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The Wounds of Indetermination: Deleuze, *Cinema* and Ethology.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the ethical and ontological significance of Gilles Deleuze's *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. Recent scholarship tends to read these texts for their contributions to film and media studies. This work develops a different focus by seeking to integrate Deleuze's encounter with cinema into his philosophical project as a whole. I argue that the philosophical significance of the two volumes of *Cinema* comes into view when these texts are situated at the intersection of the interconnected themes of ethics and ontology in Deleuze's thought. To demonstrate this unique contribution, I develop a reading of Deleuze's project which focuses on the importance of his critical engagement with Spinoza and Bergson to his own ethics and ontology. Deleuze's engagement with Spinoza may be fruitfully understood as the formulation of a problem that emerges at the point of convergence between ethics and ontology, a problem that Deleuze calls *ethology*. Through this concept, Deleuze argues that the characterisation and evaluation of the modes of an individual's life can only be done from the point of view of a pure ontology. It is in the shadow of this question that Deleuze reworks the Spinozist concern with the ratio of active to passive affections and affects in an effort to find an ontologically robust and ethically sensitive way to consider the fluctuations and modifications to this ratio in the renewal of our understanding and unconscious processes of sense making. By bringing together the concept of the wound formulated in his work of the 1960s and the concept of the sensory-motor schema and its collapse articulated in the two volumes of *Cinema*, I argue that Deleuze suggests that an individual's experience of her wounds and scars makes possible an increase in her active affections by confronting her with a renewed idea of her relational embeddedness.

Declaration by author

This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

I have clearly stated the contribution of others to my thesis as a whole, including statistical assistance, survey design, data analysis, significant technical procedures, professional editorial advice, and any other original research work used or reported in my thesis. The content of my thesis is the result of work I have carried out since the commencement of my research higher degree candidature and does not include a substantial part of work that has been submitted to qualify for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution. I have clearly stated which parts of my thesis, if any, have been submitted to qualify for another award.

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Publications during candidature

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Statement of parts of the thesis submitted to qualify for the award of another degree

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ABBREVIATIONS

Citations of Spinoza's *Ethics* are abbreviated in line with convention:

E	Ethics	Def	Definition
P	Proposition	L	Lemma
D	Demonstration	Post	Postulate
S	Scholium	Pref	Preface
C	Corollary	App	Appendix
A	Axiom	Def Aff	Definition of Affects
Exp	Explanation		

Roman numerals after E refer to one of the five parts of the *Ethics*, Arabic numerals refer to particular definitions, propositions, lemmas, etc. For example, EIP25S refers to *Ethics*, part one, proposition 25, scholium.

INTRODUCTION

A living being is not only defined genetically, by the dynamisms which determine its internal milieu, but also ecologically, by the external movements which preside over its distribution within an extensity.¹

In this brief comment in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze presents us with the hypothesis that serves as the backbone of his philosophy: to develop a meaningful account of a living being, we must not restrict ourselves to the genetic structures that are internal to a being. Since the conditions of a being's genesis are not limited to the capacities that inhere in it, we must also attend to the processes and relationships—the “kinetics of population”²—that constitute a being's milieu. Articulating the metaphysical logic and ethical consequences of this ecological conception of beings is the guiding concern of this thesis. My aim is to examine the way in which Deleuze's ecological approach to the study of beings presupposes an ontology, an account of the nature of the relational whole which is any being's constitutive milieu, and gives rise to an ethics, that is, an account of the modes of existence and the relations that sees an enhancement to, and transformation of, an individual's capacities through her relationship with—how she *makes sense of*—the ongoing modifications to her embodiment. What is particularly striking about this question of an individual's relationship with her capacities is the potential for the states of her embodiment to affect how she understands her nature as a relational being, that is, how she understands herself from an ecological point of view. On that basis, I argue that Deleuze's philosophical project is best characterised as the creative combination of ontology and ethics, that is, as *ethology*.

The first point to note about Deleuze's ecological conception of living beings is that it is fundamentally opposed to methodological individualism of any kind. An individual, for Deleuze is never self-contained and isolated, never distinct from her environment. On the contrary, the individual is embedded in a milieu that is implied in everything she does, in every facet of her mode of life. When Deleuze argues that her milieu is implied in her life, it is because her actions are determined by the affects through which she internalises her relationships with the world. Moreover, because these affects determine her actions, the relationships she has with her milieu subsist in her every action. Of course, her environment also contains other subjects undergoing the same types of affective transformations and determinations. Thus, for Deleuze, to emphasise the

¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 216.

² *Ibid.*, 216.

importance of ecological conditions in the definition of a being is to emphasise the affective entanglements of the myriad lives that interact in the ongoing transformation of an impersonal life.

A focus on relations as primary, on life as an interaction of forces and relations, entails both anti-essentialism and anti-humanism. Even if life expresses itself through particular lives, it is not reducible to these particular lives. Thus, when Deleuze engages with the human, he does so by reducing consciousness to being a symptom of the interplay of affective forces at work in and on the body. And what fascinates Deleuze about the body, about our necessary embodiment, is that the body can never really be domesticated to the whims and desires of the human. Rather, the body is, as Elizabeth Kuhn puts it, “the material with which the force of life is compatible” because it is characterised by its becoming and transformation.³ The body has a fascinating and difficult status within Deleuze’s work. As Joe Hughes puts it, “[e]ven in those texts in which the body plays a prominent role, it is very quickly transcended. ... The theory of the body in Deleuze’s work is thus a problematic site. It is not clear what kind of work the concept is supposed to do within Deleuze’s corpus, and it is not immediately clear what kind of work we can do with it.”⁴ I approach the body as the site of the interplay of ecological forces. That is, the body is not an overall structure interacting with an environment. It is, rather, a “*relatively closed system*”⁵ that expresses a set of affective relations under a particular set of conditions. I argue that Deleuze does not conceive bodies as mere extended objects; instead they are the correlation of an idea and a sensible expression of that idea in an empirical situation that arranges extended parts according to a degree of power. It is not the body as a particular state or being that interests Deleuze, it is the *process* through which a set of relations is expressed in something actual, something *sensible*. In this sense, Deleuze is more interested in embodiment as an affective process, than he is in bodies as objects.

I want to emphasise how rapidly Deleuze’s concern with life’s ecological conditions comes to challenge what counts as a life. Levi Bryant offers a concise description of the anti-humanism suggested by Deleuze’s ecological concerns when he writes that “the human and its relation to the world can no longer be treated as a privileged starting point for philosophical investigation. Humans are among beings, rather than a privileged point around which being is organized.”⁶ Deleuze’s ontological project, insofar as it responds to the problem of ecological conditions, does not begin from the point of view of human beings who are *thrown* into the world; it must begin, rather, from

³ Elizabeth Kuhn, “Toward an Anti-Humanism of Life: The Modernism of Nietzsche, Hulme and Yeats,” *Journal of Modern Literature* 34, no. 4 (2011): 6.

⁴ Joe Hughes, “Pity the Meat?: Deleuze and the Body,” introduction to *Deleuze and the Body*, eds. Laura Guillaume and Joe Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 2.

⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 12.

⁶ Levi R. Bryant, “A Logic of Multiplicities: Deleuze, Immanence, and Onticology,” *Analecta Hermeneutica* 0.3 (2011): 4.

the point of view of the relations that constitute the human as one being among many. This does not entail rejecting questions about the value and richness of human life. In his *Onto-Ethologies*, Brett Buchanan considers the extent to which such a rejection of humanism leads to reformulating these questions about human life:

While we emerge from the critiques of our humanist tradition, an increasing focus is being paid to how and where we find ourselves within nature and the world at large. “What does it mean to be human?” becomes a question of life and the living being. Attention to the status of human beings need not disappear, of course, but it does become framed by a broader emphasis on nature and life. What are the relations within nature? And how do we assess these ontological relations?⁷

So, with respect to the question of the relationships between living beings and their environment, we cannot begin from the privileged point of view of a human life and then move out into its environment in order to ask how it makes sense of the world to which it relates. Instead, the question becomes an ontological one: how is an individual a function of its environment?⁸ In this case, *function* can be read in its mathematical sense. An individual is the event wherein sets, or, as Deleuze would put it, ensembles of relations, are associated with each other such that the members of the sets are determined and transformed. Given that Deleuze’s ontology is an immanent one, the logic of this association is determined reciprocally with the ongoing relations that the individual has with her environment so that the output produced is genuinely novel. In this context, we face the sort of questions Buchanan raises insofar as we can ask after the status of a human life only from the point of view of its ongoing relations with its environment.

An appraisal of the nature of the individual and its relations with others in its environment is not merely ontological, it also concerns the individual’s ways of being and relating. That is, it also concerns ethics. This creative combination of ethics and ontology is signalled in Deleuze’s adoption of the term “ethology” to describe his approach to ethics. For Deleuze, an ethological project is not only concerned with the ontological question of the sense in which the individual is a function of its environment. It also engages the inevitable correlation of the ontological question with traditional ethical questions about the conditions and consequences of the individual’s mode of life:

When one speaks of an ethology in connection with animals, or in connection with man, what is it a matter of? Ethology in the most rudimentary sense is a practical science, of what? A practical science of

⁷ Brett Buchanan, *Onto-Ethologies: The Animal Environments of Uexküll, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Deleuze* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 4.

⁸ See *Cinema I*, 62: “There is firstly a system in which each image varies for itself, and all the images act and react as a function of each other.”

the manners of being. The manner of being is precisely the state of beings, of what exists, from the point of view of a pure ontology.⁹

Deleuze's shift from ecology to ethology makes a new series of problems accessible insofar as ethology deploys ontology to ask practical questions about the manner and comportment of individual lives or modes of existence. It is this intersection of ontology and ethics in Deleuze's practical philosophy that this thesis seeks to address and explore. While it does not seem *prima facie* problematic to suggest that an individual has some capacity for comprehending or understanding her place in a particular milieu, the nature and effects of an individual's production of sense and meaning is a complicated issue. Insofar as being is a question of meaning, rather than essence, Deleuze sees the production of meaning as the fundamental ontological question.¹⁰ Consequently, I am interested in the ways that an individual's understanding of its relationality interacts with the transformation of its capacity to participate in its environment. An individual is embedded in its environment to the extent that its existence presupposes a relationality that constitutes and directs its becoming. At the same time, that her existence is always grounded in series of relations means that the individual is necessarily exposed, necessarily vulnerable to injury or destruction. I suggest that this embodied vulnerability is, for Deleuze, a condition for transforming her understanding of the milieu of which she is a part and thereby transforming her capacities for different types of relations. Indeed, this thesis is interested in the *Cinema* books because it is in these texts that Deleuze engages most directly, most concretely with a problem that haunts his entire project: how do our wounds, the breakdowns in the sense we make of our embodiment, influence the transformation of our capacities?

In the two volumes of his *Cinema* project, Deleuze adopts a concept from Henri Bergson to name and concretely formulate the logic of how the affective continuity of the world is differentiated into particular beings: *the sensory-motor schema*. I suggest that the significance of this concept is two-fold. First, it names the process through which actual individuals come into being. Once it is named, Deleuze deploys this concept to do something that he had not successfully done in any previous work—offer a concrete way to think about the individual as a function of its environment, *from the individual's point of view*. Second, Deleuze uses this concept to elaborate a problem that had appeared previously but always remained subterranean: the *wound*. The concept of the wound appears in Deleuze's texts as a way to engage with the ethical problem of how we relate to the significance of what happens to us. *Cinema's* sensory-motor schema enables us to understand

⁹ Gilles Deleuze, "Sur Spinoza," 21/12/1980. Transcripts of Deleuze's lectures are freely available in numerous languages online at www.webdeleuze.com

¹⁰ François Dosse, *Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: Intersecting Lives*, trans. Deborah Glassman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 119; 130.

concretely the logic of embodiment as well as the conditions and consequence of the breakdowns of this logic. It is in the sense of the breakdown of this logic that the sensory-motor schema allows Deleuze to qualify what he means by *wound* and argue that experiences which disrupt the logic of our embodiment by shattering the efficacy of our habits, and thereby empower and transform our modes of life. In this way, this thesis offers a reappraisal of the significance of the *Cinema* books, by demonstrating their unique contribution to Deleuze's ethological project.

To this end, I approach Deleuze's *œuvre* with a view to the continuity of a very particular problem: the constitution of individuals and subjects as functions of a world defined by its affective continuity. This problem appears as early as Deleuze's first published book, *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, where he describes the genesis of subjects on a plane of immanence. That is, he describes the actual world as a plane of relations—the ecological problem described above—and suggests that the subject must be accounted for as an immanent expression of this relational plane. By the time he published the two volumes of his *Cinema* project some three decades later, Deleuze had arrived at an ontological picture wherein subjectivity is determined by unconscious processes of sense-making, and the actions that follow from these processes are expressions of the becoming of the plane of immanence. *Cinema's* sensory-motor schema is an immanent logic that determines action to the extent that it is an empty, formal schema that derives its content from particular experience. Indeed, as I argue in chapter four, it is only through experience that this schema is able to determine action. The sensory-motor schema does not merely receive a name in these books, *Cinema* also explores the conditions and consequences of its collapse. Inspired by the films of Italian Neo-Realism and the French New Wave, Deleuze argues that WWII changed how cinema was able to think about the role of the subject. Characters were no longer conceived as subjects of action capable of interpreting their world and acting to transform it. However, far from stranding viewers in this broken world, modern cinema, Deleuze argues, develops a new conception of the determination of action. The sensory-motor links break down because characters' perceptions no longer lead to a sensible image of their world. Instead they are presented with a new idea of the world, an idea that confronts them with the relational becoming of the world and their frailty within it. Thus confronted, the sense-making processes and habits that ground the determination of action no longer work and so characters cannot act because they literally cannot make sense of the world. Once the characters cease to act and begin to *see*, their lives come to express the forging of new connections and new relationships in the becoming of the world. This is not to say that Deleuze privileges sight over other senses; rather, he emphasises the way that disruptions to sensory-motor links renew the standing that characters have as the centre of sensory images. To explore this, he turns to Federico Fellini whose

early films concern wanderers, characters who survey their world without acting upon it. Deleuze sees in these films a relaxation of the sensory-motor links and the creation of purely optical and auditory situations for his characters. Over time, however, Fellini's films "became increasingly concerned with entering into a new element" and exploring new possibilities.¹¹ Fellini's masterpiece, *8½*, is a joyous tribute to the sensuality and struggles of the creative process and yet its creativity is grounded in new ways of making sense of things: there are memories of childhood, nightmares, distractions, dreams, fantasies, and even a telepath of whom Guido, the protagonist, asks "How do you transmit thoughts?" *8½* is not interested in the products of creation but in the difficult process of sense-making which must be undertaken by the artist.

In the last decade, the *Cinema* books have made increasingly frequent appearances in discussions of Deleuze's metaphysical project. Unfortunately, however, they are too often considered a mere recapitulation of his ontology and consequently the *philosophical* novelty of Deleuze's encounter with cinema is passed over. Addressing this issue and demonstrating the relevance and force of these works is part of my goal here. I argue that, far from merely recapitulating earlier work, Deleuze's cinema volumes rework key elements of his metaphysical project. This, of course, does not mean that the *Cinema* books are all entirely novel or always representative of the sophistication of Deleuze's earlier work. In his recent *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time: A Critical Introduction and Guide*, James Williams criticises the *Cinema* books for their "conflation of the philosophical use of the [concept of the] image ... with the cinematic image."¹² Indeed, because the books depend on a simplified distillation of Deleuze's philosophy of time, Williams suggests that "the film works add little and in fact might take away from his philosophy of time in its most consistent and extensive form."¹³ Williams suggests that this is "why many of the best commentators on Deleuze's work on cinema reconstruct the underlying philosophy on the basis of other more purely philosophical works."¹⁴

Whilst this thesis intervenes in critical discussions of these two books, it does not so much reconstruct Deleuze's ontology as take at face value a comment Deleuze makes about the necessity of understanding a philosopher's *œuvre* as a developing project. In a lecture on Spinoza, Deleuze comments on what it means to engage critically with a philosopher's work: "You never say that a philosopher contradicts himself; you will ask such-and-such page, in what sequence to put it, at

¹¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robbert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 88.

¹² James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 160.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 161.

what level of the sequence?”¹⁵ Deleuze suggests that if we want to evaluate the concepts a philosopher develops, we can do so only by asking after the sequence in which the concept appears. In other words, any critical interrogation of a philosopher must be sensitive to the place of her concepts within a developing project. I would argue that this also means that if we want to grapple with Deleuze’s concepts we will only achieve some measure of success if we uncover the problems motivating the work and consider these concepts relative to the development of certain responses to those problems. Thus, I put the *Cinema* books in the context of Deleuze’s developing project and illuminate the power of these books relative to Deleuze’s broader project.

I draw out the significance of the *Cinema* books by situating them at the point where two relatively recent, growing debates converge. First is the exploration of the potential ethical significance of Deleuze’s philosophy. While engagements with this issue have been appearing for some time, the incorporation of a section dedicated to ethics in the collection *Afterimages of Gilles Deleuze’s Film Philosophy* (2010), the appearance of the collection *Deleuze and Ethics* (2011), and a fine essay by Rosi Braidotti in *The Cambridge Companion to Deleuze*, “Nomadic Ethics” (2012), make it hard not to feel that this issue is finally receiving appropriate recognition as a genuinely Deleuzian problem. By responding to a problem articulated by Ronald Bogue in his contribution to *Afterimages*, I contend that the *Cinema* books make a significant contribution to this debate. In the *Cinema* books, Deleuze describes a situation whereby the world becomes unbearable or intolerable because it resembles an insipid, hackneyed or *clichéd* film. Because the world becomes unbearable, the sensory-motor schema fails and action ceases to follow perception. Bogue suggests that “[t]he only viable response to the intolerable is to think differently, to disconnect the world’s networks of certainties and pieties and formulate new problems that engender as yet unmapped relations and connections.”¹⁶ Bogue then turns to modern film and the potential it has for engaging this problem; however, while I agree with his assessment of modern cinema, I respond to this topic differently. I ask, is there anything immanent to experience itself which would make such a response possible? By taking the uniquely concrete philosophy of the *Cinema* books and connecting it to the concept of wounds that Deleuze evokes in his work of the late 1960s, I argue that it is experiences of the sublime, experiences whose magnitude shatter the sensory-motor schema, that force us to think differently and enable an experimentation with modes of life such that new connections become possible.

¹⁵ Gilles Deleuze, “Sur Spinoza,” 25/11/1980.

¹⁶ Ronald Bogue, “To Choose to Choose – to Believe in This World,” in *Afterimages of Gilles Deleuze’s Film Philosophy*, ed. D.N. Rodowick (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 115--132; 122.

Elaborating why this is the case requires me to engage with a second problem: Deleuze's potential contribution to an ecological or holistic ontology. The question of Deleuze's relevance to ecology, environmental philosophy and biology in general has received growing attention over recent years, see for example Buchanan's *Onto-Ethologies*, the collection *Deleuze/Guattari & Ecology* (2009), Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (2009) and the work of John Protevi, particularly his *Political Affect: Connecting the Social and the Somatic* (2009) and "Ontology, Biology, and History of Affect," his contribution to the collection *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism* (2011). I will not address directly the prospect that Deleuze's philosophy is ecological in a biological or environmental sense. Rather, the central concern of this thesis is to trace the operations and transformations in how Deleuze's ontology portrays the reciprocity between individuals and the whole of which they are parts. In the preface to the English edition of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze comments that the interconnection of the two problems formulated therein, a concept of difference liberated from identity, and repetition without reduction to the repetition of the same, are the central concerns of his project.¹⁷ I argue that these two problems persist because they allow Deleuze to simultaneously conceive individuals as expressions of subsistent relations as well as to account for these expressions as instances of genuine novelty. These issues, I argue, are in fact the mechanics employed in Deleuze's *œuvre* to develop a particular kind of holistic ontology. That is, a holistic ontology in which the whole is itself immanent to, and subsistent in, the individual lives that both constitute and express it. Defending these claims requires undertaking a substantial engagement with the ecological conditions of the constitution of a being and will thereby contribute to this broader debate.

In order to elucidate the convergence of ethics and ecological ontology in an ethology, this thesis has a broadly symmetrical structure: chapters two, three and four explore the development and transformation of this ontology in depth while chapters one and five frame this exploration by, on the one hand, setting out an ethical context for this exploration and, on the other, offering a reflection on and elucidation of the ethical significance of this ontology.

In chapter one I discuss Deleuze's critique of traditional morality and consider what ethics means for Deleuze and why his project is most fairly characterised as ethological. My contention is that for Deleuze any ontological discussion implies an ethical discussion and any ethical discussion implies ontology.¹⁸ Deleuze's project is thus ethological to the extent that two problems

¹⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, xv.

¹⁸ Jun argues that Deleuze's ethics is intimately connected to the ontological question of an individual's relationship to communities and states: "Deleuze, Values, and Normativity," in *Deleuze and Ethics*, eds. Nathan Jun and Daniel W. Smith (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 95. In a similar vein, John Marks argues that "ethics for Deleuze is inextricably linked with the notion of becoming": "Ethics," in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh:

continuously communicate and transform each other: how do individuals make sense of and relate to transformations—diminutions and enhancements—to their power (*ethics*)? and what role does the production of sense play in the transformation of an individual's power (*ontology*)? An argument that I will make throughout this thesis follows from this: Deleuze's notorious fixation on immanence entails a reciprocity between the conditions of experience and experience *per se*. Experience determines the conditions of experience, and the conditions of experience determine the form of experience; experience necessarily refers back to a set of conditions which determine it, and the form of those conditions refer to prior experience. In this chapter I also introduce two crucial concepts: *wounds* and *counter-actualisation*. The significance of these concepts is their development of the conditions and process of the transformations with which ethics is concerned. Both concepts relate to, and express, the breakdown of the sensory-motor schema. Deleuze presents such experiences of failure, of the breakdown and rupture of sense-making and habitual modes of action, as crucial to the production of genuinely creative forms of transformation and change. Significantly, such experiences have the potential to confront an individual with a renewed idea of her place in the whole. The wound is a paradigmatic example of such experiences, which Deleuze understands as conditions of ethical transformation. Counter-actualisation is the process by which these transformations occur to the extent that it is the process by means of which an individual engages with and contemplates this renewed idea and thereby transforms how she makes sense of her milieu. Initially, the power of these concepts remains unclear because they are only developed as offshoots of the historical or literary figures Deleuze discusses. By undertaking a focussed discussion of the *Cinema* books, however, the conclusion of this thesis is able to more adequately disclose the concrete power of wounds and the process of counter-actualisation. In this sense, chapter one explores what ethics would be like for Deleuze but sets it out as problem that requires his entire project to solve concretely. When I undertake an in-depth engagement with Deleuze's ontology across the next three chapters it is because the development of his ontology is the only way we will understand the content and significance of his concrete ethical claims.

In chapter two I explore how Deleuze's engagement with Spinoza enables him to argue that the conditions of ethical change occur holistically and reciprocally with the actual world. Deleuze's encounter with Spinoza is a pivotal moment for the development of his holistic ontology. In 1956, Deleuze published an essay about Bergson, "The Concept of Difference in Bergson," and suggested that being would be disclosed through a concept of difference in itself.¹⁹ Twelve years later, in

Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 88. The complex dynamic of being and becoming to which Marks refers is at the heart of Deleuze's ontology.

¹⁹ Gilles Deleuze, "Bergson's Conception of Difference," in *The New Bergson*, trans. Melissa McMahon, ed. John Mullarky (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 42.

Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza, Deleuze published a significant interpretation of Spinoza that, if taken in isolation, appears to be the work of a historian of philosophy presenting a particularly perverse interpretation of Spinoza. Against this, I argue that the significance of Deleuze's reading of Spinoza becomes clear if we read it as echoing themes from his earlier work on Bergson and as a companion piece to *Difference and Repetition*, which was published the same year. Through his engagement with Spinoza, Deleuze is able to develop a relational ontology of univocal being that is crucial to his overall project. Spinoza is well known for his thesis of substance monism, a thesis in which a single substance is modified according to an infinity of attributes. On Deleuze's reading, the attributes actually constitute substance as a qualitatively heterogeneous but numerically single whole. This constitution is simultaneously a production of infinite modal expressions of the constitution of the whole. This production is the production of the plurality of actual lives that fill out the world.

The reciprocity of substance and modes outlined in this reading of Spinoza is the crucial first step towards Deleuze's development of a holistic ontology. However, in *Difference and Repetition* (1968) Deleuze expresses a criticism of Spinoza's metaphysics and sets about developing the tools that will allow him to retain this ontology while outmanoeuvring the problem he has with Spinoza. The logic of reciprocity between substance and modes means that the identity of substance is not determined by the modes even though their production follows from the constitution of substance. In light of the criticism, chapter three elaborates how the more familiar elements of Deleuze's philosophy—the three syntheses of time, multiplicity and the distinction between the virtual and the actual—are elements of Deleuze's effort to salvage a holistic ontology that replaces the identity of substance with the differentiation of degrees of power expressed by the modes.

In chapter four I turn to *Cinema 1* to show how, in his engagement with cinema, Deleuze draws on Bergson to argue that the reciprocity of the actual world and the whole is grounded in the formalisation of sensibility in experience. In other words, the determination of the conditions of experience is reciprocal with experience itself. This argument takes the conceptual tools outlined in chapter three and uses them to develop the logic of a part/whole reciprocity with affect as the double-sided process which simultaneously expresses the relationships between beings and constitutes the whole as the continuity of the relations which subsist in actual beings. The discussion concentrates on how Deleuze adapts two arguments made by Henri Bergson—the critique of concepts of movement in *Creative Evolution* and the concept of the image in *Matter and Memory*—to conceptualise actual beings as points within an affective continuum that are distinguishable only artificially.

In chapter five I explore *Cinema 2* in order to return to the ethical themes of chapter one. My reading of *Cinema 2* foregrounds a concept Deleuze adopts from Kant: experiences of the sublime. As Christian Kerslake suggests, Deleuze's project is more Kantian than is often acknowledged and his project is more sensible when read in these terms.²⁰ The sublime is significant because it is the sort of experience in which the sense-making processes that determine action are taken to a limit at which they break down. This breakdown confronts the subject of experience with a new idea of the whole and forces it to think differently. This new idea and the possibility of making sense differently is, Deleuze argues, the condition for forging new connections and participating in new relations. That is, experiences which rupture the logic by which action is traditionally formulated are also the condition for the transformations with which Deleuze's ethics are concerned.

For all the complexity of the work that I will undertake across the five chapters of this thesis, there is a concrete hypothesis which is served by all these arguments and which can be provisionally formulated now in anticipation of a more sophisticated articulation in the overall conclusion. Experiences that follow from disruptions to and breakdowns in the logic by which we act, and express solutions to the problems posed to us by the world—experiences of the sublime, experiences characterised as “too big for me”²¹—interact with the determination of our capacities in such a way as to transform and enhance the degree of power by which we participate in particular relationships. The ethological significance of this hypothesis is that, from an ontological point of view, it asks how we might make sense of the proposition that the content of our experience interacts with the determination of the degree of power we actualise in our relationships. Fleshing out this problem is the task of chapters two, three, and four, and their narrative regarding the ecological, that is, *holistic*, determination of an individual and her power. From an ethical point of view, this hypothesis asks why it is these particular experiences that are so vital to the transformation of our power. The significance of this ethical dimension of our hypothesis is why this thesis' discussion of Deleuze's ontology is framed the way it is: on the one hand, we must start by setting out the importance of the ethical question; on the other hand, we must consider how that discussion of ontology lends itself to a particular answer. Finally, when this all converges in the conclusion, we can articulate a more sophisticated version of our hypothesis by thinking through how and why Deleuze's project lends itself to such a reading, as well as consider what it might mean in terms of a transformation of our modes of life for such an hypothesis to be true.

²⁰ Christian Kerslake, *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy: From Kant to Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 3--4.

²¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 89.

CHAPTER ONE

On the Relationship Between Ethics and Ontology in Deleuze's Ethology.

This chapter confronts two questions in order to establish a framework that will contextualise this thesis as a whole. The first question is quite broad: how does Deleuze understand the relation between a set of beliefs and changes in the capacities of a body? In response I will argue that, for Deleuze, changes in capacities are inexorably bound up in our understanding of, and our beliefs about, how we are positioned within a set of actual relations. This is clearly an ontological issue insofar as it concerns the role of various subjective elements (beliefs, understanding, memory, etc.) in the determination of our relational capacities. Insofar as this entails questions about the ways our relations affect us and how those affects transform our capacities, this ontological issue simultaneously entails an ethical question: how might an actual person participate actively in the determination of changes in these capacities? I will argue that, when the logic by which we engage sensibly with the world breaks down, a new understanding of the relational nature of the world is possible and this understanding has the potential to enhance our powers and empower our participation in the whole. This chapter will explore these claims through an engagement with Deleuze's ontology, his conception of ethical problems and the complex processes of subjective sense-making that hold the two discussions together. First, however, we need to understand the unorthodox nature of Deleuze's project and so we will begin with his criticisms of traditional moral theory.

Deleuze's Critical Response to Moral Philosophy.

In the ethical component of his ethology, Deleuze engages the assumption that the conditions of ethical problems are homogeneous. That is, Deleuze is less interested in the question of how we ought to act in certain circumstances, than he is in how and why certain circumstances present as ethical problems for particular individuals. A situation that presents as an ethical problem for one person, or one society, might not present as such for others. The defining issue for Deleuze is how an event affects an individual and how the event affects her capacities to affect and to be affected. In order to understand why he takes this unorthodox approach, we must begin by exploring Deleuze's critique of morality, particularly consequentialist morality.

Deleuze's critique of traditional morality is grounded in the claim that it is nihilistic. He argues that, insofar as morality turns towards rules abstracted from the particularity of events and insofar as we generate rules in order to judge events without consideration for their specificity, we deny "life," which is to say that we deny life's capacities by separating them from a power to act. The sense in which Deleuze considers morality to be nihilistic is distinctly Nietzschean and is inspired by sentiments such as Nietzsche's claim that "[i]nsofar as we believe in morality we pass sentence on existence."²² In many ways, Deleuze's work on Nietzsche is an account of the latter's war on morality; what concerns us here, however, is why this war is waged. What is at stake, for instance, when Deleuze describes morality as the successor to Christian dogmatism?²³ The answer, in short, is the separation of a power from what it can do or, to put this another way, the separation of a body from its capacities. For Deleuze, reactive forces, the forces that find their expression in transcendent and ascetic morality, are characterised by "their opposition to what they are not, their tendency to limit the other: in them, *negation* comes first."²⁴ and this is the specific sense in which Deleuze uses the term *nihilistic*: "In the word nihilism *nihil* does not signify non-being but primarily a value of nil. Life takes on a value of nil insofar as it is denied and depreciated."²⁵ Indeed, this anticipates a Spinozist theme that will be important for the Deleuzian conception of how ethics intersects with ontology. In his reading of Spinoza's ethics, Deleuze is concerned with Spinoza's theory of the passions and the affects which correspond with enhancements or diminutions to our powers of acting.

The primary target of this critique of morality is any form of thinking about life that we might broadly call Platonic, any system where abstract values judge the worth of an event or action from a transcendent point of view. As Deleuze writes:

Depreciation always presupposes a fiction: it is by means of fiction that one falsifies and depreciates, it is by means of fiction that something is opposed to life ... The idea of another world, of a supersensible world in all its forms (God, essence, the good, truth), the idea of values superior to life, is not one example among many but the constitutive element of all fiction. Values superior to life are inseparable from their effect: the depreciation of life, the negation of

²² Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will To Power*, trans. Walter Kaufman and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 10.

²³ "We must then acknowledge that morality has replaced religion as a dogma." Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 97.

²⁴ Gilles Deleuze, "Nietzsche," in *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Urzone, 2001), 74.

²⁵ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 147.

this world. And if they are inseparable from this effect it is because their principle is a will to deny, to depreciate.²⁶

Typically, Kantianism, particularly with its juridical deontology, is highlighted as a target of Deleuze's critique.²⁷ Deleuze begins *Difference and Repetition* by asking a bluntly Kantian question about morality: "what good is moral law if it does not ... make reiteration possible and give us a legislative power from which we are excluded by the law of nature?"²⁸ Deleuze wants to argue that moralists divide the world up into Good and Evil. For moralists, Evil arises when our actions are formulated according to a law of nature and lead only to despair or boredom. Good, however, holds out the possibility of generating something new, something enhanced, because it depends upon a law of duty to which we cannot be subject without also being legislators. It is in this sense that Deleuze describes Kant's "'highest test' ... as a criterion which should decide what can in principle be reproduced—in other words, what can be repeated without contradiction in the form of moral law".²⁹ Unfortunately, however, this law of duty ends up repeating pre-existing values by at once elevating them to the status of transcendent laws and simultaneously internalising them as laws of nature. Indeed, it is entirely possible to read *Nietzsche and Philosophy* as the story of Nietzsche's struggle against Kant, filled as it is with reproaches to Kant for having concealed a renovated theology in the unity of legislator and subject, and an interpretation of Kantian legislative reason as "an arbitrator, a justice of the peace who supervises the distribution of domains and the allocation of established values."³⁰

Still, from the point of view of this thesis' concern with modifications to the power which characterises a living being, consequentialism is a more salient counterpoint for Deleuze's approach to ethics. At first, Deleuze's ethics seems to share a common ground with consequentialist moral theories insofar as they both reject duties in favour of a concern with the consequences of an event/encounter. In their respective contributions to the collection *Deleuze and Ethics*, Levi Bryant and Nathan Jun take up the difference between Deleuzian ethics and consequentialist moral

²⁶ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 147.

²⁷ See, for example, Dan Smith who presents Deleuze's immanent ethics in contradistinction to an ethics that refers itself to something—God, values or a moral law—that is transcendent. As Smith argues, Kant, in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, posits the moral law as "a transcendent law that is unknowable." Daniel W. Smith, "Deleuze and the Question of Desire: Towards an Immanent Theory of Ethics," in *Deleuze and Ethics*, eds. Nathan Jun and Daniel W. Smith (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 125. See also Steven Shaviro, "The 'Wrenching Duality' of Aesthetics: Kant, Deleuze, and the 'Theory of the Sensible,'" *Scholarly Articles (in pdf format)*, November 10, 2007, accessed September 04 2013, <http://www.shaviro.com/Othertexts/articles.html>. Shaviro outlines an important distinction between Kantian and Deleuzian morality; Kant's morality, according to Shaviro, is "categorical and universal," whereas Deleuze's is "hypothetical and singular." *Ibid.*, 7. In other words, Kant's morality is a subjection of individual agents to categorical imperatives derived from a universal law; Deleuze's, meanwhile, is the production of specific, singular imperatives that are always immanent to a particular problematic moment.

²⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 4

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁰ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 93--94.

theories. Such theories, for instance Mill's or Bentham's versions of utilitarianism, require a kind of retrospective validity insofar as they claim to analyse past events and thereby derive criteria for prescribing the actions necessary to produce good outcomes in future encounters. This use of retrospective validity, Jun argues, derives transcendent criteria such that all attempts to make decisions about the morally correct course of action in the lead up to a given event are essentially hypothetical imperatives of the form "if you want *X* you ought to do *Y*."³¹ As Jun puts it, this presence of transcendent criteria is at odds with Deleuzian ethics because Deleuze is part of a philosophical movement that, "is nothing if not a systematic repudiation of transcendence."³²

Bryant's argument is also concerned with consequentialist moral theories' reliance on retrospective validity, but his criticism is directed at the assumption that, if such retrospection is to work, affects must necessarily be homogeneous. Bryant takes aim at JS Mill who, in his seminal *Utilitarianism*, argues that:

The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, "utility" or the "greatest happiness principle" holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness; wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure. ... all desirable things ... are desirable either for pleasure inherent in themselves or as means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain.³³

With this, Mill allows us to take account of the fact that, in any given situation, the differences between the parties involved are not arbitrary, and, thus, the affective states of the participants are foregrounded. That is, simply asking after our duties, *à la* Kant, overlooks how an action or the circumstances of a given event affect those involved. Mill emphasises that the criteria for determining the rightness of an action cannot be indifferent to its effects on those whom it will affect. As such, the outcomes of an action, the affects that it promotes, are the final criteria for determining the rightness of an action.

Bryant is concerned with what he considers "the essentialist presuppositions regarding subjects that seem to underpin utilitarian ethical theories."³⁴ Consequentialism presupposes a homogeneity to compare possible cases of being affected, and so, while Bryant commends the consequentialist emphasis on affect, he is uneasy about the way that "our capacity to be affected

³¹ Jun, "Deleuze, Values, and Normativity," 100--101.

³² *Ibid.*, 100.

³³ John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ed. George Sher (Cambridge: Hackett Company), 2001, 7.

³⁴ Levi R. Bryant, "The Ethics of the Event: Deleuze and Ethics without Αρχή," in *Deleuze and Ethics*, eds. Nathan Jun and Daniel W. Smith (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 25.

pleasurably or painfully here seems to be assumed as a brute and unchanging given.”³⁵ Quite simply, utilitarianism of the kind Bryant takes issue with, attempts to achieve an abstraction that would make it possible for these consequentialist moral theories to be prescriptive. If utilitarianism does indeed take this task upon itself, it is problematic for a very specific reason: in order to succeed at this endeavour, utilitarianism needs to be able to homogenise how an event’s affects fit into our anticipation of the unfolding of an event or action. That is, if we are going to evaluate an action or event according to its consequences, then the consequences must be sufficiently similar to prior, analogous actions or events. Bryant is troubled by this homogeneity precisely because it is unable to account for those events and actions which might change our capacity to be affected: “Yet what are we to do if *action itself* transforms our capacity to be affected by generating *new* capacities to be affected?”³⁶

For an example we need only turn to a significant influence on Deleuze’s formulation of ethics in the *Logic of Sense*: the case of Joë Bousquet who became a poet and novelist after suffering a devastating spinal injury during his service in World War 1. Bousquet is significant because, had he not suffered an injury that left him incapacitated and in constant pain, he might never have become the writer he did. Since he is interested in the extent to which Bousquet’s writing is an affirmation of the injury he suffered, Deleuze repeatedly cites Bousquet’s sentiment “my wound existed before me, I was born to embody it”³⁷ as an expression of Bousquet’s affirmation of his wound as a trauma that was necessary to his becoming a writer. Utilitarianism is unable to account for situations like these. Indeed, according to Bryant, when considering an event such as this in which Bousquet’s wound brings about an increase of pain that enhances his capacity to be affected by the world, “it is no longer possible to track the relation between action and affect in the way proposed by utilitarianism.”³⁸ From this point of view, utilitarianism cannot manage an event about to happen, an event whose consequences are not yet known. This is a significant issue because it cannot cope with the possibility that the event might change the capacities of the individuals involved to the extent that what was considered a preferable outcome in the lead-up to the event is no longer preferable once it has actually occurred.

There is a clear conclusion we can draw from this: Deleuze’s critique undermines the traditional ethical endeavours to determine how we should act as well as the criteria by which we ought to evaluate actions. Deleuze problematises the attempt to apply consequentialist criteria in order to determine correct actions because, according to his metaphysics, the “consequences” of an

³⁵ Ibid., 25.

³⁶ Ibid., 25.

³⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 148.

³⁸ Bryant, “The Ethics of the Event,” 25.

action only arise after it has occurred. Deleuze thus undermines the criteria by which both actions and events are retrospectively evaluated; not only must the evaluative criteria be immanent to the event being evaluated, but the evaluations themselves will be subject to constant revision. In Bousquet's case, Mill's pleasure/pain calculus could offer claims about whether it is right for Bousquet *to be* injured; insofar as Bousquet's being injured causes pain and deprives him of pleasure, it is wrong. However, for Deleuze, Bousquet eventually affirms his injury as a consequence of an ongoing sense-making process wherein the significance of his injury changes.

The primary issue for a Deleuzean conception of ethics is, then, the question of how to engage productively with genuinely novel situations. That is, when faced with something novel—something unexpected and unprecedented, something “too big for me”³⁹—under what conditions are we able to engage productively with the event? To engage with this problem, Deleuze turns initially to Spinoza's understanding of modes of life which entail “a production, a productivity, a potency, in terms of causes and effects.”⁴⁰ For Deleuze this means an emphasis on the degree to which an individual determines the type and form of the encounters that fill out her life. However, this does not mean that she makes a rational choice about these encounters. Rather, following Spinoza, Deleuze identifies the individual with a degree of power that is expressed in the affects she experiences given the relationships in which she is involved. As a degree of power, the individual may be said to determine events to the extent that the determination of the event involves her power. The extent to which an event or encounter is productive follows from the limit to which her power is taken: an event is more productive if her power is enhanced—that is, if she becomes more capable of affecting and being affected. I argue that it is in this sense that a new understanding, a new belief, would compel the determination of this productive engagement. This is why Deleuze's ethology is consistently interested in the way the memory of the action or event subsists in the ongoing processes of sense-making and how that subsistence affects an individual's capacities at any given moment.

This argument is thus symptomatic of a recurrent theme in Deleuze's philosophy, namely the relationship between problems and solutions. This is to say that at the centre of Deleuze's metaphysics lies a dialectic of problems. With regards to his ethics, this dialectic is not concerned with finding correct solutions to abstract problems but, rather, with the conditions that determine specific problems. When Bryant incredulously asks, “Did anyone ever really doubt whether we should, by and large, keep our contracts, be honest, or not murder our fellows?”⁴¹ it is because

³⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 89.

⁴⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988), 3.

⁴¹ Bryant, “The Ethics of the Event,” 27.

traditional problems—lying, stealing, killing, etc.—are exemplars of what Deleuze calls “false problems.”⁴² If this is problematic for Deleuze, it is because of the assumption that problems await philosophers who will answer them; aside from minor tweaking, the problems given to moral philosophers are already formulated and so pass over the specific determination of a problem *as* a problem.⁴³ Traditional ethical theory has, according to Bryant, a “fetishistic obsession ... with whether or not lying is moral or whether or not it is just to kill another person”;⁴⁴ the inadequacy of this obsession is in its passing silently over questions of the conditions of the emergence of concrete ethical problems. This is why, for Deleuze, the question *what is ethics?* is a less interesting question than “the *strange* question of *when* ethical problematics arise.”⁴⁵

A central theme in Deleuze’s ontology is the necessity of a rupture—what Deleuze calls a *caesura*—between past events that can be represented in abstract moral theory and a future that is not yet given. In critiquing traditional morality, Deleuze has brought the question of ethics into a confrontation with the strangeness of this caesura and brought to light the relation between the composition of novel actions and the “moment where ‘principles’ governing a composition no longer hold.”⁴⁶ In a famous sentiment from *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Deleuze offers a description of this ethical problem in terms of our attitudes towards the world:

The modern fact is that we no longer believe in this world. We do not even believe in the events which happen to us, love, death, as if they only half concerned us. It is not we who make cinema; it is the world which looks to us like a bad film.⁴⁷

Deleuze’s point, and the problem that drives his ethics, is that the world has been stripped of meaningful content and significance. Here Deleuze is talking about the collapse of the sensory-motor schema; this caesura between the past and the future is a crucial feature of the threshold between perception and action.⁴⁸ However, the collapse of the sensory-motor schema that Deleuze discusses in the two volumes of *Cinema* concerns the loss of the meaning of this caesura—the loss of a belief in the significance of what happens to us. Where the world was once filled with meaningful events, these events have become *clichés* and, in Deleuze’s diagnosis, this failure of significance diminishes a being’s capacity to generate new actions. The foremost concern of Deleuze’s ethics, then, is to grapple with the conditions, structures and consequences of these

⁴² Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 17.

⁴³ *Difference and Repetition* emphasises this issue by arguing that ‘true’ or ‘correct’ answers to problems are superficial expressions of much deeper sense-making processes. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 143.

⁴⁴ Bryant, “The Ethics of the Event,” 27.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴⁷ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 171.

⁴⁸ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 152.

clichés; to generate a new point of view on the world and thereby participate in the construction of new relations, new connections, and new worlds. The dialectic of problems and the reciprocity of problems and solutions is at the heart of Deleuze's ontology. And so, to understand the conditions under which problems arise, we must explore the *ontological* component of Deleuze's ethology.

The Ontology that Correlates with Deleuze's Ethics.

Deleuze's ethics is then concerned with the way our understanding, our beliefs and expectations, determine the way we participate in novel events. His approach to ethics has its sources in Spinoza's *Ethics* and Bergson's *Matter and Memory*. Following Spinoza and Bergson, Deleuze denies, in principle, the possibility of an external point of view on an event. This means that any attempt to assemble knowledge into a prediction or anticipation of the outcome of an event is simultaneously a participation in the determination of the event. An event is not novel because it is undetermined; it is novel because it cannot be predicted or given in advance of its actual occurrence. To elaborate this reading of Deleuze's ethics, we must examine Deleuze's conception of the relationship between the understanding of what happens and the happening itself. In this section I will outline some key components of Deleuze's interpretation of Spinoza, particularly the latter's parallelism, in order to show that, in the relational ontology Deleuze expounds, understanding correlates with embodied existence.

A key element of the interpretation I will offer over the next three chapters is that, within Deleuze's ontology, particular entities are not understood as self-sufficient, atomic individuals, but, rather, as individuating events. For Deleuze, there is no thing which is individuated in or by these events. Ultimately, Deleuze posits a complex conception of individuals and the whole as reciprocal such that, on the one hand, an actual individual's participation in the whole is simultaneously a participation in the whole's constitution, and, on the other hand, the whole's constitution is its expression in beings that modify the whole. In other words, the processes that generate actual individuals, simultaneously constitute the whole in which the individuals participate. Within Deleuze's metaphysics all beings are relational and, as such, the reciprocity between an individual and the whole determines changes in an individual's capacities in a complex way. To say something meaningful about a being, we must therefore attend to the relationships in which they participate. From the point of view of these relationships, the individual is the expression of a degree of power—of a certain, determinate capacity. Indeed, within Deleuze's metaphysics, an individual just *is* the expression of a capacity; the degree of power expressed is synonymous with an individual's "essence."

For an example we need only turn to Deleuze's fondness for biologist and ethologist Jakob von Uexküll. In an essay entitled "Spinoza and Us," Deleuze discusses a now famous case from Uexküll: the tick. At the beginning of his work *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans*, Uexküll is interested in the humble tick as an exemplar of the problem of whether an organism is best thought of as "a mere object or subject."⁴⁹ Uexküll is interested in the distinction between physiology and biology. While a physiologist would argue that a tick is merely a machine responding reflexively to its environment, a biologist would argue that the tick is a "machine operator" insofar as it is a "subject that lives in its own world, of which it is the center [and] therefore [can only] be compared ... to the machine operator who guides the machine."⁵⁰ Uexküll is interested in disposing of the crude opposition between the machine and the machine operator and instead explores the dynamic relation between the two such that, ultimately, his project is a story about the intensive world unique to an organism that casts the subject/object distinction as a question of points of view within a particular milieu.

Uexküll is an important touchstone for Deleuze's ethology because Uexküll's story of the tick and its relationship to its environment stresses the phenomenal content of the tick's world. The intensity of the tick's world is defined by its affective entanglement in its world: "a body affects other bodies, or is affected by other bodies; it is this capacity for affecting and being affected that also defines a body in its individuality."⁵¹ Understood in terms of its affects, Deleuze argues, an individual *is* its relationships and the degrees of power that it expresses in its relationships:

You will not define a body (or a mind) by its form, nor by its organs or functions, and neither will you define it as a substance or a subject. ... You will define an animal, or a human being, not by its form, its organs, and its functions, and not as a subject either; you will define it by the affects of which it is capable.⁵²

When Deleuze takes up Uexküll's example it is because his tick is defined in terms of its three primary affects: its receptivity to light, smell and temperature.⁵³ As Brett Buchanan notes, "At issue, therefore, is how the tick relates to its surroundings, where the emphasis is neither on the tick ... nor on the environment ... but on the 'affective' relation itself."⁵⁴ From the point of view of Deleuze's metaphysics, it is trivial to say that, for example, the tick has the property of being blind such that

⁴⁹ Jakob von Uexküll, *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans with A Theory of Meaning*, trans. Joseph D. O'Neil (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 45. This work, *Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen*, is often cited as some variant on *Strolls Through the Worlds of Animals and Men*; for an explanation of this translation choice, see O'Neil's introduction.

⁵⁰ Uexküll, *Theory of Meaning*, 45.

⁵¹ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 123.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 123--124.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 24; Uexküll, 44--45.

⁵⁴ Buchanan, *Onto-Ethologies*, 156.

its possession of this property is prior to its deployment in an encounter. Of course, the tick *is* blind, but this is beside the point. The ethological issue concerns how the photosensitivity of the tick's skin, in lieu of eyes, constitutes a capacity—a degree of power—deployed within an actual, lived encounter. It remains for this chapter to outline how this affect-centred ethics might inform our concern with the modification of a being's power.⁵⁵ There is an important thread running through these arguments. This section began by noting that novelty in Deleuze's ontology is grounded in an event's being determined by, though not *given* in, a being's relationship with the ideal formulation of that event. Ultimately, we will see that, *à la* Uexküll's tick, affective encounters drive this relationship. By articulating more clearly how Deleuze conceives the impossibility of a transcendent point of view, we can build a much stronger foundation for this broader argument about affective encounters.

This argument that the essence of an individual follows from its relations is rooted in classical philosophical arguments about the relationship between what an individual *does* and what it *is*. In his formulation of substance dualism, for instance, Descartes argues that events that occur in the actual world are substantially distinct from the minds of those who observe them. In the sixth meditation, Descartes observes that his essence consists solely in being a being who thinks, that is, a soul or a mind, and that, although he is intimately connected to a body, he is really distinct from his body and could exist independently of it.⁵⁶ This formal independence means that Descartes' mind can more or less accurately understand and describe events that it encounters; however, by virtue of his mind's radical distinctness from the event, his observation does not actually *modify* the event it observes. In an incisive article, Robin Durie outlines the arguments underlying this Cartesian theory of substance dualism. Descartes' dualism is grounded in the assertion that a substance has one principal attribute through which its nature and essence is constituted. According to this argument, where an attribute is able to be conceived without reference to any other attribute or property, this attribute may be understood to be really distinct. Finally, where there is a really distinct attribute there is a substance whose nature and essence it constitutes. Thus, where there is a plurality of attributes there is a plurality of substances.⁵⁷ To put it simply, for Descartes, each of the ways an action can be predicated of a subject—that is, that a subject *thinks*, or that a subject is *extended*—constitutes an attribute; each really distinct attribute (an attribute that has a self-sustaining existence and does not require reference to another attribute to exist) presupposes a substance that grounds

⁵⁵ A development of the ontology anticipated in these few brief paragraphs is the *raison d'être* of chapters two, three and four.

⁵⁶ Rene Descartes, *Meditations, Objections and Replies*, trans. and ed. Roger Ariew and Donald Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2006), 43--44.

⁵⁷ Robin Durie, "Immanence and Difference: Toward a Relational Ontology," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 40, no. 2, (2002):164

this attribute so, whenever a form of action—be it thought or material action—occurs, it implies a really distinct substance that gives it its content.

Spinoza does not disagree that the attributes of thought and extension are really distinct; indeed, he goes further than Descartes and argues that there are an infinite number of attributes, all of them really distinct. However, he disagrees with Descartes over the subtler point of how attributes presuppose substances. Indeed, the first task Spinoza sets himself in the *Ethics* is to make the case that there is only one substance for all attributes. This gives rise to the theory of the relationship between body and mind that has been dubbed parallelism. In his interpretation of Spinoza's parallelism, Deleuze refers to it as a “*univocity of the attributes*.”⁵⁸ That is, when Spinoza argues there is only one substance presupposed by all attributes, Deleuze takes this to mean that all attributes are predicated univocally, said in a “*single and same sense*”⁵⁹ of a unique substance. Through this argument, Deleuze mobilises the logic of univocal attribution to show that understanding correlates with embodiment and this converts understanding into an active, rather than merely reflective and descriptive, faculty. Deleuze argues that, while there is a formal distinction between the attributes (they are *really* distinct), there is no numerical—no modal or *actual*—distinction between these attributes so that, while Descartes argued that there is one substance for each attribute, Spinoza has only one substance for all attributes, even though that substance is qualitatively heterogeneous.

At the same time, this univocal predication is simultaneously a univocal *constitution* of substance.⁶⁰ That is, attributes are really distinct and so the orders of events—the order of mental events and the order of extended events—never interact; however, the sense in which an attribute constitutes substance is, in fact, the single and same sense in which *every* attribute participates in the constitution of substance. Because of this univocal expression, the order of mental events corresponds fully with the order of extended events, even though they are formally distinct and do not interact. When it comes to the individual events themselves—actual bodies, actual minds—there is a very particular reason why Deleuze affirms their modal distinction; one body is distinct from another body only insofar as each expresses a degree of the constitution of a heterogeneous, relational whole. However, so far this accounts only for how the orders of events participate in the constitution of a whole, it does not yet account for how orders of events (the attributes) relate to the actual events themselves—the modes. This is why the next step in Deleuze's reading of Spinoza is to argue that whenever a degree of power or a capacity is expressed or actualised in a certain way—

⁵⁸ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 52.

⁵⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 35.

⁶⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Urzone, 1990), 43.

in an affective encounter, for instance—it simultaneously belongs to an attribute which contains this degree of power. From the point of view of the containing attribute, this degree of power is in fact an expression of the sense in which the attribute constitutes the whole of which the individual is a part.

The interpretation that Deleuze puts forward here is not entirely unique. Indeed, a significant portion of Deleuze’s reading has a precedent in the interpretation of Spinoza put forward by Alfred Weber who contends that for Spinoza, “Matter and mind are not two opposite substances, as in Cartesianism; they are two different ways of conceiving one and the same substance, two different names for one and the same thing.”⁶¹ It is on the basis of this conception of substance that Deleuze is able to claim that, for Spinoza, the states of a body within a sensible encounter correspond to an *idea* of that body. But this idea, insofar as it is actualised as a mode of thinking, is also a degree of power that is the expression of the sense in which the attribute of thought participates in the constitution of the whole. Deleuze again follows Weber’s interpretation of EIIP7S where the latter claims that “though thought and extension exclude each other insofar as they are attributes, they belong to the same substance; conceived thus, mind and matter are the same thing.”⁶² So, for Deleuze, insofar as mental events and bodily events are univocal expressions of the same event—the constitution of the whole—they are identical: “all that is action in the body is also action in the mind, and all that is passion in the mind is also passion in the body.”⁶³ That is, from the point of view of what they express—their substantive content—the body and the mind are identical. When considered as expressive events, the body and the mind are not actually distinct or, rather, they are each an identical expression happening within a unique, “autonomous”⁶⁴ order of events. As Beth Lord explains, “Due to parallelism, experience is both bodily and mental.”⁶⁵ Spinoza’s parallelism follows from emphasising that body and mind occur under qualitatively distinct attributes while simultaneously arguing that each shares an identical cause. As Lord argues, the modes of neither attribute—thought and extension—interact causally with each other and yet, insofar as they share a common cause—God, whose modification they express⁶⁶—a “thing and its idea are therefore the *same mode* expressed through different attributes.”⁶⁷

What this means for Deleuze is that, what affects the mind, affects the body and vice versa. Of course, Deleuze maintains Spinoza’s parallelism so body and mind never interact; however, the

⁶¹ Alfred Weber, *History of Philosophy*, trans. Frank Thilly (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1902), 262.

⁶² Weber, *History of Philosophy*, 266.

⁶³ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 88.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁶⁵ Beth Lord, *Spinoza’s Ethics* (Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 67.

⁶⁶ Lord, *Spinoza’s Ethics*, 53.

⁶⁷ Lord, *Spinoza’s Ethics*, 56.

immediate consequence of their correspondence is that the affections of the mind are simultaneously expressed in the individuation of the body and the actions and modifications of the body are expressed ideally. When he was preparing his work on Spinoza, these ideas intermingled with his interpretation of Nietzsche, of whom Deleuze wrote that “the unity of life and thought ... is a complex unity: one step for life, one step for thought. Modes of life inspire ways of thinking; modes of thinking create ways of living. Life *activates* thought, and thought in turn *affirms* life.”⁶⁸ We can say of Deleuze’s deployment of Spinoza’s parallelism that it amounts to the claim that, while my thoughts and my bodily affections belong to different orders of events and thus do not interact, they are *in fact* identical; that is, there is no actual distinction between what is expressed as a thought and what is actualised in an action. The only actual distinctions Deleuze allows are between different occurrences within the same order; in other words, there is an actual distinction between Peter’s and Paul’s bodies, just as there is an actual distinction between their respective minds. However, there is no actual distinction between Peter’s body and his mind, nor is there any actual distinction between Paul’s body and his mind. In this way, modifications of the mind are duplicated and expressed as modifications of the body, and vice versa. This duplication is the same event—the modification of a power of participating in the whole—under a different order of events, a different system of conception.

In light of Deleuze’s conception of the active nature of understanding, the task that remains is to reformulate and repose our ethical question. The question of how we might modify the power of a living being shifts and we can ask new questions: how are different affective relationships expressed ideally? How does a particular mode of understanding correspond with the determination of new powers for the body? Does the affection of the body open avenues for the transformation of understanding? Moreover, how would this transformation in understanding correlate to a transformation in the powers of the body? I argue that the affection of the body *does* open avenues for a renewed apprehension of the relational composition of our lives. However, this renewed apprehension is not merely an exercise in reflecting on what happens to a body; as a result of the doctrine of parallelism Deleuze inherits from Spinoza, the renewal and expansion of an understanding of the affections of the body corresponds with the determination of corporeal power. What remains is to elaborate the way Deleuze conceives the workings of this correspondence. In order to explore this issue we must turn to a process of evaluative contemplation that Deleuze calls *counter-actualisation*. With this concept of counter-actualisation, Deleuze argues that passive processes of contemplation and sense-making determine the degree of power characteristic of an individual life.

⁶⁸ Deleuze, “Nietzsche,” in *Pure Immanence*, 66.

Contemplation and Counter-Actualisation.

Given that Deleuze places himself in a tradition that rejects substance dualism, we can set out this part of our discussion of contemplation with the observation that an observer, the one who contemplates, is not outside of the happening to which her contemplation refers. Indeed, contemplation is a crucial part of how of how an agent's past constitutes a set of concrete capacities that determine the way in which she participates in present events and encounters. Reflecting on Nietzsche's so-called "transvaluation of values," Deleuze suggests that

[e]valuations, in essence, are not values but ways of being, modes of existence of those who judge and evaluate, serving as principles for the values on the basis of which they judge. This is why we always have the beliefs, feelings and thoughts that we deserve given our way of being or our style of life.⁶⁹

This is a key point for Deleuze's ethics; the final sentence of this passage resonates with his reflections on Spinoza: "[i]n a certain manner, you say: whatever you do, you will only ever have what you deserve."⁷⁰ With this claim, Deleuze offers an ethical formulation of a point central to Spinoza's metaphysics. In his correspondence with Willem van Blyenburgh, Spinoza claims that "whatever is, when considered in itself without regard to anything else, possesses a perfection coextensive in every case with the thing's essence."⁷¹ Deleuze reads this as the claim that a being's actual existence is always an expression of the entirety of its capacities: "[i]t remains that a mode ... has no power that is not actual: it is at each moment all that it can be, its power is its essence."⁷² In other words, it makes no sense to ask about what capacities an actual being has that it does not express because the expression of the totality of its power is the existence of an actual being, nothing more, nothing less. Of course, this does not mean that the powers of an actual being are not modified over time. Rather, Deleuze expands his conception of the relational nature of being and argues that, whatever this or that being will eventually be capable of, *potential* capacities are not *actual* capacities. Following Spinoza, Nietzsche and Bergson, Deleuze argues that what a being will become is not merely an instantiation of an ideal already contained within it. As such it makes no sense to talk about a being possessing unexpressed power or unrealised potential since any being is all that it can be, and this is what Deleuze means when he interprets both Spinoza and Nietzsche as

⁶⁹ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 1.

⁷⁰ Deleuze, "Sur Spinoza" 21/12/1980.

⁷¹ Spinoza, Benedict de. *Complete Works*. trans. Samuel Shirley. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc, 2002) 808.

⁷² Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 93.

supporting the claim that “you will only ever have what you deserve”; to put this another way, all that you have is all that you are actually capable of having.

Still, this does not exhaust the meaning of Deleuze’s comment on evaluation in Nietzsche. Even if we take Deleuze’s final claim that “we always have the beliefs, feelings and thoughts that we deserve given our way of being or our style of life” as a formulation of the parallelism discussed above (that is, our beliefs, feelings and thoughts mirror or express embodied modes of existing), Deleuze’s claim that evaluations are modes of life requires some unpacking. The first point is that, for Deleuze, evaluation is not merely a gratuitous epistemological exercise. Evaluation is instead a process by which the past in the form of memories, beliefs, feelings and understandings, is contracted into the determination of a set of actual capacities in response to a present event. Indeed, when Deleuze goes so far as to proclaim that “all is contemplation!”⁷³ he insists that this process of selection and contraction is an ontological condition of *all* life.

To see the significance of Deleuze’s claim here we must turn to *The Logic of Sense* and one of the most difficult, subterranean concepts in his *œuvre: counter-actualisation*. Counter-actualisation concerns expressive movements that pull away from a mode’s actual existence and affirm the degree to which the actual being is simultaneously the constitution of a whole. However, this counter-actualisation does not consist of an *actual* movement; rather, it affirms the sense and significance of what actually happens insofar as it is constitutive of a whole. And, because these processes of actualisation and counter-actualisation are temporal, a counter-actualisation is a determination of the form of what occurs. As James Williams puts it, “[c]ounter-actualisation is ... a reciprocally determining interaction between sense and the actual side of events.”⁷⁴

In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze recapitulates a description of the individual that he had found and affirmed in Nietzsche, namely that a body is “the fruit of chance ... and appears as the most ‘astonishing’ thing”;⁷⁵ the individual is a “*fortuitous case*.”⁷⁶ In this context, Deleuze offers what he considers,

the ultimate sense of counter-actualization ... that the individual, born of that which comes to pass, affirm her distance with respect to every other event. As the individual affirms the distance,

⁷³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 75.

⁷⁴ James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze’s Logic of Sense: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 36-37.

⁷⁵ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 40.

⁷⁶ Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 178.

she follows and joins it, passing through all the other individuals implied by the other events, and extracts from it a unique Event which is once again herself.⁷⁷

Counter-actualisation sets out from the Nietzschean idea that an individual is a fortuitous case—an ensemble of material parts brought about at the locus of a series of affective encounters—and affirms the significance of the conditions of the power she expresses relative to the conditions of the power expressed by those who inhabit her world and relate to her. The concept of sense is crucial to what Deleuze is here calling an *event*. Insofar as an actual occurrence is an expression of the constitution of a whole, the sense of that constitution *is* something; it is not an actual thing but it is no less real for not being so. This sense, as we have seen, is itself the determination of the power expressed in the existence of an actual being. Every event implies the totality of all events, and their singularity relative to other events is what Deleuze, borrowing a phrase from Nietzsche, calls a “*pathos of distance*.”⁷⁸ Given that these events are not actual occurrences, their distance is not a spatial distance; it is, rather, an intensive distance that expresses the degree to which the event implies certain other events in certain ways. It is a situation whereby events, as Williams puts it, “may be far removed, but this does not mean that they have no contact. Everything connects and can be connected, but this connection is not smooth and well-regulated; it is a matter of series that converge and diverge according to disjunctive syntheses carried by mobile elements.”⁷⁹

To return to the above passage from Deleuze, then, counter-actualisation is grounded in the individual’s capacity to affirm the intensive distance—the conjunctions and disjunctions—between the event that determines her power and the events which determine the powers of those with whom she interacts. For Deleuze, this affirmation involves connecting with the event and expressing and grasping the pathos—the affects invoked—of its proximity to and distance from other events; it requires following the lines of this distance and connecting with the individuals implied by the events along these lines. Finally, it involves the individual returning to herself and carrying with her an awareness of herself and her power from the point of view of all the individuals, all the conjunctions and disjunctions, implied in her actual existence. This element of counter-actualisation that involves affirming the pathos of the event’s relationship with other events is exemplified in one of Deleuze’s favourite stories, Jorge Luis Borges’ “The Garden of Forking Paths.” “The Garden of Forking Paths” takes place during WWI and tells the story of a German spy, Dr. Yu Tsun, a Chinese professor of English, trying to discover and reveal the location of a new British artillery park. The majority of the action takes place in the home of Dr Stephen Albert, an academic whom Yu Tsun visits. An ancestor of Tsun, Ts’ui Pên, had famously set out to construct a vast and

⁷⁷ Ibid. 178.

⁷⁸ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 2.

⁷⁹ Williams, *Deleuze’s ‘Difference and Repetition’*, 165.

intricate novel, as well as an equally complex labyrinth. Albert, who reveals he has spent much of his life studying Ts'ui Pên's novel, excitedly tells Tsun that he believes the novel and the labyrinth are actually one and the same and that Ts'ui Pên's garden of forking paths is this sprawling novel whose narrative forks temporally and attempts to recount scenarios in which its characters face all of the possible outcomes of their actions. In some cases the orders of time that a character inhabits will be oblivious to others, and in other cases, orders of time will converge and diverge, confronting characters with the consequences of earlier actions that occurred in a different temporal series. Ts'ui Pên's novel, according to Albert, is an attempt to explore and portray the possibility that each outcome of any event has its own series of consequences which proliferate to infinity. Albert describes Ts'ui Pên's work in terms of the divergence and convergence of these temporal orders:

[Ts'ui Pên] believed in an infinite series of times, a growing dizzying web of divergent, convergent, and parallel times. That fabric of times that approach one another, fork, are snipped off, or are simply unknown for centuries, contains *all* possibilities. In most of these times, we do not exist; in some, you exist but I do not; in others, I do and you do not; in others still, we both do. In this one, which the favouring hand of chance has dealt me, you have come to my home; in another, when you come through my garden you find me dead; in another, I say these same words, but I am an error, a ghost.⁸⁰

Ultimately, Tsun is only able to communicate to his superiors in Germany that the artillery park they seek is in the French commune "Albert" by having his name appear in a newspaper report as the killer of Dr Albert. Thus, Tsun resolves to murder Albert. However, Tsun is only able to kill Albert by virtue of his affirmation of Albert's house as "saturated, infinitely, with invisible persons. ... Albert and myself—secret, busily at work, multiform—in other dimensions of time."⁸¹

Contemplation is then integral to Deleuze's ethology precisely because of the way that understanding, in the sense of an altered point of view or an expanded awareness, participates in the determination of what is actually possible. When Deleuze cryptically suggests waging war against war, or affirming death so as to will death *per se* against all particular deaths, he offers a description of counter-actualisation as a process whereby, instead of resenting what happens to us, we make something positive out of it precisely by apprehending that element of such occurrences that connects it to all events.⁸² Elsewhere, Deleuze invokes the relationship between love and hate as an example of the intensive distance traversed by counter-actualisation: "My love is an exploration of distance, a long journey which affirms my hate for the friend in another world and with another

⁸⁰ Borges, Jorge Luis. "The Garden of Forking Paths." *Collected Fictions*. Andrew Hurley (trans.), New York: Penguin Books, 1998, 119-128, 127.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁸² Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 149.

individual.”⁸³ In his commentary on *The Logic of Sense*, this example is taken up by James Williams who emphasises that this is an issue of our relationship to the sense of what happens to us. What matters in this example, argues Williams, is that infinitives such as “to love” or “to hate” express a differential relationship between affects and so the expression of the infinitive is really an expression of the potential to connect to different infinitives.⁸⁴ As such, this positive production does not necessarily mean something *good*; in some cases, for example Bousquet’s literary career, production follows from counter-actualisation and, in others, such as Yu Tsun’s murder of Stephen Albert, destruction follows. Regardless of *what* happens, counter-actualisation ensures that something can happen. To put it simply, where action was once limited—where possibilities were diminished—it is expanded as a consequence of counter-actualising what actually happens to us. What I wish to suggest here is that, for Deleuze, one of the ways counter-actualisation is immanent to our experience is in encounters which disrupt the sensory-motor schema and confront us with a new idea of the whole: *wounds*. It is to this topic that I turn in the last section of this chapter.

Wounds and the Modification of Power.

When he describes counter-actualisation in the *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze provides an abstract account of how a transformation in understanding correlates to a transformation in the power characteristic of actual life; a renewed understanding involves an apprehension and affirmation of an individual’s life relative to all the other lives implied in its existence. In this sense, I argue that wounds, understood as the breakdown of the sensory-motor schema, present a concrete case which illuminates the point Deleuze is making about counter-actualisation. The tick example discussed earlier offers a relatively simple example of what Deleuze means by the breakdown of the sensory-motor schema. The sensory-motor schema is a process which links “perceptions, affections and actions”⁸⁵ and we see this process carried out in the lives of all beings. In the tick’s interaction with its environment, it is capable of three affects which characterise its entanglement in its environment. When Deleuze says that the tick is capable of being affected by light, smell and temperature,⁸⁶ he is referring to Uexküll’s description of the tick as being capable of doing three things: its sensitivity to light facilitates its climbing to the top of bushes in anticipation of small mammals wandering underneath it; its olfactory sense allows it to distinguish suitable hosts from its surroundings; and its sensitivity to changes in temperature allow it to find the patch of skin on its host’s body that is most

⁸³ Ibid., 179.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 167.

⁸⁵ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, ix.

⁸⁶ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 124.

amenable to providing it with the opportunity to gorge on its host's blood.⁸⁷ However, the description Uexküll offers here only describes *how* affective entanglements describe the tick's life. What is more interesting for Deleuze is the question of why beings are characterised by particular affects. Since his is a transcendental project, Deleuze's ethology is concerned with the conditions and immanent logics that generate this or that particular mode of life, rather than a description of how the mode in question lives its life.⁸⁸ The *sensory-motor schema* of *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* describes the process by which a being's life expresses the convergence of affective entanglements in a series of behaviours. The breakdown of the sensory-motor schema would thus concern the tick's failure to generate a response to its environment. In his books on cinema, Deleuze expands on his reading of Bergson and outlines an ontology that describes the relationships between beings and their environments in terms of problems posed to an organism by its environment (how Deleuze conceives perception) and the solutions that the organism expresses in its actions. The sensory-motor schema is a logic by which this action is formulated and expressed in the organism. Of course, Deleuze is a critic of transcendence in all its forms so the sensory-motor schema, insofar as it is a logic, operates in a manner that is entirely immanent to the particular encounter in which an organism is embroiled. Indeed, it is not entirely correct to refer to the sensory-motor schema as though it is a logic which reappears in various encounters; rather, the tick in this scenario is part of an affective continuum whose parts can be modally distinguished but together constitute "a sensory-motor whole."⁸⁹ The whole, and therefore its parts, are defined by their sensory-motor relations but there is no transposable schema which determines how any particular organism will solve a given problem. By the same token, it is misleading to read an elevation of the subject into a phrase like *the tick's life expresses*. The life we call the tick's does not belong to the tick. That is, the tick does not precede its life; its status and

⁸⁷ Uexküll, *Theory of Meaning*, 44--45.

⁸⁸ On the face of it, Deleuze's reference to ethology retains firmly its zoological context: "Affects are becoming. Spinoza asks: What can a body do? We call the latitude of a body the affects of which it is capable at a given degree of power, or rather within the limits of that degree. *Latitude is made up of intensive parts falling under a capacity, and longitude of extensive parts falling under a relation.* In the same way that we avoided defining a body by its organs and functions, we will avoid defining it by Species or Genus characteristics; instead we will seek to count its affects. This kind of study is called ethology, and this is the sense in which Spinoza wrote a true Ethics." Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 1994), 256--257. In this thesis, I offer an expanded conception of ethology that I believe allows us to better appreciate Deleuze's project; by expanding this concept to reflect the reciprocity of ethics and ontology we see that a being's behaviour—ethology's traditional concern—interacts with the conditions of its becoming. The *longitudinal* element of ethology concerns the particular expression of the affects of which it is capable in a particular encounter; that is, it tracks the expression of capacities for affecting and being affected in an actual relationship such that a composite of material parts is characterised as this or that particular body. The *latitudinal* element with which it corresponds is the determination and transformation of a degree of power that constitutes this capacity. In anticipation of an exploration of the correspondance and reciprocity of these two elements across chapters two, three and four, we must emphasise that this problem, which initially seems ontological, is always simultaneously ethical insofar as it concerns the transformation—the enhancement and diminution—of the powers of a living individual.

⁸⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 32.

identity as a tick are, for Deleuze, determined by the affective entanglements that are expressed in its life.

In *Cinema 1*, Deleuze explicitly links his account of counter-actualisation to the criteria by which an organism is able to formulate and actualise its response to its affective milieu:

On the one hand a sensory contact must be established with the objects adjacent to the situation [which poses a problem] ... On the other hand the object must, in this way, awaken an affective memory, reactualise an emotion which is not necessarily identical, but is analogous to that which the role calls up.⁹⁰

If an individual is to actualise a response to her milieu, there are conditions that must be met. Obviously, this individual must actually be in a relationship with the beings that constitute the problematic environment and this must be an actual, sensory relationship. But more must be done. Crucially, the environment, the beings that fill it out, must induce the individual to, as Deleuze puts it, “affirm her distance with respect to every other event” and in so doing grasp the pathos, the affective entanglement, of her life with respect to the whole of life.

What is so compelling about the *Cinema* books, *Cinema 2* in particular, is the attention they devote to the conditions under which this process fails. However, Deleuze does not just trace the failure of the sensory-motor schema, he is also interested in the way that new forms of engagement, new methods of formulating responses, emerge from this failure. Deleuze’s description of the failure of the sensory-motor schema—*la faillite des schèmes sensori-moteurs*⁹¹—indicates that what interests him is not just that it fails but *why* it fails: as Deleuze says, “we no longer believe in this world. We do not even believe in the events which happen to us, love, death, as if they only half concerned us.” The constitution of an action as a response to a problem posed by the environment, the so-called *action-image*, is plunged into crisis once a state is reached in which,

We hardly believe any longer that a global situation can give rise to an action which is capable of modifying it—no more than we believe that an action can force a situation to disclose itself, even partially. The most ‘healthy’ illusions fall. The first things to be compromised everywhere are the linkages of situation action, action reaction, excitation response, in short, the sensory-motor links which produced the action-image.⁹²

These two beliefs refer to the two forms of the action-image. Ronald Bogue, in his indispensable *Deleuze on Cinema*, describes the action-image as, on the one hand, appearing in

⁹⁰ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 158.

⁹¹ Gilles Deleuze, “Sur *L’Image-Temps*” in *Pourparlers* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1990), 85.

⁹² Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 206.

what Deleuze calls the “large form” which “consists of a milieu of forces that constitutes an initial Situation (S), a duel of forces that comprises an Action (A), and a consequent modification of the situation (S’): S-A-S’.”⁹³ On the other hand, there is also a “small form” where “the movement is from an equivocal action (A) to a clarified situation (S) that makes possible a modified or new action (A’)[:A-S-A’].”⁹⁴ Insofar as he retains the language of sensory contact between objects, Deleuze does not suggest that we cease to have sensory relations with the world. Rather, the crisis of the action-image is concerned with the failure of these relations to constitute a compelling problem. Particularly, Deleuze is concerned with the ruptures in the process by which these sensory relations are synthesised *ideally* in order to induce an action; in this sense he is concerned with the breakdown of our belief in the world. That is, Deleuze is interested in experiences and encounters that disrupt our habitual approach to the world. In *Difference and Repetition*’s philosophy of time, he argues that a primary condition of subjective action—that is, the constitution of a subject as a being who actively engages with her world—is an unconscious synthesis of her previous experiences into an anticipation of the future. This is why I have insisted on the importance of contemplation; action is, in part, predicated on a process of sense making, of synthesising memories and experiences into a comprehensible image of the world.⁹⁵ The breakdown of the sensory-motor schema and the loss of faith in the world turns on experiences that confront that synthetic process with its limit, and so render it unable to generate either a comprehensible image or an action. In the case of the large form, we lose our belief in a totalised world which can induce actions that modify it: “the [action-image] no longer refers to a situation which is globalising or synthetic, but rather to one which is dispersive.”⁹⁶ That is, we are no longer able to think honestly of the world as a sensory-motor whole into which our actions fit as a catalyst for transformation. Similarly, in the case of the small form, we can no longer expect the world to respond to our actions by disclosing an ordered, cogent situation from which we can derive further actions: “the line or the fibre of the universe which prolonged events into one another, or brought about the connection of portions of space, has broken.”⁹⁷

While the crisis of each form presents a different failure, both entail a similar symptom: “the sensory-motor action or situation has been replaced by the stroll, the voyage and the continual return journey.”⁹⁸ The crisis exhibited in both the large and small forms of the action-image results in actors who, instead of responding to the world, can now only wander through the world as

⁹³ Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2003), 86.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁹⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 71.

⁹⁶ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 207.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 208.

spectators and voyeurs, whether they journey around the world or stroll through a single suburb. Since the world, or at least the world *qua* set of relations that involve a particular actor, was previously related reciprocally with the actor's actions, Deleuze asserts that in the new picture, where the sensory-motor linkage has failed, it is clichés that hold together the ensemble of relations into which the actor fits: "we ask ourselves what maintains a set [*ensemble*] in this world without totality or linkage. The answer is simple: what forms the set are *clichés*, and nothing else. Nothing but clichés, clichés everywhere." These clichés are not merely constitutive of the situations to which we respond, that is, it is not just that the world has become clichéd; rather, we also internalise these clichés. Clichés come to constitute our internal life "so that everyone possesses only psychic clichés by which he thinks and feels, is thought and is felt, being himself a cliché among the others in the world which surrounds him."⁹⁹ This picture of a world filled with proliferating clichés amounts to the presentation of a world filled with "events that hardly concern those they happen to."¹⁰⁰

In light of this, our definition of wounds can go beyond the provisional definition offered in the introduction. Clearly, a wound in the Deleuzian sense is not the standard sense of an injury inflicted on, or suffered by, an individual, even though injuries are sometimes wounds. Wounds are those occurrences in a life that rupture or break apart the sensory-motor schema in such a way that an individual loses faith in the world. Paradoxically, Deleuze sees this loss of faith as potentially enabling to the extent that it disrupts the belief in an individual's separateness from the world thus making it impossible to understand oneself as a fulcrum through which events and situations are disclosed and modified. If such a belief is disrupted, Deleuze argues, the individual expresses more fully her embeddedness in her milieu and thus participates more actively in its becoming. Williams emphasises the rarity and value of wounds: "[a] wound is then a rare event and a form of destiny, rather than the many injuries that assail a life without determining it (including deadly ones)."¹⁰¹ A wound is rare precisely because it is not synonymous with an injury. While not all wounds are injuries and not all injuries that befall an individual are wounds, poet Joë Bousquet is an example of the overlap between wounds and injuries that Deleuze repeatedly celebrates. A wound is valuable precisely because of what it discloses, because of the potential it offers for enhancing the individual's ability to participate in the world. Crucially, it is not the individual herself who is empowered. The enhancement is an increase in the degree to which her embeddedness in the world fosters new connections and composes more potent, productive modes of life. Her participation in the world is an expression of the forging of new connections and new relations; to participate in the formulation of new problems that, when solved, enable the individual to live a life that, as Ronald

⁹⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 208--209.

¹⁰⁰ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 3.

¹⁰¹ Durie, "Immanence and Difference," 12.

Bogue has it, constitutes “a mode of existence that is inseparable from the becoming of the cosmos.”¹⁰²

Perhaps this may not sound like a particularly attractive scenario; after all, Deleuze’s portrait of the individual does not portray her as deliberative and self-determining. But then, Deleuze’s ethics are critical of the moral systems which would support belief in such a subject. And, by the same token, Deleuze’s ontology rejects the view of the individual as the sort of autonomous, voluntaristic subject capable of choice or self-determination. Empowerment, as Deleuze envisions it, is concerned with the transformation of the actual capacities of an individual relative to the milieu she inhabits. Deleuze’s ethics is grounded in an ontology which conceives an individual as only artificially distinct from her milieu such that her empowerment lies not in having more power to do as she pleases but in the ability to convert her understanding of the world so as to engage productively with the strange and uncertain problems posed to her by her environment. Or, as D.N. Rodowick puts it, “[i]n ethical expression, we evaluate our current mode of existence, seeking to expand, change, or abandon it in the effort to achieve another way of living and another form of community.”¹⁰³ The enhancement of power is not a matter of an individual possessing more power. For Deleuze, power is not that which one might possess. Instead, it is the modification of an individual’s engagement with the world that follows from a renewal of the individual’s understanding of the world. By evaluating differently her place in the world, an individual may be able to participate in more productive relationships. This is why Deleuze says that “[t]rue freedom lies in a power to decide, to constitute problems themselves”;¹⁰⁴ producing new solutions to the same old problems does not empower us. The enhancement of our power is a function of participating more actively in the determination of problems; after all, it is the way that problems are formulated that determines the nature of the response, the kind of life we live.

Conclusion.

This chapter offers a broad framework around which this thesis will be built. The brief exposition of Deleuze’s Spinozism offered here is explored in greater depth in chapter two as the first step in a broader engagement with the transformations in Deleuze’s ontology relevant to understanding his creative combination of ontology and ethics. For Deleuze, ethics is the correlate of ontology; every ontological problem corresponds to an ethical problem and every ethical

¹⁰² Bogue, “To Choose to Choose,” 123.

¹⁰³ D.N. Rodowick, “The World, Time,” *Afterimages of Gilles Deleuze’s Film Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 97--98.

¹⁰⁴ Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 15.

problem corresponds an ontological problem. On the one hand, ontology is concerned with living beings from the point of view of their constitution and duration, their relations and the powers expressed in those relations. And, on the other hand, ethics is the problem of relational powers, of constitution and duration, from the point of view of the being who lives her life at the nexus of these relations. The interconnectedness of these domains—ontology and ethics—is what Deleuze calls *ethology*.

Deleuze's ontology centres on the dynamic conception of a heterogeneous whole, individuals whose lives express the constitution of the whole, and the reciprocity between the two. Crucially, the concept that Deleuze develops of this reciprocity resists the subordination of individuals to the identity of the whole. Ultimately, he achieves this by arguing that the relationships between individuals, or, more correctly, the degrees of power expressed in those relationships, simultaneously determine and are determined by the constitution of the whole. In chapter two I show how Deleuze's reading of Spinoza puts the construction and expression of sense in affective encounters at the heart of this reciprocity. Because this involves the power characteristic of individuals and centres on their affective entanglement with each other, this discussion is as concerned with ethics as it is with ontology. I return to the ethical dimension of this discussion in the conclusion and explore the role of wounds in facilitating the process of counter-actualisation and the subsequent renewal of problems. Even though we will set this discussion aside whilst we explore the development and transformation of Deleuze's ontology, it is important not to forget that, since Deleuze's ontology is an ontology of sense, it is inseparable from its correspondence with ethics in the formulation of an *ethological* project.

CHAPTER TWO

On Deleuze's Spinozism: Expression and Sense-Making in the Logic of Holism.

Deleuze's reading of Spinoza defends two themes that are crucial to the ethology that he develops throughout his career. First, he constructs a system in which the whole and the individuals who are its parts are generated simultaneously. In the terms of Spinoza's *Ethics*, the expressive event in which substance is constituted as unique and absolutely infinite is the same event through which the modes are produced. The second theme Deleuze develops in his interpretation of Spinoza follows from the logic of this simultaneity: the process which guarantees that the modes are produced in the same event as substance is constituted requires that substance be constituted through expressions that *make sense*. That is, substance and modes relate through complex dynamics wherein sense is manufactured, expressed and apprehended. Substance is produced through the expression of sense. And, by the same token, a modal universe is produced on condition that these sensible expressions are expressed to a mind which comprehends them.¹⁰⁵ In short, the initial formulation of Deleuze's ontology that we find in his reading of Spinoza anticipates persistent ethological themes: individuals and the whole to which they belong are produced simultaneously and reciprocally but only insofar as the relationship between the two turns on the production and expression of sense. To work through these themes we must begin, however, with a problem that is present in Deleuze's earliest publications: *immanence*.

Immanence.

The problem of immanence runs throughout Deleuze's early work on Hume, Nietzsche and Bergson, and he repeatedly hints at how a plane of immanence will work; however, it is in *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* that Deleuze constructs an operating plane of immanence for the first time. Right up until his last book, *What is Philosophy?*, a collaboration with Félix Guattari, Deleuze describes immanence as a generative operation that refers to no preceding identity. This operation generates individuals as "intensive features" of this field.¹⁰⁶ *What is Philosophy?* was

¹⁰⁵ Durie, "Immanence and Difference," 176. To the best of my knowledge, Durie's article is almost unique. The only other English-language works that discuss the ontological significance of Deleuze's linguistic interpretation of expression is Audrey Wasser, 2007 and Thomas Nail, 2008 and they too inform parts of the reading of Deleuze's Spinozism offered in this chapter.

¹⁰⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill (London: Verso, 1994), 39.

published in 1991, nearly four decades after Deleuze first articulated the problem of immanence in his book on Hume, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, so, of course, its arguments cannot simply be read backwards into an interpretation of this problem. However, Deleuze's reading of Spinoza is a crucial moment in the passage between the two; as he says in *What is Philosophy?*, "Spinoza was the philosopher who knew full well that immanence was only immanent to itself and therefore that it was a plane traversed by movements of the infinite."¹⁰⁷

There are four features of Deleuze's Spinozism that are fundamental to his conception of immanence: substance is defined as a heterogeneous field whose constitution must itself be explained; individual beings are described as "intrinsic modalities" of being;¹⁰⁸ attribution is a dual process which constitutes the plane of immanence and simultaneously expresses the modalities of being which are actualised in individual beings; and, finally, finite beings are expressions of the infinite under determinate relations.

Deleuze's reading of Spinoza owes a great deal to scholasticism insofar as he reads Spinoza as intervening in a long-running theological debate concerning the nature of God as a causal agent. For the scholastics, there were three conceptions of how God's being a cause could take place: through immanent, emanative and transitive causation. Emanative and transitive causes are not entirely dissimilar insofar as both entail understanding the causal agent as external to its effects. Transitive or efficient causation is a strictly mechanistic view of causation in which the powers proper to a cause are transferred to its effects, even if only partially, in order that the effect be realised. In the case of emanative causation, however, the agent remains within itself; that is, its powers remain in itself such that the agent's effects *emanate* from their cause as an overflowing of its abundance. Crucial to the distinction between emanative and transitive causes is the origin of laws by which God's creation proceeds. In a discussion of the place of concepts of causation in Spinoza, Pierre Macherey argues that a transitive cause produces "an effect externally in accordance with an extrinsic law."¹⁰⁹ This claim, however, implies limitations on God insofar as God becomes subject to laws which are not his own, or do not follow from his nature. While this may seem a peculiar claim to make about the theistic god, it is precisely the claim made by Christian theologians who, attached to a scriptural account of creation, needed to posit the world as produced by, but *external* to, a god that functions as an agent exploiting the means or agency of other elements in order to fabricate artefacts which are themselves only the constituent parts of a larger

¹⁰⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 48

¹⁰⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 36.

¹⁰⁹ Pierre Macherey, "From Action to Production of Effects, Observations on the Ethical Significance of *Ethics* I," in *God & Nature: Spinoza's Metaphysics*, ed. Yirmiyahu Yovel (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), 165.

chain of effects and “are thus removed to an infinite degree from that which constitutes their proper nature.”¹¹⁰

With respect to immanence, Deleuze’s fundamental claim is that the expressions of the powers of a causal agent cannot be conceived distinctly from the agent’s possession of those powers.¹¹¹ Deleuze finds an account of this in Spinoza’s ontology insofar as Spinoza identifies the cause of the world with the world caused. That is, for Spinoza, the being of God, or the being of the cause, is said in the same sense as the being of the caused. This complicates emanative causation precisely because the cause is no longer separate from and unaffected by the beings it causes. Rather, determined beings are in their cause or their cause is in them, such that the causal process is complicated by the beings that are its effects. It is in this sense that Deleuze describes a relationship of reciprocal determination between actual beings and their power. The immanent cause’s causing things to exist follows from its nature and in producing effects it expresses its own power. The particularity of immanent causation is that an effect remains in its cause. Macherey argues that Spinoza’s demonstration of EIP18, the proposition that God is the immanent cause of all things, operates in terms of these descriptions of emanative, transitive, and immanent causes.¹¹² Thus, on Deleuze’s reading, when Spinoza describes his conception of a God in whom all things exist and, consequently, must be conceived, he describes a universe where each thing explicates God yet, simultaneously, God “complicates” all things, that is, “comprehends them in itself.”¹¹³ Thus, God, encompassing all things and operating only in order to express or perfect its own nature, is the cause of all things. However, because all things are in God both conceptually and actually, that is, as possibilities and as effects, God is an immanent cause.

Univocity.

As in the causal case, there are generally three conceptions of how the relations between God and the world would work: univocally, equivocally and analogously. These relations describe the predicative relationship between Being and beings. This problem of predication concerns the sense in which we say that a thing lives its being a thing; that is, how we understand a being insofar as it is a being. In the case of univocity, the sense in which Being is predicated of a being is the

¹¹⁰ Macherey, “Action to Production of Effects,” 163--164.

¹¹¹ I will argue in this chapter that, in his reading of Spinoza, Deleuze argues that no being possesses power which is not expressed. For God, this power is an active “potentia identical to his essence,” whereas modes, produced necessarily as expressions of the affections, are identical to a power of being affected (*potestas*) which corresponds to God’s *potentia*. Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 97--98.

¹¹² Macherey, “Action to Production of Effects,” 164

¹¹³ Deleuze “Sur Spinoza” 25/11/1980.

same for all beings. This is wholly amenable to Spinoza's conception of a God who causes the world immanently given that, as Daniel Smith points out, "God [will thus be] cause of all things in the same sense that he is cause of himself."¹¹⁴ At EIP11, Spinoza employs a form of the ontological argument for the existence of God to argue that God's existence follows necessarily from his essence, and then, at EIP16, Spinoza argues that infinitely many modes are produced actually and necessarily in accordance with the essence of God. That is, the existence of both God and the infinite diversity of beings that populate the actual world follow necessarily from the essence of God. In this case, univocity is the name for the fact that God and beings follow from the essence of God *in the same sense*.

Deleuze argues that there is an implicit tradition concerned with the problem of univocity running through Duns Scotus, Spinoza, Nietzsche and Bergson, amongst others, and in this tradition he finds a desire to "conceive of several formally distinct senses [of modes of being] which none the less refer to being as if to a single designated entity, ontologically one."¹¹⁵ Deleuze argues that

being, ... insofar as it expresses itself, is said in turn in a single and same sense of all [beings]. In the ontological proposition, not only is that which is designated ontologically the same for qualitatively distinct senses, but also the sense is ontologically the same for individuating modes, for numerically distinct designators or expressors: [univocity] involves a circulation of this kind.¹¹⁶

Deleuze retains the concept of an essence since it is a key concept for Spinoza; however, he redefines it so that an essence is no longer the defining quality of Being, where Being would have a single and same sense, but locates it in the sense in which a being, an individuating difference or intrinsic modality, is said to relate to Being. That is, all the modalities which express Being are different to each other but they express Being, Being is said *of* them, in the same way. This is why Deleuze argues that the "essence of univocal being is to include individuating differences, while these differences do not have the same essence and do not change the essence of being."¹¹⁷ Deleuze establishes univocity as the ground to work through an ontology of difference in itself rather than an ontology of difference as merely the differentiation of the similar. The driving concern of Deleuze's ontology is, therefore, to articulate the process of individuation or production of individuals as events which express differentiation within univocal being.

¹¹⁴ Daniel W. Smith, "The Doctrine of Univocity: Deleuze's Ontology of Immanence," in *Essays on Deleuze*, ed. Daniel W. Smith (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 32.

¹¹⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 35.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 36

This claim, that actual individuals express differentiations *within* univocal being, is offered quite literally when Deleuze argues that individual modes are the actual side of “intrinsic modalities of being, passing from one ‘individual’ to another, circulating and communicating underneath matters and forms.”¹¹⁸ These intrinsic modalities are not actual modes, they are substantive events that occur within the attributes which characterise actual, finite modes. We must note that *Being* here does not refer to *a* being, *a* one, who would contain all beings and whose unity would transcend the plurality of modes. Rather, in anticipation of arguments later in this chapter, we might describe Being as an existential plane; the univocity of this plane consists in the fact that all beings, even the most diverse, populate or belong to it. In this sense, Deleuze argues that

[there] is a single ‘voice’ of Being which includes all its modes, including the most diverse, the most varied, the most differentiated. Being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said, but that of which it is said differs: it is said of difference itself.¹¹⁹

For Deleuze, this is why “univocal Being belongs only to difference.”¹²⁰ The equality or *univocity* of being resides in difference as a transcendental principle which inhabits individuating factors and is actualised in hierarchically organised modes which express this being: “[the] words ‘everything is equal’ . . . resound joyfully, on condition that they are said *of* that which is not equal in this equal, univocal Being.”¹²¹ What this means is that, even though the doctrine of univocity denotes a strict equality of being at the level of its being an infinitive—that is, the verbal form *to be* is the same for all beings—the degrees of power which characterise actual beings are themselves *unequal*. Insofar as finite modes are identical to a *potestas*—that is, what a body is actually capable of¹²²—which follows necessarily from the essence of God, finite modes, actual beings, are characterised, by a degree of power. These degrees of power are quantitative and thus univocal Being still admits of a certain hierarchy and method of distribution.¹²³ This hierarchy makes it possible to “conceive [of] a reconciliation between analogy and univocity”,¹²⁴ the analogous in being concerns the intrinsic modes or individuating factors. The modalities intrinsic to univocal Being are, of course, different; they “have nothing ‘really’ in common.”¹²⁵ In other words, the modes characterised by degrees of power contained within the attributes are distinct; by definition they are the differentiation of power. However, these distinct modes still interact with each other

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 38

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 36.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 66.

¹²¹ Ibid., 37.

¹²² Simon Duffy, *The Logic of Expression: Quality, Quantity, and Intensity in Spinoza, Hegel, and Deleuze* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006), 6.

¹²³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 36.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 37.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 37--38.

and, so, the sense of analogy that Deleuze claims is reconciled with univocal being is precisely the relationality of intrinsic modalities insofar as they are quantitatively diverse. Thus, Deleuze claims, even where being is called equal, or univocal, in relation to itself it is “unequal in relation to the modalities which reside within it.”¹²⁶ On the face of it, then, it would seem that, even though difference is a generative principle for being (that is, being can only be expressed univocally if it is said of that which differs), the modalities of being, as intrinsically different, can only relate by virtue of being analogous to one another. However, in order to avoid “distorting the two theses,”¹²⁷ univocity and analogy, and confusing *generic* difference with *specific* difference, Deleuze insists we understand how ontological difference, is “presupposed by the forms, matters and extensive parts”¹²⁸ of Being in its empirical expressions:

We must show not only how individuating difference differs in kind from specific difference, but primarily and above all how individuation *precedes* matter and form, species and parts, and every other element of the constituted individual.¹²⁹

And so, the problem of the intrinsic modalities of Being engages with different kinds of difference: on the one hand, it deals with *generic* or *individuating difference* which precedes matter and form and constitutes individual modes; on the other hand it deals with *specific difference* which differentiates the modes. Confronting this problem is one of Deleuze’s primary tasks in his reading of Spinoza. Consequently, it is to the differential relations between the attributes, and the constitution of substance through differentiation, that we must now turn.¹³⁰

Attribution, Distinction & the Constitution of Substance.

Deleuze argues that the differentiation of the attributes constitutes substance and that the expressive operations by which substance is constituted by the attributes forms one half of a reciprocally determining relationship between an individual and its environment. This argument that

¹²⁶ Ibid., 37.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 38.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 38.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 38.

¹³⁰ Given that this is a limited discussion of Deleuze’s reading of Spinoza, I have necessarily omitted a significant aspect of Deleuze’s conception of difference, namely, his interest in the history of the differential calculus. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze discusses at length the differential relation, dy/dx . Deleuze is interested in this operation because it is one where a relationship subsists when its terms vanish. In his elaboration of the mathematics informing Deleuze’s position, Simon Duffy argues that Deleuze is interested in the differential relation because in the relationship dy/dx the terms y and x can have values that are equal to zero; however, the differential relationship, dy/dx , sustains its terms precisely because of the relationship that subsists between them. As Duffy notes, the differential logic of the infinitesimal calculus is vital to Deleuze’s philosophy of difference; indeed, as Deleuze develops his philosophy of relational individuals he is drawing on this sense of differential relations that are positive insofar as they determine and sustain their terms. See Duffy, 2004 and 2006 as well as Aden Evans, 2000 and Daniel Smith 2007.

the attributes constitute substance is fundamental to Deleuze's reading of Spinoza because it enables Deleuze to describe substance as constituted by degrees of differentiation. In this section, I will consider the way that qualitative distinctions amongst the attributes account for the constitution of substance. Following this, I will set out to demonstrate how, for Deleuze, a modification of substance is, *in fact*, an actualisation of the degree to which substance is constituted.

In his final essay, "Immanence: A Life," Deleuze argues that, for Spinoza, "immanence is not immanence *to* substance; rather, substance and modes are in immanence".¹³¹ His point is that nothing, neither substance nor mode, transcends the plane of immanence in which all beings express powers of becoming. Twenty seven years earlier, in *Expression in Philosophy: Spinoza*, Deleuze argues that "[i]mmanence is revealed as expressive, and expression as immanent, in a system of logical relations within which the two notions are correlative."¹³² This correlation between expression and immanence raises a problem for Deleuze's reading of Spinoza: how is a system of expressions constitutive of a plane of immanence? Deleuze's response is that the differentiation of the attributes constitutes substance and that the degrees to which the attributes are differentiated are themselves expressible as degrees of power which correspond to and characterise modal existences. The essence—the degree of power—of an actually existing being is the expression of a degree of an attribute's participation in the constitution of a whole. Substance and modes are *in* immanence insofar as each is determined wholly by the operations of the attributes. For Deleuze, the attributes are "verbs rather than adjectives."¹³³ That is, the attributive operations that determine substance and modes can only be characterised by what they constitute, not what they are: "*it is not the attribute that exists through itself, but that to which the essence of each attribute relates, in such a way that existence necessarily follows from the essence thus constituted.*"¹³⁴ The essence constituted by an attribution is the essence of substance and the essence contained in an attribute is the determination of an actual mode, and, in this sense, the attributes *are* the operations of immanence.

Robin Durie argues that Deleuze's reading of Spinoza turns on an interpretation of substance "as a complex whole, or aggregate" which is constituted by really distinct parts.¹³⁵ Spinoza appears to deny this when he argues that "no substance ... insofar as it is a substance, is divisible";¹³⁶ indeed, Spinoza states that to think of substance as divisible would require that substance be finite. This, of

¹³¹ Gilles Deleuze, "Immanence: A Life," in *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Urzone, 2001), 26.

¹³² Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 175.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹³⁵ Durie, "Immanence and Difference," 166.

¹³⁶ EIP13C

course, is an obvious contradiction of the very definition of a substance.¹³⁷ However, this only seems contradictory because of the irreconcilability of a concept of a One which has no parts and a concept of a One with parts. In this case, the problem of the One and the many appears intractably contradictory precisely because it takes two essentially different things—a concept of the One in its heterogeneous sense and a concept of the One in its homogeneous sense—and obsesses over the irreconcilability of the two. In other words, the problem of the one and the many begins from static concepts and asks after their relationship as though they are already established. As Durie argues, the problem arises from assuming “the principle of the identity of substance” and then trying to derivatively understand the diversity of this very identity. Instead, Durie urges, the reader must begin from the logic of this diversity and then understand how the identity and unity of substance is generated.¹³⁸ This is why Deleuze claims that Spinoza sets out from infinity; Spinoza, Deleuze argues, does not begin with a concept of God which he is obliged to explicate in terms of its relationship to the many. Rather, he sets out from an “innocent” concept of an absolute infinity; that is, “a novel conceptual frame [which will] bring out the power and the actuality of positive infinity.”¹³⁹ This absolute infinity is the conception of God that Spinoza articulates at EID6, “By God, I understand a being absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of which each expresses an eternal and infinite essence.”

Spinoza’s argument for the existence of God rests on defending the coherence of predicating an infinity of attributes of a single substance. Indeed, his argument for the absurdity of inferring a substance for each distinct attribute is prefaced by definition four where he sets up the theory of numerical and real distinctions. The method of distinguishing two or more things we conceive to be distinct can, Spinoza claims, operate either by a difference in the attributes of substance or by a difference in the affections of substance.¹⁴⁰ In other words, distinction must operate in one of two ways; it can either be carried out through an attempt to distinguish substances or it can be a distinction between the modes of that substance.¹⁴¹ For Spinoza it is simply absurd to posit a distinction between substances because to do so would be to ask after two or more absolutely infinite beings. The former method—distinction between substances—must, by D3, D4 and D6, concern itself with the distinction between attributes as well as the understanding of how such a distinction expresses “an eternal and infinite essence” of substance. Conversely, distinction between modes, the latter method, must concern itself with the sense in which an attribute constitutes a modification of substance.

¹³⁷ EIP13CS

¹³⁸ Durie, “Immanence and Difference,” 166.

¹³⁹ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 28.

¹⁴⁰ EIP4

¹⁴¹ EIP4D

Deleuze's interest in Spinoza's argument for the necessity of distinguishing substances through their attributes revives the discussion of immanent causation—that Deleuze revives this discussion is of the utmost importance to the broader discussion of his ethology and the reciprocity between finite beings and the whole of which they are a part. Because immanent causation is a process whereby a cause remains in itself even as it is expressed in its constitution and its effects remain internal to it, it is through the theory of distinctions that Deleuze interprets and appropriates Spinoza's claim that substance "is the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things."¹⁴² Deleuze argues that it is in the scholium to EIP8 that Spinoza develops a positive demonstration of the argument for distinguishing substances by their attributes through highlighting the absurdity of the inverse proposition that substances could be accounted for through transitive or "external" causality.¹⁴³ This demonstration consists of three parts which establish that, because it is a contradiction of the very concept of substance to suppose that an absolutely infinite being is subject to causal processes which refer to finite things, and that, because "[n]umerical distinction requires an external cause to which it may be referred,"¹⁴⁴ *then numerical distinction cannot operate on or within a substance*. In other words, given the nature of numerical distinction, it is inapplicable to substance precisely because of substance's infinity; consequently, numerical distinction is applicable only to finite modes that involve the same attribute.¹⁴⁵ We will recall that, for Spinoza, a mode is precisely that finite being which is in and conceived through another;¹⁴⁶ therefore, the modes distinguished numerically *must* involve the same attribute, because the modes are, by their nature, numerical or quantitative. As Deleuze puts it, "numerical distinction can ... only [ever distinguish] modes that involve the same attribute. For number expresses in its own way the character of existing modes: the composite nature of their parts, their limitation by other things of the same nature, their determination from outside themselves."¹⁴⁷

For Deleuze, Spinoza's argument must be understood in the context of 17th Century metaphysics, particularly against René Descartes, of whose argument that modes and attributes are identical¹⁴⁸ Spinoza is especially critical. However, Deleuze retains what Durie calls a "Cartesian clue" insofar as he imports into his Spinozism a Cartesian notion of attributes as qualities: "Any given attribute is a quality, in that it qualifies a substance as this or that, but also a mode in that it

¹⁴² EIP18

¹⁴³ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 32.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁴⁶ EID5

¹⁴⁷ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 33.

¹⁴⁸ Descartes states that what we understand by the name "*modes* [is] exactly the same thing as we understand elsewhere by *attributes* or *qualities*." Rene Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, trans. Valentine Rodger Miller and Reese P. Miller (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing, 1983), 24--25.

diversifies it.”¹⁴⁹ This means that Deleuze is able to distinguish the attributes qualitatively, even as what they constitute remains numerically indistinct.¹⁵⁰ From this, Deleuze sets about interpreting Spinoza in terms of an expressionistic logic which allows the introduction of qualitative, *real* distinction into God while maintaining that substance is indeed numerically one.

This problem of attributive distinction emerges from EIP9 and EIP10 where Spinoza argues that substance has an infinity of attributes. The qualitative, or formal, distinctions between the attributes are, Deleuze claims, real yet exclude any numerical division from the concept of substance.¹⁵¹ The distinction between the attributes concerns the *nature* of the attributes such that together they constitute a substance that is qualitatively heterogeneous even though the constituted substance is quantitatively unique. Deleuze thus posits the attributes as expressions of qualitative degrees of substance—or essences—thus introducing real distinction into substance while retaining a rigorous sense of substance’s unary nature. From this point of view, Durie argues, “we can begin to see the significance of Deleuze’s claim that attributes are the *dynamic* or *genetic* elements of substance”.¹⁵² Deleuze argues that the existence of the essence of substance follows from the attributes insofar as it is expression in the attributes that gives existence to the essences. At EIP11, Spinoza adapts the classical ontological argument for God’s existence to argue that the existence of substance follows necessarily from its essence.¹⁵³ Thus, to the extent that attribution expresses essence and essence has no existence outside of its expressions,¹⁵⁴ the dynamism here flows from the attributes *to* essence. And, to the extent that the existence of substance follows necessarily from its essence, the dynamism then flows from essence to substance.¹⁵⁵ This is how Deleuze justifies the argument that Spinoza introduces real distinction into substance; as long as the attributes are really distinct then the constitutive elements of the essence of substance which they express will also be distinct. However, distinct though they are, the essences are never expressed *of* the attributes; the essences are always expressed as essences *of* substance.¹⁵⁶ In other words, the existence the essences have in their expression in the attributes is never enough to give substantial content—in its general sense—to the essences. This content fills the essences only because they are said *of*

¹⁴⁹ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 29.

¹⁵⁰ Durie, “Immanence and Difference,” 167.

¹⁵¹ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 38.

¹⁵² Durie, “Immanence and Difference,” 172.

¹⁵³ In Spinoza’s formulation of the ontological argument, the existence of substance necessarily follows from its essence and so we can say that substance acquires existence only in its essences being constituted by the attributes. It is this process that enables Deleuze to claim that substance, by being rendered as a qualitative multiplicity—a multiplicity of essences—by the attributes, exists. The attributes in this case are not static terms in need of a relation to substance but are, in fact, “dynamic and active forms” that generate substance by actively attributing essence to it. Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 45.

¹⁵⁴ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 43.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

substance—in its specific sense—and its nature *as* multiplicity.¹⁵⁷ Thus “the relationship from attribute *to* essence *to* substance” consists of a recursive dynamism that generates its own terms.¹⁵⁸

In this context, we can see a crucial element of how Deleuze interprets Spinoza’s argument that there is only one substance. Substance consists of parts—that is, it is *heterogeneous*—from the point of view of the attributes. However, from the point of view of the constituted substance, we cannot speak meaningfully of parts. This is because the distinctions amongst the attributes are *qualitative* distinctions and qualitative distinctions are never numerical.¹⁵⁹ Consequently, substance cannot be considered to consist of enumerable parts and is, in the most precise sense, singular. In other words, substance as multiplicity—substance *qua* substance—is distinct from its essence only insofar as there are qualitative distinctions amongst the essence of substance—as that “which is expressed”¹⁶⁰—that are absent in substance. At the same time, substance quite literally has no existence external to its expression *through* the essences. It is the attributes that constitute this difference between essence and substance precisely through their rendering the essences as real, existing qualities. And, because substance achieves existence through the expressive differentiation of its essence, it is through differentiation that substance exists and thus exists as cause of itself—as an immanent cause—because it is rendered as difference in itself.¹⁶¹ So, Deleuze claims that it is through the qualitative differentiation of essences—the expression of distinct essences relative to each other—under the formally determinate relation of expression that substance is constituted as existing. From here he must demonstrate how this determinate differential relation also generates modes.

Attribution and the Production of the Modes.

When he fleshes out his interpretation of why the constitution of substance is simultaneously the production of the modal universe, Deleuze sets out an argument that will be crucial to his entire project. The existence of the actual universe follows from the expression of the constitution of substance as a series of sensible propositions. That is, to the extent that substance is constituted

¹⁵⁷ Durie, “Immanence and Difference,” 172

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹⁵⁹ We will turn to the question of qualitative and quantitative distinctions when we discuss the modes as degrees of power in a later section. The issue, essentially, is that the distinction amongst the attributes, insofar as they constitute substance, are distinct from each other qualitatively. An attribute, insofar as it is a part of the constitution of substance relative to the other attributes, can be described *extensively*; that is, we can talk about *the extent to which a particular attribute participates in the constitution of substance*. The sense in which we can predicate *extensity* of a particular attribute is the intensive degree, the degree of power, that informs the numerical distinctions that characterise existing modes.

¹⁶⁰ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 44.

¹⁶¹ Durie, “Immanence and Difference,” 172.

through the expression of propositions—the attribution of essence to substance—the modal universe is the consequence of these propositions *making sense*. For Deleuze, even when they are predicated of different beings, “infinite beings and finite beings, substance and modes, God and creatures,” the attributes retain their essential nature.¹⁶² As such, a central element of his reading of Spinoza is the latter’s argument that God causes the modal world at the same time and in the same sense as he is cause of himself. At EIP25, Spinoza argues that, because the modes are the affections or modifications of substance, “God must be called the cause of all things in the same sense in which he is called the cause of himself.”¹⁶³ In other words, “[p]articlar things are nothing but affections of God’s attributes *or* modes by which God’s attributes are expressed in a certain and determinate way.”¹⁶⁴ This is an argument that Deleuze reads as describing a relationship of equivalence between God’s self-causation and God’s production of the modal universe.¹⁶⁵ For Deleuze, the activity of the attributes—attribute as *attribution*—is crucial to the simultaneity of God’s self-causation and immanent causation of modes.

To unpack the reasoning behind Deleuze’s interpretation of this relationship between God’s self-causation and the production of a modal universe, we need to understand what it means for an essence, in its expression, to be referred *to* substance. That is, we must turn to why the method of the attribution *of* essence *to* substance determines the production of modes. When Deleuze describes expression and outlines the relationship between substance, attributes and essences, he presents the beginnings of the linguistic sense of expression that he will foreground for thinking through the production of modes. In the articulation of this linguistic sense Deleuze makes the following, pivotal, claim:

[o]ne distinguishes in an expression ... what it expresses and what it designates. What is expressed is, so to speak, a sense that has no existence outside the expression; it must thus be referred to an understanding that grasps it objectively, that is, ideally. But it is predicated of the thing and not of the expression itself; understanding relates it to the object designated, as the essence of that object.¹⁶⁶

By emphasising the correspondence between an essence and the sense of an expression, this argument reiterates Deleuze’s claim that the essence of a substance has no existence outside of the attribute which expresses it. At the same time, as Durie puts it, for an expression to “‘function,’ that

¹⁶² Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 49.

¹⁶³ EIP25S

¹⁶⁴ EIP25C

¹⁶⁵ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 100--101.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

is, for it to have sense,¹⁶⁷ its referral of essence to substance must be disclosed to an understanding that comprehends the expression. Employing the conclusion of the ontological argument—that whatever is in God’s power necessarily exists—and drawing on EIP16—that “from the necessity of the divine nature there must follow infinitely many things in infinitely many modes, (i.e., everything which can fall under an infinite intellect)” —Spinoza argues that “In God there is necessarily an idea, both of his essence and of everything which necessarily follows from his essence.”¹⁶⁸ Deleuze takes this to mean that “[i]nfinite understanding is ... the form of the idea that God necessarily has of himself or of his own essence.”¹⁶⁹ In other words, there is necessarily within God a power for the deduction of properties of his essence and it is this that we call understanding. This is why, when essence is expressed as the essence of substance, it is expressed *to* substance. Spinoza defends this proposition by recourse to two earlier propositions: the aforementioned EIP16, and EIIP1, “Thought is an attribute of God, *or* God is a thinking thing.” So, in the scholium to EIIP3, Spinoza argues that God’s production of the world corresponds necessarily with his self-understanding: “God acts with the same necessity by which he understands himself, that is, just as it follows from the necessity of the divine nature ... that God understands himself, with the same necessity it also follows that God does infinitely many things in infinitely many modes.” This means that, as God’s power is expressed through an infinity of attributes, God’s power is expressed as an extended thing and as a thinking thing. As a result, because the attributes are infinite in their own kind, God’s power of extension is infinite, as is his power of thinking.¹⁷⁰

This is to say that the production of the modal universe follows from the expression of essence as a sensible proposition. This is why Deleuze says that if the sense of the expression is to function it can do so only by being referred to an understanding which apprehends it as essence. It follows that the dynamic of substance, attribute and essence is double; on the one hand, attributes express essences but express them as essences of substance and in so doing attribute to substance the heterogeneous essence which constitutes its existence. On the other hand, this process of the attribution of essence can only function by virtue of an understanding which grasps the essence as referred to its object: *substance*. The question, then, is how does this double expressivity not merely account for the expression of essence but also the production of a modal universe? At this point

¹⁶⁷ Durie, “Immanence and Difference,” 176

¹⁶⁸ EIIP3

¹⁶⁹ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 100.

¹⁷⁰ This is not a trivial point; a crucial element of Spinoza’s argument that a single substance necessarily possesses an infinity of attributes is his argument that each attribute is infinite in its own kind—e.g., the attribute of thought is infinite insofar as it constitutes a power of thinking—where substance, however, is absolutely infinite insofar as it possesses all attributes.

Deleuze makes, as Durie puts it, “the most audacious wager in his attempt to secure an immanent ontology of univocity from Spinoza’s text”¹⁷¹ insofar as he reads expression in linguistic terms:

Attributes are univocal or common forms, predicated, in the same form, of creatures and creator, products and producer, formally constituting the essence of one, formally containing the essence of the others. The principle of necessary production thus reflects a double univocity. A univocity of cause: God is cause of all things *in the same sense* as he is cause of himself. A univocity of attributes: God produces through and in the same attributes that constitute his essence.¹⁷²

For Deleuze, the univocity of the attributes means that there is a doubleness implicit in attribution. Deleuze claims that Spinoza is “too careful a grammarian to allow us to miss the linguistic origins of ‘expression’”¹⁷³ and it is precisely this linguistic element of expression which Deleuze employs to support his argument that attribution is double. The use Deleuze makes of linguistics here is elaborated in an early, crucial series from *The Logic of Sense*, “Third Series of the Proposition”:

On the one hand, [sense] does not exist outside of the proposition which expresses it; what is expressed does not exist outside its expression. This is why we cannot say that sense exists, but rather that it inheres or subsists. On the other hand, it does not merge at all with the proposition, for it has an objectivity [*objectité*] which is quite distinct. What is expressed has no resemblance whatsoever to the expression. Sense is indeed attributed, but it is not at all the attribute of the proposition, it is rather the attribute of the thing or state of affairs.¹⁷⁴

Deleuze is concerned with the relationship between an attribute (the proposition or expression), essence (sense) and substance (the state of affairs, or, the object of the proposition). His argument is that a proposition expresses a particular sense without the latter ever collapsing into the former. In other words, the proposition expresses a sense even though the sense never simply collapses into its expression and even though the sense does not exist outside of this expression. This is what Deleuze means when he says that sense “subsists” in its expression. At the same time, by referring to a particular object, the sense that is expressed by the proposition is always said *of* an object that is not the proposition. And, while sense never collapses into its expression, it never collapses into its object either. Thus sense is expressed *by* one thing (the proposition) and expressed *of* another (the object) yet it is never reducible to either.

¹⁷¹ Durie, “Immanence and Difference,” 177.

¹⁷² Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 102--103.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹⁷⁴ Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 21. Translation modified.

What is striking about this dynamic is the fact that *the proposition cannot state its own sense*. That is, the proposition can express the sense of the object but it cannot simultaneously state its own sense, the sense in which it is an expression of the sense of a designated object. However, as Durie observes, this further sense—the sense of the expression which expresses the sense of the object—can itself become a further object for a subsequent proposition.¹⁷⁵ In other words, the initial proposition, being unable to express the sense of the object at the same time as expressing the sense of expressing this sense *as the sense of the object*, engenders a new proposition which takes the sense expressed of the object as the object of *its* expression. What is crucial here is that, even though it is expressed as a new object with its own sense, this object is in fact the initial sense expressed of the initial object. What is occurring here is a relationship between a proposition and its object where the former expresses the sense of the latter. The generation of the second proposition is in fact a repetition of the first whereby the sense of the initial proposition is now the designated object. Of course, this process can be infinitely repeated by making the sense of the expression of the second proposition an object in its own right and so on.¹⁷⁶

The logic of this linguistic relation informs the expressionistic logic of Deleuze's ontology. To refer this process to the triad of substance, attribute and essence, we would say that the initial proposition is the attribute which expresses the sense, or *essence*, of a designated object: *substance*. The proposition expresses a sense which has no existence outside of its expression but it expresses this sense as the sense of an object. The generation of the second proposition is, in fact, the generation of modes as the re-expression of the proposition with a new object: the sense of the attributive expression. In both expressions the sense is ontologically *the same sense*. In the former expression the sense subsists in the attribute and is expressed as the essence of substance. In this expression the subsisting sense is said to *constitute* the essence of substance precisely because the expression gives it existence. In the latter expression the sense is expressed as the essence *contained*

¹⁷⁵ Durie, "Immanence and Difference," 177.

¹⁷⁶ For a concrete example we can turn to Deleuze's discussion in *The Logic of Sense* of the white knight's song in *Through the Looking Glass*. In *Through the Looking Glass*, when Alice encounters the white knight, he offers to sing a song he has written; however, when the knight introduces the song, he and Alice have some difficulty: "The name of the song is called 'Haddock's Eyes.'"—"Oh, that's the name of the song, is it?" Alice said, trying to feel interested.—"No, you don't understand," the Knight said, looking a little vexed. "That's what the name is called. The name really is 'The Aged Aged Man.'" - "Then I ought to have said 'That's what the song is called'?" Alice corrected herself. - "No, you oughtn't: that's quite another thing! The song is called 'Ways and Means': but that's only what it's called, you know!" - "Well, what *is* the song, then?" said Alice, who was by this time completely bewildered. - "I was coming to that," the Knight said. "The song really is 'A-sitting On A Gate': and the tune's my own invention." Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* (London: Vintage Books, 2007) 291. Deleuze is interested in this passage because it presents the relationships between "a series of nominal entities." In fact, in the various names, this passage presents four iterations of sense: what the song really is, "A-sitting On A Gate"; the name that denotes this reality, or, as Deleuze puts it, "what the song is called," "Ways and Means"; the sense of this name, "The Aged Aged Man"; and the name which denotes or expresses the sense of this new name, "Haddock's Eyes." In short, Deleuze is interested in this episode in Carroll's story because it sets up a series from the song as it really is, through the expression of the reality of the song and the subsequent naming of the song to the sense of the song's name. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 28--35.

in the attribute as the affection of substance. According to this logic, the second level of expression reproduces the first as the latter's modification. Deleuze writes,

[s]ubstance expressed itself in attributes, each attribute was an expression, the essence of substance was expressed. Now each attribute expresses itself, the dependent modes are expressions and a modification is expressed. It will be recalled that the essence they expressed had no existence outside the attributes, but was expressed as the absolute essence of substance, the same for all attributes. The same applies here: a modification has no existence outside the mode that expresses it in each attribute, but it is expressed as a modification of substance, the same for all modes differing in attribute.¹⁷⁷

Deleuze's point is that each mode is generated as a modification of substance as it is contained in an attribute; therefore, the essence contained in the attribute, the modal essence, will differ across each and every mode. This operates as the second level of expression, where the first level—which is, in fact, the other side of the attributive expression that constitutes substance—presents each different attribute as that which expresses a qualitative or intensive aspect of a substance which remains the same for all attributes. Neither object of attribution, substance or mode, can be conceived as existing independently of the relationship of attribution; however, as the attributes are either the constitutive expressions which attribute essence to substance or the modifying expression which contains the modal essence, neither substantial nor modal essence can be conceived as reducible to an attribute which exists in their absence. Furthermore, because each attribute refers to a single substance, even as it differs according to the substantial essence it constitutes and the modal essence it contains, Deleuze is able to claim “that we can conceive of several formally distinct senses which none the less refer to being as if to a single designated entity, ontologically one.”¹⁷⁸ Thus a phrase which has been repeated continuously in this chapter—*in the same sense*—now has a more precise and more robust meaning. We can now see the extent of Deleuze's use of univocity; insofar as we can say that through the constitutive expression of a single and same—though qualitatively heterogeneous—essence, attribution simultaneously generates numerically distinct modes. This is how Deleuze interprets Spinoza's argument that God produces the world at the same time as he produces himself, or, as Deleuze puts it: “Things remain inherent in God who complicates them, and God remains implicated in things which explicate him.”¹⁷⁹

The expressive operation of attribution is double. On the one hand, it constitutes the essence of substance as a heterogeneous multiplicity. On the other hand, because substance is constituted heterogeneously, there is always a quantitative sense of these expressions; that is, the ratio of

¹⁷⁷ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 110.

¹⁷⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 35.

¹⁷⁹ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 175.

attributes subsistent in substance. These quantitative senses are the objects of a series of expressions which produce actual, finite modes as expressions of the absolute infinity of substance under a determinate relation: the differentiation of the attributions. Insofar as these attributions express the constitutive ratio of God's qualities, they express modifications of God's power. Thus Deleuze argues that, for Spinoza, modes are characterised by the degree of power that is expressed by their existence. It is to this issue that we now turn.

Modification as the Expression of Power.

Deleuze argues that Spinoza's identification of modal essences with degrees of power situates Spinoza's account within long-running theological debates concerning the identity of power and action. Spinoza intervenes in this debate by setting out a correlation between power and actual capacity:

[in place of] the distinction of power and act, potentiality and actuality, was substituted the correlation of a power of acting and a power of being acted on or suffering action, both actual. The two currents meet in Spinoza, one relating to the essence of substance, the other to the essence of modes. For in Spinozism all power bears with it a corresponding and inseparable capacity to be affected. And this capacity to be affected is always, necessarily, exercised. To *potentia* there corresponds an *aptitudo* or *potestas*; but there is no aptitude or capacity that remains ineffective, and so no power that is not actual.¹⁸⁰

At the beginning of this passage, Deleuze is referring to the power of the whole: the unlimited potential—*potentia* “as force or capacity”¹⁸¹—through which God exists necessarily. This power is identical with God's essence, as Spinoza says “God's power is his essence itself.”¹⁸² Thus God possesses an infinite power of existing insofar as “being able to exist is power.”¹⁸³ Of course, even though this claim comes as part of his adaptation of the ontological argument, Spinoza is not suggesting that existence is a power of the things which exist. Rather, Spinoza's point, claims Deleuze, is that “the capacity to exist (that is, the possible existence involved in the essence of a finite thing) is a power.”¹⁸⁴ In other words, substance contains a power to exist insofar as a corollary of the power by which it is constituted is a capacity—*potestas* or “that which an individual body can do”¹⁸⁵—expressed in the production of actual beings. This brings us to the other side of the

¹⁸⁰ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 93.

¹⁸¹ Duffy, *Logic of Expression*, 6.

¹⁸² EIP34.

¹⁸³ EIP11S.

¹⁸⁴ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 89.

¹⁸⁵ Duffy, *Logic of Expression*, 6.

distinction in this passage; corresponding to the absolute power of God is a capacity that is expressed as the modal essences which characterise existent or individual beings as parts of the whole. In this sense, the power expressed by actual beings is an expression of the degree to which they are a function of the whole of nature. This is what Spinoza means when he says that “Man’s power, therefore, insofar as it is explained through his actual essence, is part of God *or* Nature’s infinite power, that is, of its essence.”¹⁸⁶ This does not efface the importance of actual modes or individuals; rather, it denies that individuals have a substantial life independent of the whole insofar as an actual mode is dependent on its interrelationship with the other modes that fill out its environment. The power of a finite mode is determined by its belonging to the whole of nature. Deleuze’s claim is that, for Spinoza, a being that does not exist of itself, that is, “has no power of its own except insofar as it is part of a whole, that is, part of the power of a being that does exist through itself.”¹⁸⁷

To see how modification—the expression of a modification of substance in an actual mode—can be understood as an expression of power, we must continue with the linguistic reading of Spinoza offered by Deleuze.¹⁸⁸ Deleuze begins by arguing that,

Attributes ... have an essentially dynamic role. Not that they are themselves powers. But, taken collectively, they are the conditions for the attribution to absolute substance of an absolutely infinite power of existing and acting, identical with its formal essence. Taken distributively they are conditions for the attribution to finite beings of a power identical with their formal essence, insofar as that essence is contained in this or that attribute.¹⁸⁹

A modal essence, then, is not a substance which is cause of itself. Rather, an essence is a power contained in an attribute and characteristic of a finite being, *an essence is a degree of power in virtue of which the being exists*. This is why Spinoza adopts the ontological argument and says that the object of this attribution—substance—necessarily exists. That is, when understood in their collective sense, the attributes are what attribute to substance the very power of existing which constitutes it as a single and same designated. However, if they are understood distributively, the attributes are the conditions under which a modification or variation of substantial power is taken as identical with the essence of the finite beings (*potestas*) which modify that substantial power

¹⁸⁶ EIVP4D

¹⁸⁷ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 91

¹⁸⁸ The linguistic sense of Deleuze’s reading of modification as the expression of power is not the only way to read this issue. In his article “Schizo-Math,” Simon Duffy offers a compelling account of powers by elaborating Deleuze’s calculus-inspired claim that “Power is the form of reciprocal determination according to which variable magnitudes are taken to be functions of one another.” Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 174.

¹⁸⁹ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 90.

(*potentia*). In this case, modes are the expression of the sense of the attributes' expression of the essence of God.

From what has been described so far, we know that the existence and nature of substance is constituted through the attributive expression of the essence of substance. We also know that actually existing things, modes, are in fact the expression of the quantitative degree of the first level of expression, hence Deleuze's claim that the modes express "a certain degree, a certain quantity, of a quality."¹⁹⁰ That is, where attributes constitute substance through their expression of substantial essence, the modal essences contained in the attributes express the intensity or degree to which a specific attribute expresses an essence at this moment or that. It is in this sense that Deleuze argues that "[m]odal essences are . . . distinguished from their attributes as different degrees of intensity."¹⁹¹ This description does not mean that modes are constituted by attributes the same way the attributes constitute the essence of God. Deleuze is emphatic on this point: "Attributes constitute the essence of substance, but in no sense constitute the essence of modes or of creatures. *Yet they are forms common to both*, since creatures imply them both in their own essence and in their existence."¹⁹² The existence of a mode is distinct from its essence, that is, the existence of a mode does not follow from its essence; however, both the existence and the essence of a mode imply an attribute. On the one hand, the existence of a mode implies an attribute insofar as each being is a mode of Being because it involves an attribute; for example, a body implies the attribute of extension insofar as it is a modified expression of a power of being extended. On the other hand, the essence of a mode implies an attribute insofar as it expresses the degree to which a body is a modification of a power of being extended. As such, the attributes are called containers of modal essences in the most literal sense since the modes are expressions of the degree to which an attribute constitutes a degree of essence within the configuration of substantial essence which all attributes, understood collectively, constitute. Summarising this dynamic doubleness of the attributes Deleuze says that

[i]t is as though to each attribute there belonged two quantities, each in itself infinite, but each in its own way divisible in certain conditions: an intensive quality, which divides into intensive parts, or degrees, and an extensive quantity, which divides into extensive parts.¹⁹³

In the first case, Deleuze is describing the constitutive relationship between substance and attributes; the attributes are infinite in their kind insofar as they can be divided into intensive parts only. In the second case, extensive division and extensive parts, he is referring to Spinoza's

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 183.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 197.

¹⁹² Ibid., 47.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 192.

conception of modal essences—the sense of the attribute’s expression—as those things which are infinite by virtue of their cause but when conceived abstractly are able to be viewed as finite and divisible.¹⁹⁴ This dynamic raises a very specific issue though; under what conditions, according to what logic, does one infinite relate to the other? That is, how do the intensive parts of a qualitative infinity relate to the extensive parts of a quantitative infinity?

Deleuze addresses this problem through his reading of modal essences. Modal essences exist independently of the mode’s existence precisely because they are contained in their respective attribute as the sense of the attribute’s expression of the substantial essence; thus Deleuze describes modal essence as “*a pure physical reality*”¹⁹⁵ distinct from the mode to which it corresponds. It is in this sense that Deleuze reads Spinoza’s argument that modal essences constitute neither their own existence insofar as they are essences¹⁹⁶ nor the existence of the mode to which they correspond.¹⁹⁷ Therefore, whenever we encounter an essence of this kind, the necessity of its existence comes from God and not from its own nature. In other words, the existence of the essence of a mode is caused not by its own nature but as the consequence of the necessary existence of the essence of substance. The nature of the cause of these essences produces them as intensive degrees within a total, *actually infinite*, system. Thus any distinction between modal essences operates only abstractly insofar as we conceive one essence independently of the system of intensities implied by this one, apparently, distinct degree.

Playing on the tension between the two qualities he suggests belong to the attributes, Deleuze interprets modal essences as “intrinsic modes or intensive quantities.”¹⁹⁸ In this case, an attribute is simultaneously qualitative and quantitative; in the former case its role is the predication of a quality or essence to substance. In the latter case it is this predication which designates the attribute as quantitative or *modal* precisely because it always poses the question of the degree to which the quality is expressed. Consequently, modal essences characterise the contingent existence of things or beings while remaining ontologically distinct from them. This is why Deleuze argues that,

[o]nly a quantitative distinction of beings is consistent with the qualitative identity of the absolute. And this quantitative distinction is no mere appearance, but an internal difference, a difference of intensity. So that each finite being must be said to *express the absolute*, according

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 192; Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 78. See also, Benedict de Spinoza, “Letter 12,” in *The Collected Works of Spinoza: Vol 1*, trans. and ed. Edwin Curley (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), 202.

¹⁹⁵ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 193

¹⁹⁶ EIP24

¹⁹⁷ EIP25

¹⁹⁸ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 196

to the intensive degree that constitutes its essence, according, that is, to the degree of its power.¹⁹⁹

Modal essences are thus distinct from their corresponding attribute precisely because they are constituted quantitatively as the degree to which the attribute expresses the essence it constitutes. Returning to EIID7, it is clear that, for Deleuze, when Spinoza describes individuals “concurring” in one action to the extent that their cooperation constitutes a mode which is itself singular, he is describing a process that is intensive, that is “quantitative and intrinsic.”²⁰⁰ There is a *quantitative* distinction of modal essences insofar as they are distinct from each other as well as from the attribute that contains them. However, the modal essence is *intrinsic* precisely because it is always contained within an attribute and thus cannot be considered extrinsic. Modal essences are thus constituted as infinite series corresponding to the intensive quantities of the attribute which contains them. In this vein, Spinoza argues that “[e]very mode which exists necessarily and is infinite has necessarily had to follow either from the absolute nature of some attribute of God, or from some attribute, modified by a modification which exists necessarily and is infinite.”²⁰¹ Even though each modal essence is characterised as an infinite series, it is only infinite because of the status of another thing, namely the intensive quantity characterising the attribute which contains it. For Deleuze, this is also the sense in which modal essences are divisible. As essences they are not divisible into extensive or extrinsic parts; however, each essence can, if conceived as an intrinsic modality, be conceived as distinct, singular and particular. What is more, even though the essences form part of a concrete system where each is involved in the production of every other, “each essence is,” as Deleuze puts it, “produced as an irreducible degree, necessarily apprehended as a singular unity.”²⁰²

In brief, we have established here that, on the one hand, modal essences are expressions of the degree to which an attribute expresses or constitutes the essence necessary to the existence of substance. In other words, *a modal essence is always constituted as a degree of power intrinsic to univocal being*. On the other hand, modal essences also express the qualitative distinction within substantial essence, that is, the distinction carried out by the process of attribution, as a quantitative distinction. That is, insofar as “[e]ach substantial quality has intensive modal quantity,”²⁰³ we can say that, in producing himself, God produces the things in the world as quantitatively distinct expressions of his own power.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 197

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 197

²⁰¹ EIP23

²⁰² Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 198

²⁰³ Ibid., 198

Conclusion.

There are two key themes in this discussion that are crucial to the account of Deleuze's ontology that I am developing. First is the simultaneity of substance and modes. The modal universe is produced at the same time substance is produced. Of course, substance does not produce the modes. The attributes, insofar as they are expressions through which essence is attributed to substance, constitute substance. Because the modes follow necessarily from the essence of substance so constituted, what actually exists is produced simultaneously as another level of the event through which substance is constituted. The second theme involves the phrase that has been repeated throughout this chapter: *in the same sense*. Deleuze argues that for the attributes to successfully express essence to substance, these expressions must be apprehended as such. Thus Deleuze invokes Spinoza's claim that God possesses an infinite power of understanding. The sense in which the attributes express the essence of substance is apprehended by this infinite power of understanding as the idea of an essence. The idea of God is the "*objective formal distinction*" that correlates necessarily with the real formal distinction that occurs in the constitution of the essence of God.²⁰⁴ The understanding of the idea of God is thus not a view point on the idea but the formal being of the idea of God.²⁰⁵ But it is precisely the successful apprehension of the idea of God that determines the quantitative degrees that characterise actual modes. These essences do not cause the existence of the modes to which they correspond; however, they only determine an assemblage of material parts as a particular mode if they express the essence of substance as a sensible proposition.

From this follows the only substantive criticism Deleuze makes of Spinoza. In Spinoza, the modes are produced through differential relations and characterised by degrees of power that express these relations. However, insofar as the production of the modes follows necessarily from the constitution of substance they "are dependent on substance, but as though on something other than themselves."²⁰⁶ In other words, while the modes are produced differentially, their differentiation follows from the constitution of the *identity* of substance. In chapter three I will explore how working through this problem is a crucial step in the transformation of Deleuze's ontology. Chapter three, indeed, elaborates some of the tools Deleuze develops to enable him to present identity as a consequence of differentiation and the constitution of substance as reciprocal with the differentiation of the modes. In turning to consider these developments I raise a number of questions that remain underdeveloped or implicit in this discussion: what is the ontological status of

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 125.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 122--123.

²⁰⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 40.

a subsistent relation? how can we characterise concretely the relationship between the degrees of power and the actual, existing modes which express them? how does Deleuze flesh out his conception of “reciprocal determination” between actual beings and the powers they express without violating Spinoza’s argument that the relationship between an existing mode and its essence is not causal? and, finally, how does Deleuze treat duration, what Spinoza calls “an indefinite continuation of existing?”²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ EIID5.

CHAPTER THREE

On Deleuze's Bergson: The Transformation of the Whole.

In this chapter I argue that, in response to the apparent independence of the identity of substance, Deleuze reconceives Spinoza's substance-attribute-mode dynamic in terms of living beings and the ontological conditions and status of their power. In order to achieve this, Deleuze must do two things. First, he must show how a mode and its essence are properly immanent to each other. Second, he must demonstrate how the existing being and the degree of power it expresses exist without reference to anything other than the structure of their reciprocity. This chapter outlines Deleuze's transformation of the holistic ontology he finds in Spinoza into an ontology in which the whole—the univocal sense of Being—is conceived as generated by the degree of power expressed in an existing entity. I also explore a key claim that Deleuze makes with respect to the relationship between a mode's essence and its existence, namely, that a “mode is just its own essence insofar as the essence actually possesses an infinity of extensive parts.”²⁰⁸ Reflecting on the ontology of *Expressionism in Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze sets himself a challenge: “[a]ll that Spinozism needed to do for the univocal to become an object of pure affirmation was to make substance turn around the modes - *in other words, to realise univocity in the form of repetition in the eternal return.*”²⁰⁹

When Deleuze returns to Bergson and Nietzsche to develop his ontology beyond *Expressionism*, he renames substance and modes—the whole and actual lives, respectively—but he retains the challenge of making the differentiation of the modes the motor of the constitution of substance. This challenge can be only be faced with a renewed conception of time—*eternal return*—in which the expression of a degree of power in an actual, finite being is entirely a product of a differential relation—*repetition*. This chapter will explore the way that the more familiar elements of Deleuze's philosophy are part of his response to this challenge. We will see that the pairing of the virtual and the actual is how Deleuze, following Bergson, reconfigures the ontological status of a being and its power; that finite beings are not produced as expressions of the constitution of “something other than themselves” but as moments in the dialectical reciprocity of individuals and the whole; that the whole is a multiplicity constituted by the association of the many as such; and that “repetition in the eternal return” is a complex series of simultaneous syntheses—the famous “three syntheses of time.” Where chapter two showed how Deleuze's reading of Spinoza

²⁰⁸ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 212.

²⁰⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 304.

produced a form of holism where finite beings are expressions of the constitution of a heterogeneous whole, and chapter four will argue that the Bergsonism of the *Cinema* books has at its heart a holism where the heterogeneous whole is constituted through the differentiation of actual lives in the course of affective encounters, this chapter systematically examines the crucial concepts that enable Deleuze to make this transition. In order to understand these concepts, we must begin with a reflection on the criticism Deleuze makes of Spinoza—the criticism that leads to the aforementioned challenge.

Deleuze's Nietzschean Critique of Spinoza.

In the course of his discussion of Nietzsche in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze develops the only substantive criticism he makes of Spinoza and, although this criticism receives a mere two pages of explicit attention in *Difference and Repetition*, I argue that it is central to understanding Deleuze's subsequent arguments for the reciprocity of the virtual and the actual. Deleuze's criticism of Spinoza concerns the determination of the identity and essence of the finite modes; although substance is constituted heterogeneously and through differential relations, the determination of the degrees of power which characterise modes proceed through the expression of the constitution of an identity which is not of the modes. That is, he objects to a monism that prioritises the identity of the one over the differentiation of the multiple; as such, I take Deleuze to be arguing for a strict reciprocity between the virtual and the actual. The determination of the virtual whole must be reciprocal, in the strongest sense, with the differentiation of actual beings. It is, thus, impossible to overstate the importance of Deleuze's objection to a monism that privileges the identity of an ideal unity over an actual plurality. The criticism he offers in no way constitutes a rejection of Spinoza; it does, however, represent an acknowledgment that the demands of a philosophy of difference go beyond the resources that Spinoza's monism can provide. Deleuze's claim is that Spinoza allows substance to retain an independence from the modes insofar as the modes only have existence through their reference to substance while substance exists solely through the expression of its own essence. Deleuze turned to Spinoza in search of an ontology that would drive his Bergsonian project; an ontology, that is, that would make it possible to think difference as a generative principle. In doing so, Deleuze was able to thoroughly describe modes as expressions of degrees of power that participate univocally in the constitution of an active, common sense of being. Being is active and common precisely because everything that the modes express is expressed of substance's univocal attributes. Unfortunately, however, this prize is won at the cost of a metaphysical system in which the modes are dependent on a prior identity that remains ontologically distinct from them.

Deleuze criticises Spinoza because substance—that *of which* the modes are said—remains independent. In Deleuze’s own words, as expressions of substance, “the modes are dependent on substance, but as though on something other than themselves.”²¹⁰

Making substance turn around the modes will, Deleuze contends, require “a more general categorical reversal according to which being is said of becoming, identity of that which is different, the one of the multiple, etc.”²¹¹ This categorical reversal confronts the asymmetry of substance and modes by foregrounding a relationship of reciprocal determination between a mode and the degree of power it expresses. Insofar as it is the expression of a relational degree, a mode can only be considered the transitory description of a set of relations which constitutes its ground. That is, as a being, a mode can only be said of that which becomes. *Difference and Repetition*’s invocation of the Nietzschean concept of the eternal return represents the introduction of a new way of thinking about time that turns on the repeated expressions of degrees of power. Deleuze’s complaint about Spinoza is that modes—as expressions of that which differs (degrees of power)—are always said of an identity that remains consistent through all its changes. In other words, we could always say that the degrees of power are degrees *of God’s power*. Within the Nietzschean categorical reversal, Deleuze wants the very identity said of the modes to be said only of the differences in power expressed by the modes; this reversal is the beginning of the form of time Deleuze calls *repetition*: “an identity, produced by difference, is determined as ‘repetition.’”²¹² In order to explicate the workings of this form of time, the remainder of this chapter will focus on Deleuze’s reading of Bergson, beginning with a discussion of how future events relate to the conditions of their actualisation.

Bergson’s Critique of the Possible and the Real and The Genesis of Novelty.

Deleuze develops the categorical reversal of difference and identity through a return to Bergson and the retrieval of a conceptual coupling that will allow him to redefine the ontological status of powers and modes: the *virtual* and the *actual*. As well as emphasising a difference between powers and modes, the use of the concepts of the virtual and the actual also allows Deleuze to affirm that powers and beings are fully real:

[t]he virtual is opposed not to the real but to the actual. *The virtual is fully real insofar as it is virtual* ... Indeed, the virtual must be defined as strictly part of the real object - as though the

²¹⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 40.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 41.

object had one part of itself in the virtual into which it plunged as though into an objective dimension. ... The reality of the virtual consists of the differential elements and the relations along with the singular points which correspond to them. The reality of the virtual is structure. We must avoid giving the elements and relations which form a structure an actuality which they do not have, and withdrawing from them a reality which they have.²¹³

Deleuze affirms this coupling of virtual and actual against the more common coupling of the possible and the real on the grounds that thinking in terms of the realisation of possibilities denies the reality of the possible and then attempts to describe the passing into reality of possibilities through a subtractive process. This subtraction occurs because the possible is supposed to be ideally infinite—that is, it contains everything whose idea does not contain logical contradiction—and the process of realisation is one whereby “some possibles are supposed to be repulsed or thwarted, while others ‘pass’ into the real.”²¹⁴ In this scenario, what actually occurs is a diminished realisation of what is possible insofar as the real contains *less* than the possible. Against this, Deleuze argues that because of the difference between the actual and the virtual, the virtual has a reality of its own that is neither diminished nor represented in the actual:

the virtual cannot proceed by elimination or limitation, but must *create* its own lines of actualization in positive acts ... [because] the actual does *not* resemble the virtuality it embodies. It is difference that is primary in the process of actualization—the difference between the virtual from which we begin and the actual at which we arrive, and also the difference between the complementary lines according to which actualization takes place.²¹⁵

In setting out the opposition of these two conceptual pairs, (virtual and actual, possible and real), Deleuze glosses an early article by Bergson on the problems of thinking in terms of possibility and reality. In “The Possible and the Real,” Bergson affirms that “reality is created as something unforeseeable and new”²¹⁶ and argues that the processes by which possibilities are realised are, by virtue of being “subtractive,” unable to account for this novelty. Bergson’s first point is that the possible has only ever been conceptualised in terms of a retrospective representation of the real such that, when we describe what might be possible in the future, we trade on an error in how we conceive the past. Bergson’s claim is that when we conceive the past as a representation of the present we construct a series of images of what must have been possible given what is currently real:

²¹³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 208--209.

²¹⁴ *Bergsonism* 96-97.

²¹⁵ *Bergsonism* 97.

²¹⁶ Henri Bergson, “The Possible and the Real,” in *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Mabel L. Anderson (New York: Citadel Press, 1992), 101.

[a]s reality is created as something unforeseeable and new, its image is reflected behind it into the indefinite past; thus it finds that it has from all time been possible, but it is at this precise moment that it begins to have been always possible, and that is why ... its possibility, which does not precede its reality, will have preceded it once the reality has appeared.²¹⁷

For Deleuze this is the first of two rules to which the process of realisation is subject: *the rule of resemblance*.²¹⁸ Where Bergson contends that a concept of the possible as something that resembles the real cannot account for the novelty of life, Deleuze is even more emphatic and suggests that this rule violates a robust conception of difference and consequently renders actual existence the arbitrary occurrence of an idea in space and time. Deleuze asks, “[w]hat difference can there be between the existent and the non-existent if the non-existent is already possible, already included in the concept and having all the characteristics that the concept confers upon it as a possibility?”²¹⁹ Insofar as the possible refers to “the form of the identity in the concept”²²⁰ since, “from the point of view of the concept, there is no difference between the possible and the real,”²²¹ Deleuze suggests that “it is difficult to understand what existence adds to the concept when all it does is double like with like.”²²² Deleuze echoes Bergson when he says that the possible is “retroactively fabricated in the image of what resembles it.”²²³ By contrast, the relationship between the virtual and the actual is the expression of difference; insofar as it is the actualisation of a power, *actuality must differ from the virtual*. That is, actualisation must proceed by differentiation. The second rule that follows from the first is *the rule of limitation*. When we ask after the future as though its potential events were aligned with possibilities subsisting in the present, we project our mistake about the past and the possible into our conception of the future. If, as Bergson suggests, the possible is generated through the retrospective reflection of reality, the possible must, accordingly, be generated as more than the real. There is a common illusion regarding possibilities and realisation, Bergson contends, and it consists in the assumption that the real adds something—namely existence—to the possible. Contrary to this illusion, Bergson contends that realisation is, in fact, a subtractive process. The conception of possibility criticised by Bergson and Deleuze construes the passage from possibility to reality as subtractive insofar as it requires the real in order to generate an idea of what is possible. Thus possibility necessarily consists of more than the existence that realises it.²²⁴

²¹⁷ Bergson, “Possible and the Real,” 101.

²¹⁸ *Bergsonism* 97.

²¹⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 211.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 211.

²²¹ *Bergsonism* 97.

²²² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 211--212.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 212.

²²⁴ Bergson, “Possible and the Real,” 102.

In his *Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual*, Keith Ansell-Pearson takes up this issue in the context of a broader reading of the history of ideas regarding biology, evolution and natural selection. Ansell-Pearson notes that this conception of possibility leads to the belief that there is a reservoir of sorts—a store of possibilities—that supplies the particular possibility that passes into reality as that present becomes past and is supplanted by a new present. Accordingly, the current present is assumed to consist in a similar store of possibilities and the future to consist of one of these possibilities, which is selected and realised. This conception of duration as the repeated selection of images of past realities according to a mechanistic selection process—a process that is wholly given and indifferent to the images upon which it operates—is, Ansell-Pearson claims, precisely the target of Bergson’s critique.²²⁵ This process of selection is also Deleuze’s target when he describes the rule of limitation at work on realisation: “realization involves a limitation by which some possibles are supposed to be repulsed or thwarted, while others ‘pass’ into the real.”²²⁶ Overturning such an illusion is precisely what Deleuze wants to achieve through the virtual and the actual. In addition to being actualised through a differentiation, processes of actualisation must involve genuine creation. If actualisation is the expression of difference then it will render existence genuinely new and not the merely arbitrary realisation of a possibility: “[a]ctual terms never resemble the singularities they incarnate. In this sense, *actualisation . . . is always a genuine creation.*”²²⁷

Rather than describing the movement from past to present to future as a straight line whereby each implies a storehouse of ideal possibilities from which an idea is selected and brought into existence, Deleuze conceives the relationship between the virtual and the actual dialectically. Virtual and actual respond to, and are determined by, each other. The virtual, on his account, is a set of conditions which subsist in the actual world and constitute a problem to which an instance of actualisation is a response or solution. That is, the actual is a plane composed of events of actualisation which do not add existence to an idea but which “solve” a virtual problem. This dialectic is the heart of Deleuze’s ontology and it is to this discussion that we now turn.

The Dialectic of Problems: the Virtual and Actualisation.

When he develops his conception of the virtual and the actual, Deleuze calls it a *dialectic of problems*; however, he is careful to distinguish his use of the word *dialectic* from Kantian or

²²⁵ Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual: Bergson and the Time of Life* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 79.

²²⁶ *Bergsonism* 97.

²²⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 212. Emphasis added.

Hegelian senses of the concept when he notes that “we do not mean any kind of circulation of opposing representations which would make them coincide in the identity of a concept.”²²⁸ The dialectic in this case is inspired by the work of Albert Lautman, an early twentieth century philosopher of mathematics. Lautman’s conception of dialectic concerns the relationship between problems and solutions, which remain distinct. As Deleuze explains in *Difference and Repetition*:

a problem has three aspects: its difference in kind from solutions; its transcendence in relation to the solutions that it engenders on the basis of its own determinant conditions; and its immanence in the solutions which cover it, the problem *being* the better resolved the more *it is* determined.²²⁹

The use of the term *transcendence*, while requiring explanation, does not present a problem for Deleuze’s ontology of immanence. In a study on Lautman’s influence on Deleuze, Simon Duffy notes that transcendence is used in a common sense way to describe the fact that the problems themselves are “posed . . . relative to the connections that are [only] likely to be supported by certain dialectical concepts.”²³⁰ In other words, within a dialectic of problems and solutions, the problem is transcendent because it is given to the solution which must respond to it. It must be emphasised, however, that this transcendence of the problem does not imply an anteriority of the problem relative to its solution. As with the case of an attributive expression of sense which subsists in its expression without being reducible to either the attribute that expresses it or the substance of which it is said, the problem subsists in a solution that explicates it. That is, a problem cannot be reduced to its determination in a corresponding solution precisely because it is the conditions of the problem which engender a solution. However, it is not until a solution is actualised that the reality of the problem is made explicit. At the same time, the problem is immanent in the solution because the extent to which it is able to be resolved hinges upon the terms of the solution’s actualisation. Since the problem *as such* only has reality insofar as it is explicated by a solution, it is said to be immanent in the solution even though it is given to the solution that explicates it and is determined by conditions that go beyond the particular solution—i.e., it is *transcendent*. For Deleuze, it is this dialectic of problems which governs the appearance of everything which makes up the world.

Deleuze takes on Bergson’s rejection of the traditional conception of the realisation of possibilities as a way of describing the relationship between a being and what that being can become. By appropriating Bergson’s critique of the possible and the real, Deleuze argues against the concept of asymmetry between possibility and reality. He affirms an equality between beings

²²⁸ Ibid., 178.

²²⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 178--179.

²³⁰ Simon Duffy, “Albert Lautman,” in *Deleuze’s Philosophical Lineage*, eds. Graham Jones and Jon Roffe (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 365.

and what they can become insofar as the actual state of an existing being and the subsistent conditions of its becoming are equally real. The difference between a being and the conditions of its becoming—between the actual and the virtual—is a difference in kind. Together their interaction accounts for the genesis and becoming of the world:

[i]t is sufficient to understand that the genesis takes place in time not between one actual term, however small, and another actual term, but between the virtual and its actualisation - in other words, it goes from the structure to its incarnation, from the conditions of a problem to the cases of solution, from the differential elements and their ideal connections to actual terms and diverse real relations which constitute at each moment the actuality of time. This is a genesis without dynamism, evolving necessarily in the element of a supra-historicity, a *static genesis* which may be understood as the correlate of the notion of *passive synthesis*, and which in turn illuminates that notion.²³¹

Deleuze argues against the assumption that actual events follow each other sequentially. Actual events follow each other but their relationship is one of association, not causation.²³² The association of actual events proceeds dialectically and progresses through a virtual problem. This is an important argument to the extent that it reinforces Deleuze's claim that repetition produces novelty.²³³ As this chapter progresses, we will see that the progression from one actual event to another proceeds via a complex process that Deleuze calls *differentiation*: the determination of a virtual problem proceeds through differentiation and the actualisation of a solution proceeds through differentiation. Because the dialectic of problems has these differential expressions driving it, and because the virtual and the actual are defined by their qualitative difference, neither the concept of the present, nor the conditions it determines as the ground of the future, are sufficient to provide the idea of a future, actual event. Indeed, even when actual events resemble each other, this

²³¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 183.

²³² The implication here that association and causation are opposed, mutually exclusive types of relationship is problematic. To elucidate why causation is not opposed to association—that is, why causation and association are not necessarily distinct types of relationships between existing relata—I will spend much of this and the next chapter focussed on a concept that is central to Deleuze's philosophy of time: *synthesis*. In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze argues that the virtual and the actual correspond to each but have their own respective causal orders; he suggests that there is an order of actual causes and an order of virtual "quasi-cause[s]." Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 94. However, neither order of reality—actual and virtual, body and sense—contains relations of efficient causation. In other words, Deleuze does not reject the notion of causation and replace it with one of association; rather, he rejects the idea of efficient causation between discrete entities and develops a new logic of causation that sees it as a much more complex system of syntheses and correspondences. The actual is produced as an eternal living present characterised as a series of passive syntheses; that is, contractions of extensive parts into bodies characterised by intensive degrees—the degrees of power that subsist in the relations between bodies. Simultaneously, the virtual is constituted as the sense or significance of present occurrences synthesised as both the whole of the past, and the future-oriented anticipations of the present. In a later section in this chapter, I will elaborate this conception of time and in chapter four I will pay extended attention to the particularity and interactions between these syntheses as they are relevant to the *Cinema* books. Still, this is a complex issue which extends well beyond the remit of this thesis. In *Deleuze's Philosophy of Time*, Williams offers an exemplary summary of the slippery interaction of *Difference and Repetition's* and *The Logic of Sense's* respective vocabularies, esp. 148--152.

²³³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 98.

resemblance is always grounded in difference. Thus ‘new’ events are generated as ontologically novel. However, in order to confront these complex issues, we must first understand what Deleuze means by *multiplicity*, given that it is the structure of the problem and the way that Deleuze is able to describe the logic of the association of sets as immanent.

Multiplicities.

In reading Spinoza, Deleuze persistently characterises substance as an intensive multiplicity; it is always a heterogeneously generated system which remains numerically one. As outlined above, however, even though Spinoza’s metaphysics delivers a conception of substance as multiplicitous, it contains a pitfall insofar as the multiplicity remains independent of the very modes which give it its existence. To avoid this pitfall, Deleuze suggests that, “instead of using the one and the multiple as adjectives, one substitutes the substantive multiplicities in the [genesis of] form: there is nothing that is one, there is nothing that is multiple, everything is multiplicities.”²³⁴ As with Lautman and the dialectic of problems, Deleuze foregrounds a figure in the history of mathematics, Bernhard Riemann, in order to rethink the concept of multiplicity (or manifolds).²³⁵ Riemann’s geometry takes up the issue of the constitution of space as such. As Arkady Plotnitsky describes it, a manifold is a conglomerate of local spaces which can be mapped infinitesimally through a Cartesian or Euclidean map—that is, by a single, consistent co-ordinate map—while the map itself cannot be accounted for by Cartesian or Euclidean space.²³⁶ In other words, every point in a space has a local neighbourhood that can be treated as Euclidean; however, because the sites of the syntheses of these local spaces are themselves mappable spaces, the overall manifold cannot be treated as Euclidean. The significance of Riemann’s work is clearly stated in *A Thousand Plateaus*: “[i]t was a decisive event when the mathematician Riemann uprooted the multiple from its predicate state and made it

²³⁴ Gilles Deleuze, “Dualism, Monism and Multiplicities (Desire-Pleasure-Jouissance),” *Contretemps* 2 (2001): 99.

²³⁵ The issue of the translation of manifold, *multiplicité* and multiplicity is a complex one which cannot be discussed in great detail in this context. It will suffice to suggest briefly what seems a likely origin of this anomaly. The conceptual content of “plateau” 14 of *A Thousand Plateaus*—“The Smooth and the Striated”—contains, as Plotnitsky points out, the almost unavoidable impression of Riemann’s work. Arkady Plotnitsky, “Bernhard Riemann,” in *Deleuze’s Philosophical Lineage*, eds. Graham Jones and Jon Roffe (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 206. However, Brian Massumi’s English translation of *Mille Plateaux* appeared in 1987, before significant secondary work had been done in English on the extent of the debt Deleuze owes to the history of mathematics. Correlatively, Massumi translated *multiplicité* as ‘multiplicity’ even though it is translated as ‘manifold’ in mathematics. This choice, it must be said, is a perfectly understandable one, particularly in light of the prevalence of the term ‘multiplicity’ in English language “French Theory.” Furthermore, by the time English language commentators began paying serious attention to Deleuze’s debt to mathematics in the late 1990s, most of his major work had already been translated into English and ‘multiplicity’ had become the standard term. For the duration of this thesis, uses of the word multiplicity bear this Riemannian sense, particularly when used in the context of Bergson and in quotes from the *Cinema* books.

²³⁶ Plotnitsky, “Bernhard Riemann,” 198--199.

into a noun, ‘multiplicity.’”²³⁷ Deleuze and Guattari write that “Riemannian space at its most general thus presents itself as an amorphous of pieces that are juxtaposed but not attached to each other.”²³⁸ ‘Multiplicity’ does not denote a given system that would unify the one and the many, it describes the generation of a system from the organisation of the many as such.

In his reading of Bergson, Deleuze foregrounds a particular conception of multiplicity: continuous multiplicities. A continuous multiplicity is a space that finds the principle of its metric in the phenomena that occur across its surface. This idea of a space determined by the events that occur across its surface is of particular interest to Bergson; however, where Bergson diverges significantly from Riemann is, as Miguel de Beistegui points out, in the insistence that continuous multiplicities belong primarily to the order of duration and not space in virtue of the fact that the terms by which one would map an ongoing duration are continually encroaching on and dissolving into one another in a way that resists the kind of quantification and division possible with an elapsed duration.²³⁹ The question of time and duration is an issue we will defer until later in this chapter; however, it is important to emphasise that Deleuze’s and Bergson’s respective interests converge on this idea of multiplicities which cannot be quantified and submitted to an abstractly generated metrical principle. As Deleuze stresses in the passage above, it is crucial to conceptualise the system of the multiple in such a way that it is the multiple *as such* which generates its own principle. Indeed, the final clause of the passage could be read as a direct response to *Expressionism* insofar as Deleuze’s reading of Spinoza allows an external term—God or nature—to determine the unity of the modes. The project for Deleuze now is to generate that term from the relationship of the modes understood as a multiplicity.

The concept of multiplicity enables Deleuze to address this problem by making it possible to move from the dialectic of problems to the conception of time as the repetition of actualisations. This is because lived time for Deleuze is constituted precisely by repetitions in the actual world and yet these actualisations do not occur from one actual term to another but through the movement from the generation of a problem or Idea as a response to a set of actual terms, to the generation of a new set of actual terms as a response to the problem. Multiplicity is an important concept precisely because it is the structure of the problem: a “structure or an Idea is a ‘complex theme’, an internal multiplicity - in other words, a system of multiple, non-localisable connections between differential elements which is incarnated in real relations and actual terms.”²⁴⁰ This concept is crucial to the

²³⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 482--483.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 485.

²³⁹ Beistegui, Miguel de. *Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 249.

²⁴⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 183.

conception of time that drives so much of his work, and so Deleuze is careful to establish the conditions under which ideas or multiplicities are generated.²⁴¹ Of course, multiplicities have no modal existence. In describing the generation of a multiplicity, one is in fact describing the conditions under which actual terms determine the formulation of a problem to which a later actualisation is a response.

Deleuze tells us that for a multiplicity to emerge three conditions must be met; first, the multiplicity's constitutive elements must retain no assignable function. That is, as the virtual side of the actually existing term, these elements must be stripped of sensible form or signification and must lose all similarity to the actuality to which they correspond. Indeed, it is this first condition that leads to what Deleuze, in the *Cinema* books, calls a *centre of indetermination* precisely because, bearing no similarity to the actual term, the virtual term as such does not presuppose a prior identity which defines its form. The second condition concerns the reciprocal determination of the elements of the multiplicity and the relations in which it participates. This is the aforementioned importance of the continuous multiplicity; the relations between the elements of a multiplicity which, "whether they characterise the multiplicity globally or proceed by the juxtaposition of neighbouring regions," generate the metric of the multiplicity.²⁴² Yet, at the same time, the elements of the multiplicity must be defined intrinsically. That is, the elements of the multiplicity are only relevant to the multiplicity by virtue of their participation in the determination of the multiplicity. Deleuze insists upon this exhaustive reciprocity so as to resist any independence either on the part of the multiplicity or its elements. Finally, the third condition for the emergence of a multiplicity is the event of the actualisation of a differential relation. These, then, are the three conditions that must be met in order for an Idea—a *problem*—to be defined structurally. We see in all three conditions the interaction of the actual term and the problem to which it responds—first through their difference and then through their reciprocal determination—and, indeed, the final condition is precisely the grounding issue for the final section of this chapter. The multiplicity is not prior to the existence of actual objects; rather, the pair virtual-problem/actual-solution are simultaneous. For all that their respective reality is formally distinct, the virtual and actual are existentially indistinguishable. In other words, the multiplicity does not exist in the absence of the terms that

²⁴¹ In the original *Différence et Répétition*, Deleuze's line is "*Ces conditions sont au nombre de trois, et permettent de définir le moment d'émergence de l'Idée*" (237) and, in his English translation, Paul Patton renders this as "There are three conditions which together allow us to define the moment at which an Idea emerges" (*Difference and Repetition*, 183). While Patton's translation makes sense, we must be aware that the English clause "an Idea emerges" presents the subject of the verb as active in a way that is not present in the original clause "*d'émergence de l'Idée*." I would argue that, insofar as it is the subject of the verb "emerge," we must be careful not to present the Idea as having an activity it does not have, this is why I have opted for a passive construction. The subtlety of this point is important for the discussion of the passive syntheses of time where Deleuze insists that it is only the actual, living present that is active and that the multiplicitous Idea remains passive.

²⁴² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 183.

actualise it, nor can an actual term exist in the absence of the “differential elements” and “ideal connections” that condition and constitute it. Deleuze’s summary of the issue drives at precisely this interactive simultaneity:

For a potential or virtual object, to be actualised is to create divergent lines which correspond to - without resembling - a virtual multiplicity. The virtual possesses the reality of a task to be performed or a problem to be solved: it is the problem which orientates, conditions and engenders solutions, but these do not resemble the conditions of the problem. ... Difference and repetition in the virtual ground the movement of actualisation, of differentiation as creation. They are thereby substituted for the identity and the resemblance of the possible, which inspires only a pseudo-movement, the false movement of realisation understood as abstract limitation.²⁴³

So far in this chapter I have argued that the more familiar terms of Deleuze’s vocabulary—virtual, actual, multiplicity—are elements of his attempts to transform his Spinozist inheritance into a robust philosophy of difference. We saw in chapter two that Deleuze inherits from Spinoza a form of holism in which the one and the many are generated dynamically as the forms and objects of attributive expressions. By virtue of this dynamism, the whole is conceived as a virtual multiplicity with no existence outside or beyond the many by which it is expressed. However, Deleuze still considers Spinoza’s ontology problematic because it conceives the production of the modes as the expression of the constitution of the essence of something other than themselves. Consequently, the differentiation of the modes is reduced to the arrangement of diversity and this diversity is always referred to an external identity. Deleuze’s philosophy of difference, however, demands that substance correspond to an actuality that expresses it without resembling it. In other words, Deleuze wants differential relations to drive his ontology—the genesis of beings and identities must be expressions of difference—and so the whole and individuals must be qualitatively distinct. This is why Deleuze characterises the relationship between the virtual and the actual as a dialectic of problems: the constitution of a virtual multiplicity—a problem or an Idea—is a step in a dialectical relationship wherein neither term resembles the other. This is why we must turn at this point to examine Deleuze’s famous *three syntheses of time*; the simultaneity of the past and future, and their synthesis in a complex process of different/ciation, enables Deleuze to conceive the actual present as the “disjunctive synthesis”²⁴⁴ of two movements of differentiation.

²⁴³ Ibid., 212.

²⁴⁴ Disjunctive syntheses are a crucial component of Deleuze’s conception of a dialectic insofar as it is the genesis of action in the process of different/ciation. Unlike, say, an Hegelian dialectic where the synthesis of terms is a *conjunction en route* to a higher unity, Deleuze’s dialectic involves disjunctive syntheses that affirm the difference of the terms of a synthesis at the same time as synthesising them. See, for instance, Williams’ argument that “[a] disjunctive synthesis is not a reduction through abstraction but a transforming addition that connects by creating differences.” Williams, *Deleuze’s Logic of Sense*, 27.

The Three Syntheses of Time and Correspondence Without Resemblance.

In the *Ethics*, Spinoza argues that “[t]he essence of things produced by God does not involve existence.”²⁴⁵ Spinoza is here referring to the ontological argument which he had deployed earlier to argue that the existence of God follows necessarily from his essence; this time, however, insofar as the things produced by God are the finite modes, existence does not follow from their essence—that is, the degree of power that characterises them does not cause their existence. We saw in chapter two that this was an important part of how Deleuze argued that God’s self-causation was simultaneously the production of a modal universe, and it is an insight that continues to be important as his ontology transforms. This is why, when Deleuze recasts a mode and its essence as a solution and a problem he argues that the two correspond, and respond to and determine each other, in a dialectical relationship even though their correspondence never entails causation. That is, actual solutions *respond* to virtual problems, but the problems never cause their solutions. Thus, Deleuze attempts to account for their reciprocity in a way that portrays their correspondence as a dialectic driven by differentiation. When he challenges himself to conceive time as a series of repetitions that would realise univocity, he does so in an effort to carry out the categorical reversal necessary to transform Spinoza’s ontology. Of course, working out this concept is also crucial to the reciprocity of individuals and the whole in the Bergsonism of the *Cinema* books; this dialectic of problems enables Deleuze to characterise individuals as the expression of a differential relationship which simultaneously generates a whole.

Deleuze begins his formulation of this correspondence in *Difference and Repetition* when he grounds the three syntheses of time in the present understood as a concrete particular that assumes a power of thinking in a living body that functions as the site of temporal syntheses. With this move, Deleuze reformulates the degrees of power of *Expressionism* as the folding of immanent powers into the constitutive events of living bodies. The way Deleuze proceeds in this reformulation of the Spinozist image of the whole owes significantly to his claim in *Expressionism* that the attribution of an essence to substance must be apprehended as such by substance; in other words, attribution must not only be an attribution *to* substance, it must also be an attribution *for* substance. The way Deleuze deploys this duality of *to* and *for* bears a remarkable similarity to his description of the first synthesis in terms of the anticipatory behaviour of the imagination. The deduction of this anticipatory behaviour is suggested in his early reading of Hume’s anti-Cartesian view of the mind and its faculties—the first chapter of *Empiricism and Subjectivity*—and this influence reappears in

²⁴⁵ EIP24.

the second chapter of *Difference and Repetition*. Deleuze begins his reflections on time with the Humean suggestion that repetition is not a case of change undergone by a thing but, rather, a transformation brought about in the mind which contemplates the thing.²⁴⁶ Deleuze names the first synthesis *habit* even though it is not a situation where a mind is in the habit of doing something. Rather, this habit is constitutive of the mind that contemplates. We must not make the mistake of assuming the priority of a mind that contemplates. Deleuze argues that the necessary precondition of a lived present is a passive synthesis of previous experiences into an anticipation that is geared towards the future. It is this synthesis, this *contemplation*, that earns the name *habit*.²⁴⁷ Habit gives time its direction from the past to the future. As Deleuze says, “Passive synthesis or contraction is essentially asymmetrical: it goes from the past to the future in the present, thus from the particular to the general, thereby imparting direction to the arrow of time.”²⁴⁸

When Deleuze describes this synthesis as contraction he means it quite literally. The imagination is defined as a “contractile power.”²⁴⁹ Deleuze reads Hume as saying that similar cases (cases similar to the one at hand in the present) are grounded in the imagination that “like a sensitive plate, . . . retains one case when the other appears. It contracts cases, elements, agitations or homogeneous instants and grounds these in an internal qualitative impression endowed with a certain weight.”²⁵⁰ Deleuze’s claim here is appropriately concrete: given the traces of previous experiences that remain within the imagination, there will be the anticipation that future cases of similar events will be consistent with previous experiences. Deleuze calls the contraction of these traces into an anticipation *passive* because it is an automatic synthesis that makes the contemplative mind possible, not an anticipation that is generated by an already existing contemplating mind. This synthesis, however, has numerous levels and, as such, goes beyond the mere passive contraction of past events into an anticipation of the future. Deleuze argues that,

²⁴⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 70.

²⁴⁷ Contemplation is the occurrence of this synthesis in the mind: “[passive synthesis] is not carried out by the mind, but occurs *in* the mind which contemplates, prior to all memory and all reflection” (Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 71) This contemplation moreover is the genesis of a “question” that determines a response. But this determination draws us closer to the need for a fuller account of active synthesis as well to later syntheses.

²⁴⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 71. With the phrase “it goes from . . . the particular to the general,” this discussion is obviously going to involve a confrontation with what is perhaps *the* classic issue associated with the contemporary reception of Hume’s philosophy: the problem of induction. However, a standard formulation of the problem of induction—under what circumstances could our anticipation of future events, given past events, ever be considered logically valid?—is not appropriate for Deleuze’s account of Hume for a very straightforward reason: the empiricism of Deleuze’s Hume is not primarily concerned with the epistemological problems traditionally associated with Hume. For Deleuze, the pressing problem with Hume concerns the genesis of subjectivity relative to the conditions of experience. Jon Roffe, “David Hume,” in *Deleuze’s Philosophical Lineage*, eds. Graham Jones and Jon Roffe (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 68. Consequently, Hume’s empiricism is not the standard formulation of empiricism that asks after the derivation of knowledge from experience; such a formulation, claims Deleuze, is neither appropriate to empiricism in general nor Hume in particular since, for Hume, to ask after the constitution of knowledge in experience (and with regard to our claims about future circumstances given past experiences) is question begging.

²⁴⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 70.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 70.

[w]e must ... distinguish not only the forms of repetition in relation to passive synthesis but also the levels of passive synthesis and the combinations of these levels with one another and with active syntheses. All of this forms a rich domain of *signs* which always envelop heterogeneous elements and animate behaviour. Each contraction, each passive synthesis, constitutes a sign which is interpreted or deployed in active syntheses.²⁵¹

The first synthesis accounts for the passive contraction in the imagination of previous sensations into an anticipation of a future state of affairs. At the same time, this synthesis also accounts for the ways in which levels of contraction are themselves synthesised in a series of signs that determine the problem to which actions respond. Deleuze offers a preliminary description of active syntheses at this point: the manner in which sensation and perception—as well as all the traits of an entity that are superimposed onto a given passive synthesis: “need and heredity, learning and instinct, intelligence and memory”²⁵²—combine in the generation of an action that the entity in question enacts as a response to a certain *problem* arising from a contemplation or habit. This connection between the first synthesis of time and the determination of problems is crucial. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze suggests precisely this direction: “To contemplate is to question. Is it not the peculiarity of questions to ‘draw’ a response?”²⁵³

The second synthesis concerns the passive synthesis of the whole of the past that has no immediate importance to the synthesis of habit. Deleuze claims that in order for the synthesis of habit to occur, there must also be a simultaneous synthesis of the entirety of the past such that the past retains its reality while remaining distinct from the contraction that occurs in the imagination. It is only by virtue of this distinction of the whole of the past from the passive synthesis of habit that the elements synthesised in habit are themselves differentiated from all of the other virtual sensations from which the present contraction must distinguish itself. Put simply, the past, as a dimension of the present, must go unattended and the present must pass in order for time to have a direction more proper than that established by the anticipatory contractions of the first synthesis:

It is not that the present is a dimension of time: the present alone exists. Rather, synthesis constitutes time as a living present, and the past and the future as dimensions of this present. This synthesis is none the less intratemporal, which means that this present passes.²⁵⁴

The second synthesis is concerned with the limits of a present present and the way the conditions of a passive synthesis relate to the needs and power of a being: “The present extends

²⁵¹ Ibid., 73.

²⁵² Ibid., 73.

²⁵³ Ibid., 78.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 76.

between two eruptions of need, and coincides with the duration of a contemplation.”²⁵⁵ Deleuze claims that “we must distinguish the foundation from the ground”²⁵⁶ and so, while this originary synthesis of habit “constitutes the life of the passing present,” it is still grounded by another, “fundamental,” synthesis which “constitutes the being of the past” and in so doing causes the present to pass.²⁵⁷ This, of course, is the notorious discussion of “a ‘past in general’ that is not the particular past of a particular present but that is like an ontological element, a past that is eternal and for all time, the condition of the ‘passage’ of every particular present”²⁵⁸ that appears in all of Deleuze’s discussions of time from *Bergsonism* on. Where the first synthesis is concerned with the operations of habit, the second concerns the passive synthesis of memory against which habit distinguishes itself. This issue is grounded in an element of Deleuze’s reading of Bergson; in order for the present to pass—if the present is to become past—then there must be an element to its characteristic relations which constitute it as having already passed. In other words, if the present is to pass it must already contain its past as a dimension of itself. Deleuze notes in *Bergsonism*: “of the present we must say at every instant that it ‘was,’ and of the past, that it ‘is.’”²⁵⁹ If the present is the site of activity and of pure becoming then the past is impassive and does nothing, but it *subsists*—with all the reality proper to that which subsists—in the present as the being of the present:

the present *is not*; rather, it is pure becoming, always outside itself. It *is not*, but it acts. Its proper element is not being but the active or the useful. The past, on the other hand, has ceased to act or be useful. But it has not ceased to be. Useless and inactive, impassive, it *IS*, in the full sense of the word: It is identical with being in itself. It should not be said that it ‘was,’ since it is the in-itself of being, and the form under which being is preserved in itself.²⁶⁰

The meaning of the past in general is then to give a milieu in which the present expresses itself as past present (representation) or present present:

it is as if the past were trapped between two presents: the one which it has been and the one in relation to which it is past. The past is not the former present itself but the element in which we focus upon the latter.²⁶¹

Thus, when Deleuze conceives the second synthesis of time, he characterises it as the passive synthesis of the whole of the past in general such that it constitutes the milieu of the being of the present becoming. We expect then that the third synthesis—for all its infamous difficulty—must

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 77.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 79.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 80.

²⁵⁸ *Bergsonism* 56.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 55.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 55.

²⁶¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 80.

deal with a very specific problem; how is it that a contraction of the past corresponds to a future oriented action? In other words, the first and second syntheses address two indissociable issues; the past must be contracted as what persists and subsists in the present (second synthesis) and simultaneously must be organised in such a way that certain elements of the past are contracted into an anticipation of the future (first synthesis). For Deleuze there are then two levels or two repetitions, the first being “a repetition of successive independent elements or instants” (*habit*) and the second “a repetition of the Whole on diverse coexisting levels” (*memory*).²⁶² And with these two syntheses Deleuze continues to develop his conception of active synthesis: “Active synthesis, therefore, has two correlative - albeit non-symmetrical - aspects: reproduction and reflection, remembrance and recognition, memory and understanding.”²⁶³

How then do these syntheses relate to each other and generate an action? No answer to this question will yield the ground for predicting which actions will come about. The actions to come are indeterminate in the sense that the determination of a future is, in fact, the actualisation of that future. Consequently, the third synthesis does not concern a specific determined action; it concerns, rather, an action’s determinability and it is for this reason that the third synthesis can only be described in terms of the conditions it gives to the first and second syntheses such that their correspondence or association is expressed in an action. This is why Deleuze emphasises that “*Repetition is a condition of action before it is a concept of reflection.*”²⁶⁴ Certainly, this third synthesis—the “empty form of time”²⁶⁵—concerns the necessary openness of the future with regard to habit and memory. James Williams notes that the openness characteristic of the third synthesis of time is a necessary presupposition precisely because it is the condition for generating the genuinely novel,²⁶⁶ and so the third synthesis turns on a radical cut, a “caesura”, between past events that are representable and a future that is not given.

Deleuze describes this synthesis as having three characteristics. The first is the caesura that has just been described. The second characteristic of this cut is the need for *all* the events synthesised in the pure past to be cut from *all* the events that can become the future. In other words, the caesura must affirm the difference between the actual past—its image and representations—and the virtual in response to which the future will emerge. Deleuze describes the cut as generating a movement towards the genuinely new by invoking metaphors—the explosion of the sun, patricide or deicide—that describe the genesis of time’s direction in virtue of the way “the symbolic image . .

²⁶² Ibid., 84.

²⁶³ Ibid., 80.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 90.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 88.

²⁶⁶ James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's 'Difference and Repetition': A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 102.

. draws together the caesura, the before and the after.”²⁶⁷ But this image is so radical that it is incomprehensible—“too big for me”²⁶⁸—and consequently the calling forth of a future which cannot be given. Indeed, Deleuze says that it “matters little whether or not the event itself occurs ... so long as [those involved] experience the image of the act as too big for them.”²⁶⁹ It is not the radicality of the event that matters in some objective sense; it is the experience, the apprehension and comprehensibility of the caesura that is crucial.

Finally, the third characteristic of this synthesis is that time is synthesised into two series with respect to the caesura. What is synthesised in the genesis of these series is the ordering of the events that, on the one hand, cannot return; that lack the power to be of any consequence to what is to come. And, on the other hand, there is the series of events that return; the events that, in virtue of being relived in the cut are affirmed by it. These moments, whether they return or not, are events both of the past (*memory*) and of the future (*anticipation*) but they must not be confused with the past and future events of a historical time. Rather, what returns, whether it is the memory of something actual or what subsists virtually, is that which expresses a power of difference.

To understand why Deleuze affirms degrees of difference as the criteria for selection in repetition we must return to his discussion of Ideas and the virtual and the actual. Of course, this is difference as it has always been discussed and therefore must be designated not as *something* which is affirmed but as a set of relations affirmed by the third synthesis. Difference in this case is the complex process of different/ciation: “[w]hereas differentiation determines the virtual content of the Idea as problem, differentiation expresses the actualisation of this virtual and the constitution of solutions.”²⁷⁰ When Deleuze describes the virtual and the actual—the differentiated and the differentiated—he does so by describing an object as double and characterised by asymmetrical “images” that do not resemble each other.²⁷¹ On the one hand, differentiation—the determination of the Idea insofar as it is virtual—is complete but acts only on the existence and the distribution of the singular points that constitute the Idea. The nature of these points is determined by the shape and distribution of actual beings. On the other hand, the progression and determination of the virtual determines the form of an already operative actual side of the object whose constitutive parts are differentiated to express a response to a given Idea. What is differentiated then connects with other differentiated objects and generates a higher order being:

complete determination carries out the differentiation of singularities, but it bears only upon their existence and their distribution. The nature of these singular points is specified only by the

²⁶⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 89.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 89.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 89.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 209.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 209.

form of the neighbouring integral curves - in other words, by virtue of the actual or differentiated species and spaces ... every structure has a purely logical, ideal or dialectical time. However, this virtual time itself determines a time of differentiation, or rather rhythms or different times of actualisation which correspond to the relations and singularities of the structure and, for their part, measure the passage from virtual to actual. ... Each differentiation is a local integration or a local solution which then connects with others in the overall solution.²⁷²

It is with this logic of different/ciation, and the deduction of these three passive syntheses that are implicit in the dialectic of problems, that Deleuze discovers that underneath historical, linear time lies a profound notion of cyclical time. This cyclical time, in virtue of its Nietzschean heritage, is called eternal return. However, this is not return in the sense of a repetition of what has come before, it is an expression of power insofar as it is an affirmation of difference (different/ciation). But, of course, this is not “merely” a philosophy of time, it is a description of what and how beings become in an ontology that always implies a differentiated whole: “In this manner, the ground has been superseded by a groundlessness, a universal ungrounding which turns upon itself and causes only the yet-to-come to return.”²⁷³

While there are many ways of approaching this discussion of time that I have necessarily excluded from this discussion,²⁷⁴ I will close this chapter with a brief discussion that enables us to anticipate a move to the *Cinema* books. The ontological issue which unites the concerns of this thesis is Deleuze’s changing conception of the reciprocity of individuals and the whole. And so, we must consider how this chapter’s discussion of some well-known Deleuzian concepts—the virtual, multiplicity, and a philosophy of time—transform Spinozist concepts—essence, univocity, substance—in order to enact a categorical reversal of being and becoming.

Conclusion: Syntheses and the Renewal of Holism.

Given that substance can no longer be conceived as a univocal being that is independent of the expressions that modify it, how must we describe the whole? Deleuze argues that the answer is *multiplicity* provided that we understand it in its “substantive form”:

²⁷² Ibid., 210--211.

²⁷³ Ibid., 91.

²⁷⁴ Not only is James Williams interested in the three syntheses of time in Deleuze’s ontology (2011). Keith Faulkner revitalises the Freudian influence to elucidate the syntheses’ Bergsonian response to Kant. Keith Faulkner, *Deleuze and the Three Syntheses of Time* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2006). And Jay Lampert explores their place in the philosophy of history that emerges from Deleuze’s collaborations with Félix Guattari. Jay Lampert, *Deleuze and Guattari’s Philosophy of History* (London: Continuum, 2006).

In this Reimannian [*sic*] usage of the word ‘multiplicity’ (taken up by Husserl, and again by Bergson) the utmost importance must be attached to the substantive form: multiplicity must not designate a combination of the many and the one, but rather an organisation belonging to the many as such, which has no need whatsoever of unity in order to form a system.²⁷⁵

If there is anything to justify this comparison between multiplicity and substance it is a moment in *Bergsonism* where Deleuze, echoing Spinoza, claims that “duration is like a naturing nature (*nature naturante*), and matter a natured nature (*nature naturée*).”²⁷⁶ Deleuze characterises the second synthesis (the past in general) as an active sense of the world, or the world described in terms of the infinite attributes. That is, the attributes of substance that express an eternal and infinite essence. On the other hand, by comparing matter with nature understood as passive, Deleuze identifies matter with the modes that correspond to the sense of these attributive expressions of the essence of substance. This is to say that, Deleuze’s interpretation of Bergson employs a distinction between duration and matter that is comparable to the conception of the distinction between an actual mode and the degree of relational power that characterises it that is at the heart of his reading Spinoza. This comparison is instructive because it suggests that, just as a mode expresses a degree of power in an actual state of affairs, we should read matter as the determinate expression of duration. However, there is an important difference as well; in reading Spinoza, Deleuze has the univocity of the attributes to guarantee the correspondence between modal essences and existing modes. Conversely, with the schema he adapts from Bergson, Deleuze turns to the logic of multiplicities to develop the third synthesis that guarantees the correspondence between matter (*habit*) and duration (*memory*).

If matter and the whole are equivalent to the correspondence between existing modes and their essences, we must bear in mind Deleuze’s comment in *Difference and Repetition* where he at first seems to dismiss talk of essences when he says that “[i]deas are by no means essences. In so far as they are the objects of Ideas, problems belong on the side of events, affections or accidents rather than on that of theorematized essences.”²⁷⁷ However, Deleuze quickly qualifies this remark by redefining the work essences must do in the ontology he seeks to develop:

[t]he events and singularities of the Idea do not allow any positing of an essence as “what the thing is”. No doubt, if one insists, the word ‘essence’ might be preserved, but only on condition of saying that the essence is precisely the accident, the event, the sense; not simply the contrary

²⁷⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 182.

²⁷⁶ Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 93

²⁷⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 187.

of what is ordinarily called the essence but the contrary of the contrary: multiplicity is no more appearance than essence, no more multiple than one.²⁷⁸

This passage does not undermine the importance of essences to this schema. What it does, rather, is gesture towards how the constitution of a modal essence—a degree of power—is itself an event. That is, the degree of power expressed in an actual mode—the problem as such—is not given but rather is the expression of a degree of a *becoming*. The juxtaposition of a virtual becoming of the degree of power with the actual becoming of the mode requires repeated emphasis if we are to understand how the renewed conception of the whole collaborates happily with the categorical reversal of being and becoming that Deleuze undertakes in light of Nietzsche. “The whole,” Deleuze states, “constitutes a virtuality” and, understood as such, the whole—being neither one nor multiple—is a multiplicity.²⁷⁹ Or, to be more precise, the whole is both one and multiple because the whole is an indefinite, yet wholly determinate, structure: “the many is a multiplicity; even the one is a multiplicity. That the one is a multiplicity ... is enough to reject back-to-back adjectival propositions of the one-many and many-one type.”²⁸⁰ The description of the whole as a virtuality recalls chapter two’s invocation of a form of distributive holism wherein the whole was described as lacking unity—a whole that concerned the “the ‘each’ rather than the ‘all,’”²⁸¹ to borrow Christian Kerslake’s phrase—in order to suggest a universality that was concerned more with the distribution of particulars than with a supervening collectivity. Deleuze argues that “a monistic field is indeed a field inhabited by multiplicities ... there is nothing that is one, there is nothing that is multiple, everything is multiplicities.”²⁸²

To put it another way, when Deleuze read Spinoza he extracted a concept of the whole—substance, or, God or nature—that was constituted in the same event and in the same sense as the modal universe was produced. But, as we have seen, the problem with this conception is that the identity of the whole determines the differentiation of the modes. He returns to Hume, Nietzsche, and Bergson in *Difference and Repetition*—for he had written on all three before writing *Expressionism*—in order to confront the challenge of reversing this categorical hierarchy of identity and difference. I have argued in this chapter that he undertakes this reversal through the conception of a being and its power as reciprocal—the virtual and the actual; association as the juxtaposition of events that determine the structure of the space of their association in the event of their association—multiplicity; and the association of the whole and individuals as occurring through

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 191.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 185.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 182.

²⁸¹ Christian Kerslake, “The Vertigo of Philosophy: Deleuze and the Problem of Immanence.” *Radical Philosophy*, 113, (2002): 13.

²⁸² Deleuze, “Dualism, Monism and Multiplicities,” 99.

complex processes of different/ciation—repetition in the syntheses of time. This means that the identity of the whole is determined as the distributive systematicity that is immanent to the differentiation of its parts. In the *Cinema* books, Deleuze characterises the immanence of the whole as the reality of the relations that subsist in the affective continuum differentiated by actual lives. Indeed, from the point of view of the Bergsonism of the *Cinema* books, the definite article in *the whole* is misleading. In his reading of Bergson's theses on movement, Deleuze argues that the distinctions between actual beings are "artificial"²⁸³ and that the whole is the subsistence of the reality of the relational nature of these artificially delineated beings that stops their separation from each other ever becoming too robust. He argues that the whole

is not a closed set, but on the contrary that by virtue of which the set is never absolutely closed, never completely sheltered, that which keeps it open somewhere as if by the finest thread which attaches it to the rest of the universe.²⁸⁴

That is, in the *Cinema* books, Deleuze takes the subsistence and immanence of the whole to the point of arguing that it is not a closed set which contains all but is an element or sense of the reality of a set that guarantees its attachment to the sets around it, the sets with which it is always already in a relationship. In *Cinema*, Deleuze talks about bodies as relatively closed systems, or, more correctly, he describes relatively closed systems as bodies; a body in an ontological sense is any set of affective relations expressed—*embodied*—empirically in a relatively closed system. The whole is the virtual side of a body which guarantees that its delineation is relative and never absolute. The argument Deleuze makes in *Cinema* is that bodies are the site of the interaction and reciprocal determination of virtual and actual relations: on the one side is the determination of a degree of power and on the other is the actualisation of this degree in a set of sensible relations. To make more sense of these ideas, chapter four will explore how *affection* replaces *attribution* in Deleuze's horizontal holism. Central to this discussion will be an elucidation of how affection connects a degree of power with an empirical body.

²⁸³ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 10

²⁸⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 10.

CHAPTER FOUR

Cinema and Affect.

The *Cinema* project undertaken by Deleuze in the 1980s introduces a concreteness to his metaphysics by grounding this step in the progression of his ontology in an account of the affective relations of finite beings. What is uniquely significant about the *Cinema* books is that, through the turn to cinema, Deleuze offers descriptions of his ontology from the point of view of the particular beings who inhabit the world described by his ontology. *Cinema 1* focuses on sensible relations that are presented in terms of the continuity of perception, affection and action. From the point of view of the evolution of Deleuze's ontology, affection is presented as doing the work attribution did in his reading of Spinoza. Whilst coming out of his work on Spinoza, however, this chapter explores the ways in which the ontology of the *Cinema* books deepens and extends Deleuze's reading of Bergson. Indeed, the following discussion turns on one of the most crucial concepts Deleuze adopts from Bergson: *images*. Bergson begins *Matter and Memory* with praise for George Berkeley who "proved ... that the secondary qualities of matter have at least as much reality as the primary qualities."²⁸⁵ Bergson praises Berkeley for arguing against the habit of assuming that the secondary properties of matter—the sensible properties that are "*immediately perceived by sense*":²⁸⁶ heat and cold, taste, odour, sound, colour, etc.—are properties of objects and are independent of the subject of experience. Berkeley's mistake, according to Bergson, was to think this led to the denial of material objects, *per se*. The concept of images that Deleuze inherits from Bergson was originally developed in response to this precise problem; that is, the problem of how to conceptualise the nature of an "existence placed half-way between the 'thing' and the 'representation.'"²⁸⁷ As such, Bergson's concept of images is crucial to the conversion of Deleuze's ontology into a project concerned with a relationality grounded in sensibility.

This is a significant step because it brings this narrative about his transforming ontology back into contact with the ethical side of the ethological project that interests this thesis. In chapter three, we saw how Deleuze qualified his holistic ontology by developing the conceptual tools to talk meaningfully about the whole as a multiplicity constituted as the expression of the degrees of power determined by the differentiation of the individual lives that participate in the whole. In other

²⁸⁵ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margarent Paul and W. Scott Palmer (Mineola: Dover Publicans, Inc., 2004), ix.

²⁸⁶ George Berkley, *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonus*, ed. Robert Merrihew Adams (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1979), 11.

²⁸⁷ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, viii.

words, Deleuze developed the conceptual tools to, as he put it in *Difference and Repetition*, “make substance turn around the modes.”²⁸⁸ In the reading of Bergson in the *Cinema* books, Deleuze takes this further and his ontology continues to resemble the one he argues for in Spinoza by retaining the logic of a doubly expressive operation. In Spinoza’s case, it was the attributes that were doubly expressive—they simultaneously constituted the essence of God and contained the essences of the modal universe that was produced as an expression of the degree of the constitution of God. In the *Cinema* books, affection takes centre stage and constitutes the whole by expressing the affects that occupy the interval between perception and action. The other side of this expression is that, expressed as affects *as such*—that is, as affects *per se* rather than the experience of an event tied to a subject—they are expressed as degrees of power which subsist in the differentiation of actual lives and, taken together, these degrees of power constitute an immanent, heterogeneous multiplicity. Because this conversion of his ontology into a form of holism where the whole is the immanent systematicity of the degrees of power that subsist in the affective relations of actual individuals, the *Cinema* books’ return to Bergson constitutes a necessary, final step in the development of Deleuze’s ontology. Consequently, each element of this chapter is focussed on either explicating the sensible elements developed in this conversion—that is, the elements that make this a concrete ontology of sensible relations—or in elaborating how they are deployed in order to achieve this conversion. The fundamental element of this conversion is the image and, to understand how the image functions in this project, we need to begin with the way Deleuze develops a Bergsonian conception of division and continuity. This conception is developed in Deleuze’s reading of Bergson’s analysis of movement because it is here that Deleuze sets out the context for conceiving the continuity and relationality that underpins his entire ontology.

Movement and Distinction.

Deleuze’s engagement with Bergson echoes his treatment of Spinoza. His concern in relation to both philosophers is to conceptualise the nature of the qualitative variation of a virtual whole, the quantitative division amongst actual things, and the reciprocity between the two. In Bergson, Deleuze finds a theory of divisions that is similar to Spinoza’s theory of distinctions. His reading of Bergson emphasises the concept of images developed in *Matter and Memory* because it provides a conceptual vocabulary for describing the actual world as an affective continuum. Deleuze appropriates Bergson’s conception of images as a tool that enables him to argue that the

²⁸⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 304.

division between actual objects is quantitative but not real—“artificial”²⁸⁹—because these existents presuppose a relational, continuous whole whose transformations they express. The similarity between Deleuze’s Spinozism and his Bergsonism is that, in both cases, ostensibly distinct actual existents presuppose a qualitatively heterogeneous whole and express the relational degrees of this whole’s constitution. In order to understand how images give him this conception of a transforming affective continuum, we must begin with the theory of divisions that Deleuze finds in Bergson’s analyses of movement in the final chapter of *Creative Evolution*. In the first chapter of *Cinema 1*, Deleuze presents these analyses as three theses which together set out an initial formulation of the reciprocity of individuals and the whole that grounds the ontology of images that he adapts from *Matter and Memory*.

Bergson’s first thesis on movement is in fact the initial formulation of a problem that follows from a critical response to what Bergson sees as “the absurd proposition, that movement is made of immobilities.”²⁹⁰ Bergson argues that movement is poorly understood when it is conceived as the accretion of discrete units in space. Movement is not, for Bergson, “a mere instantaneous juxtaposition in space.”²⁹¹ Rather, he claims that movement must be conceived continuously, as the “*transition*” between the points which express this transition.²⁹² The second thesis follows directly from this discussion and appears as part of Bergson’s confrontation with the historical and contemporary conceptions of system and their relationship with this inadequate conception of movement. For Deleuze, the crucial moment here is Bergson’s massaging of the critique of movement that constituted the first thesis in order to identify two illusions. On the one hand, classical philosophy gives us a conception of movement that “refers to intelligible elements ... Forms or Ideas which are themselves eternal and immobile.”²⁹³ These elements are then more or less accurately actualised in the entities in the world. As Deleuze puts it: “Movement ... will thus be the regulated transition from one form to another, that is, an order of poses or privileged instants, as in a dance.”²⁹⁴ On the other hand, modern science gives us movement that is still composed from abstract intervals; however, “*it[is] no longer recomposed from formal transcendental elements (poses), but from immanent material elements (sections).*”²⁹⁵ Deleuze calls this immanent material section an *any-instant-whatever* and argues that, where antiquity had conceived movement as a synthesis of poses, modern science infers movement, *qua* recomposition, from an in-principle infinitesimal analysis of moving-matter. The illusion in both cases is to think that movement occurs

²⁸⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 10; Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 36.

²⁹⁰ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: Dover Publications, 1998), 308.

²⁹¹ Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 341.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 313.

²⁹³ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 4.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

in the juxtaposition of these points or sections. For Deleuze these two illusions amount to much the same thing and are fraught with the same problem:

[i]n fact, to recompose movement with eternal poses or with immobile sections comes to the same thing: in both cases, one misses the movement because one constructs a Whole, one assumes that ‘all is given’, whilst movement only occurs if the whole is neither given nor giveable. As soon as a whole is given to one in the eternal order of forms or poses, or in the set of any-instant-whatevers, then either time is no more than the image of eternity, or it is the consequence of the set; there is no longer room for real movement.²⁹⁶

The word “eternity” is a reference to a discussion in *Creative Evolution*. In an illusion Bergson calls *cinematographical*, “the forms ... are ... only snapshots of the changing reality”²⁹⁷ which are conceived by virtue of a process of abstracting forms from their duration—distinguishing “agents” from “processes,” to use Boundas’ terms—such that “past, present and future shrink into a single moment, which is eternity.”²⁹⁸ In other words, because this cinematographical illusion abstracts movement from the objects which move, it reduces time to a single moment without duration. This reduction leads to either of the two illusions Deleuze describes. On the one hand, the classical illusion conceives movement as composed through the juxtaposition of privileged poses and, on the other hand, in the modern illusion movement is composed from the accretion of “immanent material elements.” Insofar as each illusion takes the respective poses and sections as given and thus overlooks the whole’s variation every time there is a translation in space, they lead us into the error of taking the whole to be a consequence of the actual and to be like the actual.

In Deleuze’s reading, the whole cannot be given, “because it is the Open”²⁹⁹ and, because it is open its nature is constant change, or the production of the new. Hence Deleuze’s presentation of a third and final thesis on movement; movement is double insofar as it is simultaneously the translation or rearrangement of parts in space and the openness of these parts to a whole which changes qualitatively. In *Cinema 1*, Deleuze conceives movement as facing in two directions, or rather, as a process that has two elements: “it is the relationship between parts and it is the state of

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 7.

²⁹⁷ Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 317. This discussion is itself a reference to Plato’s *Timaeus*, hence Bergson’s use of *forms*.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 320. Bergson’s argument is that this cinematographic illusion is the consequence of consciousness, being formed on the intellect, seeing “clearly of the inner life what is already made, and only [feeling] confusedly the making.” Ibid., 273. In fact, this is a criticism of the mechanistic illusion whereby consciousness confuses the divisibility of bodies for the conditions of their movement and life. Early in *Cinema 1*, Deleuze argues that Bergson mistook cinema’s potential since the medium was still in its infancy when *Creative Evolution* was written in 1907. The problem, in sum, is the illusion that movement is an abstract relationship added to immobile forms; however, as we will see in the next two sections, Deleuze argues that “cinema does not give us an image to which movement is added, it immediately gives us a movement-image. It does give us a section, but a section which is mobile, not an immobile section + abstract movement.” Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 2.

²⁹⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 9.

the whole.”³⁰⁰ On the one hand, movement involves a communication—an interaction and translation in space, a “*rapport*”³⁰¹—between parts; on the other hand, movement also entails the relationship of this spatial translation to the whole. Since Deleuze defines the whole as relational³⁰² and, since the divisions between sets are artificial, the translation in space is not the reality of movement, even though it is its actual expression. The reality of movement is the qualitative change in the relational whole in which the translation of parts participates and which it explicates. Still, even though Deleuze is fond of saying that relations are external to their terms, this whole does not exist outside or independently of the sets that express it. To explain the subsistence of the virtual whole in actual being, Deleuze adapts the Bergsonian vocabulary of images. His discussion of the relationship between movement and images and, ultimately, affection, focuses on how the actual and the virtual are immanent to the sensible relationality of images.

Bergson’s theses on movement enable Deleuze to transform the ontology he develops through his reading of Spinoza by converting it into a discussion of objects, movement and the transformation of the plane across which they move. This transformation turns on an identity of movement and continuous multiplicities insofar as the former, as Constantin Boundas observes,

require[s] that the distinction between movement (the process) and moving (the agent or patient) be abandoned. Movement affects both space and the bodies moving through it. To move is not to go through a trajectory which can be decomposed and recombined in quantitative terms; it is to become other than itself, in a sense that makes movement a qualitative change.³⁰³

Boundas’ identification of the logic of continuous multiplicities is vital because, as Deleuze argues, movement is not a relation that occurs between abstract, autonomous objects; it is not a reconstitution of “movement with the space covered, that is, by adding together instantaneous immobile sections and abstract time.”³⁰⁴ Just as with continuous multiplicities, the composition of the space through which bodies move is not really distinct from the bodies themselves. As such, the spatial translation of a body contributes to the composition of the whole of the space which contains the moving body. At the same time, the moving body is a function of the composition of the space through which it moves and, as such, it does not merely move from one point to the next unaffected by the transformations of the space across which it moves. The moving body becomes, as Boundas puts it, “other than itself” insofar as it undergoes continual transformations reciprocally with the transformations of its milieu. To understand how Deleuze converts the problematic of sections and

³⁰⁰ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 19.

³⁰¹ Gilles Deleuze. *Cinéma 1: L'image-mouvement*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1983, 32.

³⁰² Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 10.

³⁰³ Constantin V. Boundas, “Deleuze-Bergson: An Ontology of the Virtual,” in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. Paul Patton (Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1996), 84.

³⁰⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 3.

poses into one of centres within a relational, continuous universe we must unpack the pivotal Bergsonian concept to which Deleuze appeals: *images*.

Images and Representation.

The term “image” might initially seem strange insofar as it evokes some sort of distinction between the objects of perception and objects as they actually are. In appealing to the notion of the image, Bergson and Deleuze are in critical dialogue with the traditional philosophical distinction between external objects and mental representations. As Bergson puts it at the start of *Matter and Memory*, an image is more than a “representation” and less than a “thing”; it is “an existence placed half-way between the ‘thing’ and the ‘representation.’”³⁰⁵ In section XII of his *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Hume famously articulates the problem by noting that even “the slightest philosophy” assumes that “nothing can ever be present to the mind but an image or a perception.”³⁰⁶ Hume is interested in the peculiar problem that arises when we realise that, though the object of our perception changes as we continue to relate to it, the object itself, we presume, remains constant. Thus there arises a peculiar problem and an “extreme embarrassment” to philosophy: that the natural instinct to believe that the external world causes, and is present in, our perceptions is naïve and untenable, and yet equally untenable is the rationalist belief that the images born of our senses are distinct from an external world with which they cannot be reconciled.³⁰⁷

There have, of course, been many, varied attempts to negotiate this problem, but here I am interested in the way Deleuze, in his reading of Bergson, defends a nuanced version of a belief that Hume takes to be an immediate consequence of “a natural instinct or prepossession.” For Hume, we “always suppose the very images presented by the senses, to be the external objects, and never entertain any suspicion, that the one are nothing but the representations of the other.”³⁰⁸ Bergson begins *Matter and Memory* by considering this natural instinct. He asks his readers to rise above the habitual assumption of a substantial distinction between the object and our perception of it and to inhabit a “point of view of a mind unaware of the disputes of philosophers.”³⁰⁹ This does not mean Bergson is guilty of any special pleading when it comes to accepting the hypotheses he puts forward

³⁰⁵ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, vii-viii.

³⁰⁶ David Hume. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Eric Steinberg (ed.), Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993, 104.

³⁰⁷ Hume, *Enquiry*, 102--107.

³⁰⁸ Hume, *Enquiry*, 104.

³⁰⁹ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, viii. Leonard Lawlor offers an incisive and compelling discussion of how Bergson employs this artifice “to ‘dissipate’ the obscurity” of the false problems bequeathed to modern philosophy by the split between materialism/realism and idealism/spiritualism. Leonard Lawlor, *The Challenge of Bergsonism: Phenomenology, Ontology, Ethics*, (London: Continuum, 2003), 1--4.

in *Matter and Memory*. On the contrary, he suggests that the hostility that will arise with respect to his hypotheses is a product of our habitual deference to the idea that the contents of the mind are in some sense representations of some external object. Bergson's obvious frustration in the first chapter of *Matter and Memory* is directed at this representationalist thesis insofar as it seeks to conjure the external world from the mind's ideas or vice versa. In spite of this frustration, Bergson concedes that states of affairs in the world cannot help us decide between these theses, especially since pure perception—that is, perception idealised and considered without memory—“bears, by definition, upon *present* objects ... and because everything always happens ... *as though* our perceptions emanated from our cerebral state.”³¹⁰ While he grants the intuition that the objects of our perceptions are dependent in some way on our perceptions (the point that motivates both 18th century Idealism and 20th century phenomenism), Bergson argues that his thesis regarding the continuity of mind and world is to be preferred to the representationalist hypothesis on the grounds of its “greater intelligibility.”³¹¹ The problem for Bergson is that, even if experience operates as though our perceptions emanate from within us, representationalism remains unintelligible because it will inevitably run into the problem of how, if our perceptions do spring from our minds, the content of our minds ever coincides with the world intuition tells us we inhabit.

The most immediate point of connection between Deleuze's Spinoza and his reading of Bergson, is their respective attempts to outmanoeuvre particular species of dualism, whether post-Kantian dualism, in Bergson's case, or Cartesian dualism, in Spinoza's case. Similar to Spinoza's conception of body and mind as different systems of reference for the same event—that is, parallel modifications of substance—Bergson describes an image as being equally able to be understood from an objective point of view where, “related only to itself,” it contains an absolute value, or, from a subjective point of view, “the world of consciousness, wherein all the images depend on a central image, our body, the variations of which they follow.”³¹² On the one hand, following Descartes, Spinoza endeavours to provide an objective description of mind and body where the body is the modal expression of the constitution of substance and mind is an idea of the body. On the other hand, Bergson argues that the problem is to understand how images operate for a subjective world—consciousness—and how images also operate for an objective world; in this case, the problem is how these worlds are correlative expressions of a sensible continuum. For both Spinoza and Bergson, matter and mind are expressions of degrees of change in a relational whole in which there is no substantial gap between the material and ideal that has to be bridged. Each world,

³¹⁰ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 83.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 83.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 13--14.

ideal and material, is a different system of reference for expressing a whole undergoing constant modification.

Bergson describes images as emerging from the gap between pictorial representations and their objects: “by ‘image’ we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a representation, but less than that which the realist calls a thing,—an existence placed half-way between the ‘thing’ and the ‘representation.’”³¹³ Bergson uses this term to flatten his ontology so that my body, the ‘external object’ and the affects which mediate their relations, are all the same *type* of thing. This is why the relational world Deleuze articulates throughout his project is here described as a universe of continual movement, and this continual movement is equivalent to a universe of images: “We find ourselves ... faced with the exposition of a world where IMAGE=MOVEMENT. Let us call the set of what appears ‘Image.’”³¹⁴ Thus, in talking of images, Deleuze is not referring uniquely to cinema; rather, he is building upon Bergson’s conception of a universe that constitutes the subjects and objects of perception by virtue of a series of continuous sensible relations. Bergson, indeed, begins *Matter and Memory* by describing images in terms of the *mise-en-scène* of the field of our perceptions: “images perceived when my senses are opened to them, unperceived when they are closed.”³¹⁵ Images describe what Bergson takes to be primitive: an experience of being immersed in a world of representations (and here Bergson is playing on the idea of images in the mind) and corresponding external objects. The way Bergson describes it, there are images which are referred to me and which vary with the modifications of my being, and there are images which refer to themselves and vary occasionally in their relations with other images but do not change for my sake. Such images do not form distinct series but constitute distinct systems of reference for the same order of images:

the same images can enter at the same time into two distinct systems, one belonging to [*material*] science, wherein each image, related only to itself, possesses an absolute value; and the other, the world of *consciousness*, wherein all the images depend on a central image, our body, the variations of which they follow.³¹⁶

Bergson does not defend his starting position; rather, by starting from what he takes to be a fact about existence—that we constantly find ourselves “in the presence of images”³¹⁷—he begins *in media res* and aims to show that such a beginning puts the lie to the split between consciousness and external things. Bergson wants to show that, by starting with the immediate presence of images,

³¹³ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, vii--viii.

³¹⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 58.

³¹⁵ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 1.

³¹⁶ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 13--14.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

we will understand the world in such a way that the rift between materialism and idealism will never be opened. Bergson thus proposes a plane of images within which our bodies constitute a variable centre and, consequently, the fulcrum of relations—what Bergson calls a “centre,” itself an image—is neither privileged nor derided relative to the position it maintains on the plane on which it appears. As Suzanne Guerlac notes, Bergson talks in terms of images so as to “interrupt our usual habits of thought”;³¹⁸ he wants us to stop considering sensory information in terms of a more or less fallible epistemological engagement (*à la* Descartes) and think in terms of perception’s relationship with action. For Deleuze, this means developing a model of the universe in which perception and movement

would be ... a state of things which would constantly change, a flowing-matter in which no point of anchorage nor centre of reference would be assignable. On the basis of this state of things it would be necessary to show how, at any point, centres can be formed which would impose fixed instantaneous views.³¹⁹

The determinism of Bergson’s description of this universe initially appears almost Laplacean; if we are content to describe them from the point of view of perception then all these images seem to act and react upon each other in consistent ways, according to constant laws and, if we had perfect knowledge of these laws, we could predict all future states of these images.³²⁰ This being the case, it would seem that the future states of images consist of nothing that is not already contained in their present state. However, there is an image which I can take from a different point of view: my body. This image, claims Bergson, can not only be known from an external point of view, it can also be known “from within by affections.”³²¹ For Bergson, my body can be viewed in two ways, from the point of view of its external relations or from an internal point of view in terms of how those external relations are enfolded into affective states:

The distinction between the inside and the outside will then be only a distinction between the part and the whole. There is, first of all, the aggregate of images; and then, in this aggregate, there are ‘centres of action,’ from which the interesting images appear to be reflected: *My body* is that which stands out as the centre of these perceptions; *my person* is the being to which these actions must be referred. ... My body, then, acts like an image which reflects others, and which,

³¹⁸ Suzanne Guerlac, *Thinking in Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 112.

³¹⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 57--58.

³²⁰ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 2--3.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

in so doing, analyses them along lines corresponding to the different actions which it can exercise upon them.³²²

Bergson's claim seems clear, if counterintuitive; if I am to distinguish between the inside and outside of my body then I will do so by virtue of a distinction between the parts of a system and that system as a whole. Deleuze's understanding of this Bergsonian concept of the image leads to an affirmation of the equivalency of the object and the image, which entails that the *object* and the *representation* are distinct only by virtue of the set of relations to which they are referred. The image called *perception* is not a representation of the object, nor is it some Ideal mental content derived from the object, it is the object/image related to a particular image which frames it, selects out particular information and reacts to it mediately. Thus we can provisionally say that the body, *my body*, is the special image to which the object relates mediately. Bergson emphasises the fact that the body is not an impersonal object; when objects are referred to it, their relation is mediated by the *being* of the special image. This is why he says that "my person is the being to which these actions must be referred."

Even though Deleuze argues that moving bodies are indistinguishable from the executed movement, he still needs to carry out a deduction of the various degrees to which the affective continuum can be differentiated. Just as his Spinozism has its way of describing the expression or actualisation of modifications of the whole, *Cinema* has its own way of describing the elements of an actual set. In this sense, Deleuze talks about three types of image, the *avatars of the movement-image*,³²³ that express degrees of the whole's transformation in actual occurrences.

The Movement-Image and Its Avatars.

I argued in the previous chapter that Deleuze invokes the non-Euclidean geometry of Bernhard Riemann and his concept of a continuous multiplicity—a space determined by the events that occur across it—as a way of articulating Bergson's formulation of *durée*. The reciprocal determination between a space and the events that populate it is, both for Deleuze and Bergson, a way to conceive the one and the many such that they are no longer opposed to each other. For Bergson this means understanding the two terms (many and one, part and whole) as points of view on the folding of continuous processes into the actions characteristic of bodies. Deleuze takes up

³²² Ibid., 44–46. Translation modified. Bergson wrote, "*Mon corps est ce qui se dessine au centre de ces perceptions; ma personne est l'être auquel il faut rapporter ces actions.*" Bergson *Matière et Mémoire*, 49. Paul and Palmer's translation renders this as "My body is that which stands out as the centre of these perceptions; my personality is the being to which these actions must be referred." I have rendered "*personne*" as *person* to avoid the psychological baggage that "personality" has accumulated in the century since Paul and Palmer produced their translation.

³²³ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 64.

this theme in *Cinema 1* when he describes movement in terms of the relationship between Bergson's bodies—now renamed “relatively closed system[s]”³²⁴—and the plane of immanence—the set of what appears, the manifold of relations, or, the *mise-en-scène* of perception—that animates them. If we return to a passage from *Cinema 1*, we can see that what interests Deleuze is how Bergson's extension of the discussion of images makes possible an ontology wherein the movement of an object is inseparable from the object itself:

[w]e find ourselves in fact faced with the exposition of a world where IMAGE = MOVEMENT. Let us call the set of what appears ‘Image’. We cannot even say that one image acts on another or reacts to another. There is no moving body which is distinct from executed movement. There is nothing moved which is distinct from the received movement. Every thing, that is to say every image, is indistinguishable from its actions and reactions: this is universal variation. Every image is merely a road by which pass, in every direction, the modifications propagated throughout the immensity of the universe. Every image acts on others and reacts to others, on all their facets at once and by all their elements.³²⁵

Deleuze takes up Bergson's ontology of images in order to critically reformulate the relation between objects and movement. The type of image around which Deleuze formulates his affective ontology is the *movement-image*. Insofar as the objects that fill out the universe are sections cut from a continuum, Deleuze, like Bergson before him, wants a way to refer to these objects that recognises the fact that they were always already in motion. It is the concept of a movement-image that makes this possible: “cinema does not give us an image to which movement is added, it immediately gives us a movement-image. It does give us a section, but a section which is mobile, not an immobile section + abstract movement.”³²⁶

In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson suggests “that the movements of matter are very clear, regarded as images, and that there is no need to look in movement for anything more than what we see in it.”³²⁷ Deleuze cites this remark in his discussion of Bergson's critique of the traditional distinction between objects and the movements they execute.³²⁸ In that context, Deleuze offers an insight that will be key to understanding how perception and action fit into the universe he describes. He begins by citing Bergson:

‘You may say that my body is matter or that it is an image.’ The *movement-image* and *flowing-matter* are strictly the same thing. ... The plane of immanence is ... therefore a section;

³²⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 12.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 58.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

³²⁷ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 9--10.

³²⁸ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 58.

but, ... it is not an immobile and instantaneous section, it is a mobile section, a temporal section, a temporal section or perspective. The material universe, the plane of immanence, is the *machine assemblage of movement-images*³²⁹

In this passage the universe is described as a composite of movement-images; that is, of mobile sections of duration. The entities that inhabit the universe presuppose a relationality that they express. Everything we see is an image but it is not a representation by which an object is apparent to consciousness. It is a perception of the objects around us; the objects of our perceptions are the movements—*flowing-matter*—of the world and both the perceptions and the movements are images. There are no entities *as such* but rather, as Deleuze puts it in *Difference and Repetition*, “being[s] of becoming.”³³⁰ This idea appears in *Cinema 1* when Deleuze employs Bergson’s vocabulary of a system of double references:

An essential consequence follows—*the existence of a double system, of a double régime of reference of images*. There is firstly a system in which each image varies for itself, and all the images act and react as a function of each other, on all their facets and in all their parts. But to this is added another system where all vary principally for a single one, which receives the action of the other images on one of its facets and reacts to them on another facet.³³¹

Consequently, moving bodies cannot be distinguished from the movements they execute, nor can affected entities be distinguished from what affects or moves them. This appropriation of Bergson allows Deleuze to be more forceful about the relational nature of the entities that fill out his ontology. Fundamental to this appropriation is Bergson’s articulation of the universe as a plane of immanence with movements that run “from the periphery to the centre, and from the centre to the periphery.”³³² This description appears in the context of Bergson’s discussion of the continuity of perception and action and, as such, it is *perception* that travels from the periphery to the centre and *action* that travels from the centre to the periphery.³³³ In both cases we are dealing with movement-images, the difference is the status of the centre to which the movement-image is referred. This continuity of perception and action and the status of the centre, what Deleuze will call an affection-image, leads Deleuze to describe the movement-image as composed of—as differentiated into—three avatars, three types of image:

movement-images divide into three sorts of images when they are related to a centre of indetermination as to a special image: perception-images, action-images and affection-images.

³²⁹ Ibid., 59.

³³⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 41.

³³¹ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 62.

³³² Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 40.

³³³ Ibid., 40--41.

And each one of us, the special image or the contingent centre, is nothing but an assemblage of three images, a consolidate of perception-images, action-images and affection-images.³³⁴

In the discussion of the three avatars in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Deleuze is explicit about the way that the perception-image—“the degree-zero in the deduction which is carried out as a function of the movement-image”³³⁵—grounds the continuity of the other avatars and is the condition of the genesis of a whole. This is why Deleuze argues that the avatars “are not simply ordinal—first, second, third—but cardinal: there are two in the second to the point where there is a firstness in the secondness, and there are three in the third.”³³⁶ These avatars, moreover, are types of images that in their relationships constitute a “movement-image [that] gives rise to a sensory-motor whole.”³³⁷ These types are an affection-image (firstness), an action-image (secondness), a relation-image (thirdness) and respectively they constitute “something that only refers to itself, [a] quality or a power ... that refers to itself only through something else ... and something that refers only to itself by comparing one thing to another.”³³⁸

If the movement-image is the continuity of a thing and its relations this is because it is the relationality which folds from an exteriority of objects into a centre of indetermination by virtue of a selection amongst virtual actions and the actualisation of movement. Deleuze devotes much of *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* to discussing the components of the movement-image, and to showing that the movement-image is not a set of relations between pre-constituted components. In doing this he again follows Bergson who suggests that “because of the invincible tendency to think on all occasions of *things* rather than movements”³³⁹ we misinterpret this relationship; we think of one agent passively receiving impressions from another and are thus unable to reconstruct the passage by which the impression, or image, travels from one point to another. In this sense, Bergson is concerned to highlight the operations of the faculty for receiving impressions: perception. Indeed, its importance and primacy as the ground of the subject of perception is what leads Deleuze to describe perception as the “degree zero” in the cardinal relationship of the avatars.³⁴⁰ Bergson describes a particularly tight relationship between perception and action such that “perception, ... is ... entirely directed towards action, and not towards pure knowledge.”³⁴¹ Thus, perception does not reflect upon an object in order to know it, but sifts relevant data from irrelevant data *en route* to the determination of action. To appreciate why Deleuze sees the avatars of the movement-image as

³³⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 66.

³³⁵ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 31.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

³³⁹ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 154.

³⁴⁰ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 31--32.

³⁴¹ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 21.

expressing qualitative changes to the whole, we must consider the way in which Bergson's understanding of perception as posing a question to my body is taken up by Deleuze in his effort to characterise the relationship between perception and action as progressing dialectically through affection.

Perception and Action, Problems and Solutions.

Perception is, for both Bergson and Deleuze, so bound up in its relationship with action that the best way to describe it is in terms of how it operates. Indeed, it is the reciprocity of perception and action that leads Bergson to offer provisional definitions of matter and the perception of matter as, firstly, "*the aggregate of images*" and secondly "*these same images referred to the eventual action of one particular image, my body.*"³⁴² Deleuze takes this to mean that the only difference between the perception of an object and the object as such is the point of view—the system of reference—to which it is related. In this cinematic ontology, the image is the material object and, as such, the only distinction between an object and the idea of the object concerns our method of understanding the relation. When referring to the image in itself, "as it is related to all the other images to whose action it completely submits and on which it reacts immediately,"³⁴³ we can say that the image is the object. When we refer the image to another image which frames it, it is a *perception-image*. For example, when I look at the tree outside my window, there is a point of view from which the tree is a thing amongst other things and, insofar as it is an object, the tree is submitted entirely to the other images/objects around it, relative to which it reacts immediately. In this case, the tree is referred to as an object. Conversely, when I describe the tree insofar as it induces certain behaviours on my part, I call it a perception of the tree. In both cases there is only one image; on the one hand, we can refer to it objectively, in its immediate and complete relations with other images and, on the other hand, we can refer to it as relative to a special image which frames it, a special image by which the reactions are mediated. Both Deleuze and Bergson argue that, defined this way, perception escapes the peculiar problem of representation. By defining perception as a process of framing and mediation it is a fundamentally subtractive process; that is, there is strictly less in the perception than in the object *per se*:

[f]rom the point of view which occupies us for the moment, we go from total, objective perception which is indistinguishable from the thing, to a subjective perception which is distinguished from it by simple elimination or subtraction. It is this uncentred subjective

³⁴² Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 8.

³⁴³ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 63.

perception that is called perception strictly speaking. And it is the first avatar of the movement-image: when it is related to a centre of indetermination, it becomes *perception-image*.³⁴⁴

Within the context of the *Cinema* project, the notion of perception as a process of elimination or subtraction is central to Deleuze's formulation of the dialectic of problems. What Deleuze calls "the image as it is in itself"³⁴⁵ is the world Bergson describes as posing challenges to my body. That is, Bergson offers a conception of perception as the posing of a problem when he claims that,

[a]s many threads as pass from the periphery to the centre, so many points of space are there able to make an appeal to my will and to put, so to speak, an elementary question to my motor activity. Every such question is what is termed a perception.³⁴⁶

Insofar as Bergson considers perception to be a subtractive process, he argues that, if we conceive living beings as centres of indetermination, and if "the degree of this indetermination is measured by the number and rank of their functions, [then] we can conceive that their mere presence is equivalent to the suppression of all those parts of objects in which their functions find no interest."³⁴⁷ From the objects that transmit the data that finds a response in the centres, only part of what is reflected from their surface is relevant to the responses the centre can formulate. The information that is not relevant passes by unacknowledged and what is relevant is subtracted and converted into action. The centres of indetermination "allow to pass through them ... those external influences which are indifferent to them; the others isolated, become 'perceptions' by their very isolation."³⁴⁸

For Bergson, the body, or, rather, the nervous system that characterises it, is "a mere conductor" which is lodged between the objects that affect it and those it can influence, thus the nervous system works to transmit, reflect or inhibit movement.³⁴⁹ Deleuze suggests that, from the point of view of this influence and transmission, "[w]e are still in the perception-image, but we are already entering the action-image as well. In fact, perception is only one side of the gap, and action is the other side. What is called action, strictly speaking, is the delayed reaction of the centre of indetermination."³⁵⁰ If we refer to what Bergson calls a special image—what Deleuze variously

³⁴⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 64. Quentin Meillasoux offers an incisive interpretation of the first chapter of *Matter and Memory*, the important distinction between an active selection and a passive reception of images therein, as well as the significance of this distinction for Deleuze's project. "Subtraction and Contraction: Deleuze, Immanence and *Matter and Memory*," *Collapse*. no. 3, (2007): 63--107.

³⁴⁵ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 63.

³⁴⁶ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 40--41.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 28--29.

³⁴⁹ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 40.

³⁵⁰ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 64. This question of indetermination recalls our ongoing discussion of why, for Deleuze, and for Bergson before him, the outcome of an event cannot be given in advance of its actually occurring. While the first synthesis of time is the expression of an anticipation of the future grounded in prior experience, this anticipation

calls a “special image,” “my body,” “a centre of indetermination” and “an interval”—we can see why Deleuze’s ontology does not go far enough if it is limited to an “objective” account of the world. The subject—the *being* of the special image—stands out precisely because, insofar as I am a subject, I am able to take a more nuanced point of view on the being of the special image. In the most concrete terms, the special image is my body and I am able to view it internally; that is, *subjectively*. For Bergson this issue is clear; when we consider action in these subjective terms we see an indetermination which is implied in the structure of the nervous system—“an indetermination to which this system seems to point much more than to representation.”³⁵¹ This indetermination is why, for Deleuze, the interval between perception and action, between incoming information and an outgoing response, is not empty:

the interval is not merely defined by the specialisation of the two limit-facets, perceptive and active. There is an in-between. Affection is what occupies the interval, what occupies it without filling it in or filling it up. It surges in the centre of indetermination ... between a perception which is troubling in certain respects and a hesitant action.³⁵²

The interval that generates action is characterised by a series of affections, and we know from the cardinal interrelationship of images that affection does not so much precede action as ground it. Every action is grounded in an affection, and action contains the affections that form it. This is why Deleuze says that affection “surges in the centre of indetermination ... between a perception which is troubling in certain respects and a hesitant action. It is a coincidence of subject and object ... It relates movement to a ‘quality’ as lived state.”³⁵³ Because affection occupies the interval between the received perception and the reflected action, it suggests a coincidence of subject and object. As Ronald Bogue explains, to say that subject and object coincide is to say “that the object of perception is felt in conjunction with a bodily sensation.”³⁵⁴ So, when Bergson says that affection is “that part or aspect of the inside of our body which we mix with the image of external bodies,”³⁵⁵ he affirms that we are “embodied perceivers”³⁵⁶ insofar as the affection-image is the coupling of an object with a body—*my body*—that responds to the perception of the object. This Bergsonian conception of affection offers a way to approach what Deleuze calls “the second part of

participates in the determination of the conditions of the future and, as such, the future cannot be given without participating in the determination of the actual future. This sense in which the future cannot, in principle, be given is the sense in which both Deleuze and Bergson call the centre a centre of indetermination. This indetermination cannot be overstated because it is a function of the constitution of subjects. The discussion in this chapter grounds an issue I will explore in more detail in chapter five; because of the way Deleuze describes the relationship between problems and solutions that constitutes subjectivity, indeterminacy is a condition of the subjects of Deleuze’s ontology.

³⁵¹ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 23.

³⁵² Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 65.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 65.

³⁵⁴ Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema*, 37.

³⁵⁵ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 60.

³⁵⁶ Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema*, 37.

difference”³⁵⁷—differentiation—insofar as it constitutes solutions to the questions posed by perception. Thus the importance of the action-image consists in the way it “expresses the actualisation of this virtual”³⁵⁸ through the coincidence of an object and a subject in a living image.

When Bergson turns to consider the nature of affection he does so in order to address the hypothesis that “affection *must*, at a given moment, arise out of the image.”³⁵⁹ Bergson is interested in how affection operates in our bodies as the reduction of the distance between the object to be perceived—where perception remains the measurement of our “possible action upon things, and ... [their] possible action ... upon us”³⁶⁰—and our own body. For Bergson, the issue is the selection or actualisation of an action from a series of possible actions; as the distance between the object and my body approaches zero, the number of possible actions diminishes and an actual action is expressed.³⁶¹ However, we can formulate this same issue in Deleuzian terms by describing the reciprocity of the problem and the solution. Bergson describes this reduction of distance in terms of the way an imminent danger becomes increasingly urgent for an organism or the way a promise between object and subject becomes immediate.³⁶² This is precisely the type of situation Deleuze refers to when he describes “*the organism as a biological Idea*”³⁶³ insofar as it “is nothing if not the solution to a problem.”³⁶⁴

Affection in this case occurs at the horizon—affection is the threshold—where the diversity of sensory data is reduced to the degree that perception is formulated as a problem that is relevant to the body, and the body is the expression of a solution as an action. Of course, insofar as the action-image and the perception-image it transforms are both actual, the continuity of the movement-image does not move from one term to another. In this sense, the objects of perception are *not* the problem: the problem is formulated and expressed virtually as the object enters into a relationship with a special image. The actions my body expresses can resemble the actions of the object; however *neither* can resemble the problem that is formulated by the relationship between the object and my body. There is thus an intensive transformation in the interval between perception and action such that the transformation of the flow of moving-matter corresponds to a transformation of power. The last section of this chapter will explore how affection functions as a doubly expressive process that is common to both problem and solution.

³⁵⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 209.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 209.

³⁵⁹ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 55.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 51--59.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 58.

³⁶³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 184.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 211.

Affection and the Reciprocal Presupposition of Individuals and the Whole.

The deeper connection between the ontology developed in the *Cinema* books and Deleuze's early work can be seen in his description of the affection-image in terms of intensive series and individuation.³⁶⁵ The interrelationship between intensive series and individuating events is first elaborated in *Expressionism* where Deleuze presents Spinoza's individual as the actualisation of a degree of power.³⁶⁶ In this analysis, Deleuze responds to the problem of internal difference that he first formulated in his 1956 essay on Bergson.³⁶⁷ This problem drives Deleuze's interpretation of the reciprocity of substance and modes, of the whole and its expression in individuating events, and it returns in *Cinema I*'s description of the affection-image. For Deleuze the affection-image is synonymous with the close-up and the close-up is synonymous with the face. It would be a mistake to interpret 'the face' in human, or even subjective, terms, however. For Deleuze, the face or the close-up is a bi-polar process of "faceification."³⁶⁸ On the one hand, the face is, as Deleuze puts it, a sacrifice of the centre's movement. That is, the centre, or some facet of it, becomes immobile and instead functions as a unified, receptive surface on which the perception-image is etched. Deleuze calls this a "receptive plate of inscription."³⁶⁹ In a phrase that recalls the first synthesis of time's anticipatory contraction of the past, this first pole is also called a site of "impassive suspense."³⁷⁰ The affection-image also has a second pole: the constitution of an intensive series or "a pure Power ... which carries us from one quality to another."³⁷¹ This is why Deleuze says that "[t]here is no close-up of the face. The close-up is the face, but the face precisely in so far as it has destroyed its triple [individuating, socialising and communicating] function—a nudity of the face much greater than that of the body, an inhumanity much greater than that of animals."³⁷²

While there seems to be a striking similarity between the way attribution works and the way affection works, affection does not mediate the perception/action dynamic in the way that attribution mediates the dynamic between substance and modes. *Difference and Repetition*'s criticism of Spinoza would seem to amount to the discovery of a vertical organisation of substance and modes—where modes turn on an already given identity that is mediated by the doubly expressive operations of attribution. However, while affection has a similar, doubly expressive

³⁶⁵ Deleuze, *Cinema I*, 87.

³⁶⁶ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 191.

³⁶⁷ He argues that "if the being of things is ... in their differences of nature, we can hope that difference is itself something, that it has a nature, finally that it will deliver Being to us." "Bergson's Conception of Difference," 42.

³⁶⁸ Deleuze, *Cinema I*, 88.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 87.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 87.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 90

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 99.

operation that relates the virtual whole to actual entities, it does so by flattening the relationship such that there is a horizontal, reciprocal relationship between the whole and particulars. It is just this double expressivity Deleuze refers to when sets up a distinction between “pure singular qualities or potentialities - as it were, pure ‘possibles’ ... [and] the state of things, which are, as it were, [the] causes [of these singularities].”³⁷³ And yet, in reference to Béla Balázs, Deleuze still affirms a Humean scepticism about causation: “however much the precipice may be the cause of vertigo, it does not explain the expression it produces on a face.”³⁷⁴ That is, however much the two poles of the face reciprocally determine each other, their relationship is not *causal*: “the precipice above which someone leans perhaps explains his expression of fright, but it does not create it.”³⁷⁵

This conception of the affection-image as bi-polar enables Deleuze to convert the double expressivity of attribution into a doubly-expressive operation of affection. The description of affection as bi-polar is problematic, however, because it too often invokes the idea of a spectrum along which one moves; in this case the idea would be of a spectrum with affection alternating between the expression of a power for itself and a state of affairs in which the power is actualised. Instead, affection is bi-polar insofar as it is an image with two distinct but interrelated senses. My body, insofar as it is the special image that is constituted as an interval between perception and action, is “filled out and extended”³⁷⁶ by an affection-image that is simultaneously actual—that is, it is the actual state of my body to the extent that it is entangled in an affective encounter—and it is virtual—it is the sense of this state of affection, abstracted from the actual encounter and expressed for itself. Following on from his Humean scepticism, these two senses of the affect, the two poles of the affection-image, obviously do not cause one another. To say they do not cause each other does

³⁷³ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 102.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 102.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 102. The distinction between causation and determination is crucial to Deleuze’s project for a number of reasons. On the one hand, it is simply a problem he inherits from his forebears; Hume is notoriously sceptical of efforts to infer causal relations and famously distinguishes causal relations from the “constant conjunction” of the objects of our experience. David Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 28. Spinoza, however, insists on God as immanently causing the essences of things in the world (EIP18), while, at EIP17SII, he argues that “a man is the cause of the existence of another man, but not of his essence, for the latter is an eternal truth. Hence, they can agree entirely according to their essence. But in existing they must differ.” In other words, there is a distinction between the cause of the existence of the beings in the world and the determination of their essence. The importance of this distinction is clear in Deleuze’s repeated affirmation that movements from the virtual to the actual and vice versa must proceed by differentiation. In sum, the virtual *does not* cause the existence of the beings/fluxes that fill out the actual world; however, it *does* determine the form of a being’s becoming at any given moment. Given that the virtual and the actual are reciprocal, we can say the same about the actual’s determination of the virtual; the actual world is not the cause of the virtual even though it determines its content. While this thesis is constrained such that the issue of reciprocal determination is discussed herein while the question of causation is largely left aside, I would suggest that an account of causation in Deleuze’s ontology must be connected to topics I discussed in chapter two, particularly the claim that any individual being is caused not by its essence or by the power it expresses but that the necessity of its existence comes from God, the whole in which it participates. As such, causation is a vital issue for understanding Deleuze’s broader metaphysical project. Whilst I discuss the issue in more detail in the conclusion, Christian Kerslake’s *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy: From Kant to Deleuze* also provides an excellent discussion of this issue.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 124.

not, however, necessitate claiming that these two poles do not interact. Even though it is virtual, the expression of the affect *as such* is still the sense of the encounter and describes the encounter as an actual occurrence, and thus the virtual pole of the affect is determined by the actual. Similarly, the actual pole of the affect is determined by the virtual to the extent that the interval, *my body*, is not merely the site of passive reaction and, as such, its eventual action is determined by the degree to which its power *makes*—that is, *produces*—sense.

With this in mind, we can see why Deleuze describes the two poles of the affection-image as the two sides of the expression of a “power-quality.”³⁷⁷ It is not merely the case that the interval is occupied by an image which is alternatively an immobile receptive plate and then the expression of a power in its passage from one quality to another. There is one side of the affection-image that is a receptive facet of the centre but its relationship with the production of an action is a complex, double expression. The close-up abstracts its object, the affect, “*from all spatio-temporal coordinates, [and] raises it to the state of Entity*”³⁷⁸ and, by virtue of this abstraction, the affect is also the generation of an actual state of things. When the affect is taken as an entity torn from spatio-temporal coordinates, the “affection-image is power or quality considered for themselves, as expressed” and, although its existence is not independent of the state of affairs in which it is actualised, “it is completely distinct from it.”³⁷⁹ It is in this sense that the second pole of the affection-image is expressed as “ideal singularities and their *virtual conjunction*.”³⁸⁰ In other words, the *virtual* side of the affect circulates within a multiplicity of ideal events that is distinct from the actual states of affairs that respond to it. The discussion of the actual side of the affection-image takes us into the action-image. The action-image is, after all, the actualisation of a power-quality “in an individuated state of things and in the corresponding real connections (with a particular space-time, *hic et nunc*, particular characters, particular roles, particular objects).”³⁸¹ Insofar as it is the expression of a power-quality for itself, abstracted from an actual, individual state of things, it is clear how affection is doubly expressive. Expressed for themselves, affects are “ideal singularities”; that is, the singularity of problems distinct from the actualities that express their solution and these ideal singularities constitute the whole.

When Deleuze outlines the interrelationship between two forms of pluralism that characterises the constitution of monism in *Bergsonism*,³⁸² he anticipates how the *Cinema* project

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 102.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 95--96.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 97.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 102.

³⁸¹ Ibid., 102.

³⁸² “There is only one time (monism), although there is an infinity of actual fluxes (generalized pluralism) that necessarily participate in the same virtual whole (limited pluralism).” Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 82.

will reformulate the third thesis on movement by confronting the relationship between the infinity of actual entities and the virtual whole onto which the entities open. An important consequence of talking in terms of images is that Deleuze is finally able to concretely describe actual beings as points within a continuous becoming. Thus, it is hardly surprising that in *Cinema 1*'s elaboration of Bergson's critique of movement, Deleuze describes "movement [as having] two facets ... *it is the relationship between parts and it is the state of the whole*."³⁸³ What is telling in this passage is the appearance of *affection* in the original: "*il est rapport entre parties, et il est affection du tout*."³⁸⁴ In his reading of Spinoza, Deleuze describes affection as "a state of the affected body that implies the presence of the affecting body."³⁸⁵ We can distinguish between three senses of affection in Spinoza: modes are the affections of substance; affections are *what happens* to a mode; and, finally, affections are "transitions ... or variations of perfection,"³⁸⁶ that is, actual changes in a mode. These affections are just what Deleuze calls images; "images are the corporeal affections themselves, the traces of an external body on our body."³⁸⁷ When we return to a basic point of Deleuze's—that "Movement is a translation in space [and that] each time there is a translation of parts in space, there is also a qualitative change in a whole"³⁸⁸—we see an emphasis on the relationship between the parts and the whole. Affection does a double job; on the one hand, it is the interaction between actual bodies (the traces of an external body on my own), and, on the other, it is the participation of the actual bodies in the whole they modify (the modification of substance as it moves to a different degree of perfection). From *Bergsonism*, through his work on Spinoza, and into the first volume on cinema, Deleuze retains a strikingly consistent conception of part/whole relations insofar as actual beings undergo constant reorganisation relative to each other and simultaneously express the transformation of the whole.

Conclusion.

It is the process of affection that drives the dialectic at the heart of Deleuze's ontology. On the one hand, affection is the immobilisation of some facet of my body such that this surface functions as the point of communication between my body and the "external" world. That is, affection is also the process of enfolding these external relations into the composition of my body. On the other hand, affection also refers to the abstraction of this relation. That is, affection separates

³⁸³ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 19.

³⁸⁴ Deleuze, *Cinéma 1*, 32.

³⁸⁵ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 48--49.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 48--49.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 73.

³⁸⁸ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 8.

the relation from its terms and context, and expresses it *for itself*, as an intensive degree. What is the object of this expression? What is it a degree *of*? It is a degree of the constitution of *a* whole, of *a* multiplicity—a system that is numerically unique but qualitatively heterogeneous and is constituted as a whole of relations. Insofar as the sense of these expressions—i.e., what they express of their object—is a degree of power, the whole thus constituted, turns around actual lives. In other words, the whole is constituted through the expression of power, but that power is always the power that subsists in the differentiation of the movement-image into its avatars. To the extent that this differentiation of the movement-image is an ontological formulation of a discussion that concerns actual beings, the transformation of power, and modes of life, it is one side of a discussion that is *ethological*. This means that, correspondent to this chapter's ontological formulation, the philosophy of the *Cinema* books can also be rendered as an ethical discussion that proceeds in terms of the bodies that are constituted as centres of indetermination between the formulation of the perception-image as a problem and the expression of the action-image as the actualisation of a solution. Indeed, in order to understand the significance of their articulation of Deleuze's ontology to this thesis' argument that an individual's power is transformed by her experience of her wounds—the ruptures in her embodiment—we must engage with this ethical rendering of the *Cinema* books' ontology.

Elizabeth Grosz argues that Bergson's attitude to ethics and the sense in which humans are constituted by their freedom changes across his project: "In his later works, Bergson focuses less on freedom as the exclusive attribute of a self, concentrated on only the one, conscious side of the distinction between the organic and the inorganic, as he did in his earlier *Time and Free Will*, and more on the relations between the organic and the inorganic, the internal constitution of freedom through its encounters with the resistance of matter."³⁸⁹ This is to say that Bergson ultimately affirms a freedom that is not a predicate of a self—in the sense of *a free agent*—but is located in actions that relate or respond to a material environment. Deleuze adapts this theme in *Bergsonism*, when he identifies freedom with the constitution of problems. Deleuze works to shift the discussion of freedom away from aspiring to conditions in which an agent would be freed to act more voluntarily, more wilfully and characterises it as the degree to which an individual participates in, as Paul Patton explains, "the critical points at which some state or condition of things passes over into a different state or condition."³⁹⁰ The sense in which we might meaningfully describe an individual as free depends on how she makes sense of her embeddedness in the relationality of the

³⁸⁹ Elizabeth Grosz, "Feminism, Materialism, and Freedom," in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, eds. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 148.

³⁹⁰ Paul Patton. "Freedom." in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 118.

world—*does she affirm this embeddedness, or does she resent it?* —and the degree to which this sense leads her to participate in the events that transform the whole of which she is a part. This is why Deleuze argues that “[t]rue freedom lies in a power to decide, *to constitute problems themselves*.”³⁹¹ The “power to decide” is not the appearance of a wilful agency that makes conscious decisions; it is the selection and affirmation of the elements that constitute problems. In the next and final chapter, I will argue that the *Cinema* project presents a conceptualisation of how the conditions of freedom, that is, the conditions of participating more actively in the constitution of problems, are immanent to experience. This chapter has argued for an interpretation of the Bergsonism of the *Cinema* books as a crystallization of Deleuze’s ontology as one in which actual lives constitute the whole of which they are a part by virtue of the degree of power that subsists in their affective relations. Following on from this, chapter five will argue that a sophisticated conception of how individuals participate in the determination of problems illuminates the sense in which the conditions for the enhancement of their power are immanent to experience and affective relations.

³⁹¹ Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 15. Emphasis added.

CHAPTER FIVE

On Cinematic Subjects, Experimentation Beyond the Action-Image and an ‘Art of Living.’

Discussions of the ethical in Deleuze often centre on issues of thinking differently, of transforming modes of life and enhancing power. Indeed, Deleuze himself tends to describe ethics as a matter of *formulating new problems*. In *Bergsonism*, Deleuze identified the constitution of problems with a power to decide,³⁹² and he returns to this theme in *Cinema*: “[i]t is characteristic of the problem that it is inseparable from a choice ... when the problem concerns existential determinations ... we see clearly that choice is increasingly identified with living thought, and with an unfathomable decision. Choice no longer concerns a particular term, but the mode of existence of the one who chooses.”³⁹³ To make his point, Deleuze refers to Blaise Pascal’s infamous wager concerning the existence of God. He argues that the significance of the wager is not its terms—belief, non-belief, or abstention—but the mode of life entailed by the affirmation of particular terms: “[i]t is as if there was a choice of choice or non-choice. If I am conscious of choice, there are therefore already choices that I can no longer make, and modes of existence that I can no longer follow - all those I followed on the condition of persuading myself that ‘there was no choice.’”³⁹⁴ In other words, the question is not the terms of the wager, nor which one you ought to affirm, but that each term implies a mode of life that follows from the sense I make of the possibility of choosing. As Deleuze says, “I choose to choose, and by that I exclude all choice made on the mode of not having the choice.”³⁹⁵ The significance of Deleuze’s argument is that the ethical problem does not lie with the choice one makes between the terms of the wager, but the mode of life that follows from how one relates to, that is, *makes sense of*, the power to choose. In anticipation of discussions in this chapter, we can phrase this differently. The ethical situation is not about the elements of a particular problem, as though these elements exist outside their formulation in a problem; rather, the ethical is about the way those elements are *framed* such that they formulate a problem that will generate a particular solution.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 15.

³⁹³ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 176--177.

³⁹⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 114.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 114. For discussions of the ethical significance of Deleuze’s interpretation of the wager, see Bogue’s and Rodowick’s respective contributions to *Afterimages of Gilles Deleuze’s Film Philosophy*.

This conception of the relationship between choice and the formulation of problems makes sense in light of the Bergsonian conception of the continuity of perception and action discussed in the last chapter. The objects of a perception, that is, the elements of a problem posed to my body, are only quantitatively distinct from “nascent” action, the actions that my body will perform in response to the perception.³⁹⁶ In other words, the elements of a problem—the objects of perception, or the terms of a choice—are significant because of the actions and behaviour that follow from a particular framing of them. That Deleuze aligns the significance of this with situations which concern the existential determination of problems makes it clear that this is not merely ontological, but also ethical; that is, *ethological*. Accordingly, the ethical orientation of Deleuze’s analyses in the *Cinema* project can be expressed in terms of a properly ethological question: under what conditions does an individual participate in the constitution of problems, and thus the genesis of modes of life, that go beyond the clichés of the action-image? These clichés, as I will argue in this chapter, concern the determination of a problem according to a character’s belief that her actions have the power to disclose the truth of, or modify, a situation.

In keeping with Deleuze’s insistence on immanence, the conditions under which an individual participates differently in the constitution of problems are immanent to experience *as such*. In other words, if there is to be any modification in how an individual participates in the determination of problems, the conditions of this modification must follow from the affective relations implied by her existence. This immanence of the conditions of change is vital to Deleuze’s steering ethics away from a conception of individuals who behave voluntarily. To the extent that the subjects of the cinematic universe are produced as expressions of the becoming of the whole, modifications to a subject’s power—even modifications that enhance her power—cannot come from the subjects’ spontaneous transcendence of the relational plane, the plane of immanence, of which she is a product. Modifications to her power must proceed from her relational embeddedness. As such, this chapter focuses primarily on the place and transformation of perception in the constitution of cinematic subjects. Because it concerns the determination of a problem through the differentiation of the movement-image, this attention to the subject as the product of perception will illuminate the sense in which the action-image is the actual expression, that is, the actual side, of the constitution of a problem as the synthesis of memories, expectations and multiple points of view on a set of relations. This entails a radical transformation in our conception of subjects and so we will start this discussion with a brief look at Deleuze’s ambivalence to phenomenology in order to maintain the anti-humanist context that we set out for Deleuze’s project at the very beginning of this thesis. By maintaining this context we will see how Deleuze’s ethics is able to develop a conception

³⁹⁶ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 10--11.

of wounds, that is, ruptures in the laws which sustain the continuity between perception and action, that engenders experimentation with modes of life freed from the clichés of the action-image.

Resisting the Privilege of a Human Point of View: Bergsonism Contra Phenomenology.

Deleuze claims that the Bergsonism of the *Cinema* books is “the opposite of what phenomenology put forward.”³⁹⁷ Deleuze opposes the phenomenological presupposition of subjectivity as a point of anchorage for the deduction of empirical phenomena. He argues that, because consciousness is immanent to the processes and structures that determine experience, consciousness is an insufficient starting point for undertaking the challenge that Husserl’s reduction hoped to face.³⁹⁸ He turns to the conception of an anonymous viewpoint as a way of responding to phenomenology’s focus on the content of a first-person perspective.³⁹⁹ Deleuze takes phenomenology to task for its reinstatement of a dative to whom the plane of immanence is referred. This challenge is critical to an understanding of what Deleuze sets out to achieve in the *Cinema* books’ exploration of a subject’s status as a centre of indetermination. Insofar as a dative is a being “to whom things appear,”⁴⁰⁰ Deleuze’s issue with phenomenology is that, as Lawlor puts it, it “relates the plane of immanence back to a subject that constitutes the given.”⁴⁰¹ Lawlor’s analysis highlights the problem we have continually returned to, the problem that Deleuze describes in *Empiricism and Subjectivity*:

[w]e embark upon a transcendental critique when, having situated ourselves on a methodologically reduced plane that provides an essential certainty—a certainty of essence—we ask: how can there be a given, how can something be given to a subject, and how can the subject

³⁹⁷ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 58.

³⁹⁸ For all that Deleuze challenges phenomenology, we cannot overlook the extent to which Deleuze owes a debt to the phenomenological tradition. In an excellent essay, Lawlor discusses the impact of Husserl, by way of Jean Hyppolite, on Deleuze’s project. Husserl famously argued for the necessity of a phenomenological *reduction*, a “bracketing” of the actual world and intentional acts that assume the existence of the world, so that the phenomenologist might make her way back to a realm of transcendental subjectivity. Deleuze, as we shall see, is persistently critical of the idea of transcendental subjectivity; however, Lawlor is quick to remind us that the *Logic of Sense* “takes place entirely under the sign of the phenomenological reduction.” Leonard Lawlor, “The end of phenomenology: Expressionism in Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty,” *Continental Philosophy Review* 31, no. 1, (1998): 18. He argues that this reduction is a necessary condition for Deleuze’s ontological project, concerned as it is with sensible phenomena and the plane of immanence.

³⁹⁹ David Woodruff Smith and Barry Smith begin their contextualisation of work on Husserl with a description of phenomenology as the reflective study of consciousness from a first-person perspective. David Woodruff Smith and Barry Smith, introduction to *Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, eds. David Woodruff Smith and Barry Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1.

⁴⁰⁰ Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 4.

⁴⁰¹ Lawlor, “The end of phenomenology,” 15--16. See, for example, Merleau-Ponty’s description of his project as an attempt “to elucidate the primary function whereby we bring into existence, for ourselves, or take a hold upon, space, the object or the instrument, and to describe the body as the place where this appropriation occurs.” Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New York: Routledge Classics, 2002), 178.

give something to itself? ... The critique is empirical when, having situated ourselves in a purely immanent point of view, ... we ask: how is the subject constituted in the given?⁴⁰²

The “methodologically reduced plane” to which Deleuze refers is the transcendental field accessed through Husserl’s famous reduction, his bracketing of the contingencies of experience in order to deduce the transcendental structures of consciousness.⁴⁰³ Deleuze argues that this methodology “makes it possible to treat the plane of immanence as a field of consciousness [and, consequently] Immanence is supposed to be immanent to a pure consciousness, to a thinking subject.”⁴⁰⁴ For Deleuze, this inevitably violates an ontology of immanence insofar as it “discovers the modern way of saving transcendence: this is no longer the transcendence of a Something, or of a One higher than everything ... but that of a Subject to which the field of immanence is only attributed by belonging to a self that necessarily represents such a subject to itself.”⁴⁰⁵

In this context it becomes clear why Deleuze outlines the Bergsonism of his *Cinema* project in terms of its opposition to phenomenology. Deleuze argues that the radically decentred immanence of Bergson’s ontology challenges phenomenology’s methodological fixation on a subjective centre of perception. The crucial passage comes in the course of his discussion of Bergson’s famous antipathy towards cinema—an antipathy grounded in cinema’s apparent repetition of the fallacy of movement and perception as composed of poses or frames:

[Bergson’s ontological] model would be ... a state of things which would constantly change, a flowing-matter in which no point of anchorage nor centre of reference would be assignable. On the basis of this state of things it would be necessary to show how, at any point, centres can be formed which would impose fixed instantaneous views. It would therefore be a question of ‘deducing’ conscious, natural or cinematographic perception. But the cinema perhaps has a great advantage: just because it lacks a centre of anchorage and of horizon, the sections which it makes would not prevent it from going back up the path that natural perception comes down. Instead of going from the acented state of things to centred perception, it could go back up towards the acented state of things, and get closer to it. Broadly speaking, this would be the opposite of what phenomenology put forward.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰² Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume’s Theory of Human Nature*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University press, 1991), 87. Deleuze’s description of the given in Hume bears a striking similarity to Bergson’s concept of images: “[the given is] the flux of the sensible, a collection of impressions and images, or a set of perceptions. It is the totality of that which appears, being which equals appearance; it also movement and change without identity or law.” Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, 87. Emphasis added.

⁴⁰³ In his *Introduction to Phenomenology*, Dermot Moran describes Husserl’s reduction as an attempt to “put the thumbscrews ... on transcendental *consciousness* itself, to get it to yield up its secrets as to how the world and its meanings are constituted.” London: Routledge, 2000, 148.

⁴⁰⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 46.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁴⁰⁶ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 57--58.

Deleuze engages with Bergson's ontology precisely because it enables him to challenge phenomenology's resurrection of the transcendent. As Levi Bryant explains, from the point of view of the ontology Deleuze develops, "the human and its relation to the world can no longer be treated as a privileged starting point for philosophical investigation. Humans are among beings, rather than a privileged point around which being is organized."⁴⁰⁷ It is only from within this context that Deleuze can approach the Humean problem of the subject's constitution. For Deleuze, an exploration of the constitution of subjectivity cannot hinge on the view of the subject as a dative case to whom the plane of immanence is given. Deleuze's response is, simply, that the installation of the subject as a dative, that is, as the indirect object of empirical processes, reduces the plane of immanence to its immanence to a subject. To reinstate immanence as immanent only to itself,⁴⁰⁸ Deleuze builds an ontology in which the subject is understood as an event on the plane of immanence: the subject corresponds to a fixed point of view in a universe of flowing movement-matter. Against the criticism Bergson offers in *Creative Evolution*, Deleuze argues that cinema does not merely reproduce the illusions of natural perception. Cinema, according to Deleuze, presents exactly this model of a universe of "flowing-matter in which no point of anchorage nor centre of reference would be assignable."⁴⁰⁹

In order to demonstrate how cinema forms subjects as "centres ... which would impose fixed instantaneous views," we must explore how Deleuze conceives the subjects of the cinematic universe as immanent to the world they experience and condition. Gregory Flaxman suggests this approach when, in his contribution to the seminal collection *The Brain is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*, he writes that

the subject is the extraction, the process of drawing order from [the universe as an aggregate of images] as if through a sieve ... this implies a "cooling down" of the universe, for the world of images has begun to settle into a semblance of "bodies" and "rigid lines." ... In a sense, the subject is a point at which the universe sees itself: the subject synthesizes the world from a particular point of view, but the subject also derives from that world, each perspective constituting a self-synthesis.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁷ Bryant, "A Logic of Multiplicities," 4.

⁴⁰⁸ Deleuze argues that "Spinoza was the philosopher who knew full well that immanence was only immanent to itself and therefore that it was a plane traversed by movements of the infinite, filled with intensive ordinates. He is therefore the prince of philosophers" Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 48.

⁴⁰⁹ Deleuze responds to Bergson's critique of cinema by posing a peculiar question: "is not the reproduction of an illusion in a certain sense also its correction?" Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 2. Deleuze argues that, while Bergson is correct to indict cinema for repeating the illusion that perception is composed of the juxtaposition of discrete units, cinema's juxtaposition of fixed shots through various editing techniques presupposes a heterogeneous, continuous whole and thus presents duration indirectly at first and then directly.

⁴¹⁰ Gregory Flaxman, "Cinema: Year Zero," in *The Brain is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*, ed. Gregory Flaxman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 93.

Subjectivity is, then, the product of the synthesis which constitutes a point of view immanent to the processes of the flow of movement-matter. This requires an exploration of how Deleuze's interpretation of cinematic techniques for composing and associating images entails the emergence of fixed, instantaneous points of view from a synthesis of differing points of view. In particular, this entails two questions; first, how does Deleuze understand an image as being composed—*framed*—such that it has specific relevance to the point of view from which it is encountered? Second, how do different perspectives immanent to the same point of view constitute a form of subjectivity through their synthesis? These questions are closely related to what Deleuze calls cinema's "great advantage." For Deleuze, cinema circumvents phenomenology's privileging of the subject as a "centre of anchorage" in the relationality of the actual world. The cinematic composition of centres, intervals and sections of movement does not present the problems of natural perception which join, according to Bergson, "several clear images that represent states and which serve to distinguish all becomings from each other."⁴¹¹ The great advantage of cinema is, for Deleuze, that it bypasses the illusion that movement is composed of immobilities because its specific techniques compose an acentred universe. The immobile elements of cinema, the sequence of frames that runs through the projector, implies a subsistent whole which associates the immobile elements and ensures that their closure—their apparent independence from each other—is only ever partial; the sequence of which they are parts always gestures towards the law of association—the subsistence of problems—that assembles them as this or that sequence. With this in mind, we will turn in the next section to Deleuze's conception of the association and synthesis of images and how this association constitutes the "immobilities," that is, the centres, of this universe of flowing movement-matter.

Bi-Polar Perceptions: Analysis, Description & Semisubjectivity.

For Deleuze, perception is bi-polar. That is, any particular perception consists of two elements or senses: it is double. The subject—the subject of an action, the being of the interval—is a process in which the two poles of perception are conjoined in the determination of a problem. To develop a vocabulary for this discussion, Deleuze appropriates the concept of a semisubjective (or "associated") image from Jean Mitry's classic *The Aesthetics and Psychology of the Cinema*. The semisubjective image is a total image, not in the sense that it provides the most total view of a scene—an objective or omniscient view—but instead in the sense that it produces the most meaning or, rather, the most total association between the viewer and the scene. This species of image emerges from the tension between two poles of the perception-image: an analytic image and a

⁴¹¹ Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 304.

descriptive image. These images would typically be called subjective and objective images, respectively; however, since Deleuze's concerns are focussed on what it would mean for an image to be either subjective or objective, we need to be careful with such adjectives. Indeed, Mitry ultimately reserves the term "subjective" for images which create memory relationships, since an image of this type necessarily relates us to the experiences of a filmic subject.⁴¹² Since the subjectivity of this image is "merely visual" he prefers to employ the term "analytic." An analytic image is so named because it is always in place to show us what a specific character sees and to analyse the set of relations from that character's point of view. Opposed to this is a descriptive image through which we see the scene from outside and are privy to a point of view which has no particular investment in the set of relations it describes. Thus, "analytic" and "descriptive" denote respectively an analysis of the scene from a particular, internal point of view and a description of the scene from a general, external point of view. Following Mitry's lead, we will use "analytic" and "descriptive" because they allow us to reserve the terms *subjective* and *objective* for those instances when we are discussing relations *to* or *of* subjects or objects. Compared to *subjective* and *objective*, *analytic* and *descriptive* are more accurate adjectives for the poles of perception. The former pair, 'subjective' and 'objective,' always risk relating a perception to a subject who perceives or an object that is perceived. 'Analytic' and 'descriptive,' however, connote the role of perception in constituting its subject and object insofar as these adjectives describe the processes that occur at each pole. That is, they tell us whether a particular pole of perception presents us with a descriptive or an analytic point of view.

According to Mitry, neither the analytic nor descriptive image provides total or exhaustive views on a scene; it is the semisubjective image which is a total image. Without this semisubjective image, film could not develop its stories and narratives because it would be limited to the opposition or juxtaposition of description and analysis. A dialectical juxtaposition of analysis and description presents an either/or proposition—a shot would be *either* analysis *or* description—and would thus preclude the possibility of seeing the reaction of a character to a situation at the same time as seeing the situation from the point of view of the character. And thus it needs a special kind of image to associate analysis and description. As Mitry puts it, in such a situation, "[i]t is not possible to see both object and subject simultaneously."⁴¹³ Limited to description and analysis, film cannot present a character's reaction to an analysis of a description. Mitry finds a solution to this dilemma in the semisubjective, a species of image exemplified in a scene from William Wyler's

⁴¹² Jean Mitry, *The Aesthetics and Psychology of the Cinema*, trans. Christopher King (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 214.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 215.

Jezebel (1938). The scene is of a central character, Julie, in a cleaning frenzy and the camera, framing her in midshot, follows her as she works:

in order to ‘experience’ the feelings of a given character, all the audience had to do is be with the character, alongside him. ... Thus instead of the camera taking the place of the character, there were images framing the hero, either from head to toe or from the waist up, following him as he moved, seeing with him and at the same time as him. The image remained descriptive but shared in the character’s points of view. ... Thus, as we see her acting, we feel as though we are acting with her; moreover, the agitation of the camera movements, prompted by the nervousness of her movements, conveys her agitation to the audience, which thereby experiences the same feelings of impatience and irritation and shares in her emotion.⁴¹⁴

The semisubjective is, for Mitry, a species of image that goes further than a typically subjective or analytic image ever could. He argues that a shot which is ostensibly from a first person point of view does not itself carry the information necessary to relate its content to any particular character and, as such, a subjective image is so only insofar as the image is referred to a character already established in the film. In this way, a subjective image is only “a complement to another image ... [and] has meaning only insofar as it relates to a character already objectively described and placed.”⁴¹⁵ The semisubjective image is therefore an image which conveys to the audience the character’s various affective states and engagements—that is, an *analysis* of a set of relations from the character’s point of view—while simultaneously tracking, or, *describing*, the relative position and movements of the character within the relevant set.

There is, however, an important difference between Deleuze’s use of this concept and Mitry’s presentation. Mitry is interested in the semisubjective image because of its capacity to create an affinity between the character and the viewer whereas Deleuze, true to his Bergsonian heritage, is interested in the synthesis of analytic and descriptive points of view in the interval between perception and action. For Mitry, the affinity created between a character and an audience through the semisubjective image allows the audience to “project *onto* [the character] feelings which *might have been ours* in similar circumstances.”⁴¹⁶ Deleuze, meanwhile, is concerned with cinema’s, or more precisely, the *camera’s*, capacity to show us an internal point of view on the set without that point of view belonging to a specific character, even though it tracks the character’s movements within the set. Even with this difference in mind, Deleuze’s use of Mitry’s concept bears an important mark of its origin in the latter’s work. For Mitry, the purpose of the semisubjective image is not to represent the psychological reality of the character, but to give “the audience ... the

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 215.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 209.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 216.

impression that it is seeing or feeling ‘as though’ it were the character in the drama.”⁴¹⁷ While Mitry presents this image as facilitating a rapport between characters and viewers, Deleuze’s attention is focussed elsewhere; for him, the semisubjective image is the synthesis of two points of view that are both immanent to the field of relations framed by the screen. The semisubjective image is not its content as such; it is, rather, the cinematic mode constituted in the syntheses of ostensibly distinct points of view. Deleuze sets out from this apparent distinction between two points of view and sets up provisional definitions of subjective/analytic images—“the thing seen by someone ‘qualified’, or the set as it is seen by someone who forms part of that set”—and objective/descriptive images—“the thing or the set ... seen from the view point of someone who remains external to that set.”⁴¹⁸ Deleuze stretches these definitions and argues for a situation in cinema wherein the distinction between descriptive and analytic is overcome in favour of “a pure Form which sets itself up as an autonomous vision of the content.” It is a situation in which “we are caught in a correlation between a perception-image and a camera-consciousness which transforms it.”⁴¹⁹

To explain this correlation, Deleuze turns to Albert Lewin’s *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman* (1951). The film’s establishing shot exemplifies an objective shot: a wide shot of groups of people running along a beach towards a fishing boat that has run aground. But the camera withdraws and progressively expands the shot of the beach to take in a telescope on the balcony of a nearby house and then a character watching the beach scene through the telescope. Even though this shot never offers an analytic point of view—that is, we never see from the point of view of someone within the set—it is not a strictly objective point of view either because the inclusion of the character in the shot gives the scene significance to the viewer, especially when the camera follows the character inside her house where she discusses the fishing boat with her uncle. Deleuze, too, is interested in the determination of significance; however, his interest is not in the significance of the scene for a viewer as it was for Mitry. Rather, it is in the relationship between the analysis of the scene from the point of view of the character and the point of view of the camera itself; a point of view which accompanies the character but is not attributable to it.

Because this situation has no analogue in natural perception, Deleuze turns to linguists Pier Pasolini and V.N. Vološinov to provide tools for analysis. Vološinov argued for a phenomenon called “Reported speech”: “speech within speech, utterance within utterance, and at the same time

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 209.

⁴¹⁸ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 71.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 74.

also *speech about speech, utterance about utterance*.”⁴²⁰ Deleuze focuses here on what he calls an assemblage of enunciation:

there is not a simple combination of two fully-constituted subjects of enunciation, one of which would be reporter, the other reported, it is rather a case of an assemblage of enunciation, carrying out two inseparable acts of subjectivation simultaneously, one of which constitutes a character in the first person, but the other of which is present at his birth and brings him on to the scene. There is no mixture or average of two subjects, each belonging to a system, but a differentiation of two correlative subjects in a system which is itself heterogeneous.⁴²¹

The importance of this phenomenon in language is, Deleuze argues, that “this differentiation of the subject” also occurs in thought. He argues that the cogito as “an empirical subject cannot be born into the world without simultaneously being reflected in a transcendental subject which thinks it and in which it thinks itself.”⁴²² At this point, Deleuze turns to Pasolini who argues for a formal common ground between linguistics and cinema. In reading Pasolini, Deleuze contends that the significance of free-indirect discourse (Pasolini’s name for reported speech) is that it presents a situation in which the

character acts on the screen, and is assumed to see the world in a certain way. But simultaneously the camera sees him, and sees his world, from another point of view which thinks, reflects and transforms the view point of the character. . . . But the camera does not simply give us the vision of the character and of his world: it imposes another vision in which the first is transformed and reflected.⁴²³

When we first considered the nature of the image in the previous chapter, it turned on a distinction between the image as object—a universe in which “*all the images vary in relation to one another, on all their facets and in all their parts*”—and the image as a subjective perception of the

⁴²⁰ V.N. Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik (New York: Seminar Press, 1973), 115. Given Vološinov’s involvement in the Bakhtin Circle—a group of Soviet intellectuals in the early 20th century—there have been habits of attributing works published under Vološinov’s name to Mikhail Bakhtin. There is some debate around the issue and Deleuze for his part attributes the work to Bakhtin. However, it seems easy to account for this discrepancy in Deleuze’s case; the second footnote to chapter five of *L’Image-mouvement* suggests that Deleuze was working from the French text *Le marxisme et la philosophie du langage: Essai d’application de la méthode sociologique en linguistique*—published by *Les Éditions de Minuit* in 1977. Deleuze, *Cinéma 1*, 228; *Cinéma 1* 107. *Le marxisme ...* was primarily attributed to Bakhtin and only parenthetically to Vološinov.

⁴²¹ Deleuze, *Cinéma 1*, 73. Given this turn to Vološinov, it goes without saying that Deleuze’s arguments in this field stretch much wider than just Mitry. Besides Mitry, two of his major influences are Vološinov and essays in Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *Heretical Empiricism*, particularly “The Cinema of Poetry.” In this chapter I focus on Mitry for the sake of clarifying the image constitutive of cinematic subjectivity; however, this will hopefully not undermine the importance of Vološinov on reporting and reported speech, and quasi-direct discourse, and Pasolini on free-indirect discourse. The genealogy of Deleuze’s influences on this topic are much more complex than I can present here; see Louis-George Schwartz, “Typewriter: Free Indirect Discourse in Deleuze’s *Cinéma*,” *SubStance* 34, no. 3 (2005).

⁴²² Deleuze, *Cinéma 1*, 73.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, 74.

object, the situation where “*the images vary in relation to a central and privileged image.*”⁴²⁴ More than merely recapitulating Bergson’s concept of the image, however, Deleuze’s conception of semisubjective images allows him to emphasise that, far from object and subject being distinct *types* of image, the distinction between the objective and subjective senses of the image provide “a real definition of the two poles, or of the double system” of perception.⁴²⁵ This definition of the objectivity and subjectivity of the image as poles of perception highlights the possibility of moving between the objective and subjective. Deleuze characterises this diffuse form of perception as a liquid perception. In this case, perception is, as Bogue puts it, “no longer constrained by bodies”;⁴²⁶ it is the image “in the process of becoming liquid, which [flows] through or under the frame.”⁴²⁷ In this case, then, there are three moments within the perception-image; two—the two poles, objective and subjective—which express the composition of specific perceptions, and a third, unique to cinema, that presents a third sense of the perception-image, a liquid form which expresses the genesis of perception.⁴²⁸ In other words, the perception-image is generated as the mixing of the two poles but when it is actualised as this or that perception it is expressed as a specific ratio of analysis and description.

To move from this discussion of the bi-polar composition of the perception-image to the determination of the perception-image as problematic, we must turn to the discussion of framing that Deleuze undertakes early in *Cinema 1*. ‘Framing’ is a name for the unconscious, or *passive*, processes that make perception possible and it provides the context for Deleuze’s analysis of contemplation and its role in the genesis of a uniquely cinematic subjectivity. Contemplation here is not a subject’s reflection on an object; it is the passive process by which previous experiences are contracted into an anticipation of the future,⁴²⁹ and so any discussion of perception necessarily presupposes a discussion of framing.⁴³⁰ That is, insofar as an image is only an image to the extent that it is demarcated from the flux of which it is a part, an image is always framed.

Framing, and the Determination of Problems.

Framing is the technique by which a body selects out relevant data from the flux of movement-matter. As Deleuze puts it, “framing is limitation. But, depending on the concept itself

⁴²⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 76.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁴²⁶ Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema*, 74.

⁴²⁷ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 80.

⁴²⁸ In the fifth chapter of *Cinema 1*, Deleuze argues that this liquid form of the perception-image gets its most in-depth treatment in the French school of the 1920s and 1930s.

⁴²⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 74.

⁴³⁰ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 74.

the limits can be conceived in two ways, mathematically or dynamically: either as a preliminary to the existence of the bodies whose essence they fix, or going as far as the power of existing bodies goes.”⁴³¹ Framing is a crucial component of the determination of problems because it defines the boundaries of the image to which a body responds. But there is also a second reason contemplation is significant to Deleuze’s understanding of the determination of problems. The framed image comes into contact with an *opaque* screen.⁴³² This is why Bergson, in *Matter and Memory*, argues that the body is not an indifferent recipient of sensation. In other words, the power and capacities of a body direct it towards action, and the sensations of memory—that is, the affects which characterise the body’s relationship to the whole—“tend to bring about, within the body, all the corresponding sensations.”⁴³³ Bergson’s point is that an individual does not merely *receive* information, as though the body has no vested interest in the content and form of the information with which it is presented. Rather, the power and capacities of a body contribute significantly to the *framing* of the information it receives. This is why Deleuze calls the body an opaque screen; the structure and content of facet of the body which receives information from the world—the screen on which the perception-image is reflected—determines the sense in which the perception-image is problematic insofar as it *frames* it. This is the meaning of Bergson’s argument that sensory modifications are not the cause of the sensations which affect the body, even though they determine the form of the action that follows from the body’s transformations. Just as Deleuze was sceptical about the precipice causing the character’s vertigo, Bergson argues that “modifications in the centres called sensory ... are, then, less the real cause of the sensation than the mark of its power and the condition of its efficacy.”⁴³⁴ Contemplation—the contraction of previous experience into an anticipation of the future—is vital because it determines the boundaries of the frame. Taken together, contemplation and framing determine the extent to which a particular perception constitutes a problem for a living image.

All of this is to say that Deleuze’s conceptualisation of cinematic subjectivity is actually an elaboration of the determination of *centres of indetermination* within a continuum of moving-matter.⁴³⁵ ‘Indetermination’ here describes the centre as a being for whom the response to the problem presented by perception is not yet given; as D.N. Rodowick puts it, indetermination “is the

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 13: “the frame serves as an opaque surface of information, sometimes blurred by saturation, sometimes reduced to the empty set, to the white or black screen.”

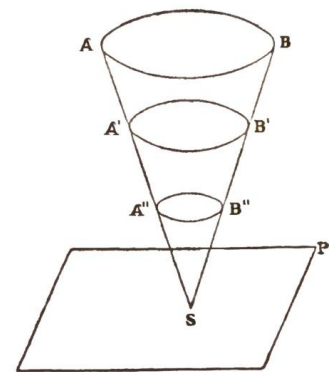
⁴³³ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 168. On the synonymy of memory and the whole, see chapter three’s discussion of the second synthesis of time; that is, the passive synthesis of the whole of the past as the ontological condition of the passing present.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁴³⁵ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 65: “There is inevitably a part of external movements that we ‘absorb’, that we refract, and which does not transform itself into either objects of perception or acts of the subject; rather they mark the coincidence of the subject and the object in a pure quality.”

range of responses available for selection as the appropriate response or action with respect to analysed stimulus or perception.”⁴³⁶ Subjectivity emerges from the interval between stimulus and response, between perception and action; however, the interval, the special image, insofar as it is an image which can be viewed from the inside, is not merely reactive in the ways sometimes implied by the vocabulary of stimulus and response. While it is not the case for every image, perhaps even the majority of images, the interval which generates a subject constitutes a rupture in which the content of a moving image is constituted as a perception-image. It is framed in particular ways, its content is contemplated, apprehended and sifted such that it poses a problem for the being of the interval. These operations couple with the synthesis of points of view on the image and constitute a subject at the same time as they determine its action.

To understand the difference between Deleuze’s Bergsonian model and a deliberative model of action, we need only turn to the famous cone that appears in the third chapter of *Matter and Memory*.⁴³⁷ While he never develops the vocabulary in as robust a way as Deleuze, Bergson is still concerned with a “conversion from the virtual to the actual.”⁴³⁸ Bergson’s discussion centres on “the clearly defined form of a bodily attitude” at the point S, and the base



of the cone, AB, as “the aspect, no less defined, of the thousand individual images into which its fragile unity would break up.”⁴³⁹ Simply put, at the base of the cone, AB, is the multiplicity of images, memories, sensations, and affects, which together constitute the virtual background which determines the problems faced by my body. At the summit, S, is the contraction of these images into the determination of an action. Of course, the movement from perception to action, from AB to S, is infinitely divisible: A’B’, A’’B’’, etc. The base of this cone, or, rather, its determination, is not actual and neither are the slices excerpted from the passage from AB through S. These sections are, as Deleuze notes, virtual;⁴⁴⁰ the only element of this image that represents something actual is S, the contraction of all images into the determination of an action. This is the crucial distinction between Deleuze’s model and a deliberative model of action; a deliberative model of action would want to

⁴³⁶ D. N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze’s Time Machine* (London: Duke University Press, 1997), 87.

⁴³⁷ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 211.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, 28. John Mullarky argues that a central aspect of Deleuze’s perversion of Bergson is the development of an ontology of the virtual that is not present in Bergson’s own philosophy; while Deleuze treats it ontologically, the virtual for Bergson is, Mullarky argues, “a well-founded perspectival and psychological phenomenon.” John Mullarky, “Forget the Virtual: Bergson, Actualism, and the Refraction of Reality,” *Continental Philosophy Review* 37, no. 4 (2004): 471. Consequently, Mullarky argues, the tendency of contemporary commentators to prioritise a concern with the virtual is a product of indentifying too closely Deleuze’s revitalisation of Bergson’s philosophy with Bergson *per se*.

⁴³⁹ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 210.

⁴⁴⁰ Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 60.

empower a subject, given at S, to choose between equally viable, *equally possible*, alternatives given at AB.

In *Difference and Repetition*'s interpretation of Bergson's essay "The Possible and the Real," Deleuze repeatedly emphasises that the actual cannot resemble the set of possibilities it actualises.⁴⁴¹ Consequently, the sections AB, A'B', A''B'', etc. do not present as collections of possibilities with greater or lesser chance of being realised at S. Instead, these sections are virtual multiplicities; assemblages of virtual elements undergoing progressive framings, descriptions and analyses *en route* to the formulation of a problem. Of course, it is not the problem itself which is framed at AB, etc.; the elements of the multiplicity are framed and reframed until, at S, they are formulated as a problem. This problematic formulation, however, occurs simultaneously with the expression of the solution to the problem. In other words, the specific determination of the problem and the expression of its solution as "the clearly defined form of a bodily attitude" occur simultaneously. This is what Deleuze means when he says that "the virtual must be defined as strictly a part of the real object."⁴⁴² Deleuze's model of the constitution of action is distinguished from a deliberative model by virtue of the fact that the specific conditions of a specific action are determined simultaneously with the expression of the action itself. While the elements of the multiplicity are not subordinate to their status as elements of a problem which corresponds to what actually occurs, talk of possibilities or options amongst which an agent can choose is nonsensical precisely because what is possible, in the sense of a virtual power, is determined at the same time as its expression in an actual occurrence.

Importantly, the sheets of the cone are sheets of the past; that is, of *memory*.⁴⁴³ This is not the past of a particular individual but the past in general—the past as the ontological condition for the present. When Deleuze discusses this issue in *Cinema 2*, it echoes a theme that is present throughout his *œuvre*: the production of subjectivity is a process that is internal to time. In this case, the constitution of a subject of action at S is internal to time insofar as it is actualisation of the organisation of the whole of *durée*. To the extent that the organisation of the past *as such* is the ontological condition for the passing present, the action which characterises this or that particular present is an intrinsic mode of the whole. Importantly, the sense in which the constitution and transformation of a subject is internal to time is how Deleuze conceives the passive contraction of the past, that is, *habit*, as a condition for the subject's action. As such, in the next section we must explore the sense in which the dialectic of problems is temporal. The significance of this temporal

⁴⁴¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 211-212.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, 209.

⁴⁴³ Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 64.

sense of the dialectic of problems is that, insofar as the particular, actual present is the actual expression of the whole of *durée*, it gives us a more sophisticated view of the reciprocity of the individual and the whole of which it is a part.

Memory, Perception, and Temporal Series.

Against Kant, who argues that time is an ideal category imposed on things by a transcendental subjectivity, Deleuze argues that the subject is constituted in time as a function of the whole of *durée*:

That we are in time looks like a common-place, yet it is the highest paradox. Time is not the interior in us, but just the opposite, the interiority in which we are, in which we move, live and change. ... Subjectivity is never ours, it is time, that is, the soul or the spirit, the virtual. The actual is always objective, but the virtual is subjective: it was initially the affect, that which we experience in time; then time itself, pure virtuality which divides itself in two as affector and affected.⁴⁴⁴

This passage gives us a provisional hypothesis: the Whole is temporal—indeed, it is time itself—and the bodies which both constitute and express the Whole are internal to time. As Deleuze notes, this whole is virtual, and we are internal to it in the sense that it is the reality of the relations that give content to our lives. The final section of this passage, however, illuminates the deceptive simplicity of this hypothesis. Deleuze’s claim is that our experience shifts so that a new image—the time-image, *time itself*—becomes the object of experience. This is what he means when he says that the actual is objective and that the virtual is subjective; when our experience is directed at our affective relations, our being affected correlates with actual objects that do not cause the affects. However, as experience undergoes this transition, the object of experience changes, and time itself—virtuality or the being of relations—becomes the object of experience, the “affector,” even as we continue to be intrinsic expressions of time; therefore, time itself is simultaneously the subject of experience, the “affected.”

What does it mean to say that “[t]ime...is the interiority in which we are”? To answer this question we need to elaborate the sense in which the sections of *Matter and Memory*’s cone are *temporal*, that is, the sense in which they are “sheets of the past.”⁴⁴⁵ For Deleuze these sheets are contracted into an actual present and so, to understand how the past—embodied habits born of previous experiences, memories, etc.—are contracted into something actually occurring in the

⁴⁴⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 82-83.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 99.

present, we must turn to a model of time that envisions paradoxes of simultaneity as the conditions for chronological or serial time. Deleuze provides us with a model of this when he writes:

[i]t is true that these regions ... appear to succeed each other. But they succeed each other only from the point of view of former presents which marked the limit of each of them. They coexist, in contrast, from the point of view of the actual present which each time represents their common limit or the most contracted of them. ... These are the paradoxical characteristics of a non-chronological time: the pre-existence of a past in general; the coexistence of all the sheets of past; and the existence of a most contracted degree.⁴⁴⁶

In his reading of Bergson, Deleuze argues that “the ‘present’ that endures divides at each ‘instant’ into two directions, one oriented and dilated toward the past, the other contracted, contracting toward the future.”⁴⁴⁷ These two hypotheses clearly echo the first two syntheses of time. On the one hand, the second synthesis outlined in *Difference and Repetition* concerns the passive synthesis of the whole of the past that has no direct importance to the synthesis of habit; the model offered in *Cinema 2* is, on the other hand, concerned with a past-oriented dilation of time that Deleuze calls *memory*. Deleuze had discussed Bergson’s concept of memory in *Bergsonism* and he returns to it here to conceptualise the ontological conditions of the passing of the present. Following Bergson, these conditions are called memory; however, they must not be confused with psychological recollection. In cases when the past is actualised in us, it is actualised as recollections; however, the past is not its actualisations. Memory, or the past, for Deleuze treats them as synonyms, is the in-itself, “*l’en-soi*,” of being; it is the ontological condition of our lives.⁴⁴⁸ As Deleuze puts it, “[m]emory is not in us; it is we who move in a Being-memory, a world-memory.”⁴⁴⁹

The argument Deleuze presents here is structurally similar to the arguments for the second synthesis in *Difference and Repetition*. As Williams argues, this synthesis is grounded in an effort to make sense of why it is that the passing present passes at all.⁴⁵⁰ In order for the present to pass, Deleuze argues, it must be grounded in a past that subsists in it. However, this subsistent past is not a prior present, it is a form of time that exists for itself and as the condition for the serial time we experience. Thus, when Deleuze calls it *past*, he does not mean it in the same sense that a former present is past. On the one hand, it is the past in the sense that it is our relationship to what has

⁴⁴⁶ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 99.

⁴⁴⁷ Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 52. “Time has to split at the same time as it sets itself out or unrolls itself: it splits in two dissymmetrical jets, one of which makes all the present pass on, while the other preserves all the past. Time consists of this split, and it is this, it is time, that *we see in the crystal*.” Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 81.

⁴⁴⁸ Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 55; Gilles Deleuze, *Le bergsonisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966), 50.

⁴⁴⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 98.

⁴⁵⁰ Williams, *Deleuze’s Philosophy of Time*, 51--52.

been, the potential for our recollection and, therefore, memory. On the other hand, it is the condition under which the present passes in order to become this or that particular past. He writes that

[t]he past is ‘contemporaneous’ with the present that it *has been*. If the past had to wait in order to be no longer, if it was not immediately and now that it had passed, ‘past in general,’ it could never become what it is, it would never be *that* past. If it were not constituted immediately, neither could it be reconstituted on the basis of an ulterior present. The past would never be constituted if it did not coexist with the present whose past it is.⁴⁵¹

This is why Deleuze says that the present “divides” at each instant. The present is not a divisible quantity, it is, rather, an occurrence that is double. On the one hand, it is the actual presence of the images with which we engage;⁴⁵² and, on the other hand, it is invested in a continually dilating and transforming past in general. In other words, the past in general that Deleuze describes is the virtual, expanding history of actual occurrences such that it functions as a set of heterogeneous conditions for the actual.

This leaves us with Deleuze’s other hypothesis; the present is not merely dilated towards the past in general, it is also contracted toward the future. This hypothesis bears a marked similarity to the first synthesis of time, concerned as it is with habit or the imagination’s passive contraction of previous sensations into an anticipation of a future state of affairs. The future towards which the present is contracted is, as Williams argues, constituted through *anticipation*.⁴⁵³ That is, the genesis of the future is the contraction of past particulars into an anticipation that something will happen. However, the constitution of this anticipation is passive and, as such, has no object; being passive there is no mind or consciousness which anticipates and so the anticipation has no content to attach it to an object. The focus of Deleuze’s second hypothesis is thus the aspect of the living present which synthesises or contracts the past into the anticipation that constitutes the future. “An activity,” Williams argues, “must synthesise earlier movements and later ones.”⁴⁵⁴

Clearly, then, *Cinema 2* returns to a model of time that has its origins in *Empiricism and Subjectivity* and appears more or less explicitly in every subsequent work. However, one element that initially seems absent from *Cinema*’s presentation of time is a version of the third synthesis of time, the empty form of time that brings the first two syntheses together such that the heterogeneous assemblage of series of virtual events determines the actual instantiation of a mode of life. Even though Deleuze does not signpost it as such, there is a concept in the *Cinema* books which does this

⁴⁵¹ Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 58–59.

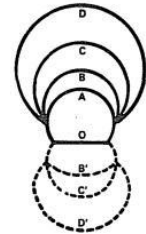
⁴⁵² “If the present is actually distinguishable from the future and the past, it is because it is presence of something, which precisely stops being present when it is replaced by *something else*.” Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 100.

⁴⁵³ Williams, *Deleuze’s Philosophy of Time*, 25.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

work. Deleuze talks about the present as the shortest circuit between an actual image and its virtual image: “The actual image and *its* virtual image thus constitute the smallest internal circuit, ultimately a peak or point, but a physical point which has distinct elements. ... Distinct, but indiscernible, such are the actual and the virtual which are in continual exchange .”⁴⁵⁵

By appealing to an illustration that Bergson offers in *Matter and Memory*, Deleuze argues that the actual present is not simply an actual object, action or image; it is the minimally contracted circuit between the object and its virtual image. In other words, the living present is the locus of two tendencies, past-oriented dilation and future-oriented contraction.⁴⁵⁶ Consequently, the question of



the third synthesis of time can be given in cinematic terms: why do the circuits of the actual image and its virtual image expand and contract? Deleuze’s claim is that it is a *sensory-motor schema* that is the affective motor of the contractions and dilations of these circuits between an actual image and its virtual image. In other words, the sensory-motor schema is the motor by which particular signs differentiate and specify the movement-image as this or that particular sequence of perceptions, affections and actions. This is not to suggest that *Cinema* presents a model of time with a repetition of the first two syntheses and the sensory-motor schema as a replacement for the complexity of the third synthesis. Rather, this Bergsonian concept allows Deleuze to emphasise the role played by sensory-motor linkages and interactions in synthesising the two tendencies of the living present such that something actually occurs.⁴⁵⁷ As such, in classical cinema’s treatment of the movement-image, montage entails action. The sensory-motor schema is not a prescriptive rule for how the movement-image is to be differentiated into the coupling of perception and action; it is, rather, a set of conditions that must be met in order for the double expressivity of affection to connect a perception with an action.

Deleuze does not say a lot about the sensory-motor schema in itself; in fact, he devotes more space to its breakdown, and I will discuss this in the final section of this chapter. For now, however, there are still inferences to be made once we treat it as the condition of the immanent logics that determine an action on the basis of the relationship between perception, memory and affection. In *Cinema 2*, Deleuze couples his broader discussion of semiotics with a critique of the standard view that film is primarily a narrative medium, and, on the back of his conception of semiotics as the system of signs which associate types of image, Deleuze describes montage as the condition which determines narrative:

⁴⁵⁵ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 70.

⁴⁵⁶ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 128; Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 289.

⁴⁵⁷ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 26.

narration is only a consequence of the visible images themselves and their direct combinations - it is never a given. So-called classical narration derives directly from the organic composition of movement-images [*montage*], or from their specification as perception-images, affection-images and action-images, according to the laws of a sensory-motor schema. ... Narration is never an evident [*apparent*] given of images, or the effect of a structure which underlies them; it is a consequence of the visible [*apparent*] images themselves, of the perceptible images in themselves, as they are initially defined for themselves.⁴⁵⁸

Before it is anything else, the universe is, for Deleuze, the composition and arrangement of movement-images.⁴⁵⁹ And so, when he claims that *Matter and Memory*'s presentation of the universe as an assemblage of images is a description of the universe as a "cinema in itself," Deleuze names this assemblage *montage*. Narration, the narrative sequence of events, is then a consequence of montage because it is only the surface effect of images being cut together and assembled according to a logic that is not grounded in the film's narrative. Accordingly, Deleuze argues that classical cinema is concerned with sensory-motor situations. Action-images have two possible concerns; on the one hand, a situation is either deduced or disclosed through an action or, on the other hand, a situation is transformed through an action.⁴⁶⁰ In any case, all of these concerns involve the passive retention and contraction of past particulars into future-oriented anticipations; that is, the generation of the action-image always entails contemplation. Thus, Deleuze argues, "[t]he action-image ... was inseparable from acts of comprehension through which the hero evaluated what was given in the problem or situation, or from acts of inference by which he guessed what was not given."⁴⁶¹ In this context, Deleuze borrows a phrase from Spinoza, *spiritual automaton*, to, as Bogue puts it, "stress the involuntary nature of thought's response to the moving image."⁴⁶² As Deleuze argues, "[a]utomatic movement gives rise to a *spiritual automaton* in us, which reacts in turn on movement. The spiritual automaton ... designates ... the circuit into which [thoughts] enter with the movement-image, the shared power of what forces thinking and what thinks under the shock."⁴⁶³ Deleuze's point is that thought is as determined as action. Action, insofar as it develops

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 26--27.

⁴⁵⁹ "The material universe, the plane of immanence, is the *machine assemblage of movement-images*. Here Bergson is startlingly ahead of his time: it is the universe as cinema in itself, a metacinema." Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 59.

⁴⁶⁰ Deleuze discusses these two focuses in great detail in chapters nine and ten of *Cinema 1*. Chapter nine is concerned with the large-form of the action-image which moves from one, problematic situation to a renewed situation by way of an action. Chapter ten deals with the small form of the action-image and its movement from one action to another through the intermediary of a situation disclosed or deduced through the initial action. For detailed commentary see Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema*, 85--92 and D. N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine* (London: Duke University Press, 1997) 68--72.

⁴⁶¹ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 163.

⁴⁶² Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema*, 166. Bogue argues that we can find the Spinozist origin of this idea in the latter's *On the Improvement of the Understanding* where Spinoza argues that "the soul acts according to fixed laws, and is as it were an *immaterial automaton*." Benedict de Spinoza, *On the Improvement of the Understanding; The Ethics; Correspondence*, trans. and ed. R.H.M. Elwes (New York: Dover, 1977), 32. Emphasis added.

⁴⁶³ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 156.

according to a sensory-motor schema, is determined by how a character *makes sense* of the situation in which she finds herself. That is, action is determined according to the way that elements of the past—recollections, habits, the portion of history and memory accessible to the character—interact with new information such that the movement-image is specified as a perception or a problem: “the cinema of action depicts sensory-motor situations: there are characters, in a certain situation, who act ... according to how they perceive the situation. Actions are linked to perceptions and perceptions develop into actions.”⁴⁶⁴

Serial or chronological time is thus an expression of a collection of virtual elements assembled and arranged according to a logic whose specific content is determined immanently to its actual expression. Deleuze’s use of cinema’s vocabulary makes it clear which element is epiphenomenal. The flux of movement matter is differentiated relative to my body, a centre of indetermination, such that part of it corresponds to a determined problem, and the remainder passes by unattended. According to an immanent logic—the laws of a sensory-motor schema—this virtual problem corresponds to the determination of an action-image. This process, the differentiation of the movement-image into its avatars, and the assemblage into this or that particular assemblage, is what Deleuze calls montage. The superficial expression, the narrative, the sequence or chronology of occurrences, is epiphenomenal in the most literal sense of being a by-product of montage. However, to understand the means and consequences of the transition from a perception of objects to a direct experience of time, we need to understand how the movement-image is differentiated relative to my body and for that we must turn to Deleuze’s semiotics.

Signs and the Differentiation of the Image.

As opposed to interpretative methods which treat film as a symbolic language, the semiotics of *Cinema* is concerned with the relations between the elements that compose images; as Deleuze says, “the various types of image don’t already exist, they have to be created. A flat image or, conversely, depth of field, always has to be created or re-created ... all images combine the same elements, the same signs, differently.”⁴⁶⁵ However, this creation of images through the relations amongst signs is not a creation *ex nihilo*. In *Cinema 2*, Deleuze argues that, insofar as distinct types of image appear when the movement-image is referred to an interval, the components of the movement-image together form a “plastic mass ... [that] is formed semiotically, aesthetically and

⁴⁶⁴ Gilles Deleuze, “On The Movement-Image,” in *Negotiations 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 51

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

pragmatically.”⁴⁶⁶ This plastic mass undergoes a constant process of specification and differentiation. From this point of view there is a “*signaletic material*”⁴⁶⁷—an entire ecology of signs, of “modulation features”—which, relative to an interval, differentiates and specifies the movement-image as a perception, an affection, an action, etc. In this sense, signs are the compositional elements of the image.⁴⁶⁸

However, signs do not merely compose and differentiate images; they also facilitate their relations. This is why Deleuze at first offers a sympathetic presentation of C.S. Peirce’s understanding of the sign; on Deleuze’s account, signs, for Peirce, “make relations efficient.”⁴⁶⁹ According to Bogue, signs generate this efficiency insofar as they make possible associations between images.⁴⁷⁰ However, Deleuze ultimately criticises Peirce for subordinating images to their linguistic sense insofar as this efficiency is grounded in knowledge; that is, the referential function through which signs associate images is essentially cognitive. For Deleuze, this means that Peirce occasionally finds “himself as much a linguist as the semiologists ... [insofar as] he would have given up trying to make semiotics a ‘descriptive science of reality’ (logic).”⁴⁷¹ Instead, Deleuze defines the sign as “a particular image that refers to a type of image, whether from the point of view of its bipolar composition, or from the point of view of its genesis.”⁴⁷² Importantly, then, the legibility and eventual problematic structure of images are not issues of interpreting semiological references; Deleuze’s semiotics treats signs as the objects of affective encounters. It is in this sense that John Mullarky argues that “this ‘signaletic’ material has direct, sensory affects on the brain, not the symbolic imagination.”⁴⁷³ This is why Deleuze argues that “[s]omething in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*. ... It is not a quality but a sign.”⁴⁷⁴

Cinema’s semiotics is significant because it foregrounds the importance of contemplation. As Williams argues, “*even in activity the present is contemplation, that is, passive absorption and transformation of retained particulars beyond the set considered in an action.*”⁴⁷⁵ Crucial to Deleuze’s ontology here is a claim that any action will exhibit various general and particular

⁴⁶⁶ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 29.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁴⁶⁸ “It is in difference that movement is produced as an ‘effect’, that phenomena flash their meaning like signs.” Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 57.

⁴⁶⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 31.

⁴⁷⁰ Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema*, 66.

⁴⁷¹ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 31.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴⁷³ John Mullarky, *Philosophy and the Moving Image: Refractions of Reality* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 86.

⁴⁷⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 139.

⁴⁷⁵ Williams, *Deleuze’s Philosophy of Time*, 27.

selections and these selections presuppose the continuum of moving matter from which they are drawn. This, Williams argues, leads to the argument that conscious action is grounded in passive, unconscious processes of retention and expectation.⁴⁷⁶ In this sense, the semiotics described by *Cinema* sets out the role of understanding, of the agent's making sense of its milieu,⁴⁷⁷ in the differentiation of images and the determination of problems. This issue takes us straight to the significance of the philosophy of time as Deleuze presents it in *Cinema 2*, which exhibits the same concern with the role of differentiation in the determination and actualisation of time as a series of repetitions as Deleuze's encounter with Bergson in the Sixties. However, in *Cinema 2*, Deleuze foregrounds the ethological sense of his philosophy of time by emphasising that the past is the virtual subsistence of memory and that the present is the world which gives content to conscious experience. The processes by which the sensory-motor schema determines expansions and contractions in the circuit between an actual image and its virtual image are essentially semiotic. We have discussed the sensory-motor schema, or more accurately, its clichés, as habit, that is the contemplative process which grounds the determination of action in the contraction of the whole of the past. However, the issue that concerns this thesis, the issue that I contend is ethologically significant, is the sense in which the failure of the sensory-motor schema is the derailing of this habit, the shattering of its efficacy, insofar as *new* actions, ones not informed by clichés, become possible. As such, we must turn to an exploration of the sense in which the failure of the sensory-motor schema is also semiotic.

On the Failure of the Sensory-Motor Schema and an Art of Living.

⁴⁷⁶ Christian Kerslake argues that in the late 19th century Bergson, independently of Freud, discovered that the processes of consciousness are, in fact, far less interesting than the unconscious processes which ground them and, as such, the former do not warrant the privilege they often enjoy. Kerslake argues that Deleuze interprets this to mean that the transcendental philosopher must move away from the focus on consciousness in favour of an exploration of the syntheses of time which are characteristic of unconsciousness. What Deleuze calls consciousness is, Kerslake argues, "almost entirely practical and focused on the *present*." Christian Kerslake, *Deleuze and the Unconscious* (London: Continuum, 2007), 9. Deleuze argues that "Bergson does not use the word 'unconscious' to denote a psychological reality outside consciousness, but to denote a nonpsychological reality—being as it is in itself." Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 56. Following this suggestion, it is sufficient for our purposes to treat the past as synonymous with the unconscious and the present as synonymous with consciousness insofar as the former is pure ontology; that is, it is constituted as a series of passive, ideal syntheses which operate as the ontological conditions of consciousness conceived as actual, psychological presence. For a sophisticated account of Deleuze's interest in the unconscious as passive conditions for the present, as well as his interest in the subterranean history of this idea, see Kerslake's excellent genealogy *Deleuze and the Unconscious*.

⁴⁷⁷ I have argued already in this thesis that a central component of Deleuze's ontology is the making of sense, or, the expression of sensible propositions. Indeed, even in his reading of Spinoza, Deleuze describes finite, existing modes as expressions of the sense of this or that attribute's participation in the constitution of substance. For discussion of the importance of sense-making to Deleuze see chapter seven, "On Learning Good Sense," of Murray Code, *Process, Reality, and the Power of Symbols: Thinking with A.N. Whitehead* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Post-war cinema, Deleuze argues, entails a transition from affects to time as the object of experience. In *Cinema*, Deleuze is interested in sensible experiences; that is, experiences which have as their object the ways in which an external body interacts affectively with my own. Deleuze is interested in the way that, in cinema's post-war transition, there are particular types of sensible experiences that are too great for habit to synthesise into a coherent idea. When this occurs, imagination, the faculty in which these syntheses occur, is taken to its limit by an experience which Deleuze, following Kant, calls *sublime*. In the experience of the sublime, reason intervenes, and produces a new idea, a new problem, with the Whole itself as its object. What follows when our actions, our modes of life, are determined by new types of ideas? To respond to this question, we will need to explore the type of existential experimentation that Deleuze presents as the consequence of contemplation failing to generate an expectation of the future, of habit being unable to *make sense* of an experience. Deleuze argues that post-WWII European cinema is the site of a crisis in the production of action-images, and so in genres such as Italian Neo-Realism and French New Wave, there appear characters who,

hardly believe any longer that a global situation can give rise to an action which is capable of modifying it [anymore] than [they] believe that an action can force a situation to disclose itself. The most 'healthy' illusions fall. The first things to be compromised everywhere are the linkages of situation-action, action-reaction, excitation-response, in short, the sensory-motor links which produced the action-image.⁴⁷⁸

What breaks or compromises the sensory-motor links is a loss of faith in the power of an action to disclose or transform a situation. Unsurprisingly, this phenomenon first appears in Italian Neo-Realism with characters who are trapped and unable to make sense of war-ravaged cities. However, with later contributions to Italian Neo-Realism, and later genres, cinema further develops the crisis of the action-image and, as such, Deleuze's description of these circumstances goes beyond the historical contingency of the war. There are deeper aesthetic conditions which were actualised in WWII and these conditions gave rise to a new species of image, the crystal image. This image emerges in the circuit between an actual image and its corresponding virtual image, and disrupts their discernibility by reflecting each in the other, and reversing their roles. Where the signs of an image usually facilitate the relations between images by referring them to each other, the signs of the crystal image, *opsigns* and *sonsigns*, refer only to the images as optical and auditory situations thus rendering the virtual and the actual sides of a circuit indiscernible. From this, Deleuze develops the theme of time as the object of experience. Time is not objectified; rather, the actual object cannot be distinguished from its virtual image and so experience takes the multiplicity

⁴⁷⁸ Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, 206.

of indeterminate meaning as its object and is unable to extract an intelligible, actual image. Deleuze argues that,

indiscernibility constitutes an objective illusion; it does not suppress the distinction between the two sides, but makes it unattributable, each side taking the other's role in a relation which we must describe as reciprocal presupposition, or reversibility. In fact, there is no virtual which does not become actual in relation to the actual, the latter becoming virtual through the same relation.⁴⁷⁹

The emergence of the crystal-image does not necessarily require conditions as violently traumatic as a global war: “[w]ithout recourse to violence, and through the development of an experimentation, something will come out of the crystal, a new Real will come out beyond the actual and the virtual.”⁴⁸⁰ In one of his more explicit appropriations of a Kantian theme, Deleuze characterises the conditions of this breakdown in terms of the sublime; as Valentine Moulard puts it: “when we are confronted with an excess of beauty or horror in images, with the sublime or the unbearable, our sensory-motor mechanisms jam.”⁴⁸¹ In the *Critique of Judgement*, Kant describes as sublime those experiences which have as their object something that is “*absolutely great*”; that is, the objects we can rightly judge as sublime are those whose greatness is without quantitative magnitude and beyond all comparison.⁴⁸² At this point, Kant sets out an argument that is crucial to Deleuze’s argument that time’s rupture is grounded in a subjective experience; with regard to the object of the judgement of the sublime, Kant argues that “it is the disposition of soul evoked by a particular representation engaging the attention of the reflective judgement, and not the Object, that is to be called sublime.”⁴⁸³ Kant argues that, because the greatness of the sublime is such that “in comparison ... all else is small,”⁴⁸⁴ the objects of the senses cannot be called sublime. The magnitude of any object of sensation is measurable relative to some other object and, thus, there will always be some thing relative to which the magnitude of the initial object is smaller or larger. For Kant this argument is applicable to any object whose magnitude is subject to mathematical estimation. However, there are also objects which are beyond my capacity to experience completely in a single instant, and here Kant offers as an example the pyramids of Egypt. I cannot view the pyramids as a totality; by the time my eye moves to take in the summit, it will have lost sight of the base. However, as it is the task of the imagination to synthesise these sensations into a total image,

⁴⁷⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 69.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁴⁸¹ Valentine Moulard, “The Time-Image and Deleuze’s Transcendental Experience,” *Continental Philosophy Review* 35, no. 3, (2002): 328.

⁴⁸² Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), 94.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 97.

this does not present a problem because “the power of numbers extends to infinity”⁴⁸⁵ and so there is nothing given or givable to the senses which could be called sublime. Contrary to this, it is the object’s provocation of the judging subject which Kant calls sublime: “for the aesthetic estimation there certainly is [a greatest possible], and of it I say that where it is considered an absolute measure beyond which no greater is possible subjectively (i.e. for the judging Subject), it then conveys the idea of the sublime, and calls forth that emotion which no mathematical estimation by numbers can evoke.”⁴⁸⁶

In the “Analytic of the Sublime,” Kant divides the operations of the imagination into either apprehension or comprehension. In his reading of Kant, Deleuze argues that apprehension is “the successive apprehension of parts”; it is the synthesis of parts that is the condition for a future-oriented anticipation (*contemplation*).⁴⁸⁷ According to Kant, there is no difficulty in extending such apprehension to infinity; however, the expansion of this operation takes comprehension to its limit. Once the imagination takes in so much information, adding further information corresponds with a loss. Consequently, while apprehension—the accretion of “representations of sensuous intuition”⁴⁸⁸—can proceed to infinity, comprehension reaches a limit that the imagination cannot overcome. An important question follows from this: if the imagination reaches the limit of its power of comprehension in the experience of the sublime, what is it that pushes it to this limit? What is it that forces the imagination to extend its reach in an attempt to unite and comprehend the immensity of the world? It is *reason’s Ideas*—Ideas produced by the faculty of reason—that can be thought but not known or imagined.⁴⁸⁹ As Kant says, “the sublime must in every case have reference to our *way of thinking*”;⁴⁹⁰ when we enlarge imagination, reason inevitably appears and “compels us subjectively to *think* nature itself in its totality as a presentation of something supersensible, without our being able to effectuate this presentation *objectively*.” The imagination concerns itself with nature as a phenomenon through which is presented a nature-in-itself. This nature-in-itself is the idea of reason which we cannot determine any further and which cannot be given objectively to the imagination. The idea can only be thought as such, it cannot be cognised or comprehended in its presentation as empirical phenomena.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 99.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 99..

⁴⁸⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Kant’s Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: The Athlone Press, 1984), 50.

⁴⁸⁸ Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 99.

⁴⁸⁹ Daniel W. Smith. “Deleuze’s Theory of Sensation: Overcoming the Kantian Duality.” in *Essays on Deleuze*, ed. Daniel W. Smith (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 93.

⁴⁹⁰ Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, 127.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 119.

Deleuze takes an important lesson from this; as Daniel Smith argues, between these two faculties, imagination and reason, which initially suffer a sharp discord, a pleasure arises.⁴⁹² By confronting its limit, the imagination can, at least negatively, go beyond this limit insofar as it can represent to itself the inaccessibility of reason's Idea. Deleuze writes,

[a]t first sight we attribute this immensity, which reduces our imagination to impotence, to the natural object, that is to sensible Nature. But in reality it is *reason* which forces us to unite the immensity of the sensible world into a whole. This whole is the Idea of the sensible, in so far as this has as a substratum something intelligible or suprasensible. Imagination thus learns that it is reason which pushes it to the limit of its power, forcing it to admit that all its power is nothing in comparison to an Idea.⁴⁹³

Deleuze argues that the imagination presents to itself the fact that an unrepresentable exists and "*it exists in sensible nature.*"⁴⁹⁴ This lesson allows us to refine our earlier description of the sign. The disjunctive relationship between the faculties discloses a sensibility that receives and apprehends signs; however, these signs are not themselves sensible objects, they are the being of the sensible—sensibility's *raison d'être*. This is what it means to talk about signs as the genetic and compositional elements of images. From an empirical point of view, signs *per se* are not sensible precisely because the sign constitutes the limit of the faculty of sensibility (the imagination); however, from a transcendental point of view, the sign can only be experienced sensibly because it is accessible only to the faculty of sensibility in its transcendental exercise.⁴⁹⁵ The sign is not a sensible object nor is it even a component quality of such objects and so, even though each species of image has corresponding signs, we must not conflate the image with its signs. Signs are, however, always presupposed by the image, they are conditions of the genesis and composition of the image, and to this extent are accessible only to the *specialised facet* on the surface of my body that receives information or has a sensory relationship with the image.

⁴⁹² Smith, "Deleuze's Theory of Sensation," 93.

⁴⁹³ Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, 50--51.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁴⁹⁵ Smith, "Deleuze's Theory of Sensation," 34. Of course, these few paragraphs are only a small snapshot of Deleuze's relationship to Kant, a relationship that is both complex and ambivalent; indeed, he famously refers to Kant as an "enemy." Gilles Deleuze, "Letter to a Harsh Critic," in *Negotiations 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 6. However, without Kant, Deleuze's philosophy would be significantly diminished. Two examples that are significant here are that, on the one hand, as Christian Kerslake observes, Deleuze's description of the virtual as a *problematic* field comes from a "peculiarly *literal* reading" of Kant's argument that ideas are problematic. Kerslake, "The Vertigo of Philosophy," 18. On the other hand, Deleuze's conception of the faculties and their interrelationships in the three syntheses of time owes a tremendous debt to Kant's three *Critiques*. Smith in particular explores the way that Deleuze moves from the disjunctive relationship between the faculties to a "differential field beyond the norms of common sense and recognition" and an outside that forces us to think. See Beth Lord, "Deleuze and Kant," in *The Cambridge Companion to Deleuze*, eds. Daniel W. Smith and Henry Somers-Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

In the experience of the sublime, reason is forced to think nature as a totality; that is, as the syntheses of imagination become increasingly incomprehensible, the imagination presents to itself the fact that some element, *some sense*, of the field of sensible phenomena cannot be given objectively. In this case, however, a question remains; if reason, or, more accurately, its *Idea*, is present between imagination's crisis and epiphany, how does imagination experience this idea *as such*? Imagination experiences signs of the intensity of an experience, of "pure" optical or sound situations (*opsigns* and *sonsigns*). The joy that arises in this instance is to be found in the crystal image to which these signs give rise:

[t]he crystal reveals a direct time-image, and no longer an indirect image of time deriving from movement. It does not abstract time; it does better: it reverses its subordination in relation to movement. ... What the crystal reveals or makes visible is the hidden ground of time, that is, its differentiation into two flows, that of presents which pass and that of pasts which are preserved. Time simultaneously makes the present pass and preserves the past in itself. There are, therefore, already, two possible time-images, one grounded in the past, the other in the present. Each is complex and is valid for time as a whole.⁴⁹⁶

Properly speaking, the crystal image is not an image in the sense that perception or action are images; the crystal has no actuality, no objectivity. It is a semiotic structure—a structure with its own relevant signs—where "the actual optical image crystallizes with *its own* virtual image."⁴⁹⁷ Deleuze argues that we see in the crystal a rupture wherein time is no longer subordinated to movement. That is, time ceases to be reduced to an indirect representation as the measure of movement. The crystal discloses time as such: as the relational conditions of actual existence with its differentiation into past- and future-oriented tendencies. The crystal is the point where the virtual and the actual are reflected in each other such that their distinction becomes indiscernible precisely because each always reflects the other: "The crystal-image is, then, the point of indiscernibility of the two distinct images, the actual and the virtual, while what we see in the crystal is time itself, a bit of time in the pure state, the very distinction between the two images which keeps on reconstituting itself."⁴⁹⁸ Thus an actual object cannot be distinguished from the virtual event which characterises it.

Setting out from a discussion of the cinema of Jean Renoir, Deleuze argues that this situation breaks with automatic movement and becomes the means for experimenting with new modes of life:

⁴⁹⁶ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 98.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 82.

[w]ithout recourse to violence, and through the development of an experimentation, something will come out of the crystal, a new Real will come out beyond the actual and virtual. Everything happens as if the circuit served to try out roles, as if roles were being tried in it until the right one were found, the one with which we escape to enter a clarified reality. In short, the circuit, the round, are not closed because they are selective, and produce a winner each time.⁴⁹⁹

This theme of experimentation is crucial to Deleuze. If the characters in his ontology want to escape the reciprocity of automatic movement and the *clichés* of the action-image, something novel must be produced. At the same time, however, if Deleuze were to suggest that the form and content of this novelty could be determined in advance, that it could be prescribed, he would be repeating the *clichés* of automatic movement—he would be suggesting that the action or attitudes of a qualified observer could disclose and transform a situation—and violating his own philosophy of difference by suggesting that novelty is an actualisation of an idea given in advance. Beginning with this idea of experimentation is crucial; in describing Renoir's work, Deleuze argues that life emerges from the crystal precisely insofar as it gambles on a mode of life which takes shape in the crystal. Deleuze argues initially for the possibility of the reflection and circulation of the indiscernibility of an actual image and its virtual image persisting indefinitely; however, he comes to argue that it is only the gamble made on an experiment that brings this circulation to completion: "Now, in contrast, the dividing in two can come to completion, but precisely on condition that one of the two tendencies leaves the crystal, through the point of flight. From the indiscernibility of the actual and the virtual, a new distinction must emerge, like a new reality which was not pre-existent."⁵⁰⁰ And so, it is through three moments that novelty is produced beyond the *clichés* of the action-image; first is an experience that is beyond the capacity of habit to represent comprehensibly; second, because it is this experience which disrupts the schemata according to whose laws the action-image is generated, this experience confronts us with an idea of the whole *as such*, instead of subordinating it to the spatial translation of its parts; and, finally, gambling on one of the roles glimpsed in the image disclosed by the new idea of the whole.

Conclusion: The Breakdown of the Sensory-Motor Schema and Experimentation.

In recounting the Bergsonian ontology of the *Cinema* books over chapters four and five, we have seen that the sensory-motor schema is Deleuze's name for the immanent laws by which the doubly expressive processes of the affection-image determine an action in response to a problem

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 86.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., 87.

posed by perception. In other words, the sensory-motor schema is the immanent logic by which sensible experience relates to its ideal conditions through affection, and vice versa. Deleuze's deployment of the Kantian conception of experiences of the sublime in the *Cinema* books allows him to suggest that there are experiences which disrupt this schema. These experiences are precisely those in which the faculty of imagination, in its habitual operation of synthesising previous experiences into an anticipation of the future, fails to produce a concept of the objects of experience. Deleuze argues that this failure confronts the imagination with its own impotence and also with a new idea of the whole of nature. Even though it is reason's idea which exposes the imagination to the limits of its power, the object of the idea is sensible nature. That is, it is reason's idea of sensible nature which disrupts the sense-making habits of the imagination precisely by presenting the imagination with its limits in the form of a sensible, yet unrepresentable object. In the thesis conclusion I will continue this discussion of the rupture in the operations of the imagination and how it brings about a new idea, a new conception of the body's relationship to its milieu. This discussion must be held over into another context because properly explicating the ethological significance of experiences of the sublime requires that we emphasise the nature of the relationship between the actual and the virtual—that is, the reciprocity between a being and its power, and I will do this in the first half of the conclusion. I will subsequently return to the twin themes of *wounds* and *counter-actualisation* presented in chapter one in order to explicate how and why the breakdown of the sensory-motor schema—experiences of the sublime—is a vital means for the transformative experimentation at the heart of Deleuze's ethics.

CONCLUSION

The Wounds of Indetermination.

In life there is a sort of awkwardness, a delicacy of health, a frailty of constitution, a vital stammering which is someone's charm. Charm is the source of life[; however,] ... Life is not your history—those who have no charm have no life, it is as though they are dead. But the charm is not the person. It is what makes people be grasped as so many combinations and so many unique chances from which such a combination has been drawn. ... Thus through each fragile combination a power of life is affirmed with a strength, an obstinacy, an unequalled persistence in the being.⁵⁰¹

I have argued in this thesis that Deleuze's metaphysical project undergoes a tremendous progression from his earliest works, published in the 1950s, to the two volumes of *Cinema*, published in the 1980s. The problem which drives this progression is an ecological concern with the relationship between an individual and her environment, and, at the heart of this progression is an effort to think through their reciprocity such that the whole—the individual's environment or milieu—is constituted as the individual engages in relationships with the other members of her environment. It is, I suggest, these differential power relations and their actualisation as real objects that constitute the whole for Deleuze.

Deleuze's ontological project receives its first full articulation in his reading of Spinoza. However, while Deleuze learns and retains much from his engagement with Spinoza, he remains dissatisfied with Spinoza's privileging of the identity of the whole, or substance, over the individuals that express its constitution and modification. This dissatisfaction leads him to return to Bergson who enables him to argue that the whole which subsists in particular lives is constituted as a heterogeneous multiplicity that is determined by the differentiation of actual lives. Thus, by the time of the renewed Bergsonian ontology of the *Cinema* books, Deleuze is able to present the constitution of the whole as turning around the differential relations that generate individuals. In Deleuze's mature ontological vision, the universe is conceived as a sensible continuum that generates individuals as the differential expression of a degree of power from the point of view of an affective encounter. The assemblage of these degrees of power constitute a whole conceived as

⁵⁰¹ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*. trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 5.

the distributive unity of the reality of relations that subsist in actual individuals. At the same time, we have also seen how Deleuze undertakes a critique of moral codes and systems that emphasise a system of judgment based on transcendent rules. Against this, Deleuze argues for a conception of ethics focussed on the immanent conditions of the transformation of an individual's power. Deleuze personifies the anti-humanism of his generation insofar as he rejects the idea of an individual as a free agent whose acts follow from her deliberations. Instead, he is interested in the passive processes—that is, the processes to which she, as a subject, is passive—which determine how an individual apprehends and makes sense of her past experiences and thereby *constitute* her. The salient feature of Deleuze's ethics is how these sense-making processes contribute to the transformation of an individual's powers and capacities.

These analyses of the ontological and the ethical are an attempt to articulate a relationship that is at the heart of Deleuze's project: *ethology*. This term, with its bipartite etymology, indicates the extent to which ethics and ontology are, in Deleuze's project, necessarily bound up in each other. Ethology has two basic concerns: on the one hand it is concerned with the ontological question of how an individual fits into her environment and expresses the ongoing transformation of this environment; on the other hand, it is concerned with the ethical question that emerges from the fact that, within a philosophy of immanence, the ontological question is always posed from the point of view of a living being. To the extent that an individual is constituted relationally, the activity or passivity of the affections involved in the determination of the individual turn on the adequacy of the idea of the individual's essence, the idea of the essence of individuals to whom she relates, and the idea of the whole of which they are all parts. If the formulation of the idea of the individual is confused and indirect in the way that it involves the idea of another individual, the affects undergone will be passions. To the extent that the idea of the individual "evinces the internal agreement of our essence, other essences and the essence of God ... then the affects that arise from it are themselves actions."⁵⁰² Thus, the degree to which the affects involved in the determination of the individual are active or passive is determined by the intelligibility, the *adequacy*, of her idea of herself, the individuals with whom she relates, and the whole in which they participate. The determination of an idea is an ontological matter of sense-making and the formulation of problems, but it is simultaneously an ethical issue that complicates the ontological question because the idea presented to her body as a problem determines how she will act and interact with those around her, and this interaction will become fodder for the ongoing making of sense—*contemplation*—and determination of problems. This is to say that the ethical and ontological complicate each other

⁵⁰² Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 48--51.

insofar as an individual's mode of life gives content to the ongoing contemplation that informs her becoming, while her becoming is synonymous with her changing modes of life.

By way of concluding this thesis, I wish to address two issues that crystallise and focus the significance of the *Cinema* books to Deleuze's ethology. The first issue concerns a persistent and, in my view, problematic, reading of Deleuze as a philosopher who valorises the virtual and denigrates the actual. According to this reading, Deleuze denies the reality of the actual by reducing it to a mere epiphenomenal expression of the becoming of the virtual. I contend that this is a misrepresentation of Deleuze's ontology. Addressing this criticism of Deleuze provides an opportunity to offer a summary of Deleuze's ontological commitments and to reflect on the ethological significance of the reciprocity of the virtual and the actual. Whilst the critique undertaken here is potentially applicable to a number of readings of Deleuze's project, I will limit the following discussion to a paradigm case of this problematic reading—Peter Hallward's *Out of This World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation*. I focus on Hallward's reading of Deleuze, because, if correct, it would negate the interpretation of Deleuze offered in this thesis.⁵⁰³ Indeed, according to Hallward, Deleuze offers no means to think through the empowerment and transformation of actual lives because, for him, the virtual and the actual are asymmetrical.⁵⁰⁴ Following Henry Somers-Hall, however, I argue that whilst the virtual is prioritised over the actual—that is, as I argued in chapter three, the problem transcends the actual occurrence to which it is given—this is not equivalent to saying that the virtual escapes the actual; rather, it is an argument that the virtual is not beholden to the habits of actual lives.⁵⁰⁵ Hallward, however, interprets this prioritisation of the virtual as an attempt to flee the actual and thus confuses the transformative power of the reciprocity of the virtual and the actual for an act of creation wherein what is created—the actual—is an epiphenomenal product of the process of creation—the virtual.

This thesis has always been directed towards the idea that our capacity for action is transformed according to the sense we make of the wounds that subsist in the present, actual state of

⁵⁰³ For other instances of the argument that the virtual has a reality that the actual does not, see Jack Reynolds, "Wounds and Scars: Deleuze on the Time and Ethics of the Event," *Deleuze Studies* 1, no. 2 (2007); Mullarky, "Forget the Virtual"; and Alain Badiou who notoriously described Deleuze's project as "a Platonism of the virtual." Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, trans Louise Burchill. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 46.

⁵⁰⁴ This is never more clear than the last four sentences of *Out of This World*: "As Deleuze understands it, living contemplation proceeds at an immeasurable distance from what is merely lived, known or decided. Life lives and creation creates on a virtual plane that leads forever out of our actual world. Few philosophers have been as inspiring as Deleuze. But those of us who still seek to change our world and to empower its inhabitants will need to look for our inspiration elsewhere." Peter Hallward, *Out of This World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* (London: Verso, 2006), 164.

⁵⁰⁵ "As Hallward emphasises, there is a tendency in Deleuze to prioritise the virtual over the actual. The meaning of this priority is not to escape actuality, but rather to override the force of habit by which the intellect tends to understand in terms of actuality alone. All too often *Out of This World* talks of creativity as if it was a property of virtuality, whereas in fact it is a process of transformation." Henry Somers-Hall, "The Politics of Creation: Peter Hallward (2006), *Out of this world: Deleuze and the philosophy of creation*, London, Verso," *Pli*, 18 (2007): 233--234.

our embodiment. If Hallward's argument justifies his claim that it is futile to seek inspiration for a transformative ethics in Deleuze, then my criticism of this argument necessitates a direct engagement with a second issue. I suggest that this is because, if we can criticise the claim that Deleuze's project is ethically insignificant, we cannot avoid the corresponding need to consider the possible content of whatever ethical significance Deleuze's project might have. That is to say, Hallward's attempt to highlight Deleuze's ethical impotence by criticising his metaphysics, *affirms* the deep interconnection of ethics and ontology in Deleuze's project and it is this affirmation that leads us to the challenge with which this thesis will conclude: the ethological significance of experiences, the *counter-actualisation*, of our wounds.

The Reciprocity of the Virtual and the Actual.

In *Out of This World*, Hallward suggests that Deleuze's emphasis on the counter-actualisation of the event leads to a subordination of the actual to the virtual. Hallward initially seems to describe counter-actualisation as a simple "reversal of the movement from virtual to actual";⁵⁰⁶ however, he nuances this description by arguing that "counter-actualisation involves something more than the mere reversal of this movement,"⁵⁰⁷ and he characterises this "more" as "extract[ing] a pure potentiality, a virtual creating from an actual creature, such that the former can be thought as wholly independent of the latter ... because it serves to free a creating from its creatures."⁵⁰⁸ Thus, for Hallward, counter-actualisation is the manner in which the virtual escapes or breaks free of the actual. The subsistence of the virtual is an issue that cuts straight to the heart of Deleuze's reading of Spinoza, specifically the way in which God produces a modal world at the same time and in the same event as his essence is constituted by the expression of his attributes. Hallward acknowledges this context in his characterisation of the simultaneous, univocal constitution of substance and the production of modes: "both creatings and creatures are facets of a single order of creation. They both are in one and the same way."⁵⁰⁹ Through a series of associations, Hallward suggests that this characterisation of univocity informs "the monotony of the underlying logic"⁵¹⁰ that drives Deleuze's metaphysics. Hallward claims that "Deleuze's work resounds with echoes of its univocal orientation" and then proceeds to cite Deleuze's collaborations with Félix Guattari—*Anti Oedipus*, *A Thousand Plateaus*, *Kafka*, and *What is Philosophy?*—as works which are grounded in this

⁵⁰⁶ Hallward, *Out of This World*, 102.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 44--45.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

univocity.⁵¹¹ In reading Deleuze this way, Hallward develops a vocabulary in which becomings and beings—processes and entities, *creatings* and *creatures*—are opposing terms in a dual process of *creation*. Hallward then elides the subtle distinctions between the terms of Deleuze’s various projects—particularly the conception of substance, attributes and modes that he inherits from Spinoza, and the virtual and the actual that is developed in *Difference and Repetition*—as though the various terms of Deleuze’s transforming project simply restate, with trivial differences, the asymmetrical creativity that Hallward suggests characterises the relation between substance and modes.⁵¹² On his reading then, the actual world “can never itself be new or creative, regardless of how distinct it may be in relation to what has already been established.”⁵¹³ This is because, while a creating is not transcendent, that is, “it doesn’t operate upon the creature from a position external to it, like a transitive cause upon its effect,” there is still an important distinction between creatures and creations. Hallward argues that

[c]reation is precisely the immanent combination of both creature and creating: the creating is more ‘internal’ to the creature than any actual inside. Nevertheless, as the verbal forms suggest, only one of these two terms is active. It is only the creating that differs or produces, and it is only the creating *as such* that can claim to be properly new. However novel or impressive an actual work of art, for instance, it bears no resemblance to the process that created it, to the power of its *working*. However novel it might be in respect to other existent creatures, a newly created individual is never itself new.⁵¹⁴

In other words, an actual entity—what is *created*—is the sterile product of a fecund process and this process, in order to be continually creative, must escape the actual. This approach, however, overlooks the important legacy of Deleuze’s reading of Spinoza’s attributes; that is, it misconstrues the reciprocity (the *implication* and *complication*) of the constitution of substance and the production of the modes. Whilst Hallward does comment on Deleuze’s use of Spinoza, he argues that Deleuze’s reading of Spinoza amounts to the claim that “[a]n individual is only truly unique, according to this conception of things, if its individuation is the manifestation of an unlimited individuating power. More crudely: you are only really an individual if God (or something like God) makes you so.”⁵¹⁵ If Hallward wanted to reduce Deleuze’s ontology to a “crude” presentation of the thesis of *Expressionism*—i.e., the metaphysical thesis that the modes are

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, 10--11.

⁵¹² In chapter six of *Out of This World*, Hallward attempts to establish an identity between Deleuze’s project and theophanic theology, an identity that centres on reducing Deleuze’s metaphysics to the theological currents that converge in Spinoza’s ontology. As he puts it, “[d]e-theologise the terms and the logic stays much the same: only being can affirm itself.” *Ibid.*, 137.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

expressions of the sense of the constitution of God, a substance whose identity is unaffected by the modes—this would be a fair characterisation of Deleuze. However, the problem with a such a reduction is clear in light of the criticism Deleuze offers of Spinoza in *Difference and Repetition*, and my own argument that affection determines the relationship between the virtual and the actual. Although the virtual is the transcendental condition of the actual, the form, content, and existence of the virtual is necessarily determined by its relationship with the actual. In other words, Deleuze works so hard at transforming his metaphysics precisely so that he can avoid the reduction of his ontology to this asymmetry, and so, once he has moved beyond the initial formulation of his ontology in *Expressionism*, the potential asymmetry of substance and modes is overcome by new concepts—the virtual, the actual and multiplicity. With these new concepts in motion, Deleuze argues that the whole of which actual lives are a part is a heterogeneous multiplicity constituted, that is, *determined*, as the distributive juxtaposition of intensities/degrees that subsist in the relations between actual individuals.

The significance of this discrepancy between the respective readings I offer of Deleuze in this thesis and that Hallward offers in *Out of This World*, is that we both want to consider the extent to which Deleuze's ontological project has anything to offer a meaningful ethical project; that is, I, like Hallward, contend that this ethical issue can only be addressed in terms of the coherence of Deleuze's ontology. However, I, unlike Hallward, contend that a sophisticated reading of Deleuze's ontology as a transforming project, affirms the ethical significance of Deleuze's project. The potential ethical significance of Deleuze's ontology is grounded in how we make sense of the whole's production of the parts which express its constitution and transformation. As Hallward demonstrates, Deleuze's *œuvre* is full of variants on the word *create*; however, the significance of this is mitigated by the fact that Deleuze, in reading Spinoza, explicitly distinguishes *production* from *creation*:

How does God produce things, in what conditions? The very conditions of production render it different from a creation, and “creatures” different from creations. As God produces necessarily, and within his own attributes, his productions are necessarily modes of these attributes that constitute his nature.⁵¹⁶

This distinction is relatively straightforward; however, saying “God produces” is unfortunately misleading, at least at first, because the sense of production present in Deleuze's reading is, as Hallward acknowledges, different to external causation. In Deleuze's reading of Spinoza, the attributes constitute the essence, and thus existence, of God insofar as they are

⁵¹⁶ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 104.

expressed as his attributes. But this attributive expression is double; that is, expression not only constitutes God, it also expresses the intensive modifications of his essence. The production of the modes is the expression of these modifications of the essence of God. This is what Deleuze means: the expression of God's essence, the expression from which his existence follows, is the same event in which the modal universe is produced. Still, God produces the modes insofar as the modes are expressions of the degree of his self-constitution, his status as *causa sui*. If we recall a theme that Deleuze inherits from both Spinoza and Hume—a distinction between causation and determination—this issue becomes clearer. In Spinoza, the existence of a mode cannot follow from its essence. In other words, the existence of a mode cannot follow from the degree of power—the degree to which it expresses the constitution of God—that characterises its existence. Later, with Hume, causation is conceived as the relation inferred from the conjunction of events given in experience. What Deleuze takes from both is a robust distinction between the determination of essence and the cause of existence. This means that when we talk of the reciprocity of the virtual and the actual, we cannot say that they cause each other; however, even though Spinoza distinguishes between the determination and causation, this does not mean that there is an absence of causation in the reciprocity of the virtual and the actual. As a response to the situation in which the production of the modes follows from the constitutive expression of the essence of substance, Deleuze undertakes a categorical reversal of identity and difference in *Difference and Repetition* and describes the virtual as a sense which subsists in the same real object that we also call actual. Insofar as they are distinct “sides” of the same object, the reciprocity of the virtual and the actual is a complex correlation wherein each determines the becoming of the other; however, to say that one causes the other is tantamount to saying that the sense which subsists in an expression is the cause of the existence of the expression.⁵¹⁷

Reflecting on Deleuze's criticism of Spinoza, Jeffrey Bell suggests that Deleuze's main objection is that the virtual “is not outside the actual ... rather, it is the power of relations ... that problematizes and intensifies the actual ... while being inseparable from it.”⁵¹⁸ This means that there is nothing apart from the actual and the relations that problematise and determine the actual. While Deleuze certainly claims that the distinctions amongst the virtual events which determine the

⁵¹⁷ Deleuze offers a detailed argument in *The Logic of Sense* that the virtual is the sense which subsists in an expression: see series three, “Third Series of the Proposition,” and five, “Fifth Series of Sense.” On the argument that the relationship between the virtual and the actual is characterised by reciprocity but not causality, see series fourteen, “Fourteenth Series of Double Causality,” where Deleuze argues that “[t]he event has a different nature than the actions and passions of the body. But it *results* from them.” The event, that is, *sense*, only escapes reduction to the actions and passions of the body to which it corresponds because “it is linked ... to a quasi-cause which is itself incorporeal.” To put it simply, the body and the event, the actual and the virtual, correspond in the same real object but, because they belong to their own distinct series of causes, they cannot be reduced to each other. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 94.

⁵¹⁸ “Spinoza Upside Down,” *Abberant Monism: Spinozism and Life in the Chaosmos* (blog).

<http://schizosoph.wordpress.com/2010/08/02/spinoza-upside-down/>.

actual are real and that *this* reality does not extend to the actual, this does not entail the claim that actual entities are themselves artificial or epiphenomenal. Thus, contra Hallward's hypothesis that actual lives follow from a virtual creating, I would suggest that actual lives exist *because* they participate in the constitution of a relational whole, the individuation or differentiation of which they *express*. The insistence on the subsistence of the virtual in actual objects affirms that the expression of a particular, virtual event of individuation as a particular, actual life follows from, *is determined by*, the relationships in which the actual object participates. This explains three moves in Deleuze's reading of Spinoza. First, it explains why Deleuze had to insist that God produces the modal universe at the same time and in the same sense as his attributes constitute his essence. Second, it explains why Deleuze had to interpret substance as a heterogeneous multiplicity, for in order for the modes to express or actualise modifications of God in a robust sense—for God to be an *immanent* cause—the essence of God must be a qualitative multiplicity, otherwise the distinctions amongst the attributes lose their reality. Finally, the commitment to a purely immanent ontology explains Deleuze's criticism of Spinoza in *Difference and Repetition*. When Deleuze develops his categorical reversal of being and becoming, the reversal in which substance is made to turn around the modes, he is able to present the whole as determined by the affective differentiation of the flux of the movement-image into its three avatars. The relational degrees expressed by these differentiations constitute the whole in which they participate. This retains the significance of the theory of distinctions that is crucial to Deleuze's reading of Spinoza and gives us a context for rejecting the claim that the virtual is real and the actual is not. While the flow of moving-matter is real, its differentiations into the avatars of the movement-image—the lines drawn around particular bodies—are only modal; that is, numerical and “artificial.” However, the distinctions between the relational degrees expressed by these differentiations are real, and they are virtual to the extent that their reality can be distinguished from the actuality of their expressions.

If I insist so persistently on the finer points of Deleuze's discussion of the virtual and the actual and the ways in which this has been misrepresented in the work of commentators such as Hallward, it is precisely because this issue is so crucial to the primary concern of this thesis, which is to say the ethical significance of the reciprocity between an individual and her environment. In *Expressionism*, Deleuze suggests that the artificiality of the distinctions between modes means that “[e]very existing mode is ... inevitably affected by modes external to it and undergoes changes that are not explained by its own nature alone. Its affections are at the outset, and tend to remain, passions.”⁵¹⁹ This poses an immediate question, a question which, according to Deleuze, is the only real ethical question: under what conditions might an existing mode aspire to convert its passive

⁵¹⁹ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 219.

affections into active affections? Or, to put it another way, an actual individual is necessarily relational, and the distinction between one actual individual and another is entirely a question of quantitative degrees of the constitution of the whole of which they are parts. That is, the *real* difference is in the relational degrees—the degrees of power—and how, expressed for themselves, they constitute a whole. *The diversity between individuals is not real difference precisely because the reality of the actual is its continuity.* In this sense, any actual individual is necessarily produced as a ratio of active and passive affects and, according to Deleuze, if ethics means anything, it is the possibility of modifying this ratio. According to Hallward's account, however, Deleuze cannot respond meaningfully to this problem of transformation of passive affections into active ones: "[i]n the end, Deleuze offers few resources for thinking the consequences of what happens within the actually existing world as such ... the adamantly virtual orientation of Deleuze's 'constructivism' does not allow him to account for cumulative transformation or novelty in terms of actual materials and tendencies."⁵²⁰ But the thesis that Deleuze has nothing meaningful to say about the ethics of the actual world would be valid only if Hallward were correct in saying that the actual world is only an epiphenomenal mirage that gestures towards a virtual creating that is characterised by its attempts to flee from the actual world. But if, as I contend, Deleuze argues that the actual and the virtual are reciprocal then we can find in Deleuze an answer to the very question that Hallward claims Deleuze cannot answer: under what conditions is the ratio of active and passive affections in an individual life modified? More broadly, how does Deleuze conceive the conditions of the empowerment and transformation of actual lives? Whilst there can be no general response to this question, I will suggest, in the following and final section, that something approaching an answer to this question can be found by modifying and qualifying Deleuze's concept of counter-actualisation. This concept is, I argue, central to Deleuze's understanding of the empowerment and creative transformation of life and I wish to situate the wound at the heart of this concept and claim that certain experiences—experiences of the sublime—rupture the sensory motor schema and thus serve as the immanent conditions of creative transformation and empowerment.

On Wounds and Counter-Actualisation.

A wound is incarnated or actualized in a state of things or of life; but it is itself a pure virtuality on the plane of immanence that leads us into a life. My wound existed before me: not a

⁵²⁰ Hallward, *Out of This World*, 162.

transcendence of the wound as higher actuality, but its immanence as a virtuality always within a milieu.⁵²¹

In chapter four I suggested that Deleuze's description of affection owes a debt to both Spinoza and Bergson. Affection, stated simply, is a state of my body insofar as it entails another body. In his reading of Spinoza, Deleuze distinguishes between active and passive affections as, respectively, affections that can be explained in terms of the affected body relative to other bodies and the whole of which they are a part, and affections that involve a confused mixture of the affected body and external, affecting bodies. Finite existing modes will always undergo passions to some degree, and can never entirely eliminate them. Becoming more active involves the possibility that a mode can "at best bring it about that its passions occupy only a small part of itself."⁵²² Thus, the ethical problem concerns the extent to which the ratio of affections involved in my existence expresses my capacity to affect other bodies relative to their capacity to affect mine. That is, it concerns enhancements and diminutions to the degree of power which characterises my existence.

Paradoxically, however, a condition of enhancing power is the realisation that I am not an arbiter for the situations in which I am involved. It is in recognition of this paradox that I have argued for a connection between Deleuze's reading of Spinoza and the ontology of sense and affect that he presents in the two volumes of *Cinema*. Experimentation with novel modes of life only becomes possible when the *clichés* that determine action-images—the *a priori* assumptions that a character's actions can disclose or modify a situation—are disrupted. The passage quoted above is from Deleuze's final essay, the beautiful "Immanence: A Life," and takes us to the heart of this thesis' interest in the *Cinema* books: the possibility that ruptures to the sensory-motor schema might, as the concrete content of counter-actualisation, confront us with the new understanding of our relationality that would enhance our power. In chapter one, I suggested a definition of wounds that, given the discussions of chapter five, I can affirm and qualify: wounds are breakdowns of, and ruptures in, the laws of the sensory-motor schema to the extent that both are virtual events that subsist in our actual lives and undermine the belief that my actions have the power to disclose or modify the situations with which the world presents us. Like wounds, ruptures and breakdowns of the sensory-motor schema are not actual occurrences; they are virtual events which correspond to, which *determine*, actual occurrences.

⁵²¹ Deleuze, "Immanence: A Life," 31--32.

⁵²² Deleuze, *Expressionism*, 218--219.

There are always signs given in experience which determine these events, and signs which actualise and express these events. Deleuze argues that there are signs given in experience that constitute both the genesis and composition of time-images insofar as they present a situation as purely auditory and visual. That is, the flux of movement-matter is differentiated as this or that image in virtue of the semiotics of experience. The genesis and composition of a time-image, that is, a crystalline structure in which an actual image cannot be distinguished from its virtual image, is given in experience as a semiotic situation in which a character goes from being an actor to a seer: in other words, she loses the capacity to act and can only observe.⁵²³

The genesis and composition of the time-image evokes the dialectic of problems that is at the heart of Deleuze's ontology, but we must resist simply reverting to that discussion because it is simultaneously too simple and too abstract. It is too simple because it only implies the extent to which my experience of signs and my interpretation of their significance is grounded in memories. It is too abstract because naming the signs of the time-image tells us nothing about what they are, which is to say how they are given in experience. To give concrete meaning to the signs of the genesis of the time-image, we could turn to Deleuze's reading of Kant: Kant would describe these signs as experiences which are beyond the capacity of the imagination to synthesise into a coherent image. And, of course, Deleuze would emphasise this description with the qualification that it is not the magnitude of the objects of our experience that defines the sign but, rather, the intensity of our experience of the sign that counts. Sublimity is not a quality of the object, it is a judgment made by the subject when an experience stretches her capacity for comprehension beyond its limits so that reason must intervene to relate the object to the category of the sublime.

It is in this sense that I suggest that wounds be defined in terms of the breakdown of the sensory-motor schema. As Williams rightly points out, wounds should not be confused with injuries.⁵²⁴ As Deleuze suggests in the above passage from "Immanence," a wound is not something that happens in the course of my actual life; it is a virtual event, an *intensity*, that subsists in actual occurrences and constitutes the problems that will determine my future. That is, a wound is not an occurrence experienced by individual, it is the sense which subsists in the content of experience. In this context, we can rephrase the ethical question about the conditions of transformation and make it much more specific: are there signs in experience through which the constitution of our actual lives would, through a counter-actualisation of the event, enhance our power by challenging us to conceive more adequately the wound which testifies to our embeddedness in a milieu? In *The Logic*

⁵²³ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 272--273. Bogue also provides an exemplary account of how these signs appear and how they constitute particular images. See chapter four of *Deleuze on Cinema*.

⁵²⁴ Williams, *Deleuze's Logic of Sense*, 12.

of *Sense*, Deleuze characterises counter-actualisation as an encounter with the sense of what happens that affirms the intensive degrees between the event which determines what happens to me and the individuals implied by the events connected to the initial event.⁵²⁵ To the extent that a wound is a virtual event, the ethical question is deceptively simple: is there an experiential sign which corresponds to my wound and which would enable the counter-actualisation through which I might engage with my wound?

A potential answer to this question can be found in *Difference and Repetition*'s discussion of Stoicism. There he writes, "[a] scar is the sign not of a past wound but of 'the present fact of having been wounded.'" ⁵²⁶ This suggestion receives the barest of attention and practically no direct elaboration; indeed, aside from these few sentences in *Difference and Repetition* it appears to be mentioned only twice more, in *The Logic of Sense* in both cases—once as a parenthetical example of a Stoic paradox and once as a cryptic remark in the discussion of Joë Bousquet's famous observation about the pre-existence of his wound.⁵²⁷ This scant reference does not, however, detract from its importance. The line in *Difference and Repetition* continues: a scar "is the contemplation of the wound ... it contracts all the instants which separate us from it into a living present." A scar, then, is the actual side of a wound. It is the sign of the event's persistence in the present conditions of a life. In the context of the present thesis, Deleuze's comments are then significant for two reasons. First, they respond to our concern about the possibility of over-simplifying the experience of signs, of overlooking the sense in which the determination of problems is *temporal*. A scar testifies to the persistence of the past as the condition of the present. Scars are not signs which express to an individual that she was, at some point in the past, wounded; rather, they affirm the extent to which her body is inescapably implicated in her milieu and thus affirm this milieu as implicated in the composition of her body. Second, I do not contemplate my scars—as though I am distinct from them and able to take them as objects of reflection. As I have argued throughout this thesis, contemplation is the passive process by which the past is contracted and synthesised as an idea constitutive of the problem which determines my thoughts and actions.⁵²⁸

As the sign of the subsistence of a wound, a scar is thus the contraction of "the wound ... [and] all the instants which separate us from it" into an idea, into a problem. However, because a wound is an event which disrupts this contraction—recall that contemplation is the process frustrated by experiences of the sublime—this contraction of the wound into present problems means that we find ourselves in the situation of a direct time-image where a circuit is established

⁵²⁵ Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 178.

⁵²⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 77.

⁵²⁷ Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 8 and 149.

⁵²⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 76--77.

between an actual image and its virtual image such that the two are indiscernible. As we have seen, it is the institution of this circuit which makes experimentation possible: “[e]verything happens as if the circuit served to try out roles, as if roles were being tried in it until the right one were found, the one with which we escape to enter a clarified reality.”⁵²⁹ This experimentation is not an individual literally, *actually*, trying out a plethora of roles; it is a counter-actualisation in which an individual confronts the multitude of other individuals implied by her own existence and transforms her actual mode of life in response to the virtual individuals that populate her *milieux*.

In light of this discussion, I would suggest that Deleuze’s ethics is not a programme for ethical behaviour nor even the determination of ethical problems. It is the sense in which his ontology presents a challenge to the living individual. As he puts it in *The Logic of Sense*, if it has anything meaningful to offer, ethics offers only this one challenge: to be “worthy” of what happens to us, that is, to overcome our resentment of the event and affirm it. From an ontological point of view, the event constitutes our life and to see it as somehow unjust, unwarranted, or “repugnant” is nothing more than the absolute depth of *ressentiment*.⁵³⁰ In this sense I argue that, against the expectation of an ethical programme, Deleuze’s ethology issues an ethical challenge from the point of view of a pure ontology. Because of the way that the two volumes of *Cinema*’s ontology—in particular, the theme of the breakdown of the sensory-motor schema as a rupture in the series of clichés—implies this discussion of wounds and counter-actualisation, I contend that these books are more concerned with the development of the sense in which Deleuze’s project unites ontology and ethics in an *ethological* project than they are with philosophies of film and cinema. It is often claimed that the *Cinema* books recapitulate arguments that appear elsewhere in Deleuze’s *œuvre*. I am content to concede this point, at least to the extent that their philosophical sophistication is only appreciable in the context of Deleuze’s broader project; that is, this sophistication comes into view when they are situated in the context of the development of Deleuze’s ethology. While it is true that the two volumes of *Cinema* repeat many arguments that appear elsewhere, they develop a uniquely immanent point of view on Deleuze’s own metaphysics. His earlier works strike their reader as commentaries, sometimes on writers, sometimes on artists, frequently on other philosophers, and, in the masterpieces of 1968/69, *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*, they are commentaries on philosophical problems and Deleuze’s own responses to them. However, the *Cinema* books are primarily the work of a thinker deploying the tools he has available to conceive and describe life on the plane of immanence that he so long celebrated, while still articulating this point of view in an impersonal—that is, philosophical not autobiographical—voice. Perhaps this is not a particularly noteworthy achievement in itself; however, it does bring to light another, much

⁵²⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 86.

⁵³⁰ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 149.

more salient achievement. The *Cinema* books demonstrate how intensely concrete Deleuze's project is, how focussed it is on the conditions of the transformation of actual lives. Deleuze's insistence on immanence, his self-description as an empiricist, and his notorious disdain for abstraction indicates the importance of concreteness to his philosophy, but, with the *Cinema* books, the style, object and content of his work are made concrete in a very different, unique and more direct way. I suggest that if we want to engage with Deleuze's ethics, and the affective ontology implied by his ethics, the *Cinema* books are significant in ways that deserve more attention precisely because they offer a way to think concretely about the formulation of, and our responses to, ethical questions of empowerment and the transformation of everyday experience.

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