

The Spectre of Immanence
Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Foucault and
Deleuze

Christian Gilliam

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political
Philosophy
Royal Holloway, University of London
Department of Politics and International Relations.
November 2014

Declaration of authorship

I **Christian Gilliam** certify that all the work contained in this thesis is my own and that where I have consulted the work of others this is clearly indicated.

Signature _____ Date _____

Abstract

This thesis contributes to contemporary debates on the nature of immanence and transcendence in political philosophy by developing the political and micropolitical implications of a philosophical position committed fully to immanence. For many in the current debates who maintain that politics requires some notion of a political subject, philosophies of immanence are considered incapable of mounting an effective politics because they deny the antagonisms and ruptures considered necessary for such a subject. These perspectives often define immanence in terms of ‘complete inclusivity’ of differences, and often accuse it of eschewing emancipation and siding with some form of bourgeois ethics. Against these dismissals, this thesis argues that a philosophy of immanence is integral to the development of an alternative understanding of the political, one that re-orientes our understanding of the self away from a still dominant reliance on an idea of the subject. It achieves this by conceiving of the Other or the Outside not (pace philosophies of transcendence) in terms of an absolute but never present fullness or lack, but instead as a disjunctive fold that goes beyond the opposition of interiority and exteriority in favour of the idea of intensity. In this way immanence becomes the ontological centre of a different type of emancipatory politics.

The thesis presents its argument by tracing out a lineage of immanence through the work of Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Foucault and Deleuze. Together these thinkers present a ‘spectre of immanence’ that counters Slavoj Žižek’s proclamation of a ‘spectre of the [Cartesian] subject’ haunting contemporary thought. Proceeding this way, the study shows how a common thread of immanence unites these four thinkers, informs their relations to one another (in terms of what each one picks up and discards from his predecessors), and unifies them in a shared attempt to reconceptualise the terms by which the political is thought. In this way, the theme of immanence acts as the primary catalyst or dark precursor to their thought as a whole. Though presented as an evolutionary chronology in the sense that it outlines a series of progressive moves from Sartre to Deleuze, the lineage the thesis establishes also works by way of a number of productive misreadings each thinker makes of the others. In this respect, the lineage accords with Nietzsche’s comparison of the thinker to an arrow shot by Nature, that another thinker picks up where it has fallen so that he can shoot it somewhere else: each arrow is taken up in part through a misunderstanding, or at least a strained understanding.

Table of Contents

Abstract – 3

Table of Contents – 4

Acknowledgments – 5

Introduction – 6

- 1. Sartre and the Instigation of Immanence – 30**
 - The First Stage: Phenomenology and the Transcendental Ego – 32**
 - Transcending the *I* – 35**
 - Phenomenological Ontology – 41**
 - The Second Stage: the Body and Lived Experience – 46**
 - The Caress of the Flesh – 50**
 - Existential Ethics and Immanent Freedom – 54**
 - The Third Stage: The *Critique* and Beyond – 56**
 - Conceptual Limits – 65**
 - Notes – 68**

- 2. Merleau-Ponty and the Fold of the Flesh – 79**
 - Phenomenology Reconsidered Through Sartre – 80**
 - The Body Revisited – 84**
 - Authenticity Revisited – 87**
 - Fleshing Out the Flesh – 96**
 - Tender is the Flesh – 111**
 - Notes – 116**

- 3. Foucault and the Force of Power-Knowledge – 123**
 - The Relation to Phenomenology – 124**
 - Signification, Dispersion and the Subject – 127**
 - From Archaeology to Genealogy and Force – 132**
 - Power as Force Relation – 134**
 - Knowledge and Discourse – 138**
 - Double Conditioning – 141**
 - The Third Axis: Ethics – 146**
 - From Pleasure to Desire – 151**
 - Notes – 157**

- 4. Deleuze and the Micropolitics of Desire – 166**
 - Transcendental Empiricism and the Double-Axiom – 168**
 - Ethico-Politics – 181**
 - Multiplicities and Desire – 185**
 - The Three Syntheses of Desiring-Production (*Micropolitical*) – 189**
 - Social Machines (*Macropolitical*) – 192**
 - Internalising the Limit – 194**
 - Ressentiment* to Bad Conscience – 197**
 - How to Become a Body with Organs/ What Can a Body Do? – 200**
 - Notes – 211**

Conclusion: The Politics of Immanence is a Politics of Life – 220

Bibliography – 228

Acknowledgements

This thesis is a multiplicity, inasmuch as it draws on a vast number of thinkers and ideas. The direction of my thought will be forever indebted to all those who came before me. This thesis is also a multiplicity in the sense that it comes as the result of a thousand encounters. Most of these encounters have been distinct yet indiscernible, indirect yet profound and certainly ambiguous in their own right: cinematic, musical, artistic, cultural, a whole array of random moments of fortune and misfortune, coincidental events, chance occurrences, throws of the dice, brushes with love and death. Some of these encounters have been with people. I am thinking here, in particular, of all those who have either directly or indirectly supported or inspired me throughout this project— without whom not! So it is to these people that I dedicate this work.

I am forever grateful to my family, especially my Mother and Father. Aside from always inspiring and encouraging me, they provided relentless support to the best of their ability. Who could ask for a better, more loving family? I'd also like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Nathan Widder. He not only proved himself to be a formidable and knowledgeable supervisor, but also a wonderful mentor and friend. At every stage, he was there fighting my corner and pushing me to realise my true potential. I am particularly thankful for the amount of time and effort he put into the manuscript, meticulously reading and considering every word, line and thought and for the respect and patience he showed to my ever-changing and progressing ideas.

With regards to my fellow post-graduates, I'd like to thank James Dennis, Alister Brisbane, Claudia Lueders, Robert Yates, Nora Siklodi, Niklas Rolf and the rest of the gang for gracefully sharing the postgraduate journey with me. With regards to the academic staff, I'd like to thank Dr Michael Bacon, Dr Jonathan Seglow, Dr Henry Somers-Hall and Dr Nick Allen. Michael offered excellent advice on the thesis and my teaching, and a gratefully received friendship. Jonathan provided appreciated words of encouragement and invaluable feedback. Aside from his friendship, Henry provided numerous stimulating discussions on existentialism and Deleuze. He never failed to encourage me to pursue new lines of thought. Nicholas Allen deserves special thanks for the work he put into the post-graduate and NET experience, and indeed into the department as a whole. He has proved himself a vibrant and positive force. I acknowledge and thank the RHUL Political Theory Reading Group. Our sessions on *Anti-Oedipus* had a lasting effect on me.

Last, but certainly by no means least, I'd like to give a huge thank you to all my friends, especially (though in no particular order): John Turner, Dan King, Iz Hayer, Alex Reid and his significant other, Nicholas Sarris, Simon Reilly, Paulo Botta, Nasser Haddad, Mathew Davies, Miles Bailey, Matthew Thurgood and the Kings Head bar staff. All of them kept my sanity in-check and ensured that I had a vibrant social life, simultaneously putting up with my PhD-related neuroticism. John and Dan deserve special thanks. John mentored me throughout my undergraduate and postgraduate studies, constantly providing invaluable advice drawn from his own experience. Dan helped me up on my feet in those first two difficult years, in providing me with work and ultimately a home.

Thank you all,

Christian – Bournemouth, November 2014

Introduction

With a pastiche of the opening of Marx and Engels's *Communist Manifesto*, Slavoj Žižek (1999: xxii) famously proclaims that a "spectre is haunting Western academia...the spectre of the Cartesian subject." A panoply of academic and philosophical positions, he maintains, has sought to exorcise this spectre, forming a perilous anti-Cartesian 'holy alliance' – perilous because, according to Žižek, the formula *cogito ergo sum* is the indispensable subversive core of any genuinely emancipatory project. In this vein, the subject must be reasserted. Yet the analogy Žižek makes here between communism and the subject is a curious one to say the least. When Marx and Engels wrote the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, communism, so it goes, was not only in its existential infancy, but also subject to severe suppression, precisely because its emancipatory ideals posed a significant threat to the European status quo. The extent to which this can truly be said of the idea of the subject is, at best, contentious. Indeed, is it not the case that the subject is part and parcel of this very status quo?

Whether individual or collective, the subject has been a central component of the dogmatic image of thought within political theory and practice, specifically insofar as it is treated as the indispensable precondition of thought, meaning, action, and ethics. It is far beyond the purview of this study to give a detailed and all-encompassing genealogy of the subject, but we can nevertheless still identify its latest manifestations. In the case of Berlinian and early Rawlsian liberalism, for instance, it is conceptualised as an 'empirical' rational free chooser of ends, and as such presupposed as the analytical and moral starting point. Communitarians hold that the subject is a social and cultural construction, embedded as it were in a rich tapestry of shared histories and understandings.¹

Even where the subject is radically displaced, as is increasingly the default position of contemporary radical thought and those writing within a broadly postmodern milieu, it is still retained in some form. After all, as Judith Butler (1993: 190) often notes, displacement is not the same as eradication. Such positions have, in effect, become the last and perhaps final bastion of the subject – an attempt to concede as much ground as possible to the postmodern delight of killing off modern metanarratives without for all that giving up the form of what has been perhaps the *grand* narrative of modernism. Political theories of 'lack' are the most prominent in this respect, holding that despite the fallibility of the subject, inasmuch as it ultimately fails to secure itself, there is still a need for some form of a

temporarily centred subject with a sense of its identity and capacity to act. Indeed, it is to an unconscious subject of lack to which Žižek's proclamation truly refers. Thus, in speaking of the Cartesian subject, Žižek (1999: xxiv) subverts its defining core, placing it instead on a Lacanian version of the unconscious and bringing to light "its forgotten obverse, the excessive, unacknowledged kernel of the *cogito*, which is far from the pacifying image of the transparent self."² There are countless other examples of theories that retain some version of this kind of subject, but only one real exception: political philosophies of immanence, whose two main figureheads can be said to be Deleuze and Foucault, though there are others preceding and following them.

At its most basic, immanence refers to a state of being internal or remaining within, in which the condition does not transcend, but rather is in the conditioned. Rooted in the thought of Spinoza and the ancient Stoics on the nature of divinity, when applied to the formal structure of subjectivity, immanence completely eschews the subject as a foundation or *sine qua non*, instead positing the subject as a simulation or semblance. It presents a kind of subjectivity without a subject – 'a life' as Deleuze (2001: 27) puts it – in which the conditions of experience, thought and political transformation are construed in terms of pre-personal and pre-individual form-generating resources, which are immanent to the material world that provokes them. The goal, then, is to "reach, not the point where one no longer says I, but the point where it is no longer of any importance whether one says I" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 3).

'To remain within' might suggest some kind of harmonious unity or interiority. Indeed, this is the way immanence is sometimes conceived by some of the very figures that the thesis argues belongs together in a lineage of immanence – Sartre, for example, holds such a view when criticizing the immanence conceived in phenomenology. But what is significant about a different notion of immanence that develops from Sartre and Merleau-Ponty and reaches its culmination in Deleuze and Foucault is that, despite superficial appearances, it cannot be restricted to or defined in terms of 'complete' interiority, inclusivity or an apparent harmony between the conditions of experience and experience itself. Instead, it entails a notion of the Outside or Other, and a corresponding violence or disturbance, but this Outside/Other is reconfigured in terms of a fold of the univocal fabric of Being. The fold is perhaps the central component of the notion of immanence this thesis will advance, inasmuch as it denotes a disjunctive synthesis that allows one to construct a relational ontology, without for all that evoking negativity and as such a real or formal transcendence.

This immanence by way of disjunction can be usefully compared to another project of immanence: Hegel's dialectic of identity. Hegel may be said to develop an *ontological* immanence, according to which the difference between For-itself and In-itself is itself 'for us' – that is, the distinction between the noumenal and phenomenal is experienced in the immanence of our thought (a point made by Žižek). This immanence retains a negative structure that culminates with a Subject that, on the one hand, transcends what would otherwise be a sterile world of mere Substance, but, on the other hand, is still seen to emerge from immanent conditions of this world. In this way, Hegelian immanence retains a moment of formal transcendence, a moment where, as Hegel says, the divine is realized on Earth. Conversely, pure immanence of the sort advanced by Deleuze rejects the process by which negation culminates in a Subject. As opposed to contradiction, Deleuze posits 'vice-diction' as an immanent movement of disjunction and folding, which result not in a consolidated subject but in a "nomadic distribution and crowned anarchy" (Deleuze 2004a: 47). This nomad is opposed to the subject as the figure about which it no longer matters whether or not one says 'I'. At this point, it is understandable that such a definition is somewhat allusive. That is because it contains a counter-intuitive concept of the Other/Outside that is hard to capture or summarise without exploring its contextual development. In many ways this is the central purpose of the present study, as we will come to see.

Because of this reconceptualization, immanence offers a new form of analysis that implodes – to the point of redundancy – this enduring veneration of the subject itself, in whichever guise it may choose to manifest itself. Truly, it is immanence which represents a radical deviation from philosophical and theoretical tradition. What is more, precisely because of this deviation, those still committed to the idea of the subject have tried to suppress immanence, obscuring it to the point of claiming that it is incoherent, ultimately leading to a political or ontological deadlock, and/or serving some form of anathematic bourgeois ethics. This certainly seems to invoke what Deleuze (2004b: 121) calls the "summary law of all or nothing" – a theoretical anxiety in which we are offered a stark, although false, choice between an "undifferentiated ground, a groundless, formless nonbeing, or an abyss without difference and without properties, or a supremely individuated Being and an intensely personalized Form." Ironically (but perhaps unsurprisingly considering he is a thinker of lack), Žižek has been at the forefront of this anxious reproach, ultimately construing Foucault and Deleuze as incoherent and bourgeoisie chaos-indulgers, forming an intricate component of the anti-emancipatory 'holy alliance'.

Returning to our opening scepticism, we may ask the question: who's really haunting who? Subverting Žižek's proclamation, the present study posits a 'spectre of immanence', and argues that the posturing of Žižek and others (positing the 'spectre' of the subject, its centrality in emancipatory struggles and the 'incoherency' of immanence) serves severely to efface important dimensions of thought, not only underplaying the way immanence develops an *alternative* and more primary image of the political beyond the subject, but further how such an image is in fact the true subversive core of emancipatory politics. It is so because it ultimately leads to a micropolitics.

As opposed to a politics of the subject, micropolitics posits a politics of life. Specifically, this refers to an immanent life of virtual events and singularities, which are in turn *actualized* and politically organized in the subjects and objects to which it attributes itself. Indeed, as Deleuze argues, all expression requires organisation/stratified relations through formed matters in conjunction – or, rather, disjunction – with social production or political forms (interchangeably understood as the 'macropolitical'). 'A life' is therefore not marked by separate individualities and subjective qualities as much as it is defined by distinct singularities and *virtuals* "engaged in a process of actualization following the plane that gives it its particular reality" (Deleuze 2006a: 31). Given this virtual/actual relation, it also holds that a life is not defined by separations and gaps, and neither is it a realm of complete inclusivity. Rather, *it is nothing more than its disjunctive connections* to an immanent Outside provoking it. In short, then, the micropolitical refers to that which is constitutive of our being, operating below the level of segmented forms or actualised expressions and proceeding the concept of difference extended in time and space that is typically associated with the constitution of the subject and object. It refers to the cultural collectivization and politicization of tactics of the self, applied to multiple layers of intersubjective being.

It is necessary to respond to Žižek's nursery tale by (re)asserting this micropolitical dimension. Doing so entails two interrelated tasks. The first, which shall occupy the remainder of this chapter, is to gain further insight into the manner in which a contemporary thought committed to the displacement of the subject has nevertheless propped it up at the expense of serious consideration of immanence; the second uses the first as a basis upon which to launch a reconstruction of immanence with a view to outlining its integral role in the development of a particular trajectory of political thought. The first task helps us identify what, precisely, is conceptually at stake, thereby showing what needs to be addressed in the second.

How the Subject is Retained: Transcendence vs. Immanence

What is initially clear is that contemporary thought has managed to retain the subject, whilst avoiding issues associated with the conventional or modern subject such as ontological minimalism and essentialism, by utilising transcendence as an overarching conceptual architecture.³ In some sense, this is hardly surprising, as transcendence is the conceptual contrast *par excellence* of immanence. In another sense, though, it is surprising, for those most committed to transcendence are close relatives to those most committed to immanence.

Transcendence refers to that which is external or other, or rather that which conditions from above, beyond or outside. Shifting away from previous 'positive' understandings of transcendence as it figures in Plato's ideal Form of the Good or Judeo-Christian perfect divinity, contemporary theories of subject-orientated transcendence utilise instead a negative conception, maintaining that an unnameable and unrepresentable 'beyond' stands as the groundless ground for subjectivity, constituting a subject as responsible before some Law, even if this beyond arises from immanent conditions. In this respect, transcendence follows a similar path to the Hegelian dialectic discussed above, except that it rejects the idea that the emergence of the subject from substance is a completion of immanence, instead seeing it as the moment where immanence is ruptured, and it rejects as well the idea that this completion is a moment of 'positive' Absolute Knowledge, but instead is the recognition of the necessary failure of the Absolute to achieve positive statues. In these ways the form of transcendence is retained even while positive figures of transcendence are rejected. Like immanence, this is a tradition that has been particularly central to Continental philosophy, although unlike immanence's reverence for Spinoza and Nietzsche, its lineage starts with Descartes, followed through mainly by Kant, Hegel, Husserl,⁴ and, more recently, what have already been identified as political theories of lack. The most prominent thinkers in this regard are Slavoj Žižek and Ernesto Laclau, and, to a lesser degree, Alain Badiou and Judith Butler. In various and at times conflicting ways these theorists utilise the *negative* form of an unrepresentable Other as a lack within a given structure, a form that goes beyond the negative of dialectical opposition in order to both ground and unground the subject. On the political register, this negativity, gap, or incompleteness is further said to ensure the antagonistic nature of political subjectivity and the corresponding identity-claims of new social movements. Indeed, it is precisely this lack that is the subject.

In a process of elimination common to most thinkers of lack, the ‘incoherence’ of immanence is said to further vindicate the conceptual necessity of transcendence and indeed of the subject as its point of personification. This ultimately propagates a tenuous circular logic, in which the retention of the subject of transcendence or lack is used to reject immanence, and the ‘incoherence’ of immanence is used to prop up this very same subject. In arguing this point, and for the sake of expediency, we will mostly focus on two of the main figureheads, Žižek and Laclau, drawing on elements of Badiou and Butler where appropriate. But this movement in contemporary radical thought is certainly not limited to these four thinkers. It is undeniable that the subject of transcendence bears a strong influence today, and is evident, for instance, in a number of studies that have sought to save political theories of immanence from themselves, so to speak, through injecting a subject back into them.⁵

In reading Lacan with Hegel, Žižek’s basic contention is that subjectivity emerges from contradiction or a withdrawal from reality. Connecting this position more generally with Kant and German idealism, Žižek argues that the All of reality, which exists in itself, has to be rejected as a paralogism – what is viewed as an epistemological limitation is in fact the ontological condition of reality itself. But where Kantian transcendentalism envisions a gap or split between the phenomenal and noumenal, Žižek, following Lacan, envisions a split between a symbolic identity and the noumenal-like force of desire constituted by lack, between which is constituted the subject.⁶

The immediate political significance regards the identification of Althusserian ideological interpellation as the very process by which the subject as pure negativity is inverted into the (Hegelian) ‘second nature’ of a symbolic order via the Master-Signifier. This establishes a ‘new harmony’ via intervention, creating and sustaining the identity of a given ideological field through a “multitude of ‘floating signifiers’, or protoideological elements,” which are “structured into a unified field through the intervention of a certain ‘nodal point’ (the Lacanian *point de capiton*) which ‘quilts’ them, stops their sliding and fixes their meaning (Žižek 2008: 95).⁷ However, a gap persists between first and second nature, a rupture in/of immanence that in turn resists the subject’s full reconciliation with his second nature (what Žižek [1999: 92-3] interchangeably refers to as the Freudian *death drive*, Hegelian *abstract negativity* and the *night of the world*). Žižek’s point here is that although the *point de capiton* functions as ‘rigid designator’, a dimension escapes the fixing of meaning, a dimension of desire beyond interpellation: the “impossible ‘square of the circle’ of symbolic and/or

imaginary identification which never results in the absence of any remainder, there is always a leftover which opens the space for desire and makes the Other (the symbolic order) inconsistent” (139).

Fantasy marks “an attempt to overcome, to conceal this inconsistency, this gap in the Other” (Žižek 2008: 139), in which case ideology not only functions as a discourse, but “implies, manipulates, produces a pre-ideological enjoyment structured in fantasy” (140). To be transfixed by a sublime object is to mask the primordial ontological Void of the Real, or to resolve its inconsistency by structuring the excess that resists our immersion in daily reality. The subject is thus the ‘vanishing mediator’ whose self-effacing gesture transforms the pre-ontological chaotic multitude into the semblance of a positive ‘objective’ order of reality (Žižek 1999: 100). Phenomenal reality does not mask, then, a noumenal thing-in-itself. It is rather generated retroactively by desire as a consequence of the insufficiency of the signifying process.

The point is not just significant for subjectivity itself, but also for conceptualising resistance. Insofar as the quilting point or signifier resists symbolic integration, it is the “overdetermining principle of articulation of the multitude of emancipatory struggles” (Žižek 2006b: 193). In this sense, we are capable of conceptualising the distinction between imaginary resistance (false transgression that reasserts the symbolic starts up and even serves as a positive donation of its functioning) and actual symbolic rearticulation via the intervention of the Real of an *act*. We can performatively reconfigure the contours of the conditions of life through our desire for something other than its continued social existence. To “fall ‘into some kind of death’, to risk a gesture by means of which death is ‘courted or pursued’, indicates precisely how Lacan reconceptualised the Freudian death drive as the elementary form of the *ethical act*, the act as irreducible to a ‘speech act’ which relies for its performative power on the pre-established set of symbolic rules and/or norms” (Žižek 1999: 313).⁸

Thus the subject of emancipation, though central, is not that of the self-transparent Cartesian cogito, nor is it some Kantian noumenal core, for it is not construed in terms of a volitional enactive creative self *per se*. Firstly, the act “occurs only when this phantasmic background itself is disturbed” (460). The act is on the side of the object qua real as opposed to the signifier, and thus we can perform speech acts only insofar as we have accepted the fundamental alienation in the symbolic order and the phantasic support necessary for the

functioning of this order, “while the act as real is an event which occurs *ex nihilo*, without any phantasmic support” (loc. cit). An effect, in other words, can escape or outgrow its cause, so that although it emerges as a form of resistance to power, and is as such inherent to it, it can outgrow and explode it; it can be ontologically ‘higher’ than its cause” (304).

In either case, it is through the use of this gap that a *formal*, as opposed to an ontological, transcendence is retained. In being formal, Žižek holds – in a way similar to Badiou’s conceptualisation of the Event,⁹ – that the dialectic of identity is one of *ontological* immanence, according to which the difference between For-itself and In-itself is itself ‘for us’: “it is ourselves, in the immanence of our thought, who experience the distinction between the way things appear to us and the way they are in themselves” (Žižek 2012a: 47-8). Thus, “‘Substance is Subject’ means that the split which separates the Subject from Substance, from the inaccessible In-itself beyond phenomenal reality, is inherent to the Substance itself” (Žižek 1999: 101). In this sense, it is “absolute immanence” that “determines the status of Hegel’s critique of Kant and the Kantian handling of antinomies/contradictions” (2012a: 48).

The error of immanence, from this perspective, is that it effectively eschews this gap through which we can conceptualise the political. As Žižek (2012a: 54) himself puts it, it is precisely the “gap in immanence,” that “Deleuze cannot accept,” failing to understand that it generates the spectre of transcendence because it is already inconsistent with it. What is specifically at issue with the immanence Deleuze affirms, then, is not immanence as such but the understanding of absolute immanence, or the plane of consistency, in terms of univocity or a complete inclusivity of difference, which leaves the negative of the form absent. Deleuze is thus said to present a “flat ontology,” one in which “all heterogeneous entities of an assemblage can be conceived at the same level, without any ontological exceptions or priorities” (Žižek 2012a: 48). It subsequently eschews the opposition and ruptures between self and Other, erroneously deconstructing “every substantial identity, to denounce behind its solid consistency an interplay of symbolic overdetermination – briefly, to dissolve the substantial identity into a network of non-substantial, differential relations” (Žižek: 2008: 78).

What is more, Deleuzian immanence also denies the very excess which accounts, for Žižek, for the emergence of the New and forms of resistance, for the possibility of the free act that would allow an effect to transcend its cause. That is, in denying this excess, “the level of

Sense-Event,” is reduced to “just a sterile effect, a theatre of shadows” (Žižek 2012a: 101). Such a criticism bares a strong resemblance to Badiou’s criticism of Deleuzian univocity.¹⁰ Badiou (2000) speaks, on the one hand and apropos Deleuze, of “a shared conviction as to what is possible to demand of philosophy today and the central problem that it must deal with: namely, an *immanent* conceptualization of the multiple” (4); while, on the other hand, he claims that the issue with Deleuze’s ontology is that, contrary to the commonly accepted image or indications of his work that play on “the opposition multiple/multiplicities...it is the occurrence of the One – renamed by Deleuze the One-All – that forms the supreme destination of thought and to which thought is accordingly consecrated” (11).

According to Badiou (2000: 24), though, Deleuze’s univocity does not signify that Being is numerically one, such that the One is not the one of identity or of number and “thought has already abdicated if it supposes that there is a single and same Being,”¹¹ it is nonetheless still a monotonous form of a transcendent One. Each form of Being contains ‘individuating differences’ that may well be named beings, meaning that beings are merely local degrees of intensity or inflections of power that are in constant movement and entirely singular. From this, “it follows once again that the numerical distinction between beings ‘is a modal, not a real, distinction’” (25). Being, here, is the same for all, it is univocal and is thus said of all beings in a single and same sense, such that “the multiplicity of sense, the equivocal status of beings, has no real status” (loc. cit).¹² Given that the multiple is arranged in the universe by way of a numerical difference that is purely formal as regards the form of being to which it refers, and purely modal as regards its individuation, “it follows that, ultimately, this multiple can only be of the order of simulacra. And if one classes – as one should – every difference without a real status, every multiplicity whose ontological status is that of the One, as a simulacrum, then the world of beings is the theatre of the simulacra of Being” (26). In this way, Badiou contends, Deleuze’s univocity leads to a “Platonism with a different accentuation,” in that in the immanent production of the One, the world is, “in the same way as for Plato, a work and not a state. It is demiurgic” (27).

Insofar as Deleuze identifies univocal difference with Nietzsche’s doctrine of the eternal return, it follows for Badiou that the Event merely refers to the eternal repetition of identical events, which in turn fails to conceptualise how the Event is personified by ruptures or sudden breaks with the mundane.¹³ Similarly, if “thought is identical with the One, it, too, must be essentially one....Thus, there are not really thoughts *in the plural*, and, when all is said and done, it is philosophy...that alone maintains immanence and conducts the circuit

of the double ascesis through right to the end, thus fully meriting the name of thought” (91). Deleuze’s “fundamental problem,” then, “is most certainly not to liberate the multiple but to submit thinking to a renewed concept of the One” (11). What is there left that is in remotely political, in this picture? Where immanence is combined with the all-inclusiveness of univocity, the result is political ambivalence that fails to think the breaks necessary for genuine politics. As Badiou (2000: 90-1) puts it:

...if the only way to think a political revolution, an amorous encounter, an invention of the sciences, or a creation of arts as distinct infinities – having as their condition incommensurable separate events – is by sacrificing immanence (which I do not actually believe is the case, but that is not what matters here) and the univocity of Being, then I would sacrifice them.

Again, this accords with Žižek’s idea that ontological immanence is a separate issue from the formal ‘gap’ of transcendence that inheres within it.

Žižek (2012a: 18) also attributes an apolitical position to Deleuze’s solo work, and holds this takes a failed turn to an incoherent politics in his collaborations with Guattari. This turn, according to Žižek, is prompted by Deleuze’s attempt to escape an ontological deadlock in his elaboration of the virtual, whereby it is both a ‘sterile’ surface effect of actual process of difference and the productive underpinning of actuality. In this way, *Anti-Oedipus* is held to be a move to an extreme idealism via desire as a pre-linguistic libidinal flux of Becoming, identifying political structures as forms of repression in its standard sense (Butler [2012: 215] reads Deleuzian desire in a strikingly similar vein, deeming it a “naturally multiplicitous affectivity”). This turn to desire is said to establish not only a positive Body, entirely inconsistent with immanence, but also a politically disastrous and anathematic position. Although guised in a language that evokes “the old Leftist radicalism linked to a philosophical idealist subjectivism” (28), the emphasis on aesthetic ‘micro’ experiments of desire ultimately brings about a flaccid renewal of bourgeois narcissism, transforming Deleuze “into an ideologist of today’s “digital capitalism”” (xxii).

Žižek further charges *Anti-Oedipus* with self-contradiction, in that its ‘unconditional monism’ of the productive virtual generates a dualism which “bears witness to the fact that his [Deleuze’s] process of Becoming is itself secretly anchored in a unified Subject” (64). Žižek utilises Hegel to argue that the subject emerges in the interstice of the minimal gap between two signifiers, a ‘void’ in/of immanence, and then holds that *Anti-Oedipus* overdetermines the void as a purely virtual entity, reducing the subject to (just another) substance and designating the re-emergence of the virtual within the order of actuality (61-

2). Thus the subject is related to Becoming and substance to Being, such that the subject is deemed the site of a purely virtual desire, in which “the moment it is actualized, it changes into substance” (62). In “missing” the “Hegelian point, he [Deleuze] is not Deleuzian enough” (64).

Overall, Žižek maintains that all this emerges out of an irreconcilable dualism between a materialism and idealism inherent in Deleuze’s early conceptual edifice. On the one hand, there is “the logic of sense, of the immaterial becoming as the sense event, as the EFFECT of bodily-material processes-causes, that logic of the radical gap between generative process and its immaterial sense-effect” (materialism), and, on the other hand, there is “the logic of becoming as PRODUCTION of Beings” (idealism) (Žižek 2012a:18-9). Either the Sense-Event, the flow of pure Becoming, is the immaterial effect of the intrication of bodily-material causes or the positive bodily entities are themselves the product of the pure flow of Becoming. It is in seeking to subvert this tension, and in particular eradicate the ‘idealist’ politics or ‘Guattarised’ Deleuze in Deleuze’s thought, that Žižek offers his own materialist solution, ‘correcting’ and ‘clarifying’ it through an unsurprising ‘encounter’ with what he considers the Hegelian (others would say post-Hegelian) gap in/of immanence. This restores a non-idealist subject and accounts for the emergence of the New in the form of a Hegelianised ‘quasi cause’ or excess. According to Žižek (2012a: 48), “the Lacanian Real is precisely that which resists inclusion within the plane of consistency, that absent Cause of the heterogeneity of the assemblage.” Transcendence thus takes its proper place within immanence and, though denied a constitutive status, it is nevertheless assigned a practical role in guaranteeing the New, thereby allegedly ‘correcting’ inconsistencies in immanence and vindicating its claim to conceptual necessity.

In a remarkable display of predictability, Žižek extends the same critique to Foucault, in particular with regards to his concept of power-knowledge and turn to bodies and pleasure. Here, power-knowledge is speciously construed by Žižek (and we see the same thing with Butler) as a version of interpellation, as the *fixing of identities*. Furthermore, Žižek (1999: 296) structurally construes this fixing in terms of “absolute immanence,” which he takes to be a circular relationship “between prohibition and desire,” with power and resistance presupposing and generating each other. On Žižek’s reading of Foucault, the very prohibitive measures that categorise and regulate illicit desires also effectively generate them. This immanent logic of disciplinary power mechanisms, insofar as it produces the

very object on which they exert their force, is said to lead to a political dead end, for the man we wish to ‘free’ is already the effect of subjection.

In other words, we are faced with a “vicious cycle of power and resistance” (Žižek 1999: 297). Foucault is thus said to be left to endorse a separate and inconsistent “kind of aestheticization of ethics: each subject must, without any support from universal rules, build his own mode of self-mastery; he must harmonize the antagonism of the powers within himself – invent, so to speak, produce himself as subject, find his own particular art of living” (Žižek 2008: xxiv).¹⁴ Foucault’s notion of the subject, it is said, “enters the humanist-elitist tradition: its closest realization would be the Renaissance ideal of the ‘all-round personality’ mastering the passions within himself and making out of his own life a work of art” (loc. cit).

The body and pleasure are earmarked as the central sites of this ethics, entailing the form of a positive Body. From this angle, Foucault’s work faces a “paradox” inasmuch as “there is no pre-existing positive Body in which one could ontologically ground our resistance to disciplinary power mechanisms” (301). Like Deleuze, Foucault is reproached for excluding the (post-)Hegelian notion of antagonism, or the subject as substance. That is, once more, the “premise according to which resistance to power is inherent and immanent to the power edifice...in no way obliges us to draw the conclusion that every resistance is co-opted in advance, included in the eternal game Power plays with itself – the key point is that through the effect of proliferation, or producing an excess of resistance, the very inherent antagonism of a system may well set in motion a process which leads to its own ultimate downfall” (Žižek 1999: 303).

Though not as direct or visceral as Žižek, Laclau follows an extremely similar pattern of thought. First and foremost, Laclau’s work can be broadly defined as post-Marxist, inasmuch as it seeks to graft theoretical developments mostly indebted to the poststructuralist tradition on to Marxism. Specifically, Laclau incorporates a notion of being understood in terms of structure and signification. In this case, the process of identification with a signifier in language is considered to be indispensable to the foundation of the subject, which in turn underpins new social movements and the processes of hegemony. However, Laclau also holds that such identification is always partial, such that identity (the unity of the subject with the other with which it identifies) is itself never fully constituted. A lack inherent to language itself, or a gap between identification and identity, ensures the continual

failure of identity to achieve complete determination, or for social objectivity to be fully constituted.

Fullness of society and its opposite, total ‘chaos’, are necessary objects of hegemonic transformation, if “the ‘coincidence’ between particular and general aims is going to take place at all” (Laclau 2000: 56). The more extended the chain of equivalences that a particular signifier comes to represent and the more it becomes a name for the aim of global emancipation, the “looser will be the links between that name and its original particular meaning, and the more it will approach the status of an empty signifier” (56). By the same token, hegemony requires a generalisation of the relations of representation, but in such a way that the process of presentation itself creates the entity to be represented: “The non-transparency of the representative to the represented, the irreducible autonomy of the signifier *vis-à-vis* the signified, is the condition of a hegemony which structures the social from its very ground and is not the epiphenomenal expression of a transcendental signified which would submit the signifier to its own predetermined movements” (Laclau 2000: 66). That means that the dimension of universality is reached only through equivalences or that it can only acquire a discursive presence through a particular content which divests itself of its particularity in order to represent that fullness (Laclau 2007: 57).

What is represented is an internal limit of the process of representation, which subverts the relationship between internality and externality. The Lacanian Real becomes a name for the very failure of the Symbolic to achieve its own fullness and thus a retroactive effect of this failure. In this sense, the hegemonic approach to politics concerns “an original lack” (Laclau 2000: 71). This presents a strict homology with the notion of ‘antagonism’ as a real kernel preventing the closure of the symbolic order.¹⁵ Thus, while accepting that identity is differential, Laclau (2007: 53) posits a beyond which is “not one more difference but something which poses a threat (that is, negates) all the differences within that context.” It is precisely this failure, lack, or beyond that, by creating a “radical undecidability that needs to be constantly superseded by acts of decision,” constitutes “the *subject*, who can only exist as a will transcending the structure” (92). Moreover, Laclau holds that this beyond must be established, lest we lapse into logical inconsistency regarding the limits of a context – making it a constitutive difference which relates the subject to an enigmatic and indefinite Other, a second-order difference.¹⁶ Indeed, if the subject was a “mere subject position [viz. Foucault] within the structure, the latter would be fully closed and there would be no contingency at all” (92).

In this way, antagonism and exclusion become constitutive of all identity, since without such limits we would have an indefinite dispersion of difference “whose absence of systematic limits would make any differential identity impossible” (54). It is the very function of constituting differential identities through antagonistic limits that simultaneously destabilises and subverts those differences. Such incompleteness, and as such the irreducibility of antagonism, forms the basis for the articulation of democratic contestation and for mapping hegemonic alternatives. With regards to Marxism, this subverts its totalizing tendency and its related class essentialism, accommodating instead for an electric variety of social movements and emancipatory struggle that are not immediately reducible to each other or in fact any Archimedean point.

Unsurprisingly, then, Laclau holds that it is precisely through antagonism and rupture, along with the adjacent theory of political subjectivity (particularly in the form of psychoanalysis) and its corollary (radical social division), that we are confronted with social action and that which can be truly called political. By reading immanence, like Žižek, in terms of an extreme inclusivity of difference that denies such rupture, Laclau (2001: 3) claims that with immanence, “politics becomes unthinkable.” Though this remark is intended for Hardt and Negri’s *Empire*, Laclau explicitly links them with a ‘Nietzschean-Deleuzian’ and Spinoza-inspired political theory of immanence. He goes on to add that, although the universality of the proletariat fully depends on its immanence within an objective social order that is entirely the product of capitalism, it is also precisely for that reason that the revolutionary subject entails the end of politics, “from government of men to the administration of things” (Laclau 2001: 5). The political revolution, on the other hand, is defined by an essential asymmetry: between the universalism of the task and the particularism of the agent carrying it out. It is here, then, that “we find the real theoretical watershed in contemporary discussions: *either we assert the possibility of a universality which is not politically constructed and mediated, or we assert that all universality is precarious and depends on a historical construction out of heterogeneous elements*” (5).

Reconstructing the Politics of Immanence

Such a reading of immanence, despite claims to the contrary, is in no way founded on an internal critique (one that follows through the logic of the theory being criticised in order to find internal inconsistencies), but rather judged from the vantage point of an already

accepted position of transcendence. It omits the philosophical context which serves to illuminate how and why immanence re-orientates our understanding of the self away from a still dominant reliance on an idea of the subject, and the way this is achieved through the evolution of an atypical re-conceptualisation of the Outside or Other. It is atypical in the sense that, contra philosophies of transcendence, the Other is not conceived in terms of lack, but instead as a disjunctive fold that goes beyond the opposition of interiority and exteriority in favour of the idea of intensity. Through it, immanence does not posit some pipedream of complete inclusivity, nor does it deny the violence and rupture of politics, but instead it places them on another footing. Indeed, it is this very fold that accounts for the very excess conceptually required for resistance. But it is an excess of an entirely different sort than the excess posed by theories of transcendence. In this way, considerations on immanence open up another path in which fixed markers and their formation are revealed as simulations, surface projections of subterranean differential mechanisms, or as deriving from a more primordial level of transformation. In other words, it leads us towards a micropolitics. Thus we need to reconstruct immanence in such a way that it responds not only to these various readings that foist misconceptions and false exceptions onto it, but also argues in favour of immanence to the point of revealing how transcendence itself is one-sided or abstract. That is, it must show that this parodic reading of immanence gains traction only by virtue of an abstract perspective still orientated towards the subject which makes transcendence a conceptual necessity.

Given that this requires exploring the genesis or contextual development of contemporary immanence and the fold, the thesis traces its evolutionary lineage through the work of Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Foucault and Deleuze. Proceeding this way, the study shows how a common thread of immanence unites these four thinkers, informs their relations to one another (in terms of what each one picks up and discards from his predecessors), and unifies them in a shared attempt to reconceptualise the terms by which the political is thought. In this way, the theme of immanence acts as the primary catalyst or dark precursor to their thought as a whole. Though presented as an evolutionary chronology in the sense that it outlines a series of progressive moves from Sartre to Deleuze, the lineage works by way of a number of productive misreadings each thinker makes of the others. Where a thinker such as Sartre or Merleau-Ponty may have failed to go *far enough* in terms of immanence (either due to restrictions in language or an undertheorisation of force), their successors, such as Foucault, overreach by envisioning the earlier thinkers as *fully trapped* in transcendence. This sort of

relation establishes practical foils, in return creating space for new conceptual additions and philosophical advances. In this respect, the lineage accords with Nietzsche's comparison of "the thinker to an arrow shot by Nature, that another thinker picks up where it has fallen so that he can shoot it somewhere else" (Deleuze 2006b: viii). Each arrow is taken up in part through a misunderstanding, or at least a strained understanding.

The first chapter investigates how Sartre instigates the first few moves of immanence. In particular, through following the progression of Sartre's thought, we will come to see a deepening engagement with immanence, which ultimately sets the foundation upon which the later thinkers build. In his early period, Sartre reworks Husserlian intentionality to bring about a repudiation of the transcendental ego. Following from this, in *Being and Nothingness* and the *Critique*, he develops a dialectic in which consciousness, while relating to an 'outside', is construed as also thoroughly embedded in that outside through the subject-body of the flesh and relations of desire. From this comes a conceptualisation of the In-itself and For-itself as simulacra or topological variations of a more primordial intertwining or fabric of univocal Being. In this sense, we are immediately taken away from the subject of social contract theory, insofar as this presumes an asocial self, and the notion of identity as the *sine qua non* of politics, insofar as this presumes the terrain of an inexplicable transcendent Other. This brings with it a new take on politics as an ethical practice – one that will be taken up and extended by the other three thinkers – in which we do not look for a transcendent outside or fracture/break in immanence through which to ground resistance, but rather work *through* and experiment with our situation or condition.

In the second chapter, we turn to Merleau-Ponty to see how, working through a number of issues with Sartre, phenomenology, and modern thought more generally, he deepens Sartre's engagement with immanence and elaboration of the subject-body and perceptual consciousness as the condition of meaning, negativity, and truth. Through tracing this development, the chapter elucidates the way in which it sets basis for Merleau-Ponty's later work. In moving away from the subject-body or an exploration of the phenomenal body to a more direct ontological enquiry into the appearing of the visible-tactile field itself, the later works develop an anti-humanist ontology (or *real humanism* as he calls it) that locates perceiving bodies within a meaning-generating flesh, where the reversibility or fold of the flesh establishes a generativity which is always immanent to it and as such beyond any notion of a metaphysical transcendent Outside or transcendent Other. It is here that the Outside/Other is first construed as a disjunctive *fold* of immanence itself. Conscious activity

is no longer referred to a being or to a subject whose acts bring about a synthesis of things, but rather posed in 'a life' as an atmosphere in the astronomical sense, or as consciousness's immanent Outside, carrying with it the events and singularities that are simply actualised in subjects and objects. This serves to radicalize Sartre's own politico-ethics, pushing it firmly beyond 'juridical politics'.

Critically, through this, Merleau-Ponty provides a conceptual language that avoids the theoretical snares of the traditional dualist language evoked by Sartre, and lays much of the groundwork for the pure immanence of Foucault and Deleuze. As well as folds, the themes of the pre-personal/individual, flesh, and ethics are played out and fully developed by Foucault and Deleuze. In this sense, then, they neither betray the 'existentialist' project and its repudiation of the ego nor undermine political subjectivity and action, but rather, bring them to fruition through the additions of power as a substrate of force relations (Foucault) and the affective dimension of desire (Deleuze).

In contrast to Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, Foucault and Deleuze are recognised as avowed thinkers of immanence (and because of this, they tend to separate themselves from Sartre and Merleau-Ponty by emphasising the latter's continued moments of transcendence, even to the point of caricature). Subsequently, they face the criticisms outlined earlier of being incoherent, of being unable to mount a politics, or of turning back to transcendence in a self-contradictory way. Against this, chapters 3 and 4 argue that 'pure' immanence does not entail apoliticism or self-contradiction, and that Foucault and Deleuze utilise critical elements of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty to demonstrate this.

Ironically, their position too is initially developed through a productive misreading of their predecessors, with Foucault presenting a parodied vision of French phenomenology as meaning-giving (*sens*) and using it as a theoretical springboard for his study of discourse, placing the human subject in immanent relations of production and signification. Such relations entail a concept of force, the development of which in Foucault's thought allows him to account for the conditions under which phenomena are generated, or their ontogenesis. Not only does this radicalise the decentring of the subject, it leads directly to and informs Foucault's later political engagements, wherein (to borrow terminology from Deleuze) man is placed in relations of transitive, unstable, virtual *forces* constituting actual formations of power, carried out by the formed or stratified relations which make up knowledge (as in formed matters or substances) and relating to extensive processes of

organisation and strategy (i.e., bio-power. Contra those who wish to read Foucault within a deeply Althusserian conjecture (*inter alia* Žižek and Butler), the nature of this network must be understood according to the immanent logic of dispersion and disjunction underpinning discursive formations in Foucault's earlier work, a logic heavily rooted in Merleau-Ponty's concept of the fold and one that makes strategic possibilities and lines of flight synonymous with folding by virtue of being the very excess or discontinuities of the network itself. The chapter concludes by arguing that though with Foucault we know conceptually where to locate resistance and how to construe it, there remains both a critical avoidance of the affective and an inconsistent crypto-normative veneration for difference.

In the fourth chapter, I argue that Deleuze combines the essential elements of the three previous thinkers to make an improved politics of immanence, which is to a certain extent more consistent and systematic. Certainly, Deleuze overcomes a number of remaining ambiguities, in particular through addressing the affective and ethical issues still ignored by Foucault by turning to schizoanalysis and the incorporation of desire, pushing the politics of immanence to its ultimate. Nevertheless, this argument must contend with a misleading but no less prominent view that Deleuzian desire is a pre-symbolic libidinal flux, an asocial essentialist category. Against this, the chapter argues that Deleuzian desire is both instigated by and utilises the ontogenetic conceptual schema of transcendental empiricism, in which thought and desire are immanent to the real that provokes them, such that they can only have a productive nature. This also flies in the face of those who maintain that transcendental empiricism suffers from extreme inclusivity of difference.

As we will see in the conclusion, the repercussions of this lineage for the emancipatory ideal Žižek claims to salvage are dramatic and unerring. Together, the four thinkers of immanence offer a new take on ethicality and political practice in which we no longer look for a transcendent Outside or rupture in/of immanence to ground resistance in spite of our condition (i.e. dialectical excess), but rather work through our condition and its entangled lines of immanence and folds of disjuncture through an affirmative ethics of self-experimentation. Here, the ego is assigned a practical function, and the political Event, far from being understood in terms of breaks with the mundane extended in time and space, speaks to an intensive "silent plurality of senses of each event" (Deleuze 2006d: 4). What Žižek sees as a self-indulgent Renaissance bourgeois concern of playing with one's sense of self outside of politics is actually the site where the political is most at stake. Politics begins here. In some broader sense, then, each one of our thinkers continue Spinoza's fundamental

ethical question, 'What *can* I do?' as opposed to 'What *must* I do?' (see Deleuze 1992: 218). Immanence is critical, then, not only because it concerns the validity of a critique that retains a moment of transcendence or grasps more fundamentally the nature of being itself, but principally because it concerns practical philosophy or an ethico-political domain preceding that of traditional politics and the kinds of politics we are told we must enact. In this way, immanence represents a turning away from the typical political question of organisation in terms of extensity, toward one that focuses on a molecular, intensive level. It becomes the ontological centre of a different type of emancipatory politics.

Notes

¹ See Mulhall and Swift (1992).

² Laclau (2000: 73) reproaches Žižek on this point, claiming it deprives the cogito of its Cartesian content. As such, it “is a *most* peculiar way of being Cartesian. It is like calling oneself a fully-fledged Platonist while rejecting the theory of forms...It is evident that if Descartes had come to terms with the obverse side to which Žižek refers, he would have considered that his intellectual project had utterly failed.” In response to this, Žižek (2006b: 226) claims “there is a long tradition within Cartesian studies of demonstrating that a gap forever separates the *cogito* itself from the *res cogitans*: that the self-transparent ‘thinking substance [*res cogitans*]’ is secondary, that it already obfuscates a certain abyss or excess that is the founding gesture of *cogito*.” In either case, it is evident that what is truly central here is the spectre of transcendence, which unites Laclau’s and Žižek’s approaches to politics and the subject. How they differ in terms of naming this subject is in this respect almost inconsequential.

³ According to Widder (2002: 2) ‘ontological minimalism’, refers to attempts to achieve an anti-foundationalist stance by “*scaling down* speculation, so that the objects of thought are reduced to what is verifiable, what informs to minimal standards of rationality and pragmatic or utilitarian principles, or what can be historicized.” Despite such aspirations, “these contemporary positions become a recipe for thoughtlessness, since their minimal assumptions need be nothing more than those previously accepted postulates that appear sustainable after appeals to transcendence are forsaken” (loc. cit). In the case of dominant forms of liberal theory, it is reckoned the subject can be set apart from its talents, skills and knowledge and so forth, which is implicit in Berlin’s account of choice and explicit in the Rawlsian account that grounds principles of justice on a hypothetical situation of complete negative freedom. This minimalist conception is spurred by a metaphysical commitment to a subject that, while bracketed from that which makes him an individual or subject, is still capable of freely choosing. Yet how can choice be made in such a vacuum, when it requires a density of character developed in the course of socialisation? Choice, then, is “linked to a context of social relations, traditions, linguistic practices and institutions that together constitute the chooser” (Widder 2012: 4). This is a charge Michael Sandel (1998) brings against Rawls, who in this respect undoubtedly follows the same course as Berlin. The later Rawls (1985: 230-1) defends his thesis on justice by stating that it is ‘political not metaphysical’, not resting on truth claims regarding justice or human nature and devoid of any pretensions to resolve fundamental disputes with regards to broader metaphysical concerns. In contrast, Rawls seeks to invoke a set of ‘basic intuitive ideas’. As Widder (2012: 6) comments, this serves not only to conflate the metaphysical with the ontological, but also in turn to neglect the ontological at the expense of understanding the constitution of the human self, up to and including the genesis of the very ‘common sense’ or intuition upon which Rawls bases his thesis on justice. In short, one cannot do politics without ontology.

⁴ In Descartes it takes the form of the *cogito* as a subjective pre-philosophical understanding that orients thought. It is primarily followed through by Kant, in which it takes the form of a transcendental ego that accompanies all subjective representations, discovering conditions external to the conditioned. Hegel seeks to avoid such external conditions by raising subjectivity up to the Absolute, so that the thing in-itself is not constituted through the representational machinery of the subject, but rather the in-itself and for-itself, or the general difference of being and reflection, are developed in the concrete movements of the dialectic. Nevertheless, his negative notion of contradiction fails to provide a concrete unity of being and expression, and the result is a retention

of transcendence in form. Husserlian phenomenology marks another critical turning point in this respect, wherein reality is grasped only through consciousness as an aspect of phenomenological experience. In this instance, transcendence is constituted in the *life of consciousness*, as inseparably and intricately linked to that life, which subtly resurrects Kantian representationalism in the form of the *hyle*. Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 46) say that Husserl's successors (i.e., Sartre and Merleau-Ponty) "discover in the Other or in the Flesh, the mole of the transcendent within immanence itself." A significant part of the argument in the present study takes issue with this reading, arguing that Sartre and Merleau-Ponty not only carry forward the tradition of immanence to which Deleuze and Guattari assign themselves, but are also responsible for reconfiguring the Other/Outside beyond the terms of exteriority and interiority.

⁵ A key example in this respect, is the work conducted by what have come to be known as the 'new' Sartre scholars *inter alia* Fox (2003), Hendley (1991), and Howells (1998), all of whom use a vulgar reading of Sartrean subjectivity as concomitant with lack to 'rescue' the likes of Foucault and Deleuze from themselves.

⁶ As with Kojève's Hegel, Lacan argues that man begins with a primitive, undifferentiated Real – and so tenuous – sense of self in the form of the mirror stage. However, as man's needs are articulated to another, "they are subjected to demand," which in turn means, "they are returned to the him in alienated form" (Lacan 2001: 316). Further, as the demand is universal and requires unconditionality, no particular act of love or recognition can satisfy it. As a result, the "particularity thus abolished should reappear *beyond* demand" (Lacan 2001: 317) in the form of desire. In this way, desire becomes a nameless sense of loss or incompleteness that appears even when the subject receives everything it needs and demands. Contra Hegel, desire is "neither the appetite for satisfaction, nor the demand for love, but the difference that results from the subtraction of the first from the second, the phenomenon of their splitting" (318).

⁷ Again this follows Lacan, particularly regarding the Other. The subject's separation from its needs concerns the Other, as demand treats the Other as "already possessing the 'privilege' of satisfying needs," as having "the power of depriving them of that alone by which they are satisfied" (Lacan 2001: 317), which serves to introduce "the phantom of the Omnipotence, not of the subject, but of the Other in which his demand is installed" (344). Indeed, if the Other is the locus of speech, it is "also the locus of...lack" (291). Yet this lack rallies against the imaginary state of harmony with the (m)Other, providing an enigma which the symbol of the Father solves, accounting for the traumatic awareness of an intrusion, a mysterious authority of prohibition.

⁸ Žižek (1999: 314) reproaches Butler for conflating the act in its radical dimension with the performative reconfiguration of one's symbolic condition via its repetitive displacements – the two are not the same.

⁹ In following and radicalising Heidegger's critical thesis against onto-theology as the conception of Being as both the unified ground of beings and the highest being, Badiou (2006: 28) proposes that ontology "must necessarily be the science of the multiple as multiple." There are "two paradigms that govern the manner in which the multiple is thought, as Deleuze's texts indicate from very early on: the 'vital' (or 'animal') paradigm of open multiplicities (in the Bergsonian filiation) and the mathematized paradigm of sets, which can also be qualified as 'stellar' in Mallarmé's sense of the word" (Badiou 2000: 4). Accordingly, whereas Deleuze belongs to the former, Badiou locates himself in the latter, locating pluralist ontology in the form of set theory, insofar as mathematics, as a discourse, "pronounces what is expressible of being qua being," such that all we can "ever know

of being qua being, is set out, through the mediation of a theory of the pure multiple, by the historical discursivity of mathematics” (8).

Crucially, set theory is not a discourse on reality as much as it is “performative” (Badiou 2006: xxiv), meaning it creates the realities with which it deals. Sets are constructed when a multiplicity is grouped together and counted as one. Or, rather, unity is established by a ‘count-as-one’. There is therefore nothing before the count, as “everything is counted,” yet this “being-nothing – wherein resides the illegal inconsistency of being – is the base of there being the ‘whole’ of the compositions of one in which presentation takes place” (54). Thus preceding the count-as-one is the count-as-none, which by extension means that subsets appear retrospectively when the first set is constituted by a count-as-one. This becomes an *evental site* in that it is a “multiple such that none of its elements are presented in the situation,” the “site, itself, is presented, but ‘beneath’ it nothing from which it is composed is presented” (175). Therefore, the site is not a part of the situation. It is “*on the edge of the void, or foundational*” (loc. cit). An event appears when a component of the site is counted-as-one, or taken on its own, first by the one that constitutes it as a set, and then by the ones that constitute its components as sets. (203). The procedure by which a multiple is recognised as an event is termed “*intervention*,” in that it is made up of a varied process of explicating and validating, via a myriad of interpretative decisions, i.e., fidelity.

¹⁰ This is unsurprising considering how both retain transcendence in form, and how Žižek’s (2012a: 25-6) reading of Deleuze is indebted to Badiou.

¹¹ In this respect, and in contrast to Žižek’s reading of Deleuze, which seemingly passes over the centrality of disjunction, Badiou argues that the power of the One is that beings are multiple and different, produced by a disjunctive synthesis, and they are themselves disjointed and divergent. Univocity is not tautological (the One is the One), but rather fully compatible with the existence of multiple *forms* of Being. It is in a single and same sense that Being is said of all its Forms.

¹² With this in mind, Badiou quotes Deleuze’s *Difference and Repetition* as stating: “A single and same voice for the whole thousand-voided multiple, a single and same Ocean for all the drops, a single clamour of Being for all beings” (Deleuze as quoted in Badiou 2000: 11). As Widder (2012: 27) has previously noted, Badiou fails to complete the passage, and as such leaves out a crucial caveat, “ignoring how Deleuze continues by holding this univocity to obtain only ‘on condition that each being, each drop and each voice has reached the state of excess – in other worlds, the difference which displaces and disguises them and, in turning upon its mobile cusp, causes them to return’.” This concerns the Nietzschean eternal return as the form of explication of difference. I elaborate this point in chapter 4.

¹³ As we will see later, this not only misreads Deleuze’s take on the eternal return – with Badiou overlooking how the single voice of univocal being is an excess immanent to all beings, as opposed to a transcendent One – but also forces a very particular reading of the political Event on Deleuze, one that is not his own. For Deleuze, it is precisely in the mundane where fundamental changes, transmutations and reconfigurations take place (see Widder 2012: 27 and 51-2). That is the point of micropolitics and the politics of immanence, which Badiou and others misjudge by viewing it through the coordinates of transcendence.

¹⁴ Žižek’s work just quoted does not in fact make this particular claim about Foucault’s conception of power. The criticism is limited, instead, to his ethics. However, I have made this summary through reading the statement in conjunction with the way Foucaudian power is presented in *The Ticklish*

Subject. Butler (1997: 2), for her part, explicitly makes this claim, referring to Foucauldian power as one which forms the subject as well as “providing the very condition of its existence and the trajectory of its desire,” which means that “power is not simply what we oppose but also, in a strong sense, what we depend on for our existence and what we harbor and preserve in the beings that we are.” In terms of gender, Butler (1990: 3) takes micropolitics to be a study of the way in which the very feminist subject that liberal politics seeks to ‘emancipate’ or represent “turns out to be discursively constituted by the very political system that is supposed to facilitate its emancipation.” That is, juridical power produces what it claims merely to represent. More specifically, and this is where Butler really departs from what Foucault and Deleuze intend by micropolitics, power is seen to fasten itself onto subjects to the point of fixing identities onto them. In other words, it is taken as an extension of Althusserian interpellation: “‘Subjection’ signifies the process of becoming subordinated by power as well as the process of becoming a subject. Whether by interpellation, in Althusser’s sense, or by discursive productivity in Foucault’s, the subject is initiated through a primary submission to power” (Butler 1997: 2).

Thus, “Althusser’s doctrine of interpellation clearly sets the stage for Foucault’s later views on the ‘discursive production of the subject’” (5). The only difference, as far as Butler is concerned, is that where Althusser insists that the subject is spoken into existence, Foucault emphasises how the subject is caught in a discursive play of signification, which is neither singular nor sovereign. Yet “Althusser and Foucault agree that there is a founding subordination in the process of *assujétissement*” (loc. cit). Indeed, for Foucault, “the symbolic produces the possibility of its own subversions, and these subversions are unanticipated effects of symbolic interpellations” (99).

In misunderstanding the immanence of micropolitics, Butler (as well as Žižek) is led to conclude that on its own it is incapable of conceptualising resistance. Butler (2006: 127) thus asserts that Foucault’s theory “maintains an unacknowledged emancipatory ideal that proves increasingly difficult to maintain, even with the strictures of his own critical apparatus.” Although Butler recognises that resistance is internal to power, she argues that Foucault is inconsistent on this account: “Foucault wants to argue that there is no ‘sex’ in itself which is not produced by complex interactions of discourse and power, and yet there does seem to be a ‘multiplicity of pleasures’ *in itself* which is not the effect of any specific discourse/power exchange” (131). That is to say, Foucault’s turn to aesthetics and his emphasis on pleasure as opposed to desire signify an attempt to endorse a prediscursive libidinal multiplicity that effectively supposes a sexuality before the law or a sexuality waiting for emancipation from the shackles of sex. In this sense, Foucault is charged for looking for emancipation outside of the power-knowledge network, in turn endorsing the very emancipatory discourse his analysis was meant to displace.

¹⁵ The normative upshot of all this is that radical democracy ‘radicalises’ the idea that democracy can institutionalise the continuous reoccupation of the lack in political practices by extending it to every aspect of society. Further, it “acknowledges that at the heart of democracy there is no universal principle or stable identity, but only eradicable lack” (Tønder and Thomassen 2005: 6). In this sense, it is strictly anti-essentialist, which serves to move Laclau away from “original forms of democratic thought,” which were linked to “a *positive and unified* conception of human nature,” constituting “a single space within which that nature would have to manifest the effects of its radical liberty and equality” (Laclau and Mouffe 2002: 181). On this basis, Laclau (and Mouffe) seek to articulate hegemonic alternatives, centred on the logic of equivalences, in which not only is the autonomy of each struggle’s space consistently dissolved, but further, and because of this, each struggle becomes an equivalent symbol of a greater indivisible struggle. In this respect, hegemony “defines the very terrain in which a political relation is actually constituted” (Laclau 2000: 44).

¹⁶ What is “beyond the limits can only be other differences, and in that case – given the constitutive character of all differences - it is impossible to establish whether these new differences are internal or external to the context” (Laclau 2000: 52).

1. Sartre and the Instigation of Immanence

Hazel E. Barnes (1974: 13) asks whether there is such a thing as “a Sartrean system, a total *Weltanschauung*?” This question touches on one of the foremost debates afflicting Sartre scholarship. A number of interpreters have portrayed Sartre as a sporadic philosopher, void of any underlying and continuous ontology or philosophical and political engagement. His oeuvre, it is said, is punctuated by a series of divergent and conflicting views. In particular, with its emphasis on consciousness, Sartre’s early work between *Transcendence of the Ego* and *Being and Nothingness* is typically taken to represent a deeply subjectivist or even rationalist position, which would later face the axe in Sartre’s turn towards a neo-Marxist or even ‘postmodernist’ dialectic of praxis.¹ Against these interpretations, others have attempted to locate a stable vantage point from which to grasp and fix all of Sartre’s thinking under one heading. This is typically identified in the ‘dialectic of the self’, of which an early formation is evident in *Being and Nothingness*. In this reading, the *Critique* and its ‘totalisation-detotalisation’ of praxis is said to represent its historico-material fruition.² Badiou (2012: 20) goes so far as to claim that Sartre’s later encounter with Marxism in the *Critique* was “unavoidable,” precisely due to the presence of the dialectic in *Being and Nothingness*. Thus, as opposed to signifying a radical split, it is supposed that each major work of Sartre’s focuses on a particular aspect of the dialectic. Whereas the earlier work can be said to focus more on the nature of existential ‘choice’, the later work focuses more on its situational or contextual limits.

The true irony here is that despite the divergence of these interpretations, each unwittingly establishes an overarching image of Sartre as a thinker of formal transcendence. Deleuze (2004b: 114n6) contributes to this view when he holds that while repudiating transcendence in the form of a field of consciousness immanent *to* a transcendental subject, the ‘subjectivist’ Sartre retains its form, insofar as the transcendental field is still determined as a field of consciousness, “and as such it must be unified by itself through a play of intentionalities or pure intentions.” For Deleuze, the transcendental is still individuated at the personal level, as already possessing a subject-predicate structure. Similarly, by starting off with this formal subject, the ‘holistic’ Sartre of the dialectic evokes an intentional relation between nomination and the thing, effectively breaking with the All-One of immanence in favour of a metaphysical polarity. In this way, Sartre seemingly pushes forward a formal transcendence of a different sort, in which the Outside/Other replaces the transcendental

subject as that to which the field of consciousness is related, entailing a transcendence of the subject and of the object.

To a certain degree, such a reading can be forgiven, considering there are numerous occasions where Sartre, particularly in his early to middle works, explicitly rejects immanence. For instance, in ‘Intentionality: A fundamental Concept of Husserl’s Phenomenology’, Sartre (2013: 4-5) writes:

Imagine now a linked series of bursts that wrest us from ourselves, that do not even leave an ‘ourself’ the time to form behind them but rather hurl us out beyond them into the dry dust of the world, onto the rough earth, among things. Imagine we are thrown out in this way, abandoned by our very nature in an indifferent, hostile, resistant world. If you do so, you will have grasped the profound meaning of the discovery Husserl expresses in this famous phrase: ‘All consciousness is consciousness *of* something’. This is all it takes to put an end to the cozy philosophy of immanence, in which everything works by compromise, by protoplasmic exchanges, by a tepid cellular chemistry. The philosophy of transcendence throws us out onto the high road, amid threats and under a blinding light.

Against these obscurations, and indeed Sartre’s own statements, this chapter argues that with Sartre there is a total *Weltanschauung*, but it is located in the continuous presence of, and deepening engagement with, immanence. What is important to note vis-à-vis Sartre’s express rejection of immanence, is that he is fundamentally referring to phenomenological immanence, as in ‘immanent to consciousness’. This is clearly a very different, and certainly restricted use of immanence from the one defined at the opening of this work. In fact, despite his rejection of immanence, Sartre moves over time towards a different kind of immanence as fold, or rather he moves away from this rather simplistic understanding of immanence as pure idealist interiority, as “the pure subjectivity of the instantaneous *cogito*,” (Sartre 2008a: 68) to one which has its own Outside. Furthermore, it is precisely through this engagement with immanence as fold, as this chapter argues, that Sartre instigates the politics of immanence, establishing its philosophical context and paving the way for Merleau-Ponty, Foucault and Deleuze. There are three critical stages to this engagement that this chapter will highlight: i) in working through inconsistencies within Husserlian phenomenology, specifically regarding intentionality, Sartre displaces the necessity and centrality of the ego, giving the object itself the role of providing identity for the subject, and the flux of consciousness the role of unity through the retention of previous experience. This serves to bypass representational machinery in favour of an impersonal transcendental field without an ego, wherein consciousness is no longer immanent *to* a transcendental subject that goes

beyond the flux of experience; ii) in confronting subsequent issues within phenomenology, specifically its ontological void and its solipsism, Sartre ventures into a dialectic premised on a primordial bond of facticity via the flesh and relations of desire, in which consciousness is thoroughly embedded in the Outside/Other to which it relates via intentionality. Despite being rooted in a problematic dualistic discourse, this greatly anticipates Merleau-Ponty's notion of the disjunctive fold; iii) lastly in confronting several criticisms regarding charges of idealism and apoliticism, Sartre materialises the dialectic and the flesh within the context of scarcity and processes of totalisation-detotalisation. In this instance, Sartre argues that all interior exteriorisations of praxis are modified by a material multiplicity, but remain immanent inasmuch as they work inside the practical field. Aside from revealing a continued presence of immanence, this last stage additionally anticipates Foucault and Deleuze's contention that there is a heterogeneous yet immanent relation between micro- and macro-arrangements.

All three stages initiate a series of investigations and conceptual arrangements orientated towards what we can retrospectively call the 'micropolitical' domain, concerning an image of subjectivity and fundamental transformations operating at a level below that of oppositional and second-order Otherness, and thus the constitution of the subject and identity. This corresponds to Sartre's existential ethics of authenticity that, as opposed to finding a 'true' self or ego simultaneously serving as the centre of our agency, speaks to a continued process of self-experimentation and creativity, in which the ego serves a practical function.

The First Stage: Phenomenology and the Transcendental Ego

Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 47) claim that Sartre's presupposition of an impersonal transcendental field "restores the rights of immanence." This claim is not followed by any sort of concrete analysis, although it is clear it refers to the way Sartre handles the Kantian legacy of the transcendental field – the 'I think' that accompanies all representations. Specifically, it relates to Sartre's repudiation of Husserl's Kantian categories and the development of an alternative *impersonal* transcendental field as one with the form of neither a synthetic consciousness nor a subjective identity. It is here that our story of immanence begins, for it is here that the legacy of the *I* as indispensable to the coherence of our agency is first displaced. Instead, the ego is envisioned as a simulation, wherein its corresponding agency is merely a semblance and its central function a cover.

In striving to take a far more humble and realistic approach to philosophy, Husserl suspends the ‘natural attitude’ or ‘judgment’ in favour of the *epoché* (‘suspension of judgment’). By following the *epoché*, the philosopher ‘brackets out’ all the assumptions of the world and the nature of existence and its contents, and instead focuses on experience as an appearance or ‘phenomenon’. Through so doing, Husserlian phenomenology attempts to wade through all metaphysical concerns and focus instead on the living human subject, or ‘Absolute Being’, thereby returning to *concrete* lived human experience. That does not mean to say one makes a judgment towards the ‘natural world’ by rejecting it, but rather that one is barred from “*using any judgement that concerns spatio-temporal existence (Dasein)*” (Husserl 2012: 59). Even if we bracket the natural world, it “still remains there like the bracketed in the bracket, like the disconnected outside the connexional system” (57). It is to “*put out of action the general thesis which belongs to the essence of the natural standpoint*” (59). Through this, Husserl (2012: 59) establishes a descriptive ‘science of consciousness’ or a ‘new’ eidetic science. By the systematic investigation into ‘pure consciousness’ we can uncover essential truths about the nature of experience (62) – thus the clarion cry of phenomenology: ‘back to the things themselves’, back to the experience of the person, to the ‘givenness’ (*Gegebenheit*) of experience.

Presupposed in this project is the view that an “*object that has being in itself (an sich seiender) is never such as to be out of relation to consciousness and its Ego,*” for the “thing is the thing of *the world about me*” (Husserl 2012: 91). The hypothetical assumption of a Real Something outside the world of subjective experience is “indeed a ‘logically’ possible one’,” but these things have “purely factual grounds in the factual limits of this experience” (92-3). We cannot grasp the transcendent as it is merely given through certain empirical connexions. Thus “consciousness (inward experience) and real Being are in no sense co-ordinate forms of Being, living as friendly neighbours, and occasionally entering into ‘relation’ or some reciprocal ‘connexion’” (95). Immanent absolute Being, as with transcendent Being (object), has its objective determining content, but such objective determination bears the same name only when we speak in terms of the empty logical categories – between the “meanings of consciousness and reality yawns a veritable abyss” (95). As such, consciousness, considered in its purity, must be construed as a self-contained system of Being “into which nothing can penetrate, and from which nothing can escape; which has no spatio-temporal exterior, and can be inside no spatio-temporal system” (Husserl 2012: 95). The spatio-temporal world, to which man claims to belong as a

subordinate singular relation, is in truth intentional Being, and so a Being with a secondary relative sense of being *for* consciousness. Reality so defined has no absolute essence. It has the essentiality of something “which in principle is *only* known, consciously presented as an appearance” (96). Thus the basic field of phenomenology, when considering consciousness, concerns the bracketing of the nature-constituting consciousness with its transcendent theses.

Clearly, Husserl sustains a gap between consciousness and reality, wherein reality is grasped only through consciousness as an aspect of phenomenological experience. In this way, Husserl proposes to regard reality only as a phenomenon *for* consciousness, and consciousness as a consciousness *of* reality. That is, the intentional relation is personified by the interplay and separation of the *for* and the *of*, in which case one term of the relation cannot be reduced to the other. Thus we “fix our eyes steadily upon the sphere of Consciousness and study what it is that we find immanent in it” (Husserl 2012: 62).

In construing consciousness this way, Deleuze (2001: 33n. 5) holds, Husserl readily admits that all transcendence is constituted in the *life of consciousness*, as inseparably and intricately linked to that life. However, Deleuze maintains that this plane is immediately related back to a subject, taken as transcendent to the real, in which the empirical is made into nothing more than a double of the transcendental. Thus, in returning to the universal subject to which immanence is attributed, “the transcendental is entirely denatured, for it then simply redoubles the empirical (as with Kant), and immanence is distorted, for it then finds itself enclosed in the transcendent” (Deleuze 2001: 27). Similarly, Sartre argues that with Husserl we find a latent Kantianism, which in turn leads to an unnecessary duplication of the self. At first, Husserl describes a psychical and psycho-physical *me*, but then goes on to add a ‘pure’ or transcendental Ego (Sartre 2004: 5). In so doing, he creates a point from which various consciousnesses can engage in various acts of apprehension while retaining their coherent unity. Thus we are returned to an internal synthesis, similar to Kant’s, in which we must account for consciousness’s contact with an object that is transcendent to it, lest we fall into solipsism. Indeed, within the sphere of consciousness, Husserl locates a hyletic structure, which effectively mediates the experience of the object, playing “so great a part in the perceptive intuitions of things” (68).³

Sartre argues that such a move runs up against the fundamental requisite of phenomenology (‘back to things themselves’), for consciousness’s direct access is here mediated by

representational machinery. If the *epoché* is supposed to exclude any transcendent being, then we cannot have an Ego of the sort to which Husserl refers (it is for this reason, moreover, that Sartre targets Husserl rather than Kant).⁴ Indeed, how can consciousness be intentional if it is loaded down or driven by something else (Sartre 2004: 42)? Thus the transcendental *I* is gratuitous and unwarranted. To allow either substance or opacity to enter the realm of consciousness is to dilute its true description as understood by phenomenology, to undermine its absolute status, and in effect to create a consciousness that is governed, that is “heavy and *ponderable*” (5). Indeed, “Consciousness...cannot be limited except by itself” (7). Consequently, Husserl, “in spite of his denial,” should be called a phenomenalist rather than a phenomenologist (Sartre 2008a: 97).

Transcending the *I*

This subsequently raises the question as to the requirement for the transcendental ego in the first place. As Sartre (2004: 6) notes, “it is usually believed that the existence of a transcendental *I* is justified by the need for consciousness to have unity and individuality.” That is, it is required, first, to overcome confusion between consciousnesses and therefore retain individuality, and, second, to explain how disconnected experiences taking place in a variety of locations and at different times can be attributed to the same individual. Both concern retaining coherent unity, and a subject to which that unity is attributed. In other words, the *ego* is introduced in order to retain the unity of self, for the purity of phenomenology risks reducing us to unlocalisable disconnected experiences. In rejecting the transcendental ego, then, Sartre must provide an alternative that can meet these demands.

For Sartre (2004: 6), “phenomenology does not need to resort to this unifying and individualizing *I*,” as consciousness is defined by intentionality, and through intentionality consciousness “transcends itself, it unifies itself by going outside itself.” Consciousness is envisioned as a radical activity that intends toward an object, as opposed to merely synthesising representations. Thus consciousness is neither pure subjectivity nor pure objectivity. It is other-orientated, for all consciousness “is consciousness *of* something” (Sartre 2004: 10 see also 2008a: 7). In this instance, it is the unity of the object that renders the *I* plausible, which means consciousness arises when it is orientated towards a being which *is not* itself.

Intentionality is accorded a different meaning to that of Husserl, for, as Sartre argues, the being of knowledge cannot be measured by knowledge. Consciousness is the knowing being, the person, insofar as he *is*, “not insofar as he is known,” which means abandoning the “primacy of knowledge if we wish to establish knowledge” (Sartre 2008a: 7). All there is of intention in my actual consciousness “is directed toward the outside,” thus “all my judgments or practical activities, all my present inclinations transcend themselves” (8). The necessary and sufficient condition for a knowing consciousness to be knowledge *of* its object is that it be “consciousness of itself as being that knowledge,” for otherwise it would be consciousness of the thing without consciousness of being so (*loc. cit.*). The reduction of consciousness to knowledge “in fact involves our introducing into consciousness the subject-object dualism which is typical of knowledge” (8). But if we “accept the law of the knower-known dyad, then a third term will be necessary in order for the knower to become known in turn, and we will be faced with this dilemma: either we stop any one term of the series – the known, the knower known, the knower known by the knower, *etc.*,” wherein “the totality of the phenomenon would fall into the unknown, in that we would bump up against a non-self-conscious reflection and a final term” or “we affirm the necessity of an infinite regress (*idea ideae ideae, etc.*)” (*loc. cit.*). If an infinite regress is to be avoided, then we must establish an immediate, non-cognitive relation of the self to itself.

Insofar as consciousness transcends itself in order to reach an object, and exhausts itself in this same positing, it is non-positional (it is not its own object). As such, it cannot be a material presence with an Ego found within. Rather it is something, psycho-physical, found without or out in the world, devoid of content, with nothing lurking behind it. Indeed, “all that there is of intention in my actual consciousness is directed towards the outside, towards the table” (Sartre 2008a: 76). The *I* of consciousness only *appears* when consciousness reflects on itself or on its previous activity during or within thethetic stage. Therefore, we have a “pre-reflective cogito” or “pre-reflective being of the *percipiens*” (16), a ‘non-thetic’ absorption into an activity, which is distinct from the consciousness apprehending the reflection of this activity. Consciousness is never aware of itself as an *I* at the time of its being focused or absorbed in something. Yet during both stages of consciousness – pre-reflective and reflective – there is a non-intentional and non-thetic awareness of self. This is also how Sartre explains self-awareness, devoid of any transcendental faculties or Ego (Sartre 2004: 47).

The upshot of this thesis is that, despite its repudiation, there are still experiences in which the ego features. Indeed, “it is undeniable that the Cogito is personal. In the ‘I think’, there is an *I* which thinks” (Sartre 2004: 9). But this is not an encounter with a pre-existing self. Rather, when confronted with this ego, “we are dealing with a mere appearance” (33) – that is to say, with a semblance.⁵ This semblance of an ego is no less functional on that account, offering a sense of agency or a disguise, as if “consciousness constituted the Ego as a false representation of itself” (48). It is due to the appearance of the ego “that a distinction can be drawn between the possible and the real, between appearance and being, between what is willed and what is yielded to,” through which a grounded self-to-self relation can be sustained (loc. cit).

At this stage, we are still left with the question of unity in duration and individuality. As Sartre notes, it will be objected that “it is necessary for there to be some principle of unity *in duration* if the continual stream of consciousnesses is able to posit transcendent objects outside itself” (Sartre 2004: 6). In other words, consciousness must be perpetual syntheses of past consciousnesses with the present consciousness. In recognition of this, Sartre affirms that the flux of consciousness itself participates in this unity by an interplay of ‘transversal’ intentionalities which are concrete and real retentions of past consciousnesses. In this way, “consciousness continually refers back to itself” (7). This concept of temporality receives its much needed elaboration in *Being and Nothingness*, where it also provides the ontological basis of the very nothingness that underpins the possibility of transgression, securing the *separation* and conflict of consciousnesses. This nature of consciousness, its nothingness, retains individuality, for like Spinoza’s substance, whose concept does not require the concept of other things from which it must be formed, it cannot be limited except by itself (see 2004: 7).

More specifically, Sartre argues that consciousnesses transverse themselves through the durational experience of time, in turn providing a *decentred* unity. That is, the primary negative structure of the For-itself is found in temporality. Phenomenologically, subjectivity *is* temporality, which in itself establishes a fractured subject. The fracturing is of a different order to that theorised by Deleuze in that the For-itself arises as diasporic, dispersing itself in the three dimensions of time by virtue of nihilation, the negation of the In-itself. Thus, despite fracturing the subject, or rather despite the fact that temporality is a dissolving force, it is at the centre of a unifying act – that is, it unifies by individuating. Henceforth, it does not so much establish a multiplicity in Deleuze’s sense as much as it establishes a quasi-

multiplicity, “a foreshadowing of dissociation in the heart of unity” (Sartre 2008a: 158).⁶ Temporality is a “unity which multiplies *itself*; that is, temporality can be only a relation of being at the heart of this same being” (159).

Through this, Sartre intends to solve the paradox of time. Accordingly, temporality cannot primarily be separation, for we have a unity of the *before* and *after*.⁷ The problem cannot be referred to temporal unity as it risks undermining irreversible succession as the meaning of this unity. Yet we cannot turn to disintegrating succession as the original character to time, lest we risk “no longer being able to understand that there is *one* time” (Sartre 2008a: 159). As a consequence, Sartre asserts that temporality is *not*, and so only a being of a certain ontological structure can be temporal in the unity of its being, as an *internal* relation. “Temporality is the being of the For-itself insofar as the For-itself has to be its being ekstasically” (159). The irreversible order and unity of time (or the self) is accounted for by the For-itself, which is temporality. The past acts as a kind of facticity, and in this sense a being-in-itself, which situates the For-itself in its flight towards the future. However, despite being outside, the connection is not of the same type as, say, between a perceived object and consciousness, for it recognises that it was the past, as being the past. The past is “a thing which one *is* without positing it, as that which haunts without being observed, is behind the For-itself, outside the thematic field which is before the For-itself as that which it illuminates” (163).

In primary reflection I am my past without knowledge of it, and in secondary reflection I know my past but I no longer am it. The past, then, is not present in thethetic mode, but is nevertheless constantly there. It is the “origin and springboard of all my actions,” and my “contingent and gratuitous bond with the world and with myself inasmuch as I constantly live it as a total abandonment” (Sartre 2008a: 164). In the second dimension of nihilation, “the For-itself apprehends itself as a certain lack” (loc. cit). When I am drinking a beer, I am this drinking, which I have to be, but which I am not. Once I have drunk “the ensemble slips into the past” (164). I am driven into the Not-yet, and as such designated as an unachieved totality, one which cannot be achieved. This is “the very meaning of the two ekstases Past and Future, and this is why value in itself is by nature self-repose, non-temporality!” (loc. cit). In the third dimension, the For-itself is dispersed in the perpetual game of reflected-reflecting, and so “escapes itself in the unity of one and the the (*sic*) same flight” (165). Being is both everywhere and nowhere. As soon as I try to see it, it is there before me, it has escaped. It is a game of “musical chairs at the heart of the For-itself which is *Presence* to

being. All in all, the For-itself disperses its being in three dimensions of temporality “due to the fact that it nihilates itself” (loc. cit).

All three temporal dimensions are ontologically equal and interdependent.⁸ In all its temporal dimensions, the For-itself is always elsewhere, and the separations of the self from the self are the For-itself’s temporal ekstasis. As such, the subject is fractured, a flight of ecstatic being, spreading itself across the temporal dimensions, and so never one with itself. Thus Sartre develops a notion of duration understood as the For-itself’s perpetual flight away from the In-itself. Duration is identity with the very being of consciousness. This stands in opposition to previous approaches to duration, according to Sartre.⁹ The real question concerns “the necessity for being, whatever it may be, to metamorphose itself completely at once – form and content, to sink into the past and to thrust itself forward at the same time *ex nihilo* toward the future” (Sartre 2008a: 167). A present moment cannot pass except by *becoming* the *before* of a For-itself, “which constitutes itself as the *after* of that Present” (167). There is, then, the evident upsurge of a new present, which is making-past the present which it once was, and the making-past of “a present involving the appearance of a For-itself for which this Present is going to become Past” (loc. cit). Simply, this is a phenomenon of temporal becoming as a global modification. The past can only be a past in relation to something (i.e., the present), for if there was nothing, then there could not be a past (of something). Equally a present must be the present of *this* past for it to be a present at all. This metamorphosis additionally “affects not only the pure Present; the former Past and Future are equally affected,” for the past “of the Present which has undergone the modification of Pastness, becomes the Past of a Past – or a Pluperfect” (167). In this instance, the heterogeneity of the Present and the Past is now suppressed, for what made the Present its distinct presentness, and the Past its distinct pastness, has now become Past. The necessity for being to metamorphosise itself establishes duration.

Of course, the future does not cease to be future, for there is always a future in relation to a present or a past, be that immediate or distant. The future, moreover, can never be realised, for it exists only in relation to the present, and a future reached is no longer a future. The For-itself cannot be what the Future promised to be. This creates a split in that the present becomes the former future of the past while denying that it is this future. The unrealised future, the original future, can no longer be the future in relation to the present (which has been surpassed), and so remains the future only to the past, in which case it becomes the “unrealizable co-present of the Present and preserves a total ideality” (Sartre 2008a: 168).

In short, the future can only remain a future if the present constitutes itself as the lack of this future, and so one can never really coincide with one's future. All in all, the relation of the present to the past is a relation of being, not of representation. This dynamic character of temporality is not a contingent quality added to the being of the For-itself, but rather its dynamics are "an essential structure of the For-itself conceived as being which has to be its own nothingness" (170).

Change is the For-itself, in that the For-itself is spontaneity, a spontaneity of which we can say "it *is*," or this "spontaneity should be allowed to define itself; this means both that it is the foundation not only of its nothingness of being but also of its being and that simultaneously being recaptures it to fix it in the given" (Sartre 2008a: 171). The "flight" of the For-itself is the refusal of contingency "by the very act which constitutes the for-itself as being the foundation of its nothingness," yet it is exactly this contingency that is fled, and it can "not be annihilated since I *am* it, but neither can it any longer be as the foundation of its own nothingness since it can be this only in flight" (172). The totality of temporalisation, then, is never achieved: it is refused, and flees from itself. Thus, "the time of consciousness is human reality which temporalises itself as the totality which is to itself its own incompleteness; it is nothingness slipping into a totality as a detotalizing ferment," and this "totality which runs after itself and refuses itself at the same time, which can find in itself no limit to its surpassing because it is its own surpassing and because it surpasses itself toward itself, can under no circumstances exist within the limits of an instant" (loc. cit). There is never an instant in and of itself, precisely because the For-itself never *is*.

In this way, the For-itself is nothingness, which underpins the possibility of transgression and negates harmonious synthesis.¹⁰ Subsequently, Sartre also meets the first demand that led Husserl to posit the transcendental ego in holding that we are barred from any true interaction: as neither term is of the same order, consciousness is one and shares nothing with other consciousnesses, so interaction of this sort is impossible. There is no real point of encounter, rather a mere crossing. For this reason, Baugh (2003: 94) has gone so far as to say that Sartre is the "avowed champion of the unhappy consciousness," exemplified here in the For-itself's vain attempt to realise an impossible totality (temporality), but also in his endless struggle with the Other via the look and his relation to the situation, to which we shall come shortly.¹¹

In repudiating Husserl's idealism, Sartre claims he has "immersed man back in the world," and as such restored to man's "anguish and his sufferings, and to his rebellions too, their full weight" (2004: 51). With this, he declares: "Nothing further is needed to enable us to establish philosophically an absolute positive ethics and politics" (52). This ethics is one of authenticity, typically construed as accepting the enduring the responsibility of one's 'radical choice'. That is to say, our ontological condition (nihilation) leaves us utterly responsible for choosing the self we become and the evaluations that emanate from that self.¹² Authenticity, then, is the mere acceptance of this responsibility. Conjoined to this is idea that the unhappy consciousness, being the axiomatic condition of nihilation, is unsurpassable. As such, authenticity is also the acceptance of a seemingly nihilistic valuation of existence.¹³

Sartre does certainly repudiate Husserl, and in return challenges the notion that the unity of consciousness requires an 'I' standing behind it as its governing centre. The Ego, "is apprehended but also *constituted* by reflective knowledge" (Sartre 2004: 34). It is an abstract, infinite contraction of the material self, a "virtual locus of unity" (34) – or more specifically it is, in relation to the past, an "interpenetrative multiplicity," and in relation to the future, a "bare potentiality," which is actualised and fixed when it comes into contact with events (38). But though consciousness is empty, for intends towards its object, *Being and Nothingness* adds that it does so *through* its situation, or an Outside in which it is already embedded. Thus conscious thetic awareness retroactively creates a fissure between itself and the world. This is precisely how the experience of nothingness should also be understood, and how, from that, we are to understand existential angst. More importantly, not only is the subject not a pre-existing determination that can be found ready-made, it is a fluid effect of reflection, in accordance with a dialectical process within an immanent apparatus or order. As we will see, there can be no true self-transparency, or radical choice in its typical sense.

Phenomenological Ontology

As Sartre makes clear in its infamous introduction, it is precisely the ontological gap or 'veritable abyss' retained by Husserl that he finds problematic and in need of bridging through proper elaboration.¹⁴ Along these lines, Sartre (2008a: 1) concedes that Husserl made considerable progress "by reducing the existent to the series of appearances which manifest it," overcoming "a certain number of dualisms which have embarrassed

philosophy,” replacing them instead with the “monism of the phenomenon.” It has allowed philosophy to sidestep Kant by rejecting the dualism of appearance and essence and “the illusion of worlds-behind-the-scene” (2). With Husserl, the essence of an existent “is no longer a property sunk in the cavity of this existent; it is the manifest law which presides over the succession of its appearances, it is the principle of the series” (loc. cit). Phenomenal being manifests its essence as well as its existence, and so it is nothing but the well-connected series of its manifestations. Yet, by reducing the existent to its manifestations, we overcome one set of dualisms only to establish another: that of the finite and infinite.

Husserl replaces the reality of the thing by the objectivity of the phenomenon and bases this “on an appeal to infinity” (Sartre 2008a: 3). The existent is reduced to a finite series of manifestations. But this is impossible, as each one of them is a “relation to a subject constantly changing” (loc. cit). So, although an object may disclose itself only through a single *Abschattung* (shadow), “the sole fact of there being a subject implies the possibility of multiplying the points of view on that *Abschattung*,” which suffices to “multiply to infinity the *Abschattung* under consideration” (3). Thus the theory of the phenomenon has replaced the thing’s reality with the phenomenon’s objectivity, and this has been based on an appeal to infinity. The appearance, which is finite, indicates itself in its finitude, “but at the same time in order to be grasped as an appearance-of-that-which-appears, it requires that it be surpassed toward infinity” (loc. cit). What appears in fact is only an aspect of the object, and the object is altogether in that aspect and altogether outside it. Thus the outside is opposed in a new way to the inside.

Related to this issue is something more fundamental: “If the essence of the appearance is an ‘appearing’ which is no longer opposed to any being, there arises a legitimate problem concerning *the being of this appearing*” (Sartre 2008a: 4). So is the phenomenon of being identical with the being of phenomena? Is “the being which discloses itself to me, which appears to me, of the same nature as the being of existence of existents which appear to me?” (4). Husserl considers being as an appearance which can be determined in concepts, as opposed to considering being as the condition of revelation. Yet knowledge cannot by itself give an account of being, lest we fall into the infinite regress mentioned above. This relates to the reworking of intentionality away from the question of knowledge. The phenomenon of being, Sartre maintains, requires an appeal to being, to something transphenomenal. Not as something hidden behind phenomena, nor as an appearance as a distinct being. Rather, what is implied is that “the being of the phenomenon although coextensive with the

phenomenon, can not be subject to the phenomenal condition – which is to exist only insofar as it reveals itself – and that consequently it surpasses the knowledge which we have of it and provides the basis for such knowledge” (6).

Although Husserlians may object insofar as the difficulties mentioned pertain to a particular conception of being and that what determines the being of the appearance is the fact that it appears, Sartre (2008a: 6) feels this is “simply a way of choosing new words to clothe the old “*esse est percipi*” of Berkley.” Husserl’s phenomenological reduction treats the noema as unreal, declaring that its *esse* is *percipi* (or that its existence is perception). Charging Husserl with solipsism, Sartre asserts that though “every metaphysics in fact presupposes a theory of knowledge, every theory of knowledge in turn presupposes a metaphysics” (loc. cit). As such, idealism ought “first to give some kind of guarantee for the being of knowledge” (6). The being of knowledge simply cannot be measured by knowledge. It is not subject to the *percipi*. The foundation of being, therefore, must be transphenomenal. Indeed, consciousness “is the transphenomenal dimension of being in the subject” (7).

Thus, rather than dealing with the analysis of a *concept*, Sartre analyses the relation of a being (consciousness or the For-itself) to another being (In-itself), which corresponds to the difference between Husserl’s and existentialism’s phenomenology. In short, consciousness *cannot be bracketed from reality*, for reality plays a fundamental role in its activity. Subjectivity is consciousness (of) consciousness,¹⁵ and consciousness is the revealed-revelation of existents, whereby existents appear before consciousness on the foundation of their being.¹⁶ Where Kant argues that the transcendental subject is also required to provide a distance between the subject and the world, to keep representations from crowding upon the soul, Sartre argues that this ‘crowding’ actually personifies our thrownness in or enthrallment with it, requiring us constantly to react. Self-reflection, in this sense, is always secondary, and so the self, though real, is not itself generative. That is, consciousness can “exist only as *engaged* in this being which surrounds it on all sides and which paralyzes it with its phantom presence” (Sartre 2008a: 114). And this “being comes into the world along with consciousness, at once in its heart and outside it; it is absolute transcendence in absolute immanence” (115). Thus the “*cogito* is indissolubly linked to being-in-itself, not as a thought to its object – which would make the in-itself relative – but as lack to that which defines its lack” (113). Hence Sartre stresses that the “relation of the regions of being is an original emergence and is a part of the very structure of these beings” (28).

However, it is on the question of the precise conceptualisation of such enthrallment that a number of interpretative problems and ambiguities arise. In the first section of *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre (2008a: 19) states that as “the being of consciousness is radically different...its meaning will necessitate a particular elucidation in terms of the revealed-revelation of another type of being, being-for-itself.” Further, he goes on to add that “although the concept of being has this peculiarity of being divided into two regions without communication, we must nevertheless explain how these two regions can be placed under the same heading,” which will necessitate “the investigation of these two types of being” (loc. cit). Arguably, we can only truly grasp the meaning of either one “when we establish their true connection with the notion of being in general and the relations which unite them” (19). Supposedly, this shows that unity lies at the heart of Being, with interiority and exteriority being its complementary structures, but that, more importantly, freedom is not negated by the In-itself, but rather found in the relationship with it, and is therefore absolute.

The initial stages of the argument present such facticity – that is, the necessary connection with the In-itself – through the situation and through our being-for-others (i.e. the look), which themselves are also oppositional relations. At its most basic, this argument holds that elements outside of the self (the situation) structure it, establishing a whole, or what Sartre later calls the ‘singular universal’, and in some respects, a ‘totalisation’. As Sartre (1976a: 59-60) puts it:

For us, man is defined first of all as a being ‘in a situation.’ That means that he forms a synthetic whole with his situation – biological, economic, political, cultural, etc. He cannot be distinguished from his situation, for it forms him and decides his possibilities; but inversely it is he who gives it meaning by making his choices within it and by it. To be in a situation, as we see it, is to *choose oneself* in a situation and also in the choices they themselves make of themselves.

But as the self, which is defined by negation, reacts to this situation in continual flux and tension, there is no “harmonious synthesis” (1963a: 338). We are amidst objects that crush us but which we in turn transcend *ad infinitum*. Therefore freedom, the movement between the self and the situation, exists in dialectical circularity. The thesis and the antithesis “represent the two moments of freedom,” which remain “mutilated and abstract and perpetuate their opposition” (loc. cit). As such, existence “exhausts itself in *maintaining* a conflict without a solution” (273). With regards to the look/ Other, Sartre maintains that Hegel errs in introducing an abstract moment of self-identity given in the knowledge of the Other, portraying both an epistemological and ontological optimism (Sartre 2008a: 262-

269). As Sartre says: “Consciousness is a concrete being *sui generis*, not an abstract unjustifiable relation to identity” (263); it is a “*denied identity*” (201). In this way, Sartre, contra Hegel, is led to conclude that “so long as consciousnesses exist, the separation and conflict of consciousnesses will remain” (268).

It seems that when reading the introduction of *Being and Nothingness*, in conjunction with part I through to the first half of part III, Sartre retains a primary metaphysical polarity, establishing two different orders of being through an absolute opposition, wherein I am (the For-itself) absolute negativity and the world is positivity. The relation between the two regions of being do not merge into one, they merely “cross,” as Merleau-Ponty (1968: 66) puts it, which is to say their union is constructed retroactively and is no real union at all. With such an argument, it is unsurprising that some scholars have deemed this to represent a ‘dialectic of the self’.¹⁷ Positioning himself within this reading, Deleuze (2004b: 373n. 49) adamantly contends that though Sartre’s theory in *Being and Nothingness* is “the first great theory of the Other, because it transcends the alternative,” and that Sartre “is the first to consider the Other as a real structure of a structure,” he falls short and replicates the subject-object split. Through defining his structure by means of the ‘look’ “he fell back into the categories of object and subject, making of the Other the one who constitutes me as an object when he looks at me, even if this means that the Other would himself become an object when I, in turn, look at him,” and so “it seems that the structure Other precedes the look” (ibid). Thus, for Deleuze, with Sartre we find that the Other is what transcends the self, while the subject itself is already transcendent in relation to ‘experience’.¹⁸

In reality, such a reading fails to appreciate that *Being and Nothingness* is a book that strives to move from the abstract to the concrete.¹⁹ As Sartre says, following Laporte, “an abstraction is made when something not capable of existing in isolation is thought of as in an isolated state,” whereas the “concrete by contrast is a totality which can exist by itself alone” (2008a: 27). Further, from this point of view, “consciousness is an abstraction since it conceals within itself an ontological course in the region of the in-itself, and conversely the phenomenon is likewise an abstraction since it must ‘appear’ to consciousness” (loc. cit). The concrete, “is man within the world in that specific union of man with the world which Heidegger, for example, calls ‘being-in-the-world’” (27).²⁰ The self, in other words, is a distinct feature of the world, but not separate from, or constitutive of it. Being is contrasted with Existence in that it is all-embracing and objective as opposed to individual and

subjective. Thus the first half of *Being and Nothingness* deals with the immediacy of experience and the second part with the background of that experience.²¹

With this in mind, as we will now come to see, Sartre's discussion of the body, flesh and desire in *Being and Nothingness*, gestures towards an impersonal, pre-subjective life, in which the Outside/Other to which consciousness is related is one in which it is also already thoroughly embedded. Life, as such, becomes consciousness's immanent Outside, and living thinking (as in thetic awareness) becomes an encounter with something substantial, a direct experience of life forces. Indeed, the consistent thesis throughout Sartre's work is that consciousness, or praxis, exists only as engaged, and it is only in this way that freedom can have any intelligibility. From this, and only from this, consciousness intends towards its objects; that is, *through* its situation, including its body/fleshism. In this case, we are *in and of* world. Once the thing is apprehended and consciousness transitions to thetic awareness of itself, it in turn establishes an empirical variant, a fissure or a partial distance between itself and the world, wherein we are then able to distinguish abstractly between the subject and object.

The Second Stage: the Body and Lived Experience

In accordance with the nature of the *Being and Nothingness*, this thesis first comes into play halfway through it. Here Sartre (2008: 241) begins by conceding that though "some may be surprised that we have treated the problem of knowledge without raising the question of the body and the senses or even once referring to it," it is "not my purpose to misunderstand or to ignore the role of the body." What in fact is important "above all else, in ontology as elsewhere, is to observe strict order in discussion" (loc. cit). Contrary to what Merleau-Ponty will later argue, the body and the flesh were always central to *Being and Nothingness*. Indeed, in viewing the constituting consciousness as some intellectual force, it is evident Merleau-Ponty misconstrues Sartre's fundamental point regarding the body's constituting of the world, and more importantly overlooks the distinction Sartre draws between the ontological primacy of perception (which is thoroughly venerated) and analytical priority insofar as it accords with the existential experience of Being.

Accordingly, the body, "whatever may be its function, appears [note: not "exists"] first as the *known*" (Sartre 2008a: 241). As such, we cannot "refer knowledge back to it or discuss it before we have defined knowing, nor can we derive knowing in its fundamental structure

from the body in any way or manner whatsoever” (loc. cit). The body cannot be *for me* transcendent and known, what I know is the body of another, “and the essential facts which I *know* concerning my own body come from the way in which others see it” (241). Thus, “consciousness *exists* its body” (353), for unreflective consciousness is not consciousness *of* the body. The relation between the body-as-point-of-view and things is an *objective* relation, and the relation of consciousness to the body is an *existential* one. Consciousness, in this instance, can only exist its body as consciousness, wherein my body is a conscious structure of my consciousness. It is “precisely because the body is the point of view on which there can not be a point of view, there is on the level of the unreflective consciousness no consciousness *of* the body,” thus the body “belongs then to the structure of the non-thetic self-consciousness” (353). The body, then, “is what this consciousness *is*; it is not even anything except body. The rest is nothingness and silence” (354). That means to say that despite the body establishing the condition of the possibility for perception, when non-thetically engaged in activities we pass *through* it in order to intend toward the object or world, and so it cannot be known on this level but rather only lived. It is literally only upon reflection that we are made aware of the contingency of our perception, brought on by our own embodiment. But that does not deny the true primacy of its existence. After all, this is a question of knowledge rather than ontology.

In this way, Sartre (2008a: 354) concludes that “consciousness (of) the body is a lateral and retrospective consciousness of what consciousness is without having to be it (*i.e.*, of its inapprehensible contingency, of that in terms of which consciousness makes itself a choice) and hence it is a non-thetic consciousness of the manner in which it is *affected*.” My body is in no way apprehended for itself; rather, it is “a point of view and a point of departure” (355). So although perception may be primary with regards to our relation to the world, it is not primary in terms of our knowledge. Thus, when engaged in phenomenological analysis of the sort that concerns Sartre, “it is important to choose the *order* of our bits of knowledge” (327). The body, then, is only brought in once the analysis moves on to consider the general background of thetic awareness.²²

Critically this relation, or passing through, exists on a non-reflective plane, as a fundamental part of the synthetic totality of man’s being-in-the-world. It is a non-reflective consciousness, in that quite simply it “is non-thetically conscious of self” (Sartre 2002: 38). Sartre’s argues that it is “a mode of our conscious existence, one of the ways in which consciousness understands...its Being-in-the-world” (61). Indeed, this must be the case, for

the world is a synthetic totality, and “*man* is a being of the same type as the *world*; it is even possible that, as Heidegger believes, the notions of the world and of ‘human-reality’ (*Dasein*) are inseparable” (5). Within this, it is rightly asserted that there is a “dual nature of the body, which on the one hand is an object in the world and on the other is immediately *lived* by the consciousness” (50-1). It must *not* be imagined “that consciousness is spontaneous in the sense that it is always free to deny a thing and to affirm it at one and the same moment.... It *knows* itself only in the world” (52-3).

Here, Sartre starts to develop a theory of the pre-personal unconscious, differing from Freud, primarily in that it is not closed-off and deterministic but rather ontological.²³ Hatzimoysis (2011: 56) is clearly right to assert that, when reading Sartre, “it is important not to mistake his critique of the psychoanalytic view of emotions, for a wholesale attack on the idea of an unconscious mind.”²⁴ Sartre (2008b: 199) himself states that he is not “a ‘false friend’ of psychoanalysis, but a critical fellow-traveller, and I have neither desire, nor the wherewithal, to ridicule it.” Certainly it is not the unconscious *per se* that he rejects, but rather the “unconscious in the form in which psychoanalysis presents it to us” (39).

Our state of latency, according to Sartre, is essentially a reflection of our Being-in-the-world as a relational state.²⁵ In *Being and Nothingness*, he criticises psychology for viewing desire as something in man by “virtue of being ‘contained’ by his consciousness,” and further for believing that the meaning of a desire is inherent in the desire itself (Sartre 2008a: 578). Through this method, the psychologist makes the abstract prior to the concrete, with the concrete being merely an organisation of abstract qualities. In reference to the case of Flaubert, he states: “the fact that the ‘need to feel intensely,’ a universal pattern, is disguised and channelled into becoming the need to write – this is not the *explanation* of the ‘calling’ of Flaubert; on the contrary, it *is* what must be explained” (579). The psychologist, then, fails to explain why Flaubert turns to writing rather than painting or music. The fact confronted is given as primary and the analysis stops there. The entire complexity of Flaubert’s behaviour and actions is reduced to certain properties and an arbitrary referential axis, “comparable to those of chemical bodies, beyond which it would *be* foolish to attempt to proceed” (581). Love and jealousy cannot be reduced “to the strict desire of possessing a *particular* woman, but that these emotions aim at laying hold of the world in its entirety through the woman” (583). An act reflects my original choice, my project as situated in my context. This choice carries itself through the pre-reflective, so that it can be enacted without reflection or overtly conscious deliberation.

It is for this reason that Sartre develops an *existential* psychoanalysis. The essential task in this instance is “hermeneutic,” that is, “a deciphering, a determination, and a conceptualization” (Sartre 2008a: 590), deciphering the meaning of acts in relation to a synthetic totality. When Sartre says that we must bring our fundamental choice to light, he is paying homage to a method that “has been furnished for us by the psychoanalysis of Freud and his disciples” (loc. cit). Alike with Freud, Sartre’s existential psychoanalysis considers all objectively discernible manifestations of ‘psychic life’ as symbols maintaining symbolic relations to the fundamental, total structures that make up the individual person. There is a need, in this sense, to restore the two-fold structure: the event of infancy and the psychic crystallisation around this event. The crystallisation is what takes shape in pre-reflective consciousness; it a ‘sway’ which makes every act a manifestation of the totality of the existent.²⁶

In addition, conscious reflection, or consciousness’s non-thetic consciousness of itself, may be able to possess or apprehend all, but this does not necessarily mean that it “commands the instruments and techniques necessary to isolate the choice symbolized” (Sartre 2008a: 591). To be sure, “if the fundamental project is fully experienced by the subject and hence wholly conscious, that certainly does not mean that it must by the same token be *known* by him” (loc. cit). *One has to make a distinction between consciousness and knowledge*. The reflection can only really furnish us with the brute materials “towards which the psychoanalyst must take an objective attitude” (592). Reflection on its own is only ever quasi-knowing. Subsequently – following Freudian analysis – dreams, failures and obsessions are still important to analyse, and still reflect our psychic self. But rather than reflecting the libido or will to power, it reflects the totality of the self, the first primary choice, or our total relation to the world and Others.

The concept of *lived experience* (*le vécu*) of Sartre’s later period expands on this notion, *explicitly* recognising a “dialectical process of psychic life” as well as “processes which are ‘below’ consciousness and which are also rational, but lived as irrational” (Sartre 2008b: 42). In reference to *Saint Genet* and *The Family Idiot*, Sartre states:

The individual interiorizes his social determinations: he interiorizes the relations of production, the family of his childhood, the historical past, the cotemporary institutions, and he then re-exteriorizes these in acts and options which necessarily refer us back to them. (Sartre 2008b : 35)²⁷

Furthermore, such predispositions operate in a *habitual way*, easily recalled into action, *lived* rather than *known*. The “intellectual’s thought must ceaselessly turn back on itself in order to always apprehend itself as a *singular universal*” (249) – a “thought is secretly singularised by the class prejudices inculcated in him since childhood,” (loc. cit) and so the “universality of the idea is limited by the singularity of the fact, a *dated* and *localized* event that *takes place* at a certain point in the history of a nation, and which resumes and totalizes it to the extent that it is a totalized product of it” (251-253).²⁸ This being the case, it is possible to liquidate forms of bad faith in man, such as “the traces of racism within him left over by his childhood, by a rigorous investigation of the ‘incomparable monster’ that is his self” (249).

It is only after, or on top of, this initial relation that Sartre construes the transition from the *body-for-me*, to the *body-for-Others*. Then, from the *body-for-Others* to a third dimension: “I exist for myself as a body known by the Other” (Sartre 2008a: 375). Overall, the Other’s role is bringing our body to reflective consciousness, dragging it out of the non-thetic and transforming it into an object, rather than being the primal form of interaction via alienation. Due to the existence of the Other, my body is “extended outside in a dimension of flight which escapes me” (375). Through the Other my body is alienated, becoming simply a ‘tool-among-tools’ or “a being-a-sense-organ-apprehended-by-sense-organs, and this is accompanied by alienating destruction and a concrete collapse of *my* world which flows toward the Other and which the Other will reapprehend in *his* world” (376). When a person feels embarrassed or feels himself blushing, when he is aware and anxious of a facial scar, acne, bad hair and so forth, he is really “vividly and constantly conscious of his body not as it is for him but as it is *for the Other*” (loc. cit). I cannot be embarrassed by my own body as I exist it, but only as it is for the Other. Thus, when I attempt to hide a scar, acne, or to correct my hair, it is not my *body-for-myself* which I wish to annihilate, but this inapprehensible dimension of the *body-alienated*. In this instance, my body becomes another means through which I may be estranged from myself through the Other.

The Caress and the Flesh

In accordance with Sartre’s attempt to move from the abstract to the concrete, his next task, once making us cognizant of *what* the body is, is to uncover our concrete relations with Others. These will “represent the various attitudes of the for-itself in a world where there are Others” (Sartre 2008a: 383). In turning to the attitude of desire, Sartre stumbles upon

where the body is. The relations uncovered in his analysis of the body, “presuppose a facticity” (loc. cit) – the flesh. Here, Sartre envisions consciousness as engulfed in a body, which is engulfed in the world as the surface between the for-itself and in-itself, or the intensive of consciousness and the extensive Outside to which consciousness intends. The body is: “the fascinating revelation of facticity, that is, as flesh” (480). Thus, by flesh, “we do not mean *a part of* the body such as the dermis, the connective tissues or, specifically, epidermis; neither need we assume that the body will be ‘at rest’ or dozing although often it is thus that its flesh is best revealed” (Sartre 2008a: 412). Rather, prefiguring Merleau-Ponty’s use of the concept, the flesh is the fundamental stuff or element of Being, which the body is in and of. By virtue of this, the body is a third term interface personifying our immersion in the world or the Outside flesh in which our consciousness is already involved. Indeed, the body as surface reabsorbs the finished act into the interpenetrative multiplicity (see Sartre 2004: 38), and as such furnishes and informs the direction of consciousness in the form of the pre-reflective past.

Sartre’s ambition here is to outline how this tactile experience comes to my attention as a focus of awareness. For this, he turns to desire, and the act of the caress – touching. Consciousness becomes ‘clogged’ by sexual desire, “it seems that one is invaded by facticity, that one ceases to flee it and that one slides towards a *passive* consent to the desire” (2008a: 410). In desire, consciousness chooses to exist its facticity on another plane. It “no longer flees it; it attempts to subordinate itself to its own contingency – as it apprehends another body – *i.e.*, another contingency – as desirable,” and so desire is “not only the revelation of the Other’s body but the revelation of my own body,” not as an instrument or a point of view, but insofar as it is “pure facticity” (loc. cit). I feel my body, its sensations, not in a bid to transcend them, but as living and inert datum, as a passion by which I am engaged in the world and in danger in the world. The “non-thetic consciousness allows itself to go over to the body, *wishes to be* the body and to be only the body” (loc. cit). Desire, then, is within the unity of a single act, “the non-thetically lived project of being swallowed up in the body” (411). In desire, “I make myself *flesh in the presence of the Other in order to appropriate the Other’s flesh*” (411). In this situation, I discover my body “as the fascinating revelation of facticity – that is, as flesh,” as the “*pure contingency of presence*” (loc. cit). Desire is “an attempt to strip the body of its movements as of its clothing and to make it exist as pure flesh; it is an attempt to *incarnate* the Other’s body” (411).

It is in this sense that the caress is an appropriation of the Other's body. It is an ensemble of "those rituals which *incarnate* the Other" (Sartre 2008a: 412). Thus the Other is not already incarnated, it did not exist explicitly for me, since I grasped the Other's body in situation; "neither did it exist for her since she transcended it toward her possibilities and toward the object" (loc. cit). The caress causes the Other to be born as flesh for me and for herself. The caress, in truth, reveals the flesh "by stripping the body of its action, by cutting it off from the possibilities which surround it; the caress is designed to uncover the web of inertia beneath the action – i.e., the pure 'being-there' – which sustains it" (loc. cit). Desire, then, is expressed by the caress "*as though by language*" (412).

Crucially, the caress realises the Other's incarnation and as such reveals to me my own incarnation. As with Sartre's theory of emotions, sexual desire represents a radical modification of the For-itself, wherein the body is no longer grasped as the instrument "which can not be utilized by any instrument – i.e., as the synthetic organization of my acts in the world" – if it is lived as flesh; so that it is "as a reference to my flesh that I apprehend the objects in the world" (Sartre 2008a: 414). Thus, in desiring perception, I discover the fleshy nature of objects, realising my flesh by means of their flesh and so on. It is specifically in this sense that it is correlatively the ensnarement of a body by the world. The world "is made *ensnaring*; consciousness is engulfed in a body which is engulfed in the world" (loc. cit) The For-itself attempts to realise a being-in-the-midst-of-the-world as the ultimate project of its being-in-the-world. In short, the "world here appears only as the ground for explicit relations with the *Other*" (414). And so, here we have the third term, via the flesh, for incarnation is the preliminary condition of the appearance of the Other as flesh to my eyes, which in turn realizes my incarnation. In addition, my goal in sexual desire is to cause the Other to be incarnated as flesh in his own eyes. Thus we drag each other onto the level of pure facticity. The experience is transient for Sartre, as pleasure, the fulfilment of desire, is its limit and end, and as such dooms desire to failure (see Sartre 2008a: 418-420).²⁹ Here we witness a pre-reflective bodily cogito, revealing to us that we are not only *in* the world but *of* the world, or that the Outside and other to which consciousness seems transcendent is already embedded within the self.

So what are we to make of those moments in *Being and Nothingness* where Sartre depicts the situation as constituted by consciousness, in which case consciousness is made transcendent to its situation (i.e., Sartre's example of Pierre in the café [Sartre 2008a: 33-5])? It is notable that such statements and examples are given in the first half of *Being and*

Nothingness, in which case we can conclude, in accordance with the comments made earlier regarding analytical priority, that they are designed to depict the phenomenological immediacy of experience as opposed to its ontological housing. That is, such examples reflect the ‘strict order of discussion’, in which the progression of the text itself reflects the argument it is making, moving from the abstract to the concrete. Though consciousness intends outward to the object, the world of the object already weighs upon it. In fact, it is by virtue of the body’s extensity and mechanical movement, or rather the way it is *in* and *of* the world’s flesh, that we can have an intellectual and intuitive experience of reality as extended, memories as continual recordings of these experiences, the past as a springboard for my actions and corresponding thoughts and the ability to think reflectively or thetically under the form of extensive homogeneity.

So what are we to make of the negative? Though Sartre does indeed argue that for there to be real openness, the one who is open to being and who sees must be a partial lacuna in being, wherein the negatite accounts for the way in which the For-itself arises as a knowledge of the In-itself and how this knowledge gives rise to that diversity of things, he goes on to add that negation becomes “a bond of essential being since at least one of the beings on which it depends is such that it points toward the other, that it carries the other in its heart as an absence” (Sartre 2008a: 198). Negation thus depends on something (the flesh of facticity) which exists before the negation and constitutes its matter, in turn making the distinction between the For-itself and In-itself abstract. For Sartre, the whittling down of the status of nothingness (insofar as it is the abstract moment in the primordial being-in-the-world) does not necessitate the deterioration of the value of negative thinking, in that negativity indeed establishes a this, causing it to exist on the thetic level. But this can only arise on the ground of the presence of all being, understood as flesh. Nothingness can only be human reality apprehending itself as excluded from being and perpetually beyond being, in relationship with that ‘nothing’, such that nothingness becomes an illusory apprehension of ourselves as transcendent. Through conscious activity it *appears* to us that we are not the world, spatiality, permanence, matter, or, in short, the In-itself in general. Yet the revelation adds nothing to what is reflected, to the In-itself. Rather, it invests it with internal and external negations, in which ‘this’ and the ‘world’ arise as distinctions, as things that I am not.

From this, we can also come to understand how the caress is not the realisation of a perfect unity between the in-itself and for-itself, but rather the realisation and brief capturing of their

grounding. Indeed, the impossible unity of the in-itself and for-itself are two abstracted sides of Being, so to conflate their unity with that of the revelation of univocity of flesh is to neglect the analytical distinction and direction of *Being and Nothingness* altogether. Put differently, the caress is a ‘successful’ act only insofar as it provides an intuitive moment that serves to deliver us beyond thethetic distinction made in Being, or rather the in-itself/for-itself dualism, wherein our body is actively realised as of the flesh, through which I seek to be with the flesh of the Other. It certainly is not successful in the sense of retroactively unifying the two faces of Being that came out ofthetic reflection. In fact, it is thethetic moment of pleasure as nihilation, and so in conjunction with the diasporic nature of temporality, which disrupts the caress and prevents it from enduring through time. Authenticity, after all, is the acceptance that there is no endurance of any essence in Being, or that the essence of Being is its becoming, its constant slide into nothingness via temporality. Bad faith, particularly in the form of the ‘impossible’ synthesis of the in-itself-for-itself (to become Man-God), then, is precisely the misdirected attempt to realize a static essence, an attempt to realize a concrete Ideal out of a contingent Being, an active denial of what one is, which is what one is not.

Existential Ethics and Immanent Freedom

In terms of conceptualising political struggle itself, then, as far as ‘freedom’ is concerned, Sartre does not look for a break or fracture in immanence or an outside positive supplement. If the forces at work below the simulative level of the self or I are immanent, then so too is resistance. Sartre’s valuative ideal of authenticity speaks to the way in which we seek such a practice of freedom, in which we attempt to recognise and utilise the conditions and factitious limits that have given form to this semblance of the ego, prior to contractual engagements. As said, the appearance of the ego, in this case “is not so much theoretical as practical,” providing a point of reference, or a way to sustain various forms of concrete concerted agency, in turn enabling us to conceptualise self-to-self relations and ethical considerations (Sartre 2004: 48).

It is precisely with this immanent relation in mind that Sartre says the self chooses itself in *situation*, that “the exercise of this freedom may be considered as *authentic* or *inauthentic* according to the choices made in the situation,” that authenticity “consists in having a true and lucid consciousness of the situation, in assuming the responsibilities and risks that it

involves in accepting it in pride or humiliation, sometimes in horror and hate” (1976a: 9). Hence the central Sartrean claim: “man can always make something out of what is made of him” (2008b: 35). That is, man is “totally conditioned by his social existence and yet sufficiently capable of decision to reassume all this conditioning and to become responsible for it” (34). Sartre asserts that this “is the limit I would today accord to freedom: the small movement which makes of a totally conditioned social being someone who does not render back completely what his conditioning has given him” (35). Subsequently, man “cannot be distinguished from his situation, for it forms him and decides his possibilities; but, inversely, it is he who gives it meaning by making his choices within it and by it,” which is to say that to be in a situation is “*to choose oneself* in a situation” (Sartre 1976a: 60). Strictly in this sense, it is said that to choose is to invent: “You are free, therefore choose – that is to say, invent” (Sartre 2007: 43). Choice is a moment of creation and invention precisely because existence is prior to essence. In choosing oneself, then, there is no pre-defined eternal image or identity to which one could refer. Any such image would therefore have to be created anew, but *only* out of the stuff out of which one has been made (hence why “Jewish authenticity consists in choosing oneself *as Jew* – that is, in realizing one’s Jewish condition” [Sartre 1976a: 136]). For that reason, “of all the actions a man may take in order to create himself as he wills to be, there is not one which is not creative,” and we “will to exist at the same time as we fashion our image” (Sartre 2007: 32). It is in this way that man is put in possession of himself as he is and “places the entire responsibility for his existence squarely upon his own shoulders” (31).³⁰

We can say then, that authenticity is understood as a creative task in a manner that prefigures Foucault’s care of self. It recognises that no “rule of general morality can show you what you ought to do: no signs are vouchsafed in this world” (Sartre 2007: 43). Similarly, Sartre strays away from the Platonic model of ‘know thyself’ in emphasising that men have a ‘condition’ as opposed to a ‘nature’ in common (see Sartre 1976a: 60), in emphasising man’s nothingness – existence precedes essence. For this reason, Sartre argues that authenticity is not supposed to refer to an actuality, that “the authenticity of your previous momentum doesn’t protect you in any way against falling next instant into the inauthentic.” Rather, authenticity is “all of a piece” and so “it isn’t enough to have acquired it once, in respect of a particular, concrete circumstance, in order for it to extend itself spontaneously to all the situations in which we are plunged” (Sartre 1984: 220) – it “is by no means enough to be authentic: it’s necessary to adapt one’s life to one’s authenticity” (221). The moment a

person proclaims to be 'authentic', he slips back into bad faith, for he fails to negate, taking his *self* to be (or to possess) an essence of sorts. In this sense, Sartre's philosophy is one of becoming that never reduces itself to a belief in static being. Its negation is tantamount to Zarathustra's 'active destruction' (see Deleuze 2006d: 167).

Thus, authenticity should be viewed as an attitude and practice not only insofar as any static identity would fall back into bad faith, but also insofar as the limit of freedom ensures that we are never quite completely rid of all social conditioning, that we never quite reach a 'pure' existential state. One must always seek to take advantage of the *small movements* – a constant attempt to gain lucid and attentive consciousness of one's situation and take as much responsibility for it as is possible within these parameters – that is, of the limits that define the self. Authenticity does not refer to the radical dissolution of all that makes up the self, a return to some archaic *tabula rasa* wherein one can create something entirely new and distinct from its past. Authenticity is the moment of creative affirmation, but within the confines of a context.³¹

The Third Stage: The *Critique* and Beyond

Though immanence is clearly present in *Being and Nothingness*, the formal structure of the situation and facticity in *Being and Nothingness* remains somewhat abstract and seemingly apolitical, inasmuch as it is separated from material and social processes. Consequently, most of the reproaches made against Sartre's seminal work following its publication arose more or less from a Marxist understanding of materialism.³² In his eagerness to retain the singularity of the existential, Sartre sought to defend it on the Marxists' own terms. Subsequently, in *Search for a Method* (1963b), published before *The Critique of Dialectical Reason*, Sartre approaches the problematic relationship between existentialism and Marxism through the Kierkegaard-Hegel conflict. Kierkegaard, on the one hand, represents the existentialist concern for the unsurpassable opaqueness of the lived experience. Hegel, on the other hand, represents the (western) Marxist concern for the totality. Existentialism champions the Kierkegaardian cause "of pure, unique subjectivity against the universality of essence, the narrow, passionate intransigence of the immediate life against the tranquil mediation of all reality" of Hegelian cause of contemporary Marxism (11). Though Hegel acknowledges both the unity and mutual opposition of life and consciousness, these are each recognised as incomplete from the point of view of the totality. Where Kierkegaard sees the

subjective, Hegel sees contradictions in formation, both representing a split between existence (life) and the object of knowledge (the concept). Conceptually, the two appear irrecoverable. However, Sartre refuses to accept this dichotomy, finding his solution in Marx: “Marx, rather than Kierkegaard or Hegel, is right, since he asserts with Kierkegaard the specificity of human *existence* and, along with Hegel, takes the concrete man in his objective reality” (14).³³

Using Lukács as his foil, Sartre is compelled to argue that Marxism is the dominant philosophy of our time, with existentialism merely playing the part of its subordinate ideology. This view holds to the compatibility of both insofar as both existentialism and Marxist materialism retain a dialectical mode of thought. In particular, Sartre’s revision of freedom involves a revision of the situation to encapsulate the structural constraints imposed on human reality by the givens of capitalist class society, understood in terms of scarcity. Sartre (1963a) maintains that after 1844 Marx sees that material existence is irreducible to knowledge and that praxis outstrips knowledge in its real efficacy. However, Sartre continues that this fundamental position of Marx vis-à-vis the dialectic has been bastardised by Western Marxists, starting with Engels’s dialectic of Nature. Following the rise of a rampant economism (43) and a “mechanistic interpretation of History” (48), the “totalizing investigation has given way to a Scholasticism of the totality” in which the “heuristic principle – ‘to search for the whole in its parts’ – has become the terroristic practice of ‘liquidating the particularity’” (28), typifying a rushed totalisation. Here, to totalise is to replace the particular by a universal, wherein the “aim is not to integrate what is different as such, while preserving for it a relative autonomy, but rather to suppress it” (loc. cit).

Resuming this argument in *The Critique of Dialectical Reason*, Sartre condemns this Marxist Scholasticism for constructing an “*external*” or “*transcendental*” dialectic, typified by an attempt to allow the world to unfold itself by itself and to no one (1976b: 27). Man is taken out of the dialectic, and as such a noumenal consciousness is envisaged, one which, like God, imposes its laws on a passive being (32). Subsequently the dialectic is reduced to an irrationalism, for, by being external, it places the dialectic in exteriority, as a Nature which lies outside of man, becoming an *a priori*, extra-human guide. The totality becomes natural history, of which “human history is only a particular form” (27). Heavily railing against this position of Engels (and Garaudy and Althusser), Sartre is adamant that dialectical reason is revealed and established in and through human praxis, and subsequently is defined by a relation between interiority and exteriority. It is a dialectic which man

produces by producing himself, and which, in turn, produces man. Thus, if there is “such a thing as dialectical materialism, it must be a *historical* materialism, that is to say, a materialism from within; it must be one and the same thing to produce it and to have it imposed on one, to live it and to know it” (33).

Engels’s position is allegedly theoretically untenable, for by trying to discover dialectical reason or laws from Nature, and so ignoring precisely where it is to be seen, he relies on non-dialectical procedures. If there is a dialectical reason, and if this is the Reason of History, this contradiction must itself “be lived dialectically, which means that man must be controlled by the dialectic insofar as he *creates* it, and *create* it insofar as he is controlled by it” (Sartre 1976b: 36). For it is absurd, and borderline mystical, to assert that the dialectic exists without men, driven by some vague inhuman force that governs the world. There is no pre-established schema imposed on individual developments, “neither in someone’s head, nor in the intelligible heavens” (37). The dialectic exists due to certain regions of materiality being structured in such a way “that it cannot not exist” (loc. cit). Sartre firmly roots the dialectic in the situation, a situation which itself is the result of men and their confrontation with one another as they are “dominated by scarcity and necessity” (loc. cit). Where there is a dialectic, there is man, who both creates and lives it. The dialectic then becomes a nominalism, in that there is a totalisation of concrete totalisations effected by a multiplicity of totalising individualities. Yet Sartre describes this as a de-totalised totality in that there is no grand totaliser, only a totalising project.

Interestingly, it is not the re-emergence of Marx that is necessarily important here, despite Sartre’s own posturing. Certainly, Western Marxism acts as a kind of foil for Sartre’s argument, but it is not Marxism itself that is truly or even directly affected here. There are two more subtle, but nonetheless more important things that come as a result of this move in Sartre’s thought. First, is the continuation of his engagement with immanence as depicted in *Being and Nothingness*. In this sense, *The Critique* should not be viewed as a replacement for *Being and Nothingness* as much as a supplement, providing not only a materialisation of situatedness but also a contingent explanation of History and historical struggle. As Sartre makes clear in the second volume of *The Critique*, his position, which opposes Hegelian idealism and external dialecticism, envisions antagonistic reciprocity as a “bond of immanence between epicenters, since each adversary totalizes and transcends the totalizing action of the other” (Sartre 2006: 5). All determinations are concrete and it is a bond of immanence that unites them. The logic of facticity fleshed out in *Being and Nothingness* is

continued, but placed within a particular conceptualisation of History, in this case scarcity (as in the contingent impossibility of satisfying all the needs of an ensemble) (see Sartre 2006: 340). Second, as a result, and though sheathed in dialectical expressions, this serves to anticipate Foucault's *dispositif* and Deleuze's *assemblage*, and in turn the micropolitical as defined in the introduction.

At its most basic, an assemblage is a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble that synthesises and thus consists of divergent elements, be they biological, social, machinic, gnoseological or imaginary. More specifically, these 'elements' are multiplicities: some are impersonal-intensive/molecular/micro (or, rather, 'virtual'), whereas others are molar/macro extensive processes of organisation and strategy (or, rather, 'actual').³⁴ Immanent in a given assemblage, or rather inhabiting and codifying the mutual imbrication of these two domains like its diagrammatic virtual double, is what Deleuze and Guattari (2004b: 155) refer to as an *abstract machine*. This concept contains an immanent material/political Outside, according to the principle of 'double-conditioning' as defined by Foucault (1998: 99-100). For Foucault, micropower relations can sustain or subvert the power of authority, or macro structures, while these very authorities and structures can exercise their powers in ways that strengthen or undermine the microscopic force relations upon which they rely. The one is always in the other, in a dance of immanent causality. This disrupts any privileged position for the subject, or indeed for an institution, when conducting a politics, and in turn provides a powerful justification for an ethics of the self as the first, and even most radical political act. Utilising a formulaic method, this can be related to Sartre's renewed understanding and use of the 'totality' – though of course without obscuring conceptual tensions. We can envision the unsurpassable opaqueness of lived experience, including the flesh and totalisations (the latter drawing on and replacing Sartre's previous take on temporality), as making up the 'micro' element, and the totality of the social, and totalisation of the material world as making up the 'macro', with scarcity effectively taking the place of the abstract machine.

Indeed, in saying that the *Critique* materialises what was already present in *Being and Nothingness*, it follows that the way Sartre's rethinking of totality anticipates the assemblage is already prefigured in *Being and Nothingness*. Questions of Sartre's interpretation of Bergson aside, it is evident that his take on duration in *Being and Nothingness* as the basis of the for-itself still has critical elements that meet the general criteria of a virtual or intensive multiplicity described by the early Bergson (2001: 128 and 162-4) and in part by Deleuze.

It speaks to a structure of time, or a mental synthesis in which the three dimensions of time and their corresponding psychic states interpenetrate and melt into one another to establish a fluctuating synthetic whole (a totalisation) set off from an extensive Outside to which consciousness continually intends in a condemned effort to achieve self-coincidence. That means to say, it is a reality, and a condition of our experience of reality, initially beyond though related to the corresponding symbolic representations of such intensities juxtaposed in an ideal extended space. Indeed, in the perpetual flight toward the Outside, the future is not instantaneous or homogeneously continuous, but rather diasporic, a non-chronological synthesis of images occurring, as Deleuze (2006a: 112) would put it, “in a period of time shorter than the shortest continuous period imaginable.”

To be sure, as we saw, Sartre explicitly argues that the past is not present in thethetic (positional) mode of consciousness, but is nevertheless constantly there, surrounding it essentially as a facticity continually and pre-reflectively orientating consciousness’s for-itself to the world. It is the “origin and springboard of all my actions,” and my “contingent and gratuitous bond with the world and with myself inasmuch as I constantly live it as a total abandonment” (Sartre 2008a: 164). Explicitly employing Bergson’s terminology from *Time and Free Will*, Sartre goes on to add that the Ego is an abstract, infinite contraction of the material self, a “virtual locus of unity” (34) – or, more specifically, it is, in relation to the past as facticity, an “interpenetrative multiplicity,” and in relation to the future, a “bare potentiality” which is actualised and fixed when it comes into contact with events (38). Here, the Ego “is apprehended but also *constituted* by reflective knowledge” (Sartre 2004b: 34).

Sartre reasserts this point through the terminology of totalisation and totality in the *Critique*, in order to establish it in direct opposition to those Marxist thinkers who think in terms of absolute, deterministic totalities (such as Lukács’s use of ‘totality’, in which the proletariat is the universal subject of history). The circularity of the regressive-progressive method underpinning it is designed to emphasise that nothing is subordinate to an *a priori*, or that rather the plurality of a multiplicity cannot refer back to a stable unity, that Being is becoming. Totalisation is “never achieved” and “the totality exists at best only in the form of a detotalized totality” (1963b: 78). Sartre’s major grievance with contemporary Marxism is its attempt to develop a dialectic as the movement of a unity already made, as opposed to a unity in a process of constant becoming, via temporal shifts in immanent circularity with the wider macro reality.

For Sartre, the relationship to everything, that is to say, the totality of beings, the totality of what-is, and the claim that in this man finds himself situated in a dialectical relationship, can only be made intelligible through totalisation and praxis. Totalisation in turn is related to totality, as in “a being which, while radically distinct from the sum of its parts, is present in its entirety, in one form or another, in each of these parts, and which relates to itself either through its relation to one or more of its parts or through its relation to the relations between all of some of them” (1976b: 45). In reality this refers to the moment of synthesis, to “the most rigorous synthesis of the most differentiated multiplicity” (46). That is to say, it is a synthesising activity which brings together disparate elements into a meaningful whole, which is also to say that man is the make-up of his situation, or that a total structure (i.e. social totality) is made up of constituent parts. In essence, praxis, as in the ‘pure spontaneity’ of consciousness and the material modification of the world, must be understood as a material totalisation (or synthesis) of its situation, an integration of material multiplicity into a projected totality. We saw this relation in *Being and Nothingness*. The major difference is that now it is being posited in a new terminology, in a direct material/political setting and with direct reference to it as a relation of immanence and immanent causality. Indeed, as with the assemblage, this is not to undermine the univocal nature of the very elements being brought together. Their disparate nature is only viewed from the vantage point of praxis, or retroactive identification as a moment of incarnation, wherein a practical reality envelops in its own singularity the ensemble of totalisations in progress – incarnation is totalisation as individuated (2006b: 28). Furthermore, each struggle is a singularisation of all the circumstances of the social ensemble in movement. By this singularisation, it incarnates the totalisation-of-envelopment constituted by the historical process – “every totalization is enveloping as a totalization as well as enveloped as a singularity” (49).

Corresponding to the indiscernibility of the assemblage and its corresponding lines of subjectivation (see Deleuze 2007: 345), this is a never-ending *process*. In this instance, negation as temporality exists within the process of totalisation (which is a constant projection into the future) and it is put into opposition with new projects (counter-finalities) that detotalise it. (This can be taken to correspond to the disjunctive excess of an assemblage, which propels self-overcoming and therefore becoming itself.) Thus there is a detotalised nature of all totalities and no ultimate or teleological movement. In this sense, the totality (a social totality, a political totality, a cultural totality, and so on), as with the assemblage, is relative, a mere ‘appearance’ of a process that must be upheld for it to appear. As Sartre

(1976b: 45) says, the orchestra has the appearance of a totality by virtue of active totalisation. The various instruments alone, without labour-power, merely represent a material multiplicity. It takes human praxis to totalise these disparate parts actively into a projected totality, in this case a piece of music. The exterior world is transformed into a certain unity by a network of interior relations. There can never be the true realisation of a stable totality itself. As soon as the process of totalisation stops, the ‘appearance’ of the totality will collapse. In this way, the totality is only a regulative principle of the totalisation, and so both have the same status. Totalisation, then, refers to the process which, through the multiplicities, continues that synthetic labour, “which makes each part an expression of the world” (46). Thus, it is a “developing totalisation,” and the dialectic is a “totalising activity” (47).

For this reason, Sartre defines the totality as a “totalising project” (1976b: 113).³⁵ When Sartre describes the mediation of isolated individuals through the third party, he notes that the third comprehends the isolated individual in reference to his totalisation, that is to say, “I perceive their gestures in terms of the aims they set themselves, and so on the basis of a future which they project” (102). And so, each one of their individual acts or actions is taken to be an expression of a future aim or total whole, i.e., the various acts of a builder who is building a wall (the future totality). I can only understand the actions of men from the point of view of totalisation. Equally, to act according to one’s project is to arrange the material field according to a future, and so I must grasp the material field in its totality (which, as we shall shortly see, Sartre envisions as being a field of scarcity). Subsequently, to totalise is to temporalise, which returns us to the immanent movement of consciousness. Or, rather, the human ensemble “temporalises its (the individual’s) totalisation and totalises its temporality” (55).

However, this totalisation (negation by praxis) exists in a dialectical tension with other totalisations as mediated by the *material world*, and similarly as mediated and conditioned by the totalised and totalising past of the process of human developments: “I totalise myself on the basis of centuries of history and, in accordance with my culture, I totalise this experience” (Sartre 1976b: 54). The individual life becomes “diluted” in the “pluridimensional human ensemble,” which both temporalises its totalisation and totalises its temporality (55). Hence when Sartre speaks of the “interiorisation of exteriority” and the “exteriorisation of interiority” (60), he is essentially stating that the wider macro material totality conditions our unique micro totalisation, which in turn conditions the wider macro

totality, which in turn conditions us, and so on (what Sartre refers to as “circularities” and “feed-back devices” [16]). Such counter-finalities can transform into a practico-inert – a field of activity no longer responsive to the group struggle which founded it (i.e. bureaucracy) – constituting the critical level of “social Being” (230), in that we all arise in the same field of action or material field of multiplicity. In this way, it is said that beneath the rift of antagonistic dissociation, “we find not the infinite void but unity again, and human presence. The fissure between the enveloped incarnations allows the plenitude of the unity of immanence to appear as a totalizing and singular incarnation *of all incarnations taken together*” (Sartre 2006: 86). Unity is dissociated within a vaster unity, i.e., that of the totalisation-of-envelopment, which is one of immanence (see Sartre 2006: 85 and 448).

So being, as in man, totalises itself from birth, “and will continue to totalise itself until death” (Sartre 1976b: 51). The individual lived and still lives the historical categories (practico-inert and seriality) in interiority. It is the totalisation itself, the “vicissitudes of his community, and his personal joys and sorrows...his love or family relations, through his friendships and...the ‘relations of production’ that have marked his life,” that bring about his successes and his failures, and that reveal the dialectical bonds of existence. Man, then, is an expression of the whole (the totality), in terms of both History and culture, and the whole is the expression of man (totalisations). The human ensemble constitutes the individual and the individual totalises the totality by the very style in which he lives them. I am “dialectically conditioned by the totalised and totalising past of the process of human development” (54). I am a living mediation between these different kinds of ensembles. I totalise the experience of my situation, and so in this way the basis of my life “is centuries old” (loc. cit). This certainly reflects a heterogeneous though immanent relation between myself and my situation, which will contextualise and shape the constitution and construction of myself as a total being, and the totality or situation in which my being shall try to totalise itself. Crucially, these totalisations do not dissolve the collectives, nor do they unify a multiplicity into a group. Rather, it refers to the way in which every man defines his practical field in a fundamentally univocal relationship, wherein the practical field is engendered by praxis and transformed perpetually by it. Thus, if it “was right to speak of a transformation of the agents (and of praxis) by the field, this transformation did not break the univocal nature of the fundamental relationship” as a “synthetic immanence of exteriority” (Sartre 2006: 165). All interior exteriorisations of praxis take place against a “background of immanence” (231); the agent and the praxis are modified by the practico-

inert, “but in immanence” *inasmuch as they work inside the practical field*. Every man is linked to every man, even if unknown to one another, by an undetermined yet “reciprocal bond of immanence,” constantly ready “to be actualized,” revealing “the relationship of two persons as having *always* existed” (247; see also Sartre 1976b: 109).

Once more placing the body at the centre of this operation, as the ultimate locus of interiorisation, Sartre is led to re-endorse his earlier position on the flesh, but now within the context of a material social reality. The whole event, the process of the social totalisation-of-envelopment, is incarnated, it becomes the body, and will be resuscitated, re-exteriorised, re-produced even, in the form of an enveloped totalisation. In this respect, the body of flesh is similar to the Body without Organs (or the body and pleasure in Foucault), the recording surface of differentiator that disjunctively connects the micro and macro through the self. Indeed, being not inert matter, but rather an affective device, the body will express this immanent bond in its desires. That is, the “fundamental existence of the sexes as a bond of reciprocity...disposes [the individual] in its carnal depth – and within the framework of the historical conjecture – to reactualise, by transcending, the relation of immanence that conditions him in his flesh by means of *that* particular women: i.e. to realize himself as sexual behaviour at every ‘opportunity’, in every *encounter*, i.e. (outside of work) in a permanent way” (Sartre 2006: 260).

Thus, once again, the body makes itself flesh, but also the flesh becomes act, “while retaining the opaque passivity of fleshly thickening to the very point of orientating practically...and revealing its own arousal,” thus the ‘carnal act’ (Sartre 2006: 260). Here the body-instrument becomes facticity insofar as it is determined in interiority by the concrete encounter of a particular other body, and, through this facticity transcended towards the other, it strives to wrest the other’s body away from instrumentality. This being the case, the flesh is transcended in its very solitude, to the solitude and contingency of the Other. It is ambivalent, then, in that it is simultaneously action and passion. The carnal contingency of lived experience is transcended by being turned into passivity, only to act through this very passivity through the flesh of the other. This relation, it is maintained, “is particularized in every case by a finite – albeit hard to numerate – ensemble of factors” (261). The enveloping totalisation is incarnated by every singularity, and every singularity defines itself simultaneously as an incarnation and an enveloped totalisation. What this adds to authenticity, then, is a material situation in which freedom arises and through which freedom navigates. Its self-experimental model is clearly not merely ethical, but ethico-political,

seeking to subvert and play with a sense of self constituted through immanent processes of totalisation-detotalisation of praxis.

The significance of the assemblage, and more specifically Sartre's prefiguring of it, is the way in which its univocal immanence delivers us away from a teleological, segmented and/or subject-based conceptualisation of the social world. Rather, the social world is shown to be a fluid process of contingent and heterogeneous connections that permeate various levels of organisation, combining micro and macro elements such that one cannot be truly understood or defined without reference to the other. The subject – though this is already a misleading term – is not an epicentre of social reality, but rather a variant of it, the effect of an immanent generativity. This serves to push Sartrean authenticity, as outlined above, to its absolute limit, in which case it echoes Foucauldian and Deleuzian ethics and micropolitics. That is, though the terminology and aspects of the conceptualisation differ, it refers to that which is constitutive of our being, operating below, and in conjunction with, the level of segmented forms or actualised expressions. Given this double-conditioning, and the fact that the body of the flesh is the interface or pivot point, it follows that resistance takes the form of an experimental aesthetic (what Deleuze calls the ethics of becoming a Body without Organs) aimed at affirmatively rerouting, subverting and playing with this constitutive virtual or intensive level. This in turn has the power to surmount the categories of standard politics either by undermining actual forms or mutating them from within. Or, rather, a practice of the self in this vein has the ability to subvert and alter the resonance of the feedback mechanism underpinning the process of totalisation. As with the assemblage, then, to stay at the level of subjects, identities, social forms and institutions, or to privilege one aspect of social reality at the expense of another, is to merely capture one half of social reality.

Conceptual Limits

There is some scope to argue that Sartre fails to complete immanence in any absolute sense, or that his take on subjectivity is not unilateral and consistent. Certainly it seems that the retention of some form of ontological polarity – at least insofar as the language itself is retained – evokes an image of transcendence. In anticipation of our discussion in the next chapter, we would do well to note Merleau-Ponty's statement that language, much like music, "can sustain a sense by virtue of its own arrangement, catch a meaning in its own mesh, that it does so without exception each time it is conquering, active, creative language,

each time something is, in the strong sense, said” (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 153). That is to say, language signifies existentially according to its expressive styles, conveying a latent existential sensitivity. With specific regard for Sartre, although immanence underpins his ontology, he did not escape dualist ways of expressing negativity, perhaps underestimating the difficulty of conveying the chiasmic interworld to which he was reaching. Invariably, this led to an image of subjectivity in which existential processes seem attributed to a subject and in which the philosophical emphasis still *seems* to be on a knowing, meaning-giving (*sens*) consciousness, even though it is precognitive. As said earlier, Sartre’s early and middle works are littered with explicit rejections of immanence on the basis that it denies the Outside to which consciousness intends, and which already weigh upon us. It is only in the *Critique*, as evidenced above, that we finally see Sartre move away from this rather simplistic understanding of immanence as pure idealist interiority, as “the pure subjectivity of the instantaneous *cogito*,” (Sartre 2008a: 68) or as some pure internal conditioning that denies any ontological footing for the Other and Outside. Immanence, as expressed and employed in the *Critique*, clearly has its own Outside. Even so, the conceptualisation is limited by its dualistic and dialectical expression, in which case some form of the negative (and so a formal transcendence) persists as seemingly integral to the process of subjectivity.

Further, this conceptual limitation has led Sartre’s interpreters – and at times Sartre himself – unwittingly to endorse a politics of transcendence, one that serves to replicate the very sovereign-centred juridico-political model of liberalism and social contract theory that his ontology as we have construed it, rails against.³⁶ With regards to Sartre, this is most clearly evident in his *Notebooks for an Ethics*, when he speaks of ‘converting’ the conflictual ‘hell’ of human passions into a mutually supportive inter-subjective city of ends. Sartre thematically links this with socialism, insofar as capitalism is seen to perpetuate oppressive structures and conflictual alienation between the self and the Other (Sartre 1992: 20 and 500). In *The Rome Lectures*, there are moments when this conflictual or oppositional view is conflated with scarcity and need, wherein the fulfilment of need is seen as the anecdote which would entail a fairer distribution of resources globally (see Anderson 1993: 129-136). In *A Plea for Intellectuals*, Sartre speaks of bourgeois humanism as an “ideology complex” that is formed through superstructures at the hands of the “ruling class” (Sartre 2008b: 237-8). That is not to say we should reject such political concerns as unimportant or unreal. The problem arises when they are not founded on the question of the self as presented in a politics

of immanence or when they are treated as separate concerns. In Sartre's case, these moments of transcendence are not always and consistently linked with his moment of immanence.

In addition to this ambiguity of language, Sartre's use of the flesh and the body, without its support or reference to Merleau-Ponty, contains Kantian ambiguities insofar as it retains traces of the very representationalism he sought to overcome, primarily in that the body is given the role of mediation. Given Sartre's commitment to realism, this is not the intention, and though the body appears to mediate, it is envisioned as doing so without, or rather beyond, representation.³⁷ However, it will take Merleau-Ponty to elucidate this point, and from it to develop a notion of generative flesh/body that moves us as close as possible to immanence within the scope of phenomenology (limited only in straddling too closely to the phenomenon as opposed to its violent genesis or force).

In this respect, Sartre cannot be said to provide a complete or consistent picture of immanence, but certainly he instigates a project of it in both ontological and political terms, already putting into doubt the central premise underpinning liberal politics and transcendence: that of the centred-self, and that of the subject-object split. As I will argue in the next chapter, Merleau-Ponty not only 'fleshes out' the flesh, so to speak, but also develops a language, specifically in terms of the fold, beyond Sartre's dualistic tendencies, one that is capable of conveying immanence. This, if anything, is Merleau-Ponty's advantage over Sartre. To my mind, this is precisely why Sartre, in a number of his later essays, very subtly clarifies his position with reference to Merleau-Ponty.³⁸ But it is Sartre who instigates this project and sets its philosophical context.

Notes

¹ Mary Warnock (1970: 128), for instance, claims that with *The Critique* “we see that Sartre has given up his attempt to present and prove human freedom by reference to the concrete fact that we each experience our freedom in anguish.” Similarly Barrett (1990: 245) contends that Sartre’s early work epitomises a kind of Cartesian dualism, which seems foreign to the dialectic of *The Critique*. See also Craib (1976: 93) and Fox (2003: 149).

² See for instance Cumming (1979: 181) and Baugh (2003: 101). Catalano (2005: 28 and 1996: 65), for his part, certainly appreciates the fact that there is a degree of ontological continuity throughout Sartre’s work, but he does not locate the dialectic of the situation in his early period, and as a result he contends that Sartre must be understood from primarily *The Critique*. Allegedly it is from this perspective, taking a backward glance at *Being and Nothingness* and the *Notebooks*, that one is best equipped to understand Sartre’s thinking and ethics).

³ For instance, in the experience of the perception of a white piece of paper, “we discover through properly directed noticing the sensory datum ‘white,’” which is “something that belongs inseparably to the essence of the concrete perception, as a *real (reelles)* concrete constitutive portion of it” (Husserl: 2012: 68). In short, a “*hyletic or material data*” (176) accounts for the way in which sensory data “offer themselves as material for intentional informing or bestowals of meaning at differential levels” (175), or how “objective unities of every region and category ‘are consciously constituted’” (179-80). Thus, what “forms the materials into intentional experiences and brings in the specific element of intentionality is the same as that which gives its specific meaning to our use of the term ‘consciousness’, in according with which consciousness points *eo ipso* to something of which it is the consciousness” (176).

⁴ See Somers-Hall (2012: 24).

⁵ Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick’s earlier translation of the text indeed renders the French ‘*apparence*’ as ‘*semblance*’, which seems more appropriate given its use in the context of Sartre discussing the ego’s ‘*pseudo-spontaneity*’. See Sartre (1957: 79).

⁶ As we will see in the fourth chapter, for Deleuze (2004b: 118), the emissions of singularities that make up a multiplicity occur on an unconscious surface and possess “a mobile, immanent principle of auto-unification through a *nomadic distribution*, radically distinct from fixed and sedentary distributions as conditions of the syntheses of consciousness.” Thus, far from being individual or personal, “singularities preside over the genesis of individuals and persons; they are distributed in a ‘potential’ which admits neither Self nor I, but which produces them by actualizing or realizing itself, although the figures of this actualization do not at all resemble the realized potential” (loc. cit).

⁷ According to Sartre, both Descartes and Kant “start from the presupposition of a time which would be a form of division and which itself dissolves in pure multiplicity,” but “since the unity of time can not be furnished by time itself, both philosophers put an extra-temporal being in charge of it” (Sartre 2008a: 156). This cannot lead to the temporal for either we will implicitly and surreptitiously temporalise the non-temporal, or “if we scrupulously preserve its non-temporality, time will become a pure human illusion, a dream” (156).

⁸ Yet, in contradistinction to Heidegger’s preference for future, Sartre (2008a: 165) maintains that “it is best to put the accent on the present ekstasis and not on the future ekstasis... for it is as revelation to itself that the For-itself *is* its Past, as that which it has-to-be-for-itself in a nihilating surpassing.” This view is shared by Merleau-Ponty (2002: 497). The present is not ontologically prior, as already

said, to the two other dimensions; indeed they condition it as much as it conditions them. Nevertheless “it is the mould of non-being indispensable for the total synthetic form of Temporality” (loc. cit).

⁹ Accordingly this problem has for a long time been “disguised by a conception of the human being as an In-itself” (Sartre 2008a: 165). Kant, for example, puts forward a non-temporal permanence, which remains across time, reducing temporality to no more than the measure and order of change. This cannot satisfy us for it fails to provide any understanding as to how the present becomes past – a point, as we will see in chapter 4, taken up by Deleuze in the second synthesis of time, drawing on Bergson. Sartre makes clear that the duration of the For-itself is due neither to permanence nor to a witness (i.e. God). It comes through the temporal aspect of the For-itself, again internal, nihilating the being of consciousness. Man arises into the present through nihilation of a past, and consigning his current temporality into a past temporal dimension. Critically, man is never completely present to himself. He is in perpetual flight. This stands in contrast to Bergsonian (and Deleuzian) duration, in which the present can be virtually past while it is actually present. For Sartre, it is essential to keep in mind, as Catalano (1985: 121) puts it, “both the multiplicity and the unity of the temporal,” for if we start with the multiplicity of before and after, “we will never arrive at the unity of duration.” That is, time must be made to be by a temporalising being that is diasporic. It is precisely this unity that is said to be missing in Bergson’s account, insofar as it cannot explain how the past is related to consciousness, or rather how it is perceived as *my* past: “we even affirm that duration is a multiplicity of interpenetration and that the past is continually organized with the present. But for all that we have not provided any reason for this organization and this interpenetration; we have not explained how the past can ‘be reborn’ to haunt us, in short to exist *for us*. If it is unconscious, as Bergson claims, and if the unconscious is inactive, how can it weave itself into the woof of our present consciousness? How does it emanate from the past as such?” (Sartre 2008a: 132). Ultimately, whether the past *is*, or, as Descartes claims, *is not any longer*, “is hardly of any importance if we are to begin by cutting down all bridges between it and our present” (133). What both Bergson and Sartre are missing is the way in which, as Deleuze figures it, a virtual multiplicity of the past is related to consciousness through the disjunctive syntheses of the dark precursor, which in itself serves to displace radically any semblance of a personal or individual self. The ego is consummated, or consumed retrospectively, and thus unity is taken out of the hands of the subject entirely. We will come to this in the chp. 4.

¹⁰ It is specifically in this sense that Sartre’s take on time is intricately woven into his theory of nothingness, a point seemingly missed by a number of interpreters, i.e., Hatzimoysis (2011: 31), Warnock’s (1970: 87), Catalano (2005), Detmer (2005 :81), Anderson (1993: 11-14), and Danto (1975: 35-70). Barnes (1974: 10) and McCumber (2011: 271-274) are exceptions in this regard. In addition to this take on temporality, and contra Hegel’s presupposition that Being and nothingness are empty abstractions, it is not the case that Being *is* and that nothingness *is not* (see Sartre 2008a: 39). Nothingness is logically subsequent to Being since it presupposes Being in order to deny it, “since the irreducible quality of the *not* comes to add itself to that undifferentiated mass of being in order to release it” (loc. cit). Nothingness is not an original abyss from which Being arose, but rather is an abyss created by Being. Being and nothingness can be viewed as both necessary parts of the real, without an attempt to make being ‘pass into’ nothingness.

Subsequently, Sartre claims that nothingness is neither before nor after being, *nor is it outside of being*. Nothingness “lies coiled in the heart of being – like a worm” (Sartre 2008a:45). The origin of nothingness would then be in the being of Being, in Man as a being-in-the-world. This means human reality, Man, has to be *freedom*. This ‘freedom’ is not an essence of human reality, it is indeed *nothing*. The relation of existence to essence is not comparable to what it is for the things of the world,

for *existence precedes essence*. Human freedom precedes essence and makes it possible: “Man does not exist *first* in order to be free *subsequently*; there is no difference between the being of man and his *being-free*” (49). As such, Sartre sides with Hegel in seeing the Mind as the negative. Equally, though Hegel grounds negation in man, he takes being and nothingness to be logically contemporary, which reduces nothingness to an emptiness, and as such to a *thing*. Thus, alike with Heidegger, Sartre does not preserve a being for non-being, for “Nothing is not; it nihilates itself” (41).

¹¹ In *The Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre (2008a: 259) held he could “escape solipsism by refuting Husserl’s concept of the existence of the Transcendental ‘Ego’.” Sartre’s impersonal subjectivity is void of a preeminent subject residing over all others. Thus it is felt that there is no issue in getting out of *this* subject, known as my ego. Although he continues to maintain throughout his work that “the hypothesis of a transcendental subject is useless and disastrous,” Sartre’s post-*Transcendence* works admit that “it does not help one bit to solve the question of the existence of Others” (259). In *Being and Nothingness* he moves away from simple (albeit ‘thin’) Cartesianism, which hopes to posit the problem of the Other in terms of the *cogito*, claiming instead that “the existence of the Other renders the *cogito* possible as the abstract moment when the self is apprehended as an object” (260). The “road of interiority passes through the Other” (loc. cit). Simply put, he claims that the only way to escape solipsism, and therefore to understand subjectivity, is through the development of a dialectic of the negative, exemplified by the look (*le regard*). The look represents a relational ontology, wherein my consciousness is modified by the presence of Others. The Other, in this instance, becomes the one who is looking at me, a subject who engulfs me with his freedom, making me a “transcendence-transcended” (Sartre 2008a: 287): “It means that I am suddenly affected in my being and that essential modifications appear in my structure – modifications which I can apprehend and fix conceptually by means of the reflective *cogito*” (284).

¹² Charles Taylor (1976: 293) famously reproaches this supposedly Sartrean take on radical choice as falling in on itself, in that a “choice made without regard to anything, without the agent feeling any solicitation to one alternative or another,” provides nothing to differentiate between or from, and so provides no real choice at all. That is, choice always takes place in a particular context or prior background of prejudgments and self-identity, establishing an implicit structure of evaluations that articulate “our sense of *what is worthy, or higher, or more integrated, or more fulfilling, and so forth*” (294). Thus Taylor reconfigures authentic responsibility to stand for the idea of the ability to question the self that one is. Although rejecting the Augustinian undercurrents of Taylor’s alternative, Connolly’s criticism of Sartrean authenticity follows a similar tract. Focusing on *Anti-Semite and Jew* in particular, Connolly (1991: 102) argues that the Sartrean account of responsibility and evil “draws upon a second tier of considerations that threaten to reinstate the very dialectic it has identified and condemned.” There are “two poles in the (early) Sartrean model: the absolute freedom of the self to choose its self and the ‘situation’ in which such choices occur,” and while “everyone has absolute choice and a situation at the abstract level,” Sartre “locates the anti-Semite and the Jew at opposite poles from each other in assigning responsibility for this condition” (102). The anti-Semite is held entirely responsible for his attitude, whereas the Jew is excused, given that he is born into the situation of the Jew, condemned from the very beginning. But is it not the case that the anti-Semite has been placed in a situation of certain cultural standards, intellectuality, social achievement, and so forth, that could “easily generate a set of alternatives that degrade the self-respect of agents enacting them?” (Connolly 1991: 103). Equally, why not identify pressures toward inauthenticity, to treat identity as given or true, in both parties? If we were to equally apply the logic of the first pole, we would risk replicating and intensifying the logic of anti-Semitism (the Jew is to blame!); with regards to the second, we would risk redeeming the anti-Semite (it’s not his fault!). The rhetorical strategy maintains symmetry between “the depth of the evil identified (anti-Semitism) and the locus of responsible agency for it (anti-Semite)” (Connolly 1991: 103). Thus it is maintained that for every evil there must be an agent whose “level of responsibility is proportionate to the seriousness of the evil” (loc. cit). Connolly warns that, though this may be morally satisfying, it contains a seed of

cruelty, insofar as it “requires Sartre to relocate and recapitulate the structure of accusations the anti-Semite projects upon the other” (103). Sartre’s thesis retains a sense of cruelty insofar as it maintains a symmetry between an evil act and the level of responsibility for that act. Although there is a germ of truth in Connolly’s claim, it must be taken with caution. First, because it is evident that in using dialectical reason in *Anti-Semite and Jew*, Sartre (1976a: 59) stresses that the individual is a synthesis between the biological, psychical and social, and that man “forms a synthetic whole with his situation.” Specially, in this case the situation *is* defined within a political society (although that does not exclude other considerations). Thus Sartre maintains that all divisive thinking, structured along bad faith, has “economic and social causes” (149). An act of evil does not necessarily match the level of responsibility for it. To be sure, anti-Semitism “manifests the *separation* of men and their isolation in the midst of the community” (149). Further, as we can see, Sartre’s take on the self is more nuanced than Connolly perhaps allows, particularly when concerning the flesh.

¹³ Subsequently a number of Sartre scholars, such as Catalano (1996: 64), claim that underlying *all* of Sartre’s concrete moral phenomenological descriptions “is the attempt to demystify norms and values to their human origins and to show further how, individually and collectively, we create and sustain our own bad faith and hierarchical ordering of our human condition.” Similarly Paul Crittenden (2009: 20) offers an interpretation of the early Sartre as espousing an ethics of ‘conversion’. Taken from the Greek *metanoia*, ‘conversion’ refers to a “change of mind and heart involving a turning from a negative state of sin or estrangement to a new way of life and fulfillment with others in union with God” (Crittenden 2009: 27). Stripped of its theological underpinnings, Sartre is seen as promoting the conversion from the world of seriousness to a world of authenticity. Crittenden (2009: 30) believes that this ethic can be traced back to Sartre’s *Transcendence of the Ego* wherein he equates pure reflection with a ‘philosophical foundation for an ethics’. In pure reflection where one is aware of one’s existential nature, contingency, and freedom, one rejects or abandons the original project of being, the attempt to be an in-itself-for-itself (God), refusing to identify oneself with the Ego or with the being of objects, and becomes a celebrated nothingness. Crittenden goes on to say that through this, Sartre argues that the pursuit of Truth is an ethical goal. To renounce the serious world is to find the truth of Being, that it is a nothingness, and thus leads us to take responsibility for the creation of our self and our own value system.

¹⁴ This critical move is overlooked by Duncan (2005: 104) when he argues that Sartre provides an anti-representational realism, or a “realism-all-the-way-down.” That is, by exclusively focusing on *The Transcendence of the Ego*, Duncan views Sartre as a radical Husserlian, wherein his phenomenology-inspired repudiation of transcendental categories overcomes the mediating epistemological machinery commonplace in representationalism. Hatzyimoyisis (2011: 11) follows a similar path in that he maintains that for Sartre our “intentional relation to the world is an opening to the phenomena.” Or, rather, where the significance of intentionality is that “it denotes the connection between two items that are clearly distinct and irreducible to each other: consciousness, and what one is conscious *of*” (15). Not only does such a reading fail to recognise the advent of enthrallment in *Being and Nothingness*, and the subsequent fleshism in which this intentional relation between nomination and the thing is merely an expressive effect or the actualisation of a potentiality as opposed to constitutive, it simultaneously opens Sartre up to Deleuze’s infamous criticism that Sartre’s thesis is hindered precisely because it is still determined by consciousness, in which case it must then be unified by itself through a play of intentionalities and pure retentions. In short, it overlooks the gesture towards the pre-personal in *Being and Nothingness*. Though Barnes (1974: 64) in part recognises this move, it is still limited in that it is proffered through a reading still orientated by *The Transcendence*.

¹⁵ Though the “necessity of syntax has compelled us hitherto to speak of the ‘non-positional consciousness of self’,” we can “no longer use this expression in which the ‘of self’ still evokes the

idea of knowledge,” hence the use of parentheses to show that it merely satisfies grammatical requirement (Sartre 2008a: 10).

¹⁶ Through this emphasis on consciousness, Sartre (2007) argues that “*existence* comes before *essence*” (27), that is, “man is responsible for what he is” (31). Without God, everything is permitted. There is no human nature, for there is no God to have a conception of it. Unlike the paper knife, which was created by man for a purpose, and supposes an essence, man has no purpose, no essence. Man, first of all, *exists*. More importantly, man’s existence is one of freedom, due solely to the negating function of consciousness.

¹⁷ For instance, Peter Dews (2007: 71) considers this aspect of *Being and Nothingness* to represent the early Sartre’s “dialectic of the self and other.” Similarly, Alain Badiou (2012: 35) claims that the Sartrean motif of the in-itself and for-itself is a “genial *projection*” of the dialectic of subject/object. Kojève’s reading of Hegel is said to reach its “massive promotion after the War, in the person of Sartre. The pessimistic doctrine of the for-the-other (hell is the others) finds nourishment here” (19).

¹⁸ This all goes back to Heidegger’s famous *Letter on Humanism*, wherein he reproaches Sartre for regressing to subjectivity as the starting point. Heidegger maintains that nothing is the primordial source of negation, or rather that man or consciousness is not and cannot be the source of negation. Negation “unfolds essentially in Being itself, and not at all in the existence of man – so far as this is thought as the subjectivity of the *ego cogito*,” and so man is different from Being in that he is ‘housed’ in it. Sartre’s account therefore fails, it is alleged, to understand that there is a certain ‘belonging together’ of man and Being in the fact that we are ‘thrown’ or are ‘Beings-in-the-world’, that Dasein is always already present in the world – that is, that there is a plane of immanence. The usual abstract Cartesian, or indeed ‘metaphysical’, distinctions made between subject and object fail to understand this situated nature of Dasein. Existence, in a “fundamental contrast to every *existentia* and ‘*existence*’, is ecstatic dwelling in the nearness of Being” (loc. cit). Man is thus caught up in Being, as opposed to being Being. Ultimately, Sartre’s self-proclaimed clarion cry ‘existence precedes essence’ is, according to Heidegger (2011: 157), merely a reversal of Plato’s belief that *essentia* precedes *existentia*. Sartre’s statement, then, is still caught in a Platonic logic, for the “reversal of a metaphysical statement remains a metaphysical statement” (158).

¹⁹ As Catalano (1998: 161) notes, Sartre could not start his analysis with perception, for that would interfere with reflection insofar as the world arises from the body, yet not from our body as known. *Being and Nothingness* “weds the philosophical method to the act of writing in such a way that the reader is led to make the philosophical ‘reduction’ and ‘destruction’ in a personal way” (loc. cit).

²⁰ Though Aronson (1978) recognises that Heidegger indeed influenced “Sartre to break with Husserl, to liberate intentionality and throw it in the world” (92), he maintains that he diverges insofar as he “argues that the existence of consciousness *depends on* the existence of things,” while Heidegger’s formula Being-in-the-world means all dualisms are said to arise afterwards, “on the foundation of Being-in-the-world.” As we will see, this reading disregards Sartre’s announcement that the For-itself and In-itself are abstract, and, furthermore, that he deals with the abstract first in accordance with phenomenological reduction. So, though quoting the first half of *Being and Nothingness* may make it appear that Sartre is effectively arguing for the independence of the In-itself, which has no need of the For-itself in order to be, this is actually true only on thethetic level of awareness. Further, as Sartre makes clear when turning to the body and the flesh, thethetic level is dependent on a more primary bond, that surpasses abstract dualisms. As such, it is also misleading for Aronson to claim that according to Sartre’s insistent logic, “there are no special *a priori* structures, no pre-conscious processes, nothing *before* consciousness” (97). The concrete is Being-

in-the-world. Sartre does not so much reverse Heidegger on this account as much as he reverses the order of analysis.

²¹ In this sense, terms such as ‘objectivity’ or ‘alienation’ or even the ‘for-itself’ do not have a univocal meaning, only a contextual similarity (see Catalano 1998: 159). For Beauvoir (1998: 450), this shows Sartre remains faithful to “the Heideggerian thesis that human reality announces what it is based on the world,” or the “reciprocal conditioning of the world and that of Ego.”

²² In this sense, Hatzimoysis (2011: 107-123) is mistaken to analyse and judge *Being and Nothingness* exclusively from a reading of its introduction. To do so fails to appreciate how the book itself is a form of argument, how the phenomenological analysis unfolds through the chapters, and how the central argument is not first given and then extrapolated, but rather explored and then given. The same mistake has led many (see n. 18) to take Sartre’s criticism of Freud early on in the text as evidence of his rejection of the unconscious, ignoring the later chapters on the flesh and existential psychoanalysis.

²³ As Hans W. Cohn (1997: 77) explains: “Rejecting the concept of an unconscious psychic locality, phenomenologists still need to account for states of awareness and unawareness, and they see them, as aspects of consciousness itself.” Similarly, Tiebout (1959: 606) claims that Freud’s closed-off unconscious does not square with his theories, and in fact the unconscious and the Oedipal complex, even from a Freudian perspective, are better understood when seen as part of man’s ontological facticity.

²⁴ Ronald Grimsley (1955), for instance, argues that Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness* completely rejects all psychoanalysis. However, he ignores Sartre’s account of the pre-reflective and the section on psychoanalysis in *Being and Nothingness*, which says that analysis is required in order for behaviour to be understood. His rejection of the unconscious is not fully-fledged, and takes aim, more specifically, at the traditional Freudian notion of it. Of course, Grimsley’s observation that Sartre ignores the event of childhood is partially valid in that, at the time of writing, Sartre had yet to develop a theory along these lines (this came later with *Saint Genet* and *The Family Idiot*).

²⁵ A similar idea is developed by Binswanger (1958). According to his Daseinsanalysis, neurotic symptoms belong to the individual world project. Other so-called existential psychotherapists offer similar theories, including Fromm, Frankl, May, and Yalom. According to Fromm (1973: 306), the unconscious contains man’s ‘primary human experience’, which is in itself rooted in man’s existential situation. This all represents an experiential core present in all men of all cultures. In this case, the Oedipus complex is merely replaced with existential experience. Yet each one of them fails to expand on this idea and, most troubling, fails to explain how the theory of the unconscious, “which deals a death blow to all ideas of autonomy of consciousness,” as Collier (1977: 43) aptly puts it, can be squared with existentialism. For this reason these writers are best considered as psychotherapists as opposed to psychoanalysts. (See also Frie [2012] and Holyzhey-Kunz and Fazekas [2012] for a similar explanation.) Apart from the existential-psychotherapists, the early Lacan asserts a similar argument. As Peter Dews (2007) observes, for Lacan the issue with psychiatry is that it attempts to trace all disorders back to a putative aetiological chance, which would lead back to purely organic factors. Such an “orientation towards causal explanation neglects the ‘human meaning’ of behaviour of the mentally disordered, which can only be made available through a methodology of understanding” (61). In this sense, the early Lacan identifies himself with the phenomenological approach common to Binswanger. It should be noted, however, that even the early Lacan differs from Sartre in various respects. In particular, Lacan maintains that there is an ‘intersubjective logic’ of speech, which sets the premise for his move toward structuralism and the Symbolic. Although both Lacan and (following Sartre) Laing are eager to highlight the shortcomings

of organicist aetiologies of madness, Lacan places the emphasis on language, whereas for Laing intersubjectivity is primarily experiential. The same is true for Sartre, who inspired Laing's reading of madness and the family. The later Lacan, however, restructures the Freudian unconscious along structuralist lines: "the mechanisms described by Freud such as those of 'the primary process', in which the unconscious assumes its rule, correspond exactly to the functions that this school [Saussure and Jakobson] believes determines the most radical aspects of the effects of language, namely metaphor and metonymy – in other words, the signifier's effects of substitution and combination on the respectively synchronic and diachronic dimension in which they appear in discourse" (Lacan 2001: 330).

²⁶ This concept of 'sway' is taken from Merleau-Ponty (2002: 440): "Children and many grown people are under the sway of 'situational values', which conceal from them their actual feelings – they are pleased because they have been given a present, sad because they are at a funeral, gay or sad according to the countryside around them, and, in the hither side of any such emotions, indifferent and neutral." 'Sway' implies a slow rhythmical move forward or backward, as opposed to a total 'hold' or 'grip'. The concept of 'sway' as related to the unconscious/pre-reflective, and thus posits that our latent thoughts or memories are resistible and hence available to us in a reflective process.

²⁷ Sartre goes on to associate interiorisation with ideology (in the Gramscian sense). In particular, man faces a tension or contradiction between objective thought and ideology, which "remain at the level of lived experience" (Sartre 2008b: 265). As man is a situated and historical being, "the disclosure he attempts to accomplish is always liable to be limited by re-emergent prejudices, or by confusion of a completed universality (ideology), as well as by simple ignorance of history" (265). Sartre means, with direct reference to his early work, that men lack a "reflective consciousness of their situation" (265). Subsequently, the term 'lived experience' denotes the way in which "social past and the historical conjuncture" are "*lived without being known*" (Sartre 2008: 283). Again making links to his past work, Sartre asserts that being-in-the-world *is* an incommunicable lived experience, and so pre-reflective (see 284).

To be sure, we are born into a 'psycho-social' background in which we are at times "deeply imbued with bourgeois ideology" (Sartre 2008b: 256), and in which ideology is 'inculcated' into man, manifesting itself in both his mode of life and in his *Weltanschauung* (255). And so, man views the world through 'tinted glasses' (loc. cit.). More precisely, to say we are deeply imbued is to say that we *internalise the external*. Thus, it is "at the level of the *situation* that the dialectic of interiorization and exteriorization is operative" (249). Racism, for example, is not something that can be simply tackled through logical or reasoned argument. It must be understood that such prejudices are concrete ways of being-in-the-world. A man can "sincerely hold anti-racist opinions of a universal type, while in his deepest recesses, under the influence of his childhood, he remains a racist – so that one day he will involuntarily behave like one in ordinary life" (249).

²⁸ Sartre states that what he calls 'Being-in-the-world' is equivalent to the 'singular universal'. It is dialectical in that I interiorise the exterior at the very moment in which I exteriorise my interiority. In short, there is an ongoing tension between the facts of my situation and my attempt to transcend them in reflective-consciousness (see Sartre 2008b: 275).

²⁹ I am grateful to Monika Langer's (1998) article 'Sartre and Merleau-Ponty: A Reappraisal', for drawing my attention to this particular aspect of Sartre's work, and for contextualising it within the Sartre/Merleau-Ponty debate.

³⁰ Subsequently, Taylor's claims that Sartre's radical choice regards the choice to create oneself anew in a vacuum, that it lacks attention to the background and to pre-established choices, and that it overlooks 'radical questioning', is evidently misguided.

³¹ This emphasis on affirmation is important, for it rails against other readings of authenticity as the acceptance of life in a nihilistic conjecture. Baugh (2003: 117), for instance, claims that "the unhappy consciousness in Sartre, whether of the single individual or the movement of history, would appear to be unsurpassable, and yet, in Wahl's words, 'happy in its unhappiness', given that the very failure to achieve a unifying synthesis is what best protects the irreducibly plural freedom that Sartre prized above all else." Here we have nothing more than a false positivity and false affirmation, which in itself already presupposes life to stand in opposition to oneself, in which case authenticity is made into nothing more than the affirmation of the ass, which is "*nothing but bearing, taking upon oneself, acquiescing in the real as it is, taking reality as it is upon oneself*" (Deleuze 2006d: 171). The ape doesn't know how to say no, "he always answers yes, but answers yes each time nihilism opens the conversation" (Deleuze 2006b: 172). To affirm is a way of unburdening, as opposed to loading life with the weight of higher values. It is to create values "which are those of life, which make life light and active" (175).

It has been forgotten that Sartre (2013: 89) makes a sharp distinction between anguish and 'neurasthenia', wherein the latter makes "pathological terror out of this virile uneasiness existentialism speaks of." Thus authenticity is not only an attitude that embraces this responsibility – seeking constantly to question every motive and every excuse, every attempt to make myself an In-itself, in order to repudiate self-deception and promote creation – but also one that celebrates and revels in this enduring sense of responsibility, where "true optimism begins: the optimism of the man who expects nothing, who knows he has no rights and nothing coming to him, who rejoices in counting on himself alone and in acting alone for the good of all" (Sartre 2013: 90). Thus, authenticity is an *affirmative* sense of creativity, an ethic of ambiguity wherein life is celebrated as opposed to resented. To require justification for life, in this nihilistic rut, is to negate life itself, for if it is so consecrated it should not have to be redeemed by reason (see Gilliam 2013: 258-9). Therefore, to be in bad faith, in anguish, is to be a nihilist; it is to start with the negation.

It may be observed that there is an apparent paradox underpinning this claim, in that Sartre presents affirmation as inseparable from a preliminary negative condition, that the affirmation of authenticity is in fact premised on another kind of negation: the negatite. We must recognise that there are evidently two senses of negation that must be separated from each other. One, understood as the negatite, is the human activity or act of the For-itself, which does not denote a negative judgment; and the other is an attitude or judgment on existence, which in turn structures our attitude to the original negatite. Baugh's interpretation commits Sartre to a conflation of the two, in which case all acts of nihiliation are forever wedded to a reactive mood that resents the impossible synthesis. But the conflation is unwarranted, clearly stirred by a Hegelian reading of Sartre, wherein the original negation is already a negation of life, which in turn must be negated in a desperate striving for identity and mutual recognition. One feels a lack in life and thus strives for fulfillment. It is only through synthesis, and the assimilation of the Other, the reduction of the Other and difference to a mere epiphenomena, that one is completed and life is affirmed. It is therefore reactive.

³² Žižek (2008) claims that Sartre misconceives the Hegelian dialectic of form and content, subsequently reaffirming the very bourgeoisie subject he claims to reject. More specifically, Sartre's existentialism had come to reject bourgeoisie content by conceiving the subject as pure negativity and thus "emptied of all positive substantial contents, of all determination by some pre-given 'essence'" (246). What remained, however, "was the *form* of bourgeoisie subjectivity, so Sartre had still to accomplish the last and most difficult task: to reject this very form of bourgeoisie individualistic subjectivity and give himself up to the working class" (loc. cit). In a word, Sartre failed to see that the 'real source of evil' "is not positive content but this form itself" (246). Such a

reproach is far from novel. For instance, Adorno (1973: 50) accuses Sartre of erroneously hanging on to the “old idealistic category of the free act of the subject,” wherein any objectivity is a matter of indifference. Consequently, “social conditions came in Sartre’s plays to be topical adjuncts, at best” (loc. cit). Thus a “modicum of political experience” would make the situations that were built up as foils for heroic decisions, “wobble like stage props” (50).

Herbert Marcuse reproaches Sartre for providing a philosophy that is tied into bourgeois culture, providing “an old ideology in the new cloak of radicalism and rebellion” (1948: 335). Through representing the condition of man as a metaphysical postulate, Sartre is said to neglect the historical conditions of human existence, and so partakes in this bourgeoisie attack. Such ahistoricism makes existentialism an “idealistic doctrine” (Marcuse 1948: 311). Marcuse, writing in 1948, finds it astonishing and ridiculous that Sartre can continue to believe in absolute freedom. Has not the tragedy of Auschwitz reached Sartre’s ears? If everything is of the For-itself’s choosing then “by the same token, all the restrictions, obstacles, prohibitions which society places upon the Jew ‘exist’ only because and insofar as the Jew ‘chooses’ and accepts them” (Marcuse 1948: 322). Simply put: “Free choice between death and enslavement is neither freedom nor choice, because both alternatives destroy the ‘réalité humaine’ which is supposed to be freedom” (322). Marcuse here is not falling into the typical trap of conflating Sartrean existential freedom with political freedom or ‘individual liberty’ (a mistake clearly made by Lukács). He is aware that “success is not important to freedom” (Sartre 2008a: 505). In Sartre’s own words, “‘to be free’ does not mean ‘to obtain what one has wishes’ but rather ‘by oneself to determine oneself to wish’” (505), thus the distinction between ‘freedom-in-consciousness’ and ‘freedom-in-situation’ (see Fox 2003: 18). Rather, Marcuse argues that it is impossible to consider such freedom in abstraction from the concrete socio-historical conditions of unfreedom.

Lukács (1949) criticises phenomenology and existentialism for only *appearing* to develop an ontological ‘third way’, failing truly to escape the solipsism of subjective idealism. Targeting Sartre’s ontology, Lukács maintains that Sartre cannot account for the reality of social phenomena. For Lukács, Sartre makes a methodological *salto mortale*, reducing co-existence (*Mitsein*) to a psychological as opposed to ontological plane. In this way it is held that existentialism’s ontology (in both Heidegger and Sartre) logically leads to an isolated ego. It is philosophically impossible, Lukács adds, to account for the social from such a view. Sartre is therefore compelled to argue in favour of the bourgeois view of life, in which one cannot trust in the love of Others or fellow-men; in which man must be skeptical of all and everything, and act to his own accord. Lukács’ reading is obviously incorrect, in that Sartre’s conception of the Other *does* exist on an ontological level. It seems really that Lukács is making a political complaint, coated in philosophical language, the complaint being that Sartre’s conception of Being seems to undermine the Marxist theory of ideology or ‘false consciousness’.

³³ In response to Hegel’s idealised dialectic, Sartre holds that the origin of struggle lies in a concrete antagonism “whose material condition is *scarcity*.” Hegel ignores matter as mediation, whereas Sartre makes matter, as scarcity, the mediation. Moving on from the abstract moment, as presented in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre argues in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* that the first relation between men is the indefinite adherence of each to each, and that, moreover, “these formal conditions for all History are immediately seen to be conditioned by inorganic materiality, both as the fundamental condition determining the content of human relations, and as an external plurality within the communicative reciprocity and within the Trinity” (1976b: 120) With this as the theoretical base, the remainder of the *The Critique* seeks to outline a theory of practical ensembles, of series and groups as moments of totalisation. History as the reciprocity of need/scarcity therefore determines that the world exists as an object of consumption. Violence and class struggle are reduced to the negativity that need and a material world of scarcity produce. And so, “the conditionings of antagonistic reciprocity are, as a whole, and *in the abstract*, based on the relation of multiplicity of

men to the field of action, that is, on scarcity” (735) The practico-inert character of the process of exploitation, and that which is embedded within it (absolute and relative surplus-value) “established itself *against a background of scarcity*” and “*by men* (that is to say, by practical organisms who have interiorised and readopted scarcity in the form of Manichaeic violence)” (739) The original totalising position of man with the material world is reducible to need. I see the Other as contra-man or the anti-man, the one-too-many. My aim then, is to suppress the freedom of the Other in order to secure mine. The lust for capital accumulation is set against the backdrop of scarcity and lack.

³⁴ Fox (2003: 99) makes a similar argument, but erroneously makes the comparison one of equivalence as opposed to anticipation. Though Sartre’s detotalised-totalisation is made up of various micro and macro levels, it does not properly encapsulate the various lines of visibility, utterance, force and subjectivation, nor the proper distinction between intensive and extensive multiplicities that can correspond with the ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ structures of Foucault’s *dispositif*. Further, in being rooted in a dialectical language, it lacks the conceptualisation needed truly to make sense of these relations without requiring some rupture in/of immanence to make resistance intelligible. I am referring, of course, to the concept of the disjunctive fold.

³⁵ By referring to it as a project, Sartre is clearly expanding his previous notion of ‘original project’ or ‘original choice’.

³⁶ Aronson (1978: 226), for instance, recognises this disjuncture between Sartre’s early and middle philosophical project and his political writings: “Failing to realize that philosophy must develop *new* categories, raise and answer questions when encountering history, Sartre simply *substituted* philosophy for the ‘servitudes and virtues’ of action. Political action as conceived by Sartre became ‘commitment’: a series of brief confrontations which were always in some sense *outside*, which never took charge of the world, never moved *within* situations and facts’.” Though this emphasis on commitment is rightly considered an attitude or principle of changing oneself, Aronson considers it apolitical, or rather only political by proxy. In which case, he reads Sartre’s later turn and apparently full commitment to Marxism in *The Critique* as providing the necessary theoretical understanding “of the conditions for socialist democracy” (229) that was lacking in his earlier thought. In short, Aronson reads Sartre as a political thinker in the more traditional sense, simultaneously overlooking the ramifications of his so-called early commitment to commitment or authenticity. Similarly, Flynn (1997: 50) argues that Sartre “pursues Plato’s suggestion as he implicitly compares the authority/power and the knowledge/belief distinctions.” This, in turn, leads to a conceptualisation of power “in a Hobbesian sense as *de facto* ability” (54). Gillan (1997: 193) situates *The Critique* within the tradition of Marx and Engels’s *The German Ideology*, injecting existential subjectivity as a way to make the dialectic more intelligible. Though this is true to an extent, the overt emphasis on this aspect neglects its immanentism. The same indeed is true of Martinot’s (1993: 45) suggestion that Sartre can be read as engaged in the Hegelian ancestry of the socio-political and Cumming’s (1979: 193) suggestion that the reflexive dimension of Sartre’s social philosophy refers to a dialectically constituted self.

³⁷ As Sartre (1969: 46) says himself, all of his work has been underpinned by an attempt “to provide a philosophical foundation to realism.”

³⁸ That is, in stressing that “being is behind us and in front of us,” that he who sees “is visible, and sees only by virtue of his visibility” (Sartre 2008b: 154). And so my body, “said Merleau-Ponty, ‘is caught in the fabric of the world, but the world is made from the stuff of my body’” (154). By his own admission, it would take Sartre “a good few years” to learn and fully appreciate Merleau-Ponty’s thesis (Sartre 2013: 316). Merleau-Ponty, accordingly, discovered through Sartre “the force of

circumstances, the inhuman powers that steal our acts and thoughts from us,” the “Nature that at first enveloped us”, the “intersubjectivity of immanence” (316), “perceptual spontaneity,” and the “*being-event* of human beings, which we may also term existence” (315).

2. Merleau-Ponty and the Fold of the Flesh

Alike with Sartre, Merleau-Ponty has with few exceptions consistently been read as a thinker of transcendence. The crucial difference from Sartre, on this account, is said to regard the nature of intentionality and consciousness. Sartre, as we know, is said to retain consciousness as a negation and thus the dialectical counterpoise of Being. In this instance, the only true relation with the In-itself is one of constitutive differentiation or opposition. In entrusting the body with the synthesis of the perceived world, not as pure datum, but rather as a temporal synthesis and subjectivity, Merleau-Ponty is said merely to invert Sartre's argument. The For-itself is made immanent to a body as mediation of experience, as opposed to the Outside or object, allegedly establishing a dialectic of embodied existence reminiscent of Sartre's dialectic of the self.¹

Though there is a grain of truth in this claim, I argue here that it only gains traction by virtue of a perspective orientated exclusively towards Merleau-Ponty's early works, and as such at the expense of his posthumously published *Visible and the Invisible*, where his (though tacit) overarching and deepening engagement with immanence – via an explicit anti-Cartesianism – comes to its ultimate fruition.² In this work, Merleau-Ponty moves toward a more direct ontological enquiry into the appearing of the visible-tactile field itself, simultaneously developing an anti-humanist ontology (or *real humanism* as he calls it) that locates perceiving bodies within a meaning-generating flesh. The reversibility or fold of the flesh establishes a generativity which is always immanent to it and as such is beyond any notion of a metaphysical outside or transcendent Other.³ Not only does this radicalise Sartre's take on authenticity and the decentring of the subject he initiated, it also develops the necessary philosophical language to bypass dualism in form, and subsequently any evocation of transcendence, providing the conceptual apparatus in which we can come to understand subjectivity and agentic capacities – an apparatus critical in subsequent developments of the politics of immanence. This makes Merleau-Ponty pivotal to the present lineage, as he acts as a proverbial halfway house between Sartre's instigation of immanence through existential phenomenology and its more overt, systemised, and politicised form in Foucault and Deleuze.

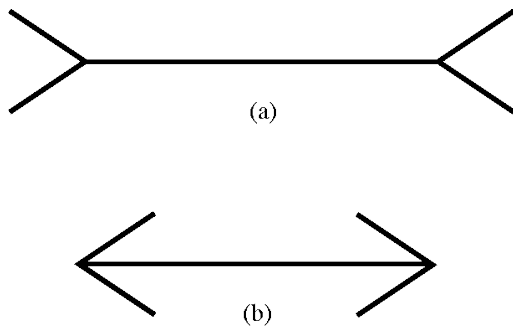
The chapter additionally argues that the 'transcendence' reading of Merleau-Ponty obscures the way in which the early works, especially *The Phenomenology of Perception*, opens the way for this development, in particular through its focus on the subject-body and the related attempt to overcome extreme subjectivism and extreme objectivism, upon which the

fleshism of the *Visible and the Invisible* relies. The early works additionally foster an ethics of ambiguity which builds on Sartrean authenticity and sets the basis for a non-judicial politics of the ‘practice of life’, which serves greatly to anticipate Foucault’s care of the self. This comes out of a direct engagement with Sartre, albeit one based upon a ‘creative misreading’, with Sartre’s alleged rationalist self-transparency used as a methodological foil for its development. Thus it is only through exploring the contextual underpinning of Merleau-Ponty’s philosophical development, that his final position will bear any weight, and that the fold, as an onto-ethical concept, will be grasped as a conceptual necessity.

Phenomenology Reconsidered Through Sartre

If the tradition of transcendence as a conceptual architecture accompanying subjectivity is traceable and partly exemplified in Descartes, then it is notable that Merleau-Ponty’s foray into philosophy is self-identified as wholly anti-Cartesian in its aspirations. In no way arbitrary or frivolous, the aspiration emanates from what Merleau-Ponty sees as a distinctly Cartesian or dualistic crisis afflicting modern thought. Between the extreme objectivism of empiricism and the extreme subjectivism of rationalism exists a mutual neglect of any kind of interworld or reconciliatory account of an ‘in-between’ of interiority and exteriority. The result in both cases is an incoherent and irreconcilable ontological dualism that is incapable of accounting for coexistence or intersubjectivity in any coherent or substantial way.

Empiricism is personified by the ‘constancy hypothesis’, which holds that there exists a direct correspondence and constant connection between stimulus and elementary perception. In other words, we directly perceive objects without representational mediation of an *a priori* synthetic structure. That being the case, there is no concept of consciousness, subjectivity or interiority to speak of. The hypothesis, however, “conflicts with the data of consciousness” (8). If perception of the object is not mediated, then it follows that any sense-datum of it is received in an atomistic and disorganised form. However, the “central combination of stimuli can immediately give rise to a different sensation from what the objective stimuli would lead us to expect” (9). Atomism simply cannot account for the evidence of a perceptual context or background, against which sense impressions are organised into meaningful wholes. Such is the case with Muller-Lyer’s optical illusion (Fig. 1), wherein the addition of auxiliary lines makes two figures appear unequal in length even though they are objectively equal.

Figure 1⁴

The question then arises as to how to put atomistic sense impressions back together. In attempting to salvage its primary theoretical position, empiricism has turned to various versions of ‘associationism’. At its most basic associationism holds that atomistic sense impressions are organised through processes of resemblance, in which previous experiences, in the form of memories, project and fill out sense-data and in return bring about a grouping together of a whole. Thus, to perceive is to remember. Though memory arises from the self, it continues to refer to an exterior process, for the parts of the thing recalled must have already been bound together by external associations in order to function as an effective projection. Paradoxically, the “appeal to memory presupposes what it is supposed to explain; the patterning of data, the imposition of meaning on a chaos of sense-data” (23). The significance of the percept, far from resulting from an association, is presupposed in all association. It thus still remains to be explained how the relationship ‘figure’ and ‘background’, ‘thing’ and ‘nothing’, and the horizon of the past appear as meaningful. When pressed on this point, empiricism reverts to a tacit rationalism, treating the *a priori* of the structures of consciousness “as if the product of some mental chemistry” (26).

Rationalism detaches the subject “by showing that I could not possibly apprehend anything as existing unless I first of all experienced myself as existing in the act of apprehending” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: x). The analytical reflection underpinning rationalism takes our primary experience of the world and traces it back to the subject as a condition of possibility distinct from that experience, “revealing the all-embracing synthesis as that without which there would be no world” (x). In this instance, consciousness is presented as the condition of there being anything at all, “the act of relating as the basis of relatedness” (loc. cit). As such, it ceases to remain part of our experience, offering – in lieu of an account – a reconstruction.

The reflection remains incomplete in that it loses sight of its own beginning in the intricate relation between the *naturata* and the *naturans*. The relation signifies the way in which the

world is there before any possible analysis of mine, such that it would be “artificial to make it the outcome of a series of syntheses which link, in the first place sensations, then aspects of the object corresponding to different perspectives, when both are nothing but products of analysis, with no sort of prior reality” (xi). When I reflect, “my reflection bears upon an unreflective experience; moreover my reflection cannot be unaware of itself as an event, and so it appears to itself in the light of a truly creative act, of a changed structure of consciousness” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: xi). Further, if such an activity is posited as taking place in the mind, there is no way of knowing whether or not what we perceive is the same as the brute existent actually there, and so we run into solipsistic and epistemological problems associated with Cartesian doubt and Meno’s paradox respectively, in which case my existence is reduced to a bare awareness of existing.⁵ By the same measure, the Other is turned into an empty word. Analytical reflection therefore knows “nothing of the problem of other minds, or of that of the world” (xiii). The only way it can overcome this doubt is by presupposing the very naturalist or positivist attitude it is supposed to account for and, ultimately, transcend. In this instance, it joins union with empiricism.

In continuing to refer back to each other, the affinity between them is “much less obvious and much more deeply rooted than is commonly thought,” arising as it were “not only from the anthropological definition of sensation used equally by both, but from the fact that both persist in the natural or dogmatic attitude” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 45). The dualism established, then, is not necessarily that between two extreme positions, but rather emanates from the inconsistencies within these extremes, in which the self is split between an ‘outer’ (in cahoots with the world) and an ‘inner’ (beyond the world) version. From whatever angle one looks at it, transcendence remains as a formal structure, in that a thing (whether the subject of the world) is constituted by something outside of it. Of course, given the shortfalls of both positions, they end up positing an incoherent circular constitution, sustaining a rupture of what would be an otherwise insular domain of immanence.

What both positions overlook, according to Merleau-Ponty (2002: viii), is “the central theme of phenomenology”: the interworld or lifeworld (*lebenswelt*) – that which exists in between the two extremes. By virtue of it, I am always already *open to* the world, and I am always already in communication with others “taken as similar psycho-physical subjects” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 411). Truly, the *cogito* must reveal me in a situation, for it is “on this condition alone that transcendental subjectivity can...*be* an intersubjectivity,” wherein the world is something I discover in me as the permanent horizon of all my *cogitationes* (xiv).⁶

Communication does not happen either just ‘out there’ or ‘in here’, but rather ‘in-between’ the two. For this reason, Merleau-Ponty speaks of an inter-weaving, which makes folding possible because we “are inter-woven into a single fabric” (413). It is precisely this single fabric that gestures towards immanence, makes up the *insular domain*, and, as such, sutures any rupture in/of it. Indeed, within this perspective all negation or doubt takes place “in a field open in advance, and testifies to a self contiguous with itself before those particular acts in which it loses contact with itself” (417). By extension, the social world is turned into a *permanent* field of existence; I am always situated relative to it. For the alien life, the living being, is an open life. It “makes tools for itself, and projects itself into the environment in the shape of cultural objects” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 412).

From this perspective, the “chief gain from phenomenology is to have united extreme subjectivism and extreme objectivism” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: xxii). Though Merleau-Ponty consistently credits Husserl with initiating this move, his own phenomenology concretizes it by following in Sartre’s *existentialist* footsteps, continuing to repudiate representational machinery or *hyletic* structure, positing that the ‘external’ world is tantamount with the constitution of the self.⁷ That is, Merleau-Ponty agrees with Sartre that the real has to be described as opposed to constructed or formed, which means that one cannot put perception into the same category as the syntheses represented by judgements, or that one cannot refer to a synthetic ego as that which gives the self subjective unity and individuality. Here, the Sartrean form of intentionality is re-introduced. We intend outward toward and sustain the very world or object which in turn weighs upon us and structures the background of these intentional threads. That is, the object in the world to which we intend is already in consciousness. That is why Merleau-Ponty describes reality as a closely woven fabric. So, though somewhat present in Husserl’s own concept of *Lebenswelt*, there is once more a suturing of the ‘veritable abyss’ of the “Kantian texts of Husserl,” i.e., *Ideas* (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 321-2n. 47). Reality cannot be bracketed – that is the meaning of existential phenomenology, in which primary consciousness is not a transcendental Ego freely positing before itself a multiplicity in itself. The I is relative and prepersonal, and it “dominates diversity only *with the help* of time” (loc. cit). That means that to return to the things themselves “is to return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always *speaks*, and in relation to which every scientific schematization is an abstract and derivative sign-language” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: x), which is to start with what is primary,

with the fabric of Being. In being a fabric, it holds that the “Inside and outside are inseparable. The world is wholly inside and I am wholly outside myself,” (474).

Yet it is precisely on this question of primacy, or rather the nature of this fabric and its conceptualisation, that Merleau-Ponty’s deviation from and criticisms of Sartre arise. Though the specifics of the criticism vary in accordance with the variation and advances of their respective thinking, the general complaint remains the same: Sartre reinstates the form of transcendence within immanence through a rupture or gap, laying the blame with consciousness, which generates this split by relating the plane back to a subject. For Merleau-Ponty, two things result from this: first, it is evident that we cannot rely on Sartre to overcome the crisis of modern thought; and second, to overcome it, we would have to start where Sartre ends, and so conceive of an *a priori* Other (or a “primordial *We*” [Merleau-Ponty 1964b: 175]) as a fundamental structure of all relations (see Merleau-Ponty 1968: 237). Merleau-Ponty’s *The Phenomenology of Perception*, in which primacy is given to perception itself, is usually credited with initiating this reversal, which is typically why he is looked to concerning questions of immanence within phenomenology. Deleuze is unequivocal in this regard:

When Sartre analysed interrogation at the beginning of *Being and Nothingness*, he made it a preliminary to the discovery of the negative and negativity. This was, in a sense, the opposite of Heidegger’s procedure. None the less, it involved no misunderstanding, since Sartre did not set out to write a commentary on Heidegger. Merleau-Ponty, on the other hand, undoubtedly followed a more thoroughly Heideggerian inspiration in speaking of ‘folds’ and ‘pleating’ (by contrast with Sartrean ‘holes’ and ‘lakes of non-being’) from *The Phenomenology of Perception* onwards, and in returning to an ontology of difference and questioning in his posthumous book *The Visible and the Invisible*. (Deleuze 2004a: 77)⁸

The primacy of perception differs from the syntheses represented by judgments, acts or predications, in that it “is the background from which all acts stand out, and is presupposed by them” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: xi).⁹

The Body Revisited

Despite some oversimplifications of Sartre’s argument, and the fact that Merleau-Ponty’s position is built on top of Sartre’s ontology, Merleau-Ponty creates an unarguably unique image of phenomenology, with a depth of the analysis of perception unparalleled by anything written by Sartre, and critical in the formation of his later ontological turn, which

provides a new conceptual system or philosophical language no longer caught up in the Cartesian hangover as Sartre's was. What is particularly important in this respect, and certainly it more than makes up the main argument in *The Phenomenology of Perception*, is that we always experience things within a context or 'world horizon'. Here we see the influence on Merleau-Ponty (2002: 9) of Gestalt theory, carried over from his previous *The Structure of Behaviour*, which recognises that "a figure on a background is the simplest sense-given available to us," but in turn argues that this is a contingent characteristic of factual perception. According to Merleau-Ponty, it is "the very definition of the phenomenon of perception, that without which a phenomenon cannot be said to be perception at all" (4). Perception is "always in the middle of something else, it always forms part of a field" (*loc. cit.*). Experience is always multideterminate, meaning that the notion of the 'pre-objective' is untenable (pace the natural attitude).

As the loci of perception, the body is central. Indeed, it is our own body that is "in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system" (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 235). It remains that I cannot grasp the unity of an object without the mediation of bodily experience. As such, external perception and the perception of one's own body vary together because "they are the two facets of one and the same act" (237), and thus every "external perception is immediately synonymous with a certain perception of my body, just as every perception of my body is made explicit in the language of the external perception" (239). This makes the body the 'third term', "always tacitly understood, in the figure-background structure, and every figure stands out against the double horizon of external and bodily space" (115). A thing exists in-itself because it resists my knowing it with total certainty, and yet the thing exists for me because I can always experience it through my own body, through touch, smell, sight, etc. We arrive, then, at the 'In-Itself-For-Me'. Through the body we are forced to "re-examine the dilemma of *for itself* and *in itself*, which involved putting 'significances' back into the world of objects, and freeing subjectivity, as absolute non-being, of any kind of inherence in the body" (2002: 247). Merleau-Ponty argues that since sensation is a constitution, "it pre-supposes in me sediments left behind by some previous constitution, so that I am, as a sentient subject, a repository stocked with natural powers at which I am the first to be filled with wonder" (249). That is:

All consciousness is, in some measure, perceptual consciousness. If it were possible to lay bare and unfold all the presuppositions in what I call my reason or my ideas at each moment, we should always find experiences which have not been made explicit,

large-scale contributions from past and present, a whole ‘sedimentary history’ which is not only relevant to the *genesis* of my thought, but which determines its *significance*... whatever I think or decide, it is always against the background of what I have previously believed or done. (459-460)

And so the “subject of sensation... need not be a pure nothingness with no terrestrial weight” (loc. cit). I am not, therefore, “‘a hole in being’, but a hollow, a fold, which has been made and which can be unmade” (249-250). This is because every perception takes place in a field, “in an atmosphere of generality and is presented to us anonymously” (250). “To say that I have a visual field is to say that by reason of my position I have access to and an opening upon a system of beings, visible beings, that these are at the disposal of my gaze in virtue of a kind of primordial contract and through a gift of nature, with no effort made on my part; from which it follows that vision is prepersonal” (251). Perception, even when seen from the inside, “expresses a given situation” (ibid). As such, between my sensation and myself there stands the thickness of “some *primal acquisition* which prevents my experience from being clear of itself” (251). Further, sensation can be anonymous only because it is incomplete: “When I see an object, I always feel that there is a portion of being beyond what I see at this moment, not only as regards the visible being, but also as regards what is tangible or audible” (251). Through positing the body as ‘the third’, we move away from the issue of representation insofar as we come to understand learning and skillful behaviour without recourse to mind or brain representations. Here, the body is given as a brute physicality and the site of synthesis.¹⁰ The spatial synthesis and the synthesis of the object are founded on the unfolding of time, wherein the body unites present, past and future, secreting time, becoming the location in nature where “events, instead of pushing each other into the realm of being, project round the present a double horizon of past and future and acquire a historical orientation” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 278-9).¹¹

Inasmuch as the ego and the alter ego or Other have parallel destinies, it holds that the anonymity of perceptual being-in-the-world necessitates a renewed approach to the problem of the Other. Merleau-Ponty (2002: 251) claims that the Other is known to me precisely because I am not transparent to myself, and in addition because my subjectivity “draws its body in its wake.” To the extent that around the perceived body “a vortex forms, towards which my world is drawn and, so to speak, sucked in,” it is no longer just mine, and merely present; rather, it “is present to *x*, to that other manifestation of behaviour which begins to take shape in it” (412). The other body, then, is no mere fragment of the world, but “the theatre of a certain process of elaboration” (loc. cit). It is my body which perceives the body

of another and “discovers in that body a miraculous prolongation of my own intentions, a familiar way of dealing with the world” (412).

Merleau-Ponty believes this once again places him up against Sartre, who apparently tries to overcome solipsism via the dialectic of the look, making my experience into a private spectacle, “since it would no longer be co-extensive with being” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 411). Yet for that Hegelian-type struggle ever to be possible, “all must necessarily have some common ground and be mindful of their peaceful co-existence in the world of childhood” (414). The unbearable gaze of the Other is possible only because “it takes the place of possible communication” (420). Because of my body, my sensory functions, the visual, auditory and tactile field, I am open to the world, already in communication with others taken as similar psycho-physical subjects. Thus we not only weave into the world, but also into each other: “the experience of dialogue there is constituted between the other person and myself a common ground; my thought and his are inter-woven into a single fabric” (413). The other is no longer a “mere bit of behaviour in my transcendental field, nor I in his; we are collaborators for each other in consummate reciprocity”; our “perspectives merge into each other, and we co-exist through a common world” (loc. cit).

Once again, Merleau-Ponty is not far off from Sartre in concluding from this that all negation and doubt takes place “in a field open in advance, and testifies to a self contiguous with itself before those particular acts in which it loses contact with itself” (417). Indeed, for Sartre, as we saw, the look does not constitute an intersubjectivity, it is merely one of its after-affects, or a concrete realisation of it. Further, it also follows Sartre in seeing the ego and the alter ego as semblances or as “merely a little shadow which owes its very existence to the light,” which means to say “they have validity rather than existence” (xv). As Merleau-Ponty (1964b: 175) puts it in *Signs*, the “reduction to ‘egology’ or the ‘sphere of belonging’ is, like all reduction, only a test of primordial bonds, a way of following them into their final prolongations.”

Authenticity Revisited

Although both Sartre and Merleau-Ponty are concerned with the body, its position in phenomenological analysis is clearly different in each case, which subsequently effects the place for existential freedom in each.¹² For Sartre, as we saw, the body is that which is lived or passed through when engaged in activities. As we are not explicitly aware of our

perception as coming from a perspective, it follows that ‘pure reflection’ would initially have to suspend the body. Thus we cannot phenomenologically start with sensation. In this way, Sartre is able to sustain the negative in the form of the negatite. It follows that for there to be real openness, according to Sartre, the one who is open to being and who sees must be a partial lacuna in being. Without this, we are left in a universe of physical or psychic images that float about without anyone being conscious of them. Thus the negatite accounts for the way in which the For-itself arises as a knowledge of the In-itself and how this knowledge gives rise to that diversity of things, the world. Consciousness arises as an awareness of being-in-itself only by virtue of nihiliation, wherein the being of consciousness is negated and identified with being-for-itself. To know things (things) as distinct is the pure revelation of the In-itself by the For-itself – they come to be only through human reality. It remains that the For-itself is a being such that in its being, its being is in question insofar as this being is essentially a certain way of *not being* a being, which it posits simultaneously as other than itself. This means that “the for-itself can be only in the mode of a reflection (reflect) causing itself to be reflected as not being a certain being,” that is, the “reflected causes itself to be qualified *outside* next to a certain being as *not being* that being; hence what we mean by ‘to be consciousness *of* something’” (Sartre 2008a 197). This refers to an internal negation, wherein not only is the speaker denied a certain quality, but the denial itself comes to influence the inner structure of the positive being who has been denied the quality. Thus, the internal negation is a relation between two beings: the one which is denied to the other qualifies the other at the heart of its essence by absence. In this sense, Sartre resists fusion, as it “would signify the solidification of the For-itself in the In-itself, and at the same stroke, the disappearance of the world and of the in-itself as presence” (201).

Crucially, to come back to a point made in the previous chapter, negation becomes “a bond of essential being since at least one of the beings on which it depends is such that it points toward the other, that it carries the other in its heart as an absence” (Sartre 2008a: 198). Negation thus depends on something (the flesh of facticity) which exists before the negation and constitutes its matter, in turn making the distinction between the For-itself and In-itself abstract. But in the case of the relation ‘knower-known’, there is nothing on the side of the knower which can provide a support for the negation. Thus, the idea is not to eliminate nothingness but rather to incorporate it into the idea of being, insofar as all thought of the void is the thought of a certain plenitude. As we said, for Sartre, the whittling down of the status of nothingness (insofar as it is the abstract moment in the primordial being-in-the-

world) does not necessitate the deterioration of the value of negative thinking. In this sense, Merleau-Ponty is not completely correct to identify Sartre's mistake as making this bond the primary opening of being towards the world, such that the being that I am not is in actuality *not* me in any way, with any relation thus establishing an ontological gap or hole. For Sartre, negativity indeed establishes a 'this', causing it to exist on thethetic level. But this can only arise on the ground of the presence of all being, understood as flesh.

The real difference between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty lies in Merleau-Ponty starting with a Gestalten-inspired take on perception as analytically primary, leading him to a notion of life understood as pure ambiguity and contingency – as the ambiguous reciprocity between the world and the body and the contingent nature of our freedom – that is not different to Sartre's, but perhaps more radical in leaving consciousness behind. With such a view, Merleau-Ponty asserts that it is improper to privilege consciousness over the body and perception in phenomenological reduction. Contra Sartre, the body is not passed through and then found in the world; it is quite simply the world as is. With this in mind, it is of no surprise that Merleau-Ponty places far greater emphasis on the way in which our body and our habits nondeterministically shape our lives below the level ofthetic awareness,¹³ and that he is looked to concerning questions of immanence within phenomenology.¹⁴

With this, Merleau-Ponty takes issue with rationalism's dichotomous approach where I am either free or determined, and also holds it "inconceivable that I should be free in certain of my actions and determined in others: how should we understand a dormant freedom that gave full scope to determinism?" (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 505). In order to be determined, I should be a thing, but how could I succeed in making myself into a thing and subsequently reconvert myself to a consciousness? Surely, once I am free I am not to be counted among things, and so I am uninterruptedly free. By the same measure, once my actions cease to be mine I shall never recover them, and if I lose my hold on the world, it will never be restored to me. It is equally inconceivable, argues Merleau-Ponty, that "my liberty should be attenuated; one cannot be to some extent free, and if, as is often said, motives incline me in a certain direction, one of two things happen: either they are strong enough to force me to act, in which case there is no freedom, or else they are not strong enough, and then freedom is complete, and as great in the worst torments as in the peace of one's home" (505). On this basis, we are urged also to reject causality and motivation. Motive does not burden a decision, for it is the decision that lends the motive its force. I am never a thing or essence for myself, and though I may well be these things for other people, "nevertheless I remain

free to posit another person as a consciousness whose views strike through to my very being, or on the other hand merely as an object” (loc. cit). It is I who makes another be for me and makes each of us be as human beings. Deliberation follows decisions and it is my secret decision which brings the motive to light. Further, we cannot have recourse to will, or freedom in the act of will, for this simply goes against our true decision and proves us to be powerless.

In many respects, Merleau-Ponty follows Sartre on the very simple point that what we call obstacles to freedom are in reality deployed by it. There is, then, “nothing that can set limits to freedom, except those limits that freedom itself has set in the form of its various initiatives, so that the subject has simply the external world that he gives himself” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 507). This may risk making the concept of freedom redundant, for if it is everywhere and therefore not something to be measured in terms of our conduct, it is anterior to all actions. The point, however, is that freedom finds its fulcrum in our general commitment to the world, making for a concrete subject. In this sense, our freedom “does not destroy our situation, but gears itself to it” (508). Our situation is constantly open, in that it “calls up specially favoured modes of resolution, and also that it is powerless to bring one into being by itself” (loc. cit). That is, unless there are “cycles of behaviour, open situations requiring a certain completion and capable of constituting a background to either a confirmatory or transformatory decision, we never experience freedom” (509). Freedom, then, must have a field, which means that there must be for it special possibilities or realities which tend to cling to being. Freedom is not to be sought in spurious discussion on the conflict between a style of life we have no wish to reappraise and circumstances suggestive of another, the real choice is “that of whole character and our manner of being in the world” (509).

This supposedly is not a return to Kantian idealism, in which a consciousness finds in things only what it has put into them. Merleau-Ponty’s entire point is to seek the conditions of possibility whilst concerning ourselves with the conditions of reality, thereby resuming the analysis of *Sinngebung*. It is freedom which brings into being the obstacles to freedom, so that the latter can be set over and against it as its bounds. With this in mind, it appears that Merleau-Ponty is endorsing Sartre’s notion of facticity, with specific reference to the crag on a mountain. As Sartre (2008a: 510) argues, to the climber who wishes to climb the crag, or stand on top of it, or who perhaps has to cross over it to get further up a mountain, it presents itself as an obstacle. But it is an obstacle only in relation to this end. To another, the crag is nothing. A passer-by may be in the area, with the end of sightseeing, and as such

the existence of the crag poses no obstacle to him. Finally, the crag may be easier to climb for some than others, but this limitation merely represents a ‘residue’, as opposed to an obstacle in-itself.

Yet Merleau-Ponty (2002: 511) goes on to add that we must “distinguish between my express intentions, for example the plan I now make to climb those mountains, and general intentions which evaluate the potentialities of my environment.” Whatever decision I make with respect to the mountain, it is clear that it will appear high to me insofar as it literally exceeds my body’s power to take it in its stride. In this sense, I am still destined to see things from the point of view of my terrestrial experience. The broader significance is that, though perceptual structures do not always force themselves upon the observer, there are some which are *ambiguous*, which reveal even more effectively “the presence within us of spontaneous evaluation: for they are elusive shapes which suggest constantly changing meaning to us” (512). We see the same thing with respect to Gestalt psychology. The grouping of dots

.....

is always perceived as six pairs of dots. It is as if, “on the hither side of our judgement and our freedom, someone were assigning such and such a significance to such and such a given grouping” (511-2). There are no obstacles in themselves, but the self who qualifies them as such is not some a-cosmic subject. It “runs ahead of itself in relation to things in order to confer upon them the form of things” (512). There is an autochthonous significance of the world, “which is constituted in the dealings which our incarnate existence has with it, and which provides the ground for every deliberate *Sinngebung*” (loc. cit).

This is true of an impersonal and abstract function such as ‘external perception’. If I give in to my fatigue during a walk, that is because I dislike the feel of it, and so have chosen differently to someone who likes the clamminess of his body and feels himself in the midst of things when fatigued. My own fatigue brings me to a halt in that I have chosen differently my manner of being in the world. Nevertheless, we must recognise, says Merleau-Ponty, “a sort of sedimentation of our life: an attitude towards the world, when it has received frequent confirmation, acquires a favoured status for us” (513). Our habitual being means that, even with an inferiority complex that a free act can in theory ‘blow sky high’, it is improbable that we should change. Here the ‘probability’ of rationalism is completely redundant, for it is a notion of statistical thought which is “not thought at all, since it does not concern any

particular thing actually existing, any movement of time, any concrete event” (513). Indeed, there is a phenomenological basis for statistical thought, in that it belongs to a being, which is fixed, situated and surrounded by things in the world. More importantly the rationalist dilemma is a false one since, as said, our freedom “does not destroy our situation, but gears itself to it: as long as we are alive, our situation is open, which implies both that it calls up specially favoured modes of resolution, and also that it is powerless to bring one into being by itself” (514).

The same is true with respect to our relation to history. I am represented to myself in concrete reflection, and so I find that I am an anonymous and pre-human flux, as yet unqualified as a ‘working man’ or ‘middle class’. I am never truly one of these identities, but nevertheless I freely evaluate myself as one of them. Yet again, that does not slip us back into a dichotomous logic from which we would conclude that history by itself has no significance except for that conferred upon it by our will. Objective thought derives class consciousness from the objective condition of the proletariat, whereas idealist reflection reduces the proletariat condition to the self-awareness arrived at by the proletarian. That is, the former traces such consciousness to the class defined in terms of objective characteristics, whereas the latter reduces being a working man to the commonness of being one. But in each case we are in the realm of abstraction, torn between the in-itself and for-itself.

In response to this, then, Merleau-Ponty offers an existential method – existential in the sense that existence, including our enthrallment via bodily perception, cannot be bracketed. I am not conscious of being working class or middle class by virtue of fact (I sell my labour, I buy labour, etc.), nor do I become one or the other on the day on which I elect to view history in the light of class struggle and so on. What makes me belong to a certain class “is not the economic system or society considered as system of impersonal forces, but these institutions as I carry them within me and experience them; nor is it an intellectual operation devoid of motive, but my way of being in the world within this institutional framework” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 515). In order for there to be a revolution, the social space must acquire a magnetic field, wherein a region of the exploited is seen to appear. Thus, the process of regrouping is discernible beyond ideologies and various occupations. Class comes into being and a situation is revolutionary when the connection objectively existing between the sections of the proletariat is finally experienced in perception as a common obstacle to the existence of each and every one. We cannot rely on the *representation* of revolution, nor is revolution the result of a deliberate judgement or the explicit positing of

an end. The worker does not make himself into a revolutionary *ex nihilo* but on the contrary on a certain basis of co-existence.

In anticipation of idealist objections – that I am not a particular project but rather a pure consciousness, and that the attributes of class belong to me only to the extent that I place myself among others and see myself through their eyes – Merleau-Ponty (2002: 521) maintains that the other-as-object is nothing but an “insincere modality of others, just as absolute subjectivity is nothing but an abstract notion of myself.” I must, in my most radical reflection, apprehend around my absolute individuality a “halo of generality or a kind of atmosphere of ‘sociality’”. This is necessary if subsequently the words ‘a bourgeois’ and ‘a man’ are to be able to assume meaning for me” (521). In other words, the For-Themselves – me for myself and the other for himself – must stand out against a background of For-Others. My life, in this sense, has a significance which I do not constitute, entailing an intersubjectivity wherein each one of us must be anonymous both in the sense of being absolutely individual and in the sense of being absolutely general. It follows that our being-in-the-world is the concrete bearer of this double anonymity.

This is all to say that we recognise, around our initiative and around that strictly individual project which is oneself, “a zone of generalized existence and of projects already formed, significances which trail between ourselves and things and which confer upon us the quality of man, bourgeois or worker” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 523). The concrete colour red, for instance, “stands out against a background of generality, and this is why, even without transferring myself to another’s point of view, I grasp myself in perception as *a* perceiving subject, and not as a unclassifiable consciousness” (524). The absolute flow takes shape beneath its own gaze as a consciousness, or incarnate subject, “because it is a field of presence – to itself, to others and to the world – and because this presence throws it into the natural and cultural world from which it arrives at an understanding of itself” (524). I am all that I am and see, an intersubjective field, not despite my body and historical situation but because of them.

As such, Merleau-Ponty asserts that we can no longer pretend to be a nihilation, capable of choosing our self continually out of nothing at all (a position he wrongly attributes to Sartre). Even the general refusal to be anything is a manner of being and has its place in the world. We are always in this manner of being in a plenum, and so freedom must be understood within this sphere. It does not operate in spite of it, but immanently within it. My actual

freedom “is not on the hither side of my being, but before me, in things” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 526). Consciousness has nothing of its own and makes its life in the world. “What then is freedom?” asks Merleau-Ponty (527). His answer: “To be born is both to be born of the world and to be born into the world” (loc. cit). Thus, with this idea of the situation, we “rule out absolute freedom at the source of our commitments, and equally, indeed, at their terminus” (528). Freedom comes not in spite of my being in the world, but because of it. I am not determined from the outside, because I am from the start outside myself and open to the world. Man is but a network of relationships, “and these alone matter to him” (530).

This theme of ambiguity and contingency is constantly played out through Merleau-Ponty’s more directly political writings between his early and middle period. Indeed, we see Merleau-Ponty constantly trying to find a political figure to which he could attribute this take on subjectivity. Initially, this figure is Marx – a Marx who, as he makes clear in *Sense and Non-Sense*, rails against typical Marxist readings we find in the likes of Garaudy, with Merleau-Ponty (1964b: 127) denouncing it as a “‘fleshless Marxism’ which reduces history to its economic skeleton”; a “pseudo-Marxism according to which everything is false by the final phase of history and which corresponds, on the level of ideas, to that rudimentary communism – the ‘envy and desire for levelling’ – for which Marx had no kind words” (128). Instead, Merleau-Ponty understands Marx as presenting the individual as a social being, in that he is “not in society as an object is in a box; rather, he assumes it by what is innermost in him” (129). There is, then, neither a social nature given outside ourselves, nor a World Spirit, nor a movement appropriate to ideas, nor collective consciousness. Rather, the vehicle of history and the motivating force of the dialectic is “man involved in a certain way of appropriating nature in which the mode of his relationship with others takes shape; it is concrete intersubjectivity, the successive and simultaneous community of existences in the process of self-realisation in a type of ownership which they both submit to and transform, each created by and creating the Other” (129). The Marx of Merleau-Ponty’s existentialism understands that the bond which attaches man to the world is at the same time his way to freedom, “of seeing how man, in contact with nature, projects the instruments of his liberation around himself not by destroying necessity but, on the contrary, by utilizing it; of comprehending how he constitutes a cultural world in which man’s “*human nature* has become his nature” (130). This environment is history, and so, for Merleau-Ponty, Marxism must be understood not as a philosophy of the subject, nor of the object, but rather as a philosophy of history. It represents a ‘concrete thinking’ of praxis, away from idealism and

metaphysical materialism, toward a form of ‘critique’ which shares strong affinities with “existential philosophy” (133). In this sense, Merleau-Ponty’s recourse to Marx anticipates (and, as we know, influences) Sartre’s later turn to him. In utilising this line of thought, Merleau-Ponty characterises the experience of the war and French occupation as one which brought us back into contact with “actual history,” wherein “we must take local particularities into account and consider naziism’s (*sic*) human function as well as its economic one” (1964b: 149). Following Marx, we cannot suppress history’s subjective factors in favour of objective ones. Rather, we must bind the two together. We are, to be sure, “in the world, mingled with it, comprised with it” (147).

In his later *Adventures of the Dialectic*, we find Merleau-Ponty shifting away from this Marxian emphasis towards a Weberian-inspired liberalism, from a concentration on Marxism toward a more reflective view of history. Nevertheless, the themes of ambiguity, contingency and local particularities are all carried forth. Indeed, the central ethic Merleau-Ponty derives from Weber’s approach is that “it is not superficial to base a politics on the analysis of the political animal” (Merleau-Ponty 2004b: 344). With his analysis of capitalism and its religious (Calvinist) origins, Weber does not simply integrate spiritual motives and material causes. Rather, he “renews the concept of historical matter itself” by posing the economic system as “a cosmos, a human choice become a situation; and that is what allows it to rise from worldly asceticism to religious motives, as well as to descend toward its capitalistic decay: everything is woven into the same fabric” (333). Contra what Merleau-Ponty finds in Marxism, Weber teaches us that history “does no work according to a model,” but rather is “the advent of meaning” (334). To say “the elements of rationality were related to one another before crystallizing into a system is only a manner of saying that, taken up and developed by human intentions, they ought to confirm one another and form a whole” (*loc. cit.*). There is, then, an ‘elective affinity’ between the elements of a historical totality, which in turn confirms the “ambiguity of historical facts...the plurality of their aspects” (355). But far from condemning historical knowledge to the realm of the provisional, it is “the very thing that agglomerates the dust of facts, which allows us to read in a religious fact the first draft of an economic system or read, in an economic system, positions taken with regard to the absolute” (335).

Ultimately, Weber’s liberalism is favoured over Marxism because his “phenomenology is not systematic....It does not lead to an absolute knowledge” (Merleau-Ponty 2004a: 341). Man’s freedom and contingency exclude the idea that the goal of cultural sciences is to

construct a closed system of concepts that confines reality according to a definitive order. The intelligible wholes of history “never break their ties with contingency, and the movement by which history turns back on itself in an attempt to grasp itself, to dominate itself, to justify itself, is also without guarantee” (340). For such reasons, “Weber is not a revolutionary” (341). His liberalism “does not demand a political utopia. It does not consider the formal universe of democracy to be an absolute; he admits all politics is violence....His liberalism is militant, even suffering, heroic” (342).

Fleshing out the Flesh

In reaching for the lifeworld through the priority of perception and a subsequent investigation of the pre-personal embodied consciousness, or the tacit body-cogito as the third term lying in between the subject and object, Merleau-Ponty went considerably far in suturing the gap or rupture in/of the immanence that Sartre himself tried to overcome. They both follow extremely similar paths in this respect. Whereas for Sartre it was critical in ironing out inconsistencies in Husserlian phenomenology, for Merleau-Ponty it was similarly considered necessary for overcoming what he saw as the crisis of modern philosophy and its troubling Cartesian heritage. Though instigating this move through a mutual interlocutor (Husserl), Sartre is envisioned by Merleau-Ponty as the last, though unintentional bastion of rational Cartesianism. A somewhat overtly simplified criticism of Sartre, it nonetheless provides the contextual foil required for a project that ironically furthers Sartre’s own project, specifically through concretizing themes of embodiment, ambiguity, contingency, and an anti-juridical ethico-politics, i.e., “practices of life” (1964b: 5), and by introducing the ‘fold’ of subjectivity – all central themes in the ethico-politics of immanence.

The crux of this anti-Cartesian project is carried forth in all of Merleau-Ponty’s subsequent works, to such a degree that we can venture so far as to say that the body (as that which is supposed to realise it and suture, as it were, the ‘dualistic rupture’) is the linchpin of Merleau-Ponty’s oeuvre. Nevertheless, the body and its corresponding concepts receive a fundamental reworking in his unfinished posthumously published *Visible and the Invisible*, pushing thought even closer to a position of pure immanence, and even to a micropolitics. At its simplest, through embarking on a direct ontological enquiry, ambiguity is no longer understood as that which exists between the world and the body. Rather ambiguity is

understood in terms of the relation between the visible and the invisible of the flesh, in which case the “body belongs to the order of the things as the world is universal flesh” (137).

Though it may be tempting see the ontological turn as personifying a radical deviation from Merleau-Ponty’s previous phenomenological project, it in fact arises from an *immanent critique* of it (which also explains how the body continues to serve as the loci of investigation). The crux of the critique regards the realisation that the anti-Cartesian project, and the subsequent bid for the non-dualist lifeworld, cannot be fully realised without investigating, and correcting, its own presupposition or prejudicative *Logos* to which its expressive style and conceptual apparatus is beholden (see Merleau-Ponty 1968: 200). The presupposition, in this instance, is that of a dualistic subject-object epistemological starting point, which in a circular fashion unwittingly corresponds with and props up a dualistic ontology. Together, this serves to resurrect a subverted Cartesianism and subject of form, inconsistent with the principle of the life-world.

In the first instance, this concerns the issue of comprehension and the latent disjunction between intellectual consciousness and perceptual consciousness present in *The Phenomenology of Perception*: “To comprehend is not to constitute in intellectual immanence...to comprehend is to apprehend by coexistence, laterally, by the style, and thereby to attain at once the far-off reaches of this style” (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 107). The ‘style’ and its ‘far off reaches’ both refer to conceptual language as the prime medium of comprehension and expression, and the underlying ontological condition that simultaneously envelopes and is obscured by it. As we noted in the previous chapter, philosophical language, like all praxis, “supposes a **selbstverständlich [self-evident]**, an instituted, which is *Stiftung* [foundation] preparing an *Endstiftung* [final foundation]” (176). Language signifies existentially according to its expressive style. Such are the ‘sedimented significations’ underpinning language, which can prevent it from later achieving a ‘positive signification’ (176). The problem for Merleau-Ponty in this respect is that his anti-Cartesian project still defined itself “in terms of reasons which owe a lot to Descartes” (Merleau-Ponty 1964b: 11).

Specifically, though Merleau-Ponty (1968: 179) did much to convince us of the naiveté of Descartes, “who does not see a tacit cogito under the cogito of *Wesen*, significations,” he now speaks of the naiveté of his own silent cogito “that would deem itself to be an adequation with the silent consciousness, whereas its very description of silence rests

entirely on the virtue of language.” Although *The Phenomenology of Perception* establishes a notion of structure or *Gestalt* as a third notion between facticity and ideality, it fails truly and positively to define *Gestalt* beyond being a spatio-temporal juxtaposition of parts, an exterior designation, and further fails to understand what makes the *Gestalt* a sensible thing (see Merleau-Ponty 1968: 204). In remaining within the exterior designation, the sensible thing is made transcendent and thus exterior, in terms of the position of its being, assimilating the sensible to the objective. The result was the placing of the “*Gestalt back into the framework of ‘cognition’ or ‘consciousness’*” (206) (in the form of a tacit cogito), presupposing a pre-reflective contact of self with self, in which processes are still attributable to a subject. Thus, though striving to describe an interworld, or a chiasm between mind and matter, the project did not practice or exemplify the life-world in the appropriate philosophical lexicon. Indeed, it even propped up a form of rationalism in its analysis by striving to provide a “top-heavy” account about, as opposed to an (appropriate) expression of, Being (178). In either case, this is a failure to attune to the “problem of the passage from the perceptual meaning to the language meaning, from behaviour to thematization” (176), which is also a failure to attend to the project’s own conditions of possibility, its own “non-explicated horizon” (178).

At its simplest, then, in starting with bodily perception and embodied consciousness, as opposed to the world of silence, *The Phenomenology of Perception* does not fully open us up to a plane of immanence, and in fact ultimately reinstates a form of transcendence within immanence in which a Cartesian rupture or dualism reemerges. As we know, Deleuze and Guattari argue that when immanence becomes immanent ‘to’ a transcendental subjectivity, it is denatured – allegedly, this “is what happens in Husserl and many of his successors who discover in the Other [Sartre] or in the Flesh [Merleau-Ponty], the mole of the transcendent within immanence itself” (46). Although the concept of the body as the third may do away with the supremacy of judgement in thought, it merely discovers this mole in the body. The For-itself is still immanent to something transcendent (the body as mediated) insofar as the body is entrusted with the synthesis of the perceived world, not as a pure datum, but rather as a temporal synthesis and subjectivity. This brings to the subject of perception his opacity and historicity. “Perception is always in the mode of the impersonal ‘One’” (279), founded against, not by or within, the background of the world. Primary perception may be non-thetic, pre-objective and pre-conscious, but our relation to the world is still mediated by a transcendent. In a backhanded way, as with Sartre, the synthesis is brought back to a subject

of sorts, in that though the unity is with the object, it is still by virtue of a consciousness intended toward that object, albeit an embodied consciousness.¹⁵

Crucially, Merleau-Ponty's self-criticism follows a deliberately circular logic. To attend to the presuppositions inherent in his language is at the same time to attend to the 'wild being' that envelopes it, and that, more importantly, it forgets and obscures. Subsequently, only a direct ontological enquiry will complete the anti-Cartesian project by elaborating "the notions that have to replace that of transcendental subjectivity, those of subject, object meaning" (167): thus the necessity to return to it (165). In other words, the question of language and the question of Being that lies behind it are mutually inclusive, for it is only through addressing both simultaneously that we ultimately reach the lifeworld that previously eluded Merleau-Ponty. It is the investigation of language, then, that ultimately prompts Merleau-Ponty to conduct a direct ontology enquiry. Underlying all this is a continued attempt to surpass Cartesianism and dualist ontology.

The wild being to which Merleau-Ponty refers is that of the flesh, which is also to say that language is of the flesh (see 1968: 205). With echoes of Sartre's thesis, Merleau-Ponty (136) defines the flesh as a "carnal being, as a being of depths, of several leaves or several faces, a being in latency, and a presentation of a certain absence," which "is a prototype of Being, of which our body, the sensible sentient, is a very remarkable variant, but whose constitutive paradox already lies in every visible."¹⁶ Undeniably, Merleau-Ponty gives the concept a more thoroughgoing treatment than it receives in Sartre. Presumably for this reason, Sartre had to clarify his position through reference to it, readily linking his notion of the situation of lived experience to Merleau-Ponty's notion that we are enveloped.¹⁷ The central theme in Merleau-Ponty's ontological turn concerns the notion that the "visible itself has an invisible inner framework (*membrure*), and the in-visible is the secret counterpart of the visible, it appears only within it, it is the *Nichturprasentierbar* which is presented to me as such within the world...the visible is pregnant with the invisible" (215-6). The visible world is held together by an invisible structure of meaning, including past experiences, horizons of experience, future experience and so forth. In this sense, the visible, as Merleau-Ponty (209) confirms, is a simulacrum or a 'phenomenal order' "second by reference to the objective order." Indeed, the criticism of transcendence ascribed to the flesh by Deleuze and Guattari (with exception of its lack of politicized conception of force) is clearly only true of Merleau-Ponty's early work, in which the body is entrusted with the synthesis that Sartre (or Merleau-Ponty's vision of him) ascribed to conscious intentionality.¹⁸ The flesh proper does not

return to subjectivity of this kind, and bears strong resemblance to Deleuze's concept of the immanent virtual, to the point that we can say it prefigures it.

The basis for Merleau-Ponty's turn to the invisible is developed in his analysis of Paul Cézanne's turn away from the techniques of geometrical perspective. More specifically, Merleau-Ponty seeks to show that through Cézanne's revelation of the field of depth, we are offered a theory of space in which it is no longer something purely fixed and eternal (as is the case with Euclidean interpretation), but rather generative, with space and the object being generated simultaneously and depth bringing the other dimensions into being. For the first time, Merleau-Ponty attempts a transcendental enquiry into the grounds of perception, or the invisible in the visible. He does this through painting because it has 'metaphysical significance' insofar as it "draws upon this brute fabric of meaning which activism would prefer to ignore" (Merleau-Ponty 2004b: 293).

This metaphysical significance is made evident by the way Descartes relates the concept of depth to representation, wherein seeing is treated as a mode or variant of thinking – vision is "an operation of thought that would set up before the mind a picture or a representation of the world, a world of immanence and of ideality" (Merleau-Ponty 2004b: 294). Light is seen as an action by contact, as rays reflected by the things in the world that impress themselves on the retina. In this way, "it is not unlike the action of things upon the blind man's cane," and so, in a sense, the "Cartesian concept of vision is molded after the sense of touch" (301). As such, a Cartesian "does not see *himself* in the mirror; he sees a dummy, an 'outside', which, he has every reason to believe, other people see in the very same way but which, no more for himself than for others, is not a body in the flesh" (302). By extension, seeing a painting is an intellectual operation, where the picture "is a flat thing contriving to give us what we would see in the [actual] presence of 'diversely contoured' things, by offering sufficient diacritical signs of the missing dimension, according to height and width. Depth is treated as a *third dimension* derived from the other two" (304).

Depth is then taken further by the Cartesian, as a relative concept, in that "another man...could penetrate their [the objects'] 'hiding place' and see them openly deployed. Either what I call depth is nothing, or else it is my participation in a Being without restriction" (Merleau-Ponty 2004b: 304). Hence perspective has to be artificially generated. In this instance, objects are presented as possessing solid boundaries with "*each outside of the others*" (loc. cit). This view finds itself expressed in Renaissance painting, where it is a

central operation contributing to our access to Being; “it is a mode or variant of thinking, where thinking is canonically defined according to intellectual possession and evidence” (303). Following a linear perspective technique, the painting aims to represent the object through geometric forms (square shapes take on the form of rectangles, and circles take on the form of ovals).

“The enigma,” writes Merleau-Ponty (2004b: 311), “consists in the fact that I see things, each one in its place, precisely because they eclipse one another, and that they are rivals before my sight precisely because each one is in its own place. Their exteriority is known in their envelopment and their mutual dependence in their autonomy.” But once depth is understood this way, it cannot be referred to as a third dimension. If it were a dimension at all, it would be the first, in that there are forms and definite planes only if it is stipulated how far from them their different parts are. But “a *first* dimension that contains all the others is no longer a dimension, at least in the ordinary sense of a *certain relationship* according to which we make measurements” (311). Depth is integral to the embodied experience of living among things. It is, therefore, the experience of the reversibility of dimensions, of a global ‘locality’ – “everything in the same place at the same time, a locality from which height, width, and depth are abstracted, of a voluminosity we express in a word when we say that a thing is *there*” (311). With respect to art, the problem is no longer that of instance, line, or form: it is that of colour. Colour is “‘the place where our brain and the universe meet’,” as Merleau-Ponty states, quoting Klee. The property of colour does not rely on solid boundaries, and so gives rise to an interpenetrative space, creating “‘identities, differences, a texture, a materiality, a something – creates them from itself, for itself” (312).

Merleau-Ponty thus concludes that we must see space and its content as together. The problem, then, is generalised. Colour is not the dimension of depth. Rather, depth is the “dimension of colour, that dimension which creates identities, differences, a texture, a materiality, a something – creates them from itself, for itself” (Merleau-Ponty 2004b: 312). The painter’s vision is not a view upon the outside, or a ‘physical-optical’ relation with the world. The world “no longer stands before him through representation” (loc. cit). Rather, it is the painter to whom the thing of the world gives birth by a sort of concentration, a “coming-to-itself of the visible” (312). The painting relates to nothing at all among experienced things unless it is ‘autofigurative’. That is, it is “a spectacle of something only by being a ‘spectacle of nothing’, by breaking the ‘skin of things’ to show how the things becomes things, how the world becomes world” (loc. cit). To elucidate the point, Merleau-

Ponty turns to Apollinaire's statement that in poetry there are phrases that do not appear to have been created, but which seem to have formed themselves. Equally, Henri Michaux "said that sometimes Klee's colors seem to have been born slowly upon the canvas, to have emanated from some primordial ground, 'exhaled at the right place' like a patina or a mold" (312).

Art, then, cannot be a construction of an artificial relationship to a space and world existing outside; it rather "awakens powers dormant in ordinary vision, a secret of pre-existence" (Merleau-Ponty: 2004b: 313). When I see the tiling at the bottom of a pool, I do not see it despite the water and the reflections there; I see it through them and because of them. "If there were no distortions, no ripples of sunlight, if it were without this flesh that I saw the geometry of the tiles, then I would cease to see it *as* it is and where it is – which is to say, beyond any identical, specific place" (313). Water, in this sense, is not in space. Instead it inhabits it, it materialises itself there, without being contained; "and if I raise my eyes toward the screen of cypresses where the web of reflections is playing, I cannot gainsay the fact that the water visits it, too, or at least sends into it, upon it, its active and living essence" (loc. cit). It is this eternal animation, "this radiation of the visible," that the painter seeks "under the name of depth, of space, of colour" (313).

In many ways this resembles and indeed pre-empt's Deleuze's notion of the virtual and its actualisation.¹⁹ Indeed, alike with the virtual, the invisible structure of the flesh – that is, that which is impregnated in the visible thickness of the flesh, my body and the Other's being in and of this – as captured by depth, is an interpenetrative space, or, rather, it is an intensive multiplicity wherein the genetic differential resides. Given it is an interpenetration, where relationships between objects as differentials are formed and sustained without for all that being subsumed, and preceding any juxtaposition in time and space, it follows that this structure contains a virtual set of impossible or folded relations that vice-dict rather than contradict one another, such that any particular formation can be actualised at any given point. Indeed, in accordance with the fundamental principle of intensity, colour – as an instance through which we reach depth or in which it is captured – cannot be divided without being changed in nature. In explicating the invisible structures within the visible flesh through the act of painting, and through one's encounter with a piece of art, one actualises a particular trajectory or relation of this impossibility. That is to say, given that this is a relation of actualisation, which incorporates "the genesis of the visible," it follows that we must leave it to the "title to designate by its prosaic name the entity thus constituted"

(Merleau-Ponty 2004b: 315). A painting's actualisation is possible in a number of ways and contexts, reliant on the way in which the artist gives it to the visible. A piece of art's meaning, then, is not determined by what it is intended to represent.

To put it another way, in exploring the works of Cézanne and Klee, and their use of colour, we witness that the visible structure of the world, such as the elements of the painting, have sensible form, but its Idea – that is what is painted – does not. Yet, it is no less real on that account. The Idea is a real or virtual intensive domain, the metastable of the flesh, made up of genetic differential elements prior to any extension in time and space, a set of various relations interpenetrating one another and differentiated, ready to be actualised, visualised or even crystallized in expression or in a particular determined structure in any given encounter that forces its explication. The encounter and the actualisation in turn feed back into the differential, adding an extra element to it and in turn altering the visible. The process continues, such that we are only ever given a constant becoming of folds. The distinction between the invisible and the visible, then, is like that of the virtual and the actual constituting the Real: it is an epistemological and opposed to ontological distinction. Indeed, despite the distinction, they are of the same univocal flesh of Being, the same fabric. Each fold of the flesh is a fold of and in the visible and the invisible – a point to which I shall return shortly. What is important to note here is that there is no negative in the process, no holes, or different orders of Being, and certainly no subject/predicate structure of synthesis.²⁰

Thus art, for Merleau-Ponty, is not a work within space, and equally the line is “no longer the apparition of an entity upon a vacant background, as it was in classical geometry” (Merleau-Ponty 2004b: 315). Rather, paralleling Riemann's approach to geometry as Somers-Hall (2012: 14) notes, “the work itself is a convolution of space.” Or, rather, the line is “the restriction, segregation, or modulation of a pre-given spatiality” (315). Instead of being a work in an $n+1$ dimensional space, “it defines itself internally through the relation of different dimensions,” and so in this way Merleau-Ponty's concept of art “meets Deleuze's concept of the Idea in general, albeit in the field of aesthetics, rather than mathematics” (loc. cit). Indeed, Deleuze holds that difference of intensity is cancelled or tends to be cancelled out in an extensive system, yet it creates this system by explicating itself. Or, rather, intensity “is developed and explicated by means of an extension [*extension*] which relates it to the extensity [*extensum*] in which it appears outside itself and hidden beneath quality” (Deleuze 2004a: 287). If extensity does not account for the individuations which occur within it, or if the figure and ground are individuating factors that take place

within an already developed extensity, then “their value is only relative. They therefore flow from a ‘deeper’ instance – depth itself, which is not extension but pure *implex*” (288).

Following Merleau-Ponty, then, Deleuze argues that extensity comes from depth, rather than depth from extensity, where the ground is the projection of something ‘deeper’, the pure *spatium*. Deleuze (2004a: 289) however, goes on to link this ‘pure spatial synthesis’ with the temporal synthesis previously specified: the three temporal syntheses of Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism (Humean present, Bergsonian memory, Nietzschean ungrounding). That is, the “explication of extensity rests upon the first synthesis, that of habit or the present; but the implication of depth rests upon the second synthesis, that of Memory and the *pasat*. Furthermore, in depth the proximity and simmering of the third synthesis make themselves felt, announcing the universal ‘ungrounding’” (loc. cit). Though Merleau-Ponty links depth with time, via the invisible structures of past experience, which, for instance, shape our experience of the colour red, he does not for all that truly explicate the universal ‘ungrounding’ of the eternal return, particularly with relation to force and therefore the qualitative/quantitative. Depth is of the past or synthesis of Memory, but within depth, Deleuze adds, is the proximity and simmering of the differentiator, which links different series together such that they are not subsumed by each other, such that they vice-dict. Vice-diction latently is evident in Merleau-Ponty, as we have already mentioned, but its exactness and its role remain limited by the vagueness of his fold, the rather unbalanced emphasis on the visibility of the flesh, in which the genesis of the Gestalt figure is explained in terms of the very actual that cancels it out, and the related, and rather Bergsonian intuition (though it is a subtle and inconsistent intuition inasmuch as immanent generativity is central to the concept of the flesh) that qualities are ready-made (in reference to the invisible structures that are inside the visible) and extensities already constituted (the sensible).

Indeed, it is from this third synthesis that Deleuze develops a somewhat counter-intuitive notion of intensive *quantity*, which incorporates a very particular concept of politicised force inspired by Nietzsche’s *will to power*. In terms of art, Deleuze holds that this virtual force is captured by Bacon’s ‘bone’ residing within the flesh. Here, the difference in quantity, which establishes a dynamic quanta, determines the quality, such that it is “the quality which belongs to the quantity” (291). Thus it is the intensive difference in quantity that is cancelled out by extension. Difference is of the intensive, which refers to a series of other differences that it affirms by affirming itself. This means that negation is the inverted image of difference, it is the extensive and qualitative. Though there is no negative in the flesh *per se*,

this nuance is clearly missing in it. As we shall see in the fourth chapter, the will to power as the third transcendental synthesis, and its reworking of the quantitative/qualitative distinction vis-à-vis intensity, has critical import for our understanding of multiplicities, and as such, the formation of political subjectivity and resistance. In short, then, Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty primarily differ with respect to their understanding of the intensive and their attempts to conceptualise it.

What is important for our purposes here, however, is that the same argument vis-à-vis the flesh is extended in Merleau-Ponty's subsequent *The Visible and the Invisible*, which more directly affects our understanding of (inter)subjectivity and provides a concept of 'folding' that later becomes central to Foucault and Deleuze. The main part of the work (*The Intertwining – The Chiasm*) returns to the problem of colour, or rather the notion that we do not see it in isolation from a field or background, that it is "not a chunk of absolutely hard, indivisible being, offered all naked to a vision which could only be total or null" (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 132). Rather, a naked colour is a "sort of straits between exterior horizons and interior horizons ever gaping open, something that comes to touch lightly and makes diverse regions of the colored or visible world resound at the distances, a certain differentiation, an ephemeral modulation of this world – less a color or a thing, therefore, than a difference between things and colors, and momentary crystallisation of colored being or of visibility" (loc. cit). We see a colour in relation to temporal thickness and a particular focusing, as well as in relation to other colours in the field which affect its substance and attract my gaze in a variety of ways depending on my intentions. That is, we see it out of and through a set of genetic differentials that act as its virtual double. This is all to emphasise the experience of being within the metastable equilibriums sustaining expressive activities such as perception.²¹

What is significant about *The Visible and the Invisible* is that Merleau-Ponty attributes the same insights to the seer. The look "envelops, palpates, espouses the visible thing," as though "it were in a relation of pre-established harmony with them, as though it knew them before knowing them, it moves in its own way with its abrupt and imperious style, and yet the views taken are not desultory – I do not look at a chaos, but at things – so that finally one cannot say if it is the look or if it is the things that command" (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 133). The look, then, finds things to which it must gear itself, into the texture it is going to feel, an "initiation to and an opening upon a tactile world. This can happen only if my hand, while it is felt from within, is also accessible from without, itself tangible, for my other hand,

for example, if it takes its place among the things it touches, is in a sense one of them, opens up finally upon a tangible being of which it is also a part” (133). It is through this crisscrossing (or fold) over from inside to outside within it, of the touching and the tangible, that its own movements incorporate themselves into the universe they interrogate. The two systems are applied to each other.

This is no different for vision, except that “here the exploration and the information it gathers do not belong ‘to the same sense’” (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 133). Yet the delimitation of the sense is crude, to the point that the intertwining between touch and vision leaves neither of them self-identical: there is a “double and crossed situation of the visible in the tangible and of the tangible in the visible; the two maps are complete, and yet they do not merge into one” (134). That is to say, they are disjunctively synthesised, making a totality that is not superposable. Thus, “since vision is a palpation with the look, it must also be inscribed in the order of being that it discloses to us; he who looks must not himself be foreign to the world that he looks at” (loc. cit). The visible and the tangible intersect each other, and our experience structures its own metastable potentialities insofar as the intertwining is sensed. Visibility and tangibility belong to the same world by virtue of my body’s reversibility as a single seeing and seen, touching and touched, or insofar as it is an open trajectory. Here we find an immanence by virtue of the fact the “he who sees cannot possess the visible unless he is possessed by it, unless he *is of it*” (134-5).

With this, we understand why we see the things themselves, in their places, where they are, according to their being, “which is indeed more than their being-perceived – and why at the same time we are separated from them by all the thickness of the look and of the body” (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 135). It is that “the thickness of flesh between the seer and the thing is constitutive for the thing of its visibility as for the seer of his corporeity; it is not an obstacle between them, it is their means of communication” (loc. cit). It is for the same reason that I am at the heart of the visible and that I am far from it. The seer has his own depth, his own generative ontogenesis, which is supported by the same visible which I see and which I know very well. It is the thickness of the body that allows me to go to the heart of things, making myself a world by making things flesh. The body is a “*sensible for itself*,” like a connective tissue, uniting us directly with the things through its own ontogenesis.

We see with the above that my body is both a phenomenal body and an objective body, and what we call visible is a simulacrum inasmuch as it is “a quality pregnant with a texture, the

surface of a depth, a cross section upon a massive being, a grain or corpuscle borne by a wave of being” (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 136). The visible is not, in other words, a multitude of spatio-temporal individuals that are connected and combined by a mind constitutive of relations. The visible holds together of itself and coheres onto things. With this, Being is not taken as substance but rather a relationship between my body and the world or between the flesh of my body and the flesh of the visible, “the coiling over of the visible upon the seeing body, of the tangible upon the touching body, which is attested in particular when the body sees them and touches them” (137). The perceived world is, as such, an “ensemble of my body’s routes” or an intertwining of routes and levels with the world, such as space, time, colour, and lighting, as lines of force uniting the two fleshs. In short, the body and the world belong to the same flesh.

To be more exact, the flesh is for itself the *exemplar sensible*, an elemental manner of being. It is not *matter*, *mind* or *substance*, but quite simply an element “in the sense it was used to speak of water, air, earth and fire, that is, in the sense of a *general thing* midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea, a sort of incarnate principle that brings a style of being wherever there is a fragment of being” (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 139). Thus the flesh is not thought of as starting from substances, from body and spirit – for then it would be the union of contradictories. Rather, “we must think it...as the concrete emblem of a general manner of being” (147) – when we speak of the flesh of the visible, “we do not mean to do anthropology” (136).

This relates back to the discussion of art in *Eye and Mind*, in that whereas art captures the process of Being and the prepersonal perceptual emergence of everyday objects, the artist himself personifies the hinge or fold between the creator and the created, between the self and world as well as the self and other, between interiority and exteriority – a fold that essentially exceeds these terms, effacing any rigid distinction between the two – out of which art can be and is created. In some sense, then, the artist’s body is the proverbial vestibule or interface sitting ‘in between’ the seeing and the seen, dragging in its wake (and even folding) the visible-invisible. Art overcomes the existential restrictions of language that tends to conjure up a two-dimensional Euclidean space, to present us with the fold itself. To repeat, it is through the artist’s body – the fact that he is *in* and *of* the world as flesh, his giving himself up to the nature to which he belongs and his re-exteriorisation of it, the intertwining between vision and movement experienced by the lived body, this folding of the flesh – that

art and even reality as experienced, can be created and sustained, and returned back into the process.

Further, the domain of the flesh, so described, is unlimited, an “ultimate notion,” for “it is not the union or compound of two substances, but thinkable by itself, if there is a relation of the visible with itself that traverses me and constitutes me as a seer, this circle which I do not form, which forms me, this coiling over of the visible upon the visible, can traverse, animate other bodies as well as my own” (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 140). There are other landscapes, then, besides my own, which means there are no rigid borders around my expressive body as it takes up its own trajectory. It remains open to the encroachments of others, expressing an intercorporeality. This in turn overcomes the problem of the *alter ego* because “it is not *I* who sees, not *he* who sees, because an anonymous visibility inhabits both of us, a vision in general, in virtue of that primordial property that belongs to the flesh, being here and now, of radiating everywhere and forever, being an individual, of being also a dimension and a universal” (142). The visible, then, is a field of being, which presides over its region. It is a field, a “fabric” (61), a topography “unfolding by differentiation (217).

By locating an alleged philosophy of identity in Sartre and using this as his foil, Merleau-Ponty initiates a mixturism with features of a philosophy of difference.²² Fundamentally, the seer is not a gap or a hole in the fabric of the visible. There is just one continuous, folding and unfolding fabric of Being. Against both positivist, and negativist conceptions of being, which preconceive being as objectivity posited before a subject around which the visible can spread, we see a world of degrees, distance, depth and difference, “an ensemble of my body’s routes” (247). We must therefore “eschew the thinking by planes and perspectives, there are two circles, or two vortexes, or two spheres, concentric when I live naively, and as soon as I question myself, the one slightly decentered with respect to the other...” (138).

The reversibility or folding of the flesh “exists in other fields; it is even incomparably more agile there and capable of weaving relations between bodies that this time will not only enlarge, but will pass definitively beyond the circle of the visible” (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 144). Thus, despite the fact that some of my movements “go nowhere,” such as “facial movements, many features, and especially those strange movements of the throat and mouth that form the cry and the voice,” these are nevertheless expressions (*loc. cit.*). Although I hear myself with my own throat, and so am incomparable, if I am close enough to the other who speaks to hear his breath and feel his effervescence and his fatigue, “I almost witness,

in him as in myself, the awesome birth of vociferation” (144). Indeed, as there is reflexivity of the touch, of sight and of the touch-vision system, there is a reflectivity of the movements of phonation and of hearing; “they have their sonorous inscription, the vociferations have in me their motor echo” (loc. cit).

Fundamentally, this new reversibility and the emergence of the flesh “as expression” are “the point of insertion of speaking and thinking” (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 145). This is possible due to the dehiscence in the heart of the flesh of the world. As Landes (2013: 178) puts it, the “real material and visible body is prepared through a series of individuations, from the embryo onward in the trajectory of individuation, which is always already *expressive being in the world*.” Expression and individuation share the logic of transduction. The body and the mind are not separate substances. Rather, experience is possible because reversibility is always metastable, the “incessant escaping, this impotency to superpose exactly upon one another the touching of the things by my right hand and the touching of this same right hand by my left...is not a failure,” rather they are the conditions of experience. In other words, this presents a conceptualisation of immanence which envisions the Outside as an exogenetic fold of the endoconsistent, or a plane of immanence. It is genetic insofar as it tends to the genesis of the visible, a fold insofar as this genesis refers to a reversibility, an endoconsistent in that the condition is in the conditioned.

In much of his later work, Merleau-Ponty utilises his concept of the flesh to bring about a renewed perspective on nature. It follows once more from the view that Cartesian ontology, which is implicit in modern science, is far from being grounded on natural perception. Indeed, the very concept of Nature, such as it is often allowed by scientists, “belongs to a conception that is entirely theological in its infrastructure” (Merleau-Ponty 2003: 89). It is theological in three ways. First, insofar as it affirms a distinct causalism that maintains that if we were to have in a given moment precise knowledge of the positions and speeds of the elements of Nature, we would have what we need to infer every future. This concept is a theological affirmation in that it affirms “a view of totality capable of subtending all evolution of the world” (89). Second, it affirms an analytical conception, or the Cartesian idea of the “decomposition of the complex into the simple that excludes all consideration of composition as original reality” (loc. cit). Third, it affirms a spatial conception of natural being, wherein the world has an entirely extensive existence. This speaks to a static notion of being, in that each element is assigned an objective place, a ‘respective situation’, in turn excluding “the idea of a being in the process of becoming, in change” (89). The only

difference between this classicism and modern scientific thought, according to Merleau-Ponty, lies in the fact that the former thinks that it is “necessary to understand Being before understanding its own behavior, while the latter grasps its being only in grasping its behavior” (loc. cit). Generally speaking, modern thought is characterised by the priority that it gives to the idea of reality over those of possibility and necessity.

Within this context, Merleau-Ponty is concerned with a study of Nature that is not a theory of knowledge of it, nor a concern for a philosophy of Nature in the sense of a super-science, a secret science, etc. Rather, Merleau-Ponty (2003: 204) seeks a concept of Nature “as a leaf or layer of total Being – the ontology of Nature as a way toward ontology – the way that we prefer because...[it] more clearly shows the necessity of the ontological mutation.” That is, a concept of Nature as the expression of an ontology, or as its privileged expression, as a part of this complex which reveals all of it. Contra Descartes, ontology is implicit in the sense that there is a ‘putting in place’ of Being according to the order of reasons rather than their articulation in one another in the intuition of a unique ontology: “we are looking for...a true *explication* of Being, that is, not the exhibition of a Being, even infinite, in which the articulation of beings one after another comes about in a manner that in principle is incomprehensible to us, but rather the unveiling of Beings as that which they [being] define, that which places them together on the side of what is not nothing” (206). Nature in us must have some relation to nature outside us, and Nature outside us must be unveiled to us by the Nature that we are. Regarding life, “the concern was to study the unfolding of the leaf of Nature – regarding the human, the concern is to take him at his point of emergence in Nature” (Merleau-Ponty 2003: 208). It is a thin leaf of nature-essence, divided in folds, doubled, even tripled (212). And so, just as there is an “*Ineinander* of life and physicochemistry, i.e., the realization of life as a fold or a singularity of physicochemistry – or structure, so too is the human to be taken in the *Ineinander* with animality and Nature” (loc. cit).

Once more, we are concerned with the body: “before reason, humanity is another corporeity” (Merleau-Ponty 2003: 208). In this light, Merleau-Ponty envisions humanity as another manner of being a body, which is to see humanity emerge just like Being, “in the manner of a watermark, not as another substance, but as *interbeing*, and not as an imposition of a for-itself on a body in-itself” (208). My body is interposed between what is in front of me and what is behind me, my body “standing in front of the upright things, in a circuit with the world, an *Einfühlung* with the world, with the things, with the animals, with other

bodies...made comprehensible by this theory of the flesh...the visible of the invisible” (209). Life, then, is not merely a power of being or a spirit, but rather that way in which we “install ourselves in perceived being/brute being, in the sensible, in the flesh where there is no longer the alternative of the in-itself and the for-itself, where perceived being is eminently in being” (210). Remaining consistent with his metaphysics of art, it follows that instead of a science of the world “by relations contemplated from the outside (relations of space, for example), the body is the measurement of the world. I am open to the world because I am *within* my body” (217) – thus once more the flesh as the visibility of the invisible, and the emergence of the flesh in life as life emerges in physicochemistry.

Tender is the Flesh

With Merleau-Ponty’s metaphysics of art, his turn to ontology itself, and finally his work on nature, we are presented with an image of subjectivity not as a hole that punctures or disrupts the fabric of Being, but rather a fold of that very fabric. Further, as folding itself is never exact, it never ‘coincides’, an excess is created through which renegotiations of said subjectivity may occur.²³ Yet the distinction between a fold, a re-fold, and an unfold is not so clear. This refers back, of course, to Merleau-Ponty’s most central political ideas: ambiguity and contingency, which in his final works he relates to his admiration of Machiavelli for proposing that the art of politics requires the negotiation through the matrices of power and lines of force. As he says in *Signs*, if “we were asked in concluding to give our remarks a philosophical formulation, we would say that our times have experienced and are experiencing, more perhaps than any other, contingency” (1964b: 239). There is “not a force at the beginning of human life which guides it toward its ruin or toward chaos,” but rather “each gesture of our body or our language, each act of political life, as we have seen, spontaneously takes account of the other person and goes beyond itself in its singular aspects toward a universal meaning” (loc. cit). Man is absolutely distinct from animal species insofar as “he has no original equipment and is the place of contingency” (240).

With this, Merleau-Ponty proposes a new *real humanism*, characterised by a life “woven out of chance events,” turning back upon, regrasping “and expressing itself” (1964b: 240). If there is a humanism today, “it rids itself of the illusion Valéry designated so well in speaking of ‘that little man within man whom we always presuppose’” (240). Instead, it must come to understand “how a body becomes animate and how these blind organs end up bearing a

perception. The ‘little man within man’ is only a phantom of our successful expressive operations; and the admirable man is not this phantom but the man who – installed in his fragile body, in a language which has already done so much speaking, and in a reeling history – gathers himself together and begins to see, to understand and to signify” (loc. cit). It is a humanism in the tradition of Machiavelli, insofar as it evokes a philosophy “which confronts the relationship of man to man and the constitution of a common situation and a common history between men as a problem” (223).²⁴ Such a humanism, therefore, no longer loves man in opposition to his body, mind in opposition to its language, values in opposition to facts. Mind and man never simply are. Instead, they are shown through in the movement by which “the body becomes gesture, language an *oeuvre*, and coexistence truth.... It begins by becoming aware of contingency. It is the continued confirmation of an astonishing junction between fact and meaning, between my body and my self, my self and others, my thought and my speech, violence and truth” (240-1).

It is for this reason that Merleau-Ponty (1968: 84) refers to life as “an atmosphere” in the “astronomical sense.” It is “constantly enshrouded by those mists we call the sensible world or history, the *one*, of the corporeal life and the *one* the human life, the present and the past, as a pell-mell ensemble of bodies and minds, promiscuity of visages, words, actions, with, between them all, that cohesion which cannot be denied them since they are all differences, extreme divergences of one same something” (loc. cit). Here, of course, ‘one’ refers to the indefinite pronoun *on*, which refers to the anonymous, prepersonal subject. Furthermore, with this, we are urged to turn to a humanism that embraces “the methodical refusal of explanations, because they destroy the mixture we are made of and make us incomprehensible to ourselves” (Merleau-Ponty 1964b: 241). In this strictest sense, not only does Merleau-Ponty’s fleshism provide a radicalisation of Sartre’s ethic of authenticity and his take on ambiguity, and therefore the rejection of the very subject upon which social contract theory relies. It also provides a picture of life as an encounter. It completely eschews, then, as Merleau-Ponty (235-6) admits, “juridical politics.”

Related to these points, it is evident that Merleau-Ponty’s fleshism anticipates the Foucauldian and Deleuzian notion of micropolitics. But it can only anticipate it, insofar as Merleau-Ponty does not develop a theory of power in conjunction with that of force, as mentioned above. It is in this sense that Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 178) argue that the “Fleshism” of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology is “both a pious and a sensual notion, a mixture of sensuality and religion without which, perhaps, flesh could not stand up by itself

(it would slide down the bones, as in Bacon's figures)." Flesh "is not sensation, although it is involved in revealing it" (loc. cit). It is "painted with pink...and sometimes with broken tones" (178-9). But what constitutes sensation "is the becoming animal or plant, which wells up like a flayed meat or peeled fruit beneath the bands of pink in the most graceful, delicate nude, Venus in the mirror; or which suddenly emerges in the fusion, firing, or casting of broken tones, like the zone of indiscernibility of beast and man" (179). In this sense, flesh "is only the thermometer of a becoming. The flesh is too tender" (loc. cit). In this section of *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari make clear reference to Merleau-Ponty's analysis of art via flesh, and subtly compare it to Deleuze's own notion of *meat*, which is introduced in his monograph on Bacon.

Here, Deleuze follows Merleau-Ponty in seeing that every theory of art posits a metaphysics. Indeed, Deleuze (2013: 37), alike with Merleau-Ponty, categorises painting as an act that directly attempts "to realise the presences beneath representation, beyond representation." The painting represents far more than its geometric forms. In this sense, paintings are not mere narratives, "reproducing or inventing forms," depicting instead something more profound (loc. cit). For Merleau-Ponty, the painting, as we saw, reveals the invisible. For Deleuze too, the painting reveals the invisible, or the 'violence of sensation'. Sensation, moreover, has a reality of its own. However, Deleuze moves beyond Merleau-Ponty insofar as he depicts painting as making visible both the invisible *and* intensive forces, which act upon the body and climb through its flesh. It is in this sense that Deleuze says art is a matter of "capturing forces" (40). For sensation to exist, "a force must be exerted on a body, on a point of the wave" (loc. cit), which seems to follow the virtual notion of the transcendental field. Force is the transcendental condition of sensation. Indeed, "if force is the condition of sensation, it is nonetheless not the force that is sensed, since the sensation 'gives' something completely different from the forces that condition it" (40).

It is specifically in this sense that "Bacon's Figures seem to be one of the most marvellous responses in the history of painting to the question, How can one make invisible forces visible?" (Deleuze 2013: 41). Bacon finds a way for sensation, beyond representation, in showing through the meat how an organism's visibility is punctuated by a fixed organisation of organs. A wave of variable amplitude flows through the body without organs; it traces zones and levels on this body according to the variations of its amplitude. When "the wave encounters external forces at a particular level, a sensation appears," and thus an organ "will be determined by this encounter, but it is a provisional organ that endures only as long as

the passage of the wave and the action of the force, and which will be displaced in order to be posited elsewhere” (34). A body without organs does not lack organs, “it simply lacks the organism, that is, this particular organization of organs,” making it an “*indeterminate organ*,” whereas the body organism is a “*determinate organ*” (34). The force will determine a body it encounters, and this organ will change if the force itself changes. What Bacon realises is the body without organs, underpinning the visual, and the forces that determine or organise it – the bone in the flesh. In particular, Bacon’s contorted figures reveal this vitality, the powerful nonorganic life that lies beyond the organism, particularly through the deformations which the body undergoes via animal traits of the head and through “the techniques of rubbing and brushing that disorganize it and make a head emerge in its place” (15). This constitutes “a *zone of indiscernibility or undecidability* between man and animal” (16). It elucidates the invisible forces of becoming, which take places in the field of the visible, revealed in the meat “through the splendor of its colors” (16).

Bacon’s paintings, then, express an ontology of forces in which every sensation implies a difference of level (or order, of domains), and moves from one level to another, something that even the “phenomenological unity did not give an account of” (Deleuze 2013: 35). As Voss (2013: 122) notes, both Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty characterise being “as endowed with a genetic potential, as a field of pre-quantitative and pre-qualitative processes, a field of individuation, and as the genetic condition of experience and thought.” Yet Merleau-Ponty’s seems to remain “on the surface of sense-experience, in particular that of vision” (loc. cit). Merleau-Ponty appears to stay with the theatre of images, of visibility, whereas Deleuze favours an ontology of forces of intensity, affectivity, and becoming, which is entirely a-subjective.

This notion of power as force, as we shall see in the next chapter, is central to Foucault’s analytic of power, and is precisely what allows him to develop an explicit politics.²⁵ In this sense, although Merleau-Ponty was critical in providing a new language not caught in the trap of Cartesian dualism (thereby radicalising Sartre) and in furthering our understanding of virtual and generative processes in a world of immanence that operate below the epiphenomenal level of the self and Other, he lacks a proper elucidation of intensive forces. Foucault’s work represents an advance in our lineage in just the same way that Merleau-Ponty represents an advance over Sartre. Indeed, with both Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, we have been dealing with a very conceptual understanding of subjectivity and how it affects politics. With Foucault, and later Deleuze, we come to a more concrete political theory of

immanence or *political* subjectivity that is nevertheless indebted to Sartre and Merleau-Ponty and intelligible only with this context in mind.

Notes

¹ See, for instance, Grosz (1999: 149) Kazashi (1999: 113), and Silverman (1993: 272).

² My claim of immanence is contrary to Michael Smith (1999: 35), who argues that Merleau-Ponty's entire oeuvre should be understood strictly in terms of transcendence. What is evident in Smith's reading, however, is that he deeply misconstrues immanence, conflating it with a sort of interiority, as in that which "is within me" or that which is "not a point of arrival, but where we set out from the moment we say 'I'" and even as a rationalist "intellectualism" (37). In contrast, transcendence is taken as exteriority, empiricism and alterity. This falls into the trap, outlined in the introduction, of reading immanence in terms of self-enclosure, sameness, solipsism or indeed a sort of insularity and inclusivity. As such, Smith claims that the development of the lived body as both seer and seen is "a blend of immanence and transcendence," and praises Merleau-Ponty on this account (37). It is clear that Smith has bought into an oppositional logic wherein the subject and object are already taken to be separate from each other, reflecting the very surface intentionality apropos the two-dimensional Euclidean space that Merleau-Ponty sought to overcome through a topological account of the heights and depths of the world beneath this level of experience. Smith therefore takes any recourse to the Outside as a recourse to a transcendent Other, missing the point that immanence can refer to the ontological, to Being in general, as opposed to the subject vis-à-vis the noumenal world. In fact, it is telling that Smith employs the very language of Merleau-Ponty's *The Phenomenology of Perception*, which *The Visible and the Invisible* aims to abolish precisely because it evokes an image of separation at odds with the nature of Being Merleau-Ponty develops. The entire point of Merleau-Ponty's notion of reversibility is to show how the subject and object are merely epiphenomenal, likened to the finger of the glove turned inside out, on the hinge of the flesh, which is to say that both sides are part of the same fabric. In this sense, Otherness is construed in terms of a fold or crisscrossing, and rather than opposition that needs to be 'mediated', we are offered, in a way that greatly anticipates Deleuze, subtle and subterranean differential mechanisms. Subsequently, exteriority does not necessarily mean transcendence. The Outside is construed as a fold of/on the plane of immanence. We can find a similar misunderstanding in Weiss's (1999: 125) reading of Merleau-Ponty alongside the Lacanian Other. If anything, Smith's misreading vindicates Merleau-Ponty's (1968: 153) contention that language, much like music, "can sustain a sense by virtue of its own arrangement, catch a meaning in its own mesh, that it does so without exception each time it is conquering, active, creative language, each time something is, in the strong sense, said" (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 153). That is to say, language signifies existentially according to its expressive styles, conveying a latent existential sensitivity which can easily lead to misrecognition and misrepresentation. Is this not precisely what happened to Sartre?

³ In this sense I agree with Diana Coole's (2007: 182) argument that Merleau-Ponty's "early work stakes out a route for overcoming subjectivism and the later writings simply continue this project, which requires a continual deepening of an inquiry that now advances to the next level via self-interrogation." This view opposes that of various scholars, such as Kwan (1963: 39) and Mallin (1979: 59, 8), who argue that Merleau-Ponty's own self-criticism in his later period was in fact exaggerated (Barabaras [2004] makes a similar argument). Accordingly, the earlier works try to return to the authentic figure of the perceived and thus to clarify a phenomenal order that escapes the thematisations of realism and intellectualism. During this period, "the status of philosophical interrogation is not itself being interrogated; the possibility of a philosophy that allows experience itself to speak is taken for granted" (Barabaras 2004: xxxiii-xxxiv). The later work, on the other hand, seeks to interrogate being itself. Nevertheless, it is possible to reconstruct a telos in Merleau-Ponty's thinking, with the early work being an introduction to his later ontology, particularly through the way its focus on the body underpins the later fleshism. Thus, even though *The Visible and the Invisible* "marks a turn in Merleau-Ponty's thought, both by the radicality of its questioning and the novelty of its concepts, it is still the case that this mutation was called for by the development of Merleau-Ponty's entire earlier reflection" (xxxiii). Landes (2013: 181) takes up a similar reading, arguing, in particular, that Merleau-Ponty's work can be tied together "through the paradoxical logic

of expression.” Though not contradicting the above, this chapter focuses instead on the theme of immanence, which serves as the unifying thread of Merleau-Ponty’s work, and how this relates to politics. This reading, as well as the above, stands in stark contrast to those who envision a radical break between the early and later Merleau-Ponty, such as Mauro Carbone (2004) or indeed even Levinas (1990: 57), who condemns his later period for forfeiting existentiality in favour of an anti-humanist position which is “indifferent to the drama of persons.”

⁴ Accessed (online): <http://www.goldmark.org/jeff/papers/ridley/html/img1.gif> 30/07/13

⁵ As in the Socratic dialogue by Plato (1980: 80) in which it is observed that one “cannot search either for what he knows or what he does not know. He cannot search for what he knows – since he knows, there is no need to search – nor for what he does not know, for he does not know what to look for.”

⁶ Merleau-Ponty levels a very similar reproach in his later work, despite changes to his own position. Accordingly, it is impossible to be simultaneously coextensive with and situated in the world. Though there is a relation between the For-itself and In-itself in Sartre’s philosophy, or a social field onto which all consciousnesses open, it is one of opposition. It is “in front of them, not prior to them, that unity is made” (Merleau-Ponty 1998: 386). There is no interworld or ‘in-between’ through which subjects can participate in something which lies between them or which is shared. Either we start with Being in the restricted sense, “which over its whole extension is absolutely exclusive of nothingness, and which nothingness needs if it is to be able to be named,” or with Being in the broad sense, “which in a way contains nothingness, invokes it in order to become fully being, in order to become Being ‘such as it is’” (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 66). In the first instance, being is considered from the point of view of nothingness, and in the second nothingness is considered from the point of view of being: thus even if one ends up with an identification, “it takes place in the first case for the profit of nothingness, in the second for the profit of being, and the two relations are not identical” (66-7). A negativist thought is identical to a positivist in that it retains the formal structure of transcendence via aporias, in which density, depth and the plurality of planes and background worlds are ignored.

Here, the world is an openness of nothingness upon being. That is to say, through positing that we can understand openness through being and nothingness, the positivist obsession with being recurs in negativity. For, from the point of view of *Being and Nothingness*, “the openness upon being means that I visit it in itself: if it remains distant, this is because nothingness, the anonymous one in me that sees, pushes before itself a zone of void where being no longer is, but *is seen*” (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 99). Constitutive consciousness therefore makes both the distance from and proximity to being “the perceptive as distinct from the thing itself, that constitutes the limits of my field into limits” (loc. cit). Subsequently, there is no longer a labour of the look against its limits, or “that inertia of the vision that makes us say we have an openness upon the word,” for there is no longer any *something* and no longer openness (99). Sartre, then, represents the inverse of Bergson’s positivism insofar as neither allows for a mixture of Being *and* Nothingness. Both positions maintain a separation between the objective and the subjective, and thus “makes impossible the subjective-objective that Nature will always be” (Merleau-Ponty 2003: 70).

⁷ As John Stewart (1998: 197) correctly asserts, “Sartre is Merleau-Ponty’s chief interlocutor.” Barbaras (2004: xxviii) makes the same point in recognising that Merleau-Ponty’s “relationship with Sartre remained ambiguous for a long time; it is true that *Phenomenology of Perception* testifies to a deep inspiration common to the two thinkers.” Despite divergences and posturing that might suggest otherwise, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty share the project of defining existential phenomenology. Yet even given this shared project, it is, as John Compton (1998: 175) highlights, “difficult to know how to put their relationship.” On the one hand, as Compton argues, we can follow the typical and generally accepted reading of there being a strict opposition between their respective ontologies – with Merleau-Ponty developing being-in-the-world in terms of a unifying structure within, and Sartre’s being-in-the-world being marked by the sharpest distinctions. On the other hand, we can read their differences in terms of shading of emphasis, which would allow us to see Merleau-Ponty responding to Sartre by reappropriating his thought within an original vision of his own.

Although Compton strives for a balanced view, he clearly sides more with the former insofar as he reads Sartrean phenomenology in terms of disembodiment, which leads him to say that “Merleau-Ponty follows Marcel’s original notion of embodiment more closely than does Sartre” (180). If anything, the previous chapter has shown this is a false, or at least simplified, image of Sartre. The truth as I wish to present it is far closer to the latter view. Indeed, the first of Compton’s two readings of the Sartre/Merleau-Ponty relation is only available if one overlooks the role of the body and immanence in Sartre’s thinking.

⁸ This reading of Merleau-Ponty within a Heideggerian trajectory is contestable. As Barbaras (2004: 316) puts it, Merleau-Ponty “recognizes in Heidegger only an echo of his own thought. He does not surrender himself to Heidegger’s perspective; he reads it according to what he finds true in it, that is, from the viewpoint of its convergence with his own approach.” In particular, Merleau-Ponty’s fleshism speaks to an ontological viewpoint that, rather than preceding from a questioning which breaks with the plane of being, focuses on understanding the sensible as Being and Being as the sensible. That is why “Merleau-Ponty has been able to criticise, in Heidegger, the radical and consequently abstract character of his interrogation of Being” (317). Barbaras also finds a stronger affinity to Husserl insofar as Merleau-Ponty continues his project of returning to the *Lebenswelt*, “which proceeds by bringing the question of experience, the question of the phenomenon, into the foreground” (316). However, it is free from Husserl’s intuitionism. In this sense, “it seems to us that one has to give Merleau-Ponty’s ontology the place that it deserves: a place beyond Husserl and Heidegger” (320).

⁹ Alleging that he simply follows Husserl and Sartre, Habermas (1987: 317) criticises Merleau-Ponty for failing to bypass the “dichotomizing basic concepts,” wherein the quasi-solipsistic subject is central. This misses the entire point of Merleau-Ponty’s position, and indeed that of existentialism as a whole, apropos being-in-the-world. Merleau-Ponty’s (2002: xvi) use of being-in-the-world “appears only against the background of the phenomenological reduction,” as per existentialism. That is, it follows the assumption that the in-itself and for-itself form a union, such that the “world, which I distinguished from myself as the totality of things or of processes linked by casual relationships, I rediscover ‘in me’ as the permanent horizon of all my *cogitationes* and as a dimension in relation to which I am constantly situating myself” (xiv). Yet it is precisely because we are through and through compounded of relationships with the world that “for us the only way to become aware of the fact is to suspend the resultant activity, to refuse it our complicity...or yet again, to put it ‘out of play’” (loc. cit). Merleau-Ponty goes on to add that, contra Husserl, this does not constitute the rejection of the certainties of common sense and a natural attitude to things (for life, existence be bracketed), but rather their inclusion, since being the presupposed basis of any thought, “they are taken for granted, and go unnoticed, and because in order to arouse them and bring them to view, we have to suspend for a moment our recognition of them” (xv). In other words, phenomenological reduction is employed precisely to elucidate our being-in-the-world, or the fact the existence cannot be bracketed. As we will come to see, however, Merleau-Ponty disputes the place of the reduction in Sartre, which supposedly privileges consciousness over perception in analysis.

¹⁰ As Dreyfus (2002: 372) argues, Merleau-Ponty’s *intentional arch* refers to the “tight connection between the agent and the world” insofar as skills are ‘stored’ not as representations but rather as dispositions “to respond to the solicitations of situations in the world.” Learning is not represented in the mind but rather appears in the way the world shows up; it is “*presented* to the learner as a more and more finely discriminated situation, which then solicits a single response” (372). Of course, there is a feedback loop to the intentional arch, but the point is that we do not just receive input passively. Indeed, an action can be satisfactory without having a goal in mind as a representation. Similarly, the *maximal grip* refers to the body’s tendency “to respond to these solicitations in such a way as to bring the current situation closer to the agent’s sense of an optimal gestalt” (367). This represents a more basic sort of intentionality, a tighter bond between the agent and the object of his concern. Acting is “experienced as a steady flow of skillful activity in response to one’s sense of situation...One does not need to know, nor can one normally express, what that optimum is,” for one’s “body is simply solicited by the situation to get into equilibrium with it” (376). Rather than

representation of the final gestalt, we have a ‘sense’ of it (i.e., the phantom limb). We are offered a way of thinking about consciousness in the frame of non-representations.

¹¹ Merleau-Ponty locates some affinity with Bergson here insofar as he draws heavily on habit and memory as the way we relate to the present and future. More specifically, habit and memory allow consciousness to relate to the in-itself beyond mental representations so that it can project forwards into the world non-thetically, and enables the subject, rather than welding together individual movements and stimuli, to acquire the power to respond with a specific solution to situations that provoke a response. Habit is merely a form of this fundamental power “of dilating our being-in-the-world, or changing our existence by appropriating fresh instruments” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 166). It becomes “knowledge in the hands, which is forthcoming only when bodily effort is made, and cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort. The subject knows where the letters are on the typewriter as we know where one of our limbs is, through knowledge bred of familiarity which does not give us a position in objective space” (loc. cit). In this sense, it also differs from Bergson, in that where Merleau-Ponty reads Bergson as construing the body and the mind communicating through the medium of time – “to be a mind is to stand above time’s flow and that to have a body is to have a present,” (91n. 19) – he construes time as communicating through the medium of the body. That is to say, for Bergson the body remains what Merleau-Ponty calls the “objective body; consciousness remains knowledge; time remains a successive ‘now’, whether it ‘snowballs upon itself’ or is spread in spatialized time” (loc. cit). In this sense, Bergson can only compress the series of ‘present moments’, and thus never reaches “the unique movement whereby the three dimensions of time are constituted” (91n. 19). This also overlooks why consciousness becomes involved in a body and a world. Quite simply, the part played by the body in memory “is comprehensible only if memory is, not only the constituting consciousness of the past, but an effort to reopen time on the basis of the implications contained in the present, and if the body, as our permanent means of ‘taking upon attitudes’ and thus constructing pseudo-presents, is the medium of our communication with time as well as with space” (210).

¹² As John Compton (1998: 177) notes, it is telling that Sartre “should begin his book by invoking freedom,” whereas “Merleau-Ponty offers his own analysis of freedom only in the final chapter of *The Phenomenology of Perception*.”

¹³ This particular aspect of Merleau-Ponty’s work has greatly influenced gender studies. For instance, Iris Young (2005) employs his phenomenology in order to analyse the way a woman’s oppression is lived in interiority, or rather how it is played out and reinforced in bodily gestures and spatialisations. In spite of a number of reservations (i.e., that Merleau-Ponty is silent both on the question of sexual difference and structures of power), Butler too employs Merleau-Ponty for these purposes, as evidenced in her *Sexual Ideology and Phenomenological Description* (1989) and her notion of performativity in *Gender Trouble* (1990), wherein style is seen as a categorical part of our being-in-the-world. In response to the inadequacies Butler sees in Merleau-Ponty, she seeks to supplement this dimension of his theory with Althusserian interpellation and a (mis)reading of Foucauldian power relations. Coole (2004: 203) is somewhat critical of this approach, in that Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology is aimed at another level, focusing on the structures of the lifeworld and suspending “presuppositions about the nature of subjectivity or objectivity.” The “implicit challenges his descriptions pose are to grasp when and how contingent structures like sexual difference emerge and to suspend assumptions regarding their natural or ontological status” (loc. cit). In this sense, Butler ignores Merleau-Ponty’s own distinction “between the ontological-methodological insistence on starting with existence and the concrete-phenomenological studies of particular experiences” (203).

¹⁴ In most readings of the early Sartre/Merleau-Ponty debate on freedom, it is said that it is not the degree of radicality, but indeed the approach itself that differs. That is, though Merleau-Ponty launches an ‘immanent critique’ against Sartre, as Stewart (1998: 200) puts it, it sets out to challenge the most fundamental feature of Sartrean authenticity: the “strong notion of human responsibility” (203). In this instance, the ambiguity and the practical function given to responsibility by Sartre is completely overlooked. Instead, he is taken, much in the way Merleau-Ponty himself reads Sartre, as offering a conception of responsibility which conceives action simply as an isolated monadic instant entirely separated from the past and the future. By extension, it is said that whereas Sartre

provides an ahistorical image of agency, Merleau-Ponty argues in favour of “the phenomenological rootedness of human beings in social and historical conditions” (208). In short, it is said Sartre lacks the very notion of sedimentation that is central to Merleau-Ponty’s concept of freedom. A very similar reading is provided by Ronald Hall (1998: 187) and John Compton (1998: 175). Once again, it is evident that such a reading is caught up in an erroneous understanding of Sartre’s ontology, and subsequently his take on authenticity, the consequence being that Merleau-Ponty’s take on freedom is held to differ not in emphasis and radicality but rather in its conceptual framework. This goes right to the heart of the Beauvoir/Merleau-Ponty debate, in which Beauvoir reproaches Merleau-Ponty for creating a ‘pseudo-Sartreanism’ insofar as it neglects the ‘interworld’ in Sartre’s own thought: “We are a long way from the philosophy of the I and the other in which the only relationship between men is their immediate confrontation instigated by the look” (458). Monika Langer (1998) and Joseph Catalano (1998) pursue Beauvoir’s argument, with a greater emphasis however on the role of the body. Catalano in particular, provides a reading entirely consistent with the one presented here, in that it is merely a difference of emphasis. The “human body as such is a late appearance” in Sartre, which is to say that “in our engaged activities we pass through our bodies” (163). As such, the body cannot be privileged in phenomenological reduction for Sartre.

¹⁵ Barbaras (2004: 16) makes a very similar point, in particular emphasising that the *Phenomenology* fails to establish a positive characterisation of the perceptual field. It “remains a prisoner of the duality between reflection and the unreflective; dominated by the presupposition of the primacy of an autonomous, reflective order, he can characterise the phenomenal only as the unreflective itself, in the sense of a negation of all reflection.” In this work the pre-personal consciousness, as we saw, establishes the dependence of sense on consciousness, wherein consciousness is defined negatively. That is to say that Merleau-Ponty gains access to the phenomenal by way of categories that conceal its originality, and in turn call forth contradictory interpretations. The *Phenomenology*’s “sole mistake,” in this sense, is that it remains “on the descriptive level, being content with bringing to light this domain which still must be thought out. This revision, which will ultimately consist in passing from a description of the perceived world to the philosophy of perception for which it calls, will be the objective of the later works” (17). The ontology to which Merleau-Ponty moves does not “break with phenomenology”; rather it is “phenomenology’s most significant achievement” (312) because it follows through Husserl’s ambition to find a type of being which contains everything, or to return from an objective world to a *Lebenswelt* “in whose continual flux are borne Nature and the objects of perception, as well as the constructions through which we grasp them with Cartesian exactness” (312).

¹⁶ Despite the fact that Merleau-Ponty’s ontology has influenced feminists such as Butler, Young and Irigaray, they have also all been highly critical of it. Irigaray (1968), for instance, finds that the privileged position of vision apropos perceptual relations signifies a phallic economy in which the feminine figures as a lack. Further, the notion of flesh is premised on an implicit codification with the attributes of femininity. Finally, the use of flesh underplays its own maternal debt. Likewise, Butler (1990: 94) finds that the lack of attention to sexual difference carries with it an implicit masculinity, in that the general description of bodies is male. Young argues that Merleau-Ponty ignores the specific experiences undergone by women. Grosz (1999: 155) argues that Merleau-Ponty’s fleshism provides a new account of masculine modes of human being. That is, although *The Visible and the Invisible* does not explicitly address the question of sexual difference, it “derives much from a kind of implicit sexualisation of ontology, the utilization of a whole series of metaphors embedded within and derived from the relations between the sexes. These metaphors are the conditions of possibility of his understanding of the flesh, which is itself the condition of possibility of the division and interaction of subjects and objects.” In this way, Grosz argues that the feminine is the unspoken, disembodied underside of the flesh. Following Butler, Young and Irigaray, fleshism is taken to represent a latent phallicentrism. See Coole (2004: 212-220) for a detailed discussion of this debate and a good defence of Merleau-Ponty on the basis that the flesh is temporal and relational existence, and as such it refers to the intercorporeity and intersubjectivity of an interworld as opposed to the opacity of an intraworld.

¹⁷ See chp. 1n. 39.

¹⁸ This links up with what is said in *The Fold*, where Deleuze (2006b: 107) claims that every perception is “*hallucinatory because perception has no object.*” That is, contra intentionality, whether through Sartre’s consciousness or Merleau-Ponty’s body, perception has no object it can reach. It is always a kind of hallucination insofar as it does not refer to a physical mechanism of excitation that could explain it from without, but rather refers “only to the exclusively psychical mechanism of differential relations among unconscious perceptions” (loc. cit, modified to correct erroneous translation of original as “physical mechanism”). Or, rather, it is made up of the double of the microscopic and the macroscopic, “the being-for the world of unconscious or minute perceptions,” which means to say we are always “perceiving in folds,” that “we have been grasping figures without objects...through the haze of dust without objects that the figures themselves raise up from the depths, and that falls back again, but with time enough to be seen for an instant” (107). Indeed, if there is to be unity, it is not from the object, nor from the collection of unconscious perceptions, but from “the differential relations that are being exerted, and from a degree of reciprocal determination of these relations” (108). It is force that engenders the perceived and the unity of the perceived.

¹⁹ As Somers-Hall (2012: 116) notes, we see that colour, for Merleau-Ponty, acts “like one of the intensive qualities that Deleuze associates with the virtual.” This intensive field is at the root of his ontology in that through art we see an enduring connection between seeing and being, in a carnal relation of reversibility. It is in this sense that the painting “gives visible existence to what profane vision believes to be invisible” (Merleau-Ponty 1964a: 298); “painting celebrates no other enigma but that of visibility” (297). What is important here is that the act of painting does not define the painting itself, for “neither the means of expression nor the creative gestures are comparable,” and “this fact [of competence in several media] is proof that there is a system of equivalences, a Logos of lines, of lighting of colors, of relief, or masses – a conceptless presentation of Universal Being” (313). That is to say, as Somers-Hall (2012: 113) notes, that what is being painted, drawn or sculpted is not in itself a thing, but rather an Idea. It is the actualisation of a virtuality in the form of an act. Painting “makes visible” that which is invisible, the “layer of invisibility” (Merleau-Ponty 1964a: 317). We see with the line that it is not visible in itself, “that neither the colour of the apple nor the boarder between field and meadow is in *this* place or that, that they are always on the near or the far side of the point we look at” (314). This contestation of the prosaic line does not rule it out of all painting, but rather ‘frees it’, revivifying its “constituting power” (loc. cit). The line does not imitate the visible, it ‘renders visible’. Every inflection, then, will have a diacritical value, or will be “another aspect of the line’s relationship to itself, will form an adventure, a history, a meaning of the line” (314). The nature of the line, then, is that of “a modulation of a pre-given spatiality” (315).

²⁰ This last point is perhaps most significant in terms of the differences that exist between the concept of depth as outlined in *The Phenomenology of Perception* and as outlined in *Eye and Mind*. The chapter on ‘Space’ in the former work, in which the concept of depth is elucidated, is perhaps the most radical of the work, inasmuch as it speaks to a totally asubjective ontogenesis of visibility. As with depth in *Eye and Mind*, it is described as the “dimension in which things or elements of things envelop each other, whereas breadth and height are the dimensions in which they are juxtaposed” (Merleau-Ponty 2002: 308). There is not, in this case, a Kantian synthesis of depth, but rather a quasi-synthesis of temporality or, rather, a Husserlian ‘transition-synthesis’, which “does not link disparate perspectives, but brings about the ‘passage’ from one to the other” (309). From this, Merleau-Ponty launches a critique of the Euclidean ‘flat’ projection of the world as a basis for understanding the perception of distance. Depth, and the space to which it is related, is ‘primordial’, it is the link between the subject and space, it does not belong to the thought of an acosmic subject, but is rather a “possibility of a subject involved in the world” (311). What holds the thesis back, however, is a point already mentioned at the start of this section: the conceptual language of the tacit, or silent cogito, which itself speaks of, or at least merely displaces, a subject/predicate structure that would undermine the immanent generativity to which this take on space and depth alludes.

²¹ For Landes, this is the epitome of the paradoxical structure of expression, or the logic of taking up from within that which the act sustains and yet that which transcends any given act. The world of colour, in this instance, “is a trajectory that I join and sustain simply *by seeing*, and yet it transcends

my gaze and offers the endless solicitation to see more, just as expression sustains language, reshapes it, and yet language (as a metastable whole) transcends every act of expression” (Landes 2013: 174).

²² Lawlor (2006: 72) deems the mixturism of the visible and the invisible to be the direct opposite of Sartre’s dialectic of being and nothingness, which represents an inverse positivism and therefore is centred around identity (here it is evident that Lawlor too sticks to the traditional misconception of Sartre’s dialectic). In contrast, Merleau-Ponty’s mixturism is one of difference, in that the identities of being and nothingness are abstract or epiphenomenal, the result of a primary variation of relations.

²³ Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 178) err when they claim that the flesh is “both a pious and a sensual notion, a mixture of sensuality and religion, without which, perhaps, flesh could not stand up by itself (it would slide down the bones, as in Bacon’s figures)” (178). Underpinning this claim is the notion that the flesh of the world and flesh of the body are exchanged as correlates, or that between them, there is an “ideal coincidence” (loc. cit). This serves to downplay the non-coincidable nature of reversibility. Nevertheless, as we will see, they are correct in deeming the flesh “tender,” insofar as it does not provide a politicised notion of force to match.

²⁴ Insofar as this take on history presents a picture of intersubjective life as a dense field of unpredictable, unknowable processes, it points to a politics, as Coole (2004: 154) observes, that entails “a game of strategy.” Following a reading of Machiavelli that seems to follow on from his liberal reading of Weber, the dichotomy between *virtù* and *fortuna* is abolished, since these forces are the combined intentionalities of other actors (see Merleau-Ponty 1964b: 218). That is to say, what Merleau-Ponty finds in Weber and Machiavelli is an understanding that power is not simply juridicopolitical, visible, institutional, massive, direct, and so forth, nor is it a possession of leaders. Leaders themselves constantly find that they are at the mercy of unruly processes that emanate from an unstable multitude they must negotiate. For Coole (2004: 155) – and I am inclined to agree – this shows that Merleau-Ponty is a precursor to Foucault.

²⁵ Aware of this apparent hiatus in Merleau-Ponty’s thinking, Diana Coole (2007: 232) argues that *force* is in fact evident, though only latently, in his ontology. That is, though “flesh and its metaphorical associations remained but a provisional epithet...the figure of the force field was developed by Merleau-Ponty as an alternative.” Accordingly, the force field suggests a more open, virtual plane, or a web with a greater sense of the invisible relations, intervals, and spacings, the negativity of which sustains an ontological generativity that is modelled on difference. That is not to say that flesh and force field are antithetical, but rather “complementary attempts at conveying elusive ontological becoming” (234). Not only does it allegedly anticipate Foucault and Deleuze, it adds to them by retaining “a phenomenology of agentic capacities that explains experiential motivation and thereby imparts more flesh to everyday politics” (238). There are a few problems with this reading. Although the notion of force is evident in Merleau-Ponty’s thinking (indeed, it features in his adoption of the Gestaltent field), it is not clear how, or indeed where, Merleau-Ponty actually proposes this as an alternative. Neither does it receive the same elaboration as flesh, with only a few passing references to force made in *The Visible and the Invisible*. Certainly, the fact that Coole reads Merleau-Ponty this way in conjunction with Bergson, Foucault and Deleuze is indicative of this hiatus. It is also indicative of the fact the this notion of force, as tied into an ontology of the political, is one attributable to Foucault, and signifies an important advance in the politics of immanence. The same is true for Deleuze, where his meatism, as said, signifies not only the invisible but also intensive forces. Finally, to claim that Merleau-Ponty retains the agentic capacities missing in Foucault has some merit, but only in that his use of pleasure is problematically vague. Taking up this point, the final chapter argues that Deleuze and Guattari advance Foucault’s notion of power through the agentic and affective dimension of desire.

3. Foucault and the Force of Power-Knowledge

By working through inconsistencies in Husserlian phenomenology, Sartre instigates the philosophy and politics of immanence. More specifically, Sartre radically displaces the centred self and begins to reconfigure the Outside/Other through his fleshism. This is advanced by Merleau-Ponty, who in reaching for the *Lebenswelt* as a means to bypass the crisis of modern thought, ultimately provides the conceptual notion of the fold. The fold, in turn, allows us to overcome some of the more ambiguous elements in Sartre's thought, particularly insofar as his retention of a dualistic language evokes a problematic image of transcendence and therefore remains trapped in this crisis. The remaining issue with Merleau-Ponty concerns his lack of a worked out conception of force. Though he made steps towards an account of the genetic underpinning of phenomena, he failed to go far enough. In some respects, this is due to the fact that, despite developing a new conceptual language, Merleau-Ponty remained in a phenomenological frame of reference, emphasising more the conditions of possibility of knowledge and experience, as opposed to the conditions (particularly the political conditions) under which they are generated (what Deleuze calls the conditions of real experience rather than those of merely possible experience). Foucault makes the necessary jump in not only incorporating Merleau-Ponty's concept of force as a disjunctive fold of the Outside in order to understand processes of signification, but also in politicising it. The fold is force, which gives power arrangements an immediate and direct relationship with the body, but which also opens up new possibilities for the kind of ethical and political practice prefigured in existentialism.

The importance of the incorporation of the disjunctive fold cannot be underestimated, for failure to recognise it has been the source of a number of misreadings and obscurations by many of Foucault's interpreters, generally envisioning not only a discrepancy between the archaeology and the genealogy, but also, as a result, an inconsistency in the genealogy with respect to power and resistance.¹ What will be argued is that just as discursive formations are understood in terms of disjunctive syntheses or as a heterogeneous ensemble, so too is the power-knowledge network (and ultimately the *dispositif*),² which, as Foucault (1980a: 196) clarifies in one of his later interviews, replaces the former insofar as it is "inscribed in a play of power" as well as "linked to certain coordinates of knowledge which issue from it but, to an equal degree, condition it." Immanent to this disjunctive network is resistance in the form of the ethics of care of the self. This chapter, then, not only shows how the addition of force as realised in 'power-relations' progresses the project of immanence, but also how

resistances are immanent to power-relations by virtue of being no more than the discontinuities of these relations themselves.

In tracing the development of Foucault's thought, which works through and draws on various aspects of phenomenology, we will be fully equipped to deal with charges that Foucault ends up with an 'immanent interpellation' that suffers from positing incoherently a complete inclusivity of differences, and that for this reason he fails to locate the proper site of resistance in a Lacanian-style structural Lack residing within power relations. By the same measure, we will show how Foucault ultimately undermines the association between the subject and lack, held by many of his critics to be necessary for political analysis and action.

The Relation to Phenomenology

In making this link between Merleau-Ponty and Foucault, it is important to address the view that there exists a veritable abyss between French phenomenology and poststructuralism as personified by Foucault.³ The prominence of this view is hardly surprising, considering that Foucault constantly defined his position against phenomenology, initially rejecting it on the basis that it "is linked, in its profoundest possibilities and impossibilities, to the destiny of Western philosophy as it was established in the nineteenth century" (Foucault 2002b: 269). As Foucault (2000a: 475) himself puts it in his final work, *Life: Experience and Science*, what is important is to move beyond a phenomenological notion of 'lived experience', which is expected to supply the originary meaning of every act of knowledge, and look "for it in the 'living' itself," that is, to "determine the situation of the *concept in life*." This understanding of life, as Agamben (2000: 221) observes, "tears the subject away from the terrain of the *cogito* and consciousness," and so "this experience roots it in life." Knowledge no longer has as its correlate the opening to a world and to truth, but only life and its errancy as the proper domain of effort, a "living being who is fated 'to err' and 'to be mistaken'" (Foucault 2000a: 476). However, the relationship is far more convoluted and intricate than is usually portrayed. It is significant that Foucault was formally trained in phenomenology and that his earliest works are phenomenological.⁴ Indeed, it is the post-Kantian project of French phenomenology that provides Foucault with the philosophical milieu through which his own project is initially *develops* and later *evolves*.

In terms of Foucault's development, the critique of phenomenology, as first presented in *The Order of Things*, is an internal one. Writing within the milieu of its post-Kantian project, it

is perhaps unsurprising that Foucault makes a case against phenomenology that is strikingly similar to Merleau-Ponty's self-criticism. Though phenomenology does not constitute a resumption of an old rational goal of the West, it does reflect "the sensitive and precisely formulated acknowledgment of the great hiatus that occurred in the modern *episteme* at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" (Foucault 2002b: 254). This hiatus refers to the dissociation between two types of analysis, one of the "positive type" and the other of the "eschatological type" (349). But insofar as a discourse attempting to be both empirical and critical cannot be both positivist and eschatological, "man appears within it as a truth both reduced and promised. Pre-critical naïveté holds undivided rule" (349). Subsequently, "modern thought has been unable to avoid – and precisely from the starting-point of this naïve discourse – searching for the locus of a discourse that would be neither of the order of reduction nor of the order of promise" (*loc. cit.*).

Husserl was only able to affect this union by changing the point of application of transcendental analysis (as we saw in the first chapter) so that the cogito modifies its function (that is, intentionality). In being so heavily associated with life, work, and language, Foucault maintains that it was inevitable that phenomenology would revive the problem of the *a priori* and the transcendental motif in this way. It perpetuates the analytic of finitude, in which man appears in an ambiguous position as both an object of knowledge and a subject that knows. In first instance, actual experience, or *lived experience*, is the space where all empirical content is given to experience, aiming to make the empirical uphold the transcendental. In this sense, it is a discourse of a mixed nature, addressed to a specific yet ambiguous layer. From this also comes a form of reflection concerning "the relation of man to the unthought, or more precisely, their twin appearance in Western culture" (Foucault 2002b: 355). The unthought provides a dialectical relation between consciousness and the object, one that supposedly displaces the ego, but in effect establishes a break with the expressive sovereignty of the All-One, thus returning to a subject of form.

Crucially, in whichever guise it manifests itself, this particular phenomenological project "continually resolves itself, before our eyes, into description – empirical despite itself – of actual experience, and into an ontology of the unthought that automatically short-circuits the primacy of the 'I think'" (Foucault 2002b: 356). However, it is impossible "to give empirical contents transcendental value, or to displace them in the direction of a constituent subjectivity, without giving rise to, at least silently, an anthropology – that is, to a mode of thought in which the rightful limitations of acquired knowledge (and consequently of all

empirical knowledge) are at the same time the concrete forms of existence, precisely as they are given in that same empirical knowledge” (Foucault 2002b: 270). Generally speaking, then, phenomenology for Foucault is defined by an attempt to overcome neo-Kantianism by elucidating the conditions of experience and how these conditions can themselves be experienced – thus the notion of lived experience and its adjacent negation or nothingness by way of consciousness. In other words, phenomenology does not quite go far enough, for it is still beholden to a pre-Kantian naiveté, ultimately giving rise to a silent anthropology that its anathema to its initial aspirations.⁵

Foucault makes it clear that this relates directly to the problem of transcendence. Once it referred to the very meaning of the world, such as the way “Plato...opposed essence to appearance, a higher world to this world below, the sun of truth to the shadows of the cave” (Foucault 2000b: 345). In modernity, transcendence takes the form of the human as the ground for the world, “a logic of signification, a grammar of the first person, and a metaphysics of consciousness” (351). In this instance, again in cahoots with Merleau-Ponty’s observation, language is reduced to the mere mirror of things, to an order of grammar that grounds the copy of the original, or as the representation of something outside itself such as a fixed Form. It is for such reasons that the history of immanence has been practically inseparable from that of (anti)representation. It is also for such reasons that Plato “is the excessive and deficient father” (344), and that anthropologism and transcendence are one and the same. The metaphysics of consciousness brings transcendence back into the heart of immanence, i.e., immanent to a subject, or tacit cogito via embodiment.

We can see that including Sartre and Merleau-Ponty in this reading is vulgar precisely in that it ignores, or rather fails to mention, their self-criticism, simultaneously limiting itself to a (Husserlian) phenomenology of intentionality. Whereas Sartre and Merleau-Ponty may have failed to go *far enough* in terms of immanence – due either to restrictions in language, or an undertheorisation of force – Foucault’s various statements on them overreaches by envisioning them as *fully trapped* in transcendence. For is not this new take on life precisely what Sartre instigated and Merleau-Ponty (1968: 84) continued, especially in referring to life as “an atmosphere” in the “astronomical sense” or as “constantly enshrouded by those mists we call the sensible world or history” in the form of the *one*, anonymous, prepersonal subject? Indeed, Foucault implicitly relies on their moves himself, as we will shortly see. Nevertheless, such misreading serves a practical function. In linking phenomenology with the ‘destiny of Western thought’, Foucault’s rejection of it once more replicates Merleau-

Ponty's, specifically with regards to the deliberately circular project of Merleau-Ponty's self-criticism viz. language and ontology. For Foucault, the critique is premised on a broader attempt to describe the historical presuppositions of the 19th century system of thought and discourse to which he attaches it, and the regularities that account for its emergence. This particular image of phenomenology is taken as the ultimate personification of said system, and thus serves as a way into his study of discourse, which radicalizes the phenomenological project by revealing the way in which the subject is caught in processes of signification, which precludes any 'total history', transcendent Archimedean point, or privileged subject upon which we can rely.

The way the phenomenological milieu aids Foucault's evolution is further seen in the way he establishes the methodological underpinning of discourse and discursive practice in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, where the critical logic of dispersion draws on and solidifies Merleau-Ponty's notion of the disjunctive fold, and is later utilized to conceptualise power-relations and ethical practice. That is to say, when we look beneath Foucault's posturing apropos phenomenology, we discover a far from coincidental intimacy with its later developments, particularly that of the invisible and the fold of Being. As Deleuze (2006b) puts it: "the 'fold' has continued to haunt the work of Foucault, but finds its true dimension in his last research," (89) adding that, in this sense, there is "no doubt that he found great theoretical inspiration in...Merleau-Ponty" (91). At its simplest, without phenomenology, there is no Foucault, and though he fails to expressly acknowledge it, his attack on phenomenology in *The Order of Things* continues Merleau-Ponty's self-criticism.

Signification, Dispersion and the Subject

The relation between Foucault and phenomenology is convoluted because the rejection, use, and advancement of the phenomenological project forms an intricate assemblage in its own right, and one he simultaneously pursues. To reinforce and further understand the point, we first turn to signification and the logic of dispersion, which are inseparable components of the study of discourse. The first major work in this respect is *The Order of Things*. It moves beyond linguistic structuralism, and the *phoneme* of post-Saussurian linguistics in particular, and looks to the structure of thoughts (*epistemes*) that order experience and determine the system of possibility as to what is considered true and false or what counts as relevant and legitimate. Contrary to the dialectical method, which "is a way of evading the always open

and hazardous reality of conflict by reducing it to a Hegelian skeleton” (Foucault 1980b: 114-5), Foucault follows Nietzsche and Bachelard in focusing on discontinuities as opposed to linearity in the temporal development of *epistemes*, textual and verbal taxonomies, and the visual plane to which they correspond. The modifications and transformations in the rules of formation of statements fail to correspond to the calm, continuist image normally attributed to them. The choice of objects and methods for analysis “are all provided by History” (Foucault 2002b: 404), and “History constitutes,” but by chance (405).⁶

Insofar as such a constitution provides the human sciences with a “fixed ground” or “determines the cultural area – the chronological and geographical boundaries – in which the branch of knowledge can be recognized as having validity” (Foucault 2002b: 405), it follows that there is no stable transcendental base or Kantian *a priori*. The appearance of man is not the result of insightful philosophical reflection, the liberation of “an old anxiety,” or “the transition into luminous consciousness of an age-old concern,” nor the “entry into objectivity of something that had long remained trapped within beliefs and philosophies” (422). Rather, his appearance is the result of a chance change in the fundamental arrangements of knowledge, or a surface effect of more primordial processes. As such, “if those arrangements were to disappear,” then “man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea” (loc. cit.). It is specifically for this reason that Foucault (2008: 63), in his earlier *Introduction to Kant’s Anthropology*, describes man and the ego as an “illusion,” or even a “transcendental mirage” – a semblance.

Whereas *The Order of Things* attempts to excavate the origins of the human sciences, Foucault’s subsequent *Archeology of Knowledge* fleshes out the methodological underpinning of this approach. As Foucault (2002a: 16) himself put it, the previous work was “a very imperfect sketch” of an “enterprise by which one tries to measure the mutations that operate in general in the field of history.” Particular attention is paid to systems of statements (whether events or things) or the rules of a discursive practice, which enable statements both to survive and to undergo regular modification. The *archive* refers to the way in which rules and practices generate the fields of knowledge that apply to modernity, or to the positivity of what might be called “a *historical a priori*” that is “not a condition of validity for judgments, but a condition of reality for statements” (143).

Further, the concept of *discourse* is given a fuller treatment with the notion of *discursive formation*. As Lecourt (1970: 152) observes, the shift to, and preference for, *discursive*

formation provides a more direct link to the materiality of the discursive order via politico-economic institutions. Foucault brackets off the non-discursive, but the link is so strong that separation becomes problematic and even unnecessary.⁷ Two critical trajectories of Foucault's later thought are pre-figured here.

First is the immanent notion of *force*. Building on the *Order of Things*, it is held that our system of knowledge is not established on the ground of some outside stable Form; it is not the sign or recognition of transcendence. Rather, thought is an event, wherein the *force of discourse* renders thought active or accounts for its genetic condition. Signs too, in this sense, are themselves instances of force, as opposed to instances of significance or representation. Here, we find a direct correlation with truth, which will become central to Foucault's analysis of sexuality. Whereas for the Greek poets of the sixth century BC, the true discourse was that which "inspired respect and terror," a century later, with Plato in particular, "the highest truth no longer resides in what discourse was or did, but in what is said" (Foucault 1981: 54). Thus, "a certain division was established, separating true discourse from false discourse" (*loc. cit.*). This forms the basis for a will to truth, which operates as an internal system of exclusion in discourse, one that, as we will see shortly, is both reinforced and renewed by whole strata of practices by way of institutional support.⁸ One is 'in the true' only "by obeying the rules of a discursive 'policing' which one has to reactivate in each of one's discourses" (61).

In opposition to this will to truth, Foucault's study here aims to restore to discourse its character as an event by throwing off the sovereignty of the signifier. Through showing that "the human subject is placed in relations of production and signification," Foucault in turn shows there is no *a priori* subject at all, nor any continuous history to which it could relate (Foucault 2002b: 327). In this sense, there is no single representational condition, merely a number of positive conditions of which the idea of representation is an effect (see Colebrook 1999: 179).⁹

As a consequence, Foucault (2002a: 10) rejects 'total history' as the attempt to reconstitute "the overall form of a civilization, the principle – material or spiritual – of a society, the significance common to all phenomena of a period, the law that accounts for their cohesion." In this image, History and society are viewed as totalities upon which the various components are an expression of the whole, hence the idea of an 'expressive totality'. Total history is also related to the figure of man, for when the history of thought is conceived in

terms of a locus of uninterrupted continuities, wherein it endlessly forges connexions that “no analysis could undo without abstraction,” and when it weaves, “around everything that men say and do, obscure syntheses that anticipate for him, prepare him, and lead him endlessly towards his future,” it provides “a privileged shelter for the sovereignty of consciousness” (Foucault 2002a: 13).

Following this is a related but perhaps more fundamental trajectory toward the idea of the fold, or, in this instance, the logic of dispersion. In the *Archaeology*, discourse is initially understood as “the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualisable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements” (Foucault 2002a: 80). It also refers to unwritten rules and structures, or regulated practices, which produce and manage utterances and statements. The central focus of study, then, is how such discourses are formed. In outlining discursive formations and their inner workings, Foucault dismisses four initial hypotheses on the basis that, in each case, the logic of dispersion undermines the assumption of internal consistency.¹⁰ Dispersion, in this instance, is understood as not merely a scattering of elements in an open space, but “a difference within the convergence of heterogeneous domains,” as Widder (2004: 416) puts it. Dispersion is inseparable from disjunctive syntheses, in which differences are not collapsed into a unity (as with dialectical thinking), but rather form the intersection where unities can appear.

It is in this sense that “we must rid ourselves of a whole mass of notions, each of which, in its own way, diversifies the theme of continuity” (Foucault 2002a: 23) and “renounce all those themes whose function is to ensure the infinite continuity of discourse and its secret presence to itself in the interplay of a constantly recurring absence” (Foucault 2002a: 28). It is by suspending these pre-existing forms of continuity that “an entire field is set free,” a field that is “made up of the totality of all effective statements...in their dispersion as events and in the occurrence that is proper to them” (29). One is therefore led to “the project of a *pure description of discursive events*” (loc. cit). Through this, we are not returned to the unity we only pretended to put into question. Rather, we restore to the statement the specificity of its occurrence, and show that discontinuity is “one of those great accidents that create cracks not only in the geology of history, but also in the simple fact of the statement; it emerges in its historical irruption” (31). That is, we describe the interplay of relations within and outside discursive events.

A discursive formation is made up of various strategic possibilities “that permit the activation of incompatible themes, or, again, the establishment of the same theme in different groups of statements. Hence the idea of describing these dispersions themselves” (Foucault 2002a: 41). It is a question of discovering the regularity, an order of their successive appearances, a correlation of their simultaneity, assignable positions in a common space, or reciprocal functionings. This, to be sure, is to “study forms of divisions” and “*systems of dispersion*” (41). Therefore, “whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity... we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a *discursive formation*” (41) or “a nexus of regularities that govern dispersion” (53). In this way, unity arises in the intersections of divergent discourses, where heterogeneous discursive zones are linked together by way of a group of relations established between authorities of emergence, delimitation, and specification. A discursive formation is characterised not by privileged objects but by the way it forms objects that are in fact highly dispersed or mutually exclusive without having to modify itself. When one speaks of a system of formation, “one does not only mean the juxtaposition, coexistence, or interaction of heterogeneous elements..., but also the relation that is established between them – and in a well determined form – by discursive practice” (80-1).

Naturally, the regularity of its dispersion is critical in the function of its unity.¹¹ The regularity of discourse and the coherence of the formation are found in statements. By statement, Foucault is not referring to the same kind of unity as the sentence, the proposition, or the speech act, nor the same kind of unit as a material object. Rather, a statement is “caught up, like the others, in a logical, grammatical, locutory nexus,” making it “a division that can be located at a certain level of analysis, as a function that operates vertically in relation to these various units, and which enables one to say of a series of signs whether or not they are present in it” (Foucault 2002a: 97). Thus it is a function of existence that belongs to signs and on the basis “of which one may then decide, through analysis or intuition, whether or not they ‘make sense’, according to what rule they follow one another or are juxtaposed” (loc. cit). A statement always refers to other statements, wherein its meaning is determined relationally. It is linked to a ‘referential’ that “is made up not of ‘things’, ‘facts’, or ‘beings’, but of laws of possibility, rules of existence for the objects that are named, designated, or described within it, and for the relations that are affirmed or denied in it” (103). It is the referential of the statement that forms the place, the condition, the field of

emergence, the authority “to differentiate between individuals or objects, states of things and relations that are brought into play by the statement itself; it defines the possibilities or appearance and delimitation of that which gives meaning to the sentence, a value as truth to the proposition” (loc. cit). The field of statement, then, “forms a complex and dispersed web, which makes the analysis of statements equivalent to that of a discursive formation” (Widder 2004: 417).

From Archeology to Genealogy and Force

Following this analysis of discourse, Foucault (2001d: 327) was soon to recognize something that eluded Merleau-Ponty: that man is “equally placed in power relations that are very complex.” In rejecting “a priori theories of the subject,” Foucault was able to “analyze the relationship that may exist between the constitution of the subject or different forms of the subject and games of truth, practices of power, etc” (Foucault 1996d: 440). In another interview, ‘The Subject and Power’, Foucault retrospectively states that his work is an attempt to illustrate the ways in which human beings are “made into subjects” through what he calls three forms of objectification (or the three modes that a genealogy can take), determining the conditions of possibility and the limits of subjectivity. First, he says, are the modes of inquiry that try to give themselves the status of science: the objectification of the speaking subject in general grammar, philology, and linguistics (the ‘truth’ axis). These, in turn, define subject positions, which are often accepted as neutral and verifiable facts. Second are ‘dividing practices’, by which Foucault means the different ways in which “the subject is objectified by a process of division either within himself or from others” (Foucault 2001d: 331) (the ‘power’ axis), wherein mechanisms of disciplinary and normalising power manage subjects according to discourses and disciplinary regimes. Third are forms of objectification concerning the way in which humans turn themselves into subjects via identification with certain subject positions (the ‘ethics’ axis), wherein power-relations delineate a form of self-to-self relation upon which, paradoxically, ethical self-formation and creation are possible.

This transition in Foucault’s thought relates back to immanence inasmuch as it accords with the basic principle of immanent causality and transformation that rejects a privileged signifier or subject that would rupture this domain or personify its constitutive negativity. Specifically, Foucault holds that discourse is inseparable from power, as the true locus of

force lying at the heart of the formation, essentially acting as its virtual double and conjuring an image of immanent generativity in a manner reminiscent of Merleau-Ponty. The one continually affects the other, such that to isolate one as the ultimate cause, as we shall see, is to enact a radical abstraction. Indeed, Foucault sees that the

historical contextualisation needed to be something more than the simple relativisation of the phenomenological subject. One has to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself, that's to say, to arrive at an analysis that can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework, according, once more, to a logic of immanence, an immanent domain accounting for the constitution of knowledge, discourses, domains of objects, and so on, without reference to a subject that is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history. (Foucault 1980b: 117)

Here, truth is “linked in a circular relation with systems of power that produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it – a ‘regime’ of truth” (Foucault 1980b: 132). Instead of a purely epistemological perspective on the constitution of knowledge and truth, this turn in Foucault's thinking concerns an historical and political one. In this way, Foucault became interested in the effects of the centralising powers which are linked to “the institution and functioning of an organized scientific discourse within a society such as ours” (Foucault 2008: 319). Whereas archaeology would be the “appropriate methodology of this analysis of local discursivities,” genealogy “would be the tactics whereby, on the basis of the descriptions of these local discursivities, the subjected knowledges which were thus released would be brought into play” (320). The production of knowledge via the Enlightenment discourses of the human sciences is not simply the result of accumulated knowledge produced by researchers within a particular historical field. More than this, there is an interrelation with power: hence ‘power-knowledge’.

Insofar as genealogy is a study of discourse within the realm of power-relations, it follows that the logic of discursive formations and its principle of *disjunctive* immanence applies. Thus the causality is not one of perfect harmony. While the form of the analysis changes from Foucault's middle period, the logic does not. The broader significance regarding the historical sense provided to us by genealogy lends us three uses that oppose the three Platonic modalities of history. As Foucault outlines in his essay on Nietzsche's genealogical approach:

The first is parodic, directed against the reality, and opposes the theme of history as reminiscence or recognition; the second is dissociative, directed against identity, and opposes history given as continuity or representative of a tradition; the third is

sacrificial, directed against truth, and opposes history as knowledge (Foucault 1991b: 93).

Again taking our cue from Merleau-Ponty, we see in all three instances how the body “is the inscribed surface of events,” (94) and the identities through which we circulate and identify ourselves are transcendental illusions, surface effects – or what we can again describe as simulacra of dynamic and virtual processes – themselves unstable insofar as they are made out of heterogeneous systems. Genealogy, as Foucault tells us, “is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction” (Foucault 1991a: 70). Genealogy, then, “disturbs what was previously considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself” (Foucault 1991b: 82). Its purpose is not to “discover the roots of our identity,” but rather to “commit itself to its dissipation” (Foucault 1991a: 95).

Power as Force Relation

When we think of power, we typically envision something that is possessed and that can be exercised over others, i.e., state power, military force or general material capabilities. From this, it follows that there will be sections of society or particular situations with either an abundance of power or a lack of it. An extremity in either direction is generally considered undesirable. Too much power in the hands of an agent or select few can be used to exploit or deprive the freedom of others, whereas too little can leave an agent vulnerable or incapable. In seeking a balance, the aim of Western liberal politics usually concerns distributions and checks and balances of power. Constitutional arrangements typically reflect this in terms of a formal equality of liberty and democratic rights, in which those lacking in material capabilities are given the right to scrutiny and suffrage, and those in abundance of such capabilities are open to scrutiny and democratic contestation.

In this instance, power is represented as domination, a form of saying ‘no’ or posting limits. It is basically “anti-energy” (Foucault 1998: 85). It is also centred on nothing more than the statement of the law and the operation of taboos. Thus all the modes of domination, submission and subjugation “are ultimately reduced to an effect of obedience” (loc. cit). Foucault notoriously balks against this traditional ‘juridico-discursive’ notion. In contradistinction, he seeks to present an analytic of “power without the king” (91),

understood as a “multiplicity of force relations” or “the moving substrate of relations between forces, which by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power,” such that every relation between forces is a power relation (92). Power as force is not a form (as in a State-form), nor does it lie between two forms. Further, as force is never singular, since it only exists in relations with other forces, “such that any force is already a relation, that is to say power,” it has “no other object or subject than force” (Deleuze 2006b: 60).

Following Nietzsche and Marx, then, Foucault envisions the relation between forces as greatly exceeding violence, “inasmuch as violence acts on acts on specific bodies, objects or beings, whose form it destroys or changes” (Deleuze 2006b: 59). Violence depends on an arrangement of force relations, which it in turn utilises in order to act on a specific object. In this sense, power is also a process, “which through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses” the multiplicity (Foucault 1998: 92), and a support “which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies” (92-3).

It is within this context of changing the terms of explanation that we can understand Foucault’s later definition of power as a mode of action upon the actions of others, as the government of men by other men, which “includes one important element: freedom” (Foucault 2001d: 342). “Power is exercised on free subjects, and only insofar as they are ‘free’” (342). It seeks to structure the field of possibilities in which the behaviour of active subjects is able to inscribe itself. Crucially, the subjects are free only insofar as they are “faced with a field of possibilities in which several kinds of conduct, several ways of reaching and modes of behavior are available.” This should not be taken to mean that there are free subjects of the sort envisioned by liberal theory, but rather that the points of resistance are engendered by the disjunctive synthesis itself. Indeed, an action upon the actions of others is the *par excellence* of force relations, in that it does not refer to domination or total control over the Other, but rather to a set of actions that always allows room for counter-actions. That is to say, one can employ a number of active or reactive techniques to determine another person’s field of possibilities, such as through a panoptic gaze or the disciplinary tactics of the school room, which instantly engender an excess or simply

opportunities for their reversal and inversion, setting up a complex set of ever changing relations.

The relation between a student and a teacher, for instance, is always one of force understood in terms of actions, in which either side can respond to the action of the other through inversion, subversion, reversal, etc. Does not the arrangement of the class room give a sense of permanent visibility? Every pupil can be seen by the teacher at the front of the class. Furthermore, it is often the case that the seating arrangement of the class can be made to reflect a regimented and hierarchical order, usually pertaining to a set of norms and moral evaluations, or a series of unwritten codes. Disruptive students are often sent to a particular section of the classroom for punishment (usually to the back of the room or sometimes right at the front). In conjunction with these actions, the teacher can use an award system to encourage good behaviour or hard work. On the flip side, however, the students can use their collective gaze to intimidate, undermine, devalue and embarrass the teacher, specifically through employing it alongside tactics of mockery and humour (such as putting a pin on the teachers chair), disobedience and non-compliance (collectively refusing a demand) or apathy (collectively refusing to take an active and visible interest); the seating system can be used to set-up formidable zones of disruption or alliance, in which students empower one another through mutual encouragement and camaraderie. In addition to this, the students can completely invert the hierarchy, so that being sent to the back of the room becomes a marker of respect among the student cohort; and the students may also use the reward system to extrapolate an advantage from the teacher by currying favour, even using it as a counter-balance to anticipated violations or accusations. All these resistances, again, are actions not directly upon the teacher, but upon the range of future actions the teacher can take.

In this, says Deleuze, we can envision an open list of variables expressing a relation between forces, constituting actions upon actions: “to incite, to induce, to seduce, to make easy or difficult, to enlarge or limit, to make more or less probable, and so on” (Deleuze 2006b: 59). The question, therefore, is not ‘What is power and where does it come from?’ but ‘How is it practised?’ (60). Indeed, an exercise of power shows up as an affect, “since force defines itself by its very power to affect other forces (to which it is related) and to be affected by other forces” (loc. cit). To incite, to provoke and produce constitute active affects, while to be incited or provoked constitutes reactive affects. The latter, moreover, “are not simply the ‘repercussion’ or ‘passive side’ of the former but are rather ‘the irreducible encounter’ between the two” (60). More specifically, as Deleuze puts it, the “power to be affected is

like a *matter* of force, and the power to affect is like a *function* of force” (loc. cit). It imposes a particular conduct on a multiplicity of individuals.

Such a set of relations between forces unique to a particular formation is best described as a *diagram*, in that it is “detached from any specific use” (Deleuze 2004b: 61). As the diagram exposes a set of relations between forces, it can be understood as a ‘non-place’ or at least the place only of mutation (71). A diagram “communicates with the stratified formation fixing it, but following another axis it also communicates with the other diagram, the other unstable diagrammatic states, through which forces pursue their mutant emergence. This is why the diagram always represents the outside of a strata” (loc. cit). The outside, in this instance, is indistinguishable from exteriority (which is still a form) in that it concerns force and its relation with other forces, necessarily referring to “an irreducible outside which no longer even has any form and is made up of distances that cannot be broken down through which one force acts upon another or is acted upon by another” (72). The diagram state resembles a Markov chain (in which the transition probabilities depend only on the current position, as opposed to the way in which the position was formed, or in which a sequence of events is dependent only on the event immediately preceding it), as it is always a mixture of the aleatory and the dependent, where things “are not joined together by a process of continuity or interiorization there, but instead they rejoin above and beyond the breaks and discontinuities (mutation)” (71).

This clearly stands in contrast to power in the substantive sense, or rather the idea that there is a given point where power is based. That is precisely because power is an open, coordinated cluster of relations. Its condition of possibility, then, is not to be found in the existence of a central point (i.e., the State, the class, the economic base). Rather, its condition of possibility is the moving substrate of force relations. It is in this sense that power can be understood as omnipresent. It is everywhere because it comes from everywhere. Consequently, we see why Foucault does not speak of a *theory* of power, but an *analytic*: in viewing power in relational terms, the central issue is to provide oneself with a grid of analysis which makes possible an account of such relations, as well as their playful (re)configuring.

As with discursive formations, then, power is relational, which means that power relations depend on a multiplicity of points of resistance, which are present everywhere in the power network. There is no transcendent outside, no positive body to which we need to refer, “no

single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary” (Foucault 1998: 95-6). Rather, there is “a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case” (96). Though there may be radical ruptures and massive binary divisions, we are usually dealing with mobile and transitory points of resistance, spread out over time and space at varying densities, “providing cleavages in society that shift about, fracturing unities and effecting regroupings, furrowing across individuals themselves, cutting them up and remolding them, marking off irreducible regions in them, in their bodies and minds” (loc. cit). It is the strategic codification of these points of resistance that makes a revolution possible. Thus it is in the sphere of force relations or micropowers that we must try to analyse the mechanisms of power.

Knowledge and Discourse

Lurking beneath the traditional notion of power is an unquestioned reverence for the purity of knowledge and truth, in which it can be utilised either to strengthen power or to undermine it. That is to say, knowledge is power. In liberal democracies the concern is always with keeping knowledge and information free from the manipulations of power, either through false press, omission of fact, political spin, or outright political lies, so as to strengthen democratic procedure and scrutiny. In classical Marxist terms, following a similar tract, this concerns the power of ideology, in which our intersubjective understandings of our material reality are obscured, inculcating a false sense of understanding and belief. An intricate part of class struggle, and therefore emancipation, once more concerns the capturing of knowledge. In either case, there is a loose Platonic vision of knowledge, in which it can be said to exist in a pure or at least untarnished form. In contradistinction to this model, Foucault maintains that knowledge is always already in a dance with power (as force relation). The notion of untarnished knowledge is a mere fantasy of transcendence, for thought is immanent to the real that provokes it.

To return to the classroom example provided earlier, we can see how pedagogical knowledge and institutional and moral rules underpin tactics of force, but also allow for the force to be exercised in the first instance. Quite simply, the idea of the school and the classroom is precisely that which allows the relation between the student and the teacher to be established in the first place. There are other ways in which knowledge is central. For instance, the student *knows* the teacher is not allowed to hit him or even touch him (in schools systems

that prohibit corporal punishment), and thus disobedience can have a trying effect. He *knows* that he can turn the teacher's code of conduct against him by, for instance, accusing the teacher of indecent behaviour or complaining to his parents that the teacher is failing to address disruptive behaviour in the class (even if it is the student himself that is the cause of the disruption). The teacher, in turn, may justify his actions by reference to educational and personal expectations, moral duty or institutional and societal rules encapsulating ideas of civility and practicality. Even the idea of the 'good citizen' or the pervading notion of the norm, can be put to effective use in making the student scared and anxious of his future ('if you don't listen to me, you will amount to nothing'), which is often reinforced through the use of his parents (employing the discourse of the family as the ultimate responsible unit, who will themselves feel a moral and social duty to produce a functioning member of society).

Where power is diagrammatic in that it mobilises non-stratified matter and functions, knowledge concerns formed matters or substances and formalised functions, "divided up segment by segment according to the two great formal conditions of seeing and speaking, light and language" (Deleuze 2006b: 61). Knowledge in this way represents a relatively rigid segmentarity. The difference in nature, however, "does not prevent mutual presupposition and capture, a mutual immanence," for "the sciences of man are inseparable from the power relations which make them possible, and provoke forms of knowledge [*savoirs*] which can more or less cross an epistemological threshold or create a practical knowledge [*connaissance*]" (Deleuze 2006b: 62). That is, we are not just dealing with the surface of projection of a power mechanism, but with a complex of power and knowledge in which the diagram and the archive are tied together through discourse, articulated on the basis of their difference in nature (Foucault 1998: 100).¹²

More specifically, the two domains remain intricately linked insofar as if something is "constituted as an area of investigation," it is because "relations of power had established it as a possible object; and conversely, if power was able to take it as a target, this was because techniques of knowledge and procedures of discourse were capable of investing it" (Foucault 1998: 98). Thus, between techniques of knowledge and strategies of power, there is no exteriority. Rather, there are 'local centres' of power-knowledge, such as between the patients and confessors (98). Deleuze refers to the relations between forces as transitive, unstable, frail and almost virtual, "unless they are carried out by the formed or stratified relations which make up forms of knowledge" (63). All knowledge refers back to relations

of force between men, but are never actualised in this form, for knowledge never refers back to a subject who is free in relation to a diagram of power; “but neither is the latter ever free in relation to the forces of knowledge [*savoirs*] who actualize it” (loc. cit).

For this reason, we “should abandon the whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop about its injunctions, its demands and its interests” (Foucault 1991a: 27). We should admit, rather, “that power produces knowledge,” or that “power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (loc. cit). The relationship is reciprocal, but the reciprocity itself is ambiguous, forming a Gordian knot that is difficult, if not impossible to unravel, to the point that we are incapable of isolating the primary cause.¹³

Subsequently, discourse must be conceptualised “as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable” (Foucault 1991a: 100). There is no division between the dominant discourse and the dominated one (as with ideology) or between accepted and excluded. Rather, we are dealing with “a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies” (100).¹⁴ Following the conceptual system of *The Archeology of Knowledge*, the entire *dispositif* or apparatus is construed as “a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions,” and so forth (Foucault 1980a: 194). It is the system of relations that can be established between these elements, or rather an assemblage.

As such, we are faced, with a complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, “but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for opposing strategy” (Foucault 1991a:101). Discourse, which is made up of power-knowledge, may transmit and produce power, but it also undermines and exposes it. The appearance of psychiatry, jurisprudence, and literature on homosexuality, perversion, pederasty, and so forth, may have made it possible to advance strong controls, but it also made possible the formation of a reverse discourse: “homosexuality began to speak on its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or ‘naturalness’ be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by

which it was medically disqualified” (Foucault 1998: 101). It was once treated as a medical perversion, and in this odd sense, natural, insofar as it was the flip side of the medical norm. Today, its ‘natural’ status allows for its liberalisation, with gay marriage often supported on the premise that homosexuality is ‘not a choice, but a result of genetics’. Such a ‘naturalist’ discourse oddly runs contrary to the very progressive-style politics that attaches itself to it, in that this politics tends to resist such ‘naturalist’ arguments in other domains (for instance regarding intelligence and G-factor analysis, and the social Darwinist concept of ‘deserving poor’) lest it be employed as a way to rationalise and justify social stratification and socio-economic division. Such a contradictory element points to the fact that the ‘truth’, in the grand sense, is not what matters. Rather, it is the ‘games of truth’ employed that is to be considered. And such games are possible precisely because discursive domains are linked together by disjunction, and so remain unstable, dynamic, and open to alteration. By virtue of its disjunctive nature, then, the entire power-knowledge network continually creates the conditions of its own resistance.¹⁵

Double Conditioning

Though power-relations are not static forms of distribution, but rather “matrices of transformation,” local centres of power and patterns of transformation eventually enter into an over-all strategy, simultaneously gaining support “from precise and tenuous relations serving, not as its point of application or final outcome, but as its prop and anchor point” (Foucault 1998: 99). Here we are presented with the double-conditioning of the microscopic and macroscopic, wherein the two domains reinforce and undermine each other. There is no discontinuity between them, yet neither is there homogeneity. Instead, “one must conceive of the double conditioning of a strategy by the specificity of possible tactics, and of tactics by the strategic envelope that makes them work” (100).

This leads us to Foucault’s idea that the fostering of and power over life, as in sustaining and continuing the biological existence of a population for the sake of the social body, has since the seventeenth century become the overall strategy encapsulating power as force, but also as interlacing with knowledge insofar as it concerns discourses on life. That is, this “death that was based on the right of the sovereign is now manifested as simply the reverse of the right of the social body to ensure, maintain, or develop its life” (136), primarily proceeding down two routes: the anatomic and the biological (139). The first (anatomic)

focused on the body as a machine, its “disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls” (Foucault 1998: 139). Referring in particular to the way in which the classical age ‘discovered’ the body as object and target of power, as something that may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved, this attention to the body clearly differed from medieval techniques of punishment (Foucault 1991a: 136). The concern of penal justice shifted from the general defence of society through techniques of declaration, exclusion, forced labour and retaliation to the control and psychological reform of the attitudes and behaviour of individuals. The entire penal regime of the nineteenth century became a matter of control not so much over what individuals did “as over what they might do, what they were capable of doing, what they were liable to do, what they were imminently about to do” (Foucault 2001c: 67). This, in turn, was accompanied by the idea of dangerousness, the idea that the “individual must be considered by society at the level of his potentialities, and not at the level of his actions; not at the level of the actual violations of an actual law, but at the level of the behavioural potentialities they represented” (57).

By the start of the 19th century, the great spectacle of physical punishment disappeared and the “theatrical representation of pain was excluded from punishment” (Foucault 1991a: 14). The body conceived as a site of the sovereign’s power was no longer the target; it was the body conceived as a path to the soul. Therefore, the question was no longer only, ‘Has the act been established and is it punishable?’, but also, ‘What is this act? What is this act of violence or this murder? To what level or to what field of reality does it belong? Is it a phantasy, a psychotic reaction, a delusional episode, a perverse action?’ It is no longer simply, ‘Who committed it?’, but, ‘How can we assign the causal proofs that produced it? Where did it originate in the author himself? Instinct, unconscious, environment, heredity?’ It is no longer simply, ‘What law punishes this offence?’, but, ‘What would be the best way of rehabilitating him?’

From this, a whole set of assessing, diagnostic, prognostic, and normative judgments concerning the criminal were lodged in the framework of penal judgment (see Foucault 1991a: 19-20). There formed methods, a kind of social orthopaedics, through which the meticulous control of the operations of the body were made possible, “which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility” (137) up to and including: the art of distribution (141-149); the control of activity (149-156); the

organization of geneses (156-162); and the composition of forces (162-169). Their instruments included: hierarchical observation (170-177); normalising judgment (177-184); and “their combination in a procedure that is specific to it” (170), the examination (184-194).

Combined with the gaze of the panoptic society, these methods and instruments, dispersed across the political plane, aimed at constituting the docile subject.¹⁶ Such a practice, Foucault highlights, did not stay within the penal system, but spread throughout society, for the control of individuals at the level of their potentialities could not be performed by the judiciary itself: “it was to be done by a series of authorities other than the judiciary, such as the police and a whole network of institutions of surveillance and correction – the police for surveillance, the psychological, psychiatric, criminological, medical, and pedagogical institutions for correction” (Foucault 2001c: 57). Indeed, education came to be designed to prepare the child “‘for a future in some mechanical work’, to give him ‘an observant eye, a sure hand and prompt habits’.” Truly, the “disciplines function as techniques for making individuals useful” (211). Unlike the soul of Christian theology, it is not born in sin. Rather, the soul is born out of methods of punishment, supervision and constraint. Power and knowledge relations invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge.

The second route down which the power over life proceeded focused on the “body as imbued with the machines of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes” (Foucault 1998: 139). Such a strategy was an indispensable element in the development of capitalism, insofar as capitalism “would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes” (141). A fine balance was required between optimizing forces and maintaining life in general, without for all that making life more difficult to govern and manage. Sex, inasmuch as it presented a means of access both to the life of the body and the life of the species, was employed as a “standard for the disciplines and as a basis for regulations” (146). Indeed, Foucault (37) describes the nineteenth century as an age of “multiplication,” an epoch that had initiated sexual heterogeneities, wherein elements of repression or, better, prohibition regarding sex played a subservient role, one that was microscopic and even local, to the transformation of sex into a discourse. The prohibition of sex was, if anything, an indication that it had been produced as something universally in our minds, included in the body as a mode of specification of individuals (47). This was not the

discovery of some new form or rationality or fundamental truth. It was rather the progressive formation of that interplay of truth and sex (57). As such, sex became something not only judged but administered.

Though creating a discourse on sexuality, the 18th century did not find a truth of the human or a hidden secret of his identity. The 18th century “did not exclude sexuality, but included it in the body as a mode of specification of individuals...it produced and determined the sexual mosaic” (Foucault 1998: 47). The aim was not to suppress sexuality, but rather to provide it with an analytical, visible and permanent reality. It was “implanted in bodies, spilled in beneath modes of conduct, made into a principle of classification and intelligibility...Not the exclusion of these thousand aberrant sexualities, but the specification, the regional solidification of each one of them” (44). Recourse to liberation through sexuality is thus an illusion, as “where there is desire the power relation is already present: an illusion, then, to denounce this relation for a repression exerted after the event; but vanity as well to go questioning after a desire that is beyond the reach of power” (Foucault 1998: 151).

In this way (and only this way), despite identifying the respective roles of government and the state insofar as these concern macro strategies, Foucault (2008b: 324-5) holds that recourse to sovereignty as a tool against discipline is misguided, for sovereignty and disciplinary mechanisms “are two absolutely integral constituents of the general mechanisms of power.” If one wants to look for a non-disciplinary form of power or struggle against discipline and disciplinary power, it is not towards the ancient right of sovereignty that one should turn, but towards the possibility of a new form of right, one which must indeed be anti-disciplinarian but at the same time liberated from the principle of sovereignty (*loc. cit.*). In this sense, we are obliged to turn away from the typical approach of analysing power from the point of view of its internal rationality in order to analyse power relations through the antagonism of strategies.

Indeed, not only is productive modern power inevitably ignored by humanist theorists, but liberal humanism itself emerges as an agent of productive power/micro-fascism, as a stratagem of the new growing mode of control. The “conventional histories” of the human sciences provide illusions that function, as Foucault (2003: 154) defines it, as a “retrospective justification.” In this vein, power is justified if it is exercised under the veneer of scientific truth. Attempts to liberate or rehabilitate ‘man’, to bring about his reason or his

‘true’ nature based on a predefined finitude or a perceived normality, excludes otherness and commits us to an oppositional or binary logic on the level of semblance. That is to say, conventional histories take the identities that are thrown up by virtual processes or force relations, identities that are in essence mere surface effects of primordial transformations of power-knowledge, as given truths upon which to effectively classify subjects. Such classifications lead to the categorisation, identification and exclusion of subjects who are not in tune with this ‘true’ essence of man’s being.

Nevertheless, the fixing of identities was never part of the disciplinary society. As Nathan Widder (2008: 157-158) puts it:

Given that an examination of the various criminal delinquents that modern society seeks to police reveals that they have always already passed through a myriad of institutions supposedly designed to correct them, how could it ever be said that power aimed to normalize individuals in the first place?

If we are interpellated from the moment we are born, from the moment we enter the classroom, then the irony is that “no ‘normal’ individual ever appears” (Widder 2008: 158). Disciplines are “techniques for assuring the ordering of human multiplicities” (Foucault 1991: 218) and nothing more. They seek to reduce the inefficiency of mass phenomena, to make a multiplicity more manageable. Any apparent failures only serve to further justify and intensify penal and disciplinary practices, and to support the spread of such practises into non-penal systems. Thus the failure of the prison “has always been accompanied by its maintenance” (272). This seems to suggest, then, that there is no fixing of identities, for identities are not ‘real’ (or representations of what is ‘real’). Rather, identities are constructed surface effects. Further, as with Sartre and Merleau-Ponty’s notion of semblance, identities serve a practical function, in that categories of identity are employed to manage populations through disciplinary methods.¹⁷ Foucault finds this renewed or “liberated” notion of the simulacrum in Deleuze’s work, endorsing it in his review article on *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense* (Foucault 2000b: 349). He commends Deleuze for locating an ‘incorporeal materiality’ in which phantasms function at the limit of bodies or protruding from them, a materiality conceived “in its play of surfaces without the aid of models, a metaphysics where it is no longer a question of the One Good but of the absence of God and the epidemic play of perversity. A dead God and sodomy are the thresholds of the new metaphysical ellipse.” This is certainly consistent with Foucault’s early notion of transcendental mirage, as that which emanates from a play of signification and force via discourse.

The Third Axis: Ethics

In addition to the truth and power axes of genealogy, Foucault sought after a third: ethics.¹⁸ This refers to the way in which the individual constitutes and recognises him/herself as a subject (self-subjection), in particular a subject of sexuality, “how men have learned to recognize themselves as subjects of ‘sexuality’” (2001d: 327). Such a formation speaks to a retroactive consumption of the very identities and norms produced and thrown up by virtual processes of force relations in conjunction with strategies of bio-power. In order for the recognition or identification with a subject position to remain somewhat stable, or at least to take effect, it requires practices of the self that serve to reinforce it, such that ethics involves ‘technologies of the self’. Thus, when, in *The Subject and Power*, Foucault (loc. cit) declares that “it is not power, but the subject, that is the general theme of my research,” he is in fact referring to the immanent double-conditioning process by which the subject and the identities by which it attempts to sustain itself are generated. Once more, there is no privileged subject as the pre-condition of thought, meaning and action, but rather a subject as an immanent effect. But given that it is an effect of a process of immanent disjunction, it follows that a certain excess is built into the relation, an excess that propels and allows for the self-overcoming of the condition, turning it into a process. Ethical practice, then, can be turned around so as to subvert a self-identified subject position.

However, as Simons (1995: 34) notes, when Foucault analyses sexuality and bio-power in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, “he had not yet formulated his notion of ethics. However, it is possible to reconstruct his discussion of sexuality along the lines of his later analyses of ethics.” In this way, it is fair to say that the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* represents the vital pivot point from the second to the third axis, ambiguously sitting between the two. Indeed, what prompts this shift to ethics, according to Deleuze (2006b: 78-9), is the impasse of the movement of liberation as the return to repression outlined in this first volume, which is precisely why the first volume ended on a doubt: “If at the end of it Foucault finds himself in an impasse, this is not because of his conception of power but rather because he found the impasse to be where power itself places us, in both our lives and our thoughts, as we run up against it in our smallest truths” (79). The ultimate question then: “If power is constitutive of truth, how can we conceive of a ‘power of truth’ which would no longer be the truth of power, a truth that would release transversal lines of

resistance and not integral lines of power? How can we ‘cross the line’? And, if we must attain a life that is the power of the outside, what tells us that this outside is not a terrifying void and that this life, which seems to put up a resistance, is not just the simple distribution within the void of ‘slow, partial and progressive’ deaths?” (Deleuze 2006b: 79). That is, how can we envision an addition to power-knowledge or a way out/through it while remaining in immanence?

Recall that through the power-knowledge network, we see that one using the discourse of liberation “runs the risk of falling back on the idea that there exists a human nature or base that, as a consequence of certain historical, economic and social processes, has been concealed, alienated or imprisoned in and by mechanisms of repression” (Foucault 1996d: 433). Freedom cannot be understood as the liberation of desire, as the liberation of an essential self, nor is it simple negation. Rather it is a creative process, a way to create, recreate and change the situation. Thus we emphasise “practices of freedom” over “processes of liberation” (loc. cit).¹⁹ The impasse can be resolved only “if the outside were caught up in a movement that would snatch it away from the void and pull it back from death” (Deleuze 2006b: 79). This would be a new axis, one that does not annul all others “but one that was already working at the same time as the others, and prevented them from closing on the impasse” (80). Deleuze suggests that this axis was “present from the beginning...(just as power was present from the beginning in knowledge),” but that “it could emerge only by assuming a certain distance, and so being able to circle back on the other two” (loc. cit).

On the face of it, Foucault turns to the classical Greeks as, for him, they present the beguiling idea of life as material for a work of art.²⁰ To be clear, though ethics itself is an axis of genealogy and subjectification, it can also be used to loosen the connection between the three axes. It is precisely this loosening that Foucault finds in the return to the Greeks. What is notable for Foucault is that in antiquity the ethical substance ran in conjunction with a particular *mode d’assujettissement*, “to build our existence as a beautiful existence” (Foucault 2001a: 356). Thus, the ethical question was not: which desires? which acts? which pleasures? But rather: “with what force is one transported ‘by the pleasures and desires?’” (Foucault 1992: 43). The dynamics were analysed in terms of two major variables: quantitative and qualitative. The former refers not to the “type of objects toward which they are orientated, nor the mode of sexual practice they prefer; above all, it is the intensity of that practice” (44). The latter relates to the “role or polarity specific,” the question of

remaining in one's role or abandoning it, "being the subject of the activity or its object, joining those who underwent it – even if one was a man – or remaining with those who actively performed it" (47). We still find moral codes concerning the body, married life, sex with boys, but "they accept those obligations in a conscious way for the beauty or glory of existence" (Foucault 2001a: 356).

With Stoicism there is a subtle shift, which places obligation under the rubric of universal humanity or rationality. However, this represents only a partial deviation, in that aphrodisia still plays a central role. It is Christianity that truly signifies a complete change in ethics, a result of a transformation in telos and asceticism. Here, "the telos is immortality, purity," wherein self-examination takes the form of self-deciphering (Foucault 2001a: 358). Critically, the *mode d'assujettissement* turns into divine law, "it is not aphrodisia, but desire, concupiscence, flesh and so on" (loc. cit). Knowledge, in turn, took a different position vis-à-vis care of the self. In antiquity, scientific knowledge becomes secondary, guided by ethical and aesthetic concerns for a beautiful life. For Epicureans, for instance, "there was a kind of adequation between all possible knowledge and the care of the self," thus the "reason that one had to become familiar with physics or cosmology was that one had to take care of the self" (360). For Christians, things are quite different: "the possibility that Satan can get inside your soul and give you thoughts you cannot recognize as satanic, but that you might interpret as coming from God, leads to uncertainty about what is going on inside your soul" (361). Difference here takes the form of a hierarchical opposition "between a naturally pure self and a sinful and corrupt Other" (Widder 2008: 186).

Purity becomes of central importance: the reason one is compelled to gain knowledge and insight is in order to gain self-mastery as a means of keeping pure. It is a form of austerity linked to the necessity of renouncing the self and deciphering its truth. The form of obligation is, in turn, given a legal footing, an internal juridification of religious law. With the coming of the Enlightenment and the demise of religion, the juridical element remains relatively intact, as well as the *mode d'assujettissement* and the ethical substance (*substance éthique*). Self-examination takes the form of self-deciphering. There is a difference then, between the Greek form of austerity, "which is linked to an aesthetics of existence, and other forms of austerity, which are linked to renouncing the self and deciphering its truth" (Foucault 2001a: 366). Subsequently, we see that moral codes are relatively stable, and that what actually changes is the relation to oneself, or more specifically ethics. The shift in

ethics coincides with a shift since the classical age in the mechanism of power, a shift from the sovereign's right of death to the power over life.

The turn to the Greeks, however, is additionally informed by a more penetrating insight: the way in which the fold is central to ethical practice. Contrary to the temptation to view Foucault's previous work as anathema to any conception of interiority, it remains that the outside is, rather than a fixed limit, "a moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely that inside *of* the outside" (Deleuze 2006b: 80). Though Foucault does not employ the word, such folding is found in *The Order of Things*, where the unthought is not external to thought but lies at its very heart as that impossibility of thinking which doubles or hollows out the inside. Indeed, "the theme which has always haunted Foucault is that of the double," (81) which in Merleau-Ponty is construed as the fold of the flesh.

Inspired by Merleau-Ponty, such folding is at the heart of Foucault's ethicality. That is, the answer to the impasse concerns the ethical relation to oneself apropos an aesthetic of the self as the corresponding mode of subjectification, in terms of particular relations of the outside, folded back to create a doubling, allowing a relation to oneself to emerge, constituting an inside which is hollowed out, in turn capable of developing its own unique image. Precisely insofar as no true essential self is given to us, the practical consequence is clear: "we have to create ourselves as a work of art" (Foucault 2001a: 351). We can make ourselves a work of art through such folding, or through exploiting the excess built into the disjunctive relation of the double-conditioning (micro/macro). This is an ascetic practice, in the sense of an exercise of the self on the self, by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself, subverting the very techniques and tactics used to create manageable subjects.

More specifically, as we have seen, though power relations and the simulacral unities and identities arising from them are everywhere and impossible to escape completely, there is a microscopic dispersion beneath these unities, where, as Widder (2008: 185) puts it, "another sense can be glimpsed that is overlooked by representational thought and the will to truth." This is the sense of sense, "or the sense of sensible statements as such, which underlies all statements and allows them to 'make sense'" (loc. cit), and refers to the paradoxical yet positive content of dispersion that exceeds the terms of identity and opposition referred to previously. Does this not also follow a very similar tract to Sartre and Merleau-Ponty insofar as the Other is not taken as *the* relation of difference, but rather as a conduit (or fold) that

structures relations of difference in the form of the generative flesh? This sense presents it as the immanent differentiator, “disjoining differences, and folding together heterogeneous but mutually imbricated domains” (185).

Clearly this relates back to immanence in that we are separated from the language of moral codes and dialectical thought, where, through an appeal to a transcendent Law, the self takes the form of a moral subject, a self-reflexive ‘I’ or ego, that “separates itself from what it is not and takes responsibility for itself” (Widder 2008: 186). Through immanence so construed, following the understanding of power relations as relations of disjunction, we envision a nebulous and dispersed self, taking the form of a unity of dispersion, a “complex of heterogeneities with no firm distinction between inside and outside” (loc. cit). The subject is not envisioned as a substance, but rather as a form that “is not primarily or always identical with itself” (Foucault 1996d: 440). One does not always have the same relationship with oneself, “there are relationships and interferences between these different forms of the subject; but we are not dealing with the same type of subject” (loc. cit). Further, as well as this excess demolishing anything within us that might be seen as a homogenous substance, it is also by virtue of such excess that we are able to ‘play games of truth otherwise’ (Foucault 1988a: 15), to exceed ourselves, to self-create and practice life as a work of art.

What Deleuze (2006b: 91) finds revolutionary here is the way Foucault looks to the Greek in terms of presenting the outside as “more distant than any exterior,” as “‘twisted’, ‘folded’ and ‘doubled’ by an Inside that is deeper than any interior, and alone creates the possibility of the derived relation between the interior and the exterior.”²¹ As Foucault (1992: 43) puts it, the ethical substance in ancient Greece – aphrodisia – is a nexus of forces that links together rules, techniques and institutions, along with “acts, pleasures, and desires,” operating “‘beneath the codes and rules’ of knowledge and power,” unfolding and merging with them, creating new foldings (and being created in the process), whose “variations constitute irreducible modes of subjectivation” (Deleuze 2006b: 86). The object for moral reflection is not the act itself, or desire, or even pleasure, but “more the dynamics that joined all three in a circular fashion” (Foucault 1992: 43).

The central point to be made is that the disjunctive nature of both power and the self is such that they exceed the terms of identity and opposition, making ethical negotiation a constant possibility. In this sense, the ancient Greeks “folded force,” they “made it relate back to itself,” and far from ignoring interiority, individuality or subjectivity, “they invented the

subject, but only as a derivative rule of free men,” as Deleuze (2006b: 84) puts it. The circular joining represents a fold of subjectivation or, rather, “four folds of subjectivation: the body and its pleasures, the fold of the relation between forces, the fold of knowledge, and finally the fold of the outside itself, or “the ultimate fold” (86). There never remains, therefore, “anything of the subject, since he is to be created on each occasion, like a focal point of resistance, on the basis of the folds which subjectivize knowledge and bend each power” (87).

From Pleasure to Desire

Despite his own statements, Foucault has not abandoned but instead further radicalised Sartre’s initial ethico-political sensibility, moving it beyond the confines of abstraction toward a recognition of force and an overt theorisation of power that was lacking in both Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. Hence, we still have with Foucault the theme of ethics as the reflective part of freedom.²² There is still this idea that working on yourself, knowing ontologically what you are, what you are capable of, and what it means to be politically engaged, are primordial starting points for politics, and that techniques and creative practices of the self subvert the political precisely because they intervene at the level on which we are constituted. There is also the continuation of the very Sartrean idea that man can make something out of what is made of him.

Two critical issues are usually raised at this juncture, however: first, whether it is possible for the modern bureaucratic capitalist state to acknowledge such an ethical requirement within its collective process;²³ and, related to this, what criterion should be used to differentiate between different struggles – the good versus the bad, and acceptable versus unacceptable forms of power.²⁴

The first issue greatly anticipates the central question of our final discussion in the final chapter – what kind of politics does immanence offer? – and so we shall leave it aside for the moment. We have to wait for Deleuze to be in any position to give a full response. In terms of asking how we differentiate between good and bad, legitimate and illegitimate, we must observe that, insofar as power is relational and omnipresent, we are not differentiating between powers, as Fraser (1989: 32-3) suggests. It is not as if, at the constitutive or micro level, some forms of power are repressive and others productive, or that it is contained in some places and possessed by some people but not in and by others. As we saw, this is not

Foucault's thesis. His ethics concerns ways to cultivate care of the self *through* relations of power. It concerns power in a Spinozist sense and so is a matter of what a body *can* do as opposed to what it *should* do. It is only from a perspective that conflates knowledge of truth, conceiving pure knowledge unaffected by power and an ability to make moral or even normative judgements, that Foucault's position on knowledge seems politically problematic. The likes of Habermas (1987: 284) charge Foucault with what we can deem a *judgmental relativism*, precisely in that he deprives us of an epistemic foundation. Foucault's concerns, however, are not moral, but ethical. It is not a question of knowledge or belief, but action and capability. Certainly, if genealogy has taught us anything, it is that such an epistemic vantage point is non-existent.

The true problem here regards how we are to differentiate between good and bad (as opposed to good and evil) *agonistic struggles* and *strategies*. It is strictly in this sense that we see Foucault run into some difficulty. Though this may seem like quite a jump at first, this difficulty is interrelated with his agentic and affective void. Despite the incredible advances Foucault makes in politicising the fold, it comes short in that it fails consistently or substantially to account for agentic and affective existential capacities. Although the fold of subjectification incorporates a notion of interiority necessary for navigating through power-relations, this only serves to provide the conceptual apparatus through which we can envision agentic *possibilities* and transgression without falling into dialecticism. It does not, for all that, account for agentic capacities and affective motivation, or rather the "psychic life of power,"²⁵ in which we are either motivated to explore these strategic possibilities or come to desire our subjectivation. If one of the central insights of Foucault's microphysics of power is that we belong and act in apparatuses of *dispositifs* where we distinguish between what we are (or what we already no longer are) and what we are becoming (see Deleuze 2007: 350), then surely some incorporation of the psychic is necessary.

Beyond this necessity, the agentic/affective void leaves Foucault vulnerable to charges of judgmental relativism apropos agonistic struggles and the privileging of difference, because without it all struggles can be deemed equal in value (nihilism) regardless of their content, or, to borrow from Deleuze and Guattari, their libidinal investments. Even if we say that the veneration of difference itself, or agonistic equality, is enough in this respect, it is still presupposed as a supreme value, and in this sense it is crypto-normative. Why even respect agonism, let alone differentiate between different agonistic struggles? I suggest that through

exploring the affective and agentic dimension offered by Deleuze, which turns us to a broadly Nietzschean ethic of life-affirmation, it is possible to begin to consider how we may distinguish between reactive life-negating positions and active life-affirming positions. This does not provide an epistemic foundation upon which to establish imperatives, but rather has the potential to provide an immanent, loose and deliberately ambiguous criterion or common footing to differentiate between struggles and Spinozist bodily experimentation. Or, rather, at the very least it provides a frame of reference for individual, and potentially collective, debate. By the same token, and in a way that echoes existentialism, life-affirmation can justify the sanctity of difference insofar as the bid for identity is conflated with nihilism or the negation of life, and insofar as life is difference.

It may be objected at this point that Foucault (1998: 157) does account for all of the above. First, through his allusion to an aesthetic criterion understood in terms of life, and second through his emphasis on “bodies and pleasures” as the “rallying point for the counterattack against the deployment of sexuality.” Certainly there is a case to be made here. The first point, however, is merely alluded to, and though it contains a possible answer, it is insubstantial on its own. Further, it seems disconnected from the affective, which loosens the link between the Nietzschean will to truth and the will to power. As for the second point, Patton (1998: 66) argues that Foucault’s human body “is no mere inert matter upon which power is exercised and out of which ‘subjects are created’. It is a body composed of forces and endowed with capacities...it is precisely in order to dress these bodily forces that the techniques of discipline are deployed.” In this sense, it would be misleading to say Foucault completely neglects the emotional or affective core of man. Conversely, it would also be misleading to say that he accounts for it in any substantial way (not in the sense of presenting a ‘thick’ subject, but in the sense of being well thought out) or indeed that pleasure as he presents it is a satisfactory model. First, because it is not clear how pleasure is conceived, and, second, because it is unclear how it would animate resistance.

On the one hand, Foucault (1998: 44) speaks of a “sensualization of power and a gain of pleasure” in which the pleasure discovered feeds back to the power that encircled it. There is a certain “pleasure that comes of exercising a power that questions, monitors, watches, spies, searches out, palpates, brings to light.” On the other hand, there is a “pleasure that kindles at having to evade this power, flee from it, fool it, or travesty it...power asserting itself in the pleasure of showing off, scandalizing, or resisting” (45). Thus, even though

power captures pleasure, and finds pleasure in its capturing, pleasure also offers the “possibility of resistance” (156), which is to say that there are “*perpetual spirals of power and pleasure*” (45). Pleasure, then, has its reactive and active moments. Nevertheless, the question as to how or rather what causes pleasure to be configured in both ways, or how it can come to take on a different character (pleasure found here, but not there) is unclear. The concept of the disjunctive linkages and folds can at least account for the possibility of a pleasure configured through power possibly serving to resist it – this pleasure being the fold, refold or infold of another pleasure and power, and so forth – but what of the affective motive? Without the motive, which need not invoke a self-conscious subjective motivation, there is no indication as to whether the pleasure in question is a real resistance or simply one floating on the surface of strata or organization. That is, with Foucault we know conceptually where to locate resistance and how to construe it, but not what compels or drives it and its opposite, or what decides whether one finds pleasure in resistance or in exercising powers of observation. What gets pleasure going?

Deleuze (2007) makes a powerful point in stressing that pleasure is not the cause but the effect. Pleasure, whether the pleasure in resisting or in exercising power over others, is secondary to a process in which *desire* is assembled by social machines, in turn generating unconscious libidinal investments. This is to recognise that there is an absence of a third form that pleasure can take: the pleasure in submitting to power, or, for Deleuze, the desire for one’s repression (bad conscience). Deleuze (131) comments that it is telling that Foucault is more interested in Sade, whereas he is more interested in Masoch. What interests Deleuze with respect to the Masoch is not the pain, “but the idea that pleasure comes to interrupt the positivity of desire and the constitution its field of immanence” (loc. cit). In this case, power arrangements do not constitute or assemble anything, but rather assemblages of desire “disseminate power formations according to one of their dimensions” (125). Desire is the agentic dimension of power.

There is a resemblance here to Freud (2005: 235), in that Deleuze is speaking to the existence of motivations and forces beyond pleasure. However, as we will see in the following chapter, rather than identifying a principle of repetition compulsion that overrides pleasure (*Thanatos*), Deleuze speaks of a differentiator (*dark precursor* or *Body without Organs*) that disjunctively synthesises series, presenting a virtual world of impossibilities. As opposed to a thermodynamic drive, this marks the zero points of intensities. It is, then, a field of immanence proper to desire. This can be partially codified through social machines, or social

repression by way of exclusive disjunctions, which interrupt or intervene the process, breaking apart an assemblage's potential and micro-reality, in turn negating its field.

More specifically, whereas Foucault avoids the language of desire precisely because it seems to evoke lack and repression (contra his reversal of the repression hypothesis), and in the same vein some sort of discursive fiction or essentialism, Deleuze, alongside Guattari, construes desire as something productive and machinic, in a way that is reminiscent of Nietzsche's will to power. Desire does not lack anything and it has no set nature. Desire is an affective force, part of a functioning heterogeneous assemblage, and therefore also a process. Insofar as it is a part of this assemblage, it is also connected, productive and produced – "it implies the constitution of a plane of immanence or a 'body without organs', which is only defined by zones of intensity, thresholds, degrees and fluxes. This body is as biological as it is collective and political" (Deleuze 2007: 130). Indeed, from this it follows that desire itself is revolutionary – it is constantly seeking to make new connections, and as such bypass forms of stratification or codification, which in the case of capitalist reterritorialisation creates vacuoles or lack propagating itself in accordance with the organization of an already existing organisation of production (see Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 30). This makes desire "teeter and fall victim to the great fear of not having one's needs satisfied" (loc. cit).

In this vein, pleasure marks the (mostly failed or unfulfilled) satisfaction that is born out of the negative of a fictitious lack, short-circuiting desire's positivity or blocking its flows, taking form in accordance with or in reaction to it through a socially invested assemblage. Deleuze comments that pleasure "seems to me to be the only means for a person or a subject to orientate themselves in a process that exceeds them. It is a re-territorialisation. From my point of view, this is precisely how desire is brought under the law of lack and with the norm of pleasure," and thus pleasure sits "on the side of strata and organization... it is in the same breath that desire is presented as internally submitting to the law and outwardly regulated by pleasures" (131). A reactively assembled desiring-machine, for instance, can find a sort of pleasure in its own repression or in the punishment of others by way *ressentiment*. In repressing desire or in breaking apart the potential and micro-reality of an assemblage, it can "only keep on existing as fantasies, which changes and twists them completely out of shape" so that they become "shameful things" (Deleuze 2007: 126). Such is the case with the capitalist subject of consumption (see Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 30).

The question here is: “Why are some troubled people, more than others, more vulnerable to, and perhaps dependent on, shame?” (Deleuze 2007: 126). Or, rather, why are some in bad conscience and others not? Why do they vary in degree? This question of agency or motive comes down to the assemblage of desire in conjunction with its social dimension. In which case, desire disseminates power formations. This is still in keeping with Foucault’s contention that the objectives and aims of power are not the result of choice or decision of an individual or collective subject, but nevertheless it identifies a headquarters of sorts in desire. Where Marxism speaks of class interest, however, we are speaking here of unconscious libidinal interests, in accordance with a given assemblage. In this case, love and sexuality “are the exponents or the indicators, this time unconscious, of the libidinal investments of the social field,” which oscillate between reactionary and revolutionary investments (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 386-7). This also still continues the thesis that the inside is a fold of the Outside and vice versa, but it reads the inside in terms of desire.

Fundamentally, desire so understood explicitly employs the Nietzschean ethic of affirmation in conjunction with that of agonism/difference, simultaneously providing a substantial conceptualisation of the psychic life of power. Where Foucault politicises the fold through the addition of force, which speaks to a topological relationship in which the inside is formed by a crease in the outside, Deleuze (2007: 264) makes desire the inside in general, or “the mobile connection between the inside and the two other features, the outside and strata.” From this, it follows that Deleuze’s recourse to desire as the ground or criterion of ethical judgment presents a wholly consistent and, more importantly, immanent solution of sorts. Of course, this doesn’t immediately settle the issue. At the very least, it gives an indication as to why we should turn to Deleuze’s systematization of immanence.

Notes

¹ Todd May (1995: 72), obscures the connection by stating “we have no *Archaeology of Knowledge* of the later works,” implying that genealogy has no proper epistemological grounding. Notwithstanding the fact that genealogy is not a purely epistemic affair, this fails to appreciate the way genealogy draws on archaeology. The result is a catastrophic mystification of Foucault’s notion of resistance. Just as Žižek and Butler accuse Foucault of immanent circularity (see introduction) that leaves him unable to postulate resistance except by an illegitimate appeal to a transcendent positive Body standing outside the relation, so too does May (144) believe that Foucauldian resistance “implies that there is something either beneath or beyond power to which power applies itself and which has the character of being resistant....The idea of an inherently resistant material is a transcendental one; it posits something outside the arena of productive power as the transcendental substance upon which power operates.” Yet this is not the case when we consider that the power-knowledge network not only works by way of immanence, but through disjunctive linkages that constantly engender the very excess or resistance Foucault discusses. Badiou (2012: 90) for his part speaks of a “strange harmony between the archaeology of knowledge and the genealogy of tactics of struggle,” which “seems to ignore the discontinuity of epistemes.” Indeed, whereas archaeology is said to account for singularities and their assemblages, its “finesse can be articulated upon a genealogy of its tactical efficacy” (89). Although a relation is envisioned here, it is one between a theoretical “objectivity,” and a “clarification of tactical struggles,” (loc. cit) or the articulation of contemporary tactics. It is in this sense that genealogy is said to be concerned with continuity. When construed this way, a void is indeed established, in which, even if Foucault identifies power as relational, the question remains “if one refuses the dialectical schema (the relation is contradiction), how to think the distinction between terms and relations to being with?” (98-9). This entire problematic, once more, can be easily avoided if the proper relation between archeology and genealogy is established. Namely, that while genealogy carries forth the logic of dispersion and disjunction of archaeology, it situates discursive formations within relations of power. It is not, then, just a mere matter of efficacy and continuity (see also Widder 2004: 418). As Davidson (1986: 227) puts it, “Archaeology attempts to isolate the level of discursive practices and formulate the rules of production and transformation for these practices. Genealogy, on the other hand, concentrates on the forces and relations of power connected to discursive practices; it does not insist on a separation of rules for production of discourse and relations of power.”

² Deleuze (2007) conceptualises Foucault’s *dispositifs* in terms of the lines composing it. Each line has a different nature, but, though distinguishable, each is mixed with the others and sometimes augments or elicits the others through variations and “even mutations of the assemblage” (347). In this sense, Foucault’s three axis of genealogy (knowledge, power and subjectivity) “by no means have contours that are defined once and for all but are chains of variables that are torn from each other” (343). The first two lines are the “curves of visibility and the curves of utterance” (344). This speaks, really, to discourse and knowledge. Third are those of force (loc. cit), which puts knowledge into an immanent relation with power. Finally there are those of subjectivation, which includes lines of flight that escape the previous lines (345-6). The subject is a singular process of unification immanent to an apparatus, which itself is a multiplicity where certain processes in becoming “are operative and are distinct from those operating in another apparatus” (347). Fundamentally, then, it holds that we “belong to these apparatuses and act in them,” and so we “have to distinguish between what we are (what we already no longer are) and what we are becoming: *the part of history, the part of correctness*” (350). By Deleuze’s reading, then, the *dispositif* captures the way in which Foucault

seeks to provide retroactive reading of his work, uniting his early concern with knowledge/discourse and his later concern with power, and at last with ethicality and subjectivity. Deleuze holds that in distinguishing between these lines, we untangle them: the lines of the recent past from the lines of the near future. Through this, says Deleuze, Foucault follows Nietzsche: “to act against time and thus on time in favour...of a time to come” (350-1). That is to say that, ethically, to engage with the study of the *dispositif* is to engage with *becoming*. It is at once both destructive and constructive. As we will see later in this chapter, this fits with Connolly’s understanding of Foucault’s genealogy and its ethical implications.

³ See for instance Allen (1998: 192), Dreyfus and Ranibow (1986: 112), Duncan (2005: 101), Flynn (2005a: 2), Jay (1986: 178-9), McCumber (2011: 328-9) Moss (1998: 5), and Paras (2006: 27-9). On numerous occasions, Foucault commits himself to this reading (i.e., 1991d: 351; 2000a: 466; 2000b: 351; 2001b: 248), and certainly the public spat between Sartre and Foucault serves to reinforce it (see Paras 2006: 32).

⁴ See May (2003: 285).

⁵ For a similar argument, see Deleuze (2004: 77), Dosse (1997: 41-2) and Lawlor (2006: 65-8).

⁶ As Foucault (1991b: 88) makes clear(er) when turning to his genealogical studies, the forces operating in history do not accord with a single regulative mechanism, but rather are the result of *haphazard conflicts*.

⁷ Foucault eschews his earlier distinction between the discursive and the non-discursive when he states, if “you take Gabriel’s architectural plan for the Military School together with the actual construction of the School, how is one to say what is discursive and what institutional? That would only interest me if the building didn’t conform with the plan. But I don’t think it’s very important to be able to make that distinction, given that my problem isn’t a linguistic one” (Foucault 1981: 198). The duality of discursive and non-discursive formations presents abstractions, when in fact one cannot be without the other, as they are in a relation of immanent/circular causality. See also n. 12.

⁸ As Widder (2004: 419) notes, it is precisely insofar as ‘true’ discourse, from Socrates and Plato onwards, becomes that which is ‘free’ from power that it becomes an internal limitation. In this instance, “discourse compels itself to tell the truth independent of any attachment to power or to a powerful speaker, but in this way it hides the exercise of power that still flows through it, a power that follows necessarily from it being a *will* to truth.” As we will see when we come to sexuality, the will to truth also “licenses a great deal of self-deception and ignorance” insofar as it seeks to mark certain forms of discourse and knowledge with an “authoritative stamp of truthfulness or scientificity” (loc. cit). Thus, it becomes a warped will to truth, or the willing of a certain kind of truth. The real irony, however, comes in the way the will to truth seeks to iron out discrepancies, discontinuities and disjunctions by mapping out binary divisions, measuring these according to a representational, oppositional difference, i.e., according to standards of normality and abnormality. Through acting as a mode of power in this way, it “necessarily disrupts its own goals: the more it seeks to localize, identify and delineate both standards of normality and deviances, the more its own operations of dispersion and discontinuity will continue to hinder this aim” (421).

⁹ The true irony of those who charge Foucault with relativism (i.e., Habermas 1987: 284; Putnam 1983: 288; Taylor 1986: 34; and Norris 1993: 50) is that their reproaches are informed by the very desire for a ‘fixed origin’ that Foucault highlights as merely a discursive habit of modernity. That is, the reproach is reliant on a pre-philosophical notion of rationality or a metahistorical deployment of ideal signification and indefinite teleologies, and so it seems merely to re-assert modernist values premised on a transcendent critique in the guise of a neo-Kantian ‘practical reason’. Naturally, if

the implication of Foucault's thesis is that there is no Archimedean point upon which we can ground *moral* resistance, or that there is no transcendent position by virtue of thought's immanence to the real that provokes it, it is hardly surprising that those with the contrary view will find Foucault's thesis wanting, inasmuch as such complaints are derived from a view proffered through a distinctly typical or common moral-political grammar.

¹⁰ So for instance, the hypothesis that statements different in form and dispersed in time comprise a group if they refer to one and the same object is immediately problematised by the dynamic and shifting nature of the object of knowledge. In terms of madness, the object presented by seventeenth and eighteenth century medical statements "is not identical with the object that emerges in legal sentences or police action; similarly, all the objects of psychopathological discourses were modified from Pinel or Esquirol to Bleuler" (Foucault 2002a: 35). Even if one were to turn one's attention to those groups of statements that share the same object, one would soon find that "each of these discourses in turn constituted its object and worked it to the point of transforming it altogether" (36). Thus we would have to turn, not to the eminence and uniqueness of an object, but rather to the space in which various objects emerge and are continuously transformed, the space that allows them to speak. The unity of discourses on madness would be based, then, on the interplay of the rules that make possible the appearance of objects during a given period of time and the interplay of the rules that define the transformations of these different objects. Thus, to "define a group of statements in terms of its individuality would be to define the dispersion of these objects, to grasp all the interstices that separate them," or, rather, to formulate their law of division (*loc. cit.*).

Similar problems arise if we try to define a group of relations between statements, their form and type of connexion, as in a style or way of looking at things, or as a series of descriptive statements. Descriptions cannot be abstracted from hypotheses, and, further, the descriptive statement is only one of the formations present in any discourse. Moreover, the descriptive statement itself is continually displaced. Thus, "if there is a unity, its principle is not therefore a determined form of statements" (Foucault 2002a: 37). Once more, we are obliged to recognise the "coexistence of these dispersed and heterogeneous statements; the system that governs their division, the degree to which they depend upon one another, the way in which they interlock or exclude one another, the transformation that they undergo, and the play of their location, arrangements, and replacement" (38). We could seek to establish groups of statements by determining the system of permanent and coherent concepts involved. Yet grammar only appears to form a coherent figure. Instead, we discover a discursive unity "not in the coherence of concepts, but in their simultaneous or successive emergence, in the distance that separates them and even in their incompatibility" (38), or the in the interplay of their appearances and dispersion. Lastly, the same obstacle is attributed to the attempt to regroup statements, describe their interconnexion and account for the unitary forms under which they are presented.

¹¹ Yet these systems of formation are not taken as blocks of immobility, static forms that are imposed on discourse from the outside, "and that define once and for all its characteristics and possibilities" (Foucault 2002a: 81). In fact, the system of formation "is no stranger to time" (*loc. cit.*), for a discursive formation "does not play the role of a figure that arrests time and freezes it for decades or centuries; it determines a regularity proper to temporal processes" (83). In this sense, it presents the principle of articulation "between a series of discursive events and other series of events, transformations, mutations, and processes" (*loc. cit.*). It is not an atemporal form, and mobility is built into the system of formation.

¹² Contra Rorty (1986: 47), who says that Foucault does not offer a theory of knowledge or that due to his Nietzschean heritage, he does not seek any substitute for theories, and contra Hoy's (1986:

129) assertion that Foucault's "enterprise is neither epistemological nor ontological, for he is not making claims about what knowledge and power are," it is evident that the addition of force is part and parcel of a broader epistemologically and ontologically engaged project, one that elucidates their mutual implication. In showing that thought is immanent to the real that provokes it, Foucault effectively reworks the Kantian transcendental field, accounting for the conditions of experience in a way that links it directly with the empirical as opposed to the representational. There is clearly a great affinity with Deleuze here, and it is precisely for this reason that Foucault (2000b: 346) endorses Deleuze's "incorporeal materialism."

A central part of this reworking necessitates a reworking of Kant's immanent critique. Foucault, then, follows the Kantian Enlightenment tradition, so long as it is understood not in terms of "faithfulness to doctrinal elements, but rather the permanent reactivation of an attitude – that is, of a philosophical ethos that could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era" (1991f: 43). Such critique is read via Nietzsche's genealogical will to power, which figures as the genetic underpinning of thought or speaks to its contact with the Outside that provokes it, the double affirmation as per above. To pursue it is to "follow the complex course of descent," which is "to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations – or, conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being does not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents" (Foucault 1991b: 81). Thus it can be said that the "body is the inscribed surface of events" (83). Contra Kant, the conditions of thought cannot be grounded on a transcendental ground, such as Reason, for no such ground exists. Rorty (1987: 47) is misleading, then, to suggest that whereas the "Hegelian wants history to substitute for theory of knowledge and for philosophical theories generally," a Nietzschean like Foucault "must not want *any* substitute for theories." The substitute is precisely the will to power as immanent critical and genetic principle, in light of fact that force relations generate phenomena.

In this sense, Deleuze's interpretation of Foucault comes closest to capturing the essence of his immanence. Specifically, in Deleuze's account, the fold of the Outside is ever present. Even though the *Archaeology* stops at the statement, "and does not attempt to deal with a problem that surpasses the limits of 'knowledge'," already "we feel that AZERT, on the keyboard, represents the focal point of power or of power-relations" (Deleuze 2006c: 12). AZERT, as in the letters on the keyboard of a French typewriter, form a statement that cannot be reduced either to a phrase or a proposition, for it is a statement of an alphabetic series governed by laws of chance. Nevertheless, it "has a specific link with something outside it, with 'something which can be strangely like it and virtually identical to it'" (66). And this outside, Deleuze continually affirms, "exists as an unformed element of forces," wherein "*the exterior*" is "the area of concrete assemblages, where relations between forces are actualized" (37). In this sense, the fold of subjectivation present in Foucault's ethical turn builds on a theme developed in *The Order of Things* and *The Archeology of Knowledge* (80-1). Given this affinity, it is clear that Badiou (2012: 85) is wrong to claim that "the pairing of Deleuze/Foucault, even if its empirical virtue – their friendship and admiration – is incontestable, nonetheless is philosophically empty."

¹³ As Simons (1995: 27) notes, "Foucault does not attempt to systematically break down the elements of that mutual constitution. Rather, his accounts are a deliberate entanglement of power and truth." This stands in contrast to Dews's (2007: 211) view that Foucault "presents power as a precondition of knowledge, rather than knowledge as a precondition of power," such that his immanent formulation "appears to attribute a certain ontological priority to power" (213). May (1993: 77)

explicitly endorses Dews's view, asserting that genealogy is "a project of relativizing knowledge to the play of forces." It seems this reading is based primarily on Foucault's *Madness and Civilisation* and *Birth of the Clinic*, wherein the institutional (i.e., the asylums of Tuke and Pinel, and, of course, the hospital) is seemingly favoured. When Dews finally turns to *Discipline and Punish*, he takes the formation of the Panopticon as the institutional precondition of forms of knowledge, which is to say that the priority of power "is confirmed by Foucault's central image of the Panopticon, where an architectural mechanism which renders human beings available to continuous observation forms the precondition for the elaboration of knowledge" (Dews 2007: 213). By its very hierarchical nature (as Dews sees it), the Panopticon bars any relationality in the power-network, and thus seems to contradict Foucault's notion of power-*relations*. This is a prime instance (it is one of many) where Dews localises his attack, focusing on semantic inconsistencies at the expense of the broader theoretical architecture or point that Foucault is constructing. Were the point recognised, it would put such semantics in their rightful context, which is to say, make them redundant. Regarding the first two works, it is clear that Dews has willfully neglected Foucault's well known retroactive reading of them when he sets up the three axes of genealogy. In the case of *Discipline and Punish*, the Panopticon can be viewed as part of a broader power network in which the prison, alongside the use of observation, is already taken as a site in which to normalise inmates according to a particular discourse of the norm; that it was constituted as an area of investigation *because* of preexisting relations of power and knowledge, which established this arena as a possible object. Foucault's central point is that power can only be exercised over something that techniques of knowledge and procedures of discourse are capable of investing. Its legitimacy is based precisely on a form of knowledge, which its function serves to reinforce. To be sure, Foucault (1981: 201) acknowledges that there is a difference of potentials in power relations, or rather instances in which micro-powers seem to operate from above; nevertheless, "in order for there to be a movements from above to below there has to be a capillarity from below to above at the same time." Thus, the feudal form of power relations, between the serfs tied to the land and the lord who levies rent from them, "must indeed have the backing of a certain pyramidal ordering of the feudal system" (loc. cit). A strict demarcation between cause and effect is not possible. Is that not the entire point of the ambiguous immanent network?

¹⁴ For this reason, Said (1986: 151-2) errs in maintaining that power, for Foucault, is something that can be possessed, and that it concerns domination.

¹⁵ This should put to rest the tired and unrecognisable caricature of Foucault as an heir to Althusser, wherein he is interpreted as utilising concepts concerned with the way in which power serves to fix social identities through individualising practices that are both discursive and institutional, as if Foucault abides by some sort of historical materialism or variant of interpellation. We saw already that Žižek, Butler (in the introduction) and May (see n. 13) are all guilty of providing a variation of this argument. Other examples include McCumber (2011: 328-9), Olssen (2006: 30), Racevskis (1991: 23) and Wolin (2004: 13).

¹⁶ On the question of the panoptic gaze, some have construed a strong affinity with Sartre's take on the look. As Jay (1986: 181) puts it with respect to Foucault's *The Birth of the Clinic*, though Sartre "is never mentioned in the work...it is difficult to avoid hearing echoes of his chilling description of the alienating and objectifying power of the Other's gaze in Foucault's historical account of the rise of a specific medical practice in the classical age." See also Vaz (1995: 40), Fox (2003: 259), Hendley (1991: 66) and Flynn (2005b: 224). The last three in particular maintain that Sartre provides the relational ontology required to make intelligible the epistemic nature of Foucault's gaze and power-knowledge. Against this, I maintain that although the language of Sartre's look and Foucault's

gaze is uncannily similar, the two, at least insofar as they are read by the above, speak to two entirely different ontologies. That is, Jay, Vaz, Hendley and Fox stick to a transcendent reading of Sartre, in which the look is the penultimate relation – as opposed to a topological variation in which the Other is realised inthetic consciousness (as argued in chapter 1) – in which case it follows a dialectical principle whereby the identity of the self, albeit a non-essentialist identity, is constituted on the terrain of the Other. With this reading, then, there is even scope to relate it to Lacan’s mirror stage, as Dews (2007: 71) does. Yet Foucault’s Other is an immanent one, and certainly in this sense to claim that the gaze is epistemic is to obscure the central thread of Foucault’s argument: that of folds (see n. 12). It is one thing to say that freedom is found within a situation; it is another to understand this in terms of immanence and disjunction as opposed to dialectical ruptures (see n. 12). Crucially, the entire debate is misleading, in that it fails to understand the ontology of both Sartre *and* Foucault.

¹⁷ As Foucault (1991a: 271) makes clear, if the “law is supposed to define offences, if the function of the penal apparatus is to reduce them and if the prison is the instrument of this repression, then failure has to be admitted.” Penalty does not eradicate illegalities or eliminate offences. Rather, it distinguishes and distributes them: “it is not so much that they render docile those who are liable to transgress the law, but that they tend to assimilate the transgression of the laws in a general tactics of subjection. Penalty would then appear to be a way of handling illegalities” (272).

¹⁸ Christopher Norris (1993: 30) decries this move to ethics as “an escape route of kinds” from the issue of moral relativism. Indeed, it is the alleged disjuncture between Foucault’s disciplinary and biopolitical themes fleshed out in *Discipline Punish* and the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* and his later ‘care of the self’ that, as we saw in the introduction, informs Judith Butler’s point of departure from Foucault. Following the idea that there exists an irreconcilable tension between Foucault’s middle and late periods, Simons (1995: 3) claims that the “most general set of poles to be found in Foucault’s work is the tension between constraining limitations and limitless freedom.” Equally, with regards to truth, Foucault highlights “light-hearted notions of truth and conceptions of it as domination” (5). It is between these two poles, or through employing the constructive tension between them, that we come to an ‘undefined liberty’ or practice. For Simons, then, we must strategically use the interpretive frame of lightness and heaviness to lend coherence to Foucault’s work as a whole, recognising that his thinking exists in the indeterminable or fluid space between. Despite offering a more nuanced understanding of Foucault, this reading comes to some problematic conclusions and, ultimately, despite recognising the relational nature of power, ends up endorsing the constitutive view of it, in turn implying that we must reintroduce transcendence into our conceptual apparatus in order to understand freedom. That is, “efforts to reinterpret oneself must resist networks of power-knowledge that constitute subjects” (21). Freedom does not come from outright resistance, but must rather *use* and *work through* networks of power-knowledge, which themselves constantly engender points of resistance. One has to be extremely careful, then, in choosing what language to use to convey this Foucauldian point.

Žižek (2012a: 163; and 2008a: xxiv) views this shift to ethics as retaining, and even reinforcing, the form of the late capitalist subject, in turn returning to the humanist-elitist tradition insofar as it is concerned with an aesthetic alternative and experimental living or a Renaissance ideal of the ‘all-round personality’ mastering passions and antagonistic forces within himself as a way of mastering the use of pleasures, without due concern for the true (macroscopic) order of politics and its necessary universalist underpinning. In a word, it is charged with a relativistic capitalist narcissism, in which “the thesis that the idea of the possible end of ideology is an ideological idea par excellent” (loc. cit). Underpinning this complaint is the view that Foucault fails to address the issue of identity and the constitution of the subject in any satisfactory terms, ignoring the Althusserian idea that “a

certain cleft, a certain fissure, misrecognition, characterises the human condition as such” via a process of ideological interpellation. This is to locate the constitution of the subject in an oppositional ideal, in which the dialectical leftover refers to a fundamental deadlock, a kernel resisting symbolic integration that must be negotiated. Although not responding to Žižek himself, Brown (1998: 47) is on point in highlighting that Foucault’s “genealogy does not oppose these things [identity, unitary engines of history and essential subjects of history] on moral or political grounds, but rather, generates a discursive political space in which they are called into question.” Genealogy points to a refiguring of the political, locating a series of relations below that of opposition or identity, relations that cannot be conceptually captured in dialectical terms or in terms of lack, which entails that ethics can no longer be a question formed on these Hegelian terms. The care of the self, then, is not only a logical consequence of genealogy, but a highly political ethic, inasmuch as it speaks to a specific form of asceticism designed to grapple with these immanent logics of power or to play with force via foldings and refolding. An ethics rooted in Lacanian separation would be unable to speak to this subterranean level. Further, Žižek’s complaint here conflates experimental living with the trivial and shallow individualism of capitalism. Certainly, to use Deleuze and Guattari’s term, the deterritorialisation that comes with such an ethical practice is entirely antithetical to capitalism, which seeks to internalise its limit or block and shift such lines of flight. In fact, is not to equate such experimentation with capitalism, ironically, unintentionally (and erroneously) to credit capitalism with providing the proper space through which such experimentation can occur? If that were the case, what exactly would be the issue with capitalism other than its market failures (dead labour and so forth)? Is not the very point to be made that it is precisely the capitalist system which hinders self-creation in this sense, insofar as it consistently requires particular forms of subjectivity in order to render itself efficient, sustainable, and so on? Indeed, as we have seen, and as Simon Choat (2010: 118), Todd May (1993: 117) and Michael Walzer (1986: 59) argue, for Foucault the rise in disciplinary mechanisms goes hand in hand with the rise of capitalism and the particular requirements of industrialised production – a similar argument being provided by Deleuze and Guattari, as we shall see in the following chapter.

¹⁹ Poulantzas (2014: 78) maintains that this notion of power neglects the role of state repression and violence, or rather domination. However, domination, on the standard interpretation of political power, does exist. Foucault concedes that in analysing power relations “one sometimes encounters what may be called situations or states of domination in which the power relations, instead of being mobile, allowing the various participants to adopt strategies modifying them, remain blocked, frozen” (Foucault 1996d: 434). Therefore, “liberation is sometimes the political or historical condition for a practice of freedom” (loc. cit). Conversely, liberation does not “give rise to the happy human being imbued with a sexuality to which the subject could achieve a complete and satisfying relationship,” and indeed it “paves the way for new power relationships, which must be controlled by practices of freedom” (434), or reconstitutes the space of power that must exist in all relationships. Domination relates to power relations insofar as they can be “fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical and allow an extremely limited margin of freedom,” as may be the case with class struggle (441). In such cases, then, the “problem is knowing where resistance will develop,” whether through unions or political parties; and “what form will it take – a strike, a general strike, revolution or parliamentary opposition” (loc. cit). Supplanting domination, though plausibly opening avenues for new relations to emerge, guarantees nothing in terms of freedom, as these are two different types of power. Though intersecting, they remain distinct. This links back up with what was said of the role of the state apropos governmentality (see n. 12), i.e., the sovereignty-discipline-government triangle, as well as the *rule of double conditioning* laid out in Volume 1 of *The History of Sexuality* (see Foucault 1998: 99). As May (1993: 117) puts it, “the continuation of capitalism on

the political level is dependent for its own functioning on the disciplinary strategies that lie at the micropolitical level,” such that “a change in the state apparatus which does not address micropolitical forms...runs the risk of merely allowing power to change hands rather than altering its structure.”

²⁰ Vintages’s (2001) suggestion that Foucault is urging us to return to some form of Greco-Roman ethics of self is at odds with numerous statements that this is not the message of his genealogy of ethics. She quite clearly states that “Foucault wants to rescue freedom, or what is left from it, from the disciplines and to re-endorse the ancient type of freedom practices” (172). Yet, for instance, Foucault associates the Greek ethics of pleasure with ‘virility’, ‘dissymmetry’, ‘exclusion of the other’, an ‘obsession with penetration’ which he finds “quite disgusting!” (Foucault, 1991d: 346). There is “no exemplary value in a period which is not our period” (347). Indeed, when directly asked what he thought of the Greeks, Foucault (1988b: 244) answers: “Not very much. They immediately stumbled upon what I consider to be the contradiction of the mortality [*sic*] of antiquity between the relentless search for a certain style of existence on the one hand and the effort to make it available to all on the other. While the Greeks probably approached this style more or less obscurely with Seneca [?] and Epictetus, it found expression only within the framework of a religious style. All of antiquity seems to me to have been a ‘profound error’. [Laughter].”

²¹ Although Deleuze’s monograph on Foucault correctly presents power-knowledge as a disjunction rather than opposition, wherein resistance is turned into a folding of power back into itself, it is notable that this recognition is not given in Deleuze and Guattari’s treatment of Foucault in *A Thousand Plateaus*. There, Deleuze and Guattari (2004b: 585 n. 39) state that their point of disagreement with Foucault concerns the way in which the assemblage is understood. For them, an assemblage is “not of power but of desire (desire is always assembled), and power seems to be a stratified dimension of the assemblage.” Further, the “diagram and abstract machines have lines of flight that are primary, which are not phenomena of resistance or counterattack in an assemblage, but cutting edges of creation and deterritorialization.” Despite making common cause with Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari portray the structure of power-knowledge in terms of opposition, holding that Foucault misses the important revolutionary role played by desire. Of course, Foucault maintained that desire, however construed, speaks to a hidden truth about the individual, and as such is always already caught up in the power-knowledge network, which is why power, not desire, is primary for him. Nevertheless, the crucial point is that, despite Deleuze’s earlier problematic take on Foucault, his monograph offers an interpretation consonant with the one presented here.

²² When asked how his assertion that one must create oneself without recourse to knowledge or universal rules differs from Sartre’s, Foucault responds by attacking the ‘moral’ underpinnings of ‘authenticity’. Despite siding with Foucault in avoiding the idea of the self as something that is given to us, Sartre, he says, “turns back to the idea that we have to be ourselves – to be truly our true self” (Foucault, 1991d: 351). Conversely, Foucault maintains that the only acceptable outcome from the idea that the self is not given to us is that “we have to create ourselves as a work of art” (*loc. cit.*). It is in this sense that Foucault claims to be closer to Nietzsche than Sartre. However, Foucault’s interpretation of Sartre conflates authenticity with a static state of Being or an identity as opposed to a practice of continuous negation, creation, and becoming. As argued in the first chapter, it is evident that Sartrean authenticity is of the latter.

²³ See for instance Andrew Koch (2007: 16), Todd May (1995: 50), and Jon Simons (1995: 116).

²⁴ See for instance, Fraser (1989: 32-3), Habermas (1987: 284), Norris (1993: 50) and Putnam (1983: 287-8).

²⁵ In this sense, we are in no way evoking Butler's (1997: 87) "psychoanalytic criticism of Foucault." As we know, Butler understands Foucauldian power in terms of interpellation, or as that which discursively constitutes a subject's identity (84) through working on the soul (in its Aristotelian formulation as the form and principle of the body's matter) (90). Through this reading, Butler looks for an excess that can account for the structural possibility of resistance, in turn conflating this search with that of interiority and, by extension, the affective. As Butler (2006b: 151) herself states, in "the intersection of Foucault and Freud, I have sought to provide a theory of agency that takes into account the double workings of social power and psychic reality," which is primarily "motivated by the inadequacy of the Foucauldian theory of the subject to the extent that it relies upon either a behaviourist notion of mechanically reproduced behaviour or a sociological notion of 'internalization' which does not appreciate the instabilities that inhere in identificatory practices." Briefly, Butler (1997: 104) turns to Freud's view on the formation of conscience, maintaining that a "certain place for psychoanalysis is secured in that any mobilization against subjection will take subjection as its resource, and that attachment to an injurious interpellation will, by way of a necessarily alienated narcissism, become the condition under which resignifying that interpellation becomes possible." This will "not be an unconscious outside of power, but rather something like the unconscious of power itself, in its traumatic and productive iterability" (loc. cit). The general argument is that insofar as power may at once retain and resist subordination it is both a resistance that is really a recuperation of power and a recuperation that is really a resistance. It is this ambivalence that forms the "bind of agency" (13). Given disjunctive folding and how the fold encapsulates both the interior and the exterior in ways that exceed their typical use, Butler's search is unnecessary. Even the affective level is present in the form of pleasure. The real issue, however, is the conceptualisation of this affective dimension and the agentic question of motive.

4. Deleuze and the Micropolitics of Desire

We turn to Deleuze, along with his collaborative works with Guattari, because he incorporates an affective dimension to power that is not only more elaborate and detailed than Foucault's but also concerns agentic capacities, seeking to understand our libidinal investments with power and providing a basis for evaluating a mode of existence, simultaneously providing veneration for the principle of difference and life. Within this is the idea that pleasure, something to which Foucault refers as the possible ground for resistance, is part of reactive desire, lying on the side of strata and organisation. The overriding purpose of this chapter is to explore in more detail this agentic and ethical potential of desire, and the manner in which it builds on the three previous thinkers to complete immanence, whilst pushing forward a consistent and essential micropolitics.

'Desire' is an undoubtedly slippery concept, and seems constantly weighed down, as it were, with metaphysical, essentialist and discursive baggage. As we saw in the last chapter, it was for this reason that Foucault felt uncomfortable with Deleuze's, albeit subverted, use of desire. A number of interpreters have made this the basis of their critique of Deleuze. Chief among them is Judith Butler (2012: 214), who claims that:

...inasmuch as the critique of the cultural reification of desire as lack engages its own form of reification through an appeal to an ontologically invariant multiplicitious affectivity, it discards the benefits of the Lacanian position along with its disadvantages; in other words, the appeal to a precultural eros ignores the Lacanian insight that all desire is linguistically and culturally constructed.¹

Though Deleuze follows Nietzsche's insistence on the non-dialectical multiplicity of affects, challenging any asserted unitary directionality, he is charged with ultimately reinstating what Butler interchangeably deems an 'ontological', 'natural', 'essentialist', 'ahistorical' or 'pre-cultural' ideal of desire (214-5), or an "erotics of multiplicity" as an "always already existing possibility once life itself is freed from the constraints of slave morality" (216). As such, the Deleuzian ethics of becoming a Body without Organs (BwO) is read in terms of the emancipation, or the liberation of an essentialist self in the form of desire, from repressive anti-erotic political structures, paralleling the Enlightenment appeal to natural desires "that we find in Rousseau or Montesquieu" (215).

Žižek (2012a: 28) makes a strikingly similar claim, holding in particular that such appeals to an ontology of productive Becoming or a pre-symbolic libidinal flux present the "exemplary case of Leftist radicalism linked to philosophical idealist subjectivism," or the

“remobilization of the old humanist-idealist topic of regressing from the ‘reified’ result to its process of production” (25). As we know from the introduction, Žižek goes so far as to argue that an inherent impasse over the nature of the virtual as a surface effect vs. a productive power caused an otherwise apolitical Deleuze to turn toward Guattari and this ‘old’ idealist politics of desire – that “Guattari presents an alibi, an easy escape from the deadlock of his [Deleuze] previous position” (18). *Anti-Oedipus* is thus accused of escaping to the idealist extreme of affirming the pure flow of Becoming, which, while “masquerading as radical chic,” effectively transforms Deleuze “into an ideologist of today’s digital capitalism” (xxi-xxii). Žižek’s overriding point (as in a sense, so is Butler’s) is that the entire deadlock, and its ensuing problems, can be effectively overcome by reading Hegel back into Deleuze, or returning the form of transcendence back into the edifice. Thus, not only is Deleuzian desire under attack, but also the very basis of ‘pure immanence’.

This chapter answers this interpretation via a two-fold argument. First, whereas Žižek believes that ‘Deleuze proper’ fails to account for the ruptures entailed by transcendence and as such faces a deadlock, we will see how transcendental empiricism actually construes thought in terms of a forceful encounter with the Outside understood as *exogenetic*, not in terms of transcendence but rather in terms – following Merleau-Ponty and Foucault – of a fold of the plane of immanence, making it *endoconsistent*. The event does not relate the lived to a transcendental subject, but rather to the immanent survey of a field without subject, the All-One. From this, immanence is construed as the regulative ideal of philosophy precisely because immanence itself is real, or is reality itself in the making.² Second, this in fact has a reciprocal and consistent relation to Deleuze and Guattari’s micropolitics of desire. On the one hand, through the double axiom, morality and its corollary form of politics is thoroughly challenged, pushing instead an ethics grounded in the notion of immanent modes of existence (as opposed to a transcendent ground, be that the subject or a form of the Good). The exploration of this ethical dimension, with the aim of returning to and experiencing the transcendental field in order to establish the conditions for new modes of existence (how to become a Body without Organs), is the central driving-factor behind the political works. That is to say, the ‘Guattari’ encounter does not come out of an impasse, but rather is a logical extension of Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism. On the other hand, in striving for this, Deleuze and Guattari employ the conceptual schema of transcendental empiricism and its double-axiom to enable an *active destruction*, accounting for the ontogenetic conditions of desire (how a mode of existence is determined) and as such serving the ethical task.

Thus there is no ‘impasse’ or ‘split’ to speak of, but rather a consistent image of thought informed by a double requirement to be both exogenetic and endoconsistent, which instigates a politics that draws on its conceptual schema. It is only in obscuring this connection that one will be invariably led to overlook the way in which desire is (coherently) immanent and therefore relative to the real that provokes it, such that it can only have for itself a productive ‘nature’. That is, the ontogenetic is continued in *Anti-Oedipus*, but within the context of the social production and desire,³ where the true nature of instincts cannot be inferred from their instantiation in social institutions and representations up to and including the Oedipal triangle (daddy-mommy-me).⁴ Indeed, desire is deemed ‘machinic’ precisely because it does not represent anything, it only produces and it does so by virtue of its connections with this Outside. As the connections are related through disjunctive folds. The production of reality takes the form of immanent causality, in which there is no dualism or opposition between man and nature, thus: “Nature=Industry=History” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 25). Thus, desire is far from a ‘natural multiplicity’ or ‘pre-symbolic libidinal flux’. Ultimately, it is only through understanding this that we will come to see the political necessity of Deleuze and Guattari’s ethics and the way in which it is in fact the subversive defining core of emancipatory struggle.

Transcendental Empiricism and the Double-Axiom

We turn first to transcendental empiricism. Keeping with the general theme of the study, we can see that Deleuze first develops his theory of multiplicities by working through and drawing on critical elements in the previous three thinkers.⁵ To begin with, as we know, Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 47) commend Sartre’s repudiation of Husserl’s latent Kantianism – where the ‘I’ is indispensable to the coherence of our agency – precisely because it “restores the rights of immanence.” It does so by eschewing synthetic consciousness or subjective identity, or rather the claim that the world as it is thought is immanent only to some principle that is not itself worldly or empirical (such as Husserl’s hyletic structure), which turns the ego into a transcendent referent. However, Deleuze (2004b: 114n. 6) also problematically holds that Sartre advances this thesis at the expense of ignoring the flesh as encapsulating the Outside of the situation, and so maintains that Sartre’s thesis is hindered precisely because the impersonal transcendental field is still determined as the field of consciousness. The error, in Deleuze’s view, is that one cannot

think of the transcendental in the image of, and in the resemblance to, that which it is supposed to ground (see Deleuze 2004b: 121). Such a move, he holds, will only uncover the conditions of possibility of knowledge and experience as opposed to the genetic conditions of thought itself or the way in which phenomena are actually generated. Further, through retaining this notion of an intentional relation between nomination and the thing, Sartre breaks with the expressive sovereignty of the All-One of immanence. As Deleuze argues, when conceptualised through this negative, the dialectic perpetuates transcendence.⁶

Deleuze envisions himself as taking a step towards a pre-individual and impersonal zone. Though a germinal version of this zone can be located in Sartre's thought, as we have seen, there is a case to be made that Deleuze does indeed go further, in that he specifies how the transcendental field is defined by both an impersonal *and* pre-individual virtual field of forces beyond the actualised differentiations it underpins, including that of consciousness. In this respect, as mentioned in the second chapter, there is a closer affinity with Merleau-Ponty's metaphysics of art and the invisible of the flesh, and certainly Deleuze makes frequent use of the conceptual fold, as we shall see.⁷ However, Deleuze later maintains, along with Guattari, that among other things (the return of transcendence via the body, or the harmony of coincidability) the "flesh is too tender" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 179). Though some of the other claims made against Merleau-Ponty are suspect, there is a degree of truth with respect to the flesh's tenderness. As already said, this links back with Bacon's meatism as the counter to Merleau-Ponty's fleshism, which for Deleuze makes visible the *invisible* and *intensive* forces that act upon the body and climb through its flesh. It is in this sense that Deleuze says art is a matter of "capturing forces" (40). Indeed, through such an emphasis, we can provisionally see how he shares a great affinity with Foucault's notion of power as a moving substrate of force relations, wherein the fold is force. Yet he differs in his later emphasis on desire, as we shall see.

What is critical is that through this focus on the transcendental field, the invisible, and force, Deleuze develops a conceptual schema that accounts for the genetic and immanent conditions of existence of the real in a systematic and perspicacious manner foreign to the very thinkers on which he draws. And although it is an empiricism of sorts, eschewing the transcendental idealism of both Kant and Husserl, it is nevertheless still transcendental insofar as it concerns itself with the conditions of experience, and yet still empirical insofar it concerns itself with the real to which it is immanent. Contra Husserl, in particular, who modelled the transcendental field after the empirical, with the relation between the two being

that of resemblance, Deleuze posits their separability. The transcendental field can be distinguished from experience “in that it doesn’t refer to an object or belong to a subject (empirical representation)” (Deleuze 2001: 25). As a consequence, philosophy must explore the transcendental field for itself, and not as a Kantian redoubling of the empirical that still precludes the transcendental from being posited as an object of experience. This duality does not amount to a dualism. Rather, it establishes a philosophy of univocity, of folding.

Difference and Repetition is the critical work in this respect. It is often interpreted as Deleuze’s anti-Hegel book⁸ insofar as it seeks to rethink difference or to capture ‘difference in-itself’: a pure difference or virtual force, which is not defined in relation to identity or to the negation of an identity, but which underpins and transforms identities. As we will see, pure differences retain virtual potencies that are actualised, and therefore determined, in a series of repetitions. This links up with the broader view that beings must be understood in terms of becoming, that they are not represented by analogy or in comparison with a higher being (as in Plato’s Forms) but rather only ever become. Unity, then, is only secondary, referring to the way differences are *actualised* as forms, but actualisation is itself still a moment of genuine creation and novelty. Repetition, in other words, is the form of explication through which the ‘for-itself’ of difference differentiates and differentiates itself. Yet this is not a repetition of resemblance, for it is a repetition that repeats difference as opposed to the same. Further, it is repetition that not only concerns time, but also disrupts the vulgar chronological conceptualisation of it. First, in that rather than expressing a continuum, repetition reveals non-linear relations between past, present and future, particularly regarding how they fold into and are synthesized with one another. Second, in that Deleuze treats time itself as a structure through which movement or change is conditioned.

In this way, the impersonal and pre-individual character of the transcendental field is accounted for through three syntheses of time, “*which must be understood as constitutive of the unconscious,*” and which in turn reveal selves to be “larval subjects” or “dissolved” (Deleuze 2004a: 140). The discontinuous structure of time conditions time’s passage and the passage of the things that exist within it in such a way that it ungrounds movement in chronological time, such that neither past (in terms of conditioning) nor future (in terms of destiny) can imprint an enduring mark. Expression is of central importance here, as we move beyond representation to express the sense of the *untimely*. Each event in time always only

repeats difference. The three syntheses of time serve as the centre of Deleuze's ontology, in that they establish how "repetition is, for itself, difference in itself" (118).

It is not my intention to explore all three syntheses in detail, but rather to note the way this pushes the transcendental beyond its previous phenomenological incarnation toward an ontogenetic theory of multiplicities.⁹ So very briefly, the first synthesis accounts for the constitution of the linear, chronological form of time (what Heidegger calls the 'vulgar' conception) on the basis of a living present, establishing "a foundation which endows pleasure with its value as a general empirical principle to which is subject the content of the psychic life in the Id" (Deleuze 2004a: 140). Following Sartre's criticism of Kant's invocation of a non-temporal permanence, Deleuze holds that this synthesis speaks to a static line of time only, and as such cannot account for the passage of the present. We must further constitute time as a present, "but a present which passes" (Deleuze 2004a: 100). So although it is originary, the first synthesis of time must be considered "no less intratemporal" (Deleuze 2004a: 100). It needs to be shown why the present passes and what prevents the present from being coextensive with time. In short, there "*must be another time in which the first synthesis of time can occur*" (100).

Hence, while the first synthesis, which Deleuze also calls the passive synthesis of habit, constitutes the living present in time and makes the past and the future two asymmetrical elements of that present, the second, "passive synthesis of memory constitutes the pure past in time, and makes the former and the present present...two asymmetrical elements of this past as such" (Deleuze 2004a: 103). Deleuze (2004a) links this to the narcissistic ego of the first synthesis, which sees itself in what it contemplates (120), in that it is "extended in the form of a second passive synthesis, which gathers up the particular narcissistic satisfaction and relates it to the contemplation of the virtual object" (143). Whereas Sartre argues time must be made to be by a temporalising being that is diasporic, a unity that is said by Sartre to be missing in Bergson's account insofar as Bergson cannot explain how the past is related to consciousness – how it is perceived as *my* past – Deleuze returns to Bergson to locate the conditions of real experience in virtual (as opposed to actual) multiplicities, which, though not a 'negative' in the typical sense, essentially function as Deleuze's non-being.

One of Bergson's basic presuppositions is that whereas the behaviour of, for instance, a tick, which has no capacity for reflective conscious thought or *contraction*, is determined purely by instinct, human instinct is disrupted by intelligent contemplation and recollection (see

Holland 2012: 309). However, the demands of action or sensation necessitate the repression of such contemplation, leaving the past unconscious as a virtual “involuntary memory which differs in kind from any active synthesis associated with voluntary memory” (107). Here the noumenal is constituted by “the relation of virtual coexistence between the levels of a pure past, each present being no more than the actualisation or representation of one of these levels” (105). The pure past coexists with the present, in that the present present is “only the entire past in its most contracted state,” which, additionally, constitutes the present and its passing – that is, the past “does not cause one present to pass without calling forth another, but itself neither passes nor comes forth” (Deleuze 2004a: 103). And so, for this reason, the past, “far from being a dimensions of time, is the synthesis of all time of which the present and the future are only dimensions” (loc. cit). It does not exist, but rather insists and consists: it “insists with the former present, it consists with the new or present present” (103).

A virtual multiplicity is a collection of positive singularities emitted and absorbed in a period of time shorter than the shortest imaginable period of continuous and extended linear time. This makes virtual relations intensive, ‘molecular’ or ‘*microscopic*’ insofar as they depict the concealed conditions of the actuality (as in, the horizontal-empirical) given to experience (see Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 38; and Deleuze 2004a: 106). Consequently, everything expresses virtual multiplicities, which may be incarnated in an indeterminate number of actual states of affairs. The virtual is real but not actual, and this distinction portrays an epistemological rather than an ontological division, as Deleuze’s ontology is univocal. To elucidate: “the possible is opposed to the real; the process undergone by the possible is therefore a ‘realisation’” (Deleuze 2004a: 263); by contrast, “the virtual is not opposed to the real; it possesses a full reality by itself. The process it undergoes is that of actualisation” (loc. cit).

However, Deleuze argues that what Bergson, and by extension Sartre, are missing is the way in which a virtual multiplicity of the past is related to consciousness through the disjunctive syntheses of impossibles related and folded into one another through a dark precursor, which is in effect an immanent connection with the Outside in terms of folding. This is the time of the “aborted cogito,” (135) linked to Nietzsche’s notion of the eternal return of difference itself or of the *untimely*. In this instance, the self is not progressively fractured through chronological time, but rather typified by a fundamental discontinuity, inasmuch as

it assembled in non-chronological order from different periods of time, each referring to different subjectivities or existential states.

This move to a third synthesis arises from the view that the “second syntheses of time points beyond itself in the direction of a third which denounces the illusion of time in-itself as still a correlate of representation” (Deleuze 2004a: 111). The inclusion of time as the form under which undetermined existence is determinable already displaces the Cartesian myth of the unified self, the ‘I think, therefore I am’, or of a personal or individual self.¹⁰ Insofar as this formula provides an image of resemblance, identity, analogy and opposition as nothing more than effects or the products of a primary difference or system of difference, it follows that difference must be articulation without any meditation whatsoever by the identical, the similar, the analogous or the opposed, for that would present a paradox. Thus, “difference must immediately relate the differing terms to one another,” (143). That is to say, difference must be articulation and connection in itself. There must be “a differentiation of difference, an in-itself which is like a *differenciator*...by virtue of which the different is gathered all at once rather than represented on the condition of a prior resemblance, identity, analogy or opposition” (loc. cit).

Whereas *actualisation* is the field of individuation, *dramatisation* is the process of individuation. What links the individuation field and the dramatisation process is a ‘dark precursor’ connecting different factors of the field of individuation and so triggering ‘internal resonance’ and then ‘forced movement’. The *dark precursor* is the agency of force – the will to power – which ensures communication between differences, or the communication of peripheral series. “Thunderbolts explode between different intensities, but they are preceded by an invisible, imperceptible *dark precursor*, which determines their path in advance but in reverse, as though intagliated” (Deleuze 2004a: 145). It is the in-itself of difference, “which relates heterogeneous systems and even completely disparate things, the *disparate*” (147).

It is primarily at this point where much confusion arises, specifically insofar as this drive or agency of force is related to an essentialist or at least a-social image of Deleuzian desire (*inter alia* Butler). Indeed, it is either taken in the anthropomorphic sense as known by psychology or, relatedly, in the mechanic sense of a strict relation of cause and effect as known by classical physics. However, as Deleuze clearly argues in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, it is neither. The ‘willing’ of the will to power is the virtual aspect of force by

which it differentiates (or ‘makes the difference’ between incommensurable perspectives) and differentiates itself (or differentiates intensive and differential relations of forces into distinct actual types), involving and explicating itself in a repetition of difference, *immanent* and thus relative to the real that provokes it. The will to power, in other words, is simply the genetic and differential element of force relations.

This relates back to what was said in the second chapter, vis-à-vis the qualitative/quantitative and intensive/extensive distinction. Deleuze’s (2006d: 44) basic contention is that for Nietzsche – against mechanistic abstractions of unity and numerical quantity – forces can never be equal, but are rather in relations of inequality and continual flux (that is, relations of disequilibrium). This presents us with a world of “dynamic quanta,” wherein forces clash with one another in such a way that one will invariably take the superior position and as such subordinate inferior forces (Nietzsche 1968: 339). By virtue of this dynamic, it follows that a force must express itself in accordance with the other forces to which it relates, which means that the essence of force is its “quantitative difference from other forces,” which is expressed as the force’s quality (Deleuze 2006d: 46). If a force dominates over another, if it is quantitatively superior, it will have for itself the quality of being active: it commands, creates, transforms and overcomes. Conversely, an inferior force will have to submit to its superior counterpart, and as such it will only have for itself the quality of reaction. Quality, in other words, denotes the means by which a force can express itself in a given relation of quantity.¹¹

Against Hegel’s *Dialectic of Consciousness*, then, in which the thing of sense certainty and object of perception are subsumed by a relation of equal forces which oppose or negate each other, Nietzsche holds that the “essential relation of one force to another is never conceived of as negative element in the essence” (Deleuze 2006d: 8). That is, forces vice-dict rather than contradict one another. Therefore, the synthetic nature of this relation of forces is one of disjunction – differences relate to one another without their difference being subsumed (see also Foucault 1991: 92). This is the principle of diversity and its reproduction by way of the continual return of the enigmatic differentiator that always differs from itself, which is expressed by Nietzsche in terms of the eternal return of ‘difference in itself’. It is revealed as the groundless law of becoming, lying at the heart of synthesis, for it “does not cause the same and the similar to return, but is itself derived from a world of pure difference” (Deleuze 2004a: 153).

There are further additions to make here, however. The relation also implies chance, for “chance,” (‘haphazard conflicts’ as Foucault puts it) or Outside encounters bring forces into relation in the first instance, while “the will to power is the determining principle of this relation” (Deleuze 2006d: 49). What is more, the will to power itself must have qualities, something compelling the evaluation and relation of forces so as to affect their means of expression or becoming, something underpinning the impetus and the stuff of interpretation itself. This is the primordial qualitative element underpinning interpretation, and in turn determining the qualities of force. Such a process is one caught in the matrixes of an immanent causality (where the cause is in the effect). Crucially, “these fluent, primordial and seminal qualitative elements,” Deleuze (2006d: 50) warns, “must not be confused with the qualities of force.” Whereas the quality of a force is determined by the differential of quantities, designated in terms of active and reactive forms of expression, the quality of the will to power itself is designated in terms of affirmative and negative. With this reading, action and reaction:

are more like means, means or instruments of the will to power which affirms and denies, just as reactive forces are instruments of nihilism. And again, action and reaction need affirmation and negation as something which goes beyond them but is necessary for them to achieve their own end. Finally and more profoundly, affirmation and negation extend beyond action and reaction because they are the immediate qualities of becoming itself. (Deleuze 2006d: 50).

Thus affirmation is the power of becoming active, its moment of actualisation, whereas negation is the power of becoming reactive. This relates to the idea that on top of being the one that interprets, the will the power is the one that evaluates. Whereas to interpret is to determine the force which gives sense to a thing, to evaluate is to determine the will to power which gives value to a thing. And so the will to power as genealogical element “is that from which senses derive their significance and values their value” (51).

What is critically important here, is that while the will to power is a differential and a genetic element of force relations, it is itself also the product of force relations via evaluative separation, which urges the will to power to will a particular quality of power: affirming or denying. The will to power, in this sense, is not something that wants power, it is not anthropomorphic in its origins, signification or essence. Power is “*the one that wills* in the will,” it is the genetic and differential element in the will, and therefore not something to be measured against representations and strict causality. Thus it is the ‘creative’ force because it interprets and evaluates in a continual mode of becoming. But what does it will? It “wills

precisely that which derives from the [exo]genetic element,” determining as it is determined, the relation of force with force, and qualifying related forces (79).

From the standpoint of the genesis or internal production of force, the will to power is an endogenetic (or even endoconsistent) process, the differentiator or conduit differentiating virtual forces of intensive and differential relations into distinct actual types. Or, more simply, this differential determines the relation between forces (and so their qualities), but “from the standpoint of its own manifestations, it is determined by relating forces” (57), or, rather, it is affected from an Outside encounter in the form of, for instance, a moral diktat or evaluation, which affects the immediate qualities of becoming or actualisation itself – it is therefore exogenetic. The will to power always determines at the same time as it is determined, and qualifies as it is qualified. It relates and synthesises differences in degree of the extensive world to produce differences in kind in the intensive, but it is only by virtue of already relating to this Outside extensive world that differences will be related and expressed in a particular manner. Thus the will to power is manifested as a capacity for affecting and being affected.

To argue this point in the context of multiplicities as explicated in *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze (2004a: 151) turns to Freud’s thesis that phantasy is constituted on the basis of at least two series, one infantile and pre-genital, the other genital and post-pubescent, wherein “the series succeed one another in time from the point of view of the solipsistic unconscious of the subject in question.” The question, then, is how to explain the phenomenon of ‘delay’, “which is involved in the time it takes for the supposedly original infantile scene to produce its effect at a distance, in an adult scene which resembles it and which we call ‘derived’” (loc. cit). Although Deleuze follows Freud’s notion that the problem concerns resonance between the two series, he departs from the notion that they are distributed within the same subject across a space of chronological time. The childhood event, in this instance, is not one of the two real series but, rather, “the dark precursor which establishes communication between the basic series, that of the adults we knew as a child and that of the adult we are among other adults and other children” (152). Phantasy is the manifestation of the childhood event as dark precursor, such that what is originary in the phantasy is not “one series in relation to the other, but the difference between series insofar as this relates one series of differences to another series of difference, in abstraction from their empirical succession in time” (loc. cit). The phantasm, then, relates to external reality or Outside at and through the differentiator.

This brings about a renewed take on the death instinct, one that supplements it with the eternal return of ‘difference in itself’ as in the continual return of the enigmatic differentiator that always differs from itself. Inasmuch as this breaks the self into multiple subjectivities, it follows we are given a “fractured I,” which is not only the basis of the superego but “the correlate of the passive and wounded narcissistic ego, thereby forming a complex whole that Paul Ricoeur aptly named an ‘aborted cogito’” (Deleuze 2004a: 135). It is revealed as the groundless law of this system, and “does not cause the same and the similar to return, but is itself derived from a world of pure difference” (153). Each series returns, not only in the others which imply it, but “for itself, since it is not implied by the others without being in turn fully restored as that which implies them” (153). Quite simply, if “difference is the in-itself, then repetition in the eternal return is the for-itself of difference” (loc. cit). In this sense, the eternal return is “the hidden ‘other face’ of the death instinct” (Ansell-Pearson 1999: 18).

From this, it can be deduced that the transcendental field contains many different and impossible worlds, only one of which is really actualised (Deleuze 2004a: 59). An impossibility is logically possible, but incompatible with the things and events of the actual world, such that it belongs only to the world of the virtual. Virtual impossibilities coexist without succeeding each other in chronological time, and speak to repetition as a temporal structure of explication. If the unconscious houses a resonance between different selves or between different series, each living a different time series in abstraction from its empirical succession in time, it follows that they coexist “outside any condition under which one would enjoy the identity of a model and the other the resemblance of a copy” (152). However small the internal difference between the two series, “the one story does not reproduce the other...rather, resemblance and identity are only functional effects of that difference which alone is originary within the system,” connected by the dark precursor or some kind of common trauma (i.e., Oedipus) (loc. cit). From this it follows that virtual relations are not dialectical or oppositional, as the “negative appears neither in the process of differentiation nor in the process of differentiation” (Deleuze 2004a: 258); “‘the unconscious knows no negative’, must be taken literally” (133). The term for describing these multiplicities is a folding “*vice-diction*,” as opposed to “contradiction” (238).

This can be summed up in the following way: the determination of the virtual content of an Idea of a given multiplicity is formed through differentiation, whereas the actualisation of that virtual multiplicity into species and distinguishable bodies within the spatio-temporal

context, is differentiation.¹² The relation is creative, in that the actual terms never resemble the singularities they incarnate, as with the division of the egg (Deleuze 2004a: 266).¹³ Multiplicities are constituted by the progressive determination of differential elements, differential relations, and singularities. It is “always in relation to a differentiated problem or to the differentiated conditions of a problem that a differentiation of species and parts is carried out, as though it corresponded to the cases of solution of the problem” (Deleuze 2004a: 258). However, though difference in itself expresses itself by involving and explicating itself, via differentiation and differentiation, repetition is the mode of this involvement and explication. Returning is being, but not that of the same, rather that of becoming, as all previous identities have been abolished and dissolved. Returning is “the becoming-identical of becoming itself. Returning is thus the only identity, but identity as a secondary power; the identity of difference, the identical which belongs to the different, or turns around the different” (Deleuze 2004a: 50-1). Thus, following *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, the *dark precursor* or *will to power* represents an exogenetic (as in a genetic force from the Outside) fold of the endoconsistent (as in the virtual or immanent field itself) through which differences are related to one another, resembling a “sheet of paper divided into infinite folds or separated into bending movements, each one determined by the consistent or conspiring surroundings” (Deleuze 2006b: 6).¹⁴

In this case, all modalities and differences, or all individuals and substances, are taken as *expressions* of a single substance, in that “Being is said in a single and same sense, *of* all its individuating differences or intrinsic modalities” (Deleuze 2004a: 45), but “this sense is that of eternal return as the return or repetition of that of which it is said” (51).¹⁵ That is, Being is the same for all these modalities, but these modalities are not the same. Substance and modes are *in* immanence, as opposed to modes being immanent *to* substance, so that it is not akin to a predicate that belongs to a subject. There is still a hierarchy and distribution in univocal being in relation to the individuating factors and their sense. But distribution and hierarchy “have two completely different, irreconcilable acceptations,” and there are also different meanings for “the expressions *logos* and *homos*, insofar as these refer to problems of distribution” (Deleuze 2004a: 45). There are two types of distribution: one that implies a dividing up of that which is distributed and one that is nomadic. With the latter, there is no longer a division of that which is distributed, “but rather a division among those who distribute *themselves* in an open space” (46). It is here that persons are arranged in such a manner as to cover the largest possible space. Critically, it is “not a matter of being which

is distributed according to the requirements of representation, but of all things being divided up within being in the univocity of simple presence (the One–All)” (loc. cit). In this way, univocal Being is at one and the same time *nomadic distribution*.

The critical concept here, is that of expression. Indeed, “immanence...is inseparable from the concept of expression (from the double immanence of expression in what expresses itself, and of what is expressed in its expression)” (Deleuze 1992: 180), in which virtual intensities cancel themselves out in actual extensities, or in which difference in-itself negates itself in identity.¹⁶ Thus, to be actualised “is also to be *expressed*,” (Deleuze 2004b: 127), and every level of expression is simultaneously a process of stratification and organisation, in that it consists, as we have seen, of “giving form to matters, of imprisoning intensities or locking singularities into systems of resonance and redundancy, or producing upon the body of the earth [the field of virtual intensities] molecules large and small and organising them into molar aggregates” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 45). This process is both “beneficial in many respects but unfortunate in many others,” (45) as on the one hand it provides life with a minimum of structure and stability, but on the other hand it obscures the true genesis of forms and formation (organisation) and thus real realm of difference that operates beyond identity. This follows Nietzsche and Spinoza in recognising that immanence generates transcendence and its vicissitudes, which in turn act as a blockage or a barrier to active modes or virtual intensities themselves.

Now, this radically challenges a dogmatic image of thought that maintains the existence of a direct correspondence between thought and truth, that “thought is the natural exercise of a faculty, of the presupposition that there is a natural capacity for thought endowed with a talent for truth or an affinity with the true, under the double aspect of a *good will on the part of the thinker* and an *upright nature of the part of thought*” (Deleuze 2004a: 166). Such is the case, for instance, with Descartes’ *cogito*, in which ‘everyone knows’ what thinking is, wherein it is said that the *I* is predisposed towards truth. Thus the *cogito* is taken as the unquestionable point of departure for thought. The plane (as in a prephilosophical notion of what thought itself is, or upon which thought itself arises), then, is referred to the *cogito* as a field of consciousness. Similarly, Kant discovers in his transcendental philosophy conditions which still remain external to the conditioned in the form of practical reason. A reason, moreover, “for those cases in which one has no need to bother about reason: namely, when the needs of the heart, when morality, when ‘duty’ speaks” (Nietzsche, quoted in Deleuze 2006d: 86-7). As such, Kant did not “abolish the distinction between the two worlds

(sensible and super-sensible),” as much as he secured “*the unity of the personal* in the two worlds” (87). This amounts to overlooking the genesis of reason itself, a genesis of understanding and its categories: “What is the will which hides and expresses itself in reason?” (85). Kant thus finds the modern way of saving transcendence.

In being tied to transcendence, such a plane or dogma overlooks the *conditions* that give rise to thought and, by the same measure, our immersion in the world. Thought is *immanent* to the real that provokes it rather than related to some transcendent stable point of departure.¹⁷ Common sense, therefore, will “think nothing at all but remain a prisoner to opinion, frozen in an abstract possibility” (Deleuze 2004a: 181). Following a similar objection made by Merleau-Ponty (1968: 3) that the ‘scientific attitude’ maintains a prephilosophical perceptual faith, Deleuze argues that ‘recognition’, as the principle presupposition of the image of thought, “relies upon a subjective principle of collaboration of the faculties...a common sense as a *Concordia facultatum*” (Deleuze 2004a: 169). More than this, it is also a question of motives and force. Indeed, the most general presuppositions of philosophy are essentially moral, “since Morality alone is capable of persuading us that thought has a good nature and the thinker a good will, and that only the good can ground the supposed affinity between thought and the True” (167).¹⁸

In other words, what is fundamentally problematic for Deleuze here is that thoughts do not “originate in a good nature and a good will,” but rather “come from a violence suffered by thought...which would not be closed on recognition, but which would open it to encounters and would always be defined as a function of an Outside” (Deleuze 2006a: 18). In this vein, the notion of the ‘private thinker’ is unsatisfactory, for it “exaggerates interiority, when it is a question of *outside thought*,” which places thought in an immediate relation “with forces of the outside” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 215). Crucially, the Outside, as with the outside as force in Deleuze’s construal of Foucault, is not exterior, nor does it represent a transcendent conception of the Other. Rather it is an immanent conception of the Outside and Other, in which case it is not a question of rupture but rather one of folds and movement, which constitutes the image of thought (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 37). The event, in this sense “does not relate the lived to a transcendental subject...on the contrary, [it] is related to the immanent survey of a field without subject; the Other Person does not restore transcendence to an other self but returns every other self to the immanence of the field surveyed” (48). Thus, it can be said, without falling into transcendence, that the “plane of consistency (grid) is the outside of all multiplicities” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 10).

Because of this, Deleuze's image of thought contains a double, yet related, requirement to avoid dogma or *doxa*. First, in terms of the exo(onto)genetic, it follows that we must take as our point of departure, "a radical critique of the dogmatic Image and the 'postulates' it implies" (Deleuze 2004a: 195).¹⁹ The second requirement, as already indicated, links to the notion of the fold of the Outside, or the way in which thought is not only external to what it thinks (exogenetic), as per above, but also *immanent* to what it thinks, or rather to the real that provokes it (endoconsistent).²⁰

Thus, it is not the gap in the immanence that "Deleuze cannot accept" that is responsible for the "spectre of transcendence." Rather, it is the fold. By the same token, the nomadic and the 'self-identical entities' present neither a dualism proper nor a monotony of extreme inclusivity. In many respects, this problem is a straw man, as what Žižek sees is not in fact Deleuze's argument. It is also in this sense that Žižek personifies the "modern moment" in which "we are no longer satisfied with thinking immanence as immanent to a transcendent; *we want to think transcendence within the immanent, and it is from immanence that a breach is expected,*" making us think "that immanence is a prison (solipsism) from which the Transcendent will save us" (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 47). Indeed, as opposed to presenting or explaining the spectre of transcendence as that which is generated by immanence, Žižek retains its form, and as such commits himself to "the *illusion of transcendence*" (49). Overall, Deleuze does not misunderstand Hegel in ignoring the gap of/in immanence. It is precisely the nature of this gap that he disputes and seeks to subvert via the fold.

Ethico-Politics

We've now seen how Deleuze 'proper' does not face a deadlock by virtue of the ontogenetic concept of the fold. That being the case, what can be said of the Guattari encounter? It surely cannot now be viewed as an escape route, for there is nothing from which to escape. Rather, it is clear that it represents a logical consequence and continuation of transcendental empiricism. In other words, what is critical for us here, is the way in which this position helps provoke an immanent concept of ethico-politics while providing the conceptual schema for the very *active destruction* (as in destruction of reactive forces themselves, related to a power of affirming) on which such an ethico-politics relies. To be clear, we are speaking here of Deleuze's works with Guattari, which, though politically (and micropolitically) engaged, are an ethical form of analysis through and through. What we

find when we come to Deleuze's explicitly political works is a change in emphasis, as Beistegui (2010: 54) notes, from the ontogenetic to the ethical. Although *Difference and Repetition* contains the double axiom (exo/endo), its general focus is primarily on the genesis of thought, the conditions for the actualisation of virtual intensities in extensity, or the conditions of existence of phenomena and modes. In this sense, it is a work of pure philosophy. The direction of the political works, by contrast, is concerned with reversing this operation. Rather than accounting for the genetic conditions of thought as such, it is concerned with *becoming*, or rather with bringing virtual intensities back into life, such that it is possible to affirm difference beyond its own tendency to negate itself in identity.²¹ This move solidifies and politicises an immanent ethics of life affirmation found in Nietzsche and Spinoza, which Deleuze elaborates in his monographs on them. Primarily it concerns the questions: what are the conditions for the creation of new modes of existence? And how do we become other than we are, create actively, and affirm life itself in its difference?

First, in terms of its provocation, Deleuze's transcendental empiricism makes the concept of morality, as a transcendent ground for a transhistorical system of good and evil and its corollary imperatives, unthinkable. If thought is immanent to the real that provokes it, then ethics, as with critique, must be of immanence itself. To be sure, there is no objective vantage point and no transcendent Outside to which we can refer. To sustain or construct one is to obscure the genetic force that gives it form or sense, and thus to commit to the dogmatic image of thought. By the same token there is no transcendental subject that could serve as a basis for universal ethics, only processes of subjectivation in a field of immanence:

...it was only the subject that incarnated it [the life of the individual] in the midst of things that made it good or bad. The life of such individuality fades away in favour of the singular life immanent to a man who no longer has a name, though he can be mistaken for no other. A singular essence, a life... (Deleuze 2001: 29).

Subsequently, ethics must be grounded in the immanent *modes* of existence themselves, with reference to these processes of subjectivation and stratification, i.e., what mode of existence does a particular thought, action or feeling imply? From where does it derive and what does it express? How is a mode determined?

In answering these questions Deleuze draws on Nietzsche's genealogy, but also Spinoza's *Ethics*, sewing the two together in a way that makes for a partly indiscernible union, in conjunction with the ontogenetic basis of transcendental empiricism. Both, for instance, contend that modes of existence, or expressions of the virtual, should be evaluated according

to the intensive criteria of power (in its qualitative and typological senses) – that is, its dark precursor or its determining will to power. Both also contend that such power concerns the body as that onto which it fastens, consequently serving as their model for the analysis of modes. Spinoza, for his part, defines the body in terms of its capacity to affect and be affected by other bodies, wherein the “power of suffering and the power of acting are two powers which vary correlatively, while the capacity of being affected remains fixed; the power of acting is dead or live...according to the obstacles or opportunities that it finds in the side of passive affections” (Deleuze 1992: 224). Thus, on the question of how one is supposed to evaluate and differentiate modes of existence, the Spinozist answer is by way of capability of affections, i.e., what a body can and cannot do, its degrees of power and affectivity (218). Very similarly, Nietzsche poses it in terms of active and reactive wills to power, with one affirming life in its difference and the other negating it.

Underpinning all this is a certain veneration of life itself, such that any requirement or demand for a transcendent justification for it is immediately deemed to negate its intrinsic value. In such an instance, life “is judged according to values that are said to be superior to life: these pious values are opposed to life, condemn it, lead it to nothingness, they promise salvation only to the most reactive, the weakest, the sickest forms of life” (Deleuze 2001: 78). This represents a naïve “semblance of affirmation” (74) or the affirmation of the ass which “does not know how to say no because he says yes to everything that is no,” even to nihilism (Deleuze 2006d: 173). It is an affirmation of the ‘real as it is’ as determined by what higher values have already made of reality (insofar as *reactive nihilism* is premised on *negative nihilism* [see Deleuze 2006d: 140]). In contrast, affirmation proper “enjoys its own difference in life instead of suffering the pains of the opposition to this life that it has itself inspired. *To affirm is not to take responsibility for, to take on the burden of what is, but to realise, to set free what lives*” (Deleuze 2004d: 174).

We are not speaking, then, of freedom for freedom’s sake, but of a type of existence concerning a way of, and attitude to, life: asceticism. It is precisely for this reason that differentiating between different modes and accounting for the genetic underpinning is so crucial. Indeed, Nietzsche “recalls something that has been essentially forgotten...the unity of life and thought” (Deleuze 2006d: 66). Life activates thought, and thought in turn affirms life. Thus the ethical question concerns how to attain active affections, where affirmation of life relates directly to the ability of the power of action of a mode of existence, or an active will to power: “Hence the properly ethical question is linked to the methodological question

of how we can become active. How can we come to produce adequate ideas?” (Deleuze 1992: 221).

We can see that through this engagement with Nietzsche and Spinoza comes a fundamental addition to transcendental empiricism. Whereas transcendental empiricism did in fact account for the ontogenesis of multiplicities and subsequently the way they are related to given a mode of existence (or the way the virtual is expressed in a processes of stratification and organisation), it did not, for all that, make any kind of overt distinction between different modes, which is necessary for the very immanent ethics it provokes as a logical consequence of its image of thought. This distinction is what Spinoza and Nietzsche add, and it emanates from an affective dimension in the form of will to power or conatus.

With the events of May 1968, the necessity of turning to an immanent ethics in conjunction with affectivity became politically pertinent to Deleuze and Guattari (see Deleuze 2002: 210). Indeed, as Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 21) say, the particular way a concept is used to draw the plane of immanence depends entirely on the event to which it corresponds. Where the plane was previously an ontological and then ethical one, May 1968 revealed its practical and political significance insofar as it signified “reality breaking through” (Deleuze 1995: 145) or “an opening onto the possible” (Deleuze 2007: 233). Reality broke through in the form of a subjective redeployment or affective creation of a new existence – the very creation to which Spinoza and Nietzsche spoke. Insofar as the French communists resisted the movement as much as the Gaullist right, Deleuze (2007: 234) saw in May ’68 a reflection of a “current crisis” – specifically, the “radical incapacity to create a subjective redeployment on the collective level” (Deleuze 2007: 234). How did it fail to break through entirely? How was it betrayed and co-opted by the institution? How was every collective enunciation by a new existence, by a new collective subjectivity, “crushed in advance by the reaction against ’68, on the left almost as much as on the right?” (235). How were active affections turned in on themselves? What became evident was that the Outside real provoking thought and affectivity, and determining the expression of virtual intensities through processes of stratification and organisation, is entirely political.

The entire impetus of Deleuze’s political works with Guattari regards this ethic of affirmation, in accordance with this fundamental realisation. This ultimately realised in the notion of ‘becoming a Body without Organs (BwO)’ – a body, in other words, without *organisation* and *stratification*, which itself is political repression in the form of imprisoning

intensities, or demarcating the virtual plane of immanence with lines of force. In this sense, the BwO is itself the field of virtual intensities prior to actualisation. With reference to *Difference and Repetition*, it is the full egg before the extension of organism and organisation of the organs, “before the formation of strata; as the intense egg defined by axes and vectors, gradients and thresholds, by dynamic tendencies involving energy transformation and kinematic movements involving group displacement, by migrations: all independent of *accessory forms* because the organs appear and function here only as pure intensities” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 170). It is the plane of immanence itself, or “the Earth – the Deterritorialized, the Glacial, the giant Molecule,” and is permeated by “uniformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions, by free intensities or nomadic singularities, by mad or transitory particles” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 45). Thus the strata or organisation via expression, “are phenomena of thickening on the Body of the earth, simultaneously molecular and molar; accumulations, coagulations, sedimentations, *foldings*” (553).²² In the political context, the strata or organisation are acts of capture, which operate by coding and territorialising (as in demarcating segments of organisation) upon the earth. It is precisely because of such folding that to become active is to overcome these vicissitudes of transcendence by working through the intensive, through movements of folding, re-folding, and in-folding, all of which personifies *active destruction*:

Active destruction means: the point, the moment of transmutation in the will to nothingness. Destruction becomes *active* at the moment when, with the alliance between reactive forces and the will to nothingness broken, the will to nothingness is converted and crosses over to the side of *affirmation* which destroys reactive forces themselves. Destruction becomes active to the extent that the negative is transmuted and converted into an affirming power. (Deleuze 2006d: 164).

Active destruction, as the prerequisite to and process of becoming active, is realised in micropolitical analysis itself.

Multiplicities and Desire

This ethico-political project is initially fleshed out in Deleuze and Guattari’s first collaborative work, *Anti-Oedipus*. At first glance, it presents an alternative to Freudian psychoanalysis in the guise of schizoanalysis – whereas psychoanalysis privileges the neurotic pole of delirium in its analysis, schizoanalysis privileges the schizophrenic pole, which presents “a state of desire at its most critical and acute” (Guattari in Deleuze 2002:

266). The true purpose of schizoanalysis here is to realise *active destruction*, specifically through three tasks, all of which are undertaken simultaneously. Indeed the schizophrenic is a person of *disorganisation*, hence its usefulness as an analytical pole. The first task refers to the ‘destructive’ element, whose goal is to battle the spectre of transcendence in the form of Oedipus. Oedipus, in conjunction with capitalism, is the form of organisation in which desire is transformed into its reactive guise. This task is ontogenetic and is the primary concern of *Anti-Oedipus*. Nevertheless, it is “in no way separable from its positive tasks,” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 354), which direct it and give it purpose, expressing the ‘active’ dimension.

The first positive task “consists of discovering in a subject the nature, the formation, or the functioning of *his* desiring-machines, independently of any interpretations” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 354). That is, to return to an experience of desire (as a mode of existence) that is fully real and immanent, freeing the unconscious from any transcendental law or structural lack. The second positive task is to differentiate between the unconscious libidinal investments and preconscious interests. Through employing the schizo-pole as the referential axis, the sole focus, following Wilhelm Reich, is on the way in which we come to desire fascism or the repression of our desire (although caution must be heeded insofar as both ‘fascism’ and ‘repression’, as we shall see, are accorded unique meanings and experimental workings) – that is, the way in which we become reactive. It speaks to a political analysis not of preconscious interest but of unconscious libidinal investment in association with the capitalist world order as the abstract machine. Whereas Marxism typically poses the problem of power in terms of the interests of the ruling class, Deleuze and Guattari turn to the interests of desire. Or, rather, where Spinoza speaks of modes and conatus, and Nietzsche of will to power, Deleuze and Guattari speak of desiring-machines. Given that conatus is determined by an affection or feeling we actually experience, it is best understood in such terms (see Deleuze 1992: 231).

In short, all three tasks make for an ontogenetic and ethical analysis within a political context, in that the genesis of desire, in which the socius is given the role of stratification and organisation (or the agent of force as that which provokes the actualisation of a virtual multiplicity into distinct forms and substances, thereby blocking and obscuring the virtual), serves as a prerequisite to returning desire to its earth, or to immanence, wherein it is freed from the requirement to represent – freed, that is, to produce. The ontogenetic element comes once more by way of a close affinity to Kant. For Kant, experience is ordered according to

a priori of space and time, as well as the three mental operations of syntheses: apprehension, reproduction and recognition. In a manner that purposively replicates transcendental empiricism, Deleuze and Guattari turn this on its head, locating the conditions of experience in an unconscious virtual multiplicity of relations, or a realm of virtual differentiation. As opposed to three syntheses of time, however, this virtual multiplicity, as that which is the province of the unconscious, is made up of three *syntheses* of desiring-production that engineer partial objects, flows, and bodies, and that function as units of production.²³ Nevertheless, desiring-production is still what in transcendental empiricism is deemed a microscopic multiplicity, which, given the affective and political dimension, is also to say that desiring-production operates at a truly ‘micropolitical’ level.

To be clear, the differences in kind between micropolitical and macropolitical analysis speak to the distinction between the two kinds of multiplicities drawn from Riemann and Bergson and employed by Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition*, but construed here in terms of desiring-production and social production, or desiring-machines and social-machines. Thus micropolitics does not necessarily mean the small, tiny, or individual, but rather *constitutive*. As we saw with Foucault – whose microphysics of power shares a great affinity with Deleuze’s micropolitics – this refers to the substrate of force relations operating at the level where the individual and the collective are encoded and reterritorialised (or, in Foucault’s terms, where standards of normality and deviance are constituted). It speaks to a multiplicity of relations which are intensive, ‘molecular’ or ‘microscopic’ – as opposed to extensive, ‘molar’ or ‘macroscopic’, or even the level of actualisation, expression and stratification – depicting the concealed conditions of the actuality given to experience, conditions operating below the level of identity or representation of desire. The difference between the micro and the macro is not one of size but rather scale (see Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 373).

The distinction does not amount to a dualism, such as the dualism between the One and the Many, “*but on the contrary, of distinguishing two types of multiplicities*” (Deleuze 1991: 39). Indeed, the molecular and molar share the same machinic nature, differing only in regime. Further, the difference in regime does not exclude the immanence of each to the other, for there are “only multiplicities of multiplicities forming a single *assemblage*, operating in the same *assemblage*: packs in masses and masses in packs. Trees have rhizome lines, and the rhizome points of arborescence” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 38). In this sense, each assemblage (for instance, that of desire) has elements or multiplicities of several kinds, with different elements interpenetrating one another. Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari

(39) claim it is the *assemblage* of both the micro and the macro that is the province of the unconscious, “the way in which the former condition the latter, and the latter prepare the way for the former or elude them or return to them.” For there are “no desiring-machines that exist outside the social machines that they form on a large scale; and no social machines without desiring-machines that inhabit them on a small scale” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 373). The elements can be of a different type, consequently engendering contradictions and tensions, while at the same time producing consistencies and parts that cohere – this concerns once more the very folding of the exogenetic on the endoconsistent, as the two-fold requirement of Deleuze’s image of thought.²⁴ Further, assemblages or configurations of machines, just like concepts, are the working parts of the plane of the abstract machine (see Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 36). In Foucault it was bio-power, whereas here, as we shall see, it is that of capitalism and the axiomatic.

In *Dialogues*, Deleuze (2006b: 99) continues to hold that an assemblage is a multiplicity of a multiplicity, whilst providing a more nuanced understanding of the interpenetration of the micro and macro through his description of lines. An assemblage includes “lines of rigid and binary segmentarity, no less than molecular lines, or lines of border, of flight or slope.”²⁵ There are molar lines that segment us into clearly defined, rigid oppositions, but also more subtle molecular lines of connections and fluid distributions, of “*quantum flow*,” as Deleuze and Guattari (2004b: 239) put it in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Such lines operate by “*mutual immanence*,” for not one of them is transcendent, “each is at work within others” (226). Put differently, each stratified expression and articulation of the virtual intensive, has a corresponding type of segmentarity (as in segments of stratification or form), one supple, more molecular, and merely ordered; the other, more rigid, molar and organised. The use of ‘lines’ can be helpful in understanding the repression and ‘territorialisation’ of desire. For if ‘territorialisation’, as an essential element of macro social production, consists of composing a territory on the virtual plane of immanence, on the BwO, then the lines of force signify its demarcated borders – the divisions of force which mark the actualisation of the virtual – as with the lines on a map or on a hand. This, in turn, also makes sense of ‘lines of flight’, as a process of deterritorialisation, i.e., to open up and return to the intensive. One could even take the analogy further and stress that folds can be understood in terms of the folding of a map or scrunching of a hand, in which the lines, no matter how far apart, come together to connect disjunctively.

The crucial point is that however described or conceptualised, desiring-production (the micro) produces reality itself, but alongside social production (the macro) and our experience of it. In this sense, desire does not lack anything, but is rather always already ‘mechanically’ assembled, it is a machine always “coupled with another [machine]” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 5). There are no internal drives in desire, only assemblages.²⁶ This is clearly an immanent and productive notion of desire that stands in stark contrast to the typical Hegelian/Lacanian terminology of lack, or indeed (pace Butler’s interpretation) any psychoanalytic idealism of something that grounds representation or expression, something transcendent.²⁷ It is constantly producing as opposed to representing. Desire produces insofar as “its product is real...it can be productive only in the real world and can produce only reality” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 28). Indeed, the great discovery of psychoanalysis “was that of the production of desire, of the productions of the unconscious. But once Oedipus entered the picture, this discovery was soon buried beneath a new brand of idealism” (25).

The Three Syntheses of Desiring-Production (*Micropolitical*)

Let us now delve into the specifics of this relation, as first construed in *Anti-Oedipus*. Desiring-production makes up the impersonal and pre-individual element of the transcendental field, or the molecular lines of connection, which is accounted for through three non-chronological syntheses of drives and partial objects as opposed to the syntheses of time. The first synthesis is productive and concerns desiring-production as the production of production (as production without telos and without distinction between producer and product). It is inherently connective in nature: ‘and...’, ‘and then...’, and so on, connecting the continuous flow of libidinal drives with partial objects of satisfaction, all of which are by nature fragmentary and fragmented. Such is the case with the Mother’s breast and the infant’s mouth. The breast and the mouth are only partial objects, parts of wholes that have not yet been constituted.²⁸ The drives too are partial insofar as they are invested with erotic value. In addition to the connective synthesis, there is the inclusive disjunctive synthesis of anti-production, in which the productive energy of the connective synthesis is disrupted and counteracted, but this anti-production is also formed by and within the connective synthesis itself. There are two modes of inclusive anti-production, and third mode of exclusive anti-

production which is tantamount to the kind of repression enacted by social machines. As the third regards social production, we will deal with only the first two here.

In the first case, the mouth is connected to the breast and some valuable energy is produced (nutritionally and erotically), achieving satiation. At some point sucking stops and the connection is broken (indeed the nipple does not guarantee its presence when demanded), and production produces anti-production while simultaneously recording the image of the nipple as an object of satisfaction on the recording surface of the Body-without-Organs (BwO) (see Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 1, 50-1 and 303). In this case, the nipple takes on a bivocal character, becoming both an object of love and hate. In the second case, the connection can also be broken by distraction, whereupon the nipple-mouth is replaced with another connection. Thus, “a connection with another machine is always established, along a transverse path, so that one machine interrupts the current of the other or ‘sees’ its own current interrupted” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 6). The connection is never merely a choice between one thing and another, ‘this or that’, but a momentary choice among a multitude of possibilities. In this way, it is inclusive, i.e. ‘either...or...or,’ as opposed to ‘either/or’.²⁹

Insofar as this is recorded on the BwO for future reference, the BwO is the non-productive component, but nevertheless “it is produced, at a certain place and a certain time in the connective synthesis, as the identity of producing and the product” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 9). In accordance with its broader definition as the plane of immanence, the BwO in this context marks the zero point of virtual intensities. It differs drastically from Freud’s death instinct, which implies a kind of thermodynamic reference or a process of repetitive compulsion to seek satisfaction from the same object, matching a particular memory trace of previous satisfaction (i.e., nipple-mouth). In contrast, the BwO, alike with the *dark precursor*, represents an interruption in this process, wherein the subject is open to a virtual past that contains a limitless variety of modes of satisfaction. This is a repetition of difference as opposed to identity, afforded by intelligence and institutions functioning with but outside instinct; it interrupts flows and “sets up a counterflow of amorphous undifferentiated fluid” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 10).

For this reason an apparent “conflict arises between desiring-machines and the body without organs. Every coupling of machines, every production of a machine, every second of a machine running, becomes unbearable to the body without organs” (Deleuze and Guattari

2004a: 9). The disjunctive synthesis works in tandem with the connective synthesis (in a process of attraction, differentiation, and repulsion of drive-partial object relations), which together, depending on their particular configuration alongside social production, give rise to a particular figure of the ego. Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari argue that “desiring-machines work only when they break down, and by continually breaking down” (9) – anti-production coupled with production. If we were to go to extremes of this relation, say for instance the extreme of connection without disjunction, we would be presented with total fixation with a predetermined object, or what Freud identifies as neurosis (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 133). The other extreme, that of the disjunction without connection, presents us with psychosis, a complete withdrawal from reality. Thus, “the cause of the disorder, neurosis or psychosis, is always in desiring-production” (140), but, as we will see, “in its relation to social production, in their different or conflicting regimes, and modes of investment that desiring-production performs in the system of social production” (loc. cit).

This all leads, finally, onto the third, conjunctive synthesis of consumption-consummation. The particular configuration of this synthesis is dependent on the particular interplay of production and anti-production of the first two, relative, of course, to social production, to which we shall come momentarily. Critically, as Deleuze and Guattari (2004a: 20) explain, “the opposition of the forces of attraction and repulsion produces an open series of intensive elements, all of them positive, that are never an expression of the final equilibrium of a system, but consist, rather, of an unlimited number of stationary, metastable states through which a subject passes.” Such pure intensities are the effect of the forces of repulsion and attraction, and are all positive in relation to the zero intensity that designates the full body without organs. They “undergo relative rises or falls depending on the complex relationship between them and the variations in the relative strength of attraction and repulsion as determining factors” (loc. cit). Thus, in the case of Judge Schreber, attraction and repulsion produce intense nervous states that fill up the BwO to varying degrees, states through which Schreber-the-subject passes, becoming a woman and many other things, through an endless circle of the eternal return.

The ‘subject’ emerges as an after-effect of this interplay, in which the particular networks of relations and states of intense experience they generate are recognised and consummated *ex post facto* by a subject of that experience: “a conjunctive synthesis of consummation in the form of a wonderstruck “‘So *that’s* what it was!’ and ‘So it’s *me!*’” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 21). The subject is produced as a residuum alongside the machine, or as an appendix,

and passes through all the degrees of the circle formed by the points of disjunction on the BwO, which converge on the desiring-machines – the *eggo rather than the ego* (insofar as the BwO is the full egg before extension). The subject “is not at the centre, which is occupied by the machine, but on the periphery, with no fixed identity, forever decentered, *defined* by the states through which it passes” (22). Such states can be identified with particular personages, or, rather, one can identify such personages with zones of intensity on the BwO. Thus the Nietzschean subject who passes through a series of states and who identifies these states with the names of history (i.e. ‘the crucified one’, ‘Caesar’, ‘Dionysus’). It is clear that these states are not chosen, but rather the subject is driven to them. Once more following transcendental empiricism, the formation of the ego or the subject is retroactive, and thus becomes a particular actualisation via differentiation of a virtual unconscious process of differentiation.

Social Machines (*Macropolitical*)

As said, insofar schizoanalysis is concerned with assemblages or multiplicities of multiplicities making up assemblages, it cannot be cut off from the macropolitical, which is here represented as the social machine. As with desiring-machines, social machines are constituted by connective, disjunctive and conjunctive syntheses, organising productive flows at a molar level. And just as desiring-machines “involve an unengendered non-productive attitude, an element of antiproduction coupled with the process,” so too do forms of social production, coupled with “a full body that functions as a *socius*” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 11). Social-production has its own body without organs, its own differentiator, its own *dark precursor* – indeed, capital is “the body without organs of the capitalist” (loc. cit). Fundamentally, the social machine stands as an apparatus of repression, for it stands opposed to the creative potential of desire’s schizophrenic processes of inclusive syntheses. The “prime function incumbent upon the socius has always been to codify the flows of desire, to inscribe them, to record them, to see to it that no flow exists that is not properly damned up, channelled, regulated” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 35).

The BwO registers multifarious images of objects of satisfaction as reminders of potential future satisfaction, however in the third mode of anti-production, some are captured, coded and as such repressed and territorialised (as in a subjectification closed in on itself), but in a way distinct from Freudian primary repression. Instead of an inclusive disjunction, desire is

subjected to an exclusive one, as in ‘this and not that’, good and not bad. Such is the case with the Oedipus complex. Repression finds its *raison d’être* in the fact that desire, in constantly seeking new connections, is revolutionary. That is to say, schizophrenia is “the *absolute limit* of every society, inasmuch as it sets in motion decoded and deterritorialized flows that it restores to desiring-production, ‘at the bounds’ of all social production” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 288).

Within this rubric there are three forms of molar repression: savage-territorial; barbarian-despotic; and civilised-capitalist. Each of these stages relates its flows to certain codes – this “is the business of the socius” (153), where the socius “may be the body of the Earth, the body of the Despot, the body of Money” (35), which correspond to the segmented lines that lie in the heart of an assemblage, interpenetrating with the molecular lines of connection, or even cutting off lines of flight. Whereas the first social machine, the pre-capitalist territorial machine, is one “of primitive inscription” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 155), and the second despotic social machine merely overcodes, establishing the transcendent position of the despot, the capitalist machine is characterised by complete deterritorialisation at the molar level (whereas at the molecular it enacts vicious reterritorialization). The “decoding of flows and the deterritorialization of the socius...constitutes the most characteristic and the most important tendency of capitalism” (36). It achieves this primarily because “capitalism can proceed only by continually developing the subjective essence of abstract wealth or production for the sake of production, that is, ‘production as an end in itself, the absolute development of the social productivity of labor’” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 281). Under the first aspect of capitalism’s *double movement* (the fact that, on the one hand, it can proceed only by continually developing the subjective essence of abstract wealth for the sake of production, and, on the other hand, it can do so only in the framework of its own limited purpose as a determinate mode of production), it continually surpasses its own limits, “always deterritorializing further, ‘displaying a cosmopolitan, universal energy which overthrows every restriction and bond’” (281).³⁰ Capitalism thus operates via the axiomatic of capital, wherein men are ruled by real abstractions. In this sense, capitalism arises “as a worldwide enterprise of subjectification by constituting an axiomatic of decoded flows” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 505). For this reason, capitalism is the *relative limit* of every society, or “*the negative* of all social formation” – it is the spectre that constantly haunts, the spectre of the unnameable, generalised decoding of flows.

As Patton (2000: 44) puts it, assemblages' "mode of functioning cannot be understood independently of the virtual or abstract machine which they embody." In the case of panopticism, for instance, we have an "abstract formula" that aims "to impose a particular conduct on a particular human multiplicity" (Deleuze 2006c: 29). It is a "diagram" or an "abstract machine...coextensive with the whole social field," regulating the practice of discursive formations, and notions of truth, be that through manifold relations, open strategies, or rational techniques (30). Insofar as there is a mutually supportive function between "a form of expression and a form of content, a discursive and a non-discursive form, the form of the visible and the form of the articulable," the abstract machine is an "immanent cause" (33), i.e., the condition in the conditioned. It is the condition of the effects realized in the assemblage and the abstraction that can only exist in those effects. Read this way, the discursive statements underpinning the disciplinary model represent "a multiplicity that passes through all levels and 'cuts across a domain of structures and possible unities, and which reveals them, with concrete contents, in time and space'" (14). It is an "anonymous function which leaves a trace of subject only in the third person, as a derived function" (loc. cit). In this instance, capitalism is the abstract machine, which is how it is able to affect a union between the micro and the macro so effectively.

We can now come back to an earlier point with a bit more clarity. In terms of exogenesis, we can see how, like the Ideas, Problems or Structures that characterise Deleuze's transcendental field of thought in *Difference and Repetition*, the abstract machine accounts for the assemblage (of desire) and the production of reality. It is the assemblages' genetic underpinning, but it is also exterior or *exo* by virtue of the entanglement of lines (of immanence) of the socius or by virtue of the fact that it exists, though not independently, outside of the assemblage which is folded by the BwO as differentiator. Indeed, given these lines of immanent causality, or the fact that it is not independent of the assemblage, we can now see the connection with endoconsistency. The exterior or Outside force here is not one of transcendence but once again a fold of immanence.

Internalising the Limit

There is more to this relation to capitalism, however, insofar as it is always coming up against its own *interior limit*. The schizo that it produces is its greatest threat. He is forever "wandering about, migrating here, there, and everywhere as best he can, he plunges further

and further into the realm of deterritorialization (in which subjectification is opened up to engaged in lines of flight), reaching the furthest limits of the decomposition of the socius on the surface of his own body without organs” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 38). In this sense, there is a “revolutionary potential of decoded flows” (267). Accordingly, the threat must be opposed through the creation of new interior limits. Capitalism attempts to restore all sorts of residual and artificial, imaginary or symbolic territorialities in a bid to recode and rechannel persons who have been defined in terms of abstract quantities. There is thus a “twofold movement of decoding or deterritorializing flows on the one hand, and their violent and artificial reterritorialization on the other” (37). To be clear, reterritorialisation consists of an attempt to recompose a territory engaged in a process of deterritorialisation, or to bring segments of strata, segmented lines back onto the virtual intensive plane or BwO. The nostalgia and necessity of the Urstaat (the city of Ur, the point of departure of Abraham or the new alliance) is reconciled with the insistence of the fluxion of the flows. Capitalism makes use of the Urstaat for effecting its reterritorialization, reproducing it as its internalised limit.

One is therefore guided and ruled by real abstraction on the one hand and new territorialities that re-code in order to displace the internal limit on the other. Clearly this engenders a *split* at the centre of the subject between his abstract ideal, preceded by the potential of the axiomatic, and the codes by which he lives (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 334). Under capitalism, the family too is privatised, and it is precisely due to this fact that it is “placed outside of the field, the form of the material or the form of human reproduction begets people whom one can readily assume to be all equal in relation to one another” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 285-6).³¹ This placing of the family outside the social field is also its greatest social fortune, in that it is the condition under which the entire social field can be applied to the family. Through such a move, capitalism is able to employ the Oedipal complex as a way to internalise its limit and re-territorialise the flows of desire, “where desire lets itself be caught” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 288). That is, the reproduction process, though not directly economic, passes by way of the noneconomic factors of kinship.

Thus, in Oedipus there is a recapitulation of the three machines: it makes ready in the territorial machine as an empty unoccupied limit; it takes form in the despotic machine as a symbolically occupied limit; but it is filled out and carried to completion only by becoming the imaginary Oedipus of the capitalist machine. It is “only in the capitalist formation that the Oedipal limit finds itself, not only occupied, but inhabited and lived, in the sense in

which the social images produced by the decoded flows actually fall back on restricted familial images invested by desire” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 289). It is at this point in the Imaginary that Oedipus is constituted, at the same time as it completes its migration in the in-depth elements of representation: “*the displaced represented has become, as such, the representation of desire*” (loc. cit). This is how Oedipus gathers up everything: everything is found again in it, as the result of universal history, “but in the singular sense in which capital is already this result” (290) – a whole series of territorial fetishes and despotic idols, where everything is recapitulated in the images of capitalism, which shapes and reduces the unconscious to the Oedipal simulacra.

The familial conjunction that results from the capitalist conjunctions ensures that daddy-mommy-me is (re-)encountered everywhere, since everything has been applied to them (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 288). Each phase of Freud’s second topography is associated with a particular *personological figure*, transferred, if you like, between the family and the institution (see Guattari 2007: 303-4). “Father, mother and child thus become the simulacrum of the images of capital (‘Mister Capital, Madame Earth’, and their child the Worker)” (287), or its imaginary reterritorialisation. Just as capital separates the worker from the means of production via primitive accumulation, in turn deferring the satisfaction of consumption until after work, so too does the Father separate the child from the Mother through castration threat, in turn deferring the satisfactions of sexual consummation until the founding of a new family.

In this way, the Oedipal-nuclear family is the initial training ground in subservience and asceticism for the production of the capitalist subject. Social production, to be sure, “delegates the family to psychic repression” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 131). Social repression “needs psychic repression precisely in order to form docile subjects and to ensure the reproduction of the social formation, including its repressive structures” (129). The flows of desire are reconfigured in such a way as to engender a manageable neurotic subject of docility and resignation in which Oedipus is consummated.³² The effect is the creation of lack in the imagination, which serves as a function of capital and its search for endless profit, wherein money becomes a mystical and fetishised object by establishing ideal subjects of consumption and craving:

It is lack that infiltrates itself, creates empty spaces or vacuoles, and propagates itself in accordance with the organization of an already existing organization of production. The deliberate creation of lack as a function of market economy is the

art of a dominant class. This involves deliberately organizing wants and needs (*manque*) amid an abundance of production; making all of desire teeter and fall victim to the great fear of not having one's needs satisfied; and making the object dependent upon a real production that is supposedly exterior to desire (the demands of rationality), while at the same time the production of desire is categorized as fantasy and nothing but fantasy. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 30)

Ressentiment to Bad Conscience; the Nietzschean Moment

Desire, having completed its migration, experiences an extreme affliction of being turned against itself: “the turning back against itself, bad conscience, the guilt that attaches it to the most decoded of social fields as well as to the sickest interiority, the trap or desire, its guilty growth” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 236).³³ Once the active force of desire, or its productive fluvia, is deprived of its normal conditions of existence in this way, instead directing itself inward and turns against itself, *ressentiment* is born, leading to the triumph of reactive forces (132):

the hatred of life and of all that is free, of all that passes and flows; the universal effusion of the death instinct; depression and guilt used as a means of contagion, the kiss of the Vampire; aren't you ashamed to be happy? Follow my example, I won't let go before you say, 'It's my fault', O ignoble contagion of the depressives, neurosis as the only illness consisting in making others ill; the permissive structure: let me deceive, rob, slaughter, kill! but in the name of the social order, and so daddy-mommy will be proud of me. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 291).

This brings us back, more directly, to the Nietzschean notion of will to power, and Deleuze's account in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* of the two kinds of reactive forces operating in a double structure, wherein the system that receives an excitation is not the system that retains a lasting trace of it – what is considered the Freudian schema of life (whose origins are found in Nietzsche) or the ‘topological hypothesis’.³⁴ These two systems “correspond to the distinction between the conscious and the unconscious” (Deleuze 2006d: 105). The reactive unconscious is defined by mnemonic traces and lasting imprints, whereas consciousness reacts not to traces, but to present excitations or the direct image of the object. This second kind of reactive force shows us the form and conditions for reaction to be acted: “when reactive forces take conscious excitation as their object, then the corresponding reaction is itself acted” (106). Crucially, the two systems must be kept separate. Reaction becomes something acted because it takes conscious excitation as its object, and because reaction to traces remains imperceptible in the unconscious. Forgetfulness has a positive function as a

guard “preventing the two systems of the reactive apparatus from becoming confused” (106).

When there is a lapse in the faculty of forgetting, reaction to traces become perceptible and so reaction ceases to be acted. No longer being able to act a reaction, active forces are deprived of the material conditions of their functioning, “*they are separated from what they can do*” (Deleuze 2006d: 107). This is precisely what coding does to desire: it blocks and redirects its flows, and forces its productive nature to represent instead. Social representations impose restrictions, blockages, and reductions, setting fixed images on desire circulating on the BwO. The more fixed they are, the greater is the degree of paranoiac and fascistic tendencies, by which the libido is made to repress its flows in order to contain them in the narrow cells of the type ‘family’, ‘persons’, ‘objects’, ‘nations’ and so forth. Reactive forces do not prevail, then, when they form a greater force than that of active forces. Rather, they prevail when the trace takes the place of action. It concerns, to be sure, a topological displacement. *Ressentiment* is born precisely because reaction is endless by virtue of being felt instead of acted. In turn, the man of *ressentiment* becomes revengeful, for he blames the object, whatever it is. It must be made to pay for this infinite delay. Moving away from the topological, we see *ressentiment* evolve into the typological, in which it takes on form, or is identified with a particular symbolic figure.³⁵

Ressentiment perpetuates, in both its forms, the deprivation of active forces of their material conditions of operation. Critically, all instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly turn inward – Nietzsche’s *internalisation of man* – to constitute a bad conscience “that multiplies its pain, which has found a technique for manufacturing pain by turning active force back against itself: the squalid workshop” (Deleuze 2006b: 120). Such is its topological aspect. But it has more important typological nature, where pain is conceived as the consequence of an inward fault, as sin, as guilt (the Christian priest). In terms of Oedipus, the psychoanalyst takes on the priest’s role, compelling us to consume guilt as our own, internalising and spiritualising ‘infinite debt’, replacing Oedipus-the-despot with Oedipuses-as-subject: “By placing the distorting mirror of incest before desire (that’s what you wanted, isn’t it?), desire is shamed, stupefied, it is placed in a situation without exit, it is easily persuaded to deny ‘itself’ in the name of the more important interests of civilization (what if everyone did the same, what if everyone married his mother or kept his sister for himself? there would no longer be any differentiation, any exchanges possible). We must act quickly and soon. Incest, *a slandered shallow stream*” (130). This is initiated by the paranoiac father:

“Guilt is an idea projected by the father before it is an inner feeling experienced by the son” (303).³⁶ Here, also, the family appears in two forms: one where “it is guilty, but only in the matter in which the child lives it intensely, internally, and where it is confounded with the child’s own guilt”; the other “where it is a tribunal of responsibility, before which one stands as a guilty child, and in relation to which one becomes a responsible adult” (293).

There is, then, a “double direction” given to reactive desire: “the turning back against oneself, and the projection against the Other: the father is dead, it’s my fault, who killed him? it’s your fault, it’s the Jews, the Arabs, the Chinese, all the resources of racism and segregation; the abject desire to be loved, the whimpering at not being loved enough, at not being ‘understood’, concurrent with the reduction of sexuality to the ‘dirty little secret’, this whole *priest’s psychology*” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 291). In terms of the turning back against oneself, wherein pain is taken as salvation, it follows that libidinal investment is attracted to the degree of development of productive forces or power.³⁷ Thus, although the interests of such social representations and institutions in and by which forces are registered and generated are clearly of critical import, insofar as “interests predispose us to a given libidinal investment” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 379), the truly central point is that libidinal investment bears upon the degree of development of forces or the energies on which these syntheses depend” (378). Thus a certain pleasure is attained when a reactive body of desire is augmented or empowered. Pleasure, then, is most certainly on the side of reactive strata. Indeed, the libido “does not come to consciousness except in relation to a given body, a given person that it takes as object,” but our “‘object choice’ itself refers to a conjunction of flows of life and of society that this body and this person intercept, receive, and transmit, always within biological, social, and historical field” (323). Insofar as Oedipus itself is born of an application or a reduction to personalised images, “it presupposes a social investment of a paranoiac type” (306).

From this, we can finally come to explain the way in which we come to desire our repression, or the way in which modes are turned in on themselves (i.e., bad conscience). Ideological and class analysis, relying on the preconscious investments of interest, counteract and coexist with investments of unconscious desire of the social field, often in opposite modes. Such investments can either be reactionary or revolutionary, oscillating as it were from one formula to the other, and are “so well hidden, so unconscious, so well masked by the preconscious investments, that they appear only in our sexual choices of lovers” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 386). The most ‘revolutionary’, or even ‘progressive’ character, in the

typical sense that is, can be driven by a reactive configuration of desire. In this instance, a deep rooted sense of *ressentiment* or even bad conscience drives the self to either cling to identities that serve to suppress difference and exclude others, foster sentiments and acts of aggression, with a particular political identification either taken as the target and/or justification, or finally to use 'political' action as a means to discharge reactive affects.

How to Become a Body without Organs/What Can a Body Do?

Transcendental empiricism, as we saw, provokes an immanent ethics by eschewing the dogmatic image of thought and the subject, upon which traditional moral philosophy and political theory typically rely. Such an ethics essentially concerns returning the virtual intensities captured and occluded by forms of stratification and repression back to life, freeing our concepts, affects and precepts from fixed identities, neuroses and the negation of life. Thus, on the question of how one is supposed to evaluate and differentiate modes of existence, the answer is posed in terms of active and reactive desires, with the former affirming life in its difference, thereby becoming capable of creating something new or doing something different, and the latter negating life, thereby blocking flows of creativity. Underpinning the veneration of active modes is a certain veneration of life itself, such that any requirement or demand for a transcendent justification for life is immediately deemed to negate its intrinsic value – do not such demands emanate from a form of *ressentiment*? Subsequently, ethics is more than simply construed a matter of self-experimentation, a return to the intensive which is a return to becoming or a set of practices of freedom: it is, in truth, a matter of Nietzschean life affirmation.

Such an ethics is eminently political, in both analytical and practical terms. The way in which a mode is determined, a desiring-machine is assembled, or the self is formed, is connected to social and political formations. It is through such formations that the virtual differentiations that constitute desire are differentiated and occluded. Or, rather, it is through such encounters that the virtual is actualised, expressed and thereby stratified and organised. This can turn desire in on itself and establish reactive modes, in which case desire can effectively reify and support the prevailing social and political order. Thus, even though we may seemingly be not directly politically engaged, our relations to ourselves can nevertheless reflect and reinforce a form of political organisation, such that attempting to bring the intensive back into life invariably poses political problems.

We tend to think of politics, particularly in our present age, as process of democratic contestation over ideas concerning how societies and people should be organised. This view reduces politics purely to questions of rational deliberation, negotiation, open discussion, and strategising, making it a matter of mobilising constituencies, balancing interests, utilising facts and statistics, and so forth. Deleuzian micropolitics, on the other hand, invites us to consider, that thought is an affective affair, immanent to the real that provokes it. Provocation is central here, for thinking lacks the transparency and rational spontaneity that is often, though tacitly, ascribed to it – it must be provoked by an encounter with an Outside or real. Indeed, reading in conjunction with Foucault, we can see how thought is provoked and thereby organised by a variety of institutional disciplines, movements and tactics of the self that pervade all sections and levels of society and life. It is inescapable in the strict sense of being omnipresent. It is precisely this affective dimension of thought that has been so successfully exploited by the reterritorializing forces of capitalism: marketing groups, the advertisement industry, educational institutions, training programmes, the military, the film industry, the music industry, institutional human resources, party political communications and so forth. It is by creating neurotic desiring-machines that capitalism overcomes its internal limit, bringing about a consistent and supportive subjectivity of lack (leading to a drive for consumption so as to ‘fill the void’) and guilt (leading to behaviours of ‘financial responsibility’, debt paying and general docility). We are dealing here with a kind of power that constitutes subjects, as opposed to one that later manipulates or relies on already constituted subjects.

Such a constitution is critical in an age of bio-power, and indeed in a post-industrial society increasingly reliant on specific forms of subjectivity for its continued existence. If subjects no longer felt any kind of lack and thus ceased to partake in fetishized consumption, if subjects no longer felt a sense of guilt regarding debts or a sense of responsibility to work hard for the social body or the company, if subjects no longer felt an emotional need to satisfy and please authority figures and so forth, the entire socio-economic system would collapse. That is why, whether knowingly or not, abstract machines employ social machines to strike and mark out the BwO, to create forms of desire and subjectivity that accord with its own overall strategy. The particulars of this relation will change from age to age and society to society, but the need for this ability remains.

Within direct political engagements there lies an indiscernible and multilateral zone of unconscious and affective agency, where disciplinary techniques, tactics of the self, modes

of repression, and other constitutive processes are critical in the formation of political personae and culture – what Connolly (2000: 110) describes as “the micropolitics of cultural juridicalization.” The political import of this affective zone is made evident on a regular basis in the way that, for instance, discussion on the European Union or immigration proceeds not by way of a presentation of facts or arguments about practicalities – statistics ‘proving’ the financial benefits of foreign labour seldom win over a xenophobe – and is driven more by viscerally emotive forms of resentment or other affective discharges. A resentful political discourse resonates only with a resentfully assembled desiring-machine, which it serves to reinforce. The same undoubtedly rings true of anti-welfare sentiments, which are constantly accompanied by highly emotive slogans and terms (i.e., ‘benefit scroungers’) and tabloid articles, but the affective dimension is no less present in more ‘high-brow’ political debates and discussions. In all these cases, subtle affective tactics of fear, patriotism, bad conscience, guilt, and more are employed to harness an always already assembled desire, and set presumptive agendas for macropolitics. It is specifically this micropolitical element that concerns Deleuze and Guattari apropos the failure of May ’68.

In the first instance, then, the micropolitics of desire reveals how modes of repression and disciplinary tactics applied to multiple layers of our intersubjective being shape our sense of self on an unconscious level, in turn reifying a pervading order or at least establishing what we can perhaps call manageable ‘subjects of convenience’. Our subjectivity is constituted so as to feel guilty for not paying back a debt or proud in having a good credit history, to valorise entrepreneurship or fetishize profit, to submit to discipline on the basis of guilt and to humble ourselves before figures of authority, clamouring for positive recognition from the teacher, the police officer, the judge, the credit card company, and the doctor: in short, to be the ‘good’ or ‘Hegelian’ citizen. In the second instance, though following the same thread as the first, the micropolitics of desire reveals an ulterior motive, so to speak, underpinning the subjectivity of those directly engaged with politics in its more traditional sense. However one identifies oneself and one’s motives politically (i.e., as a self-identified left-winger who says he is driven by a sense of social injustice or a self-identified conservative who says he is driven by the a sense of responsible pragmatism), it holds that there is something more emotive, affective, and primordial pushing and pulling the individual and the collective in certain directions of thought and action. In every case, the failure to engage on this micropolitical level is also a failure to engage with that which shapes our lives, attitudes, and thoughts, and therefore that which is truly political.

Subverting such micropolitical tactics and forms of organisation is not a mere question of freedom, as we have already seen. It is a question of ethics and life, a question of affirmation. But how precisely is it to be subverted? Not only is desire always already assembled and directed by political forms of organisation; it also, by virtue of being the agentic and affective pivot point of such forms, has the capability to surmount them, and, indeed, to surmount the general categories of standard politics all together. That is to say, if we are constituted on an intensive level, albeit in disjunction and immanent causality with the actual/macro, then it is to the intensive level, first and foremost, that we must seek political subversion. But this is so only on a theoretical level. Practically speaking, we can never reach the intensive directly, and indeed to suggest it as a possibility would obscure the immanence of the two domains: micro-macro. That is, it would obscure the way in which micropower relations of the intensive sustain and/or subvert macropolitical powers of authority, and how in turn these authorities can exercise their powers in ways that sustain, reify and/or subvert the microscopic intensive upon which they rely. Indeed, if, as Deleuze and Guattari's ontogenetic analysis indicates, thought is immanent to the real that provokes it and is instigated by its encounters with this real, then in order to have thoughts that we can be worthy of, or to release intensities back into life, we must have the right type of encounters, the right type of real. In other words, though we can never reach this intensive level directly, as we continually operate at the actual level, we must engage in practices that, though indirect in their own right, directly affect the intensive and the related processes of differentiation and differentiation. At its most basic, if the real provokes and configures that virtual intensive, or that which gives the given, then altering the real itself through various methods and practices can release new intensities. This can only come about by way of developing tactics of the self that can bring about this effect. We must tend to the intensive, but in a manner that accords with immanent causality.

This is simply to say that certain techniques or tactics alter thinking in its direction, speed, intensity and sensibility, and therefore have the potential to release captured intensities or actualise new ones. This claim resonates with Foucault's ethics of the care of the self, for it regards techniques and practices that open up lines of flight, re-orientating desire and thought so as to create new possibilities. As Connolly (2000: 107) puts it, it regards tactics and techniques that "can function as counter-measures to build more independence and thoughtful responsiveness into ethico-political sensibility." Even the simple act of relaxing in a warm bath, with your favourite music playing in the background, whilst entertaining

nostalgic or romantic thoughts, can instigate new patterns of thinking or actualise different intensive states. Is it not precisely to instigate new patterns, or to subvert cyclical ones, that we ‘go for a walk’ or spend time relaxing, either out with friends and family or on selected hobbies? Nietzsche speaks to such thinking in a section in *Ecce Homo* where he details how his dietary habits, preferential climates, and daily routines and practices aid him in his thinking – the “choice of nutrition; the choice of climate and place: the third point at which one must not commit a blunder at any price is the choice of *one’s own kind of recreation*,” (Nietzsche 2000a: 698) and the “slightest sluggishness of the intestines is entirely sufficient, once it has become a bad habit, to turn a genius into something mediocre.” (696). As Deleuze and Guattari (2004b: 166) say, to become a Body without Organs (BwO) is to engage in “a set of practices.” These practices concern the transmutation of the reactive into the active, a conversion and a crossing over to the hither side of affirmation, as opposed to sublimation.

Mimicking Foucault even further, the disjunctive fold – the differentiator, dark precursor or BwO – through which the virtual is related to a plane of organisation, creates the very excess through which this surmounting can be technically realised, or through which codes and lines can be reshuffled and renegotiated. Because of the disjunction, there are a variety of virtual intensities waiting at any given time to be actualised and reshaped through various techniques that create new encounters across a range of personal, social, and political strata. Thus, you may act tactically and experimentally upon yourself, to “fold more presumptive receptivity and forbearance into your responses to pluralizing movements in the domains of gender, sensual affiliation, ethnic identification, religion/irreligion, or market rationality that challenge your visceral presumption to embody the universal standard against which that diversity is to be measure” (Connolly 2000: 107). In this way, the ethics of becoming a BwO, as with the ethics of the care of the self, feeds into politics and acts as a strategy of political engagement, entailing political questions concerning, as Foucault (2004:xiv-xv) puts it in the preface to *Anti-Oedipus*, how to tackle “the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us.”

In this sense, tending to the intensive certainly does not mean returning to a primordial or essentialist self that has been repressed by social forms. For Deleuze and Guattari, repression is meant in a way vastly distinct from Freudian repression or the negative of the Law. Recall that the BwO registers multifarious images of objects of satisfaction as remainders of potential future satisfaction. In the third mode of anti-production, some are captured, coded

and territorialised (as in a subjectification closed in on itself). That is, repression refers to the redirection or rerouting of the flows of desire, which in turn codifies them. Or rather, to re-use the language of Deleuze's Nietzsche, it means altering the form of expression of forces and separating desire from its productive force of connection, namely through *evaluations*. So whereas the two modes of anti-production associated with the BwO refer to *inclusive* disjunctions, the third mode of anti-production, which is repression, refers to desire when it is subjected to an *exclusive* one, as in 'this and not that', good and not bad. Such is the case with the Oedipus complex. In redirecting the forces of desire, as opposed to negating them outright, repression or the macro-political *produces* new assemblages of desire. That is its critical power, the power to produce modes of subjectivation.³⁸ What is more, as we saw, this production always already involves the intensive and virtual level as that which gives the given. That is why to refer to the actual or given alone when discussing emancipation or political struggle is to come in too late. A similar point was made earlier with respect to Merleau-Ponty's thesis on art: we require both the given and that which gives the given in order to explain an object. Thus, tending to the intensive simply means tending to that which gives the given or that which accompanies all actual and given phenomena, and accounts for their forceful genesis. And on the question of how we tend to that which gives the given, seeing as we always already operate in the given, we respond with tactics of the self, which are a reappropriation of the real that provokes. There is even a correspondence here with Sartre's idea of 'feedback mechanisms' in processes of totalisation, in which practices of authenticity alter the feedback or change its resonance. The broader point to come out of the concept of the assemblage is that, given it is a complex system interacting with all levels of social reality, the slightest change can have a significant and unpredictable effect.

However it is viewed, then, it seems clear that the ontogenetic-political project (how a mode is determined, or how the virtual is actualised and expressed by being stratified and organised) and the ethical project (achieving active modes or affections, or simply becoming a BwO) mutually presuppose each other precisely because the ethical relies on working *through* the plane of organisation insofar as this plane represents a fold of/on consistency or virtual immanence itself. That is, any possibility of transgression presupposes the ontogenetic (and the exo as the instigator) insofar as, once more, an ethics of attaining affirmative affections, which requires a freedom from organisation of the organs, means a

return to immanence, and the molecular becomings that compose it through a reshuffling of lines.

What is more, in speaking of the intensive, we come to understand how transformation in this sphere is not a case of subjective choice, of becoming a subject or simply contesting one's existing identity for the sake of assuming another, but instead of transgressing these ideas at a fundamental level. This directly follows on from Sartre and Merleau-Ponty's idea that the ego can at best only serve a practical function, inasmuch as it provides a point of reference through which we can relate to ourselves when these techniques are being worked out. It can also appear as a way by which we seemingly make a choice about how we become different, even if said choice is illusory.³⁹ Anything beyond this risks obscuring how the 'subject' – and indeed (even when treated as contingent and fleeting) identity – in whichever guise it may manifest itself, already stands on the side of strata, it already comes in too late, *after* the true transformation has already taken place. That is why to believe in the subject is 'dogmatic', but also politically backward.

As Deleuze and Guattari (2004b: 304) confirm, though it is "indispensable for women [or indeed anyone] to conduct a molar politics – that is, one sitting on actualised segmented forms – with a view to winning back their own organism, their own history, their own subjectivity," it is "dangerous to confine oneself to such a subject, which does not function without drying up a spring or stopping a flow" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 304). This is also why, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari (2004b) add that to return to the level of virtual becomings, or at least to tend to it through practices of the self, politically concerns becoming-minoritarian.⁴⁰ Majority here does not refer to a greater relative quantity, as in a democratic majority, in which case the minority would refer to the individual or a small subset of individuals. Majority actually refers to the determination of a standard in relation to which large and small quantities can be said to be minoritarian: white-man, adult-male, etc. The majority in the universe assumes as pre-given the right and power of man, and so in this sense women and children, but also animals, plants, and molecules, are minoritarian.⁴¹ It is "perhaps the special situation of women in relation to the man-standard that accounts for the fact that becomings, being minoritarian, always pass through a becoming-woman" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 321). If becoming-woman is the first quantum, or molecular segment, with the becoming-animal that links up with it coming next, then, argue Deleuze and Guattari, becoming-imperceptible is that toward which they are rushing. As with Kierkegaard's 'knight of the faith', the man of becoming can look like a

bourgeois, nothing but a bourgeois. Perhaps there is nothing noticeable about him. Yet he blends in with the walls, so to speak, in a way that brings into play the cosmos with its molecular components, away from molar aggregates, finding his zones of indiscernibility. Movement becomes principle, as with the ‘small movements’ of which Sartre speaks.

Movement itself – though not its effects – is imperceptible, because this movement is intensive or even virtual. This presents for us another way of expressing the same idea: that to come in analytically on the actual or given level is to come in too late. This is not to discard the actual segmented level of identity, however, for it is central to any politics inasmuch as it informs and shapes the virtual level in an immanent causality or double-conditioning (the BwO is defined by its capacity to affect and be affected after all) of folding via participating in the very exclusive disjunctions of repression that produce an assemblage of desire. Yet, and this is the crucial point, it is not for all that constitutive, or at least on the constitutive level. So though, for instance, I may appear to be a typical left-wing graduate student engaged with a majority anti-austerity politics, and though this engagement will entail certain practices and social relationships, or evaluations that are recorded on the BwO and thus inform the virtual intensive, there are a series of fundamental transformations and movements taking place within myself that are indiscernible in their own right, or non-identifiable on this macro level, precisely because they precede and constitute it (albeit whilst being constituted by them). It follows from this, that such talk of unconscious libidinal investments and minoritarian becomings, or indeed the more general picture of this micropolitics, continues and advances the move away from the central *I* of moral theory, or the world of the subject and the primacy of identity, in favour of the pure immanence of the field of virtual intensities, of “flows of intensity, their fluids, their fibres, their continuums and conjunctions of affects, the wind, fine segmentation, microperceptions” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 179), which is the transcendental field itself. Immanence so defined cannot refer to a subject whose acts bring about a synthesis of things; it is “only when immanence is no longer immanence to anything other than itself that we can speak of a plane of immanence” (Deleuze 2001: 27). The central point here, as has always been the case when discussing immanence, is that one does not look for a transcendence as either a positive Body or as a formal break of a self-enclosed world of immanence, nor for a central subject of choice through which to mount a resistance. Such a view would only serve to obscure its very principle. We have to understand and change ourselves on this primordial, pre-individual and pre-personal level – concerning the existing structure of one’s desiring

machines and their active or reactive quality and the agency of the BwO – before we can understand and change our politics. That is, we have to be micropolitical before we can be political.

Such an ethico-politics is no less dangerous than a more traditional, or a viscerally more ‘radical’, revolutionary politics. There are no guarantees here. Once again, Deleuze and Guattari clarify this point, making revisions with regards to the nature of intensive becoming and the inherent danger of attempting to attain the affective by way of de-territorialising (that is, of abolishing all lines of force that demarcate the virtual into actual segments or territories) in their subsequent *A Thousand Plateaus*.⁴² Deleuze and Guattari’s (2004b: 305) principle warning is that we cannot operate with two extreme abstract poles of planes, but rather between them, in the intermezzo – “that is what Virginia Woolf lived with all her energies, in all of her work, never ceasing to become.” Although the BwO represents the crossing of thresholds of organisation and a reunification with the field of virtual intensities, it is also a limit, in that “you can’t reach it, you are forever attaining it” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 166). It is forever being attained “because beyond each stratum, encased in it there is always another stratum,” a “perpetual and violent combat between the plane of consistency, which frees the BwO, cutting across and dismantling all of the strata, and the surfaces of stratification [immanent expression and thus organisation of the virtual] that block it or make it recoil” (176) – as said before, God expresses himself by stratifying himself. Subsequently, to disarticulate, to cease to be an organism, you have to “use a very fine file,” as opposed to a “sledgehammer” (177). You “invent self-destructions that have nothing to do with the death drive,” for “dismantling the organism has never meant killing yourself, but rather opening the body to connections that presuppose an entire assemblage, circuits, conjunctions, levels and thresholds, passages and distributions of intensity, and territories and deterritorialisations measured with the craft of a surveyor” (177).

In other words, the BwO and its plane of consistency cannot be reached by “wildly destratisfying” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 178), because, as we have already stated, it can never be reached directly and purely to begin with. In this sense, the “paradox” of the emptied and dreary bodies, without any form or organisation at all, is that “*they had emptied themselves of their organs,*” they have tried to rid themselves of the very things that make up their Being, when really they should have been “looking for the point at which they could patiently and momentarily dismantle the organisation of the organs we call the organism” (loc. cit), through techniques that are not directly virtual or on the plane of consistency, but

that nevertheless greatly affect and alter it. This relates back to an earlier point, namely that the process of actualisation/expression/stratification is in part beneficial, for it at least provides life with a minimum structure and stability, it provides the very stuff out of which we can transform and guide our selves (another idea found in Sartre). To go to the extreme of complete disorganisation, or de-stratification, is extremely risky and indeed entirely misguided. Thus, it can be said that there are “several ways of botching the BwO” (178). If “you free it with too violent an action, if you blow apart the strata without taking precautions, then instead of drawing the plane you will be killed, plunged into a black hole, or even dragged toward catastrophe” (178). In this vein, Deleuze and Guattari (2004b: 250) identify four risks or dangers associated with the lines of immanence, of which the fourth is the most significant, “the one that interests us most,” for it concerns the lines of flight themselves.⁴³ There is a reworking here of the BwO and fascism as they are presented in *Anti-Oedipus*. Previously, the BwO was taken as the recording surface, and desire was always already socially constituted by means of representations that were registered on it. In this sense, fascism was taken as the fixation of desire. In *A Thousand Plateaus* however, fascism is taken as an *acceleration* of desire. It is, as Protevi (2000: 67) notes, a matter of desire moving too fast rather than too slow. Here, the fascism as excess speed corresponds to a new working of the now ‘cancerous’ BwO and ‘suicidal’ line of flight.⁴⁴

It would be “oversimplifying,” write Deleuze and Guattari (2004b: 252) “to believe that the only risk they [lines of flight] fear and confront is allowing themselves to be recaptured in the end, letting themselves be sealed in, tied up, reknotted, reterritorialized.” Lines of flight “emanate a strange despair, like an odor of death and immolation, a state of war from which one returns broken” (loc. cit). The danger is that such lines, instead of connecting with other lines and each time augmenting their valence, will spin off into a void, turning to destruction and the passion for abolition: “like suicide, double suicide, a way out that turns the line of flight into a line of death” (253). This does not refer to any kind of death drive, for there “are no internal drives in desire, only assemblages,” as we saw in *Anti-Oedipus* (loc. cit). Rather, desire is always assembled; it is what the assemblage determines it to be. The assemblage “that draws lines of flight is on the same level as they are, and is of the war machine type” (253).

That is not to say that it has war as its object, but rather the emission of quanta (flows) of deterritorialisation. Every creation is brought about by a war machine and is an assemblage that differs drastically from the state apparatus. It is nomadic in origin and in fact directed

against such an apparatus. In this sense, one of the fundamental problems of the State “is to appropriate this war machine that is foreign to it and make it a piece in its apparatus, in the form of a stable military institution” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 253). But when the war machine has reached the point where it has no other object but war, when it substitutes destruction for mutation, then it frees the most “catastrophic charge” (loc. cit). War is the failure of mutation.⁴⁵ So it holds that stratisfying yourself “is not the worst that can happen” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 178). As with Foucault’s relational take on power, it is only by virtue of lodging yourself on a stratum, refolding yourself through techniques and practices of the self, experimenting with the opportunities that the actual or given segments offer, finding “an advantageous place on it” and “potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight,” through “experiencing them,” producing “flows of conjunction here and there,” trying out “continuums of intensities segment by segment,” that we have any chance of playing the game otherwise, of disarticulating and disorganising.

In short, even where a line of flight is possible, it can easily turn bad, accelerating beyond any recognisable or manageable form, turning cancerous, destructive. This accords entirely with the notion of immanence as the principle of philosophizing, wherein the plane of immanence is “a section of chaos and acts like a sieve” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 42). Chaos threatens consistency, and therefore the challenge of philosophy – which is reliant on concepts whose singular components form relations with other components in a bid to establish consistency – is “to give consistency without losing anything of the infinite” (42). Philosophy tries to capture chaos while avoiding the process of reification and solidification that characterises representationalism. The process of becoming a BwO follows the same principle in that it avoids the two extremes between chaos and order and instead seeks to work through and between them. As said in *Anti-Oedipus*, it is a matter of distinguishing between breakdown and breakthrough. The language of transcendence is, in reality, the language of absolutes, of extremes, of oppositions, of organisation, all of which if followed to the letter miss the subterranean differential mechanisms at the play in the multiplicity, and so can severely and dangerously ‘botch’ the process of emancipation, but also miss the more primordial level of fundamental political transformations and processes of organisation and power-resistance.

Notes

¹ See also Best and Kellner (1991: 106), who make a similar claim.

² As Bestegui (2010: 12) notes, the fact the immanence becomes an ideal, as opposed to a reality, signifies a paradox in wanting to “extract the pre-conceptual conditions of thought by way of *concepts*...”, in wanting to bring out the horizon or plane on the basis of which philosophy unfolds, but which it itself does not constitute.” The concept is an attempt to draw a plane, to bring out its own image, yet it can never be fully reached given this paradox.

³ Taking the place of *will to power* in *Difference and Repetition* (see Deleuze 2004a: 153).

⁴ That is not to deny the existence of the Oedipal complex, but rather to dispute its origins, so to speak, or the signifying chain it appears to belong to and represent. The Oedipus complex is construed as resulting from a particular configuration or relation between social production and desiring-production. With this in mind, Deleuze and Guattari (2004b: 39) claim it is the assemblage of both the micro and the macro that is the province of the unconscious, “the way in which the former condition the latter, and the latter prepare the way for the former or elude them or return to them.”

⁵ The question of who most influences or guides Deleuze’s thinking is certainly a long-standing one in Deleuze scholarship. In presenting a connection to phenomenology and Foucault, I am not positing their primary significance or centrality, but merely highlighting the lineage or, rather, the crucial connection in this particular context, specifically in terms of immanence and its relation to a particular ethico-political sensibility that moves through authenticity, ambiguity, care of the self, and the BwO. (Lawlor [2006 and 2012] makes a similar point on the relation to immanence, albeit not in the context of political theory.) Indeed, it is obvious that figures such as Kant and Bergson are also of central importance, certainly as far as the transcendental field is concerned. Moulard-Leonard (2002), Ansell-Pearson (1999; 2002), Boundas (1996), Borradori (2001) and Badiou (2000) go so far as to suggest that Bergson is the central figure, or the “real master” (*ibid.*, 39). Boundas (1996: 81) even works with the composite name ‘Deleuze-Bergson’.

Although the importance of Bergson cannot be underestimated, it is not entirely evident why he should be given such a central role in the formation of Deleuze’s thought. To name just a few reasons, it is evident that Spinoza, via Duns Scotus, plays as important a role in terms of construing univocity or immanence, which is clearly one of the defining features of Deleuze’s thought (see Gatnes 1996: 164 and Macherey 1996: 142). Further, Nietzsche is central in completing the de-centering of the self that Bergson never completes insofar as duration retains an image of an ego that endures. Indeed, Nietzsche also plays a central role in the configuration of power as a substrate of force relations and in the renewed conceptualisation of desire and its corollary, bad conscience, in *Anti-Oedipus* (see Widder 2012: 61-88). Then there is the case to be made that, in spite of Deleuze’s apparent anti-Hegelianism, he exhibits a strong, albeit counter-intuitive and subtle, affinity with Hegel. Either insofar as Deleuze follows Hegel’s demand that philosophy must be an ontology of sense (see Widder 2008: 34-9), or insofar as both attempt to move beyond a philosophy of judgement (see Somers-Hall 2012), or, as some argue, insofar as Hegel in fact acts as the “unavoidable and indispensable ‘phenomenon of bordering’” that is Deleuze’s “*anomalous*” or “*exceptional individual*” (Malabou 1996: 116). There is also the latent Marxian influence in the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (see Read 2003 and Choat 2012: 125-154) and the Humean influence (see Baugh 2003: 149 and Margarit 2012). Finally, of course, there is the enduring influence of psychoanalysis by way of Freud, Jung and Klein (see Holland 2012). It seems evident that the attempt to find a central figure for Deleuze can be quite misleading and almost irrelevant (a point shared by

Buchanan 2000: 10-15). Certainly, if we are to find a central figure, he will be so only by virtue of the particular context to which we are applying Deleuze's thought. So, for instance, in terms of multiplicities, it stands to reason that Bergson would be of prime importance, whereas in terms of schizoanalysis it stands to reason that Freud et al. would be of prime importance. But even when we do this, we exclude the utilisation of other thinkers. Schizoanalysis, for instance, is indeed indebted to Freud, but it reworks Freud via Nietzsche, Marx, and others. If we are to characterise Deleuze's thought, this is best secured by conceptual themes or conceptual personae as opposed to 'master' figures.

⁶ Deleuze does not at any point wholeheartedly reject the 'dialectic' as such, only particular realisations of it. For instance, in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze concedes that the dialectic is "the art of problems and questions, the combinatory or calculus of problems as such" (2004a: 196). This is its "real task, its only effective task" (199). Whereas "Analytics gives us the means to solve a problem already given, or to respond to a question, the dialectic shows us how to pose a question legitimately," inventing the subjects of syllogisms and engendering the elements of syllogism concerning a given subject.

However, the "dialectic loses its peculiar power when it remains content to trace problems from propositions" (Deleuze 2004a: 196) or when it is understood within the dogmatic image of thought, perverted by the power of the negative. For underpinning the negative are beliefs in good and common sense, and in error, which in turn are premised on the dogmatic *Cogitatio natura universalis* that treats error as the negative and as developing naturally. To believe in error as the only obstacle to good-sense, as the only possible misadventure of thought, is to reduce everything to the form of error, and is at the same time to testify to the form of a common sense. Here, error "is only the reverse of a rational orthodoxy" (Deleuze 2004a: 186). Indeed, "one faculty alone cannot be mistaken but two faculties can be, at least from the point of view of their collaboration, when an object of one is confused with *another* object of the other" (186). There is thus a positive model of recognition, and a negative model of error, both proceeding like two sides of the same coin. This dogmatic image of thought "supports itself with psychologically puerile and socially reactionary examples...in order to prejudge what should be the most valued in regard to thought – namely, the genesis of the act of thinking and the *sense* of truth and falsehood" (197). Hence the fundamental role of a philosophy of immanence and genetic critique.

⁷ Which is not to ignore the Bergsonian influence via the virtual/multiplicities, and the fact that such fleshism exists in Sartre.

⁸ See for instance, Baugh (2003: 148), Malabou (1996: 115), Patton (2000: 30) and Žižek (2012: 44).

⁹ For a good summary of the three syntheses, see Widder (2012: 41-53).

¹⁰ It was the Kantian critique which first shows that, contra Descartes, it is "impossible for determination to bear directly upon the determined" (Deleuze 2004a: 108). For Kant, time is what determines the undetermined, insofar as I exist *within time*. Therefore "the spontaneity of which I am conscious in the 'I think' cannot be understood as the attribute of a substantial and spontaneous being, but only as the affection of a passive self which experiences its own thought – its own intelligence, that by virtue of which it can say *I* – being exercised in it and upon it but not by it" (108). The self is thereby fractured by the pure and empty form of time. However, "Kant did not pursue this initiative: both God and the I underwent a practical resurrection" (109) in the form of a transcendental subject. By the same measure, Deleuze (105) holds apropos Bergson's virtual past, that "however strong the incoherence or possible opposition between successive presents, we have the impression that each of them plays out 'the same life' as different levels." In this way, Bergson presents an ego that endures via duration, and as such does not go far enough in admitting its fractured nature. Bergson's ego retains a unity and a centre of action, wherein consciousness remains the ground for such a temporality, in turn excluding impossibles and undecidabilities from the self and its past (Widder 2012: 138).

¹¹ Indeed, when reactive forces triumph, as is the case with Nietzsche's 'slave revolt', they do so by means of their distinct reactive qualities, i.e., by preventing the superior force from flowing through its actual means of expression, or *separating an active force from what it can do* by a moral evaluation that devalues such expression as repugnant or sinful. In *Anti-Oedipus*, separation will be the role assigned to the socius via exclusive disjunctions enacted on the Body without Organs (BwO).

¹² What we see here is the primacy of difference as the fundamental basis of the identity of all phenomena. It is primary in that, first, "there are differences between the virtual point of departure and the actual outcome"; second, "there are differences between the various lines along which actualisation can take place" (Patton 2000: 36-7). In his early work, Deleuze (2004a: 277) refers to this system of difference, or more specifically the disjunctive syntheses of difference, as a 'simulacrum' in which identities emerge as surface effects or simulations created by the simulacrum's multiplicity. As the term itself conjures a deeply Platonic image as that of a 'false difference', it has been subject to misinterpretation (see, for example, Badiou 2000: 25). For this reason, Deleuze and Guattari drop the term in favour of 'multiplicities' and the 'rhizome', as in an underground plant that grows horizontally without a fixed centre. Nevertheless, the point apropos the semblance of identity (and indeed Oedipal desire) remains intact (see Widder 2012: 54-58).

¹³ As in embryology, which shows that each process of actualisation is a genuine creation (see Deleuze 2004a: 268-270).

¹⁴ Taking the analogy further, Widder (2012: 18-9) remarks that if one takes a piece of paper and marks two opposite corners (representing the negative difference between them), and then folds it so that the corners approach each other, we see "the marks remain on opposite corners when following the paper's surface, but they are also now closer along another dimension. Assuming more than three spatial dimensions, one can imagine even more complex folds, including folds immanent or internal to the marked corner themselves" (loc. cit). Differences are synthesised disjunctively, folded together "such that they never simply correspond to or oppose one another" (24). As opposed to unity, there is a connection across differences that maintains their discontinuity.

¹⁵ This notion of expression manifests itself once more in Deleuze's *Logic of Sense*, wherein pre-individual and impersonal singularities produce sense. Or, rather, sense is the expression of the virtual world of singularities and events folded into individuals. Sense is their voice, and their markings on the surface of propositions. Again, as Widder (2008: 37) puts it, we have immanence insofar as sense so defined exceeds both the empirical and the conceptual without reverting to a second sensible world transcending the given, and insofar as it grasps the totality of what is, "even while grasping itself as something more than an empirical or conceptual totality" (37). Sense is thus immanent to our world, but is distinguishable from its immediate expressions and appearances.

It is within this context that Deleuze (1997: 191) praises and, in many important respects, follows Hegel in stressing that philosophy "must be an ontology, it cannot be anything else; but there is no ontology of essence, there is only an ontology of sense," which means "first of all that it is not an anthropology." See chp. 3, n.4.

¹⁶ This relates directly back, then, to Deleuze's main book on Spinoza. For Spinoza, expression is not subordinate to emanative or exemplary causality and does not resemble anything. As such, "a result can be obtained only within a perspective of univocity" (Deleuze 1992: 180). There is no foundational division, such as between the speaker and the object of his speech. Expression appears as "the unity of the multiple, as the complication of the multiple, and as the explication of the One" (Deleuze 1992: 176). The one infinite substance expresses itself through "an infinity of attributes, which are as it were its actual forms or component qualities" (182). Substance is thus an immanent cause, or a cause that remains within itself, as opposed to a transitive cause, which lies outside its

effect, or an emanative cause, where the cause remains within itself but the effect that it produces does not. In latter cases, we are invariably brought back to transcendence.

¹⁷ As Baugh (2003: 152) recognises, this speaks to Deleuze's indebtedness to empiricism's logic of external relations, which he regards "as the greatest impediment to Hegelianism, since it allows one to grasp terms as having come into relation through contingent events, that is, through a chance interplay of forces." In short, the empirical is the transcendental condition of the possibility of concepts. On this point, Badiou (2000: 86) argues, "Deleuze's most constant theme is... that we only think when *forced* to think. Let this be a warning to those who would see in Deleuze an apologia for spontaneity: whatever is spontaneous is inferior to thought, which only begins when it is constrained to become animated by the forces of the outside." This reading is partially correct, in that it is indeed true for Deleuze that we think only when we are forced. However, it fails to complete the argument insofar as this is used to claim that Deleuze is incapable of theorizing any kind of agency. First, in following the Nietzschean notion that there is no 'one' at all, in terms of an ego standing behind the drives or a particular dominant drive, Deleuze envisions the one in terms of the multiplicity of an assemblage. In this sense, "Blanchot is correct in saying that One and He – *one* is dying, *he* is unhappy – in no way take the place of a subject, but instead do away with any subject in favour of an assemblage of the haecceity-type that carries or brings out the event insofar as it is unformed and incapable of being effectuated by persons" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 292). HE does not represent a subject, "but rather makes a diagram of an assemblage" – thus He or one, "indefinite article, proper name, infinitive verb: A HANS TO BECOME HORSE, A PACK NAMED WORLD, TO LOOK AT HE, ONE TO DIE" (loc. cit). In this sense, as Widdler (2012: 834) puts it:

'One' is simply shorthand for a multiplicity – for an assemblage that only as an assemblage can be said both to control its drives and to be determined by the relational component forces that constitute it by virtue of the ascendancy of some of them against various resistances. Agency resides in this dispersed but synthesized assemblage, which is irreducible to any unity, and this agency implies control, but not necessarily choice. Thus at a fundamental level, choice or the lack of choice is no longer an issue. Instead it is a matter of assessing how the synthesis of disparate impulses, in conflict and in flux, makes the self what it is at any particular time.

¹⁸ Coiled inside the heart of this problem of sense is an unconscious of pure thought, which constitutes its sphere and in which we find a game of mirrors, wherein a proposition is regarded as true because its expressible is true, while the expressible is true only when the proposition itself is true. In short, "in extracting a double from the proposition we have evoked a simple phantom. Sense so defined is only a vapour which plays at the limit of things and words. Sense appears here as the outcome of the most powerful logical effort, but as Ineffectual, a sterile incorporeal deprives of its generative power" (Deleuze 2004a: 195). Sense is therefore the genesis or the production of the true, while truth is only the empirical result of sense. Truth is pure production, as opposed to adequation, or genitility, as opposed to innateness.

¹⁹ In this vein, Deleuze (2006d: 85) initially proposes the Nietzschean will to power as "a genetic and genealogical principle, as legislative principle," holding it to be "capable of realising internal critique" insofar as the will to power replaces the transcendental principle with genealogy. Even the end of Nietzsche's critique is vastly different, in that the point is not justification but a different way of feeling, "another sensibility" (88). The philosopher, in this instance, replaces old wisdom by command, he "destroys the old values and creates new ones," and so his science is "legislative" (86). This legislative principle speaks to the Deleuzian invention of concepts on a plane of immanence, in that it breaks with the 'self-evidence' of the dogmatic image of thought in favour of the actualisation of a given pure event in a specific context. In this way, philosophy overturns the form of common sense, the form of recognition that rediscovers "the State, rediscovers 'the Church' and rediscovers all the current values that it subtly presented in the pure form of an eternally blessed unspecified eternal object" (loc. cit). The creation of concepts acts as a 'counter-effectuation' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 158).

²⁰ As said in the introduction, Badiou (2001) claims that the thesis of the univocity of Being guides all of Deleuze's thinking. There are two theses attributed to this position: first, that being is a One of disjunction that is not numerically one, and second that it is the transcendent One. In other words, Deleuze's univocal Being that is a position of transcendence, with the actual merely realising the eternal repetition of identical events or the monotony of the One. As thinking is a fold of the One, thinking too is monotonous. Clearly, Badiou misconstrues the virtual/actual relation. As Widder (2012: 27) puts it, the "single voice of univocal being is not a transcendent One but an excess immanent to all beings that propels them towards their self-overcoming." The eternal return is the structure of this overcoming, "and it is the expressive sense of being as such" (loc. cit). Repetition does not represent, but rather is the form of explication. The One, then, does not stand over and above, as something to be represented, and neither does repetition return the Same. It only ever returns difference, genuine novelty, and creation by way of immanent causation. Indeed, the relation between virtual structure and spatio-temporal events, or rather the actualisation of the former in the latter, is always a creative process (hence difference itself is a process, as opposed to a category). That is because actual terms never resemble the singularities they incarnate. For "a potential or virtual object, to be actualized is to create divergent lines which correspond to – without resembling – a virtual multiplicity" (Deleuze 2004a: 264). As actualisation is "always a genuine creation," bodies and states of affairs do not represent structures of ideal events (loc. cit). Embryology shows "that the division of an egg into parts is secondary in relation to more significant morphogenetic movements: the augmentation of free surfaces, stretching of cellular layers, invagination by folding, regional displacement of groups" (266). The double differentiation of species and parts always presupposes spatio-temporal dynamisms. In this sense, the "entire world is an egg" (268). Becoming-actual does not signify a transition from the concept to its instantiation, but rather the production of something new through chance encounters (see Baugh 2003: 154 on this particular point and its relation to Hegel's critique of the abstractness of sense-certainty).

²¹ However, as will be seen at the close of this chapter, the BwO is also a limit that can never be fully reached. This will have a radical bearing on emancipation, and will ultimately lead to a conclusion tantamount with Foucault's thesis that 'emancipation' is found through power-relations, not in spite of them.

²² Emphasis added.

²³ However, this does not establish a strict homology between the three syntheses of *Difference and Repetition* and the three syntheses of *Anti-Oedipus*. As Williams (2011: 172. 20) notes, "though it is tempting" to make such an equation, "this move involves many risks of confusion due to the dramatic shift in emphasis between time and psychoanalysis as the locus for the process in the two books." The change in emphasis also involves, as noted, the shift from the ontogenetic to the ethical. What does remain consistent, however, is the double-axiom endo/exo and the image of a virtual unconscious and the subsequent passive self. Further, it is almost impossible not to note the intense similarities between *Difference and Repetition's* dark precursor and *Anti-Oedipus' Body without Organs*. Both refer to an Outside – the first in terms of a force which ensures communication and the second in terms of being a recording surface of machinic connections – and the Outside as a fold of immanence inasmuch as they differentiate the differentiations in a way that vice-dicts as opposed to contradicts, amounting to a clearly disjunctive synthesis as related to univocity of the All-One. As repetition is the explication of such a process, and as repetition repeats only difference, both are represented as an alternative to the Freudian thermodynamic death drive. In both cases, the Kantian transcendental self is subverted by an unconscious self.

²⁴ As per above, such folding of immanence is precisely what Žižek (2012a: 65) overlooks when claiming: "Deleuze is as far as possible from asserting any kind of complementarity between the two poles [nomadic and State, molecular and molar]."

²⁵ When speaking of the BwO in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari (2004b) replace lines with strata – there are “three great strata concerning us”: the “organism, the significance, and subjectification” (176). The BwO and its ‘true organs’ are “opposed to the organism, the organic organisation of the organs” (176). Thus, when Deleuze and Guattari (2004b: 168) claim the BwO is “what remains when you take everything away,” they are quick to add that what you take away “is precisely the phantasy, and significances and subjectifications as a whole.” Psychoanalysis thus stands in opposition to this process, in that “it translates everything into phantasies, it converts everything into phantasy, it retains the phantasy. It royally botches the real, because it botches the BwO” (loc. cit). The BwO, then, is only “occupied, populated only by intensities,” passing and circulating, producing and distributing them “in a *spatium* that is itself intensive, lacking extension.” This it is not a scene, a place, or even a support upon which something comes to pass, it has “nothing to do with phantasy, there is nothing to interpret” (169). The BwO, then, is an assemblage with no underlying organisational principles.

²⁶ Although the appearance of concepts precluding experimentation, along with built-in value judgements, appears to return to some form of psychology, Deleuze and Guattari (2004b: 229) are clear that they are not invoking any kind of death drive, and that desire is always assembled.

²⁷ Once more, the figure of Hegel is construed as the critical foil. Some argue that, on this point, Deleuze is a poor reader of Hegel (i.e., Houlgate 1986: 5-8 and Malabou 1996). Malabou (121) states that “Deleuze reduces Hegelian multiplicity by abstraction and makes Hegel appear as his outsider.” That is, Hegelian philosophy is said by Deleuze to reduce multiplicity to a unity in the same way Freud is said to have reduced the multiplicity of the wolf pack, to such an extent that Hegel is “given privileged treatment; he becomes the *only one*, with all the negative respect one pays to an absolute *heteron*: unable to be assimilated and thus veritably other” (120). Such a position not only misses the way in which Deleuze divides and targets two distinct Hegels (one Kojévian and the other Hyppolitean), but also how Hyppolite’s Hegel heavily informs Deleuze’s contention that ontology must be an ontology of sense (see Widder 2008: 34-39).

²⁸ For Klein, the ‘part-object’ refers to the ‘part of’ a lost unity or totality (molar), such as the mother’s breast. This can be identified as either good or bad, depending on the function the part object serves. Deleuze and Guattari rework this concept through their *object partiels*, which is translated as ‘partial objects’. Partial replaces part, in that it refers to bias, as in evaluating intensities that know no lack and are capable of selecting organs (see translator’s note in Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 340n).

²⁹ As Holland (2012: 322) notes, this resembles Freud’s ‘polymorphous perversity’ of the infantile (pre-ego) unconscious in that “anything goes; before being fixated on specific organs, erogenous zones, or activities, pleasure can be found or taken almost anywhere; it is not instinctually determined.”

³⁰ In primitive societies, there is a collective investment of the organs, which plugs desire into the socius and assembles social production. Modern society, however, is defined by a vast privatisation of the organs, “which correspond to the decoding of the flows that have become abstract” (157).

³¹ The State still has a role to play in this process, in that it is utilised as a model of realisation as opposed to representing the absolute site of struggle and domination. It is a concrete assemblage that realises the machine of overcoding of a society, a machine which in turn is not the State itself but rather “the abstract machine which organises the dominant utterances and the established order of a society, the dominant languages and knowledge, conformist actions and feelings, segments which prevail over others” (Deleuze 2002: 97). The abstract machine of overcoding “ensures the homogenization of different segments, their convertibility, their translatability” (97). Power does not depend on the State, but “its effectiveness depends on the State as the assemblage which realizes it in a social field” (Deleuze 2002: 97). The State, therefore, is not a transcendent paradigm of an overcoding, but an immanent model of realisation for an axiomatic of decoded flows.

³² More specifically, this is the effect of exclusive disjunctions, as is the case with Freud's *A Child Is Being Beaten*, which designates Oedipus as the 'nuclear complex'. In distributing lack in two nonsymmetrical series, Freud establishes the exclusive use of the disjunctions: 'you are a girl *or* boy'. "Such is the case with castration, and its relationship to Oedipus in both instances" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 67). Here, the moment of consummation, of '*So it's me!*', refers back to the Oedipal triangle: "When the family ceases to be a unit of production and of reproduction, when the conjunction again finds in the family the meaning of a simple unit of consummation, it is father-mother that we consume" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 287). Such castration, though mythical, enacts a practical operation on the unconscious via the thousand breaks-flows of desiring-machines, where the unconscious no longer produces but rather 'believes'. Further, by laying the foundation for the exclusive use of the disjunctions of the unconscious in this way, desire is led down "a path of resignation" (67). Resignation, that is, to Oedipus, to castration: "for girls, renunciation of their desire for the penis; for boys, renunciation of male protest – in short, 'assumption of one's sex'" (loc. cit). To be sure, this represents an "analytical fallacy" that consists in passing from the detachable partial object to the position of a complete object as the thing detached (phallus). Such a passage "implies a subject, defined as a fixed ego of one sex or the other, who necessarily experiences as a lack his subordination to the tyrannical complete object" (68).

³³ Given that capitalism represses desire by way of the axiom, and that this in turn has the potential to create bad conscience, it is misleading to conclude that the conflation of capitalism with deterritorialisation, or rather the notion that capitalism liberates flows of desire, speaks to an affinity "to the most radical aspects of liberal thought, which are precisely the most libertarian, notably Hayek, who promoted the idea of 'value-desire'" (Garo 2008: 62). Indeed, as Read (2008: 147) notes, "Deleuze and Guattari's invocation of a 'spiritualized Urstraat' against the 'immanence of the social forces' invokes Marx's early criticism of capitalism in 'On the Jewish Question'," which speaks to "a splitting of the subject, and of existence, in which mankind lives as both a citizen, an equal participant in the ideology of collective life, and a member of civil society, unequal and concerned only with one's private self-interest." The reterritorialisation by capitalism via the axiomatic of capital and the utilisation of Urstraat/Oedipus means that the subject will be ruled by real abstraction on the one hand and codes on the other hand. Thus, Deleuze and Guattari do not see capitalism as a process of liberation *par excellence*. As soon as capitalism liberates the codes of desire, it comes against its own interior limit, and so enacts an insidious subterranean process of subjectification. Similarly, Deleuze and Guattari maintain that the inter-subjective idealism of free markets has corrupted the political idea of friendship as the prerequisite to democratic consensus (see Lambert 2008: 35 and Patton 2008: 188).

³⁴ As Deleuze (2006: 104) puts it, in the normal state the role of reactive forces "is always to limit action," whereas active forces "produce a burst of creativity." The active type, in this sense, is not a type that only contains active forces, but rather expresses the normal relation between a reaction that delays action and an action that precipitates reaction – thus the "master is said to react precisely because he acts his reactions" (loc. cit). Reaction alone, then, cannot constitute *ressentiment*, nor can *ressentiment* be understood in terms of the strength of a reaction. The origins of *ressentiment* come from not re-acting. That is, "*reaction ceases to be acted in order to become something felt (senti)*". Reactive forces prevail over active forces because they escape their action" (104).

³⁵ For Nietzsche, the Judaic priest represents this. He gives it form insofar as he conducts the prosecution and pursues the enterprise of revenge. He is the "master of dialectics" insofar as he is always comparing in oppositional terms, decrying the Other as evil and thus construing himself as good (Deleuze 2006d: 118). Any synthesis is always from the perspective of the slave, and requires the master to compromise himself at the expense of his *pathos of distance*. In this sense, the dialectic is an "exhausted force which does not have the strength to affirm its difference, a force which no longer acts but rather reacts to forces which dominate it – only such a force brings to the foreground the negative element in its relation to the other" (9).

³⁶ “The father is first in relation to the child, but only because what is first is the social investment in relation to the familial investment, the investment of the social field in which the father, the child, and the family as subaggregate are at one and the same time immersed” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 303-4).

³⁷ This feeds into Deleuze and Guattari’s contention that individual fantasy is itself plugged into the existing social field, apprehending it in the form of imaginary qualities that confer on it a kind of transcendence or immortality under the shelter of which the ego plays out its pseudo destiny. This has decisive importance over the death instinct, “insofar as the immortality conferred on the existing social order arrived into the ego all the investments of repression, the phenomena of identification, of ‘superegoization’ and castration, all the resignation-desires...including the resignation to dying in the service of this order, whereas the drive itself is projected onto the outside and turned against the others” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004a: 70).

³⁸ In this way, once more, there is a great affinity with Foucault’s notion that sexuality is something produced by the discourse and practice of repression (in its classical sense) and exclusion – though Deleuze gives it its psychic counterpart.

³⁹ On the question of agency see n. 17.

⁴⁰ Here becoming is a “verb with a consistency all of its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, ‘appearing’, ‘being’, ‘equalling’ or ‘producing’” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 262). Becomings are perfectly real and also rhizomatic (as in multiple and non-hierarchical); they are not a “classificatory or genealogical tree” (263). Thus, becoming and multiplicity are the same thing, in that becoming is defined not by its elements, nor by a centre of unification or comprehension, but rather by its changing number of dimensions: “it is not divisible, it cannot lose or gain a dimension *without changing its nature*” (275). And since its variations and dimensions are immanent to it, “*it amounts to the same thing to say that each multiplicity is continually transforming itself into a string of other multiplicities, according to its thresholds and doors*” (275). Thus the question is not, or not only, that of the organism, of the history and subject of enunciation that opposes masculine to feminine in the great dualism machines, but that of the body – “the body they *steal* from us in order to fabricate opposable organisms” (305).

⁴¹ Such emphasis on becoming-minor has led some to conclude that, as democracy concerns the majority, Deleuze and Guattari are anti-democratic (see Mengue 2003: 43 and Thoburn 2003: 11). However, as noted, minority here refers to quality as opposed to quantity. Furthermore, as Patton (2006: 190) recognises, “democracy is exclusively a matter of majority only in a relatively simplistic and numerical sense. It is majoritarian insofar as majority vote is the mechanism through which the will of the people is typically determined.” Although the qualitative sense of majority can be embedded in a democracy, insofar as “the rights and duties of citizens at any moment are based upon the majoritarian ‘fact’ of the society concerned,” or rather because the principle of majority rule relies on the “prior question ‘majority of whom’,” which “has always been settled in advance and usually not by democratic means,” there is also an element of democracy that caters to minoritarian movements insofar as it is “bound up with the transformation of the majoritarian subject of democracy” (190-1). Democratic nation-states have undergone a constant struggle to broaden the base of those who count as citizens, and faced numerous efforts “to change the nature of public institutions in ways that both acknowledge and accommodate differences in relation to sexual preference, physical and mental abilities, and cultural and religious backgrounds,” which is to say “minoritarian becomings provide one important vector of ‘becoming-democratic’ in contemporary societies” (191). In this sense, Deleuze and Guattari are resolutely pro-democracy. They even go so far as to equate becoming-democratic with the philosophical task of counter-actualisation, or “philosophy’s unending struggle against opinion” (189).

⁴² This work is notable also in that its very structure and style of argument attempts to explicate the plane of immanence itself. *Anti-Oedipus* was somewhat confined in this respect, in that it was “counter-dependent on constituted ideologies ([Psycho]analysis, Stalino-Trotskyism, etc.)” (Guattari 2006: 366).

⁴³ First, is the danger of fear, wherein we “flee from flight, rigidify our segments, giving ourselves over to binary logic; the harder they have been to us on one segment, the harder we will be on another; we reterritorialize on anything available.” The more rigid the segmentarity is, “the more reassuring it is for us” (251). The second danger concerns clarity as related to the molecular. Once again, “everything is involved, even perception, even the semiotic regime, but this time on the second line” (loc. cit). Here, clarity refers to the distinctions that appear in what used to seem full, “where just before we saw end points of clear-cut segments, now there are indistinct fringes, encroachments, overlappings, migrations, acts of segmentation that no longer coincide with the rigid segmentarity” (251). From this, we think we have understood everything, and draw conclusions to that effect. Power represents the third danger, because it is on both lines simultaneously, “stretching from the rigid segments with their overcoding and resonance to the fine segmentations with their diffusion and interactions, and back again” (252). Fourth, is the danger that a line of flight, once “crossing the wall, getting out of the black holes,” connects “with other lines and each time augmenting its valence, *turning to destruction, abolition pure and simple, the passion of abolition*” (253).

⁴⁴ See Protevi (2000: 167) and Holland (2006: 74-77). Holland reproaches Protevi for asserting that the second understanding of fascism accords with a psychological conceptualisation, for it is clear that in explicitly avoiding the invocation of any kind of death drive, or rather in continuing the understanding of desire as an assemblage, it cannot be psychological – “no psychology here after all” (Holland 2006: 77).

⁴⁵ This brings us back to fascism and its difference from totalitarianism. The latter is a State affair between a localised assemblage and the abstract machine of overcoding it effectuates. Fascism, however, involves a war machine. When it builds itself a totalitarian State, “it is not in the sense of a State army taking power, but of a war machine taking over the State” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004b: 254). In fact, the fascist State is far less totalitarian than it is suicidal. It is “constructed on an intense line of flight, which it transforms into a line of pure destruction and abolition” (254). In this sense, fascism represents the reversion of the line of flight into a line of destruction that already animated the molecular focuses of fascism, “and made them interact in a war machine instead of resonating in a State apparatus” (255). The war machine, in short, no longer has anything but war as its object and “would rather annihilate its own servants than stop the destruction” (loc. cit).

The Politics of Immanence is the Politics of Life

What we have essentially been reaching for is a convincing picture of the politics of immanence. That is, to trace the way in which immanence has constantly pushed forward the components of a particular and arguably new conceptualisation of the political processes of organisation, specifically regarding subjectivity and emancipatory struggle. This task was pursued in the face of claims that immanence fails to mount an effective politics, namely by rejecting, or at least failing to account for, its very defining core: the political subject and, in the case of philosophies of lack, the ruptures and exclusions by which it and the discourse through which it identifies itself, is constituted. In some sense, then, the underling question of the present study is: can we still have a politics without a subject, and if so, what does it amount to?

Indeed we can, and must, have a politics that does not keep returning to a subject. It amounts to a politics of ‘a life’, or rather a politics of life. This is meant in two interrelated senses. First, instead of focusing on the subject, no matter how contingent or displaced, as the locus of primary political transformation and subjectivation, we turn to an immanent or virtual, impersonal and pre-individual life. This can also be understood in terms of an intensive subterranean level underpinning, traversing and interpenetrating with the differences and processes extended in chronological time and space, and oppositional thinking. It is here, in this immanent network of interpenetration that constitutes the self below the personal and the individual level, where political processes of organisation operate, preceding, determining, and reflecting preconscious interests or standard political engagements. It is precisely for this reason that Deleuze and Guattari define it as a *micropolitical* level. It is also for this reason that the ethics of self-experimentation and self-formation associated with immanence, which is cashed out through at this level, is resolutely political. In operating at the subterranean level, it can either reify or problematize social and political forms.

Second, and certainly coming out of the first insofar as it provokes it as a logical necessity, a politics of life is meant in terms of an immanent Nietzschean-inspired ethical affirmation. Experimenting with molecular fluxes and creative deterritorializations is not a mere matter of freedom for freedom’s sake, the reawakening of a turgid and outmoded liberal dream tenuously perched on false allusions of grandeur and loosely supported by an inconspicuous theological hangover. It is a matter of life itself, of returning to life those very intensities

that affirm difference beyond their own tendency to negate and cancel themselves out in identity or extensities, the release of affirmative modes that seek no justification or explanation for suffering, for existence or for Being. Herein lies the ‘normative’ justification of a line of thought constantly, and irritatingly charged of nihilism. There is no greater nihilism than to demand and expect life or existence to redeem itself under the auspices of reason.

Everything needs a context in order to be fully grasped, and indeed it was precisely in order to elucidate the nuances and their contextual underpinning, as well as the misconceptions and misreadings of this framework of immanence, that we sought its evolutionary trajectory. The study aimed to show that immanence is not only coherent, but the necessary outcome of a series of failures, contradictions and problems in modern thought. For instance, as we saw, this lineage of immanence was instigated by Sartre working through Husserl’s failure to complete his own post-Kantian aspirations. Through this, Sartre effectively challenges the notion that there is ‘one’ true self and centre of agency. Although this position led Deleuze to claim that Sartre’s thesis (in terms of completing immanence) was hindered in that the transcendental field was still determined as a field of consciousness, it is evident that for Sartre this is premised on our primordial enthrallment with the world in terms of the pre-personal and pre-individual flesh. That is why it can be said that Sartre’s position critically rejects subjective and objective idealism, wherein human involvement with the world is founded on a subject’s representations, bringing man back into direct contact with the world, and its contingency – “Life is nothing until it is lived” (Sartre 2007: 65).

In striving to overcome the dualistic or Cartesian crisis afflicting modern thought completely (where Sartre was construed as its last bastion), we saw Merleau-Ponty push the immanence found in Sartre to its full realisation and consistency as far as phenomenological analysis allows. More specifically, he not only ‘fleshes’ out the concept of the flesh, but also provides us with an entirely new language beyond a limited and dualistic discourse that still implies transcendence. This comes out of a necessary self-criticism, which ultimately recognizes the limits of traditional philosophical language and the way in which it is ontologically housed. Critically, it is here that the Outside/Other is first construed as a disjunctive *fold* of immanence itself, a pertinent turning point consistently omitted or disregarded by our antagonists. Through the fold, we come to understand how we can move beyond the subject,

without for all that sacrificing the violence, rupture of Outside/Other typically associated with politics. It is a matter of reconceptualization, as opposed to utter rejection of this idea. Instead of considering Otherness in terms of dialectical or second-order difference, we are given a domain of complex and subtle folds, which are both spatial and temporal in nature, greatly exceeding the problematic terms of exteriority and interiority.

This serves to radicalize Sartre's ethical project – one that is distinct from that of moral codes and dialectical thought. In the latter cases, the self takes the form of a self-reflexive *I* or ego distinguishing itself from its differential 'opposite' and in turn assuming responsibility for itself. For Merleau-Ponty, the employment of the existential self signifies a 'practical function', serving to provide a renewed and more substantial take on existentialist ethics of authenticity as a practice of freedom. Agency is not found within an Ego or a coherent unified self. Rather, it is found within the space of dispersal. Man, then, becomes a fold in Being or the fabric of immanence, capable of unfolding and refolding, but never capable of punching holes in this primary fabric. No holes in the fabric, and nothing separate or truly privileged. It is for this reason that Merleau-Ponty (1968: 84) refers to life as "an atmosphere," in the "astronomical sense." It is "constantly enshrouded by those mists we call the sensible world or history, the *one*, of the corporeal life and the *one* the human life, the present and the past, as a pell-mell ensemble of bodies and minds, promiscuity of visages, words, actions, with, between them all, that cohesion which cannot be denied them since they are all differences, extreme divergences of one same something" (loc. cit).

Foucault took this further through his take on power-knowledge, recognizing that the self is always already embedded in relations of transitive, unstable, virtual *forces* constituting actual formations of power, carried out by the formed or stratified relations which make up knowledge (as in formed matters or substances) and relating to extensive processes of organisation and strategy (i.e., governmentality). The fold, in this case, is force. Thus, contra those who wish to read Foucault within a deeply Althusserian conjecture (*inter alia* Žižek and Butler), the nature of this network must be understood according to the very same immanent logic of dispersion and disjunction elevated by Merleau-Ponty and underpinning Foucault's earlier work on discursive formations, wherein strategic possibilities and lines of flight are synonymous with it by virtue of their excess. Again, this extends to ethics. Foucault envisions a nebulous and dispersed self taking the form of a unity of dispersion or a field of

heterogeneities beyond object-subject and inside-outside splits. The subject is not envisioned as a substance, but rather as a form that is not primarily or always identical with itself. The care of the self, like existential authenticity, represents an art of living in which one seeks to work through power, once more by way of folding force, or making it relate back to itself, taking advantage of the disjunctive opportunities and lines of flight it provides.

Building on this trajectory, Deleuze posits immanent life in terms of virtual events and singularities, which are in turn *actualized* and politically organized in the subjects and objects to which it attributes itself – *it is the ultimate egg*. ‘A life’ is therefore not marked by separate individualities and subjective qualities as much as it is defined by distinct singularities and *virtuals* “engaged in a process of actualization following the plane that gives it its particular reality,” as Deleuze (2005: 31) puts it. Given this virtual/actual relation, it also holds that a life is not defined by separations and gaps, and neither is it a realm of complete inclusivity – *it is nothing more than its disjunctive connections* to an immanent Outside provoking it. This is a far cry from a formal ego or self-transparent consciousness. For consciousness is nothing without a synthesis of unification, “but there is no synthesis of unification of consciousness without the form of the I, or the point of view of the Self” (Deleuze 2004b: 118). What is “neither individual nor personal, are, on the contrary, emissions of singularities insofar as they occur on an unconscious surface and possess a mobile, immanent principle of autounification through a *nomadic distribution*, radically distinct from fixed and sedentary distributions as conditions of the syntheses of consciousness” (loc. cit). In Deleuze’s later thinking – taking on a distinctly more ethico-political approach in that rather than accounting for the genetic conditions of thought as such, it is concerned with *becoming*, or rather with bringing virtual intensities back into life – the unconscious surface is construed in terms of desiring-production, in which ‘a life’ is determined by way of non-chronological syntheses of drives and partial objects, in conjunction with processes of social and machinic production in which the condition is in the conditioned. This, in turn, establishes a series of intensive states consummated by the self, creating a retroactive sense of self-identification. In speaking of desiring-production, the genetic coding, decoding and re-coding of power-relations are understood to operate through and by an affective and agentic dimension. In expanding the notion of the impersonal, pre-subjective life this way, Deleuze turns to unconscious libidinal investments,

or desiring-production, which, alongside social production, produces reality and our experience of it.

The first thing to come from this critical move is an ability to conceptualise the way in which we come to desire our repression (i.e., bad conscience), in which politico-ethics is construed not merely as a matter of self-experimentation or as a set of practices of freedom, in accordance with a crypto-normative veneration of difference itself. We evaluate and differentiate modes of existence in terms of active and reactive desires, with one affirming life in its difference and the other negating it. As shown, though this second meaning of a politics of life was integral to Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Foucault, it was Deleuze who systemised it in conjunction with the first.

The second is that we cannot, in staying true to Deleuze, envision the ‘micropolitical’ as somehow cut-off from the macropolitics of segments and organisation. Again, this was evident in the previous three thinkers, and again it is Deleuze who perspicaciously systemises it. It holds that the differences in regime between the micropolitical and the macropolitical does not in any way preclude there being a complete immanence of the two dimensions. The segments of governmentality, or the abstract machine of capitalism, utilise intensive relations or lines of force to regulate, manage, *organise* or re-territorialise assemblages. On the flip side, these can also be spurred and altered by micro-desires or perceptions – one as the (re)(in)fold of the other. Indeed, the whole point of the fold is to allow us to conceptualise such relations beyond the problematic terms of identity and opposition, interiority and exteriority.

To be more specific, although the condition of possibility for power is not found in the existence of a central point (i.e., the State, the class, the economic base) but rather in the virtual, moving substrate of force relations that surrounds us and comes from everywhere, the actualised expression of these virtual intensities in extension requires organisation/stratified relations through formed matters in conjunction, or rather disjunction, with social production. In fact, this is not just a question of utilization, for all forms of expression entail organization and the capturing of intensive singularities on the plane of immanence, and all forms of organization concern politics in its broad sense. That is why we can venture so far as to say that, from the moment we are born into existence and from

the moment we express, there are lines of force, both molar and molecular, at work within us and tangled up with one another, where one is the fold of the other.

This brings us back to the very definition of immanence that seemed so allusive at the start. It was said in the introduction that immanence, at its most basic, refers to a state of being internal or remaining within. However, as we have seen, this does not amount to a radical interiority of consciousness (which is how the term is treated by Sartre) or a pipedream of complete inclusivity and so a complete rejection of the Outside or Other (which is how the term is treated by contemporary thinkers of transcendence); and neither is it, for all that, the same sort of immanence as is often attributed to Hegel's dialectic of identity. What is critical here, and indeed we traced it throughout the lineage, is the atypical reconstrual of the Outside/Other in terms of disjunctive folding. That is, instead of treating the Other in transcendent terms, as either an absolute fullness or an absolute lack beyond being, we treat it as a fold of Being that structures relations of difference beyond the terms of interiority and exteriority. In this case, there is no negative in the process of subjectivity, or two different ontological orders of Being that relate through oppositions, contradictions and second-order differences. This is simply another way of saying that both the molar and the molecular are of the same univocal fabric of being, folding into and twisting around each other to create our sense of self and the very identities we use to mark out that very same self – a nomadic distribution.

Through undertaking this journey, have we not also come to see how everything is political, or how politics cannot be reserved for the subject or indeed any segmented category? As opposed to laying the ground for its nebulous dispersion, stripping it of its conceptual specificity so as to deem it so utterly relative that it paradoxically fails to signify anything political at all,¹ this is meant in the very precise sense of organized expressions of virtual intensities. To be is to express, and to express is to be organized and stratified. The very expression and emission of virtual multiplicities require and are *provoked* by organisation/stratified relations through formed matters in conjunction – or, rather, disjunction – with social production and political forms (interchangeably understood as the 'macropolitical'). In this respect, to conduct a molar politics without its micro counterpart is to remain abstract in the sense of presenting one half of political reality as the whole of political reality.

Further, insofar as there is a complete immanence of the two domains, is it not also entirely misleading to claim that with immanence we are faced with the disappearance of the category of the subject and identity in their entirety? Although immanence does argue that identity is a semblance or simulation, it does not for all that maintain that it bears no significance for the political. The subject, identity and exclusion *are* at the level of organisation of segmentarity. But as opposed to representing a constitutive, or a theoretically and practically necessary categories, we come to understand them as illusionary epiphenomena. This is not to deny that such illusions structure a certain level of political life, but it is to deny that they are in way constitutive of political subjectivity. They rely on a molecular level, an underlying complex concerning other kinds of transformation, and where other political possibilities reside, which accords to different conceptual rules all together.² To operate above this level, before taking stock of it, is already to come in too late, it is to miss that which gives the given.

This leads onto what is perhaps the most central point of immanence. Though we have already mentioned it, it is worth reiterating as we come to the close: it is precisely due to this mutual imbrication of the two domains that resistance takes the form of a self-experimental aesthetic aimed at affirmatively rerouting, subverting and playing with this constitutive virtual or intensive level, which in turn has the power to surmount the categories of standard politics either by undermining actual forms or mutating them from within. If both my latent sense of subjectivity (the way in which my preferences, tastes, attitudes, desires, attractions, feelings, habits and so forth, can be formed so as to turn me into a subject of convenience), and my more overt political engagements (such as my party membership, my electoral preference, my preconscious interests) are constituted at the virtual intensive level, then it holds that practices that impact this level can have profound consequences. With respect to the former, engaging with a micropolitics will have the potential to subvert and undermine completely all the various forces that have, in collusion with macro strategies or the abstract machine of a given society or institution, conspired to construct me in a certain way, and that heavily rely on this construction for their continued existence. In this instance, 'I' can turn myself from a subject of convenience to one of inconvenience and disruption. I can lodge myself on the social stratum, but also disperse myself across it. I can be so scattered that I can no longer be captured by it. With respect to the latter, engaging with a micropolitics will have the potential to awaken me from a dogmatic slumber, to overcome

forces of resentment and division, or at the very least to instil in me a basic weariness and persistent questioning of my own and others' political engagements and exclusionary practices. It is this intensive point (in conjunction with the notion of double-conditioning), more than any other, which has pushed the conceptualisation of the political deeper, into a new, more disturbing, terrain. Man is not born free only to find himself everywhere in chains. Man is his chains, man is his lines of force, but they can be subverted, folded, re-folded and unfolded, tangled and untangled, again and again in an endless and affirmative game of existence. Thus, it is not the case that concern with issues of identity (that is, the way in which it arises as a simulacrum of more fundamental differential processes) and self-experimentation are the luxury of the rich, or the bourgeoisie, as some such as Žižek or Badiou maintain. Politics starts here. In this sense, immanence will only appear apolitical – haunting even – to those committed to a more traditional, oppositional, or even abstract perspective.

Notes

¹ See for instance, Garo (2008: 57), who makes this claim against Deleuze.

² For the same reason, Baugh (2003: 152) is misleading when he states that, as opposed to Derrida, who wants to “liberate negation from the constraints of the dialectic,” Deleuze “wants to dispense with negative difference altogether.”

Bibliography

- Adorno, T. W. (1973) *Negative Dialectics*. Trans. E. B. Ashton. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Agamben, G. (2000) 'Absolute Immanence', in Heller-Roazen (ed) *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*. Stanford, Stanford University Press.
- Allen, B. (1998) 'Foucault and Modern Political Philosophy' in Moss, J. (ed) *The Later Foucault*. London, Sage Publications Ltd, pp. 164-198.
- Althusser, L. (2005) *For Marx*. Verso, London.
- Althusser, L. (2008) *On Ideology*. Verso, London.
- Anderson, P. (1983) *In The Tracks of Historical Materialism: Weekly Library Lectures*. London, Verso.
- Anderson, T. C. (1993) *Two Ethics: From Authenticity to Integral Humanity*. Chicago, Open Court.
- Ansell-Pearson, K. (1999) *Geminal Life: The difference and repetition of Deleuze*. London, Routledge.
- Aronson, R. (1978) *Jean-Paul Sartre: Philosophy in the World*. London, Verso.
- Badiou, A. (2000) *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*. Trans. Louise Burchill. London, University of Minnesota Press.
- Badiou, A. (2006) *Being and Event*. Trans. Oliver Feltham. London, Continuum.
- Badiou, A. (2012) *The Adventures of French Philosophy*. Trans. B. Bosteels. London, Verso.
- Barbaras, R. (2004) *The Being of the Phenomenon: Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*. Trans. T. Toadvine and L. Lawlor. Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press.
- Barnes, H. E. (1974) *Sartre*. London, Quartet Books.
- Barrett, W. (1990) *Irrational Man: a Study in Existential Philosophy*. New York, Anchor Books.
- Baugh, B. (2003) *French Hegel: From Surrealism to Postmodernism*. New York, Routledge.
- Beauvoir, S. (1976) *The Ethics of Ambiguity*. Trans. B. Frechtman. New York, Kensington Publishing Corp.
- Beauvoir, S. (1998) 'Merleau-Ponty and Pseudo-Sartreanism', in Stewart, J. (ed.,) *The Debate Between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty*. Evanston, Northwestern University Press, pp. 448-490.
- Beistegui, M. (2010) *Immanence: Deleuze and Philosophy*. Edinburgh University Press.

- Berlin, I. (2004) 'Two Concepts of Liberty', in Hardy, H. (ed) *Liberty: Incorporating Four Essays on Liberty*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 166-217.
- Bernauer, J. W. & Mahon, M. (2007) 'Michele Foucault's Ethical Imagination' in Gutting, G. (ed) *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 149-175.
- Best, S. & Kellner, D. (1991) *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Binswanger, L. (1958) 'The Existential analysis school of thought', Trans. E. Angel, in May, R. et al (ed.) *Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology*. New York, Basic Books.
- Boradori, G. (2001) 'The Temporalization of Difference: Reflections on Deleuze's Interpretation of Bergson', *Continental Philosophy Review*, Vol. 34 (1), pp. 1-20.
- Boundas, C. V. (1996) 'Deleuze-Bergson: an Ontology of the Virtual', in Patton, P. (eds) *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Ltd, pp. 81-106.
- Bourriaud, N. (2002) *Relational Aesthetics*. Trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods. Dijon, Le presses du reel.
- Brown, W. (1998) 'Genealogical Politics' in Moss, J. (ed) *The Later Foucault*. London, Sage Publications, pp. 33-49.
- Buchanan, I. (2000) *Deleuzism: A Metacommentary*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.
- Buchanan, I. (2008) 'Power, Theory and Praxis', in Buchanan, I. and Thoburn, N. (eds.) *Deleuze and Politics*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, pp. 13-34.
- Buchanan, I. and Thoburn, N. (2008) 'Introduction: Deleuze and Politics', in Buchanan, I. and Thoburn, N. (eds) *Deleuze and Politics*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, pp. 1-12.
- Butler, J. (1989) 'Sexual Ideology and Phenomenological Description: A Feminist Critique of Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*', in Allen, J. and Young, I. M. (ed.) *The Thinking Muse*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London, Routledge Classics.
- Butler, J. (1993) *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*. New York, Routledge
- Butler, J. (1997) *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford, Stanford University Press.
- Butler, J. (2012) *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France*. New York, Columbia University Press.

- Cannon, B. (1985) 'The Death of the Objective Observer: Sartre's Dialectical Reason as an Epistemology for the Social Sciences', *Man and World*, vol 18. pp 269-293. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Carbone, M. (2004) *The Thinking of the Sensible: Merleau-Ponty's A-Philosophy*. Albany, SUNY Press.
- Catalano, J. S. (1985) *A Commentary on Jean-Paul Sartre's "Being and Nothingness."* London, University of Chicago Press.
- Catalano, J. S. (1996) *Good Faith and Other Essays: Perspectives on a Sartrean Ethics*. London, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Catalano, J. S. (1998) 'The Body and the Book: Reading *Being and Nothingness*' in Stewart, J. (ed) *The Debate Between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty*. Evanston, Northwestern University Press, pp. 154-174.
- Catalano, J. S. (2005) 'Sartre's Ontology from *Being and Nothingness* to *The Family Idiot* Joseph S. Catalano', in Hoven, A and Leak, A. (ed.,) *Sartre Today: A Centenary Celebration*. Oxford, Berghahn Books.
- Choat, S. (2010) *Marx Through Post-Structuralism: Lyotard, Derrida, Foucault, Deleuze*. London, Continuum.
- Cohn, H. W. (1997) *Existential Thought and Therapeutic Practice: An Introduction to Existential Psychotherapy*. London, Sage Publications.
- Colebrook, C. (2005) *Philosophy and Post-Structuralist Theory: From Kant to Deleuze*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.
- Colebrook, C. (2008) 'Bourgeois Thermodynamics', in Buchanan, I. and Thoburn, N. (eds) *Deleuze and Politics*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, pp. 121-138.
- Collier, A. (1977) *R. D. Laing: The Philosophy and Politics of Psychotherapy*. Sussex, The Harvester Press Limited.
- Compton, J. J. (1998) 'Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Human Freedom', in Stewart, J. (ed) *The Debate Between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty*. Evanston, Northwestern University Press, pp. 175-186.
- Connolly, W. E. (1991) *Identity\Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*. London, University of Minnesota Press.
- Connolly, W. E. (1998) 'Beyond Good and Evil: The Ethical Sensibility of Michel Foucault' in Moss, J. (ed) *The Later Foucault*. London, Sage Publications, pp. 108-128.
- Connolly, W. (2002) *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed*. London, University of Minnesota Press.
- Connolly, W. (2011) *A World of Becoming*. London, University Press.
- Coole, D. (2007) *Merleau-Ponty and Modern Politics After Anti-Humanism*. Plymouth, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

- Cooper, D. (1999) *Existentialism: A Reconstruction* (2nd ed). Victoria, Blackwell.
- Craib, I. (1976) *Existentialism and Sociology: A Study of Jean-Paul Sartre*. London, Cambridge University Press.
- Crittenden, P. (2009) *Sartre in Search of an Ethics*. Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Cumming, R. D. (1979) 'This Place of Violence, Obscurity and Witchcraft', *Political Theory*, vol. 7 (2), pp. 181-200: Sage Publications.
- Danto, C. (1975) *Sartre* (2nd ed). London, Fontana Press.
- Davidson, A. (1986) 'Archaeology, Genealogy, Ethics', in Hoy, D. C. (ed) *Foucault: A Critical Reader*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell. pp. 221-234.
- Deleuze, G. (1991) *Bergsonism*. Trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam. New York, Zone Books.
- Deleuze, G. (1992) *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*. Trans. M. Joughin. New York, Zone Books.
- Deleuze, G. (1995) *Negotiations: 1972-1990*. Trans. M. Joughin. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1997) *Appendix. Review of Jean Hyppolite, Logique et existence*, in Hyppolite, J. *Logic and Existence*. Trans. L. Lawlor and A. Sen. New York, State University of New York Press.
- Deleuze, G. (2001) *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*. Trans. A. Boyman. New York, Zone Books.
- Deleuze, G. (2002) *Desert Islands and Other Texts: 1953-1974*. Trans. M. Taormina. London, Semiotext(e).
- Deleuze, G. (2004a) *Difference and Repetition*. Trans. P. Patton. London, Continuum.
- Deleuze, G. (2004b) *The Logic of Sense*. Trans. M. Lester. London, Continuum.
- Deleuze, G. (2006a) *Dialogues II*. Trans. H. Tomlison, B. Habberjam, and E. Ross Albert. London, Continuum.
- Deleuze, G. (2006b) *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*. Trans. T. Conley. London, Continuum.
- Deleuze, G. (2006c) *Foucault*. Trans. Hand, S. London, Continuum.
- Deleuze, G. (2006d) *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. Trans. Thomlinson, H. London, Continuum.
- Deleuze, G. (2013) *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*. Trans. D. W. Smith. London, Bloomsbury.
- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1994) *What is Philosophy?* Trans. H. Tomlinson and G. Burchell. New York, Columbian University Press.

- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (2004a) *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans R. Hurley, M. Seem and H. R. Lane. London, Continuum.
- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (2004b) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. B. Massumi. London, Continuum.
- Descartes, R. (1969) *Discourse on Method and The Meditations*. Trans. F. E. Sutcliffe. London, Penguin Books.
- Devenney, M. (2002) 'Critical Theory and Democracy' in Finlayson, A. & Valentine, J. (ed) *Politics and Post-Structuralism*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, pp.176-193.
- Dews, P. (2007) *Logics of Disintegration: Post-Structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory*. London, Verso.
- Dosse, F. (1997) *The History of Structuralism, Volume 1: The Rising Sign, 1945-1966*. London, University of Minnesota Press.
- Downing, L. (2008) *The Cambridge Introduction to Michele Foucault*. New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Dreyfus, L. H. (2002) 'Intelligence without representation: Merleau-Ponty's Critique of Mental Representation' in *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 1 (4), pp. 367-83.
- Dreyfus, L. H. & Rabinow, P. (1983) *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (2nd ed). Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Duncan, J. (2005) 'Sartre and Realism-All-the-Way-Down', in Hoven, A. and Leak, A. (ed.) *Sartre Today: A Centenary Celebration*. Oxford, Berghahn Books.
- Fell, P. J. (1979) *Heidegger and Sartre: An Essay on Being and Place*. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Flynn, T. R. (1997) 'An End to Authority: Epistemology and Politics in the Later Sartre', in McBride, W. L. (ed) *Existentialist Politics and Political Theory*. London, Garland Publishing, Inc. pp. 50-67.
- Flynn, T. R. (2005a) 'Introduction: Sartre at One Hundred—a Man of the Nineteenth Century Addressing the Twenty-First?', In van den Hoven, A. and Leak, A. (ed) 'Sartre Today: A Century Celebration'. Oxford, Berghahn Books pp. 1-14.
- Flynn, T. R. (2005b) *Sartre, Foucault, and Historical Reason: Volume Two, A Poststructuralist Mapping of History*. London, The University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M. (1980a) 'The Confession of the Flesh' in Gordon, C. (ed) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. New York, Vintage Books, pp. 194-228.
- Foucault, M. (1980b) 'Truth and Power' in Gordon, C. (ed) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. New York, Vintage Books, pp. 109-133.
- Foucault, M. (1981) 'The Order of Discourse' in Young, R. (ed) *Untying The Text: A Poststructuralist Reader*. Boston, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, pp. 48-78.

- Foucault, M. (1988a) 'The Ethic of Care of the Self as a Practice of Freedom' in Bernauer, J and Rasmussen, D. (eds) *The Final Foucault*. Cambridge, MIT Press. pp. 1-20.
- Foucault, M. (1998b) 'The Return of Morality' in Kritzman, L. D. (ed) *Philosophy, Philosophy, Culture*. New York, Routledge. pp. 242-254.
- Foucault, M. (1990) *The Care of The Self: The History of Sexuality Volume 3*. Trans Robert Hurley. London, Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1991a) *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. Trans. A. Sheridan. London, Penguin Books.
- Foucault, M. (1991b) 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' in Rabinow, P. (ed) *The Foucault Reader: an Introduction to Foucault's Thought*. London, Penguin Books. pp. 76-100.
- Foucault, M. (1991d) 'On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress', in Rabinow, P. (ed) *The Foucault Reader: an Introduction to Foucault's Thought*. London, Penguin Books, pp. 340-372.
- Foucault, M. (1991e) 'Politics and Ethics: An Interview' in Rabinow, P. (ed) *The Foucault Reader: an Introduction to Foucault's Thought*. London, Perengrine, pp. 373-380.
- Foucault, M. (1991f) 'What is Enlightenment', in Rabinow, P. (ed) *The Foucault Reader: an Introduction to Foucault's Thought*. London, Penguin Books, pp. 32-50.
- Foucault, M. (1992) *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality Volume 2*. Trans Robert Hurley. London, Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1996a) 'Madness Only Exists in Society' in Lotringer, S. (ed) *Foucault Live: Michel Foucault: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*. London, Semiotext(e), pp. 7-9
- Foucault, M. (1996b) 'The Aesthetics of Existence' in Lotringer, S. (ed) *Foucault Live: Michele Foucault: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*. London, Semiotext(e), pp. 450-454.
- Foucault, M. (1996c) "The Concern for Truth" in Lotringer, S. (ed) *Foucault Live: Michele Foucault: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*. London, Semiotext(e), pp. 455-464.
- Foucault, M. (1996d) 'The Ethics of the Concern for Self', in Lotringer, S. (ed) *Foucault Live: Michele Foucault: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*. London, Semiotext(e), pp. 432-449.
- Foucault, M. (1996e) 'The Order of Things' in Lotringer, S. (ed) *Foucault Live: Michele Foucault: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*. London, Semiotext(e), pp. 13-18
- Foucault, M. (1996f) 'The Return of Morality', in Lotringer, S. (ed) *Foucault Live: Michele Foucault: Collected Interviews, 1961-1984*. London, Semiotext(e), pp. 465-473.
- Foucault, M. (1998) *The Will to knowledge: The History of Sexuality: Volume One*. Trans. Robert Hurley. London, Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (2000a) 'Life: Experience and Science' in Faubion, J. D. (ed) *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*. Trans Robert Hurley and Others. London, Penguin Books, pp. 465-478.

- Foucault, M. (2000b) 'Theatrum Philosophicum' in Faubion, J. D. (ed) *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*. Trans Robert Hurley and Others. London, Penguin Books, pp. 343-368.
- Foucault, M. (2001a) 'Governmentality' in Faubion, J. D. (ed) *Michele Foucault: Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*. London, Penguin Books, pp. 201-222.
- Foucault, M. (2001b) 'Interview with Michel Foucault' in Faubion, J. D. (ed) *Michele Foucault: Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*. London, Penguin Books. pp. 239-297.
- Foucault, M. (2001c) 'Truth and Juridical Forms', in Faubion, J. D. (ed) *Michele Foucault: Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*. London, Penguin Books. pp.1-89.
- Foucault, M. (2001d) 'The Subject and Power', in Faubion, J. D. (ed) *Michele Foucault: Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*. London, Penguin Books. pp. 326-349.
- Foucault, M. (2002a) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Trans S. A. M. Smith. London, Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (2002b) *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. London, Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (2003) *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. Trans. A. M. Sheridan. London, Routledge Classics.
- Foucault, M. (2004) 'Preface'. Preface. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. London, Continuum. pp. xiii-xvi.
- Foucault, M. (2008a) *An Introduction to Kant's Anthropology from a Pragmatic Perspective*. Cambridge, MIT Press.
- Foucault, M. (2008b) 'Two Lectures', in Roach, S. C. (ed.,) *Critical Theory and International relations*. London, Routledge, pp. 317-325.
- Fox, N. F. (2003) *The New Sartre: Explorations in Postmodernism*. London, Continuum.
- Frankl, V. E. (2010) *The Doctor and the Soul: From Psychotherapy to Logotherapy*. Trans. Richard Winston & Clara Winston. London, Souvenir Press.
- Fraser, N. (1989) *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory*. Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Freud, S. (2005) 'On the Pleasure and the Reality Principle', in Freud, A. (2005) *The Essential Freud*. Trans. James Strachey. London, Vintage, pp. 505-517.
- Freud, S. (1997) *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Trans. A. A. Brill. St Ives, Wordsworth.
- Frie, R. (2012) 'Existential therapy and post-Cartesian psychoanalysis: Historical perspectives and confluence', in Barnett, L. and Madison, G. (eds) *Existential psychotherapy: Legacy, vibrancy and dialogue*. London: Routledge, pp. 21-33.
- Fromm, E. (1961) *Marx's Concept of Man*. Trans. T. B. Bottomore. New York, Frederick Ungar Publishing Co.
- Fromm, E. (1973) *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*. London, Penguin Group.

- Fromm, E. (2001) *The Fear of Freedom*. London, Routledge.
- Frosh, S. (1997) *For and Against Psychoanalysis* (2nd ed.). London, Routledge.
- Gardner, S. (2009) *Sartre's Being and Nothingness: A Reader's Guide*. London, Continuum.
- Gatens, M. (1996) 'Through a Spinozist Lens: Ethology, Difference, Power', in Patton, P. (eds) *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Ltd, pp. 162-187.
- Genosko, G. (2012) 'Deleuze and Guattari: Guattareuze & Co.', in Smith, D. W. and Somers-Hall, H. (eds) *The Cambridge Companion to Deleuze*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 151-169.
- Gillan, G. J. (1997) 'A Question of Method: History and Critical Experience', in McBride, W. L. (ed) *Existentialist Politics and Political Theory*. London, Garland Publishing, pp. 193-206.
- Gilliam, C. (2013) 'Existential Boredom Re-examined: Boredom as Authenticity and Life-Affirmation', *Existential Analysis*, vol. 24 (2), pp. 250-262.
- Grimsley, R. (1955) 'An Aspect of Sartre and the Unconscious' *Philosophy*, vol. 30 (112), pp. 33-44.
- Grosz, E. (1999) 'Merleau-Ponty and Irigaray in the Flesh' in Olkowski, D. and Morley, J. (ed) *Merleau-Ponty, Interiority and Exteriority, Psychic Life and the World*. Albany, State University of New York Press, pp. 145-166.
- Habermas, J. (1987) *The Philosophical Discourses of Modernity*. Trans. F. Lawrence. Cambridge, The MIT Press.
- Hacking, I. (1986) 'The Archaeology of Foucault' in Hoy, D. C. (ed) *Foucault: A Critical Reader*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell Ltd. pp. 27-40.
- Hall, R. (1998) 'Freedom: Merleau-Ponty's Critique of Sartre', in Stewart, J. (ed) *The Debate between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty*. Illinois, Northwestern University Press.
- Hatzimoysis, A. (2011) *The Philosophy of Sartre*. Durham, Acumen.
- Hegel, G. W. F. (1977) *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A. V. Miller. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Heidegger, M. (2008) *Being and Time*. Trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. Victoria, Blackwell Publishing.
- Heidegger, M. (2011) 'Letter on Humanism' in Krell, D. F. (ed) *Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger*. London, Routledge, pp. 213-266.
- Hendley, S. (1991) *Reason and Relativism: A Sartrean Investigation*. New York, State University of New York Press.
- Hindess, B. (1998) 'Politics and Liberation' in Moss, J. (ed) *The Later Foucault*. London, Sage Publications, pp. 50-63.

- Holland, E. W. (2008) 'Schizoanalysis, Nomadology, Fascism', in Buchanan, I. and Thoburn, N. (eds) *Deleuze and Politics*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.
- Holland, E. W. (2012) 'Deleuze and Psychoanalysis', in Smith, D. W. and Somers-Hall, H. (eds) *The Cambridge Companion to Deleuze*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 307-336.
- Holyzhey-Kunz, A. and Fazekas, T. (2012) 'Daseinsanalysis: a dialogue', in Barnett, L. and Madison, G. (eds) *Existential psychotherapy: Legacy, vibrancy and dialogue*. London: Routledge, pp. 35-52
- Houlgate, S. (1986) *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Hoy, D. C. (1986) 'Power, Repression, Progress: Foucault, Lukes, and the Frankfurt School' in Hoy, D. C. (ed) *Foucault: A Critical Reader*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell, pp. 123-148.
- Hoy, D. C. (1998) 'Foucault and Critical Theory', in Moss, J. (ed) *The Later Foucault*. London, Sage Publications, pp. 18-32.
- Husserl, E. (2001) *Logical Investigations: Vol I*. Trans. J. N. Findlay. London, Routledge.
- Husserl, E. *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. Trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson. London, Routledge Classics.
- Hendley, S. (1991) *Reason and Relativism: A Sartrean Investigation*. New York, State University of New York.
- Ingram, D. (2007) 'Foucault and Habermas' in Gutting, G. (ed) *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (2nd ed). Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Irigaray, L. (1993) 'The Invisible of the Flesh: A Reading of Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 'The Intertwining—The Chiasm', in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. London, Athlone, pp. 151-184.
- Jay, M. (1986) 'In the Empire of the Gaze: Foucault and the Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-century French Thought' in Hoy, D. C. (ed) *Foucault: A Critical Reader*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell, pp. 157-174.
- Jung, H. Y. (1971) 'The Political Relevance of Existential Phenomenology', *The Review of Politics*, vol. 33 (4), pp. 538-563 [online] accessed: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1406378> [last accessed 10/01/2011].
- Kazashi, N. (1999) 'Bodily Logos: James, Merleau-Ponty, and Nishida' in Olkowski, D. and Morely, J. (eds) *Merleau-Ponty, Interiority and Exteriority, Psychic Life and the World*. New York, State University New York. pp. 107-120.
- Kwant, R. C. (1963) *The Phenomenological Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty*. Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press.
- Kierkegaard, S. (2000) 'The Concept of Anxiety' in Hong, H. V. & Hong, E. H. (ed.) *The Essential Kierkegaard*. Princeton, Princeton University Press. pp. 138-155.

- Lacan, J. (2001) *Écrits: A Selection*. Trans. A. Sheridan. London, Routledge Classics.
- Laclau, E. (2000) 'Identity and Hegemony: The Role of Universality in the Constitution of Political Logos' in Butler, J. et al (ed) *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*.
- Laclau, E. (2001) 'Can Immanence Explain Social Struggles?' *Diacritics*, vol. 31 (4), pp. 3-10.
- Laclau, E. (2007) *Emancipation(s)*. London, Verso.
- Laclau, E. & Mouffe, C. (2001) *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (2nd ed). London, Verso.
- Laing, R. D. (1967) *The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise*. London, Penguin Group.
- Laing, R. D. (1990) *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness*. London, Penguin Group.
- Lambert, G. (2008) 'Deleuze and the Political Ontology of Politics in the Work of Gilles Deleuze', Buchanan, I. and Thoburn, N. (eds) *Deleuze and Politics*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, pp. 35-53.
- Landes, D. A. (2013) *Merleau-Ponty and the Paradoxes of Expression*. London, Bloomsbury.
- Langer, M. (1998) 'Sartre and Merleau-Ponty: A Reappraisal', in Stewart, J. (ed) *The Debate Between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty*. Evanston, Northwestern University Press, pp. 93-120.
- Lawlor, L. (2006) *The Implications of Immanence: Toward a New Concept of Life*. New York, Fordham University Press.
- Lecourt, D. (1970) 'Sur l'Archéologie du Savoir', *La Pensée*, no. 152.
- Levi-Strauss, C. (1968) *The Savage Mind: Nature of Human Society*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Levinas, E. (1990) 'Sensibility', in Johnson, G. and Smith, M. (ed) *Ontology and Alterity in Merleau-Ponty*. Illinois, Northwestern University Press, pp. 47-90.
- Loewenthal, D. (2011) 'From existentialism (and post-modernism) to post-existentialism: from Buber to Levinas' in Loewenthal, D. (ed) *Post-existentialism and the Psychological Therapies: Towards a Therapy Without Foundations*. London, Karnac, pp 19-31.
- Lukács, G. (1949) 'Existentialism' in Lukács, G. (1973) *Marxism and Human Liberation: Essays on History, Culture and Revolution*. Dell Publishing.
- Lukács, G. (1980) *The Destruction of Reason*. Trans Peter Palmer. New Jersey, Humanities Press Atlantic Highlands.
- Malabou, C. (1996) 'Who's Afraid of Hegelian Wolves', in Patton, P. (eds) *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, pp. 114-138.

- Mallin, S. (1979) *Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy*. New Haven, Yale University Press.
- Macherey, P. (1996) 'The Encounter with Spinoza', in Patton, P. (eds) *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Ltd, pp. 139-161.
- Marcuse, H. (1948) 'Existentialism: Remarks on Jean-Paul Sartre's *L'Être et le néant*', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol 8 (3), pp. 310-336: New Jersey, Wiley. [online] Accessed: [http://www.marcuse.org/herbert/pubs/40spubs/48hmsartre.pdf?sici=0002-8762\(194904\)54%3A3%3C557%3AEOFAP%3E2.0.CO;2-F](http://www.marcuse.org/herbert/pubs/40spubs/48hmsartre.pdf?sici=0002-8762(194904)54%3A3%3C557%3AEOFAP%3E2.0.CO;2-F) [last accessed 28 June 2012].
- Marcuse, H. (2002) *One Dimensional Man: Studies on the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. London, Routledge.
- Margarit, E. (2012) 'Deleuze Transcendental Empiricism as Exercise of Thought: Hume's Case', *Research in Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, and Practical Philosophy*, vol. 4 (2), pp. 377-403.
- Martinot, S. (1993) 'L'Esprit objectif as a theory of language', *Man and World*, vol 26. pp. 45-62. Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Marx, K. and Engels, F. (1974) *The German Ideology*. London, Lawrence & Wishart.
- Marx, K. (1979) 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', in Tucker, R. C. (ed) *Karl Marx/ Friedrich Engels Collected Works*, vol. II. New York, International publishers.
- Marx, K. and Engels, F. (2002) *The Communist Manifesto*. Trans. S. Moore. London, Penguin Classics.
- May, R. (1994) *The Discovery of Being: Writings in Existential Psychology*. London, W. W Norton & Company.
- May, T. (1993) *Between Genealogy and Epistemology: Psychology, Politics, and Knowledge in the Thought of Michel Foucault*. Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University Press.
- May, T. (2003) "Foucault's Relation to Phenomenology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (2nd ed). Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 284-311.
- McCumber, J. (2011) *Time and Philosophy: A History of Continental Thought*. Durham, Acumen.
- Mengue, P. (2003) *Deleuze et la question de la démocratie*. Paris, L'Harmattan.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1964a) *Sense and Non-Sense*. Trans. H. L. Dreyfus and P.A. Dreyfus. Illinois, Northwestern University Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1964b) *Signs*. Trans. R. C. McCleary. Illinois, Northwestern University Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968) *The Visible and the Invisible*. Trans. Alphonso Lingis. Illinois, Northwestern University Press.

- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1998) 'Sartre and Ultrabolshevism' in Stewart, J. (ed) *The Debate between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty*. Illinois, Northwestern University Press, p. 355-447.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2002) *Phenomenology of Perception*. Trans. Colin Smith. London, Routledge Classics.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2003) *Nature: Course Notes from the Collège de France*. Trans. R. Vallier. Illinois, Northwest University Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2004a) 'The Crisis of Understanding', in Baldwin, T. (ed) *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Basic Writings*. London, Routledge, pp. 325-345.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2004b) 'Eye and Mind', in Baldwin, T. (ed) *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Basic Writings*. London, Routledge, pp. 290-324.
- Mill, J. S. (2008) 'On Liberty', in Collini, S. (ed) *J. S. Mill: On Liberty and Other Writings*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. pp. 1-116.
- Miller, J. (1979) *History and Human Existence: From Marx to Merleau-Ponty*. London, University of California Press.
- Mills, S. (2003) *Michel Foucault*. New York, Routledge.
- Molina, F. (1962) *Existentialism as Philosophy*. New Jersey, Prentice-Hall.
- Moss, J. (1998) 'Foucault, Rawls and Public Reason' in Moss, J. (ed) *The Later Foucault*. London, Sage Publications, pp. 149-163.
- Mouffe, C. (2005) *The Return of the Political*. London, Verso.
- Moulard-Leonard, V. (2002) *Bergson-Deleuze Encounters: Transcendental Experience and Thought of the Virtual*. New York, State University of New York Press.
- Mulhall, S. and Swift, A. (1992) *Liberals and Communitarians: An Introduction*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers.
- Nietzsche, F. W. (1968) *The Will to Power*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York, Vintage Books
- Nietzsche, F. W. (2000a) 'Ecce Homo' in Kaufmann, W. (ed) *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York, The Modern Library, pp. 655-802.
- Nietzsche, F. W. (2000b) 'The Genealogy of Morals' in Kaufmann, W. (ed) *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York, The Modern Library, pp. 437-600.
- Norris, C. (1993) *The Truth about Postmodernism*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell.
- Novack, G. (1972) *Understanding History: Marxist Essays*. New York, Pathfinder Press.
- Olssen, M. (2006) *Michel Foucault: Materialism and Education*. London, Paradigm.
- Patton, P. (1998) 'Foucault's Subject of Power' in Moss, J. (ed) *The Later Foucault*. London, Sage Publications, pp. 64-77.
- Patton, P. (2000) *Deleuze and the Political*. London, Routledge.

- Patton, P. (2008) 'Becoming Democratic', in Buchanan, I. and Thoburn, N. (eds) *Deleuze and Politics*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, pp. 178-195.
- Paras, E. (2006) *Foucault 2.0: Beyond Power and Knowledge*. New York, Other Press.
- Poster, M. (1986) 'Foucault and the Tyranny of Greece' in Hoy, D. C. (ed) *Foucault: A Critical Reader*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell. pp. 205-220.
- Poulantzas, N. (2014) *State, Power, Socialism*. London, Verso.
- Protevi, J. (2000) 'A Problem of Pure Matter: Fascist Nihilism in *A Thousand Plateaus*', in Ansell-Pearson, K. and Morgan, D. (eds) *Nihilism Now! Monsters of Energy*. London, Macmillan Press, pp. 167-88.
- Putnam, H. (1983) *Realism and Reason: Philosophical Papers: Volume 3*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Racevskis, K. (1991) 'Michel Foucault, Rameau's nephew and the question of identity', in Bernauer, J. and Rasmussen, D. (e) *The Final Foucault*. Cambridge, MIT Press.
- Ransom, J. S. (1997) *Foucault's Discipline: the Politics of Subjectivity*. London, Duke University Press.
- Rawls, J. (1985) 'Justice as Fairness: Political not Metaphysical', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, vol 14 (3), pp. 223-51.
- Read, J. (1998) "The Age of Cynicism: Deleuze and Guattari on the Production of Subjectivity in Capitalism," in Buchanan, I. and Thoburn, N. (eds.) *Deleuze and Politics*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, pp. 139-159.
- Read, J. (2003) *The Micro-Politics of Capital: Marx and the Prehistory of the Present*. New York, State University of New York.
- Rorty, R. (1986) 'Foucault and Epistemology' in Hoy, D. C. (ed) *Foucault: A Critical Reader*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell. pp. 41-50.
- Said, E. (1986) 'Foucault and the Imagination of Power' in Hoy, D. C. (ed) *Foucault: A Critical Reader*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell. pp. 149-156.
- Sandel, M. J. (1998) *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (2nd ed). Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Sartre, J. P. (1957) *The Transcendence of the Ego: An Existentialist Theory of Consciousness*. Trans. F. Williams and R. Kirkpatrick. New York, Noonday Press.
- Sartre, J. P. (1963a) *Saint Genet: actor and martyr*. Trans B. Frechtman. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.
- Sartre, J. P. (1963b) *Search For a Method*. Trans. Hazel E. Barnes. New York, Vintage Books.
- Sartre, J. P. (1969). 'Itinerary of Thought', *New Left Review*, vol. 58, pp. 48-66.
- Sartre, J. P. (1976a) *Anti-Semite and Jew: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate*. Trans. G. J. Becker. New York, Schocken Books.

- Sartre, J. P. (1976b) *Critique of Dialectical Reason I: Theory of Practical Ensembles*. Trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith. Paris, Editions Gallimard.
- Sartre, J. P. (1981) *The Family Idiot*, vol. 1, Trans. C. Cosmon. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sartre, J. P. (1984) *War Diaries: Notes from a Phoney War, November 1939-March 1940*. London, Verso.
- Sartre, J. P. (1988) *Life/Situations: Essays Written and Spoken*. New York, Random House US.
- Sartre, J. P. (1990) *In Camera and Other Plays*. Tran. K. Black and S. Gilbert. Middlesex, Penguin Group.
- Sartre, J. P. (1992) *Notebooks for an Ethics*. Trans. D. Pellauer. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Sartre, J. P. (2000) *Nausea*. Trans. R. Baldick. London, Penguin Group.
- Sartre, J. P. (2001) *What is Literature?* Trans. B. Frechtman. London, Routledge.
- Sartre, J. P. (2002) *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*. Trans. P. Mairet. London, Routledge.
- Sartre, J. P. (2004) *The Transcendence of the Ego*. London, Routledge Classics.
- Sartre, J. P. (2006) *Critique of Dialectical Reason II (Unfinished)*. Trans. Quintin Hoare. Verso, London.
- Sartre, J. P. (2007) *Existentialism & Humanism*. Trans. P. Mairet. London, Methuen.
- Sartre, J. P. (2008a) *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. Trans. H. E. Barnes. London, Routledge.
- Sartre, J. P. (2008b) *Between Existentialism and Marxism*. London, Verso.
- Sartre, J. P. (2010) *The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination*. Trans. Jonathan Webber. London, Routledge.
- Sartre, J. P. (2013) *We Have Only This Life to Live: The Selected Essays of Jean-Paul Sartre 1939-1975*. Edited. Ronald Aronson and Adrian Van Den Hoven. New York, New York Review Books.
- Silverman, H. J. (1993) 'Cézanne's Mirror Stage' in Johnson, G. A. (ed) *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*. Evanston, Northwestern University Press. pp. 262-77.
- Simons, J. (1995) *Foucault & the political*. London, Routledge.
- Smith, D. (2003) 'Deleuze and Derrida, Immanence and Transcendence: Two Directions in Recent French Thought', in Patton, P. and Protevi, J. (eds) *Between Deleuze and Derrida*. London, Continuum Press, pp. 46-66.

- Smith, M. B (1999) 'Transcendence in Merleau-Ponty', in Olkowski, D. and Morley, J. (ed.) *Merleau-Ponty, Interiority and Exteriority, Psychic Life and the World*. Albany, State University of New York Press, pp. 35-46.
- Solomon, R. C. (1987) *From Hegel to Existentialism*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Somers-Hall, H. (2012) *Hegel, Deleuze, and the Critique of Representation: Dialectics of Negation and Difference*. Albany, State University of New York Press.
- Stewart, J. (1998) 'Merleau-Ponty's Criticisms of Sartre', in Stewart, J. (ed) *The Debate Between Sartre and Merleau-Ponty*. Evanston, Northwestern University Press, pp. 197-216.
- Taylor, C. (1976). 'Responsibly for Self', in Rorty, A. O. (ed.) *The Identities of Persons*. Los Angeles, University of California Press, pp. 281-99.
- Taylor, C. (1986) 'Foucault on Freedom and Truth' in Hoy, D. C. (ed) *Foucault: A Critical Reader*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell. pp. 69-102.
- Thoburn, N. (2003) *Deleuze, Marx and Politics*. London, Routledge.
- Tiebout, H. M. (1959) 'Tillich, Existentialism and Psychoanalysis', *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 56 (14), pp. 605-612.
- Tønner, L. and Thomassen, L. (2005) "Rethinking radical democracy between abundance and lack," in Tønner, L. and Thomassen, L. (eds.) *Radical Democracy: Politics Between Abundance and Lack*. Manchester, Manchester University Press, pp. 1-13.
- Vaz, A. (1995) 'Who's Got the Look? Sartre's Gaze and Foucault's Panopticism', *Dalhousie French Studies*, vol. 32, pp. 33-45.
- Vintages, K. (2001) "'Must we burn Foucault?'" Ethics as art of living: Simone de Beauvoir and Michel Foucault', *Continental Philosophy Review*, vol 34 (2). pp. 165-181.
- Voss, D. (2013) 'The Philosophical Concept of Meat and Flesh: Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty', *Parrhesia* vol. 18, p. 133-124.
- Yalom, I. D. (1980) *Existential Psychotherapy*. US, Basic Books.
- Young, I. (2005) *On Female Body Experience*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Walzer, M. (1986) 'The Politics of Michel Foucault' in Hoy, D. C. (ed) *Foucault: A Critical Reader*. Oxford, Basil Blackwell, pp. 51-68.
- Warnock, M. (1970) *Existentialism*. London, Oxford University Press.
- Warren, M. (1988) *Nietzsche and Political Thought*. Cambridge, The MIT Press.
- Weiss, G. (1999) 'Body Image Intercourse: A Corporeal Dialogue between Merleau-Ponty and Schilder', in Olkowski, D. and Morley, J. (ed) *Merleau-Ponty, Interiority and Exteriority, Psychic Life and the World*. Albany, State University of New York Press, pp. 121-144.
- Widder, N. (2002) *Genealogies of Difference*. Chicago, University of Illinois Press.

- Widder, N. (2004) 'Foucault and Power Revisited', *European Journal of Political Theory*, Vol. 3(4), pp. 411-432: London, Sage Publications.
- Widder, N. (2008) *Reflections on Times and Politics*. Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Widder, N. (2012) *Political Theory After Deleuze*. London, Continuum.
- Williams, J. (2011) *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time: A Critical Introduction and Guide*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Wolin, R. (2004) *The Seduction of Unreason: The Intellectual Romance with Fascism, from Nietzsche to Postmodernism*. Oxford, Princeton University Press.
- Žižek, S. (1999) *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*. London, Verso.
- Žižek, S. (2006a) 'Da Capo senza Fine' in Butler, Laclau and Žižek (2006) *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*. London, Verso.
- Žižek, S. (2006b) 'Schlagend, aber nicht Treffend!', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 33(1): 185-211.
- Žižek, S. (2008) *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. Verso, London.
- Žižek, S. (2011) *Living in the End Times*. London, Verso.
- Žižek, S. (2012a) *Organs without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences*. London, Routledge Classics.
- Žižek, S. (2012b) *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*. London, Verso.

