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# CHAOS/ART

by  
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## **Abstract**

Historically chaos has been considered the inferior and negligible opposite of order. Either an incoherent melange of disparate elements and forces that preceded the existence of the universe, or an undesired state of confusion and disarray. A lot of contemporary thought however, from mathematics to physics and philosophy, has negated this traditional conception by recognizing the essential role chaos plays in all existence. Rather than just a diminished state of matter or circumstance, chaos is now seen as a vital and necessarily productive omnipresence that results in change, innovation - the new, and many, intrinsically mutual, and coexisting orders as opposed to a single, regulatory and universal order.

By tracing the conception of chaos through Western history, especially as it was presented by the Christian churches, I seek to reveal the misconceptions that have helped lead to its diminished status. Then through the philosophical qualification of chaos by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari I show how an art that directly expresses the qualities of chaos can restore chaos to the central position it occupies while revealing the shortcomings of any institution that claims the highest forms of truth and knowledge are eternal and unchanging.



## **Introduction:**

To begin I would like to briefly regard my own beginnings. It's become clearly apparent through the research and writing of this dissertation that the context my artistic practice inhabits is directly linked to my formative years. I grew up in a very established Roman Catholic family and was educated in Catholic schools wherein identity, belief, and purpose were all predetermined and beyond negotiation. I was forever resentful of the fixed truths I would have to memorise, live by, and recount ad infinitum. They never felt natural to me, nor did I ever see myself represented within the breadth of the Christian doctrines. In fact the religious and institutional aspects of my upbringing essentially made it really difficult for me to be me. When I was young I tried to apply myself to the teachings of Catholicism but all that happened is I would suffer guilt and anguish at my own internal rebellion against the steadfast truths that authoritatively accounted for all life and existence.

Beyond the reach of the familial and Church territories that so dominated my childhood I found however a kind of solace and refuge in the natural world. Its perpetual motion and change, along with its limitless forms, from the most grand to the most minute, would engage me more deeply and evocatively than any of the teachings I had been raised on. My sense of self found correspondence with the world of nature and I remember the constant fantasy of escape into it that arose to counter the dislocation my daily life instilled. It was only until time and experience enabled me to look beyond the scope of the Christian worldview that I came to realize there were actual alternatives to it. When I saw these I didn't hesitate to embrace them and I have rarely looked back with any seriousness, well not at least until now.

It was something I never really questioned or regarded, in that it was just there, an assumed part of the landscape, but through the development of this paper I have become deeply aware of the central presence the Christian Churches have maintained throughout the history of the Western World. Their indelible effect upon its ideas, evolution and character means that the West today would be a profoundly different place without them. More pertinent to this paper however is the revelation that my own artistic ambitions have developed in reaction to this history, and even more profoundly again, the themes I engage within my work have a historic legacy that reaches back to the origins of Christian Church doctrine.

It was some time after choosing to become a painter that I undertook the seemingly arbitrary process of asking myself what were the paintings I most enjoyed or regarded, and then, from these conclusions, what were the sort of paintings I wished to produce. What I discovered however was that the outcomes of this process were by no means arbitrary but intrinsically tied back to my early life. One key imperative I came upon was to attempt to create work that would engage well beyond the initial encounter, in that the time an audience shared with a work would somehow be extended beyond a perfunctory glance. To realize this ambition I thought to incorporate qualities of liminality, imprecision, and generic or transitional/incomplete motifs that could be many things as opposed to something singular and fixed. As I saw it, this methodology would then provide the possibility for multiple potential meanings that are subjectively evoked rather than externally posited, and so in turn the relationship the viewer has with the work is extended beyond the first encounter insofar that the subjective meaning of the work, on a personal level, is recreated in the mind with each visit. Or better still, strata of meanings are preserved in the subjective memory as a growing catalogue of associations that deepens the relationship between the audience and the work over time.

This required that a certain amount of the painted image was at least familiar in some way, in that it correlated to the everyday in some respects but not enough as to become specific or certain. Also it seemed important that the work I produced remained open or unresolved in a deliberate way; was the painted image forming into something or dissolving into nothing? This lack of fixity meant that meaning was either deferred or denied all together insofar that the image didn't provide any certainty upon which a lasting interpretation could be established, and yet, the intrigue it evoked would ideally motivate the audience to keep seeking it.

These ideas in part derived from the constant fascination the medium of paint itself holds for me, it's latent potential as a kind of primal substance that can be manipulated to represent an infinity of images or patterns. Paint as primordial goo; the basic ingredients of matter from which countless forms can emerge. The latent possibilities I sensed in even just a smear of paint suggested a constant opening to potential, to new forms; unprescribed worlds that were yet to be created, and I wanted my work to convey this idea of possibility. Classical painting would work toward predetermined ends, be it a portrait, still life or landscape, but much mid to late twentieth century practice broke with this tradition and started to posit the generative

quality of the medium itself. Following this idea it could be suggested that a smear of paint contains all paintings (every painting until now, every painting that will be) the unrecognized, the unseen, the previously unknown, all reside there in a latent pre-originary state, much like the mythological notion of chaos.

Due to some auspicious advice I first encountered the thinking of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari via the writing of the academic Elizabeth Grosz. What I discovered was the correlation between the ambitions I have for my own art practice and Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical conception of chaos. They conceptualize it as the broadest possible form from which the arts, sciences, and philosophy respectively derive sensations, measures, and concepts. More specific however is the way their concept of chaos centers change, transition, the unknown/unknowable (unforeseen potential), variety and the new while de-centering the fixed, and the eternal, traditionally the most regarded forms of truth and knowledge within the West. This set me off on a long period of research that has enabled me to not only gain a greater understanding and insight into my own practice and the broader practices of other artists who share the same ambitions, but more essentially it has helped me to realize the context from which the motivation to create the sort of work I do stems.

Initially It made sense to understand how chaos had been framed over the course of Western history, most especially as I had never previously encountered such an expansive philosophical exploration of it, nor one that establishes it in such an essential position. Certainly the term chaos had found currency in recent studies in science and mathematics but never had it been, to my knowledge, so broadly applied or conceived. My research revealed the term had undergone a considerable evolution, from mythology into philosophy and then religion, or more specifically the Roman Catholic religion, and from there into the sciences and philosophy of today. What became apparent is that through the broad adaptation of Plato's Theory of Forms into central doctrine the Catholic Church effectively denigrated and diminished the chaotic, and so with it human nature, the natural world, and the generative (regenerative) force of chaos itself; in short, effectively anything it couldn't control or influence. Certainly the Church as we now know it hasn't the dominant position or influence it once did, however its enduring presence and impact globally today cannot be under appreciated. In this way both my personal history and my research into this paper has given

me greater impetus to want to understand and create an art that values the chaotic above the Noumenal and the liminal or fleeting above the fixed.

This paper then begins with an exploration of the historic conceptions of chaos, from mythology into Classical philosophy and then religion. I pay particular attention to how the Christian Churches, most especially the Roman Catholic Church, has favored the philosophy of both Plato and Aristotle, and how their notions of order and chaos carried through into Christian Church doctrine. I then briefly outline the Church's position as the dominant institution within the history of the West, and how this has resulted in the notions the Church most regarded becoming those most favored within Western traditions themselves. Provided then are examples of the purported "truths" that the Church has made claims for and how the revelation of the chaotic nature of both the world and the universe has compromised and overturned its steadfast claims.

In the second chapter I outline how Deleuze and Guattari conceive chaos and through their formulation of it create a model I then apply in the third chapter to the work of an array of artists, including myself. Although most of these may not be explicit in stating that their art is a reaction to an ideology that prizes the fixed and eternal over the fleeting and changing, I show that their work does correspond with the notion of chaos I describe whilst operating in the same way as an art that does consciously set out to disrupt the application of fixed meaning derived from an institutionalized doctrinal heritage. Through the study of their work and its capacity to maintain a writhe and blossoming subjectivity that is generative of many, alternating interpretations, I aim to locate and establish my practice within this investigative field.

## Chapter 1. Chaos in history.

### 1.1 In the beginning, chaos and cosmos

Chaos held a central position in the early mythology of many human traditions, particularly those emerging within the Mediterranean and Black Sea Basins. Seen as the original, pre-existence state; a swirling and undistinguished blend of elemental ingredients from which the cosmos either emerged or was fashioned, it occupies a foundational position in the narratives that have helped establish the core religious and cultural doctrines of most Indo-European civilisations.<sup>1</sup> In its original sense chaos wasn't a state of complete disorder or confusion, as is most commonly perceived today,<sup>2</sup> but rather it was presented as either an unfathomable void or limitless body of water. Both were marked by an impenetrable/unknowable depth teeming with the basic elements that when combined formed all things, be it through the work of a single deity or several deities in cooperation. The word chaos stems from the Ancient Greek word *χάος* which originally meant an abyss, chasm, or infinite darkness. It etymologically links to the Proto-Indo-European word *gheu/ghen* which means "to gape or yawn."<sup>3 4</sup>

Chaos in myth never ceased to exist once the cosmos was formed, but it continued to present itself in the form of any threat to the certitudes and conventions of the interpreted, fashioned and civilised world. Symbolically it was often represented as either a writhing serpent or dragon of great power that is embroiled in battle with a warrior-type figure devoted to its domination and control. The chaoskampf, a mythical personification that represents this ordering principle is such a figure, and its struggle with chaos is depicted substantially throughout Indo-European mythological traditions. For example in the forms of Indra vs Vritia (Vedic), Zeus vs Typhon (Greek), Thor vs Jörmungandr, the world serpent (Norse), Marduk vs Tiamat (Babylonian), Yahweh vs the Leviathan (Judaic), and then in Christian texts in the guise of George and the Dragon, and St Michael or Jesus vs the Devil.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mark P.O. Morford and Robert J. Lenardon, *Classical Mythology*, 8th Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 78- 80.

<sup>2</sup> Chaos (definition), *Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 11th Edition* (London: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Robert S.P Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek* (Boston: Brill, 2009), 1616–7.

<sup>4</sup> Chaos (definition - noun), *Online Etymology Dictionary*, accessed 28.10.2014.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Jordon, *Encyclopedia of Gods* (London: Kyle Cathie Ltd, 1992), 332, 304, 116.

The fact that chaos, as a concept, was primarily presented within cultures founded in the vicinity of the Mediterranean and Black Seas is potentially emblematic of the vast cultural exchanges that took place in this region in the millennia preceding the Common Era. Although each culture would likely have regarded its corresponding religious system as authoritative and unique there is more commonality between alternative traditions from the area than there is not.<sup>6</sup> All of these show that despite the ever present threat from chaos, a comparative review tends to affirm that as well as emerging from chaos, the cosmos continually depends on the chaos of creation.<sup>7</sup> As Jonathan Smith remarks “chaos is never, in myths, finally overcome. It remains as a creative challenge, as a source of possibility and vitality over against, yet inextricably related to, order and the sacred.”<sup>8</sup>

Around the start of Classical Antiquity however, sometime between the 8th and 7th centuries BCE, certain mythological formulations of the start-of-it-all reframed the continuing relationship chaos maintained with the created cosmos. It appears the Greeks, whose empire, along with the Roman’s, respectively dominated the Mediterranean and Black Sea territories up until the 5th century CE, were the first to distance chaos from the creation. And it was their culture, together with influences from the ancient Near East, that prevailed as the basis of art, philosophy, society, and educational ideals right throughout this time. These ideals were preserved and imitated by not only the Romans but by the subsequent Western World.<sup>9</sup>

True to the traditional sense, Hesiod, a poet of this time consolidated the rich mythological tales of Greece to create what became the standard account of the gods and their origins, *The Theogony*. In it chaos is personified as the primal goddess Eris, who was presented as the first deity from whom both the darkness and light emerged in the characterized guise of the primordial gods Erebus and Nyx.<sup>10</sup> His version corresponds extensively to the myth of the Mesopotamian primal goddess Tiamat who was meant to have given birth to the first

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<sup>6</sup> James P. Mallory and Douglas Q. Adams, *Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Proto-Indo-European World* (London: Oxford University Press, 2006), 92-98.

<sup>7</sup> Martin L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2007), 412.

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 144.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993), 89.

<sup>10</sup> Norman Oliver Brown and Hesiod, *Hesiod's Theogony* (New York: The Library of Liberal Arts, 1953).

generation of the Babylonian deities.<sup>11</sup> However, with Heraclitus and other pre-Socratics, the first step in this distancing of chaos from a deified persona is taken. Chaos to Heraclitus is the primordial yawn, “the toothless gaping emptiness of the beginning”<sup>12</sup> and not an actual deity itself. He claimed it established the dual cosmic form of heaven and earth which is imbued with the power of Eros (light), the personified third term of mutual attraction and reunion that holds opposites in reciprocal embrace. Their motion from one state to another, say night into day and into night again, is emblematic of the constant change all generated existence undergoes, and how each state is a partial representation, or facet, of a larger discreet form.<sup>13</sup> Chaos in this latter case is rendered as a vacuum state latent with forces that evolve through Eros to emerge as perpetually transmuting and evolving forms of the Cosmos.

For later philosophers, most notably Plato, this distancing from a pantheon of anthropomorphic gods goes even further, while simultaneously the idea of chaos presented by Heraclitus as a cosmic foundation that shifted and changed was rationally indefensible, a position Plato maintains through the length of his philosophical teachings; “But if the very nature of knowledge changes, at the time when the change occurs there will be no knowledge, and, according to this view, there will be no one to know and nothing to be known: but if that which knows and that which is known exist ever, and the beautiful and the good and every other thing also exist, then I do not think that they can resemble a process of flux.”<sup>14</sup>

To Plato, chaos existed as an indeterminate melange of the four elements that required fashioning by an artisan-like figure he termed the demiurge. In his view the demiurge, both profoundly benevolent and divinely inspired, was only able to make an imperfect world due to the chaotic nature of its ingredients; “He took over all that was visible, seeing that it was not in a state of rest but in a state of discordant and disorderly motion, He brought it into order out of disorder.”<sup>15</sup> To Plato, the material world fashioned by the demiurge, the world that we know and share, was not the real world but an “image” or “copy” of the true world that

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<sup>11</sup> Jordan, *Encyclopedia of Gods*, 332.

<sup>12</sup> William K.C Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy: Volume 1* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 212.

<sup>13</sup> Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 211-214.

<sup>14</sup> D. N Sedley, *Plato Cratylus* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2007), (section 40), 160.

<sup>15</sup> T. K Johansen, *Plato's Natural Philosophy: A Study of the Timaeus-Critias* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2004), (section 29 - 31), 91.

existed unchanging and eternal in the mind of the divine source. The ambition of the demiurge was to reveal through creation the perfection that was the nature of God, or what Socrates had previously presented as the world of Ideal Forms and what Plato later named the world of the Timeless Forms or archetypes. Chaos, which was seen as a kind of inferior or corrupted state,<sup>16</sup> was to be transformed so as to create a record of this perfect realm; “He was good, and in him that is good no envy ariseth ever concerning anything; and being devoid of envy he desired that all should be, so far as possible, like unto Himself.”<sup>17</sup> Since, in Plato’s logic, change must contain some inherent purpose or reason, the world created by the demiurge was installed with a teleology, the goal of which was to transform the brute matter of chaos according to the model or template of the eternal that the work of the demiurge revealed.<sup>18</sup> Chaos then, to Plato, is akin to the most unreliable and transient of primal elements that becomes valuable only through its shaping into a fixed, mimetic form that relates a predetermined, divinely decreed principle.

Curiously the term cosmos, which denotes the ordered universe that chaos either expressed or was fashioned from, and which (at least in the terms of the latter Greek philosophers) it is antithetically opposed to, derives from the Greek word κόσμος, or kosmos which means both ‘order and ‘ornament.’ The term can be etymologically linked to various words such as decorum, decoration, cosmetic, costume and custom.<sup>19</sup> This suggests that cosmos, while acquiring the general meaning of a world system or universal order derived from the religious/cultural bias that authored it, “it is also the cultivated or controlled persona of chaos”.<sup>20</sup> Cosmos then is not necessarily associated exclusively with the creation of the world, order, or culture per se, but is also associated with the establishment of a measured, ranked, or ruling cultural order which masks or represses a prior, more primitive kind of order. “In this sense of the word, the cosmos, cosmic order, or cosmological description of the world is

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<sup>16</sup> D. N Sedley, ‘Hesiod’s Theogeny and Plato’s Timaeus’ in *Plato and Hesiod*, eds. G. R Boys-Stones and H. H Johannes (London: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 246-258.

<sup>17</sup> R. G Bury, *Plato Timaeus* (Harvard: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1929) (section 29e), 95.

<sup>18</sup> Johansen, *Plato’s Natural Philosophy*, 112-114.

<sup>19</sup> Cosmos (definition - noun), *Online Etymology Dictionary*, accessed 28.10.2014.

<sup>20</sup> N. J. Girardot, *Myth and Meaning in Early Daoism: The Theme of Chaos (hundun)*, (Magdalena: Three Pines Press, 2008), 4.



especially related to the aristocratic codes of ritual propriety, status, decorum, merit, and "face" found within the context of a civilizational tradition.”<sup>21</sup>

Notions specific to Anglo-Western culture such as maintaining ‘a stiff upper lip’ or ‘speaking only when spoken to’ or even ‘being a good sport’ all suggest the demand to repress some internal chaotic or contrary impulse by asserting an appropriate attitude of compliance and control. Cosmos can therefore connote the image of the ‘ornamentation’ or ‘cosmetic’ camouflage of chaos's unrestrained nature via the assertion of an external code of order and affect. From the minute effort to withhold a burp to the considerable effort required to repress a transgressive romantic or sexual desire, the coded cosmos asserts qualified measures of propriety and impropriety that are underwritten by a whole swathe of social, political and religious axioms.<sup>22</sup>

These rules can prescribe the necessity to deny, exclude or even to attempt to reconfigure chaos, most especially when it presents itself as an alternative to the static notions that code upholds. In terms of the Western World and the codes that inform its particular notions of civility, civilisation, and cosmos, and so therefore it’s conception of, and relationship to chaos, it has to be understood how deeply inscribed they are by the long history it has shared with the Christian Churches. Most especially the Roman Catholic Church which as the dominant religious and institutional tradition within Western history has profoundly influenced its evolution:

“Any recapitulation of our cultural and intellectual history must address the task with care, for Christianity has presided over Western culture for most of the latter’s existence, not only bearing its central spiritual impulse for two millennia but also influencing its philosophical and scientific evolution well on through the Renaissance and Enlightenment. Even now, in less obvious but no less significant ways, the Christian world view still affects, indeed, permeates the Western cultural psyche, even when the latter is most apparently secular in disposition.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Girardot, *Myth and Meaning in Early Daoism*, 4.

<sup>22</sup> Martin J. Martüstik, *Jürgen Habermas: A Philosophical-Political Profile* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), 49.

<sup>23</sup> Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 91.

## 1.2 The Rise of Christendom

Christianity faltered at the start, a small Jewish mystery cult formed around the teachings of the figure Jesus of Nazareth, it was a movement scapegoated, persecuted and repressed by the Roman state and the dominant Jewish orthodoxy. Within a few short generations however it had succeeded in appealing to a broad populace through the Christian Fathers' synthesis of Classical Greek philosophy with church doctrine.<sup>24</sup> Most notably Clement of Alexandria who used the argument presented by Xenophanes that refutes pantheistic faiths on the basis of anthropomorphism.<sup>25</sup> In this way Christianity presented an authoritative, all encompassing and resolute vision for both religion and philosophy that appealed to the intellectual spirit of the time while in a sense simplifying and consolidating daily religious practice.<sup>26</sup>

Whatever the reason for its burgeoning appeal is secondary to the purposes of this paper and can really only be speculated upon, the fact is Christianity found a footing that carried it to the centres of power throughout the Roman empire, and although its followers often suffered terribly for their beliefs in the centuries following the crucifixion of Jesus, the Christian faith prospered to become the official and exclusive religion of the Empire itself. Perhaps the most significant conversion to the Christian faith was that of the Roman emperor Constantine in the year 312 for it was he that in the following year co-authored the Edict of Milan that expressly granted recognition and liberty to not only Christians but also to all other faiths. Constantine's favouring of and commitment to Christianity's propagation saw members of its flock enter public life or take important positions within government, which in part, it is understood, attributed to Christianity officiation in the year 380.<sup>27</sup>

When in the year 476CE a Germanic tribal chieftain deposed Romulus Augustus, the then emperor of the Western Roman Empire, the Church's future was secured in ways that would

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<sup>24</sup> Christopher Stead, *Doctrine and Philosophy in Early Christianity* (London: Ashgate Press, 2000), 68.

<sup>25</sup> Arran Gare, "The Primordial Role of Stories in Human Self-Creation," *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy*, Vol 3, No 1 (2007). Accessed 28.10.2014. <http://cosmosandhistory.org/index.php/journal/article/view/56>

<sup>26</sup> Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity*, 19.

<sup>27</sup> Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh and Frederick W. Norris, *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (London: Routledge, 1997), 380.

have an indelible effect on the European world and the gestating West. This act seen by most historians as the death knell for the Western Roman Empire and the Graeco-Roman World effectively positioned the Church to become the largest and most dominant institution in Western history. By taking control of the remaining Roman infantry and positioning itself as the governing body of the now fractured Empire the Church effectively became the principle influence on the development of Western law, education, healthcare, culture, and its associated ideas of truth, spirituality, morality, society, good and evil, human purpose and justice. The Western World we know today would be impossible to conceive without its historic presence. Perhaps on the face of it classical civilisation in the West had been snuffed out as Edward Gibbon would pointedly epitomise his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*; “I have described the triumph of barbarism and religion.” But from the long view of the West’s complex evolution, these new forces “did not entirely eliminate or supplant the Graeco-Roman culture as much as they engrafted their own distinctive elements onto the highly developed and deeply rooted classical foundation.”<sup>28</sup>

“...there gradually arose a comprehensive world-view common to Western Christendom. Succeeding that of the classical Greeks as the governing vision of the culture, the Christian outlook would inform and inspire the lives and thinking of millions until the modern era - and for many, continues to do so.”<sup>29</sup>

### **1.3 The Christian conception of chaos; Genesis, creatio ex-nihilo and Church doctrine.**

“Christian theology created this ex nihilo at the cost of its own depth. It systematically and symbolically sought to erase the chaos of creation.” Catherine Keller

The first book of the bible, the book of Genesis, presents a comprehensive rendering of the beginning of the world/cosmos according to the Judeo/Christian mythological creation myth *ex-nihilo*, which in latin means ‘out of nothing.’ Genesis is also the first of the five books that opens the bible, all five of which are known collectively as the Pentateuch (Greek word for five scrolls) or specifically the Torah in Judaism. According to both Judaic and Christian

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<sup>28</sup> Tarnas, *Passion of the Western Mind*, 89.

<sup>29</sup> Tarnas, *Passion of the Western Mind*, 90.

doctrine the Pentateuch was authored by Moses via the dictations of God and is accorded special relevance in both traditions for two reasons; they summarise God's ambitions and desires for his people and their world, and they are God's own divine words and not the expressions or interpretations of a mortal mind.<sup>30</sup>

There's a small problem however with the assertion that Moses wrote the Pentateuch; in the book of Deuteronomy, the final book, Moses dies, and in the book's last eight verses there is also a detailed description of the manner of his death, his age when dying, and his burial rites along with the effect his death has on his people. This raises the question of how can an author render a detailed description of his own death, along with extended details of what follows? The answer is they cannot, but the Pentateuch, being regarded as the word of God himself, allows perhaps for this strange oversight to be explained as God's omnipotence providing foresight to Moses's fate. In reality however, if the Christian's claim for their God were true, and that he was indeed an almighty, all-seeing, all-knowing figure that espoused only perfection, then one would reasonably expect his words to be perfect also and not be fraught with the many contradictions and confusing details that riddle the first five books of the bible.

It was the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes who in 1651 raised publicly this concern in his book *Leviathan*.<sup>31</sup> On mainland Europe other writers of the same period raised similar concerns, including Spinoza, and for doing so some were imprisoned, and all their works condemned.<sup>32</sup> It took until the 19th century when a theologian with a scientific disposition took on the task of examining the Pentateuch since it was widely held that its contradictory nature compromised any claim for the contents to be an authoritative and accurate account of the beginning of existence, early history, and with it the establishment of the Church itself. Julius Wellhausen undertook the task and his research resulted in the Documentary Hypothesis which, despite his allegiance to the Church, in fact revealed a varied authorship of the Pentateuch which appeared to be derived from originally independent, parallel and

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<sup>30</sup> John Riches, *The Bible: a Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 19–20.

<sup>31</sup> Although sympathetic to Christian doctrine, and a devout believer himself, Hobbes was the first to suggest that perhaps the section of Deuteronomy that recounts Moses' death and funeral would most likely have been written by someone other than Moses.

<sup>32</sup> Jonathan I. Israel. *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 49-57.

complete narratives written over approximately 500 years by 3 to 4 separate individuals,<sup>33</sup> none of them necessarily Moses himself. This, like many other similar invalidations of foundational doctrine, were excused by the Church through positing the allegorical value of the text as more essential than the factual worth.<sup>34</sup>

The Christian creation myth contained within the book of Genesis has also unsurprisingly been shown to not necessarily be the exclusive and authoritative record it was presented as. Contrary to the claims of the Christian tradition, comparative mythological studies have revealed it to have been considerably adapted from or influenced by the Mesopotamian creation story known as the Enuma Elish,<sup>35</sup> as well as an ancient Egyptian creation story from the Egyptian township Hermopolis, as it was named by the Greeks.<sup>36</sup> And to further its cause, if it is after all true that the Judeo-Christian creation myth was derived from these sources, the tale was honed to support the assertion of a monotheistic faith. This alteration is one of the few but particular variations from both the Mesopotamian and Hermopolitan creation stories. The others being that the Genesis creation story does not account for the origin of God, and in it there is no trace of the resistance chaos in myth typically presents to the cosmogenic order, or to its own ordering by a divine figure.<sup>37</sup>

The reduced role that chaos played in the creation for Plato was here taken even further by the Church, which was in effect to negate Chaos definitively. The creatio ex-nihilo also presents chaos as a void, but not one that gapes with latent potential like in the majority of other mythologies, but as an absence, an erasure, an absolute nothing that cannot, in any sense, provide the units or conditions from which existence might appear.<sup>38</sup> Although chaos is personified in the bible as the fathomless depths of the watery Tehom - a term which is a

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<sup>33</sup> Richard E. Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (New York: Harper Collins, 1989), 119.

<sup>34</sup> Gary Greenberg, *101 Myths of the Bible - How the Ancient Scribes Invented Biblical History* (Naperville, Illinois: SourceBooks, 2000), 57-68.

<sup>35</sup> Karl Luckert, *Egyptian Light and Hebrew Fire: Theological and Philosophical Roots of Christendom in Evolutionary Perspective* (New York: SUNY Press, 1991), 220.

<sup>36</sup> Karl Luckert, *Egyptian Light and Hebrew Fire: Theological and Philosophical Roots of Christendom in Evolutionary Perspective*, 99.

<sup>37</sup> Karl Luckert, *Egyptian Light and Hebrew Fire: Theological and Philosophical Roots of Christendom in Evolutionary Perspective*, 189

<sup>38</sup> Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep: a Theology of Becoming* (New York: Routledge, 2002), xvi.

cognate to the Mesopotamian chaos deity Tiamat,<sup>39</sup> according to the early Christian conception of the cosmos, chaos literally exists beyond the verges of the flat Christian world, kept for eternity at bay by the great starry dome of the Christian heavens.<sup>40</sup> If it is to appear, it is in aberrant episodes that signify the character Satan's conniving sabotage of God's eternal plan, who like an interloper from some distant and foreign shore momentarily brings discord to the otherwise virtuous and harmonious Christian realm.

By the time of the Enlightenment it was the norm for dogmatic claims by the Church to be rebuked, disproven, and overturned by scientific discovery. Why I recount these particular examples out of the many, if not innumerable instances of doctrinal disproof, is because they are related to the Church's conception of chaos and its rendition of the beginning of the world/cosmos. Since it could be argued that through the conception of the beginning of all-things, and what claims are made for the ensuing existence of the world, that the ongoing relationship a civilization or institution maintains with chaos is perhaps revealed. We can also perhaps see how arbitrary are the notions that it presents as qualified and enduring truths that purport to support those claims and by which great ills are brought upon those who do not conform to them.

In the case of the Christian Church big claims were made, for instance Christianity vehemently maintained it was the only "true" faith due to its exclusive access to God's will via Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. All other faiths in turn were regarded as inferior and misdirected. Christianity was privileged by its particular access to the truth, a truth that existed "eternally" and "absolutely" in the righteous realm of "the almighty creator." The Church alone had the authority to advocate right and wrong, and rhetorically, anyone to say otherwise was simply a mouthpiece for Satan himself. It's in this vein that the Church was deeply insensitive to any rationale that contradicted its claims to the truth, so much that it demanded from its followers "a submission of the intellect and the will." This submission was to recognize and acknowledge the infallibility of the scripture and its ultimate authority, the Roman Bishop, who we know as the pope. The pope's word, along with the Magisterium's, was regarded as utterly infallible, meaning that there could be no higher earthly agency or mandate to contradict them. Any proclamation made by the pope was

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<sup>39</sup> A.E. Whatham, "The Yahweh-Tehom Myth," *The Biblical World*, Vol. 36, No. 5 (University of Chicago Press, 1910). Accessed 28.10.14 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3141790>

<sup>40</sup> Aristotle, *On the Heavens I and II*, trans. Stuart Leggatt (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1995).

considered to be beyond error, and was not to be questioned, it was also to be accepted in “blind faith,” literally. It was taught, and still is, that the best any follower of the faith could do in their daily life was to emulate Jesus, who “perfectly followed the will of God” without question or reserve. Furthermore, it is believed within the Church that the pope, through the divine providence of the Holy Spirit, is sanctioned to understand and interpret the will of God. Similarly, the Magisterium, a group of bishops that includes the pope, is divinely inspired to interpret God’s intention when it comes to the qualification of doctrine and principles of faith. No one else within the Church holds such jurisdiction, and so it was expected that all followers of Catholicism must adhere to these infallible Papal decrees.<sup>41</sup>

The Christian doctrine, stemming directly as it was purported to, from God the Father, states that all people were born from sin and, despite being made in “God’s image,” were naturally disposed to sin and wrong doing. Everyone, being descendants of the original sinners Adam and Eve, were destined for eternal torment and suffering if they didn’t embrace the Christian way, the only “true” path to redeem the soul from the clutch of it’s evil birth. Adam and Eve’s original sin meant that all humans were a lesser, diminished or “fallen” version of their truer selves, the supra-natural self resurrected into eternal life in heaven. Only through the grace of God, and dedication to the ways of the scripture, could concupiscence, the desire to sin, carried through generations from Adam and Eve, be overcome. To subscribe to the Christian faith was to maintain to deny and refute anything that contradicted it, this was taken to the extreme in the active persecution of the “heretical faiths” in both the Inquisition and the Crusades. More implicitly however, the “vile” body, along with it’s many evil appetites and it’s diabolical, organic, and spontaneous, chaotic expressions; laughter, flatulence, menstruation, sexual passion, desire, or swearing for example, were most often regarded as expressions of evil or inferiority, and so a regression to a more primitive state or self. These chaotic instances were seen as a threat or compromise to the elevated stance of the faithful, and duly, were to be denied and repressed.

“But if one day... the art of mockery were to be made acceptable, and to seem noble and liberal and no longer mechanical... it would summon the dark powers of corporal matter, those that are affirmed in the fart and the belch, and the fart and

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<sup>41</sup> The Catechism of the Catholic Church. The Transmission of Divine Revelation. Accessed 28.10.14. <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/PN.HTM>

the belch would claim the right that is only of the holy spirit, to breathe where they list.”<sup>42</sup>

The world itself too was regarded with the same mistrust and contempt since, unlike heaven, the perfected, unchanging realm of God, it was a flawed place where birth and death perpetuated its ephemeral, unreliable, and ungovernable nature. It too was seen to be fallen, a realm of sin and temptation, a lawless place of carnal/animalistic passions and primitive ignorance perpetrated by the Devil and his ever zealous consorts. Since heaven was the true realm, the earth itself was merely a testing ground where every moment we either moved closer to, or further away from God. Therefore it had little intrinsic or ongoing value to a Christian beyond the betterment it could provide the soul on its journey to paradise. It was the realm of the “necessary evil,” a principle of measure by which standards of goodness could be qualified, and which provide a meaningful opportunity to ratify the stance of a righteous, moral certitude and superiority.

“All things that exist, therefore, seeing that the Creator of them all is supremely good, are themselves good. But because they are not, like the Creator, supremely and unchangeably good, their good may be diminished and increased. But for good to be diminished is an evil, although, however much it may be diminished, it is necessary, if the being is to continue, that some good should remain to constitute the being.”<sup>43</sup>

This idea of a measure by which “all things” could be judged as existing in accord with a transcendental principle or authority again is not exclusive to the Church but was presented previously by Plato and later, Aristotle, arguably the two most regarded exponents of ancient Greek philosophy. In fact a great deal of scholastic evidence clearly suggests that “early biblical texts were changed and adapted after both the Judaic and Christian traditions encountered popular Greek thought.”<sup>44</sup> And I would suggest that the favoring that both Plato

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<sup>42</sup> Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose* (London: Picador, 1984), 477.

<sup>43</sup> St Augustine, “The Works of St Augustin,” ed. Philip Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: First Series, Vol 3, St Augustine* (New York: Cosimo Publications, 2007), 240.

<sup>44</sup> Stead, *Doctrine and Philosophy in Early Christianity*, 37.



and Aristotle enjoyed through Western history has a lot to do with their favoring by the Church.

#### **1.4 Christian doctrine and Greek thought.**

Plato was one of the first philosophers to argue that reality is primarily ideal or abstract. Through his ‘theory of forms,’ he asserted that ultimate reality is not found in objects and concepts that we experience but instead, reality is found in ‘forms’ or ‘ideas’ that transcend the physical world. These forms operate as perfect and eternal universal templates for everything we experience in existence. Say for example, all horses on earth are imperfect replicas of the universal ‘horseness’ that exists in an archetypal dimension. One result of Platonism was the belief that matter is inferior to the spiritual because of its fluctuating and inconsistent quality, thus stating that there exists a dualism between matter and the immaterial.<sup>45</sup> “This perspective naturally leads to negative perceptions concerning the nature of the physical world and even our human bodies because of their supposed inferior and imperfect nature.”<sup>46</sup>

This exaltation of the spiritual over the physical in Platonism carried across to Judaism as evidenced in the writings of the Jew, Philo (20 B.C.E - 50 C.E). Philo, in an attempt to make the Old Testament more attractive to the Greeks influenced by the Platonic ideal allegorized many Old Testament passages that appeared too crass and unworthy of God. For Philo, “statements in the Old Testament that discussed the wrath of God or God changing his mind needed to be allegorized” so as to show that the monotheistic faith was consistent with the best of Greek philosophy.<sup>47</sup> His adaptations influenced the Christian Church Fathers who similarly established an accord between Plato’s philosophy and their developing Christian doctrines.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Gare, *The Primordial Role of Stories in Human Self-Creation*, 96-98

<sup>46</sup> Gare, *The Primordial Role of Stories in Human Self-Creation*, 97.

<sup>47</sup> Gary R. Habermas, “Plato, Platonism,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 859.

<sup>48</sup> Habermas, “*Plato, Platonism*,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 858.

Platonism also influenced its more religious counterpart, Neo-Platonism, which was a complex system describing reality. It was founded by the Roman philosopher Plotinus (A.D. 204–270).<sup>49</sup> The Egyptian-born Plotinus carried on some of the main ideas of Plato such as (1) there is an immaterial reality that exists apart from the physical world; (2) a strong distinction exists between an immaterial soul and the physical body; and (3) the immortal soul finds its ultimate fulfillment as it becomes one with an eternal, transcendent realm. According to Plotinus, the lowest level of reality is matter.<sup>50</sup> The Neoplatonists embraced this doctrine and took the unchanging One to be the source of all the other forms. This is the philosophy used to interpret and defend Christianity with God identified with the unchanging One and the changing sensible world denigrated as a manifestation of our fallen state, a world of temptations to be overcome: “this provided the basic framework of medieval culture.”<sup>51</sup>

Aristotle, who evolved many of Plato’s ideas, much later became the favoured philosopher amongst Christians through the popularization of his thought via the efforts of the massively influential Catholic Church priest, philosopher, and theologian, Thomas Aquinas. Aristotle asserted that the outermost sphere of the universe is immutable and filled with the divine element, ether, which unlike the four elements of the material realm, it never altered. He argued that the universe was composed of two worlds, namely the supralunary and the sublunary spheres, and these distinct regions were governed by two different sets of mechanics, celestial mechanics and terrestrial mechanics respectively. In this cosmology, the world is hierarchically ordered, such that everything belongs to a natural position. When something is attracted to a place where it ‘naturally’ belongs, the movement is considered a “natural motion.” All other movements are considered “violent” or “unnatural” because they drive things away from the natural positions and thus disturb the cosmic equilibrium.<sup>52</sup> This notion is deeply reflected in the Catholic conception of earth and its relationship with heaven:

“In a Catholic's view, not only is heaven perfect and inalterable, but also the Creator of heaven is infallible and unchangeable. The Catholic Church has its

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<sup>49</sup> Christopher Kirwan, “Plotinus,” in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 689–90.

<sup>50</sup> Kirwan, “Plotinus,” in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, 691.

<sup>51</sup> Arran Gare, “Mathematics, Explanation and Reductionism: Exposing the Roots of the Egyptianism of European Civilization,” *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy*, Vol 1, No 1 (2005). Accessed 28.10.2014. <http://cosmosandhistory.org/index.php/journal/article/view/6>

<sup>52</sup> Diogenes Allen, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), 9.

own version of a “two-sphere universe”: On earth everything is changeable and perishable, but in the transcendental world where God, angels, and the saved souls reside, everything is everlasting. God as "being" instead of "becoming" has firmly established the foundation of truth. While "change" denotes chaos, decay, depreciation, decomposition, and many other negative concepts, the unchangeable God, revealed by the inalterable heaven and the hierarchically ordered world structure, gave people a sense of certainty and security, and a hope for the perfect world after death.”<sup>53</sup>

It was this Catholic cosmological model which Galileo famously disproved, and for it, was trialled and found guilty of heresy. What he found within the heavenly sphere was not some static and permanently fixed order but a swirling, forever moving and transforming dimension that appeared “as if God had scattered stars without any rule or pattern.” The profound opposition the Catholic Church expressed against his discoveries revealed just how deeply the intellectual and religious certainty of the Church was undermined by them. Galileo did not set out to disprove the existence of an unchangeable God or the falsity in Aristotle’s claim, his observations were simply a further development and affirmation of the work of Copernicus who had previously theorized a heliocentric solar system. Copernicus however was unable to prove it since there was not sufficiently powerful telescopes to do so, but by the time of Galileo there were, and what he discovered was the ‘chaotic’ reality of the heavens that disproved the fallacy of Aristotle’s claim, and thus the Church doctrine, that the universe was geocentric and that the heavens were static and unchanging. Because the Church had endorsed as truth the cosmology suggested by Aristotle, a truth supported by the divine authority of the Pope and the Magisterium, it had to refute Galileo’s claims or else the Church’s legacy and authority could be, and would be, mistrusted.

And so it is with Christianity, the world and the universe with it, are degraded to an inferior and diminished copy of the eternal and unchanging realm of heaven. We see too in the philosophy of the middle ages through to the 19th century a similar attitude that maintains the legacy established by Plato where truth in its most ultimate sense must be static and forever the same; “In traditional European philosophy, ‘changeless order is conceived as the final perfection, with the result that the historic universe is degraded to a status of partial reality,

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<sup>53</sup> Chong Ho Yu, *Theological Conflicts Between Galileo and the Catholic Church and Their Implications for Modern Disciplines* (2001). Accessed 28.10.14. <http://www.creative-wisdom.com/education/hps/galileo.html>

issuing into the notion of mere appearance.”<sup>54</sup> Gary Habermas observes that Plato’s concept of forms, along with his cosmology and his views on the immortality of the soul, “probably has the greatest influence in the philosophy of religion.”<sup>55</sup> And like Christianity, “Platonism is the effort to establish a definitive authority and a transcendence to which ultimately everything can be referred.”<sup>56</sup>

The confidence instilled by the sovereignty of “the Church” meant early scientific investigation was inspired by a fervent belief that the wondrous mysteries of the world and the universe would ultimately reveal the truth of God’s existence. The Church was initially supportive of empirical research since it was utterly confident that it above any other faith or system spoke only the truth of existence. Descartes for example insisted he was discovering the “laws that God has put into nature.”<sup>57</sup> Later Newton would declare that the regulation of the solar system presupposed the “counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being.”<sup>58</sup> But as history has repeatedly revealed the absolute opposite is the case; no proof of God’s existence has yet been posited, and every assertion the Church has made for reality has been spectacularly disproven. Say in the case of Galileo who had once focussed upon “jewel-like lights that moved in eternally recurring patterns,” the reality is the starry galaxies are “barely more than the flecks of froth on a stormy sea of dark matter.”<sup>59</sup> In every instance chaos or the chaotic has been the revealed norm:

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<sup>54</sup> Alfred N. Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (New York: The Free Press, 1968), 80.

<sup>55</sup> Habermas, “*Plato, Platonism*,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 928.

<sup>56</sup> Miguel de Beistegui, “The Deleuzian Reversal of Platonism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Deleuze*, ed. Daniel W. Smith and Henry Somers-Hall (Boston: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 58.

<sup>57</sup> Neil deGrasse Tyson, “The Perimeter of Ignorance,” *Natural History Magazine* (Nov. 2005). Accessed 28.10.14. <http://www.naturalhistorymag.com/universe/211420/the-perimeter-of-ignorance>

<sup>58</sup> deGrasse Tyson, “The Perimeter of Ignorance,” *Natural History Magazine*.

<sup>59</sup> Dennis Overbye, “From Light to Darkness: Astronomy’s New Universe,” (*The New York Times*, April 10, 2001), 1. Accessed 28.10.14. <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/04/10/science/from-light-to-darkness-astronomy-s-new-universe.html>

“...the universe was no longer a rigid hierarchy of immutable and definitive modules of order but something moving and changing. In such a universe, contradictions and oppositions do not constitute an evil to be reduced by abstract formulas, but they form the very core of reality.”<sup>60</sup>

Try as it violently and repeatedly might Christianity never succeeded in denying the ubiquitous chaos that is the nature of the world and the universe. It was always chaos that asserted itself, and not because it sought to counter the cosmetic order that Christianity applied to it, but simply because it is the evidenced and consistent truth of life. All existence is chaotic in nature and not the mimetic version of some abstract and static divine principle as Plato first claimed. However the tradition he established and which has been writ large throughout the history of the West still plays out today. The Christian Church nurtured the Western World through its infancy and its laws and doctrines have penetrated every aspect of society and culture since. Although its influence wains the fact is the West was founded on a Classical/Christian foundation that is still in place, and so to address the Western conception of chaos it has been necessary to trace it back to that origin.

By favoring the philosophy of Plato and translating his transcendent principle into doctrine Christianity reduced existence to a binary model that profoundly and aggressively diminished the burgeoning complexity that typifies it: “The poisoned gift of Platonism is to have introduced transcendence into philosophy, to have given transcendence a plausible philosophical meaning (the triumph of the judgment of God).”<sup>61</sup> By recapitulating the binary logic that the transcendent principle maintains “the abiding western dominology can with religious sanction identify anything dark, profound, or fluid with a revolting chaos, an evil to be mastered, a nothing to be ignored.”<sup>62</sup>

The French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, like Nietzsche before him, sees in Platonism the “source of our sadness, our decadent values, and our most deeply entrenched illusions, extended and radicalized in Christianity” which Nietzsche accurately defined as “Platonism

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<sup>60</sup> Umberto Eco, *Aesthetics of Chaosmos: The Middle Ages of James Joyce*. (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989), 85

<sup>61</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical; Plato, the Greeks* ( London: Verso, 1998), 137.

<sup>62</sup> Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep: a Theology of Becoming* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 216.

for ‘the people’.”<sup>63</sup> The Platonic principle of transcendence, Deleuze argues, should have no place in philosophy since “it is not a philosophical invention, but a religious, moral, and political distribution of power.”<sup>64</sup> As history has repeatedly shown the denial of the centrality of chaos has resulted in a repressive and destructive legacy that although capable of great beauty has denigrated all that did, and even still, does not stand in accord with it. This provides a great impetus to restore chaos as a central notion and to reconsider the certitude of the Christian claims for truth and existence that have sought to refuse and eradicate it in all of its various expressions.

So then what is the centrality of chaos, and how can we know it, if like in its mythological form it does in fact perpetuate a necessary and enduring presence? To answer this question I will in the next chapter more comprehensively explore how Deleuze and his counterpart Felix Guattari conceive chaos. And by doing so take a step toward establishing the context for an art that presents it.

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<sup>63</sup> de Beistegui, “The Deleuzian Reversal of Platonism,” 58.

<sup>64</sup> de Beistegui, “The Deleuzian Reversal of Platonism,” 58.

## Chapter 2. What is Chaos?

“the nonlinear geometry of chaos is figured everywhere” Catherine Keller

To set about attempting to define chaos it is perhaps necessary to outline what comes in the way of doing so since chaos, by its very nature, eludes precise qualification. As we have seen in its original mythological conceptions it was presented as either waters of an unfathomable depth or as an impenetrable, swirling mass of immense magnitude which held the universe *in potentia*. Both conceptions clearly suggest two aspects of chaos that carry through to the contemporary era; chaos is both of a size and complexity too great to be adequately represented in a single form, and, more profoundly, despite its recognizable presence and qualities chaos is largely a mystery, even today.<sup>65</sup>

From the perspective of the ancients, to try and conceive of something that preceded existence from the vantage of existence itself would have been a difficult and fraught task. Rather than attempt to apply some kind of sensible form to it without the means of arriving at an accurate or concise understanding, the unfathomable and impenetrable quality we see given to chaos in its mythological conception implies the impossibility of adequately conceiving of it and thereby accepting the persistent enigma that it is. This is the “Ancient Greek idea of chaos as *areton* or *alogon* - that which is beyond all comprehension.”<sup>66</sup> How this enigmatic quality of chaos applies today is in the non-classical disciplines of much contemporary scientific investigation wherein there is incorporated into studies of chaos the irreducible presence of “the unknowable”.<sup>67</sup> Be it that a chaotic system is one that is either too complex to be adequately represented or that any of its future positions or states cannot be predicted with any precision.<sup>68</sup> Or, even more powerfully, the unknowable aspect of chaos is recognised in the background effects of virtual particles that are registered but not directly recorded in the

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<sup>65</sup> Arkady Plotnitsky, “Chaosmologies: Quantum Field Theory, Chaos and Thought in Deleuze and Guattari’s What is Philosophy?” *Paragraph*. Vol. 29, Issue 2 (Edinburgh University Press, July, 2006): Accessed 28.10.14. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3366/prg.2006.0017>, 40-55

<sup>66</sup> Plotnitsky, “Chaosmologies: Quantum Field Theory, Chaos and Thought in Deleuze and Guattari’s What is Philosophy?” 41.

<sup>67</sup> Plotnitsky, “Chaosmologies: Quantum Field Theory, Chaos and Thought in Deleuze and Guattari’s What is Philosophy?” 45.

<sup>68</sup> James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science* (New York: Vintage, 1998), 32.

experiments of particle physics.<sup>69</sup> Or, through the recognition of implicate orders that remain hidden within outwardly chaotic phenomena.<sup>70</sup>

Chaos then is something that refutes the clear analysis and qualification so generally favoured by the classical sciences and the reason why it was always deliberately placed outside of, ignored, or even disparaged by their considerations.<sup>71</sup> Therefore when describing chaos there is a need to accept that any description will, in some way, fail to account for it in its entirety, and even more importantly no description therefore is final and complete. This openness and flexibility acknowledges and accepts the ongoing evolution of ideas and concepts that explain phenomena and that the circumscribed nature of our sensory perceptions can inhibit our ability to fully grasp it:<sup>72</sup>

“The totality of the universe is too much to be grasped definitively in any form of knowledge, not only because it is so vast and immeasurable, but even more because in its many levels, domains, and aspects it contains an inexhaustible variety of structures, which escape any given conceptual “net” that we may use in trying to express their order and pattern.”<sup>73</sup>

Chaos, in the most general sense, can be described as the “whirling, unpredictable movement of forces, vibratory oscillations that constitute the universe.” It is not to be understood as “absolute disorder but rather as a plethora of orders , forms, wills - forces that cannot be distinguished or differentiated from each other, both matter and its conditions for being otherwise, both the actual and the virtual indistinguishably.”<sup>74</sup> What Elizabeth Grosz is referring to when she makes mention of the “actual and the virtual” is the philosophical

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<sup>69</sup> Timothy S. Murphy, “Quantum Ontology: A Virtual Mechanics of Becoming,” ed. Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin J. Heller, *Deleuze & Guattari: New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy, and Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 224.

<sup>70</sup> Ilya Prigogine, *From Being to Becoming: Time and Complexity in the Physical Sciences* (London: W H Freeman Press, 1980), 230.

<sup>71</sup> Philip Kuberski, *Chaosmos: Literature, Science and Theory* (New York: SUNY Press, 1994), 91.

<sup>72</sup> Murphy, “*Quantum Ontology*,” p.226: For Heisenberg results cannot be separated from the devices that measure them and the statistical formalism that expresses them

<sup>73</sup> David Bohm, *The Special Theory of Relativity* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 272.

<sup>74</sup> Elizabeth A. Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 26.



qualification of chaos by Gilles Deleuze and his counterpart Felix Guattari. Deleuze and Guattari present chaos as a perpetually moving, genetic medium that precedes, coexists/ coincides with, and succeeds order, whilst also containing the potential for countless alternative and non-specified orders. To Deleuze and Guattari, *chaos*, or its corresponding term, *the virtual*, is a kind of omnipresent milieu or status that underscores, infuses and enshrouds existence, what they term *the actual*. And that *the actual* itself emerges from chaos when conditions occur or are established for the *actualisation* of a latent virtual potential.

The terms of the actual are circumscribed by specific conditions that either allow or prevent the emergence of these virtual potentialities, or what Deleuze and Guattari call *singularities*. Whereas the virtual is an infinite mix of unspecified/unbiased and multiple structures, which are defined as singularities, the actual is the realm of specific *difference(s)* that come about as a result of the interactions, whether random or deliberate, of the elemental conditions of both the virtual and the actual through their perpetual coupling. In fact Deleuze and Guattari are specific in stating that neither the actual or the virtual are discreet from each other but are “distinct and yet indiscernible, and all the more indiscernible because distinct, because we do not know which is one and which is the other.”<sup>75</sup> In other words both the actual and the virtual are in a constant and connected flux perpetually motioning from one to the other.<sup>76</sup>

The virtual/actual relationship can be illustrated by reviewing the ‘actual’ conditions of certain states or environments. Say for example in deep space where a majority of the elements that are required for the emergence of life as we know it exist in abundance. Dying stars emit profound quantities of hydrogen, oxygen and carbon atoms that are literally discharged randomly into the interstellar vastness. They can and do encounter the vast gas clouds that form into star making regions known as nebula. There the loosed atoms lodge onto fine dust particles to form simple prebiotic molecules, even at temperatures just above absolute zero: - 272 degrees celsius. As it happens over millions of years these vast gas clouds collapse in on themselves and infant stars take shape at their centre. As the region surrounding the star heats up the molecules evaporate from the dust and intricate chemical reactions weave the simple atoms into complex organic compounds. “Such carbon-bearing compounds are the

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<sup>75</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2; The Time Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (New York: Continuum, 2005), 79.

<sup>76</sup> Miguel de Beistegui, *Truth and Genesis, Philosophy as Differential Ontology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 291-293.

raw material for life - and they seem to emerge spontaneously, inexorably, in the enormous stretches between the stars.”<sup>77</sup>

Actual conditions in deep space however do not, as far as its known, allow these organic compounds to develop further. But introduce them to a different environment with more stable parameters, say with a higher temperature and low-level gravity, and their interactions again change and they evolve into more and more complex forms that, as we have seen here on earth, develop into a seemingly unlimited variety. In all instances the virtual can be regarded as the inherent potentials that are latent to each of these molecules, most especially as they combine and react, and the actual can be seen as the conditions that nurture these reactions and developments. If conditions within the actual are not sufficient then certain virtual tendencies that exist with these molecules are not actualised. Similarly, as the actual enables the emergence of more complex virtual potentials even more potentialities are established within the virtual.<sup>78</sup> Applying then a discreet measure or form to the virtual is not possible since the reality of the virtual becomes apparent via the actual, and because the virtual changes with the actual, it never arrives at a position where it can be regarded as qualifiable in exact or final terms. As Buckminster Fuller stated “there is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it is going to be a butterfly,” it is through its metamorphosis that we discover the intensive potential hidden within it.<sup>79</sup>

The multiplicities that populate the virtual and which structure the intensive processes that yield the actual are also defined by Deleuze and Guattari as what they term “lines of flight”: “The structure of the virtual realm can be explicated as a meshed continuum of heterogenous multiplicities defined by zones of indiscernability or ‘lines of flight’.”<sup>80</sup> These are the potential pathways or directions that ‘actual’ systems evolve along depending on the conditions of the actual, whether say stable or volatile. “These processes and the resultant actual are said to be ‘divergent actualizations’, which means that the same virtual multiplicity

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<sup>77</sup> Andrew Grant, “Cosmic Blueprint of Life,” in *The Best American Science and Nature Writing 2011*, ed. Mary Roach and Tim Folger (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2011), 176.

<sup>78</sup> Daniel W. Smith, “Deleuze and the Production of the New,” in *Deleuze, Guattari and the Production of the New* (London: Continuum, 2011), 160.

<sup>79</sup> Mark Bonta and John Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Guide and Glossary* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 16: “extensive properties of actual substances hide the intensive nature of the morphogenetic processes that give rise to them.”

<sup>80</sup> Bonta and Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy*, 16.

can provide the structure for intensive processes that yield products with vastly different extensive properties.”<sup>81</sup>

One need only look at the seemingly infinite forms that carbon based life takes here on earth to see how these extensive properties profoundly differ, whilst at the same time being composed of a comparatively smaller sub-set of ubiquitous constitutive ingredients:

“Is there such a thing in nature as increase in variety? Were things simpler, was variety less in the original nebula from which the solar system is supposed to have grown than it is now when the land and the sea swarms with animals and plant forms with their intricate anatomies and still more wonderful economies? It would seem as if there were an increase in variety, would it not?”<sup>82</sup>

This motion from the virtual to the actual Deleuze describes as “the production of the new,” in that with each actualization of a virtual potentiality there is a created difference such that no actualised form or event will ever perfectly resemble another: “In other words, when the virtual is actualized, it differentiates itself, it produces the new.”<sup>83</sup> Unlike traditional Western philosophy that largely posits creation and creativity as the bringing into being of pre-established possibilities with changeless order positioned as the final perfection; “everything has already been conceived, if only in the mind of God.”<sup>84</sup> Deleuze proposes that rather than grasping the novelty intrinsic to the extant “the whole of existence is here related to the pre-formed element, from which everything is supposed to emerge by a simple realization.”<sup>85</sup> A realization that, it is understood, to result in a mimetic form derived from a timeless ‘ideal’ with the consequence that “the historic universe is degraded to a status of partial reality, issuing into the notion of mere appearance.”<sup>86</sup> The virtual however, as Deleuze formulates it, is not subject to a process of realization, and the rules of actualization are not timeless

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<sup>81</sup> Bonta and Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy*, 16.

<sup>82</sup> Charles S. Pierce, ‘Synchism, Fallibilism, and Evolution’ in *Philosophical Writings of Pierce*, ed. Justus Buchler (New York, Dover Publications, 1955), 357.

<sup>83</sup> Smith, *Deleuze, Guattari and the Production of the New*, 160.

<sup>84</sup> Smith, *Deleuze, Guattari and the Production of the New*, 159.

<sup>85</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1990), 20.

<sup>86</sup> Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 80.

resemblances, but rather “difference (the differential relation) or divergence (divergent series) - in other words, creation and novelty.”<sup>87</sup>

“difference, he [Deleuze] claims, is essentially productive, and the only engine or principle of production. The world does not unfold through imitation and reproduction, but through a rigorous dynamic of production. If there is an origin of production, it is not identity, but disparity: it is as a result of disparities between elements and series, and at every level (physical, biological, psychological, aesthetic, social and political, etc.), that the world is shaped and events take place. It is only because of differences and differentials – of potential, energy, pressure, level, temperature, tension, in short, differences of intensity – that new phenomena emerge.”<sup>88</sup>

The inconspicuous liminal development of virtual multiplicities along ‘lines of flight’ that result in the actual/the new are not unrestrained by time but, in essence, form and evolve with it; “The more deeply we study the nature of time, the better we understand that duration means invention, creation of forms, continuous elaboration of the absolutely new.”<sup>89</sup> Because nothing ‘actual’ is changeless, transition (movement or change: temporality) and time (duration) are central to its elaboration; “process, activity, and change are the matter of fact. At an instant there is nothing... Thus, since there are not instants... there is no nature at an instant. Thus all the interrelations of matters of fact must involve transition in their essence.”<sup>90</sup> The actual then, it could be argued, is the link that time has to chaos, and it would seem almost impossible to differentiate them since one unfolds through time, and the other is known by what unfolds; neither can be separated from the other or be identified without the other.

However, the tradition in Western science, philosophy, and religion has been to simply align time to existence and not attribute anything to it other than a form of measure “of the relations

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<sup>87</sup> Smith, *Deleuze, Guattari and the Production of the New*, 159-160.

<sup>88</sup> de Beistegui, “The Deleuzian Reversal of Platonism,” 73.

<sup>89</sup> Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (London: H. Holt and Co., 1911).

<sup>90</sup> Whitehead, *Modes of Thought*, 146

among objects that do not fundamentally depend upon it.”<sup>91</sup> The clockwork universe of Isaac Newton succinctly presented by him in the celebrated form of the Orrery was an idealized representation of this notion of “timeless motion ... or ... a motion in timeless time - a notion as paradoxical as that of changeless change.”<sup>92</sup> His cosmos presented as a harmonized vision of discreet and definitive patterns perfectly repeated ad infinitum for eternity (another measureless measure), from which nothing new would emerge.<sup>93</sup>

It is well known today that the reality of the universe is profoundly different to the “changeless order” which Newton supposed and that the ubiquitous chaos that in fact forms it in a sense dissolved the classical vision he established. He, like all the most celebrated religious and philosophical figures of his time denied change to ultimate reality and upheld the ideal that knowledge was a form that had no relationship with time. In the most literal sense though our understanding of ourselves, other beings, the world and the universe is developed over time. As Kant suggested and Whitehead made explicit, our subjectivity forms through time; in that we are interior to it and that knowledge develops through the experience of subjects and not otherwise:<sup>94</sup> “the whole universe consists of elements disclosed in the analysis of the experiences of subjects.”<sup>95</sup> By doing this both Kant and Whitehead make it possible to think change, becoming and emergence of the new, rather than subordinating them to ‘changeless order’ or ‘static forms.’

None of this is to discount the reality of order either - the development through time of chaotic phenomena can, and does, result in it.<sup>96</sup> Though order is not a form applied to chaos from a transcendental realm or principle as Plato would have argued, it can be regarded as a stable expression of chaos itself. Deleuze’s conception of chaos, like complexity theory that

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<sup>91</sup> Steven Shaviro, “Novelty and Double Causality in Kant, Whitehead and Deleuze,” in *Deleuze, Guattari and the Production of the New* (London: Continuum, 2011), 209.

<sup>92</sup> Gare, “Mathematics, Explanation and Reductionism: Exposing the Roots of the Egyptianism of European Civilization,” 59.

<sup>93</sup> Gare, “Mathematics, Explanation and Reductionism: Exposing the Roots of the Egyptianism of European Civilization,” 48.

<sup>94</sup> Shaviro, “Novelty and Double Causality in Kant, Whitehead and Deleuze,” 210-211.

<sup>95</sup> Alfred N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1978), 166.

<sup>96</sup> Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Music, Painting and the Arts*, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 17.

informs it,<sup>97</sup> shows order as emerging from chaos while maintaining a consistent and necessary link to it; it doesn't just appear and then remain preserved for perpetuity unaffected by other forces. Consider the notion of stillness, our position on the planet is made still by the interaction/adaptation of different forces, this stillness is like an island, a momentary (in the broader sense) pause in a large flux. Remove even one of the surrounding factors that influence the earth (for example the moon) and the orders that have thus far emerged upon it would be either profoundly altered or, in some instances, would cease to exist, to be actual. As Deleuze states, chaos, which encompasses both order and disorder, "is not an inert or stationary state, nor is it a chance mixture. Chaos makes chaotic and undoes every consistency in the universe."<sup>98</sup>

"Chaos is defined not so much by its disorder as by the infinite speed with which every form taking shape in it vanishes. It is a void that is not a nothingness but a virtual, containing all possible particles and drawing out all possible forms, which spring up only to disappear... without consistency or reference, without consequence. Chaos is an infinite speed of birth and disappearance."<sup>99</sup>

These infinite speeds are the durations of actualised phenomena, be it a brief flash of lightning to the great, extended life of a planetary system. None of these are purely discreet but are formed through complex systems of interaction and effect. As Alfred Whitehead insisted "there is nothing that floats into the world from nowhere. Everything in the world is referable to some actual entity."<sup>100</sup> The meshed continuum that is chaos I would suggest is the link between all phenomena and its perpetual fluctuations and differential elaborations are what form it:

"different names: among them chaos, disorder, unpredictability, force, the infinite, profusion, intensification, materiality without measure, nature without norm that are in excess of the principles by which we attempt to know and regulate them.

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<sup>97</sup> Plotnitsky, "Chaomologies: Quantum Field Theory, Chaos and Thought in Deleuze and Guattari's *What is Philosophy?*" 43.

<sup>98</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill (London: Verso, 1994), 42.

<sup>99</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 118.

<sup>100</sup> Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 244.

Chaos is not the absence of order but rather the fullness or plethora that, depending on its uneven speed, force, and intensity, is the condition both for any model or activity and for the undoing and transformation of such models or activities.”<sup>101</sup>

Chaos then is not the diminished melange that Plato and the Christian Churches have insisted upon, nor is it made necessary by the application of an ordering code or formula. It simply is, and it cannot under any circumstances be definitively denied. All phenomena arises from and continues to depend upon the chaotic forces that shape and enshroud it. The ceaseless motion toward new forms that marks out chaos does not arise from a fixed, transcendental vantage but through the disparities that are inherent to all material reality. Contrast and difference as Deleuze explains is its productive force and not the sameness and replication so many traditions have maintained. Through the differentiation of phenomena and experience, and through the understanding of the complexity that infuses it, we can begin to perceive its latent wealth and essentiality. The fact that our own chaotic natures don’t always conform to the definitions that are applied to us and the world is not an indication of the necessity to repress and deny what isn’t recognised or acknowledged, but it is emblematic of the limitations these notions apply.

Chaos grants value and accords worth to all phenomena equally insofar that it doesn’t differentiate between what can and can’t be. Similarly all disparity, contrast, and change does not evolve through a systematized measure that either valorizes or denigrates it but it first comes about and then these notions are retrospectively applied. The arts in this sense are chaos par excellence. To present this I will now consider a selection of artists whose work expresses these qualities of chaos; Joseph Mallord William Turner, Gerhard Richter, Cecily Brown, Cornelia Parker and Katy Moran. Through their work we can appreciate the methods of the arts and its ceaseless presentation of new forms, new concepts, and new ideas in which an increasing variety of subjectivities and identities find expression and place.

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<sup>101</sup> Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, 26.

### Chapter 3. Chaos in art.

How the arts present chaos can, in the most general sense, be seen as the sum of its expressions. Like Deleuze's conception of chaos as a realm of constant flux, of perpetual becoming and disappearing, creation and destruction, of constant refiguration and reterritorialisation; a constant threat to certainties, the methods of the arts do just that. Its main currency is innovation, the new; "the production of the new," a perpetual flow of new and evolving visions and unforeseen expressions that, as Deleuze insists, "wants to create the finite that restores the infinite."<sup>102</sup>

The arts are about creativity in the most essential sense, a constant becoming of new concepts, ideas, and notions, forms and expressions that qualify previously unqualified thoughts or expound the prior unknown. Whereas Platonic traditions have established the arts as mimetic deception which, at best, can only operate as propaganda, Deleuze, Bergson, Whitehead, and Nietzsche before him, along with many streams of contemporary science such as Chaos Theory, Sync, Palaeobiology, Complexity, Particle Physics, and Quantum Mechanics, all posit the centrally innovative nature of the multiverse and its constant motion toward new forms and configurations. Art, in turn, is not then a diminished rendition of some Universal principle - a substitute for the "real" - but the result of an activity that is central to and in excess of the unfolding and elaboration of all phenomena.<sup>103</sup> Importantly the 'newness' that the arts express does not appear *ex-nihilo*, from "out of nothing" as certain movements, like Dadism have claimed for itself,<sup>104</sup> but it is an innovative production that stems from a profoundly and deeply interconnected association of parts, both seen and unseen.

In this chapter I will demonstrate how the work of Joseph Mallord William Turner, Gerhard Richter, Cecily Brown, Cornelia Parker and Katy Moran present chaos in its most general sense as the broadest imaginable form within which all other forms can either coalesce or dissolve,<sup>105</sup> and also as a medium that provided resistance and transgressions to the static notions that certain institutions have perpetuated throughout history. Where Plato, Aristotle, the Christian Churches, Classical Science and Philosophy proclaimed the highest and most

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<sup>102</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 186.

<sup>103</sup> Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, 47.

<sup>104</sup> Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Boston: MIT Press, 1986), 152.

<sup>105</sup> Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, 28.



perfect truth was singular, unchanging, and eternal. Chaos, as a primal realm of mutability, transience and change, of openings and mutual variety, of unaccorded identities; the unacknowledged or the unknown, and of unforeseen becomings; the unpredictable and the new, reveals the paucity of such claims and undermines their authority. The work of each of the artists I show here operates in the same way by liberating meaning from the prescribed forms certain historic conventions have asserted and thereby creating the opportunity for substitute visions that more accurately convey the transient and indistinct nature of existence.

Further to this, I will show how art that engages these notions gives, in a vital way, impetus and import to those expressions that propagate alternatives to the application of universal claims for truth and existence. Where traditional and classical practices present explicit meanings often subordinate to an all-encompassing, universal doctrinal heritage; the standard for the majority of the arts from antiquity until the 19th century, a lot of contemporary art practice is epitomised by a plethora of mutually co-existent meaning centres each emergent of a unique and localised form of order or expression. This very idea applies succinctly to Deleuze's conception of the dynamics of chaos and in this chapter I will make this association. Further to this I will illustrate how art can represent the forces inherent to chaos; its unceasing motion, lack of fixity, its forming, constituting, destroying, and dissolving power, as well as the latent, infinite variety of virtualities that structure it; their hidden presence that is alluded to but not made explicit - the ambiguous, elusive and liminal quality of chaos.

### **3.1 My Work: "reconnections through a zone of indistinction."<sup>106</sup>**

"The moment you think you know a work of art, it is dead to you." Oscar Wilde

Before attributing certain aspects of chaos to the work of a series of artists and thereby showing the broader artistic context within which I identify my own practice, it would be helpful to outline here what are the pictorial ambitions I have for it. In my paintings I seek to represent unprescribed forms (either real or not) that enable the mind to freely explore them as it sees them, if they are seen at all. It is more about the suggestion of something, its emergent

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<sup>106</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 202.

and evocative qualities, the unprescribed potential that is latent within the represented forms/marks/surface and what they may or may not be becoming. Ideally the imagination has the opportunity to rest and unfold with these possibilities and is given a respite from reality, or at least a hard-edge reality that presents and perceives only itself. In this regard the rational could be seen as supplanted by the irrational and knowledge or the known is replaced by an active or allowed ignorance inhabited by imaginary projections.

This methodology seeks to maintain a rich subjectivity that in turn personalizes the image in a way that any derived meaning is firstly individual and not doctrinaire. Ideally then the relationship the viewer has with my work is extended beyond the first encounter insofar that the content of the work, on a personal level, is recreated in the mind with each visit. Or better still, strata of meaning are preserved in the subjective memory as a growing catalogue of associations that deepens the relationship between the audience and the work over time. The motifs I choose are intentionally vague, obtuse, and indistinct so that this process of personalization, as it were, is further nurtured, and that the distinction between abstraction and representation, if it actually exists, is not maintained simply because the forms I paint are not quite something but are enough to not be nothing.

My paintings portray liminality; images that hover between the poles of emergence/becoming and dissolution. Are they forming or dissolving, and does the lack of fixity proclaim meaninglessness? If it does I don't mind. As Deleuze insists, "everything signifies"<sup>107</sup> and so even a lack of meaning, its absence, can be an opening where meaning enters of its own subjective and unpredictable accord. In this way the refusal to mean, as is typified in the artistic project of Gerhard Richter, is made sensible and worthwhile. How this appears in my own work is through an intended use of ambiguity, indistinction, and uncertainty.

I must also acknowledge the degree to which the medium of paint itself motivates me. It's latent potential as a kind of primordial substance that can be manipulated to represent an infinity of images and patterns resonates analogously to the idea of original chaos; the world unfettered by order and not yet stabilized and elaborated through time. Paint as the primordial ingredients of matter from which an infinity of forms can emerge. Like the twenty-six letters that combine to form an entire dictionary of words (it too not static but mutating and

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<sup>107</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 2004), 124.

evolving) which in turn becomes ALL writing (the articulation of infinite worlds, still becoming) there is no limit to the images paint can present.

The translation of these ideas into paintings can be first seen in ‘The Face on Mars’ (fig.1) which I started with thick, arbitrary, random brushstrokes that were sanded back after leaving them to dry for six months, they were then tinted to reveal their detail. Next I painted out the majority of the surface so as to alter the strokes into a chaotic spread of floating obscure forms drifting across a void. The title is a reference to the vast production of detailed theories that derive from the apophenic habit of humans to apply mistaken meanings to random phenomena. The “Face on Mars” itself is in the region of Cydonia located in the northern hemisphere of Mars. Photographed in 1976 by the Viking 1 orbiter it distinctly looks like the monumental carving of a human head looking out from the planet’s surface. But later investigation has revealed it to simply be a hill jutting out from a desert plain that looks like a face when imaged from above at a certain angle and at a certain time. From earth it becomes a lasting monument to a great, lost civilization of extraterrestrials. In reality however, on Mars, it is the product of natural chaotic forces which from any other perspective looks just like an unassuming hill.



(fig.1) Adrian Hobbs. The Face on Mars, 2013. Oil on Board, 124x82cm.

The way in which random chaotic phenomena can be interpreted to suggest a multitude of derivative and perhaps new meanings can also be seen in 'Sic Transit Gloria Mundi' (fig.2) and 'Come in Number 51, Your Time is Up' (fig.3). These two paintings are adapted from the closing sequence of the 1971 Michaelangelo Antonioni film *Zabriskie Point*. The film explores the brief meeting of two disaffected youths enmeshed in late sixties counterculture. As they struggle to locate themselves beyond the reach of the American consumerist utopia, they are each differently confronted and thwarted by its pervasive and inescapable presence. The character Dara is emotionally overwhelmed by the events that take place and expresses her anger and grief through the imagined, explosive destruction of various consumer icons that include a fridge, a television, even a modernist, architecturally designed house. As each of these objects dissolve spectacularly in slow motion their disintegrating parts fly across the screen to transform like clouds into a plethora of random, indistinct but deeply evocative and chaotic forms. I took a series of stills from this sequence and then adapted them into these paintings. By staying close to the original images I attempt to relate the same evocation of the new through the demise of prescribed, meaning-laden forms.



(fig.2) Adrian Hobbs. *Sic Transit Gloria Mundi*, 2014. Oil on Canvas, 121x91cm.



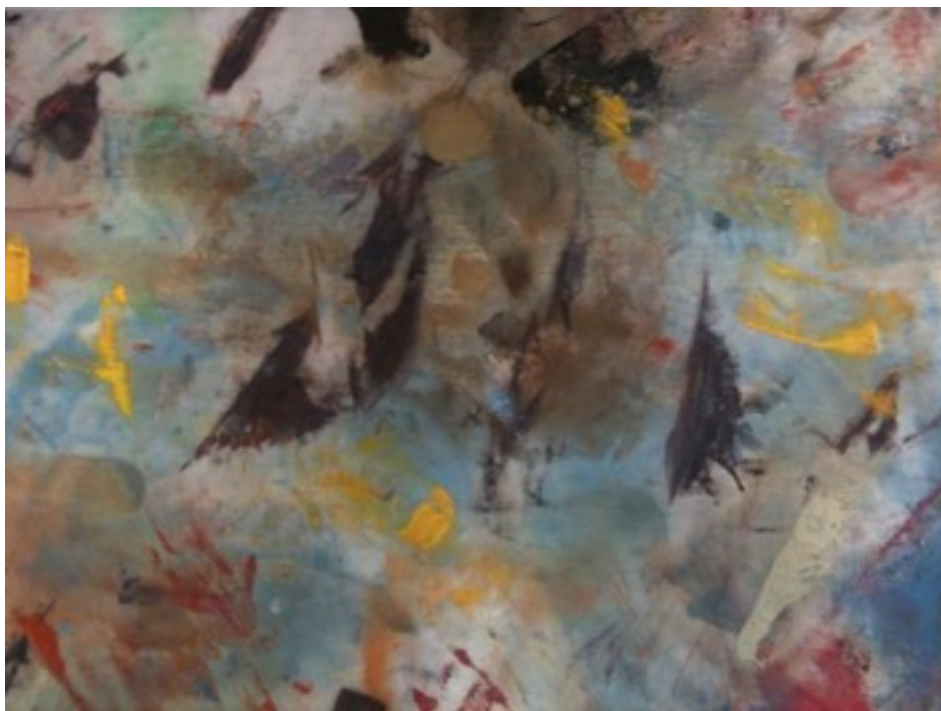
(fig.3) Adrian Hobbs. Come In No.51, Your Time Is Up, 2012. Oil on board, 90x60cm.

Evading the literal is taken even further in 'Key Largo' (fig.4), 'Between the Straight Line and the Curve' (fig.5) and 'Madame Muck' (fig.6). My starting point for these works is the residue of paint remaining on the palette after working on another piece. Marks are applied with no consideration of an outcome or end. If anything my initial decision on how and where to apply the paint is based on how much paint remains and how large is the surface I am painting on. Every layer or application (sometimes small, sometimes extensive) from then on is made in reaction to or as a response to those first marks, and will always include an element of randomness or chance. I work at the painting until I get an initial sense of an impending form coalescing within the painted surface but never do I allow it to arrive at a definitive point.

Historically the principal Western institutions of religion, science, and philosophy have prescribed meaning to existence and insisted we all follow their lead. Art that presents unprescribed and unspecific meaning (futures) are testament to the reality of the endless emergence and differentiation of phenomena. Chaos reveals that the future (and so meaning) is not set for perpetuity but is constantly evolving and unfolding from the present, therefore works that acknowledge and maintain this reality, to me, are the kind of works I wish to make. There are many artists with a project that share these ideas, and here I will focus on a few whose work help to establish a context for my own practice.



(fig.4) Adrian Hobbs. Key Largo, 2012. Oil on Board, 70x55cm



(fig.5) Adrian Hobbs. Between the Straight Line and the Curve, 2013. Oil on Canvas, 135x98cm.



(fig.6) Adrian Hobbs. Madame Muck, 2014. Oil on Board, 94x70cm.

### 3.2 Turner's chaos.

“He began by pouring wet paint onto the paper till it was saturated, he tore, he scratched, he scrubbed at it in a kind of frenzy and the whole thing was chaos - but gradually and as if by magic the lovely ship, with all its exquisite minutia, came into being.”<sup>108</sup>

Joseph Mallord William Turner (born. April 23, 1775) the famed English painter of the 19th century came to fame at a very young age through his early work since it fulfilled all the expectations of the Anglo tradition and the institutions that supported it: the works he produced were empirical (true to form and nature), harmonious, they imbued the English landscape with a heroic/regal aura, they exuded a relaxed confidence and skill, and, as an added treat Turner himself was not a European import but a true-blooded Englishman.<sup>109</sup> The England of his time, long at war with France, was a burgeoning scientific, industrial and naval power that sat on the verge of becoming the most powerful empire in the world. The nation's fervent embrace of scientific innovation and its translation to industry, not to mention its aggressive colonisation of foreign lands, provided it with the immense wealth and resources to become its celebrated Britannia. All of this meant the England of Turner's time was “an empire of solid, prosaic, commercial facts”<sup>110</sup> which was besotted by its own proliferating strengths and wealth while steadfast in the certainty of its future course as a nation.<sup>111</sup>

In painting, then regarded the highest of the art forms, the classics were most revered and strict rules applied to the represented subject. History painting was the most esteemed of genres, being regarded as the pinnacle of the ‘painting subject hierarchy’.<sup>112</sup> By imbuing the image with a classical tone - harmony, beauty, clarity, exactness - the subject is installed in the linear tract of history and so established as both true and everlasting for all time.<sup>113</sup> Initially Turner's work fulfilled this quota but about mid-way into his career he turned his back on

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<sup>108</sup> Nicholas Tracy, *Britannia's Palette: The Arts of Naval Victory* (London: McGill-Queens University Press, 2007), 298.

<sup>109</sup> Simon Schama, “Turner, Painting Up a Storm,” in *The Power of Art* (London: BBC Books, 2009), 244.

<sup>110</sup> Asa Briggs, *A Social History of England, 3rd Ed*, (London: Penguin Books, 1994), 219.

<sup>111</sup> Briggs, *A Social History of England*, 221.

<sup>112</sup> Schama, “Turner, Painting Up a Storm,” 248

<sup>113</sup> Schama, “Turner, Painting Up a Storm,” 249.



paintings' tradition and sought to represent what could only be described as the chaotic antithesis of the classical vision.

The first real sign of Turner's disinterest in perpetuating historic convention was to be witnessed in 1806 with the exhibition of the painting 'The Battle of Trafalgar, as Seen From the Mizzen Starboard Shrouds of the Victory.' 1806 (fig.7)<sup>114</sup> As previously stated, history painting was the most revered of genres and the actual Battle of Trafalgar, barely a year prior, was still firing the imaginations and patriotic fervor of the public of England. 'Nelson-mania' transfixed the nation and the public flocked to see any depiction they could of the event.<sup>115</sup> What greeted the viewing public that eagerly anticipated Turner's rendition of what was to be regarded as one of the greatest wartime victories of the British nation was a cacophonous imbroglio of twisted sails, broken masts, crashing ships and tiny, desperate, unheroic figures all overshadowed and shrouded by the obscuring billows of cannon smoke and burning wreckage. In fact Admiral Nelson himself who had lead the British fleet to victory only to die in the last moments of battle, wasn't presented as the valiant and glorified personage of the public's imagination but instead as a tiny, slouching, barely identifiable flop of a figure whose life had been, just moments prior, taken by a bullet from the direction of what actually appears to be the viewers perspective.<sup>116</sup> This wasn't a clear example of the kind of reportage the Academy revered, after all "art's obligation, for the keepers of the academic flame, was narrative clarity." Instead, Turner went for "instantaneous atmospheric: chaos, confusion and the smoke shrouded 'indistinctness' for which he would be repeatedly attacked."<sup>117</sup>

This widening, or retreating of the viewer's perspective so as to take in the much broader themes or forces at play comes to eventually typify Turner's work. In Turner, the historic subject is no longer exclusively singular, central, or heroic but is diminished and contextualised by the wider circumstances that surround it. His Admiral Nelson was a piece in a bigger game, not the colossal, consolidating figure around which forces converge but just one of the many collateral sacrifices that assured a victory. Perhaps this was the thrill for Turner, to represent the wider forces of history and change, however to his critics and condemners it was not. Upon seeing this eagerly anticipated painting, to the consternation of

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<sup>114</sup> Schama, "Turner, Painting Up a Storm," 256.

<sup>115</sup> Tracy, *Britannia's Palette: The Arts of Naval Victory*, 314.

<sup>116</sup> Schama, "Turner, Painting Up a Storm," 257.

<sup>117</sup> Schama, "Turner, Painting Up a Storm," 257.

his early patrons, he “dives deep into a chaotic rendition of nebulous transgressions in gamboge”<sup>118</sup> and to one critic has committed “the cardinal sin of indistinctness.”<sup>119</sup>



(fig.7) J.W. Turner, *The Battle of Trafalgar, as Seen From the Mizzen Starboard Shrouds of the Victory*, 1806, 171x239cm.

By this time in his career Turner was freed of the concerns most artists would have to be considerate of since he'd attained a certain autonomy thanks to his early successes. These provided him wealth and a considerable reputation as well as the succour of a few loyal patrons, who, despite growing criticisms of his work, maintained their support. Though certainly this partly enabled him to break with conventional tastes, what exactly motivated Turner to pursue what, at the time, was an extremely radical vision can never be entirely known to us. What matters though is that he did and continued to do so for the remainder of his life. And by doing so he opened painting to the greater forces of chaos - untamed nature, change, inexactness, the new - as the world around him too dramatically and aggressively transformed under the emerging forces of industrialization and modernity:

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<sup>118</sup> Schama, “Turner, Painting Up a Storm,” 281.

<sup>119</sup> Jeremy Lewison, *Turner, Monet, Twombly: Later Paintings* (London: Tate, 2011), 68.

“The introduction of chaos into this existing order was part of the process of transformation, chaos not simply as disorder but as a state of primal indeterminacy that is prelude to a new social and natural actuality.”<sup>120</sup>

Though it can be said that as his life progressed the indistinctness that Turner became renowned for did more frequently dominate his oeuvre, he didn't however cease to create from time to time the kinds of paintings critics and the public adored. ‘Snow Storm: Hannibal and His Army Crossing the Alps’ (1814), (fig.8) - “a break from his previous style, an innovation, and a step toward a more graphic chaos”<sup>121</sup> - ‘The Fighting Temeraire,’ (1838) ‘The Burning of the Houses of Parliament’ (1836) or his deeply romantic visions of Venice (1841-1843) all found favour. Whereas other works like ‘Landscape with a River and a Bay in the Background’ (1835-1840) and ‘Snow Storm: Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth’ (1842), (fig.9), had Turner be accused such that “The artist is basking in original chaos... all is shapeless and empty” or that “Turner delights in abstractions that go back to the first chaos of the world.”<sup>122</sup>



(fig.8) J.W. Turner, Snow Storm: Hannibal and His Army Crossing the Alps, 1814. Oil on Canvas, 241x142cm.

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<sup>120</sup> Keller, *Face of the Deep: a Theology of Becoming*, 114.

<sup>121</sup> Schama, “Turner, Painting Up a Storm,” 261.

<sup>122</sup> Walter Thornbury, *The Life of J. M. W. Turner, Vol 2* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1862), 191.



(fig.9) J.W. Turner, Snow Storm: Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth, 1842. 305x228cm.

To look at these paintings today without the knowledge of their effect at the time its hard to estimate the shock and outrage they evoked since we now view them from the vantage of a history of painterly innovations that, in retrospect, have vastly exceeded Turner in terms of both disruption and originality. For the time however it was a bold step and the more he summoned chaos within his work “the further he removed himself from Victorian taste that prized, above all else, the dependable factuality of life”. The England of his time “was a world of measures and proportions, of bolts and rivets, a world governed by engineering. It had no truck with sentimental mistiness. In that practical mind-set, steam was not the veil of poetry, it drove the pistons of profit.”<sup>123</sup> Chaos to the learned and powerful of this time was still, like it was to Christianity before it, to be overcome. It had to be mastered for the “betterment of mankind” (rhetoric for ‘the gain and advantage of a few’)<sup>124</sup> and so to present it in a governing role that dictated the terms for life while showing humanity as its prone dependent subject was a radical and unpopular, albeit far more factual, manoeuvre.

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<sup>123</sup> Schama, “Turner, Painting Up a Storm,” 250.

<sup>124</sup> Kuberski, *Chaosmos: Literature, Science and Theory*, 29: “The equation of knowledge and domination thus becomes the irrevocable axiom of modern thinking.”

Turner evoked the powers of chaos and for it he changed the convention of painting, new possibilities were revealed for the tradition while the dogmatic principles upheld by the academy were de-centered and compromised. Whereas academic paintings of the time were created for the academy, consumed by the academy, and celebrated by the academy, thus neatly maintaining it, Turner punched holes in its self-referential walls to let in a glimpse of the chaos it refused and disparaged. By embracing and expressing the grander themes of nature, change, the sublime, even “the moral concerns of slavery and machine labor”, and not just those prescribed and dictated by the institution, he broadened painting’s applicability while establishing for it the possibility of new futures. Perhaps the most pertinent and lasting statement his work makes is that, in the end, it is not chaos that humanity will master but that chaos is humanities’ master already.

### **3.3 Chaos in the Contemporary.**

“In defiance of ideology, pictures everywhere therefore say nothing” Gerhard Richter

Where J.W Turner suffered criticism and resistance to the non-definitive nature of his paintings, the art world today has little issue with work that presents the indistinguishable and indeterminate. Whether the motivation is, say in the case of Gerhard Richter, to allow “a thing to come, rather than creating it - no assertions, constructions, formulations, inventions, ideologies - in order to gain access to all that is genuine, richer, more alive: to what is beyond my understanding”.<sup>125</sup> Or with Cecily Brown who claims that she is “interested in the unfixed nature of things” and that “it’s about... what you get from allowing the imagery to shift and change. There isn’t a final destination”,<sup>126</sup> we get a sense of a concern for painting to be freed from the historic legacy of representation subordinate to an institutionalized standard that establishes definitive terms and outcomes for its production.

In Richter’s case, his formative experience as an artist in the service of the Eastern Bloc and the rules it prescribed for its artistic practitioners became the impetus to embrace a creative project that liberated the painted image from the strictures of an omnipresent creed. As he

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<sup>125</sup> Gerhard Richter, *The Daily Practice of Painting. Writings and Interviews 1962-1993*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Obrist, trans. David Britt (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 119.

<sup>126</sup> Lari Pittman, “Cecily Brown in Conversation with Lari Pittman,” in *Cecily Brown* (New York: Rizzoli Publications, 2008), 26.

claimed “ No ideology... but painting like Nature, painting as change, becoming, emerging, being-there, thusness; without an aim, and just as right, logical, perfect and incomprehensible”.<sup>127</sup> Further to this, he observed; “to have an ideology means having laws and guidelines; it means killing those who have different laws and guidelines”.<sup>128</sup> The very precise measures the Communist regime dictated for it’s artists was countenanced by a deeply coded social dogma that, not unlike Christianity, had precise values and functions prescribed for the arts.<sup>129</sup> The nationalism that it strictly nurtured required the propaganda of “great art” to relay and popularize its message for the people. To stand outside of, or suggest alternatives to it, would be to face criminal charges that in most instances offered only two outcomes; either repress and mask the chaotic impulse for insubordination and thus acquiesce to the domineering standard or be ‘removed’ from the system.<sup>130</sup> Like the coded cosmos that denigrates the chaotic impulse toward alternatives thus vilifying anyone or anything that dissents or contradicts the ruling ideology, the Politburo that ruled over Richter’s childhood and early adult years set within him the desire to access and evidence an art that would counter it’s incontrovertibly explicit and repressive principles.<sup>131</sup>

This does not mean that Richter’s art should be regarded as strictly anti-communist, it isn’t, it reaches further than that. What it more generally opposes is any system or regime that attempts to affix the complex heterogeneity of the world into a delimiting, hierarchically-stacked framework, while simultaneously, his work positions the unknowable as a constitutive part of experience: “Abstract pictures are fictive models, because they make visible a reality that we can neither see nor describe, but whose existence we can postulate. We denote this reality in negative terms: the unknown, the incomprehensible, the infinite.”<sup>132</sup> By invoking the unknowable/virtual aspects of chaos as a remedy to the fixity of ‘dyed-in-the-wool’ institutional posturing he opens the painted image to new possibilities by stripping it of meaning and so maintaining it, like the virtual, in a pre-actual position that can, but not

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<sup>127</sup> Richter, *The Daily Practice of Painting. Writings and Interviews 1962-1993*, 121.

<sup>128</sup> Gerhard Richter, *Gerhard Richter: Writings 1961-2007*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Obrist, trans. Dietmar Elger (London: Thames and Hudson, 2009), 35.

<sup>129</sup> Richter: *Writings 1961-2007*, 189: “I originally came from Dresden, where Socialist Realism prevailed.”

<sup>130</sup> Jason C. Sharman, *Repression and Resistance in Communist Europe* (London: Routledge, 2003), 44.

<sup>131</sup> Richter, *The Daily Practice of Painting. Writings and Interviews 1962-1993*, 96.

<sup>132</sup> Richter, *The Daily Practice of Painting. Writings and Interviews 1962-1993*, 100.

necessarily will, evoke a multitude of derivative forms without adhering to any single one of them (fig's.10 and 11) :



(fig.10) Gerhard Richter, Abstraktes Bild (Abstract Painting), 2009. Oil on Wood, 50x70cm.

“Pictures which are interpretable, and which contain a meaning, are bad pictures. When a picture presents itself as the Unmanageable, the Illogical, The Meaningless, it demonstrates the endless multiplicity of aspects; it takes away our certainty... It shows us the thing in all the manifold significance and infinite variety that preclude the emergence of any single meaning and view.”<sup>133</sup>

Although Richter is most likely referring to paintings when he describes “the endless multiplicity of aspects”, as a notion it corresponds with Deleuze’s conception of the ‘actual’ forms of chaos. Each ‘actual form’ or ‘actuality’ as such is linked to one of an endless array of virtual multiplicities and differentiates from other similar actualities in each instance - the

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<sup>133</sup> Richter, *The Daily Practice of Painting. Writings and Interviews 1962-1993*, 35.

creation of the new. The known actual expressions of chaos are for example as multiple and as varied as the carbon based life forms on Earth. Therefore following Deleuze, each life form is an expression or aspect of chaos, most especially since it is formed by and through chaos (time and the interaction of chaotic forces). The countless and increasing extent of all variety, all difference, all contrast formed as it is through chaos, is emblematic of chaos itself. Chaos, and its countless and unceasing, and forever differentiating aspects are reiterated or reflected through the constancy of the new in painting and the arts in general.



(fig.11) Gerhard Richter, Abstraktes Bild (Abstract Painting), 2005, Oil on Canvas, 113.5x72cm.



Another systemic methodology Richter utilizes in his work is that of the blur. By blurring the image or surface it imbues his paintings with a transitory or liminal quality that is, in part, another attempt by him to release his work from the stricture of precise or fixed meaning.<sup>134</sup> For him it is also a matter of a better painting since in a blurred image “you can see many more things in it than in a sharply focused image. A landscape painted with exactness forces you to see a determined number of clearly differentiated trees, while in a blurry canvas you can perceive as many trees as you want. The painting is more open.”<sup>135</sup> This open, unresolved quality we see in a lot of his work he claims is one of the best statements his art can make about the world. In a 1972 interview Richter explained his motivation for blurring his paintings was because “I can make no statement about reality clearer than my own relationship to reality; and this has a great deal to do with imprecision, uncertainty, transience, incompleteness.”<sup>136</sup> These qualities were the source of so much criticism for Turner but for Richter they’re a source of praise. Whether despised or loved these are qualities endemic of chaos. Although Richter doesn’t explicitly position his work as a critique of those traditions that endorse only precision, certainty, fixity, and completeness, it does however acknowledge and present alternatives to them, and also, it could be argued, is, in the end a more factual representation of reality itself since only a small section of reality includes the surface, or what is obvious - what appears.

Where Richter is explicit in refusing the application of meaning to his work and so leaving it open to an endless series of unfixable associations - chaos as the unknowable, the pre-actual/ the virtual, and the infinite, even the multiple - the painter Cecily Brown takes this notion and adds to it the intention to maintain a transitional quality in that the painted image sits between fixed positions or forms; “I think that painting is a kind of alchemy... the paint is transformed into image, and hopefully paint and image transform themselves into a third and new thing... I want to catch something in the act of becoming something else.”<sup>137</sup> This literal ‘in between’ state as she describes it is analogous with the concept of chaos as both the undetermined/ unestablished and the liminal or transforming/changing. How she renders this is via complex paintings that present a chaotic spread of marks, colours and lines which combine to almost, but not quite, coalesce into distinct imagery. In her painting titled ‘Skulldiver 4’ (fig.12) vague

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<sup>134</sup> Richter: *Writings 1961-2007*, 33.

<sup>135</sup> Richter: *Writings 1961-2007*, 81.

<sup>136</sup> Robert Storr, *Gerhard Richter. Forty Years of Painting* (New York: MOMA, 2002), 85.

<sup>137</sup> Dore Ashton, “Cecily Brown En Route,” in *Cecily Brown* (New York: Rizzoli Publications, 2008), 16.

suggestions of partial figures; a woman's languishing upper body, another's spread legs, intermingle with gestural marks, stray lines, and earthy, bruised-flesh tones that intimate maybe a face in one section or a sleeping infant in another. The question of what is seen however lingers, is never answered and the eye continues its attempt to assert the recognizable only to have it slip away almost every time. In summing up her ambitions for her work she stated:



(fig.12) Cecily Brown, *Skulldiver IV*, 2007. Oil on Linen, 216x226cm.

“I want my work to be arresting enough visually to make someone want to stop and look at it... To me, a painting is successful when you can look at it for several hours and it continues to reveal itself - it sets off a domino effect of associations and allusions to things that prompt memory, similar to being alone daydreaming. It is almost like an external manifestation of the unconscious... I like that its hard to get a quick read on a painting.”<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Pittman, “Cecily Brown in Conversation with Lari Pittman,” 25.

Although initially arresting there is not a quick or easy read on Brown's work, and despite admitting that she is prone to want to create recognizable forms within her paintings she fights the urge to do so since, for her, the recognizable is far less enthralling than the unrecognizable.<sup>139</sup> To illustrate this she differentiates between the recognizable as an "image" and the unrecognizable as "paintings",<sup>140</sup> indicating that she wants for the latter to "create an unpredictable situation where one sensation leads to another, so that looking at it becomes a complex and layered experience. I think the absence of fixed meaning is liberating".<sup>141</sup> In another work, 'The Fugitive Kind,' (fig.13) vague suggestions of both a seated female figure or an elderly man's profile (amongst others) jockey for distinction before being reabsorbed into the general swirl of painted marks and colours. Hints or inferences tease our perception but nothing precise or static satisfies it.



(fig.13) Cecily Brown, *The Fugitive Kind*, 2000. Oil on Linen, 229x190.5cm.

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<sup>139</sup> Pittman, "Cecily Brown in Conversation with Lari Pittman," 28.

<sup>140</sup> Pittman, "Cecily Brown in Conversation with Lari Pittman," 28.

<sup>141</sup> Pittman, "Cecily Brown in Conversation with Lari Pittman," 29.

The starting point for a majority of her work is a varied selection of images that range across history. These provide her with an initial form from which she develops her paintings, and that may or may not be partly glimpsed in the finished work. In some cases a classic painting by Tintoretto or Rubens, in another an early twentieth-century pornographic photo.<sup>142</sup> This array of source material and the ensuing paintings she produces, the critic Dore Ashton notes, is “fervent at all times - is eclectic.”<sup>143</sup> In the opening of her essay ‘Cecily Brown En Route,’ Ashton applies the notion of the eclectic, as it was outlined by the eighteenth century French writer and philosopher Denis Diderot, to Browns practice. In the *Encyclopédie* Diderot wrote that the eclectic reveres “the individual and the personal,” as it dismembers “prejudice, tradition, venerability, universal assent, authority - in a word, everything that overawes the crowd.”<sup>144</sup> This notion corresponds to what Katherine Hayles has described as the “politics of chaos,” in that the subjective and individual, or local knowledge as she terms it, resists assimilation into global or universal theories. Where “totalizing theories are associated with oppressive political structures,” the personal and subjective or “local knowledge, in both a geopolitical and theoretical sense” is the basis for “liberation, change, and innovation.”<sup>145</sup> If then Brown’s work can be seen as an inspiration for change or liberation, a break away from universal creeds that dictate the terms for all of us, it is through her determination to establish a personal, erotic perspective that tantalizes us by alluding to intimately private moments where the personal and subjective are most pronounced.<sup>146</sup> By forsaking distinction and precision she nurtures the formation of personal narratives through an accentuation of the subjective, for it is in the subjective locale of personal experience that the change which chaos instills is first encountered:

“Cecily Brown looks at the reality of the world in relation to human presence; she wanders in search of a truth that is not absolute and extraneous, but contingent and fleeting, a truth contaminated and corroded by individual experience.”<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Ashton, “Cecily Brown En Route,” 13.

<sup>143</sup> Ashton, “Cecily Brown En Route,” 11.

<sup>144</sup> Ashton, “Cecily Brown En Route,” 11.

<sup>145</sup> N. Katherine Hayles, *Chaos Bound: Orderly Disorder in Contemporary Literature and Science* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), 209.

<sup>146</sup> Uta Grosenick, ed., *Art Now. Vol 2*, (London: Taschen, 2005), 72.

<sup>147</sup> Danilo Eccher, “Cecily Brown,” in *Cecily Brown* (Rome: Museo d’Arte Contemporanea, 2003), 18.

In 'Carnival and Lent' (fig.14) we see a more deliberate inclusion of recognizable forms, but ones that sit at the edge of dissolution, as though they're about to be absorbed into the apparent chaos that surrounds them. Here the suggestion of a Bacchanalian feast or Dionysian rite; a figural celebration of change and transformation, plays out before us and, like in the words of Enrique Juncosa describing Brown's oeuvre, we get a glimpse of a "hedonistic garden where images and brushstrokes meld into each other without respecting any hierarchical order."<sup>148</sup> Again the intimate moments of subjective change and transformation play out in the minutiae of the image while the distant, overall effect is an almost cacophonous surge of broiling flesh-tones and earthy colours that provide a more literal depiction of chaos. Even despite a hint of a theme in the title which obviously derives from the 1559 painting *The Fight Between Carnival and Lent* by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, a painting that depicts a detailed commentary on the pitfalls of both indulgence and abstinence, there is little to be deciphered in Brown's work. It is here we get a sense of what she told Jan Tumlir in 2003; "The place I'm interested in... is where the mind goes when its trying to make up for what isn't there."<sup>149</sup>



(fig.14) Cecily Brown, *Carnival and Lent*, 2008. Oil on Linen, 246x226cm.

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<sup>148</sup> Enrique Juncosa, "El Jardin de la Delicias," in *Cecily Brown*, (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, 2004), 3.

<sup>149</sup> Ashton, "Cecily Brown En Route," 19.

Another artist, Cornelia Parker, is also driven by the want to create work that doesn't hold to a single reading or express an objective dictum. Her works 'Hanging Fire (Suspected Arson)' and 'Dark Matter, Exploded View' (fig's. 15 and 16) give us an experience of chaos in a freeze-frame moment. Like a temporal order glimpsed and seized between instances of expanding dissolution these works literally hover before the viewer who, depending on what position they assume in relation to the work, is given a rich variety of alternate perspectives.



(fig.15) Cornelia Parker, Hanging Fire (Suspected Arson), 1999. Wood, metal, 140x84x240cm.

Here Parker takes what artists like Gerhard Richter and Cecily Brown convey on a surface but extends it into space. The visual ambiguity and indistinction that is explicit in their work isn't here expressed through an image but through a sculptural configuration that shifts and transforms according to the viewer's position. By taking remnants of a church burnt down from a lightning strike (fig.15) or an exploded garden shed (fig.16) and arranging them such that each external vantage offers a differing view (a visual chaos), we are provided an experience of the heterogeneity of the subjective/local angle which disestablishes the universal claim. This correlation to chaos is not just in the subjective or in the literalness of an order derived from the chaotic detritus of disaster but also in the material itself. To Parker, these ostensibly worthless residues are not spent or dead but ripe with potential: "My work is all about the potential of materials - even when it looks like they've lost all possibilities".<sup>150</sup>



(fig.16) Cornelia Parker, *Dark Matter, Exploded View*, 1991. Wood, metal, plastic, ceramic, paper, textile and wire, 400x500x400cm.

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<sup>150</sup> Cornelia Parker, "Cornelia Parker," *art seen soho* website, accessed 28.10.14, <http://www.artseensoho.com/Art/DEITCH/parker98/parker2.html>

The perpetual cycles of chaos include the full spectrum of forming and dissolving forces that constitute the universe. All material reality is party to these forces. The virtual aspect of chaos establishes the unseen potential inherent to all material forms, and each of these forms are subject to the conditions of the actual which either does or doesn't allow for the actualisation of one, or any, of these virtual potentials. As outlined in the second chapter, these virtual potentialities are rarely glimpsed prior to their actualisation, and it is through the unfolding of time that the variant forms which materials can develop into become apparent in the actual. Art takes this notion of the virtual potential and presents a constantly increasing array of new actual forms through the reconfiguration and reshaping of materials, a shaping that is in excess of the usual or the likely, the everyday.<sup>151</sup> It is the unexpected/unpredictable quality of the virtual that is expressed through the new that artists like Cornelia Parker bring to everyday materials. And this newness, is, in this sense, unqualified by the everyday and so it sits beyond or outside of it, unfettered by the meanings that define it. This speculatively allows for a free-ranging series of associations or meanings to be applied to her work whilst not establishing one above all others. When asked how she felt when people attempted to fix meaning to her art, she answered;

“I’m always trying to do the opposite. I think art is about freedom and hopefully my work will have a very different meaning to each person who sees it. I don’t want it to have a fixed meaning, and I think that is the reason, formally, that I make the work I make. I like work that has an ambiguity to it... I like things to be free.”<sup>152</sup>

In this same sense the painter Katy Moran presents works that “no end of stories can unfold from.”<sup>153</sup> She’s not inspired to create “a literal painting” with “a literal title that closes something down”<sup>154</sup> but she makes work that remains available to constantly shifting interpretations. Stand close to either ‘Wasabi Without Tears’ (fig.17) or ‘Providence’ (fig.18) and their surfaces are dominated by painterly strokes and subtle tonal contrasts that appear

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<sup>151</sup> Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, 8.

<sup>152</sup> Lowenna Waters, “Interview with Cornelia Parker,” in *The White Review* (September 2011), accessed 28.10.14, <http://www.thewhitereview.org/art/interview-with-cornelia-parker/>

<sup>153</sup> Bob Nickas, *Painting Abstraction: New Elements in Abstract Painting* (London: Phaidon Press, 2009), 262.

<sup>154</sup> Sara Hughes, “An Interview with Katy Moran,” *Tate St Ives, Andrea Rosen Gallery* (2009), accessed 28.10.14, [http://images.andreareosengallery.com/www\\_andreareosengallery\\_com/Moran\\_Press\\_Kit0.pdf](http://images.andreareosengallery.com/www_andreareosengallery_com/Moran_Press_Kit0.pdf)



chaotic at best. One is left to infer an image from the flurry of marks in much the same way as one deduces meaning from a rorschach illustration. However step a distance away and the brushstrokes fade into indistinct forms and spatial tonal contrasts that suggest something more coherent, even perhaps a painting from a previous period in history, but never do they arrive at a point of qualification but instead linger just beyond the recognizing function of the eye.



(fig.17) Katy Moran, *Wasabi Without Tears*, 2007. Acrylic on Canvas, 38x46cm.

In a 1973 interview, the painter David Aspden said while discussing his art that “when you start to ask for specific meanings you tend to block what is there.”<sup>155</sup> It is in this sense that Moran wants to escape the literalness that “closes down” the indeterminate quality of her work because it would then cease to emanate the unseen and the unknown. As Deleuze and Guattari state “art is a composition of chaos” that “constitutes as James Joyce says, a chaosmos, a composed chaos - neither foreseen nor preconceived.”<sup>156</sup> Art that conveys the

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<sup>155</sup> David Aspden, *David Aspden interviewed by Hazel de Berg in the Hazel de Berg collection* [sound recording] (Nov. 1965), accessed 28.10.14, <http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/279328>

<sup>156</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 204.

new, the unknowable, the unfixed, the changing, the liminal, retrieves chaos from the neglected verges of any cosmetic model that represses, denies or masks it. By conveying these qualities art can expose the chaotic and innovative nature of the multiverse, and meaning that is subordinate to a doctrinal heritage and which refutes or misrepresents the inherent wealth of detail and knowledge that is intrinsic to all phenomena (the co-existing levels and centers of mutual yet discreet realities) is revealed through the delimiting measures it applies. Most especially via their failure to accord value or truth to, and account for, the seemingly endless variety of forms and processes that populate the extant.



(fig.18) Katy Moran, Providence, 2009. Acrylic on Canvas, 56x45cm.

In this chapter I have also set out to convey that art, like science and philosophy, depends on, and indeed thrives upon, the unknown; its innovations and discoveries are the revelation of what has not been previously seen, understood, or qualified in full, or perhaps that which has been repressed or denied. The unknown or unrecognised, and what they contain are art's limit, its threshold, and its future. Chaos, as the universal norm, is revealed through art and rather than designate its borders for perpetuity it is forever extending and altering them - it does not cease to change and so therefore it doesn't arrive at a final destination. Through the uniquely

subjective visions of the artists I have presented here I have attempted to show how art, like chaos, “undoes consistency” and resists “the pressures of the transcendental vantage point.”<sup>157</sup> Aesthetic objects, as Karen Lang argues, “ultimately defy our desire to find a unitary “truth” or meaning in them”<sup>158</sup> which is precisely what chaos itself does. As David Bohm stated “the totality of the universe is too much to be grasped definitively in any form,”<sup>159</sup> chaos too, like art, escapes the definitive application of a formula or equation that might attempt to account for it in its entirety (how often do we try?).

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<sup>157</sup> Karen Lang, *Chaos and Cosmos: On the Image in Aesthetics and Art History* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), 4.

<sup>158</sup> Lang, *Chaos and Cosmos: On the Image in Aesthetics and Art History*, 4

<sup>159</sup> Bohm, *The Special Theory of Relativity* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 274.

## **Conclusion.**

In the end, this paper is as much about chaos and art as it is about the necessity to scrutinize and pick apart those histories and ideas that repress and compromise the truth of ourselves and the world. Its not like we have a choice to be different to who we intrinsically are just like its not possible to deny chaos by masking or repressing it through the cosmetic application of some institutional doctrine that accounts for it in reductive and delimiting terms. Multiplicity, contradiction, difference, variety in the extreme is the way of the world and any tradition that attempts to deny this is denying something central to the nature of life and existence.

By originally recognizing that my work is an envisioning of chaos I took the first step in discovering its context within a broader artistic field. When I began to perceive the motivation behind it related to and derived from my personal history I came to understand the reason why I made the sort of work I did. However nothing prepared me for the realization of the historic legacy that diminished the chaotic through the unrecognized fact that order derives from chaos, and that it is not simply orders' opposite or its enemy. By attempting to eradicate the chaotic so much unnecessary suffering has been inflicted upon the world - so much! Where the chaotic (the norm of existence) affirms multiplicity, variety, contradiction, difference and the new, whilst compromising claims for a universal authority, systemic notions that seek to eradicate chaos through the application of universals only ever seem to favour a minority of individuals, ideas, and possibilities. What is left is either sameness, and conformity or repressed, alienated and ostracized variety.

If there was one key thing I came to through the process of researching and writing this paper it would be that those ideas most favoured within the history of the Western world are those that have been most favoured by the Christian Churches. As I sought to outline in the first chapter the Christian Churches have had an indelible and dominant influence upon the evolution of the West and although I sensed this it had never been explicitly spelt out nor did I understand just how pervasive and extensive its influence was. Certainly the Christian religion had played a major influence upon my formative years but never had I known what an influence it had over the formative years of my culture. I have sought here to illustrate just how enormous that influence has been, and in some respects release myself from it. Philosophers like Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Alfred North Whitehead and Frederick Nietzsche, among others, have attempted the same and writers today like Miguel de Beistegui

continue this tradition. What they propose is a “reversal of Platonism” where the transcendent notions first expounded by Plato and Aristotle are ultimately inverted to reveal that change, the ephemeral, difference, the multiple, even the unknown, everything the Platonic tradition disparaged as illusionary and false, all in fact play a central role in the unfolding of the universe.

An art that expresses these qualities of chaos goes some of the way in addressing this history and although it may not pointedly critique it, it does offer an alternative view. An alternative that represents notions contrary to static institutional posturing which by the simple act of existing can create the opportunity for difference and novelty - who knows where that may lead? Historically institutions that have sought to repress contrary voices do so with the intention of silencing them and thus removing the possibility of their finding some ground and footing. If the simple presence of alternatives didn't pose some threat to their perceived or real authority then I wonder if they would have gone to such extreme lengths to eradicate them. Certainly the work I create myself and that I present in this paper isn't, within the general context of the contemporary art world, anything that is at risk of being censored, derided or repressed. However, like I said, it does provide an alternative vision that favours the chaotic above the ordered measures that designate a hierarchy of limitations to the extant and through which variety, in the extreme, can continue to generate.

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## Appendix A

Further to the main text, this appendix contains all other work that I produced as part of my studio project. There was not sufficient space within the main text for these works and their accompanying descriptions and so they are listed here to illustrate the full extent of my exploration of the ideas outlined within this paper. In addition is a more detailed description of how the art of my master's project operates as visions of the chaotic, and what were the processes I undertook to create them such that they integrate the concepts described within this paper.

As I stated in my thesis it came as a surprise for me to realise that the ambitions I hold for my practice were motivated by my experience of being raised in a conservative Catholic environment . One that didn't reflect my innate sense of self or comply with my own personal impressions of the wider world. Religions, like Christianity, prescribe specific meaning to all phenomena and have, thus far, been largely mistaken in their claims. In this sense, their prescription of meaning could be described as an act of apophenia where meaningful connections are established and asserted at the cost of factual understanding or conjecture informed by experience.

Science on the other hand depends on the discovery and maintenance of factual data so that the results from one experiment can be replicated on alternative occasions so as to establish a consistent reference point from which other claims or theories can be tested and verified. Where a Christian theologian might claim that the existence of a breathable atmosphere on Earth is proof of divine providence and the necessity of humanity's presence, thus establishing a meaningful connection to her or his ultimate reference, that being God. A scientist on the other hand would understand it as the result of intricate circumstances specific to a certain localised environment or phenomena. The truth of either claim is dependent on the possibility that another individual can test its conformity to fact, its accuracy. Therefore, proof is established in the particular; the local or specific environment that is under consideration, and not in abstract thought or concepts.

Religion thrives on the assertion of specific meaning to what could be regarded as meaningless circumstances. It dresses them up for its own purposes. Meaning that is derived from abstract concepts and not consistent or shared understanding and experience needs to be introduced, it needs to be taught, it does not result from a direct experience of phenomena. Science on the other hand depends on a knowledge based in actual experience that can be shared without the need for doctrinal induction. Its understanding is one that is consistent through time and, as Neil deGrasse Tyson stated “it's true whether or not you believe in it.”

In lieu of a factual, scientific understanding all human traditions have derived and attached meaning to the world and phenomena. Where understanding was lacking a speculative notion was placed to fill its absence. This could be seen as the same motivation that lures us to be intrigued by and to speculate upon the vagueness that typifies many abstract paintings. Their obtuse and indistinct quality maintain our curiosity without necessarily satisfying it. The danger is that any speculative intrigue is maintained as universally true and then applied broadly without consideration and allowance to alternative notions that may contradict or disprove it. Or which may even help to evolve it and bring it closer to fact, as is exemplified in Deleuze and Guattari's notion of ‘conceptual personae.’

This is my criticism of the Christian Churches and one of the main reasons, however unconsciously, I am inspired to create the work that I do. Intrigue and curiosity is the motivational force that pushes us to seek the truth of something and it should be celebrated and not repressed as Catholicism in particular has insisted. Especially as there is so much still about the world and the universe that we are yet to know. Existence does not conform to the notions that most religions assert and for this reason it is necessary to mark their limitations and look beyond them.



(fig.19) Adrian Hobbs. Apophenia and Fact, 2014. Oil on Canvas, 232x155cm

In 'Apophenia and Fact' (fig.19), my graduation show work, I have sought to present an image that would summarise these concerns. Through the use of colours popularly used in religious paintings of the renaissance period and with oblique forms floating through the sky, as many Christian figures often would, (fig.20) I am attempting to render something akin to religious works of this kind, however one that is liberated of religious doctrinal meaning. The indistinct quality of the motifs invites the same speculation that is described by the term apophenia, an experience that corresponds to the transitory suggestion of forms by passing clouds - an association as arbitrary as the shifting forms themselves.



(fig.20). Eustache Le Sueur. Saint Bruno Lifted Into Heaven (detail), 1645-1646

As previously outlined, this work, like other paintings in my practice, is developed from a still taken from the closing sequence of Michaelangelo Antonioni's 1971 film, *Zabriskie Point*. In it the female character's rage at the insidious, repressive, and all pervading presence of a Modernist Capitalist utopia inspires the imagined, rapturous and cathartic destruction of a range of Modern consumer objects. This particular image is a rendition of the moment shredded cloth and fabric, the remnants of an exploded wardrobe of clothes, are slowly floating and shifting across the screen.

The title of the track that plays over this final sequence is ‘Come in Number 51, Your Time is Up,’ the same title I gave to the first painting I attempted in this style (fig.3). When I first saw this film in 2011 I had been doing a small series of studies in oil paint where over a diffused background in cool tones I would apply random daubs of warmer colour. These vaguely alluded to still lifes or landscapes (fig.21). What struck me was the similarity between these studies and the stilled frames of the final scene of *Zabriskie Point*. The chaotic randomness of my marks and the chaos unleashed on the screen echoed each other (fig.22) and to render these stills as paintings was, to me, the next logical step in the development of my work.



(fig.21) Adrian Hobbs. Study, 2011. Oil on Cardboard. 40x60cm



(fig.22) Michaelangelo Antonioni, 1971. Film still from *Zabriskie Point*



Images taken from this scene became a source of inspiration for my investigations into the compositional depiction of chaos, and they correspond to the conception of chaos I present in the second chapter of my thesis, in that:

1. They present an unknowable quality through the vagueness of the disintegrating objects as they evolve along the unseen “lines of flight” created by the explosions that move them.
2. The virtual possibilities latent to the explosive act result in actual forms that could not be preconceived.
3. They depict forces of transformation and dramatic change.
4. Inherent to them is movement, change, and liminality.
5. From it, as the objects disintegrate through the force of the explosion, a sense of renewal, and of newness derived from the destruction of old forms is evoked.
6. Process and transition through time - the length of the scene - is illustrated via the swiftly evolving nature of the depicted objects as they motion from one inferred form to another.



(fig.23) Adrian Hobbs. Study, 2012. Oil on Cardboard. 46x60cm

Other works created during my masters course, and which are also a response to the final scene of *Zabriskie Point*, include a study (fig.23) and the painting titled ‘*Sic Transit Gloria Mundi*’, (fig.2) which translates to mean ‘Thus Passes the Glory of the World,’ a latin phrase repeated during the papal coronation ceremony for over five centuries up until 1963. It was intended as a reminder of the chaotic and unreliable nature of existence that needed to be overcome and denied in favour of the eternal object. In this painting I render a more distinct sense of the destructive power of chaos and with it, my own desire to perhaps destroy and escape the history that I experienced as a repressive and delimiting presence.

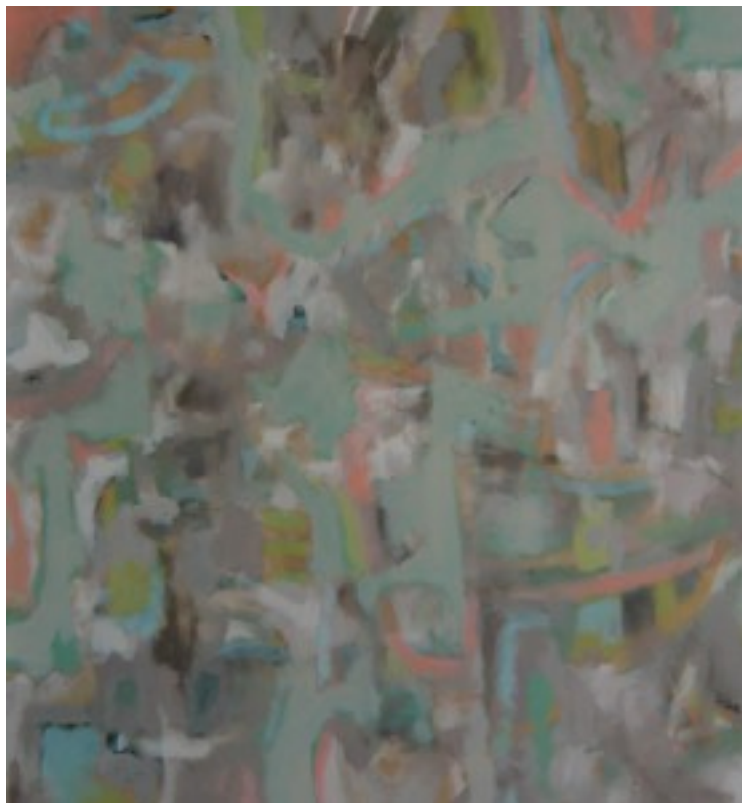
My investigations into notions of chaos and their representative imagery weren't exclusive to work deriving from *Zabriskie Point*. For this reason I did not choose to explore in great detail in the paper the influence the film has had upon my practice. Especially since the broader context I was establishing for my self had more to do with an art that sought to avoid fixed institutional meaning. Works that I presented in my paper include 'Key Largo' (fig.4) and 'Madame Muck' (fig.6) which are examples of the method I outlined therein where I seek to realise a work without any deliberate end in mind. The marks I make in the development of these works are unconsidered and spontaneous, much in the sense of "allowing a thing to come" that Gerhard Richter describes when approaching his abstract paintings. Further works that derive from this strategy include 'Leftward Look' (fig.24) an untitled work from 2014 (fig.25) and 'Grey, Green, Blah' (fig.26). The chaotic residue of undetermined motions and unthought responses typify these works. Although bordering upon a distinguishable image they remain irresolute and open, available to whatever associations might be applied to them. In this sense the local and the subjective is held in a principle position and the universal and objective have no place.



(fig.24) Adrian Hobbs. *Leftward Look*, 2013. Oil on Board. 128x81cm



(fig.25) Adrian Hobbs. Study, 2014. Oil on Board. 65x60cm



(fig.26) Adrian Hobbs. Grey, Green, Blah 2013. Oil on Board. 65x60cm

This approach is by no means unique or innovative insofar that the history of some painterly abstraction has developed via the evasive and liminal quality portrayed in paintings like these. Similarly I recognise the problems associated with this history, wherein the Modernist universal rhetoric of the Abstract Expressionist movement often informs the reading of them. However, I have taken the opportunity of exploring this style through my masters degree as a means of considering these problems and understanding the attraction or desire to create works in this style, and with that, attempting to know the point of departure from them.

Not all the work that I made with this approach was completely devoid of an end goal. ‘Candy Walls’ from 2013 (fig.27) and an untitled painting from the same year (fig.28) were both made with two specific intentions; the exclusion of one or two primary colours, and with the aim to render a sense of balanced or ordered motion arriving from a chaotic, partly unmeasured approach. In the case of Candy walls I excluded the primary colours blue and red while positioning pastel greens and pinks to play against each other. Similarly, in the untitled work from the same year (fig.28) I excluded red and placed the blues, pink and yellows in relationship to an ordering tone of green. Both works exhibit a more deliberate sense of harmony which maintains a suggestion of motion through the interaction of juxtaposing tone and indistinct, abstract marks.



(fig.27) Adrian Hobbs. Candy Walls, 2013. Oil on Board. 65x60cm



(fig.28) Adrian Hobbs. Untitled, 2013. Oil on Board. 65x60cm

This juxtaposition of colour is taken to a more obvious extreme in an untitled study from 2012 (fig. 29) where paint was applied using only a palette knife and in a reversal of the spatial convention where cool tones are used to represent the background and warm tones to show foreground detail. Again paint was applied without much or any thought toward an end result and the original smears were preserved. The effect is spatial with the background having an almost hot, primordial quality and the foreground motifs rushing and dissolving with the generated heat spewing up below or behind them. A sense of active and dynamic originary chaos is evoked.

Another untitled study from the same year (fig.30) was similarly created using only a palette knife and with paint left remaining on the palette. Unlike the smoothness of the previous work this piece is built up with thick paint to make the surface rise and form with a distinct sense of materiality. No precise end was held in its making. This work returns in a sense to the works developed from the final sequence of the film *Zabriskie Point*. Not only because of the colours but also in the free formed and chaotic rendering of the smears of paint. Like these works, but perhaps in an even more dynamic way, the represented forms suggest dramatic motion and change, of forces coming into conflict in a chaotic and unmeasured and unconsidered way.



(fig.29) Adrian Hobbs. Untitled, 2012. Oil on Board. 60x42cm

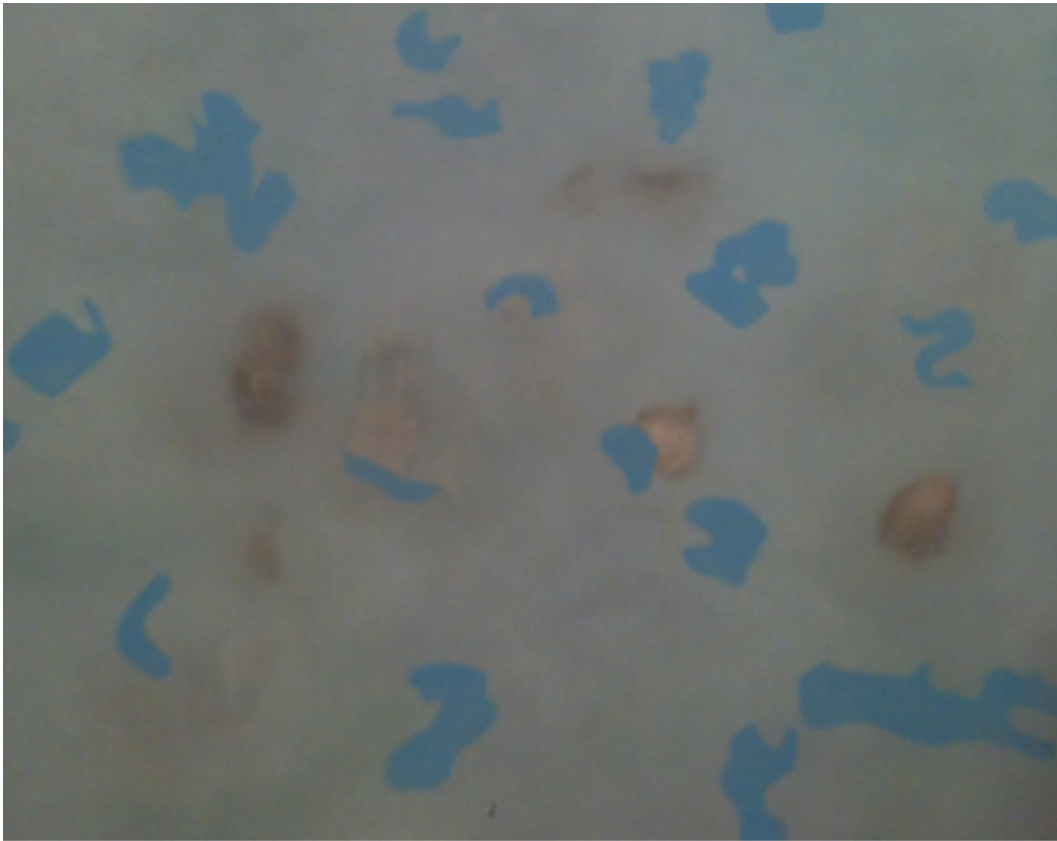


(fig.30) Adrian Hobbs. Study, 2012. Oil on Board. 40x60cm

Two more works that present a cooler, calmer, more spatial sense of the chaotic is a study from 2014 (fig.31) and the painting 'Temporal Nonsense' from 2012 (fig.32). For this first work I took a failed attempt at a painting in the Zabriskie Point series and sanded it back until just a remnant of the painted surface remained. Before cleaning the sanded surface I mixed the paint dust with a medium and then worked it randomly with a brush. The end result is what you see here. Presented is something close to a work by Turner where atmospherics dominate; a suggestion of a billowing dust cloud that obscures a vague, barely rendered, perhaps romantic desert landscape corroded by time and uninhibited nature. In Temporal Nonsense indistinct forms float over a blue, cloudy void from which emerges oblique shapes. Again motion and becoming, transition and an ungrounded fixity is exhibited through the use of indistinction and vagueness. Nothing certain exists here but yet form seems to strive for cohesion in the same way that meaning is derived from the most random of circumstances.



(fig.31) Adrian Hobbs. Study, 2014. Oil on Board. 90x60cm



(fig.32) Adrian Hobbs. Temporal Nonsense, 2012. Oil on Board. 63 x78cm

The final work I will consider here, and which is the first I present in the main text of my paper, *The Face on Mars* from 2012, (fig.1) and studio view, (fig.33) which is also the first work that I presented in my thesis. It, like *Apophenia* and *Fact* is an attempt to convey the arbitrariness of those doctrines that are mistakenly established as authoritative accounts of reality. And in the maintenance and defense of which great acts of hostility and injustice are carried out. As I explained in my thesis this work seeks to represent the tendency of the human imagination to attach meaning to those phenomena that evoke great responses from us. Notions of human purpose and our origins raise big questions and history has shown how high the stakes are for those that attempt to answer them. Where conjecture or speculation has been asserted as fact time has shown it is the chaotic that corrects the mistake. An art that renders the chaotic may not pointedly overturn the deception perpetuated by a specific doctrinal claim, it does however offer an alternative to it and by its presence perhaps bring others to question the paucity of its misconception.





(fig.33) Adrian Hobbs. The Face on Mars, 2013, (studio view). Oil on Board, 124x82cm.

## Catalogue



(fig.34) Adrian Hobbs. Apophenia and Fact, 2014. Oil on Canvas, 232x155cm



(fig.35) Adrian Hobbs. Apophenia and Fact, installation view