleuze's philosophy from *an ethical point of view*.

Finally, this leads to the more general problem of the coherence of Deleuze's philosophy as a whole, and one of the greatest mysteries involved with this

²⁷³ The example of the coconut cited above, which appears at Gilles Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, 7, is framed in terms of the expressive reality of infinitives, qua sense, in relation to changes at the level of bodies, that is first introduced in the second series of *The Logic of Sense*, but is not to be found in *Difference and Repetition*.

²⁷⁴ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Logic of Sense*, 89.

²⁷⁵ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Logic of Sense*, 155-8.

²⁷⁶ It should be added, however, that the strange double ethical rule proposed by Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* (to connect to everything, but not to explicate too much) is a close relative of the theme of counter-actualisation. This double ethic is thus unsurprisingly, featured heavily in Williams' study of *Difference and Repetition*, and in fact is the accent that opens the book.

problem: what broader relationship holds between *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*?²⁷⁷ It seems to me that Williams' solution to this vexed issue is to attempt an original synthesis of the two (and, indeed, many other aspects of Deleuze's philosophy). In this regard, his approach is akin to Badiou's, *while executed much more effectively*. Williams' reading of Deleuze is superior to Badiou's above all because of its much greater concern for both the letter and the spirit of Deleuze's philosophy.²⁷⁸ It would perhaps be better to say that Williams much more than Badiou demonstrates the range of mobile possibilities afforded by Deleuze's philosophy when it is extended along lines implicated in Deleuze rather than oriented towards concepts of external provenance.

Passive synthesis and the subject who thinks

If, for Deleuze, it is the individual who thinks, when we understand this thought as the opening movement in the process of engendering of reality, we are still left with questions about the status of conscious representational thinking. This is however less of a challenging issue than it may at first appear, for the account of the intensive individual does not replace the classical philosophical interest in the subject as *res cogitans* as much as provide a thorough-going account of what this conception of the subject presupposes. This is a complex moment in Deleuze's thought, so here I will restrict myself to a small number of points bearing on the issues at stake here.

We have seen already in chapter five that the syntheses of habit and memory already found and ground the possibility of representational thinking and the active syntheses that it involves. This is the first part of the characterization of the nature of conscious thought. What it does not explain, however, is what relationship the active thought made possible by the syntheses of time have to the theory of individuated intensities around which the process of actualization hinges, as we have seen it above. To proceed, we can consider Deleuze's claim, made frequently in *Difference and Repetition*, that Kant inaugurated a new era in philosophy by subjecting the thinking subject to a split constituted by time.

²⁷⁷ It seems to me that this relationship is much more problematic than what is often posed as the great gap in Deleuze's thought, that between *Difference and Repetition* and *Anti-Oedipus*. For my part, I cannot assent to the fairly prosaic understanding of the relationship between the two books, namely that *Difference and Repetition* was composed under strict academic restraints that *The Logic of Sense* was free from, for at least three reasons. The first is that Deleuze himself, in discussing these two works, treats them both as overly academic in nature ("I know well enough that they're still full of academic elements" [N 7]; in the same paragraph, he notes that, at least with the concept of fatigue, *Difference and Repetition* distinguishes itself). Secondly, while many of Deleuze's earlier works are specifically composed to respond to given guidelines, this never stopped Deleuze from presenting the work in his own way: nobody would ever claim that even Deleuze's most straight-laced works, like *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, are boring. Third, in contrast to Deleuze's own claims on the matter, *Difference and Repetition* itself is written in a style which could hardly be described as dusty and academic, containing as it does both some of Deleuze's most poetic writing and many tantalizing but unjustified philosophical moves.

²⁷⁸ See n215 above, where I cite Williams' critique of Badiou's reading of Deleuze on these very points.

Now Deleuze like Kant wedges time into thought, thereby cracking thought into two unequal halves.²⁷⁹ The difference lies in what it is that time splits. In Kant, it is the thinking self, which is divided between passive receptivity (the empirical self, on the side of sensible intuition) and activity synthesis (the transcendental unity of apperception, on the side of the formal conditions for the possibility of experience, the static machinery of sense). For Deleuze, on the one hand and as we have just seen, the ‘thinker’ is not a self, but rather the individual *qua* expressive intensive determination, and ‘thinking’ is conceived as the movement of progressive determination, of *expression*. This is the first (according to the order of reasons) half of the picture, where the intensive implicated individual takes the place of Kant’s formal transcendental unity of apperception. On the other hand, we have the self whose genesis is founded on the passive syntheses.

Ultimately, then, time does not split the subject as much as it is an irreducible determinant or moment of passage in the movement of actualization. Indeed, counter to the letter of Deleuze’s text, we might even say (taking some liberties for the sake of metaphor) that far from splitting the thinking subject, time is the bridge which carries the implicated Ideas of the intensive individual into the realm of explication.

This is the first of four points which allow us to appreciate how Deleuze’s account of the individual as thinker can be articulated with the conscious capacity for thinking that has been taken as the key feature of human nature. The second concerns the internal structure of the intensive individual in relation to the self. In the final pages of chapter five of *Difference and Repetition*,²⁸⁰ Deleuze turns his attention to one case of explicated systems – or rather, one structure across which the path from implication to explication runs – which he dubs the psychic system. Now Deleuze has already granted that consciousness is a characteristic of all emergent or actualized systems, so the psychic systems that he speaks of are not in the first instance characterized by the conscious-unconscious split.²⁸¹ Instead, what characterizes psychic systems for Deleuze is the nature of the remaining connections to the intensive precursor of the subject that still remain manifest within it.

²⁷⁹ It is this ‘unequal’ which is evoked in the title of this Chapter of *Difference and Repetition*: the asymmetrical synthesis of the sensible is asymmetrical insofar as the production of extended and qualified actuality proceeds on grounds which are foreign to it and do not resemble it.

²⁸⁰ Not to mention the famous essay on Tournier’s *Robinson*, “A Theory of the Other”, first published in 1967, and later included as one of the appendices in *The Logic of Sense*. On this essay, which has drawn its share of controversy (particularly from feminist readers of Deleuze), see Moira Gatens’ Spinozist treatment of the Deleuze-Tournier intersection, “Through a Spinozist Lens: Ethology, Difference, Power,” in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, 171-6.

²⁸¹ “Every spatio-temporal dynamism is accompanied by an emergence of an elementary consciousness which itself traces directions, doubles movements and migrations, and is born on the threshold of the condensed singularities of the body or object whose consciousness it is.” (DR 220/284) This claim need be no surprise, at least once we recall the Leibnizian terms in which this Chapter (not to mention the account of habit earlier in *Difference and Repetition*) proceeds. Of course Deleuze does not mean to say that rocks and trees are also *res cogitans* in the Cartesian sense, but rather that human thinkers are in fact *like rocks and trees*, and only secondarily *res cogitans*. Correlatively, the notion of the unconscious for Deleuze must be thought as common to all being, and only consequently a structure of human being.

On the face of things, we are presented with two qualities of psychic systems which Deleuze calls the I and the self, where the former indicates a certain unity and the latter a continuation of resemblances. We have seen from a number of points of view now the grounds for the advent of the I and the self, which might properly be considered *indentities* rather than identities, serial and stable systems of impression which are the ultimate product in the psychic regime of the movement of actualization. If the thinking subject is characterized by the form of the I and the habituated content which we can call self, it is nonetheless still an articulation of a complex individual which precedes it, and whose features or what Deleuze calls “centers of envelopment which testify to the presence of individuating factors.” (DR 260) These factors are present within the subject (the term I am using here to account for the psychic system, including the qualifications provided by the I and the self) on Deleuze’s account as “the *a priori* Other [Autrui]” (DR 260/334)

Deleuze immediately distinguishes his approach from those that assign the other to the status of either a subject or an object, and mentions Sartre by name. In place of these two alternatives, Deleuze characterizes the other in his sense in terms of elements of the prior intensive individual which remain implicit in the subject: as a “swarm of possibilities around reality [...] possibles [which] are always Others.” (DR 260/334) We must immediately note that by possible Deleuze is not invoking the category of possibility that he had previously discarded in favour of the virtual. Rather, possibility here must be taken to indicate the implicated status of these Others which crowd our thinking lives. These implicated elements, like the rest of the figures in Deleuze’s ontological cast of concepts, are expressive in nature, and Others express other possible worlds which our own individuation remains marked by. The other, in this sense, forms the elements of variety in thought which the self and the I would tend to exclude, offering alternative directions for expression not at the forefront of the unfurling subject.

The third element of Deleuze’s account of the thinking subject concerns what he would later (in *Francis Bacon* and then *What is Philosophy?*) come to call cliché, and what *Difference and Repetition* calls the dogmatic image of thought. We have already seen that an inevitable transcendental illusion accompanies all differentiation, insofar as the intensive differences expressed by individuals tend to be cancelled out in their explication: “difference is the sufficient reason of change only to the extent that the change tends to negate difference.” (DR 222/286) In the case of thermodynamics, this leads to the positing of the primacy of entropy; in biology, the theory of preformism and hylemorphism. In each case, the mechanism for genesis is propounded on the basis of the result, methodologically the same mistake that Deleuze diagnoses in Kant’s tracing of the transcendental from the empirical, and based on the same consequence of explication, but with the force of the Kantian concept of transcendental illusion.

It is at this level, the world of qualified extension and cliché, that the figure of the autonomous thinking subject is to be located. The dogmatic image of thought is ultimately a set of claims about the nature of the place of the thinker (the I and Self of psychic systems) which take the extended and qualified *result* of actualization as the *foundation*, as the ground zero of

reality. To take the subject as autonomous, as at root the agent of an internally coherent and native representational process, and to theorise thinking on this basis is to misunderstand everything about thought. In turn, the peculiar quality of Deleuze's account of thinking – and by this I mean his non-subjective and ante-representational characterization of it – what strikes us as odd about it is the distance it is from the marbled clichés that we habitually adopt.

Again, this clichéd view is for Deleuze entirely inevitable, but given that it is, how do we come to think the new that is perpetually emerging, which we are indeed immersed in despite ourselves?²⁸² This brings us to the fourth and final point I would like to make with respect to thought, and it concerns precisely this question of the *origin* of thought in the conscious subject for Deleuze. Its answer returns us once more to the main concepts of this chapter: intensity, time, difference.

As we have seen already in chapter three, the claim that thought is always engendered by a violent encounter that we are unprepared for is an important claim in Deleuze's philosophy, and nowhere more than in *Difference and Repetition*, which includes some of the most memorable passages anywhere in Deleuze's work on this very point:

Certainties force us to think no more than doubts [...] Concepts only ever designate possibilities. They lack the claws of absolute necessity – in other words, of an original violence inflicted upon thought; the claws of a strangeness or an enmity which alone would awaken thought from its natural stupor or eternal possibility: there is only involuntary thought, aroused but constrained within thought, and all the more absolutely necessary for being born, illegitimately, of fortuitousness in the world. Thought is primarily trespass and violence, the enemy, and nothing presupposes philosophy: everything begins with misophy. Do not count upon thought to ensure the relative necessity of what it thinks. Rather, count upon the contingency of an encounter with that which forces thought to raise up and educate the absolute necessity of an act of thought or a passion to think [...] Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*.

(DR 139/181-2)

This reads as something of a manifesto, and must be taken to be one. If the nature of thought is one of the key issues in *Difference and Repetition*, we must take as fundamental Deleuze's claim that thought is not the active product of a subject, construed however one wishes, but the product of an encounter with something extra-subjective which we are fundamentally unprepared for.

²⁸² "Values, morals, homelands, religions, and these private certitudes that our vanity and complacency bestow generously on us, have as many deceptive sojourns as the world arranges for those who think they are standing straight and at ease, among stable things. They know nothing of this immense flight that transports them, ignorant of themselves, in the monotonous buzzing of their ever quickening steps that lead them impersonally in a great immobile movement." (Blanchot, *L'amitié* [AO 341])

How are we to assimilate these claims into the framework elaborated in this chapter thus far? Simply by noting the source of the encounters which spur on thought for Deleuze: problematic Ideas expressed in intensive individuals. It is in short the encounter between the individual and the subject which engenders thought for the subject. Let's also note the important fact that it is because such encounters are with intensity that *Difference and Repetition* gives such primacy to sensibility – intensity is for Deleuze experienced in the first instance through a *coup*, a shock of sensation. This is why the citation above continues with the following words:

What is encountered may be Socrates, a temple or a demon. It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that *it can only be sensed*.
(DR 139/181)

Our initial contact with the world is through sensation, and it is this contact which engenders thought and its correlative faculties. This is a key reason why Deleuze's philosophy in *Difference and Repetition* is to be properly thought of as a transcendental empiricism. It also marks one of the fundamental deviations of Deleuze from Solomon Maïmon. Where Maïmon solves the issue of the communication of sensibility and the understanding by collapsing the former into the latter, Deleuze proceeds in the opposite direction. And to the Maïmonian objection to such a maneuver (how could what is unintelligible, ie., sensation, become so?), Deleuze's response is to elaborate, in chapter three of *Difference and Repetition*, a theory of the genesis of diverse faculties, each proper to its own object, rather than maintaining the representational structure of the Kantian understanding as Maïmon does. We are also forced to recognize the necessarily indirect role that virtual Ideas play in the genesis of thinking. As subjects, we do not think Ideas. Should we have such direct contact with the virtual, Deleuze's continual emphasis on sensibility and sensation would be beside the point, since a relation between thought and Ideas would take something like the form of intellectual intuition. It is because our contact with problematic Ideas is always in the form of contact with intensive individuals that sensibility must be primary for Deleuze, in the sense that it is only through sensible encounter that the fuse can be lit that runs from the sensation to the Idea.²⁸³

²⁸³ It might be objected that Deleuze proposes what looks like a native faculty of pure thought (DR 194/251: "It is nevertheless true that Ideas have a very special relationship to pure thought"), and that it is through this faculty that we as constituted subjects, have access to Ideas directly. The invocation of pure thought sets Deleuze several problems revolving around the 'origin' of Ideas that the second half of chapter four of *Difference and Repetition* revolves around, and a number of complicated factors are involved that we do not have the means to deal with here. Two initial observations ought to be made, though. First, immediately after proposing this faculty of pure thought, Deleuze insists that it must be thought in the same way as all other faculties as they are presented in the chapter devoted to the image of thought, lacking the features of a given and natural capacity. Second, our capacity to think ideas is already irreducibly bound up with sensibility. In Deleuze's somewhat enigmatic words: "thought is determined in such a manner that it grasps its own *cogitandum* only at the extremity of the fuse of violence which, from one Idea to another, first sets in motion sensibility and its *sentendum*, and so on." (DR 194/251) In other words, pure thought as a faculty only makes contact with the subject who thinks at the extreme point where Idea communicates sensation – in other words, in the form of the encounter with expressive intensity.

Finally, we can connect this fourth point with the temporal syntheses once more. The syntheses of habit and memory, as we saw in chapter six, have an inherently conservative tendency, counteracted by the formal time of the eternal return which subjects them to the centrifugal expulsion of any crystallization of unity. We have also just seen the sense in which the intensive individual is the ‘thinker’ of the eternal return, the third synthesis of time, insofar as it legislates the ceaselessly repeated submersion of qualified extension in its intensive origins. With these points in mind, we can characterize the sensible shock that inaugurates all thought as the implacable consequence of the alliance between intensity and the future, between the will-to-power and the eternal return. All thought begins in contact with intensity, and this contact comes about due to the temporal nature of actualization.

Conclusion: thought and the event

Badiou concludes the main text of his work on Deleuze by abruptly shifting from questions concerning the fold to “the consequences of a political nature that follow from it.” (DCB 90/135) In fact, Badiou’s critical meditations come to an end by suggesting that the problem with the figure of the fold is that it once more submits the event – the advent of the new – to what already exists. Thus he writes that “I cannot bring myself to think that the new is a fold of the past, or that thinking can be reduced to philosophy or a single configuration of its act.” (DCB 91/136) Given all that we have seen, this is at once an obvious consequence of Badiou’s reading of Deleuze, and obviously false with respect to Deleuze himself.

Even if we grant Badiou the equation of memory and being or the One, thereby installing the past at the heart of the present, we cannot assert that the actualization of the virtual past is in any way the replaying of what has already taken place. Even Deleuze’s most Bergsonian formulation of this relationship between the past and the present (found in *Bergsonism* and the related texts from the fifties) insists that since actualization has no set method or path these must be created:

what coexisted in the virtual ceases to coexist in the actual and is distributed in lines or parts that cannot be summed up, each one retaining the whole, but only from a certain perspective, from a certain point of view. These lines of differentiation are therefore truly creative: they only actualize by inventing, they create in these conditions the physical, vital or psychical representative of the ontological level that they embody.
(B 101)

For Deleuze, the famous Bergsonian *élan vital* is nothing but the creative movement of actualization itself. And if Deleuze is a vitalist, it is not insofar as the virtual is the vital force of being – rather, the virtual and the actual are both caught up in the great drama of actualization which sets the stable world of identities in motion along an incessant internal and decentralizing path, but one which at least in *Difference and Repetition* solely unfolds on the side of the actual. Rather than preserving a neo-Platonic hierarchy of being, actualization “opens onto a trajectory or a spiraling expansion that moves further and further away from a centre.” (FLB 137/188tm). Further, this eccentric spiraling at the heart of being – contra Badiou – does not

require a unified moment. Deleuze is emphatic: "Bergson was right, therefore, to say that from the point of view of differentiation, even the resemblances which appear along divergent lines of evolution (for example, the eye as an 'analogous' organ) *must be related first of all to the heterogeneity in the production mechanism.*" (DR 212/274, emphasis added)

We have seen that Deleuze does not simply assert a dyadic opposition between the present and the past, between an active virtual and a passive or residual actuality. Instead, the roles are reversed. It is the actual which is the veritable motor of being, whose activity engages with the passive and problematising differential structure of the virtual, actualizing it without being caused by it. And, further, this movement of actualization is not simple exteriorisation but an elaborate, even baroque, movement which engages the intensive individual with the radical dynamisms in which times and spaces emerge without common *ratio* or transcendent purpose. The world of the actual, though irreducibly indebted to the genetic instances of the virtual, seethes with its own determinations, its own productive capacities, its own power for novelty. Even more importantly, I would argue, is the introduction of a third moment into his most developed temporal schema provided by *Difference and Repetition*, that of the eternal return. As we have already seen, it is only on pain of ignoring this absolutely central emphasis that we could present Deleuze as an orthodox Bergsonian, for whom memory is the final word in the convoluted tempest of time.

I would like to add one final remark on Deleuze's theory of thought as we have canvassed it here, the following points. Badiou is certainly right to claim that thought for Deleuze begins in a generalized outside, and that the inside is constituted, a product. It does not seem fair, however, to say that the fold is the key concept in Deleuze's arsenal for coming to grips with this procedure. More importantly, by identifying thinking with the constitution of the self, we are only provided with at most half of the picture. We might attribute this additional aspect of Deleuze's work to his transcendental bent. Unlike Badiou, whose subtractive methodology orients his work in the direction of a minimal ontology on the one hand and a reductive account of the irreducible variety of being on the other, Deleuze takes as his goal the search for the sufficient reason *for* this variety of being. Where Badiou presents a minimal ontology, Deleuze's is maximal in scope.

Badiou's limited understanding of Deleuze's account of thought is more profound than just overlooking the secondary subjective capacity of thinking. What his account in no way indicates is a familiarity with the nature of the genetic activity to which Deleuze gives the name of thought in its fullest extension. The invocation of the fold, taken in Badiou's limited sense, does little more than schematize the result of the genesis of thought, rather than explain it. This is an important point because, should Badiou have grasped the entire gamut of concepts and processes involved in the genesis of thought, the simple dualism that his reading of Deleuze relies on would be voided.

It is clear that thought, for Badiou, is an absolutely central category. This is also true for Deleuze. However, Badiou's treatment of Deleuze's theory of thought makes little progress, other than repeating the thesis of the One and its emanative cinders, which has by the end of *The Clamor of Being* become

nothing more than a truism, repeated at an increasingly large distance from Deleuze's philosophy itself.

Conclusion

It is no doubt more instructive to write with an eye to what one does not want to be at any cost than under the suspicious image of what one desires to become.

Badiou, *Théorie du Sujet*

A singular palimpsest

This thesis has been prosecuted in the vein of an adversarial trial. At issue has been neither the correctness of Badiou's own philosophy, nor indeed that of Deleuze's, but rather the evidence in Deleuze's philosophy to support the reading offered of his work by Badiou in *The Clamor of Being*. Or better, since it attempts to evacuate the moral and imperial tone of the ideal of judgment, what has been pursued is a partial set of enquiries or *queries*. These queries have concerned a list of issues and concepts, a set of cases: being, method, the virtual, time, truth, the event, subjectivity, and thought. In each case, what I have attempted is an assessment of Badiou's assertions about Deleuze in the light of specific moments in Deleuze's work, and against the background of Badiou's own account of the issues that he takes up again in Deleuze.

It may be objected that such an approach to august philosophical texts is far from philosophical. Perhaps. However, we should recall that decisive law, one that ought to govern our attention to the thought of another, the one expressed by Nietzsche in *Ecce Homo*, in an exclamation that takes on a tragic colour in the light of history: "Above all, do not mistake me for someone else!"²⁸⁴ Of course, the reasons by which one writer might mistake another in this fashion are not necessarily simple. The fact that such an ensemble of misinterpretations is indeed prosecuted by Badiou has nonetheless been demonstrated in each of these cases.

This will have been the first of three general conclusions established by this thesis, namely that Badiou's reading of Deleuze is through and through marked by error. Simply put, Badiou is wrong about many aspects of Deleuze's thought. Again, my interest here has not been to explain why he construes the Deleuzian text in this or that way – an approach that one might call *symptomatic*, and which would lean either towards Freudian or Derridean thought – although there is much that might be advanced in this direction. Nonetheless, it is possible to generalize in two respects here. The first is relative to the theme of the One. Badiou's interpretive lynchpin in *The Clamor of Being* is, as we have repeatedly seen, the idea that Deleuze's work revolves around the fundamental posit of an ultimate ontological unity. What the multiple investigations pursued here evince is a reversal of the role that the posit of the One plays in Badiou's reading. Rather than being the key element in Deleuze's thought, it is rather the *a priori* assertion, indeed *decision*, on the part of Badiou that he brings to Deleuze's work. The thesis of the One is thus used by Badiou as a lens through which to examine Deleuze; it is not a claim of Deleuzian thought that he – in advance of all others – has managed to uncover. Moreover, secondly, we have seen some evidence to support the conclusion that the various positions that he attributes to Deleuze are presented in ways characteristic of and derived from his own philosophy, as if in order to read Deleuze's philosophy, it had to be drawn near to his own, illuminated by his own light. Arguably, some of Badiou's assertions about Deleuze are really descriptions of the shadows cast from it by the light of *Being and Event*.

²⁸⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Preface', *Ecce Homo* §1.2, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1992), 673.

Now, the *querulous* approach pursued here has inevitably led to a quite widespread agnosticism about Deleuze's philosophy, an agnosticism concerning the general status and claims of his thought on many points. This though was not my goal here. If my interest was in a defense of Deleuzian metaphysics, this defence was partial and presented *via negativa*, as a multiple assertion that Deleuze's thought is not – cannot be, on the basis of the texts themselves – what Badiou claims that it is.

The partial approach adopted did, however, provide the means to account in some detail for one of Deleuze's key works, namely *Difference and Repetition*. This eventuated in an *a posteriori* fashion due to the fact that a number of the concepts investigated by Badiou find their most extensive and complex expression in that work. As such, the locus of the defense of Deleuze presented here is to be found in the resistance that *Difference and Repetition* presents to readings such as that proposed by Badiou. Arguably, with respect to a number of concepts – in particular, time, thought and the virtual – the metaphysics proposed by Deleuze in this work is irreducible to ciphers of a monotonous ontology of the One, displaying as it does both an unwavering commitment to the theme of a fundamental difference (in the twinned forms of the virtual and intensity) and the radical ungrounding nature of time. *Difference and Repetition* can be read as the most alien philosophical work imaginable to Parmenides' inaugural paean to the One. If the stakes of this thesis – and its attempt at a defense of Deleuze against the Badiouian schema – are to be located in one particular set of claims, they are to be found in my proposed interpretation of *Difference and Repetition*, which I think makes a contribution in its own right to scholarship on Deleuze. Such is the second general conclusion of the proceeding.

Surveying this more or less entirely tentative and negative orientation, it would be possible to arrive at the conclusion that my argument here concludes that Badiou's reading of Deleuze has no value at all. This is not quite the case. For if Badiou's conclusions about Deleuze are in a number of ways incorrect, and sometimes profoundly so, the manner of his approach to Deleuze, his resolutely principled and philosophical mode of engagement, have provided one of the most significant incitements to Deleuze's readers, an incitement which is at once philosophical, vigorous and profound. The singularity of the palimpsest that is *The Clamor of Being* is to be found not by considering the accuracy of his representation of Deleuze, but the renovated force that it has brought to the reading of Deleuze's work. Although Badiou's attitude towards Deleuze has in recent years increasingly taken the form of a static opposition (as I noted in the Introduction), the genuine engagement with Deleuzian metaphysics constituted by *The Clamor of Being* is irreducible to any of the previous ambient or studied attitudes, whether critical or laudatory. By orienting his reading around the (fallacious) assertion of the primacy of the One, Badiou introduced a new way to enter into Deleuze's work, a very serious and striking way, and one which has not ceased to invigorate the reception of the latter. I am led therefore to the assertion of a rule of thought (perhaps a correlate of that cited above from Nietzsche) which is not inconsequential: one should always strive to have *more than one master*. This relation, however, must take the form of a submission not to the level of human existence, but to what, in those we take as our masters (a peculiar, somewhat paradoxical act), is excessive and inhuman.

As Foucault often remarked – in a sentiment that is profoundly Deleuzean, as we have seen – it is the advent of problems which provokes change in the reception of an idea, a thought, a practice. It is good to be forced to reread, it is good to listen again to familiar words when they are spoken in a foreign tongue, in a novel idiolect. This is my third and final claim by way of conclusion: while we must judge Badiou's Deleuze on the grounds of fidelity to the text, we must also reassert that there is a greater fidelity in question, and that is a fidelity to philosophy itself.

We must also not to be too quick to dismiss the requirements of the discipline of philosophy on the side of judgment either. The requirements of an academic piece of writing such as this are welcome and necessary. Indeed, rather than shutting down the potential of works, rather than desiccating the objects of thought and narrowing our attention, these demands of attentiveness and scholarship should take us in the end to the point at which the same works open up and display their irreducible and irreducibly problematic nature. This is the same point which marks the transition between scholarship and thinking as such, between the history of philosophy and philosophy as such – and between judgment and creativity as such: "There is some judgment at work in selecting how we shall repeat the traces left by others, but it is not in judging the past persons, but in finding ways of connecting to their virtual traces by expressing them anew."²⁸⁵

A fidelity to philosophy, as both Badiou and Deleuze have argued more strongly than many before them, is always a fidelity to the advent of something new, of a becoming whose law is irreducible to the exhaustive mappings of what exists in the sonambulant and elastic hiatus of the present. It is a fidelity to an event in thought whose unexpected grace – a grace that is as cruel as it is sweet, cruel in the measure of its sweetness – comes to overturn accepted certainties, ways of living and feeling, modes of thought.

This is what we are reminded of by a moving passage in *The Clamor of Being*. Breaking off his critique of the relationship he perceived between chance and the eternal return in Deleuze, Badiou writes:

On this particular point, Deleuze did not pursue the discussion in detail. I take it up here, but find the fact that he is no longer there to rejoin somewhat disconcerting. How I would so like him to point out to me once again, as he did with great relish in so many different passages, to what extent my philosophy has a reflexive, negative, or analogical value ...
(DCB 77/116)

Beyond thetic disagreement regarding this or that, philosophy is nothing if not the continuation of the movement of thought, of a certain haggard consciousness, engendered by problems. We do not desire the continuation of disputes, of challenges, of the endless process of refining distinctions and the rigidification of boundaries, but rather something *in* these acts which moves us forward in thought.

²⁸⁵ Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Logic of Sense*, 147.

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