Spinoza: Desire and Power

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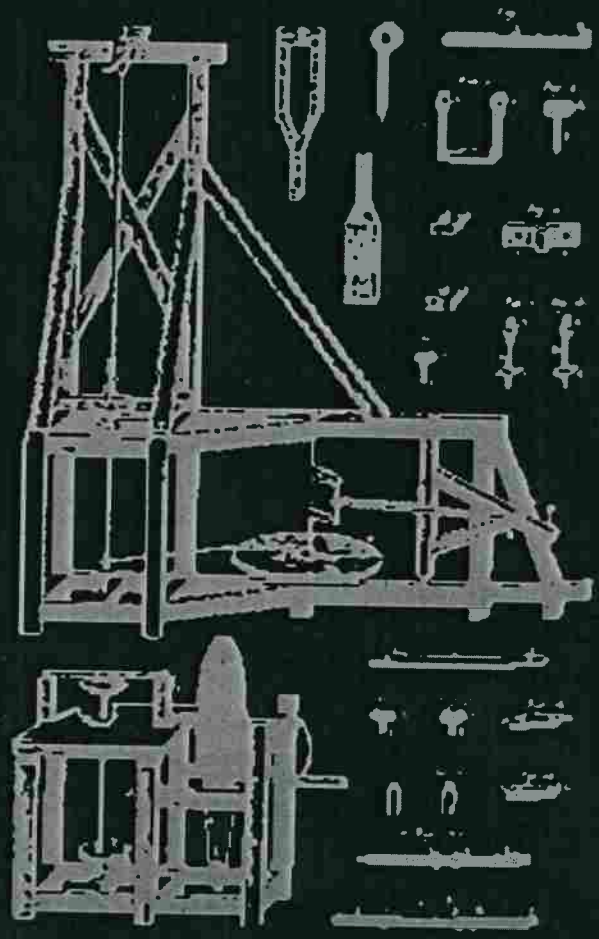
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The Three Kinds of Knowledge

GILLES DELEUZE

Today, I would like this to be our last meeting. This will be our last meeting on Spinoza, unless you have any questions. In any case it's necessary that, today, if there is anything that concerns you, you intervene as much as possible.

And so, I would like to do two things today: firstly that we finish with the Spinozist conception of individuality, because we have spent quite long enough on this concept, but also that we draw from it the consequences concerning a point, a formula, a celebrated Spinozistic formula: We experience ... we experiment.[1] We feel and we experience. This formula does not say: we think. These two very loaded words: to feel and experience that we are eternal. What is this famous Spinozist eternity? OK. And secondly and finally, it is necessary to draw some consequences from what ought to have been the implicit theme of all these meetings; that is to say: what is the relationship between an ontology and an ethics once one says that this relation is of intrinsic interest for philosophy. The fact is that this relation was only developed and founded by Spinoza. So much so, that were somebody to come to us and say that their project was a kind of ethics which had a correlation with an ontology, that is, a theory of Being, one would have to stop and say: fine, in this way, in this kind of inquiry, one can say many new things, but it is a Spinozist inquiry. It is an inquiry signed Spinoza.

You recall, and I remind you of this not at all to return to these points, but to see what we've got. You recall the three dimensions of individuality? First dimension: I have an infinity of extensive parts; well

1 *Expérimenter* means both to experience and experiment. It is worth bearing in mind that this double meaning also applied to Spinoza's Latin *experientia* – which is why he was able to write in the *Political Treatise* §2.1 *experientia sive praxis* experience/experiment or practice [trans.].

more, if you remember more precisely. I have an infinity of wholes, composed of an infinity of parts which are extensive or external to one another. I am composed to infinity.

Second dimension: these infinite wholes of extensive parts external to one another belong to me, but they belong to me under characteristic relations. Relations of movement and of rest which the last time I tried to say were nature.

Third dimension: these characteristic relations do nothing but express a degree of power that constitutes my essence, my essence of myself; that is to say, a singular essence.

Therefore the three dimensions are the extensive parts external to one another that belong to me, the relations under which these parts belong me, and the essence as degree, *gradus* or *modus*, the unique essence that expresses itself in these relations. Now, Spinoza never does say this, because he has no need to say it, but we are forced to note a curious harmony, between what and what? Between these three dimensions of individuality and what he calls, now and again, the three kinds of knowledge. If you recall the three kinds of knowledge, you will immediately see the strict parallelism between the three dimensions of individuality as such and the three kinds of knowledge. But that there is such a parallelism between the two must force us to certain conclusions. You see, this is not something that Spinoza needs to say. I insist on this because I would also want you to draw from this rules for the reading of all philosophers.

He will not say: notice. It is not up to him to explain. Once more, I insist on this at length: one cannot do two things at once. One cannot at once say something and explain what it is that one says. It is because of this, that things are very difficult. OK. It is not Spinoza that has to explain what Spinoza said; Spinoza has to do better than this: he has to say something. To explain what Spinoza has said is not bad, but in the end it does not go very far. This is why the history of philosophy must be extremely modest. Spinoza will not say to us: notice, you see that my three kinds of knowledge and that the three dimensions of the individual, correspond to one another. It is not up to him to say this. But for us, in our modest task, it is good to point this out. So, in what sense do they correspond?

You recall that the first kind of knowledge is the totality of inadequate ideas. That is to say, the totality of passive affections and of passion-affects that result from inadequate ideas. This is the totality of signs, inadequate confused ideas, and the passions, the affects, that result from these affections. This is what we learnt last time. Now, from the moment we exist, under what conditions or, what is it that makes it the case that we are not only destined to inadequate ideas and to passions but even perhaps, condemned to have *only* inadequate ideas and passive affects, or passions. What is it that creates our sad situation?

Understand that this should be obvious so I don't want to stress this in too much detail. I would just want you to feel, sense, that we are made up of extensive parts. In as much as we have extensive parts, this condemns us to inadequate ideas. Why? because of what the system of extensive parts is. Once more, they are external to one another, they go to infinity, both at once. The simplest bodies, that are the ultimate parts, you recall, the simplest bodies do not have any interiority. They are always determined from the outside. What does this mean? By shocks. By impacts from another part. In what way do they encounter shocks? In the simplest way, to know that they never cease changing relations, since it is always within a relationship that the parts belong to me or do not belong to me. Parts of my body leave my body and enter into another relationship. The relation of arsenic, this relation does not import well, the relation of the mosquito when it bites me, the relation ... I do not stop integrating parts into my relations. When I eat, for example, when I eat there are extensive parts that I appropriate for myself. What does this mean, to appropriate parts for oneself? To appropriate parts for oneself is to say: they leave the preceding relations that they made up to take a new relation, this new relation being one of my relation to myself: by eating meat I create my own flesh. What horror! But in the end, it is necessary to live, life does not stop being like that: shocks, appropriations of parts, transformations of relations, compositions to the infinite, etc. This system of parts external to one another that do not stop reacting, at the same time that the infinite totalities in which they enter do not stop varying, is precisely the regime of inadequate ideas, of confused perceptions, of passive affects, of the passionate affects that result. In other words, it is because I am composed of a collection of an infinity of infinite wholes of extensive parts external to one another, that I do not stop having perceptions of external things, perceptions of myself, perceptions of myself in my relations with external things, perceptions of the external

things in relation to myself. It is all this that makes up the world of signs. When I say: 'ha' this is good, that is bad, what are these signs of good and bad? These inadequate signs simply mean: I encounter externally parts which are *compatible* with my own parts under their relation 'bad': I encounter externally parts which do not agree with me.

See, therefore, that the whole domain of the infinite wholes of parts external to one another corresponds exactly to the first kind of knowledge. This is because I am composed of an infinity of extrinsic parts of which I have inadequate perceptions. So that the first kind of knowledge corresponds to this first dimension of individuality.

Now one sees, precisely, that the problem of the kinds of knowledge was brilliantly launched by the Spinozist problematic. With this definition one might believe that we are condemned to inadequate knowledge, knowledge of the first kind. Consequently, how are we to explain the chance that we have to escape from this confused world, from this inadequate world, from this first kind of knowledge?

Spinoza's response is: yes, there is a second kind of knowledge.

But how does Spinoza define the second kind of knowledge? In the *Ethics*, this is very striking; the second kind of knowledge is knowledge of relations, of their composition and of their decomposition. One can not come up with a better phrase than: the second kind of knowledge corresponds to the second dimension of individuality. Since, in fact, the external parts are not only external in relation to one another, but are radically external, absolutely external, how is it then that we can say that external parts are part of me?

This means only one thing for Spinoza, namely that these parts are determined, always from the outside, to enter into such or such relation, into this or that relation that characterizes me. And moreover, what is the meaning of 'to die'? To die means only one thing; it is that the parts that belonged to me under this or that relation are determined from the outside to enter into another relation that does not characterize me, but that characterizes something else.

The first kind of knowledge is therefore the knowledge of the effects of encounters, or effects of action and of interaction by external parts on one another. One cannot define it better. This is very clear. The effects are defined by either the effects caused by the shock or by the encounters of external parts with one another. This in turn defines the first kind of

knowledge. In fact my natural perception is an effect of the shocks and collisions between the external parts that compose me and the external parts that compose other bodies. But the second kind of knowledge, this is an altogether different kind of knowledge. This is knowledge of the relations that compose me and relations that compose other things. You see, this is no longer the effects of encounters between parts, this is knowledge of relations, namely the manner in which my characteristic relations are composed with those of other things, and the manner in which my characteristic relations and other relations decompose themselves. Now this is adequate knowledge, and in fact this knowledge can only be adequate. It is opposed to a knowledge that is content to react, since this is a knowledge that raises itself to the comprehension of causes. In effect, any relation whatsoever [*rapport quelconque*] is a reason. Any relation whatsoever is the reason by which an infinity of extensive parts belongs to one such body rather than to some other.

In this moment of the second kind of knowledge, I simply insist on this: that the way I have tried to put it does not imply that this is at all an abstract form of knowledge. If you make this abstract then all of Spinozism collapses. This is evidently the fault of the commentaries, they say always: ha! well yes, its mathematics. Ha! well, no, its not mathematics. It has nothing to do with mathematics, except that mathematics is a special case. It is in fact possible to define mathematics as a theory of relations. There then, agreed, mathematics is a part of the second kind of knowledge. It is a theory of relations and proportions. See Euclid. OK, it is a theory of relations and proportions, and at this very moment mathematics forms part of the second kind of knowledge. But to think that the second kind of knowledge must be a mathematical type of knowledge, this an abominable piece of stupidity [*bêtise*] because, at that very moment, all of Spinozism becomes abstract. One does not live one's life by mathematics. It is not necessary to exaggerate; it is a question of the problems of life. I'll take this as an example, because it appears to me infinitely more Spinozist than geometry or mathematics, or even the Euclidean theory of proportions; I'll take as example of something that one would want to say is adequate knowledge of the second kind, something at the level of learning how to swim: "Ha, I know how to swim"! [*je sais nager*] Nobody can deny that to know how to swim is a conquest of existence. It is fundamental, you understand. I conquer an element; endogenously one will not conquer an element. I know how to swim, I know how to fly. Formidable. What does this mean?

This is all simple: not to know how to swim is to be at the mercy of an encounter with a wave.[2] So, you have the infinite body of water molecules that compose the wave. I say: this is a wave because, these simplest bodies that I call "molecules", are not in fact the simplest, and it will be necessary to go still further than the water molecules. The water molecules already belong to a body, the water body, the body of the ocean, etc. ... or the body of the pond, the body of some pond. So what is the knowledge of the first kind? It is this: to go, I launch myself, I go there, I am in the first kind of knowledge. I launch myself. I splash about as one says. Why does one want to say 'splash about'? Splashing about is very simple. Splashing about, the phrase accurately indicates, one sees clearly, that this is all a matter of extrinsic relations. Sometimes the wave slaps me and sometimes it carries me; these are the effects of a shock, namely: I do not know anything of the relation that is composed or that decomposes itself. I receive the effects of extrinsic parts. The parts that belong me to me are shaken. They receive the effect of a shock from the parts that belong to the wave. So sometimes I laugh and sometimes I snivel, as a result of what the wave does to me, makes me laugh or knocks me senseless. I'm affected passionately: "Ha mum, the wave fought me!" OK. "Ha mum, the wave fought me." – a scream that we will not stop having so long as we remain in the first kind of knowledge since one will not stop saying: Ha the table has hurt me; this is exactly the same as saying: the other hurt me; not at all because the table is inanimate, Spinoza is so much smarter than all that *we* were able to say afterwards. It is not at all because the table is inanimate, that we are driven to say: the table has hurt me. It is as stupid to say: Pierre has hurt me as it is to say the rock [*la pierre*] has hurt me, or the wave has hurt me. It is all at the same level, it is all the first kind of knowledge. OK. You follow me?

On the contrary: I know how to swim; that does not force me to say that I have a mathematical, physical, or scientific knowledge of the movement of the wave. It is just to say that I have a knowhow, an astonishing know how. it is to say that I have a kind of sense of the rhythm. What can one say about this rhythm? I know how to compose my characteristic relations directly with the relations of the wave. Nothing else happens between the wave and me. This is to say that no more happens between the extensive parts, the wet parts of the wave and the parts of my

2 It is possibly worth noting here that there is a simple and terrible play of words here: *la vague*, the wave is connected to the Latin *vaga* i.e. vague knowledge, the first kind of knowledge, the imagination [trans.].

body, than takes place between the relations. The relations that compose the wave, the relations that compose my body, and my fitness, or capacity, when I know how to swim: to present my body under relations that are composed directly with the relation of the wave. I dive at the right moment. I resurface at the right moment. I avoid the wave that approaches, or, on the contrary I use it, etc. ... All this is the art of the composition of relations. I look for examples that are not mathematical because, once more, mathematics is only a part of this. It would be necessary to say that mathematics is the formal theory of the second kind of knowledge. It is not that the second kind of knowledge is mathematical. It is the same thing at the level of love. Waves or loves, it is all the same. In a love of the first kind, well, you are constantly in this system of encounters between extrinsic parts. In what one calls a *grand amour, La dame aux camélias*, what is it that is beautiful [laughs], there you have a relation of composition. No, my example is very bad because *la dame aux camélias*, this is the first kind of knowledge, but in the second kind of knowledge you have a type of composition of relations with one another. You are no longer in the regime of inadequate ideas; namely: the effect of a part on one of my own, the effect of an external part or the effect of an eternal body on mine. There you attain a domain deeper than the one that is the composition of the characteristic relations of a body with the characteristic relations of another body. And this type of flexibility or of rhythm which occurs when you present your body, and from that time your soul also, you present your soul or your body, under the relation that is composed directly with the relation of the other. You truly feel that this is a strange happiness. Here, in this, is the second kind of knowledge.

Why is there a third kind of knowledge? There is a third kind of knowledge because Spinoza says relations are not essences. The third kind of knowledge, or intuitive knowledge, is that which surpasses relations and their compositions and their decompositions. This is knowledge of essences, which goes further than relations since it attains the essence that expresses itself in relations, the essence on which the relations depend. In effect if relations are mine, if relations characterize me, this is because they express my essence. And my essence is what? It is a degree of power. Knowledge of the third kind is knowledge that this degree of power gets from itself and gets from other degrees of power. This time it is a knowledge of singular essences. OK. The second kind, and, even more so, the third kind of knowledge, are perfectly adequate. You see that there is a correspondence between the kinds of knowledge and dimensions of

individuality. This means what, finally? This coincidence means that the kinds of knowledge are more than kinds of knowledge, they are ways of existence. They are ways of living.

But why is it that they are ways of living? This becomes difficult because, ultimately, all individuals are composed of the three dimensions simultaneously. It is there that one will find the final problem. You, me, it is not important who, any individual has all three dimensions simultaneously. What can one conclude from this? Every individual has all three dimensions simultaneously, agreed. Here exactly is the problem: every individual has all three dimensions simultaneously, and nevertheless there are individuals that will never leave the first kind of knowledge. They will not come to achieve the second or the third [end of the tape...] a knowledge of their singular essence or other singular essences. How do we explain this? This is not at all automatic. Every individual has the three dimensions but note, this does not imply that it has all three kinds of knowledge; one can easily remain in the first kind. How can we explain this last point? Let us tackle the question differently: when is it that there are conflicts? For example: one can hate oneself. It happens that one hates oneself. Hate, this kind of conflictual mode of existing, from one individual to another individual, is what? How to explain hate? Consider an exemplary text of Spinoza's, Book IV of *The Ethics*, the first axiom of Book IV, it will bother us a lot, the appearance of this axiom, and there Spinoza does not explain it much.

> Axiom: There is in Nature no individual thing that is not surpassed in strength and power by some other thing.

There is no ultimate power because the ultimate power is the totality of Nature. A thing being given, it is defined by a degree of power; and there is always a degree of superior power and in fact one has seen that there is an infinity of degrees of power. Infinity is always active for Spinoza, is always actual, a degree of power greater than the greatest degree of power than I can conceive. Till now, it would not be worth bothering about this axiom but it continues:

> Whatsoever thing there is, there is another more powerful by which the said thing can be destroyed.

This statement must make us pause! Why? because the second sentence brings an unexpected precision. The first sentence says: once a thing has been given, it is defined by its power, but once a degree of power has been given, i.e. a thing in its essence, the degree of power is the essence of the thing. Agreed, that's fine. One understands. Second sentence, it adds, note: by something more powerful the first thing can always be destroyed. This is very embarrassing. Why? Suddenly one says to oneself: I don't understood anything. What's going on? It seems to say that an essence can be destroyed by a more powerful essence. Then at this very moment there is no longer any third kind of knowledge. There is even less any second kind of knowledge, because destruction is what? This is evidently the effect of an essence on another essence. If an essence can be destroyed by a more powerful essence, by an essence of a superior degree, this is catastrophic, the whole of Spinozism collapses. One is brought back to the effects, one is brought back to the first kind of knowledge, it is no longer possible to have knowledge of the essences. How is it that there can be an adequate knowledge of essences, if essences can be in a destructive relation with one another?

Fortunately, everyone has understood. And furthermore, it will be necessary to wait a long time for an answer, but this is normal, this is why you need patience to read. Well finally, in Book V, there is proposition 37 and proposition 37 gives us, after its proposition, and after the demonstration of the proposition, it gives us a separate statement, a scholium, and the scholium says this: the axiom of Book IV, which I have just read, concerns singular things in so far as one considers them in relation to a definite time and a certain place, "of which I think no one can be in doubt." Here it is necessary to laugh, because, even so: "of which I think no one can be in doubt", is something that we've had to wait a long time for and it could have been said in Book IV, which would have saved us a lot of trouble. But that's Spinoza's problem. Why does he say it so late? He says it when he needs to say it. What can one say of this precision?

Spinoza says to us: note, the axiom of destruction, the axiom of conflict: an essence can oppose itself to another to the point of destroying it. One understands this only when one considers things in relation to a certain time and a certain place. He does not say anything more about this. What does this mean: to consider things in relation to a certain time and a certain place? What one wants to say, is: consider them in their existence.

Why should one want to say: consider them in their existence? To consider them as they exist, as they are passed into existence, as they pass into existence, and this means what? We've seen it: to pass into existence, is what? One passes into existence, an essence comes into existence when an infinity of extensive parts finds itself externally determined to belong under such a relation. I have an essence, myself, Pierre or Paul. I have an essence. I say that I pass into existence when an infinity of extensive parts is externally determined (that is to say by the shocks which rebound from other external parts) to enter into a relation which characterizes me. Thus at first I did not exist, insofar as I did not have these extensive parts.

To be born is this. I am born when an infinity of extensive parts are externally determined, by an encounter with other parts, to enter into a relation that is mine, that characterizes me. At that very moment, I have a relation with a certain time and with a certain place. What is it that happens at this time and place, the time and place of my birth. This here, here and now, is what? This is the *régime* of extensive parts.[3] The extensive parts, the wholes of extensive parts, they always have a time and a place. Better, they will endure what they will endure. The extensive parts are externally determined to enter into a relation that characterizes me, but for how long? Until they are determined to enter into another relation. At that very moment, they pass into another body. They do not belong to me any more; it endures a certain time. Well. What does this mean? How has this clarified things?

In fact I can talk about conflict between two individuals only in as much as these individuals are considered as existing here and now. This is very important for the formation of conflictual relations. It is only in as much as individuals are considered as existing here and now that they can interact. This is not a question of good or evil. It is a question of logical possibility. I can only have conflictual relations with another individual according to what? According to the extensive parts that compose us, that belong to us. The place, the environment of the conflict, is that of extensive parts. In what does the conflict between the individuals consist? In the conflicts between individuals it is always a matter of knowing the

3 It is worth keeping the original French at this point, for as the translators of *L'anti oedipe* point out, "The word *régime* has a number of different meanings in French, including: regimen or form of government; a set of laws, rules or regulations; fate of flow, as a current; rate or speed of operation, as of a motor or engine. Since the authors use the word in several senses, the French word *régime* has been retained throughout the English text" *Anti-Oedipus* p. 31 [trans.].

final relation that these infinite wholes of extensive parts will enter. Imagine this sad situation: I fight with a dog over a kind of pâté. OK. Horrible spectacle. How can we describe this spectacle? It is a matter of what? You have three terms: the food, the dog and me. Then I bite the dog to seize [laughs] his food; the dog hits me with his paw. What happens? You have an infinite whole of extensive parts under the relation "meat". You have an infinite whole of extensive parts under the relation "dog". You have an infinite whole of extensive parts under the relation "me". And all that whirlwind, and all that struggle. Namely: me, I want to conquer the extensive parts of the meat to assimilate them for myself; that is to say, to impose my relation on them. The dog, it wants the same. I bite the dog. I want to drive it off. The dog, it bites me, etc. etc. There isn't anything else. This is the domain of conflict. The conflict is the respective effort of each existing body to appropriate for itself the extensive parts. What does 'appropriate for itself the extensive part' mean? It means to effectively make the relation that corresponds to each individual. In this sense I can always say: I am destroyed by something stronger than me. And in fact, as long as I exist, this is the risk of existence. OK. And the risk of existence only ends with what one calls death. What is death? This is the fact that Spinoza will call necessary, in the sense of inevitable, that the extensive parts that belonged to me under my characteristic relation will stop belonging to me and pass into another relation that characterizes other bodies. It is inevitable by virtue of the very law of existence. An essence will always meet an essence stronger than it under conditions of existence that means that, from that time, the stronger essence destroys. Destroys what? literally destroys the belonging of the extensive parts to the first essence.

Good, agreed. But I'll initially say, even if it means I'll have to correct myself shortly, and it will be necessary to correct myself, I say: suppose that I am dead. So, I am dead. For Spinoza – this will take on an abstract air, but try: it is up to you to make the effort. I will say shortly why this does not appear abstract for me, but make the effort. "I am dead", what does this mean? Once again if you accept these premises, that this is not at all an abstract theory, it is really a concrete problem. If this is all that death is, it means that there are no longer any extensive parts, there are no longer any extrinsic wholes that belong to me. I am dispossessed. Agreed, I am dispossessed. I do not have any more parts. This means: my characteristic relations stop being effectuated. This is what death means, but nothing more than that. So, what is it that is ended by death? What have not

ended, according to Spinoza, are my relations. They have ceased to be effectuated, true, but there is an eternal truth of these relations. They are not effectuated, agreed, but we've seen that for Spinoza, relations are largely independent of their terms. To effectuate a relation means that some terms arrive that effectuate the relation. The relation is effectuated by its terms. Then there are no longer any terms that they effectuate. The relation has an eternal truth as a relation, a truth independent of its terms. It is no longer effectuated, but it remains actual as a relation. It does not pass to a virtual state. There is an actuality of the non-effectuated relation. And, even more, there is an actuality of the essence that expresses itself in the relation, since the essence is not at all an extensive part, it is an intensive part! It is a degree of power. This degree of power does not correspond to anything any more. This degree as we saw the last time, this degree of intensity does not correspond to anything any more in extension. There are no longer any extensive parts that correspond to the intensive part. Agreed. But the reality of the intensive part, as an intensive part, that survives.

In other words there is a double eternity, completely correlative. There is a double eternity: the eternity of the relation or relations that characterize me, and the eternity of the essence, the singular essence that constitutes me, and that cannot be affected by death. And even more, on this level as it is described in Book V, in the text that I have just read, on this level, conflict cannot exist. Why? Because all the relations are composed to infinity following the laws of relations. There are always relations that are composed. And on the other hand all the essences agree with all the essences, every essence agrees with all the others, as a pure degree of intensity.

In other words, for Spinoza, to say that a degree of power or a degree of intensity destroys another degree of intensity, this is a proposition devoid of sense. The phenomena of destruction do not exist on this level and they have for a rule that they relate back to the *régime* of the extensive parts that provisionally belong to me.

Consequently, what does it mean to say: I feel, I experience that I am eternal? This is not: "I know it". What I would want you to understand is the difference between the last proposition and this one: I know and I maintain that I am immortal. One could say that this is a theological suggestion. I know and I maintain that I am immortal. And: I feel and I experience that I am eternal. In fact Spinoza himself rejects, in Book V,

all conceptions of immortality. He says to us: no no, it is not the case that everyone is immortal; it is a matter of saying that everyone is eternal, and this is not at all the same thing. Why is this different? How does Spinoza present this? what is this expressivity? I believe that it is necessary to understand the word in the strongest possible sense. This is not simply: I make the experience, or I have the experience. it is rather to create the experience in an active manner.

I have the experience that I am eternal. What is it that this expresses? It is very curious. If you look for it in literature, it is much later, in the English literature of the nineteenth century, that you will find a kind of Spinozism of this type: eternity, an experience of eternity. And it is also strangely tied to the idea of intensity, as if I could not have the experience of eternity other than under an intensive form. This is a frequent theme with authors who do not, exactly, appear to me to be so far removed from Spinoza. Even if they do not know it, in authors such as Laurence, in a minor book such as *Powys*, there is a type of experience of eternity under the form of the intensive.

Here, I'll try to return to being more concrete. When you exist, you exist as yourself in opposition to everything else. Everything opposes itself to everything else, and Spinoza does not at all say it would be necessary to escape this. He knows that this is absolutely necessary. That this is a dimension, a dimension of existence. Agreed, but he says: here, take two extreme cases. Let us take the individual 'X', the individual "Pierre". Let us consider Pierre, as himself. He spent the majority of his life – you see here how this becomes very nuanced and very concrete – one can say of Pierre that he spent his life, mainly, in the first kind of knowledge. This is the case for most people, since according to Spinoza, it is necessary to have even a little philosophy to get out of the first kind of knowledge. Take the case of someone that lives mostly in the first kind of knowledge. Why do I specify mostly? it is necessary to be optimistic, even if it does not always happen. This person, in any case, he will have properly understood a small part of his life, a time, not a long time, a day, an evening, an evening while returning to his home. He will have understood a small part. He will have had the impression of understanding a little of something. Maybe he really will have understood a little of something and then, all his life he tries to forget that he had understood something so striking. Suddenly he says to himself: but wait, there's something not quite right here. All, even the worst of the poor wretches, have this experience.

Even the worst of morons has passed close to something where he has said: couldn't I have, couldn't I have passed all my life in deception? Then one leaves to a small extent the first kind of knowledge. I.e., in Spinoza's terms, you will have understood even on a tiny point, you will have had an intuition of something of essence, or the intuition of an essence, or the comprehension of a relationship. One can be very generous: there are very few people who are totally idiotic. There always is something that they understand. We all have our skills. For example some have an astonishing sense of some animal. That does not prevent them from being mean, or whatever, but they have something: Or consider woodcraft: This type, this fool, this fool and this miser, at least when he talks about trees there is something, one feels that there is something. One spends one's time to have these experiences. The impression that, if you want, it is over, that even the worse clown, there is a point where he has to stop being a clown. At last there is something. Nobody is condemned to the first kind of knowledge, there is always a small hope. Now this is very important. There is a glimmer with someone. It was less hateful when I did not believe it! It's sufficient to find the skill. Then, but of course, sometimes one has even more weaknesses to find, agreed, and then one falls again fast. But I myself do not know: the worst policeman, the worst I could think of, there surely has to be some small skill. Surely.

Spinoza does hold out the call to the army of the blessed to save everyone. No, he wants to say to us something else. He wants to say to us, Look! This is very complicated because finally, your existence is a matter of proportions. What does this means, a matter of proportions? Agreed, you have the extensive parts that compose you, and so you exist. It is not at all question of rejecting that. What would it be, to renounce the extensive parts that compose me, that is, to renounce all the combinations of existence, so as to withdraw oneself from all lived oppositions. I withdraw myself from lived oppositions. I only eat grass. I live in a cave, etc. This is basically what we call asceticism. Spinoza is not interested in that at all. To him it is a dubious solution. Very, very dubious. He thinks that the ascetic is deeply malicious, and that the ascetic pursues an implacable hate, an inexpiable hate against the world, against nature, etc. ... Therefore this not at all what Spinoza would recommend. He says to us: watch out; in your existence it is a matter of a relative proportion, between what and what?

You grant me that I now have my three dimensions of the individual: the extensive parts, secondly the relations, thirdly the essence or the intensive part that constitutes me. I can express them in following form. The extensive parts that belong to me are the same as the inadequate ideas that I have. They are necessarily inadequate. They are, therefore, the inadequate ideas that I have and the passions that result from these inadequate ideas. The relations that characterize me, when I arrive at knowledge of them, these are the common notions, or adequate ideas. The essence as pure intensive part, as a pure degree of power that constitutes me, this again is an adequate idea. Spinoza says to us: in your existence, you can have a vague idea of the proportion that there is between inadequate ideas and passions, since the two are linked, the inadequate ideas and affects-passions that fill your existence, on the one hand, and on the other hand the adequate ideas and the active affects to which you come.

You recall, the inadequate ideas – I will finish quickly and then ask if you understood – inadequate ideas and passions, these relate back to the first dimension of existence: to have extensive parts. The two other aspects, knowledge of relations and knowledge of degrees of power as intensive parts, these refer back to the two other aspects: the characteristic relations and the essence as intensive part. Suppose that in my existence I have, comparatively (please note, it is not question of renouncing extensive parts: this would be to kill oneself, and we know what Spinoza thought about suicide) ... Imagine that during my existence I achieved a relative amount (Spinoza says we cannot achieve total activity since you are composed of extensive parts and you are subject to the law of extensive parts); but suppose that you have succeeded in achieving mostly adequate ideas and active affects. This is the first example. And in the second example, imagine: you achieved active affects very rarely, and not for very long. OK. Put yourself at the moment of your death. This is all very concrete. When you die, in the first example and in the second example, what will happen? When you die this means that all the different kinds of extensive parts that make you up disappear; this means that they go off into other bodies i.e. they effectuate other relations than yours. When you die in the second example, you had in the majority of your existence, inadequate ideas and passive affects. This means that what dies is, comparatively, the greater part of yourself. This is proportionally the larger part of yourself. It is the other way around in the first example. This is curious, this intervention of a type of relative proportion. This is what is

important in Book V. If you miss this in Book V (despite Spinoza being explicit about it), I believe that you cannot understand the movement of Book V. The other example: suppose that during your existence you attained, on the contrary, a comparatively large number of adequate ideas and of active affects, at that very moment the part of you that dies is comparatively unimportant, insignificant.

So this is very odd. It seem to me that Spinoza returns to the idea of existence as a test. But this is not at all a moral test; this more a test of a physico-chemical type. I feel that I am eternal, yes. What does this statement mean? I now have this experience, under what condition?

This is not at all a question of the soul surviving the body, or the question of immortality which would be: in what sense and in what form does the soul survive the body. This is how it was asked by philosophy and theology, (ignoring the huge differences), from Plato to Descartes. From Plato to Descartes, this question is asked. This is really the question of the immortality of the soul, and the immortality of the soul necessarily passes, from this point in time, by way of the problem of a before and of an after. Why? What determines the before and the after, from the standpoint of the immortality of the soul, namely the moment of the union of the soul and body? namely that, before the soul, is before incarnation, before the soul unites itself to a body. The after of immortality, the after of the soul, this is after death, this is to say after what ... hence the discomfort of all the authors who have talked about the immortality of the soul. What is their discomfort? It is that the immortality of the soul cannot be apprehended or can be conceived only under the temporal form of a before and of an after. And this is already the whole theme of the *Phaedrus* that introduces Plato's ideas about the immortality of the soul. Plato's *Phaedrus* dialogue launches a huge doctrine of the immortality of the soul precisely under the form of the before and the after: before the union and after the union. When Spinoza opposes his eternity to immortality, one sees precisely what he wants to say. From the standpoint of immortality, if you like, I can know that the soul is immortal. But in what does immortality consist? It consists in being able to say that, for example, I know (I know – but then by way of what kind of knowledge – but this is a side issue) that my soul does not die with my body. Even if I admit the Platonic idea that there is this knowledge, I do not know what kind of form it has. Why? because immortality truly seems to exclude the before and the after, so it is already an eternity, more precisely it cannot be

known [*savoir*] or known [*connais*] that under the species of the before and after. And Descartes again will ask: under what form? That the soul is immortal, I can say I am sure of this, according to Descartes. But as to which form, I know nothing. I can at most assert that there is a before and that there is an after. That the soul was not born with the body and that it does not die with the body. I can assert that. I cannot assert the what or the how. It would necessarily have to be an intellectual intuition, as they say, but we don't have intellectual intuition.

This is not how Spinoza puts the problem, because for him the problem does not involve a before and an after. It is a problem of the same time. I want to say that at the same time I am mortal that I experience/experiment that I am eternal. And to experience/experiment that I am eternal does not mean that there is a before, that there has been a before and that there will be an after; it means that starting now I experience/experiment something that cannot be under the form of time. And what is this, that cannot be under the form of time? To know that there are two absolutely opposed meanings of the word "part"; first: there are the parts that I have: these are the extensive parts, external to one another, and I have them in the mode of time. In effect, I only have them provisionally. I have them in duration. I have them in the mode of time: which is the parts that are external to one another, the extensive parts that I have. OK. But when I say: intensive parts, I want to say something completely different. The two senses of the word "part" differ in nature, because when I say intensive parts = essence, this is no longer a part or parts that I have, this is a part that I am. I am a degree of power. I am an intensive part. I am an intensive part and other essences are also intensive parts. Part of what? Part of the power of God, says Spinoza. Experience/experiment that I am eternal: this is to experience/experiment that "parts", in the intensive sense, coexist and differ in nature from "parts" in the sense of external and extensive. I experience/experiment here and now that I am eternal. This means that I am an intensive part or a degree of power irreducible to the extensive parts that I have, that I possess. So that when the extensive parts are taken from me = death, that does not effect the intensive part (what I am from all eternity). I experience/experiment that I am eternal. But only on one condition, on the condition that I rose to ideas and to affects that give to this intensive part an actuality. It is in this sense that I experience/experiment that I am eternal. Therefore this is an experimentation that signifies an eternity or a coexistence, and not an immortality of succession. Starting now, in my existence, I can

experience/experiment the irreducibility of the intensive part that I am from all eternity, that I am eternally, to the extensive parts that I possess under the form of duration. But, if I did not make actual my essence, or even my relations, if I remained only within the law of extensive parts that meet themselves from the outside, at that very moment I have not even the idea of experiencing that I am eternal. At that very moment, when I die, yes, I lose the greater part of myself. The opposite would happen if I made my intensive part proportionally larger. What does this mean? Clearly this is not straightforward. This brings into play, in a type of proportional calculation, the extensive parts that I have and the intensive parts that I am. This is difficult since there is no commonality in nature between the two senses of the word "part". So, how can it be said that one or the other is more or less large, comparatively, than the other? Spinoza tells us: when I die, sometimes what perishes, namely the extensive parts that are no longer a part of me, that which perishes of me, is in certain cases the greater part, and in other cases it is an insignificant part, rather small. It would be necessary therefore that the intensive part and the extensive parts have a common criterion in which to enter into this rule of proportion, namely from the two extreme cases where sometimes the extensive parts that disappear, constitute the larger part of myself. Sometimes, the opposite, where they constitute only a small part of myself because the intensive part has taken the larger part of myself. OK, we cannot go further. It is perhaps up to us, in existence, to establish this type of proportional calculation, or of the lived sense of proportion. It would be necessary to say what is important in a life, what is it that is important.

The criterion of importance. To what have you given importance? Answer: you have given importance to 'the important'. It would be necessary to do something, almost, of importance. This is important; that is not important. It would be almost necessary to make it a criterion of existence! People, what do they judge important in their life? That which is important is it what is said on the radio? Is it necessary to be a stamp-collector to live a healthy life? Perhaps all that! What is a happy life, in the sense where someone dies while saying to himself: after all I have largely done what I wanted. I came close to doing what I wanted, or what I would have wished for, yes this is good. What is this curious blessing that one can give oneself and that is the opposite of a self-contentment? What is it that one means by this category, "the important"? Yes agreed, that is embarrassing, but it is not "important". What is this calculation? Is it not this category of the "remarkable" or of the "important" that allows us to

see the proportions between the two irreducible senses of the word "part"? Answer: what depends on, or what results from, the intensive part of myself, and what returns, on the contrary, to the extensive parts that I have.

And then, obviously there is always the problem of premature deaths ... The singular essence, it comes into existence, good, but I am a crushed baby? [Laugh]. Up to which point the Spinozist rule holds, namely that the time that I endure ultimately has no importance. Spinoza says this very firmly, and he has the right to say it since he did not die very old but he was not a crushed baby. He had the time to write *The Ethics*. So, nonetheless, what about the babies that die? Spinoza's rule, but after all when I die this means only one thing, namely: I no longer have extensive parts. We are embarrassed by cases of premature deaths, because of premature deaths, one always can say: he has his eternal essence, but this eternal essence, once more, in this way that one reads Spinoza, is not simply an essence like a mathematical figure. It is an essence that exists only insofar as it has passed into existence; i.e. something that has actualized its degree, or it has actualized by itself its own degree; i.e. the intensive part that it was. It goes without saying that when I die prematurely I have not at all actualized the intensive part that I was. In other words I expressed nothing.

I have in no way become the intensity that I am.

All this is what happens when one dies at a certain age, but all those that die before? There I believe in fact that it is necessary rather...? If one imagines that a correspondent could have asked this of Spinoza, what would Spinoza have replied? I believe that he would not have at all flattered this malicious questioner. He would have said something like: unfortunately yes, this is all part of the irreducible exteriority of nature, that makes up the group of people who have been, who will be poisoned, etc. That the whole problem of the extensive part of ourself was such that in certain cases it could indeed make ... I mean that, in Spinozistic terms, it is necessary almost to say: someone who dies prematurely, yes, this is a case where death imposes itself in such a manner that, it is imposed in these conditions such that, at this moment it concerns the greater part of the individual we are considering.

But what one calls a happy life is to do all that one can, and Spinoza insists on this in order precisely to try to avert premature deaths; i.e. to prevent premature deaths. What does this mean? In no way trying to stop

death, but so that death, when it comes, finally only concerns the smallest part of myself. Here I believe, such as he saw it, he experienced and felt things.

Translated by Jon Rubin

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Spinoza: Superior Empiricist

JONATHAN RUBIN

This paper was provoked by two things. First by a fascinating comment in Deleuze's *Expressionism in Philosophy* (which he repeats in *Practical Philosophy*) where he writes that the common notions must be understood as more biological than mathematical. Second by a worry that despite their best efforts and intentions, recent attempts to switch and develop the focus of investigation in Spinoza to his account of the imagination have, by downplaying or ignoring the role of reason, lost something crucial for our ability to distinguish between servitude and freedom.

Common Notions

Why are Spinoza's common notions interesting or relevant to contemporary political theory? There have been a number of excellent works that treat of the fundamental importance of the imagination as far as political organisation is concerned. I am thinking in particular of Balibar's *Spinoza and Politics* (and a number of his essays), Lloyd and Gatens' *Collective Imaginings* and of course Negri's *The Savage Anomaly*. The necessity of engaging with the intersection of Spinoza's theory of imagination and politics would be sufficiently justified for no other reason than that most people, most of the time, in their interactions, function at the level of the first kind of knowledge. Balibar is particularly instructive on how the imagination in Spinoza's *Ethics* functions as a kind of primary 'social glue' for want of a better phrase – all imagination is necessarily collective in as much as it is the result of an interaction between both your own and some other body (hence Lloyd and Gatens' title). All of this is sufficient to justify this work. However, none of this work (and Lloyd and Gatens are more guilty of this than others) should

blind us to the status of the imagination in Spinoza. The imagination is necessarily *inadequate*. So long as we remain within the first kind of knowledge and Deleuze is absolutely right when he writes: "The different kinds of knowledge are also different ways of living, different modes of existing" [Deleuze 1992 p.289], so long will our way of living be inadequate too. In precisely what sense should we consider it inadequate? The first kind of knowledge leaves us at the mercy of chance encounters – as a way of life, it is the uncontrolled nature of our encounters that leaves us always prey to sadness or weakness. Deleuze has a wonderful description of life as the first kind of knowledge when he describes swimming, a crucial example that will be examined further:

> So what is the knowledge of the first kind? It is this: to go, I launch myself, I go there, I am in the first kind of knowledge. I launch myself. I splash about as one says. Why does one want to say 'splash about'? Splashing about is very simple. Splashing about, the phrase accurately indicates, one sees clearly, that this is all a matter of extrinsic relations. Sometimes the wave slaps me and sometimes it carries me; these are the effects of a shock, namely: I do not know anything of the relation that is composed or that decomposes itself. I receive the effects of extrinsic parts. The parts that belong me to me are shaken. They receive the effect of a shock from the parts that belong to the wave. So sometimes I laugh and sometimes I snivel, as a result of what the wave does to me, makes me laugh or knocks me senseless. I'm affected passionately: "Ha mum, the wave fought me!" OK. "Ha mum, the wave fought me." – a scream that we will not stop having so long as we remain in the first kind of knowledge
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> [Deleuze 1981, this voume, p. 6]

Imagination is the domain of *servitude*.

Freedom is Virtue *or* Perfection[1]

The difficulty with a concept such as freedom is the (perhaps artificial) separability of two questions: what is it? And how does one achieve it? That these are artificially *or* abstractly separable – and that this is a bad thing – is a worry that is linked to a broader concern about the status of common notions generally. This is, for the moment, regrettably opaque but it will be made clearer when I come to address the competing interpretations of what the common notions are in Spinoza. That these two questions are not properly even abstractly separable for Spinoza is captured by his insistence on the equivalence of virtue *or* perfection. Though this particular equivalence is stated in the *Political Treatise*, its demonstration is also to be found in the preface to Book IV of the *Ethics*: "by perfection in general I shall understand reality, as I have said that is the essence of any thing whatsoever" and then Definition 8: "By *virtue* and *power* I mean the same thing; that is (Pr.7,III), virtue, in so far as it is related to man, is man's very essence". So we get the equivalences: essence *or* perfection, (virtue or power) *or* essence therefore perfection *or* virtue. Of course, 'man's very essence' is nothing but desire – that is, his *conatus*. So we can conclude that 'being free' is always an activity – if not necessarily a 'striving'.[2] Freedom is precisely a becoming.

Despite the difficulty of separating the problems of what freedom is from how we achieve it, such a separation is necessary if only for the initial pedagogical impetus. But I have still not explained why, if we are interested in freedom, we should also be interested in the common notions. This might be thought to be quite straightforward, but in fact is anything but.

The initial crucial proposition is IVP23:

> In so far as a man is determined to some action from the fact that he has inadequate ideas, he cannot be said, without qualification, to be acting from virtue [i.e. he is not free]; he can

1 [Spinoza 1951, §2.7]

2 I have dealt elsewhere with the problems of translating conatur and why it is not a teleological notion. The best translation, to my mind, would be work or effort – understood in strictly energeticist terms. This is, unfortunately, not something I have the space here to defend and so I have retained the more traditional translation.

> be said to do so only in so far as he is determined from the fact that he understands.

As a statement of Spinoza's position, this is very clear. If you understand something, it is because you have formed a common notion, or adequate idea. It is only on the basis of adequate ideas that we can be said to be active (by IIIP1) – and it is only when we are active that we are free. This is, so far, just a clarification of IVP23. The real problem comes in the proof:

> In so far as a man is determined to action from the fact that he has inadequate ideas, to that extent (Pr.1,III) he is passive; that is (Defs 1. and 2,III), he does something that cannot be perceived *solely* in terms of his own essence, that is (Def.8,IV), something that does not follow from his own virtue. But in so far as he is determined to an action from the fact that he understands, to that extent he is active (Pr.1,III); that is (Def.2,III) he does something that is *perceived solely in terms of his own essence*, that is (Def.9,IV), which follows adequately from his own virtue.
>
> [emphases added]

The crucial difficulty for anyone who might wish to accept this proof as valid is the claim that to the extent that one is passive, an action cannot be perceived in terms of one's own essence i.e. it is not a free act. Why is there a problem with this claim? There is a problem because it appears directly to contradict part of the proof of IIIP9: "The essence of the mind *is constituted* by *adequate and inadequate* ideas (as we showed in IIIP3), and so (IIIP7) it endeavours to persist in its own being in so far as it has both these kinds of ideas" [emphases added]. The contradiction is generated by the claim of IIIP9 that "the essence of the mind is constituted by adequate and inadequate ideas" and the claim of IVP23 that "inadequate ideas cannot be perceived solely in terms of its own essence" even though inadequate ideas partially constitute one's essence. IIIP9Pr claims that the essence of the mind is constituted by *both* adequate and inadequate ideas whereas IVP23Pr claims that it is only adequate ideas that constitute the essence of the mind.

These two quotations need a lot of unpacking to dispel the apparent contradiction. The crucial word, I will argue, that dispels the apparent contradiction is: 'solely'.

This will be made a lot clearer by a return to the swimming example used by Deleuze. It is perfectly possible to *stay afloat* (i.e. staying afloat is something we can do) without being able to *swim* – so long as the sea is kind, or if we wearing something like arm-bands, or are holding on to a piece of wood. As Deleuze puts it: we are carried by the water. So long as this remains the case, we cannot understand our ability to stay afloat *solely* in terms of our own ability to swim. But if we can swim then there is nothing else that needs to be added or understood in order to explain our staying afloat. Obviously in order to swim, you need water (and air, and gravity etc.), but being able to swim is *sufficient* to explain somebody's staying afloat, whereas somebody who cannot swim needs something else to explain their staying afloat: e.g. arm-bands or luck.

To justify this particular explanation, let us consider the proof to IIIP1:

> In every human mind, some of its ideas are adequate, others are fragmentary and confused. Now ideas that are adequate in someone's mind are adequate in God in so far as he constitutes the essence of that mind; and furthermore those ideas that are inadequate in the mind are also adequate in God, not in so far as he contains in himself the essence of that mind *only*, but in so far as he contains the minds of other things as well.
>
> [emphasis added]

This proof relies on the idea that from the perspective of substance, there are no such things as inadequate ideas. Substance cannot suffer, as there is nothing external to it. As it cannot suffer, all modifications of substance are active – that is they are adequate ideas (considered under the attribute of thought) or actions (considered under the attribute of extension). Passions, or inadequate ideas, are therefore necessarily *perspectival* (see also IIP37Pr: "there are no ideas confused or inadequate, except in respect to a particular mind" and IIIP3Sch: "We therefore see that passive states are related to the mind only in so far as the mind has something involving negation: that is [*sive*], in so far as the mind is considered a part of Nature, which cannot be clearly and distinctly perceived through itself

independently of other parts"). It is only modes that can suffer, or have inadequate ideas, but all ideas are adequate "in God". It is because inadequate ideas always involve both our own essence *and* the essence of another mode, that they cannot be understood solely in terms of our own essence. It needs stressing again that this is not a symmetrical relation. If the *reason* we can stay afloat is because we can swim, this does not mean that we have suddenly become cut off from nature – adequate ideas, or being active, in no way suddenly constitute man or anything else as an "imperium in imperio" (Book III preface). At the very least, as I said earlier, to stay afloat you need water and gravity – but if the reason that you stay afloat is because you can swim, because you are swimming, then this is sufficient and this is no more than repeating Def1,III: "By an adequate cause, I mean a cause through which its effect can be clearly and distinctly perceived". If the reason that you are staying afloat is because you are wearing arm-bands then you are only the 'partial cause' of your staying afloat (Def2,III). Of course by Spinoza's own theory if something combines with our own power, then it is legitimate to consider the assemblage as one individual. This of course would mean that the human-wearing-arm-bands assemblage would indeed be staying afloat through its own essence; it would be the adequate cause of its staying afloat.

What are Common Notions?

There is with very few exceptions a *broad* consensus about just what a common notion is. I stress the broad, because there is some disagreement about the precise details. In an interesting paper Schoen discusses a number of different interpretations of common notions. As he puts it: "Spinoza himself is so terse, if not taciturn, with regard to this topic that any interpretation of his thought must look for corroborative support beyond mere consistency with the text" [Schoen 1977 p.537].[3] Despite this lack of textual evidence *all* commentators agree on the importance of

3 This is an excellent paper – not only for the thoroughness of its analysis of what I have been calling the 'consensus view' of common notions but also for its occasional insights into Spinoza's ontology. Its only flaw is its main thesis: the belief that somehow, Spinoza was trying to provide an account for how logic 'locks onto' the world, turning the *Ethics* into a (admittedly at least on Shoen's account, successful) proto- *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*; a move as bold as it is wrong.

common notions. Whether it is Deleuze writing that "the entire *Ethics* is written from the standpoint of the common notions" [Deleuze 1988 p. 57] or Curley writing that "the concept of the common notions [...] is of considerable significance in the mature theory of the *Ethics*" [Curley 1973 p.49]. There is no disagreement about the importance of the common notions.

How does this broad consensus suggest we should understand common notions? "They are ideas of *properties* common to all objects that we experience" [Curley 1973 p.54, emphasis added].[4] Or more fully:

> common notions are the foundations, or starting-points, of our genuine reasoning (*rationcinii nostri fundamenta*) and of scientific knowledge (*fundamenta rationis*). The objects of such ideas, their *ideata*, are those *properties* which any mode of extension or any body, or any part of one, necessarily possesses merely in virtue of being a mode of Extension.
>
> [Hampshire 1950 p. 95 emphasis on 'properties' added]

If common notions are notions of properties, that is: that their contents are properties, what is their form? As there is a consensus about the content of common notions, it is unsurprising to find that there is also consensus about their form: common notions are propositional; as one might expect given that they are supposed to be the deductive base of our science. Common notions, on this view, are forms of *declarative knowledge* (as opposed to procedural knowledge: knowing *that*, rather than knowing *how*). What is the textual evidence in the *Ethics,* the only place where common notions are discussed, for this kind of view? There are two main arguments that can be put forward to support the idea that common notions are ideas of properties. The first, rests on how to translate IIP39: "Id quod corpori humano et quibusdam corporibus externis, a quibus corpus humanum affici solet, commune est, *et proprium*" [emphasis added]. Fløistad translates this as: "That which is common to and a property of the human body, and certain external bodies by which the human body is used to be affected".[5] This makes it clear that what common notions are notions of are properties. More modern translations, specifically Curley and Shirley do not translate "et proprium" as "a

4 See also [Fløistad 1969 p. 108]

5 See also the Elwes translation for a similar rendering.

property" but as "proper to" i.e. "that which is common and proper to". This does not give as much credence to the view that what Spinoza is referring to are properties, though this does not stop Curley from claiming that they are.

The first advantage of understanding common notions as knowledge of properties is that it does not demand any special interpretative effort on our part to see how and why, "It is in the nature of reason to perceive things under a form of eternity" (IIP44Cor) and of causes as necessary. In as much as we think that *scientific laws* are supposed to hold universally (i.e. they are not temporally bound) and necessarily, then they look to be good candidates for being common notions. The second advantage of understanding the common notions as knowledge of properties, that is, as true universals (as opposed to the false universals, or transcendentals that Spinoza dismisses and denounces in IIP40Sch), is that it allows us to fit Spinoza into a common lineage of philosophers who have linked a growth in knowledge to a growth in freedom. This lineage goes back to the Stoics and Plato and is the dominant assumption underlying the Enlightenment. If Hampshire is right in claiming that common notions are the foundations of our scientific practices, then Spinoza's theory would place him firmly in the tradition Adorno and Horkheimer describe in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. This would make Spinoza's claim that common notions are the prerequisite for our freedom thoroughly comprehensible. However, in interpreting Spinoza's conception of reason as a form of specifically *instrumental rationality* – the question as to whether Spinoza was right to claim that common notions *just are* the necessary and sufficient condition for our freedom looks a lot more problematic.

This may all be going a bit too fast. The 'instrumental rationality' tag can all too quickly be applied to many philosophers' conceptions of reason (and in many cases is a way of dismissal that requires as much thought as the charge of *ressentiment*; it needs a lot and yet rarely gets it) and in fact looks even more applicable to an understanding of common notions that reads them as procedural rather than declarative knowledge (as I intend to do). The problem with this reading of Spinoza is that it turns man into an "imperium in imperio" (kingdom within a kingdom) – or if not man then the budding Enlightenment *philosophe*. Any argument that reaches a claim so explicitly rejected by Spinoza must be treated with suspicion.

The final problem that I want to outline with the declarative knowledge interpretation of the common notions is that it renders particularly

mysterious Spinoza's claim in IIP38: "Those things that are common to all things and are equally in the part as in the whole can be conceived only adequately". Commentators, such as Curley or Hamphsire, who read this proposition as referring to basic scientific understanding are left wondering how: "Spinoza might have reconciled this view with the fact that people did, for many centuries, have inadequate ideas about motion"[Curley 1973 p.54] – and indeed still do. Even worse is the corollary to this proposition: "Hence it follows that there are certain ideas or notions common to all men". To which the only response is incredulity – exactly what proposition is supposed to be affirmed by all people everywhere and presumably at all times since the birth of language?

What I've here been calling the standard view of common notions whereby their contents are properties and their form is propositional, runs into several problems. What are we to make of Spinoza's repeated insistence throughout Books III and IV of the *Ethics* of the claim that we do have adequate ideas, not many admittedly, but some, if adequate ideas are supposed to be the *foundation* for our (current, or seventeenth century?) scientific practice. How are we to understand Spinoza's claim that we do have common notions, that some common notions are had by all people, if they are supposed to be scientific notions?

Superior Empiricist

In the title to this paper, I proposed that Spinoza should be read as a 'superior empiricist'. Now this is not meant to be yet another intervention, or an attempt at a ressurection, of the empiricist/rationalist debate.[6] This 'debate' was definitively buried by a paper by Curley [Curley 1973], which starts off by pointing out that the rationalist/empiricist distinction was nonsense to begin with and then shows how fundamental the notion of experience and experiment are to Spinoza's work – he could have also added *praxis* as in "*experientia sive praxis*" [Spinoza 1951, §1.3]. Superior empiricist is a term that was originally coined by Schelling, reused by Bergson and then resurrected by Deleuze. I do not for the moment wish to suggest that I can give either a full or a definitive explanation of what this phrase is supposed to denote in Deleuze's own

6 However, see Deleuze 1992a for a way of recasting the empiricist / rationalist distinction that does not start from the problem of knowledge.

work. In fact I am giving it a thoroughly partial reading in as much as I am determinedly ignoring Deleuze's comments about how a new doctrine of the faculties is a central component of a superior empiricism. Revised or not, properly transcendental or not, I am not going to try to force faculties onto Spinoza.

So what am I taking to be the defining feature of a superior empiricism? At the end of the image of thought chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze argues that the embedded assumptions of the dogmatic image of thought finally collapse into just one: the privileging of knowledge over learning. That is: the dogmatic image of thought claims to exhaust what we mean by thinking by reducing it to knowing – or reduces thought to knowledge. This is all part of Deleuze's general critique of representation as being inadequate to account for what thinking is. I think it is obvious that what I have called the 'standard interpretation' of the common notions is a clear instantiation of the dogmatic image of thought; whether or not the standard interpretation is correct, those who have proposed it can be shown to hold to the implicit presuppositions of the dogmatic image of thought. Deleuze claims that all the eight postulates embed within one another such that they could all be derived from the eighth and final presupposition that learning is dependent upon knowledge. In order to justify my claim that the standard interretation adheres to the image of thought I would have to show that they held the last presupposition, and the rest would follow. Deleuze's claim that all the postulates can be derived from the final one may be thought to be questionable. However, with the standard interpretation's claim that the second kind of knowledge is declarative and foundational for science, we can see the outlines of the eighth, which is the final presupposition: "the postulate of the end, or result, the postulate of knowledge (the subordination of learning to knowledge)" and the sixth: "the postulate of logical function, or the proposition (designation is taken to be the locus of truth)" [Deleuze 1994b p. 167].

The problems that the standard interpretation has can be seen to have been clearly anticipated in Deleuze's own critique of the dogmatic image of thought. Deleuze announces (in his two books on Spinoza) that the fundamental ethico-political problem is the problem of how we *achieve* common notions. In making this pronouncement he is saying no more than this: that the problem of learning is central to the *Ethics*, that Spinoza is not a philosopher whose work is subsumable within the dogmatic image

of thought. If we are to take seriously Deleuze's claim that the common notions are more biological than mathematical, we need to have an understanding of them radically different from the standard one.

I could put it this way: to know how to swim is to have a common notion of the relations that are formed by my body and a body of water. This is, I believe, still too abstract and static – swimming, the activity of staying afloat is a common notion – a common notion that is continually formed and reformed anew with every stroke and breath; always liable to the realism of the sole axiom of book IV of the *Ethics*: "There is in Nature no individual thing that is not surpassed in strength and power by some other thing. Whatsoever thing there is, there is another more powerful by which the said thing can be destroyed". No matter how well we can swim there is always an unexpected rip-tide or unusual wave that can decompose the common notion that we were otherwise able to form. I'm not going to say any more about how we form common notions just yet, as I want to consider a set of objections that Macherey raises in [Macherey 1996].

The Encounter with Spinoza

The overall thrust of Macherey's paper is concerned to oppose Deleuze's reading of Spinoza's philosophy as a philosophy of expression. Although it is not my intention to defend Deleuze's reading of Spinoza as an expressionist philosopher, there is an additional interesting point of disagreement which can be inferred by a remark Macherey makes at the end of his paper: "we might more convincingly present him [Spinoza] as a theorist of alienation, than make him a philosopher of expression" [Macherey 1996 p.156]. The import of this comment by Macherey is I think that there is much more to the disagreement between Deleuze and Macherey than a clash within the history of philosophy. As I have been pointing out, and will hopefully continue to make clearer, the question of Spinoza's common notions is tied to the question of Spinoza's theory of freedom and of politics. One can see in this comment by Macherey a much larger clash with Deleuze over the way in which politics, freedom and of course, Marxism should be thought. As significant as this clash is, this is not the place to deal with it.

Macherey objects to the interpretation of Spinoza as a philosopher of expression. He limits his objections to two specific points of interpretation. The first point is Deleuze's reading of Spinoza as importing a Scotist notion of quality to define the attributes; I will not deal with this objection as it is not relevant to my concerns here. The second objection, which is the one that does pose a relevant problem for me, is to Deleuze's account of the formation of common notions. Macherey's objections are threefold but all revolve around the status of 'joyful passions'. Firstly he detects 'the outline of a dialectic' in the need for the existence of joyful passions and Deleuze's description of the movement from joyful passions to common notions. Secondly he rejects the very existence of joyful passions. Thirdly, just to make sure, he argues that even if they did exist then they would be too unstable to do the work that Deleuze, or I need them to do. Although the second objection is the most important and the most interesting, I shall deal with them in the order that Macherey raises them. However, before I can respond to Macherey's objections, I need to say a little about Deleuze's framework so that it is clear what Macherey is objecting to. In describing this framework, I should not be taken to be fully endorsing it. I have my own problem with Deleuze's account – one that, curiously, Macherey seems to notice but finds no problem with.

> The opposition of actions and passions should not conceal the other opposition that constitutes the second principle of Spinozism: that of joyful passive affections and sad passive affections. One increases our power, the other diminishes it. We come closer to our power of action insofar as we are affected by joy. The ethical question falls then, in Spinoza, into two parts: *How can we come to produce active affections? But* first of all: *How can we come to experience a maximum of joyful passions?*
>
> [Deleuze 1992 p. 246]

> [Joyful passions] still do not give us possession of our power of action, we have no adequate idea of objects that agree in nature with us; joyful passions are themselves born of inadequate ideas, which only indicate a body's affect on us. We must then, *by the aid of joyful passions*, form the idea of what is common to some external body and our own. For this idea alone, this common notion, is adequate. This is the second stage of reason; then, and then only, do we understand and act, and we are reasonable: this not through the accumulation of joyful passions as passions, but by a genuine 'leap,' which puts us in possession of an adequate idea by the aid of such an accumulation.
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> [Deleuze 1992 p. 283]

The Outline of a Dialectic?

As Macherey notes, joyful passions occupy an intermediate position between sad passions and adequate ideas. Though they are not themselves adequate and we cannot therefore be said to be active, nonetheless they increase our power of activity. They could, perhaps, be said to occupy a 'mediating' position between sad passions and activity and it is this very mediating position that Macherey focuses on in order to claim that he has found the 'outline of a dialectic'. Given that all passions limit our activity, they involve a 'sort of negativity'. One might, as Macherey suggests, be tempted to call the transformation of the negativity of sad passions, by the still negative form of joyful passion, "a negation of the negation, or a ruse of reason that makes use of an evil, passion, to advance something good, ethical liberation" [Macherey 1996 p. 153]. Macherey himself has no time for this kind of dialectical magic: "no *conjuring* with the situation will ever turn something bad or harmful into something useful" [Macherey 1996 p. 154]. If the transformation of passions into adequate ideas in Deleuze's account does indeed rely upon a hidden dialectic, then we would be entitled to feel some suspicion towards the account that he offers; not least as such an account would undermine the claim that Spinoza's philosophy is innocent of the labour of the negative. Why though would we accept such a description?

There is a hidden assumption that drives Macherey's account. This assumption is, I think, false – and with its rejection, we can also reject the idea that only the *magic* of the dialectic could answer how the move from joyful passions to adequate ideas occurs. Macherey is being too essentialist about what makes a passion a passion. I have already argued that passions involve a necessary perspectivalism – that as substance cannot suffer, so all passion is, as should be obvious, modal. Though we

cannot 'conjure with the situation', the question of what the situation is, is what is at stake here. If we consider swimming once more – one reason why we may be afloat is that we are wearing arm bands. Now this means that we have not yet entered into our power of swimming. We can understand this by reversing the order of the demonstration to IVP23: to the extent that someone does something that cannot be perceived solely in terms of their own essence, then they are passive; that is, their actions are determined by inadequate ideas. What is in question is precisely the individuation of essences – they do not 'carve nature at its joints' – if we wanted to give anything that privilege, it would be the attributes. This is what I am getting at by claiming that although Macherey is right to say that no conjuring with the situation can turn something harmful into something positive, he is far too essentialist about what counts as the situation. Wearing arm bands is therefore a joyful passion; it is the arm bands, not our power of activity, that explains our staying afloat. Certainly in my own case it was with the aid of arm bands that I learnt to swim that is: it was 'with the aid' of a joyful passion that I learnt to swim. Even if we accept that there is no need to suppose the existence of a dialectic in Deleuze's account to explain the transition from something negative to something positive, precisely because the distinction that Macherey needs for a dialectical account even to be possible, would be one of real distinction, when it is in fact a modal distinction, this has not yet provided an explanation of how the transformation is possible. Nor has it answered Macherey's second objection that I shall turn to next: are we correct to believe in the existence of joyful passions at all?

Joyful Passions

> Everything turns on whether this talk of passionate joys, together with our transition to a greater perfection as a result of the chance composition of our being with that of something else that agrees with it in nature, allows one to speak also of 'joyful passions' whose very passivity prefigures or prepares the way for the transition to greater activity. But if we look carefully at what Spinoza says, this seems very doubtful. On this particularly difficult question, I would claim rather bluntly that for Spinoza all passions, without exception, are sad – even those that are or appear to be joys. Or that they are all ultimately sad, in a sort of *passionate entropy*, being precisely transitions unfolding in a time that cannot be reduced to momentary states [...] One might speak of a *sad destiny* of the passions, of all passions without exception, including joys that are passions. A 'joyful passion', indeed is a contradiction in terms.
>
> [Macherey 1996 pp. 153-4 emphasis added]

A crucial distinction that Macherey mobilises here is between passionate joy and joyful passion. I say it is crucial as it is not immediately evident in Macherey's paper and so ths obscurity leaves the reader somewhat baffled by Macherey's argument that despite Spinoza introducing the notion of a passionate joy ("By joy, therefore, I shall understand in what follows that passion by which the mind passes to a greater perfection"[7]) Spinoza does not allow for the existence of joyful passions. The distinction, though thin, is tenable. Passionate joys refer only to the feeling that we experience when some chance composition increases our power of activity – that is, we move to a greater state of perfection. Joyful passion, though, refers to a mode that causes this transition. The question that Macherey poses can be put this way: although it is clearly the case that Spinoza does postulate passionate joys, can we claim that what causes them are themselves joyful, i.e. that there are joyful passions. It is his rejection of this last claim that needs examining.

His general claim (general in the sense that it makes no specific reference to the *Ethics*), outlined in the quotation above I will examine in a moment. However, he also goes on to examine the notion of *fluctuatio animi*, or 'vacillation of mind' which, as his third and final objection, he claims provides a definitive refutation of Deleuze's claim that there are joyful passions. I will also examine Macherey's argument with respect to the propositions of the *Ethics* that he refers to. Firstly, though, the general argument.

I emphasised two phrases in the above quotation: 'passionate entropy' and 'sad destiny'. As rhetorical as these phrases might sound, they are crucial, as it is only by their literal interpretation that Macherey is able to

7 Compare to Shirley's translation: "So in what follows I shall understand by pleasure 'the passive transition of the mind to a state of greater perfection,' *Per laetitiam itaque in sequentibus intelligam passionem, qua mens ad maiorem perfectionem transit* IIIP11Sch

offer a *principled* objection to the existence of joyful passions. Why this is so, I will explain shortly, but first the damage that would be done to Spinoza's system if Macherey were right needs to be made clear. The distinction that I wish to draw is what differentiates his second objection from his third. The third objection, which is a much weaker (though still crippling) *de facto* objection is that *as it happens* joyful passions are too unstable to do the work (whatever that may be) that I or Deleuze need them to do. The second objection which I am presently examining is that all passions are *necessarily* sad – hence there can be no joyful ones. In order to justify this claim, Macherey is forced to introduce a teleological principle into Spinoza's system. Nothing else will give him a *principled* objection. If he does not introduce a teleological principle then he cannot establish that what we take to be a typical unstable degeneration of a passionate encounter into something damaging, something sad was a *necessary* event. That Macherey of all people should make this move is astonishing. Perhaps he did not realise that only an appeal to teleology would give his claim the principle it needed. Given the generality of his claim (by which I mean there is no reference to any particular passage in the *Ethics*), I assume that we are simply supposed to recognise it as something that we believe about the *Ethics*. Nothing, I hope, could be further from the case. We are left in this situation: the only way Macherey can offer a principled objection to the existence of joyful passions is by importing a teleological principle into the *Ethics*; Spinoza is famous for *explicitly* rejecting all forms of teleology, or teleological explanation – and given the failure in this paper to provide an argument for the existence of teleology in the *Ethics*, combined with his otherwise explicit rejection of this view, we can reject Macherey's objection to the existence of joyful passions.

Fluctuatio Animi

This brings me finally to Macherey's last objection: that passions (joyful or otherwise) are simply too unstable to 'prepare the way' for our gaining adequate ideas.

Of course there is more to Macherey's worry about Deleuze's project of showing how joyful passions can be a jumping off point for the formation of common notions. Even if we reject Macherey's implicit

claim that there is a teleological necessity driving the passions towards dissolution, passions may still seem like fortuitous encounters, random and unstable. This of course, is not just a problem for Deleuze, or myself as we try to explain how it is that, given Spinoza's system, common notions can be formed; if this is a correct description of the passions, then it is a major problem for any reading of Spinoza that seeks to explain the formation of the common notions. But why should we accept this description of them? Deleuze's own description of the imagination as a way of life – the wave hitting us and sometimes carrying us and sometimes swamping us – may seem to suggest that random and unstable is a good description of the passions; but then, we are not fish. To put this another way, a potentially crippling objection to the kind of account I am trying to offer here of the formation of common notions is that passions, *qua* passions are too unstable to act as enabling constraints for the formation of common notions. Why though should we accept this description of the passions – are they really so unstable or random?

The very term random should alert us to the likelihood of this being a serious misreading of what Spinoza means by a passion. Passions are *contingent*, but this is a purely epistemological (though necessary) definition: Spinoza the metaphysical determinist. "Inadequate and confused ideas follow by the same necessity as adequate, or clear and distinct ideas" (IIP36). There is then, no reason to believe that passions are random. Are they, however, still too unstable to do the work of preparing the way for our achieving common notions?

Macherey thinks that there is in Spinoza's idea of the *fluctuatio animi* a demonstration of the instability of the passions – that they necessarily fluctuate between joy and sadness. What is *fluctuatio animi*?

> If we imagine that a thing which is wont to affect us with an emotion of pain, has something similar to another thing which is wont to affect us with an equally great emotion of pleasure, we shall hate it and love it at the same time [IIIP17]

Macherey claims that the notion of *fluctuatio animi* is necessarily excluded from Deleuze's thought. Firstly because it completely (according to Macherey, at least) undoes Deleuze's account of the formation of common notions and secondly because all Deleuze's "philosophical thinking is based on rejecting the theme of ambivalence and the associated

dialectical inversion that he sees as depending on negativity" [Macherey 1996 p. 156]. Why does the notion of *fluctuatio animi* undo Deleuze's account?

> The way Spinoza uses the theme of *fluctuatio animi* shows how the symmetry established between joy and sadness by the fact that they are produced by converse movements is merely apparent: there is in sadness nothing even potentially positive that might allow one to see it as a limiting of *conatus*, to which it remains altogether foreign.
>
> [Macherey 1996 pp. 155-156]

This is why Macherey sees Spinoza more as a philosopher of alienation than expression – for Macherey passions are *alien* to our power of activity, for Deleuze they *involve*, though to the lowest degree possible, that power. So is Macherey right? The only response using his own fine phrase, is that "if we look carefully at what Spinoza says, this seems very doubtful. On this particularly difficult question, I would claim rather bluntly" that Macherey is wrong and that I have in fact already dealt with this question. To remind you: "The essence of the mind is *constituted* by adequate and inadequate ideas" [IIIP9Pr] that is by common notions and passions, and man's essence is his conatus. As a consequence we may also reject Macherey's claim about one of the links between Spinoza and Marx, that of alienation. There is no alienation: Spinoza the anti-humanist.

If we return once more to the swimming example, then we can also see that Deleuze has no problem with the notion of vacillation – in fact he is explicit in a way that Macherey seemed to think he never could be about the domain of imagination; the difference is with the waves sometimes carrying me and sometimes swamping me. There is no teleology here.

End for Now

This paper will tail off towards a close, rather than reach a conclusion, by outlining some of the problems that I have with the view that common notions are a procedural rather than declarative form of knowledge as well as acknowledging the work that still has to be done. For some of these

problems, I think resources exist that are able to overcome them productively; for others – I have as yet no idea. Although mainly exegetical, this last part will close on a final political problem. This view of the common notions whereby they are activities or skills – be they swimming, walking or riding a bicycle without stabilisers gets round *most* of the problems that the standard view has. Learning to walk is something that all able-bodied humans do – by virtue of what they have in common and the relations that they form between the strength and elasticity of the leg muscles and the constant pull of gravity. Likewise, there is no problem when Spinoza writes that if we have an adequate idea, we know that we do. If you're swimming, then you're swimming. There is no room for doubt and to think that there even could be, would be secretly to return to a view of the common notions as declarative knowledge. Explaining how common notions are known under a form of eternity is one problem that I do not as yet have an answer for.

There still remains the problem of how we come to form common notions. In a few pages of *Expressionism* (pp. 280-283) which continue to frustrate, despite their familiarity, Deleuze starts off by writing that: "There is, though, a danger of common notions appearing to intervene miraculously unless we explain how we come to form them. *How do they come to break the concatenation of inadequate ideas to which we had seemed condemned?*" [Deleuze 1992 p. 280 emphasis in the original] – if we do not explain how we come to form common notions the whole of Spinozism remains mysterious. Can we do anything when we read this but nod in agreement and expectation? Three pages later he answers this question of how we form common notions: we do not do it by an "accumulation of joyful passions as passions, but by a genuine '*leap*,' which puts us in possession of an adequate idea, by the aid of such an accumulation" [Deleuze 1992 p.283 emphasis added]. A *leap* ... well as far as attempts go to demystify transitions in a rigorously deterministic thinker, this must count as a spectacularly dismal failure. Indeed, if the conclusion to a superior empiricism when confronted with explaining learning is to mutter, 'leap' (though why not bounce, or hop, or dance?) then we might have doubts about its superiority. There are, fortunately, resources that can offer much more in the way of an explanation. One place we could look to for more of an explanation of the mechanisms of learning would be in the work of Paul and Patricia Churchland.

It may seem to be a bit of a *leap* suddenly to try to import the Churchlands into a paper that had previously focused on differing interpretations of Spinoza's common notions. Why would we turn to the Churchlands' work? What possible connection could there be? To relieve those who are particularly alarmed by this suggestion, there is not the space here to engage here with their work in the detail it would need to give an adequate account of the move from imagination to common notions. They are mentioned here more as a sign (in a truly Spinozistic sense) that there are resources to answer this question. It is actually not that hard to link Spinoza and the Churchlands. To take just two instances: Spinoza's notion of desire is resolutely non-intentional, his notion of belief as I have been arguing is also best understood non-propositionally. Folk psychology has no place in the *Ethics*: Spinoza the eliminative-materialist (see also [Cook 1986] for a similar linking though with very different conclusions and aims). The Churchlands don't just reject folk psychology because they think it is a false theory. It is also a *moribund* theory. It lacks the conceptual resources to explain a number of phenomena that are clearly crucial: "[Folk psychology] fails utterly to explain a considerable variety of central psychological phenomena: mental illness, sleep, creativity, memory, intelligence differences, and the *many forms of learning*" [Churchland 1998, 8]. It is the Churchlands' claim that an understanding of learning (of which there are many kinds) is one of, if not *the*, crucial element missing from folk psychology. It is this one crucial claim about the importance of learning that links the Churchlands to Deleuze. Unlikely bed-fellows as Deleuze and the Churchlands may be, I think their work *may* (and I stress this 'may' as it is an empirical question as to whether they are right or not) be able to offer a fresh insight into the mechanisms whereby we learn – or at least offer something better than 'leap'.

To give an example of how their approach is useful, I'm actually going to quote some people completely different – just because on this particular subject I couldn't find anything as quotable. A major problem that has been left unresolved is the status of joyful passion – surely, even if we accept the arguments against Macherey that I have made and particularly if we are not happy with the idea of bouncing from joyful passions into common notions, then there is more work to be done here. So what more can I say about them – to use a very different terminology, I think joyful passions can best be understood as *enabling constraints*:

> The language of energetics and constraints is a very general one for discussing dynamics, but it is unfortunately common to consider constraints as only placing restrictions. However, and crucially, constraints are both *dis*abling [sad passions] (some dynamical states are thereby rendered dynamically inaccessible) and *en*abling [joyful passions] (some dynamical states are thereby rendered dynamically accessible). The human skeleton, e.g., places constraints on shape and size plasticity but also enables all the movement that underlies our powerful behavioural adaptabilities; the grammar of language sharply constrains word character and order, but it makes powerful communication accessible. An enabling constraint is a restriction on a system which opens up new capacities for the system. Because of its constructive character for us, culture is perhaps our most profound enabling constraint. But of course the enabling is always on balance, it cannot be purely enabling, as organised despotism demonstrates (and ask the painter or dancer about the limits of linguistic expressiveness).
>
> An Integrating Scaffold at http://www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/casrg/publications/Baspap9W.pdf

> Organised systems characteristically face global constraints, and these constraints may function both in an inhibitory fashion, by ruling out certain otherwise available complexions of the system, and in a functionally amplifying fashion by making available certain capacities which the system would be otherwise unable to achieve. We refer to the latter as enabling constraints. For example, the cell membrane is a global enabling constraint with respect to intra-cellular biochemical organisation because it provides a quasi-isolated environment within which critical parameters such as ionic concentrations, enzyme activity etc., may be maintained and organised so as to perform useful work and without which they would collapse.
>
> Organisation, Evolution and Cognition at http://scistud.umkc.edu/psa98/papers/christensen.pdf

I realise that as it stands this is merely suggestive, but I think that it may well be a way of concretising the notion of joyful passion in a way that makes Macherey's worries superfluous. Finally, on this reading of the common notions as knowing-how rather than knowing-that, reason, rather than being abstractive or facultative, becomes thoroughly embodied and embedded. Unfortunately it would take a paper twice as long as this one to go into the full ramifications for trying to tie Deleuze and the Churchlands together to articulate a clear understanding of the move from imagination to reason.

In a shorter version of this paper given at the Society for European Philosophy conference 2002, I ended with what I called, for want of a better phrase a 'Foucauldian political worry'. With his emphasis on the productive nature of power, as Macherey has pointed out (in an attempt to use Spinoza to clarify some aspects of Foucault's work) Foucault can be read just as much as a Spinozist as Nietzschean (though Macherey makes no attempt to claim that Foucault was familiar with Spinoza's work, an examination of Foucault's *Dits et ecrits* indicates such a familiarity, despite the fact that he still privileged Nietzsche over Spinoza). A major task of *Discipline and Punish* is to show how *in some respects* disciplinary apparatuses increase 'what a body could do' – even though the bodies that were produced by disciplinary apparatuses were 'docile'. It is not at all clear to me, given the understanding of common notions outlined in this paper, how disciplines such as rifle drill do not count as forming a common notion.

If the docile body does not count as a freer body (and I hope that we can agree that it does not), then the notion of adequate and inadequate ideas cannot be thought to mark out the domains of freedom and servitude as straightforwardly as one might have hoped.

That was where the previous version of this paper got stuck. Now, however, I realise that this whole worry rested on a crucial, and more importantly *liberal* assumption. In his book *Bodies, Masses, Power* Montag argues that for Spinoza the individual is not a meaningful, or interesting political entity (and may be downright deceptive) as the power of an individual, compared to the state, is negligible. I think it is possible to make a stronger claim than that. I said that we could not distinguish rifle drill from other common notions that we may well have wanted to say increase our freedom – *but why would we assume that a* political *judgment of this kind could be made in any event at the level of the*

individual? Only, of course, if we were liberals would we think *that*. There is no discrimination between rifle drill and freedom because politics does not reside at the level of the individual; to quote Montag to finish this paper:

"salvation will be collective or it will not be" [Montag 1999, p. 82].

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Spinoza, or, The Power of Desire[1]

CAMILLE DUMOULIÉ

1. The Power of *Conatus*

1.1. The Appetite

Spinoza's metaphysics originates from a renewed questioning concerning the nature of substance, such as it was firstly defined by Aristotle and subsequently resumed by Descartes. If one distinguishes substance (that which persists beneath all changes) from its attributes (i.e. accidents or secondary properties), a question then arises regarding the status of substance independently from its attributes. For instance: what is a body without form, colour, weight, etc.? Descartes solved this problem by deriving one main attribute that characterises the essence of each substance. In the case of the body, this attribute corresponds to extension; in that of the mind, the attribute has to be identified with thought. No doubt we cannot think substance independently from its main attribute; however, reason demands we preserve this distinction.

The principles of Spinoza's metaphysics aim to eliminate this contradiction by proceeding in the most rigorous manner starting from the ontological division between substance and accident. If substance is defined as cause of itself in relation to all accidents which are only through it, then there must be only one infinite substance whose essence includes existence: God. This sole substance is constituted by an infinity of attributes of which we can know only two: extension and thought. Each

1 This essay was originally published in *Le désir* (Armand Colin/HER Éditeur, Paris 1999). We thank the author and the publisher for allowing us to print it here in translation. – *Trans.*

attribute, in so far as it is the expression of substance, is itself infinite and constitutes one of its ways of being. After having adopted the Aristotelian idea according to which essence is energy, Spinoza affirms that the essence of God is power. The latter transmits its energy to all that is.

The perseverance of each thing in its being, the striving of all existing beings to be in accordance with their own essence, coincide with determinate expressions of the infinite power of God. This force, this striving, is named by Spinoza *conatus*. It sustains the appetite for life of all that is and boosts a fundamental desire. We could identify such a striving with a primordial drive which is not determined by any subject nor aim to attain any specific object. This also constitutes the basis of Spinoza's ethics, as it is clearly stated in the following formula: "The striving to preserve oneself is the first and only foundation of virtue" (IV, 22, corollary).[2] The notion of "appetite" refers back to Aristotle's *hormé* or *orexis* passing through the *appetitus* of the Stoics. However, the passage from the domain of ontology to that of ethics entails a radical overturning: there is no longer any *a priori* determination of the Good, no object is good in itself. The criterion of an action is always subjective, and in the place of a morality intended as a search for rules in life, we find an ethics founded upon a vital power, an energetics. This overturning is summarised by the resumption of a celebrated formula by Aristotle:

> The apparent good is the object of appetite, and the real good is the primary object of rational wish. But desire is consequent on opinion rather than opinion on desire (*Metaphysics*, Book L, 7).

To which Spinoza replies in the *Ethics* by stating exactly the opposite:

> It is clear that we neither strive for, nor will, neither want, nor desire anything because we judge it to be good; on the contrary, we judge something to be good because we strive for it, will it, want it, and desire it (III, 9, scholium).

Further on (IV, 19), Spinoza specifies that everyone desires that which s/he judges to be good for him/her, according to the laws of his/her own nature. This is to say that such a judgement is not a pure act of reason, or

2 All Spinoza's quotations are taken from *A Spinoza Reader – The* Ethics *and Other Works*, edited and translated by E. Curley, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ 1994. – *Trans.*

the effect of a natural inclination towards the Good – as it is in Socratic morality. On the contrary, it is the expression of a "state of affection" [*état affectif*] which translates and utters a tendency into primary judgements of existence. Its only ontological and ethical criterion is the enhancement or diminishing of the sensation of power; the joy and sadness which accompany the fluctuations of power are the primary criteria of all value judgements.

1.2. The Pure Positivity of Desire

The appetite – *qua* expression of the power of God in each being – is infinite. As a consequence, it does not actually have a subject or an object, a beginning or an end. Things express this infinity in a "definite and determinate" mode, in as much as each of them is the bearer of a *quantum* of power. Nevertheless, each of them lives this *quantum* as if it were infinite. This is why desire has to be intended as pure positivity. At this stage, two other consequences are derived: firstly, desire does not follow from a lack; on the contrary, it follows from an infinite superabundance of power that searches for and creates the necessary conditions for its own growth. In the second place, the vital force does not entail any internal limitation or negativity. Every single thing opposes itself to all that can suppress its existence, and above all, "no thing has anything in itself which can destroy it". In spite of all the importance that Spinoza's influence had on modern thought, on Hegel and on psychoanalysis in particular, it is nevertheless evident that an irreducible difference opposes them. The labour of the negative and the death drive are inconceivable in Spinoza's universe. All limitations of power – as well as death itself – can only be caused by external forces. For instance, even when broaching the question of suicide, Spinoza does not interpret it in moral terms – as the entire philosophical tradition did before him – but always in terms of power and energetics. One does not commit suicide, one is suicided:

> Those who kill themselves are weak-minded and completely conquered by external causes contrary to their nature (IV, 18, demonstration).

Whilst from libidos to Freudian libido, passing through the Schopenauerian notion of Will, a diabolic character of desire is affirmed,

Spinoza represents on the contrary an historic rupture: the appetite corresponds to a positive and infinite expression of the divine power in each thing. It may occur that it errs – especially in the case of man. In order to understand these mistakes, it is necessary to specify the nature of desire. If on the one hand the latter is in its essence strictly identifiable with the appetite, on the other, it can also be said to be one of its particular manifestations.

2. Desire is the Essence of Man

2.1. The Affects

In the *Ethics* (III, 9), Spinoza affirms that appetite is the essence of man and states that "between appetite [*appetitus*] and desire [*cupiditas*] there is no difference, except that desire is generally related to men insofar as they are conscious of their appetite". What are men actually conscious of? This consciousness cannot be referred to appetite itself. The fact that man is or is not conscious of his own appetite does not alter anything in the latter: indeed, appetite presents all the main features of an unconscious will. Rather, the specificity of desire consists in searching for stimuli in particular external representations which may determine and orientate the striving. In other words, desire is defined by the difference between the appetite and its representation or, more precisely, between the appetite and the representation of the affects which act upon the body.

> Desire [*cupiditas*] is man's very essence, insofar as it is conceived to be determined, from any given affection of it, to do something (III, definitions of the affects I).

First point: desire presupposes the representation of a cause which determines all activity (IV, 61). This is how the wandering and erring of desire start: instead of turning towards the internal emanation of *conatus*, the mind searches outside for objects which supposedly cause desire. Instead of wanting that which we judge to be desirable in accordance with our own essence, we make the mistake of searching for the origin of desire and the reasons of what is desirable in exterior things. Lacan's definition of *objet petit a*, intended as a phantasmatic object-cause of

desire which is not the actual object of desire, finds here its philosophical origin. The same goes for the essential distinction that psychoanalysis draws between the affect and its representation, as well as for the idea according to which we do not ever have a direct access to the affect – let alone the drive – but only to their representative (*Triebrepräsentant*), or, to use Freud's terminology, to the "representative-representation" (*Vorstellungsrepräsentant*).

Second point: this affection, or secondary cause, is an effect produced by external bodies on our body. Therefore, it does not coincide with the affect itself, but with its representation, or with its idea, since, given the distinction between modes, there is no immediate relationship between the body and the mind. The latter only perceives exterior bodies "through the ideas of the affections of its own body" (II, 26), and above all:

> The human mind does not know the human body itself, nor does it know that it exists, except through ideas of affections by which the body is affected (II, 19).

The connection between the two modes and between the order of their respective causes is realised in God. In him alone modes are co-present. As a consequence, it is in him that man learns to know the connection between ideas and the affections of the body.

2.2. The Passions

The affections which act upon desire are therefore passions: in other words, they correspond to the mental interpretation of the actions suffered by the body. The basic criterion at work here is always the same: the enhancement or diminishing of power, of which joy and sadness are somehow signals. By considering only the external causes, we confine ourselves to a passive situation; meanwhile we are also exposed to the power of imagination. The latter is a faculty of the mind that *produces ideas* about external bodies on the basis of the affections which one's own body suffers. Therefore, it is an inadequate representation but one which accomplishes a necessary function. It provides an answer to the fact that man is always *situated* in Nature and is thereby always affected by external bodies. During this perpetual collision, imagination spontaneously

attempts to satisfy the appetite, that is, to produce joy through the sensation of an enhancement of power.

> The mind as far as it can, strives to imagine those things that increase or aid the body's power of acting (III, 12).

Given that representations do not correspond to things in an adequate manner, we find ourselves involved in false judgements; by obeying to the force of things which we wrongly suppose to dominate, we end up achieving the opposite of what is desirable, thus finding ourselves in a state of impotence. Therefore, a passion is nothing but an inadequate expression of desire which relies on a fantasy, an imaginary object, and not on an actual thing.

The two essential feelings of love and hate derive from the two fundamental passions of joy and sadness – whose passive and thereby imperfect character is due to the fact that they are always subjected to fluctuations; an entire combinatory of affective life, together with the fortuitousness of contradictory desires, follows in turn from love and hate. However, we are not forever condemned to inadequate representations in which the soul is passive and dominated by the imagination. Given the basic distinction between representation and affect, it is possible for us to draw adequate ideas from things without experiencing the passions which accompany them. Feelings cease to have a passive character as soon as we form clear and distinct ideas about them; there is no affection of the body of which we cannot form clear and distinct ideas (V, 3 and 4). At this point, we become active and are able to reverse the logics of modes by giving back to the mind its own power over the body. In such a way, we enter a "rational desire".

3. The Intellectual Love of God

3.1. Rational Desire

There are many connections between the Stoics' morality and Spinoza's ethics. Undoubtedly, if we consider *ataraxia* to be the aim of Stoicism, then the latter is irreconcilable with Spinozism. On the other hand, if its aim is to be identified with *Amor fati* – i.e. to desiring that which occurs,

to a voluntary adherence of man to his destiny – then Stoicism is very proximate to what Spinoza defines as "impassibility", that is, an active adhesion to the necessity of Nature which brings about a feeling of actual joy and fulfilment.

Indeed, rational desire is a *desire* and not its negation or submission to the intellect. However, it finds a guide in reason and in so doing it becomes autonomous and active; it ceases to be determined by external affects and searches all stimuli for acting within itself, that is, from its own essence. Since the correct ethical criterion is always provided by the degree of power, one should not define those who cannot achieve the freedom of autonomy as guilty but as impotent, as incapable of mastering the affects determined by external causes. This wisdom is not a form of intellectualism. It is not a matter of submitting passions to reason and eradicating the power of imagination as it is in the case of classical morality. On the contrary, only passions can act upon other passions. In other words, one must assign to the maxims of reason the force of persuasion which is proper to passions themselves. In this way, Spinoza resumes the Stoical practice according to which moral rules, i.e. *theoremata*, must be meditated upon so that they can become as customary for the body as they are for the mind. At this stage, the imagination places itself at the service of this intellectual force of persuasion thus contributing to reverse passivity into activity. Joy is the ethical passion *par excellence* and an actual criterion for moral action:

> A desire which arises from joy is stronger, other things equal, than one which arises from sadness (IV, 18).

The aim of ethics is indeed to grant desire its power and positivity. Therefore, Spinoza's morality is essentially positive: it is founded upon sympathy and generosity, it orients existence in accordance with that which is most desirable and does not depend on that which would be better to fear, run away from or prohibit. Spinoza inaugurates the modern critique of negative and interdictory morality which nourishes resentment and feeds bad conscience. Contrary to Christianity and other religious moralities (against which he had to defend himself throughout his own life), he condemns pity, humility and remorse as negative feelings which cause sadness.

3.2. The *Co-naissance*[3] of Man and God

In the case of rational desire, joy does not undergo any enhancement or diminution dependent upon the fortuitousness of affects: on the contrary, it follows from man's adjusting to his essence and from the latter's adjusting to the essence of Nature. Such is the blissfulness which accompanies the ultimate realisation of desire that Spinoza calls it "intellectual love of God": once again, this love should not be read in intellectualistic terms. Even if it relies on knowledge it is not a mere act of reason. It is a "third kind of knowledge": beyond the first level – that of confused ideas – and with the mediation of a second level – that of adequate ideas – this last kind of knowledge is nothing less than the knowledge of God himself. It is both the knowledge of God's nature, that is of its modes – mind and body – as perceived from the standpoint of their eternal essence, and the knowledge of Nature as God alone can intuit it. This act of intellection of Nature that produces a joy whose sole cause is God is itself an act of love. And yet, God is merged in an eternal enjoyment of himself and cannot love in return. The love of God is thus said to be "intellectual" in order to show how it leaves any demand of reciprocity – which creates the pathos of love – out of consideration. The infinite and eternal idea which God has of himself is nothing but intellectual love of himself. To put it with Spinoza: "God loves himself with an infinite intellectual love" (V, 35). From this, it follows that the mind's love for God participates in the love with which God loves himself:

> Insofar as God loves himself, he loves men, and consequently God's love of men and the mind's intellectual love of God are one and the same (V, 36, corollary).

In such a way Spinoza returns to the conclusions of the Plotinian mystics, even though it substitutes the infinite transcendence of God with his eternal immanence. This is why one could talk of a *co-naissance* of man, world and God within the reflexivity of the mind. The reflection of the wise man who knows Nature in an adequate manner and desires its necessity corresponds to an act of sanctification of the world which provides the mind with a feeling of eternity and divinises all that is.

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3 *Co-naissance* is an untranslatable pun on the French terms *connaissance* (knowledge) and *naissance* (birth). – *Trans.*

Here the laws of moral psychology finally find their true ethical meaning. By initially instituting the essential positivity of desire, Spinoza establishes that morality does not consist in running away from the evil or in fearing death; this attitude of the mind could eventually only lead to sadness and negative feelings. On the contrary, morality directly aims at that which gives more power and refuses to consider the essence of man as a "being-for-death"; up to Heidegger, the latter has indeed often been taken as the greatest ethical requirement:

> A free man thinks of nothing less than of death, and his wisdom is a meditation on life, not on death (IV, 67).

Spinoza's moral psychology finds its veritable dimension in the fifth book of the *Ethics*: its task is to give back to man the meaning of his eternity through the intellectual love of God and a participation in his joy. Such an eternity should not be located in any Beyond but consists instead in man's real being, which effectively participates in the eternal existence of God. The idea of a *co-naissance* of the world via the reflexivity of the mind will remerge in Hegel's thought. But the one thinker who drew all consequences from this affirmative philosophy of desire is certainly Nietzsche.

Translated by Lorenzo Chiesa

Pli 14 (2003), 53-57

Alain Badiou as a Reader of Spinoza[1]

PIERRE-FRANÇOIS MOREAU

The constant presence and importance of the figure of Spinoza in the work of Alain Badiou needs to be acknowledged – despite the criticisms that Badiou often levies against him. This was testified as recently as the prologue of Badiou's *Abrége de Métapolitique* (1998): in this text the 'philosopher as resistant' is linked to the shadow of Cavaillès, who (following in the wake of Canguilhem's assessment) fought in the Resistance because of logic and Spinozism.[2] In the remarks that follow, we will simply indicate some of the salient points in Badiou's trajectory as a reader of Spinoza.

Let us begin at the beginning, if not at the origin: in the midst of the 1960s, Louis Althusser published *For Marx* and then, in collaboration, *Reading Capital*. Both the collection of articles and the edition of the work undertaken in Althusser's seminar aimed at a renewal of the understanding of Marxism: without a doubt, they attained this goal in a manner that went far beyond their expectations. These three volumes[3] enjoyed an immense influence, and were read far beyond the restricted circle of philosophers, finding themselves at the centre of a whole host of polemics on the 'epistemological break', alienation, 'theoretical practice', and so on. In May 1967, Alain Badiou published in *Critique* an article entitled 'Le (re)commencement du matérialisme dialectique' 'The (Re)

1 [Article originally published in *Alain Badiou. Penser le multiple*, ed. by Charles Ramond (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2002), pp. 391-396. We would like to thank the author and Charles Ramond for permission to publish this translation.]

2 I must here refer the reader to the remarkable article by Mogens Laerke, 'The Voice and the Name: Spinoza in the Badioudian Critique of Deleuze', *Pli: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy* 8 (1999), pp. 86-99, as well as to the work in progress of Françoise Barbaras.

3 [The original unabridged French edition of *Lire le Capital* was published in two volumes by Éditions Maspero, in the series *Théorie*, run by Althusser himself.]

Commencement of Dialectical Materialism'[4] which, following the custom of this journal, is less a review in the strict sense than an original study – in which Badiou takes stock of the contemporary situation of Marxism, interprets Althusser's own interpretation (it is not simply a question of situating Althusser, but also of registering, with respect to certain questions, the points of opacity), and finally attempts to go further in the last pages, in order to resolve those difficulties whose solutions Althusser has yet to find, and which perhaps he has not even clearly formulated.

The undertaking represented by *For Marx* is defined in terms of what it gets rid of: the 'damaged goods' that try to pass for Marxism and which can be reduced to three categories: 'fundamental Marxism' (Garaudy and those 'theories' of alienation fascinated with the Young Marx), 'totalitarian Marxism' (the partisans of 'diamat'), and 'analogical Marxism' (Lukacs and Goldmann). Althusser is credited with a rigorous preoccupation to look for Marxism there where it is effectively found – in *Capital* – and with discovering Marx under the register of a rigorous epistemology, whose formulation here owes more to Spinoza and Kant than Bachelard. Why in fact should one evoke 'the rule that consigns to the imaginary every assumption of a totality'?[5] And further on recall 'that access to the totality is forbidden to us, which is what the first Kantian Critique rigorously established [...]'?[6] Besides, the two concepts that sum up the Hegelian enterprise (which at the time was considered as the continent to be abandoned in order to lay the foundations of historical materialism) are totality and negativity[7]; and against this totality, it is Kantian critique which already lays claim to validity: 'in many respects, the transcendental dialectic is the secret government behind the Althusserian polemic'; 'the theory of the production of knowledges [*connaissances*] is a sort of practical schematism. The philosophy of the concept, sketched out by Althusser as it had been by Cavaillès before him, bears a strong resemblance to the exhibition of the structured field of knowledge [*savoir*] as a multi-transcendental subject-less field'.[8] The

4 *Critique* 240 (May 1967), pp. 438-467. [This article is discussed at length in Bruno Bosteels, 'Alain Badiou's Theory of the Subject: Part I. The Recommencement of Dialectical Materialism?', *Pli: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy* 12 (2001), pp. 200-229.]

5 Ibid., p. 445.

6 Ibid., p. 466.

7 Ibid., pp. 466-467.

8 Ibid., p. 466.

critique of negativity is instead deciphered in Spinozist terms: the rejection of finality is opposed to expressive causality; the theory of the object-idea is opposed to spiritual interiority; the irreducibility of illusion is opposed to the freedom of the for-itself. It is indeed the first two or three first parts of the *Ethics* that can act as bulwarks against the principal danger posed by negativity, which is always ready to reinsert itself surreptitiously into Marxist discourse so as to pervert its rigour.

For what concerns the thorny problem of knowing in a given epoch (in each social formation) which is the determining instance or practice, is resolved by distinguishing – in a way that follows Marx's texts to the letter – between domination and determination: in each social formation, there is a dominant practice, whose definition depends on the specificity of the formation (here we recognise the classical reference of Antiquity to the political, of feudalism to the religious, and of capitalism to the economic); but the very distribution of these places is guaranteed by a single practice – which is determining even if it is not dominant: this is what is classically referred to as the economy's role of 'determination in the last instance'. The interest of this distinction obviously lies in the fact that it safeguards both the specificity of historical epochs and the central theses of Marxism. Nevertheless, what is characteristic here is the language in which this theory of determination is expressed: 'such a practice, like Spinoza's Nature, will be both structured and structuring'.[9]

It simply remains to indicate where the main 'gaps' in Althusser's undertaking are situated. Badiou locates them in the fact that Althusser's work is still rooted in that which it wants to break with,[10] as well as in the merely empirical acceptation of a plurality of instances which are ultimately not theoretically defined. This gives us the following problems:

– the status of dialectical materialism: Dialectical Materialism 'differs from an absolute knowledge a lot less than Althusser is willing to concede';[11]

– the absence of a response to the question 'are the structures where determination is exercised defined upon sets?'

9 Ibid., p. 456.

10 'Nevertheless, Althusser's interpretative work finds itself in a situation of caesura. In many respects, it is still governed by theoretical resentment, which sometimes blinds it to everything within it that testifies the presence of the philosophical, or even ideological, tradition' (ibid., p. 465).

11 Ibid., pp. 460-461.

This is why, besides economic practice and its presence as an instance within the whole 'there is a very enigmatic distortion/unification, whose first 'model' was doubtless provided by the Cartesian-Spinozist relation between God and the adequate idea of God. But here, like in Spinoza, the problem remains that of the deduction of the modes, that is, of 'what' is structured by the structure, of that upon which the structure is defined'.[12] Whence the necessity of a formal discipline like the theory of historical sets – all the more urgent inasmuch as 'by all sights, Althusser believes he can do without it', since he wishes to 'realise at once [...] a direct determination of the concept of structure that need not rely on any underlying sets'.[13] It is against this pre-theoretical naïveté that Badiou sketches out, within a mathematical register, what a complete construction of the concept of determination could be. I will not follow the detail of his reasoning here; what interests me is simply the statement of the philosophical condition required in order to confer rigour to the entire theory: reading Kant in Spinoza. 'Let us not be mistaken: Kant and Spinoza can be mentioned here to the precise degree that we suppress what could superficially bring them together: suppressed, Book V of the *Ethics*, in which the intellectual love of God restores a form of man's participation [*co-appartenance*] in the ultimate foundation; suppressed, the second Critique, in which freedom cuts a path toward the transphenomenal'.[14]

Spinoza's merit would thus lie in the critique of negativity; his sin in the re-opening of totality. I think this is the last time that Badiou will speak of Spinoza in such directly political terms. But he will speak of him again, as if to deepen and reverse this estimate.

On the side of totality, one can see his critique of Spinozism ascend from *Ethics* V to *Ethics* I, as if little by little the entire system were marked by this aspiration toward totality which in 1967 only characterised its conclusion. Incidentally, I think that, generally speaking, all readings of Spinoza that isolate *Ethics* V are doomed either to misunderstand the logic of the system or, if they are rigorous, sooner or later to retrace their steps and find in the first books the antecedents and connections that produce the last one.

12 Ibid., p. 461.
13 Ibid., p. 463.
14 Ibid., p. 467.

In 1982, in *Théorie du sujet* [*Theory of the Subject*], the Spinozist or Althusserian 'process without a subject' [*procès sans sujet*] is denounced as the 'epitome of the One'. It is now in the name of dialectics, which struggled to find its definition in the 1967 article, that Spinozist ontology is condemned. Simply put, in Spinoza himself there is 'the spectre of the two'; and it is Deleuze who is judged to represent the Spinozism of the multiple.[15]

In *L'Être et l'évènement* [*Being and Event*], and then in the 1993 conference 'L'Ontologie implicite de Spinoza' ['Spinoza's Implicit Ontology'],[16] we can see this possibility of the Two in Spinoza grow in significance – the body/soul relation finding itself grounded at a deeper level, in the difficulties associated with the infinite modes, and then especially in the infinite mode that is the divine understanding, or, to speak like Badiou, the intellect of God. In the 1993 conference, we witness the place for a subject being hollowed out, by the triple relation of causality/coupling/inclusion that circumscribes the irreducible character of the infinite intellect within the system: that Thought does not resemble the other attributes, that the divine intellect does not resemble the other infinite modes, and that the inclusion of finite intellects within the infinite intellect does not resemble any other relation defined by Spinozist ontology – each and every time an exorbitant trait signals a point of tension within the system.

We are therefore justified in thinking that the figures of totality and subjectivity have been inverted by Badiou: whereas thirty years ago the danger of totality pointed to the extreme edge of a problematic concerned with the critique of negativity conceived as subjectivity, we now see the Subject rise up in the impasses of a problematic centred on the One – or perhaps, haunting it like a spectre.

Translated by Alberto Toscano

15 'Dialectics states that there is the Two [*il y a du Deux*]. It proposes to infer from it the One as a division in movement. Metaphysics posits the One, and gets endlessly entangled trying to draw the Two out of it [...]. The ontology of the multiple is a metaphysics [...]. In Spinoza, who is a great philosopher, there passes the spectre of the Two: the attributes, thought and extension'; but this appearance is 'cancelled' by the determination of substance as constituted by an infinity of attributes – in other words, 'this Two is a disability of the multiple', since it is only the limitation of the human understanding that reduces its knowledge to that of two attributes. See *Théorie du sujet* (Paris: Seuil, 1982), pp. 40-41.
16 *Spinoza, Puissance et ontologie* (Paris: Kimé, 1994).

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Spinoza's Multiple / Deleuze's Multiplicity

STÉFAN LECLERCQ

The Spinozist multiple and the Deleuzian multiplicity, despite their etymological proximity, are, without doubt, interchangeable or assimilable only with great difficulty. They both originate in different universes of thought, from distinct powers of reflection, even though, as is known, Deleuze was a great reader of Spinoza. Nevertheless, the thought that there is no link between these two thinkers, or orders of thought, should be avoided. Quite the contrary. But if their thought is united, genealogically, it is on different points than those of *the multiple* and of *multiplicity*. What enjoins these two figures is, unquestionably, that which sets the multiple and multiplicity at play. The analysis of these two concepts will not necessarily unveil a *presence* of Spinoza's philosophy in the work of Gilles Deleuze, nor a Deleuzian presentiment at the heart of Spinozist discourse. Rather, a thought will become apparent in the space between, in the wave or in the fold of these two affirmations: the multiple and multiplicity. Far from a Spinozist-Deleuzian *identity* which would, at times, be delineated, it would be better to understand here the formation of a concept, or a group of concepts as *situation*, as the irruption of an a-subjective thought, a thought which no longer belongs to anyone. Is this not the fate of true creations? By dint of being conceived by the accumulation and conjunction of forms, of thoughts, and of matter, creation, like a bastard child, sees itself with so many fathers that it belongs to everybody: indefiniteness of origin as singular quality, beyond any chronology or any familialism.

The Liberation of the Multiple

The Deleuzian multiplicity is hardly an ensemble of unities on which other unities could be added without changing its nature. The Deleuzian multiplicity avoids numerical assemblage, transcended by a One which would impose on it both its origin and its motivation. Deleuze's multiplicity is much more a multiplicity *in itself*. It does not find its originality outside itself, even if it finds all its dynamics from outside, from the element which would come to be added.[1] What Deleuze gives to multiplicity is an autonomy. This autonomy should be understood as the singularisation of a multiple, and not as its identification, or its subjectivation. It takes, henceforth, the name of multiplicity. This autonomy thus bestowed on what becomes a *multiplicity* is nothing other than the possibility to *cut* any effect of transcendence on this ensemble. The singularisation of multiplicity breaks the power of the One on the multiple. That multiple has often appeared deprived of a proper motivation, disincarnated by a dominant, transcendent One, always in actuality. This because *that multiple* is only constituted by numerical unities as the always sensible effectuation of an impenetrable One-creator.[2] In this system, for it is a question of system, unity can be repeated, again and again, without changing the nature of the multiple or that of the One. If the shepherd transcends the flock, the flock is nothing without the shepherd. Each animal is one of the flock's elements, without a singularity which would incarnate it specifically. Henceforth, the being (*étance*) of the unity is outside itself, lodged in the forming One, or in the shepherd.[3] The One does not cease to transcend it, without its determination being affected.

The Deleuzian operation, so minuscule in its gesture, nevertheless creates an immense disruption. If the One thus stops affecting the unity, the unity will naturally find its motivation in itself. Without the shepherd the flock becomes a pack, where each of its elements exists by a difference which is singular to it. In this way the pack realises a certain degree of differentiation intrinsic to each animal. The pack is thus characterised by a power of differentiation raised to the power of x. Effectively, difference is productive of power, insofar as it is itself power

1 Deleuze & Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, Paris, Minuit, 1980, p.16.
2 Ibid., p.13.
3 Deleuze, *Différence & Répétition*, Paris, PUF, 1968, p.46.

without being truly actualised. If difference came to be actualised, it is difference in general which would come to fade away. It would be a little like an institutionalised difference, a little like a *difference-state apparatus*. The power of difference is what accredits it first a differentiation with itself, that is to say a perpetual creation of intensities and affects. If there is a power, that is a power to affect and to be affected, away from all actualisation as erection of qualities.[4]

Being is a power to affect and to be affected. It is intrinsically conceived by a principle of differentiation, allowing it a difference with itself, as well as a difference with another. This power to affect, doubled with a power of differentiation incarnates it in a non-determination immanent to its nature. How to determine that which does not stop changing? Being changes, and never stops changing, according to two criteria, movements (longitude) and intensity (latitude).[5] Being does not cease to move and to affect, to allow itself to be affected. The intrinsic difference, or specific difference animating it allows it a novel movement where even its form is indefatigably put into question again and again. What is the form of Being which cannot gesticulate anymore? Being can only be conceived by its longitudes and latitudes, eternal movements of intensities which can no longer be intensified. Hecceities. Being is an hecceity, individuation without form, or with a thousand forms, untimely and impregnable.[6]

Hecceity as Condition of Multiplicity

Every element of the sensible is hecceity. We see, in this concept, the interchange, or the union, of an ontology and an epistemology at work. Being and nature, *Deus sive natura*. In the end, being is not that different to the things that surround it. All form a pack, or a *multiplicity*, a multiple singularised by that which makes it. The pack, like every ensemble, is composed of elements which do not stop moving, redefining themselves perpetually according to new movements. Precarious latitudes and longitudes that give being a form which is new every time. The Deleuzian

4 Deleuze & Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, Paris, Minuit, p.154.
5 Deleuze & Parnet, *Dialogues*, Paris, Flammarion, 1996, p.112.
6 Deleuze & Guattari, op.cit., 1980, p.318. Hecceity is a concept of John Duns Scotus which Deleuze, as we shall see, takes up without keeping its original sense.

multiplicity cannot but move, it rests within a systematic indetermination where it finds its motivation, as well as its foundation: the plane of immanence.[7]

Deleuzian multiplicity is indeed determined the most by this indetermination at work. Indetermination is the motivation of all difference. There can be no conceptual determination that leaves its object determined. One cannot change by remaining the same, by leaving difference solely on the level of the accident. Understanding difference on the level of the accident, and thus of the sensible, means that being would remain faithful to itself in a difference transcended by it. Accepting the slight quotidian change without being changed by it would show rather well this type of accidental difference. Being determined by a dominated difference. On the contrary, a pure difference transforms with it both all beings and all of the sensible. Heterogeneous essence as pure ontology.

It is during his analysis of difference according to Aristotle that Deleuze shows best this principal difference at work as ontological condition.[8] It is known that, for Aristotle, all effort on the part of matter tends towards the form. The movement of matter, so well driven by the movement of movement, or motor, only works towards the realisation of form.[9] Form is the very accomplishment of the movement of matter. These created forms are like a *residue* of eternal forms, and thus the way to reach them, or at least to imagine them. But, objects Deleuze, in this production of forms there must be a process of differentiation at work, otherwise all forms would be identical. In order for matter, in the immanence of its movement, to *produce* difference, difference cannot be accidental, but must indeed be placed on the level of essences.[10] There must be, necessarily, a contrariety in the genus itself and not simply in its sensible effectuation. For a thing to be eminently different, different *in itself*, it is necessary that the process of differentiation animating it be placed on the level of being (*étance*), and not only on its realisation. Difference itself is at the origin of being (*étance*). The essence of a thing is necessarily composed of heterogeneous vectors whose assemblage authorises sensible realisation. The essence of Mercury, for example, is composed of "with feet" and "with wings". "With feet" and "with wings",

7 Deleuze, *Immanence: une vie*, Paris, Minuit 1995, pp.3-5.
8 Deleuze, op.cit., 1968, pp.45-49.
9 Aristotle, *Physics*, II, 193b.
10 Deleuze, op.cit., 1968, p.46.

as opposed qualities, are heterogeneously united to form Mercury. Mercury cannot exist without these two qualities of its figure. It founds then, if you like, a process of differentiation at the heart itself of the essence of Mercury.

Thus, difference is essential for the composition of essences, and authorises the realisation of the sensible. The object expresses, by its essences, its matter, and in its form, a difference which is intrinsic to it (specific difference). Difference is then an expression of form. But this difference at work cannot be an expression of form, and by reason of essence, other than on the condition that the essence of the thing remains within a living indetermination.[11] What changes, and has change as its vital process, may only give rise to an indeterminate form, itself always changing.

No doubt unfortunately, this concept of specific difference is only virtually at work in Aristotle's philosophy. This is for two reasons. To begin with, difference cannot be thought without a pure movement as dynamics of change and of specific difference. For this, a real movement is needed as a *substrate*. This substrate must be an essentially different movement, that is to say immanent, or better, pure immanence, to which the elements are related. On the contrary, the Aristotelian movement refers the movement immanent to things to a supreme movement, or prime mover. Immobile, ungenerated movement, it is the intelligible movement directing the infinity of sensible movements. At this stage, difference can no longer produce itself. It is transcended by this mover with strange qualities.[12] This intelligible movement , precisely by its uncommon qualities, relegates specific difference to the variety and the equivocity of the sensible. Moreover, the principle of categories prevents this specific difference from expressing itself and from being at the origin of expression of both form and matter. If the essence of an element remains indeterminate, it will find its effectuation in an always novel expression. If all things are blended in a prodigious chaos, they can only be distinguished as form or as thing by a singular expression incarnating them. Only the expression of a thing would offer it an individuation. If now a process of categorisation acts upon this chaos, aiming to classify and itemise things, difference would no longer be a question of internal expression but of the category itself. By the category, the thing finds its

11 Ibid., p.50.
12 Aristotle, *Physics*, VIII, 267a.

difference precisely in the category to which it belongs, and no longer by that specific difference which, even till now, was expressed in it.[13]

It is Duns Scotus, distant disciple of Aristotle, who will truly breathe specific difference into the heart of his master's thought. Judging, like a good student, that moved matter exhausts itself in form, Duns Scotus will see in it an absolute individuation which will finally resemble specific difference. If every thing possesses a form, and every thing is different, as a consequence every form is individuated so that it becomes distinguishable.[14] And, as we know, the sensible form is a *residue* of intelligible forms, that is to say it remains the primary means of knowledge of the intelligible. Thus, through the sensible form we can, as it were, swim back upstream. The individuated form holds a process of individuation as *objective finality* and thus allows us to understand essence itself as this process. What is important here, therefore, is to see a process, as concept, at work, and not, a little blandly, to follow an analogy that would allow us to compare the sensible with the intelligible form. For as soon as there is process at work, the process of individuation, it amounts to the same as seeing a concept, that of difference, effectuated.

This concept is that of hecceity in Duns Scotus's sense: a singular individuation as specific difference expressed in essences. This individuation, rendering things dissimilar, is entirely the expression of essence. Essence, if it is one, will not cease to express itself differently in all the objects of its creation. And if these expressions are different among themselves, they are all equal with regard to the essence, allowing it a differential incarnation in the sensible. The totality of these expressions in their relation with essence is named by Duns Scotus univocity.[15]

13 Deleuze, op.cit., 1968, p.50.
14 Duns Scotus, *Principle of Individuation*, question 4.
15 Deleuze, op.cit., p.57. See also: Stéfan Leclercq, *Héccéité et univocité. La présence de Jean Duns Scot dans l'oeuvre de Gilles Deleuze* (paper given at the Collège International de philosophie), Les Editions Sils Maria, forthcoming 2003. It must be added that it was Alain Badiou who first threw light on the univocity inherent in the work of Deleuze, as can especially be seen in *Difference and Repetition*, and *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*. See Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*

The Multiple and Singularities in Spinoza

For Spinoza, every unity is distinct. It can no longer form a set, or a group on which it would depend. Unity is not organised according to a *numericity* where it would lose both its meaning and its intrinsic value. For Spinozist unity, it is more of a question of organisations (*agencements*). Organisation with the other, thus organisation for the construction of nature, organisation also with God, without which nothing is done.

Every unity is distinct, because it is specified. It is specified insofar as it incarnates a specific essence. Essence is the cause of unity. Unity, in its turn is the expression of essence. Therein lies a beautiful organisation (*agencement*). Without a cause there is no unity, without expression there is no essence.[16] We can see established here a relation of a new type, one which cannot correspond to the usual transcendence between the thing and its essence.[17] Immanence is put in place. Here it is no longer a question of governing the thing and of installing, beginning with it, a creative hierarchy. With Spinoza, the world is constructed at the same time, in a unilateral relation between the different parties, like the essences, substances, modes, and attributes.[18] There is a common relation installed wherein each realises the common. This realisation of the common cannot, whatever one thinks, be realised on the same, on resemblance, on analogy. Quite the contrary, there is a concept of difference at work, which allows each of the *values* present to be what it is, perhaps,[19] but also to become what it becomes. This difference intrinsic to essences creates, as the expression of these essences, the *singular thing*.

All elements have things in common, and at the same time also very dissimilar things. The singular thing is not solely constituted by differences, even if only a singularity may give birth to the singular. Many

16 Spinoza, *Ethics*, II, XLV.

17 "Spinoza, the infinite becoming-philosopher. He showed, drew up, and thought the 'best' plane of immanence - that is, the purest, the one that does not hand itself over to the transcendent or restore any transcendent, the one which inspires the fewest illusions, bad feelings, and erroneous perceptions." Deleuze & Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, New York, Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 60.

18 Deleuze, *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*, Paris, Minuit, 1968, pp.9-11.

19 Spinoza, op.cit., II, XXXI.

things are curved like an egg, but everything is not an egg. There must necessarily be a difference at work even within the essences in order for the variety of the world to be established into a *multiple* world. The Spinozist multiple therefore is established on that which things have in common, *simultaneously* with that in which they differ. All things in the world are like siblings through this principle of essences as causes. Two or several things may form a multiple, and not a multiplicity, because they are similar. And this resemblance is indeed the same difference which is shared in common. Things are singularly the same for they are essentially different. What they have in common is a differential principle inspiring them, much rather than a resemblance by analogy. Nevertheless, if a thing is singular, that is because it is not totally different. There is a composition of the heterogeneous animating it.[20] The same and the different are united. But what things have primarily in common is that they are exercised by a concept of difference. The same as analogy is only sensible, equivocal, for a first kind of knowledge. The same and the different in the object is a *Chaosmosis*, as Félix Guattari would say, uniting the same and the diverse, order and chaos, movement and rest.[21]

Understanding this, that is to say, being infiltrated within the relations between things, within the link that comprehends both the thing and the unity, is, according to Spinoza, the second, and then the third kinds of knowledge. These kinds of knowledge allow the realisation of an adequate, that is a true and authentic idea.[22] True, then, is not the same, but the same united with difference. The adequate idea is the only one which can grasp essences and be united with them. It is because we are different, and because this difference realises us as expressions of an essence, that we belong to God and to Nature. God is himself Nature, as Spinoza has so well said. The multiple is indeed all these expressions both of essences and, consequently, of God, to which every being is united by its very difference.

This difference that all essences have in common and that all elements of the real impel constitutes the Spinozist *Plane of Immanence*. Difference

20 Ibid., II, VII.

21 Singular things are defined in terms of movement and rest. But this movement or rest is not obtained by the object itself but from another, from a conditioned singular thing. (Spinoza, op.cit., II, III). There is undoubtedly a connection to be made with the Heraclitean '*ta panta rhei*', as Aristotle describes it in *Metaphysics*, A 2-5.

22 Spinoza, op.cit., II, IV.

is no longer that which is *immanent to* the element or the thing. Difference, pushed to such a power, can no longer be the figure of the predicate, the attribute. This power is too strong, too ferocious, at the very heart of the creative process. Since immanence is pure power, as condition of the real, that which is created, engendered, is related to it. It is no longer a question of different things, but of a difference whose expression things realise. Difference is an immanence as condition of the real. At this stage, the view of difference as a *state,* or as a real principle of reality, must be avoided. That would only have the advantage of understanding difference as homogeneous, as showing solidarity with itself. That difference is only still an attribute adhering to the thing for the construction of an identity. On the contrary, if difference has indeed this ultimate power assigned to it, it does not stop being different to itself. If we say, for example, that colour marks the difference between things, then a blue sea, a pink sky are differentiated by their nuance – but this is still a differential attribute. But if this blue, or this pink, is never apparent in the same way, here turquoise, there navy blue, then the sky and the sea will undergo a constant differentiation with themselves, by a difference as condition of their existence. This difference cannot but change, and change the elements that it incarnates with it. The sea, or the sky, is related to this unstable blue in a constant, untimely difference at work. The immanent becomes immanence, plane of immanence, in a tumult of movements, variations, and intensities.[23]

Superposing the Planes

The essential for us today is not to understand Deleuze's thought correlatively with, in parallel to, Spinoza's. What is important is rather to know what these two thoughts organise together, and for us, under the order of the multiple and of multiplicity.

As we know, the *plane of immanence* is a Deleuzian concept. Perhaps the most important concept in Deleuze's philosophy, it nevertheless finds its motivation, as well as its effectuation, in Spinoza's light. In this respect

23 "For one becomes Spinozist without knowing it, arriving in the middle, truly Spinoza's place in philosophy: the construction of a plane of immanence made of speeds and slownesses, and affects." Deleuze, *Spinoza et nous*, in *Magazine Littéraire no.* 370, November 1998, p.50.

we could well call Deleuze a *Spinozist*, although his thought, and the concepts issued from it, cannot be reduced to this. Spinoza reveals to Deleuze the concept of the *plane of immanence* which he will employ in his reading of Spinoza but also, quite preciously, for the organisation of his own philosophy. This, eminently epistemological, plan comes to be doubled, or superposed, by a high ontological degree which constitutes its inevitable counterpart: univocity.[24] We cannot understand this Deleuzian plane of immanence in its inherent multiplicity without this univocity at its heart, uniting, on the same plane, being and Nature. Immanence and univocity are inseparable, without the risk of truncating a just understanding of Deleuzian thought.

We can well see the degree to which immanence and univocity are simultaneously constructed, how they participate in the same motivation, and similar determinations. Being is composed of distinct, differential expressions which, though different between them, are no less equal in the relation to being which they compose (univocity). At the same time, difference is expressed as condition of the thing, according to speeds, movements, and affects. Speeds, movements, and affects are the expression of difference in the thing, and in difference itself. This difference at work realises what all things have in common. But this difference is far from being a difference located in the sensible, as accident, a difference as exercised attribute of the thing. Because this difference is at the origin of things, it is conceptual, transcendental. It acts on things and does not accompany them. An intrinsic difference therefore, like that which all things have in common, may be understood as *plane of immanence.*

Immanence and univocity indeed participate in the same process of differentiation, in being and in things. Being and things share this difference as world order, as the One-all of the universe.[25] Attempt at an installation of a true *cosmology.* Multiplicity, affects, movements, intensities. Pure immanence to which everything is related, expression of being as differences: multiplicity can thus, finally, express itself.

Translated by Hector Kollias

24 A plane can never be understood on its own, just as a concept, on its own, without links to other concepts, remains an abstraction.

25 This One-all is pure immanence at work. A true multiplicity: a One whose very being is difference and multiplicity. For the opposition of the Deleuzian One-all to the Platonic and neo-Platonic One, see: Deleuze & Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* Minuit, 1991, pp.46-47.

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Subtraction: Jewish and Christian

SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK

When we are dealing with an erotic-religious text like *The Song of Songs*, commentators hurry to warn us that its extreme and explicit erotic imagery is to be read allegorically, as a metaphor: say, when, in the poem, the lover kisses the woman's lips, this 'really means' that He imparts on the Jews the Ten Commandments. In short, what appears as the description of a 'purely human' sexual encounter, symbolically renders the spiritual communion of God and the Jewish people. However, the most perspicuous Bible scholars themselves are the first to emphasize the limits of such a metaphorical reading which dismisses the described sensual content as 'only a simile': it is precisely such a 'symbolic' reading which is 'purely human', i.e., which persists in the external opposition of the symbol and its meaning, clumsily attaching a 'deeper meaning' to the explosive sexual content. The literal reading (say, of *The Song of Songs* as almost pornographic eroticism) and the allegorical reading are the two sides of the same operation: what they share is the common presupposition that 'real' sexuality is 'purely human', with no divine dimension discernible in it. (Of course, the question arises here: if sexuality is just a metaphor, why do we need this problematic detour in the first place? Why do we not directly render the true spiritual content? Because, due to the limitations of our sensual finite nature, this content is not directly accessible to us?). What, however, if *The Song of Songs* is *not* to be read as an allegory, but, much more literally, as the description of a purely sensual erotic play? What if the 'deeper' spiritual dimension is already operative in the passionate sexual interaction itself? The true task is thus not to reduce sexuality to a mere allegory, but to unearth the inherent 'spiritual' dimension which forever separates human sexuality from animal coupling. Is it, however, possible to accomplish this step from

allegory to full identity in Judaism? Is this not what Christianity is about, with its assertion of the direct identity of God and man?[1]

There is a further problem with *The Song of Songs*. The standard defence of 'psychoanalytic Judaism' against Christianity involves two claims: first, it is only in Judaism that we encounter the anxiety of the traumatic Real of the Law, of the abyss of the Other's desire ('What do you want?'); Christianity covers up this abyss with love, i.e., the imaginary reconciliation of God and humanity in which the anxiety-provoking encounter with the Real is mitigated – now we know what the Other wants from us – God loves us, Christ's sacrifice is the ultimate proof of it... Second claim: do texts like *The Song of Songs* not demonstrate that, far from being (only) a religion of anxiety, Judaism is also and above all the religion of love, an even more intense love than Christianity? Is the covenant between God and the Jewish people not a supreme act of love? However, as we have just indicated, this Jewish love remains 'metaphoric'; as such, it is itself the imaginary reconciliation of God and humanity in which the anxiety-provoking encounter with the Real is mitigated. Or, to put it in a direct and brutal way, is *The Song of Songs* not ideology at its purest, insofar as we conceive of ideology as the imaginary mitigating of a traumatic Real, as 'the Real of the divine encounter with a human face'?

How, then, do we pass from here to Christianity proper? The key to Christ is provided by the figure of Job, whose suffering prefigures that of Christ. What makes the *Book of Job* so provocative is not simply the presence of multiple perspectives without a clear resolution of their tension (the fact that Job's suffering involves a different perspective than that of religious reliance on God); Job's perplexity resides in the fact that he experiences God as an impenetrable Thing, uncertain as to what He wants from him with the ordeals to which he is submitted (the Lacanian '*Che vuoi?*'), and, consequently, that he – Job – is unable to ascertain how he fits into the overall divine order, unable to recognize his place in the divine order.

The almost unbearable impact of the *Book of Job* resides not so much in its narrative frame (the Devil appears in it as a conversational partner of

1 Is Catholic celibacy (the prohibition of priest's and nun's marriage) not ultimately anti-Christian, a remainder of *pagan* attitude? Does it not rely on the pagan notion that those who sacrifice terrestrial sexual pleasures thereby gain access to the divine *jouissance*?

God, and the two engage in a rather cruel experiment in order to test Job's faith), but in its final outcome. Far from providing some kind of satisfactory account of Job's undeserved suffering, God's appearance at the end ultimately amounts to pure boasting, a horror show with elements of farcical spectacle – a pure argument of authority grounded in breathtaking display of power: 'You see all that I can do? Can you do this? Who are you then to complain?'. So what we get is neither the good God letting Job know that his suffering is just an ordeal destined to test his faith, nor a dark God beyond Law, the God of pure caprice, but rather a God who acts as someone caught in the moment of impotence, weakness at least, and tries to escape his predicament by empty boasting. What we get at the end is a kind of cheap Hollywood horror show with lots of special effects – no wonder that many commentators tend to dismiss Job's story as a remainder of the previous pagan mythology which should have been excluded from the Bible.

Against this temptation, one should locate the true greatness of Job with precision: contrary to the usual notion of Job, he is *not* a patient sufferer, enduring his ordeal with the firm faith in God – on the contrary, he complains all the time, rejecting his fate (like Oedipus at Colonus, who is also usually misperceived as a patient victim resigned to his fate). When the three theologian-friends visit him, their line of argumentation is the standard ideological sophistry (if you suffer, it is by definition that you *must have* done something wrong, since God is just). However, their argumentation is not limited to the claim that Job must be somehow guilty: what is at stake at a more radical level is the meaning(lessness) of Job's suffering. Like Oedipus at Colonus, Job insists on the utter *meaninglessness* of his suffering – as the title of *Job* 27 says: 'Job Maintains His Integrity'.[2] As such, the *Book of Job* provides what is perhaps the first exemplary case of the critique of ideology in the human history, laying bare the basic discursive strategies of legitimising suffering: Job's properly ethical dignity resides in the way he persistently rejects the notion that his suffering can have any meaning, either punishment for his past sins or the trial of his faith, against the three theologians who bombard him with possible meanings – and, surprisingly,

2 According to Jung, in the conscious suffering of Christ, God atones for the suffering of Job: 'for, just as man must suffer from God, so God must suffer from man. Otherwise there can be no reconciliation between the two' (C.G. Jung, *Answer to Job* (Princeton: Bollingen 1958), p. 39). The framework is here still that of exchange: one suffering for the other...

God takes his side at the end, claiming that every word that Job spoke was true, while every word of the three theologians was false.

And it is with regard to this assertion of the meaninglessness of Job's suffering that one should insist on the parallel between Job and Christ, on Job's suffering announcing the Way of the Cross: Christ's suffering is *also* meaningless, not an act of meaningful exchange. The difference, of course, is that, in the case of Christ, the gap that separates the suffering desperate man (Job) from God is transposed into God himself, as His own radical splitting or, rather, self-abandonment. What this means is that one should risk a much more radical reading of Christ's 'Father, why did you forsake me?' than the usual one: since we are dealing here not with the gap between man and God, but with the split in God himself, the solution cannot be for God to (re)appear in all his majesty, revealing to Christ the deeper meaning of his suffering (that he was the Innocent sacrificed to redeem humanity). Christ's 'Father, why did you forsake me?' is not the complaint to the *omnipotent* capricious God-Father whose ways are indecipherable to us, mortal humans, but the complaint which hints at the *impotent* God: it is rather like the child who, after believing in his father's powerfulness, discovers with horror that his father cannot help him. (To evoke an example from recent history: at the moment of Christ's crucifixion, God-the-Father is in a position somewhat similar to that of the Bosnian father, made to witness the gang rape of his own daughter, and to endure the ultimate trauma of her compassionate-reproaching gaze: 'Father, why did you forsake me?'...). In short, with this 'Father, why did you forsake me?', it is God-the-Father who effectively dies, revealing his utter impotence, and thereupon rises from the dead in the guise of the Holy Ghost.

Why did Job keep his silence after the boastful appearance of God? Is this ridiculous boasting (the pompous battery of 'Were you there when...' rhetorical questions: 'Who is this whose ignorant words / Smear my design with darkness? / Were you there when I planned the earth, / Tell me, if you are so wise?'(*Job* 38:2-5)) not the very mode of appearance of its opposite, to which one can answer by simply saying: '*OK*, if you can do all this, *why did you let me suffer in such a meaningless way*?'. Do God's thundering words not render all the more palpable his silence, the absence of an answer? What, then, if *this* was what Job perceived and what kept him silent: he remained silent neither because he was crushed by God's overwhelming presence, nor because he wanted thereby to signal

his continuous resistance, i.e. the fact that God avoided answering Job's question, but because, in a gesture of silent solidarity, he perceived the divine impotence. God is neither just nor unjust, but simply impotent. What Job suddenly understood is that *it was not him, but God himself who was effectively on trial in Job's calamities*, and he failed the test miserably. Even more pointedly, one is tempted to risk a radical anachronistic reading: Job foresaw God's own future suffering – 'Today it's me, tomorrow it will be your own son, and there will be no one to intervene for *him*. What you see in me now is the pre-figuration of your own passion!'.[3]

Since the function of the obscene superego supplement of the (divine) Law is to mask this impotence of the big Other, and since Christianity *reveals* this impotence, it is, quite consequently, the first (and only) religion to radically leave behind the split between the official/public text and its obscene initiatory supplement: in it, there is no hidden untold story. In this precise sense, Christianity is the religion of Revelation: everything is revealed in it, no obscene superego supplement accompanies its public message. In old Greek and Roman religions, the public text was always supplemented by secret initiatory rituals and orgies; all attempts to treat Christianity in the same way (to uncover Christ's 'secret teaching' somehow encoded in the New Testament or found in apocryphal Gospels) amount to its heretic re-inscription into the pagan Gnostic tradition.

Apropos Christianity as 'revealed religion', one should thus ask the inevitable stupid question: what is effectively revealed in it? That is to say, is it not that *all* religions reveal some mystery, through the prophets who carry the divine message to humans? (Even those who insist on the impenetrability of the *dieu obscur* imply that there is some secret which

3 As for the 'Jewish exception', one is thus tempted to risk a radical rereading of Freud, who attributed to Jews the disavowal of the primordial crime (the parricide of Moses): what if even alternative Freudian readings which propose the hypothesis of a displaced crime (effectively, it was Moses himself who was guilty of the 'parricide' by killing the pharaoh) are wrong? What if Moses' true crime was not the murder, but the *humiliation* of the pharaoh, the public display of his impotence? Is this not worse than a direct killing: after the killing, the father returns as the ideal agency of the Law, while the humiliated father just survives as a ridiculous impotent excrement? What if this humiliation of the father was the precondition for establishing Judaism as the first great religion which, originally and for most of its existence, was *not* a state religion, but the religion of a group without a state identity? And, furthermore, what if *this* is what renders the idea of the State of Israel problematic?

does not resist revelation, and in the Gnostic versions, this mystery *is* revealed to the selected few in some initiatory ceremony). Significantly, Gnostic re-inscriptions of Christianity insist precisely on the presence of such a hidden message to be deciphered in the official Christian text. So what is revealed in Christianity is not just the entire content, but, more specifically, that *there is nothing – no secret – to be revealed behind it.* To paraphrase Hegel's famous formula from his *Phenomenology*, behind the curtain of the public text, there is only what we put there. Or, to formulate it even more pointedly, in more pathetic terms, what God reveals is not his hidden power, but only his impotence as such.

Where, then, does Judaism stand with regard to this opposition? Is it not that God's final appearance in the Job story, in which he boasts about the miracles and monsters he generated, is precisely such an obscene fantasmatic spectacle destined to cover this impotence? However, things are here more complex. In his discussion of the Freudian figure of Moses, Eric Santner introduces the key distinction between symbolic history (the set of explicit mythical narratives and ideologico-ethical prescriptions that constitute the tradition of a community, what Hegel would have called its 'ethical substance') and its obscene Other, the unacknowledgeable 'spectral', fantasmatic secret history that effectively sustains the explicit symbolic tradition, but has to remain foreclosed if it is to be operative.[4] What Freud endeavours to reconstitute in his Moses book (the story of the murder of Moses, etc.) is such a spectral history that haunts the space of Jewish religious tradition. One becomes a full member of a community not simply by identifying with its explicit symbolic tradition, but only when one also assumes the spectral dimension that sustains this tradition, the undead ghosts that haunt the living, the secret history of traumatic fantasies transmitted 'between the lines', through the lacks and distortions of the explicit symbolic tradition – as Fernando Pessoa put it: 'Every dead man is probably somewhere still alive'. Judaism's stubborn attachment to the unacknowledged violent founding gesture that haunts the public legal order as its spectral supplement, enabled the Jews to persist and survive for thousands of years without land and common institutional tradition: they refused to give up their ghost, to cut off the link to their secret, disavowed tradition. The paradox of Judaism is that it maintains fidelity to the founding violent Event precisely by *not* confessing, symbolizing it:

4 See Eric Santner, 'Traumatic Revelations: Freud's Moses and the Origins of Anti-Semitism', in *Sexuation*, ed. by Renata Salecl (Durham: Duke UP, 2000).

this 'repressed' status of the Event is what gives Judaism its unprecedented vitality.

Does, however, this mean that the split between the 'official' texts of the Law with their abstract legal asexual character (Torah – the Old Testament; Mishna – the formulation of the Laws; and Talmud – the commentary of the Laws, all of them supposed to be part of the divine Revelation on the Mount Sinai), and Kabbalah (this set of the deeply sexualised obscure insights to be kept secret – recall the notorious passages about the vaginal juices) reproduces within Judaism the tension between the pure symbolic Law and its superego supplement, the secret initiatory knowledge? A crucial line of separation is to be drawn here between the Jewish fidelity to the disavowed ghosts and the pagan obscene initiatory wisdom accompanying the public ritual: the disavowed Jewish spectral narrative does not tell the obscene story of God's impenetrable omnipotence, but its exact opposite: the story of His *impotence* covered by the standard pagan obscene supplements. The secret to which the Jews remain faithful is the horror of the divine impotence – and it is *this* secret which is 'revealed' in Christianity. This is the reason why Christianity can only occur after Judaism: it reveals the horror first confronted by the Jews. It is thus only through taking into account this line of separation between paganism and Judaism that one can properly grasp the Christian breakthrough itself.

What this means is that, in forcing us to face the abyss of the Other's desire (in the guise of the impenetrable God), in refusing to cover up this abyss with a determinate fantasmatic scenario (articulated in the obscene initiatory myth), Judaism confronts us for the first time with the paradox of human freedom. There is no freedom outside the traumatic encounter with the opacity of the Other's desire: freedom does not mean that I simply get rid of the Other's desire – I am as it were thrown into my freedom when I confront this opacity as such, deprived of the fantasmatic cover which tells me what the Other wants from me. In this difficult predicament, full of anxiety, when I know *that* the Other wants something from me, without knowing *what* this desire is, I am thrown back into myself, compelled to assume the risk of freely determining the coordinates of my desire.

According to Rosenzweig, the difference between Jews and Christian believers is not that the latter experience no anxiety, but that the focus of anxiety is displaced: Christians experience anxiety in the intimacy of their

contact with God (like Abraham?), while for Jews, anxiety arises at the level of their being a collective entity without a proper land, threatened in its existence.[5] And, perhaps, one should establish here a link with the weak point of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* (the 'illegitimate' passage from individual being-towards-death and assuming one's contingent fate to the historicity of a collective): it is *only* in the case of the Jewish people that such a passage from individual to collective level would have been 'legitimate'.

In what, then, does the Christian community differ from the Jewish one? Paul conceives of the Christian community as the new incarnation of the chosen people: it is Christians who are the true 'children of Abraham'. What was, in its first incarnation, a distinct ethnic group, is now a community of free believers which suspends all ethnic divisions (or, rather, cuts a line of separation *within* each ethnic group) – the chosen people are those who have faith in Christ. We have thus a kind of *'transubstantiation' of the chosen people*: God kept his promise of redemption to the Jewish people, but, in the process itself, he changed the identity of the chosen people. The theoretical (and political) interest of this notion of community is that it provides the first example of a collective which is not formed and held together through the mechanism described by Freud in his *Totem and Taboo* and *Moses and Monotheism* (the shared guilt of the parricide) – are not further versions of this same collective the revolutionary party and the psychoanalytic society? 'Holy Ghost' designates a new collective held together not by a Master-Signifier, but by the fidelity to a Cause, by the effort to draw a new line of separation which runs 'beyond Good and Evil', i.e., which runs across and suspends the distinctions of the existing social body. The key dimension of Paul's gesture is thus his break with any form of communitarianism: his universe is no longer that of the multitude of groups which want to 'find their voice' and assert their particular identity, their 'way of life', but that of a fighting collective grounded in the reference to an unconditional universalism.

How, then, does the Christian subtraction relate to the Jewish one? That is to say, is a kind of subtraction not inscribed into the very Jewish identity? Is this not why the Nazis wanted to kill them all: because, among all the nations, Jews are 'the part that is no part', not simply a nation

5 See Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985).

among nations, but a remainder, that which has no proper place in the 'order of nations'? And, of course, therein resides the structural problem of the State of Israel: can one form out of this remainder a State like others? It was already Rosenzweig who made this point:

But Judaism, and it alone in all the world, maintains itself by subtraction, by contraction, by the formation of ever new remnants. [...] In Judaism, man is always somehow a survivor, an inner something, whose exterior was seized by the current of the world and carried off while he himself, what is left of him, remains standing on the shore. Something within him is waiting.[6]

Jews are thus a remainder in a double sense: not only a remainder with regard to the set of 'normal' nations, but also, on top of this, a remainder *with regard to themselves*, a remainder *in and of themselves* – the rest, that which remains and persists after all the persecutions and annihilations. These two dimensions are strictly correlated: if Jews were to be only a remainder in the first (external) sense, they would form just another self-identical ethnic group. So when Jews are conceived of as a remainder, we should be very precise in defining that with regard to what they are a remainder: of course, of themselves, *but also of humanity as such*, insofar as it was abandoned by God. It is as such, as 'out of place', that Jews are the place-holders of universal humanity as such. And it is only against this background that the Paulinian 'transubstantiation' of the Chosen People (no longer only Jews – a particular ethnic group – but anyone, irrespective of his/her origins, who recognizes himself/herself in Christ) can be properly understood: Paul, as it were, just switches back to the universality, i.e., for him, Christians are the remainder of humanity. In other words, *we are all, humanity entire, considered as redeemed, as a rest* – but of what?

Here, one should return to the Hegelian point that every universal Whole is divided into its Part (particular species) and its Rest. The Part (particular as opposed to universal) is the obscene element of existence –

6 Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, pp. 404-405. Of course, I owe this quote to Eric Santner, who developed in detail this notion of Jewish identity in his outstanding *Psychotheology of Everyday Life*. Interestingly, this notion of being a remainder is also part of the traditional Slovene national identity; the traumatic cut in the Slovene history is the counter-Reformation offensive in the late 16th century, as the result of which one third of the Slovenes were killed, one third emigrated into Germany in order to remain Protestants, and the remainder, the scum who compromised their fidelity, are the existing Slovenes...

say, at the level of the law, the obscene unwritten supplement that sustains the actual existence of the universal Law, the Law as an operative power. Recall the tension between universal and particular in the use of the term 'special': when one says 'We have special funds!', it means illegal or at least secret funds, not just a special section of the public funds; when a sexual partner says 'Do you want something special?', it means a non-standard 'pervert' practice; when a policeman or journalist refers to 'special measures in interrogation', it means torture or other similar illegal pressures. (And were not, in the Nazi concentration camps, the units which were kept apart and used for the most horrifying job of killing and cremating thousands and disposing of the bodies, called *Sonderkommando*, special units?). In Cuba, the difficult period after the disintegration of the Eastern European Communist regimes is also referred to as the 'special period'.

Along the same lines, one should celebrate the genius of Walter Benjamin which shines through in the very title of his early essay 'On Language in General and Human Language in Particular'. The point here is not that human language is a species of some universal language 'as such' which comprises also other species (language of gods and angels? animal language? the language of some other intelligent beings out there in space? computer language? the language of the DNA?): there is no actually-existing language other than human language – but, in order to comprehend this 'particular' language, one *must* introduce a minimal difference, conceiving it with regard to the gap which separates it from language 'as such' (the pure structure of language deprived of the insignia of human finitude, of erotic passions and mortality, of the struggles for domination and the obscenity of power). The particular language is thus the 'really-existing language', language as the series of actually uttered statements, in contrast to the formal linguistic structure. This Benjaminian lesson is the lesson missed by Habermas: what Habermas does is precisely what one should *not* do – he posits the ideal 'language in general' (the pragmatic universals) *directly* as the norm of the actually-existing language. So, along the lines of Benjamin's title, one should describe the basic constellation of the social law as that of the 'Law in general and its obscene superego underside in particular'... The 'Part' as such is thus the 'sinful', unredeemed and unredeemable aspect of the Universal – to put it in actual political terms, every politics that grounds itself in the reference to some substantial (ethnic, religious, sexual, life-style...) particularity is by definition reactionary. Consequently, the division introduced and

sustained by the emancipatory ('class') struggle is *not* the one between two particular classes of the Whole, but the one between the Whole-in-its-parts and its Remainder which, within the Particulars, stands for the Universal, for the Whole 'as such', opposed to its parts.

Or, to put it in yet another way, one should bear in mind here the two aspects of the notion of remnant: 'Rest' as what remains after subtraction of all particular content (elements, specific parts of the Whole), and 'rest' as the ultimate result of the subdivision of the Whole into its parts; when, in the final act of subdivision, we no longer get two particular parts or elements, two Somethings, but a Something (the Rest) and a Nothing. In this precise sense, one should say that, from the perspective of Redemption (of the 'Last Judgement'), the unredeemed part is irrevocably lost, thrown into nothingness – all that remains is precisely the Remainder itself. This, perhaps, is how one should read the motto of the proletarian revolution 'We were nothing, we want to become All' – from the perspective of Redemption: that which, within the established order, counts as nothing, the remainder of this order, its part of no part, will become All...

The structural homology between the old Jewish or Paulinian Messianic time and the logic of the revolutionary process is crucial here: 'The future is no future without this anticipation and the inner compulsion for it, without this 'wish to bring about the Messiah before his time' and the temptation to 'coerce the kingdom of God into being'; without these, it is only a past distended endlessly and projected forward'.[7] Do these words not fit perfectly Rosa Luxemburg's description of the necessary illusion that pertains to a revolutionary act? As she emphasizes against the revisionists, if one waits for the 'right moment' to start a revolution, this moment will never arrive – one has to take the risk and precipitate oneself into the revolutionary attempts, since it is only through a series of 'premature' attempts (and their failure) that the (subjective) conditions for the 'right' moment are created.

Agamben maintains that Paul only became readable in the 20th century, through Walter Benjamin's 'Messianic Marxism': the clue to Paul's 'end of time' is provided by the revolutionary state of emergency. This state of emergency is to be strictly opposed to today's liberal-totalitarian emergency of the 'war on terror': when a state institution proclaims the state of emergency, it does so by definition as part of a desperate strategy

7 Rosenzweig, p. 227.

to *avoid* the true emergency and to return to the 'normal course of things'. Recall a feature of all reactionary proclamations of the 'state of emergency': they were all directed *against* popular unrest (or 'confusion') and presented as a decision to restore normalcy. In Argentina, in Brazil, in Greece, in Chile, in Turkey, the military proclaimed the state of emergency in order to curb the 'chaos' of overall politicization: 'This madness must stop, people should return to their everyday jobs, the work must go on!'.

In some sense, one can effectively argue that, today, we *are* approaching a kind of 'end-time': the self-propelling explosive spiral of global capitalism does seem to point towards a moment of (social, ecological, and even subjective) collapse in which total dynamism and frantic activity will coincide with a deeper immobility. History will be abolished in the eternal present of multiple narrations; nature will be abolished in its biogenetic disposability; the very permanent transgression of the norm will assert itself as the unconditional norm... However, the question 'When does ordinary time get caught in the messianic twist?' is a misleading one: one cannot deduce the emergence of messianic time through an 'objective' analysis of historic process. 'Messianic time' ultimately stands for the intrusion of subjectivity irreducible to the 'objective' historical process, which means that *at any point*, things can take a messianic turn, time can turn 'dense'.

The time of the Event is not another time beyond and above the 'normal' historical time, but a kind of inner loop within this time. Recall one of the standard plots of the time travel narratives: the hero travels into the past in order to intervene into it and thus change the present; afterwards, he discovers that the emergence of the present he wanted to change was triggered precisely *through* his intervention – his time travel was already included in the run of things. What we have here, in this radical closure, is thus not simply complete determinism, but a kind of absolute determinism which includes in advance our free act. When we observe the process from a distanced vantage point, it appears to unfold in a straight line; however, what we lose from our sight are the subjective inner loops that sustain this 'objective' straight line. Which is why the question 'In what circumstances does the condensed time of the Event emerge?' is a false one: it involves the re-inscription of the Event back into the positive historical process. That is to say, one cannot establish the time of the explosion of the Event through a close 'objective' historical

analysis (in the style of: 'when objective contradictions reach such a level, things will explode'): there is no Event outside the engaged subjective decision that creates it – if one waits for the time to become ripe for the Event, the Event will never occur. Recall the October Revolution: the moment when its authentic revolutionary urgency was exhausted was precisely the moment when, in theoretical discussion, the topic of different stages of socialism, of the transition from the lower to a higher stage, took over – at this point, revolutionary time proper was re-inscribed into linear and 'objective' historical time, with its phases and transitions between phases. In contrast to it, authentic revolution always occurs in an absolute Present, in the unconditional urgency of a Now.

It is in this precise sense that, in an authentic revolution, predestination overlaps with radical responsibility: the true hard work awaits us on the morning after, once the enthusiastic revolutionary explosion is over and we are confronted with the task of translating this explosion into a new Order of Things, of drawing the consequences from it, of remaining faithful to it. In other words, the truly difficult work is not that of the silent preparation, of creating the conditions for the Event of the revolutionary explosion; the earnest work begins *after* the Event, when we ascertain that 'it is accomplished'...[8]

The shift from Judaism to Christianity with regard to the Event is best encapsulated with regard to the status of the Messiah: in contrast to Jewish Messianic expectation, the basic Christian stance is that *the expected Messiah has already arrived*, i.e. that we are already redeemed: the time of nervous expectations, of precipitously overcoming oneself towards the expected Arrival, is over, *we live in the aftermath of the Event, everything – the Big Thing – already happened.*[9] Paradoxically, of course, the result of this Event is not atavism ('It already happened, we are redeemed, so let us just rest and wait...'), but, on the contrary, an extreme urgency to act: it happened, *so now we have to bear the almost unbearable burden of*

8 And it is perhaps at this level that we should also approach the old question, which lately seems to regain its actuality, of the line of separation between animal and man: at the level of positive being, there is no difference, man is just an animal with specific properties and abilities; it is only from the engaged position of being caught in the process of subjectivation that the difference becomes palpable.

9 Perhaps the most succinct answer to Christianity, to the Christian notion that the Messiah is already here, was provided by Kafka's claim that the Messiah definitely will arrive, but too late, when humanity will already be tired of waiting for him and his arrival will no longer matter, thereby leaving people indifferent.

living up to it, of drawing the consequences of the Act... 'Man proposes, God disposes' – man is incessantly active, intervening, but it is the divine act which decides upon the outcome. With Christianity, it is the obverse – not 'God proposes, man disposes', but its inversion: 'God [first] disposes, [and then] man proposes'. It is waiting for the arrival of the Messiah which constrains us to the passive stance of, precisely, waiting, while the arrival functions as a signal that triggers activity.

What this means is that the usual logic of the 'cunning of reason' (we act, intervene, yet we cannot ever be sure of the true meaning and ultimate outcome of our acts, since it is the decentred big Other, the substantial symbolic Order, that decides) is also strangely turned around – to put it in Lacanian terms, it is humanity, not God, which is here the big Other. It is God himself who made a Pascalian wager: by dying on the cross, he made a risky gesture with no guaranteed final outcome, i.e., he provided us – humanity – with the empty S_1, Master-Signifier, and it is to humanity to supplement it with the chain of S_2. Far from providing the conclusive dot on the 'i', the divine act stands instead for the openness of a New Beginning, and it is to humanity to live up to it, to decide its meaning, to make something of it. It is like a Predestination that condemns us to frantic activity: the Event is a *pure and empty sign*, and we have to work to generate its meaning. 'The Messiah is here' points towards the terrible *risk of revelation*: what 'Revelation' means is that God took upon himself the risk of putting everything at stake, of fully 'existentially engaging himself' by way of, as it were, stepping into his own picture, becoming part of creation, exposing himself to the utter contingency of existence. One is almost tempted to refer here to the Hegelian-Marxian opposition of formal and actual subsumption: through the Event (of Christ), we are *formally* redeemed, subsumed under Redemption, and we have to engage in the difficult work of actualising it. The true Openness is not that of undecidability, but that of living in the aftermath of the Event, of drawing out the consequences – of what? Precisely of the new space opened up by the Event.

What this means, in theological terms, is that it is not us, men, who can rely on the help of God – on the contrary, *we must help God*. It was Hans Jonas who developed this notion, referring to the diaries of Etty Hillesum, a young Jewish woman who in 1942 voluntarily reported to a concentration camp in order to be of help there and share the fate of her people: 'Only this one thing becomes more and more clear to me: that you

cannot help us, but that we must help you, and in so doing we ultimately help ourselves. [...] I demand no account from you; you will later call us to account'.[10] Jonas links this stance to the radical idea that God is impotent – the only way, according to him, to explain how God could have allowed things like Auschwitz to happen. The very notion of creation implies God's self-contraction: God has to withdraw into himself, constrain his omnipresence, in order to first create the Nothing out of which he then creates the universe. By creating the universe, he sets it free, lets it go on its own, renouncing the power of intervening into it: this self-limitation is equivalent to a proper act of creation. In the face of horrors like Auschwitz, God is thus the tragic impotent observer – the only way for him to intervene in history was precisely to 'fall into it', to appear in it in the guise of his Son.

Such a fall by means of which God loses his distance and becomes engaged, steps into the human series, is discernible in a classic joke from the German Democratic Republic in which Richard Nixon, Leonid Brezhnev and Erich Honecker confront God, asking him about the future of their countries. To Nixon, he answers: 'In 2000, the USA will be Communist!', Nixon turns around and starts to cry. To Brezhnev, he says: 'In 2000, the Soviet Union will be under Chinese control'. After Brezhnev also turns around and starts to cry, Honecker finally asks: 'And how will it be in my beloved GDR?'. God turns around and starts to cry... And here is the ultimate version: three Russians who share the same cell in the Lubyanka prison were all condemned for political offences. As they are getting acquainted, the first says: 'I was condemned to 5 years for opposing Popov'. The second says: 'Ah, but then the party line changed, and I was condemned to 10 years for supporting Popov'. Finally, the third one says: 'I was condemned for life, and I *am* Popov'. (And is it necessary to add that there effectively *was* a Bulgarian high Komintern functionary named Popov, a close collaborator of Georgi Dimitrov himself, who disappeared in the purges of the late 1930s?). Can this not be elevated into a model for understanding Christ's suffering? 'I was thrown to the lions in the arena for believing in Christ!'; 'I was burned at a stake for ridiculing Christ!'; 'I died on a cross, and I *am* Christ!'... Perhaps, this moment of stepping into the line, this final reversal by means of which the founding Exception (God) as it were falls into his own creation, is inserted into the series of ordinary creatures, is what is unique to Christianity, the mystery

10 Quoted from Hans Jonas, *Mortality and Morality* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press 1996), p. 192.

of incarnation, of God – not only appearing as a man, but – becoming a man.

This compels us to detach radically the Christian 'love thy neighbour' from the Levinasian topic of the Other as the impenetrable neighbour. Insofar as the ultimate Other is God himself, one should risk the claim that *it is the epochal achievement of Christianity to reduce its Otherness to Sameness*: God himself is Man, 'one of us'. If, as Hegel emphasizes, what dies on the Cross is the God of the beyond itself, the radical Other, then the identification with Christ ('life in Christ') means precisely the suspension of Otherness. What emerges in its stead is the Holy Ghost, which is *not* Other, but the community (or, rather, *collective*) of believers: the 'neighbour' is a member of our collective. The ultimate horizon of Christianity is thus not respect for the neighbour, for the abyss of its impenetrable Otherness; it *is* possible to go beyond – not, of course, to directly penetrate the Other, to reach the Other the way it is 'in itself', but to become aware that there is no mystery, no hidden true content, behind the mask (deceiving surface) of the Other. The ultimate idolatry is not the idolizing of the mask, of the image, itself, but the belief that there is some hidden positive content beyond the mask.

And no amount of 'deconstruction' can help us here: the ultimate form of idolatry is the deconstructive purifying of this Other, so that all that remains of the Other is its place, the pure form of Otherness as the Messianic Promise. It is here that we encounter the limit of deconstruction: as it became clear to Derrida himself in the last two decades, the more radical a deconstruction is, the more it has to rely on its inherent non-deconstructible condition of deconstruction: the Messianic promise of Justice. This promise is the true Derridean object of *belief*, and Derrida's ultimate ethical axiom is that this belief is irreducible, 'undeconstructible'. Derrida can thus indulge here in all kinds of paradoxes, claiming, among other things, that it is only the atheists who truly pray – precisely by refusing to address God as a positive entity, they silently address the pure Messianic Otherness... It is here that one should emphasize the gap that separates Derrida from the Hegelian tradition:

It would be too easy to show that, measured by the failure to establish liberal democracy, the gap between fact and ideal essence does not show up only in [...] so-called primitive forms of government, theocracy and military dictatorship [...]. But this failure and this gap also characterize, *a priori* and by definition, *all* democracies, including the oldest and most

stable of so-called Western democracies. At stake here is the very concept of democracy as concept of a promise that can only arise in such a *diastema* (failure, inadequation, disjunction, disadjustment, being 'out of joint'). That is why we always propose to speak of a democracy *to come*, not of a *future* democracy in the future present, not even of a regulating idea, in the Kantian sense, or of a utopia – at least to the extent that their inaccessibility would still retain the temporal form of a *future present*, of a future modality of the *living present*.[11]

Here we get the difference between Hegel and Derrida at its purest: Derrida accepts Hegel's fundamental lesson that one cannot assert the innocent ideal against its distorted realization. This holds not only for democracy, but also for religion – the gap that separates the ideal concept from its actualisation already inheres in the concept itself: in the same way that Derrida claims that 'God already contradicts himself', that any positive conceptual determination of the divine as a pure messianic promise already betrays it, one should also say that 'democracy already contradicts itself'. It is also against this background that Derrida elaborates the mutual implication of religion and radical evil[12]: radical evil (politically speaking: 'totalitarianism') emerges when religious faith or reason (or democracy itself) is posited in the mode of future present. However, against Hegel, Derrida insists on the irreducible excess in the ideal concept which cannot be reduced to the dialectic between ideal and its actualisation: the messianic structure of 'to come', the excess of an abyss that can never be 'positivised' in its actual determinate content. Hegel's own position is here more intricate than it may at first appear: his point is not that, through gradual dialectical progress, one can master the gap between concept and its actualisation and achieve the concept's full self-transparency ('Absolute Knowledge'). To put it in speculative terms, his point is to assert a 'pure' contradiction which is no longer the contradiction between undeconstructible pure Otherness and its failed actualisations/determinations, but rather the thoroughly immanent 'contradiction' that precedes any Otherness. Actualisations and/or conceptual determinations are not 'traces of an undeconstructible divine Otherness', but *just traces* marking their own in-between. Or, to put it in yet another way, in a kind of inverted phenomenological *epoche*, Derrida reduces Otherness to the 'to-come' of a pure potentiality, thoroughly de-

11 Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx* (London: Routledge 1994), pp. 64-65.

12 See Jacques Derrida, 'Faith and Knowledge', in *Religion*, ed. by Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

ontologising it, bracketing its positive content, so that all that remains is the spectre of a promise; but what if the next step is to drop this minimal spectre of Otherness itself, so that all that remains is the rupture, the gap as such which prevents entities from reaching their self-identity? Recall the old reproach of the French Communist philosophers to Sartre's existentialism: Sartre threw away the entire content of the bourgeois subject, maintaining only its pure form, and the next step was to throw away this form itself – is it not that, *mutatis mutandis*, Derrida threw away all positive ontological content of messianism, retaining nothing but the pure form of the messianic promise, and the next step is to throw away this form itself? And, again, is this not also the passage from Judaism to Christianity? Judaism reduces the promise of Another Life to a pure Otherness, a messianic promise that will never become fully present and actualised (the Messiah is always 'to come'), while Christianity, far from claiming full realization of the promise, accomplishes something far more uncanny: the Messiah *is here*, he *has* arrived, the final Event already took place, *and yet the gap (the gap that sustained the messianic promise) remains*... One is almost tempted to propose here a return to the earlier Derrida of *differance*: what if (as, among others, Ernesto Laclau has already proposed[13]) Derrida's turn to the 'post-secular' messianism is not a necessary outcome of his initial 'deconstructionist' impetus? What if the idea of infinite messianic Justice which operates in an indefinite suspension, always to come, as the undeconstructible horizon of deconstruction already obfuscates the 'pure' *differance*, the pure gap which 'differs' an entity from itself? Is it not possible to think this pure in-between *prior to* any notion of messianic justice? Derrida acts as if the choice is between positive onto-ethics, the gesture of transcending the existing towards another higher positive Order, on the one hand, and the pure promise of spectral Otherness, on the other – however, what if we drop this reference to Otherness altogether? What then remains is either Spinoza – the pure positivity of Being – or Lacan – the minimal torsion of drive, the minimal 'empty' (self-)difference which is operative when a thing starts to function as a substitute *for itself*:

> What is substituted can also appear itself, in a 1:1 scale, in the role of the substitute – there only must be some feature ensuring that it is not taken to be itself. Such a feature is provided for by the threshold which separates the place of what is substituting

13 See Ernesto Laclau, *Emancipation(s)* (London: Verso, 1995).

> from what is being substituted – or symbolizes their detachment. Everything that appears in front of the threshold then is assumed to be the ersatz, as everything that lies behind it is taken to be what is being substituted.
>
> There are scores of examples of such concealments that are obtained not by miniaturization but only by means of clever localization. As Freud observed, the very acts that are forbidden by religion are practiced in the name of religion. In such cases – as, for instance, murder in the name of religion – religion also can do entirely without miniaturization. Those adamantly militant advocates of human life, for example, who oppose abortion, will not stop short of actually murdering clinic personnel. Radical right-wing opponents of male homosexuality in the USA act in a similar way. They organize so-called 'gay bashings' in the course of which they beat up and finally rape gays. The ultimate homicidal or homosexual gratification of drives can therefore also be attained, if it only fulfils the condition of evoking the semblance of a counter-measure. What seems to be 'opposition' then has the effect that the x to be fended off can appear itself and be taken for a non-x.[14]

What we encounter here yet again is the Hegelian 'oppositional determination': in the figure of the gay-basher raping a gay man, the gay man encounters himself in his oppositional determination, i.e., tautology (self-identity) appears as the highest contradiction. This threshold can also function as the foreign gaze itself: say, when a disenchanted Western subject perceives Tibet as a solution to his crisis, Tibet already loses its immediate self-identity and turns into a sign of itself, its own 'oppositional determination'. In contrast with gay-bashing rape, where the homosexual desire is satisfied in the guise of its opposite, here, in the case of a Western Tibet worshipper, the utter *rejection* of Tibet, the betrayal of what the Tibetan civilization is accomplished in the guise of its opposite, of the admiration for Tibet. A further example is provided by the extreme case of interpassivity, when I tape a movie instead of simply watching it on TV, and when this postponement takes a fully self-reflected form:

14 Robert Pfaller, 'The Potential of Thresholds to Obstruct and to Facilitate. On the Operation of Displacement in Obsessional Neurosis and Perversion' (unpublished paper, 2002).

worrying that there will be something wrong with the recording, I anxiously watch TV while the tape is running, just to be sure that everything is OK with the recording, so that the film will be there on the tape, ready for a future viewing. The paradox is here that I *do* watch a film, even very closely, but in a kind of suspended state, without really following it – all that interests me is that everything is really there, that the recording is OK. Do we not find something similar in a certain perverse sexual economy in which I perform the act only in order to be sure that I can in future really perform the act: even if the act is, in reality, indistinguishable from the 'normal' act done for pleasure, as an end-in-itself, the underlying libidinal economy is totally different.

So here we encounter again the logic of reflexive determination, in which watching a movie appears as its own oppositional determination – in other words, the structure is again that of the Moebius strip: if we progress far enough on one side, we reach our starting point again (watching the movie, a gay sex act), but on the obverse side of the strip. Lewis Carroll was therefore right: a country *can* serve as its own map insofar as the model/map is the thing itself in its oppositional determination, i.e., insofar as an invisible screen ensures that the thing is not taken to be itself. In this precise sense, the 'primordial' difference is not between things themselves, and neither is it between things and their signs, but rather it is between the thing and the void of an invisible screen which distorts our perception of the thing so that we do not take the thing for itself. The movement from things to their signs is not that of the replacement of the thing by its sign, but that of the thing itself becoming the sign – not of another thing, but – *of itself*, the void at its very core.[15] This gap can also be the gap that separates dream from reality: when, in

15 And the same goes for the relationship of masking. In December 2001, Argentines took to the streets to protest against the current government, and especially against Cavallo, the minister of finance. When the crowd gathered around Cavallo's building, threatening to storm it, he escaped wearing a mask of himself (sold in disguise shops so that people could mock him by wearing his mask). It thus seems that at least Cavallo did learn something from the widely spread Lacanian movement in Argentina – the fact that a thing is its own best mask. And is this also not the ultimate definition of the divinity – God also has to wear a mask of himself? Perhaps, 'God' is the name for this supreme split between the absolute as the noumenal Thing and the absolute as the appearance of itself, for the fact that the two are the same, that the difference between the two is purely formal. In this precise sense, 'God' names the supreme contradiction: God – the absolute non-representable Beyond – *has to appear as such*.

the middle of the night, one has a dream about a heavy stone or animal seating on one's chest and causing pain, this dream, of course, reacts to the fact that one has a real chest pain – it invents a narrative to account for the pain. However, the trick is not just to invent a narrative, but a more radical one: it can happen that, while having a chest pain, one has a dream of *having a chest pain* – being aware that one is dreaming, the very fact of transposing the pain into the dream has a calming effect ('It is not a real pain, it is just a dream!').

And this paradox brings us to the relationship between man and Christ: the tautology 'man is man' is to be read as a Hegelian infinite judgement, as the encounter of 'man' with its oppositional determination, with its counterpart on the other side of the Moebius strip. In the same way that, already in our everyday understanding, 'law is law' means its opposite, the coincidence of law with arbitrary violence ('What can you do, even if it is unjust and arbitrary, law is law, you have to obey it!'), 'Man is man' signals the non-coincidence of man with man, the properly *inhuman* excess that disturbs its self-identity – and what is ultimately Christ but the name of this excess inherent in man, man's extimate kernel, the monstrous surplus which, following the unfortunate Pontius Pilate, one of the few ethical heroes of the Bible (the other being Judas, of course), can only be designated as *ecce homo*?

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The Extent of Giving: Sending in Derrida and Heidegger

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There is a proximity between Derrida and Heidegger that can be deceptive. It fluctuates. At times it contracts to a point where the two seem so near as to touch, and at other times it expands so far that the two seem worlds apart. Nowhere is this more evident than in regards to the very issue of distance and proximity. Derrida and Heidegger each think a givenness or gift of the world which confronts the traditional, metaphysical notion of presence. Famously, Heidegger has analyzed the German idiom *"es gibt"* (literally "it gives," colloquially, "there is") in this regard. If we do not simply take presence for granted, but indeed think it as given, then we are led to consider the distance that this giving traverses. These considerations of distance, proximity, and giving—of sending, in short—are explicitly treated in Derrida's 1980 text *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*.[1] And it is precisely here, where their interests would appear to coincide, that Derrida takes a great distance from Heidegger. In Heidegger's attempt to distance himself from a metaphysical view of presence, Derrida sees a reiteration of presence and a failure to depart from metaphysics. If it is allowable to isolate three moments in this logic of the gift and of giving—an origin that gives, a gift that is given, and a reception of the gift given—then Heidegger's thought

1 Jacques Derrida, *La carte postale: de Socrate à Freud et au-delà* (Paris: Flammarion, 1980)/English translation: *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); hereafter *CP* with French/English pagination.

of sending would remain metaphysical at every one. Heidegger holds to the thought of a pure origin (originary presence), he thinks the gift "as such" (gift as presence), and he is assured of its arrival (destination in presence). How close these objections come to striking their mark, how far Heidegger may be able to dodge or avoid these charges, I will address in what follows. First, I will present Derrida's critique of sending in Heidegger as it appears in *The Post Card* and the associated seminar *Given Time*, illustrating each of the three moments enumerated above.[2] Then, rather than address each of these in turn, I will articulate Heidegger's conception of essence (*Wesen*) and essencing (*Wesung*), to show how a thought of essence applies to each of the three moments of Derrida's concern. In so doing, I will rely heavily upon Heidegger's *Contributions to Philosophy (from Enowning)*.[3]

a. The Charges Aimed

1. Purity of Origin

Heidegger appears relatively early in the correspondence that opens *The Post Card*. At issue is his vision of history (*Geschichte*) as a sending (*Schickung*). In *Time and Being* (1962) for example, what is sent (*das Geschickte*) are the various "epochs" of being that go towards history.[4] What is historical in this history is the way that being each time occurs (*geschieht*) through these various epochs (Greek, Medieval, Modern, or however one might name them). These epochs of being (which Derrida views in terms of *"envois"*) culminate in the epoch of technology and it is

2 Jacques Derrida, *Donner le temps: 1. La fausse monnaie* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 1991)/English translation: *Given Time: 1. Counterfeit Money*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992); hereafter *GT*with French/English pagination.

3 Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 65: *Beiträge zur Philosophie (vom Ereignis)*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989)/English translation: *Contributions to Philosophy (from Enowning)*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); hereafter *GA*65 with German/English pagination.

4 Martin Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969)/English translation: *On Time and Being*,trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972).

here for Heidegger, so Derrida, that the technology of the post and telecommunication would find its home. But Derrida resists this postponement of technology, for him the post is operative from the outset. The point is not only that technological "positing" and "position" obstinately refuse to be shoved aside from the origin, nor is it only that there is thereby a concomitant advent of metaphysics with the supposedly pure origin, though these are each important effects of "postality." Rather, and alongside these concerns, the issue is to demonstrate the negligence of the "ontic" in these matters. Even when we are concerned with the impossibility of an origin devoid of technological positing, we may still find ourselves construing that technological necessity in the most general of terms, with the most purified of concepts. There is here then not a technological positing in general, but a particular formation of this in the actual, national post offices. It would be a mistake to call this an "instantiation" of technological positing, as well, since the general idea of technology does not remain anywhere outside of these determinations. Derrida's insistence on approaching these issues of sending through the seemingly arbitrary or, at the least, whimsical discussion of post cards and postal systems, is itself a resistance to the purified conceptuality of technology and metaphysics. Even if we admit a co-presence of the technological at the origin, there is nothing here to jeopardize the purity of that origin, if technology is thought in strictly conceptual or pure terms. The post office and the history of the mail system is a particularly messy way of entering into this complex of issues. The implicit target of these reflections is Heidegger, a Heidegger who would resist any "ontic" contamination of the purely ontological origin.

But this postality is itself prone to generalization, one can even speak here of a "postal principle." Anytime there is giving there is the post, and with it metaphysics. Derrida imagines Heidegger's response to this, "he doubtless would see in the postal determination a premature (?) imposition of tekhnê and therefore of metaphysics."[5] Derrida's first charge against Heidegger is that he would think sending apart from the technological and metaphysical, that he would maintain a purity of essence in the Greek origin. Such a charge is not to be taken lightly:

> This is serious because it upsets perhaps Heidegger's still 'derivative' schema (perhaps), upsets by giving one to think that technology, the position, let us say even metaphysics do not

5 *PC*73/65.

> overtake, do not come to determine and to dissimulate an 'envoi' of Being (which would not yet be postal), but would belong to the 'first' envoi—which obviously is never 'first' in any order whatsoever.... If the post (technology, position, "metaphysics") is announced at the "first" *envoi*, then there is no longer A metaphysics, etc.[6]

Accordingly, Heidegger's origin would be uncontaminated by metaphysics, there would be a perfect sending uncontaminated by technology.

2. The Gift as Such

In the seminar *Given Time*, given around the time of *The Post Card's* composition and proclaiming itself "indissociable" from the latter[7], Derrida reads Heidegger as a thinker of the gift in the company of Mauss and Benveniste. Here the postal critique continues and Heidegger is presented as certain of the gift *as such*.[8] The issue is an economic one, for once the gift has been recognized "as such," as soon as it is given "as such," then the "gift" is implicated in a cycle of payback, debt, repayment, and value. Everything gift-like about it is lost. This annihilates the gift for Derrida, "From the moment the gift would appear as gift, as such, as what it is, in its phenomenon, its sense and its essence, it would be engaged in a symbolic, sacrificial, or economic structure that would annul the gift in the ritual circle of the debt."[9] Within such a system of instant evaluation, the gift is impossible—indeed, it is *the* impossible; Derrida's own aporetic italics: "Not impossible but *the* impossible"—*"Non pas impossible mais l'impossible."*[10]

6 *PC*73/65-66.
7 *GT*134 n.1/104 n. 21.
8 This point may be similar to Derrida's criticisms of Lacan in *The Post Card*where Derrida emphasizes Lacan's refusal to think the letter (what is sent) as divisible and partitioned (like the two sides of a post card). A thought of the gift "as such" would be a thought that could wholly identify the gift, and this could only be possible given the gift's indissociability and dependable, supportable, integrity.
9 *GT*38/23.
10 *GT*19/7.

Instead of acknowledging this impossibility of the gift, Heidegger seizes upon the gift and renders it certain. Believing that he has the gift at his disposal, he can confidently write of the gift as such. What Heidegger's various formulations of the gift ultimately attest to for Derrida is "the desire to accede to the proper" which is already "surreptitiously ordered by Heidegger according to the dimension of 'giving.' And reciprocally."[11] Giving is not an impossibility for Heidegger, but a necessity, and one subordinated to propriety. To know the gift "as such" is to know it in its proper place, to have it completely at one's disposal, present and accounted for. To conceive the gift "as such" is at once to betray it and return it to metaphysics.

3. Destination

Derrida's final charge against Heidegger concerns a certainty of arrival and destination. If there is a pure origin and a gift as such, there must be, correspondingly, a final destination that is reached and attained in the giving of the "gift." Heidegger's thinking of the gift would therefore also be a thinking of destination and complete reception. Derrida implicitly speaks of Heidegger in a small diatribe against Oxford academics and Plato scholars perversely interested in the authenticity of Plato's epistles: "they have a properly mathematical—and therefore teachable—certainty of what an authentic destination is (and none of our old men escapes this, not even the one from Freiburg, I fear, even if in this respect he remains the most prudent one), they know what apocrypha and bastards are!"[12] Certainty of destination provides the assurance for whatever claims are made about textual or filial lineage. Such a certainty entails the complete reception of what has been transmitted. In this reception there is again no remainder and nothing that remains outstanding. The gift as such, sent from the pure origin, is here completely received. There is nothing lacking or missing in this, nothing lost in the translation from origin to destination. When what is sent arrives, one may be certain of its having been sent and certain of its integrity across the journey (that it has arrived intact and whole, in one piece). Only upon receipt of this assurance can one

11 *GT*36/21.
12 *PC*93/84.

pronounce upon the authentic and the inauthentic, the real and the counterfeit.

In effect, this certainty of destination assures that the origin has transmitted itself without corruption and completely, it gives assurances as to the re-presentation of the origin here and now, it assures us of the identity between the origin and its destination, it assures us of the same. Heidegger would think that the gift comes to a final rest in the achievement of its destination, not so Derrida: "In the beginning the post...and it begins with a destination without address, the direction cannot be situated in the end.... The condition for it to arrive is that it ends up and even that it begins by not arriving."[13] Rather than a thought of arriving, Heidegger's thinking of the gift would only be a covert reduplication of the origin and an obdurate refusal to let go of the same.

These are the three charges leveled against Heidegger's thought of sending: a) that there is a purity of origin, b) that there is the gift as such, and c) that there is complete arrival. A proper reply to each of these requires an understanding of essence in Heidegger. In the second half of this paper, I will provide just that, before showing its application in each of the areas questioned by Derrida.

b. The Avoidance of Essence

In Heidegger commentary, there has not been sufficient attention paid to essence (*Wesen*). But perhaps this is to be expected since it is very difficult to say just what essence is for Heidegger; it seems to withdraw from every attempt to determine it. Early existentialist readings of Heidegger, too, wanted nothing to do with essence. The term was avoided for fear of falling back into a substantialist metaphysics. Nevertheless, one of Heidegger's major contributions to philosophy is a rethinking of essence, and it is precisely in this rethinking that Heidegger counters the charges of Derrida.

It is very clear from the *Contributions to Philosophy (from Enowning),* that "essence" is not to be thought as a generality or universality, nor is it to be conceived as a substantially present commonality between beings, "The essence is not general, but instead precisely the essencing [*Wesung*]

13 *PC*34/29.

of the respective singularity [*jeweiligen Einzigkeit*]."[14] Essence for Heidegger is not an underlying support or "whatness" that is held in common among members of a kind or type. Rather, it serves to name the way of being of the singular being, what Heidegger terms its essencing.[15] This essencing, for its part, as the essencing of the "respective singularity" is an essencing which occurs each time. It is not only that the traditional generality of essence is here countered by a singularity, but the time of this notion also, its steady persistence, is here countered by the punctuated or syncopated temporality of the "each time." Each time the being is singularized and differentiated from the others, it is singular through and through—so much so that this essencing leads to what Heidegger calls the "truth" of be-ing.

Truth is here thought in terms of a clearing, one that is opened through, by, and as essencing: "the occurrence of the truth of being [*Seyn*], this is essencing."[16] The opening of this clearing occurs through an essencing of the singular being because in this essencing there is simultaneously concealment. In not showing itself, the being opens the clearing; this withdrawing of the being is its essencing, and this clearing is the truth of being, "the clearing for self-concealing [*die Lichtung für das Sichverbergen*]."[17] If beings were to wholly present themselves, the clearing could not be opened, there would be no space for a clearing. This is not a case of "overcrowding," since such a thought is rooted in thinking space as a container. Here there is simply no space for space. Essencing (*Wesung*) would thus act as the occurrence of a clearing for self-concealment. What it means for a thing to "have" an essence or to "be" essentially is for it to occur in such a way that there is simultaneously a self-concealment. Essencing would be a way of *not* showing oneself. Essencing would be the occurrence of a thing whereby it announces its self-concealment. The essence of a thing is nothing general, it is nothing at

14 *GA*65: 66/46; translation modified (hereafter "tm").

15 With this, Heidegger has not abandoned the thought of commonality that is endemic to essence. For Heidegger there can be no commonality or community of individuals when these are considered to be identical in essence. Singularity of essence, as Heidegger views it, first distinguishes each from the other and thus first allows for what could be termed a community of essences. The distinction is one that may be found in the thought of Jean-Luc Nancy, between a homogeneous "common being" and a singular "being in common."

16 *GA*65: 288/202-203; tm.

17 *GA*65: 346/242; tm.

all, it is instead a withholding. This is the first point to be made regarding essence, it is essencing, a self-concealing or a withholding.[18]

And to return to giving, the second point to be made is that this withholding withdrawal is nothing negative, but something given. It is not the result of a lack or absence. Heidegger speaks of a "giving self-withdrawing [*schenkenden Sichentziehen*]" to capture this sense of essencing, identifying this as the "essence of self-concealing."[19] Concealment is withdrawal, but this withdrawal must give itself to view and appear in the clearing. In a sense, the clearing and the withdrawal are one and the same, the withdrawal gives the clearing. Essencing as a making-known of concealing cannot occur anywhere other than in a clearing. And this clearing is built of beings (things). Beings themselves are the site of essencing, are themselves that mark of withdrawal. How could essence be thought distinct from beings? Essencing is the singular giving of beings and is inseparable from them. Giving is the mirror-image of withdrawal.

And lest we object that this essence in withdrawal is itself a strategy for protecting the purity of this essence, and of safeguarding be-ing from beings, Heidegger is quite clear on the coincidence of be-ing and beings:

> Wanting to separate *be-ing* from some snatched up being is impossible, especially since "any being whatsoever," if it is only experienced as true, is always already the other to itself—not like *some other* as the opposite that belongs to it. Rather, *the other* means that which as sheltering the truth of being lets a being be a being.[20]

Beings are already (the truth of) be-ing, and not as an opposite that would still belong to the same, not as a necessary attendant in the oppositional and dialectical logic of positing (not as *the same's* other). Be-ing and

18 This is confirmed by a glance ahead to 1951's "Building Dwelling Thinking" where essence is spoken of as a sort of hiding place or space of concealment for the thing, "we allow something into its essence when we properly conceal something back into its essence"; essencing occurs "only then when they themselves, as things, are allowed to be in their essence" (Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 7th ed. (Stuttgart: Neske, 1994), p. 143/English translation in: Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, ed. and trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971), p. 149; tm).

19 *GA*65: 249/176; tm.

20 *GA*65: 264/186; tm.

beings cannot be separated because they belong together, they are held together in withdrawal. Be-ing "belongs to it [the particular being] and only to it."[21] Far from safeguarding essence, this withdrawal of be-ing hands the particular being over to machination and technological circulation, where essence is most endangered. As a consequence of this withdrawal of be-ing, a withdrawal which is itself the essencing of be-ing, "the being then appears so, it appears as object and something present-at-hand, as if be-ing did not essence."[22] For something to appear as if be-ing did not essence ("as if" emphasizing the impossibility of such a situation) is to appear as if it were an object fully present. The world of presence—metaphysics, in short—is what is given. What is given is the abandonment of be-ing.

Considering essence in this way, as nothing general but as a singular occurrence of self-concealment, as the giving of a withdrawal, and as the delivery of the being to machinational danger, a response can be volleyed to each of the charges above.

1. The Other Beginning (vs. Purity of Origin)

This self-concealing play of essencing is not without consequences for an understanding of beginning and origin. To inquire into the purity of origin for Heidegger requires an understanding of his conception of beginning. The first thing to note is that the beginning is always doubled. Heidegger distinguishes a beginning of metaphysics, what he calls the "first beginning," and an "other beginning" (*andere Anfang*) that would elude metaphysics. The ambiguity of "other" is key here. Earlier, in the first Hölderlin course (1934-1935) as well as in the first Schelling course (1936), Heidegger had spoken of a "new beginning."[23] Such talk is abandoned by the time of the *Contributions* (1936-1938) as it remains within the frame of metaphysics. For such a "new" beginning, what is past must be over and done with, completely left behind, in a word, overcome.

21 *GA*65: 115/80; tm.

22 *GA*65: 115/80-81; tm.

23 See Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 39: *Hölderlins Hymnen "Germanien" und "Der Rhein,"* 2nd ed., ed. Susanne Ziegler (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), p. 119 (hereafter *GA* 39) and Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 42: *Schelling: Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit (1809)*, ed. Ingrid Schüßler (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), p. 5.

Not coincidentally, Nietzsche speaks of a "new beginning" (*"ein Neubeginnen"*) in describing the final transformation of the lion into child in his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra.*[24]

This idea of a complete detachment, of a separation without remainder or trace, surreptitiously includes a thought of pure presence and absence. The "new" beginning would be completely present and wholly untouched by the completely absent "old" beginning, which would likewise have completely come to its end. The "other beginning" does not overcome what went before. "Other" does not indicate a "second" beginning somewhere after the first, and "beginning" does not entail an absence of relation with what went before. Heidegger's "other beginning" does not come after the metaphysical first beginning has come to its end, despite Derrida's implications to the contrary. Instead, the other beginning lies right upon the first beginning. The two do not follow each other serially: "Leaping into the other beginning is returning to the first beginning, and vice versa."[25] At the risk of too schematic a presentation, one might say that the other beginning is the essence of the first beginning, it is nowhere other than at the first beginning, but nevertheless remains concealed there.

For this reason, there is always another beginning, which is not to say that there is need to go back and start again. The first beginning is already another beginning precisely qua beginning. A beginning for Heidegger is never over and done with, is not restricted to what begins. This would be what Heidegger terms a "start" (*Beginn*), in the first Hölderlin course.[26] Rather, a beginning only begins by holding something of itself in reserve. A beginning is given and hence the concealment. Because this concealment is essential to the beginning, there can never be a complete beginning, though each beginning is wholly begun. The beginning does not exhaust itself in what it starts up, but remains also concealed in this beginning. In a piece that serves as the summation of the first three Nietzsche courses (dating from 1939, prior to the decision to lead a fourth course into Nietzsche), Heidegger expresses this never-completed aspect of beginning in a grammatical manner: "The beginning is only in

24 See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra, "Von der drei Verwandlungen,"* in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Kristische Studienausgabe*, vol. 4, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Münich/Berlin: Deutscher Taschen Verlag/Walter de Gruyter, 1988), p. 31.

25 *GA*65: 185/130.

26 *GA*39: 3.

beginning," *"Anfang ist nur im Anfangen."*[27] A beginning cannot be substantialized insofar as this would entail a completed and wholly present object of our nomination. Rather, the beginning is always a verbal occurrence, insofar as this entails a necessary incompletion to the act, insofar as we remain precisely *in* the beginning and do not leave it as something that has been or has begun.

In other words, beginning begins with refusal. But this is no simple obstinacy to begin, rather it is again a given refusal native to beginning. In this sense, the beginning makes all essencing "inceptual": *"refusal is the foremost and utmost giving of be-ing* [Schenkung des Seyns], *even its inceptual essencing* [anfängliche Wesung] *itself."*[28] The withdrawal and refusal of the other beginning lets the first beginning begin, and Heidegger is clear that this first beginning, the beginning of metaphysics, is likewise the beginning of *technê* and positing.[29] Consequently, there is no premature imposition of *technê* or metaphysics for Heidegger, because the technological and metaphysical conception of being is already the beginning of being.

2. The Essential (vs. the "As Such")

Given what was said above concerning the refusal of essence, it is obvious that this already short-circuits the complete and total seizure of the thing "as such." I cannot have the essence of a thing since this is precisely a matter of concealment—it is not there for me to have. Of course, this is not to say that I cannot be in a relation to this essence. On the contrary, my relation to this essence is one of sheltering, there is a refusal to challenge it out into presence. But this does not mean—and this is (perhaps) contra Derrida—that essences would avoid the circulation of economy. This is a key point for understanding essence in Heidegger.

On the one hand, we are faced with a thinking of withdrawal and refusal, where the thing does not show itself, and does not show itself

27 Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 2 (Pfullingen: Verlag Günther Neske, 1961), p. 29/English translation: Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 3, ed. David Farrell Krell, trans. Joan Stambaugh, et. al. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1987), pp. 182-183.

28 *GA*65: 241/170; tm.

29 *GA*65: 184/129, 169/119.

essentially. On the other hand, we are not to imagine that the essence of the thing is a secret preserve where it can exist untouched by the challenges of the technological world around it. If the latter were the case, and in Derrida's view it is precisely the situation with Heidegger, this would be an elaborate effort to ensure the purity of essence and to defend it from "contamination" with the metaphysical, the technological, and the ontic. But if essence lies in concealment, it makes no sense to speak of a purity of essence since this concealment must itself announce itself and is concealed by this very announcement. There is no separation of essence and thing, Heidegger is quite clear on this in the *Contributions:* "Essencing does not lie 'beyond' the being and detached from it, rather a being stands in be-ing and, standing therein and lifted away, has its truth as *what is true* only *in be-ing.*"[30]

Rather than think of essencing as the spiriting away of the essence of the thing, we should think of it more as an "emplacement" of the thing into the realm of the metaphysical and technological. The withdrawal in question here gives the thing over to circulation and replacement. It gives it over but never completely, for, if it did that then the thing would be completely challenged forth and available, it would be purely present. In such a condition there could be no gift. So it would seem that there is a line that Heidegger is unwilling to cross, a thought that he cannot think. Heidegger will not allow for the complete exposition of the thing into technological availability. But we cannot conclude from this that he has preserved an "uncontaminated" essence somewhere. Instead, we must see in this gesture an effort to approach a situation of unending challenge and escalating danger. In other words, Heidegger's conception of essence insures that there will always be more to challenge forth, always be more to endanger. If the thing were completely turned inside-out and its essence exposed without remainder, there would no longer be need for sheltering, there would no longer be a responsibility to things or to the world. Heidegger will not allow for a cessation of the danger, but only for its increase. Essence does not preserve the thing, it endangers it, and does so essentially. We cannot annul our responsibility for Heidegger; this is his lesson. That we not be responsible to the gift; this is *the* impossible.

30 *GA* 65: 287/202; tm.

3. Arriving (vs. Certainty of Destination)

The last point of critique against Heidegger, that he is certain of the arrival of the gift, can now be addressed. Since the thing is not complete, but *has its essence in concealment*, the thing is not completely present. It is not all here and it is essential to the thing that it not be all here. Bringing together the thought of giving and essence as withdrawal, Heidegger can speak of this condition interms of arrival and arriving. What is given has not yet arrived. What is given is arriving. The arriving given will never arrive. It will never be here completely, never have done with arriving. Were it to arrive in full, there would be no essence. Were it to arrive in full, there would be complete severance from the giver.

This logic of arriving was addressed above in terms of beginning.

There is no beginning that is over and done with, rather beginning lies only in beginning, a process which is not surpassed upon reaching the end. Heidegger's most sustained consideration of arriving, however, is accomplished in terms of the Gods throughout his various readings of Hölderlin. "The Gods have flown", exclaims the poet, and this flight is thereby made known; the "absence" of the Gods is announced in it.[31] The flight of the Gods is no absence of the Gods, because the Gods are not so absent as for that absence to go unremarked. Heidegger makes the same point in regards to the poet's statement at the conclusion of "The Ister," where Hölderlin writes, "what that one does, the river/ no one knows" (lines 71-72). But the poet must "know" in order to say this. In each case, an "absence" is announced and rendered anything but absent.

The consequences of this for a thinking of arriving cannot be underestimated. If one is entitled here to speak of a flight of the gods, then one is just as much entitled to speak of an arrival of the trace, the trace of a flight that the poet has detected and announced. A departure that is at once an arrival and an arrival that arrives in departure, these names still put an end to the arriving and departing by substantializing it. But if departure leaves a trace, then it has not completely departed. And if what arrives is a trace of departure, then the arrival is never done with either.

31 *"Entflohene Götter!"*, Friedrich Hölderlin, *"Germanien"* (17), in Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, ed. Friedrich Beißner (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1951), p. 149.

Arrival is postponed and deferred. Instead of departure and arrival there is only departing and arriving.

With this we touch upon the darkest moment or "joint" of Heidegger's *Contributions to Philosophy (from Enowning),* that of the last god. Here "last" does not refer to the final place in a sequence of gods (Zeus... Christ...the Last God). The "last" in question here, this ultimacy (*Letztheit*), is rather a never-ending arriving. The last god will outlast all others precisely because it can never arrive. Its arrival would be its end. Heidegger says as much in a statement that recollects all the points that have been emphasized above: "The last god is no end, but rather *the beginning* as it resonates unto and in-itself, and thus is the highest shape of refusal."[32] The last god is so thoroughly a figure of arriving, that a few years later (1939-1940), Heidegger will call the last god "the most coming of the coming."[33]

Far from a thought of certain arrival and fixed destination, Heidegger's thinking is inhabited by arriving and destining. To recognize this we need not go any further than this brief mention of the last god, for the last god is the name that Heidegger gives to this very problem of arriving. From the beginning, through the essential endangerment, and to the arriving, Heidegger's thinking is a thinking of incompletion.

c. The Place of Publication

In the response to Derrida's charges attempted above, I have intentionally drawn from Heidegger's *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning),* a text unavailable to Derrida at the time of *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond.* Heidegger's *Contributions*, written during 1936-1938, was only first published in 1989, some nine years after Derrida's text. For this reason it may seem unfair or out of place to criticize Derrida's reading for ignorance of a text he could not possibly have known.[34] In *The Post Card*, however, Derrida undertakes an analysis of

32 *GA*65: 416/293; tm.

33 Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 69: *Die Geschichte des Seyns*, ed. Peter Trawny (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1998), p. 211.

34 It should be noted, however, that Derrida does cite the *Contributions to Philosophy (from Enowning)* in the 1991 publication of the 1977-1978 seminar *Given Time* (GT 33 n. 1/19 n. 9). Derrida gives no indication that the

legacy whereby typical chronology is reversed, where the sons now give themselves the father, where Plato sends himself Socrates, etc. The situation is presented as follows:

> Example: if one morning Socrates had spoken for Plato, if to Plato his addressee he had addressed some message, it is also that p. would have had to be able to receive, to await, to desire, in a word to have called in a certain way what S. will have said to him; and therefore what S., taking dictation, pretends to invent—writes, right? p. has sent himself a post card...he has sent it back to himself from himself, or he has even 'sent' himself S.[35]

Here we see not so much the reversal of authority in the speaker-writer relationship (it is not the recipient who alone would now dictate), as the subversion of that relationship. The authoritative position is lost and what is revealed thereby is the transitional space between the speaker and writer, along with the more or less successful attempts to appropriate a position within this space; positions which may attempt to reestablish a seat of authority all over again. Considering the relationship in terms of an active and a passive party is inadequate for similar reasons. The supposedly passive party actively calls for what is sent from the supposedly active party, who now passively receives the call. This same logic of legacy may be applied to the interpretation of a text, to a text and its commentary.

Just as we thought that Socrates came before Plato, so did we think that the *Contributions to Philosophy* (CP) came before *The Post Card* (PC). This means that the line of descent or influence would run from Heidegger to Derrida. Socrates dictates to Plato, putting words into his mouth. But for Derrida this means that Plato must "call" for what Socrates gives him. Plato, in fact, gives this call and both parties are the donors here. In terms of our texts, PC would "call" for CP, *The Post Card* would hear what it wants from the *Contributions*, which the *Contributions* would send to *The Post Card* (its own "post card"). But this is only if we follow the compositional order of the texts, the publication order tells a different story. Now instead of: CP then PC, we have: PC then CP. Now it is *The*

Contributions would alter his analysis in any way. On the contrary, the *Contributions* are cited as further support for it.

35 *PC*35/30.

Post Card which dictates to the *Contributions* (its own "contribution"), the *Contributions* which are influenced by *The Post Card*—now it is the *Contributions* which "call" for *The Post Card!* This reversal of priorities in an already reversed arrangement (reversed in regards to the compositional order) furnishes us with what would appear to be a reinstatement of the compositional hierarchy of influence, the arrangement of traditional (metaphysical) chronology. If we attend to the publication history, then the post card effect reinstates metaphysics—it is indistinguishable from it.

By emphasizing the publication history of these texts—and both Derrida and Heidegger have concerned themselves with the role of the publisher in their work—not only is the idea of a direct line of descent from author to reader problematized, but so is any conception of the post card effect as a simple reversal of chronology. Instead, what we have is the opening of a space of sending, a "between" Heidegger would call it, which is the provenance of the publisher. Here again there is the encroachment of the "metaphysical" and the technological upon a field that we might otherwise think as pure. Not only is there no purity of origin, no gift as such, and no complete arrival, but even the interval opened up in this thought of sending is itself impure. Heidegger's concern with the "public" character of publication would find its place here.

By the logic of sending, it is no foul to criticize Derrida's reading of Heidegger by appeal to a text published after his own. We both vie to establish a connection with Heidegger's thought in this and to ground its legitimacy. There are no limits on the lineages and filiations we can so maintain. Derrida's work is not dependent upon Heidegger, but it is not dependent without being independent either. Now every text is in a possible relation to every other, writing it and being read by it, calling back one to the other. This field of infinite relations, this network of passages, is textuality itself. It is an opening and a non-identical presence which prevents the equation of a text with numbered pages between two covers. That an "outside" agency, the publisher, through the various technologies of publication, would play a role in textuality is no objection to postcardizationbut is, rather, its attestation. There is no purity of lineage, one way or the other. But this itself is nothing foreign to Heideggerian thinking.

Perhaps Derrida's greatness is that he calls this forth from Heidegger. Indeed, as Heidegger himself once stated, it is quite small to think that one

is independent. It is a sign of greatness to bear and sustain an influence. In a 1936-1937 Nietzsche course (first published in 1961), Heidegger writes:

> "Dependence" is not a concept by which we can understand relationships among the greats. But the small are always dependent on the great; they are "small" precisely because they think they are independent. The great thinker is one who can hear what is greatest in the work of other "greats" and who can transform it in an original manner.[36]

36 Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 1 (Pfullingen: Verlag Günther Neske, 1961), p. 45/English translation: Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1979), p. 35.

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Moses Mendelssohn and the German Reception of Roger Boscovich's *Theoria*

GREG WHITLOCK

I. Boscovich's Reputation in Europe

With the publication of around one hundred scientific papers, the reputation of Roger Joseph Boscovich (1711–1787)[1] spread rapidly across eighteenth-century Europe. Boscovich was renowned first in his adopted nation of Italy. The Academia della Scienze (Bologna) made him a member in 1746, where he was entrusted by Benedict XIV with a series of high-profile scientific missions, and in his homeland of Dalmatia. His reputation spread quickly to France, where his ideas received their most enthusiastic audience. He was elected corresponding member of the French Académie des Sciences in 1748, and Louis XV made him a French citizen in 1774. As a papal representative, Boscovich journeyed to Poland and became a celebrity there; the exiled king made Boscovich a member of the Academy of Stanislas by special royal recommendation. After Boscovich traveled through Bulgaria and Transylvania, his reputation blossomed throughout the Slavic world, including Russia, where he was made an honorary member of the Russian Academy of Science in 1760. Boscovich's ideas also received a warm welcome in England and Scotland. During his visit to London and Cambridge, Boscovich was given honorary membership in the Royal Society in 1761. His British admirers included Joseph Priestley, John Robinson, Lord Kelvin, Michael Faraday, and others. From England, Boscovich's fame spread to colonial

1 For biographical sketches of Boscovich, see E. Hill, "Roger Boscovich: A Biographical Essay" in L.L. Whyte, ed., *Roger Joseph Boscovich SJ, F.R.S. (1711–1787)* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961), pp. 17–101; and Branislav Petronievic, "Life of Roger Joseph Boscovich" in Roger Joseph Boscovich, *A Theory of Natural Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1966), pp. vii–ix.

America. Benjamin Franklin met Boscovich in London, and Franklin's house guest in America, Joseph Priestley, brought with him an enthusiasm for the Dalmatian. Later, Lord Kelvin recalled Boscovich favorably in his Baltimore lectures.

Boscovich was a court favorite in Austria, as well. Boscovich finished the *Theoria Philosophiae Naturalis* while in Austria, and its first edition was published in Vienna (though he was greatly disappointed in it, and another was published four years later in Venice). Alma Sodnik-Zupanec noted that Boscovich inspired a widespread modernization of university curricula in Austria. From Austria, Boscovich's fame spread to Slovenia, Hungary, and Turkey.

We would expect, then, that Germany, too, would have received Boscovich's ideas positively. After all, Boscovich sojourned in Germany twice: once on his way from Poland to Rome, and once traveling from Paris to Constantinople. The Vienna edition of the *Theoria* was bought almost entirely by individuals or institutions in Germany, and it was translated into German by 1784.

But the German reaction to Boscovich was as decidedly negative as the Austrian reaction was positive. The curriculum change discernible after Boscovich's sojourn in Austria was only partly discernible in Germany. Sodnik-Zupanec has catalogued works, with special reference to the Ljubljana library, that resulted from Boscovich's sojourns in Austria and Germany.[2] All but two were Austrian publications. In Breslau, A. Zeplichal published *Entwurf der Boscowischen Naturlehre* (1769), and in Würzburg, N. Burkhäuser published *Theoria corporis naturalis principiis Boscovichi conformata* (1770). Sodnik-Zupanec reported that Burkhäuser's work described the atmosphere in Würzburg as hostile to Boscovich. In fact, Boscovich was despised by critics there. They sought to discredit him with gossip; they vehemently reprimanded him; they asserted that he had corrupted philosophy or had stood true philosophy on its head. Burkhäuser explained these reactions by saying that the critics were ignorant of Boscovich's actual works and that out of mere prejudice and second-hand accounts, arose obscure, disordered, and false characterizations of his ideas. Burkhäuser also asserted that hateful jealousy was a motivation.

2 A. Sodnik-Zupanec, *Actes du Symposium International R.J. Bo˘skovi´c 1961* (Beograd: 1962), pp. 283-289.

Sodnik-Zupanec wrote that Boscovich's German opponents were "representatives of scholasticism with a fixed pedagogical agenda".[3] They feared that Boscovich would "corrupt the youth" with Newton's theories, and even more so, with his own theories. The reference to scholasticism, and other remarks by Sodnik-Zupanec, suggests that the critics were followers of Christian Wolff. But Leibnizians were also disposed against Boscovich. This was the situation in Würzburg, and it was typical of the German estimation of Boscovich.

There seems to have been no niche in Germany for Boscovich. There was no honorary membership for him in the German Academy. Of course, some figures in the Academy, led by Leonhard Euler, defended Newton against the Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy. Euler, however, defended Newton's theory of absolute space and time, so Boscovich, who embraced relative space and time, would still have been unattractive to him.[4] The fact that Boscovich was anti-Prussian politically during the Seven Years War[5] certainly did not help his cause in Berlin, but political sympathies alone cannot explain the German antipathy toward him; Boscovich was a popular figure across several lines of political hostility.

Why, then, was the German reception of Boscovich's ideas so negative, while the rest of Europe celebrated him as one of its greatest living thinkers? In what follows, I will show how a widely read review by Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1785) influenced German public opinion about Boscovich's *Theoria* decisively and how Mendelssohn missed the mark.[6]

3 Sodnik-Zupanec, p. 286.

4 Later, the German atomists G.T. Fechner and J.G. Vogt adopted aspects of Boscovich's theory; F.W.J. Schelling's own dynamism may have been influenced by Boscovich; and J.G. Herder commented positively on him. Immanuel Kant revised his own physics in reaction to Boscovich's ideas, but only implicitly and indirectly. With these exceptions, the German intelligentsia paid Boscovich no heed for a century or more after his death. J.G. Fichte and Friedrich Schlegel did not mention him. Arthur Schopenhauer, who railed against the notion of action at a distance, would have roundly rejected Boscovich but apparently did not even know of him. Georg Hegel, Ludwig Feuerbach, and Karl Marx had no discernible impression of Boscovich. Friedrich Lange mentioned him only once, and then negatively, in his critique of materialism.

5 E. Hill, loc. cit., p. 49.

6 I have already discussed Boscovich and Nietzsche in "Roger Joseph Boscovich, Benedict de Spinoza and Friedrich Nietzsche," in *Nietzsche-Studien* (1996), pp. 200–220; "Examining Nietzsche's "Time Atomism Theory' Fragment from 1873," in *Nietzsche-Studien* (1997), pp. 350–360; and "Investigations in Time Atomism and Eternal Recurrence," in *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* (Fall 2000), pp. 34–57. In two future articles I discuss the treatment of Boscovich at the hands of Immanuel Kant and the British scientists.

II. Background of Mendelssohn's Review

A powerful, negative German response to Boscovich came even before the appearance of the *Theoria*'s standard Venice edition of 1763; only months after the first edition of 1759, Moses Mendelssohn,[7] seeking a complete refutation, attacked Boscovich. Mendelssohn reviewed Boscovich's *Theoria Philosophiae Naturalis* in a series of letters as part of his regular contribution to *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend.* This Berlin weekly was one of two "chief literary organs of the Berlin Enlightenment".[8] Since 1740 Berlin had been the center of German Enlightenment thought. Mendelssohn was one of *Briefe*'s founders and main editors and was a leading figure in the Berlin Enlightenment. In Lewis White Beck's estimation, Mendelssohn was "the epitome of popular philosophy at its best," the "outstanding living author" of the speculative metaphysics Kant targeted, and the most readable of the early German philosophers.[9] The letters concerning Boscovich are numbered 42, 45, 54, and 56 (from June 7 to September 20, 1759) in seven issues.[10] This series greatly influenced reception of the *Theoria* and its author among Germans of the time.

Mendelssohn's motives were threefold. First, he sought to attack Boscovich's system from a Leibniz-Wolffian position, that is, as part of the larger Newton-Leibniz rivalry. Mendelssohn considered Boscovich to be a logical, if extreme, consequence of Newton. Second, Mendelssohn, though himself an alien within German society as a Jew, promoted the budding German national culture, and Boscovich was non-German. These two matters were interconnected; when Mendelssohn commended "our German philosophy," he meant Leibniz and Wolff. Mendelssohn opposed

7 For a biography of Mendelssohn, see H. Walter, *Moses Mendelssohn: Sein Leben und seine Werke* (New York: Bloch, 1930).

8 L.W. Beck, *Early German Philosophy* (Chippenham: Thoemmes Press, 1969), p. 324.

9 Ibid., pp. 323, 337, 326.

10 M. Mendelssohn. *Gesammelte Schriften.* Jubiläumsausgabe. Band 5 Part I. *Rezensionsartikel in Briefe, der neueste Literatur betreffend* (1759–1765). Frommann Verlag. Stuttgart–Bad Cannstatt. 1991.

French materialism and he considered Boscovich to be one with the French.

Third, Mendelssohn's attitude toward Boscovich may be explained in light of the challenges posed by Spinoza. Mendelssohn considered Spinoza a good and virtuous man but one whose philosophy led to atheism and fatalism. *A fortiori*, Mendelssohn was disposed to completely reject Boscovich's theory, since *Boscovich's theory went far beyond Spinozism in its radical consequences.*

In fact, Boscovich's theory subverted Spinozism in three crucial respects, guaranteeing an even greater convertibility to atheism. Boscovich's theory had as its first consequence the rejection of the very notion of substance. For Boscovich, there is no substance. A more polar opposition to Spinoza, whose first proposition is "Substance is prior to its modifications," could scarcely be imagined. The second consequence is the rejection of infinite force; the total amount of force in the universe is finite. In Boscovich's natural philosophy, there are no real infinities anywhere in nature. The third consequence of Boscovich's theory is the rejection of infinite novelty. There is only an endlessly recurring set of phenomena. Or as Boscovich put it, his ideas "do away with the idea of everything continuous coexisting; & when this is done away with the majority of the greatest difficulties vanish. Further, nothing infinite is actually found actually existing; the only thing possible that remains is a series of finite things produced indefinitely".[11] This subverted Spinoza's proposition XVI in Book One of *The Ethics*: "From the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinite things in infinite ways".

Mendelssohn's review of Boscovich's *Theoria* did not prove controversial. On the contrary, it was widely accepted as a decisive and welcome refutation. Mendelssohn defended the immortality of the soul, the existence of God the father, and the Leibnizian optimism that the actual world is the best of all possible worlds, messages that the German nation wanted to hear in the face of British science and Spinozism. While it was never likely that Boscovich's scientific ideas would have proven more popular in Germany than Kant's own physical theory of dynamism or Leibniz's monadology, it remains an unnoticed chapter in German intellectual history that Mendelssohn's review failed to grasp Boscovich's real position.

11 R.J. Boscovich, loc. cit., p. 12.

III. Mendelssohn's Review: Problem of Compenetration

Boscovich's theory of matter derived from this argument:

1. Either two solid bodies can collide by immediate contact, or the two bodies can compenetrate (occupy the same spatial point at the same instant), or there exists a force in each solid body that repels the other body before immediate contact.

2. Immediate contact between bodies would violate the Law of Continuity, since there would occur a sudden change in velocity.[12]

3. Two bodies cannot occupy the same spatial point at the same moment.

Therefore, there exists a force in each solid body that repels the other body before immediate contact. [13]

From this conclusion Boscovich surmised that the elementary particles of matter must be centers of force, point particles, endowed with inertia, indivisibility, impenetrability, and a repulsive force capable of extinguishing any velocity of another particle approaching them before impact. Force, according to Boscovich, alternates from attractive to repulsive depending on the inverse squared distance between points. At great distances, force is attractive, accounting for gravity; at indefinitely small distances, force becomes repulsive. Between these distances, force alternates and accounts for physical phenomena such as magnetism, electric charge, cohesion, and so on. Centers of force are unextended and do not constitute a continuum. Rather the fields of force emanating from these centers constitute relational space, which is not a continuum. Centers of force never achieve direct contact; rather, they operate by *action at a distance.*

In his review, Mendelssohn attacked Boscovich's theory by arguing, first, that Leibniz's theory of matter was superior in that it solved the problem of compenetration by supposing that monads are elastic, not solid, bodies. (Mendelssohn translated the Latin *compenetratio* into German as *Ineinanderfallen.*) These undermined, he believed, any necessity of a repulsive force at indefinitely small distances. Second, Mendelssohn argued that *action at a distance* was a nonsensical,

12 R.J. Boscovich, loc. cit., 24–25.
13 R.J. Boscovich, loc. cit., p. 10.

counterintuitive notion. Leibniz's monadology, he happily countered, did not require such a strange assumption. Third, Mendelssohn argued that Boscovich introduced, or at least implied, new notions of time and motion. Mendelssohn objected that Boscovich considered time and space as mere illusion. Finally, Mendelssohn objected that Boscovich's theory of light and matter defied common sense notions. Lesser, more technical objections were made to particular mechanical explanations of physical phenomena, but these all relied on the broader objections to the new theory of matter. Additionally, theological objections were launched against Boscovich.

Each of Mendelssohn's objections, however, were based on misunderstandings of Boscovich's position or an overestimation of Leibniz's relative advantages.

Concerning elasticity and compenetration, it is crucial to realize that Boscovich himself responded to Mendelssohn's objection or similar ones posed by other Leibnizians. Recall that Mendelssohn's review appeared almost immediately after the Vienna edition of the *Theoria*. In the subsequent Venice edition, Boscovich responded to various critics, including that charge by an "unnamed Leibnitian" and "some of the Leibnitian circle" that elasticity solved the problem of compenetration and rendered the *Theoria* superfluous. He wrote, "Moreover, those who admit that all the particles of solids, however small they may be, are soft or elastic, yet do not escape the difficulty, but transfer it to prime surfaces, or points; & here a sudden change would be made & the Law of Continuity violated".[14]

> Besides, I was not the first to introduce the notion of simple non-extended points into physics. The ancients from the time of Zeno had an idea of them, & the followers of Leibniz indeed suppose that their monads are simple & non-extended. I, since I do not admit the continuity of the points themselves, but suppose that any two points of matter are separated from one another, avoid a mighty rock, upon which both of these others have come to grief, whilst they build up an extended continuum from indivisible & non-extended things of this sort. Both seem to me to have erred in doing so, because they have mixed up with the simplicity & non-extension that they attribute to the elements that imperfect idea of a sort of round globule having two surfaces distinct from one another, an idea they have acquired through the senses; although, if they were asked if they had made this supposition, they would deny that they had done so.[15]

14 R.J. Boscovich, loc. cit., p. 10.

Further,

> Those arguments that some of the Leibnitian circle put forward are of no use for the purpose of connecting indivisibility & non-extension of the elements with continuous extension of the masses formed from them. I discussed the arguments in question in a short note appended to Art. 13 of the dissertation *De Materiæ Divisibilitæ and Principiis Corporum....Those, who say that monads cannot be compenetrated, because they are by nature impenetrable, by no means remove the difficulty. For, if they are both by nature impenetrable, & also at the same time have to make up a continuum, i.e., have to be contiguous, then at one & the same time they are compenetrated & they are not compenetrated; & this leads to an absurdity & proves the impossibility of entities of this sort. For, from the idea of non-extension of any sort, & of contiguity, it is proved by an argument instituted against the Zenonists many centuries ago that there is bound to be compenetration; & this argument has never been satisfactorily answered: From the nature ascribed to them, this compenetration is excluded. Thus there is a contradiction & an absurdity.*[16]

Mendelssohn argued that Leibniz could escape the dilemma that ensnared Zenonists along these lines, though it cannot be proved that this was intended among "the Leibnizian circle." Clearly, Boscovich responded that monads could not be both nonextended and contiguous without undergoing compenetration, meaning that a continuum could not be constructed out of such points. Mendelssohn retorted that monads are not contiguous, i.e., do not achieve direct contact. He further interpreted Boscovich to construct a continuum out of his own nonextended force points. The debate thus resolves into two questions of fact: Did Leibniz

15 R.J. Boscovich, loc. cit., p. 59.
16 R.J. Boscovich, loc. cit., p. 59. All emphases in original.

suggest that monads achieve direct contact? And did Boscovich attempt to construct a continuum out of unextended force points? Both these questions should be answered in Boscovich's favor.

> First, Leibniz allowed direct contact for his nonextended monads. Since he did not embrace action at a distance, a continuum had to be constructed out of contiguous, nonextended monads.
>
> But my Theory differs in a marked degree from that of Leibniz. For one thing, because it does not admit the continuous extension that arises from the idea of consecutive non-extended points touching one another.[17]

Leibniz's inference was vulnerable precisely here. Mary Hesse observed, "The vague and unsatisfactory nature of Leibniz's arguments from the principle of continuity to action by contact is indicated by the use of the same principle by Boscovich in reaching the opposite conclusion".[18] Bertrand Russell observed of Leibniz that:

> His belief in the plenum and the fluid ether should have led him to the second theory [of an all-pervading fluid], and to the investigation of fluid motion. His relational theory of space, and his whole doctrine of monads, should have led him, as it led Boscovich, Kant, and Lotze, to the theory of unextended centers of force. The failure to choose between these alternatives made his dynamics a mass of confusions. The true Leibnizian Dynamics is not his own, but that of Boscovich.[19]

In this connection Russell cited the above-analyzed Articles 138 and 139 of the *Theoria*. Mendelssohn only inherited the confusions.

> Second, it is entirely false that Boscovich attempted to construct spatial continuum from unextended points. This is the standard misinterpretation of his system and one forwarded even today.

17 R.J. Boscovich, loc. cit., 59.

18 M. Hesse, *Forces and Fields* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1962), pp. 163–164.

19 B. Russell, *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1937), p. 91.

> But this entirely misconstrued the entire Boscovichian system: relative time and space are constructed out of lines of force, not force points. "We maintain, once again, that it is a mistake when one claims that, according to Boscovich, real existent things, spatial points, or prior locations, are connected by continuous space. . . . Did Boscovich want to construct space from spatial points? Above all, not that".[20]

IV. Mendelssohn's Review: Action at a Distance

In general, Boscovich considered Leibniz's as close to his own force point particles, with two important exceptions. First, Leibniz's monads explain physical phenomena by direct contact with each other rather than by action at a distance. This left Leibniz with a serious problem of accounting for gravity. Second, Leibniz, by rejecting action at a distance, was forced to construct spatial continuums from contiguous, unextended points. Yet Mendelssohn called this doctrine an "idol" that "has been banned from metaphysics with good effect."[21] Having been only partly liberated from idolatry himself, and possessing his own idols of imagination, Boscovich consequently launched unfounded attacks against Leibniz, showing only his own faulty knowledge of the Leibniz literature, Mendelssohn argued.

Almost two centuries later, Russell had the opposite evaluation: "This brings me to Leibniz's grounds against action at a distance. I cannot discover, on this point, anything beyond vulgar prejudice. . . . The spatial and temporal contiguity of cause and effect are apparently placed on a level. . . . With regard to time, though a difficulty arises from continuity, the maxim may be allowed; but with regard to space, it is precluded, as a metaphysical axiom, by the denial of transeunt action". Since monads do not *really* act on each other, even by impact, but only represent the world as a whole in perceptions, there is no coherent reason to claim that, within monads, the perception of things distant would be any less a cause than perception of things nearby. "The denial of action at a distance must,

20 S. Ristisch, *Der Satz vom Grunde und die Gründung der punktuellen dynamischen Atomistik*, in *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie und Soziologie* ns. 13, 38.1 (1914), p. 100.

21 Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* Band 5 Part 1, p. 83.

therefore, be classed as a mere prejudice, and one, moreover, which has a most pernicious effect upon the relation of Leibniz's Dynamics to his Metaphysics".[22]

Again, Mendelssohn only inherited Leibniz's inability to explain gravity and the need to construct a continuum from monads, which, while impenetrable and contiguous, do not affect each other with primitive force. It was left to Boscovich, Max Jammer argued *pace* Russell, to take up the challenge.

> Strictly speaking, in accordance with his monadological point of view, no transmission of force was implied, but rather a mutual release of inherent activity. But in spite of this rejection of the transuent character of force, Leibniz's impact theory could be worked out consistently only on the assumption of extended particles. The last resort, therefore, of Leibniz's dynamics was ultimately Huygen's mechanism of extended atoms, a theory that is incompatible with the central ideas of Leibniz's monadology. The only way out of this impasse was to reject the idea of extended particles altogether and to conceive forces as associated with mathematical points as their centers, a conception that naturally presupposes action at a distance as the only mode of dynamic interaction. It was Roger Joseph Boscovich who advanced the real Leibnizian theory of dynamics, although ultimately . . . Boscovich's concept of force is relational rather than dynamic.[23]

V. Mendelssohn's Review: Space, Time, and Motion

Mendelssohn correctly noticed that Boscovich had pioneered a new conception of motion in space and time. In particular, Boscovich developed a dynamic theory of time atomism.

> He presumes that duration is continuous in its succession; each and every moment being . . . considered the common border between the prior and subsequent ones. Thus, there can be no

22 B. Russell, loc. cit., p. 93.

23 M. Jammer, *Concepts of Force* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1957), p. 170.

> two moments that are nearest to each other, i.e., between which no actual duration, no actual succession, could be said to exist; as little are there two points in the mathematical line, two points in the surface, or two points in the body, which directly touch each other, and which are nearest each other. Time is, consequently, never discrete but rather all points must be continuous; consequently, the departure of alterations must never be interrupted but rather at all points must be continuous. Because, if the alterations were interrupted anywhere at all, a jump would have to have occurred. Since where jumps occur, duration of the prior state would be actually discrete from the duration of the subsequent moment, and both borders (or the last moment of the prior and the first moment of the subsequent period) would be the nearest to each other, which is absurd. To avoid this absurdity, one must allow that alterations are just as constant as time.[24]

Boscovich suggested that instants in time are dynamic particles rather than static time atoms or lengths of duration. Time instants are limits, or boundaries, not parts of time intervals. He made time relative, or at least relational, without an absolute timeframe. Motion in time is generated by overlapping intervals, not time points. Mendelssohn sought to refute Boscovich's theory of time (and thereby that of space) by arguing that Boscovich equivocated between real and imaginary time. He began with the observation that Boscovich's theory required real time. Boscovich wrote,

> Not only those who admit absolute space, which is of its own real nature continuous, eternal & immense, but also those who, following Leibniz & Descartes, consider space itself to be the relative arrangement which exists amongst things that exist, over and above these existent things; it seems to me, I say, that all must admit some mode of existence that is real & not

24 Mendelssohn, loc. cit., pp. 59-60. See also Mendelssohn, loc. cit., p. 58: "In continuous alteration, then, a definite state (*Zustand*) obtains at each moment of time, which is different from both the preceding and the subsequent moment. And as each moment may be regarded as the transition from the preceding into the subsequent moment, so Mister Boscovich views the state that obtains at each moment merely as the common border between the prior and the subsequent magnitude."

> imaginary; through which they are where they are, & this mode exists when they are there, & perishes when they cease to be where they were.[25]

These two such modes are for the *where* and *when* of a point, as Mendelssohn expressed it. The author gave to every force-point these two actually existing modes, which are *real* space and time; the "mere possibility" of these modes constitutes *imaginary* space and time.

> Then he gives to each and every point two series of such actually existing modes (*Modis*), and these, consequently, comprise real space and real time.[26] . . . When one thinks the mere possibility of these modes, then one has empty space and empty time, if we may express it this way, or imaginary space and imaginary time.[27]

Mendelssohn correctly quoted Boscovich as saying, "These several real modes are produced & perish, and are in my opinion quite indivisible, non-extended, immovable & unvarying in their order".[28] Then Mendelssohn delivered his refutation of the theory.

> In the tiny interval between points there exists a possible space, in which we can imagine the possibility of ever more points, which *could* find their modes between the original points. Mister Boscovich would prove that this possible or imaginary space be continuous, infinite, eternal and necessary, although real space does not obtain all these properties. He finally brings to bear on time also everything he has said about space. I do not know what to make of this mere possibility, which is also nonetheless maintained to be real. Between points there is an interval, this interval is real, but it is nothing other than a possible space. Do you see the error upon which the father has based his *action at a distance*? He had to concede empty space, then made it a necessity of his hypothesis—and a virtue of necessity at that. Nonetheless, he did not wish to consider this space, like that of the Newtonians, as a real, extended,

25 R.J. Boscovich, loc. cit., p. 197.
26 Mendelssohn, loc. cit., p. 86.
27 Mendelssohn, loc. cit., p. 87.
28 R.J. Boscovich, loc. cit., p. 197.

> indivisible and eternal thing. Therefore he made a mere possibility out of it, and indeed a possibility that must either exist or its points have no intervals and must, by his own hypothesis, compenetrate. In order to keep his system from sinking, he thus allows this obvious contradiction to stand.[29]

Mendelssohn's refutation does not work because it contained misunderstandings of Boscovich's theory, although, in all fairness, Boscovich's ideas were in turn complex and obscure. So let us lay them out properly.

Boscovich distinguished between real and imaginary time. By the *real*, he meant physical points and intervals. These points and intervals consist of force. And for him there is always a finite number of points and intervals in the universe. These points are indivisible and endowed with repulsive power and inertia. Intervals arise from relations between points. Force, not extended matter, fills up the universe. The *real* means such points and intervals as actually found in nature. Real points are not infinitely indivisible, but intervals possess an infinite insertibility, or infinite componibility, of additional points. When Boscovich spoke of real points and intervals, he meant physical force points, not mathematical points. By the *imaginary*, he meant points and intervals as conceived in geometric, mathematical reasoning. Imaginary space and time are forms of intuition, for him. They are "empty" of any force. Whereas there are not perfect points, lines, or surfaces in nature, geometric points, lines, and surfaces are perfect. As such, imaginary points and intervals are potentially infinitely divisible, and there is a potentially infinite number of them. Mathematical space and time, are constructed out of continuous points, are infinite in extension, and are continuums. Imaginary points possess no force of repulsion or inertia.

Well before Kant, Boscovich distinguished space and time as they are "in themselves" and "as we know them." We cannot know time and space in themselves, he asserted. Were real relations to change, and yet produce the same idea, we would notice no change. Time and space as we know them are experienced as continuous, divisible, and so on, yet it is the crude threshold of the senses that accounts for this impression. Rather than equivocating and winding up in contradiction, Boscovich was moving

29 M. Mendelssohn, loc. cit., p. 87.

toward his own version of critical philosophy.[30] Mendelssohn remained within a Leibnizian, pre-critical view of time and space. Russell's observation that Leibniz's confusions could be traced back to an insufficient understanding of subjective space[31] rings true for Leibniz's follower Mendelssohn.

Mendelssohn criticized Boscovich for considering geometry as imaginary. "Here Mister Boscovich goes further than even the *Leibnizians*. He would very gladly hold the opinion that *the entirety of geometry rests merely in the imagination*".[32] This is easy to demonstrate; Boscovich's *Theoria* reads: "Hence the whole of geometry is imaginary; but the hypothetical propositions that are deduced from it are true, if the conditions assumed by it exist, & also the conditional things deduced from them, in every case . . .".[33] This means only that Mendelssohn remained within a realist notion of geometry, while Boscovich looked beyond Euclidean geometry, something Kant himself did not do.

Further, Mendelssohn misunderstood Boscovich to consider time as a continuum. Boscovich repeatedly said motion is the only continuum, and it is precisely motion that Mendelssohn misunderstood. These misinterpretations invalidated Mendelssohn's refutation. Out of fairness to Mendelssohn, though, these misunderstandings of Boscovich are repeated even today.

VI. Mendelssohn's Review: Testimony of the Senses

Boscovich's entire theory demanded a radical departure from the testimony of the senses. Referring to Boscovich's *Theoria*, L.L. Whyte commented, "I join Nietzsche in holding it to be 'the greatest triumph over the senses that has yet been achieved on earth'".

Diametrically opposed to Boscovich, Mendelssohn took the testimony of the senses as foundational. Mendelssohn was not an original thinker but preferred to promote a common sense, or "popular," philosophy from various sources. He did not simply defer to the vox populi; rather, his

30 Boscovich gave his clearest response to a criticism similar to Mendelssohn's at *Theoria* Article 372.

31 Russell, loc. cit., p. 99.

32 M. Mendelssohn, loc. cit., p. 82.

33 *Theoria philosophiae naturalis*. §369 first and second editions: §374 third edition.

popular philosophy defended philosophy and natural religion as the means to human happiness. Abstruse metaphysical issues were judged by their ethical, philanthropic, or humanitarian implications.

One consequence of Mendelssohn's common sense epistemology was that matter must be considered as extended and impenetrable; this is the way it appears to human sensation and understanding. Human action requires that we think of material objects as extended, and thus of their elemental particles. Throughout his review, Mendelssohn chastised Boscovich for contradicting the requirements of human understanding and action. Letter 55 began by emphasizing that the Boscovichian system opposed the senses in considering extension, impenetrability, along with many other properties of matter, as mere illusions, the real grounds of which are points emanating force. Even heat and cold, colors, and others are accounted for by this hypothesis. His unseen, unfelt world of force points defied the common sense of the Berlin reviewer, especially the construction of extension out of unextended points. That extension itself is an illusion; such a belief would, of course, undermine the realist worldview based on the five senses. Solidity and impenetrability would be likewise an illusion, space itself being only imaginary. These triumphs over empirical evidence were bought with the currency of *action at a distance,* in the reviewer's eyes.

Mendelssohn rejected the entire Boscovichian revolution: not only did *action at a distance* pose an insoluble contradiction for the Jesuit from Dalmatia, but, "This is the general fate of his hypotheses! They seldom directly confront Nature in a precise fashion, consequently one is led astray from time to time to do damage to the first and most secure concepts in order not to relinquish the hypotheses."[34] And so it seems that the decisive objection to Boscovich lay in his opposition to the senses and what they tell us of Nature. The senses testify to solidity and impenetrability of bodies, direct contact, extension, and material properties like heat, color, and so on. Whereas force points operating in accord with the Boscovich Curve possess none of these qualities. Rather than follow the strange and idiosyncratic Dalmatian natural philosopher into a supersensible view of the world as force points strewn across a vacuum, Mendelssohn promoted the Leibnizian worldview embraced by a large segment of the budding German national culture.

34 M. Mendelssohn, loc. cit., p. 87.

Another case in point exemplifies the conflict between author and reviewer: the shape of Earth. Quoting *De Figure Telluris*, Mendelssohn demonstrated Boscovich believed that the shape of Earth is not determined by the surfaces of the atoms composing it, and that the shape of Earth is constantly under subtle change. Boscovich wrote,

> This surface of Earth, which the oceans, rivers, mountains and valleys border, is not only, at least in our view, irregular, but also discontinuous, because it alters with every smallest motion of the fixed and fluid parts. Nor has the question ever been that of a [precise] shape of Earth. Other certain regular shapes have been assumed for it, which most closely approximate it; one imagined that the mountain and hills were leveled and valleys were filled in. Also, this concept of a shape of Earth alone is fluctuating and indefinite, because so many infinite regular curves may be drawn through a particular number of given points. Similarly, infinitely many curved surfaces may be drawn around the Earth, that they either touch mountains and hills at certain points or cut across them in such a way that inner spaces are filled in with matter contained outside the surface, and all these surfaces may be regular. Therefore, there are infinitely many surfaces that meet the criterion.[35]

To which Mendelssohn commented, "I cannot imagine how as astute a mathematician as Boscovich undoubtedly is, should have forgotten that a smallest [surface] must exist, and that doubtless these surfaces are the question when we seek to determine the shape of Earth".[36] The only possible way to mathematically determine the shape of Earth, he stated, is to consider the surfaces of the smallest particles of matter.

Here we see a dramatic use of the imagination based on macroscopic objects for microscopic objects. An atom was taken to be a small particle of Earth; an atom was but a smallest "clump" of Earth. Precisely this analogy misconstrued an atom, according to Boscovich; atoms are dimensionless points of force, not at all small black dots with measurable arcs or surfaces. We simply cannot use imagination in deducing the properties of smallest particles. Mendelssohn chose the clump model of an atom and thus determined the shape of Earth in his way. Boscovich, of

35 Quoted at M. Mendelssohn, loc. cit., pp. 80–81.
36 M. Mendelssohn, loc. cit., p. 81.

course, determined Earth's shape in another, because *he did not believe particles to have surfaces at all.* In fact, Boscovich's frequent retort that the Leibnizians imagine elementary particles as dots with parts, rather than as points without parts, is verified here in Mendelssohn's case.

Here I would make three remarks against Mendelssohn. First, the argument that the parts of a whole must have the same characteristics as the whole itself is a glaring example of the *fallacy of division.* Second, his characterization again presumes that Boscovich would account for extension by adjacent points: lines of force, rather, fill space and account for extension, as astute readers of Boscovich know. Third, later in Mendelssohn's career, after the appearance of *Critique of Pure Reason,* he modified his own position to approximate that of Kant. Mendelssohn wrote in *Morgenstunden*: "We are merely saying, the idea that we have of matter as extended, mobile, and impenetrable is not a consequence of our weakness and our inability; rather, it comes from the positive power in our souls, which is common to all thinking beings, and is not merely subjective but objective truth".[37] And: "Thus, when we say matter is extended, mobile, and impenetrable, we say nothing more than that there exist ideas outside us, which represent it as extended, motile, and impenetrable, for every thinking being".[38] This later position was consonant with Boscovich's distinction between real and imaginary points. For these three reasons, Mendelssohn's defense of the senses against Boscovich falls apart.

VII. Mechanics

Letter 45 (July 5, 1759, six pages) contained a summary of *Theoria* Part II, Mechanics. Mendelssohn informed his readers that he preferred to delete all mathematical formulas, and even graphs, from discussion of difficult matters such as mechanics. "I would prefer not to make my letters overly rigid with mathematical symbols. . . . [Mathematical symbols] standing by themselves in a letter is not acceptable, but what is worse,

37 M. Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* Vol. 2, 291. Quoted at M. Keyserling, *Moses Mendelssohn: Sein Leben und seine Werke* (Leipzig: Hermann Mendelssohn, 1862), p. 447.
38 M. Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* Vol. 2, 290. Quoted at Keyserling, loc. cit., p. 448.

such [mathematical] speculations cannot be summarized in an excerpt".[39] Numbers do not explain the nature of force, they only quantify it, he argued, and so Boscovich was allegedly caught in a vicious circle. This reliance on mathematics and graphs became, in Mendelssohn's eyes, the central Boscovichean weakness; this error underlay every part of the system, according to the thesis of the entire review. The only thing Boscovich proved, according to the reviewer, was that Newton's law of action and reaction is true for a mass of points. "Without falling into a viciously circular argument, for Mister Boscovich, all that follows from Newton's principle is this: that the equality of action and reaction also occurs in masses, that is, in a vast number of points."

Mendelssohn's Letter 54 (September 13, 1759) attacked Boscovich's ideas about the penetrability of matter; this issue has been central for much of the discussion surrounding the *Theoria*, from its appearance to current times. Mendelssohn ascribed to Boscovich the belief that an object, travelling fast enough, would penetrate another body without atomic collisions and consequently would leave no hole in the penetrated body. This was allegedly how Boscovich explained light's penetration of bodies. The reviewer then compared this notion of penetrability of matter to belief in ghosts passing through walls. He granted that all philosophical systems contain ideas that ring irrational when taken from context. Mendelssohn, however, argued that the world is too small for Boscovich's theory, and so he went outside of it for some of his explanations.

Mendelssohn's objections to Boscovich's mechanics are especially weak. First, Mendelssohn discarded a fully technical treatment of mechanics and abused Boscovich for not doing the same. Yet, Mendelssohn himself gave a description of the Boscovich Curve to his readers; including an illustration of it would surely have helped more than harmed readers. Second, Boscovich did not merely reinvent Newton's theory; his particles had repulsive, not attractive, forces at indefinitely small distances. This difference had many advantageous ramifications for Boscovich. Third, Mendelssohn, like so many others, misunderstood Boscovich on the nature of light. Priestley set the tone for reception of Boscovich and his ideas in Great Britain of the 1770s by commending him precisely on this point, and as a contrast to the British reception, Letter 54 is especially interesting. Though Boscovich in 1763 was wrong about light, he had a more profound idea than Mendelssohn gave him credit for.

39 M. Mendelssohn, loc. cit., p. 65.

He held that due to the incredible speed of light, the repulsive force of particles approached by light would approach an infinite magnitude. This meant that light would achieve a virtual penetrability of matter, though light particles would still not achieve direct contact with other particles. If a mass, such as a cannonball, were to achieve the speed of light, then it, too, would attain virtual penetrability of matter. But then again, such a mass would also transform into a "very tenuous effluvium," which is how Boscovich characterized light.[40] Since spirit is immaterial, physical points of force would not exert a repulsive force of any magnitude against it; thus, spirit can truly penetrate matter. In my opinion, Boscovich's great theoretical weakness was not an issue of mechanics, but rather that he had to accept a radical Cartesian dualism in order to retain any theological notion of spirit and God.

VIII. Mendelssohn's Review: Theological Issues

Mendelssohn held that two notions—the fatherhood of God and immortality of the soul—were crucial for human well being. These were notions he was unwilling to relinquish at any cost. The pre-established harmony of the universe, Leibniz's monadology, and the notion that the actual world is the best of all possible worlds were further ideas he considered foundational. These Leibnizian notions, he believed, comported perfectly with his own tradition of Judaism. For Mendelssohn, the highest standard of truth was healthy human understanding, not dogmatism. Common sense proved to be whatever gave light and life to human understanding. Everything uncommon, extraordinary, disordered, or obscure was incorrect and a corrupting influence. Clear, enlightening notions bore in themselves the seal of truth. Not only the ontological proof of God's existence qualified as truth but also John Locke's empiricism. Speculation had to employ human understanding as its compass. Atheism, he firmly believed, could only lead to human unhappiness and so must be false.

Boscovich believed in the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. He was a devout Jesuit but one who separated his science from church dogmas and who followed science even when it violated them.

40 R.J. Boscovich, loc. cit., p. 166.

What the reviewer Mendelssohn saw, to his horror, was that, by two relatively minor changes to the *Theoria*, the author's theory could do without the existence of God altogether as an explanatory hypothesis. In the *Theoria*, God existed only in an untenable dualism between the world of force and the Being external to force. Mendelssohn also saw that minds would suffer the same fate. If centers of force were also centers of conation and cognition, then there would be no use for the notion of mind as a substance separate from matter. Both matter and mind (along with God) would be superceded as intelligible hypotheses, the world being conceivable entirely as force-points strewn across voids acting in pairs in an oscillating manner according to the inverse of the distance squared.

Further, Boscovich's notion of God did not choose the best of all possible worlds, because there is no such world. Rather, God, as the Infinite Determinator, chose the world based on a law of force that prevented eternal recurrence. For, if point-particles could return to the exact same position in space as occupied previously, the world would operate over enormous cycles of time according to eternal repetition of a self-same universe. Boscovich did not believe in pre-established harmony; the world is a swirling flow of relations between force-points.

Mendelssohn's conclusion on these issues is correct albeit for the wrong reasons. Boscovich's theory did not permit any occult explanations; thus the determinations of God should not be permitted to explain how the universe avoids eternal recurrence of a self-operating system of nature. (Nor did his theory permit actual infinities in nature[41]; thus his argument that a point can never return to a prior point due to the infinite componibility of space cannot be allowed.) God served no vital purpose from a scientific perspective. In some passages Boscovich suggested that if force points were endowed with will and cognition, there would be possible "some third thing," neither mind nor matter.[42] Boscovich's dualism was indeed untenable and a glaringly regressive aspect of his system: with it, we are left with a world of swirling forces, neither mind nor matter, recurring eternally. Although the contemporary German public took his refutation as decisive, Mendelssohn's popular philosophy did not stand the test of time, leaving a niche for Boscovich in Germany, after all.

41 R.J. Boscovich, loc. cit., p. 12.
42 R.L. Boscovich, loc. cit., p. 64.

IX. Final Note

Mendelssohn's negative review of the *Theoria* did not go unchallenged. An anonymous author defended Boscovich in *Anmerkungen über den Auszug, and die Kritik eines berlinisches Herrn Recensenten das Boscovischische System betreffend* (Remarks on the Summary and Critique by a Berlin Reviewer of the Boscovichian System). It was published by the Royal Imperial Near-Austrian College at Freiburg as a master's degree thesis in philosophy in August 1772. This work is no longer extant, with the exception of its introductory paragraph:

> A certain gentleman from Berlin has ventured to summarize and criticize Boscovich's work. I leave it to the public to decide how well each succeeds. Here I supply both this [summary] and that [critique] as they were inserted in *Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend.* I simply add remarks thereto which seem to me appropriate to clarify obscure matters; to fill in, where necessary, what has been left out; to discuss in detail what has been poorly understood; and to accuse the critique, which is so often unfounded, of its fairness. In general it seems to me useful to become familiar with the system in its original language, because there may be doubts raised by reading it in the Latin.[43]

The "certain gentleman from Berlin" was Mendelssohn, of course. (Though the review letters were surreptitiously anonymous, the one at issue was signed unambiguously with the initial "M.") This paragraph tells us that Mendelssohn's entire review (28 pages) was reprinted in the thesis and that a detailed, critical analysis of it was given, including reference to the original Latin.[44] This revelation is important because the Anmerkungen, a copy of which was possessed by the Basle University Library, became a crucial resource for the young professor Friedrich Nietzsche a century later in 1873. In fact, the "Time Atomism Fragment of 1873" is Nietzsche's notes from his reading of Boscovich's Theoria, the masters thesis, and, by implication, Mendelssohn's review. The obscurities, misunderstandings, and omissions corrected by the

43 M. Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften* Vol. 22, pp. 29–30.
44 The anonymous review was itself reviewed four years later by Johann August Eberhard in "Rezension zu den Anmerkungen...," in *Die Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek,* Anhang zum 13–24 Bände. Abteilung I (1776), p. 526f.

anonymous masters candidate, bolstered Nietzsche's evaluation of Boscovich in *Beyond Good and Evil*, when he sought to rehabilitate Boscovich's reputation in Germany. The belated attempted rescue of a maverick scientist by a maverick philosopher did not succeed in Germany, though, even within Nietzsche's closest circles.[45]

45 See G. Whitlock, "Roger Joseph Boscovich, Benedict de Spinoza and Friedrich Nietzsche," in *Nietzsche-Studien* (1996), pp. 200–220.

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On Rhythm, Resonance and Distortion

ZAFER ARACAGÖK

> Man is a rope stretched between the animal and the Superman – a rope over an abyss...What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal: what is lovable in man is that he is a transition...Thus Spoke Zarathustra.
>
> The Tacoma Narrows Bridge, which spanned a length of one mile over the Tacoma Narrows in Bremerton, Washington, was nicknamed the Galloping Gertie because of its constant rocking and twisting in the wind. These oscillations became so great that on November 7, 1940, a support cable near the middle of the bridge snapped, causing the entire structure to crash into the river below.

0.

That to think, to speak and to write about rhythm requires and does not require rhythm at the same time can be obtained from a line of thought that aims to preserve its unthought, not as something that can be thought or written or spoken about but as that which makes one aware of the absent presence of the unthought, as "something," or perhaps as the "unheard."[1]

1 Concerning the question of the "unthought," particularly, in Heidegger, I would like to acknowledge my debt to Lacoue-Labarthe's essays "Obliteration" and "Apocryphal Nietzsche," (Lacoue-Labarthe, P., *The Subject of Philosophy*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis: 1993) and to his work in general. However, the way I approach Agamben's works in this essay should be seen as intending to foreground a new concept of "resonance" by way of inventing strategies to disappropriate "the unheard", projected as that which can be

Yet how one approaches this term also determines the "meaning(s)" associated with this term. Can we understand rhythm? Is it possible to understand rhythm *as such*? If it is possible, then how? Furthermore, why should we understand rhythm?

Can we hear the rhythm?

One possible way of understanding rhythm can be found in a traditional appropriation of the word. Rhythm: division of a supposed continuum into intervals, an attempt at temporalisation? Yet, that which is known as a continuum of time is a continuum only when time is conceptualised as a succession of points – rhythm can thus be conceptualised as a division of a continuum of time into intervals only when time is made of points - of what? Of the experience of the one who experiences it? Yet, does *rhythm* have a subject? Does the *subject* have a rhythm? Is it possible to approach rhythm without appropriation? Is it possible to formulate a concept of rhythm without falling into the determinations of an epistemology of subject? Is it possible to consider the heard and the unheard of rhythm without betraying them?

1.

Getting into resonance with these preliminary questions, this essay finds its point of departure in two essays written by G. Agamben, entitled, "Poiesis and Praxis" and "The Original Structure of the Work of Art".[2] The latter opens with the following sentences:

> "Everything is rhythm, the entire destiny of man is one heavenly rhythm, just as every work of art is one rhythm, and everything swings from the poetizing lips of the god." This statement was not passed down to us by Hölderlin's own hand. It is from a period of his life - 1807-1843 - that we usually define as the years of his insanity. The words that compose it were transcribed by a visitor's sympathetic hand from the "incoherent speech" that he uttered in his room in the house of the carpenter Zimmer.[3]

experienced in a relationship to "ousia" in Agamben.

2 Both included in Agamben, G., *The Man without Content*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California:1999

First of all, one of my aims in this paper is to draw attention to a certain reading of Hölderlin's quite often cited paragraph on rhythm with the intention of foregrounding in Agamben the privilege concluded from this quotation. That is, a certain privilege that might be taken here as corresponding to an authentic experience of rhythm; or, perhaps, to an ear that hears the unheard; or, perhaps, to a subject – something more than a subject that takes the step beyond, that is indicated by a moment of *Aufhebung*.

However, I believe that this privilege cannot be made clear without following Agamben's route (a route that not only traverses possibilities but also produces truths) towards a formulation of an original structure of the work of art at the cost of an exclusion and, at the same time, of an inclusion of "the unheard" as that which can be experienced and that, I think, finds its point of departure in a negation, though it passes itself off as an affirmation of the unthought. As Nietzsche showed us time and again, this is an affirmation in which is hidden a negation. Or, better, this is a move of *Aufhebung*, in which a negation is elevated to the level of affirmation. Therefore, my main concern in this paper will be to read Agamben's essay with the intention of affirming an affirmation, that is, keeping such oppositions as the thought and the unthought, the heard and the unheard, the ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) and αριθμοζ (arithmos) as mere differences by way of articulating a different approach to rhythm. My second concern will be to distinguish the Heideggerian move in Agamben's handling of Hölderlin's claim and thus to throw light on the above mentioned negation. Therefore my guiding question will be: is there a possible way of developing a relationship between ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) and αριθμοζ (arithmos) by keeping these terms as differential units and thus, in a double move, rhythmising non-rhythm and non-rhythmising rhythm?

3 Agamben, p. 94.

2.

In his essay, "Poiesis and Praxis," tracing etymologically the (original) meaning of *poiesis*, *praxis* and *work*, Agamben lays bare the historical evolution that these words went through in Western thought. According to Agamben the (hi)story - for this is a story of a fall - of these words is as follows: *poiesis* in time is conjoined with *praxis* only to be subsumed under the general concept of *work*. From Roman times onwards, *work* started to signify production with the sole aim of putting into **action,** whereas formerly these three represented different realms in their relationship to "limit." Thus, "bringing into presence" which was the main concern of art (*poiesis*) in the beginning was replaced by an aesthetic production of works (*praxis*) and a concern for principles that constitute art as an aesthetic realm.

For Agamben, it was in Nietzsche that the ultimate unity of *poiesis* and *praxis* culminated into "will to power." If the will that only wills itself represented this evolution, then a will that is willed by opening itself to an application of "being" to "becoming" is what Nietzsche introduced into metaphysical tradition. Therefore, Nietzsche's thought was a "thought of art".[4]

If our intention is to approach these preliminary conclusions about the issue of *poiesis* and *praxis*, we should be able to locate the matter in a broader context: that is, in the question of applicability of the thought of "being" to "becoming," in the question of associations the word "will" has in Nietzsche, and also in the much broader context of the question of negation and affirmation in Nietzsche.

These three points become especially important when, for example, one considers Agamben's other essay, "The Original Structure of the Work of Art", where one observes that, in the former essay, the transformation of the whole of life into art and the artist's will to power is much related to "the original structure of the work of art" which Agamben detects in the opposition of ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) and αριθμοζ (arithmos). For if the *poiesis* essay can be seen as an attempt to draw a picture of the fall of *poiesis* into "will to power," the second essay traces the possibility - by a certain reading of the quotation from Hölderlin - of restoring *poiesis* to its original status by means of foregrounding the unheard as that which can

4 Agamben, p.85.

be heard within the oppositional structure of ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) and αριθμοζ (arithmos).

To start with, to be resonating with Nietzsche probably amplifies those vibrations of thought that, genealogically speaking, put forward thought as a difference of forces, instead of the traditional way of putting it into opposition to "*praxis.*" If the Nietzschean criticism of Hegel – the critique of *Aufhebung* – should be pursued in the name of a critique of Hegelian transgression of limit, then one should first deconstruct the opposition of "the thought" to "the unthought", or "the heard" to the "the unheard," which is embodied in Agamben as the opposition between "*poiesis*" and "*praxis*" or, between ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) and αριθμοζ (arithmos). Such a deconstruction also provides one with a reading of Nietzschean will not as an application of "being" to "becoming" but as comprising differential units, or rather, as less *being* of becoming than being of *becoming*.

Since Lacoue-Labarthe's essays "Apocryphal Nietzsche" and "Obliteration"[5], we have learned too well the Heideggerean approach to Nietzsche that "obliterated" Nietzsche by way of an Hegelian move (though much criticised and thought as surpassed by Heidegger himself as a result of his "step-back" manoeuvre). I propose at this point that a similar move can be detected in Agamben's approach to Nietzsche by way of his criticism of "will" that leads him to a conceptualisation of ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) as an authentic experience. Without doubt, it does not mean that Agamben obliterates Nietzsche but he, in a certain way, reads Nietzsche as if certain truths can be obtained from him - this is a subject to which I will return later as the main theme of both my essay and Agamben's: resonance.

As Agamben puts it:

> We are so accustomed to this unified understanding of all man's "doing" as *praxis* that we do not recognize that it could be, and in other eras has been, conceived differently. The Greeks, to whom we owe all the categories through which we judge ourselves and reality around us, made a clear distinction between *poiesis* (*poiein*, "to produce" in the sense of bringing into being) and *praxis* (*prattein*, "to do" in the sense of acting). As we shall see, central to *praxis* was the idea of the will that

5 Both included in Lacoue-Labarthe, P., *The Subject of Philosophy*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis: 1993.

> finds its immediate expression in an act, while, by contrast, central to *poiesis* was the experience of pro-duction into presence, the fact that something passed from nonbeing to being, from concealment into the light of the work. The essential character of *poiesis* was not its aspect as a practical and voluntary process but its being a mode of truth understood as unveiling, as aletheia.[6]

In relation to these definitions of *poiesis* and *praxis*, the category of "work" was understood by the Greeks as that which pertains to biological necessity. According to Agamben, these distinctions between *poiesis*, *praxis* and *work* have been obscured in time as a result of a tendency that prioritised "voluntary production of an effect" above all.

> When this process is completed in the modern era, every chance to distinguish between *poiesis* and *praxis*, pro-duction and action, is lost. Man's "doing" is determined as an activity producing a real effect, whose worth is appreciated with respect to the will that is expressed in it, that is, with respect to its creativity and freedom. (...) In terms of the work of art, this means the emphasis shifts away from what the Greeks considered the essence of the work - the fact that in it something passed from nonbeing into being, thus opening the space of truth and building a world for man's dwelling on earth - and to the *operari* of the artist, that is, to the creative genius and the particular characteristics of the artistic process in which it finds expression.[7]

The most obvious distinction between *poiesis* and *praxis*, as can be observed above, is that for *poiesis*, there need not be something actualised that can be represented either in the form of a work or an art work. In other words, that which unveils itself might or might not find embodiment in an artwork, for what precisely distinguishes it from *praxis* is the lack of the will of the artist in *poiesis* and the will of the artist in *praxis* as "voluntary production of an effect," that is, the active will of the artist to represent this experience in an artwork. Consequently, if, after this development, one can talk about "the particular characteristics of the

6 Agamben, pp. 68-69.
7 Agamben, p.70.

artistic process", then there is a more convenient way of defining it: aesthetics.

For Agamben, all Western thought - basically metaphysical – can be seen as a series of "attempts to transcend aesthetics and to give a new status to artistic pro-duction [which] have started from the blurring of the distinction between *poiesis* and *praxis*, that is from the interpretation of art as a mode of *praxis* and of the *praxis* as the expression of a will and a creative force."[8] Novalis, Nietzsche, Artaud, and the Situationists, therefore, attempted in vain to posit the essence of "human activity as will and vital impulse"[9] because what they strived for was in fact a "forgetting of the original pro-ductive status of the work of art as foundation of the space of truth."[10]

In the rest of the essay Agamben elaborates the distinctions between *poiesis* and *praxis* on the basis of "limit" and "will." If *poiesis* has its limit outside itself and is not determined by an end or by an act of production, *praxis* is what has its limit within itself and is, therefore, what is determined by an act of production in opposition to bringing into presence. Furthermore, the final and the most crucial distinction between the two lies in *praxis*' relation to "will": "that man is capable of *praxis* means that man wills his action and, willing it, goes through it to its limit. *Praxis is going through to the limit of the action, while moved by will*; it is willed action."[11]

Now if we could sum up all those distinctions that went into the structuring of *poiesis* and *praxis* as oppositional terms, perhaps we could finish this essay at any moment; yet the fact that one can never produce a sum total of such distinctions is what raises some questions about the "truth" of both this essay and Agamben's. Without doubt, it is the inexhaustibility of such distinctions that both constructs and deconstructs such oppositions between terms; yet there is always a point, where, by means of an approximation, a concrete opposition is produced in phenomenology: *poiesis* or *praxis*? As long as thought proceeds with binary oppositions, it is inevitable that one will be caught - most of the time by an unconscious act, or by simply avoiding it – crossing the bridge. Then there arises a serious question about this inexhaustability: should one

8 Agamben, p.71.
9 Agamben, p.72.
10 Agamben, p.71.
11 Agamben, p.75.

prefer to cross the bridge? Or, should one prefer to preserve an already-there abyss as an abyss? Is approximation unavoidable?

Without producing truths, but rather, by looking at the origin of values and values of origin, or, better, proceeding genealogically, can one explain this "abyss" by way of a concept of resonance? By resonance, I mean not the general dictionary of the term - "Resonance: sound produced or increased in one body by sound waves from another...", but resonance on both sides of a border that gives way to a distorted rhythm on the very line (?) that seems to constitute the border.

3.

The last section of the *poiesis* essay, "Art Is the Highest Task and the Truly Metaphysical Activity of Man"[12] is devoted to a reading of Nietzsche that crosses the labrynthine bridge between Nietzsche's early and late works as Heidegger's Zarathustra[13] crosses the bridge in order to reach the truth. Now "will" is transformed into "will to power" and equated with "eternal recurrence," thereby made to bear witness to the Nietzschean project of transforming life into art, that is, transforming the whole of life into an art work not by means of the will of the artist but by transformation of the will into a general will. These are the final sentences of the essay:

> Art is the eternal self-generation of the will to power. As such, it detaches itself both from the activity of the artist and from the sensibility of the spectator to posit itself as the fundamental trait of universal becoming. A fragment from the years 1885-86 reads:"The work of art where it appears without an artist, e.g., as body as organism ... To what extent the artist is only a

12 This is the last sentence of the preface that Nietzsche wrote to his *The Birth of Tragedy* in 1871. The sentence appears in Kaufmann's translation as follows: "Let such serious readers learn something from the fact that I am convinced that art represents the highest task and the truly metaphysical activity of this life, in the sense of that man to whom, as my sublime predecessor on this path, I wish to dedicate this essay." Nietzsche, F., *The Birth of Tragedy, Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, The Modern Library, New York: 2000, pp. 31-32.

13 Heidegger, M., "Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra?," *Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 20, no.3, issue no. 79, March 1967, pp. 411-31.

> preliminary stage. The world as a work of art that gives birth to itself – "[14]

Agamben comments no more after this quotation and it seems as if we are asked to conclude that this is the final stage of the fall of *poiesis* into the hegemony of the will, and since then what has been ruling man is this fallen state in which he is condemned to metaphysics. Without doubt this position emanates from a special perspective from which Agamben has formerly looked at a famous Nietzschean aphorism in the *Will to Power*: "Recapitulation: To impose upon becoming the character of being - that is the supreme will to power."[15]

This is supposedly, as one considers the generalisation of the will, what constitutes, according to Agamben, the metaphysical twist of the will in Nietzsche that, I believe, can only be maintained if one decides to read the quotation literally, that is, if one holds it as a means for producing "truth."

I will return to this in following sections because I think there is no way of producing a criticism of how this point is appropriated by Agamben for restoring *poiesis* to its original status, without first showing the moves taken by Agamben for foregrounding a relationship between 1) the fallen state of *poiesis*; 2) the quotation from Hölderlin; and 3) the opposition of ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) and αριθμοζ (arithmos). One possible way of such a criticism might possibly be undertaken by claiming that all are works of negation: that is, 1) if Nietzschean will ends up in will to power it is because Agamben sees in Nietzsche not an affirmation of affirmation but simply an affirmation of negation; 2) if Agamben concludes that Nietzsche, with a basically metaphysical twist, is the ultimate point in the development of the history of the will, it is because in the phrase "being of becoming" he puts stress on *being* rather than on *becoming*; 3) if Agamben raises the possibility of hearing the unheard within an economy of opposition between ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) and αριθμοζ (arithmos) he achieves that only by way of a negation of time as made of points - all of which would have to be proved later.

14 Agamben, p. 93.

15 Nietzsche, F., *The Will to Power*, Random House, New York: 1967, aphorism 617, p. 330.

4.

To my knowledge, it hardly occurred to anyone to take this quotation by Hölderlin - which opens Agamben's essay - "Everything is rhythm, the entire destiny of man is one heavenly rhythm, just as every work of art is one rhythm, and everything swings from the poetizing lips of the god" - as bearing witness to the question of the visible. Now perhaps this is a rather perverse way of approaching this quotation - for there will be no ends in this query and one is guaranteed to become lost on the way - but is not this parallellism between "everything is rhythm" and "just as every work of art is one rhythm" drawn by Hölderlin in order to throw light on "everything" by asking "art" in all its visibility to be present as witness to the invisible rhythm in "everything"? Asking this question allows one to see (?) the potentiality of "everything" having a rhythm but not by way of identifying "art" with "everything." That is, Hölderlin offers us no direct passage from the visible or audible rhythm of the art work to the assertion that "everything is rhythm." In other words, Hölderlin does not guarantee that one can see or hear this but one can only think of it as the inaudible, as the invisible, that can be thought only "as" and not *as such* of the audible or visible rhythm of the artwork. I believe this way of thinking about the radical otherness of "everything" that is compared by Hölderlin to the artwork invites us to rethink the relationship of the unthought to thought in this quotation (and also of Hölderlin's madness, or the question of madness in general[16]).

Should not one better talk about a punctured tympanum between the two?

16 See Lacoue-Labarthe's essay "Typography" which is of invaluable importance for the issue of madness in philosophy. In this essay, and also in "Obliteration," Lacoue-Labarthe traces Nietzsche's "madness" and Heidegger's treatment of it (Lacoue-Labarthe, P., *Typography*, Harvard University Press, London: 1989). On the other hand, looking at the question of the visible with regard to the question of "rhythm" in Hölderlin raises more questions about whether the issue at stake here is the one related to "mimesis as imitation." Yet, I think this issue cannot be discussed within the limited space of this essay.

5.

I think there is no other way of falling out of resonance with Agamben's "The Original Structure of the Work of Art" (or showing that if there is a possibility of getting into resonance with him, it can only be achieved by means of admitting to a hierarchy between a model and a copy) without first pointing to a determination of limit with respect to the distinction produced by Agamben between ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) and αριθμοζ (arithmos). (The question of resonance will always remain though, until we get to the point of impossibility of appropriating the unthought as the thought.)

Agamben's move to save *poiesis* from the metaphysics of will, or, basically, from metaphysics, or aesthetics, goes by way of showing that rhythm is not a structure in the sense that Structuralism appropriated it. After discussing Aristotle's claim – which the philosopher adopted from Antiphon – that rhythm is what gives structure to "elemental, inarticulate nature,"[17] Agamben compares the implications of this theory with Structuralism in general. If rhythm should be generally understood as structure and if structure is "a whole that contains something more than the simple sum of its parts," then this "something" is something else, something other than the elements and that "which must exist in some way."[18] What Structuralism did, in that sense was nothing different from Pythagoreans who sought this element, this something other, in αριθμοι (arithmoi), numbers. Numbers for them constituted the original principle of all things. "Structural analysis, then understands structure not only as ρυθμοζ but also as a number and elemental principle."[19]

For Aristotle, on the other hand, this "something else" should be something that is "radically other" that opens "a more essential dimension":

> Aristotle designates this dimension as the αιτια του ειναι, the "cause of being," and the ουσια, the principle that gives origin and maintains everything in presence: not a material element but Form (μορφη χαι ειδοζ). Therefore, in the passage from the

17 Agamben, p. 95.
18 Agamben, p. 96.
19 Agamben, p. 97.

> second book the *Physics* referred to earlier, Aristotle refuses the theory expounded by Antiphon and by all those who define nature as elementary matter, το αρρνθμιοτον, and instead identifies nature, that is, the original principle of presence, precisely with ρυθμοζ, structure understood synonymously with Form[20].

Now what happens in Aristotle is the abolition of the hierarchy between elemental, inarticulate nature and structure as ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos): thus, these concepts, such as structure, rhuthmos, and Form are subsumed under a general concept of ουσια (ousia), presence. That is, form is always already there in nature because of the original principle, ουσια (ousia), all of which of course gives way to the question of rhythm, whether it can be felt as such or as something that can be calculated as in Structuralism.

Agamben's criticism, without doubt, abjures Structuralism because, as we mentioned above, it "understands structure not only as αριθμοζ but also as a number and elemental principle"[21], as something more than its elements and thus it aims to transcend aesthetics by searching for the original principle that is located outside its elements, such as mathemathical precision (αριθμοζ (arithmos), just as in the case of the Pythagoreans).

If rhythm should be seen as something else, that is, as something radically other, Agamben is quite careful not to offer a concept of rhythm that can be felt "as such." Rhythm, therefore, as Hölderlin put it, is not a structure in the sense of αριθμοζ (arithmos), that is, something calculable, but, instead, is related to ουσια (ousia), the principle of presence that "opens and maintains the work of art in its original space."[22] What happens here in Agamben's criticism, by a sleight of hand, is the literal obliteration of what Hölderlin, in his madness, quite carefully formulated, that is, the division of "everything" and "art." In other words, Hölderlin does not talk about a possibility of projecting what is peculiar to "art" onto "everything", he only makes a comparison, without identifying one with the other. In that sense, what the poet formulates as something visible, audible, or simply, as sensible for art is applied by Agamben, who formerly defined his position as saving poiesis from aesthetics, to

20 Agamben, p. 97.
21 Agamben, p. 97.
22 Agamben, p. 98.

"everything". Without doubt, one cannot trace here any intention that, once appropriated by "everything," this rhythm can be felt as such.

However, this move, first of all, does not save Agamben from reappropriating the limit that was intentionally disappropriated earlier - result of which is that we are put face to face with a formerly denied opposition: if we have to think ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) not in opposition to αριθμοζ (arithmos), then what is at stake here is the reproduction of another limit, say between "everything" and its outside. In other words, can one preserve one's distance from reappropriation by, first, extending what only applies, for Hölderlin, to art, to "everything" and then creating another limit between "everything," in which art is included, and an outside, that is the original principle, that is, presence, ουσια (ousia)? Is this not to reappropriate the hierarchical structure abolished a second ago, that is, the one between ουσια (ousia) and all the others, that is, "everything"?

On the other hand, there is the question of whether this rhythm, that is not only peculiar to art, but to everything, can be felt *as such*. Does not Agamben here open up a possibility for hearing the unheard in quite a Heideggerian manner?

Let us follow the steps carefully.

"But what, then, is the essence of rhythm?"[23] asks Agamben.

6.

> Recapitulation: To impose upon becoming the character of being - that is the supreme will to power.

This is supposedly, as one considers the generalisation of the will, what constitutes, according to Agamben, the metaphysical twist of the will in Nietzsche that, I believe, can only be maintained if one decides to read the quotation literally, that is, if one holds it as a means for producing "truth."

Now, Nietzsche's position with regard to "truth" is obvious as early as his *The Birth of Tragedy* where he finds the embodiment of this attitude in the person of Socrates. Given this attitude, which Nietzsche defines as

23 Agamben, p. 99.

the attitude of the Socratic man, the tragic view of life opposes it in the sense of a singularity (or, rather, of appearances) that knows no distinction between universal and particular. If the production of truth is what can only be obtained by means of a knowledge whose validity is guaranteed by a universal concept of truth, the tragic view of life privileges a certain abyss that cannot be crossed unless by way of scientific approximation. Without doubt, Nietzsche's criticism of metaphysics, that can be discerned, and yet cannot be held as the main theme of this early work, belongs to a later period, say, to *Zarathustra*, in the form of a project of leaving metaphysics behind. Already in the introduction written to *The Birth of Tragedy* in 1871, he defends his position as follows: "Art is the highest task and the truly metaphysical activity of man."

Furthermore, this position, as Agamben believes, can also be held as bearing witness to Nietzsche's attempt at an aestheticisation of metaphysics, that Nietzsche himself calls "aesthetic metaphysics" in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Especially when Nietzsche discusses the relationship between the Dionysiac and the Apollonian, he undoubtedly follows a metaphysical route that places these two gods into opposing forces: one represents the chaos, the One, and the other, the Form. His later work, though cannot be taken as the completion of his project of leaving metaphysics behind - for example, in *Zarathustra*, where he considers the distinction between "higher men" and "overman" is raised, unavoidably, the question of the possibility of "turning one's back" on the whole metaphysics[24] - yet if one pays attention to the differences between the first introduction of 1871 and the one written in 1886, one cannot fail to see that there had been immense changes that took place in Nietzsche's position with regard to metaphysics. I think the whole passage is worth quoting because it higlights those strains of thought that express not only Nietzsche's bitter criticism of himself concerning his discipleship of Wagner but also a fruitful confusion of mind concerning his consideration of Dionysos, the God, the metaphysical principle of art, and their relation to Being and active nihilism.

Now, I believe that if what Nietzsche aims at in the aphorism, "Recapitulation: To impose upon becoming the character of being - that is the supreme will to power," is taken as a literal application of being on becoming, the conclusion that Agamben reaches can be deduced from *The*

24 See especially, Derrida's essay, "The Ends of Man" in *Margins of Philosophy*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago: 1982

Birth of Tragedy - a conclusion that transforms Nietzsche's thought, by way of looking for proofs, into "a thought of art," the ultimate point within the tradition of metaphysics of an attempt to forget poiesis: aestheticisation of life. However, and in fact, that is literally what Nietzsche is criticising in 1886 as the failure in his earlier thought.

> But, my dear chap, where on earth are we to find romanticism if not in your book? Can that profound hatred of "contemporariness," "actuality," "modern ideas" be carried any farther than you have carried it in your aesthetic metaphysics - a metaphysics which would rather believe in nothingness, indeed in the devil himself, than in the here and now? Do we not hear a ground bass of rage and destructive fury growl through all your ear beguiling contrapuntal art - a fierce hostility to everything that is happening today, an iron will (not far removed from *active nihilism*[25]) which seems to proclaim, "I'd rather that nothing were true than see you triumph and your truth?" Listen, you high priest of art and pessimism, to one of your own statements, that eloquent passage full of dragon killer's bravado and ratcatcher's tricks so appealing to innocent ears; listen to it and tell us, aren't we dealing here with the confession of a true romantic of the 1830's, disguised as a pessimist of the 1850's? Can't we hear behind your confession the annunciatory sounds of the usual romantic finale: rupture, collapse, return, and prostration before an old faith, before the old God.... Come now, isn't your pessimistic work itself a piece of anti Hellenism and romantic moonshine, fit to "befog and intoxicate," a kind of drug - in fact, a piece of music, and German music to boot? Just listen to this: "Let us imagine a rising generation with undaunted eyes, with a heroic drive towards the unexplored; let us imagine the bold step of these St. Georges, their reckless pride as they turn their backs on all the valetudinarian doctrines of optimism, preparing to 'dwell resolutely in the fullness of being': would it not be necessary for the tragic individual of such a culture, readied by his discipline for every contingency, every terror, to want as his Helena a novel art of metaphysical solace and to exclaim as Faust did:

25 My emphasis

And shall not I, by mightiest desire,

In living shape that precious form acquire?

> "Would it not be necessary?" - no, indeed, my romantic fledglings, it would not be necessary. But it is quite possible that things - that you yourselves - might end that way: "metaphysically solaced" despite all your gruelling self discipline and, as romantics usually do, in the bosom of the Church.[26]

What is active nihilism? And, what is this necessity that Nietzsche is critical of here?

The active nihilism that Nietzsche is accusing himself of is the critique that he directed, in *Zarathustra*, to "The Higher Men," in whom he traces a replacement of God with man. As Deleuze puts it:

> Nietzsche's idea is that the death of god is a grand event, glamorous yet insufficient, for nihilism continues, barely changing its form. Earlier nihilism had meant depreciation, the negation of life in the name of higher values. But now the negation of these higher values is replaced by human values (...) Nothing has changed, for the same reactive life, the same slavery that had triumphed in the shadow of divine values now triumphs through human ones. (...) That is why Nietzsche, in book IV of Zarathustra, traces the great misery of those he calls "the higher men." These men want to replace God: they carry human values; they even believe they are rediscovering reality, recuperating the meaning of affirmation.[27]

At this juncture, I would like to propose that we have to excavate deeper into the question of replacement and application, for it will throw light on 1) how, as we will see soon, Nietzsche criticizes himself in the 1886 introduction, 2) how the differences between active and reactive nihilism are maintained in Nietzsche and also 3) how the application, *as such*, "the character of being on becoming," is provided in Agamben.

26 Nietzsche, F., *The Birth of Tragedy*, Anchor Books, New York: 1956, pp. 13-14.
27 Deleuze, G., *Pure Immanence*, Zone Books, New York: 2001, pp. 80-81.

For one thing, it is obvious that Nietzsche realizes in the 1886 introduction that he committed such a replacement and therefore his position in *The Birth of Tragedy* with regard to God carries the risk of enthroning such higher values in the spirit of Romanticism, in the form of "rupture, collapse, return, and prostration before an old faith, before the old God...." For such a "rising generation," what Nietzsche declared as destiny was to "dwell resolutely in the fullness of being," the necessity of which was found nowhere but in the quotation from Goethe. Now, we have "fullness of being" and its "necessity" on the one hand, and the criticism of this necessity on the other.

Furthermore, in chapter VI of the 1886 introduction, we read Nietzsche complaining about another failure in terms of an application:

> And yet there remains the great Dionysiac question mark, intact, apart from all those rash hopes, *those wrong applications* (my emphasis) to contemporary matters, which tended to spoil my first book; remains even with regard to music. For the question here is (and must continue to be), "What should a music look like which is no longer romantic in inspiration, like the German, but Dionysiac instead?"[28]

What Nietzsche criticises here "as those wrong applications" was to apply what passed for him intially as the principles of tragic art to Wagner's music. Romanticism, as he understands years later, was "rupture, collapse, return, and prostration before an old faith, before the old God...." This is actually the god of nothingness that is replaced by the old god by an active nihilism and, "the truly metaphysical activity of man" that Nietzsche claimed in the 1871 introduction is now depreciated as "aesthetic metaphysics - a metaphysics which would rather believe in nothingness, indeed in the devil himself, than in the here and now?"

What is Nietzsche proposing here as a kind of metaphysics that has a belief "in the here and now"? A critique of application, not simply of what passes for the old to the new, but a critique of application as that which can be applicable? And also, a critique of necessity? If this is so, can we discern in this belief "in the here and now" an intention to cast a light on Nietzsche's critique of "fullness of being"? And does Nietzsche have a name for that? It seems as if the name Dionysos, which he employed in

28 *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 13.

order to oppose it to morality, metaphysics, the Christian God, and Western art, does not suffice anymore when Nietzsche realises what underlines his position: active nihilism, application of the old to the new, replacement. What he does then upon this realisation – upon a new critique of "fullness of being" that he depreciates as unnecessary - is to confess:

> Thus it happened that in those days, with this problem book, my vital instincts turned against ethics and founded a radical counterdoctrine, slanted aesthetically, to oppose the Christian libel on life. But it still wanted a name. Being a philologist, that is to say a man of words, I christened it rather arbitrarily - for who can tell the real name of the Antichrist? - with the name of a Greek god, Dionysos.[29]

In the first place, in the late introduction, Nietzsche had realised that that which reveals itself as a question of name in fact is a question of Being, a question of full being, that he supposed to fully embody itself in the name of Dionysos but it was a replacement, an application, of the old being to the new one, that he now opposes with "here and now." Now, the way Nietzsche realises this in the later introduction takes the form of a criticism of Being, or basically the philosophy of Being, that polluted the way he produced a criticism of metaphysics: from *The Birth of Tragedy*, to *Zarathustra* and to *Will to Power*, Nietzsche realises that what he had been critical of - Being - cannot be maintained with an absolute rejection of Being and without the introduction into his thought the idea of "eternal recurrence" - that is, Becoming. Given these circumstances, I think, one is faced with preferences when one considers this quotation from Nietzsche: "Recapitulation: To impose upon becoming the character of being - that is the supreme will to power." The question is twofold: Is one supposed to replace Being with Becoming according to Nietzsche (that can be seen as an alibi when circumstances for doing so are obscure)? Or, is there another possible way of negotiating such an imposition? In other words, what really happens when such a replacement takes place? (Is such a replacement, in the form of an application, possible and, basically, is it possible for Nietzsche?) Does not this move, this replacement, send one back to a determination that one was critical of a second ago (as Nietzsche realises in the 1886 introduction)? Is it possible to see in becoming a

29 *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 11.

determination that conditions the relationship between universal and particular? Can one produce a determination out of "becoming"[30]?

Before one can resonate with a probable answer to this question - that is, with Nietzsche's answer - I think that these questions also pave the way for further questions about Nietzsche and the question of style: after all, can it be a philosophical issue to be true to Nietzsche when one considers the place of style in Nietzsche? It is a question of reading Nietzsche as closely as possible to Nietzsche, yet to be close does not always endow one with being true to Nietzsche, for if approximation is what is thought to be the ultimate result of "being close to," then Nietzsche would be the last of the philosophers who would exchange style with approximation. If the philosopher in question is Nietzsche, then one is required to formulate a "being close to" him, always with an eye to the abyss, due to his styles, in accordance with such concepts as "becoming," "eternal recurrence," or "will to power" - concepts that function in Nietzsche as forces by which all the negativity of concepts like "being," "essence," "god" is disappropriated to be reappropriated by active forces. What happens, for example, in a process of becoming?

The importance of double affirmation also becomes visible at such a juncture: double affirmation in Nietzsche is a move taken with the intention of producing a critique of Hegelian "*aufhebung*." As Deleuze put it:

30 Here, a brief reference to Deleuze is illiminating. He warns us about the following points: "What nihilism condemns and tries to deny is not so much Being, for we have known for sometime that Being resembles Nothingness like a brother. It is, rather, multiplicity; it is, rather, becoming. Nihilism considers becoming as something that must atone and must be reabsorbed into Being, and the multiple as something unjust that must be judged and reabsorbed into the One. Becoming and multiplicity are guilty - such is the first and the last word of nihilism . (...) Multiplicity is affirmed as multiplicity; becoming is affirmed as becoming. That is to say at once that affirmation is itself multiple, that it becomes itself, and that becoming and multiplicity are themselves affirmations. (...) Multiplicity is no longer answerable to the One nor is becoming answerable to Being. But Being and the One do more than lose their meaning: they take on a new meaning. Now the One is said of the multiple as the multiple (splinters or fragments); Being is said of becoming as becoming. (...) Becoming is no longer opposed to Being, nor is the multiple opposed to the One (these oppositions being the categories of nihilism)," Deleuze, G., *Pure Immanence*, Zone Books, New York: 2001, pp. 84-86.

> The will to power, says, Nietzsche, consists not in coveting or even in *taking* but in *creating* and *giving*. Power, as a will to power, is not that which the will wants, but that which wants in the will (Dionysos himself). The will to power is the differential element from which derive the forces at work, as well as their respective quality in a complex whole. Thus it is always given as a mobile, aerial, pluralist element. It is by the will to power that a force commands, but it is also by the will to power that a force obeys. To these two types or qualities of forces there correspond two faces, two qualia of the will to power, which are ultimate and fluent, deeper than the forces that derive from them, for the will to power makes it that active forces affirm, and affirm their difference: in them affirmation is first, and negation is never but a consequence, a sort of surplus of pleasure. What characterises reactive forces, on the other hand, is their opposition to what they are not, their tendency to limit the other: in them negation comes first; through negation, they arrive a semblance of affirmation.[31]

What does Agamben do in that sense? First, affirmation: the opposition between ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) and αριθμοζ (arithmos) is affirmed in order to atemporalise the ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos), yet at this very moment this affirmation – in which the negative is preserved as negation – yields to another negation and thus an opposition between "everything" and its "outside": thus the issue of atemporalising ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) is achieved by introducing another opposition of, another border between, inside and outside.

Whereas what Nietzsche would do in such a situation would be to affirm the opposition between ρυθμοζ (rhutmos) and αριθμοζ (arithmos) not by way of producing another opposition but by way of offering an affirmation of ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) and αριθμοζ (arithmos) as differences. To do so, empowers one with appropriating the negative by active forces, and the latter requires a second affirmation. Negation loses its power and the border between active and negative, affirmation and negation, thus does not disappear, nor does it become concrete but punctured.

- It is unnecessary.

31 Deleuze, G., *Pure Immanence*, Zone Books, New York: 2001, pp. 73-74.

7.

Is it timely to talk about resonance now? Or is it better to wait until things, fragments, get into a resonance – or lay bare the resonance between the "thought" and the "unthought," ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) and αριθμοζ (arithmos), the "heard" and the "unheard"?

In other words, can we talk about a passage between ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) and αριθμοζ (arithmos) without privileging an Agambenian experience of ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) that enables one to hear the unheard? What is the aim of an approach that "sees" in the phrase, "Everything is rhythm, the entire destiny of man is one heavenly rhythm, just as every work of art is one rhythm, and everything swings from the poetising lips of the god" a possibility of applying what stands for "art" to "everything"?

8.

For as long as tympanum will not have been destroyed ... that cannot be achieved by means of a simply discursive or theoretical gesture, for as long as these two types of mastery will not have been destroyed in their essential familiarity – which is also that of phallocentrism and logocentrism – and for as long as even the philosophical concept of mastery will not have been destroyed, all the liberties one claims to take with the philosophical order will remain activated a tergo by misconstrued philosophical machines, according to denegration or precipitation, ignorance or stupidity. They very quickly, known or unknown to their "authors," will have been called back to order. [32]

What are the preconditions for resonance?

> The Tacoma Narrows Bridge, which spanned a length of one mile over the Tacoma Narrows in Bremerton, Washington, was nicknamed the Galloping Gertie because of its constant rocking and twisting in the wind. These oscillations became so great that on November 7, 1940, a support cable near the middle of the bridge snapped, causing the entire structure to crash into the river below. Luckily, the only casualty was a cocker spaniel,

32 *Margins of Philosophy*, p. xxii.

and the failure has taught engineers since then valuable lessons. Experts still argue over what caused the failure in the first place, but they do know what contributed to the failure. The original designers of the bridge should not be blamed for the failure, since their knowledge of all the forces acting on the bridge was incomplete. They more than likely progressed the field of engineering through their failure.

Even today, no one is sure exactly what caused the Tacoma Narrows Bridge to collapse. Several theories exist explaining the problem, all involving the effects of aerodynamic forces on the bridge. Three of those theories were listed in the Federal Work Agency's (FWA) report on the collapse: the wind blowing against the bridge had the same frequency as the resonance frequency of the bridge, causing vibrations to build up disproportionate to the force of the wind; vortices generated around the bridge matched the resonance and cause oscillations to gradually build up; random fluctuations in wind turbulence were enough to cause the bridge to collapse. Whatever the reason, the forces acting against the bridge on the morning of November seventh were enough to cause a cable band to slip, which put enough stress on the other parts of the bridge that it failed.

Leon Moisseiff, the designer of the bridge, said, "I'm completely at a loss to explain the collapse," which is true, considering he did not anticipate the need to calculate for aerodynamic forces on the bridge design. Even the FWA reported after the collapse that the bridge construction was the most suitable for its uses, economics, and location. Therefore, the engineers cannot be placed totally at fault; their understanding was incomplete. After the collapse of the bridge, engineers realised that there is a need to fully understand all the forces acting on their design. They also learned in hindsight the dangers of exceeding a design paradigm. The Tacoma Narrows Bridge was the most flexible bridge of its time, exceeding previous bridge's designs in terms of the ratios between length, depth, and width. Whether or not they knew it at the time, the designers were taking a risk by trying something completely new. In this case, they failed, but

in their failure, they probably contributed more to engineering science than they would have had they succeeded.

Hart, Terence, for CES120: Engineering Communications at Alfred University
http://maclab.alfred.edu/students/harttm/intro.html.

A vibrating source which will create vibrations in another element: that is, a relationship between a model and a copy is what determines our understanding of resonance. What kind of a resonance – if there is one – can be said to exist between Nietzsche and Heidegger/Agamben? Or, on what conditions can it be said that there is a resonance between them? Or, what kind of a resonance does Nietzsche offer between himself and his future readers?

Once again: Is it possible to hear the unheard in what is heard? Bearing in mind this question, I think, facilitates one with being cautious towards rhythm – if what is supposed to be heard is ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) in opposition to αριθμοζ (arithmos). Since we can take it for granted that this opposition is there in Agamben's text, we can speculate according to the premisses with which Agamben puts forward this opposition. If resonance should be taken at its face value, that is as mentioned above, then it can be said that the way Agamben proposes or plays with this opposition is largely based on this type of resonance. First: there is a source and it is by means of this source that the αριθμοζ (arithmos) is made audible. Then, a series of questions follow: What is this source? Can this source be formulated as determined with an opposition of temporal and atemporal. As Agamben notes: "we perceive rhythm as something that escapes the incessant flights of instants and appears almost as the presence of an atemporal dimension in time".[33] And "the incessant flight of instants" is the realm where we can hear the rhythm (i.e., αριθμοζ) *as such*, that is as a piece of music... In the atemporal dimension, on the other hand, "we are as though held, arrested before something, but this being arrested is also a being-outside, an *ek-stasis* in a more original dimension".[34]

Now if one follows this route that proceeds by giving way to distinctions such as, ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos)/ αριθμοζ (arithmos);

33 Agamben, p. 99.
34 Agamben, p. 99.

temporal/atemporal; inside/outside, the source of rhythm comes to the foreground rather as the origin of rhythm. Agamben does not tell much about this origin of rhythm except via referring to the etymology of the word "gift" (εποχη) in Ancient Greek. Gift (εποχη), in the sense that Agamben uses the word, as both "to hold back and to present" (επεχω) is equated with "rhythm" and "to be" or "to be present." Then, the atemporal, thought within the oppositional structure of ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos)/ αριθμοζ (arithmos) and inside/outside, is what empowers man with an "opening [to] his authentic temporal dimension"[35]. After this series of manoeuvres, the final point of which is to lay bare the centrality of "Being" or "presence," the origin of rhythm can be seen in the outside, the capacity of *ek-stasis* of man, that endows him with an experience of what holds back and presents itself at the same time, that is, as what we know from Heidegger as *aletheia*.

What might be the implications of this theoretical framework for our theory of resonance? If ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos), that is the atemporal dimension where man opens himself to his authentic dimension with the intention of hearing the unheard in rhythm – for αριθμοζ (arithmos) is the ordinary, arithmetic, that is calculable rhythm - then I think we can talk about a hierarchical or rather a metaphysical structure between ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) and αριθμοζ (arithmos). First comes ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) and the ordinary, daily experience of αριθμοζ (arithmos) is just a bad, base copy of what is original. Or, in other words, ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos), since it can be experienced only by leaving the inside for an outside, is what presents itself only in the outside, as the source of ordinary rhythm that we are capable of hearing. In order to have the experience of the unheard – in order to hear it – we have to go outside.

The origin, then, as we have made clear, can be located in the outside – as the source of rhythm – which, only by means of getting into resonance with, we can hear, though as the bad copy of the original within the linear temporality of αριθμοζ (arithmos). Now I believe that the idea of resonance that is hinted here by Agamben can be thought in its all novelty as an idea of resonance which, by forcing the hearer – or, shall we call it, simply, the ear – to the outside, aims to set the ear free from a former hierarchy – the hierarchy of inside and outside. What happens in the outside? An experience of authentic temporal dimension, where "the

35 Agamben, p. 101.

poetic status of man on earth finds its proper meaning. Man has on earth a poetic status, because it is *poiesis* that founds for him the original space of his world."[36]

Without going further than this, or let us say, without submitting what is already forced by Agamben's reading (of ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) and αριθμοζ (arithmos) within the context of ousia) once more to a puncture between an inside and outside, to a punctured tympanum, nothing can be obtained at such a juncture. That is, if there is a limit between inside and outside and, if Agamben forces this limit to open man to an experience of authentic temporal dimension, then there should have left no question of "going further than this" because, then, there would have left no limit to be surpassed, to be trancended, any more. In other words, if this puncture caused by Agambenian force on the tympanum opens a way from inside to an outside by way of obliterating the limit, it puts the "man" in a dimension (atemporal) where he is supposed to hear what he did not hear before. Yet, does this position of man enable him to get rid of the ear that he formerly supposed to have gotten rid of? If we look at the structure, that is, what makes man able to hear the unheard, it is nothing more than the same hierarchy that has been abolished before. In other words, the former hierarchy between ρυθμοζ (rhuthmos) and αριθμοζ (arithmos) is re-paired in man's new position: although the limit is abolished, or the tympanum punctured, it is now replaced by another limit between "being," or "presence" on the one hand, and the man's ear, his/her capacity of hearing this "presence" on the other. It is again the source of rhythm, that is "presence," with which man resonates, with a repaired ear, that makes the authentic experience of man what it is. And this move, surpassing its limit just in order to constitute another limit, as we all know well, is a move of *Aufhebung*.

Replacement and application: do they not belong to the question of re-pairing? Repairing the punctured tympanum by way of re-pairing oppositions?

What might be the function of this punctured tympanum that is re-paired as soon as man passes to the other side? What might be the function of this punctured tympanum if it were left punctured? First: Would man need to pass to the other side (outside) if the punctured

36 Agamben, p. 101.

tympanum were left punctured? Second: What would the preservation of a punctured tympanum as punctured mean for a theory of resonance?

9.

> Philosophy has always insisted upon this: thinking its other. Its other: that which limits it, and from which it derives its essence, its definition, its production. To think its other: does this amount solely to relever (aufheben) that from which it derives, to head the procession of its method only by passing the limit? Or indeed does the limit, obliquely, by surprise, always reserve one more blow for philosophical knowledge?[37]

What I would like to lay bare here is what is implicitly proposed and missed by Agamben's criticism. For this purpose what I offer is a reading of Derrida's essay "Tympan" with the intention of opening a discussion on "resonance" – the type of "resonance" that is proposed and missed by Agamben.

Following the line of thought quoted above, Derrida elaborates the Hegelian move, *Aufhebung* as an insistence "upon thinking its other: its proper other, the proper of its other. (...) In thinking it *as such*, in recognizing it" he writes, "one misses it. One reappropriates it for oneself, one disposes of it, one misses it, or rather one misses (the) missing (of) it."[38] Furthermore, using tympanum as a metaphor for the limit between inside and outside, Derrida raises the following questions with a concern for the possibility of a resonance between inside and outside which would give way to a vibration on a punctured tympanum: "Can one violently penetrate philosophy's field of listening without its immediately – even pretending in advance, by hearing what is said of it, by decoding the statement – making the penetration resonate within itself, appropriating the emission for itself, familiarly communicating it to itself between the inner and middle ear, following the path of a tube or inner opening, be it round or oval? In other words, can one puncture the tympanum of a philosopher and still be heard and understood by him?"[39]

37 *Margins of Philosophy*, pp. x-xi.
38 *Margins of Philosophy*, p. xi.
39 *Margins of Philosophy*, p. xii.

Derrida does not say it, but what the philosopher would hear – when no inside/outside hierarchy left and the tympanum is punctured - would be a mixture of vibration and distortion that can be obtained by way of underlining the missed opportunity by Agamben. We have already said that what is implicitly proposed but missed by Agamben, or better, in Derrida's terms, what Agamben "misses the missing of" in this matter is the possibility of preserving an already punctured tympanum punctured: this is a situation when resonance is no more understood in the hierarcical order of an outside and inside, but as what comes to itself as a distorted (failed?) rhythm produced on the punctured tympanum as a result of bodies on both sides already in resonance in themselves. That when the tympanum is punctured it will yield to distortion and hence it will put the understandability – or, rather, "the proper," "the authentic," "the presence," "the Being" - at stake can be furthermore questioned within the question of the thought and the unthought or, better, since it would suit the context, the question of the heard and the unheard in Agamben, and, not without Heideggerian reverberations.

As already mentioned, one of the reasons why Agamben misses this point can be found in the insistence of a move of *Aufhebung* which insists on reappropriating the limit it has disappropriated. In Derrida's terms, "For this is how Being is understood. It assures without let-up the *relevant* movement of reappropriation."[40] This is actually where the specific resistance of philosophical discourse to deconstruction takes place: "It is the infinite mastery that the agency of Being (and of the) proper seems to assure it; this mastery permits it to interiorise every limit as *being* and as being its own *proper*."[41] This move in Agamben is what transforms what is proposed as the unheard in rhythm as hearable as long as one opens oneself to the experience of authentic temporality that makes itself "heard" as presence, as Being.

Can one puncture the tympanum so that the unheard remains as the unheard without reappropriating the limit?

40 *Margins of Philosophy*, p. xvi.
41 *Margins of Philosophy*, p. xix.

10.

> *This impression, as always, is made on some tympanum, whether resonating or still, on the double membrane that can be struck from either side.* [42]

Nevertheless, the question of the heard and the unheard should not be thought as a separate issue from the fact that Nietzsche prefigures as a source in Agamben's essay, "Poiesis and Praxis." It is so, because, first of all, admittedly, Agamben's is a question of getting into resonance[43] with Nietzsche, rather than being true to him. If one should approach what resonance is, rather than understanding the question of resonance, then that Nietzsche appears as a source in Agamben's text is not surprising. Yet, it is surprising at the same time, because it does not only present us with another case of "missing the missing" of Nietzsche, but also, by way of extending this missing to another one, with an introduction of the voice of Being into Nietzsche – which is presumably there but cannot be made into something that resonates with Being without not preserving the punctured tympanum as punctured.

Nietzsche: the question of style and the question of resonance?

Does Nietzsche ever become what he "is"? Where do we locate the "Ecce"? Can we locate the "Ecce"?

Hölderlin: everything is rhythm: can it be heard?

Re-pairing the puncture leads to aestheticisation of life – from this side or that side - does it really matter? Nevertheless, one crosses the abyss, despite Nietzsche.

42 *Margins of Philosophy*, p. xxv.

43 "If we tune our minds to the resonance proper to this aphorism, if we hear in it the voice of of the one who teaches the eternal recurrence of the same, it will open for us a region in which art, will to power and eternal recurrence belong to one another reciprocally in one circle": Agamben, p.88.

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Kant's Productive Ontology

BETH LORD

In this paper I will introduce an interpretation of Kant's ontology in terms of a concept of production. The notion of an ontology, in the Kantian context, requires some clarification. Kant's understanding of the word ontology [*Ontologie*] would have come largely from Christian Wolff, who, in addition to being the major modern philosophical influence in Kant's early years, was apparently responsible for popularizing "ontology" as a philosophical term. Ontology, for Wolff, is the study of logically possible being; that is, being the predicates of which are not contradictory. The predicates of a possible being constitute the essence and definition of that being, which in turn constitute its concept.[1] Ontology, in this case, is the study of being insofar as it is definable and conceptualizable.

Wolff's ontology may be characterized as an epistemological ontology, insofar as conceptual definition is a condition of possible being. Creation by God is the condition of actual being, for beings obtain merely as possible until something is added to their possibility to make them existent. Ontology does not seek after the divine ground of existence; this is the task of rational theology. Rather, ontology seeks conceptual knowledge of beings: it inquires into the essence of things, where essence is equated with the thinkable concept. Thus Wolff's rationalist ontology is concerned with the essence and knowability of beings rather than with the ground of their existence. Essence entails conceptual definition and conceptual definition is the ground of our knowledge of essence: any object satisfying the condition of conceptual definition is ontologically valid. Thus Wolff's ontology is an epistemological study of essence, for which anything that can be logically thought has ontological status. It is an

1 Lewis White Beck, *Early German Philosophers* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1969), pp. 263-4.

essential rather than an existential ontology, but it is thereby also an epistemological ontology.

Kant was evidently dissatisfied with the Wolffian ontology; he felt that with the "modest" Transcendental Analytic he had surpassed and replaced "the proud name of an Ontology that presumptuously claims to supply, in systematic doctrinal form, synthetic *a priori* knowledge of things in general".[2] Indeed, the Transcendental Analytic, Kant's system of concepts and principles, replaces rationalist ontology with a radically new epistemology. Yet in his conception of ontology as epistemology, and his categorization of the questions of the origin of existence and the meaning of being under cosmology and theology respectively, Kant maintains the Wolffian definition of ontology and division of philosophical topics. In both Wolff and Kant we see that ontology is understood in epistemological terms, and that this epistemological ontology — a search for the grounds of knowledge — is strongly distinguished from existential ontology, a search for the grounds of existence. German rationalist ontology had been characterized by this division, and indeed by the occlusion of the existential question by epistemological concerns, since the mid-seventeenth century.[3] It was by means of this distinction, and by means of a strong distinction between possibility and actuality, that Wolff asserted his difference from the radical Spinozism of which he was accused.[4]

It may be true, as some attest, that Kant straightforwardly accepted philosophy's epistemological priority. The structure of Kant's first Critique does attest to a maintained distinction between epistemological and existential questions. Indeed, some parts of Kant's text suggest that questions concerning the grounds of existence are subsumed under the

2 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan Press, 1929), A247 / B303. Hereafter abbreviated to *CPR*, with references to the standard A and B editions.

3 Beck traces this key distinction back to the German Cartesian Johannes Clauberg. "With [Clauberg] there begins a rationalistic ontology in which the potentiality of being thought defines being. [...] A direction is established in German philosophy away from the classical ontological realism of scholasticism, and its primary concern with being, toward the priority of the epistemological problem" (pp. 185-6). Jonathan Israel suggests that this distinction helped to propel German rationalism away from the "dangerous" ideas of Spinoza, although it did not protect certain philosophers from accusations of Spinozism; see chapters 26, 29, and 34 of Israel's *Radical Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001).

4 For an excellent account of Wolff's persecution due to alleged Spinozism, see Israel, ch. 29.

rubric of epistemological analysis of *a priori* concepts.[5] However, I will argue that Kant's existential ontology is far more developed than most commentators have suggested, and that it is in Kant's theory of natural production that this ontology emerges. Furthermore, through natural production we will see that the epistemological and existential ontologies are not in any sense distinct: their boundaries are blurred, their objects overlap, and their grounds are common. Kant's overthrow of rationalist ontology goes far beyond the Analytic; it pervades his philosophy of nature and his metaphysics as a whole.

I will look first at Kant's 1763 essay *The One Possible Basis for a Demonstration of the Existence of God* in order to examine Kant's early thesis about being. The existential ontology that Kant relies upon here is what I will call a productive ontology: a theory of the origin of existence that is based on a theory of natural or divine production. I will show that for the pre-critical Kant the existence of an ontological ground cannot be deduced from a strictly epistemological ontology, and must instead be based on a notion of production. I go on to examine Heidegger's interpretation of Kant's thesis, which ascribes to Kant a conception of beings as produced permanent presence, and of *being* as an original subject-object relation. For Heidegger, this epistemological understanding of being places limits on existential ontology. But moving on to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, I will suggest that the focus on natural production makes Kantian ontology rather more complex. A productive ontology will be seen to explain both existence and knowledge, thus blurring the distinction between the existential and epistemological ontologies.

1. *The One Possible Basis*: Existence and Divine Creation

The central concern of Kant's 1763 essay *The One Possible Basis for a Demonstration of the Existence of God* is ontology. This is true both of ontology in the Wolffian sense, the object of which is the general predicates which can be conceptually thought, and of ontology in the Heideggerian sense, which aims to inquire into the meaning of the being of beings. Indeed, the essay brings these two senses of ontology, the epistemological and the existential, into collision: Kant criticizes the

5 See especially *CPR* A845-6 / B873-4.

Cartesian and Leibnizian ontological proofs for God's existence precisely because they attempt to deduce God's actuality from a concept, and this criticism is based on an inquiry into the meaning of the terms *being* and *existence*. A proper understanding of being — not as a real predicate for Kant but as absolute positing — will show up the flaws in traditional ontological proofs, and make way for Kant's new basis for a demonstration of God's existence. That the existence of an ontological ground cannot be deduced from an epistemic structure is Kant's major point against rationalist theology. Kant begins with an analysis of the concept of existence, which, while "very simple and well-understood", is nevertheless difficult to define precisely.[6] This very problem will eventually be the starting point for Heidegger's project of fundamental ontology; for Kant, it leads to a renewed insistence on the existential ontology of the ground of all existence, over against the epistemological ontology of concepts and principles.

Kant begins his analysis of existence with the statement: "Existence [*Dasein*] is not a predicate or determination of any thing".[7] This is to say that existence does not say anything qualitative about a thing, and thus cannot be included in the concept of a thing. The concept of a thing is completely determined; whether that thing is possible or actual does not affect the predicates pertaining to it. Predicates are determinations of content, so all the predicates that pertain to a thing pertain to it equally in possibility as in actuality. The existence of a possible thing does not add any predicate, but rather indicates that a thing which was possible is now actual, retaining the same predicates it had as a merely possible thing. "[I]t cannot be that if they [possible things] existed they would contain one more predicate, for in the possibility of a thing according to its thorough determination, absolutely no predicate can be missing", says Kant.[8] In order to demonstrate that something exists, one does not look in the concept of the thing, but rather in the origin of knowledge one has of the thing (experience or some other justification).[9]

6 Immanuel Kant, *Der Einzig Mögliche Beweisgrund zu einer Demonstration des Daseins Gottes / The One Possible Basis for a Demonstration of the Existence of God*, bilingual edition, trans. Gordon Treash (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), Ak. 70-1. Hereafter abbreviated to *OPB* with references to the German (Akademie) pagination.

7 *OPB* Ak. 72.

8 *OPB* Ak. 72.

9 *OPB* Ak. 72-3.

Empirical knowledge of the existence of something is sufficient to establish its actuality. But the fact that there are actually existing things, Kant clearly implies, is due to God's creation. The creator holds all possibility in his idea, and is unique in being able to make the possible actual:

> The being who gave existence to the world, and to [Julius Caesar], would know all of [Caesar's] predicates without a single exception and yet regard him as a merely possible thing which would not exist save for his decree. [...] Not a single determination would be wanting in the [representation] that the supreme being has of [things], and yet existence is not amongst them since he knows them as only possible things.[10]

This passage reinforces Kant's point that existence is not amongst the predicates that determine a thing, but also suggests that existence is equivalent to *createdness* by God. Existence is the "moving" of something from possibility to actuality, from God's idea of it to his creation of it by decree. God does not need to *add* anything to possibility to make a thing actual; he simply posits the thing with all its predicates. While this distinguishes Kant's view from Wolff's, it also ties the pre-critical Kant to a notion of divine creation as the necessary condition of actuality. Later in the text, Kant asserts "That things exist [...] is attributable to the wise choice of one who wills them".[11]

The assumption of divine creation, however, does not introduce a Cartesian circle into Kant's argument, firstly because he sets out not to prove God's existence but only to establish the grounds for such a proof, but more importantly because this assumption is not required for his argument against traditional ontological proofs. Whereas Descartes maintained that existence is included in the concept of God, the pre-critical Kant claims that God is included in (or implied by) the concept of existence. Kant does indeed assume that existence means createdness by a divine author, but that assumption is not *necessary* to his argument: whether God is thought to exist or not, Kant's definition of existence as a non-predicate implies that God's existence cannot be deduced from the concept of God.

10 *OPB* Ak. 72. Interpolations mine. I substitute "representation" [*die Vorstellung*] for Treash's "idea".

11 *OPB* Ak. 103.

The assumption of divine creation, however, gives a double meaning to Kant's second statement, that "existence is the absolute position of the thing".[12] Absolute position might mean human logical positing, or it might mean God's absolute creation, "pronouncing his omnipotent *fiat* over a possible world".[13] Both senses are implied, for Kant suggests that it is God's "positing" things into existence that allows humans to posit them as existing. Positing, Kant says, is identical with the concept of being [*Sein*] in general.[14] Something can be posited in relation to a predicate (a narwahl is brown, e.g.), in which case being is the copula of judgment. But in addition, "should not only this relation but the thing in and for itself be viewed as posited, then this being is the same as existence".[15] Existence [*Dasein*] is thus understood to be a specific instance of being [*Sein*]; while the former indicates absolute positing, the latter can also mean predicative positing in general. This is why the word *is* can be used to indicate relations that non-entities or possible things have to one another.[16] In pronouncing his *fiat*, God establishes absolutely the existence of things which were previously only possible relations, but does not thereby add any new determinations to his idea of the things. It is inaccurate, therefore, to say "A narwahl is an existent thing", for this suggests that existence is a predicate included in the concept of a narwahl. We ought to say "the predicates that I think together as a narwahl belong to certain existent sea creatures"; in other words, we ought to think of the concept of a narwahl, with all its predicates, as absolutely posited.[17] The narwahl is actual by virtue of God's absolute positing, and thus positable as actual on the human scale, by human observers.

God, like the narwahl, cannot be predicated into existence; because existence is not a predicate, God cannot be said to exist simply by virtue of the concept of God including every positive predicate. God's existence cannot be proved, Kant says, on the basis of mere concepts. In Kant's basis for a demonstration, God *can* be posited absolutely by virtue of the necessity that *something* be posited absolutely: God's necessary existence is the necessity of *existence in general*. Kant makes this claim by showing that possibility, and therefore conceivability, require that there be *some*

12 *OPB* Ak. 73.
13 *OPB* Ak. 74.
14 *OPB* Ak. 73.
15 *OPB* Ak. 73.
16 *OPB* Ak. 74.
17 *OPB* Ak. 73-4.

existence. Everything that *is* possible is also conceivable, for that which is internally possible must be logically coherent according to the principle of contradiction, and what is logically coherent is also conceivable. What allows for this internal possibility is the actuality of *something or other*. The possibility of things in general is abolished "when no matter or no datum for thought exists, [for then] nothing conceivable is given".[18] If there were no existence — if nothing could be absolutely posited — then nothing could be conceived and nothing would be possible. There is no contradiction in the denial of all existence,

> But that there be some possibility and yet absolutely nothing actual contradicts itself. For if nothing exists, nothing conceivable is given and one would contradict himself in nevertheless pretending something to be possible. [...] To say "nothing exists" means the same thing as "there is absolutely nothing." It is obviously self-contradictory to add, despite this, that something is possible.[19]

Possibility in general, then, requires that there is *not nothing*: it requires the existence of *something*. "All possibility is given in something actual", and this givenness happens in two ways: either the possible is given as a determination in what is actual, or it is possible because something else is actual — that is, as the consequence of the existence of something else.[20] All possibility is given as a determination or consequence of *some actuality*. The condition for possibility in general is an actual something, "in which and through which everything conceivable is given; [...] a certain actuality whose annulment itself would totally annul all internal possibility".[21]

This something is not just another thing in the sequence of effective causes; nor is it the logical concept of actuality in general. The logical concept of actuality could not itself generate the possible existence of things because existence cannot be produced from mere concepts. Existence can only come about through absolute positing by a being that has the power to transfer possibility into actuality. This being is "the ultimate real ground of absolute possibility [... providing] the data and the

18 *OPB* Ak. 78.
19 *OPB* Ak. 78.
20 *OPB* Ak. 79.
21 *OPB*. Ak. 83.

material element in the conceivable".[22] It exists necessarily; it is unitary, simple, immutable, and eternal, containing the highest reality, understanding and will. It is God, or the ontological ground for all beings: the source of their internal possibility and of their qualitative determinations. God is the origin of all possibility and actuality, and is therefore also the ground of the conceivable. God "moves" things from possibility to actuality by way of absolute positing, and not by "adding" anything to possible concepts, as Wolff had argued. It is true that for Kant, as for Wolff, possibility precedes actuality; what is interesting here is that *existence* is a condition for all possibility, and this existence is God's existence. While Wolff would also have argued that God's existence must logically precede all possibility, Kant differs by deriving the necessity of God's existence from the necessity of existence itself, and not from concepts.

Through an analysis of existence, Kant has arrived at a basis for a demonstration that there is a necessary being which grounds all existence and thought. Furthermore, Kant says that this necessary being is creative. Natural production occurs only through God's initial creation:

> Everyone knows that regardless of all grounds for the generation of plants and trees, the regular organization of floral pieces, avenues, and the like are possible only through an understanding which plans and a will which executes them. All the might or power of generation as well as all other data for possibility are insufficient without an understanding to make complete the possibility of such order.[23]

Kant's inquiry into being — a pre-critical fundamental ontology, of sorts — leads to a particular understanding of production. God is not only the ontological ground of possibility and actuality; he is the creator who originates the very possibility of matter and the craftsman who puts matter into its natural order.[24] He does this not through his being as such, but through his free choice. This understanding of production, insofar as it is based on free divine creation, is close to Leibniz's. However, the method Kant uses to get there is quite different: it is an analysis of being, and not of the concept of God, that leads to this conclusion. The possibility and

22 *OPB.* Ak.79-80.
23 *OPB.* Ak. 88.
24 *OPB* Ak. 126-7.

conceivability of things depend on the *existence* of God, not on the concept of God. Kant's method is clearly more existential than essential.

One could, of course, argue that the idea of creation was implicit in Kant's analysis of existence all along, and that absolute positing is nothing other than divine creation. The connection between Kant's inquiry into being and his notion of production could thus be said to predetermine what he takes to be the meaning of existence. This is precisely the line that Heidegger takes in his *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, where he argues that a certain "productive comportment" towards the world is implicit in Kant's philosophy, as Heidegger takes it to be in the entirety of western metaphysical thought. Heidegger maintains that the idea of createdness — that something possible is "conveyed over" to the actual, whether by adding predicates or by absolute positing — is based on the medieval distinction between *essentia* and *existentia*, which Kant preserves as reality and actuality.[25] The Aristotelian line is that the distinction between essence and existence is fundamental for production: only if a possible concept is distinct from actual existence can the production of beings occur. Whereas for Wolff this involves adding actuality to the concept of the essence of the thing, for Kant, the thing is simply posited with all its predicates, and its concept or essence remains unchanged. With both philosophers actuality involves some activity on the part of God. Heidegger traces actuality back to *agere*, acting: that which is actual is possibility which has been actualized, enacted. And this specific characterization of all extant things as enacted, Heidegger says, comprehends beings in terms of a productive comportment towards them. This is the charge that Heidegger lays on Kant, asserting that Kant's connection between being and production is entirely traditional.

I have suggested already that it is not the content of Kant's conception of divine creation but the method by which he arrives at it, that is remarkable in *The One Possible Basis*. It is through an analysis of existence, and the necessity of existence to knowledge, that Kant's philosophy of production emerges. Kant evidently maintains a distinction between possibility and actuality, and thus between essence and existence; he also maintains a conception of an active God that posits beings into createdness. Heidegger's charge of productive comportment, as I will

25 Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1982) p. 93, 99. Hereafter abbreviated to *BPP* with page references to the English translation.

show, is entirely correct. But as we move into Kant's critical philosophy, we can use this notion of productive comportment against Heidegger's rather limited reading to show that existence, for Kant, is the product of natural and not divine activity. Furthermore, the relation between essence and existence, between the epistemological and existential ontologies, will prove to be far more complex in Kant's system than Heidegger's analysis allows for.

2. Heidegger's Productive Comportment

Productive comportment is, for Heidegger, an intentional attitude of a *Da-sein* towards a thing: an attitude that interprets the thing and its being in terms of its function in a productive system. This comportment understands that things have been produced, are producible, or are not in need of production. It is this productive comportment that Heidegger says has guided the interpretation of the existence and essence of beings since early Greek philosophy.[26]

Heidegger argues that one of the earliest examples of such thinking is to be found in the relation between *morphe* (form) and *eidos* (look, idea) in Greek philosophy. While for modern philosophy the look or essence of a thing is determined by its form, for Greek ontology it is the opposite: the form of a thing, *morphe*, is determined by its look, *eidos*. Heidegger suggests that this is explained by technical production, in which the look precedes the form: the producer begins with the idea, the anticipated look, of what is to be produced through shaping and forming.[27] The *eidos* is the image of imagination which determines what the thing "already was and is before all actualization".[28] Because the *eidos* is prior to the actualized thing, and because it contains the total reality of what the thing already was, the *eidos* is the unchanging "truth" of the thing: this emerges most clearly in Plato, where the idea represents the true reality of the particular. Heidegger also argues that the *eidos*, which contains all the qualitative determinations of a thing, constitutes the thing's completedness, its delimitation as what it is, and thus its thing-determinateness.[29] Only

26 *BPP* p. 104-5.
27 *BPP* p. 106.
28 *BPP* p. 107.
29 *BPP* p. 108.

because a specific *eidos* governs production can a thing be defined as some specific thing, and its whatness be ascertained. This outlook on beings considers that things are understandable as specific things because they have been formed or produced according to an *eidos*. And this means that beings are apprehended as having been produced to stand completed on their own: they are produced, placed-before (Heidegger plays on *Herstellen*) the apprehending person for use, released from their relation to the producer. The reality, whatness, or *essentia* of a being is thus directly related to its usability and its standing independently present, ready for use.[30]

Heidegger explains that the Greek word for "that which is", *ousia*, originally referred to property, and beings became synonymous with "at-hand disposable" possessions.[31] *Ousia*, that which is, is the present at hand, available for use; existence, then, is interpreted as permanent presence. "Being, being-actual, or existing, in the traditional sense, means presence-at-hand".[32] In his *Introduction to Metaphysics* Heidegger adds that the Greek sense of being, as permanent presence, has the character of standing in itself, manifesting itself for apprehension.[33] He therefore describes the mode of access to the extant as *Vorfinden*, finding the existent thing present before us. That which exists is, for ancient Greek philosophy, accessed through an "intuitive finding present" [*das anschauende Vorfinden*] which is also known as *aisthesis*, a beholding perception.[34] Heidegger points out that such perception is only a modification of productive behaviour, which involves "sight" in the sense of the fore-sight of the anticipated look of the thing to be produced; while the thing's whatness is prescribed by fore-sight, its thatness is established through intuitive seeing. The actuality of the actual is *only* manifested in pure intuition. Furthermore, the actuality of the thing can only be established by referring back to its production, the fact that it has been produced according to an *eidos* and completed, set before us for use. When things are understood according to productive comportment, their actuality is only comprehensible in the context of their production and perception — things have been produced and set out to be found present

30 *BPP* p. 108-9.
31 *BPP* p. 108-9. See also his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale UP, 1959), esp. p. 60ff and p. 194ff.
32 *BPP* p. 100.
33 *Introduction to Metaphysics* p. 63-4.
34 *BPP* p. 109-10.

by intuition. Heidegger's point here is that the concepts of both essence/reality and existence/actuality refer back to production and are grounded in human productive comportment.

This, for Heidegger, is the ground on which the Western ontological tradition is based: the producedness of beings is the presupposition for their capacity to be apprehended in perception, and it is with a productive comportment towards beings that we apprehend and understand the world.[35] A productive existential ontology, then, is at the basis of epistemology. Even things which are not understood to be produced by a producer — things of nature — are understood in terms of productive comportment, for these are understood to be the raw materials which are already present for producing other things. Productive comportment not only understands individual things as produced, but apprehends the world in terms of a structure of producing.[36] And this comportment towards beings determines how their *being* is understood. It is due to productive comportment that objects are understood as independent: as produced, beings are finished and released from their relation to a producer, standing independently on their own, available for use. This means that things have an existence, a being-in-themselves, that is not dependent on humans: "the being that is understood in productive comportment is exactly the being-in-itself of the product".[37] In being apprehended in terms of productive comportment, things are already understood to be in-themselves, to have being which is not dependent on a human producer. The being-in-itself of a thing is thus *always already established* in the apprehender's comportment towards the thing. It is this particular point that Heidegger uses to approach the place of production for Kant.

Heidegger maintains that there is "an undeviating continuity of tradition" from ancient and medieval philosophy to Kant, insofar as being is consistently interpreted by way of production.[38] For the Kant of *The One Possible Basis* essay, absolute positing is divine creation, and existence is createdness: only something which has been created by God can then be posited by a human subject. Heidegger suggests that the medieval sense of creation that Kant inherits is related to, though not identical with, the ancient concept of production. From Greek to Latin

35 *BPP* p. 112-3.
36 *BPP* p. 115-6.
37 *BPP* p. 113.
38 *BPP* p. 117.

philosophy, Heidegger claims, there is a shift from understanding the world in terms of natural and human production (*phusis* and *techne*) to understanding the world in terms of creation by God: *that which is* is understood as *ens creatum*, while God is the unique *ens increatum*, the creator of all beings which is not itself in need of creation.[39] Medieval and early modern philosophy thus continue to understand beings in terms of production. The pre-critical Kant is clearly thinking along these lines when he suggests a world divinely created and describes God as eternal and immutable necessary existence: the creator who does not himself stand in need of being created.

Heidegger's claim is that beings, for Kant, are thought as produced permanent presence. Thus he adds that absolute positing for Kant means "positing as letting something stand of its own self".[40] When a thing is absolutely posited, it is posited in and for itself, standing independently of its creator. The creator gives the thing a "being in itself" so that it may stand on its own. And this essential level of being is inaccessible to the human observer. Although Kant does not formulate a phenomena-noumena distinction in *The One Possible Basis*, it is clear that he does think of things as having an internal possibility or substance created by God and inaccessible to human intuition. It is this internal possibility that gives things their "thoroughgoing relations of unity and coherence" such that they exhibit universal harmony with one another.[41] While the human observer can speculate about the purpose of this harmony, she cannot access its true workings. For Heidegger this limitation of knowledge with respect to creation is explicable in the context of productive comportment. He interprets Kant to be saying that human intuition cannot access the "true being" of things because the former has not created the latter.[42] To substantiate this claim he draws upon two of Kant's pre-critical remarks: "finite beings cannot of themselves know other things, because they are not their creator", and "no being except the creator alone can cognitively grasp the substance of another thing".[43] Just as knowledge of the *eidos* is restricted to the producer for the Greeks, knowledge of the true being or substance or inner possibility of things is limited to that being who has created the things. Human knowledge, meanwhile, is limited to those

39 *BPP* p. 118-9.
40 *BPP* p. 117-8.
41 See *OPB* Ak. 96ff.
42 *BPP* p. 149.
43 Kant, Reflection no. 929 and Lectures on Metaphysics, qtd. *BPP* 149-50.

things which human intuition can *re*-produce through the process of representation.[44] While God's knowledge is existentially and essentially creative, human knowledge is epistemologically reproductive of that which is already produced. This implies not only an understanding of being in terms of production, but also a connection between the conditions of knowledge and the conditions of production. Only what is existentially produced by God to be permanent presence can be perceived, and only what is epistemologically reproduced, according to the application of the cognitive faculties to the perceived object, can be *known*. Furthermore, Heidegger's model allows us to see how the existential and epistemological ontologies become separated in modern thought: existential creation is God's business, while epistemological reproduction is humanity's.

However, Hediegger's analysis also shows that these two ontologies cannot be unrelated. For beings which can be epistemologically experienced must first have been existentially created. Heidegger's analysis of Kant, however, allows him only a very limited existential ontology: one in which existence is understood as producedness-for-knowledge. As production allows for cognizability, cognition implies producedness. The existential production of beings allows for their epistemological reproduction. Existential production itself cannot be understood by the human perceiver. However, the fact that beings are *understood as produced* is the basis of their epistemological representation. Heidegger comments on Kant's two pre-critical statements thus:

> A genuine cognitive grasp of a being in its being is available only to that being's creator. The primary and direct reference to the being of a being lies in the *production* of it. And this implies that *being of a being* means nothing but *producedness*. [...] The being of things is understood as being-produced. In Kant this is present basically as a self-evident matter of course, but it does not receive explicit expression.[45]

44 See Kant's *Critique of Judgment* §68, Ak. 384: "we have complete insight only into what we can ourselves make and accomplish according to concepts"; cf. *CPR* B xiii: "reason has insight only into that which it produces after a plan of its own".

45 *BPP* p. 150.

For Heidegger's Kant, the being of beings is understood as produced permanent presence, and producedness means knowability. Producedness is the ground of knowability because it is taken to be the ground of the *existence* of beings, where true knowledge of the ground of existence is impossible. An ontology based on this notion of production would be an epistemological ontology — one which, like Wolff's, inquires into the conditions for the possibility of the knowledge of beings. However, it would be based on an existential ontology of production, a theory that beings are *generated* and not merely *conceptualized*. This is an epistemological ontology which depends upon an existential ontology, and which therefore depends upon the existence of beings, not merely on the logical relation of concepts.

I have already suggested that this is the kind of ontology to which Kant moves. Unfortunately, while Heidegger's analysis gives us a Kantian ontology based on production, it does not go beyond the description of beings as produced permanent presence. This is because Heidegger believes that Kant does not move beyond an "ontology of the extant".[46] This is, in one sense, entirely true, but Heidegger misses the radicalism of Kant's renewed focus on the extant, indicative of what some commentators see as his shift from a rationalist to an empiricist stance. For while Kant's definition of ontology is similar to Wolff's, it differs in its reference to the existence of things. Wolff's notion of ontology had nothing to do with actuality: it was concerned with logically possible being. Kant's notion of ontology, like his notion of existence, requires actuality as well as logical non-contradiction; it requires a perceptual relation between subject and object. While Kant continues to define "ontology" epistemologically, as the science of the conditions of possibility of knowledge, he adds that the concepts must bear a relation to objects of the senses. Kant defines ontology in his essay of 1791, "What Real Progress has Metaphysics made in Germany since the Time of Leibniz and Wolff?":

> Ontology (as a part of metaphysics) is the science that comprises a system of all concepts and principles of understanding, but only insofar as these extend to objects given by the senses and can, therefore, be justified by experience. It does not deal with the supersensible, the ultimate end of metaphysics, and thus belongs to the latter only as a

46 *BPP* p. 148.

> propadeutic. Ontology is the porch or entry way of metaphysics proper and will be called transcendental philosophy because it contains the conditions and first elements of all our knowledge *a priori*.[47]

With this statement Kant says explicitly that ontology is concerned with the conditions of possibility of sensible knowledge, and not with the supersensible. While that is to say that ontology is concerned with epistemological grounds, and not with existential grounds or the meaning of being, it is also to say that ontology is concerned with concepts and principles insofar as they relate to existing things. Kant's is an epistemological ontology, but one that refuses to restrict itself to the logical examination of concepts: ontology is a system which grounds knowledge by connecting concepts to existing things. The above paragraph could, of course, be an abstract of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, indicating that Kant thought of that work as an ontology, as he himself suggests in its closing chapters.[48] I will now go on to look at being and existence in the first Critique, to consider Kant's departure from divine creation and the extent to which he nevertheless maintains a productive comportment, as Heidegger suggests.

3. The *Critique of Pure Reason*: Being and Natural Production

The above remarks suggest that Kant's first Critique is an ontological work, where ontology is understood to be an epistemic system of concepts and principles of the understanding, insofar as they make experiential knowledge possible *a priori*. I have also suggested that the epistemic system must rest on an existential ontology which is characterized by a notion of production. While *The One Possible Basis* presents an existential ontology of divine creation, we will see a different notion of production taking hold in the first Critique, blurring the distinction

47 Immanuel Kant, *Welches sind die wirklichen Fortschritte, die die Metaphysik seit Leibnizens und Wolf's Zeiten in Deutschland gemacht hat? / What Real Progress has Metaphysics Made in Germany since the time of Leibniz and Wolff?*, ed. Friedrich Theodor Rink (1804), bilingual edition, trans. Ted Humphrey (New York: Abaris Books, 1983), p. 53 (tranlsation slightly modified). For earlier definitions of ontology, see Kant's *Lectures on Metaphysics*.

48 *CPR* A845-6 / B873-4.

between existential grounds and epistemological grounds. An existential ontology might be, as Adorno suggests in his lecture course on Kant, "salvaged" from epistemology.[49]

The first half of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (Transcendental Aesthetic and Transcendental Analytic) is ontological in precisely the sense Kant describes. The second half, the Transcendental Dialectic, concerns that to which ontology is propadeutic, according to Kant: the supersensible, as soul, cosmos, and God. Heidegger compares the divisions of the *Critique of Pure Reason* to the divisions of Wolffian metaphysics: the Aesthetic and Analytic are characterized as *metaphysica generalis* (ontology), while the Dialectic with its three chapters is characterized as a critique of *metaphysica specialis* (psychology, cosmology, theology). Kant's explicit discussion of being occurs not in what is properly his ontology, but rather in his critique of theology. Kant criticizes the ontological proof for the existence of God in much the same terms as he had in *The One Possible Basis* essay. As in that essay, he does this by way of definitions of being and existence. These terms do not have exactly the same meanings as they did in Kant's pre-critical work. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, *Dasein* is used to name the modal category of existence: it is among the pure concepts of the understanding, equivalent to the concept of actuality. *Sein*, by contrast, is the copula of predicative positing, a logical predicate rather than a real predicate. Thus Kant's thesis about being:

> *'Being'* is obviously not a real predicate; that is, it is not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing. It is merely the positing of a thing, or of certain determinations, [as existing] in themselves.[50]

Kant tells us that a "real predicate" is a predicate that determines a thing, that is added to the concept of the thing and enlarges it.[51] As in *The One Possible Basis*, Kant asserts that being is not a predicate of this kind. The addition of being to a thing's concept does not enlarge the concept of what the thing is. It does not affect the thing's *reality*. It is useful at this point to note Kant's important distinction between reality [*Realität*] and actuality

49 Theodor W. Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2001), pp. 85-8.

50 *CPR* A598 / B626. I have bracketed Kemp Smith's words "as existing", which do not appear in the German text.

51 *CPR* A598 / B626.

[*Wirklichkeit*]. "Reality", for Kant as for Baumgarten and Wolff, does not describe that which is real in the sense of really existing, but rather describes the determinateness of a thing. From the Latin *res*, Kant aligns *realitas* with *Sachheit*, thingness or thing-determinateness; in the table of categories reality is listed under *quality*.[52] The reality of a thing is its *quidditas*, its what-content; thus a "real predicate" is an essential predicate which determines what the thing is.[53] To say that being is not a *real* predicate is to say that being contributes nothing to the determination of a thing, cannot tell us anything about *what* the thing is in its essence. As in *The One Possible Basis*, Kant says here that "the [actual] contains no more than the merely possible" and uses the well known example: "A hundred [actual] thalers do not contain the least coin more than a hundred possible thalers".[54] The possible and the actual do not differ in their reality: both are determined by the concept of a hundred thalers. They differ, rather, in their actuality: only the actual money has existence, extantness, or as Heidegger will have it, presence-to-hand.

Being, which is not a real predicate, has nothing to do with reality. Rather, being is both a logical predicate and an existential predicate. In its logical use it is the relation-word or copula which relates predicates to their logical subjects. In its existential use, "we posit the subject in itself with all its predicates, and indeed posit it as being an *object* that stands in relation to my *concept*".[55] This use of the word "being" is roughly equivalent to the meaning ascribed to the word "existence" in *The One Possible Basis*. The thing is not just a possible manifold of predicates, but is *actual* and can be known *a posteriori*.[56] This is what Kant means when he asserts that being is the positing of a thing, or of certain determinations, in themselves. Being, as well as functioning as a logical copula, can be an assertion of actuality, describing a thing's thatness rather than its whatness. This definition of being differs from Kant's definition of existence in *The One Possible Basis*, however, in that *we* are the ones who do the positing, and things themselves are not generated by our positing activity. The pre-critical essay maintains that things come into existence by virtue of God's absolute positing. The *Critique of Pure Reason*, by

52 *CPR* B182; A80 / B106.
53 *BPP* pp. 34-38.
54 *CPR* A599 / B627. I have substituted the word "actual" where Kemp Smith confusingly uses the word "real" (Kant uses *Wirkliche* in both cases).
55 *CPR* A599 / B627.
56 *CPR* A600 / B628.

contrast, claims that human subjects posit that a thing exists on the basis of experience. Yet this fails to account for the origin of existence, explaining only the origin of our *account* of existence. The notion of creation built into the pre-critical concept of existence has seemingly vanished.

What, then, has happened to Kant's pre-critical notion of God as the ground of all existence? What grounds and originates the existence of things? Kant asserts that we may *think* of God as being such a ground — just as we may think of the concept of God as including omnipotence — but we must not presume that such a concept has any actuality. Reason, Kant says, needs to assume something necessary as a basis of existence in general, but from this "purely arbitrary idea" the existence of such a being cannot be proven.[57] However, we may legitimately *postulate* a necessary being as the ground of all existence, so long as we do not presume that such a being necessarily exists.[58] That is, the idea of a necessary being which grounds all existence is an *ideal* of reason. An ideal, Kant says, is an idea that has been individuated and hypostatized into an individual thing, "determinable or even determined by the idea alone".[59] The ideal has no objective reality — that is, no appearance which corresponds to it — but it functions in a regulative capacity, as a concept of something entirely complete by which reason may measure the incomplete.[60] An ideal is an epistemic regulator, in this case masquerading as an existential ground.

The *sum-total of all possibility* is such an ideal. According to the Scholastic principle of complete determination, which Kant retains, this sum-total of all the possible predicates of things is presupposed as a condition of the determinateness of any given thing. Each thing has a certain number of predicates from the sum total, and the remaining predicates are negative for that thing; that is, for every possible predicate, a thing is either positively or negatively constituted. Thus each thing is capable of being completely determined. This principle, Kant says,

> contains a transcendental presupposition, namely, that of the material *for all possibility*, which in turn is regarded as

57 *CPR* A603 / B631.
58 *CPR* A612 / B640.
59 *CPR* A568 / B596.
60 *CPR* A569-70 / B597-8.

> containing *a priori* the data *for the particular possibility* of each and every thing.[61]

The idea of this sum-total is an ideal of pure reason, necessary for understanding the determinability of things in general. Kant adds:

> If [...] reason employs in the complete determination of things a transcendental substrate that contains, as it were, the whole store of material from which all possible predicates of things must be taken, this substrate cannot be anything else than the idea of [an All of reality]; an *omnitudo realitatis*.[62]

The existence of things, as far as we can experience and determine them, presupposes the ideal of a qualitative totality, a store of all possible content for things. "Nothing is an object *for us*, unless it presupposes the sum of all empirical reality as the condition of its possibility".[63] The possibility of knowledge presupposes a ground of determination. Yet this ground of determination, the idea of the sum-total of all possibility, is transformed by reason into an existential ground; it is made identical with the concept of an *ens realissimum,* the concept of a "total reality" thing which contains within itself all possible determinations of existing things.[64] Reason objectifies and individuates this concept and calls it "the primordial being [...] the highest being [...] the being of all beings [*das Wesen aller Wesen*]".[65] It is this last nomination that Kant is particularly careful to qualify:

> These terms are not [...] to be taken as signifying the objective relation of an actual object to other things, but of an *idea to concepts*. We are left entirely without knowledge as to the existence of a being of such outstanding pre-eminence.[66]

"The being of all beings" is not an actual object and does not necessarily exist; it is only the *idea* of such a being that reason presupposes. *This being,* the sum-total of all possible determinations, must not be understood

61 *CPR* A573 / B601.
62 *CPR* A575 / B603. Kemp Smith omits what I have placed in brackets, which occurs in the German text.
63 *CPR* A582 / B610.
64 *CPR* A576-577 / B604-605.
65 *CPR* A578 / B606.
66 *CPR* A579 / B607.

as *a thing*. All possibility presupposes *not* some existing thing, but rather the idea of a sum-total of all reality. It is by means of a "transcendental subreption" that reason moves from this idea to that of the *ens realissimum*, "substituting for [the idea of a sum-total] the concept of *a thing* which stands at the source of the possibility of all things".[67]

Why does this transcendental subreption take place? Why does reason insist on transferring the idea of a sum-total onto the idea of an existent thing? The answer does not simply relate to the enduring notion of God as *ens realissimum*, but also reflects a fundamental uncertainty in the faculty of reason about the origin and ground of existence. Kant indicates this uncertainty by asking why reason supposes the idea of total reality to be contained in an individual being. He lyrically describes the wavering of reason on this question:

> Why are we constrained to assume that some one among existing things is in itself necessary, and yet at the same time to shrink back from the existence of such a being [*Wesen*] as from an abyss? [...] While I may indeed be obliged to assume something necessary as a condition of the existent in general, I cannot think any particular thing [*Ding*] as in itself necessary. In other words, I can never *complete* the regress to the conditions of existence save by assuming a necessary being, and yet am never in a position to *begin* with such a being.[68]

What we see here is not an ambiguity about the existence of God, but rather the wavering of reason between the idea of a necessary ground for existence and the idea of a necessarily existing thing that grounds. Kant asserts this distinction and warns against the reduction of the former to the latter. Reason must waver between the two ideas lest it be blinded by its own illusion — the illusion that the two are identical. The movement is enforced by the two regulative principles of necessity and contingency. The first "calls upon us to seek something necessary as a condition of all that is given as existent", while the second "forbids us to treat anything empirical" as this condition.[69] Thus reason is constrained to seek an existential ground but prevented from treating any empirical thing as that ground. The existential ground is not *a thing* in the world, yet reason is

67 *CPR* A582-583 / B610-611, italics mine.
68 *CPR* A615 / B 643.
69 *CPR* A 616 / B 644.

irresistibly drawn to this explanation for the condition of existence. This conflict draws attention to the problem that Heidegger characterizes as the question of the ontological difference: namely that *being itself* must originate beings in some way — and yet while being itself is not *a being,* it cannot be understood without reference to beings. The question as to where beings get their *being* from is answered here only by reference to the regulative idea of a necessary being, with all the caveats that entails.

Reason's wavering between the idea of a necessary ground for existence and the idea of a necessarily existing thing is mirrored by a conflict between mechanistic and teleological explanations of nature. The two sides of this conflict are similarly supported by the two regulative principles: while the principle of necessity insists that we assume "a necessary first ground for all that belongs to existence", that of contingency "warns us not to regard any determination whatsoever of existing things as such an ultimate ground ... but to keep the way open for further derivation [of causes]".[70] Reason is in conflict with itself over two issues here: the question of an existential ground, and the question of an explanatory ground for a system of nature. These two questions are the existential and epistemological versions of a broader question which concerns the origin of nature in general. On the teleological model, we assume that nature has a necessary first cause and that there is a necessarily existing thing which, by design, makes all existence possible. On the mechanistic model, we refuse to grant objective validity to a first cause and instead regard nature as a system of efficient causes, where nothing empirical can be regarded as the condition of all existence. Teleology encourages us to understand existence to be given by *a being,* namely God; mechanism presents us only with a system of beings, the source of the existence of which cannot be deduced from an analysis of the system itself.

The conflation of these two conflicts at A616 / B644 suggests a number of important points. First, as I have suggested, the conflict over whether nature is to be understood teleologically or mechanistically is the epistemological version of the existential conflict over whether existence is grounded in a necessarily existing thing or not. The two positions will turn out not to be irreconcilable. But the important thing to note here is that the fundamental question of natural science is at the same time both the question of existential ontology and the question of epistemological

70 *CPR* A616 / B644.

ontology. For the question about the origin of existence is the same as the question about the production and generation of nature, and also the question about how we understand such production. Kant's answer is that materially, nature must be thought to produce itself mechanically, whilst formally, it must be understood to have been created by God. Thus in our scientific endeavours we must continue to derive appearances from other appearances as if there were an unending causal chain, while at the same time striving toward the ultimate ground of that chain, as if a necessary being were presupposed.[71] This results in Kant's insistence on the *idea* of an intelligent existential ground which regulates an otherwise mechanistic view of nature.[72] It is a formal requirement of reason, which seeks unity in the connection of experience, that a divine creator be assumed to exist, but the creator's status is that of a merely regulative idea. In terms of what can actually be known to exist, it is nature itself that generates existence, and it is within nature that we must seek the grounds of existence of those things we experience. The existential ground must be sought within nature, such that we proceed to investigate existence in terms of natural production, but the ground of our coherent understanding of existence is the regulative idea of a divine creator. Thus we must seek an existential ground solely within nature, while upholding, for the sake of an epistemology of existence, the idea of a divine creator.

It is epistemological ontology itself which arrives at, and requires, the idea of a divine creator as the origin of existence. An existential ontology should be derivable from natural production alone, though without the regulative idea of God, we would not be able to understand it systematically. Natural production is the material condition of possibility of things in nature, which must be understood in terms of the concepts and principles of understanding; this conceptualized nature, in turn, must be unified by the ideas of reason, including the idea of God as existential ground. The idea of God regulates the use of the understanding, and the understanding constitutes the experience of nature. Yet in addition to the transcendental hanging-together of experience, there is the material hanging-together of nature, which is where the non-epistemological existential ontology is to be found. It is true that we often interpret this material coherence of nature in teleological terms. Yet natural production, however it actually occurs, must be the *material* condition of possibility of the appearances for which the understanding provides the *formal*

71 *CPR* A618-9 / B646-7.
72 *CPR* A670 / B698 ff.

conditions of possibility. Furthermore, we must strive to explain nature's coherence in strictly natural (non-teleological) terms.[73] Explanatory grounds should aim to be adequate to existential grounds as they actually are. This suggests that underlying the epistemological structure of concepts, principles, and ideas, is an existential ontology of natural production — that is, a notion of material nature as mechanism, the ongoing production of which is the condition of possibility of a world of existing things in general. *This* existential ontology is at the basis of the epistemological ontology, whereas a theory of divine creation, as Kant says, can only be posited at the end of scientific inquiry, after all natural explanations have been exhausted.[74]

If Kant is guilty of productive comportment, as Heidegger claims, it is a comportment based no longer on divine creation, but on natural production. This is the point that Heidegger misses: Kant's limited epistemological ontology requires an unlimited, non-epistemological existential ontology of natural production underpinning it. If producedness is indeed the condition for the possibility of perceiving a thing, then natural production is not only the origin of the existence of things, but also the ground of all knowledge of nature. Indeed, it is the material ground of knowledge, just as the categories are the formal ground of knowledge. Through this initial look at production in the first Critique, we can see that existential grounds and epistemological grounds need not remain distinct: producedness is the condition of possibility of existence and of knowing about that which exists. And this epistemological system, based on an existential ontology of production, *then* assumes a divine creator as explanation for that which cannot be explained naturally. Existential production is now nature's business, and epistemological reproduction continues to be humanity's — but epistemology now rests on a theory of existential production which epistemology itself must produce, through both experience and synthetic *a priori* principles.

Kant's epistemological ontology, as a system of concepts and principles, thus requires a productive existential ontology, and this existential ontology requires the epistemological structure to regulate it. The two must feed into one another if the human mind is to know anything about nature: the productive existential ontology must be

73 *CPR* A772-3 / B800-1.
74 *CPR* A693-4 / B721-2; A772-3 / B800-1.

available to the epistemological system, structured by it but also immanent to it as its grounding condition.

4. Kant and the Meaning of Being

How do the notion of being and the concept of existence fit into this structure? I have been talking about an existential and productive ground for the existence of things, which Kant puts in the context of discussion of a necessary being. Yet it will quickly be seen that these claims have little to do with Kant's own notion of being as he defines it in the Transcendental Dialectic. Being, for Kant, is not the origin of beings; nor is it a property of them nor a concept which determines them. Furthermore, being is evidently not *a being*. Being is an epistemological saying, an act of judgment which affirms the existence of a thing or the relation of a thing to a predicate. There is no reason to consider "being" as inhering in things or originating them; it is an affirmation which stems from the subject. It is significant that the word "is" has two different functions: that of positing existence (existential), and that of connecting two concepts (logical or epistemological). The "is" establishes not only the presence of a thing, but also the nature or essence of that thing. In both cases, though, the "is" has a strictly epistemic function, for even in its existential use, being serves to assert the presence of a *knowable* thing *to a mind*; it does not indicate its mere being. Being, in its existential use, affirms the relation the subject bears to an object: that is, the fact that the object is actual, present to perception and cognition.

Thus the term "being" is transcendental in an important sense: it establishes in judgment the actuality-relation a thing has to a perceiving subject. Being, for Kant, is the non-conceptual iteration of the relation between mind and world, the proclamation by a mind that a world is present to it. What can be ascribed to a world, then, is not *being* but existence. And existence is ascribed to the world through application of the categories. Thus it is that existence is one of the twelve pure concepts in Kant's ontological "system of concepts and principles", while being is neither a concept nor a principle. Nevertheless, being is amongst the conditions of possibility of knowledge as the positing of a knowable world through the initial subject-object relation. Being is not a concept because it

constitutes the very basis of the Kantian epistemological ontology, making possible the application of categories to a knowable object.

Kant's notion of being has been interpreted by Paul Davies as "extra-categorial", and similarly by Derrida as "transcategorial".[75] On Heidegger's late interpretation of this material, being is modality itself, one of the four pre-categorial divisions of judgments.[76] Modality, Kant tells us, is a peculiar function of judgment: "it contributes nothing to the content of the judgment [...], but concerns only the value of the copula in relation to thought in general". Later Kant adds that the categories of modality "do not in the least enlarge the concept to which they are attached as predicates. They only express the relation of the [object's] concept to the faculty of knowledge."[77] The categories of modality are possibility, existence, and necessity. With regard to an object, categories of modality contribute no determination of content but rather determine what the copula of the judgment — the "is" — means for thought. There are three modes of this relation: the object is related to thought either as possible (i.e. it agrees with the formal conditions of experience), as actual (i.e. it is bound up with the material conditions of experience), or as necessary (i.e. it is determined in accordance with the universal conditions of experience).[78] These categories are akin to being in that they are not real predicates; their employment determines the precise relation between subject and object, either as possible, actual, or necessary. These three modalities are indeed modalities of being, for they give a precise value to the copula. The "is" affirms the presence-to-mind of a thing, but the modal categories must determine whether the thing in question is possible, actual, or necessary. The category of existence determines that the thing in question has actuality for judgment.

75 Paul Davies has noted in Kant's critical philosophy "a sense of being that cannot be conflated with being extant". See Paul Davies, "Kant's Joke (Or, On Continuing to Use the Word 'God')", in *The Matter of Critique*, ed. Andrea Rehberg and Rachel Jones (Manchester: Clinamen, 2000), pp. 110-128, here at p. 127. Derrida argues that being, for Kant, transcends every concept, and is the condition of all concepts and categories. See Jacques Derrida, "The Supplement of Copula: Philosophy before Linguistics", in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982), pp. 175-205, here at p. 195.

76 Martin Heidegger, "Kant's Thesis about Being", trans. Ted E. Klein Jr. and William E. Pohl, *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), pp.337-363, here at p. 341.

77 *CPR* A74 / B99-100; A219 / B266.

78 *CPR* A218 / B265-6.

I suggest that, with Heidegger, we align being with modality, a move which assigns being a grounding function in the table of categories. As the unspecified relation between subject and object, it allows for the application of further concepts to the thing in question. This means that being is an epistemologically grounding activity. The establishment of the relation of intuitability between subject and object is necessarily the first step in any further inquiry into the object in question, whether it is made explicit or not: the narwahl must be established to be an object for a subject, and it must be established to be a knowable object. This ascription of the "is" is the original relation between subject and object, which precedes the stages of intuition and categorization as Kant describes them. The establishment, with the "is", of the mind-world relation, would thus be prior to all intuition and make it possible. This would be an original transcendental activity allowing for the correspondence of intuition with the world.

This is essentially the position Heidegger takes in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Heidegger argues — much as he does in *Being and Time* — that a pre-philosophical grasp of being must precede the encounter with beings. With Kant, Heidegger says, this is expressed as a pre-cognitive relation between subject and object, which first establishes the field of intuitable objectivity. Heidegger approaches this point through perception. Kant makes clear that perception is the means by which actuality is apprehended. When discussing being as positing, he suggests that when a thing is thought to exist, all that is added to the concept of the object is the perception of that thing.[79] Earlier, in his discussion of actuality in the Postulates of Empirical Thought, Kant specifies that "the perception which supplies the content to the concept is the sole mark of actuality".[80] On Heidegger's interpretation, actuality for Kant has to do only with the question of whether a thing is given in perception: only perception can establish that a possible thing has actuality, exists. This means that existential assertion has the character of perception: to posit a thing's existence is to say that it can be perceived. "Kant thus says in short: actuality, existence, equals absolute position equals perception".

This is to say that existence, absolute position, and perception are all descriptions of the intuitive or epistemic relation between subject and object. Heidegger specifies that existence is not to be equated with the

79 *CPR* A601 / B629.

80 *CPR* A225 / B273.

perceived object, but with its perceivedness, its relation to a positing subject.[81] This, of course, does not imply that the object exists only by virtue of its being perceived, as it would for Berkeley, but rather that perception establishes that the object exists for the positing subject. Heidegger points out, however, that "perceivedness presupposes perceivability, and perceivability on its part already requires the *existence* of the perceivable [...] being".[82] Perceivedness and positing cannot be equated with extantness, but are ways of accessing this extantness.[83] Indeed, this is obvious from Kant's statement that perception is the sole *mark* of actuality: perception is the only way we have of knowing that a thing is actual. This existence of the perceivable thing would have to precede its relation to the subject; the thing would have to exist *before* positing could take hold of it. This points to an extantness of the object which precedes the cognitive relation, but also to a subjective relation to extantness which precedes perception. Heidegger argues that this is implicit in Kant's text: there is a pre-intuited extantness of things and a pre-intuitive comportment of human subjects to that extantness.[84]

This means, for Heidegger, that extantness must somehow already be grasped: extantness must already be disclosed before the extant can be uncovered.[85] And this is the original relation between subject and object which Heidegger aligns with being for Kant. It is at this point that Heidegger is able to draw a parallel between Kant's notion of being and the existential structure of Da-sein as described in *Being and Time*. For Heidegger in this period, perception is an intentional comportment of the Da-sein, directed towards something whose mode of being is always already pre-conceptually understood. A disclosure of extantness belongs to Da-sein and is the condition of possibility of the uncoverability of extant things.[86] Heidegger extends this interpretation of the relation between perception and extantness to Kant:

81 *BPP* p. 48.
82 *BPP* p. 49.
83 *BPP* p. 67. I have used the term "extantness" to refer to that state that things might be in before their relation to the subject. This is distinct from "existence", which refers to the state of things after they have been intuited and determined through the categories.
84 Interestingly, and apparently without awareness of Heidegger's argument, Gerd Buchdahl proposes a similar reading of Kant: he argues for a pre-intuited "being in the world" of things which we apprehend in a pre-intuitive way. See his *Kant and the Dynamics of Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).
85 *BPP* p. 71.

> With respect to its possibility, *perceivedness is grounded in the understanding of extantness.* [...] It is manifestly this understanding of being to which Kant recurs without seeing it clearly when he says that existence, actuality, is equivalent to perception.[87]

What Heidegger suggests is that the *being* of beings must be disclosed before any particular *beings* can be uncovered; before a thing can be encountered, determined, and posited along with all its predicates, its being must in some sense already be understood. This takes place as the original subject-object relation of the "is", the epistemologically grounding establishment of being. Heidegger makes clear that this pre-cognitive relation is not "enacted" prior to intuition; rather, it is implicit in the basic constitution of Da-sein. "In existing, the Da-sein also already understands the mode of being of the extant, to which it comports existingly".[88] Da-sein has a basic epistemological comportment to things, which establishes that they are objects of possible knowledge. The conditions of this establishing move are that things *are*, and, as we saw previously, that they are produced.

I believe that Heidegger's notion of the pre-cognitive encounter which establishes the presence and producedness of beings for thought gives us the best way of understanding how the initial stage of the apprehension of beings occurs in Kant's system. But we need to make clear that this pre-cognitive encounter does not access "the meaning of being" or that which grounds existence in Kant's system. Rather, being is strictly epistemologically grounding: the pre-cognitive encounter establishes the grounds of knowledge, not the grounds of existence. Being is the basis of Kant's epistemological ontology, not his existential ontology. The ground of the existence of things, then, has nothing explicitly to do with being, but rather has to do with natural production. It is in Kant's natural philosophy that we must seek his existential ontology. Yet as we have

86 *BPP* p. 71. See also Heidegger's introduction to *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996).
87 *BPP* p. 71-2. It is unclear to me why Heidegger insists that Kant says that existence is equivalent to perception. Kant nowhere asserts their equivalence, but says that perception is the sole means of *verifying* the existence of something. Later in the passage to which Heidegger refers (*CPR* A225-6 / B273-4), it becomes clear that Kant is talking about how we acquire knowledge of the existence of things, ie. only through perception.
88 *BPP* p. 71.

seen, the existential ontology will be structured by the epistemological ontology, while also forming the ground for its possibility.

In his critical period, Kant's existential ontology is based on natural production, while divine creation takes on the status of an idea that regulates our understanding of natural production. His epistemological ontology, meanwhile, is a system of concepts and principles with being at their basis. While the grounds of existence and the grounds of knowledge were strictly separated for Kant's immediate philosophical predecessors, for Kant they are intertwined: natural production must be theorized by the epistemological system, while knowledge must ultimately depend upon the source of all existence. I hope to have shown here that Kant's ontology is not strictly epistemological, but is also existential and productive. Heidegger is right that Kant does not move beyond an "ontology of the extant".[89] But with this, Kant moves decisively beyond an ontology of the *concept*, thus making a significant advance in the philosophy of existence. Heidegger is also right that the critical philosophy expresses a productive comportment towards things. But rather than being a constraint, as Heidegger suggests it is, this notion can be used to examine the importance of natural production in Kant's system, and the underlying necessity of a certain kind of materialism to transcendental idealism. Indeed, what will emerge from Kant's philosophy of material nature is a ground of beings that can in no way be characterized as produced permanent presence, but must instead be determined as ongoing productive activity.

89 *BPP* p. 148.

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The Memory of Thought

Alexander Garcia Duttmann, *The Memory of Thought* (London: Continuum, 2002)

CLAIRE COLEBROOK

In *Difference and Repetition* Gilles Deleuze declared that he was finally 'doing philosophy,' rather than pursuing the history of philosophy (Deleuze 1994, xv). Even so, in his historical studies of philosophers Deleuze had already drawn a distinction between active and reactive approaches to past philosophers. Reading a figure from the past is not about beginning with a well-formed question and then assessing various arguments to see who has come up with the best solution. Such an approach merely domesticates the philosophical persona, returning the provocative events of philosophy to a single philosophical horizon. By contrast, Deleuze asks how each philosopher, by posing a problem, transforms the history of philosophy (Deleuze 1991). Great philosophy is untimely philosophy; it does not add to or enrich a philosophical history that we share and recognise. Rather, a genuinely new problem disrupts what we took ourselves and philosophy to be, opening a new history.

In *The Memory of Thought,* Alex Garcia Duttmann distances his own work from the history of philosophy and does so in a double manner. Duttmann sees Heidegger and Adorno as invoking names – Germania and Auschwitz – that reconfigure the historical context of philosophy. But his work itself enacts the structure of the name, deciding that Heidegger and Adorno present events of philosophy, and that their work is not just within history but also marks a decision that constitutes history. Indeed, the relation between the name and the concept is, Duttmann insists, not a peculiarity we can attribute to these two philosophers who are writing in a historically significant moment, but is a necessary structure. Thought

begins with naming. An event, which as yet cannot be thought, mastered or comprehended, presents itself to be thought. The name lacks sense and context. But naming is also an anticipation of sense in its very failure to achieve sense. The name is the condition of sense but is also that which must be forgotten in the constitution of sense. The fact that, today, 'after Auscwitz' has become a slogan that extends beyond Adorno scholarship is evidence of this structure. Far from correcting the common misapprehension of what 'after Auschwitz' *means*, or must mean, Duttmann asks why *this* name, in Adorno, could not yet have been meaningful. The naming of this event in Adorno was an attempt to pursue the limits of comprehension, while comprehending those very limits.

In the same manner, Duttmann approaches Adorno and Heidegger with a resistance to inclusion. His work is, therefore, diametrically opposed to those studies of Adorno that would locate him within, and defend him from, the rigorous tradition of analytic and critical philosophy. In *Adorno: Disenchantemnt and Ethics,* J.M Bernstein presents Adorno as a remarkably assimilable and valuable philosopher, who provides solutions to such quandaries as internalism versus externalism, or discourse ethics and Kantianism. For Bernstein, Adorno's thesis of disenchantment allows us to deal with our loss of a context for practical reason (Bernstein 2001). Duttmann, by contrast, does not see Adorno as describing a loss of sense but as producing a name that disrupts the sense of history. Duttmann's Heidegger is also a far cry from Hubert Dreyfus's respectable and sensible philosopher who can help 'us' solve the mind-body problem (Dreyfus 2000), or whose response to the holocaust can be read as a symptom of German nationalism (Young 1997). Rather, by naming these philosophers, and by seeing their work as an event that thought in its current form cannot comprehend, Duttmann asks if their philosophy might be best read according to what it demands and provokes, rather than what it says. Heidegger's naming of Germainia discloses philosophy itself as an undecidable event between name and concept, for the philosopher must name an event in order to think and in order to avoid the repetition of an already constituted history. But this naming shows Heidegger's philosophy itself to be a historical decision about history, a decision that must have been possible from its own history, but that is also beyond Heidegger's own historical calculation. If we simply say that Adorno, like so many others, saw Auschwitz as a symptom of the triviality of reason, then we decide in advance the relation between name and context. If, however, we ask about the resistance of the name to sense, and ask how

each name produces a philosophical context and history, how each name decides what must be thought and what remains outside thought, then the philosopher is not fully reduced to a concept, but remains to be read.

Both Adorno and Heidegger, for Duttmann, present and think the structure of the name. Both were aware of philosophy's own recognition of itself, and the limits of self-naming. Both named an event in history in order both to mark philosophy's limit and to avoid conceptualising that limit from an already constituted philosophy. By reading these philosophers as names rather than concepts, as events within philosophy that preclude us from locating the misrecognition of 'Germania' within Heidegger, or the proper approach to 'Auschwitz' in Adorno, Duttmann exposes the risk of the name. Nothing decides the propriety of the name. Only when the name falls into conceptuality can we assess what the name will have done. Only with the reading of the philosopher from within the history they make possible can we assess the force of their problem.

History is more than the milieu of philosophy and philosophy is more than the response to history. The historical name, the event that each philosopher recognises as the force that philosophy must confront, is not a decision within the history of philosophy. 'Auschwitz' and 'Germania' ask us to do philosophy differently, but they can have this force in relation to philosophy only because philosophy has somehow, before itself, allowed this event to be named.

The problem of the name is, in Duttmann's work, itself a name. The style of *The Memory of Thought* is conditional rather than propositional. If it is the case that Auschwitz and Germania are names, if they did not yet have a meaning and a sense, then what is philosophy such that it can name? Philosophy is no longer a logic that must deal with history, nor itself a history that can reflect on various ways of legitimating logic. Duttmann makes a positive claim to what doing philosophy is; but this claim is performed, rather than stated. *The Memory of Thought* approaches the name in Heidegger and Adorno to state the very structure of naming, as an event of thought that resists thought but that also decides the path of thinking. Duttmann's text itself is an act of naming; it does less to defend the relation between Heidegger and Adorno than it demonstrates what such a relation might enable us to think. If philosophy is naming, then its context is not pre-given; nor is such a context innocent or determinable. The naming of an event is an act that does not yet have sense but that orients sense. Reading a philosopher creates the problem

and the context that allows the philosopher to be thought, to then become a concept within a philosophical history.

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Virtually New

Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson, Barbara Habberjam, and Eliot Ross Albert (London: Continuum, 2002)

WAHIDA KHANDKER

> A style is managing to stammer in one's own language. It is difficult, because there has to be a need for such stammering. Not being a stammerer in one's speech, but being a stammerer of language itself. Being like a foreigner in one's own language. Constructing a line of flight.[1]

The problem of novelty (of its emergence and, indeed, of its very possibility) is well-trodden ground in the history of philosophy. Replacing the permanence of substance with becoming and flux at the foundations of thought and knowledge, as is done in much current 'deconstructive' philosophy, carries with it a question: If novelty is continually being created, how can we recognize it, if 'recognition', by its very nature, involves the recomposition of pre-existing elements? An example, in the work of Gilles Deleuze, of how this relation between old and new is acknowledged, if not necessarily resolved, is through the employment of 'minor' languages. Invention or 'creation' occurs together with, and in spite of, the systems of thought, language, or politics that structure our conceptual and social worlds; an old system endures and yet is also subverted by the activity of the 'minor' element added to it.

The problem cries out for some specificity.

A good place to start, perhaps, is the new edition of the Deleuze/Parnet *Dialogues*. Commonly recommended as a compact introductory text to the

1 G. Deleuze, *Dialogues II*, p4

Deleuze oeuvre, this revised edition contains one 'new' essay entitled 'The Actual and the Virtual', translated by Eliot Ross Albert. Although it is suggested by the translator that this additional piece was, in fact, merely a draft for another paper, in itself, the essay does have a number of virtues.

1) It reiterates the relationship between virtual and actual, not as that between pre-existing possible and finished product, but as one of mutual exchange (a circuit) in which the impermanence of subjectivity is exposed at the base of the 'primordial' act of perception.

2) Albert's generous end-notes make welcome references to the particular works of Henri Bergson that have directly inspired Deleuze's examinations of the virtual/actual relation (works such as *Matière et mémoire* and *L'Énergie spirituelle* that explore the interactions of memory and perception, of past and present).

My one quibble is that the inclusion of this essay (of barely five pages) hardly justifies the audacious addition of 'II' to the collection's original published title. For the sake of accuracy and brevity, then, I would say just two things. Firstly, *Dialogues II* remains a useful perspective on the central preoccupations of some of Deleuze's works in which the same subject matter is treated with sometimes mystifying complexity (e.g., *L'Anti-Oedipe* and *Mille Plateaux*). Secondly, it should simply be noted that this collection is not, strictly speaking, 'new'.

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The Logic of Sensation

Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation. By Gilles Deleuze (London & New York: Continuum, 2003) Translated from the French by Daniel W. Smith. 209 pp.

DARREN AMBROSE

This translation of Deleuze's elegant and sustained engagement with the specificity of painting appears some twenty years after its initial publication in France and is the last of Deleuze's major philosophical works to be translated into English. When Deleuze originally published this work in 1981 it came as a two-volume set, with the first volume consisting of the text and the second of full-page reproductions of the paintings by Bacon cited by Deleuze. Since his arguments often unfold through very detailed analysis of specific paintings by Bacon it is unfortunate that such a volume of reproductions does not accompany this long-awaited translation. However, as Daniel Smith indicates in his translator's preface, reproductions of Bacon's work are readily available either in print or on-line, and that of course Deleuze's text is best read having such images on hand.

The text itself consists of seventeen 'rubrics', each dealing with a more complex aspect of Bacon's paintings that Deleuze claims 'could serve as the theme of a particular sequence in the history of painting.' Thus when considered together these seventeen rubrics are intended to function as an account of a general 'logic of sensation' associated with a very specific task for painting. To grasp this logic of sensation in painting, it is necessary to inquire into the nature of the painterly task which functions as the operative presupposition of Deleuze's *Logic of Sensation*. Deleuze's account of this painterly task is explicitly mediated through the

specificity of Bacon's own response as a painter, and is articulated by Deleuze as that route in painting that is concerned with elaborating 'haptic space'. Haptic space, for Deleuze, is neither a manual space opposed to a purely optical space of vision, nor is it a purely tactile space connected to the optical. It is rather a distinct kind of space that competes with optical space. This route would seem to indicate that painting itself should not be understood as the effort to merely perfect the representation or reproduction of visible forms. Such a notion of perfection would merely serve to impose linearity upon the historical development of painting and restrict what painting is actually able to achieve. Thus for Deleuze in the *Logic of Sensation* representational perfection is not considered to be painting's primary task. As Merleau-Ponty writes in 'Eye and Mind':

> The idea of a universal painting, of a totalisation of painting, of a fully and definitively achieved painting is an idea bereft of sense. For painters the world will always be yet to be painted, even if it lasts millions of years...it will end without having been conquered in painting.[1]

Deleuze argues that painting is and always has been fundamentally concerned with presenting the non-visible forces that act behind or beneath the visible forms. Such a task has obviously become more and more explicit for painters throughout the last century given the equivalence established by contemporary physics between energy and matter. The constitution of every material object is now understood as a complex concentration of invisible forces. A phrase from the painter Paul Klee resonates as a type of motif in Deleuze's book – 'not to render the visible, but to render visible'. Thus in painting it is never a question of reproducing or representing concrete and visible forms or even of inventing abstract forms. For painting it is always a question of capturing the invisible forces of the Real, or what Bacon understands as capturing the 'fact'. Painters must attempt to extract from these invisible forces a 'bloc of sensation' by creating a construct or assemblage in paint that serves as framework for the conveyance of the sensation. The resulting artwork is thus a type of sensational monument to the invisible forces of the Real. In the *Logic of Sensation* Deleuze argues that a 'community' of artists form around a common problem, namely how to effectively harness

1 M. Merleau-Ponty, 'Eye and Mind', translated by C. Dallery in *The Primacy of Perception* (Northwestern U.P., 1964), p.189

these invisible forces by creating a work of sensation capable of being adequate to them. An important part of this artistic task is this discovery of a means of conveyance capable of sustaining the violent immediacy of the sensation rather than merely functioning to dull it. Whilst different arts develop and evolve their own solutions given the nature of the material they have to work with, Deleuze considers Bacon's *painted* Figures 'to be one of the most marvellous responses in the history of painting to the question, How can one make invisible forces visible?'[2]

In developing this account of the specific painterly response in the *Logic of Sensation* Deleuze often draws upon statements made by the painter himself in conversation with the art critic David Sylvester.[3] Indeed, one of the cornerstones of Deleuze's analysis is the claim that we fail to listen closely enough to what painters themselves actually say regarding both their own work and the nature of painting. Consequently in order to construct a philosophical understanding of Bacon's work that is in some way isomorphic with the paintings themselves Deleuze becomes obliged to align himself with Bacon's understanding of his own work and the nature of painting that he expresses through language. This alignment becomes so close at times that one could easily describe Deleuze's book as a type of rigorous philosophical supplement to Bacon's interviews with Sylvester. Deleuze's own fundamental understanding of Bacon's paintings rests upon the contention that they succeed in acutely conveying a very particular type of violence and that this is a violence *of* sensation rather than the violence of a specific represented spectacle. This is a view extremely close to Bacon's own view of his paintings. Bacon's paintings thus attempt to convey a type of sensory violence associated with the way colour modulation and line are utilised to capture a sensation of the 'brutality of fact' or what Bacon says 'used to be called truth'. His attempt to 'paint the scream' appears to Deleuze to be an exemplary case in point. According to Bacon his aim was not to merely paint a reproduction of the visible horrors of the world before which one screams but rather to paint the intensive forces that might actually produce a scream. His aim is to 'render visible the invisible forces' that convulse the body so as to produce an actual scream. The reproduction of the actual violence of the horrifying

2 G. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 58

3 D. Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon 1962-1979*, 3rd edn. (London: Thames & Hudson, 1987) Deleuze cites this book so often that it is perhaps advisable that one's reading of Deleuze's text be accompanied by a copy of this text as well as by reproductions of Bacon's paintings.

spectacle must be renounced in the effort to commune much more deeply with, and produce a work capable of rendering visible and conveying, the intense sensation associated with the violent non-spectacle of invisible forces assailing the body.

For Deleuze Bacon elaborates a painterly Figure in such a way that it becomes a support or framework able to convey a sustained and precise sensation in a direct and immediate way. Without the support of this very particular kind of painterly Figure sensation would remain diffuse, ephemeral and vague and lack both clarity and duration. For Deleuze the intensity and clarity of sensation is facilitated and sustained in Bacon's paintings more often than not through the Figure or body:

> Sensation is what is being painted; what is painted on the canvas is the body, not insofar as it is represented as an object, but insofar as it is experienced as sustaining this sensation.[4]

Deleuze introduces an important concept right at the very beginning of his analysis of Bacon's Figure. This is what he terms (following Lyotard's *Discours, figure*[5]) the *figural*. This concept stands in clear opposition to the concept of representational figuration, which remain too illustratively and narratively determinate and always function merely to relate the image to an object it is supposedly illustrating or reproducing, or to an event it is apparently narrating. It thus serves to subordinate the eye to the optical code of representation and recognition with the associated risks of losing the immediate intensity of the sensation. Deleuze argues that the conventional optical codes of visual representation serve to repress the anomalies of sensation that are disturbing to the eye, i.e. the deformations and violations of 'good form'. By actively disrupting this 'good form' associated with the optical code of representational figuration the artist is implicitly able to shift attention onto forces that never become directly visible. The concern for the artist becomes one of creating a space *of* and *for* the invisible, and *of* and *for* the possible. Such a visible space must allow for the 'visible' realm to become traversed by unconscious forces thereby rendering visible what Lyotard in *Discours, figure* calls the *figural*. Lyotard argued that by disengaging from the sovereignty of the optical field of representation and engaging with the primordial rhythm of desire and the 'transgressive forces of the unconscious' the artist is able to

4 G. Deleuze, ibid., p. 35
5 J-F. Lyotard, *Discours, figure* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1972)

elaborate the *figural* as a type of Dionysian 'anti-form' capable of visually infesting both figurative and abstract space alike. This *figural* infestation, leaking into the visible realm of the painting, is exemplified within the works of the greatest surrealistic painters such as Ernst, Masson, Miro and Tanguy. When Deleuze relates this concept of the *figural* to Bacon's Figure he exorcises any hint of the Freudian apparatus that Lyotard had maintained. For Deleuze the Baconian Figure must be understood as figuring a transgressive force within the phenomenal space of the Real rather than a force associated with an invisible psychological realm. He argues that Bacon's work leads us toward what he terms a chaotic 'body without organs'. As Deleuze says, 'Bacon has not ceased to paint without organs, the intensive fact of the body. The scrubbed parts of the canvas are, in Bacon, parts of a neutralised organism, restored to their state of zones or levels.'[6]

Deleuze suggests that there are two general routes through which modern painting attempts to circumvent the subordination to representational figuration (which Deleuze characterises as the fight against cliché) – it either gravitates towards abstraction or towards the *figural*. The first movement, i.e. towards abstraction, develops in a number of different directions through different artists and artistic movements, but is marked by two extremes for Deleuze. At one extreme there is the evolution of a pure 'optical' abstraction within art movements such as cubism, purism, orphism and de Stijl, (which included painters such as Braque, Kandinsky and Mondrian). Despite the fact that this type of painting rejects classical representational figuration, Deleuze argues that it still retains abstract visual forms that attempt to refine sensation, dematerialise it and reduce it to a purely optical code. At the other extreme there is an attempt at elaborating a pure manual chaos which attempts to go beyond representational figuration by abandoning abstract form and dissolving all form in a fluid and chaotic space of manual lines and colour patches, splashes and blocks that outline and delimit nothing. This route of manual chaos was pursued within the abstract expressionist movement by painters such as Pollock and de Kooning, and is marked by the attempt to reverse the subordination of the eye to the optical code of representational figuration by pursuing a purely manual chaos. This manual chaos is pursued through a line and colour which no longer outline or delimit

6 Ibid., pp. 45-6

anything, but which spread out chaotically across the canvas and occupy the totality of the painting.

By breaking with the optical code of representational figuration, both of these extremes of abstraction break with the perceived task of painting as the imposition of 'form' upon matter. Thus Deleuze argues that the pure abstractionists aimed to liberate form through radicalising optical codes, whereas the abstract expressionists aimed to liberate matter through unleashing an unconstrained manual chaos. What becomes clear is that both routes reconfigure the painterly task away from the elaboration of the 'matter-form' relation governed by representational codes and coordinates and toward a concentration upon elaborating previously unexplored 'material-force' relations. Painters upon either of these artistic paths thus attempt to elaborate a new means for capturing pure intensities of force, what Paul Klee called 'the forces of the cosmos'. However, Deleuze cites Klee's claim that in order to successfully produce a complex sensation, (i.e. in order to be able not only to harness the intense forces of the cosmos but also to render the subsequent sensation 'visible' in a sustainable way), the painter must proceed with a sober and disciplined gesture that simplifies, selects and constrains the material. Klee famously claimed that all an artist needed to open up an *event* of the Real was the simplicity of a pure and simple line, a pure inflexion unfolding in and of itself. For Klee if one attempts to multiply this simple line and elaborate an overly complex space traversed by a complex interplay of multiple lines, one risks opening up the space to *all* events and irruptions of the forces of the cosmos. The obvious danger here is that one risks producing nothing but a chaotic scribble that effaces the genuinely liberating line, thereby effacing the sensation of the forces of the Real. For Deleuze Klee's remarks function to clarify a problem inherent within the painterly path pursued by their abstract expressionists through the elaboration of pure manual chaos.

Clearly Bacon chooses a different painterly path, and for Deleuze the reason for this was precisely Bacon's concern with avoiding the effacement of the clarity of the sensation. Deleuze claims that in Bacon's paintings an entirely different logic of sensation becomes apparent through the elaboration of a 'haptic' space as his response to the imperative to render visible the invisible. Deleuze's account of Bacon's response begins with the development of a philosophical understanding of the way Bacon circumvents representational figuration. For Deleuze Bacon is acutely aware of the way that the surface of the canvas is inhabited by pre-

existing figurative coordinates, or what Deleuze calls 'the figurative and probabilistic "givens"'. Bacon's approach to circumventing these givens involves developing an act of painting that emerges from the making of random marks (which Deleuze terms 'line-traits'), acts of cleaning, sweeping, brushing or wiping areas of the canvas in order to clear away specific zones of the canvas (which Deleuze terms 'colour-daubs') and the throwing of paint at the canvas. These random acts are clearly associated with the manual techniques developed by the abstract expressionists but in Bacon's hands Deleuze argues that they become something fundamentally different. They begin the process of delineating a 'haptic' space. Bacon himself considers these manual marks merely preparatory, or merely an element of the subsequent act of painting. As Bacon himself says, 'Isn't it that one wants a thing to be as factual as possible and at the same time as deeply suggestive or deeply unlocking of areas of sensation other than simple illustration of the object that you set out to do? Isn't that what all art is about?'[7] In his conversations with David Sylvester Bacon likens these random acts to what he calls the 'graph' or 'diagram' that is a type of 'non-illustrational form' that works upon the level of sensation as possibility and suggestion 'and then slowly leaks back into the fact.'[8] This concept of the 'diagram' becomes the key to Deleuze's understanding of Bacon's pre-figural preparation of the canvas, i.e. Bacon's way of circumventing the figural givens and thus his circumvention of the visual code of representational figuration. These manual marks are distinguished by being physical acts rather than the visual acts of painting, and thus set out the ground in contradiction to either a pre-planned representational figuration or the existing figural coordinates inhabiting the canvas. Deleuze argues that one shouldn't underestimate the degree to which these automatic or random manual marks ultimately threaten to engulf any subsequent act of figuration they are supposedly preparing the way for. When the diagram engulfs the entire canvas the painting becomes analogous to the totalised manual chaos paintings of abstract expressionism and the clarity and duration of the sensation is lost. Bacon is concerned to avoid such a proliferation of the diagram and to transfigure it into a productive zone of figuration, a zone capable of 'breeding' forms.

For Deleuze what is particularly significant about the painterly diagram utilised within Bacon's work is that it is primarily a means for allowing

7 D. Sylvester, ibid., p.56
8 Ibid.

the emergence of another type of space in painting – a 'haptic' space. 'Haptic' seeing designates a type of vision distinct from the optical where the 'sense of sight behaves just like a sense of touch'. Deleuze suggests that through manual traits the hand assumes a type of autonomy and independence allowing it to become guided by other forces, and to make visible marks that no longer depend upon will or sight. These manual marks of the diagram literally attest to an intrusion of another type of space into the pre-given visual coordinates of representational space. In the diagram one no longer sees anything: (it is as if one were in a catastrophe or chaos). The painting is removed from being governed by these optical coordinates. Bacon, however, recognised that the diagram serves a double function in that it also serves to mark out new 'possibilities of fact' and 'possibilities of becoming'. The chaos of the diagram does not in and of itself constitute a 'fact' or 'becoming'. In order for the diagram to be transfigured into such a 'fact' or a 'becoming', i.e. in order to evolve into a Figure, Bacon realised that the manual marks of the diagram have to be reintroduced back into the visual field. The significance of this introduction of the manual marks into the visual field is that the visual field now ceases to be an optical space governed by representational codes and is transfigured into what Deleuze calls 'haptic' space. As Deleuze writes, the diagram gives 'the eye another power, as well as an object that will no longer be figurative.'[9] Deleuze claims that sight discovers in itself a specific function of touch that is uniquely its own, a function distinct from its optical function: 'One might say that painters paint with their eyes, but only insofar as they *touch* with their eyes.'[10]

Through Bacon the diagram functions as a violent chaos in relation to the figurative givens but it is also handled as the germ of a new 'haptic' order in painting, allowing for a new logic of sensation. As Bacon says, it literally 'unlocks areas of sensation'. Deleuze argues that through Bacon we are able to come to understand how of all the arts painting is necessarily and 'almost hysterically' able to integrate its own catastrophe in a productive way. Bacon himself shows how painters necessarily traverse the catastrophe by embracing it, struggling with it and then transfiguring it. For Deleuze Bacon's work represents one of the most significant responses to the catastrophe in painting, a response that achieves the delimitation of a new pictorial order to come, a new type of

9 G. Deleuze, ibid. p. 101
10 Ibid., p. 155

relation between chaos and order and a new 'haptic' space. Deleuze posits that Bacon's precursor in this regard was Cézanne and he spends considerable time developing an understanding of the precise affiliations between the two painters in their development of a 'haptic' space. This is an affiliation explored through a comparison between Cézanne's 'logic of organised sensations' and Bacon's 'logic of sensation'. To understand the way Deleuze develops this affiliation it is crucial to understand the role that Lawrence Gowing's famous paper on Cézanne, 'The Logic of Organised Sensation',[11] plays in Deleuze's argument. The focus of Gowing's paper is Cézanne's late works that were marked by a distinct and revolutionary form of colour modulation and the delineation of a radically new pictorial space. Gowing writes that within these works 'something quite extraordinary and unparalleled happened', and claims that 'Cézanne was reaching out for a kind of modernity that did not exist, and still does not'.[12] Central to Deleuze's argument in the Logic of Sensation is that Bacon's paintings consummate Cézanne's task of delineating a genuinely 'haptic' space.

To understand Deleuze's claim it is necessary to grasp the way Cézanne recognised an implicit opposition between perception and sensation. For Cézanne perception is intrinsically bound up with optical conventions or codes of representation, and as such it inevitably fails as a means for conveying the immediate intensity of sensation. Deleuze cites a text by D.H. Lawrence claiming that Cézanne's intentions as a painter were indeed to capture a 'representation' of nature and that these intentions were accompanied by a voracious desire to render his paintings more 'true to life' than conventional illustrative or imitative painting. In the effort to pursue this truer representation of nature it was crucial for Cézanne to discover both a way of disrupting the sovereignty of visual perception that prevented this aim from being achieved, and a radically new way for conveying in paint the immediate intensity of sensation. Cézanne felt that it was necessary for the painter to have and be able to combine both a 'way of seeing' (an 'optics') and a 'system of thought' (a 'logic'). As Cézanne once wrote:

11 L. Gowing, 'Cézanne: The Logic of Organised Sensations' in *Conversations with Cézanne*, ed. M. Doran, translated by J.L. Cochran (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 180-212
12 Ibid., p. 180

> There are two things in the painter, the eye and the mind; each of them should aid the other. It is necessary to work at their mutual development, in the eye by looking at nature, in the mind by the logic of organised sensations, which provides the means of expression.[13]

Cézanne became increasingly convinced towards the end of his life that the necessary capture of sensations of reality in painting (the 'making real' or 'making true' of the intensity of sensation) could only come about through an exploration and elaboration of a radically internal 'logic of organisation'. It seemed necessary to Cézanne that he have the entire intensity and life of nature within himself as this logic of sensation. His 'extraordinary' discovery was that this logic was purely a matter of the organised sensations of *colour*, and that through the full development of an organised schema of colour the full intensity of sensation can be reproduced in painting. For Cézanne it is the essence of the painter to be able to speak in colours and that those colours have an essential fluidity, density and organisation. In the late work of Cézanne Gowing shows how colour is no longer fixed by the dictates of visual representation, but becomes an organised flow or movement capable of reproducing the very rhythms and textures of life – of sensation itself. Colour itself becomes grasped by Cézanne as the material force of paint itself, a force capable of being adequate to the intensity of nature. For Cézanne the task of the painter is to grasp a certain internal 'logic of colour' and work with colour as 'colouring sensation'. He discovered for instance that when colours are placed in a certain order against one another there is an inherent suggestion of a fundamental change in plane. Hence, when a series of colours, (always placed in the order of the spectrum and always placed at regular intervals along it), are elaborated by Cézanne they intrinsically move towards a culminating point thereby conveying a sense of the continuous curvature of a real surface. For Gowing in Cézanne's hands colour modulation became developed as a means of animating representations of life, of nature with an unparalleled intensity of sensation.

Deleuze understands Cézanne's paintings as emerging from two opposing moments linked to this discovery of colour modulation as a logic of organised sensation:

13 Ibid., p. 194

> Perhaps this modulation of colour is Cézanne's principal operation. By substituting...a juxtaposition of tints brought together in the order of the spectrum, modulation will define a double movement of expansion and contraction – an expansion in which the planes, and especially the horizontal and the vertical planes, are connected an even merged in depth; and at the same time, a contraction through which everything is restored to the body, to the mass, as a function of a point of imbalance or a fall. It is through such a system that geometry becomes sensible. And sensations become clear and durable: one has realised the sensation, says Cézanne.[14]

Deleuze terms these two moments the *diastolic* and *systolic* rhythms of colour and design. The *diastolic* moment consists of the violent eruption of colour during which there is nothing except colours in all their extraordinary clarity, fluidity and intensity. The *systolic* moment involves the condensation of this extreme proliferation of colouring sensation into definite forms (which Cézanne had called 'stubborn geometry'). For Deleuze these *systolic* and *diastolic* rhythms of colour and form are much closer to the fundamental rhythms of sensations of the Real than representations or imitations of reality that are governed by the conventions of optical perception. These rhythms delimit what Deleuze will call 'haptic' space. Through the use of these fundamental rhythms Cézanne is able to infuse his late paintings with an intensity of sensation closely associated with the invisible forces of the cosmos, and enable him to render 'visible the folding force of mountains, the germinative force of a seed, the thermic force of a landscape'.[15] Thus Cézanne's embrace of the *diastolic* moment of the eruption of colouring sensation represents his handling of the powerful diagrammatic chaosgerm in painting and the struggle that results in the eventual imposition of a new form of stable geometry or pictorial 'fact' is the subsequent *systolic* moment. Thus Cézanne can be recognised as revolutionising a productive utilisation of the catastrophic diagram in painting whereby a passage from the 'possibility of a fact' to the 'fact', or a movement from the diagram to the painting becomes actualised.

For Deleuze it is this traversal from the diagram to the painting which places Bacon upon the same trajectory in painting as Cézanne. Cézanne

14 G. Deleuze, Ibid., pp. 118-9
15 Ibid., p. 57

was a painter who understood that in order to render visible the invisible forces of the cosmos one must necessarily traverse and confine the diastolic rhythm of the diagram. It is a strategy adopted by Bacon in his own use of the diagram – the diagram considered as a possibility of 'fact' rather than the 'fact' itself. In following Cézanne's example, Bacon demonstrates an understanding that not all of the figurative givens have to disappear, indeed figuration persists in his work insofar as a new type of figuration is allowed to emerge from the diagram that is capable of conveying the violence, the brutality and the intensity of 'fact'. Therefore Deleuze posits Bacon's paintings as continuing Cézanne's 'tempered use of the diagram', a kind of 'middle-way' between the subsequent painterly extremes of pure abstraction and abstract expressionism, between the pure restraint and unconstraint of the diagram – and in doing do Deleuze understands Bacon to be developing the 'haptic' space initiated by Cézanne.

Deleuze spends considerable time considering the specific utilisation of the diagram in Bacon's work in the effort to delineate 'haptic' space, analysing in detail Bacon's handling of the conflicts between chaos and order, chance and control. Deleuze argues that the middle way between the purely optical and tactical initiated by Cézanne, involves utilising the diagram to constitute an *analogical* language in paint.

Ultimately Deleuze argues this logic of analogy finds it highest expression in his treatment of colours. The diagram, which is the agent of this analogical language, is itself utilised to rupture all the figurative givens – but through this action (i.e. when it becomes operative, functional and productive) the diagram defines the possibility of 'fact' by liberating planes, bodies and colours for modulation. Lines and colours become able to constitute the Figure or the Fact, i.e. to produce 'new' resemblances inside the visual whole where the diagram operates and is realised as a specific moment or area of the painting.

The law of the diagram for Bacon is this: begin with a figurative form (i.e. through the inevitable figural givens), produce the intervention of the diagram to scramble it, and then utilise the diagram to facilitate the emergence of a form of a completely new type, which Deleuze terms the Figure. Bacon's logic of sensation is thus understood as the production of a type of resemblance through a radically un-resembling means. Being itself a catastrophe, the diagram must not be permitted to merely create a catastrophe. Being a zone of scrambling, the diagram must not be

permitted to scramble the painting. The diagram must be grasped as an inherently fecund zone, with what emerges from it coming both gradually and all at once. The process of painting exemplified by Bacon's route involves a continual injection of the manual diagram into the visual whole, as a 'slow leak'. It is as if one were moving from the hand to what Deleuze calls the 'haptic eye', or from the manual diagram to 'haptic vision'. This passage in Bacon's work evokes a similar passage made in the late work of Cézanne and represents for Deleuze a truly great moment in the art of painting. The achievement of the 'haptic' represents the very pinnacle of what he understands as Bacon's logic of sensation. Deleuze concludes his analysis of Bacon by citing Leiris[16] on Bacon's achievement of a haptic vision in the effort to capture in paint the intensity of the sensation:

> The words Leiris uses to describe Bacon – hand, touch, seizure, capture – evoke this direct manual activity that traces the possibility of fact: we will capture the fact, just as we will "seize hold of life". But the fact itself, this pictorial fact that has come from the hand, is the formation of a third eye, a haptic eye, a haptic vision of the eye, this new clarity. It is as if the duality of the tactile and the optical were surpassed visually in this haptic function born of the diagram.[17]

16 M. Leiris, *Francis Bacon: Full Face and in Profile*, translated by J. Weightman (New York: Rizzoli, 1983) & *Francis Bacon*, translated by J. Weightman (New York: Rizzoli, 1998)

17 G. Deleuze, ibid., p. 161

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I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), hereafter *CPR*.
G. Deleuze, *Foucault* (Paris: Minuit, 1986), p. 24.
D. W. Conway, Genealogy and Critical Method , in R. Schacht, ed., *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 318-33, esp. p. 320.
D. Sedley, Epicurus, On Nature Book 28 , *Cronache Ercolanesi* 3 (1973), 5-83, p. 56.

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