

Deleuze and the Ethics of Immanence: Beyond the Illusions of Consciousness

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Abstract

This thesis examines the idea of immanent ethics as it appears in the work of Gilles Deleuze by mapping its emergence in his most relevant works (including those co-authored with Félix Guattari). My analysis adopts an innovative perspective: it suggests that Deleuze's ethical imperative can be best understood in terms of overcoming the illusions of conscious agency. My argument is organised around two particular illusions that are normally held to relate to the supposed primacy of consciousness – that of free will and that of value. I demonstrate that, for Deleuze, overcoming these illusions can be achieved by becoming attuned to the immanent organising principle of reality, which can, in a human sense, be called the unconscious. It is the unconscious forces that constitute effective agency, while the conscious self is capable of activity only insofar as it is able to express and restructure the unconscious forces which constitute the possibility of its activity. From this perspective, I trace the trajectory of Deleuze's thought from his work on Spinoza and Nietzsche, where he conceptualises immanent ethics through idiosyncratic readings of these philosophers, to his co-authored work with Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, where a new account of the ethics of immanence is presented. This ethical approach takes the form of a materialist psychiatric practice called schizoanalysis. By examining the development of Deleuze's immanent ethics, I seek to isolate and clarify its main conceptual elements. I show how schizoanalysis both embraces and diverges from Deleuze's readings of Spinoza and Nietzsche, and suggest that its aim is that of dismantling normalised subjectivity to produce new thoughts, feelings and desires. Such a dismantling is the precondition for any future articulation of a genuinely immanent ethics.

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Introduction – Deleuze and the Whirlwinds of Immanence

i) Introduction

Subjectivity as such presupposes the illusion that things could be different. To be a subject is to be unable to think of oneself as anything but free — even if you know that you are not. The barrier that means that this cannot be faced is transcendental.

– Mark Fisher, *The Weird and The Eerie*¹

Consciousness is a fetish. (A reification of productive forces.)

– @qdnoktsqfr on Twitter²

This thesis examines the idea of immanent ethics as it appears in the work of Gilles Deleuze. By mapping the emergence of immanent ethics in Deleuze's most relevant works (including those co-authored with Félix Guattari), I aim to clarify and develop its main components. I suggest that Deleuze's ethical imperative can be best understood in terms of overcoming the illusions of conscious agency, which, for Deleuze, can be achieved by becoming attuned to the immanent organising principle of reality – what, in a human sense, can be called the unconscious. It is the unconscious forces that constitute effective agency, while the conscious self is capable of activity only insofar as it is able to express and restructure the unconscious forces which constitute the possibility of its activity. Tracing the trajectory of Deleuze's thought from his work on Spinoza and Nietzsche, where he conceptualises immanent ethics through idiosyncratic readings of the work of these philosophers, to his co-authored work with Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, which develops an independent account of the ethics of immanence, I organise my argument around two specific illusions of consciousness: the illusions of *free will* and *value*.

To set up the problematic of the illusion of free will or autonomous subjectivity, one can consider a passage from Gustave Meyrinck's 1927 novel *The Golem*:

¹ Mark Fisher, *The Weird and The Eerie* (London: Repeater, 2016), p. 44.

² 23 April 2019, <<https://twitter.com/qdnoktsqfr/status/1120632010324602880>> [accessed 6 August 2019].

Isn't it strange the way the wind makes inanimate objects move? Doesn't it look odd when things which usually just lie there lifeless suddenly start fluttering. Don't you agree? I remember once looking out onto an empty square, watching huge scraps of paper whirling angrily round and round, chasing one another as if each had sworn to kill the others; and I couldn't feel the wind at all since I was standing in the lee of a house. A moment later they seemed to have calmed down, but then once again they were seized with an insane fury and raced all over the square in a mindless rage, crowding into a corner then scattering again as some new madness came over them, until finally they disappeared round a corner.

There was just one thick newspaper that couldn't keep up with the rest. It lay there on the cobbles, full of spite and flapping spasmodically, as if it were out of breath and gasping for air.

As I watched, I was filled with an ominous foreboding. What if, after all, we living beings were nothing more than such scraps of paper? Could there not be a similar unseeable, unfathomable 'wind' blowing us from place to place and determining our actions, whilst we, in our simplicity, believe we are driven by free will?³

The uncanny impression described by Meyrinck's character presents us with a world which contradicts common and pervasive presuppositions concerning human subjects. In such a world, human beings would be denied their traditional attribute of conscious 'rational' autonomy: they are envisaged here as being no different from scraps of paper whirling in the wind. The passage initiates an understanding of human agency which denies the notion of an 'inner self' (that is, the subject understood as self-conscious bearer of free will) any motive power. Like papers scattered by a breeze, humans here are conceived of as being immersed in the multiplicity of forces that imperceptibly animate and direct their actions and thoughts.

Meyrick's eerie vision evokes a realm which corresponds to what Deleuze repeatedly refers to as 'the plane of immanence'.⁴ On the plane of immanence human beings are not autonomous subjects who exert mastery over everything non-human in virtue of their superior attribute of consciousness. Instead, they exist in a non-hierarchical manner on a common plane alongside animals, plants, and seemingly lifeless entities, with which they are in constant and often unacknowledged modes of interaction.

³ Gustave Meyrinck, *The Golem*, trans. by Mike Mitchell (Sawtry/Riverside: Dedalus/Ariadne, 1995), pp. 54–55.

⁴ For an overview of this concept in the work of Deleuze see Christian Kerlake's insightful paper 'Deleuze and the Meanings of Immanence', in *After 1968*. <[http://www.after1968.org/app/webroot/uploads/kerlake-paper\(1\).pdf](http://www.after1968.org/app/webroot/uploads/kerlake-paper(1).pdf)> [accessed 6 May 2019].

Human beings, when they are comprehended in terms of this horizontal plane, live in the same way and under the same conditions as non-human entities: they are swept along by forces which they cannot control. When related to human beings, this field of forces, which both articulates and is articulated by the encounters between material bodies, can be understood in terms of the affective forces of the unconscious.⁵

Meyrinck's character suggests that the idea of free will, the assumed motor of our agency, is nothing but a blunder, a delusion to which we naively succumb. The idea of the subject as a free actor, with an entirely undetermined capacity for thinking and choosing that exists independently of context as if in a vacuum, is, it is suggested here, akin to a veil which blinds us to the complex forces that animate us and our world. Deleuze and Guattari in *What is Philosophy?* suggest that these complex forces make up the 'plane [of immanence which] is surrounded by illusions' – illusions which themselves arise from this plane itself 'like vapors from a pond'.⁶ While we always already exist on this horizontal plane of being, Deleuze and Guattari maintain that the illusions make it appear otherwise. They propose that one that 'perhaps comes before all others', is the 'illusion of transcendence'.⁷ This is not limited to the transcendence of God, but refers to anything that stands outside and remains untouched by the forces of material reality. The illusion of transcendence, therefore, also includes the illusion of the autonomous subject.⁸

From Deleuze's perspective, being subject to the illusion of the autonomous subject installs human beings onto 'a plan of organisation'.⁹ The latter corresponds to any conception of existence that is organised by a principle 'that comes from above and refers to a transcendence'.¹⁰ For Deleuze, a plan of organisation can be related to ideas such as God, Reason, Unity, etc., which assert a transcendent organising principle of existence in 'a design in the mind of a god, but also an evolution in the

⁵ For a consideration of these vital forces that belong to non-human entities, see Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill (London: Verso, 2009), p. 49.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Daniel W. Smith proposes, for example, that 'in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant had already critiqued the concepts of the Self, the World, and God as the three great illusions of transcendence; and what he calls the "moral law" in the second critique is, by Kant's own admission, a transcendent law that is unknowable' (Daniel W. Smith, 'Deleuze and the Question of Desire: Toward an Immanent Theory of Ethics' in *Essays on Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp.175–88 (p.176)).

⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. by Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988), p. 128.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

supposed depths of nature, or a society's organisation of power'.¹¹ This transcendence concerns the notion of the subject, which is assumed to remain beyond the influence of forces in which it is immersed, and serves as the agency that orders them.

'When you invoke something transcendent', Deleuze argues, 'you arrest [the] movement' of processes on the plane of immanence.¹² According to Deleuze, 'it's always ever abstractions, a transcendent viewpoint, if only that of a Self, that prevents one from constructing a plane of immanence'.¹³ In his view, it is only when one assigns substantive causal power to an autonomous consciousness, its agency and mental representations that one closes off access to the plane of immanence. My thesis examines Deleuze's approach to ethics precisely from the perspective of seeking to overcome the illusion of a transcendent subject, which amounts to constructing a plane of immanence. If transcendence thus corresponds to the sphere of consciousness, its representations, and its illusions, immanence in its strictest sense for Deleuze corresponds to 'the unconsciousness itself, and the conquest of the unconscious'.¹⁴ The conquest of these unconscious forces entails opening oneself to the field of affective forces that operate on the plane of immanence, and that are, according to him, constitutive of agency. In this regard, only with the rejection of the primacy of notions such as 'consciousness', intentional 'will' and 'pure' thought can the genuine attributes of the subject and its possibilities come to light.

Keeping the above in mind, one can introduce a passage that relates this to the question of value. In his 1922 short story 'A Hunger Artist', Franz Kafka narrates the life of a performer once celebrated for his incredible ability to fast. After a long career in the spotlight, the Hunger Artist's art falls out of favour and, as a result, the hunger artist is left forgotten in a circus, abandoned casually in his small cage alongside those of performing animals. In spite of the now universal lack of interest in his ascetic art, the hunger artist insists on continuing his fast. The following passage gives an account of his last moments, witnessed by an 'overseer' who spots him under a pile of dirty hay:

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Gilles Deleuze, 'On Philosophy', *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, trans. by Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997) pp.135–55 (p. 146).

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 29.

An overseer's eye fell on the cage one day and he asked the attendants why this perfectly good cage should be left standing there unused with dirty straw inside it; nobody knew, until one man, helped out by the notice board, remembered about the hunger artist. They poked into the straw with sticks and found him in it. "Are you still fasting?" asked the overseer, "when on earth do you mean to stop?" "Forgive me, everybody," whispered the hunger artist; only the overseer, who had his ear to the bars, understood him. "Of course," said the overseer, and tapped his forehead with a finger to let the attendants know what state the man was in, "we forgive you." "I always wanted you to admire my fasting," said the hunger artist. "We do admire it," said the overseer, affably. "But you shouldn't admire it," said the hunger artist. "Well then we don't admire it," said the overseer, "but why shouldn't we admire it?" "Because I have to fast, I can't help it," said the hunger artist. "What a fellow you are," said the overseer, "and why can't you help it?" "Because," said the hunger artist, lifting his head a little and speaking, with his lips pursed, as if for a kiss, right into the overseer's ear, so that no syllable might be lost, "because I couldn't find the food I liked. If I had found it, believe me, I should have made no fuss and stuffed myself like you or anyone else." These were his last words, but in his dimming eyes remained the firm though no longer proud persuasion that he was still continuing to fast.¹⁵

The performer's final words whispered to the overseer consist of a striking admission, which can be read from the perspective of value judgement. The hunger artist discloses that his fasting is not the result of any conscious control over his desire for nourishment. He is simply unable to find anything that he wants to eat. Food leaves him devoid of all desire for it, so he cannot do otherwise than abstain. Although he desperately wants to be admired for his ability to fast, the hunger artist acknowledges that people should not venerate him since his fasting is not a voluntary achievement of conscious will, but a compulsion to which he must succumb.

The tale of the hunger artist opens up a critical perspective on the manner in which we tend to assign value to things and actions. Understood in terms of the plan of organisation, the hunger artist's fast is assumed to be the act of a free subject endowed with an autonomous capacity for choice. From this perspective, the hunger artist's abstinence is a result of the autonomous faculty of conscious will that supervenes upon the functioning of unconscious bodily drives: while the artist desires food, he is able to consciously moderate the cravings of his body. This renders his actions an admirable ascetic accomplishment.¹⁶ Conscious reflective will expresses

¹⁵ Franz Kafka, 'A Hunger Artist', in *The Complete Stories*, trans. by Willa and Edwin Muir (New York: Schocken Books, 1989), pp. 300–10 (p. 309).

¹⁶ The hunger artist's *inability* to eat (or to find food that he can enjoy) is presented as an *ability* to fast, thus taking the necessary result as a voluntary achievement.

its superiority over the 'mere' realm of bodily drives. However, if we consider this character's evaluation of food on a plane of immanence, as opposed to the plan of organisation, we see that his actions can be comprehended as the involuntary expressions of a multiplicity of embodied factors. These include the various embodied elements that render him unaffected by certain foods (genetic disposition, preceding diets, his history, etc.) combined with the networks organising the given availability of food (existing cooking practices, available ingredients, etc.). These causes frustrate his desire to eat in the same way that the wind caused the scraps of paper to chase madly after one another in the preceding passage from Meyrinck's text. What is valued is not the product of deliberative conscious willing, but of concatenations of embodied conditions which make up the lived experience of the self.

According to Deleuze, the same can be said for every kind of value, be it moral, aesthetic or economic. The supposedly universal values of 'Good' and 'Evil', for example, which are grounded in Western culture in the existence of a Christian God as the moral, transcendent creator of all that there is, are no different. Deleuze proposes that 'there are no such things as universals, there's nothing transcendent'.¹⁷ This is because '[a]bstractions explain nothing, [rather] they themselves have to be explained'.¹⁸ Illusions of value, or, as Deleuze and Guattari refer to them in *What is Philosophy?*, the 'illusion of universals', take place 'when concepts are confused with the plane'.¹⁹ Put differently, we are subject to this illusion of attributing values in this way insofar as we assume that values and universals explain existence to us. We thus overlook that these values need to be explained as they are, just as in the case of hunger artist. They are produced by the field of forces constituting the plane of immanence, springing from existence rather than transcending it.

Immanent ethics, insofar as it views the ideas of free will and universal values as illusory, rejects the foundational principles of traditional moral philosophy.²⁰ It could be said that morality, understood as any kind of system for judging existence, belongs firmly to what, following the discussion offered above, has been called the plan of organisation. In *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, Deleuze avers this when he proposes that free will is 'the traditional principle on which Morality was founded as an

¹⁷ Deleuze, 'On Philosophy', p. 145.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*,

¹⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 49.

²⁰ Paradigmatic examples of humanist moral philosophy can be found with Descartes, Kant and Hegel.

enterprise of domination of the passions by consciousness'.²¹ This moral way of thinking, which presupposes the idea of free will, still largely informs our everyday thinking habits. Once we embrace the view that that the conscious self is not able to control bodily drives from 'above' or 'outside' (so to speak), every moral project as it has been traditionally conceived becomes untenable. 'Moral philosophy', one might say, is exposed in its redundancy. Although Deleuze himself neither explicitly formulates his own ethical theory nor uses the term 'immanent ethics', he does offer an outline of ethics which presents the counter-image of morality understood in this conventional way.

In a 1986 interview on Michel Foucault, Deleuze proposes that unlike morality, which 'presents us with a set of constraining rules [...] that judge actions and intentions by considering them in relation to transcendent values', the approach associated with immanent ethics sees actions and thoughts as expressions of unconscious dispositions.²² 'There are things one can only do or say through mean-spiritedness', Deleuze adds, 'a life based on hatred, or bitterness toward life. Sometimes it takes just one gesture or word'.²³ Affective attitudes, in other words, precede conscious reflection. Deleuze's reference to hatred toward life immediately evokes two philosophers that he considers as his main influences: Nietzsche, the great analyst

²¹ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 18.

²² Gilles Deleuze, 'Life as a Work of Art', *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, trans. by Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997) pp. 94–101 (p. 100). It should also be noted that in this interview, as well as in his monograph dedicated to Foucault, Deleuze aligns Foucault's ethical approach with ethics as opposed to morality. We firstly have to note Foucault's ethics contains elements that clearly contradict an ethics that remains immanent to the functioning of the unconscious. The differences between Deleuze's approach and Foucault's approach are in fact outlined by Deleuze himself in a short text called 'Desire & Pleasure' (published in *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975–1995*, trans. by Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina, ed. by David Lapoujade (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2006), pp. 122–34). The principal difference pointed out by Deleuze is that for him the immanence of desire, which he sees as the energy that enables and guides our behaviour, precedes the operations of power, which through disciplinary practices and discourses articulate the functioning of desire. Foucault, on the other hand, refuses to posit an immanent organizing principle, and assumes power to be primary. It is this difference that leads Phillip Goodchild to proclaim Foucault's ethical emphasis on the care of self consists of the 'perpetual disciplining of life in the name of the Idea [which] is precisely the practice of transcendence that constitutes the opposite pole to Deleuze's philosophy of immanence' (Phillip Goodchild, 'Philosophy as a way of life: Deleuze on thinking and money', *Substance*, 39, 1 (2010), 24–37 (p. 24.)) Yet, my contention is that Deleuze refuses to classify Foucault's ethics under the banner of morality due to Foucault's use of ethical principles. The latter should be distinguished from moral and disciplinary rules in that they are not prescriptive, but optional and are directed towards a cultivation of an *ethos*. I return to this distinction in my conclusion.

²³ Deleuze, 'Life as a Work of Art', p. 100.

of *ressentiment* against life, and Spinoza, the philosopher of joy, who Deleuze explicitly mentions immediately afterwards.²⁴

To further elaborate on Deleuze's conception of the ethics of immanence from the perspective of illusions of consciousness, this thesis focuses on and develops what Daniel W. Smith identifies as the three central pillars of this ethics in Deleuze's work. In 'Deleuze and the Question of Desire: Toward an Immanent Theory of Ethics', Smith sketches out the contours of Deleuze's theory of immanent ethics. For Smith, the first two pillars can be found precisely in Deleuze's work on Spinoza and Nietzsche, to each of whom Deleuze devoted monographs.²⁵ Smith insists that it is in these monographs that Deleuze first works out the immanent theory of ethics, which lays the foundations for his own account of immanent ethics that he puts forward with Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*. The aim of this thesis is to substantiate and develop Smith's outline of Deleuze's immanent ethics by tracing its emergence from his engagements with Spinoza and Nietzsche to its culmination in *Anti-Oedipus*. By closely examining the trajectory of Deleuze's ethical thought charted by Smith from the perspective of the illusions of conscious agency, I aim to isolate and clarify the central principles of immanent ethics.

Smith proposes that the main point of convergence that for Deleuze unites Nietzsche and Spinoza is that they refuse to judge individuals in terms of transcendent principles. Instead, he claims that according to Deleuze they both seek to evaluate them immanently, i.e. 'in terms of the manner by which they "occupy" their existence – the intensity of their power', or, put simply, in terms of their unconscious disposition.²⁶ Building on Spinoza and Nietzsche, Deleuze is able to differentiate

²⁴ In another interview from *Negotiations* Deleuze, for example, proposes that in his formative period 'all tended toward the great Spinoza-Nietzsche equation' (Gilles Deleuze, 'On Philosophy', p. 135.).

²⁵ Smith, 'Deleuze and the Question of Desire', p. 175. In this essay Smith also acknowledges the influence of Kant on Deleuze's ethics of immanence. He proposes that while Deleuze's ethics adopts its 'content' from Spinoza and Nietzsche, its underlying 'form' is Kantian (*Ibid.*, p. 188). For a mapping of Deleuze's reworking of Kant's basic architecture from his first critique onto Deleuze's readings of Spinoza and Nietzsche, see the third chapter of Joe Hughes's *Philosophy After Deleuze: Deleuze and the Genesis of Representation II* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012). There Hughes effectively demonstrates that Deleuze's accounts of immanent ethics in Spinoza and Nietzsche can be understood in terms of Deleuze's inversion of Kant's two-fold movement from sensibility to understanding (three syntheses) and back (schematism). For a consideration of Kant's theory of moral law from the perspective of Deleuze's immanent ethics, see Smith's essay 'The Place of Ethics in Deleuze's Philosophy: Three Questions of Immanence', in *Essays on Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp. 146–59.).

²⁶ Smith, 'Deleuze and the Question of Desire', p. 176.

between (two different pairs of) two kinds of functioning of the unconscious, or, in Spinoza's terms, two kinds of modes of existence. The first kind corresponds to modes of existence that manage to 'conquer' their unconscious activity and thus come into active possession of their power of acting. These modes are codified as free or active (or rational) by Spinoza, and noble and active by Nietzsche. The other kind of modes remain cut off from their power of acting. They are deemed by Spinoza as passive and enslaved, and slavish and reactive by Nietzsche. Unlike the external criteria of morality, which measure one's behaviour against timeless criteria stipulating what one should do, this immanent ethical distinction is concerned with whether one is capable of deploying one's capacities and thus acting at all.

In this thesis, I argue that being able to activate one's unconscious forces and thus exercise one's capacities is a matter of overcoming the illusion of the primacy of consciousness which lies at the heart of conventional moral discourse. My contention is that these illusions should be seen as the starting point and persistent feature of Deleuze's immanent ethics. Deleuze brings up these illusions precisely in relation to Spinoza and Nietzsche. In a chapter called 'On the Difference Between The *Ethics* and a Morality', from *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, Deleuze isolates three main differences between the two, which for him correspond to Spinoza's 'three major resemblances with Nietzsche'.²⁷ The first two of these common points, namely the illusion of free will and the related illusion of value, constitute the explicit focus of this thesis, while the third, the devaluation of sad passions, is addressed in passing. Similarly, the names of Spinoza and Nietzsche come up in *What is Philosophy?* when Deleuze and Guattari discuss the illusions that emerge from the plane of immanence. They propose that we 'must draw up a list of these illusions, just as Nietzsche, following Spinoza, listed "four great errors"'.²⁸ The illusions of consciousness (or transcendence) and of values (or universals) are at the top of Deleuze and Guattari's list.²⁹

²⁷ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 17.

²⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 49. Deleuze here refers to the 'Four Great Errors' chapter from Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols*, which I engage with later.

²⁹ While Deleuze and Guattari do not explicitly mention Kant when discussing the illusions that emerge from the plane of immanence, his presence is nevertheless felt. Kant's idea of transcendental, or objective, illusion is discussed by Deleuze in his short book *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, but also features in the central chapter of his *Difference and Repetition*. The idea of transcendental illusion is in fact central to Kant's project as the aim of his critique is precisely to mitigate the effects that this illusion, according to him, inevitably claims on knowledge itself. 'In many ways', Deleuze suggests, knowledge is 'deeply tormented by the ambition to make things in themselves known to us' (*Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam

Consequently, I suggest that these illusions provide us with a privileged perspective for understanding the third book by Deleuze, co-authored with Guattari, that Smith sees as his book of immanent ethics, i.e. *Anti-Oedipus*. The idea of the ethical status of *Anti-Oedipus* can be at least partially ascribed to a remark made by Michel Foucault in his preface to the book. Asking the authors for forgiveness, Foucault suggests that *Anti-Oedipus* is 'the first book of ethics to be written in France in quite a long time'.³⁰ He proposes that not unlike Christianity (which aims to expel every trace of flesh lodged in the soul), the anti-Oedipal lifestyle developed in *Anti-Oedipus* seeks to eradicate 'the slightest traces of fascism in the body'.³¹ The ethical demand that motivates *Anti-Oedipus* thus answers to a demand to engage with the ethos of fascism in its bodily register: what, in other words, are the immanent forces that spring from the body which drive fascism?

To address this question, Deleuze and Guattari conceptualise the theory of the unconscious that Smith sees as the central element that *Anti-Oedipus* contributes to the ethics of immanence. This theory provides them with the conceptual basis for schizoanalysis, the materialist psychiatric practice that *Anti-Oedipus* puts forward as an alternative to psychoanalysis. Since schizoanalysis focuses on the reactivation of a productive unconscious, its aims are perfectly aligned with the ethics of immanence. Furthermore, as this reactivation consists of undoing oppressive unconscious structures that organise the normalised or Oedipal model of subjectivity, I argue that schizoanalysis, too, leads to exposing the illusion of consciousness as providing the foundation of ethics.

(London: The Athlone Press, 1984), p. 24). As a result of this innate tendency of our knowledge-seeking, we tend to falsely affirm the knowledge that transcends, or goes beyond, our sense experience. It is this illusory knowledge of things, not as objects of our experience, but in themselves (i.e. as existing in perfect conformity with our ideas) that Kant seeks to critique. As this illusion, too, takes place when, as Deleuze and Guattari state above, 'concepts are confused with the plane', we should note that the structure of Kant's transcendental illusion is aligned with what Deleuze (and Guattari) refer to as the illusion of universals or the illusion of value. While I find it is necessary to acknowledge the correspondence between Kant's approach and mine (both focus on rectifying the illusions that are unavoidable), I maintain that further explication of Kant's project is not required. As suggested in footnote 25, a lucid analysis of Deleuze's transfiguration of Kant's conceptual apparatus (three synthesis) can be found in Hughes's *Philosophy After Deleuze*.

³⁰ Michel Foucault, 'Preface' in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), pp. xi–xiv (p. xiii).

³¹ *Ibid.*

In examining Deleuze's immanent ethics from the perspective of its critique of the autonomous conscious subject and the values associated with it, my thesis seeks to offer a perspective that, as I show in the following literature review, remains overlooked. My contention is that this perspective isolates the core element of this ethics – the immanent organising principle, i.e. the web of unconscious forces – and liberates our understanding of them from a damaging conception of transcendence that serves to separate these immanent forces from what they can do. Approaching Deleuze's ethics from this perspective also allows me to outline the radical difference of his approach from more traditional moral projects. While there is arguably an ethics implied in each of Deleuze's books (including those co-authored with Guattari), the decision to limit the present discussion to the works just named facilitates a close examination of the dynamic of this ethics.

In focusing on Deleuze's work on Spinoza and Nietzsche I draw out Deleuze's ideas by returning to these authors' original texts. I then turn to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, referring to their other works, essays and interviews only when needed. This allows me to provide a thorough assessment of Deleuze's ethical foundations. I demonstrate how *Anti-Oedipus* mobilises conceptual elements from Nietzsche and Spinoza, and, building on them, puts forward an ethics that takes into account the specifics of capitalist social formation. In this regard, the role of immanent ethics in relation to contemporary cultural critique can be brought to the fore. Since the idea of the subject as a free agent still very much remains part of present-day public discourse, I maintain that its dismantling is as significant as ever. By interrogating the ethical implications of the illusions of free will and value, I thus aim to contribute to dissolving the habit that constitutes what Braidotti sees as a '400-year-old lag in thinking'³² – stratifications of habit that, for Braidotti, have remained in place for 400 years after Spinoza's *Ethics* and continue to inhibit our capacities for acting.

ii) Literature Review

Deleuze's ethical theory is, of course, far from being an under-researched topic. The secondary literature on Deleuze's work, alone or together with Guattari, is both extensive and continuously proliferating, and writing on his ethical approach is no

³² Braidotti discussed antiquated cognitive habits in her lecture at the 2017 summer school, 'Posthuman Ethics in the Anthropocene', at Utrecht University.

exception. That said, while Deleuze's theory of ethics has indeed received some academic attention, John Protevi notes that it has nevertheless been engaged with only 'comparatively sparingly'.³³ My review of the secondary literature on Deleuze's ethical theory will be divided into three different categories: those texts which offer comprehensive accounts of Deleuze's philosophical project, those which provide an engagement with Deleuze and Guattari's collaboratively authored work, and, finally, those writings that engage with Deleuzian ethics directly.³⁴ My aim is to show that while the theory of ethics is by no means overlooked by Deleuzian scholarship, it remains the case that a substantial engagement with ethics from the perspective developed here is still lacking.

Most of the comprehensive takes on Deleuze's philosophy acknowledge the presence of the ethical component but address it in a limited manner. The most notable early monographs on Deleuze, Michael Hardt's *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* and Keith Ansell-Pearson's *Germinal Life: The Difference and Repetition of Deleuze*, both offer discussions of his ethics. Hardt carefully traces Deleuze's philosophical formation by considering his monographs on Bergson, Spinoza and Nietzsche, but analyses his ethical thought in relation to Nietzsche alone. Ansell-Pearson's bio-philosophical discussion of Deleuze's ethics, on the other hand, is based on Bergson, coupled with Deleuze's major early texts, *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*. Ansell-Pearson's inquiry into ethics is organised around the notion of the event elaborated on in the latter.³⁵ Other major comprehensive accounts of Deleuze's philosophy include Ian Buchanan's *Deleuzeism*, Gregg Lambert's *The Non-Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*, James

³³ John Protevi, Review of *Deleuze and Ethics*, edited by Nathan Jun and Daniel W. Smith, in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* <<http://ndpr.nd.edu/news/deleuze-and-ethics>> [accessed 7 May 2018].

³⁴ Even though I consider them indispensable, especially in relation to texts as impenetrable as those of Deleuze (and Guattari), I avoid mapping readers' guides, introductions, and 'dictionaries' of concepts. I refrain from doing so as they do not seek to provide a comprehensive account that I am interested in. The format of this review is partially adopted from Edward Thornton's exemplary PhD thesis (Edward Thornton, 'On Lines of Flight: A Study of Deleuze and Guattari's Concept' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, Royal Holloway, 2018), p. 18).

³⁵ Deleuze sums up the ethical imperative laid down in *The Logic of Sense* in the following way: 'to become worthy of what happens to us' (Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, ed. by Constantin V. Boundas, trans. by Mark Lester, Charles Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 149). This ethic consists of not becoming resentful of an event (seeing it as unjust or unwarranted), but rather engaging with it in a creative way. Ansell-Pearson draws on this injunction to consider the ethical aspect of the biological evolution of the human species, which for him consists of making this evolution creative and thus 'to think "beyond" the human condition' (Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Germinal Life: The Difference and Repetition of Deleuze* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 14).

Williams's *The Transversal Thought of Gilles Deleuze: Encounters and Influences*, Levi Bryant's *Difference and Givenness: Deleuze's Transcendental Empiricism and the Ontology of Immanence*, and Joe Hughes's *Philosophy After Deleuze*. While Lambert and Bryant explicitly refrain from addressing the ethical component, Buchanan and Hughes each devote a chapter to Deleuze's ethics.

Buchanan approaches the ethical component of Deleuze's thought through the notion of 'counter-actualisation' developed in *The Logic of Sense*. He argues that to counter-actualise an event is to actively take charge of what happens to us (instead of lamenting or begrudging it). Conversely, Hughes's main aim is to show the 'monotonous' underlying structure that is common to all of Deleuze's work, and that consists of an inversion of Kant's work.³⁶ I consider all of these accounts illuminating in their own way (especially the one by Hughes whose Kantian mapping of Deleuze is particularly impressive), but it has to be observed that none of them offers a sustained account from the perspective attempted by this thesis. Finally, since he organises his argument around the ethical question of 'how might one live', I would like to single out Todd May's introduction to Deleuze. May's account offers an admirably clear analysis of the said question and does so with considerable attention to Spinoza and Nietzsche. While May provides a compelling general overview and contextualisation of Deleuze's ethics, his exposition sidesteps more nuanced conceptual issues and their genealogical development. By taking a step back, May glosses over the detailed analysis of the functioning of the unconscious, its habituation, and repression, which, I claim, is vital for any proper understanding of immanent ethics. In addition, May also neglects the topic which forms the core concern of this thesis, and occasionally downplays the role of the unconscious, which makes Deleuze's ethics at times seem too voluntaristic.

In texts which engage with Deleuze and Guattari's jointly authored writings, the ethical angle of Deleuze's work is only explored to a certain degree. Ronald Bogue's *Deleuze and Guattari* traces the development of their conceptual toolbox back to Deleuze's individually authored work. Bogue engages with the significance of Nietzsche's influence and even with the critique of the sovereign subject which emanates from it, but he completely avoids a discussion of ethical theory. *The Two Fold Thought of*

³⁶ As noted, in chapter 3 Hughes maps Kant's influence on Deleuze's ethics of immanence, and thus provides a very clear exposition of Kant's 'formal' impact on Deleuze to which Smith alludes.

Deleuze and Guattari by Charles Stivale offers an exploration of the shifts that take place between *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, but it does so without touching upon their ethics at all. Sabrina Achilles's *Literature, Ethics, and Aesthetics: Applied Deleuze and Guattari*, on the other hand, considers the ethics of a literary machine. As it studies the role that literature can play in an ethical re-structuring of one's unconscious disposition, Achilles's project neatly complements Aidan Tynan's *Deleuze's Literary Clinic*. These authors' elaboration of the ethical aspect of literary activity outline an interesting case of immanent ethics in which writing is employed to treat one's symptoms and intensify one's powers. By examining the ways in which symptoms such as alcoholism, anorexia, and manic depression are expressed in literary texts, and investigating the enhancing effects produced by writing, Tynan's book also provides us with specific analyses of the unconscious that can be mapped within the general coordinates of immanent ethics established by my thesis. These coordinates are structured around the illusions of conscious agency, which both Achilles and Tynan do not engage with.

Brian Massumi's *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia* rightly points out that Deleuze and Guattari's whole project can be understood as 'an effort to construct a smooth space of thought'. Massumi adds that the same was attempted by Spinoza and Nietzsche under the banner of 'ethics' and, respectively, 'gay science'.³⁷ Massumi also stresses the role played by the illusion of the free subject in their work, but, while strongly concentrating on the second volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, *A Thousand Plateaus*, he sidesteps the chance to offer a sustained account of the relation between Deleuze and Guattari's writings and ethics. The ethical aspect of schizoanalysis is at times explored by the *Schizoanalytic Applications* series, which consists of collections of essays that seek to 'schizoanalyse' a particular field or issue (cinema, gender, literature, art, religion).³⁸ These texts offer insightful practical

³⁷ Brian Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1992), p. 8.

³⁸ These schizoanalytic essay collections include *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Visual Art*, ed. by Ian Buchanan (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Cinema*, ed. by Ian Buchanan and Patricia MacCormack (London: Bloomsbury, 2008); *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Literature*, ed. by Ian Buchanan, Tim Matts, and Aidan Tynan (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Religion*, ed. by F. LeRon Shults and Lindsay Powell-Jones (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); and *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Feminism*, ed. by Cheri Carr and Janae Sholtz (London: Bloomsbury, 2019)

deployment of schizoanalysis, and often help to elucidate certain aspects of it, but usually steer away from a more robust theoretical exploration.³⁹

Lastly, when it comes to works that engage explicitly with Deleuze's ethics, one has to agree with Protevi that they are relatively sparse. The most focused engagements with Deleuzian ethics so far can be found in *Deleuze and Ethics*, a collection of essays co-edited by Smith and Nathan Dun. These essays either approach this issue from a different perspective to the one I adopt here (event, aesthetics, death etc.), or they discuss it in conjunction with literature, political theory, film studies or art criticism. The exception is the already-mentioned essay by Smith, 'Deleuze and the Question of Desire: Towards an Immanent Theory of Ethics', which begins the project of sketching a Deleuzian ethics by linking it to the unconscious. This essay thus offers a blueprint for this thesis, without elaborating on the question of ethics in either the detail or directions offered below.

Similarly, Ronald Bogue's *Deleuze's Way: Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics*, which examines themes from French new-wave to black metal, also includes a short yet programmatic essay called 'Immanent Ethics'. In this essay, Bogue offers a valuable overview of the ethics of immanence from the perspective of temporality. He discusses ethical attitudes to the past (being worthy of that which happens), present (experimentation), and future (regaining belief in this world by trusting in its possibilities). Bogue also expands on the collective aspects of immanent ethics, which is without a doubt very significant for Deleuze. The main shortcoming of Bogue's account is his almost exclusive reliance on *The Logic of Sense*. By completely disregarding Deleuze's books on Nietzsche and *Anti-Oedipus*, and

³⁹ For example, in her essay 'An Ethics of Spectatorship: Love, Death and Cinema', Patricia MacCormack puts forward a schizoanalytic approach to the ethics of cinematic experience. This ethics is aimed at resisting the reduction of cinematic images to meaning and opening oneself up to affective forces in excess of signification. MacCormack analyses how these forces can reconfigure spectator's subjectivity, but she avoids a more systematic engagement with immanent ethics and the illusions of consciousness. Conversely, in 'Strategies of Camouflage: Depersonalization, Schizoanalysis and Contemporary Photography', Ayelet Zohar examines desubjectifying mental states through his engagement with photographic art. While Zohar's approach offers interesting schizoanalytic insights into the dissolution of subjectivity, it fails to discuss the illusions that normally (i.e. in absence of any pathological mental state) constitute our subjectivities. F. LeRon Shults's 'The Atheist Machine', on the other hand, explores schizoanalysis as an atheist machine, i.e. a practice that frees us from our beliefs, which inevitably confine us. Shults's approach is tangentially related to that taken by my thesis in that it is interested in overcoming the confines of subjectivity, but his exploration is motivated by a theological perspective. Again, while these essays illuminate a particular aspect of schizoanalysis and its applications, a sustained account of schizoanalysis as an ethics of immanence is missing.

partially disregarding his work on Spinoza, Bogue misses the perspective of illusions of consciousness that my thesis excavates through its engagement with these texts.

One of the few monographs that, to my mind, engages directly and in a sustained manner with Deleuzian ethics is *Deleuze and Guattari's Immanent Ethics* by Tamsin Lorraine. Lorraine foregrounds the issue of subjectivity and Bergson's notion of duration, which she examines through a feminist lens. Her exploration of 'minoritarian' feminist subjectivity draws on Spinoza as well as Nietzsche, but the conclusions she draws address themselves mostly to feminist scholarship, rather than elaborating the issues in broader terms. A strong emphasis on Deleuzian ethics from a feminist angle can be also found in the opus of Rosi Braidotti, particularly in her *Transpositions* and *Nomadic Subjects*. Braidotti's theoretical approach frequently foregrounds the issue of the formation of subjectivity, which is the central focus of this thesis. Again, while there is some conceptual overlap with Braidotti's work, I adopt a perspective on the theme of ethics that she leaves unexplored. In addition to offering a sustained account of immanent ethics from a novel viewpoint, my thesis seeks to avoid heavy reliance on terminology. I admit that this allows Braidotti and other Deleuzian scholars to cover more ground and move faster through their arguments, but my impression is that it does so at the cost of unintelligibility to wider audiences and even loss of rigour.⁴⁰

Finally, I would also like to note two engagements with the notion of value that are relevant to this thesis. Braidotti and Pisters' edited volume, *Revisiting Normativity with Deleuze*, is a collection of essays which offer a Deleuzian analysis of the notion of value. Values and norms are here explored in the context of scientific laws, legal rules, financial regulations, political representation, but also ethical and moral normativity. While the introduction identifies the central importance of Deleuze's critique of autonomous subjectivity, none of the essays pick up on the illusions that are constitutive of such subjectivity. In spite of this shortcoming, I see some of these essays as complementary to the analysis undertaken by this thesis.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Deleuze avoids a rigid definition of his concepts (they often gain meaning only through their contexts) and frequently switches between words that denote them (e.g. the word 'expression' in his reading of Spinoza denotes exactly the opposite concept than it does in *Anti-Oedipus*). Using terminology without further clarification can be, therefore, often confusing.

⁴¹ Laura U. Marks's 'Vegetable Locomotion: A Deleuzian Ethics/Aesthetics of Travelling Plants', for example, offers an interesting exploration of what might human ethics learn from self-organising migrations of plants (ones that do not result from agriculture, climate change, or genetic engineering).

Another text that speaks to the continued relevance of the concept of value is Brian Massumi's recently published *99 Theses on the Revaluation of Value*. Massumi's aim is to 'take back value' from the capitalist market.⁴² In order to do so, he advocates for a shift from quantitative value (prices, wages, stock indices etc.) to qualitative value, which he defines in immanent terms (as an increase in our vital powers). As Massumi heavily relies on *Anti-Oedipus*, his analysis is compatible with my contextualisation of immanent ethics within the capitalist social formation, which I undertake in my final chapter. In fact, Massumi's analysis adds specificity, nuance and recency to this contextualisation (for example, by engaging with contemporary crypto-economies). As he does not engage with the illusions of consciousness as explored by this thesis, his efforts do not, however, invalidate my aims.

iii) Chapter Overview

This thesis is divided into three chapters. The three chapters constitute a structure that corresponds to the three fundamental texts of immanent ethics identified by Smith. In my first chapter I engage with Deleuze's account of Spinoza and analyse Spinoza's ethical project from the perspective of overcoming the illusions of free will and transcendent values. I argue that these two illusions, which are most explicitly articulated in Deleuze's engagement with Spinoza, lay the foundations for the critique of free will and values that he undertakes in his account of Nietzsche, and the co-authored *Anti-Oedipus*. Deleuze in fact maintains that the whole effort of Spinoza's *Ethics*, his central philosophical work, 'is aimed at breaking the traditional link between freedom and will', which is what this chapter will seek to substantiate.⁴³ The illusion of values is, according to Deleuze, closely related to that of free will, as our ideas of value, like our decisions regarding our actions, are not transcendent in any way, but are rather generated immanently by unconscious forces. From Spinoza's perspective, we succumb to these illusions of consciousness insofar as we confuse our reflective awareness of these ideas with their origin.

Yet, according to Spinoza, we are capable of *reasoning*, i.e. of understanding the causal laws that produce our thoughts and values. Grasping these eternal laws, which

⁴² Brian Massumi, *99 Theses of the Revaluation of Value: A Postcapitalist Manifesto* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), p. 3.

⁴³ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 69.

for Deleuze constitute a 'new [kind of] rationalism' (i.e. an immanent one), generates joyful affects of understanding, which alter our unconscious disposition.⁴⁴ Deleuze suggests that once we manage to do so, 'consciousness, having become a reflection of adequate ideas, is capable of overcoming its illusions'.⁴⁵ In my first chapter I thus draw on Deleuze's Spinoza to conceptualise immanent ethics as a transition from the enslavement to the illusion of free consciousness, to a state that Spinoza understands as freedom, which can be seen precisely as freedom from these illusions. This state of freedom, I suggest, corresponds to constructing a plane of immanence. On a plane of immanence, Deleuze proposes, '[t]here is no longer a subject, but only individuating affective states of an anonymous force' that cannot be effectively attributed to an individual subject.⁴⁶

Before moving on to outline my chapter examining Deleuze's account of Nietzsche, I want to substantiate my decision to prioritise Spinoza over Nietzsche in the narration of my thesis. While Deleuze's main book on Nietzsche, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, was published in 1962, his monographs on Spinoza, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* and *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, followed in 1968 and, respectively, 1970. Yet, it has to be noted that Deleuze was already deeply steeped in Spinoza's thought when writing his 1962 Nietzsche book. According to Françoise Dosse, acclaimed biographer of Deleuze and Guattari, Deleuze's thesis on Spinoza, which was in turn developed into *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, was 'practically finished in the late 1950', and was on the way before Deleuze started seriously working on Nietzsche.⁴⁷

In addition to Spinoza's temporal primacy in Deleuze's trajectory, Dosse also rightly proposes that 'Spinoza had a special place in Deleuze's work'.⁴⁸ The special status of Spinoza for Deleuze can be, for example, observed in *Abecedaire*, where he discusses his relation to 'intellectual' knowledge, the kind of knowledge possessed by 'cultured' or 'sophisticated' people.⁴⁹ Deleuze states that everything he learns is done with a particular aim and as soon this aim is achieved, he forgets what he has

⁴⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. by Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1992), p. 149.

⁴⁵ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 60.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁴⁷ Françoise Dosse, *Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: Intersecting Lives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), p. 118.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁴⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Gilles Deleuze from A to Z*, trans. by Charles Stivale (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011), letter C [on DvD].

learned. The only exception is Spinoza, whose thought impacted him so deeply that he could never forget it. The uppermost significance of Spinoza's conceptual influence on Deleuze is well documented by Dosse and Michael Hardt, but is also evident from the high praise Deleuze always had for his philosophy.⁵⁰ Finally, I propose that my engagement with Deleuze's account of Spinoza should precede his account of Nietzsche due to the conceptual character of their thought. While Deleuze finds in Spinoza the formal coordinates of his ontological universe and its affective principles, Nietzsche fleshes out these coordinates with his historical and psychological analysis. It is precisely this combination that constitutes 'the great Spinoza-Nietzsche equation', which, according to Deleuze, oriented his early period, in which he was engaged with analysing the history of philosophy.⁵¹

My second chapter, then, engages with Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche and traces the immanent ethics that he outlines there. I demonstrate that the issue of the purported free subject, an unrestrained origin of its decisions and valuations, plays a key role here as well. Moreover, my contention is that exposing the illusions of consciousness is central to the ethical transition from reactivity to activity. As with Spinoza, Deleuze sees human agency in Nietzsche as a matter of the unthinking forces of life. These unconscious forces, or, in Nietzsche's terms, the will to power, will be shown to be generative of the values we assign to actions and things. I demonstrate that for Deleuze the misleading idea of an acting subject plays a central role in the becoming-reactive of humanity, which takes place as reactive slave morality overpowers active noble or 'master' morality. Due to the degeneration of the active drives that constitute the masters, the quality of their will to power, which determines the nature of their evaluations, is transformed from *affirmation*, which assigns positive value to life, to *negation*, which denigrates and delimits it. This negativity, or reactivity, is, according to Deleuze's account of Nietzsche,

⁵⁰ For an overview of Spinoza's influence on Deleuze's work see chapter 3 in Michael Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp. 56–122, and Dosse, *Intersecting Lives*, pp. 143–49. Deleuze's praise for Spinoza can be found, for example, in 'On Philosophy', an interview by Raymond Bellour and Francois Ewald, where he refers to Spinoza as 'the absolute philosopher' or the 'purest of philosophers' ('On Philosophy', p. 140). Conversely, in *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari proclaim that Spinoza is 'the prince of philosophers' but also 'the Christ of philosophers', who 'showed, drew up, and thought the "best" plane of immanence—that is, the purest'. (Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 60.)

⁵¹ Deleuze, 'On Philosophy', p. 135. As we will see, this Spinoza-Nietzsche equation is strongly present in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze's main book on Nietzsche, as well as in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, his second book on Spinoza, which was written after his engagement with Nietzsche.

fundamentally constitutive of human consciousness and forms the starting point of immanent ethics.

I argue that the ethics of immanence that Deleuze finds in Nietzsche aims to overcome negative valuations, which are in fact expressed in all forms of our conscious thought. Deleuze proposes that our consciousness is reactive and merely *reacts* to the activity of the unconscious. He sees it as negative since our mental representations of value inevitably impose limitations on the ever-changing forces of life which in fact underlie them. For Deleuze, the categories of our conscious thought, such as identity, causality, and finality are inescapably grounded in negativity. Unlike Spinoza, Nietzsche does not see grasping the order of causality that produces our conscious representations as a way of conquering the illusions of consciousness. Instead, I will show that an ethical overcoming of the illusions of consciousness and the belief in the substantive nature of its representations consists for Nietzsche in a transvaluation of values.

This transvaluation corresponds to an affirmative way of evaluating, which arrests the self-differentiating forces of life but is capable of thinking together with this vital self-differentiation. In other words, affirmative thinking is, like Spinoza's joyful understanding, at one with its affective component. I explain that this is achieved by means of the test of eternal return, which has, according to Deleuze's Nietzsche, the capacity to activate our unconscious forces. This transformation of unconscious structures is, then, mirrored in the organisation of our consciousness, which is nothing but the reflection of these structures. I suggest that the shift in ethical imperative that takes place between Deleuze's engagement with Spinoza and Nietzsche, i.e. from grasping the laws of reason to unleashing the creative forces of life, paves the way for the immanent ethics developed in *Anti-Oedipus*.

Building on the preceding chapters, my third and final chapter examines the ethics of immanence in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*. To analyse this ethics from the perspective of overcoming the illusions of consciousness, I begin by introducing their intricate model of the unconscious. This model, which incorporates elements from Deleuze's accounts of Spinoza and Nietzsche, is here given its full elaboration. Like Spinoza's degree of power, which is nothing but the power of acting, and Nietzsche's will to power, which constantly differentiates itself, the unconscious in *Anti-Oedipus* is seen as essentially productive, a production of itself. For Deleuze and Guattari, this self-producing unconscious, which they liken to a schizophrenic process, is inevitably

inserted into social formations, which are themselves shaped by this production, but which also repress it.

To be able to differentiate between the productive and repressed (and repressive) functioning of the unconscious, Deleuze and Guattari put forward two sets of the synthesis of the unconscious, which will be explained in detail. The 'legitimate' uses of these syntheses, produce the unconscious in a way that is *immanent* to its own functioning. The 'illegitimate' uses of these syntheses, on the other hand, repress this production by imposing upon it a *transcendent* organising principle (i.e. meaning) and thereby limiting it. It will be shown that 'Oedipal' or normalised consciousness is produced only through such repression. I show that this production *via* the repression of consciousness for Deleuze and Guattari conceals the illusion of autonomous subject, which I drew out in the previous chapters. While this illusion is only alluded to in *Anti-Oedipus*, I demonstrate that it still provides a privileged angle for understanding its immanent ethics.

Drawing on *Anti-Oedipus*, I then situate this ethics within the context of our current social formation, which Deleuze and Guattari perceive as distinctly capitalist. For them, the functioning of the capitalist market disrupts the hierarchies of values, norms and traditions, which hitherto repressed unconscious production, and incites the immanence of schizophrenia. Conversely, Deleuze and Guattari propose that, in order to counter these unleashed schizophrenic flows, capitalism mobilises 'all its vast powers of repression'.⁵² This mobilisation they equate with the forces of paranoia. Schizoanalysis is, then, situated between these two libidinal poles of capitalism, schizophrenia and paranoia. I show that schizoanalysis aims to disentangle paranoid formations in the unconscious and thus revive its productive schizophrenic functioning. This re-structuring and unleashing of unconscious dispositions is reflected in the (partial) undoing of the Oedipal consciousness and, according to Deleuze and Guattari, leads to the situation in which it is possible for a person to produce 'himself as a free man'.⁵³ I argue that this schizoid freedom is more Nietzschean than it is Spinozist.

In my conclusion I seek to isolate the main elements of Deleuze's ethics of immanence. I review the trajectory of their development from his engagement with

⁵² Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 34.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

Spinoza to Nietzsche to *Anti-Oedpus*, and show how schizoanalysis both embraces and diverges from Deleuze's readings of Spinoza and Nietzsche. By engaging with Deleuze's claim that '[w]e do not live or think [...] in the same way' on the plane of immanence and on the plan of organisation, I reflect on the illusions of consciousness as the passage between two plan(e)s.⁵⁴ This reflection takes the form of an extended *prolegomenon* to the possibility of any future immanent ethics. In this *prolegomenon* I seek to lay out the field of possibility of ethical activity that lies beyond the false sense of subjective freedom that inhibits our vital powers. Building on the outlined conditions of possibility, I offer a speculation on the tasks of any future immanent ethics.

Chapter 1 – Spinoza and the Discovery of the Unconscious: Consciousness as Dreaming with One's Eyes Open

'Setting out a plane of immanence, tracing out a field of immanence', claims Deleuze, 'is something all the authors I've worked on have done'.⁵⁵ *What Is Philosophy?*, co-authored with Guattari, adds that Spinoza 'thought the "best" plane of immanence'.⁵⁶ Spinoza's plane of immanence, they propose, 'does not hand itself over to the transcendent or restore any transcendent [and] inspires the fewest illusions, bad feelings, and erroneous perceptions'.⁵⁷ I suggest that not only does the plane of immanence that Spinoza constructs in his *Ethics* preclude any new illusions, but that its main ethical aim can be understood in terms of the overcoming of illusions that arise inevitably about what consciousness is. 'The fact is', claims Deleuze in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 'that consciousness is by nature the locus of an illusion'.⁵⁸ Deleuze claims that, for Spinoza, consciousness is constituted only as a site of illusion. The nature of this site will be unpacked in this chapter. I argue that Deleuze's rendition of Spinoza and his conception of illusions of consciousness provides us with a key starting point and a persistent feature of the ethics of immanence.

In *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* Deleuze differentiates between two constitutive illusions of consciousness, namely, 'the psychological illusion of freedom' and 'the

⁵⁴ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 128.

⁵⁵ Deleuze, 'On Philosophy', p. 45.

⁵⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 60.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 19.

theological illusion of finality'.⁵⁹ The first one of these illusions corresponds to the illusion of autonomous subjectivity and will thus be the focus of this chapter. This illusion is clearly of central importance for both Deleuze and Spinoza as it is, as we will see, related to several key conceptual issues. Deleuze in fact makes explicit that 'freedom is a fundamental illusion of consciousness'.⁶⁰ The second illusion, in conjunction with the first one, appears only in the Appendix to Book 1 of *Ethics*. The overlap of these two illusions as they appear there is aptly summed up by Hasana Sharp. For Sharp, these illusions, when combined, reflect

a notion of reality designed for human use and enjoyment (finalist illusion) by a God who can offer or withhold love (theological illusion) from an individual who can freely earn or fail to be worthy of salvation (freedom illusion).⁶¹

These illusions are thus a matter that the belief that everything in existence has its own pre-determined purpose, and that acting in accordance with this divine purpose leads to redemption. Like Beth Lord, who links this belief to 'the Christian worldview as it was in the seventeenth century', Sharp too rightly observes that this illusion was relevant to Spinoza's socio-historical context.⁶² 'Rather than constituting consciousness as such', she proposes, 'it aptly describes what might loosely be called Christian psychology'.⁶³ Since the relevance of the theological illusion of finality is limited to a particular context, it will not be discussed in this thesis.

In addition to the illusion of subjective freedom, which I claim is crucial for understanding of Deleuze's immanent ethics, Spinoza also examines the other main thread of this thesis, that of value. In *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* Deleuze in fact proposes that 'the illusion of values is indistinguishable from the illusion of consciousness'.⁶⁴ According to him, there is nothing transcendent or substantive about these values. Like our subjectivities, these valuations are not external to the realm of material forces, nor do they in any way faithfully represent reality. Instead, Deleuze maintains that these values are produced immanently. Put differently, the

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 60. Deleuze initially proposes that consciousness is constituted by a triple illusion (that of freedom, finality, and theological illusion) (*Ibid.*, p. 20), but later on conflates the last two into one illusion.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁶¹ Hasana Sharp, *Spinoza and the Politics of Renaturalisation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 135.

⁶² Beth Lord, *Spinoza's Ethics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 46.

⁶³ Sharp, *Politics of Renaturalisation*, p. 135.

⁶⁴ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 23.

way we assign value to things and actions is compelled in the same way as our conscious will is. Due to this common manner of determination of our will and valuation, one which will be explained in detail in this chapter, there is a significant overlap between the illusion of free will and that of values.

Deleuze also maintains that this immanent determination of will and values is covered up by the same kind of illusion. Deleuze characterises the common structure of these two illusions in the following manner: its nature is such 'that it registers effects, but it knows nothing of causes'.⁶⁵ In his view, both, our illusory belief in subjective freedom and our illusion of an unrestricted value judgement, are based on confusing mere effects for actual causes. More precisely, illusions of consciousness turn on mistaking the awareness of the effects that other bodies exert on our body for its own autonomous causal agency. In correspondence with the two literary images discussed above in the introduction, one can say that we thus believe that we are free because we are conscious of our thoughts, actions, and values, but ignorant of the actual causal network, the unfathomable 'winds', that shaped them. It could therefore be said that from Deleuze's perspective the ethical overcoming of the illusion of consciousness would thus amount to grasping the effective order of causality that articulates our thoughts and actions, and produces our evaluations. This order of causes for him concerns 'the laws of composition', which in the same manner structure encounters between bodies and ideas.

According to Deleuze's rendition of Spinoza, the illusory nature of consciousness should be first of all understood through consciousness's relation to the unconscious. Deleuze proposes that, for Spinoza, '[c]onsciousness is completely immersed in the unconscious'.⁶⁶ The unconscious that prompts our conscious thought is linked to Spinoza's idea of *conatus*, which Deleuze defines as 'the effort by which each thing strives to persevere in its being'.⁶⁷ From Spinoza's perspective, *conatus* is an unconscious drive that instinctively compels us to act and think in a way that is conducive to our continuing existence. As will be seen, according to Spinoza, our ideas, evaluations and actions are produced as knee-jerk reactions to the positive or negative effect, i.e. enhancing and diminishing, that other entities claim on our conative drive.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

Due to Spinoza's subordination of consciousness to the unconscious, Deleuze rightly suggests that in regard to this subordination 'Nietzsche is strictly Spinozian', a point which will be argued in detail in my second chapter.⁶⁸ Insofar as our behaviour is triggered by the influence that other entities exert on our *conatus*, we exist in what Spinoza understands as the state of 'bondage', a condition in which we remain utterly dependent on the external situation in which we find ourselves. Insofar as we remain in this subjected state, Deleuze sees us as no different from children: 'ignorant of causes and natures, reduced to the consciousness of events, condemned to undergo effects, [children] are slaves of everything, anxious and unhappy'.⁶⁹ The degree of our enslavement is proportionate to our 'passivity' and 'inadequacy'.

Significantly, Deleuze notes that in ascribing illusory status to consciousness Spinoza does not devalue thought. On the contrary, on his account Spinoza discovers 'an unconscious of thought just as profound as the unknown of the body'.⁷⁰ This unconscious thought is for Deleuze a matter of affect, which he understands in terms of variations of intensity. These intensive variations consist of increases and decreases in our *conatus*, the drive which constitutes our power of acting (the latter is for Spinoza, as we will see, inseparable from our power of thinking). Deleuze frames Spinoza's ethical imperative also in terms of our power of acting. He suggests that the latter is achieved when a person 'comes into possession of his power of acting', which is no longer articulated by random encounters with other entities, but rather actively exercised by us.⁷¹ In this chapter I argue that actively exercising one's power of acting amounts to overcoming the illusions of consciousness. The latter consists of formulating adequate ideas which reconfigure our unconscious dispositions so that they become aligned with the laws that articulate life on the plane of immanence. It is this ethical task that Deleuze terms 'a voyage in immanence', where 'immanence is the unconscious itself, and the conquest of the unconscious'.⁷² By explicating Spinoza's ethics in these terms, this chapter will lay down the conceptual foundation for Deleuze's ethics of immanence, which will be constructed throughout this thesis.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 19–20.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 29.

i) Collapsing the Empire within an Empire: Constructing Spinoza's Plane of Immanence

To approach the plane of immanence that Deleuze discovers in Spinoza, we should start with Spinoza's critique of human freedom. The distillation of the latter can be found in Spinoza's rejection of the idea of human being in nature as 'an empire within empire'.⁷³ Since this notion is presupposed by Deleuze's reading of Spinoza, but remains implicit, it is worth drawing it out. Spinoza explains that according to this conception, the human 'has absolute power over his actions, and is determined by no other source than himself'.⁷⁴ From this perspective, humans are distinguished from non-human beings through the ability to moderate and suppress their drives and desires, and are as such capable of a degree of self-determination. Here the conscious aspect of the self is able to subordinate bodily drives to the expressions of its will. For Deleuze, it is precisely 'attributing to the mind an imaginary power over the body' that constitutes the illusion of free will.⁷⁵ In virtue of being free in choosing our actions, human beings are seen as standing in opposition to the rest of existence and exerting mastery over it.

Spinoza's figure of a human being as an empire within an empire anticipates Deleuze and Guattari's figure of the schizophrenic, which will be discussed in my third chapter. I claim that the ethical aspect of a schizophrenic, who is in 'intimate contact with profound life of all forms', can be best understood in opposition to a person who succumbs to the illusion of autonomy.⁷⁶ Like Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*, Spinoza denies any ontological priority to humanity. Instead of seeing the latter as a kind of a supernatural phenomenon, he maintains that human behaviour follows the same laws as every other natural phenomenon. Human conative drive, which directs our conscious thoughts and our actions, is for him thoroughly embedded in and determined by the forces that shape its ideational and material environment. According to Spinoza's unique ontological vision, our mental inclinations and our

⁷³ Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*, in *The Complete Works*, ed. Michael L. Morgan, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002), pp. 213–282 (p. 277). The translation of the phrase in question was modified by myself. My citations of *Ethics* will, when needed, follow the standard conventions which include the symbols 'E' for *Ethics*, 'DEF' for definitions, 'A' for axioms, 'L' for lemmas, 'P' for propositions, 'C' for corollaries, 'D' for demonstrations, 'S' for scholia, 'EX' for explications, 'PR' for prefaces.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 60.

⁷⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 4.

bodily movements are, as I will explain, determined *in parallel*, but remain causally independent from one another.

In Spinoza's view, *conatus* is closely related to what he understands as the essence of every existing entity. He proposes that from the essence of a human (like any other entity) 'necessarily follow those things that tend to his preservation, and which man is thus determined to perform'.⁷⁷ Deleuze's reading of Spinoza establishes a strict distinction between the idea of *conatus* and that of essence. For Deleuze, the essence of every existing entity consists of its singular 'degree of power or intensity'.⁷⁸ This (more or less) fixed quantity of power or energy marks out everything concerning what any entity is.⁷⁹ The essence of every entity should thus be understood as its unique power of acting: an entity *is* what it is capable of doing. This ontological equation between being and power to act and produce remains a permanent feature of immanent ethics.

Daniela Voss rightly suggests that in Deleuze's reading of Spinoza, power is a superior term to *conatus*.⁸⁰ By prioritising the former, Deleuze is able to claim 'that entire Ethics presents itself as a theory of power'.⁸¹ He is able to differentiate between essence as a pure intensity and *conatus* by suggesting that '*conatus* is indeed a mode's essence (or degree of power) *once the mode has begun to exist*'.⁸² It is only once an intensive degree of power comes into existence by being embodied in its extensive bodily parts, that this degree of power is manifested as conative drive. The degree of power as the *conatus* of an entity manifests itself as an innate vital force that determines the entity to endeavour to persist in existence and continue to exercise its powers. From this perspective, then, every *existing* entity is characterised by this conative drive, which is its very essence. This essence constitutes the being of every existing entity, be it an animal or a person, or even an inanimate object such as a stone.⁸³

⁷⁷ Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 284.

⁷⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 209.

⁷⁹ According to Deleuze, this degree of power should be seen as 'endowed with a kind of elasticity', which changes with individual's 'growth, aging, illness' (*Ibid.*, p. 222).

⁸⁰ Daniela Voss, 'Intensity and the Missing Virtual: Deleuze's Reading of Spinoza', *Deleuze Studies*, Volume 11 Issue 2 (2017), 156–73 (p. 159).

⁸¹ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 104.

⁸² Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 222. Emphasis by Deleuze.

⁸³ For Spinoza, a stone strives to maintain its shape, weight, consistency etc., in its encounters with the sun, water, its contact with other stones etc.

Spinoza links the idea of *conatus* with that of desire, which will be used to navigate my argument. If *conatus* is seen as the general tendency to stay in existence that marks every individual entity, then in each individual case desire should be understood as a particular expression of this tendency. Focusing on the idea of desire will allow me to examine both illusions of consciousness, i.e. those of autonomous freedom and transcendent value. The examination of how our desiring inclinations are articulated will allow me to analyse the emergence of not only the illusion of free will but also that of value judgement, which will be shown to be just as instinctive and involuntary. Spinoza defines desire as ‘the very essence of man insofar as his essence is conceived as determined to any action from any given affection of itself’.⁸⁴ For him, desire is the vital drive to persevere in being that expresses itself as a response to some external stimuli. These affections caused by external entities claim influence on a person’s vital powers, which results in an instinctive desiring movement to negotiate this influence.

Determined by these affections, which can be either enhancing or diminishing, desire manifests the entity’s power of acting in concrete behaviour that is oriented toward preserving or increasing this vital power. As will be shown, this effort sometimes compels us, as Deleuze suggests, ‘to ward off an affection that we do not like, sometimes to hold on to an affection we like’.⁸⁵ Desire understood in this way is less an abstract wish than a (bodily as well as mental) movement or inclination towards or away from something. In general, our desires are directed by what we deem as advantageous to our conative drive and thus valuable, and away from what we deem as damaging and thus without positive value.⁸⁶ What needs to be established now is the way in which, for Spinoza, our desires are ‘determined to any action’ and thus involuntary. The nature of this determination is for Spinoza and Deleuze linked to the deceptive experience of freedom of choice that characterises human self-understanding.

The explanation of illusory human freedom can be advanced by another definition of desire that Spinoza provides. According to the latter, desire is nothing but *conatus*

⁸⁴ Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 311.

⁸⁵ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 231.

⁸⁶ Here we can see that the will’s illusive ability to exert power over the body, which allegedly allows it to choose between different actions, is intrinsically related to the ability to judge some actions as more desirable or valuable than others.

'accompanied by the consciousness thereof'.⁸⁷ Deleuze paraphrases this definition by proposing that '*conatus* having become conscious of itself under this or that affect is called desire'.⁸⁸ Desire, then, is the inclination that we become aware of as a result of our unconscious conative drive being either enhanced or inhibited by an affecting entity. It is precisely here that we can locate the illusion of autonomous subject. Deleuze suggests that it is by 'considering only [enhancing or inhibiting] effects whose causes it is essentially ignorant of, consciousness can believe itself free, attributing to the mind an imaginary power over the body'.⁸⁹ Human subjects tend to consider themselves as free and unrestrained in their thoughts and actions because they are, as Spinoza puts it, 'conscious of their desire and unaware of the causes by which they are determined [to desire]'.⁹⁰

Our illusory sense of freedom is, then, grounded in the fact that we are aware of what we are attracted to or repelled by, but completely oblivious to what caused these inclinations. As such, we mistake the awareness of our desires for their origin. Since consciousness is in no way the actual origin of our desires, these desires cannot be considered to be self-generated. Explanation of the actual causation that produces human desires requires a longer recourse to Deleuze's idiosyncratic account of Spinoza's complex and elaborate ontological vision. As I suggest that the ethical overcoming of illusions of consciousness consists of grasping the actual causal laws that organise our existence, mapping out this ontological account will provide the basis for the rest of my argument.

In *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy*, Hardt proposes that Deleuze's main challenge with Spinoza is 'to maintain a strictly materialist interpretation of Spinoza's ontology'.⁹¹ According to Hardt, a materialist ontology is 'an ontology that does not found being in thought'.⁹² I will demonstrate that Deleuze's interpretation combats the privilege of consciousness by locating being in the intensive power,

⁸⁷ Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 284.

⁸⁸ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 99.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁹⁰ Baruch Spinoza, 'Letter 58', in *The Complete Works*, ed. Michael L. Morgan, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002), pp. 908–10 (p. 909).

⁹¹ Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze*, p. 74.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 75. Hardt rightly clarifies that '[m]aterialism should never be confused with a simple priority of body over mind, of the physical over the intellectual. [The] materialist correction is not an inversion of the priority, but the proposition of an equality in principle between the corporeal and the intellectual.' (*Ibid.*) This materialist correction is manifested itself in Deleuze's conception of 'ontological parallelism', which Hardt sees as an original interpretation in Spinoza studies, and which will be elucidated below.

which precedes and produces our subjectivities. To trace Deleuze's interpretation of Spinoza's ontology, I will unpack what he calls 'the first triad of substance' in *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*.⁹³ Hardt restates this triad in the following terms:

Through the attributes (the expressions), substance (the expressing agent) is absolutely immanent in the world of modes (the expressed).⁹⁴

Let us begin by clarifying the concept of *substance*, which Hardt sees as the expressing agent and thus the primary concept. Spinoza conceptualises the entirety of existence in terms of an all-encompassing substance which he famously refers to as '*Deus, sive Natura*', i.e., God, which is the same as nature. Spinoza's contemporary, Descartes, conceives of existence as consisting of separate substances which have either mental or physical reality (bodies and minds) which are different in kind. In contrast to this conception, Spinoza maintains that substance is one and the same everywhere. This unitary substance expresses itself in an infinite number of *attributes*, among which human beings can access those of thought and extension.

Attributes should be understood as the different ways of being of this divine/natural substance, which exists as a thinking being and as an extended being. Unlike Descartes, who opposes physical and mental reality as different in nature, Spinoza conceptualises attributes of thought and extension as two distinct yet corresponding expressions of one unitary substance. According to Spinoza, these two attributes of substance are not in relations of casual interdependence. God as a thinking being cannot be the cause of an event in the attribute of extension, and vice versa. For Spinoza, the two attributes are parallel to one another. Deleuze maintains that God as substance *expresses itself* through thought and extension in a parallel manner, in the same sense that one and the same explosion finds its parallel expressions in sound, heat and light.⁹⁵ As we will see, human beings also exist in this corresponding

⁹³ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 337.

⁹⁴ Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze*, p. 64.

⁹⁵ This parallel expression of substance through its attributes is what Deleuze understands as ontological parallelism, a doctrine that Hardt sees as the defining feature of his reading of Spinoza. Deleuze contrasts this doctrine with 'epistemological parallelism', which privileges the attribute of thought (Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 99). This privilege of thought is manifested in its function as a means of perceiving every attribute of substance including itself. Instead of seeing attributes as expressions of being, attributes are here understood as forms of knowledge. This prioritising of intellect is characteristic of readings of Spinoza spanning from Hegel to Althusser. For critical engagements with Deleuze's 'expressionist' reading of Spinoza

manner, i.e. as minds in the attribute of thought and as physical bodies in the attribute of extension.

Since Spinoza holds that everything that exists is of the same nature, existence has no exterior cause. There can be no divine entity that creates being from outside the world.⁹⁶ Consequently, Spinoza maintains that God is 'the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things'.⁹⁷ For him, God is not separate from existence; God's creations rather remain 'in' God as its parts, and are thus ontologically dependent on it.⁹⁸ These creations in which God as the expressing agent remains immanent in are referred to by Spinoza as *modes* of substance. As aptly summed up by Lord, the difference between God as the cause of itself and God as the effect of itself is the difference between substance and the world of modes.⁹⁹ Like substance, modes exist under two distinct yet parallel attributes of thought and extension.

God as the cause of itself, i.e. substance, is nothing but God's essence, which is according to Spinoza God's own power (of acting or self-actualisation).¹⁰⁰ According to Deleuze, the power expressed by God corresponds to the degrees of power that constitute the essence of human and non-human entities (i.e. finite modes). This sameness in kind between substance and the world of modes is what Deleuze understands as 'the univocity of being', which will become, as we will see, the underlying ontological principle of *Anti-Oedipus*.¹⁰¹ God's expressive power is self-determined not in the sense that it freely chooses which conceived thing will it create, but in that it is not determined by any other cause (as there is nothing else apart from God in existence). Since God always unavoidably creates everything that it conceives of, its power is expressed according to the principle of necessity, which will be expanded on shortly.

see Pierre Macherey, 'Encounter with Spinoza', in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Paul Patton (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), pp: 139–61, and Gillian Howie, *Deleuze and Spinoza: Aura of Expressionism* (London: Palgrave, 2002).

⁹⁶ To think of God in this way, Spinoza suggests, is to anthropomorphise the divine. Spinoza does this, to a certain extent, in his use of masculine personal pronouns when referring to God.

⁹⁷ Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 229.

⁹⁸ In E1P15 Spinoza suggests that '[w]hatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God' (*Ibid.*, p. 224).

⁹⁹ Lord, *Spinoza's Ethics*, p. 37.

¹⁰⁰ According to Spinoza, 'God's power is his very essence' (Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 238). God's power is expressed, in the parallel manner, under the attributes of thought and extension.

¹⁰¹ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 63.

To proceed with our explanation of Deleuze's account of Spinoza's ontology, we now need to further explicate the world of modes. Deleuze firstly differentiates between *infinite* modes, which are eternal and unchanging, and *finite* modes, which are transient and constantly changing. Infinite modes are differentiated into the categories of the immediate infinite and the mediate infinite. The immediate infinite consists of 'infinite intellect' insofar as it expresses God as a thinking being, and of 'infinite motion and rest' insofar as it expresses God as an extended being. Lord defines infinite motion of rest as 'the infinite set of variation of motion, which expresses all possible ways that physical being can exist'.¹⁰² Conversely, she defines infinite intellect as 'true understanding of everything that exists'.¹⁰³

In Deleuze's terms, the infinite immediate mode is composed of degrees of intensity, which differ from one another only insofar as different shades of white differ from a white wall. As noted, these intensities are essences of finite modes ('essences of bodies as elementary forces' and 'ideas of essences') constituting their power of acting and thinking. The infinite immediate mode gives rise to the mediate infinite mode, which consists of the totality of laws that prescribe how existing bodies and ideas are composed with regard to one another. The infinite mediate mode is expressed in concrete entities existing for a limited period in space and time, i.e. particular physical bodies or things considered under the attribute of extension, or particular ideas or minds considered under the attribute of thought.¹⁰⁴

The formation of finite modes can be best explained through unpacking what each finite mode consists of. According to Deleuze, an existing finite mode involves three components:

a singular essence, which is a degree of power or intensity; *a particular existence*, always composed of an infinity of extensive parts; and *an individual form* that is the characteristic or expressive relation which corresponds eternally to the mode's essence, but through which also an infinity of parts are temporarily related to that essence.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Lord, *Spinoza's Ethics*, p. 42.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁰⁴ Spinoza's conceptualisation of the relation between the mode's physical body and its mind will be explained shortly.

¹⁰⁵ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 209.

A mode's essence is its unique threshold of power.¹⁰⁶ Modal essences are caused directly by God as substance, and exist as contained in the immediate infinite mode, which envelops the singular essence of every single possible mode that can be brought into existence. Consequently, in Deleuze's view, this degree of power is fixed and eternal, and as such exists before and after the mode's embodied existence. For him, the immediate infinite mode should thus be understood as a sort of reservoir of potential whose existence is no less actual.¹⁰⁷ Deleuze indicates in the passage quoted above that a modal essence corresponds to a characteristic relation through which this essence expresses itself eternally. This characteristic relation should be understood as a kind of distinctive intonation belonging to the vital forces of life that constitute the essence.

Once a finite mode comes into existence, its singular essence is manifested as *conatus*, the drive that determines it to endeavour for its continued existence. Yet although the mode's singular essence as conative drive compels its manner of existing, this essence is not itself the cause of the mode's particular existence. While Deleuze proposes that the modal essence eternally expresses itself in a characteristic relation, he maintains that 'it is not the essence that determines an infinity of extensive parts to enter into that relation'.¹⁰⁸ The vital relation that characterises a human embryo, for example, is not enforced by the expressive relation that eternally corresponds to its singular essence, as the latter is not the cause through which the embryo comes to exist. Instead, the characteristic relation through which the essence of this embryo expresses itself is prescribed by the manner in which the cells that bring the embryo into existence (and the particles that comprise these cells, as well as particles that comprise these particles, *an infinitum*) are composed. The characteristic relation is expressed in a way that eternally corresponds to mode's essence only when a mode manages to become active.

The conative power of an existing mode is thus a function of the characteristic relation that subsumes the infinity of its extensive parts, and which is realised in these parts. Deleuze refers to this relation that individuates a finite mode as one of 'speed and

¹⁰⁶ This intensive quantity demarcates all that the mode is potentially capable of doing, that is, all the ways of moving the body, but also, in a parallel manner, the capacity of comprehending.

¹⁰⁷ It is important to note that these singular essences are not possibilities that God could have created (that would indicate that God can choose what it will create). Instead, they have an actual existence. Deleuze frequently emphasises the 'physical reality' of these singular essences (*Ibid.*, pp. 193–4, p. 312).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

slowness, motion and rest', or, elsewhere, as 'rhythm'.¹⁰⁹ 'If you have your appendix removed,' Lord elucidates, 'it ceases to be part of you – not because it is spatially distinct from your body, but because it no longer communicates motion with your other bodily parts'.¹¹⁰ This characteristic pattern that realises the mode's degree of power manifests itself on different scales, and is constantly composed through, or decomposed by, relations that characterise other modes. While the removal of an appendix might not have a significant impact on one's power of acting, the ability to act would be gravely affected by digesting arsenic. The characteristic relation of arsenic would destroy the characteristic pattern of one's body, and thus obliterate one's conative drive.¹¹¹ Similarly, but on a different level, a car and its driver temporarily take up a common relation of movement and rest. If the driver-car assemblage gets stuck in a traffic jam, its pattern of movement and rest is forced to conform to the rhythm of congestion. Finite modes thus exist at different levels of compositional complexity, all of which influence their power of acting.

Once a mode is in existence its essence is, therefore, not expressed in the same eternal relation as contained in the immediate infinite mode. The degrees of power of a finite mode are determined, rather, in accordance with what Deleuze terms the 'laws of composition and decomposition'.¹¹² According Deleuze, it is these laws that 'determine the conditions in which a relation is actualised – that is, actually subsumes extensive parts – or, on the other hand, ceases to be actualised'.¹¹³ By regulating how extensive parts combine with each other's characteristic relation, or, conversely, decompose them, these laws vary the mode's degree of power. In the example above, such laws concern not only the composition that initially forms the embryo (the precise manner in which a sperm fertilises an egg), but also the compositions that allow for its continued existence (nutrients that nurture it, etc.). These laws also regulate how the characteristic relation of this embryo, which eventually becomes a fully-grown human being, is ultimately decomposed, which amounts to its death. Lord suggests that these the laws that structure the encounters of finite modes under the

¹⁰⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 127, and Gilles Deleuze, 'Spinoza and the Three "Ethics"', in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. by Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 138–51 (p. 142).

¹¹⁰ Lord, *Spinoza's Ethics*, p. 62.

¹¹¹ Since modal essences are eternal, poisoning would not affect them. The mode's essence would continue to express itself in an eternal relation after the poisoned mode would cease to exist.

¹¹² Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 211.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

attribute of extension can be understood today in terms of modern science.¹¹⁴ From this perspective, the totality of such laws prescribes how bodies compose on a quantum-mechanical, chemical, biological, etc. level. In parallel to these physical laws, Spinoza posits the existence of the totality of logical laws that determine the composition of ideas under the attribute of thought. These corresponding physical and logical laws together constitute the mediate infinite mode.

From the above it is clear that a particular finite mode is in the last instance *not* brought into existence by infinite modes. While God through the immediate infinite mode causes a mode's essence, and through a mediate finite mode determines the laws under which this essence is realised in virtue of being composed of infinite parts, finite modes are only caused by God insofar as it exists as other finite modes.¹¹⁵ Spinoza proposes that the existence of every finite mode requires another finite mode that causes it.¹¹⁶ An embryo cannot initiate itself, but is rather produced by virtue of a composition of cells, or, put otherwise (and more simply), a child is conceived by its parents. The latter were in turn brought into existence by their own parents, who were brought into existence by their parents, and so on. The birth of a child is hence caused by this long chain of ancestors. If we then consider all the other causes required for the existence of these ancestors (food, raiment, shelter, medicine, etc.), and the causes of these causes (organised production of food, building tools and techniques, organised medical science, chemistry, raw materials, etc.), we can see that the existence of a child is a matter of a multiplicity of different finite modes. Similar infinite webs of causes are then required for the child's continued existence. In the final instance, the existence of every finite mode is caused by, and can be referred back to, the infinite entwinement of finite modes that precedes it.

As in case of God as substance, Spinoza sees the unfolding of substance in the world of modes as a matter of necessity. This necessity, which characterises Spinoza's whole ontology, remains central to Deleuze's reading of his philosophy. In Spinoza's view, '[n]othing in nature is contingent, but all things are from the necessity of divine nature determined to exist and to act in a definite way'.¹¹⁷ I have explained that for

¹¹⁴ Lord, *Spinoza's Ethics*, p. 42.

¹¹⁵ As noted, Spinoza maintains that God is the only self-causing being in existence, or, put differently, it is the only being whose existence follows from its essence (see E1P24, Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 224).

¹¹⁶ See E1P28 (*Ibid.*, p. 224).

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

Deleuze the world of modes is constituted by three different co-existing orders. These orders, which structure the manner of existing of finite modes, correspond to three orders of necessity. The necessity of the first two orders, that of singular essences and laws of composition, is related to infinite modes. As noted, God is an immanent cause of itself by nature and thus unavoidably creates everything that it can conceive of. Infinite modes are the necessary effects or expressions of God's essence, which is nothing but its infinite power of expressing itself.¹¹⁸ These infinite modes, which contain the singular essence of every possible finite mode (infinite immediate mode) and laws of composition (infinite mediate mode), are eternal and unchanging.

The third order that constitutes the world of modes concerns the sphere of particular finite modes that emerge out of the infinite causal web of other finite modes. This sphere is one of ever-changing, transient modes, which come into existence and die away. Spinoza refers to this order as one of 'fortuitous' or chance encounters.¹¹⁹ Yet, Deleuze makes it clear that this does not mean that the order of encounters is in any way random or undetermined. This order is, he proposes, only 'fortuitous in relation to the order of relations', which can be accidentally composed and decomposed by the laws of composition that structure encounters between finite modes.¹²⁰ Deleuze instead suggest that 'the order of encounters is itself perfectly determinate: its necessity is that of extensive parts and their external determination *ad infinitum*'.¹²¹

The necessity at stake in the order of encounters is linked to the assumption that the existence of every finite mode inevitably requires an infinite web of other finite modes. This causal web exactly *determines* the manner of a mode's existence. The way in which a human being comes to exist is determined by a composition of cells, which are constructed out of genetic material that emerges out of an intricate history of genetic lineages. These determinations interrelate with the type of nurture the infant receives, including familial arrangements, pedagogic methods, nourishment, medication, etc.¹²² Since none of these determining entities or structures are self-determined, but act precisely in virtue of being bound by other external causes,

¹¹⁸ See E1P34 (*Ibid.*, p. 238).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

¹²⁰ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 238.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Each of these social practices is, of course, itself determined by the complex network of causes that constitutes its history. Our existence is similarly affected by macro-structures such as political systems or climate conditions, which equally affect our manner of being.

Deleuze proposes that the infinite web of causes could have not unfolded in any other way.

According to Deleuze's account of Spinoza, human consciousness (and hence desire) emerges out of these three modal orders of causal necessity, which express the self-actualisation of substance. To these three coinciding modal orders of determination correspond three different kinds of knowledge or ideas. Deleuze proposes that '[t]he first kind of knowledge (imagination) is constituted all by inadequate ideas'.¹²³ This inadequate or imaginary knowledge, which is of the lowest kind, emerges spontaneously in the sphere of chance encounters with other finite modes. The sphere of imaginary knowledge is in perfect correspondence with the illusion of free will. Here our desires appear as self-generated and our values as freely formulated, when in fact we know nothing but the effects that other entities exert over us, which are passively registered by our consciousness.

Spinoza's ethical imperative consists of forming adequate ideas that are related to two other types of knowledge, which apprehend our determinations linked to the unchanging sphere of infinite modes, and amount to the knowledge of causes. As will be shown in the next section, it is the formation of adequate ideas that puts one into the possession of one's power of acting, which for Deleuze corresponds to the conquest of the unconscious. The lower form of adequate knowledge concerns laws of composition, which are a matter of ideas that Deleuze equates with common notions. The highest kind of knowledge is, according to him, one of 'intuition' or 'beatitude', which is the knowledge of singular essences in themselves. Deleuze, possibly tongue in cheek, suggests that '[o]nly Spinoza has entered into the third kind' of knowledge.¹²⁴ Due to the potentially unattainable and somewhat obscure nature of knowledge through intuition, my exploration of the ethical overcoming of consciousness focuses on Deleuze's theory of common notions.

¹²³ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 289.

¹²⁴ Gilles Deleuze, 'Lectures on Spinoza's Concept of Affect', <http://www.gold.ac.uk/media/images-by-section/departments/research-centres-and-units/research-centres/centre-for-invention-and-social-process/deleuze_spinoza_affect.pdf> [accessed 17 May 2018]

ii) The Bondage of Consciousness: Enslavement to Imaginary Freedom

After outlining Deleuze's reading of Spinoza's complex ontology, and explaining the place that human beings occupy in it, we can close in on the question of consciousness by examining his conceptualisation of our mental and corporeal existence. By analysing how our *conative* drive is determined to act at this level, I will examine the processes that effectively constitute our subjectivities. This section also develops the illusion of free will and that of value, which, I claim, provide a privileged view point for understanding Deleuze's ethics of immanence. I argue that these illusions conceal the state of enslavement or bondage, which the immanent ethics that Deleuze finds in Spinoza ultimately seeks to overcome. Spinoza describes this abject state, which at the outset characterises every human being, as one in which we are 'at the mercy of external causes and are tossed about like the waves of the sea when driven by the contrary winds, unsure of the outcome and of our fate'.¹²⁵ Insofar as our *conatus*, as the unconscious drive that orients our thought and actions, is caused to act by external circumstances, Spinoza sees human beings as passive and enslaved to tendencies produced by these circumstances.

To account for the production of these external determinations, let us first return to one of Spinoza's definitions of desire. According to Spinoza, desire is simply the inclination of a mode's conative drive when this drive is determined to any action from any given affection of itself. If this affection is caused by an external body, we remain passive in the production of the desire that follows from it. Conversely, if this affection is actively caused by us, this brings about what Spinoza understands as freedom, a state, reason, that will be explored in the next section. Yet, before we can discuss the operations that enslave us, we have to zoom in on Spinoza's conceptualisation of affections or modifications that finite modes constantly undergo in encounters with other finite modes.

This requires us to first introduce another characterisation of finite modes conceptualised by Deleuze. I have already discussed finite modes in terms of their distinctive relation of movement and rest, which is either composed with or is decomposed by other encountered modes. In addition to this definition of an individual mode, which he terms 'kinetic', Deleuze proposes another 'dynamic' definition.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 320.

¹²⁶ Deleuze, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 123.

From the perspective of the latter, a mode is characterised by its 'capacity for being affected', which corresponds to its degree of power.¹²⁷ Like the kinetic definition, which distinguishes between the eternal relation in which essence expresses itself and one that is actualised through interaction with other modes, the dynamic definition too is characterised by a similar dichotomy. A mode's capacity to be affected on the one hand refers to a capacity (or threshold) that corresponds to a mode's degree of power which delimits all that this mode can be affected by. On the other, it relates to the capacity that has been actualised through encounters with other modes.¹²⁸ A mode's eternal capacity is thus in existence at all times and constituted by the affections caused by other modes. These affections constantly exercise and vary the mode's power of acting, but also realise this capacity by sensitising it to some excitations rather than others.

Spinoza's account of affections that incessantly modify human beings (and other modes) and produce desires depends on his understanding of the relation between body and mind. As Deleuze adopts Spinoza's conception of affections and its underlying body-mind relation without any significant alterations, I will develop them through Spinoza. Spinoza conceptualises the body-mind relation in accordance with the parallel yet independent relation that he establishes between the attribute of thought and extension. For him, each existing human being is one mode, which exists simultaneously as a finite mind under the attribute of thought and as a physical body under the attribute of extension. He elucidates this relation by proposing that '[t]he object of the idea constituting the human mind is a body'.¹²⁹ The human mind should thus be understood as the idea whose object is the mind's corresponding body. For Spinoza, mind is nothing but a set of ideas about what happens in and to the body.

In fact, he suggests that 'nothing can happen in [the] body without its being perceived by the mind'.¹³⁰ The complexity of the human body, a multifaceted combination of different components and relations, is for him paralleled in the mind with an idea of every such component and relation. Yet it is clear that we do not have complete

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹²⁸ Drawing on Deleuze, I will differentiate between the eternal and the currently realised capacity for being affected by referring to the first as *the virtual* and to the latter as *the actual*. For the parallels between the essence-existence relation in Deleuze's reading of Spinoza and Deleuze's own conceptual relation of virtual-actual see Voss, 'Intensity and the Missing Virtual', 156–73.

¹²⁹ E2P13 (Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 251).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

knowledge of what happens in our bodies. There are always sense perceptions and bodily processes (most of our digestive processes, the activities of our immune system, etc.) that remain 'below' (to speak metaphorically) the level of our consciousness. If the human mind does indeed have an idea of everything that happens in our body, then mind and consciousness cannot be taken as synonymous. Instead, Spinoza situates consciousness at the nexus of mind and body. Apart from the ideas one is conscious of, the mind also contains ideas of bodily affections and processes that remain beyond consciousness. It is for this very reason that Deleuze credits Spinoza with 'a discovery of the unconscious, of an unconscious of thought just as profound as the unknown of the body'.¹³¹ This unconscious mode of thought that parallels the unknown of the body is, according to Deleuze, a matter of affect, which I return to below.

From Spinoza's perspective, we become aware of the world through ideas (insofar as they are conscious) about our bodily perceptions. As our bodily senses are affected by other bodies (which they always are), there is an idea of these changes in our mind. We grasp ourselves and our surroundings only through 'affections of the body', which should be generally understood as modifications of the body perceived through the senses, and 'ideas of these affections', which concern the corresponding contents of consciousness.¹³² In accordance with body-mind parallelism, these two ways of perceiving cannot influence one another. An idea is triggered though an association with *another idea* that we had simultaneously with a similar bodily affection at some previous point in time, a process, which Spinoza links to habit and memory. For example, if one's body perceives the smell of smoke, the corresponding idea of a fire hazard might arise in one's mind.

For Spinoza, encounters with other finite modes bring about durable changes upon the self. He proposes that our bodies and minds retain physical and mental traces of these encounters. As a result of being able to record these traces, our minds and bodies are habituated in a particular way. Mnemonic traces can be involuntarily reactivated by future encounters in the form of what Spinoza conceptualises as images. He defines images as the 'affections of the human body the ideas of which set forth external bodies as if they were present to us'.¹³³ In this way, the smell of

¹³¹ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 19.

¹³² E2P17 (Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 256).

¹³³ Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 257.

smoke will most likely reactivate an idea of fire hazard in the mind of someone who has been recently involved in a fire (and possibly send them into panic), but it might evoke the idea of a camping site in the mind of a boy scout. When the mind represents external bodies that are no longer present to itself in this way, Spinoza maintains that the mind 'imagines'.¹³⁴ It is critical to note that since our thoughts inevitably arise from the interplay of mnemonic traces, Spinoza maintains that the nature of consciousness is such that, until we manage to formulate a knowledge of a higher kind, it is disposed to nothing but imagining.

In addition to the affections linked to images, Deleuze introduces a different kind of modifications of our minds and bodies, which is another element that is specific to his reading of Spinoza. Deleuze suggests that '[f]rom a given idea of an affection there necessarily flow "affects" or feelings (*affectus*)'.¹³⁵ His notion of affect will play a significant role in the following chapters, and is, as we will see, one of the concepts that are central to immanent ethics. For Deleuze, image-ideas, i.e. ideas about states of our body being affected by another body, *cause* affects which should be seen as lived transitions from one state to another.¹³⁶ Unlike image-ideas, which concern representational contents of consciousness, affects concern non-representational thought, or what I have above referred to as the unconscious of thought (which parallels the unknown of the body). As such, affects in themselves mean or represent nothing, but are intrinsically linked to the images from which they flow. According to Deleuze, affects correspond to transitions consisting of variations in one's conative drive, i.e. one's power of acting. If affections linked to images are related to extended states of body and mind, affects are intensive transitions that link the successive states of body-mind to one another.

Deleuze distinguishes between two basic affects. He maintains that an encounter with an external body fulfils our capacity to be affected in a way that *increases* or *decreases* our power of acting. If the affecting body composes with our present relation, then its power of acting is added to our own and we undergo an affect of joy.

¹³⁴ For Spinoza, images initially concern the corresponding affections of body *and* mind. Bodily affections are thus presupposed even when images are discussed as ideas of bodily affections or imagining as the operation of the mind. We should also note here that images are linked to the idea of representation. Correspondingly, Lord defines an image as 'the representation of a thing in thinking, language or pictures'. (Lord, *Spinoza's Ethics*, p. 162.)

¹³⁵ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 220.

¹³⁶ According to Deleuze, we are not conscious of this affective transition. No matter how infinitesimally close the two subsequent states are, the transition always happens as if 'behind our backs'. See Deleuze, 'Lectures on Spinoza's Concept of Affect'.

For example, we are thirsty and we drink a glass of water. Since water enters into a composition with our body, its degree of power supplements our own. Our power of acting is thus increased or expanded. The idea of joy as the increase of our power of acting is, as it will be shown, at work in Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche's will to power. It also underlies the concept of desiring-production in *Anti-Oedipus*. Conversely, if the affecting body decomposes our characteristic relation, a part of our power of acting is invested in warding off the disagreeable trace. Since a part of our power is thus immobilised, our power of acting is decreased, and we undergo an affect of sadness.¹³⁷ If I catch a cold, this viral infection decomposes my characteristic relation and diminishes my power of acting, as part of it is invested in fighting off the virus. As a result of this decrease of my powers, I am not able to perform certain actions (e.g. study).

Deleuze proposes that the effects that a mode claims on our power of acting are reflected in our image of this mode. According to him,

[t]he feeling affect (joy or sadness) follows from the image affection or idea that it presupposes (the idea of the body that agrees with ours or does not agree); and when the affect comes back upon the idea from which it follows, the joy becomes *love*, and the sadness, *hatred*.¹³⁸

According to Spinoza, the transition in our power that results from the state of being affected by a mode leads to another state in which this effect is registered in the image associated with this mode. We can imagine a situation in which we take an instant dislike to someone only seconds after meeting them. The encounter with this person has for some reason decreased our power of acting (we could say that we felt inhibited by their presence), and this becomes mirrored in our idea of the person. Our negative image is not the result of a value judgement we have consciously made in relation to this person. In other words, it is not an act of conscious will. Rather, our dislike for this person (the image we hold of them) is the result of us becoming aware of the inhibition of our power of acting prompted by their presence. The negative image of this person is an automatic and involuntary response to the diminishing of our powers, of which this person is seen as the cause. Accordingly, the particular states of body-mind (i.e. image-affectations) that we understand as love and hate are

¹³⁷ If passive affections cut us off from that of which we are capable, this is because our power of action is reduced to attaching itself to their traces, either in the attempt to preserve them if they are joyful, or to ward them off if they are sad.

¹³⁸ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 27.

for Spinoza simply affects of joy and, respectively, sadness, 'accompanied by the idea of an external cause'.¹³⁹ For him, our imaginary ideas of things are always affectively loaded, i.e. associated with joy, sadness, or a bit of both. The two types of modification that modes undergo, image-affects and affects, should thus be seen as distinct but inseparable.¹⁴⁰ This is why Deleuze proposes that images 'envelop' affects.¹⁴¹

At this point we can briefly recap Deleuze's understanding of the functioning of the mind in Spinoza. We have noted that from his perspective our minds and bodies are habituated according to their random encounters with other modes. As a result, our mind and bodies retain traces or images that indicate our past encounters and envelop a variety of joyful and sad affects produced in these interactions. These images are, according to Deleuze, 'connected with one another according to an order that is first of all that of memory or habit'.¹⁴² If our body undergoes an affection that is related to previous affections, this reactivates corresponding ideas and affects, which our mind assembles into a new affectively loaded idea. In 'Spinoza and the Three "Ethics"' Deleuze proposes that in this case 'effects refer to effects, following an *associative chain* that depends on the order of the simple chance encounters between physical bodies'.¹⁴³ In his view, newly produced images thus have as referents effects, which he explains as 'confused mixtures of bodies and obscure variations of power'.¹⁴⁴

Deleuze maintains that images 'do not have objects as their direct referents'.¹⁴⁵ '[A]n image', he proposes, 'is the idea of an affection which makes an object known to us only by its effect. But such knowledge is not knowledge at all'.¹⁴⁶ Since images are only the knowledge of effects, they correspond to the lowest form of knowledge, which is composed of 'inadequate' ideas. The knowledge of effects is unreliable as it does not disclose anything about the causality structuring the encounter, but instead merely indicates, as Deleuze puts it, 'a momentary state of our changing constitution'.¹⁴⁷ Spinoza's famous example of such indication is our image of the sun, which due to

¹³⁹ Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 286.

¹⁴⁰ While a feeling of hate itself represents nothing, it always implies an image of a hated object, which is seen as the cause of the diminished power of acting.

¹⁴¹ Deleuze, 'Lectures on Spinoza's Concept of Affect'.

¹⁴² Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 74.

¹⁴³ Deleuze, 'Spinoza and the Three "Ethics"', p. 143.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 147.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

the human perceptual apparatus, make the sun 'seems to us to be about 200 feet away' – which it is not.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, our images of the sun also envelop affects, the corresponding variations of our power of acting, which are reflected in these images. We perceive, for example, the sun as pleasant if it warms us up after being drenched by the rain or as agonising if it keeps on burning our skin in the desert. Additionally, such an image would echo all the mnemonic traces associated with the given experience, which would contribute to its confusedness. Such images, therefore, do not give us 'adequate' knowledge of the sun's nature' or the nature of our own body (i.e. their singular essences as contained in the immediate infinite mode). Nor does the image disclose the laws according to which the sun composes its relation with our own body. Instead, here we know the sun only through the effects it claims on our body.

It is precisely the awareness of these effects, when the latter are taken as to be self-caused, that constitutes the illusion of consciousness. Insofar as this is the case, Deleuze goes as far as to propose that 'consciousness is only a dream with one's eyes open'.¹⁴⁹ To substantiate his somewhat radical statement, let us first consider an example linked to illusion of autonomous subject. We have seen that for Deleuze desire is nothing but our essence as *conatus* insofar as an affection determines it to do, or to imagine, this or that. Being affected by the presence of a disagreeable person (or any other entity), our *conatus*, i.e. our drive to maintain and increase our power, prompts us to act in a way that will remove this inhibition and regain its powers (e.g. excuse ourselves and walk away). Desire is here simply the movement away from this person, who is perceived as displeasing.¹⁵⁰

If someone diminishes our power more intensely and durably, then our *conatus* might be expressed as a desire that is more severe. For example, if one's neighbour keeps playing loud music, one might want to call the police. Yet, this action will be suspended if it is associated with images that envelop sad affects and are thus linked with an anticipation of decrease in power. 'He who hates someone will endeavour to injure him', says Spinoza, 'unless he fears that he will suffer a greater injury in return'.¹⁵¹ If we imagine, based on the associative chain of previous traces, that the

¹⁴⁸ Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 326.

¹⁴⁹ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 20.

¹⁵⁰ Love and hate, too, can be seen as kinds of desire, as they involve our conative drive, being determined by joy or sadness, to be inclined toward or away the cause of joy or sadness.

¹⁵¹ Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 298.

act of calling the police will entail a greater decrease in our power than our neighbour turning off the music will increase it (we might feel ashamed of resorting to such drastic measures), then we will refrain from doing so. In a similar manner, affections of our conative drive orient our conscious thought, i.e. images we hold of things and actions. If an external body affects our *conatus* with joy, this produces a desire to prolong this joy in imagination. Consequently, we are determined to imagine this external body, i.e., regard it as present even after it is no longer with us. If, conversely, an external body affects us with sadness, this determines our *conatus* to endeavour to ward off the images of this mode by striving to call to mind the images that exclude this mode's existence.

The key point here is that for Spinoza our suspension of action, or suppression of imaginings, does not follow from an unrestrained decision of the conscious agent. In accordance with his parallelism of mind and body, the conscious self cannot cause material events, while physical bodies cannot cause mental events. Instead, Spinoza proposes that 'mental decisions are nothing more than the [*conatus* itself], varying therefore according to the varying disposition of the body'.¹⁵² Put differently, through *conatus* each body strives to persist in extension and each mind in thought, which is expressed in parallel manner in the decisions of the mind and the appetites of the body. The way *conatus* reacts to an affection is as involuntarily in the case of our decision to call (or not to call) the police as it is in the case of our body responding to a viral infection by producing anti-bodies.

Desire, which in both cases concerns removing a disagreeable affection, is nothing but the awareness of an instinctive manifestation of our *conative* power. 'Consciousness', claims Deleuze, 'appears as the continual awareness [...] of the variations and determinations of the *conatus* functioning in relation to other bodies or other ideas'.¹⁵³ As already intimated above, consciousness cannot be seen as the origin of this desire, but is merely a witness to its conative production. Consciousness adds nothing to this production, but it is rather constituted as its side-product and symptom. This secondary (i.e. produced) status of consciousness is, as we will see, a permanent feature of Deleuze's ethics of immanence.

¹⁵² *Ibid.* Spinoza originally proposes that our conscious decisions are nothing but *appetites themselves*, but he takes the latter to be synonymous with *conatus*.

¹⁵³ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 21.

To substantiate this illusion of freedom that constitutes our consciousness, we can examine Spinoza's famous example of the stone that he employs in 'Letter 58'. Here Spinoza suggests that attributing freedom to human action is no less an error than would be attributing it to a stone rolling down a hill if the latter were to be conscious of itself.¹⁵⁴ 'Conceive, if you please,' he proposes,

that while continuing in motion the stone thinks, and knows that it is endeavouring, as far as in it lies, to continue in motion. Now this stone, since it is conscious only of its endeavour and is not at all indifferent, will surely think it is completely free, and that it continues in motion for no other reason than that it so wishes. This, then, is that human freedom which all men boast of possessing, and which consists solely in this, that men are conscious of their desire and unaware of the causes by which they are determined. In the same way a baby thinks that it freely desires milk, an angry child revenge, and timid man flight.¹⁵⁵

If a stone rolling down a hill were to be aware of its desire to keep on moving while being ignorant of the causes that determine its movement, Spinoza proposes that this stone too would think that it were the undetermined source of its activity. The illusion of human freedom has for him an equivalent structure. The conscious self mistakenly sees itself as the origin (or cause) of its thoughts, actions, and desires, but it is only a mute witness to the effects that external bodies claim on our *conatus*. In Spinoza's view, our behaviour is as un-free and determined as a baby's desire for milk: both are thoroughly instinctive.¹⁵⁶ Similarly, a timid man is not free when he ascribes a higher value to refraining from an action that he in fact desires. His judgement springs from the fact that the images he associates with the desired action envelop joys that are less intense than the forms of sadness enveloped in images associated with the repercussions of this action. He is in fact seen as timid precisely because he is (due to the particularity of retained traces) inhibited by circumstances that leave others unaffected.

¹⁵⁴ In Spinoza's view, of course, the stone is to a certain degree conscious. In accordance with his theory of parallelism, the material reality of the stone under the attribute of extension is paralleled by an idea of everything that happens to that stone under the attribute of thought. Human consciousness is more developed than a stone's consciousness only because of the higher complexity of the human body and not by virtue of some fundamental difference in kind.

¹⁵⁵ Spinoza, 'Letter 58', p. 909.

¹⁵⁶ A baby's conscious experience of hunger is not a matter of him or her consciously *deciding* to be hungry, but a perception of a process that is already, in a parallel manner, taking place in the body. It is the idea of the hungry state of the body that triggers an association to previous ways of satisfying the emerging desire for nourishment.

This deceptive articulation of 'freedom' is aptly summed up by Deleuze who proposes that '[f]reedom is a fundamental illusion of consciousness to the extent that the latter is blind to causes, imagines possibilities and contingencies, and believes in the wilful action of the mind on the body'.¹⁵⁷ Overcoming the illusion of freedom is, in short, a matter of forming adequate ideas regarding the unfolding of Spinoza's universe. This involves grasping the lack of causal interaction between attributes of thought and extension, understanding the causal laws of composition that govern each of these attributes, and in this way attuning oneself to the necessity according to which existence unfolds itself. The necessity of causal laws, which dispel the illusion of freedom linked to ideas of contingency and possibility, will be further explored in the final section of this chapter. For now, let us note that succumbing to the illusion of freedom that characterises our consciousness covers up the actual casual laws that organise our world and leads to inadequate knowledge.

After outlining the illusion of freedom, we can now turn to the illusion of values. The latter is, as noted, for Deleuze intrinsically related to that of consciousness. 'Because it is content to wait for and take in effects', he proposes,

consciousness misapprehends all of Nature. Now, all that one needs in order to moralise is to fail to understand'. It is clear that we have only to misunderstand a law for it to appear to us in the form of a moral "You must."
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The question of values is a matter of normative rules, laws and prescriptions, which Deleuze discusses under the common banner of morality. Since no representation merely represents (in the sense of objectively describing a phenomenon), but in fact prescribes, every representation of 'reality' can be here understood as morality, which is a point that will be expanded further on. Deleuze illustrates the misunderstanding involved in the illusion of values through Spinoza's well-known reading of the biblical story of Adam and the forbidden fruit.

According to Spinoza, Adam, being ignorant of the laws of composition that structure the causal relation between the apple and his body, interprets God's 'thou shall not eat of the fruit' as a moral prohibition (and not as a revealing of causal laws of nature, which Spinoza takes it to be). In Spinoza's view, then, God does not prohibit anything, but as Deleuze sums up, merely 'informs Adam that the fruit, by virtue of its

¹⁵⁷ Deleuze, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 70.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

composition, will decompose Adam's body. The fruit will act like arsenic'.¹⁵⁹ Deleuze maintains that Adam's misunderstanding of God's prohibition is no different in nature from the common misunderstanding of the social or moral laws laid down by human institutions. He suggests that '[l]aw is always the transcendent instance that determines the opposition of values (Good-Evil)'.¹⁶⁰ As such, it does not provide us with any knowledge, but has no other effect than obedience. In this way, the social and moral laws not only make nothing known, but they also distort our capacity to grasp the order of eternal laws of compositions.

These values, laws and norms provide a multiplicity of social practices and structures, which constitute the context for valuation of things and actions. Since these practices by means of rewards and punishments distribute our joyful and sad affects, they amount to the social apparatus that articulates our desires. Through the empowering and/or inhibiting effects that this social apparatus claims on our conative drive, it produces desiring movement towards or away from something and thus inevitably transmits certain ideas of value. Explicitly linking the notion of desire to that of valuation, Spinoza proposes that

we do not desire a thing because we judge it to be good; on the contrary, we call the object of our desire good, and consequently the object of our aversion bad. Therefore, it is according to his [affect] that everyone judges or deems what is good, bad, better, worse, best, or worst.¹⁶¹

In Spinoza's view, our desire for something does not follow from an unrestricted evaluation that *precedes* it. Desire is simply consciousness of our *conatus* already determined by an affect to be inclined a certain way. Being determined to desire by a series of moments of joy and/or sadness, we already have an inclination toward or away from an object or action that is associated with these affects. In this way, we *imagine* this object or action as good or bad, that is, enhancing or harmful to our power of acting, and endeavour to continue to imagine it as present or exclude it from our imagination, respectively.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁶¹ Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 298. I have opted to modify Shirley's translation (emotion) with the term used by Deleuze (affect).

According to Deleuze's account of Spinoza, then, our value judgement is simply a matter of the sum of affects that we have undergone in relation to the object or action in question.¹⁶² Spinoza corroborates this by proposing that

[b]y "good" I understand here every kind of [joy] and furthermore whatever is conducive thereto, and especially whatever satisfies a longing of any sort. By "bad" I understand every kind of [sadness], and especially that which frustrates a longing.¹⁶³

We value something as good because we associate it with joy, which produced in us a desiring inclination of thoughts and actions toward it. Something is seen as having value simply because we imagine that it will satisfy our desire, not because it would be in any way inherently valuable. Conversely, something is bad because we associate it with images that envelop sadness and this is why we recoil from it. It is in the same manner, i.e. through the associative chain of mnemonic traces, as Deleuze puts it, that we formulate judgements about what is beautiful or ugly, orderly or confused, etc. As these valuations are based on images, these valuations do not pertain to the essence of the evaluated object considered in itself, but mostly reflect the perspective of a particular person.

Since every human being undergoes a singular series of affections, which actualise our capacities to be affected in a different manner, we have to note that our desires and corresponding values are produced differently. Our attractions and repulsions follow from traces produced by the particular chain of causes that affected us, which is why we differ from one another in our ideas about what is valuable and what is not. In view of this, Spinoza proposes that 'the miser judges wealth the best thing, and its lack the worst thing. The ambitious man desires nothing so much as public acclaim, and dreads nothing as much as disgrace'.¹⁶⁴ A person who exemplifies the desire to possess money will ascribe high value to accumulating wealth, and see spending it as bad. Equally, someone whose conative drive has been previously enhanced by the approval by others (which is how Spinoza defines ambition) will endeavour to

¹⁶² According to Spinoza, we do not need to be directly affected by something to see it as good or bad. From his perspective, we instinctively undergo an affect of sadness even if, e.g., someone hurts a person or a thing that we love (i.e. something associated with joy). This incites us to hate the injuring person. Spinoza assumes the existence of a similar affective involvement if we consider the person to be 'like us'. For his intricate analysis of the economy of affective imitation see E3P27, P34, P40 and P43.

¹⁶³ Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 298. Here I have also opted to stick with Deleuze's translation of affects and replace Shirley's 'pleasure' and 'pain' with 'joy' and 'sadness'.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

replicate similar joys. Someone with a hangover will, by the same token, shudder by the mere thought of alcohol. Different objects thus affect us differently at different times, according to the changing dispositions of our body. For Spinoza, then, we do not only differ in valuations from one another, but also from ourselves. '[S]ince everyone according to his [affect] judges what is good [and] what is bad [...]', proposes Spinoza, 'it follows that men vary as much in judgment as in [affect]'.¹⁶⁵ Our value judgements, either moral or otherwise, are for Spinoza simply a matter of affective traces that have been produced in the encounter (or a cumulative series of encounters) between the judged action or object and our *conatus*. 'And', concludes Spinoza, 'this is how everybody judges'.¹⁶⁶

The conception of valuation that Deleuze finds in Spinoza, and his criticisms of illusory accounts of its nature, can be expanded by introducing Spinoza's notion of the abstractions. Deleuze explains that we form abstract ideas when our (finite) mind 'simply retains some selected characteristic from what affects it (man as a vertical animal, man as a reasonable animal, or an animal that laughs)'.¹⁶⁷ While Deleuze differentiates between different types of abstract ideas, the one at stake in the given example correspond to general or universal notions.¹⁶⁸ According to Deleuze, universal notions are a name we give to a number of individual modes that we consider to be somehow similar. Examples of general notions given by Spinoza include ideas such as those of 'man', 'dog' and 'horse', all of which indicate a certain kind, type, or species (*genus*) of individual modes. General notions are assertions about what things and phenomena are and what kind of things and phenomena they are.

This assertion is based on the selected characteristic, the common essential trait, which we retain from the random encounters with this particular type of entity. Given the geo-historic context of our encounters, the retained trait that defines, to continue with Deleuze's example, a human being might be the upright posture, capacity to reason, or to laugh. Universal notions are, hence, formed by means of our mind

¹⁶⁵ E3P51s (*Ibid.*, p. 304).

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.* When we judge others, for example, as fearless or timid, we simply compare them through the affects that they are capable of. Someone who is inhibited by a thing that does not affect us, will be thus seen as timid from our perspective. Similarly, someone who is not affected by a thing that diminishes our power, will be seen as fearless.

¹⁶⁷ Deleuze, 'Spinoza and the Three "Ethics"', p. 139.

¹⁶⁸ Apart from general notions, Deleuze maintains that Spinoza's idea of abstractions includes also transcendental terms (like 'thing' or 'entity') and numbers. (See Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 44).

habitually associating the (spoken or written) word 'man' with ideas of bodily impressions of different human beings we have encountered.¹⁶⁹ For Spinoza, the formation of universal notions indicates limited nature of human imagination. Our capacity to imagine is surpassed 'to the extent that the mind is unable to imagine the unimportant differences of individuals (such as the complexion and stature of each, and their exact number)'.¹⁷⁰ Consequently, our mind imagines 'man' not as every particular man we ever encountered, but as an indistinct bundle of their images. These images are bundled together by virtue of their common characteristic(s), their essential trait(s), which is (are) imagined clearly and distinctly.

In the introduction to part 4 of *Ethics* Spinoza proposes that these universal ideas serve as normative models grounding our valuations. In his view, it is by comparing individual modes to these normative models that we value modes as good or bad, perfect or imperfect, each according to our general idea of this kind of mode. If, like in Spinoza's example, we encounter a house that agrees with the model of a house that we hold, we will judge it to be finished, functional, aesthetically pleasing, etc. He adds that we even judge natural phenomena (e.g. sunsets) in the same way (as if God would create reality by trying to emulate some models that God has preconceived).¹⁷¹ It is here that Deleuze locates his notion of morality. He suggests that we are within its domain insofar as we think in terms of normative models against which we measure and evaluate things and actions. For Deleuze, morality is thus a matter of judging individual modes in relation to our normative models of them, i.e. general ideas and essential traits that characterise them.

A pertinent example of such a normative model is the idea of human being as a self-contained acting agent. From this perspective, the essence that defines a human, and differentiates it from other beings, is our capacity to regulate our bodily drives and thus exercise our will. Yet, that does not mean that we are overwhelmed by

¹⁶⁹ In addition to general notions based on direct experience of things, Spinoza maintains that formation of general notions also originates 'from symbols' (E2P40s2 (Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 267)). General notions formed in this way are based on representations of things in language, pictures and other physical representations that give us ideas concerning these general notions. An example of this double formation of a general notion can be found with the idea of 'sexual intercourse'. Unlike hundred years ago, today this category has been expanded to include oral sex, which was back then considered as a criminal offence. The example is taken from writings of FuckTheory, accessed through Patreon.

¹⁷⁰ E2P40s (*Ibid.*, p. 266).

¹⁷¹ I have explained that according to Spinoza God necessarily creates everything that it conceives.

passions and carried away with our behaviour. The essence that makes us humans is thus not necessarily realised. According to Deleuze, morality, whatever form it may take, is precisely the enterprise of realising the essence which is taken as an end and thus established as a value. Deleuze proposes that

the moral vision of the world is made of essence. The essence is only potential. It is necessary to realise the essence, which will be done insofar as essence is taken for an end, and the values ensure the realisation of the essence. It is this ensemble which I would call morality.¹⁷²

In Deleuze's view, morality judges and gives orders in the name of a *general* essence, which is established as a norm.¹⁷³ The idea of the human being as an acting agent implies a morality insofar as it sets up exercising our will as a value, and invites us to pursue it. Although the direct focus of Spinoza's critique of this conception of human subject is Descartes, Sharp observes that this conception of humans as free and unrestrained actors dominates the 'humanist tradition from Descartes to Kant to Hegel'.¹⁷⁴ Moral perspective here measures instances of human behaviour against this exclusive standard of freedom and self-determination whereas deviations are, as Spinoza says, something to 'bemoan, ridicule, despise, or, as is most frequently the case, abuse'.¹⁷⁵ A more historically concrete example of morality can be found with Christianity, which, for example, establishes acting out of pity as a model of good conduct (i.e. value).

In general, morality as understood by Deleuze subordinates individual cases to universal norms which prescribe what they essentially are or should be. In doing so, it imposes onto existence an additional plan that organises it in a particular way, and thus 'always implies a dimension supplementary to the dimensions of the given'.¹⁷⁶ Moral models evaluate what exists from the perspective that transcends existence, and presuppose a principle that is superior to it, be it the Christian God, universal values of Good and Evil, or, at the most fundamental level, the supremacy of

¹⁷² Gilles Deleuze, 'Ontologie-Ethique' lecture, trans. by Simon Duffy, on *Webdeleuze*. <<http://www.webdeleuze.com/textes/190>> [accessed 4 May 2019].

¹⁷³ For Deleuze, essences are never general, but always singular as they consist of a mode's degree of power.

¹⁷⁴ Sharp, *Politics of Renaturalisation*, p. 6.

¹⁷⁵ Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 277. Here it becomes obvious that different normative models have different impact on our conative drives. If we, for example, take someone who has diminished our power of acting as a free and unrestrained cause, this accentuates our hate for this person, which additionally inhibits us.

¹⁷⁶ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p.128. 'Development of forms and formation of subjects', Deleuze adds, 'this is the basic feature of this first type of plan' of organisation.

humanity. This supplementary dimension that morality superimposes onto existence is inevitably underlined by the exceptional status of human beings, which are seen as capable of rising above the nexus of causal forces in which they are embedded by subordinating the body and its instincts to the mind and its (moral) ideas. Any form of morality as understood by Deleuze is thus based on the idea of a human 'empire within an empire', of a free agent dominated by the illusion of a commanding and autonomous consciousness.

It has already been noted that in *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari, refer to the illusion of values as 'the illusion of universals', which for them arises 'when concepts are confused with the plane' of immanence.¹⁷⁷ They maintain that we fall into the illusion of universals when we 'think the universal explains, whereas it is what must be explained'.¹⁷⁸ The illusion consists of ascribing substantive status to our mental representations of values and universal essences, and assumes that they in fact faithfully represent things and phenomena. Conversely, Deleuze and Guattari maintain that these universal notions must be explained precisely because they are not given but rather produced. I have shown that that this illusion of universals is already fully articulated in Deleuze's reading of Spinoza. From the perspective of the latter, our valuations of things and actions are subject to the same determinations we examined in the case of the illusion of subjective freedom. As explained, Deleuze maintains that our ideas about value emerge as a result of becoming conscious of the affective variations we experience.¹⁷⁹ The conscious will (our mental decisions) is, therefore, compelled in the same manner as our assignments of value (their mental representations) insofar as they both spring from the complex series of the joyful and sad random encounters. Due to their common root of production, I suggest that both the illusions of free will and value can be grouped under the umbrella term *illusions of consciousness*.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 49.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ It has to be noted that affects are reflected in our valuations only insofar as we are conscious of them. If we remain unaware of them, such as in the case of nuclear radiation, we do not form any value judgements about the affecting thing.

¹⁸⁰ I thus suggest that illusions of consciousness involve the illusion of free will and the illusion of values insofar as they are both constituted through a confusion of effects for causes. In the case of the illusion of values, confusing the awareness of their production (as an effect of unconscious forces) for a voluntary act of their assignation (a cause) is accompanied with the false ascribing of substantive status to mental representations of these values.

The illusions of consciousness just explained conceal the state of enslavement, which Spinoza's ethics seeks to overcome. Rising above this passive state remains central to Deleuze's rendition of Spinoza's ethics. To characterise this state, let us now establish the connection between enslavement and the first kind of knowledge, which consists of images or inadequate ideas. This kind of knowledge is, as explained, the knowledge of effects. By way of example, my knowledge that fire is painful is nothing but the idea of fire associated with the affect of sadness from all the times I have burned myself, reinforced by ideas of cautionary warnings from others. Yet, while I have an expectation that the heat will harm me, it is still possible for me to accidentally burn my hand. The reason for this is that we constantly interact with an infinite number of complex entities, composed of an infinity of parts that under different circumstances ceaselessly claim influence on one another.¹⁸¹ We are always part of multifaceted compositions and structures the operations of which are impossible to calculate. Our encounters with other entities are therefore also inseparable from different kinds of unforeseen interventions. Even though I know that fire is bad for me, I will still get burned if the fact that someone has left the stove on remains unnoticed.

Similarly, although I generally like oranges, there might be an occasion when they have a negative impact on me. For example, if I eat an orange after having drunk milk it might make me nauseous (the protein in milk does not combine with the acid in oranges) and thus decrease my power of acting. Images of things are thus inadequate insofar as they are the knowledge of effects these things at some point claimed on us, which is always a matter of contingent circumstances. The latter include the varying dispositions of my body, that of the evaluated mode, and the variety of factors that impact them. Through these frozen images we regard these modes as still present to us, even though the circumstances that mediated our encounters with them might have been completely altered since then. It is due to this unreliability of our imaginary valuations that Spinoza sees them as inadequate.

Significantly, in addition to these inadequate ideas, which arise from contingent encounters with other modes, Deleuze (via Spinoza) conceptualises a kind of affects that follow from these images. Since these affects, like images, emerge from merely *undergoing* encounters with other entities, he sees the affects that follow them as

¹⁸¹ In E3P51 Spinoza suggests that '[d]ifferent men can be affected in different ways by one and the same object, and one and the same man can be affected by one and the same object in different ways at different times'. (Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 347)

passive, and terms them 'passions'. Insofar as our capacity to be affected is fulfilled by passions, these either increase or decrease our power of acting, but they do so only by virtue of being prompted by an external cause. In other words, our power of acting is exercised by contingent encounters with other modes that arbitrarily produce in us passive affects of joy and sadness. When our conative drive is determined by inadequate ideas and passions, our thoughts and actions are directed by a desire that is imaginary. Imaginary desires incline us to move toward or away from what we *imagine* to be good or bad, i.e. whatever we imagine to enhance or diminish our power of acting.¹⁸²

Yet, since our ideas about what is good or bad are inadequate, the satisfaction or frustration of our desire will depend upon circumstances that are contingent and can never be completely foreseen. Consequently, desires that arise from being acted on by external things can ultimately prove damaging to our power of acting. The examples of such harmful desires provided by Lord include nicotine addiction, abusive relationships, different forms of conflict arising from hate, envy, resentment etc., as well as other more overtly political desires that drive us, as Spinoza famously puts it, to '*fight for [our] servitude as if for salvation*'.¹⁸³ It is precisely this passive state, in which we are, as we noted with Spinoza, 'at the mercy of external causes and are tossed about like the waves of the sea', that corresponds to the state of bondage. Bondage, then, is nothing but the state of being enslaved to imaginary desires related to external objects that *appear* as the causes of our joys and sadness. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that this enslavement of our unconscious forces, which can make us act in a way that diminishes our power, constitutes 'the fundamental problem of political philosophy'.¹⁸⁴ I will argue that this inevitable co-optation of unconsciousness is also a significant issue for Deleuze's ethics of immanence.

¹⁸² As I have explained, this desiring inclination orients our action as well as imagination. It causes us to preserve the object seen as the cause of our joy, as well as to prolong the joy in imagination by regarding this object as still present to us. An object seen as a cause of sadness, on the other hand, determines our conative drive to endeavor to cut short its presence in the physical domain and our imagination.

¹⁸³ Lord, *Spinoza's Ethics*, p. 105. Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, in *The Complete Works*, ed. Michael L. Morgan, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002), pp. 383–584 (p. 389–90).

¹⁸⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 29.

iii) Rectifying the Illusions of Consciousness: From Bondage to Passions, to the Freedom of Necessity

I have shown that through his reading of Spinoza, Deleuze is able to construct a conceptual apparatus consisting of a plane of immanence, i.e. the intensive power that constitutes the being of substance and expresses itself in finite modes, and the 'moral' plan of organisation, which arises by means of illusions of consciousness. In this section I will draw out the immanent ethics that Deleuze assembles in his account of Spinoza. We have seen that to succumb to the illusion of free will and illusion of values entails remaining at the level of an inadequate knowledge of effects, enslaved to passions that follow from this knowledge. The ethical imperative that Deleuze takes up from Spinoza consists in overcoming our bondage to imaginary desires for things and actions, which can contingently enhance or diminish our power of acting.

This enslavement to inadequate ideas that underlie our illusory sense of freedom can be for him rearticulated by forming adequate ideas about the actual causes of our desires, and thus move beyond passively evaluating things solely by effects they claim on us. I will argue that, according to Deleuze, it is only after we attain adequate ideas that our consciousness becomes a reflection of actual causality, which is what rectifies its illusions. Unlike inadequate valuations which spring from contingent encounters and are ever-changing and unreliable, adequate ideas concern the eternal sphere of infinite modes, and are, like their objects, unchanging. Formation of adequate ideas attunes us to the necessity that structures the eternal sphere of infinite modes, which I outlined in the first section.

My exploration of the ethical overcoming of the illusions of consciousness will be based on the analysis of the first (i.e. the lower) kind of adequate ideas, the common notions, which are, according to Deleuze, 'central' to Spinoza's *Ethics*.¹⁸⁵ For Deleuze, common notions correspond to Spinoza's idea of reason.¹⁸⁶ It has to be

¹⁸⁵ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 57.

¹⁸⁶ Yet, Joe Hughes rightly points out a certain ambiguity in Deleuze's treatment of the relation between common notions (or 'understanding') and reason. Hughes observes that whereas in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* and most of *Expressionism* the two concepts are conflated, a differentiation between them appears in the final part of *Expressionism*. There, Hughes explains, Deleuze establishes that common notions are 'applied to objects of experience (imaginings or perceptions), whereas reason forms concepts which do not have a correlate in experience', like, e.g., the idea of God (Joe Hughes, *Philosophy After Deleuze* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), p. 65). As this distinction is not central to my argument, I use the ideas of

noted that this conception of reason is not in agreement with what Deleuze refers to above as Reason with a capital R, that is, the ordering principle that organises the plane of immanence from above. For Deleuze's Spinoza, claims Moira Gatens, '[r]eason cannot be seen as a transcendent or disembodied quality of the soul or mind but rather reason [is] embodied and express[es] the quality and complexity of the corporeal affects'.¹⁸⁷ This 'immanent' conception of reason should thus not be understood as a neutral instrument for regulating the 'irrational' affects, but rather as formulated by means of affect.

For Deleuze, Spinoza's common notions concern the laws that prescribe how relations of movement and rest that characterise finite modes enter into composition with one another. Building on Deleuze's theory of common notions, I argue that it is by grasping the necessity of these laws of reason that we can move past the illusion of freedom and that of values. Since common notions as adequate ideas are a source of active affects or 'actions', which are inevitably joyful and enhancing, their formation allows us to come into possession of our power of acting. If we manage to form a common notion, our conative drive is thus no longer determined to act by external bodies, but by self-affection related to the joys of understanding. The latter are permanently registered as mnemonic traces, and henceforth reflected in our consciousness. I will argue that it is through formation of common notions that we can attain what Spinoza understands as freedom, which is for him precisely not a matter of volition or choice, but of the acknowledgement of eternal necessity. Since this notion of freedom stands in opposition to the state of bondage, I will use it to guide my explanation of the transition from imaginary desires that characterise the illusions of consciousness, to coming into possession of the immanent powers operating on the plane of immanence.

To explicate Spinoza's idea of freedom from Deleuze's perspective, I start by unpacking Spinoza's assertion that '[i]f men were born free, they would form no conception of good and evil so long as they were free'.¹⁸⁸ I have explained that bondage is a state in which we are subject to desires dictated by external entities, which are evaluated based on the passive affects they exert on our *conatus* ('good' if

common notions and reason as synonymous. For the significance of this distinction see Hughes, *Philosophy After Deleuze*, p. 65–9.

¹⁸⁷ Moira Gatens, 'Through a Spinozist Lens: Ethology, Difference, Power', in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Paul Patton (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), pp: 162–87 (p.166).

¹⁸⁸ E4P68 (Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 355).

they enhance it, 'bad' if they diminish it). Spinoza defines this passivity by proposing that we remain passive insofar as 'something takes place in us, or follows from our nature, of which we are only the partial cause'.¹⁸⁹ To elucidate the idea of partial, or inadequate, causality, let us return to one of my previously given examples. When I meet someone that I immediately dislike, I become witness to, rather than the cause of, mental and bodily processes that are already taking place within me.¹⁹⁰ My image of this person emerges automatically as a synthesis between the present state of my body as affected by this person and the mnemonic traces that resonate with the current affection. And yet, since my nature, a term synonymous with singular essence and degree of power, reacts and thus participates in the production of my image of this person and the passion that follows from it, my conative drive can still be said to be their partial or inadequate cause.¹⁹¹ In this way, my *conatus* is determined, i.e. *prompted*, by an external object to manifest itself as a desiring inclination, and is as such an inadequate or partial cause of the actions and images that follow from it.

Spinoza defines freedom by contrasting it to the inadequate causality that characterises the passivity of bondage. While discussing God, Spinoza proposes 'that thing is called free which exists from the necessity of its nature alone, and is determined to act by itself alone'.¹⁹² I have explained that God is the only entity in existence that exists and acts by itself exclusively, and is as such the only thing that is absolutely free.¹⁹³ This freedom cannot be claimed by finite modes whose existence, as we have seen, is caused and conditioned by other finite modes. Nevertheless, Spinoza maintains that finite modes are still capable of a degree of freedom in their actions once they are brought into existence. This freedom is by no means linked to the mind's ability to freely subordinate the body to its ideas, but emerges from, as outlined in the above-quoted definition of freedom, *being determined to act by the necessity of its essence alone*. 'Freedom is always linked to essence and to what follows from it', claims Deleuze, 'not to will and to what governs it'.¹⁹⁴ The essence of an existing finite mode is nothing but its conative drive to maintain itself in existence and what necessarily follows from this is by definition

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

¹⁹⁰ To put it in Spinoza's terms, I become conscious of my *conatus* being affected (inhibited) by this person.

¹⁹¹ We should add that it is never only one cause, but a multiplicity of other entities that factor into the encounter.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 217.

¹⁹³ As noted, God's freedom is not that related to the choice of what it will create or not, but that of acting from its own nature, which is nothing but its power of self-actualisation.

¹⁹⁴ Deleuze, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 71.

precisely that which contributes to this vital endeavour. If causality can be attributed solely to a mode's *conatus*, free from the influences of external causes, then the effects that follow from *conatus* cannot be contrary to it. Instead, these effects can only be augmenting to this drive, and thus joyful. When our power of acting is the adequate cause of our ideas, actions and affects, these effects always enhance our power.

Freedom understood in this way, as acting from one's own nature, is first of all freedom from negative affects. More precisely, it is freedom from passions, which can be both sad and joyful, but of which our *conatus* is only an inadequate or partial cause. Accordingly, Deleuze suggests that for Spinoza a human being 'is free when he comes into possession of his power of acting, that is, when his *conatus* is determined by adequate ideas from which active affects follow'.¹⁹⁵ Unlike the state of bondage in which our power is exercised by contingent encounters with other modes, freedom is characterised by being in control of our power of acting. Our *conatus* is here no longer determined by images, which are unreliable and thus productive of potentially damaging desires, but by adequate ideas through which we grasp the actual causes of our affections. In the case of common notions, these causes concern laws of composition, which structure how characteristic relations of finite modes combine with each other.

According to Deleuze, adequate ideas allow us to come into possession of our power, because their formation itself is *productive of active affects*. These inherently joyful affects are thus not caused by external entities (i.e. food), but by our own power of acting and they should be seen as a kind of self-affection. This state of being free from the determinations caused by external factors will play a key role in the third chapter of this thesis, where it will take the form of what Deleuze and Guattari conceptualise as the body without organs. For Spinoza, active affects are caused by our power of comprehension, which activates our power of acting. 'When we have an adequate idea', observes Lord, 'we know that we know it, and the mind necessarily considers its own power of thinking, leading to joy'.¹⁹⁶ According to Lord, the formation (or crystallisation) of an adequate idea in our mind is inevitably accompanied by the joy of a "Eureka!" moment, which we experience when we grasp how things fit

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹⁹⁶ Lord, *Spinoza's Ethics*, p. 101. Spinoza conceptualises this joy of apprehension in E3P53 (Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 305).

together and so comprehend the logical consistency of our ideas. When this happens we are certain that we have understood this idea, which is for Spinoza the criteria for its adequacy.¹⁹⁷ In the case of active affects, then, it is the conscious thought that initially produces the increase of the activity of unconscious (or non-representational) mode of thought (i.e. the intensive variation of our *conatus*), and not the other way around.

If we were born free, as Spinoza presupposes, all our ideas would be from the very beginning caused by our own power of comprehension. All our ideas, then, would be adequate and thus productive of active joys. As such, we would not experience any affection that would not be a direct consequence of our conscious action. Since our capacity for being affected would be at all times filled with the joys of understanding, these joys would immunise us from experiencing any passive affects. In the absence of passive joys and sadnesses, which underlie ideas of things as good and evil, our value judgements, too, would be absent. If we could be free from experiencing passions caused by external objects and events, we would be capable of understanding that they are not objectively good or bad. They can be perceived as such only from the perspective of particular finite modes. Instead, an adequate evaluation of any object or event would amount to grasping that they are not valuable in themselves; they just *are*.

In addition to the perspective of adequate causality of ideas, freedom from illusions of consciousness can be also understood from the perspective of the content of adequate ideas. Unlike images, which grasp things only through contingent effects they claim on us, the content of adequate ideas consists of the knowledge of causes that structure our encounters with other modes.¹⁹⁸ Deleuze proposes that '[w]hat defines freedom is an "interior" and a "self" determined by necessity'.¹⁹⁹ I have demonstrated that one is free through what necessarily follows from one's essence, but the necessity in question can also be understood in terms of the apprehension of

¹⁹⁷ Lord points out that '[a]n adequate idea is an idea understood fully and truly: it is the activity of thought that is sufficient and necessary for understanding the idea completely' (Lord, *Spinoza's Ethics*, p. 74). Adequacy of an idea is for Spinoza a matter of apprehending its coherence under the attribute of thought itself. In other words, idea's adequacy is not a question of the satisfactory representational relation between the idea and its object considered under the attribute of extension.

¹⁹⁸ Since inadequate ideas concern the knowledge of effects separated from the knowledge of causes, Spinoza also refers to such ideas as 'conclusions without premises' (Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 262).

¹⁹⁹ Deleuze, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 70.

causal necessity according to which the existence unfolds. As I explained, inadequate ideas are linked to uncertainty, possibility and contingency. Not knowing for sure (which concerns also the illusive freedom of choice that we attribute to ourselves and others) is directly related to a large number of passions that Spinoza investigates in Part 3 of the *Ethics* (hope, fear, doubt, but also pride, guilt, etc.).²⁰⁰ Conversely, adequate knowledge is for Spinoza a matter of eternal laws and singular essences that articulate the expression of the infinite web of causes. The more adequate ideas we form about the necessity of this expression, the more surely our consciousness can anticipate it. This restrains the passions that arise from uncertainty.

Being able to foretell the unfolding of an event will, for example, remove the doubt which constitutes the basis of fear and hope. Such understanding of necessity also moderates passions that are consequent to an event. (This moderation, as I show shortly, is not caused directly by our conscious will or imagination, but by the structures that common notions impose on the latter.) From the standpoint of a free person, writes Lord, ‘village-destroying tsunamis, mass murderers, malaria-spreading mosquitoes and deformity-causing chemicals follow from the necessity of the divine nature and that, from God’s perspective, these things are neither evil or good’.²⁰¹ If we were able to comprehend this necessary expression of God, and in this way incorporate everything that happens to us into our understanding, we would remain untouched by every atrocious catastrophe. Put differently, total knowledge of God *sive* Nature, would free us from passions, which would preclude the formation of inadequate ideas about good and evil. Instead of evaluating them, a free person would affirm such things as necessary.

Yet, Spinoza makes it clear that such freedom is absolutely impossible. Unlike God, who as the only being in existence that can only be affected by itself has only active affects, Spinoza suggests that ‘the force by which a man perseveres in existing is limited, and infinitely surpassed by the power of external causes’.²⁰² Being only a minuscule part of an infinite existence, which constantly affects us in a variety of ways, our capacity to be affected is typically fulfilled with passive affects. In fact, for Spinoza, being enslaved to passive affects and imaginary desires is the fundamental condition of human existence. Since we are at all times immersed in a highly complex nexus of

²⁰⁰ For example, Spinoza defines fear as ‘the inconstant [sadness] arising from the idea of a thing future or past, of whose outcome we are in some doubt’ (Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 313).

²⁰¹ Lord, *Spinoza’s Ethics*, p. 135.

²⁰² Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 324.

cause and effects that is constantly in flux and frequently at the mercy of encounters with entities that can completely overwhelm us, our power of acting is predominantly exercised by passions. We are, therefore, very rarely adequate causes of the effects (ideas, actions and affects) that follow from our essence.

In spite of this 'pessimistic assessment of existence', as Deleuze puts it, Spinoza nevertheless allows for the possibility of forming adequate ideas about aspects of our existence.²⁰³ This opens up a leeway for an ethics, which provides Deleuze with the main elements for his own ethics of immanence. From the perspective of common notions, overcoming our enslavement to the passions produced in chance encounters with other modes involves comprehending the laws of composition that constitute the infinite mediate mode. As I have explained, common notions are a matter of eternal laws that determine the interactions of bodies. Unlike images that grasp only the effects that encountered bodies claim on our body, common notions relate to the knowledge of causal necessity that articulates these interactions. According to Deleuze, 'a common notion is the representation of a composition between two or more bodies, and a unity of this composition'; 'it expresses the relations of agreement or composition between existing bodies'.²⁰⁴ A common notion, then, is an apprehension of how a mode's characteristic relations of movement and rest compose with that of other mode(s), and thus vary the power of involved modes.

Spinoza's prime example of this is that of poison which composes with blood in a way that completely destroys its characteristic relation. Deleuze illustrates the difference between images and common notions by glossing the different ways in which a sunbather and a 19th-century painter relate to the sun.²⁰⁵ While a sunbather knows the sun only through joyful effects on his body, and accordingly sees it as pleasant, the painter who goes out into nature cultivates a relation to the sun that is far more complex. She pays close attention to the position of the sun, its path, and every slight change in shadowing that follows from this. Based on the sun's position, the painter carefully composes her relation to the easel and canvas, but also to the wind. Through a long process of experimentation, she learns to form a common notion explaining the interaction of involved bodies. Another example provided by Deleuze is that of a person who is able to swim. This person is capable of composing the characteristic

²⁰³ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 273.

²⁰⁴ Deleuze, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 54.

²⁰⁵ Deleuze, 'Lectures on Spinoza's Concept of Affect'.

relation of his body with that of the waves. Knowing how to move in relation to the movement of the sea, a swimmer is able to successfully synch up with its rhythm. Deleuze contrasts the swimmer with a child who is tossed around by the ocean. Being knocked senselessly by a wave that disagrees with his gives relation, the shocked child cries out to his mother: "the wave fought me!" As the child's idea of the wave as bad is based only on the negative effects it claims on him, and involves an attribution of these effects only to the wave, we could say that this scene dramatises the inadequate conception of value.

The issue of common notions can also be approached in terms of Deleuze's dynamic definition of the individual mode, i.e. from the perspective of a body's capacity to be affected. This perspective will allow me to gloss the conditional value that Spinoza nevertheless assigns to external bodies. This provisional value is related to Spinoza's question of 'what a body can do', which is famously foregrounded by Deleuze.²⁰⁶ '[G]iven an animal,' Deleuze asks,

what is this animal unaffected by in the infinite world? What does it react to positively or negatively? What are its nutriments and its poisons? What does it "take" in its world? [A]n animal, a thing, is never separable from its relations with the world.²⁰⁷

The question of what a body can do is a matter of excitations to which it reacts, or, put differently, affects that it is capable of. Deleuze points out that the world of a tick is limited to only three affects. Apart from these three affects, he suggests, a tick is completely incapable of experiencing everything else that goes on around it.²⁰⁸ Similarly, a particular human body can be indifferent to some encountered bodies, compose with others, or be decomposed by yet other bodies. If my body perfectly composes with the affecting body, its power is added to my own power of acting and this is thus increased.

Conversely, if a body completely decomposes my body (like poison), it will bring about my death and a complete destruction of my power of acting. This range of joyful and

²⁰⁶ E3P2S (Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 280). Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 226, Deleuze, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 17.

²⁰⁷ Deleuze, *Practical Philosophy*, p. 125.

²⁰⁸ Drawing on Jakob von Uexkull, Deleuze argues that 'the first has to do with light (climb to the top of a branch); the second is olfactory (let yourself fall onto the mammal that passes beneath the branch); and the third is thermal (seek the area without fur, the warmest spot)' (*Ibid.*, p. 124).

sad affects is, as Spinoza points out, very different for a drunkard than it is for a philosopher, both of whom are determined to desire and value very different things. Affects should thus not only be understood as variations in power, but also, as Ian Buchanan points out, as 'the capacity that a body has to form specific relation'.²⁰⁹ Each mode is capable of forming a unique multiplicity of relations, which Buchanan characterises as 'the virtual links between bodies [which] become actual when they are connected to a body'.²¹⁰ These affective connections are by no means controlled by the conscious self, but rather enable the latter to become aware of what was before imperceptible to it.

For Deleuze, Spinoza situates the effective (i.e. non-illusory) value that other modes do have for a particular mode precisely in the possibility of actualising this mode's virtual (or essential) capacity to be affected. To continue with Spinoza's example, a philosopher undergoes a very different series of encounters than a drunkard. These encounters render a philosopher capable of forming a very different set of affective relations (ones related to intellectual activity). If we consider Nietzsche's discussion of the significance (value) that asceticism has for philosophers, we might say that their capacity to be affected is realised in a way that directs their conative drive towards a life of austerity, which allows them to maximise their power of acting. In Nietzsche's view, this is the case since contemplation requires an absence of distractions.

Nietzsche observes that 'there exists a genuine philosophers' irritation and rancour against sensuality'.²¹¹ Driven to pursue intellectual endeavours, he claims, a philosopher recoils from sensual pleasures of food and sexual intercourse, and avoids interferences such as marriage, friendship, or material possessions. As a result of this ascetic isolation, adds Nietzsche, a philosopher is 'relieved of the necessity of thinking *about himself*' and thus remains largely ignorant of himself.²¹² Put differently, Nietzsche assumes that the capacity to be affected of an ascetic being (like a philosopher) is something which turns on him or her being preoccupied with abstract thought and solitary contemplation, and thus remains largely unrealised. Although

²⁰⁹ Ian Buchanan, 'The Problem of the Body in Deleuze and Guattari, Or, What Can a Body Do?', *Body & Society*, 3 (1997), 73–91 (p. 80).

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. by Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. by Carol Diethe, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 76. Original emphasis.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 80. See also the first section of the Prologue to *The Genealogy of Morality*.

there is absolutely no reason to assume that doing philosophy does not actualise one's capacity to be affected, Nietzsche seems to maintain that the life of a hermit prevents philosophers from discovering the whole range of other affective relations they are capable of forming.

It could be said that Spinoza sees as conditionally valuable precisely external bodies that allow us to dissolve the ignorance that according to Nietzsche characterises the ascetic philosopher. Spinoza proposes that that

which so disposes the human body that it can be affected in more ways, or which renders it capable of affecting external bodies in more ways, is advantageous to man [...]. On the other hand, that which renders the body less capable in these respects is harmful.²¹³

The value of these modes to a particular mode is based on images and thus inadequate and uncertain, yet according to Spinoza this sensitising and experimental interaction with other modes presents an indispensable step to adequate understanding. Deleuze, too, glosses the importance of this experimental modal interaction that actualises our hitherto virtual capacities and thus indicate our powers of acting. This sensitising of our capacity to be affected is for Deleuze linked to the concept of joyful passions, which is, as observed by Pierre Macherey, another idiosyncratic element of Deleuze's reading of Spinoza.²¹⁴ From Deleuze's perspective, the passive joys of alcohol, for example, to which the ascetic philosopher is oblivious, are good and advantageous insofar as they increase our power to act and, correspondingly, to think. Conversely, to the extent that alcohol cripples our powers and renders us unsusceptible (as it does in a hangover), it is bad and harmful. In any case, such realisation (or blockage) of our body's virtual relations does not yet free us from being enslaved to passions.

According to Deleuze, the passive joys that a particular body is capable of are significant as a starting point for the practical formation of common notions. He maintains that these joyful passions should be used as 'a springboard' for constructing common notions.²¹⁵ He argues that

²¹³ Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 341.

²¹⁴ Macherey suggests that 'for Spinoza all passions, without exception, are sad - even those that appear to be joys'. (Macherey, 'The Encounter with Spinoza', p. 153.)

²¹⁵ Deleuze, 'Lectures on Spinoza's Concept of Affect'.

when we encounter a body that agrees with ours, we experience an affect or feeling of joy-passion, although we do not yet adequately know what it has in common with us. Sadness, which arises from our encounter with a body that does not agree with ours, never induces us to form a common notion; but joy-passion, as an increase of the power of acting and of comprehending, does bring this about: it is an occasional cause of the common notion.²¹⁶

Deleuze points out that while a sad chance encounter diminishes our ability to understand, joyful ones cause an increase in our power of thinking. He suggests that joyful passions in this way prompt us to form a common notion, and should thus be used as an aid for apprehending the unity of the composition arising from the given chance encounter. 'You undergo a joy', Deleuze says elsewhere, 'you feel that this joy concerns you, that it concerns something important regarding your principal relations'.²¹⁷ A joyful encounter not only boosts our ability to think, but also provides us with a hint of what affects are we capable of. By the assistance of joyful passions, we can thus inspect what is common to the composition of our own body and that of an external body and try to grasp the laws that realise the agreement between them. According to Deleuze, joyful passions thus give us a local point of departure that we should try 'to open up'.²¹⁸

Apart from the increase in the capacity to comprehend afforded by passive joys, we can see that images that envelop these passions play a role in formation of common notions as well. These images are nothing but mixtures of our body with other bodies, but they still contain elements that enable the formation of common notions. Deleuze maintains that 'since falsity as such has no form' in Spinoza (it has no actual existence, it consists of privation of knowledge), 'the inadequate idea does not reflect back on itself [in consciousness] without manifesting what is positive in it'.²¹⁹ Even if our image of the sun falsely presents it as if it is two hundred feet away, this image still allows us to start formulating knowledge about it. For Deleuze, '[i]t is this positive kernel of the inadequate idea in consciousness that can serve as a regulative principle for a knowledge of the unconscious'.²²⁰ Being conscious of what is positive in the inadequate ideas, one can start formulating common notions regarding the causal laws that effectively exercise one's power of acting. Our

²¹⁶ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 55.

²¹⁷ Deleuze, 'Lectures on Spinoza's Concept of Affect'.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.* Spinoza assumes that adequate ideas are in a sense contagious and proposes that '[w]hatever ideas follow in the mind from ideas that are adequate in it are also adequate'. See E2P40 (Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 266).

²¹⁹ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 60.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

consciousness thus provides us with the means of rectifying the illusions that are innate to its functioning.

Overcoming the bondage to a given passion consists of a leap from inadequate ideas and passive joy to common notions that cause active affects. If we manage to do so and form a common notion, the passive joy is overturned into an active one. According to Deleuze, the

two feelings differ only in their causes; passive joy is produced by an object that agrees with us, and whose power increases our power of action, but of which we do not yet have an adequate idea. Active joy we produce by ourselves, it flows from our power of action itself, follows from an adequate idea in us.²²¹

Deleuze proposes that if we succeed in forming a common notion, our joy is no longer a result of being acted on by an external body, but follows from our own power of acting. In particular, this active joy springs from our activity of comprehending which was involved in the production of this common notion. Such joyous moments of insight, in which we grasp how our relation of motion and rest composes with that of an external body, are difficult to predict and cannot be forced by our conscious activity alone. Instead, a eureka moment takes place when the common notion crystallises itself from the images and traces our body and mind have accumulated so far. Deleuze maintains that it is only then that we truly and adequately understand the eternal law of the relation in question.²²²

It can be said that it is only as a result of overturning passions into actions that we can free ourselves from the enslavement to illusions of consciousness. Insofar as our *conatus* is determined by passive joys, we remain enslaved to a desire for the affecting body, which is seen as the cause of our joy. By means of active self-affectation, our affective disposition is altered, and so is the consciousness that reflects it. If the active joy of understanding is stronger than the passive joys that ground the desire for affecting body, the desiring inclination toward the latter, together with the idea of it as good, will be diminished.²²³ In accordance with Spinoza's parallelism

²²¹ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 274.

²²² From the perspective of the kinetic definition of an individual mode, we can say that the act of adequate comprehension expresses our essence in the relation that corresponds to it eternally.

²²³ Spinoza maintains that an affect 'cannot be checked or destroyed except by a contrary [affect] which is stronger than the [affect] which is to be checked'. Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 325.

which assumes that the activity of mind is always paralleled by bodily activity, this desire is then equally moderated in relation to imagination (which no longer seeks to regard the desired object as present) as it is in relation to bodily movement that corresponds to it. Since, as Deleuze points out, 'an action in the mind is also an action in the body', having adequate ideas is never only a matter of thought, but of bodily activity as well.²²⁴ If, conversely, passive joys overpower the active affects, like they can in the case of smoking, the harmful effects of which are well known, we can relapse into a passive desire. When this happens, Spinoza says, we 'see the better, but do the worse'.²²⁵

Even though common notions concern *compositions* between bodies, and thus always relate to something positive, Deleuze assumes that it is also possible to formulate these kinds of adequate ideas in relation to entities that affect us with sadness. He claims that in this case 'the common notion will simply be very universal, implying a much more general viewpoint than that of the two bodies confronting each other'.²²⁶ Unlike common notions that follow from joyful passions, which concern few local bodies, the commonality between bodies that allows us to overturn sad passions is universal in nature. This universal agreement is related to the necessity that governs the existence of finite modes in a broader sense. Spinoza asserts that if we understand that modes are determined to endeavour to stay in existence, while their actions are compelled by the infinite web of causes, the sadness that arises from our encounters with them should be lessened.

From the perspective of universal common notions, proposes Spinoza, 'we see that [sadness] over the loss of some good is assuaged as soon as the man who has lost it realises that that good could not have been saved in any way'.²²⁷ The more we understand the necessary causes that unfold an event, the more active we are in regard to the affects that follow from it. Affirmation of this necessity will above all attenuate any antipathy toward other people, who 'like everything else, act from the necessity of their nature'.²²⁸ Understanding that human beings are not governed by

²²⁴ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 256. For Spinoza, having an adequate idea thus always corresponds to being an adequate cause of an action.

²²⁵ Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 281. An interesting example of active affects being overwhelmed by passions is explored by Hasana Sharp. Sharp imagines a feminist scholar, who is well aware of how beauty standards are reflective of certain patriarchal structures, yet still desires to undergo a breast enlargement procedure. (Sharp, *Politics of Renaturalisation*, p. 79).

²²⁶ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 286.

²²⁷ Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 367.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 370.

free will, which goes against the central assumption of traditional morality, is one the grounding principles of life on the plane of immanence. Such understanding will, as Spinoza claims, help one to refrain 'from dwelling on men's faults and abusing mankind and deriving pleasure from a false show of freedom'.²²⁹ While Deleuze proposes that the active joys of understanding produced by universal common notions are less potent than the specific ones, they still allow for the alleviation of our inhibited powers. In addition, they also lead to a realisation that no thing or action is in itself bad or evil.

Deleuze proposes that for Spinoza evil is nothing but 'the destruction, the decomposition, of the relation that characterises a mode', and 'can only be spoken of from the particular viewpoint of an existing mode'.²³⁰ As noted, inadequate values, either moral or not, are a matter of affects associated with what is valued, and as such express the unique perspective of a particular mode. This is, for Spinoza, how we evaluate everything, from matters of indigestion to moral affairs. The idea of bad, or evil, is therefore equally applicable to poisoning as it is to being beaten up on the street for no reason. In both of these encounters, my characteristic relation is decomposed and I undergo a decrease in power. Yet, if we consider this from the perspective of common notions, it becomes clear that such decomposition is never only a decomposition. Poison and the molecules that constitute it, are, like human beings, determined by their essence to endeavour to maintain their characteristic relation. In this way, they are compelled to do everything that is in their power to impose on the encountered body a relation that harmonises with them.

The law of composition that structures the encounter between poison and me, then, consists of poison destroying my relation, which is decomposed so that it can be combined with that of poison. The same can be said for the act of beating. As my presence for some reason diminishes an attacker's power, he is determined to ward off this inhibition by fighting me. This action is partially caused by attacker's power of acting, which modifies my relation so that it composes with his.²³¹ From my

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 247.

²³¹ Here we have to note that Spinoza's ethical system rejects any kind of inter-human violence. He advocates against it on the basis that such violence harms what is beneficial, or good, for the perpetrator of this violence. This is the case because human beings are most alike in our bodily constitutions and as such most agreeable and enhancing to one another. By committing an act of violence against another human being, the perpetrator remains enslaved to passions as his actions are based on image-affects and thus caused inadequately.

perspective, insofar as it is inadequate, this act is seen as bad, or even evil, because it decomposes the relation that characterises me.²³² Yet within the domain of adequate knowledge, claims Deleuze, the idea of 'evil is nothing because it expresses no composition of relations, no law of composition'.²³³ My idea of evil, then, can only be formed from the inadequate perspective of modal existence, and does not partake in the eternal reality of God's infinite modes. Conversely, if I were capable of forming a common notion, my mind would grasp the eternal law that necessarily articulates the relation between my body and that of my attacker. The law of this relation is eternal in the sense that, as Buchanan points out, it does not 'rely on active 'authors', but passively await[s] realisation'.²³⁴

Finally, let us consider the ontological aspect of common notions, which will substantiate their role in overcoming the illusions of consciousness, a role that was so far only touched upon. For Deleuze, '[t]he different kinds of knowledge are also different ways of living, different modes of existing'.²³⁵ As I have implied before, these changes in ways of existing follows from active affects that are produced via the formation of a common notion. Unlike images which are a matter of representation in consciousness, common notions by means of self-affection intervene upon these images, but are non-representational in nature. To expand on how formation of a common notion rectifies the illusions of consciousness, I will unpack Deleuze's claim that '[n]ecessity, presence and frequency are the three characteristics of common notions'.²³⁶ Firstly, common notions attune us to the necessity of laws of composition and, in this way, moderate passions based on images of things as contingent or possible, or even free and self-determined.²³⁷

Secondly, through common notions images of things remain durably present to us. While our imagination seeks to assert the image of a desired object, its presence cannot be maintained due to encounters with modes that exclude it. As a result, our

²³² At a provisional level, my encounter with the attacker is harmful only insofar as it inhibits my power of comprehension.

²³³ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 249.

²³⁴ Buchanan, 'The Problem of the Body', p. 78.

²³⁵ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 289

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 296.

²³⁷ See E5P5 and E5P6 (Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 367). Here Spinoza illustrates this point with a telling episode: 'we see that nobody pities a baby because it cannot talk or walk or reason, and because it spends many years in a kind of ignorance of self. But if most people were born adults and only a few were born babies, then everybody would feel sorry for babies because they would then look on infancy not as a natural and necessary thing but as a fault or flaw in Nature'.

mind enters into a state of uncertainty, seeing the present existence of an imagined object as possible or contingent. This is corrected by means of a joyful self-affection, which solidifies the presence of the images involved in a given composition. Deleuze maintains that common notions 'impose themselves on the imagination' and in this way correct the illusions that the latter gives rise to.²³⁸ Since common notions are eternal, Spinoza proposes that 'there can be nothing that excludes their present existence'.²³⁹ Thirdly, common notions determine our mind to more frequently regard the images of objects related to active joys. Unlike images, which associate an affect with an external object seen as its cause, common notions relate the causality of the composition to several causes, which in virtue of its multiplicity, as Spinoza says, 'more often spring to life'.²⁴⁰ Additionally, since these ideas consist of adequate understanding, he claims that other ideas are 'more readily associated' with them, which extends the production of active joys.²⁴¹

In terms of Deleuze's dynamic modal definition, adequate ideas thus exercise our power so that it realises our virtual capacity to be affected in a way that makes its instinctive reactions to other modes either more enhancing, or less diminishing. From the perspective of kinetic modal definition, the formation of common notions can be said to express our essence in the relation of movement and rest that corresponds to it eternally (i.e. the relation with which it is contained in the infinite immediate mode), and not in the relation realised by the infinity of extensive parts that temporarily correspond to this essence. For Spinoza, the achieved degree of freedom from the illusions of consciousness (that of free will and value) is a matter precisely of the relative proportion between the adequate ideas through which we participate in the divine eternity of infinite modes, and the inadequate ones which passively emerge from contingent encounters. Correspondingly, Deleuze proposes that the degree of adequate 'knowledge is always the immanent power that determines qualitative difference of modes of existence (good-bad)'.²⁴² Deleuze's account of Spinoza's immanent ethics comes down to distinguishing between good, active and free (or rational), modes of existence and bad, passive and enslaved, ones. Unlike the good and bad of morality, which is grounded on the illusions of freedom and values,

²³⁸ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 296.

²³⁹ Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 368.

²⁴⁰ E5P13 (*Ibid.*, p. 370).

²⁴¹ E5P12 (*Ibid.*). The reason for this contagious nature of adequate ideas lies in the fact that Spinoza assumes that '[w]hatever ideas follow in the mind from ideas that are adequate in it are also adequate'. (Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 266).

²⁴² Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, pp. 24–25.

Spinoza's immanent ethics evaluates a human being based on the capacity to come into possession of their power of acting, and thus become expressive of the power of God.

After examining Deleuze's account of Spinoza from the perspective of illusions of consciousness, we can now briefly recap how Deleuze's engagement with Spinoza's thought allows him to elaborate his conception of immanent ethics. I maintain that this engagement lays the groundwork for Deleuze's ethics of immanence, establishing several central elements of its conceptual apparatus. The first of these elements is the immanent organising principle that Deleuze discovers in his rendition of substance as an intensive power expressing itself through the finite modes' power of acting. The equivalence between God's power and the degrees of power that comprise the being of finite modes constitutes the plane of immanence (or the univocity of being). Deleuze locates this dynamic organising principle, which is always fully active and productive, in the domain of the unconscious. Secondly, to this power of acting corresponds a capacity to be acted upon. The latter is at all times fulfilled with affects, which vary the mode's intensive power. Next, there is a process of habituation, which, through the formation of an associative chains of traces, enslaves us to certain potentially damaging patterns of acting and thinking.

Most significantly for this thesis, I claim that engagement with Spinoza offers Deleuze a conception of the illusions of *free will* and *value*, which cover up this passive state of enslavement. By succumbing to these illusions, we are installed onto what Deleuze terms *the plan of organisation*. I have shown that on this plan, the subject is seen as the unrestrained origin of thoughts, decisions and valuations, while assigned values are taken to be explanatory of the valued objects and actions. These illusions of consciousness are in Deleuze's reading rectified by the formation of common notions, which put us into active possession of our power of acting, and re-structure our unconscious disposition.

Although Deleuze manages to work out several aspects of his immanent ethics through his reading of Spinoza, there still remain aspects that need to be developed or amended. In discussing Deleuze's critique of Kant's rationality in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Hughes suggests that this critique can also be applied to Spinoza's reason, an element that he sees as incompatible with Deleuze's own thought. For Hughes, this critique is a matter of 'the distinction between creative thought and

legislating reason from the point of view of their relation to “life” [i.e. power].²⁴³ While Deleuze sees Nietzsche as the thinker who unleashes the creative potentials of both thought and life, Hughes suggests that, for Deleuze, ‘[t]hought as reason predicts outcomes, determines the good, and thinks the true’.²⁴⁴ In this way, reason sets limits for life and disciplines it. While this is true for Kant’s conception of reason, I maintain that Deleuze’s ‘immanent’ rendition of Spinoza’s reason does *not* impose limits on life, bounding it by ideals external to it. Instead, laws of composition, or ‘rules of life’, as Deleuze also refers to them, are unchanging truths that realise vital powers of encountering entities.²⁴⁵ If we manage to grasp these laws, joys of understanding alter our unconscious disposition so that it becomes permanently attuned to these laws. Our power of acting is, therefore, not inhibited by reason as a transcendent organising principle, but is rather aligned with its laws, and thus stabilised.

My contention is that through his engagement with Nietzsche, which I analyse in the following chapter, Deleuze is able to move away from another element that could not be expelled from his reading of Spinoza. This element is his notion of eternity. Spinoza insists that the notion of eternity is not temporal as it exists outside the coordinates of past, present and future, and as such cannot be reconciled with qualifications such as ‘when’, ‘before’ and ‘after’.²⁴⁶ Voss suggest that Spinoza’s eternity is rather ‘related to the necessary existence’.²⁴⁷ This eternal necessity concerns the eternal laws that await realisation, and eternal degrees of power that unfold existence in accordance with these laws. The eternal and unchanging nature of these contours that articulate reality ‘corresponds’, according to Voss, ‘to a “false problem”, an illusion of transcendence, and cannot have any significance for a philosophy of immanence’.²⁴⁸ The transcendent residue observed by Voss invalidates Deleuze and Guattari’s claim in *What is Philosophy?* that Spinoza is perhaps the only philosopher ‘never to have compromised with transcendence’.²⁴⁹

I suggest that *via* Nietzsche, Deleuze is able to relocate the focus of immanent ethics from formulating knowledge of eternal necessity to creating new possibilities of life, that is, new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. In engaging with Nietzsche, he can

²⁴³ Joe Hughes, *Philosophy After Deleuze*, p. 73.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

²⁴⁵ Deleuze, ‘Lectures on Spinoza’s Concept of Affect’.

²⁴⁶ See E5P23S (Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 374), E1P33S2 (*Ibid.*, p. 236.)

²⁴⁷ Voss, ‘Intensity and the Missing Virtual’, p. 171.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

²⁴⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 48.

leave the illusion of transcendence that is Spinoza's eternal necessity behind. This shift brings us closer to what Deleuze sees as the aim of his own thought: 'not to rediscover the eternal or the universal, but to find the conditions under which something new is produced (creativity)'.²⁵⁰ Through his engagement with Nietzsche, Deleuze also ventures outside of the domain of Spinoza's body-mind parallelism, which is a highly original conception, but also one that effectively brackets the relation between body and mind. This allows Deleuze to further problematise the effects of mental representations on the bodily unconscious, which get its full articulation in *Anti-Oedipus*. In spite of these shifts, I argue in the next chapter that for Deleuze there is a strong continuity between Spinoza and Nietzsche. I show that Deleuze rediscovers the conception of illusions of consciousness in Nietzsche, and that his reading of the latter is profoundly Spinozist.

Chapter 2 – Nietzsche's Becoming Active: Value Beyond the 'Free' Subject

In his 1967 essay 'Conclusions on the Will to Power and Eternal Return', which discusses Nietzsche's departure from transcendent criteria for the evaluation of values, Deleuze suggests that for Nietzsche '[t]he noble and the vile, the high and the low, become the *immanent* principles of [...] evaluations'.²⁵¹ Instead of measuring human behaviour against the universal categories of good or bad, true or false, Deleuze suggests that Nietzsche too seeks to evaluate it immanently, i.e. by referring it back to the mode of existence it expresses. For Deleuze, an idea that one has might indicate 'a base or vile way of thinking, feeling, and even existing, and there are others that exhibit nobility, generosity, creativity'.²⁵² While this immanent ethical distinction between the noble and the base immediately establishes a parallel with Spinoza's distinction between the enslaved, who remain subject to their passions, and the free and rational, who become active, it also needs to be said that this is the only time Deleuze uses the word 'immanence' in his work on Nietzsche. And yet, as we will

²⁵⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, 'Preface to English language edition', in *Dialogues II*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), pp. vii–x (p. vii).

²⁵¹ Gilles Deleuze, 'Conclusions on the Will to Power and Eternal Return', in *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953-1974*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Michael Taormina (Paris: Semiotext(e), 2004), pp. 117–27 (p. 118).

²⁵² *Ibid.*

see, there is absolutely no doubt that the concept is implicitly presupposed and at work in Deleuze's account of Nietzsche.

In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari, as noted, suggest that Nietzsche, alongside Spinoza, is the great expositor of the epistemic and evaluative illusions of consciousness that emerge on the plane of immanence. In my second chapter, I will continue my exploration of the illusion, or, to use Nietzsche's word, fiction, of free will, and that of value, by examining Deleuze's work on Nietzsche. These fictions, as in the case of Spinoza, are held to conceal and corrupt the effective activity of the unconscious. Through my engagement with Deleuze's account of Nietzsche I show that it is in fact precisely the rise of the fiction of free will that leads to the denigration of the unconscious, which for Nietzsche marks a key turning point in human history. This unconscious activity will be conceptualised in terms of the will to power, which Deleuze sees as Nietzsche's central ontological principle, and is allied with the biological processes of life itself.

I demonstrate that from perspective of Deleuze's ontological reading of Nietzsche the will to power is intrinsically linked to the idea of value.²⁵³ In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze proposes that for Nietzsche '[t]o live is to evaluate'.²⁵⁴ Every living person inevitably assigns value to actions, things and the world around them. Yet, according to Deleuze, '[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'.²⁵⁵ This proposition, which Deleuze sees as 'the crucial point', firstly, confirms the link with Spinoza's idea of a mode of substance, an entity inextricably connected with the rest of existence, which for Deleuze in Spinoza's conceptual framework replaces the notion of a subject.²⁵⁶ More importantly, it establishes that, as in his reading of Spinoza, for Deleuze, these evaluations are not 'performed' by an autonomous subject, but are rather instinctive actualisations (in this case of the will to power) which spring from a person's mode of existence, the unconscious that underlies and orientates the conscious self.²⁵⁷

²⁵³ For an elucidation of Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche as a critical ontology (rather than a critique of ontology) see Jon Roffe, 'Deleuze's Nietzsche', in *Interpreting Nietzsche: Reception and Influence*, ed. Ashley Woodward (London: Continuum, 2011), pp. 66–80 (p. 68).

²⁵⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), p. 184.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁵⁷ As indicated in my introduction, for Deleuze, Nietzsche and Spinoza are indelibly associated with one another. Deleuze establishes a strong connection between two

As we have seen, for Spinoza each human being, as a finite mode of existence, is above all characterised by his or her relative degree of activity and passivity (depending on the ratio of adequate and inadequate ideas they hold), and this is reflected in the nature of their evaluations. The relatively more active his or her mode and the relatively more adequate his or her valuations, the more a person is attuned to the plane of immanence. With regard to Nietzsche, Deleuze differentiates between two different qualities of the will to power which correspond to two perspectives of evaluation. On the one hand, affirmative will to power blindly strives to manifest its vital powers, and the evaluations that arise from it are celebratory of life and its possibilities of expression. Conversely, the negative will to power instinctively seeks to contradict such expressions of life and actualises itself in evaluations that burden and denigrate it. For Deleuze, this distinction between affirmative and negative will to power corresponds to the distinction that we referred to above as that between the 'noble' and 'base', but also active and reactive modes of existence.

The difference between the active and reactive mode of existence is most clearly illustrated by Nietzsche's famous conception of the conflict between noble masters and base slaves. Deleuze offers a specific account of this conflict.²⁵⁸ According to him, the outcome of this historical conflict, which ends in the triumph of slaves, has fundamentally determined the course of development of humanity. The master-slave conflict is for the purposes of my investigation significant for several reasons. Firstly,

philosophers who have often been seen as belonging to two distinct trajectories of thought. (Without getting too deeply into the intricacies of such classifications, we can safely say that Spinoza is typically seen as the arch rationalist while Nietzsche's thought is seen as characterised by a strong irrationalism.) Both Deleuze's second monograph on Spinoza and his *Nietzsche and Philosophy* swarm with analyses of notions that interfuse them. This common conceptual structure that conjoins them is, as noted, referred to by Deleuze as 'the great Spinoza-Nietzsche equation'. In the above-mentioned essay 'On the Difference Between the Ethics and a Morality', Deleuze suggests that the main points of convergence between the two are their critique of consciousness, values and sad passions, all of which are either direct (consciousness and values) or indirect (sad passions) focus of this thesis.

²⁵⁸ To offer an ontological (and thus systematic) reading of Nietzsche's deliberately fragmented thought, Deleuze often glosses over ambivalences and nuances that characterise Nietzsche's work. The most revealing example of such omission with regards to Deleuze's reading of the master-slave conflict, but also in relation to Deleuze's conception of reactive consciousness, can be found in Essay I, § 16 of *On the Genealogy of Morality*. There Nietzsche suggests the battle between slave morality and master morality has not yet ended and that 'there are still no lack of places where the battle remains undecided' (Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, p. 32). Unlike Nietzsche who sees modern morality as mixed, Deleuze's whole reading of Nietzsche turns on the idea of triumph of slave morality. Moreover, in the same section Nietzsche suggests that the master-slave conflict 'has become ever deeper and more intellectual' and suggests that today the battle between noble and slavish elements plays itself out in the domain of the consciousness (*Ibid.*). For Deleuze, conversely, consciousness is strictly slavish (reactive, or negative) in character. This negativity of consciousness is, as we will see, one of the central components of Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche.

Deleuze maintains that the main conceptual device employed by the triumphant slaves is precisely the fiction of free will, one of the focal themes of this thesis. Secondly, he proposes that the victory of slaves brings about (or, more precisely, initiates) the deterioration of the affirmative will to power, the 'noble' affective disposition. This results in negative will to power becoming the prevailing affective disposition of humanity, one that dominates us to this day.

Thirdly, this becoming-reactive of humanity is for Deleuze reflected in the nature of human consciousness in two different ways. On the one hand, Nietzsche maintains that reactivity leads to an expansion of intellectual capacities and is therefore formative of human beings as such. On the other hand, the dominance of negative will to power is reflected in the way we think and evaluate. In fact, for Deleuze, Nietzsche sees negativity as the defining characteristic of human consciousness: the nature of our conscious thought is such that our evaluative tendencies inevitably depreciate and denigrate life. This chapter argues that the task of immanent ethics in Deleuze's account of Nietzsche is to overcome this characteristic negativity of consciousness and the illusions that structure it. As with his reading of Spinoza, I suggest that Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche puts forward an ethical imperative that focuses on activation of the unconscious, which is the site of genuine agency. Yet, unlike with Spinoza, where this is done by means of affects linked to reason, I demonstrate that for Deleuze's Nietzsche this is achieved through transmuting our affective disposition, its active self-destruction, in a way that it is able to give expression to an affirmative way of thinking and evaluating.

To construct my argument, the first section of this chapter will focus on outlining Deleuze's ontological account of Nietzsche and situating human beings within it. By carefully unpacking Deleuze's intricate conceptualisation of the relation between the notions of the will to power and force, I outline what he sees as the ontological foundations of Nietzsche's universe. In addition to explaining the ideas of activity and reactivity which describe the quality of a force, I will explain the affirmative quality of the will to power, which Deleuze sees as its primary form, and clarify the related ideas of becoming and difference. Building on the first section, the second section examines what Deleuze understands as 'the triumph of reactive forces', which is, as noted, for him achieved through the conceptual invention of a freely acting subject. This triumph is exemplified by the overpowering of the ancient 'noble' class, who are deceived by reactive and weak 'slaves' into believing that every subject has the capacity to regulate their aggressive instincts. In this way, the slaves sway the masters into

adopting their morality of compassion, which denounces active expressions of life and establishes in their place the primacy of a form of reactive and hence negative evaluation. In addition to explaining the fiction of the autonomous subject, my investigation of the slave triumph will allow me to elucidate the emergence of human consciousness as slavish, or negative. Moreover, it will enable me to show that through his conceptualisation of the suffocation of vital powers by means of morality Deleuze starts to develop his critique of the effects claimed by representation. From perspective of this critique, which Deleuze is unable to develop in Spinoza due to the absence of causal relations between body and mind, but which is fully elaborated in *Anti-Oedipus*, our conscious ideas are able to deform and diminish the vital powers that inhere in our bodies.

In the final section of this chapter I expand on the constitutive negativity (and reactivity) that for Deleuze characterises our conscious thought. Drawing on Nietzsche's own work, I substantiate Deleuze's account by establishing the perspective of the illusions of consciousness, which, I argue, are conceptualised in the same manner as in Spinoza. I also institute a direct link between the illusory idea of free will and our dominant discourses of being, which, since they aim to establish an unchanging level of reality, limit the forces of becoming and difference. To approach the affirmative attitude toward evaluation, one which manages to break away from the negativity of our consciousness, I introduce Deleuze's highly idiosyncratic reading of the doctrine of eternal return. By engaging with the latter, I explain how the test of eternal return can serve as the means of overcoming established values and of *creating new values* which do not denounce and inhibit life but seek to appreciate and so enhance it. Consequently, I argue that the test of eternal return is central to the immanent ethics that Deleuze constructs through Nietzsche as it allows us to install ourselves on the realm of becoming, or the plane of immanence.

i) The Ontology of Difference: Active Force and the Affirmative Will to Power

To approach what Deleuze sees as Nietzsche's ontological vision, let me begin with a brief outline that will help me establish its main coordinates. According to Deleuze, what comes first for Nietzsche is life. Living, in turn, necessitates values:

The world is neither true nor real but living. And the living world is will to power [...], which is actualised in many different powers. To actualise the will to power under any quality whatever, is always to evaluate. To live is to evaluate. There is no truth of the world as it is thought, no reality of the sensible world, all is evaluation, even and above all the sensible and the real.²⁵⁹

According to Deleuze, existence should not be understood in terms of notions such as truth or reality or being.²⁶⁰ In his reading, Nietzsche's fundamental ontological principle is the unthinking energy of life, which Nietzsche terms the will to power. Akin to Spinoza's self-actualising power of substance, Nietzsche's will to power too should be seen as the immanent organising principle constituting the univocity of being, that is, the plane of immanence.

Deleuze suggests that the will to power, in turn, actualises itself in different evaluations, none of which can be seen as being more substantive than any other. In fact, the idea of truth as an objective fact, the idea of reality as that which is self-sufficient and independent of our senses, or the idea of being as the fundamental and unchanging layer of existence, are nothing but forms of evaluation and, as such, *illusions*. As noted, Deleuze sees Nietzsche as holding that different evaluations correspond to different qualities of the will to power, *affirmation* and *negation*. He sees affirmation as characterised by 'the enjoyment and play of its own difference'.²⁶¹ Difference, in turn, is understood as 'difference from self' which is his definition of the idea of becoming.²⁶² Conversely, negation is characterised by 'the suffering and labour of opposition that belongs to it', i.e. the striving to deny or contain this self-differing becoming.²⁶³ Where affirmation welcomes open-ended play and experimentation, negation repudiates it.

Before further exploring the idea of will to power and its two qualities, it is necessary to attend to the notion of force, which Deleuze sees as its complement. The notion of force needs to be explicated to account for the corporeal dimension of Deleuze's ontological account of Nietzsche. If the will to power is the intensive principle of existence, force should be seen as its corresponding extensive dimension, the physicality in which the will to power inheres. According to Deleuze, forces are

²⁵⁹ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 184.

²⁶⁰ I hold on to the notion of ontology as Deleuze still conceptualises an ontological account of reality. The latter does not establish being as something fixed and stable, but rather frames it in terms of becoming, i.e. as an ever-changing flux.

²⁶¹ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 188.

²⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

constitutive of physical bodies which exist on different planes of compositional complexity:

[t]here is no quantity of reality, all reality is already quantity of force. [...] Every force is related to others and it either obeys or commands. What defines a body is this relation between dominant and dominated forces. Every relationship of forces constitutes a body – whether it is chemical, biological, social or political. Any two forces, being unequal, constitute a body as soon as they enter into a relationship.²⁶⁴

Existence is constituted from quantities of force which are always associated with one another in relations of domination. It is only in its relation to another that a force can be characterised as either dominant or dominated. If the quantity of a force is greater than that of another to which it is currently related, the greater force is temporarily constituted as dominant and the lesser force as dominated. Deleuze proposes that any such asymmetrical composition of forces constitutes a *body*. According to such a conception, the body does not consist of a self-identical field that is traversed by forces, but is itself constituted only as a result of a more or less temporary meeting of forces. Such bodies exist as compositions of dominant and dominated forces on different scales that are co-extensive with one another.²⁶⁵

From this perspective, bodies are composed as mixtures of chemical, biological, social or political relations of forces. For example, when a woodworker starts carving up wood to make a table, two forces enter into a relationship and constitute a body of some sort.²⁶⁶ The encounter of two quantitatively unequal forces results in one being overpowered by the other: the woodworker cuts up the wood, giving it a new shape and use. But the woodworker is also a composite of forces shaped by encounters with other dominating forces. Her expertise in carpentry comes from her teachers and the discipline instilled in her by an educational institution, her life as an artisan intersects with a series of intricate power-relations between different socio-political bodies, the kind of table she is creating is influenced by certain fashion trends, the availability of certain materials and tools, etc. Likewise, the wood she is working with has its own history, which makes it a suitable raw material for a table. This history

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40.

²⁶⁵ To compare this with Spinoza, bodies are defined by their characteristic pattern of motion and rest and compose compound bodies when they communicate movement to one another, thus entering into shared relations of movement and rest.

²⁶⁶ I borrow this example from Brian Massumi's *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 10. Massumi borrows it from Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*.

includes factors related to climate, soil conditions, forestry measures, etc. The interplay between axe and log is therefore a relationship between two complexes of forces, bodies existing at different scales, which enter into a temporary relation.

Deleuze proposes that the force that dominates by virtue of its quantity is the force that *interprets* the dominated force by assigning it meaning or purpose. He maintains that

[w]e will never find the sense of something (of a human, a biological or even a physical phenomenon) if we do not know the force which appropriates the thing, which exploits it, which takes possession of it or is expressed in it. A phenomenon is not an appearance or even an apparition but a sign, a symptom which finds its meaning in an existing force.²⁶⁷

For Deleuze, commanding forces appropriate the obeying ones, thereby imposing on them a particular signification. The sense of something, which here concerns not merely the linguistic 'meaning' of a thing, but also its use and functioning within a system of ends, does not arise from an act of judgement performed by an autonomous, conscious self. It rather springs from a meeting of forces in which the dominating force interprets the dominated force. As such, the meaning of a phenomenon is not a false or misleading appearance that needs to be stripped away to arrive at its underlying truth or essence.

Instead, Deleuze claims, 'the sense of something is its relation to the force that takes possession of it', and is an effect of an unequal meeting of forces.²⁶⁸ For example, the woodworker (a complex of forces) interprets the wood by following the grain, considering the wood's texture and durability, and giving it a meaning, a purpose, as a table. For a further elucidation of Deleuze's idea of interpretation of forces, we can return to Nietzsche. In *On the Genealogy of Morality* he provides a now famous example of different interpretations of punishment. He suggests that the latter has been appropriated in different socio-historical contexts by different forces which have exploited it for different purposes. In addition to its currently accepted use as a form of legally sanctioned retribution, he points out that punishment was previously employed as a means of rendering people harmless, inspiring fear, obliterating what

²⁶⁷ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 3.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

threatened to dilute the power of a race or class, celebrating, declaring war, etc.²⁶⁹ Nietzsche adds that a similar process of re-interpretation can take place in relation to a physiological organ (on which a new function is imposed), but also in relation to a 'legal institution, social custom, political usage, art form or religious rite'.²⁷⁰ The sense of something is thus subject to an on-going series of re-interpretations by different concatenations of forces.

In *Daybreak* Nietzsche provides another example of such a re-interpretation. There he invites us to imagine the situation of being at the marketplace and noticing that someone is laughing at us. He proposes that the interpretation of this (or any other) encounter is a matter of the state of forces that characterise our mode of existence at that given moment. These forces here correspond to unconscious drives, i.e. bodily instincts seeking gratification beneath the level of consciousness.²⁷¹ For Nietzsche, the event of being laughed at 'will signify this or that to us according to whether this or that drive happens at that moment to be at its height in us – and it will be a quite different event according to the kind of person we are'.²⁷² Put differently, the ideas we form about the situation as it is given to us through sense perception will depend on the particular drive that is dominating other drives at that particular moment.

Nietzsche suggests that at one particular time we might comprehend the situation as insulting and engage in a quarrel, and in this way gratify the dominant drive to combativeness. At another time the event would be cheerfully dismissed, an interpretation dictated by the prevalence of the drive to benevolence. Conversely, this event might even be appropriated by a drive as an opportunity for contemplation, and thus provoke thoughts about the general nature of laughter. Nietzsche proposes that responses will differ from person to person as each of us is constituted by a different multiplicity of drives. At the level of human experience, then, Nietzsche sees

²⁶⁹ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Essay I, § 13, pp. 53–4. According to Nietzsche, these previous meanings of punishment are hard to distinguish because every time a force appropriates a thing and interprets it anew, its former purpose 'must necessarily be obscured or completely obliterated'. (*Ibid.*, p. 51.)

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁷¹ Joshua Andresen rightly points out that 'Deleuze's language of forces corresponds directly to Nietzsche's attempt at a "physiological" account of human willing and acting in terms of organisation of drives, affects, and sensibilities' (Joshua Andresen, *Nietzsche's Project of Revaluing all Values*, PhD thesis, Northwestern University, 2005, p. 127). For Nietzsche's discussion of the physiological domain of drives and affects that dictates the psychological domain of consciousness, see for example *Beyond Good and Evil*, sections 6, 12, 19, and 23.

²⁷² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, ed. Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), §119, p. 76.

interpretation as a matter of unconscious forces, which appropriate the received bodily sensations by imposing meaning on them. Our conscious ideas are as such effects (or signs or symptoms) that express a deeper state of forces.

In addition to the *quantities* of force that relate to one another as overpowering and overpowered, Deleuze distinguishes between two corresponding *qualities* of forces. While a force can be more or less dominant or dominated in terms of its *quantity*, the quality of force concerns the *manner* in which one force relates to another. For Deleuze, the quantity and quality of associated forces are essentially interrelated. If a force encounters a force that is inferior in quantity, it will be determined to behave in a certain way, and, conversely, in a different way if the encountered force is superior in quantity. It is this which gives rise to the distinction between active and reactive forces: 'the superior or dominant forces are known as *active* and the inferior or dominated forces are known as *reactive*'.²⁷³ Forces that are greater in quantity are active in the sense that their activity is primary and dictates the movement of the reactive forces. 'Appropriating, possessing, subjugating, dominating', Deleuze argues, 'are the characteristics of active force. To appropriate means to impose forms, to create forms by exploiting circumstances'.²⁷⁴ The active force thus *interprets* the reactive one by imposing a meaning on it (or by assigning it purpose). Reactive forces are secondary in that they are always triggered by and conform to the motion of active forces. In a body, whether it be chemical, biological, social, or political, reactive forces function by obeying active forces, adapting to them, imposing limitations on their activity and/or regulating them. A piece of wood, for example, reacts to the activity of the axe by absorbing and restricting its movement.

In *Daybreak*, Nietzsche suggests that our conscious thought, being dominated by drives and instincts, is dictated by unconscious forces. Genuine activity, for Nietzsche, thus seems to be on the side of the latter. Consciousness, in contrast, is reactive. Deleuze confirms this by proposing that, for Nietzsche,

[c]onsciousness merely expresses the relation of certain reactive forces to the active forces which dominate them. Consciousness is essentially reactive; this is why we do not know what a body can do, or what activity it is capable of (GS 354).²⁷⁵

²⁷³ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 40.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 41. Deleuze immediately adds that 'what is said of consciousness must also be said of memory *and* habit', which are two faculties that are closely linked to Spinoza's account

According to Deleuze, for Nietzsche our conscious thought takes shape as a reaction to the overpowering activity of unconscious forces that constitute and traverse our bodies. By evoking the question of what a body can do, Deleuze links his view of Nietzsche to Spinoza. The latter claims that our consciousness (insofar as it is passive) is merely a witness to variations of the unconscious conative drive caused by external bodies, and thus knows little of the potent capacities of our bodies.²⁷⁶ Similarly, Deleuze maintains that, for Nietzsche, we do not have direct knowledge of the active forces that belong to our bodies. We grasp these active forces of unconsciousness only through their effects, reactions to their activity, which manifest themselves *in* and *as* our conscious thought. To advance Deleuze's conceptualisation of these unconscious forces, which underlie the interpretation of things and events, we need to explicate what he sees as Nietzsche's central ontological commitment, i.e. the will to power. This immanent organising principle operates in and through forces and thus directs the movement of bodies that these forces constitute. The will to power gathers these forces and acts through them in either an affirmative or negative manner.

As with Spinoza's degree of power considered under the attribute of extension, Nietzsche's will to power can be for Deleuze understood as an intensive principle that is both physical yet at the same time irreducible to the extensive materiality of bodies. In a similar manner to Spinoza, who posits the power of acting as the essence of every existing entity, Deleuze institutes the will to power as the vital striving that constitutes the life of all living entities. According to Nietzsche, this innate vitality must not be overlooked as it is '*the essence of life, its will to power*'.²⁷⁷ Thus, he maintains that by means of the will to power every living creature

instinctively strives for an optimum of favourable conditions in which to fully release his power and achieve his maximum of power-sensation; [and] abhors equally instinctively, with an acute sense of smell that is 'higher than all

of imagination. It is clear that for Deleuze Nietzsche's notion of reactivity, which the latter ascribes to consciousness, and Spinoza's notion of passivity, which characterises the latter's account of imagination, are undoubtedly related.

²⁷⁶ Unlike Nietzsche, for whom consciousness is subsequent to the body and its active forces, Spinoza's theory of parallelism establishes a relation between body and mind that is characterised by correspondence and causal independence. Yet, we have to note that for Spinoza body and mind are both equally oriented by an unconscious conative drive. From Spinoza's perspective, then, unconsciousness is not only a matter of the body, but also of the mind. This unconscious or non-representational thought concerns Spinoza's notion of affect understood as the variation of our conative drive. Conversely, Nietzsche's account of drives and affects is strictly physiological.

²⁷⁷ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Essay I, § 12, p. 52.

reason', any kind of disturbance and hindrance that blocks or could block his path to the optimum [...].²⁷⁸

Nietzsche's notion of will to power concerns the vital drive that compels all living beings to strive to maximise the power that they are capable of exercising. Deleuze frequently reiterates that the will to power should not, however, be understood as a conscious desire for social influence and domination (as we will see, such a misconception amounts to a reactive interpretation of the will to power).²⁷⁹ What wills is not the conscious aspect of the self, but a striving that is pre-subjective, and in fact gives rise to subjectivity. The will to power is, then, the origin of conscious wanting: the vital energy that enables and directs our thought and action in the first place. To put it in the terms Deleuze uses in his reading of Spinoza, the will to power is an entity's degree of power, its power of acting or capacity to affect; but equally, as indicated by Nietzsche's evocation of power-sensation above, the will to power is a matter of sensibility or receptivity, i.e. of an entity's capacity to be affected. The will to power should thus be seen as the vital energy that intrinsically 'wills' its expansion and growth (and the increase in sensitivity that corresponds to it), and thus compels us to seek out whatever is conducive to increasing our power of acting and to recoil from whatever inhibits it. This general tendency characterises, for Nietzsche, every living creature.

Understood in this way, as an expansive and maximising vitality, the will to power consists essentially of affirmation. Deleuze proposes that '[w]hat a will wants is to affirm its difference'.²⁸⁰ 'In its essential relation with the "other"', he continues, 'a will makes its difference an object of affirmation', which amounts to making it an object of enjoyment.²⁸¹ Before expanding on its inclination to *enjoy* its difference, let us begin by explaining what Deleuze sees as the will to power's innate tendency to *affirm* its difference. To do so, we first need to clarify the relation between the idea of force and that of will to power, which Deleuze presents in a particularly opaque manner.

Deleuze first of all proposes that the will to power is 'both a complement of force and something internal to it'.²⁸² For him, the will to power is an intensive complement of a

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Essay III, § 7, p. 76.

²⁷⁹ It will be shown that, for Deleuze, such an interpretation of the will to power is in fact a *reactive* one.

²⁸⁰ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 9.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 49.

force, because it cannot be reduced to the extensive body of forces in which it is realised; the will to power is, however, also internal to a force because it constitutes its inner core that propels its action. Yet, Deleuze also points out that there is a two-fold causal relation between forces and the will to power:

We should not be surprised by the double aspect of the will to power: from the standpoint of the genesis or production of forces it determines the relation between forces but, from the standpoint of its own manifestations, it is determined by relating forces. This is why the will to power is always determined at the same time as it determines, qualified at the same time as it qualifies.²⁸³

For Deleuze, the will to power that in any instance corresponds to a force is inevitably *determined* by this force's momentary relation to another force. However, at the same time, it also *determines* the behaviour (i.e., the activity or reactivity) of the force in which this vital drive inheres. Insofar as the will to power is determined by an encountered force, this determination is related to the will to power's manifestations as the sensibility of a force to which this will corresponds.

Deleuze also refers to this sensibility of a force as the force's 'capacity to be affected', which again aligns his reading of Nietzsche with that of Spinoza.²⁸⁴ As in his reading of Spinoza, Deleuze at the outset assumes that encounters with other forces can shape the capacity of force in a way that allows it to become more receptive to inferior forces, ones in relation to which it can affirm its difference in quantity.²⁸⁵ Once a force encounters an inferior force to which it is receptive, this inferior force to a certain degree fulfils the superior force's capacity to be affected. Again, in accordance with his reading of Spinoza, Deleuze proposes that this capacity 'is necessarily fulfilled

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

²⁸⁵ We have seen that for Spinoza other modes can be considered good only insofar as they render us receptive to other modes and thus actualise the relations that were up to that point virtual. In doing so, they produce joyful passions that increase a mode's power of thinking and may in this way lead to the formation of a common notion. For Nietzsche, too, this sensitisation is a necessary condition for the will to power to affirm its difference. 'In order for the will to power to be able to manifest itself', he writes, 'it needs to perceive the things it sees and feel the approach of what is assimilable to it' (quoted by Deleuze in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 63). The will to power must, then, firstly be able to sense that which it can overpower and thus expand itself. The more developed the entity's capacity to be affected, the more powerful it is. Consequently, Deleuze claims that this capacity is 'not necessarily a passivity but an *affectivity*, a sensibility, a sensation' (*Ibid.*, p. 62). Unlike with Spinoza, for whom this receptivity is important insofar as it contributes to the thinking capacities of a conscious self, in the case of Nietzsche this receptivity is a matter of the functioning of unconscious instincts exclusively.

and actualised at each moment by the other forces to which a given force relates'.²⁸⁶ Insofar as this capacity of a force is fulfilled by an inferior force, the will to power that inheres in the superior force is compelled to 'affirm its difference', whereas the latter can be understood as the difference in the quantity of force. The will to power is then determined by relating forces to the extent that it can affirm its difference only insofar as it is realised in a force that is related to an inferior force. This superior quantity of force is the condition of possibility of its affirmation.

Conversely, the will to power determines its corresponding force to the extent that it compels it to act in a certain way. It is for this reason that Deleuze proposes that the will to power be seen as 'the internal element of [...] production' of a force.²⁸⁷ When a force is affected by an inferior force, its will to power produces the emerging quantity of this force (i.e. dominant) and its corresponding manner of behaviour (i.e. active quality) in this relation. In striving to maximise its power, the will to power thus formulates its response to the encounter with an inferior force by determining its corresponding force to actively dominate and exploit it. 'Force is what can', Deleuze adds, 'will to power is what wills'.²⁸⁸ In his view, active or reactive forces are 'means or instruments of the will to power, which affirms and denies'.²⁸⁹ While it is bodies and the forces that compose them that act and do things, it is the will to power that mobilises these forces and determines them to act. Therefore, Deleuze points out, 'it is always through the will to power that one force prevails over others and dominates or commands them'.²⁹⁰

Yet, by dominating inferior forces the will to power also mobilises active forces for the expansion of its own vital powers. When a dominating force's will to power compels this force to behave in an active manner, it also realises the increase in its own will to power, and the power-sensation that corresponds to it.²⁹¹ Since the will to power is nothing but life, its expansion effectively amounts to the production of life as a vital process. Affirmative will to power is a perpetual motor that generates difference, an intrinsically expansive vital process relentlessly differentiating itself. The difference in

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

²⁹¹ What Deleuze refers to as 'a deep affinity' between the activity of force and the will to power's affirmation consists precisely of this reciprocity (*Ibid.*, p. 54). Namely, it is through the will to power that a force actively subjugates another force and affirms its difference in quantity, but this activity of force also allows for the will to power's own affirmation.

question here is not one of quantity of force, but of the will to power's difference from itself. Understood as self-differentiation, the affirmation of will to power corresponds to Deleuze's idea of becoming.

For him, 'affirmation and negation extend beyond action and reaction because they are the immediate qualities of becoming itself'.²⁹² He immediately adds that '[a]ffirmation is not action but the power of becoming active, *becoming active personified*'.²⁹³ As with Deleuze's account of Spinoza, becoming can here also be understood as the intensive transition between successive extensive states of a body. Insofar as the force is affected by an inferior force, its will to power generates a transition to a subsequent state in which this power is increased, and the force is compelled to act in an active manner. In correspondence, again, with his rendition of Spinoza, Deleuze conceptualises this variation in the degree of power in terms of affects. He proposes that '[t]he affects of force are active insofar as the force appropriates anything that resists it and compels the obedience of inferior forces', which corresponds to the expansion of the will to power, or, in terms of Deleuze's Spinoza, to the increase in the power of acting.²⁹⁴ Deleuze equates this increase in power to the affect of joy, which also allows us to explain the notion of enjoyment that he links to the affirmation of this difference. Difference understood as an increase in power is the object of enjoyment precisely because any joyful affect is nothing but this intensive expansion in power.²⁹⁵

At this point we can pause so as to recap the ontological vision that Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche constructs. According to this vision, existence consists of the on-going interactions of quantitatively unequal forces (and the physical bodies they compose) that are oriented by the will to power, the vital striving that compels their movement. Furthermore, the nature of existence is such that there always exist relations of domination between these forces. A greater force is instinctively determined by its will to power to actively dominate and exploit the encountered lesser force, and thus joyfully affirm its difference. Meanings and ideas (but also, as I will

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 54.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

²⁹⁵ While Deleuze's conceptualisation of active affects in Spinoza corresponds to that in Nietzsche, we should draw attention to the distinction in the production of these affects. In the case of Spinoza, active affects are produced as a result of the activity of comprehending, while in the case of Nietzsche they are produced by the will to power's effective affirmation of difference. Yet, as I will soon explain, Deleuze's rendition of Nietzsche also allows for active affects, or becoming active, that are produced by the conscious self.

shortly argue, values) arise from this power-struggle. Unlike with Spinoza, where Deleuze assumes that two bodies can also compose and in this way mutually amplify each other's power of acting, his reading of Nietzsche suggests that domination and subordination are the fundamental conditions of existence. From this perspective, there are no co-operative encounters between forces; instead, the greater force always overpowers and exploits the lesser one. Yet, while this state of affairs may remain valid for animals and plants, this is clearly not the case with humans. This is evident simply from the fact that physically stronger individuals do not necessarily overpower weaker ones. To explain what, according to Deleuze's account of Nietzsche, brings about this condition of humanity, we need to expand on the negative aspect of will to power.

My analysis has up until now assumed the perspective of a superior force, one which is related to an inferior force. Yet, a force can also encounter a quantitatively greater force, which causes its will to power to determine its emerging quantity as inferior and its quality as reactive. In this case, the quality of the will to power is not one of affirmation, but, according to Deleuze, takes on the form of negation. As noted, negative will to power seeks to 'deny what differs' and does so by determining its corresponding force to *react* to active forces by obeying, adapting to, and limiting their dominating activity.²⁹⁶ Deleuze grounds the opposition between the affirmative and negative will to power in Nietzsche's conceptualisation of the relation between masters and slaves. To expand on the negative will to power, explain its link to the notions of value and evaluation, and substantiate the still somewhat abstract theory of forces I have outlined, I now trace Nietzsche's characterisation of the master-slave relation. This will also allow me to account for the fundamentally reactive condition in which, according to Deleuze, humanity finds itself after the triumph of slave morality, and, in turn, critically analyse the fallacy of the free subject that legitimates and thereby also helps facilitate this triumph. I demonstrate that this human reactivity is intrinsically linked to the negativity of human consciousness, which inevitably functions in a way that delimits life, and which the ethics of immanence seeks to overcome.

²⁹⁶ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 78.

ii) Becoming Reactive, Becoming Conscious: The Slave Triumph and the Fallacy of the Free Subject

In *On the Genealogy of Morality* Nietzsche sketches the distinction between active masters (or nobles) and reactive slaves by grounding it in the different composition of forces that constitutes them. In their relation to slaves, the masters are more powerful: they are constituted by the greater quantity of force. Nietzsche proposes that for the dominant group of masters, happiness is inseparable from acting on instinct, and claims that for them 'being active is by necessity counted as part of happiness'.²⁹⁷ For Deleuze, the dominant quantity of forces that constitutes the noble being is reflected in the active quality, or 'type', of these forces.²⁹⁸ On account of their relative supremacy in strength, the will to power drives the masters to affirm their difference. Due to their physical vigour, they are capable of leading a life of immediate gratification of their drives. The activity of the masters consists in the joyful appropriation of whatever is conducive to the enhancement of their will to power. They modify their environment, subjugate, exploit and commit violence upon the inferior slaves. Yet, the masters, as spontaneous and relatively unreflective creatures, lack any conscience and are largely unaware of (and indifferent to) the injuries that result from their activity.

Slaves, on the other hand, are physically weak, unable to assert themselves and thus at the mercy of the aggressive endeavours of their masters. Nietzsche suggests that for slaves happiness 'manifests itself as essentially a narcotic, an anaesthetic, rest, peace, "Sabbath", relaxation of the mind and stretching of the limbs'.²⁹⁹ According to Deleuze, the defining feature of slaves as a type is *ressentiment*, which he defines as 'a reaction which simultaneously becomes perceptible and ceases to be acted'.³⁰⁰ Unlike masters, who instinctively respond to external stimuli with an immediate riposte, slaves are incapable of this. Instead of responding to the affecting forces by acting, *ressentiment* results in a reaction to stimuli that is felt ('senti') and perceived. The inability to form a riposte to an excitation is accompanied by a deeply resentful feeling toward the force that caused this excitation (in this case the masters).

²⁹⁷ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Essay I, § 10, p. 21.

²⁹⁸ Deleuze refers to the quality of force also as a 'type'. Deleuze, who claims that typology is 'the key stone of Nietzschean philosophy', renders Nietzsche's whole project in terms of a variety of active and reactive types (Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 34).

²⁹⁹ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Essay I, § 10, p. 21.

³⁰⁰ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 114.

Deleuze explains the dominance of the *drive to ressentiment* in slaves as a result of the decay of the active force of forgetfulness. This force of forgetfulness prevents the reaction of unconscious traces of previous encounters to current excitations from resurfacing into consciousness. By constantly regenerating our receptivity, this active force allows consciousness to respond to present affections.³⁰¹ Conversely, the deterioration of this force renders slaves incapable of responding to these excitation. Deleuze assumes that the men of *ressentiment* 'only invest traces' of previous encounters.³⁰² This is akin to his characterisation of Spinoza's passive affections which cut us off from our capacity to act 'because our power of action is reduced to attaching itself to their traces, either in the attempt to preserve them if they are joyful, or to ward them off if they are sad'.³⁰³ Additionally, Deleuze maintains that a man of *ressentiment*, 'is venomous and depreciative because it blames the object in order to compensate for its own inability to escape from the traces of the corresponding excitation'.³⁰⁴ Deleuze thus aligns Nietzsche's reactivity with Spinoza's passivity, as he maintains that inadequate ideas indicate 'our incapacity to rid ourselves of a trace', which continues to assert the presence of the body that caused it.³⁰⁵ If the present excitation resonates with sad affective traces, the affected person will perceive the affecting entity as the cause of his or her sadness, and will, consequently, feel an aversion toward this entity. Similarly, Deleuze suggests that for Nietzsche *ressentiment* arises as our power of acting is limited to investing past traces, and manifests itself in blaming the currently affecting body for our powerlessness. In the case of the slaves, this venomous depreciation is quietly directed towards the masters.

We can thus see how for Deleuze the difference in quantity of force between masters and slaves is reflected in the qualitative difference of their modes of existence, their type. According to him, such relations between masters and slaves determine two different qualities of the will to power, which in turn determine two different ways of assigning value to things and actions. The will to power that dominates the masters is characterised by affirmation, which is actualised in their evaluations. Affirmative will to power inclines masters to affirm their difference in strength by acting on instincts

³⁰¹ For an elucidation of this mediating role of the active force of forgetfulness between the system of unconscious traces and consciousness, see Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 113.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 115.

³⁰³ Deleuze, *Expressionism*, p. 246

³⁰⁴ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 116.

³⁰⁵ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 74.

and drives, and in this way expanding and differentiating their will to power. Since this expansion corresponds to joyful affects, the masters initially assign value precisely to their own mode of existing and the self-asserting actions that correspond to it. 'To the fore', writes Nietzsche, 'there is the feeling of richness, of power ready to overflow, the happiness of high tension'.³⁰⁶ The masters look approvingly at themselves and their actions, and affirm as 'good' the life of domination and superiority which they enjoy. This idea of themselves as good is, according to Nietzsche, 'saturated with life and passion, "we the noble, the good, the beautiful and the happy!"'.³⁰⁷ As the activity of self-affirmation allows them to expand their vitality (transitions from one corporal state to another consist of expansions of the will to power), they value it positively.

Yet, Deleuze maintains that masters are characterised also by the negative, the power of denying. According to him, the negation of masters consists of 'the aggression necessarily linked to an active existence, the aggression of an affirmation', i.e. the physical abuse directed toward slaves, but also of 'the negative concept', the idea of slaves as being the ones who are deemed 'bad'.³⁰⁸ Significantly, for Deleuze, these two forms of negation are secondary, being only a consequence of the affirmation. Aggression results from the active self-affirmation of the masters, while the negative concept comes to them merely as 'an afterthought, an aside'.³⁰⁹ Masters negate the existence of slaves, deeming their weakness and inability to act as "bad", only as a means of additionally glossing their own strength and superiority. Nietzsche suggests that the master's evaluating glance turns to 'its opposite only so that it can say "yes" to itself even more thankfully and exultantly'.³¹⁰ The function of this negative evaluation is merely to augment the joy of affirmation, or, in Deleuze's words, 'to redouble the [...] enjoyment'.³¹¹

Masters enhance their enjoyment of difference linked to affirmation (which is reflected in seeing themselves as 'good') with the enjoyment of negative difference (which consists of distinguishing themselves from the slaves, who are deemed 'bad'). Deleuze assumes that these two moments together account for what Nietzsche terms the maximisation of power-sensation, or the feeling of power, which concerns the will

³⁰⁶ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, § 260, p. 205.

³⁰⁷ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Essay I, § 10, p. 20.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, § 11, p. 22.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, § 10, p. 20.

³¹¹ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, pp. 120–1.

to power's manifestation as a force's capacity to be affected. When the latter is fulfilled by the inferior forces of the slaves, the will to power of the masters is expressed as 'pathos of nobility and distance', 'the continuing and predominant feeling of complete and fundamental superiority of a higher ruling kind in relation to a lower kind'.³¹² It is this feeling that grounds the life-affirming evaluating of the masters. Nietzsche refers to the conception of good and bad that arises from this as 'noble morality'.³¹³

Deleuze links this feeling of superiority to the notion of hierarchy. I mobilise this notion to draw out the ideas of the plan of organisation and the plane of immanence in Deleuze's account Nietzsche. According to Deleuze, this notion takes on a double meaning in Nietzsche's work. These two meanings of hierarchy will be shown to correspond to the two terms in question. The first meaning of hierarchy for Deleuze corresponds precisely to this 'feeling of difference'.³¹⁴ This feeling arises from and effectively reflects the hierarchy of forces understood as 'the difference between active and reactive forces, the superiority of active to reactive forces'.³¹⁵ This hierarchical arrangement corresponds to the concrete state of physical forces and the inequalities that structure their actual encounter. In this encounter, the masters affirm their advantage in strength, overpower the weaker slaves, and in this way act in accordance with what Nietzsche sees as the fundamental nature of life: relentless proliferation, expansion and production. As there are no laws or other restrictions that would structure their relation in advance and, in this way, inhibit life as self-differing power, this hierarchy is akin to the plane of immanence. Here, as Deleuze puts it in his essay on Nietzsche from *Pure Immanence*, '[I]f life activates thought, and thought in turn affirms life'.³¹⁶ In the absence of superimposed limitations, masters actively dominate slaves, affirm life, and formulate a form of evaluation (noble morality) that is appreciative of life. Meanwhile, according to Deleuze, the second meaning of hierarchy corresponds to a reversal of the first. This new kind of hierarchy is established as a result of the revolt of the slaves and the triumph of reactive forces. To explain this reactive hierarchy, I will begin with the evaluation of the slave.

³¹² Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Essay I, § 2, p. 12.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, § 10, p. 20.

³¹⁴ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 9.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

³¹⁶ Gilles Deleuze, 'Nietzsche', *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2005), p. 66.

Unlike masters, slaves are from the outset directed by a negative will to power which determines that they deny that which differs. Incapable of instinctively *acting out* their response and affirming their difference, slaves are restricted to *reacting* to the forces they encounter. This reaction is precisely the reproachful feeling of *ressentiment*, which is directed towards the affecting force. Instead of the joyful feeling of fullness that accompanies noble self-affirmation, Nietzsche suggests that slavish *ressentiment* ‘says “no” on principle to everything that is “outside”, “other”, “non-self”’.³¹⁷ In contrast to the masters, slaves from the outset negate and depreciate all that they are not. This negation is expressed in their thinking and evaluating. From the perspective of the slave, it is the powerful master who is initially seen as ‘bad’ or even ‘evil’. Only by virtue of negating the masters in this way are slaves able to fabricate a kind of self-affirmation. They proclaim themselves as ‘good’ simply on the grounds that they are not as dominating, vigorous and aggressive as their masters. Consequently, the morality established by slaves assigns value to attitudes such as compassion, selflessness and pity. As it accuses the vital and subjugating activity of the masters, this ‘slave’ morality denigrates and denies the masters’ affirmation of difference, and thus ultimately devalues life itself.

By reversing the value of vital self-affirmation in favour of altruistic behaviour, slave morality gives as an example of what Deleuze sees as the hierarchy of a reactive kind. Instead of emerging from a concretely experienced encounter between slaves and masters, this kind of hierarchy is a manifestation of what Nietzsche calls an ‘imaginary revenge’, a compensation for being unable to respond to the masters by acting.³¹⁸ Deleuze proposes that this kind of hierarchy always depends on ‘a fiction, on a mystification or a falsification’.³¹⁹ In the case of slaves, this fiction is precisely the fiction of free will, which I will analyse shortly. But for now we should note that this other kind of hierarchy also prescribes values *in advance* of an actual encounter of forces. By condemning the affirmation of the masters and the aggression that accompanies it, it imposes limitations on forces before they enter into any relation. In this way, as Deleuze puts it elsewhere, men of *ressentiment* make of life ‘something that must be judged, measured, restricted, and of thought, a measure, a limit, that is exercised in the name of higher values’.³²⁰ Unlike the hierarchy that links active life with affirmative thought, the hierarchy of slaves is based on values and ideas that

³¹⁷ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Essay I, § 10, p. 20.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 57.

³²⁰ Deleuze, ‘Nietzsche’, p. 70.

thought erects in order to discipline and negate life. In other words, these values are established as transcendent organising principles that constitute the plan of organisation.

As anticipated, Nietzsche maintains that the imaginary revenge that slaves enact on masters by formulating their own morality in turn produces real effects. In fact, Nietzsche proposes that slaves by means of slave morality effectively triumph over masters. Importantly, the reactive forces here do not overthrow the active ones by forming a greater force and actively overpowering them. Instead, as Deleuze claims, slaves triumph by means of 'contagion': they infect masters with slave morality.³²¹ Slaves blame masters for their inability to respond to encountered forces while being condemned to feeling this reaction.³²² The initial accusation – '[i]t's your fault if I'm weak and unhappy' – is extended to: 'aren't you ashamed to be happy? follow my example, I won't let go before you say, "It's my fault"'.³²³ Infection by slave morality brings about a disintegration of the active forces constitutive of the masters. As a result of this disintegration, the masters are rendered unable to affirm themselves and overpower the slaves. They, too, thus become reactive.

We have to note that in its description of the imposition of slave morality on the masters and the consequence of their becoming reactive, Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche gives priority not to physiological forces, but rather to psychological ones, i.e. to the ideas represented in consciousness. Without any explicit acknowledgement of this, Deleuze here assumes that the former can claim the effect of the latter: slave morality as a set of ideas degenerates the active and affirmative tendencies of masters by the way of their conscious thoughts. Ideas are thus no longer mere 'symptoms' that express a certain state of bodily forces and the quality of the will to power. Instead, they become weaponised: they have the capacity to influence and modify forces, rendering them reactive.

It is not that consciousness gains its influence as an active and self-contained spiritual force endowed with causal power; rather, it is a reactive tool of reactive forces whose power emanates precisely from the unconscious elements that reactive sentiment

³²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 75

³²² As noted, the slavish type 'is venomous and depreciative because it blames the object in order to compensate for its own inability to escape from the traces of the corresponding excitation' (Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 116).

³²³ Deleuze, 'Nietzsche', p. 77, Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 268–9.

mobilises in order to overpower what is other than it. Deleuze is here making a general claim about the nature of representation of objects in thinking, language, and images, which he starts to develop in his work on Nietzsche, and which becomes central in *Anti-Oedipus*. In particular, his claim is that representation does not merely represent, but that the contents of representation produce actual material effects.³²⁴ Limitations imposed on active forces by representation, as Deleuze puts it, 'separate the active forces from what they can do'.³²⁵

For Nietzsche, slave morality marks the beginning of the triumph of reactive forces. The latter is for him, as Ronald Bogue notes, co-extensive with 'the history of the West'.³²⁶ In the *Genealogy* Nietzsche scrutinises this reactive triumph by closely examining what he sees as its three main figures, namely, *ressentiment*, bad conscience and the ascetic ideal (all of which feature prominently in *Anti-Oedipus*). According to Deleuze, each of these elements constitutes a stage in the amplification of the reactivity of humanity and plays a part in a wider project of nihilism (whose principles will be fully explored below, in the next chapter).³²⁷ It is of central importance to note that for Nietzsche the emergence of *ressentiment* and other reactive traits should not be seen as an incidental or secondary affair in human history.

Deleuze points out that these are 'not psychological traits' any more than they are simply 'categories of thought', but should be seen as 'the foundation of the humanity in man' and 'the principle of human being as such'.³²⁸ The *ressentiment* that characterises the slaves is a matter of not actively responding to the affecting body,

³²⁴ I have suggested in relation to Spinoza that for Deleuze representation not only represents but also *prescribes*. The claim about the material effects of representation could not yet be made due to the doctrine of parallelism between body and mind. From the perspective of this doctrine, there is no causal relation between the domain of conscious ideas and the power of thinking, on the one hand, and the corporeal domain and the power of acting, on the other.

³²⁵ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 86. The capacity of conscious thought to claim effects on the bodily forces and the will to power, regardless of how involuntary this influence is, is also a necessary condition for the possibility of becoming active. Without this feedback loop from psychological forces to physiological ones, human consciousness would be completely unable to impact the unconscious inclinations that guide its cognition and behaviour, and Deleuze's account of Nietzsche would remain thoroughly anti-humanist.

³²⁶ Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 24.

³²⁷ While Deleuze primarily aligns *ressentiment* with Judaism and frames it as an accusation ('it's your fault') directed toward the strong and the vital, bad conscience is linked to the Christian idea of sin, which is aligned with a feeling of self-reproach ('it's my fault'). The ascetic ideal is the denigration of physical pleasures (or, in other words, depreciation of the joyful affirmation that expands the will to power), which already underlies both of the previous moments of reactive triumph.

³²⁸ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 64.

but instead consciously knowing, perceiving and feeling a reaction to it. While slaves thus remain incapable of an active response, they are nevertheless endowed with a set of different capacities which are intrinsically related to the development of human consciousness. These capacities, which include faculties such as intellect and conscience, are expanded and enhanced by the effects of succeeding stages of reactive triumph. According to Deleuze, the humanity of human beings, who are distinguished precisely by a higher degree of conscious capacities, is constituted as a result of the domination of reactive life.³²⁹

Since the development of human consciousness originates in the slavish way of thinking, Deleuze maintains that 'negation has dominated our thought, our ways of feeling and evaluating, up to the present day'.³³⁰ Conscious thought is for Deleuze based on negation because it can only arise in opposition to masters and their affirmative activity. For Deleuze, 'consciousness is always the consciousness of an inferior in relation to a superior to which he is subordinated'; it is 'the consciousness of an ego in relation to the self which is not itself conscious'.³³¹ This is not only the case for the conscious self in relation to the active forces of the unconscious.³³² The relation between the superior unconscious and an inferior consciousness also characterises the relation between masters and slaves. The former instinctively affirm their difference and are immersed in enjoying it, and as such remain largely unreflective and oblivious to the world around them. Slaves, on the other hand, from the outset negate the masters and thus become conscious of the world and themselves only in the aftermath of the affirmation of the ousted nobles.

Due to the derivative character of negation, Deleuze proposes that affirmation is '*ratio essendi*', or the primary quality of existence, of the will to power. Conversely, he claims that negation is the '*ratio cognoscendi*' of the will to power, the quality through which the will to power is known to us. It is for this reason that he sees all human thought as the actualisation of a negative will to power. Like *ressentiment*, negation cannot be a mere category of thought, because 'the categories of thought [...] –

³²⁹ It should be noted that Deleuze ascribes an important role in the becoming-reactive of humanity to the priest, who is a noble, but who detaches from the interests of the nobility and uses the slave to overthrow them.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 176–77.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

³³² As noted, for Deleuze consciousness is characterised by reactivity, being 'nothing but the symptom of a deeper transformation and of the activities of entirely non-spiritual forces' (*Ibid.*, p. 39).

identity, causality, finality – themselves’ are grounded in negation.³³³ Negation, or becoming-reactive, is thus an embodied condition that underlies all of our conscious thinking and evaluating. I propose that this fundamental reactivity of human consciousness for Deleuze constitutes the starting point of Nietzsche’s ethics, which has, just as with Spinoza, becoming-active (or free/rational) as its aim. The becoming-active produced by thought would correspond to a transition to another corporeal state, through which our will to power is expanded (an active affect), and would amount to an affirmative way of evaluating. I engage with the ethical task of an affirmative evaluation, the becoming-active of thought, in the last section of this chapter. Before we can do so, let us first examine the fiction of free will, which enables the slave revolt in the first place.

For Nietzsche, the idea of ‘an unbiased “subject” with freedom of choice’ is the key conceptual invention of the slaves. As Deleuze puts it, ‘[i]t is thanks to this fiction that reactive forces triumph’.³³⁴ Like the notion of freedom criticised by Spinoza, this idea consists of the assumption that a conscious self, as an entity endowed with the autonomous faculty of thinking, has the ability to directly regulate its own thought and behaviour. This unrestrained conscious faculty is added to the ontology of forces as its transcendent organising principle. It is assumed that this faculty is able, at least to some extent, to control the vital drives composing its body. This conscious agency is fictional precisely because, as Nietzsche argues, ‘[a] quantum of force is just some quantum of drive, will, action, in fact it is nothing but this driving, willing, and acting’.³³⁵ There is, in other words, no separate and autonomous agency that would be exempt from driving, acting and willing (the latter does not belong to conscious will, but to the will to power). Instead, every human action and thought is always articulated within the complex interaction of forces and drives. These interactions of forces are, as we will see, organised by processes that Deleuze understands as ‘culture’.

To examine this interaction of forces devoid of a supervening subject, let us return to the image of Kafka’s hunger artist considered above in the Introduction. According to the hunger artist’s own admission, his fasting is not a consequence of a deliberate (conscious) denial of hunger, but a result of the frustrated relation between his bodily forces, or drives, and the food that is available for their gratification. In this relation,

³³³ *Ibid.*, p. 34. This negative character of identity, causality and finality will be discussed in the next section.

³³⁴ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Essay I, § 13, p. 27; Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 124.

³³⁵ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Essay I, § 13, p. 26.

the realm of the biological body and its drive for sustenance, on the one hand, and the cultural domain which concerns the processing and preparation of food, cannot be meaningfully differentiated. From the perspective of Deleuze's account of Nietzsche, this grotesque instance might be taken as exemplary: it in fact epitomises a situation that is always the case. Since the biological drives that constitute our bodies, be it for nourishment or sexuality, are from the very beginning shaped by the forces of culture, the two domains are always already intertwined. Biological inclinations are, on the one hand, gratified, amplified, or inhibited by the forces of culture. These same forces of culture are, on the other hand, constantly (re)articulated by biological inclinations. This circular influence between biological inclinations and cultural forces will, in the next chapter, be recast by Deleuze and Guattari in terms of molecular desire and molar representation. For now, we have to note that this mutually determining interplay of biological and cultural forces unfolds without the interference of a supposedly 'autonomous' subject.

One can illustrate this last point in fairly stark terms. In our cultural context, standards of beauty ascribe value to slimmer bodily types, which leads to severe diets and eating disorders. In such a situation, the conscious 'decision' to eat or not to eat is a result of the strength of the forces involved. If our drive for sustenance can, amidst other forces that shape the situation (the availability of appetising food, closeness of summer, etc.), overpower our drive to look appealing to others, our will to power will compel us to eat. Conversely, if the latter drive is stronger than the first, the will to power will determine us to abstain from eating. We can also easily imagine a situation in which a person is compelled to eat and consequently feels guilty for doing so. The key point for Deleuze is that all of these imagined scenarios result exclusively from relations between forces which determine the will to power to compel the body to a particular action. The conscious aspect of the self cannot by means of its will alone cancel out any of these drives, nor can it voluntarily will a new one into existence. Instead, the decision 'taken' by the mind is a consequence of the constitution of drives: only a drive can oppose another drive, not conscious 'will'.

Nietzsche offers an exemplary instance of this interaction of forces in *Daybreak* where he discusses possible ways of combating a bodily drive. He begins by sketching out six different methods for doing so, including avoiding opportunities for the gratification of the drive, engendering disgust through its unrestrained gratification and associating its gratification with a painful idea. It is clear that for Nietzsche, bodily drives are shaped by socio-cultural forces that are both psychological (ideas) and physiological

(material practices). Yet, immediately after recapitulating these methods, Nietzsche adds:

[T]hat one desires to combat the vehemence of a drive at all, however, does not stand within our own power; nor does the choice of any particular method; nor does the success or failure of this method. What is clearly the case is that in this entire procedure our intellect is only the blind instrument of another drive which is a rival of the drive whose vehemence is tormenting us, whether it be the drive to restfulness, or the fear of disgrace and other evil consequences, or love. While 'we' believe we are complaining about the vehemence of a drive, at bottom it is one drive which is complaining about another; that is to say: for us to become aware that we are suffering from the vehemence of a drive presupposes the existence of another equally vehement or even more vehement drive, and that a struggle is in prospect in which our intellect is going to have to take sides.³³⁶

Here we can again see that for Nietzsche the 'mind' ('we') cannot freely exert control over this or that bodily compulsion. For humans, the moderation of a drive is firstly and necessarily a matter of cultural practices, but the question as to which practices is a matter which is historically contingent and thus outside of our power. Secondly, the multiplicity of drives constituting us is already predisposed to be attracted to some methods and averse to others. Nietzsche further claims that the successful application of the method depends on our existing constellation of drives, which might not be easy to overpower. Most significantly, the inclination to battle a drive initially requires the opposition of another drive. As noted, my wish to eat less does not come as a consequence of a conscious decision to do so, but is produced by another drive, perhaps the drive to look more attractive, which combats the very drive that seeks gratification in eating more. From Nietzsche's perspective, the 'I' that finally decides to go on a diet is nothing more than an instrument of the dominant drive that takes over consciousness and rules over and subordinates other competing drives. Once again, our conscious thought is not spontaneous and free, but rather a mere effect, or an instrument, of the state of our bodily forces, i.e. drives which are in constant interaction with our cultural environment.

From this perspective, culture should be understood as nothing more than the ordering and ranking of these relations between drives. Indeed, Deleuze defines culture as 'a process of formation of thought through the action of selective forces, a training which brings the whole unconscious of the thinker into play'.³³⁷ These

³³⁶ Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, §109, p. 65.

³³⁷ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 108.

selective forces of culture generate order by promoting and enhancing certain drives and blocking or discouraging the satisfaction of others. In this way they articulate the contours of the social domain and conscious thought alike. Different cultures in different places and at different times promote different hierarchies of drives and thus shape the possibilities for individuals belonging to these cultures, and hence fashion the self. For Nietzsche, morality is an actualisation of the relation of forces, but also a means that culture employs to order these drives. 'Wherever we encounter a morality', he argues, 'we also encounter valuations and an order of rank of human impulses'.³³⁸ Daniel Smith observes that in our current morality, for example, industriousness is ranked higher than sloth, obedience is more desirable than defiance, and chastity is valued over promiscuity.³³⁹ Similarly, we have seen that the masters value themselves as those who 'act, affirm and enjoy', and look down on slaves who are unable to do this.³⁴⁰ According to Deleuze, the reversal of this valuation, which initiates the triumph of reactive forces, should be understood as the beginning of the 'degeneration of culture'.³⁴¹ This degeneration is linked to the pervasiveness of reactive life, i.e. the domination of the drive of *ressentiment* (and other reactive drives) over all other drives.

According to Deleuze's account of Nietzsche, this degeneration of culture commences with slaves mobilising the fiction of the autonomous acting subject, which underlies their morality. Nietzsche explains this fiction in Section 13 of the first essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality*, where he proposes that the men of *ressentiment* 'do not defend any belief more passionately' than this one.³⁴² Since this conceptual device grounds their morality, Nietzsche maintains that is of utmost significance to them. Deleuze refers to the fiction of free will as the fiction of 'a force separated from what it can do' and analyses its construction in terms of three stages.³⁴³ In the first stage, a force is separated into two components: the force itself and its manifestation, or an agent and its action (i.e. what it is capable of doing). Masters are thus conceived as separate from their subjugating activity – the former being seen as the cause and the latter as its effect. The second stage corresponds to the invention of a causal agency, which is given a substantive status. Deleuze proposes that 'force, which has

³³⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), §307, pp. 245–6.

³³⁹ Daniel W. Smith, 'Deleuze and the Question of Desire', p. 180.

³⁴⁰ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 119.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

³⁴² Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Essay I, § 13, p. 26.

³⁴³ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 123.

been divided in this way, is projected into a substrate, into a subject which is free to manifest it or not'.³⁴⁴ The masters are in this way endowed with freedom to express their strength or hold it back, i.e. they are framed as being able to moderate the active drives that compel their behaviour. An action is in this way made dependent on an acting subject, who has the capacity to steer, moderate, or release the composition of forces that constitutes it.

The third moment of this fiction is one of moralisation. Having made the masters responsible for their actions, the slaves present their potentially aggressive activity as freely chosen and condemn them as 'evil'. The last step in the slaves' valuation is establishing themselves as 'good'. This also presupposes the fiction of an acting subject that has the capacity to act or not to act. This step allows the slaves to present their weakness (inferior quantity of force and their fundamental inability to affirm their difference) as a willed act. Slaves, then, present themselves as being praiseworthy for holding back forces that they do not have. Moreover, Deleuze proposes that slaves claim that more 'force is needed to hold back than [...] is needed to act'.³⁴⁵ This allows the slaves to assert their superiority over the masters and establish themselves as the ones who are 'good'. Accordingly, Nietzsche argues, the powerlessness and passivity of the slaves clothes 'itself in the finery of self-denying, quiet, patient virtue, as though the weakness of the weak were itself [...] a voluntary achievement, something wanted, chosen, a *deed*, an *accomplishment*'.³⁴⁶ It is in this way that the slaves reverse the valuation of the masters and institute the hierarchy of the second kind.

Deleuze asserts that this hierarchy is the only one known to us today when 'we [...] only recognise hierarchy back to front'.³⁴⁷ This hierarchy is not driven by affirmation and the resulting feeling of power, but is based on negation, the principle of knowing or *ratio cognoscendi* of the will to power. Hierarchy is, as such, a matter of different systems of negative evaluations, which are enforced by institutions such as the state, the church, morality, etc. We can further explore the logic of this hierarchy by examining a certain misconception of the idea of the will to power.³⁴⁸ According to

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁶ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Essay I, § 13, p. 27.

³⁴⁷ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 123.

³⁴⁸ Deleuze attributes this interpretation of the will to power to Nietzsche's predecessors (from Hobbes to Hegel), but also to Nietzsche's thought as appropriated by Nazi Germany.

this reactive interpretation, the will to power means “to want power”, a conscious desire for social influence. This interpretation sheds light on three different aspects of the reversed hierarchy. Firstly, if the will to power is understood in this way, then in this hierarchy ‘[p]ower is interpreted as the object of representation’.³⁴⁹ This is the idea of superiority formed by the impotent slaves, who falsely ascribe it to the masters. While the latter are instinctively driven to exercise their power, the slaves’ idea of power is to have one’s dominance represented and recognised by others.

Secondly, if power is understood as something represented, this hierarchy is inevitably reliant on a criterion that prescribes whether a specific form of representation is to be recognised as having value or not. Deleuze proposes that

only values which are already current, only accepted values, give criteria of recognition in this way. The will to power, understood as the will to get oneself recognised, is necessarily the will to have the values current in a given society attributed to oneself (power, money, honours, reputation).³⁵⁰

According to Deleuze, power as a matter of the acquisition of assignable values presupposes the existence of values that are already established. It is the rule of the norm. One’s superiority is then measured only against these established values. Finally, if values are attributed according to already existing criteria, the principle of their distribution has to be the struggle to be favourably represented. Yet, Deleuze insists, ‘[o]ne cannot over emphasise the extent to which the notions of struggle, war, rivalry or even comparison are foreign to Nietzsche and to his conception of the will to power’.³⁵¹ Masters do not seek to compete with, overpower or be favourably represented in relation to the slaves, since they are driven by affirmation of difference. The idea of struggle as the competition for established values reflects the perspective of the powerless slave who is incapable of such affirmation. The reversed hierarchy, i.e. the plan of organisation, is thus effectively characterised by the three misunderstandings of will to power. It is based on the representation and recognition of values, which are attributed on the basis of already existing criteria and distributed on the basis on competition.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

iii) The Becoming-Active of Consciousness: Affirmative Evaluation and the Eternal Return

I have shown that that, according to Deleuze, for Nietzsche 'to live is to evaluate' and I have explained that a reactive human history has shaped us to evaluate only from a negative perspective, one that paradoxically denigrates life itself. This reactivity is constitutive of human cognition and self-awareness. It also leads us to see the world as the slaves do. In this section I will elaborate the different forms of negative evaluation which together constitute the project that Nietzsche terms nihilism. The notion of nihilism will be mobilised as it is a term that brings together a variety of discourses and practices (grounded in ideas such as being, truth, and reality) that assign to life the value of *nil*. These discourses and practices, which, according to Deleuze, dominate Western culture, gain their momentum with the uprising of *ressentiment*, which he aligns with the Judaic religion.³⁵² I substantiate Deleuze's account by going back to Nietzsche and argue that nihilism in all its forms can be understood as grounded in the illusion of being, the supposedly fixed and unchanging layer of existence. Furthermore, I suggest that the illusion of being that substantiates nihilism is intrinsically related to, and in fact follows from, the illusion of the free subject.

The rest of this section will focus on examining Nietzsche's ethical project in terms of immanent ethics. From the perspective of the latter, the ethical aim consist of going beyond the constitutive negativity and reactivity of conscious thought to the point where it loses its representational character, and becomes active and affirmative. Freeing thought from the negative, and thus instituting 'a new way of thinking, a new sensibility', is for Deleuze's Nietzsche a matter of 'transmutation' or 'transvaluation'.³⁵³ Since we understand the world through negation, all the values known to us deny the differentiation of life by imposing laws and limitations on it. As a result, transvaluation includes both the destruction of established values and the creation of new values, which are the values of life itself. To account for this transvaluation Deleuze mobilises Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal return, which he interprets anew. Deleuze's complex and highly idiosyncratic re-interpretation of eternal return will be thus examined in relation to becoming-active, which amounts precisely to a way of evaluating that

³⁵² According to Deleuze, Nietzsche observes the seeds of nihilism already with the Greek philosophers, in particular with Socrates who initiates 'the degeneration of philosophy' (Deleuze, 'Nietzsche', p. 69).

³⁵³ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 175.

affirms and appreciates life and its becoming. Put differently, eternal return will be examined as a means of overcoming the illusions of consciousness and its constitutive negativity. It will be shown that, unlike in the case of Spinoza, this ethical overcoming is framed as an unleashing of creativity. The latter results from the dissolution of the reactive forces that constitute us, underlie our conscious thought and bind us to certain responsibilities.

To begin with, we should examine what Deleuze understands as the 'physical' doctrine of eternal return. This doctrine will provide us with a background for considering the negative evaluations that constitute different stages of nihilism in terms of the illusions of being. These nihilist projects establish fictive ontologies of being, which consist of claims regarding the fundamental, homogenous and stable nature of existence. Yet, according to the physical account of eternal return there is no such unchanging being in the world. Deleuze proposes that

the world of the eternal return is a world of differences, an intensive world, which presupposes neither the One nor the Same [...]. The eternal return is itself the only unity of this world, which has none at all except as it comes back; it is the only identity of a world which has no "same" at all except through repetition. Essentially, the unequal, the different is the true rationale for the eternal return. It is because nothing is equal, or the same, that 'it' comes back.³⁵⁴

For Deleuze, eternal return should not be seen as the perpetual recurrence of the same state of forces. He relates this sameness to the ideas of the One or the Same, which for him denote any kind of totalising, fixating or unifying notion. Instead of consisting of the recurring and self-identical cycle of past constellations of forces, the nature of existence is characterised by difference, change and novelty, which over and over again emerge from random encounters between bodies. In fact, for Deleuze, the only identity or unity of this world, i.e. its being, is constituted by the eternal return of difference, i.e. of its becoming. As a result, he proposes that the eternal return as a physical doctrine is simply 'the law of a world without being, without unity, without identity', the disruptive law of a world of ceaseless differentiation.³⁵⁵ According to this doctrine, as aptly summed up by Roffe, '[t]he most comprehensive thing that we can say about being as such is that it is nothing other than the reality of this unbounded movement of change'.³⁵⁶ This is what life on the plane of immanence is like before it

³⁵⁴ Deleuze, 'Conclusions on the Will to Power and Eternal Return', p. 122.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

³⁵⁶ Roffe, 'Deleuze's Nietzsche', p. 76.

gets distorted by the illusions of consciousness, which projects onto it a plan of organisation.

We have established that Deleuze's notion of affirmation concerns precisely the affirmation of becoming, which is nothing but the self-differentiation of an entity. The eternal return as the reality of perpetual becoming is in itself a force of affirmation, which affirms difference and change. Yet, there remains the question of the way of thinking that would be capable of affirming this difference. Deleuze initially addresses this question in the following way:

How does the thought of pure becoming serve as a foundation for eternal return? All we need to do to think this thought is to stop believing in being as distinct from and opposed to becoming or to believe in the being of becoming itself.³⁵⁷

For Deleuze, the thought of pure becoming, where the latter can also be understood, as Roffe suggests, as difference or 'change unbound by any higher law', should firstly discard the idea that beneath the ever-changing flux of forces lies a stable layer of existence.³⁵⁸ It is precisely these ontological claims, which seek to fixate being, that bound, delimit and negate becoming and difference, which for Deleuze amounts to opposing life itself. It is these transcendent organising principles that constitute different ontologies of being, or, to put it in Deleuze's terms, different plans of organisation.

For Deleuze the aim of affirmative thought would thus first of all be to affirm the world of becoming by exposing illusory ontologies of being. These illusory ontologies institute different reactive hierarchies, which provide categorisations of existing entities in terms of value. So far we have discussed the moral hierarchy established by slaves by means of which they pacify the masters. Yet, each stage of Nietzsche's account of nihilism can be understood precisely in terms of instituting a particular ontology of being. Deleuze conceptualises these three stages in terms of negative, reactive and passive nihilism, each of which sets up its own account of a stable and unchanging reality. Negative nihilism is the religious nihilism of Judaism and Christianity, which he lines up with reactive figures of *ressentiment* and bad conscience, respectively. Negative nihilism grants being to the after-world. The divine

³⁵⁷ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 48.

³⁵⁸ Roffe, 'Deleuze's Nietzsche', p. 75.

existence of the latter grounds the morality of compassion and the idea of sin, both of which are for Nietzsche linked to the condemnation of self-differentiating expressions of life.

The reactive stage of nihilism corresponds to the era of humanism, which is initiated by 'the death of God'.³⁵⁹ Deleuze focuses on two main features of reactive nihilism. The first feature is the dominance of the atheistic humanist morality which replaces religion, and is manifested in values such as 'adaptation, evolution, progress, happiness for all and the good of community'.³⁶⁰ The second is the quest for scientific knowledge, which ascribes the highest value to the idea of truth. While the former bases its laws and morality on the democratic claim of everyone being equal, thus potentially inhibiting self-differentiations, the latter sets up the scientific reason to locate objective truth (i.e. that which has being) in the realm beyond our "deceptive" senses. In this way, hidden objectivity is given priority over the ever-changing realm of becoming. Lastly, passive nihilism is a stage of exhausted and disillusioned humanity, where any claim to values superior to life has been abandoned. Yet, Deleuze proposes that this stage establishes the idea of the real as that which has being. Reality here consists of simply what is perceived through the senses, which is taken as self-sufficient. Deleuze proposes that this idea of the real is a 'false positivity' as it only grasps, as he puts it in Spinoza's terms, 'consequences separated from their premises', an expression that Spinoza uses to describe inadequate knowledge of effects.³⁶¹ Since such perception of reality has been produced by a thoroughly reactive culture, its acceptance amounts to promulgating the *status quo*.

Deleuze makes it clear that by establishing what *is*, these ontologies of being produce the effects of arresting becoming and denying life. Like the notions of the divine, the good and evil, he claims,

[b]eing, the true and the real are the avatars of nihilism. Ways of mutilating life, of denying it, of making it reactive by submitting it to the labour of the negative, *by loading it with the heaviest burdens*.³⁶²

For Deleuze, the idea of being, however it is conceived, be it as the divine, the true or the real, serves the powers of negation as it imposes limitations on life, and ends

³⁵⁹ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p.152.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 184.

up separating it from what it can do. Yet, it should be said that, for Nietzsche, the ontology of being also manifests itself in the fiction of a free subject that we analysed above. In instituting this fiction, the slaves attribute to the acting subject the status of a fundamental and unchanging reality. In fact, by going back to Nietzsche's own texts, it can be shown that he sees the idea of being itself as derived from the idea of an autonomous subject, and thus secondary to it. Analysis of this conceptual relation will allow us to corroborate our understanding of the plan of organisation that Deleuze constructs through Nietzsche.

Nietzsche already establishes a connection between the notions of ego and being in section 13 of the first essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality*. There he suggests that slaves – by falsely distinguishing between the agent and activity – ascribe to the agent the status of being. Be it the lightning and its flash (as in Nietzsche's example in GM, I, 13), or the human subject and its action, the separation between the two establishes the former as an effect, a passing and insubstantial event, and the latter as its cause, the acting entity that remains self-same and unchanging. But 'there is no "being" behind the deed', claims Nietzsche, "'the doer" is invented as an after-thought, – the doing is everything'.³⁶³ As established by the physical moment of eternal return, there is no fundamental causal substance beneath the transitory encounters of bodies and forces. All that endures is becoming and the eternal return of difference, or, to put it in Nietzsche's terms, nothing but driving, willing, and acting.

Nietzsche further develops his claim that the idea of being is an elaboration of the notion of an acting subject endowed with autonomous agency in 'Four Great Errors' section of *The Twilight of the Idols*. There Nietzsche proposes that

[t]he oldest and most long-standing psychology was at work here, and this is all it did: for it, all happening was a doing, all doing the effect of a willing; for it, the world became a multitude of doers, a doer (a 'subject') was imputed to everything that happened. Human beings projected their three 'internal facts', the objects of their firmest belief—will, mind, 'I'—beyond themselves; they originally derived the concept of being from the concept 'I', they posited 'things' as existing in their own image, according to their concept of the 'I' as a cause.³⁶⁴

³⁶³ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Essay I, § 13, p. 26.

³⁶⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols, or, How to Philosophise with the Hammer*, trans. Richard Polt (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 'The Four Great Errors', § 3, p. 32.

In his view, the idea of being is an invention which is the consequence of projecting the fiction of a subject as a causal agent (which for him consists of 'three internal facts') onto the rest of existence, pushing the idea of being as its origin. In this way, the idea of a thing, the most immediate correlate of the idea of being, was established as the cause of all events and happenings. The latter, which amount to the world of becoming, were considered as merely an ephemeral effect, which disappears in passing. This way of thinking first of all sees the world as composed of a multiplicity of individuated things and subjects, which constitute the fundamental and stable layer of reality.

Before elucidating such an ontology of being with an example, I will Nietzsche's three 'internal facts', will, mind, and 'I', which correspond to three different aspects of the illusive causal agency of human cognition. This will allow me to situate the perspective of illusions of consciousness within Deleuze's account of Nietzsche. Additionally, it will enable me to differentiate between the three forms of mental causality, which have been thus far taken as more or less synonymous. Firstly, Nietzsche understands the conscious will as the faculty that initiates actions and exerts control over our drives. Secondly, the mind or consciousness is for him the site of the causal antecedents on an action (motives, intentions, etc.), i.e. mental representations that provide grounds our decisions. Finally, he sees the 'I' as what causes our thought, its origin. Yet, Nietzsche makes it clear that all of these mental causes are only fictive, as '[t]he "internal world" is full of optical illusions and mirages'³⁶⁵ It is precisely these mirages that Deleuze and Guattari are referring to when discussing the illusions that arise on the plane of immanence in *What is Philosophy?*.

In perfect correspondence with Spinoza, Nietzsche maintains that the illusory causal agency of will, mind, and 'I' arises from confusing effects, i.e. ideas and evaluations produced as actualisations of the will to power, for causes, i.e., autonomously formed thoughts that provide the basis for future actions.³⁶⁶ To substantiate this connection with Deleuze's account of Spinoza, and prepare grounds for my consideration of *Anti-Oedipus*, let us consider this confusion of causes and effects that constitute the illusion of consciousness. Nietzsche proposes that

Most of our general feelings—every sort of inhibition, pressure, tension, explosion in the play and counterplay of the organs [...]—arouse our drive to

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁶ See *Ibid.*, § 1, p. 30.

find causes: we want to have a *reason* for feeling that we're in *such and such* a state—a bad state or a good state. It's never enough for us just to determine the mere fact *that* we find ourselves in such and such a state: we admit this fact—become *conscious* of it—only *if* we've given it some kind of motivation.³⁶⁷

For Nietzsche, human beings are characterised by a strong compulsion to find an explanation for the state they find themselves in. He goes so far as to propose that we consciously acknowledge a feeling only insofar as we have already found a causal explanation for it. We can recall Deleuze's example of a child who, after being knocked over by a wave, interprets the event as the wave 'fighting' him as if the wave was motivated to knock him over. From Spinoza's perspective, the hate that this child might eventually develop (repeatedly) for the sea is nothing but the sad affect coupled with the idea of the sea as its cause. Nietzsche sees this drive for assignation meaning and causality as an innately human trait.

Like Spinoza, who sees images as produced by the associative chain of mnemonic traces, Nietzsche links the productions of causal explanations to memory. He proposes that

Memory, which comes into play in such cases without our knowing it, calls up earlier states of the same kind, and the causal interpretations that are rooted in them—but *not* their causation. Of course, memory also calls up the belief that the representations, the accompanying occurrences in consciousness, were the causes. In this way there arises a *habituation* to a particular interpretation of causes that actually inhibits and even excludes an *investigation* of the cause.³⁶⁸

By referring the current excitation to previous traces, Nietzsche proposes that its causal explanation springs from the earlier excitations that are associated with it. It is in this way that the joy and sadness, pleasure and displeasure, are explained by the causal account, which emerges only as the effect of the encounter. To put it in Nietzsche's terms, '[t]he representations *generated* by a certain state of affairs were misunderstood as the cause of this state of affairs'.³⁶⁹ Unlike Spinoza, who assumes that we can eventually disentangle the past and present images and form common notions, Nietzsche maintains that this referential functioning of our minds precludes us from ever effectively grasping causality that produces the state in which we finds

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, § 3, p. 32.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, § 4, p. 33.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

ourselves.³⁷⁰ The habituation to a particular explanation can be likened to formation of Spinoza's universal notions, which single out the trait of a group of entities or encounters that has affected us the most, and use it as normative models.

Nietzsche suggests this confusion between our feelings, be they joyful or sad, which we become aware with only together with their causal explanation, is exploited by morality and religion. Yet, the same could be said for any other transcendent principle that structures the plan of organisation, and thus assigns meaning to immanently produced affects. With regards to religion, Nietzsche proposes that the causal explanation they offer for unpleasurable feelings is linked to punishment for something we should not have done ('physical discomfort gets saddled with the feeling of "sin"') or activity of our 'evil' enemies. Conversely, our pleasurable states are explained by our good deeds, our trust in God, our 'faith, love, hope—the Christian virtues', etc.³⁷¹ Nietzsche proposes that morality or religion (or any other discourse of being) is established as customary when 'one kind of cause-positing becomes more and more prevalent, concentrates itself into a system, and finally comes to the fore as *dominant*'.³⁷² Once all other causes and explanations are excluded, the Christian, for example, associates everything with the idea of sin in the same way as everything triggers the entrepreneur to think of business. Nietzsche thus maintains we are 'infected' with morality only insofar as 'a state of consciousness is confused with the causation of this state', i.e. we become conscious of a state only in association with the causal explanation offered by morality.

³⁷⁰ Nietzsche offers a compelling analysis of our mind's tendency to resort to explaining things in terms of previous causal explanations (one which is once again eerily similar to Spinoza's). For him, 'the drive to find causes is conditioned and aroused by the feeling of fear. [As a result,] we *single out* and *favor* a certain type of explanation, the type that eliminates the feeling of the alien, new, and unexperienced, as fast and as often as possible—the most *customary* explanations'. (*Ibid.*, § 5, p. 34.) Another point that I would like to draw attention to here is Nietzsche's claim about the impossibility of grasping the actual causes of our affects. This inability to formulate knowledge about our unconscious disposition in fact comes up frequently in his work. In *Daybreak*, for example, Nietzsche suggests that '[h]owever far a man may go in self-knowledge, nothing however can be more incomplete than his image of the totality of drives which constitute his being. He can scarcely name the cruder ones: their number and strength, their ebb and flood, their play and counterplay among one another—and above all the laws of their nutriment—remain unknown to him.' (D 119) This impossibility of knowing the causes of our affects is, of course, in stark contrast with Spinoza, whose ethics consists of grasping laws that realise the affective relations with our environment. While schizoanalysis, as we well see, is less certain about the possibility of such knowledge, it still assumes the ability to experiment with our unconscious disposition and thus alter it.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, § 6, p. 35.

³⁷² *Ibid.*

Having established this illusion of consciousness as a precondition for illusions of being, let me now return to my discussion of the ontology of being, and elucidate it with an example. The latter can be found in Nietzsche's conceptualisation of the master-slave relation. As noted, what characterises the slave mentality is seeing the world in terms of ontology of being. From the slave's negative perspective, both slave and master alike are endowed with free agency which gives them the capacity to either express their power or not. This is akin to the *moral* vision of the world discussed in the previous chapter, where the essence of a human being is his or her freedom. This distribution of essences that allocate being proceeds in the same way with identifying species, but also genders, races, etc. Nietzsche's idea of a thing thus corresponds to that of a general category, which prescribes what an entity *is* and in this way 'legislates' over it.³⁷³ Being is distributed based on the requirements of representation, which sets its limits and barriers.

In addition to seeing human beings as autonomous subjects, the slaves' evaluation ascribes *properties* to these subjects. One is seen as 'good' if one chooses to withhold one's action, and 'bad' or 'evil' if one does not do so. Again in correspondence with my discussion of morality in Spinoza, slave morality lays down a view of existence which is divided into individuated entities with clearly prescribed essences, while values ensure that these essence are realised. In this way, the ontology of being also provides the basis for judgment. In other words, in addition to determining what things *are*, this ontology also establishes what *kind of* things they are. Similarly to the hierarchical distinction between the free and determined, the slavish evaluation of 'good' and 'bad' establishes a difference, which delimits the properties or representational spaces assigned to slaves and masters respectively. The ontology of subjects with properties is in this way given a moral dimension. This ontology institutes, as proposed by Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition*, 'a hierarchy which measures beings according to their limits, and according to their degree of proximity or distance from a principle'.³⁷⁴ Like with Spinoza, Deleuze sees the moralisation of

³⁷³ It is Kant who proposes that ideas *legislate* over material objects. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy* Deleuze frequently refers and alludes to this Kantian legislation of ideas and values, which order the material realm. In *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, Deleuze explains that 'the understanding *legislates* over phenomena, but only insofar as they are considered in the form of their intuition; its legislative acts (categories) therefore constitute general laws, and are exercised on nature as object of possible experience' (Gilles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of Faculties*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson, Barbara Habberjam (London: The Athlone Press, 1983), p. 62).

³⁷⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: The Athlone Press, 2001), p. 37.

existence in Nietzsche as a matter of establishing a hierarchical representation of subjects and things according to the extent to which they actualise their being.

Another well-known example of such *moral* way of thinking can be found in Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*. There Foucault analyses the way in which the category of a 'homosexual' was constructed by 19th century medical institutions. While before then same-sex intercourse was considered merely a forbidden act, 'a temporary aberration', the medical and psychiatric apparatus of the 19th century established homosexuality as something that constituted the deep essence of an individual, a person's being:³⁷⁵

The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology. Nothing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality. It was everywhere present in him: at the root of all his actions because it was their insidious and indefinitely active principle; written immodestly on his face and body because it was a secret that always gave itself away. It was consubstantial with him, less as a habitual sin than as a singular nature.³⁷⁶

For Foucault, 19th-century medicine established homosexuality as the essential trait of a medically labeled person. The validity of this claim is supported by the scientific authority granted to it by society. Since it includes allocation of essence and value, the institution of the category of the homosexual can be considered as a moral evaluation. This moral evaluation is not conducted in terms of good and evil, but in terms of the normal and the abnormal. As in the case of the 'evil' masters infected by slave morality, the medical practices and discourses that organise encounters of 'abnormal' homosexual bodies impose limitations on their vital powers, suspend their becoming, and separate them from what they can do.

From negative or 'moral' evaluation, which is, as seen, inevitably linked to the illusions of consciousness, let me now turn to the affirmative way of thinking and evaluating. To examine the latter, we can consider how the world is seen by the noble masters before the triumph of slaves. This will help us develop an understanding of the ontology of becoming, a vision of existence in tune with the eternal return of

³⁷⁵ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1980) p. 43.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 42–3.

difference. This realm of becoming should be, as noted, understood as the plane of immanence that Deleuze constructs *via* his reading of Nietzsche. Firstly, Nietzsche claims that ‘all noble morality grows out of a triumphant saying “yes” to itself’.³⁷⁷ Masters exercise their power of acting in an act of joyful self-affirmation, which is their measure of value. They do not posit neutral subjects, whose properties are delimited on the basis of them exercising or withholding their power. From the perspective of the ontology of becoming, Deleuze proposes, the notion of a

limit no longer refers to what maintains a thing under a law, nor what delimits or separates it from other things. On the contrary, it refers to that on the basis of which it is deployed or deploys all its power; hubris ceases to be simply condemnable and *the smallest becomes equivalent to the largest* once it is not separated from what it can do.³⁷⁸

Instead of autonomous subjects judged and categorised as good or bad depending on their actions, we could say that masters see themselves as well as the slaves purely in terms of unrestrained forces. ‘There are not static points from which movement originates’, as Henry Sommers Hall aptly puts it, ‘but rather just movement itself’.³⁷⁹ The forces in motion are here not negated and separated from what they can do. Instead, these forces are taken to the limits of their capacities, which amounts to a definition of activity that Deleuze offers elsewhere in passing.³⁸⁰ Deleuze proposes that the hubris of the masters is no longer condemnable as it is not based on a suspension of power that they do not actually possess, but rather on its actual exercise. He adds that on this plane of becoming, forces are equal insofar as they are not separated from their action.

In addition to seeing this as a physical doctrine, Deleuze conceptualises eternal return as a selective doctrine.³⁸¹ This aspect of eternal return is of central importance for the investigation of immanent ethics. The selection performed by eternal return is, for Deleuze, double: eternal return functions as a principle for selective thought and selective ontology. The significance of eternal return as a selective thought for

³⁷⁷ Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, Essay I, § 10, p. 20.

³⁷⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 37.

³⁷⁹ Henry Sommers-Hall, *Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: An Edinburgh Philosophical Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 42.

³⁸⁰ See Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 59.

³⁸¹ It should be noted that several readers of Nietzsche take issue with this reading of eternal return. For exemplary critiques of the idea of eternal return as a selective doctrine see Lawrence Hathab's *Nietzsche's Life Sentence: Coming to Terms with Eternal Recurrence* (London: Routledge, 2005), and Paul S. Loeb's *The Death of Zarathustra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Deleuze lies precisely in its function as the means of transition between thinking in terms of ontology of being and ontology of becoming. In other words, eternal return as a selective thought allows us to expose the illusions of being that underlie the negative way of thinking (and operate through notions like identity, causality, and finality), and in so doing pave the way for an affirmative way of thinking. The principle of selection in thought, a selection that is for Deleuze a matter of ethics, is found in the test of eternal return. Nietzsche's conception of eternal return as a test can be found in *The Gay Science*:

What if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: "This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence—even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!" Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: "You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine".³⁸²

With eternal return, Deleuze argues, Nietzsche gives us a practical rule that is 'as rigorous as the Kantian one', the categorical imperative.³⁸³ Insofar as eternal return is related to life as we have lived it, that is, the entirety of past encounters that constitute our life, it is a matter of what Nietzsche refers to as *amor fati*: 'the formula for greatness in a human being'.³⁸⁴ To be able to bear the thought of reliving our past in every detail infinite times over, means being able to wholly accept our fate and even love it. According to Sommers-Hall, '[o]nly that which is pure affirmation, or which is not separated from what it can do, can truly will the repetition of everything that makes it what it is'.³⁸⁵ The affirmative masters, whose becoming is still unbound by any higher laws or values, do not distinguish between an acting subject and its actions, and thus allow no difference between what was done and what could be done. As a result, they can wholly accept their past and will its eternal repetition. The noble masters as an exemplar of pure affirmation thus do not succumb to the illusion of the ego as having being, but see the world solely in terms of acting and becoming.

³⁸² Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, § 341, pp. 273–4.

³⁸³ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 68.

³⁸⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo: How to Become What You Are*, trans. Duncan Large (Oxford: Oxford University Press), II § 10, p. 35.

³⁸⁵ Somers-Hall, *Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, p. 43.

Conversely, the negative way of thinking that characterises slaves posits a subjective agency which results in reactive attitudes to their past. We have to note that neither *ressentiment* (i.e. the accusation of others) nor bad conscience (i.e. the blaming of oneself) are possible (at least, in their conventionally understood senses) unless we assume the existence of an autonomous ego, which grounds the slavish mode of valuation. Since the slaves posit that they and others could have acted differently, and/or have not fully deployed their power, they cannot bear the thought of eternally reliving their lives and everything that makes them what they are. If we understand eternal return as a recurrence of the same (here, the neutral subject, the very centre of identity), ‘we replace Nietzsche’s thought with childish hypotheses’, claims Deleuze.³⁸⁶ Those who blame and accuse themselves and others for their past actions, see the world in terms of the ontology of being, in this case, ‘good’ and ‘bad’ acting subjects, which is a way of thinking that does not withstand the test of eternal return. This test thus authenticates an affirmative way of thinking and exposes the illusions of being.

Deleuze argues that eternal return is an experiment that allows us to evaluate the desires that give rise to our future actions. ‘[W]hatever you will, will it in such a way that you also will its eternal return’, he suggests, clearly emulating the formulation of the categorical imperative.³⁸⁷ According to Deleuze, our desired states and also our actions should be subjected to the ordeal of eternal return. In his view

[o]ne thing in the world disheartens Nietzsche: the little compensations, the little pleasures, the little joys and everything that one is granted once, only once. Everything that can be done again the next day only on the condition that it be said the day before: tomorrow I will give it up – the whole ceremonial of the obsessed.³⁸⁸

Deleuze maintains that the thought of eternal return allows us to either eliminate these half-desires or, conversely, transmute them. According to him, each half-willed action – one that we wish to do once and never again, that manages to endure the test of eternal return – is no longer the same desire but would take on a different form. ‘Laziness, stupidity, baseness, cowardice or spitefulness that would will its own eternal return’, asserts Deleuze, ‘would no longer be the same laziness, stupidity

³⁸⁶ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. xvii.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

etc.³⁸⁹ What returns are thus not the same states. Instead, these states are intensified and return in yet unknown 'extreme forms that do not preexist the ordeal of eternal return'.³⁹⁰ Indeed, for Deleuze the test of eternal return is more a matter of *creation* than selection. It serves as a means of intensifying the reactive states of thought and taking them to their extreme forms. Deleuze supposes that in their extreme forms these states lose the reactive character, as a force is no longer separated from what it can do but is taken to its limits. In this way, the selective thought of eternal return should be able to situate us within the ontology of becoming.

Deleuze sees the transmutation effected by the ordeal of eternal return as an 'active destruction'.³⁹¹ What is destroyed, or negated, for him, is precisely the reactive forces that constitute our bodies and underlie our current evaluations. According to Deleuze, in the test of eternal return the negative will to power is turned against reactive forces and in the act of suppressing them becomes affirmative. He proposes that thus '[t]he negative becomes the thunderbolt and lightning of a power of affirming'.³⁹² Like aggression in the case of masters, this destructive negativity is merely a consequence of affirmation. As affirmation is the primary form of will to power (i.e. its *ratio essendi*), one that is yet unknown to us, this conversion is reflected in the creation of new values. Up to the moment of conversion we had recourse only to the established set of values, rules, laws and general concepts that render a certain way of acting desirable, or, conversely, condemn it.

Subjecting this either positively or negatively valued action to a test of eternal return brings about its transvaluation. Being able to will the eternal repetition of, for example, our unwillingness to work (which is looked down upon in our current culture that values industriousness) would intensify and transform this inclination and evaluate it anew. The known value based on negation and instituted by the selective process of culture, is thus shattered and replaced with the yet unknown one, which is grounded in affirmation. It is precisely here that the new way of thinking and evaluating that Deleuze calls for is produced. This affirmative thought is unburdened from established values, laws, and categories, which impose limitations on life and in turn separate it from what it can do. In addition to disavowing these established patterns, the test of eternal return allows the creation of a new value or principle, one that is not general

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

³⁹⁰ Deleuze, 'Conclusions on the Will to Power and Eternal Return', p. 125.

³⁹¹ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 174.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 175.

(“the Same or the One”) but tailored to our particular situation. It is in this way that our thought is no longer dictated by our bodily forces – ones that were articulated by the reactive process of culture – but breaks free and becomes active.

According to Deleuze, eternal return as a selection of thought is also linked to a selection of being. While selective thought eliminates half-desires in thought, selective ontology is supposed to eradicate half-powers in being. Deleuze adds that the latter is a question of ‘the eternal return making something come into being which cannot do so without changing nature’.³⁹³ To explain this transformation in being we have to keep in mind that for Deleuze it is only becoming that has being. Yet, and this is of key importance, being is not characteristic of every form of becoming. Deleuze asserts that the ‘eternal return teaches us that becoming-reactive has no being. Indeed, it also teaches us of the existence of a becoming-active’.³⁹⁴ As pointed out by Bogue, Deleuze clarifies this claim in *Difference and Repetition*, where he suggests that

[o]nly extreme forms return – those which [...] go to the end of their power, transforming themselves and passing one into another. Only that which is extreme returns, that which is excessive, which passes into the other and becomes identical [with the other].³⁹⁵

Deleuze here seems to suggest that it is the active forces that are the ones capable of self-differentiation and metamorphosis. By going to the limits of what they can do, active forces not only subjugate and impose forms on reactive forces, but go also beyond all constraints, including those of their own identity. In this way, these forces transform themselves and, in this way, “become other”. Unlike the active forces, which differ from themselves and have no other being than this becoming, reactive forces have no true being at all. Every ontology of being established by reactive forces is eventually exposed as illusory by the physical law of eternal return, the recurrent change that erodes all organised ensembles of bodies and subverts every hierarchy. Eternal return as a physical doctrine, sums up Deleuze, ‘affirms the being of becoming’, but as selective ontology ‘it affirms this being of becoming as the “self-affirming” of becoming-active’.³⁹⁶ By means of their affirmative self-transformation,

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

³⁹⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 41, quoted in Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari*, p. 31.

³⁹⁶ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 72.

active forces partake in the ever-changing world of becoming, which is the only one that has being.

For Deleuze, it is the selection of thought that has the capacity to produce this selection of being. Like the production of common notions in Spinoza, the ordeal of eternal return is, according to him, expected to account for a transformation that does not concern merely conscious thought but is in fact ontological. This is an affective change: it is the realisation of one's capacity to be affected in a different way and thus produces what Deleuze refers to as 'a different way of feeling: another sensibility'.³⁹⁷ The consequences of this change in one's mode of existence are such that when one is affected by the forces related to those involved in the transmutation, the will to power responds in a different manner. Deleuze seems to suggest that the response would in this case involve the return of difference. Put differently, the instinctive response would be determined not by negation but by affirmation and would thus entail enjoyment and the play of its own difference. As it brings back the affect of joy, such coming anew of difference corresponds to the contagiousness of common notions in Spinoza.³⁹⁸

Finally, we can consider the active self-destruction resulting from ethical and ontological selection from the perspective of the dissolution of a subject. Deleuze proposes that in Nietzsche

there is a kind of dissolution of the self. The reaction against oppressive structures is no longer done, for him, in the name of a "self" or an "I." On the contrary, it is as though the "self" and the "I" were accomplices of those structures.³⁹⁹

As I have explained, the contents of our conscious thought are for Deleuze produced by the state of our drives, which constitute the actual self ('the self which is not itself conscious', as he put it above).⁴⁰⁰ This unconscious self should thus be differentiated from the illusory self as an autonomous thinking entity, which is the self that Deleuze puts in parenthesis. The unconscious self is constituted by drives assembled by the

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

³⁹⁸ This movement from the becoming active of thought back to the sensibility, wherein the latter (first synthesis) is transformed as a result of the former (third synthesis), can be aligned with what Kant understands as 'schematism', the co-optation of the first synthesis by the third one.

³⁹⁹ Deleuze, 'Conclusions on the Will to Power and Eternal Return', p. 123.

⁴⁰⁰ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 39.

processes of reactive culture, which orders them so that we instinctively adopt the established forms of valuation and the responsibilities that come with it. It is precisely these reactive forces that constitute the self as an oppressive structure, one that underlies our responsibilities, which should be, according to Deleuze, dissolved. The idea of the self as an autonomous entity (the “self”) is itself an accomplice in shaping these structures as it effectively partakes in the co-optation of drives. The notion of responsibility itself, one that is intrinsically linked to the accusations issued by *ressentiment* and bad conscience, is in fact fully dependent on the fiction of an acting subject.

Yet, as Deleuze argues at length, ‘[t]o affirm is not to take responsibility for, to take on the burden of what is, but to release, to set free what lives’.⁴⁰¹ Instead of assuming responsibilities distributed by different ontologies of being, affirmation consists of dissolving the libidinal structures that ground these responsibilities. According to Deleuze, the test of eternal return should be able to actively transfigure these oppressive structures and allow us to shake off our feeling of responsibility to these ontologies. In doing so, it unshackles the vital energy, which can now be re-invested. Deleuze further proposes that

[t]o affirm is to unburden: not to load life with the weight of higher values, but to create new values which are those of life, which make life light and active. There is creation, properly speaking, only insofar as we make use of excess in order to invent new forms of life rather than separating life from what it can do.⁴⁰²

The ordeal of eternal return destroys the reactive in us and in this way generates an excess of energy that leads to the creation of new values. This re-evaluation should for Deleuze take the perspective of affirmation. Such a re-evaluation might concern our responsibility to meet up with a colleague we find somewhat unpleasant, or other more political obligations of ours, and could result in a variety of new attitudes. It is precisely these yet unknown forms of life that Deleuze’s rendition of Nietzsche encourages us to explore.

Having thus outlined Deleuze’s account of Nietzsche’s ethics of immanence, I will, before moving on to my final chapter, stop to review the trajectory of its core elements. By examining the great Spinoza-Nietzsche equation, I have established the

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

conceptual core shared by Deleuze's rendition of these thinkers. In addition to the plane of immanence, the intensive organising principle that we find in the degree of power (Spinoza) or the will to power (Nietzsche), this equation involves the concept of affect (as an intensive variation), that of the capacity to be affected and the conceptualisation of the relation between intensive power and extended bodies. I have shown that Deleuze already works out all of these notions in his reading of Spinoza. The same can be said for the illusions of free will and value, which re-appear, and are to some degree substantiated in terms of their status as illusions, in Nietzsche. While the conceptual structure surrounding the notion of affect remains unchanged in *Anti-Oedipus*, these illusions of consciousness (while still being implied) take a back seat to the conceptualisation of the productive unconscious.

A significant element that Deleuze develops (or at least indicates) through his engagement with Nietzsche is the critique of material effects of representation. We have seen that Deleuze already conceptualises a critique of representation in his account of Spinoza. There he proposes that our mental representations (i.e. images) are produced passively and immanently, and that they do not explain anything, but instead need to be explained (in terms of their production). This critique of representation (which amounts to the critique of the illusion of value) is extended in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, where it takes the form of different reactive hierarchies of representation, which organise the world in a particular way. Yet, in his work on Nietzsche Deleuze is also able to draw attention to the effects that the ideas claim on the bodily sphere of the unconscious. This was not possible in his work on Spinoza as Spinoza's doctrine of parallelism excludes any causal interaction between the mental and the material sphere. In his account of Nietzsche, Deleuze is thus able to suggest that by imposing limitations on the vital powers that constitute us, representation effectively degenerates these powers and renders them reactive. This relation between biological drives and cultural forces will be expanded on in *Anti-Oedipus*, where it is elaborated in terms of the distinction between the molecular and the molar.

The most drastic shift that occurs between Deleuze's readings of Spinoza and Nietzsche, as anticipated, concerns the aim of an ethics of immanence. At the core of the immanent ethics that Deleuze constructs through Nietzsche, is the unleashing of creativity that is innate to our vital powers, which is in a sense the exact opposite of the ethical imperative that he constructs via Spinoza. If the ethical aim that Deleuze puts forward via the latter focuses on grasping the unchanging laws that structure our

existence, the aim that is articulated through the former consists of going to the limits of our capacities and thus becoming other. This becoming-other corresponds precisely to transformation and change, which is the only thing that, within the coordinates of Deleuze's ontological account of Nietzsche, has being. This shift in focus from eternal necessity to creative self-differentiation paves way for the immanent ethics that Deleuze and Guattari put forward in *Anti-Oedipus*, which is based around the notion of production.

As we have seen, in Deleuze's *Nietzsche and Philosophy* this creative transformation is related to the dissolution of the unconscious self, a theme which emerged only toward the end of this chapter, but which will take central stage in *Anti-Oedipus*. Instead of assuming responsibilities and adhering to the established values distributed by different plans of organisation, Deleuze draws on Nietzsche to suggest that the illusions of consciousness should be overcome through the activation, or rather the active destruction, of the unconscious. This ethical re-structuring of one's unconscious disposition is, as noted, found in Spinoza as well, where its aim is the alignment with the laws of reason. The practical aim of this attunement is to stabilise one's affects and thus come into possession of one's power of acting. In Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche this rearticulation takes on a different inflection as it is related to undoing the oppressive unconscious formations effected by the reactive forces of culture. The re-organisation of the unconscious is in turn reflected in the re-organisation of the normalised subjectivity, which is thus exposed as anything but autonomous. It is precisely this thread of increasing the creative powers of the unconscious by undoing the effects of normalisation that will constitute the core concern of the ethics of immanence worked out by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*. By expanding on the historical analysis of culture that Deleuze outlines through Nietzsche, *Anti-Oedipus* offers a highly innovative account of the cultural effects of capitalism, and thus situates this ethical imperative within the sphere of modern-day existence.

Chapter 3 – Schizoanalysis: Dismantling Oedipal Consciousness

To establish parallels between the immanent ethics I just outlined through Deleuze's Nietzsche, and Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, one does indeed not have to look further than its title. For Deleuze and Guattari, the idea of Oedipus corresponds to an oppressive structure in the unconscious which underlies and organises consciousness. As indicated above, they advocate that this unconscious formation should be, just as Nietzsche suggests, dissolved, or at least restructured. This, in brief, is the aim of immanent ethics that we can find in *Anti-Oedipus*. Yet, just like in the case of Deleuze's account of Nietzsche and Spinoza, this ethical aim comes as a pinnacle of a very elaborate conceptual system. In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari develop a complex and layered theory that conceptualises the articulation of the unconscious by social forces. Their theory draws on a wide variety of philosophical and literary sources, among which Spinoza and especially Nietzsche are among the most prominent ones. In fact, Deleuze and Guattari see the notion at the core of their idea of the unconscious, that of desiring-production (or simply desire), as equivalent to Nietzsche's conception of will to power.⁴⁰³ In correspondence with the latter, desiring-production (the central ontological principle of *Anti-Oedipus*) is held to be an unthinking vital process that blindly strives to reproduce itself.⁴⁰⁴

In an interview in *Negotiations*, Deleuze adds a Spinozist twist to this Nietzschean conception of unconscious. He proposes that *Anti-Oedipus* is about 'the univocity of the real, a sort of Spinozism of the unconscious'.⁴⁰⁵ We have seen that for Spinoza being is univocal in the sense that it is an unfolding of one and the same substance (i.e. intensive self-actualising power) which is the immanent cause of all that exists. According to Deleuze, the main aim of *Anti-Oedipus* is to conceptualise the *unconscious* as the immanent force that exists and acts everywhere in the same way. In this chapter I explore the illusions of consciousness, that of free will and that of value, from the perspective of this univocity of unconscious desire. It will be shown that immanent ethics, once again, consists of overcoming these illusions and finding

⁴⁰³ This equivalence remains implicit throughout *Anti-Oedipus*, but is made explicit by Deleuze in his essay 'Psychoanalysis and Desire' (in *Deleuze Reader*, ed. Constantine V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 105–114 (p. 114).)

⁴⁰⁴ It should thus be noted that Deleuze and Guattari's notion of desire should not be confused with that of Spinoza. In Spinoza, desire is an inclination that springs out of determination of a conative drive, and is coupled with the consciousness of this inclination, whereas desire in Deleuze and Guattari is this self-producing unconscious process.

⁴⁰⁵ Deleuze, 'On Philosophy', p. 144.

ways to activate the unconscious desire. In *Anti-Oedipus* this self-differentiating, or better put, self-producing, desiring process also goes by the name of schizophrenia, or, more precisely, 'schizophrenia as a process'.⁴⁰⁶ Schizophrenia in fact is one of the two concepts that feature in the common subtitle of *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, the other major work that Deleuze and Guattari co-authored. The other concept that links these two volumes together is that of capitalism. Unlike with Spinoza and Nietzsche, *Anti-Oedipus* thus will allow to contextualise immanent ethics within the coordinates of capitalist social formation.

To locate the illusions of consciousness developed in Deleuze's accounts of Spinoza and Nietzsche within *Anti-Oedipus*, I begin by outlining Deleuze and Guattari's conception of unconscious processes that are for them constitutive of consciousness. The first section of this chapter examines how, according to them, schizophrenia is produced by means of the three syntheses of desire. These syntheses of the unconscious precede and articulate our conscious thoughts, decisions and intentions, which emerge only as an after-effect of desiring-production. Deleuze and Guattari maintain that a stable and normalised (or as they term it 'Oedipal') subjectivity can be constituted only as a result of the repression of desiring-production. This repression is executed in accordance with the form of social formation into which desire is inserted. To account for the difference between schizophrenia as the production of desire and the oppressive mechanism through which social organisations repress desire, Deleuze and Guattari put forward two different sets of criteria according to which the three syntheses of the unconscious are put to use.

They differentiate between the 'immanent' criteria, which are aligned with the schizophrenic functioning of the unconscious and correspond to the 'legitimate' use of its syntheses, and the 'transcendent' criteria, which put these syntheses to 'illegitimate' use by relating them 'instead to a hypothetical meaning and re-establish[ing] a kind of transcendence'.⁴⁰⁷ This imposition of meaning onto ceaselessly self-differentiating desire institutes what was in the previous chapter referred to as an ontology of being, which inevitably establishes its own hierarchy of value.⁴⁰⁸ In what follows I initially focus on the immanent uses of the syntheses of desire, uses which are productive of schizophrenia. I argue that from the perspective

⁴⁰⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 136.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁴⁰⁸ See p. 105 and p. 93 of this thesis.

of schizophrenia understood as a process, everything is of equal value insofar as it contributes to the production of desire. To the extent that it remains unrestrained by hierarchical arrangements, desiring-production does not discriminate in relation to what it produces. Finally, by elaborating the forces of schizophrenia and paranoia, and the corresponding notions of the molecular and the molar, I establish the basic pillars of Deleuze and Guattari's model of the unconscious, and thus lay down the conceptual basis for the rest of this chapter.

My second section will unpack the illegitimate ('transcendent') uses of the syntheses of desire, which amount to the repression of desire. By taking Deleuze and Guattari's critique of psychoanalysis as an example, I will explain how desiring-production is disfigured by being recoded into molar representation and tricked into desiring its own repression. In this way I show how the paranoid investment, the opposite pole of schizophrenia, is constituted. I also show how such repression constitutes an Oedipal subjectivity, one that is dominated by a bad conscience. In addition to that, in this section I engage with *Anti-Oedipus* to situate my analysis of illusions of autonomous subjectivity and value within the context of the capitalist social formation. According to Deleuze and Guattari, capitalism primarily organises its production through abstract quantities of value, or axioms, which are meaningless. In organising production by way of axioms, capitalism constantly disrupts the qualitative codes and values that order society. I show that it is precisely by means of this breakdown of social codes channelling desire that capitalism incites schizophrenia, while paranoid forces, the other pole of capitalist dynamics, seek to re-establish social order and contain desire.

In the third section I examine Deleuze and Guattari's conception of schizoanalysis as a form of immanent ethics. I propose that the general aim of schizoanalysis is to overturn molar representation into the order of desiring-production, inciting a movement from conscious representations into the productive unconscious. I argue that this movement aligns schizoanalysis with the ethical aim that Deleuze lays down in his readings of Spinoza and Nietzsche. Schizoanalysis is then discussed from the dual perspectives of its destructive and positive tasks, and the ethical experimentation that they entail. I explain that the destructive task amounts to an undoing of the paranoid molar investments which act to block schizophrenia as a process. Since a stable subjectivity is constituted only as a result of molar structures in the unconscious, I propose that this destructive task corresponds to the undoing of the illusion of autonomous ego. On the other hand, I propose that the positive task of

schizoanalysis is the locating of desiring-machines beneath the systems of representation that crush them with the aim of restoring their functioning.

Yet, before I begin, I would like to pause over the fact that *Anti-Oedipus* is not Deleuze's own work, but a collaborative project. Although I acknowledge that Félix Guattari's contribution to their project is anything but insignificant, I maintain that this does not in any way invalidate the aim of this thesis. Deleuze and Guattari met in 1969, when Deleuze has already published his books on different figures from the history of Western philosophy (including Nietzsche and Spinoza), and two major works written in his own voice, *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*.⁴⁰⁹ Guattari was a political militant and a Jacques Lacan inspired psychoanalyst, who set up the forward-thinking psychiatric clinic at Le Borde and has, before meeting Deleuze, published several essays on psychoanalytic theory.⁴¹⁰ The encounter between the two is well documented from the biographical perspective by Dosse's authoritative account *Intersecting Lives*. The conceptual aspect of this encounter, on the other hand, remains relatively under-explored. A convincing analysis of the import of Guattari's ideas for *Anti-Oedipus* is offered by Edward Thornton.⁴¹¹ Thornton maps Guattari's work prior their encounter in two main axes, the first concerning the machinic (i.e. productive) nature of desire, the second relating to his concept of transversality, and demonstrates how they unfold in *Anti-Oedipus*. Thornton's examination makes it clear that, although Deleuze was well acquainted with Freud before meeting Guattari, the latter's engagement with psychoanalysis, as well as Trotskyite communist politics, was instrumental in articulating the combined critique of Freudian (and partially Lacanian) psychoanalysis and capitalism that the two undertake in *Anti-Oedipus*.⁴¹²

While I do not want to dispute the significance of Guattari's contribution in any way, my contention is that the main conceptual framework for the ethics of immanence

⁴⁰⁹ Dosse, *Intersecting Lives*, p. 3.

⁴¹⁰ Majority of these texts are collected in *Psychoanalysis and Transversality: Texts and Interviews 1955–1971*, trans. by Ames Hodges (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2015).

⁴¹¹ See Chapter 2 of Thornton's brilliant PhD thesis.

⁴¹² Deleuze's engagement with Freud is present from the very beginning of his philosophical career. The title of Deleuze's very first published essay from 1955 *Instincts and Institutions* is a nod to Freud's essay 'Triebe und Tribschicksale', which has been translated as 'Instincts and Their Vicissitudes'. Deleuze's engagement with Freud also features in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962) and continues with *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty* (1967), *The Logic of Sense* (1969), and *Difference and Repetition* (1968), where Deleuze tries to synthesise Freud with Nietzsche.

presented in *Anti-Oedipus* can be, to a significant degree, traced back to Deleuze's work on Spinoza and Nietzsche. The degree of continuity between these early works by Deleuze, which I explore in my first two chapters, and *Anti-Oedipus* will be glossed and explained throughout this chapter. It will be shown *Anti-Oedipus's* ontology (which is inseparable from its ethical concerns) has been largely developed by Deleuze prior to their encounter and has provided the context for the assimilation of Guattari's concepts. Guattari's theoretical work, which Deleuze describes as a 'schizoid' writing flow, and that was, in Guattari's own recurring words, 'a mess', can be thus seen as being integrated into Deleuze's complex and layered ontological system, which is symptomatic of what Guattari saw as Deleuze's enviable and intimidating 'ability to organise and classify things'.⁴¹³ Such, admittedly simplified, account of their collaboration can provide us with some inkling of why Guattari felt 'a bit overcoded' by Deleuze in *Anti-Oedipus*, and, as he also states in *The Anti-Oedipus Papers*, that he did not 'really recognize [him]self' in this text.⁴¹⁴

i) The Schizophrenic Univocity of Being: Mapping the Productive Unconscious

As they frequently stress throughout *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari do not seek to glorify schizophrenia as a mental illness. Rather, they are interested in what they term 'schizophrenia as a process'. The latter in their view corresponds to a 'harrowing, emotionally overwhelming experience, which brings the schizo as close as possible to matter, to a burning, living center of matter'.⁴¹⁵ Unlike sovereign subjectivity, which perceives itself, to put it in Spinoza's words, as an *empire within an empire*, an autonomous subject opposed to its environment as its master, a schizophrenic episode puts one into close contact with one's surroundings. Like Spinoza and Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari are not interested in 'man as the king of creation'.⁴¹⁶ They introduce the figure of a schizo precisely as a counterpoint to this view. As illustrated by the numerous literary and clinical examples in *Anti-Oedipus*, rather than viewing the world from the detached standpoint of an autonomous subjectivity

⁴¹³ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, 'Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari on Anti-Oedipus', in *Negotiations*, pp. 13–24 (p. 14); Félix Guattari, *The Anti-Oedipus Papers*, ed. by Stéphane Nadaud, trans. by Kéline Gotman (Los Angeles: Semiotex(e), 2006), p. 246, p. 254.

⁴¹⁴ Guattari, *The Anti-Oedipus Papers*, p. 400, p. 404.

⁴¹⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 4.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

endowed with free will, the schizo is deeply immersed in the world he or she inhabits, experiencing it as vividly, overwhelmingly and forcefully as possible. This schizoid immersion manifests itself as a profound connectedness to the world around it. As a result of its capacity to form intense connections with its surroundings, Deleuze and Guattari assert that 'schizophrenia is the process of the production of desire and desiring-machines', and, conversely, the schizophrenic as a specifically clinical entity is created only when this process is interrupted or repressed.⁴¹⁷ In the idea of schizophrenia as a process Deleuze and Guattari thus develop the model of a productive unconscious, one that blindly seeks nothing but to produce desire, and that, as noted, conceptually corresponds to the will to power as a ceaselessly self-differentiating drive.⁴¹⁸

Deleuze and Guattari maintain that it is precisely schizophrenia as desiring-production that constitutes the univocity of the unconscious, which in their view is nothing but the real itself. Schizophrenia as an ontological principle thus corresponds to the genesis of the unconscious, which exists everywhere in the same way and is always in flux. According to Deleuze and Guattari,

If desire produces, its product is real. If desire is productive, it can be productive only in the real world and can produce only reality. Desire is the set of *passive syntheses* that engineer partial objects, flows, and bodies, and that function as units of production. The real is the end product, the result of the passive syntheses of desire as autoproduction of the unconscious. Desire does not lack anything; it does not lack its object. It is, rather, the *subject* that is missing in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject; there is no fixed subject unless there is repression.⁴¹⁹

Like (Deleuze's) Nietzsche, who sees being in terms of becoming, which is nothing but the self-differentiation of the will to power, Deleuze and Guattari perceive desire as productive of reality. Desiring-production is being as such, or, more precisely, as this production is dynamic and constantly in flux, it should be understood in terms of the ontology of becoming. This self-production of the unconscious desiring energy operates in accordance with the three syntheses, which are passive insofar as they are pre-subjective, that is, they do not depend on the activity of a conscious self. Buchanan proposes that these syntheses 'have no self-comprehension of what they

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴¹⁸ Since *the degree of power* is nothing but power of acting and producing, this Spinozist concept too can be paralleled with that of desiring-production or schizophrenic process.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

are doing, much less an end or a goal – they simply act, as unthinkingly as machines'.⁴²⁰ Desire thus cannot be a matter of a pre-existing or fixed subject who is missing a desired object which he or she is driven towards. Instead, a fixed and stable subject is produced as a result of the illegitimate use of the syntheses of desire, which synthesise 'partial objects, flows, and bodies' under what Deleuze and Guattari see as the conditions of repression. This repressive conditions correspond to processes that structure, order and unify bodies and flows, and thus organise them in a way that limits their productivity.

The repression of desire which is formative of a stable subjectivity is explored below in the next section of this chapter. In the current section I analyse the operators of the schizo process that is subject to repression, i.e. the three passive syntheses of desire that constitute the auto-production of the unconscious. Yet, before examining these operators, it must be noted that for Deleuze and Guattari desire never exists in a pure and unrepressed state. Instead, desire already interacts with, intermingles with, and thereby invests itself within the social organisation in which it finds itself, however repressive that social form might be. Desire and the social form a totality. According to Deleuze and Guattari, '[t]here is only desire and the social, and nothing else'.⁴²¹ Again in correspondence with Spinoza (or whom the conative drive is inevitably in contact with its foods and poisons) and with Nietzsche (who sees the emergence of culture as necessarily inhibiting some and discouraging other unconscious forces), Deleuze and Guattari see desire as always already socialised. They discuss this socialisation in terms of a mixture of molecular and molar elements, as will now be explained in this section.

While the molecular corresponds to the productive particles constituting the process of desire, Deleuze and Guattari see the molar as the social aggregation of these particles. The molar aggregates, they explain, are the

statistical forms into which [the molecular elements of desire] enter as so many stable forms, unifying, structuring, and proceeding by means of large heavy aggregates; the selective pressures that group the parts retain some of them and exclude others, organising the crowds.⁴²²

⁴²⁰ Ian Buchanan, *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus* (London: Continuum Publishing, 2008), p. 52.

⁴²¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 29.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, pp. 287–88.

The molar aggregates correspond to a unification and a fixation that is associated with representational forms that identify such categories as different races, nations, classes, species, but also kinds of persons and objects. Social organisations, with their discourses and practices, unavoidably order the social by establish distinctions between different types of crowds, subjects and objects. According to Deleuze and Guattari, this molar unification of molecular desiring-production, which is nothing but its repression, is executed precisely through 'illegitimate' uses of the syntheses of desire. To be able to understand the latter, we must first understand the 'legitimate' or 'immanent' uses of the three syntheses. Insofar as desiring production is synthesised according to the legitimate uses of the three synthesis, the product thus corresponds to schizophrenia as a process.

Deleuze and Guattari refer to the first synthesis of the unconscious as the 'connective synthesis' or the synthesis of connection.⁴²³ This synthesis concerns the linking of a desiring connection or a 'flow' between two 'partial objects'. When partial objects are coupled by a flow of desire, they constitute a desiring-machine. Consequently, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that partial objects should be understood as the 'dispersed working parts of a machine that is itself dispersed', or, in short, 'the molecular functions of the unconscious'.⁴²⁴ Joe Hughes points out that the molecular nature of partial objects concerns their two main aspects.⁴²⁵ Firstly, unlike molar aggregates which are formed as organisations of molecular elements, partial objects are the smallest possible units that feature in the production of the unconscious. Secondly, these fragments are absolutely dissimilar, non-unified and unrelated to one another, or, as Deleuze and Guattari put it, they exist in a state of 'positive dispersion' or 'real in-organisation'.⁴²⁶ According to this conception, partial objects are diverse micro-fragments that function as the basic elements of desiring connectivity.

Deleuze and Guattari maintain that '[d]esire constantly couples continuous flows and partial objects that are by nature fragmentary and fragmented'.⁴²⁷ Desire is hence 'synthetic' in the sense that it links elements that have no necessary connection to

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

⁴²⁵ Joe Hughes, *Deleuze and the Genesis of Representation* (London: Continuum, 2008), pp. 62–63.

⁴²⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 5. The idea of positive dispersion is equivalent to the concept of multiplicity, which is also one of the central concepts in Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

one another which can be deduced logically from any properties associated with them. Yet, in addition to partial objects and flows, I have noted that the 'engineering' of desire also involves material bodies. While partial objects do have a material (extended) component, they are synthesised as partial objects only insofar as they are coupled with another partial object by means of a (intensive) flow. This is readily illustrated by examples:

Amniotic fluid spilling out of the sac and kidney stones, flowing hair; a flow of spittle, a flow of sperm, shit, or urine that are produced by partial objects and constantly cut off by other partial objects, which in turn produce other flows, interrupted by other partial objects.⁴²⁸

Partial objects are always joined to one another through a flow. One partial object functions as a working part of an energy-source-machine that produces a flow of desire, while the other partial object, a part of what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the 'organ-machine', draws off this flow and receives a charge of energy from it. This organ-machine in turn produces an energy flow that gives a charge to another machine, and so on and so forth to generate chains of desiring connections. A frequently quoted example of desiring connection provided by Deleuze and Guattari is that between a baby's mouth that interrupts and draws sustenance from the flow of milk and the mother's breast that produces the milk. The baby's mouth is here a partial object that receives a charge from another partial object, i.e. mother's breast. The baby's nourishment then becomes a source of input for another partial object – the infant's digestive system.

To understand what happens in the first synthesis, it is necessary to differentiate between material flows, flows of desire and physical body parts (or organs) that partake in it. Even though desiring connections are formed between physical body parts or organs (mouth, breast, anus) and material flows and objects (milk, urine, sperm), the interruption of flows at stake here is not merely a matter of extension. Instead, bodily organs are constituted as machines only insofar as they are connected by means of flows of desire, which are themselves intensive. As an organ-machine is charged by desire in virtue of being affected by another material body, this desiring energy mobilises a physical part of the body and 'organises' it for the purposes of production. According to Buchanan,

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6.

the synthesis of connection snaps our organs together in a new arrangement of its own making and its own design. On this view of things, organs are any parts of the body which seen from the perspective of the unconscious are capable of performing labour, capable in other words of producing a flow themselves, but also of turning the ceaseless flow of libido into an affect [...].⁴²⁹

In his view, desiring-production assembles bodily organs so they can perform a certain activity. For example, the mouth contracts a flow of milk and thrusts it into the throat, thus producing a flow of desire. As suggested by Buchanan, desire is also the force that arranges our organs so that they perform wage labour. Desire thus mobilises and activates (parts of) our bodies and pushes them in a particular direction. This results in another organ-machine being charged with desire, and so on. Apart from producing desire, Buchanan also suggest that flows of desire can be also turned into a reactive affects such as anxiety, guilt or bad conscience, which are, as I explain soon, instances of anti-production caused by social repression.

Insofar as the connective synthesis functions immanently, Deleuze and Guattari maintain that partial objects 'enter into aberrant communications following a traversal [path]'.⁴³⁰ In other words, parts of our body are here indiscriminately coupled with other partial objects that surround us. Partial objects here remain at their molecular level, i.e. dispersed or multiple, and non-unified. Deleuze and Guattari refer to the use of a synthesis that is not subject to repression as 'partial and nonspecific'.⁴³¹ The partial character of this synthesis concerns the objects of desiring connections, which are here not limited to individuated persons and complete objects. Instead, these connections give rise to fragmented partial objects that are not perceived as belonging to whole entities. Conversely, the nonspecific character of the synthesis concerns the subject of desire. The latter is not seen as a pre-existing unity to which desire is then assigned. Instead, desire remains at the molecular level of partial objects.

In addition to its molecular connectivity, Deleuze and Guattari propose that the connective principle of this synthesis is characterised by the logic of "and..." "and then...", etc.⁴³² Thus, an organ-machine is continuously switching between different partial objects that are capable of charging it. After forming a desiring connection with

⁴²⁹ Buchanan, *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus*, p. 59.

⁴³⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 69.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

the breast, for example, the baby's mouth connects with the air it inhales, and then with the thumb it sucks, and so on. Deleuze and Guattari illustrate the schizoid functioning of this synthesis by introducing Henri Michaux's account of a 'table' built by a schizophrenic.⁴³³ This 'overstuffed' 'table of additions' is constructed without any plan or blueprint. Instead, it is produced unthinkingly (in a machinic manner), though the indiscriminate and contingent additions of whatever is at hand. According to Deleuze and Guattari, a table produced in this way is finished only when it is no longer possible to add anything else to it. As the surface of the table is eaten up, this 'freak piece of furniture' is no longer a table, but a hodge-podge accumulation of elements. We can already see that a schizo does not build a table in order for it to have a social use or value. The only 'value' that guides a schizo's mode of production is the joy of production itself. Once the joy of production is exhausted, and the schizophrenic process is completed, this leads to a nonproductive stasis. This stasis for Deleuze and Guattari corresponds to a body without organs, a term for which Levi Bryant once said that it is as overstuffed as the said schizophrenic table.

In the process of forming connections, the first synthesis also produces what Deleuze and Guattari see as the complementary element of a desiring machine, namely a body without organs (from here on abbreviated as BwO). The BwO is a concept that is central to the functioning of the desiring unconscious as it is intrinsically linked to the forces of anti-production or paranoia. It is also a highly complex notion that will have to be unpacked gradually. For now, let us offer a provisional explanation of this concept. The BwO should be firstly seen as a surface of inscription that records traces, which organise our body into a functioning (eating, breathing, defecating, etc.) organism. For Deleuze and Guattari, this surface of inscription is characterised by two extreme states. On the one hand, the BwO is produced as a sterile, non-productive stasis, which I just mentioned. When the BwO is dominated by anti-production, forces that repel productive connections, our body remains un-organised. There are no functioning organ-machines, and, hence, no flows are being produced. At the other extreme, the BwO is a site characterised by hyper-productivity of connections, which corresponds to the state of schizophrenia. Here, too, our body remains un-organised, but this is so as there is no permanency to the functioning of organ-machines. Instead, there is perfect fluidity of desiring-connections, which amounts to maximum desiring-production. With this brief outline of the BwO and its two extreme states in mind, we

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

can continue with our exploration of Deleuze and Guattari's account of the productive unconscious.

To begin with, one must note that the production of the BwO initiates the second synthesis of the unconscious, i.e. the 'disjunctive synthesis of recording'.⁴³⁴ As anticipated, in the first instance, the BwO is produced as a nonproductive stasis. It is akin to 'a stalled engine', not unlike a finished schizophrenic table to which nothing more can be added. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that

[d]esiring-machines make us an organism; but at the very heart of this production, within the very production of this production, the body [without organs] suffers from being organised in this way, from not having some other sort of organisation, or no organisation at all.⁴³⁵

Firstly, the organism should not be understood as a pre-given unity. Instead, our body is structured into a functioning organism by the organ-machines that are charged by energy-source machines that surround us. Yet, Deleuze and Guattari suggest being articulated as a functioning unity in turn becomes unbearable to the BwO as it eventually starts to suffer from being restricted by the given organ-isation. 'What would be required [by the BwO]', they add, 'is a pure fluid in a free state, flowing without interruption, streaming over the surface of a full body [without organs]'.⁴³⁶ For them, the state that the BwO strives for is characterised by fluidity, where desire is not delimited by any kind of organisation. When our body is organised into a particular constellation of organ-machines, these machines restrict the flows of desire that are exchanged between them and those that charge them.⁴³⁷ Like the schizophrenic table that becomes more and more saturated with each added object, leaving fewer and fewer options for other add-ons, the given constellation of organ-machines articulates the flows in ever more rigid ways. By unifying organ-machines into an increasingly fixed and determined arrangement, this saturation of the organism makes the circulation of flows of desire increasingly hard. 'Desire indeed passes through the body, and through the organs', propose Deleuze and Guattari, 'but not through the organism'.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

Once desire is no longer able to circulate freely and the schizophrenic process is completed, the BwO suspends the desiring connections that constitute organ-machines. 'In order to resist organ-machines', Deleuze and Guattari argue,

the body without organs presents its smooth, slippery, opaque, taut surface as a barrier. In order to resist linked, connected, and interrupted flows, it sets up a counter flow of amorphous, undifferentiated fluid.⁴³⁹

In other words, the BwO in turn repels the desiring connections that organise the body and thus rejects the unity they impose on it. In doing so, it dissociates the organ-machine from the energy-machine that charges it with desire, which animates the physical activity of the body. The BwO as a sterile stasis thus functions as a force of anti-production that disorganises the organs. When the BwO repels organ-machines, '[t]he automata stop dead and set free the unorganised mass [of desiring energy] they once served to articulate'.⁴⁴⁰ The machinic automata of the functioning organism are suspended and the BwO becomes a 'barrier' shielding the body from its outside. Like with Spinoza's idea of a free man, who actively causes all of his affections, the suspension of connections by the BwO breaks off the influence of external bodies. In its striving for the free circulation of desire, the BwO rejects a permanent fixation on a particular energy-source machine, thus allowing for potentially different arrangements of organs.

Due to its anti-productive, or disjunctive, function, Deleuze and Guattari see the BwO as an equivalent of the psychoanalytic idea of 'primary repression'.⁴⁴¹ For Freud, the latter precedes and grounds what he refers to as 'repression proper', which is exerted within the realm of interpersonal and social relations. Similarly, for Deleuze and Guattari, the BwO should be seen as the force of repulsion that autonomously and instinctively suspends or interrupts desiring connections and pushes one away toward new experiences. Although there are essential differences in how they conceptualise the relation between primary and social repression, it can be said that Deleuze and Guattari, like Freud, see the intrinsic operation of primary repression as the basis for social repression. As we will see, this force of repulsion is susceptible to being co-opted by the repression exercised by molar aggregates. When social repression is able to co-opt the forces of repulsion to suspend desiring-production

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

before its completion, these forces begin to instinctively repel connections prohibited by social authority.

Deleuze and Guattari make clear though that even when the BwO operates as a barrier that blocks out the desiring connections to what is external to it, there is nothing totalising about its functioning. Instead, they maintain that the BwO as a sterile stasis is produced as 'a whole, but a whole alongside the parts [i.e. partial organs]'.⁴⁴² Deleuze and Guattari's insistence on the non-unified fragmentation of parts, one that follows no principle of organisation, concerns precisely the question of production. David Lapoujade proposes that this molecular dispersion of elements 'is the condition under which desire is able to circulate and flow freely', which is, as we will see, also the condition for maximising production.⁴⁴³ Deleuze and Guattari illustrate this non-unifying relation between the BwO and partial organs by comparing it to that between Spinoza's substance and its attributes. Like the infinity of parallel attributes that manifest the substance 'insofar as they are really distinct and cannot on this account exclude or oppose one another', partial organs are simply the radically diverse and unrelated elements that give expression to the BwO.⁴⁴⁴

Deleuze and Guattari substantiate this claim by proposing that '[p]artial objects are the direct powers of the body without organs, and the body without organs, the raw material of the partial objects'.⁴⁴⁵ Similarly, they refer to the BwO as the 'immobile motor' and to partial objects (or organ-machines) as 'the working parts'.⁴⁴⁶ To further explicate this relation, we must look at BwO's function as a recording surface for partial objects. This will allow us to see why for Deleuze and Guattari repulsion as primary repression is not a malfunction but is rather intrinsic to the production of desire. Deleuze and Guattari frequently stress that machines work only by continually 'breaking down'.⁴⁴⁷ In addition to dismantling the given arrangement of organs, the breakdown of a machine – i.e. the production of the anti-productive stasis that is the BwO – is in itself productive because the BwO is 'perpetually reinserted into the

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 326.

⁴⁴³ David Lapoujade, *Aberrant Movements: The Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*, trans. Joshua David Jordan (Los Angeles: Semiotexte, 2014), p. 162.

⁴⁴⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 327.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 369.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

process of production'.⁴⁴⁸ This ceaseless re-insertion of the BwO into the production of desire happens precisely as a result of the BwO's role as a surface of inscription.

Deleuze and Guattari maintain that every instance of desiring connection suspended by the disjunctive synthesis of recording is simultaneously documented as an unconscious trace on the BwO. For them, the multiple partial objects that constitute a machine are recorded in the form of 'signs' or 'codes of desire'.⁴⁴⁹ Once the first recording is produced, this recording sets the direction for this machine's (re)production by being constantly fed back into it. In the process of recording coupling between an organ-machine and an energy-source machine, the former 'captures within its own code a code fragment of another machine, and thus owes its reproduction to a part of another machine'.⁴⁵⁰ As an organ-machine is charged by an energy-source machine, it records the partial organs involved in this connection in a chain of code (which correspond to what Deleuze refers to as an associative chain of traces in Spinoza). Our desiring machines therefore are linked in chains of code with other machines in our own bodies, other bodies, society and nature.

In Deleuze and Guattari's view, these recorded chains of code structure the way a desiring machine functions. They propose that

[a]n organ may have connections that associate it with several different flows; it may waver between several functions, and even take on the regime of another organ – the anorectic mouth, for instance. All sorts of functional questions thus arise: What flow to break? Where to interrupt it? How and by what means?⁴⁵¹

For Deleuze and Guattari, our organ-machines can be charged by several different flows of desire. When an organ-machine is coupled through a chain with an energy machine, this chain forms a line crossing the surface of the BwO, thus recording this desiring connection. As an organ-machine can be charged by several different machines within and outside the body, it features in several binary chains of code forming lines traversing the BwO. The anorexic mouth, for example, can interrupt a flow of air or food. On the surface of the BwO the anorexic mouth thus features as 'a point of disjunction' located at the intersection of the lines that code its connections

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

to other organs functioning as its energy sources.⁴⁵² Similarly, since it can produce a flow of words or a flow of vomit (it can be 'an eating-machine, an anal machine, a talking-machine, or a breathing machine (asthma attacks)'), it is coded as an energy-source-machine for other organs.⁴⁵³ The recordings on the BwO thus take the form of a network of lines of inscriptions. These lines inscribe productive connections between desiring machines, which are recorded as points of disjunction located at their intersections.

To examine how the chains of code orient the functioning of a desiring-machine, let us return to the mouth of a baby, which provides us with a somewhat simpler example. The baby's mouth inhales the molecules of air, then it forms a connection with their mother's breast as it draws milk, then it cries, then it sucks on a thumb, then it sucks on a pacifier, etc. Like with the anorexic mouth, the possibilities of what the baby's mouth is capable of doing are determined by these recorded connections. Each of these couplings is recorded as a chain of code on the BwO and forms the potential of the body to be organised differently to the way it might be now. Yet, at the same time the code sets limitations for body's organisation: a baby's mouth returns to the mother's breast as a familiar source of nourishment, and a body is gradually formed in accordance with its first connections. In this sense, the recording process on the BwO should be understood in terms of *habituation*. Every trace of desiring-production left on the BwO, thus, at the same time *facilitates* and *restricts* future connections by engendering habits. A partial object (or, more precisely, its recording in code) manifests a direct power of the BwO insofar as it enables a desiring connection to be formed. In terms of Deleuze's rendition of Spinoza and Nietzsche, this susceptibility to connections corresponds to the individual's capacity to be affected, which determines 'what a body can do'. Conversely, the BwO is the immobile motor of partial objects, since it permits their functioning by neutralising desiring connections and recording them.

These recordings of partial objects in chains of code are, like partial objects in the first synthesis, characterised by heterogeneity and dispersion. Consequently, Deleuze and Guattari see these chains as being molecular in nature. 'In a chain that mixes together phonemes, morphemes, etc., without combining them', they claim, 'papa's mustache, mama's upraised arm, a ribbon, a little girl, a cop, a shoe suddenly turn

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

up'.⁴⁵⁴ Unlike the molar social code, which prescribes communal meanings and values, Deleuze and Guattari stress that the multiplicity of connections linked to a particular series of desiring-production that constitute these chains of code are strictly a-signifying. 'The code [of desire] resembles not so much a language as a jargon, an open-ended, polyvocal formation'.⁴⁵⁵ In their view, the code of desire consists of signs only insofar as each of these signs 'speak[s] its own language'.⁴⁵⁶ Since the 'language' of code is polyvocal, the 'meaning' of these a-signifying signs is ultimately fluid and does not prescribe any kind of predetermined order or hierarchy of value. 'These indifferent signs follow no plan', Deleuze and Guattari add, 'they function at all levels and enter into any and every sort of connection'.⁴⁵⁷

On this conception, the unconscious is characterised by an essential excess that engenders a kind of cross-pollination between different chains of code. These heterogeneous chains of code 'all intersect, following the endlessly ramified paths of the great disjunctive synthesis'.⁴⁵⁸ If the connective synthesis forges connections between our organ-machines and energy-source machines that charge them, then the disjunctive synthesis of recording forms new connections between the traces of these connections and multiplies the grid between these points of disjunction. This 'surplus of code' creates new future possibilities for the desiring-connections that organise the body, ones that were not present in the initial experience.

With this in mind we can now turn to the other pole of the BwO's functioning, which concerns forces of attraction. Attraction is related to the immanent or legitimate use of disjunctive synthesis of recording. Attraction can be seen in its full effect in a schizophrenic delirium, when the BwO pulls desiring-machines back towards its chains of code. Deleuze and Guattari maintain that when this happens

[m]achines attach themselves to the body without organs as so many points of disjunction, between which an entire network of new syntheses is now woven, marking the surface off into co-ordinates, like a grid. The "either ... or ... or" of the schizophrenic takes over from the "and then": no matter what two organs are involved, the way in which they are attached to the body without organs must be such that all the disjunctive syntheses between the two amount to the same on the slippery surface. Whereas the "either/or" claims to mark decisive choices between immutable terms (the alternative: either this

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

or that), the schizophrenic “either ... or ... or” refers to the system of possible permutations between differences that always amount to the same as they shift and slide about.⁴⁵⁹

In the movement of attraction, the BwO re-arranges the body into functioning organs. Yet, the re-formed organ-machines do not converge solely on the existing points of disjunction and chains that connect them. Instead, they propose that new connections between points of disjunctions are forged on the BwO, i.e. connections that were not present in the original experience. The proliferation of these chains of code opens new options for the ‘and, and, and etc.’ logic of the connective synthesis. In fact, Deleuze and Guattari propose that in the case of schizophrenic process this connective logic overlaps with the ‘either, or, or etc.’, which they see as the logic of legitimate or ‘inclusive’ disjunctive synthesis. Unlike ‘either, or’, the logic of exclusive disjunction, which concerns molar social code prescribing a choice between two mutually exclusive options, the inclusive disjunction testifies to the schizo’s indifference to available options. Even though his or her recording surface inevitably contains molar recordings, the schizo operates on the level of molecular chains of code, which is radically heterogeneous and without hierarchy. Consequently, the schizo does not discriminate between available options and constantly switches between points of disjunction, thus ceaselessly forging new connections, simultaneously inscribing them on the BwO. It is due to this fluidity of movement that Deleuze and Guattari propose that the BwO of a schizophrenic here amounts to a slippery surface.

Deleuze and Guattari clarify this fluidity that characterises the schizoid operations on the BwO in the following manner:

It might be said that the schizophrenic passes from one code to the other, that he deliberately scrambles all the codes, by quickly shifting from one to another, according to the questions asked him, never giving the same explanation from one day to the next, never invoking the same genealogy, never recording the same event in the same way.⁴⁶⁰

The schizophrenic has at his disposal another code, a molecular system of coordinates, which allows him to subvert the molar representation and the hierarchy established by it. To explain this subversion of social codes, Deleuze and Guattari repeatedly use the example of a schizophrenic being questioned by different agents

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

of social authority (doctors, policeman, etc.). When asked to explain himself, or 'to situate himself socially', as Deleuze and Guattari like to put it, a schizo is able to introduce his own points of reference, different points of disjunction between which he is constantly sliding, and which do not correspond with the existing social code.⁴⁶¹ In doing so, the schizo always provides different answers to the posed questions. When, for example, he is asked about his gender, the schizo first identifies as a man, then as a woman, then perhaps as something that lacks an obvious relation to gender (i.e. a kangaroo), etc., and it is this distance he traverses that constitutes the inclusive disjunction. The schizo subverts the social code for gender by undermining it from within by, in Deleuze and Guattari's words, 'stuff[ing] it full of all the disjunctions that this code was designed to eliminate'.⁴⁶² It could be said that in this way the category of gender becomes over-stuffed and de-familiarised in the same way that the schizophrenic table is, which can effectively destabilise the efficiency of this category.

Bricolage, the mode of production involved in the construction of the schizophrenic table, is another good way of illustrating the schizoid operations of inclusive synthesis. Drawing on Claude Lévi Strauss, Deleuze and Guattari maintain that *bricolage* is characterised by

the possession of a stock of materials or of rules of thumb that are fairly extensive, though more or less a hodgepodge – multiple and at the same time limited; the ability to rearrange fragments continually in new and different patterns or configurations; and as a consequence, an indifference toward the act of producing and toward the product, toward the set of instruments to be used and toward the over-all result to be achieved.⁴⁶³

In a similar manner to the *bricoleur*, the schizo has at his or her disposal a network of points of disjunction, which result from previous desiring connections. This network on the BwO constitutes the available points of reference, the raw material of his activity. When confronted with a random task or situation, the schizo, like the *bricoleur*, simply resorts to whatever code happens to be at hand (even if it has little or no relation to the given situation). The schizo is both able constantly to switch between used elements and to link them up in new ways. These new combinations augment the range of operations available to them. Finally, since the schizo works without a plan or a goal, he or she is radically indifferent to the way they proceed.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

From the schizo's standpoint, the result – the productivity which is mirrored in the achieved satisfaction – will be always the same.

Accordingly, it should be said that, like the BwO that is produced through repulsion, the BwO generated in the process of attraction does not in any way unify or totalise its partial objects. 'Although the organ-machines attach themselves to the body without organs', write Deleuze and Guattari, 'the latter continues nonetheless to be without organs and does not become an organism in the ordinary sense of the word. It remains fluid and slippery'.⁴⁶⁴ Since organ-machines constantly link up with different points of disjunction on the BwO, the body of a schizo is never arranged into a fixed constellation of functioning organs. Flows of desire do not merely extend between two points of disjunction that are coupled through this connection. Instead, desire finds itself in a state toward which it strives when the BwO resists a given arrangements of organs. Desire exists as 'a pure fluid in a free state, flowing without interruption, streaming over the surface' of the BwO.⁴⁶⁵ Desire in a fluid state, where no code that organises it can prevail over any other code, is precisely the state of schizophrenia. Schizophrenia as a process is a flow of desire circulating freely between a molecular multiplicity of coded partial objects on the BwO. This unrestrained fluidity of desire knows no permanence of recording and thus (since the response to a situation is never the same) no habit. Instead, there is only what could be understood as a kind of permanent revolution of psychic life.

The BwO is thus produced at the two limits of desiring-production. The first limit is the anti-productive one, where the BwO emerges as a sterile stasis suspending the connection between machines and repelling their organisation. This is the paranoiac pole which corresponds to the functioning of primary repression and marks the absence of connectivity.⁴⁶⁶ At the other limit, desire flows freely over the surface of the BwO, constantly forging new connections between organ-machines and energy-source machines. This is the schizophrenic pole that corresponds to the forces of attraction and marks the upper limit of desiring production. Even though we are dealing with two different instantiations of the BwO, in both cases desire is not

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴⁶⁶ As this absence is never complete (total absence of desire on the BwO would simply amount to death), it would be more accurate to say that it marks the minimum of desiring-productivity.

invested in organ-machines that channel in a certain way, but circulates freely.⁴⁶⁷ Both of these states thus manage to overturn the unity of a functioning organism.

Finally, the opposition between attraction and repulsion is the starting point for the third synthesis of the unconscious, that is, the 'conjunctive synthesis of consumption'.⁴⁶⁸ This passive synthesis is also where the illusion of subjective freedom arises. What is produced by this synthesis is thus a subjectivity, or, in Deleuze and Guattari's own words, 'something of the order of a subject'.⁴⁶⁹ This provisional subject is not given and stable, but can only arise as a product of repression. Insofar as the use of this synthesis is legitimate, the subjectivity that is generated is a schizo or 'nomadic' one. Deleuze and Guattari specify that this subject is

a strange subject [...] with no fixed identity, wandering about over the body without organs, but always remaining peripheral to the desiring-machines, being defined by the share of the product it takes for itself, garnering here, there, and everywhere a reward in the form of a becoming or an avatar, being born of the states that it consumes and being reborn with each new state.⁴⁷⁰

For Deleuze and Guattari, there is no self-identical or autonomous subject that would precede and experience what the desiring-machines produce. Instead, they propose that a schizo subject is a fleeting and passive subject that is ceaselessly defined and redefined by the products it consumes. This subject thus emerges anew out of each consumed state in the series and is in this sense akin to what we generally term a multiple personality. To understand the genesis of a schizo subject, we have to clarify what exactly is produced by this synthesis and then consumed by the subject. Deleuze and Guattari are explicit about this: it is 'intensive quantities' or, put differently, 'bands of intensities' situated on the BwO. The latter is under the regime of the third synthesis framed as a field of intensities, which corresponds to the network of disjunctions insofar as the BwO is considered as a surface of inscription.

Deleuze and Guattari maintain that these intensities are produced as a reconciliation of the opposition between forces of repulsion and attraction, which in their view takes

⁴⁶⁷ In accordance with the above footnote, we can that even the anti-productive BwO is characterised by a fluidity of desire even if its quantity is at a minimum.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

the form of what they term, recalling Freud, 'the return of the repressed'.⁴⁷¹ 'The forces of attraction and repulsion', they write, 'of soaring ascents and plunging falls, produce a series of intensive states based on the intensity = 0 that designates the body without organs'.⁴⁷² These intensive variations thus start from zero intensity, which corresponds the BwO as a sterile stasis, and are determined by the relative proportions of repulsion and attraction involved. Repulsion and attraction thus function in a similar way to joy and sadness in Spinoza: they correspond to an increase or decrease in a given intensity. Accordingly, Deleuze and Guattari also refer to this intensive variation in terms of affect. A schizophrenic experiences affective variations in intensity 'in their pure state, to a point that is almost unbearable', through manic ascents and depressive falls.⁴⁷³ These intensities are pure in the sense they are compromised as minimally as possible by the extensive demands of functioning organs. As such, they correspond to both Spinoza's and Nietzsche's notions of active affect. Such affectivity is not produced through a passive encounter of bodies, but rather arises through the individuals's activity alone.

The relative strength of repulsion and attraction that shape these intensities is articulated in relation to the relevant points of disjunction. The strength of repulsion is determined by the anti-productive forces of the BwO, which repress a given desiring connection, while the strength of attraction is a matter of the degree of productivity of the organ-machine in question. When a connection between points of disjunction is made on the BwO, and desire clenches a body part into a certain constellation, forming an organ-machine, the intensity that is produced in the process is a result of the strength of the previous repulsion and attraction associated with the recorded points of disjunction. This intensity is thus produced as a 'return of the repressed' in the sense that it includes the anti-productive energy that in the past repelled the given desiring connection. An open series of intensive states thus proceeds as a synthesis of productive and anti-productive energies recorded on the BwO.

The nomadic subject arises as a consummation of these intensities. In a manner echoing Deleuze's readings of Spinoza and Nietzsche, this consummation corresponds to an intensity being translated into an extended state of consciousness. The intensive quantities thus underlie and determine subjective experiences and,

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

therefore, ground all the delirious thoughts and hallucinated sensations of the schizophrenic. 'Nothing here is representative', Deleuze and Guattari claim, 'rather, it is all life and lived experience: the actual, lived emotion of having breasts does not resemble breasts, it does not represent them'.⁴⁷⁴ The schizophrenic delirium of Judge Schreber, the famous Freud case, who experiences himself as a woman, is not on based on an idea of a woman, but initially arises out of a zone of intensity, or points of disjunction, on the BwO. Before having his delirious thoughts, Judge Schreber undergoes a feeling of femininity, of having breasts. The schizo subject is located solely in terms of these reference points and is adjacent to them. Due to this derivative nature of the schizo subject, Deleuze and Guattari propose that the logic that characterises the legitimate use of the third synthesis should be understood in terms of 'So that's what it was!' and 'So it's me!'.⁴⁷⁵ Insofar as this synthesis is legitimate, the produced subject recognises itself as such only retroactively, as an after-effect of the consumed intensities. The subject does not, it follows, precede them as a totality of self-contained consciousness. This fleeting schizo subjectivity accepts that there is no autonomous subjectivity that would precede or even actively perform the synthesis that gives rise to it.

Having considered the productive machinery of the unconscious, we can now finally examine the illusion of autonomous subject as conceptualised in *Anti-Oedipus*. This illusion arises precisely in the aftermath of the conjunctive synthesis of consumption. While the illusion of autonomy is here not conceptualised as explicitly as it is Deleuze's account of Spinoza or even Nietzsche, it is nevertheless present. Deleuze and Guattari in fact disguise it in a cryptic quote. Interestingly, they illustrate the operation of this illusion by drawing on an insight of Karl Marx:

Let us remember once again one of Marx's caveats: we cannot tell from the mere taste of wheat who grew it; the product gives us no hint as to the system and the relations of production.⁴⁷⁶

The illusion of autonomous subjectivity is enabled by the fact that the produced consciousness of subjectivity does not indicate anything about the unconscious machinery that generated it. Only as a result of this opacity, are we able falsely to assume that we are at the unrestrained origin of our own thoughts. The illusion of

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

autonomous subjectivity here amounts to a fetishisation of consciousness. The latter is perfectly aligned with Spinoza's explanation, according to which we believe that we are free because we are aware of ideas, wants and valuations, but simultaneously ignorant of the multiplicity of affective encounters that produced them. Deleuze and Guattari's explanation of the illusions of consciousness also corresponds to that of Nietzsche, who, following Spinoza, proposes that this illusion results from confusing effects (mental representations by means of which we become conscious of ourselves) for their causes.

Deleuze and Guattari further reinforce this sense of Spinoza's and Nietzsche's influence when they assert that a subject 'confuses himself with this third productive [synthesis] and with the residual reconciliation that it brings about'.⁴⁷⁷ There is yet another parallel that can be drawn between Deleuze and Guattari's conception of subjectivity and Spinoza's thought. As noted, Spinoza claims that we do not want something because we freely judge it to be good, but we judge it to be good because we are determined to want it. For him, affects that determine our wants thus pre-exist our awareness of them. By the same token, Deleuze and Guattari assume that affects are produced as a result of a complex interplay of production and anti-production, and our awareness of them (our 'consciousness') arises only after that.

ii) Capitalism and Paranoia: Repression and the Recoding of Persons

In opposition to the immanent or legitimate uses of the syntheses productive of desire, Deleuze and Guattari put forward the transcendent or illegitimate uses of these syntheses. Unlike the syntheses that are immanent to the schizophrenic functioning of productive unconscious, their transcendent uses disrupt and diminish desiring-production. Deleuze and Guattari see such disruptions as illegitimate, which corresponds to their status from the perspective of immanent ethics. Since the transcendent uses of syntheses repress desiring-production, they are constitutive of a stable subjectivity. To explain the constitution of such fixed or 'Oedipal' subjectivity, I begin by explaining these illegitimate uses of the syntheses of the unconsciousness. The repressive uses of these syntheses proceed by trapping the molecular unconscious through the imposition of meaning (and the hierarchy of values that corresponds to it), thus establishing a kind of transcendence, and in this way stalling

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

schizophrenia as a process. As with the Nietzschean account of the slave revolt, which posits that the unconscious drives of the masters were degenerated *via* the establishment of slave morality, this imposition of meaning amounts, for Deleuze and Guattari, to the dissemination of social codes or values. Whereas in his reading of Nietzsche Deleuze sidesteps any conceptualisation of this entrapment of the unconscious, *Anti-Oedipus* confronts the issue fully and offers a detailed account of it. By explaining how molar representation unifies and aggregates the molecular unconscious, I outline what for Deleuze and Guattari constitutes the paranoiac unconscious investment. In their view, the latter turns on the co-opting of the primal repression of the BwO, and constitutes one of the two dominant types of investment under capitalist social formation.

In the second part of this section I draw on Deleuze and Guattari's genealogy of social formations to situate my discussion historically, i.e. within the context of the capitalist formation. In fact, since for Deleuze and Guattari desire is always already socialised and bound in molar aggregates, desiring-production cannot be considered separately from the social formation in which it is inserted. For Deleuze and Guattari, capitalism mobilises elements of previous social formations, but ultimately plays out its dynamics between its two extreme poles. The first pole is the one of schizophrenia, explained in the previous section. For Deleuze and Guattari, the forces of capitalism foster schizophrenia as they constantly disrupt, or 'decode', established hierarchies of values and displace, or 'deterritorialise', entities from their material environments for the purposes of a capitalist productive process. These two operations result from the fact that, unlike pre-capitalist formations which depend on policing a set of *qualitative* values, capitalist production functions by means of abstract *quantities* of value (wages, prices, interest, stock indices, etc.).

The other pole is constituted by paranoiac social investments. Like the negative will to power, the latter seek to contain the schizoid investments by re-instituting meaning ('recoding') and reinserting entities in different material apparatuses ('reterritorialisation'). In doing so, Deleuze and Guattari propose, it seeks 'to rechannel persons', i.e. to reinstate Oedipal subjectivities.⁴⁷⁸ By elucidating how capitalism produces schizophrenia by prioritising quantitative over qualitative values, this section will set the grounds for what follows, i.e. a consideration of

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

'schizoanalysis' as an immanent ethics. It will be shown that in the context of *Anti-Oedipus*, the aim of immanent ethics consists of fostering schizoid investments by overturning paranoid ones, thus disentangling normalised subjectivity. By undoing this formative repression, schizoanalysis seeks to restore the capacity of our unconscious to form desiring connections, which can be productive of new ways of thinking and acting.

To explain how molar representation binds the molecular unconscious, I draw on Deleuze and Guattari's critique of Freudian psychoanalysis. While their critique is targeted explicitly at the Oedipus complex, it is nevertheless applicable to every prohibition, and, in fact, every representation of objects in thought, language, images or any other symbols. In their view, the psychoanalytic project inevitably distorts desire as it frames the problem of the unconscious not in terms of production but in terms of meaning. Since desiring-production always operates with molecular and polyvocal elements, it cannot be adequately represented. It is for this reason that Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of Oedipus is pertinent to molar representation in general. For Freud, the Oedipus complex concerns the incestuous desire held to be characteristic of every infant, the negotiation of which is central to a child's development into adulthood. Every infant's desire is initially directed at sexual involvement with the parent of the opposite sex, which is reflected in a conflict with the parent of the same sex. Yet, as Deleuze and Guattari point out, '[t]he law tells us: You will not marry your mother, and you will not kill your father'.⁴⁷⁹ It is this prohibition related to incestuous or Oedipal desires (the overcoming of such desires being for Freud the basis of human society) that will help us unpack the transcendent uses of syntheses.

First of all, Deleuze and Guattari maintain that the prohibition of incestuous desires involves the transcendent use of the connective synthesis of desire. Insofar as it assumes that male infants desire their mothers and female infants desire their fathers, the Oedipus complex 'refer[s] the objects of desire to global persons' and 'desire to a specific subject'.⁴⁸⁰ Specific individuated subjects (male or female infants) are thus assigned a specific complete objects (mother or father). Yet, as noted, there are on Deleuze and Guattari's conception no individuated subjects nor complete objects at the molecular level of partial objects. The desiring connections indiscriminately link

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

up organ-machines with energy-source machines (e.g. baby's mouth is coupled with mother's breast) without any recourse to unified entities. Consequently, Deleuze and Guattari propose that

[g]lobal persons—even the very form of persons—do not exist prior to the prohibitions that weigh on them and constitute them [...]: desire receives its first complete objects and is forbidden them at one and the same time.⁴⁸¹

Desire as they understand it is never a desire for something or someone. It only desires to produce, to differentiate itself. For them, '[t]he unconscious is totally unaware of persons as such'; it registers a father and mother only in terms of fragmented partial objects.⁴⁸² By assuming that desire wants mommy or daddy, psychoanalysis imposes on it a certain structuration that did not exist before: it codes desire of the analysed person in a particular way. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the distortion of desire begins precisely as a result prescribing complete objects of desire to individuated desiring subjects. It is at this point that the insertion of lack into the molecular order of desire begins.

Deleuze and Guattari relate the idea of lack to few different concepts that they use interchangeably (Jacques Lacan's concept of phallus, Oedipus, law, despotic signifier). Since they suggest that the idea of phallus is nothing but 'poorly understood will to power', the creation of lack can be translated into Nietzschean terminology.⁴⁸³ From this perspective, struggle for phallus as a symbol of social authority corresponds to a reactive (slavish) understanding of the will to power, which sees the latter as the wish to be in the position that is seen as socially desirable. In the context of the Oedipus complex of a male infant, for example, this slavish understanding of the will to power amounts to the psychoanalytic projection of child's wish to take his father's place as his mother's lover (and not to a blind vital force that simply seeks to affirm its vitality, as Nietzsche's noble conception would have it). In elevating the Oedipal desire above all others and making it universal, the psychoanalytic practice partakes in, and becomes complicit with, the production of lack. The latter appears only when we pass from ceaseless couplings of machines to unified entities.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

Deleuze and Guattari propose that 'everywhere we encounter the analytic process that consists in extrapolating a transcendent and common something, but that [process] is [really] a common-universal for the sole purpose of introducing lack into desire'.⁴⁸⁴ They add that 'the extraction of a transcendent complete object from the [a]signifying chain [of code serves] as a despotic signifier on which the entire chain thereafter seemed to depend'.⁴⁸⁵ According to them, interpreting and imposing the meaning on a polyvocal code of desire performs an operation in which the despotic signifier suspends this molecular polyvocality of unconscious. Furthermore, this illegitimate use of the connective synthesis gets recorded on the surface of the BwO, and thus becomes repeatable and habituated.

By subjecting desire to the Oedipal law psychoanalysis also performs a transcendent-orientated use of the disjunctive synthesis of recording. The latter is at the outset accomplished by means of the differentiation between a child, father and mother required by the Oedipus complex. This differentiation, according to Deleuze and Guattari, 'represents the minimum condition under which an "ego" takes on the co-ordinates that differentiate it at one and the same time with regard to generation, sex, and vital state'.⁴⁸⁶ According to Deleuze and Guattari, Oedipal law situates one socially in terms of being a parent or a child, a man or a woman, dead or alive. It is only through the imposition of these co-ordinates that the stable subjectivity begins to take shape. Unlike the inclusive disjunction of a schizo which unfolds as an open-ended series of alternatives (either, or, or etc.), the differentiation in question proceeds by means of exclusion; one is *either* a man *or* a woman.

Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari propose that the Oedipal law forces one either to accept the 'correct' one of these two molar categories, or find itself in the domain of transgression. Deleuze and Guattari propose that

Oedipus says to us: either you will internalise the differential functions that rule over the exclusive disjunctions, and thereby "resolve" Oedipus, or you will fall into the neurotic night of imaginary identifications.⁴⁸⁷

In their view, Oedipal law puts forward two options. One either accepts the hierarchical categorisation set by the social order, which results in an internalisation

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

of social authority (e.g. a male infant gives up the incestuous desire and finds a substitute for his mother, which corresponds to 'resolving' Oedipus).⁴⁸⁸ Or, conversely, one violates the given differentiation and goes astray (e.g. a male infant stays fixated on his mother, which results in neurosis).⁴⁸⁹ The main point is that in both cases (normality or neurosis) one remains firmly within the grid laid down by the Oedipal law. In both cases the Oedipal law blocks a multiplicity of connections between points of disjunction on the BwO, thus eliminating all other possible couplings between machines, and in this way channelling the flow of desire in a particular way. This blockage, which again takes the form of a despotic signifier, is recorded on the BwO. If such denial of connections is repeated, it thus gets habituated, which leads to instinctive suspension of such connections by the BwO.

Thirdly, psychoanalysis performs the transcendent use of conjunctive syntheses insofar as every symptom is explained by being referred back to the Oedipal law. According to Deleuze and Guattari, psychoanalysis operates by means of

a foregone conclusion that the collective agents will be interpreted as derivatives of, or substitutes for, parental figures, in a system of equivalence that rediscovers everywhere the father, the mother, and the ego.⁴⁹⁰

They point out that psychoanalysis interprets our thoughts and emotions in terms of familial determinations and in this way always concludes that these always result from a subject's relation to his or her mother or father. For Deleuze and Guattari, the family, rather than being a universal structure, is in fact always inserted into a socio-historical context, which is breaking into its circle from all sides. 'There is always an uncle from America', Deleuze and Guattari propose, 'a brother who went bad; an aunt who took off with a military man; a cousin out of work, bankrupt, or a victim of the Crash; an anarchist grandfather'.⁴⁹¹ While all of these agents of production and anti-production are registered as chains of code on the BwO, psychoanalysis reduces the determinations of the whole social field to those of the familial triangle. From the

⁴⁸⁸ It should be clear that the choice between available options is not a matter of a conscious decision, but unfolds at the unconscious level.

⁴⁸⁹ Buchanan explains that '[i]f one does not resign oneself to the fate of castration, and embrace the dictates of one's sex, then one is condemned to the proverbial dark night of the undifferentiated, the so-called 'polymorphic perversity' (Freud's phrase) of childhood eroticism, which knows neither subject nor object'. (Buchanan, *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus*, p. 68.)

⁴⁹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 101.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

psychoanalytic perspective, then, our relation to our boss and other figures of social authority is seen as being based on and preceded by our relationship with our father.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, this reductive attitude of psychoanalysis brings about 'the flattening of the polyvocal real in favor of a symbolic relationship between two articulations: so *that* is what *this* meant', 'it was your father, or it was your mother'.⁴⁹² Unlike the schizoid use of the third synthesis, which gives birth to a nomad subjectivity by means of a retrospective consummation of intensities ('So that's what I was!'), the illegitimate use manifests itself as a transcendent identification which can be summed up as 'This is who I am'. This can be elucidated by the example of the composer Igor Stravinsky, which Deleuze and Guattari introduce. According to them,

Stravinsky declares before dying: "My misfortune, I am sure of it, came from my father's being so distant with me and from the small amount of affection shown me by my mother. So I decided that one day I would show them."⁴⁹³

Stravinsky believes that his creative drive was determined by his parents neglecting him during his childhood. He sees his will to create music as a way of getting back at his them and proving that he is worthy of their affection. Since Stravinsky thinks he is driven to compose in order to be favourably represented in relation to his parents (struggle for phallus), it could be said here that his thinking reflects a reactive, slavish, mode of being. In opposition to the life-affirming joyful creation of Nietzsche's masters, Stravinsky holds a resentful conviction that his musical opus is a reaction to his neglectful parents. By offering a casual explanation for our feelings, psychoanalysis thus caters for the drive to find causes for the states in which we find ourselves, which Nietzsche sees as characteristic of humans and the functioning of our consciousness.

These three illegitimate uses of the syntheses of unconscious for which Deleuze and Guattari reproach psychoanalysis constitute the main operations of social repression. These operations are involved in every imposition of meaning involved in the process of ordering society. The imposition of meaning onto the productive unconscious corresponds to 'coding' or 'channelling' of desire, which is trained to accept the socially established standards of value. Since social repression is here a matter of ideas that in term structure molar aggregates in the unconscious, it has to be noted

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

that this kind of repression proceeds via consciousness. Unlike Freud, who sees the repressed unconscious as being composed of forces constantly trying to break into consciousness, Deleuze and Guattari take the opposite view. For them,

[t]he unconscious does not apply pressure to consciousness; rather, consciousness applies pressure and strait-jackets the unconscious, to prevent its escape. [...] What we have tried to show from the outset is how the unconscious productions and formations were not merely repelled by an agency of psychic repression that would enter into compromises with them, but actually covered over by antiformations that disfigure the unconscious in itself, and impose on it causations, comprehensions, and expressions that no longer have anything to do with its real functioning.⁴⁹⁴

Deleuze and Guattari here propose that the production of desire is disfigured by meanings and ideas which constitute molar aggregates or anti-formations in the unconscious. This straight-jacketing of desire by our conscious ideas constitutes social repression, or, in Freud's terms, repression proper. Yet, as suggested by Deleuze and Guattari, desiring connections are also repelled by what they understand as psychic repression. This repression is no less social, but differs from social repression, or repression proper, in that it circumvents consciousness. Psychic repression thus operates solely in an unconscious manner, that is, by directly mobilising the repulsive forces of the BwO.

To understand psychic repression, we need to first grasp the social character of its operations. Through their critique of psychoanalysis Deleuze and Guattari frequently propose they 'have never dreamed of saying that psychoanalysis invented Oedipus', but that 'the subjects of psychoanalysis arrive already Oedipalised, they demand it, they want more'.⁴⁹⁵ In their view, the repressive coding or straight-jacketing of desire, which psychoanalytic practice performs by imposing meaning on it, is in fact wanted by subjects who are already repressed or Oedipalised. This initial repression, the psychic one, is for Deleuze and Guattari a matter of the institution of family, which is under capitalism assigned a special function. Unlike pre-capitalist social formations that incorporated child rearing into communal and political life, capitalist social formation isolates human reproduction from the social field and privatises it in the family. Such isolation first of all severely restricts children's possibilities for forming productive connections. These possibilities are limited to their parents and siblings, who are prohibited in in the first place. Deleuze and Guattari assert that the familial

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 338–39.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

unit, with the prohibition of incest that it enforces, trains desire to be tame, submissive and susceptible to reactive affects such a guilt and bad conscience.

In their view, the prohibition of incest has particularly toxic effects in the context of the isolationist capitalist family. They maintain that the psychic repression performed by the familial unit tricks desire into accepting that it is indeed incest what it wanted. They propose that

[b]y placing the distorting mirror of incest before desire (that's what you wanted, isn't it?), desire is shamed, stupefied, it is placed in a situation without exit, it is easily persuaded to deny "itself" in the name of the more important interests of civilisation (what if everyone did the same, what if everyone married his mother or kept his sister for himself? there would no longer be any differentiation, any exchanges possible). We must act quickly and soon.⁴⁹⁶

Since a child from their earliest age lives exclusively amidst his or her family members, all of whom are prohibited and sexually placed under a taboo, Deleuze and Guattari maintain that their desire undergoes a certain pacification. They propose that this is achieved through the misleading nature of the incest prohibition, which implies that if incest is in fact prohibited, this is because it is actually desired. This deceptive image of incestuous desire, which needs to be urgently repressed in the interest of civilisation, brings about a disfigurement of desiring-production. Deleuze and Guattari propose that the familial repression of the fictitious incestuous desires gives rise 'to a consequent desire, all ready, all warm for punishment'.⁴⁹⁷ Trained as if it had an object corresponding to this fiction, desire is made guilty and obedient. As such, desire itself is taught to desire to be restrained and controlled.

Deleuze and Guattari make the role of familial repression clearest when they propose that '[p]sychic repression is such that social repression becomes desired'.⁴⁹⁸ For them, unconscious psychic repression enables and fosters the repression that operates at the level of consciousness. This psychic repression takes place by means of co-opting the mechanism of primal repression, i.e. the forces of repulsion that repel desiring-connections and are inherent to the molecular functioning of machines. Upbringing in an isolated and tabooed familial environment systematically rejects couplings of child's machines, which is registered on his BwO and thus habituated.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

Connections repeatedly rejected by their environment are from now on habitually repelled by their BwO. As forces of repulsion amount to paranoia, the family structure fosters paranoid tendencies and thus produces a disposition to seek out the means that would reinforce these tendencies. Deleuze and Guattari refer to this disposition as the 'Oedipal' or 'docile' subject, who, being used to having of his connections denied and being shamed, desires similar treatment. According to them, psychoanalysis is one of the means of additionally strengthening, i.e. repressing, the Oedipal subjectivity, which, as we will soon see, the schizophrenic forces of capitalism keep on dismantling.

By mistranslating desire into molar representation, psychoanalytic practice adds another layer of social repression to the initial psychic repression performed by the family. As noted, the site of social repression is consciousness, which, conditioned by familial repression, eagerly accepts the psychoanalytic explanation of its desires. As these explanations inevitably proceed through the illegitimate uses of syntheses, they temper with the unconscious which 'can no longer operate in accordance with its own constituent machines, but merely "represent" what a repressive apparatus gives it to represent'.⁴⁹⁹ Deleuze and Guattari add that the imposition of Oedipal interpretations 'gives rise to the inevitable illusions (including the structure and the signifier) by means of which consciousness makes of the unconscious an image consonant with its wishes'.⁵⁰⁰ This falsifying image that consciousness accepts as a true meaning of its desires is registered in the unconscious. These disfiguring 'antiformations' on the recording surface of the BwO immobilise the functioning of our machines by blocking productive connections. Such anti-formations in the unconscious are situated 'where a despotic Signifier destroys all the chains, linearises them, biunivocalises them, and uses the bricks as so many immobile units for the construction of an imperial Great Wall of China'.⁵⁰¹ Schizoanalysis, as we will see, is concerned precisely with demolishing this imperial wall constructed by repressive social structures.

Forces of psychic and social repressions thus jointly apply selective pressures, excluding some elements and retaining others. In this way, they amass molecular particles of desire into molar aggregates, and articulate what we perceive as our

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40. Biunivocalisation here refers to an operation by which one term is made univocal to another term (i.e. 'that is what this meant').

social reality. The structuring of these molar aggregates corresponds to the formation of representational forms, such as persons, races, nations, classes, species, football teams, etc. For Deleuze and Guattari, paranoia should be seen precisely as a mode of social investment that invests these molar aggregates. In particular, they propose that paranoid investment is defined 'by the enslavement of production and the desiring-machines to the gregarious aggregates that they constitute on a large scale under a given form of [...] selective sovereignty'.⁵⁰² Paranoid investments thus seek to organise, unify, regularise, signify or totalise molecular elements and in this way subordinate them to the statistically-dominant molar aggregates and social codes. Similarly, it could be said that paranoid investments seek to be favourably represented in relation to the dominant hierarchy of values. 'The paranoid engineers masses', add Deleuze and Guattari, 'and is continually forming large aggregates, inventing heavy apparatuses for the regimentation and the repression of the desiring-machines'.⁵⁰³ As it seeks to enforce order and prevent variations and irregularities, paranoia is not far from what Deleuze understands as the negative will to power, which opposes itself to the self-differentiating life.

As anticipated, for Deleuze and Guattari paranoia and schizophrenia constitute the two main poles of the libidinal dynamics that characterises capitalism. Schizophrenic investments, which invest molecular elements and in this way overturn or even explode molar codes, should thus be seen as a counteracting tendency to the paranoid investment. To situate my discussion more explicitly within the context of the capitalist social formation, I will now explain how capitalism fosters these two tendencies, and how the tensions between them are played out. We will see that the capitalist formation, on the one hand, disentangles subjects of capitalism by freeing the flows of desire that underlie them, thus generating a schizophrenising effect. Yet, on the other hand, capitalism mobilises all kinds of paranoid repressive apparatuses to re-channel these flows and stabilise these threatened subjectivities.

In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari construct a genealogy of capitalism by examining how this social organisation was assembled from the elements of preceding social formations. They propose that the main distinction between capitalism and non-capitalist social formations is that the former is able to reproduce itself without reproducing systems of social code that order desiring-production. While

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 348.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 364.

non-capitalist social organisations needed to ‘codify flows of desire, to inscribe them, to record them, to see to it that no flow exists that is not properly damned up, channelled, regulated’ in order to conserve their mode of production, capitalism does so without enforcing the continuity of hierarchies of blood, honour or race.⁵⁰⁴ These hierarchies seek to channel desire so it invests pre-assigned objects, and thus enforce an unchanging social order. Capitalism, on the other hand, maintains itself above all through the impersonal operations of the market. As such, it does not completely depend on reproducing the hierarchies of social code.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, social codes (i.e. values, traditions, and norms that order social relations) lose their primary function in capitalism. Moreover, in their view the forces of capitalism constantly destabilise or ‘decode’ them. Deleuze and Guattari propose that

[c]apitalism is in fact born of the encounter of two sorts of flows: the decoded flows of production in the form of money-capital, and the decoded flows of labor in the form of the ‘free worker.’ Hence, unlike previous social machines, the capitalist machine is incapable of producing a code that will apply to the whole of the social field.⁵⁰⁵

Capitalism is a result of freeing two different flows: the flow of landless peasants, who are ‘freed’ from the privatised land and thus find themselves without any means of subsistence, and the flow of money, which is released from being tied in landed property. Capitalism thus begins by *decoding* the social fabric of codes, disinvesting them of their force and meaning, and so releasing both peasants and wealth from the contexts in which they were traditionally embedded. Deleuze and Guattari refer to the material aspect of this process as *detritorialisation*.⁵⁰⁶ Deterritorialisation is the detachment of an entity (bodies and resources, but also ideas, language, money or capital) from the material environment that shaped it or produced it. This process also involves the detachment of the desiring machines from the material relations that originally formed their habituations. Deleuze and Guattari see this process as a positive development as it frees the desiring-machine from the coded power-relations they were subjected to. This allows them to form new desiring connections, resulting

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁵⁰⁶ Decoding is for Deleuze and Guattari a parallel to deterritorialisation, but refers to representations and meanings rather than material objects and processes. Decoding thus relates to the way capitalism defines those objects – as measurable abstract quantities, rather than having any concrete qualities.

in new experiences, needs, and desires. In their view, the unrestrained desiring-production that constitutes schizophrenia is incited precisely by the processes of decoding and deterritorialisation.

Yet, as Deleuze and Guattari go on to show, every process of deterritorialisation leads to, or at least implies, a process of *reterritorialisation*. The process of reterritorialisation, the other side of the intrinsic dynamic of capitalism, refers to the material reinsertion of an entity into a certain constellation of power. Concretely, in the above case of primitive accumulation, reterritorialisation happens when banished peasants and liberated funds unify into textile factories to function as labour-power and capital. Yet, as stressed above, reterritorialisation does not proceed by enforcing new codes, and thus by *recoding* the flows of desire, but rather through what Deleuze and Guattari term 'axioms'. The domain of axioms concerns principles for subordinating something to quantitative evaluation, like, e.g. money. They propose that

[b]y substituting money for the very notion of a code, it [capitalism] has created an axiomatic of abstract quantities that keeps moving further and further in the direction of the deterritorialisation of the socius.⁵⁰⁷

Deleuze and Guattari point out that the market is not concerned with qualitative forces. It is focused exclusively on quantitative monetary aspects, that is, the axioms that measure abstract labour, capital, and surplus value. Axioms function as systems of market equivalency which order and delegate the flows of labour and capital. For Deleuze and Guattari, axioms operate by means of pure calculation, and they have no meaning in themselves. Jason Read points out that '[a]xioms are distinct from codes in that they do not require belief in order to function. Axioms relate to no other scene or sphere, such as religion, politics or law, which would provide their ground or justification'.⁵⁰⁸ According to Deleuze and Guattari, capitalism proceeds through the continual dynamic of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, dictated by the algorithms of profit-curves. This dynamic is intensified because ever-new axioms are added, which opens up new dimensions of existence to the exploitation by capital.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁵⁰⁸ Jason Read, 'The Age of Cynicism: Deleuze and Guattari on Production of Subjectivity in Capitalism', in *Deleuze and Politics*, ed. Ian Buchanan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), pp. 139–59 (p. 145).

'Axioms cannot be argued with', Read continues, 'it is only possible to add new axioms to the system'.⁵⁰⁹ As axioms do not operate at the level of meaning, they can be superseded only by introducing new axioms. The process of axiomatisation is to be understood as deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation combined. To add a new axiom is to free productive flows of desire, while at the same time reterritorialising them in another context, which allows the extraction of surplus value and its privatisation. This incessant movement of release and capture, freeing of resources, and binding them in relations of exploitation elsewhere, just to release them again as obsolete, energises the escalating spiral of capitalism. By pointing out the ongoing and increasing destabilisation of social codes, Deleuze and Guattari echo a well-known passage from Marx and Engels' *The Communist Manifesto*:

Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.⁵¹⁰

Marx and Engels anticipate and diagnose the chronic instability of meaning caused by the operations of capitalism. They envision the demystification of the codes fixated with the hierarchies of tradition, the process that culminates in the unparalleled mobility and fluidity of our capitalist existence. This is the condition in which schizophrenia as a process looms large. Even if this process is a result of capitalism's need to account for ever-new ways of extracting surplus value, Deleuze and Guattari see in this a positive process, because it allows for free movement of entities and the creation of new desiring connections. Schizophrenia, however, is only one side of the economic, cultural, and libidinal processes of capitalism.

Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge the constant reappearances of 'anachronisms' of social code, which institute the other end of the capitalist dynamic.⁵¹¹ The latter corresponds to paranoia, which, as noted, consists of a tendency to impose systems of meaning with a lasting authority, and subjugate the functioning of desiring

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁵¹⁰ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, on *Marxists Internet Archive* <<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm>> [accessed on 26/9/2018].

⁵¹¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 35.

machines to these molar aggregates. The paranoiac pole manifests itself in formation of apparatuses tasked with *recording* and thus channelling and repressing desiring production. Yet, for Deleuze and Guattari these processes are not as forceful as the processes of decoding, which release entities from coded relations and thereby allow their incorporation into the relations of capitalism. The meanings put into effect by the processes of recoding are ancillary to the operations of axioms. As already noted, capitalism functions through axioms ordering material processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, and 'is incapable of producing a code that will apply to the whole of the social field'.⁵¹² As a consequence, recoding is dictated by axioms of the market and is in service of the latter. According to Deleuze and Guattari

[c]apitalism institutes or restores all sorts of residual and artificial, imaginary, or symbolic territorialities, thereby attempting, as best it can to recode, to rechannel persons who have been defined in terms of abstract quantities. Everything returns or recurs: States, nations, families. That is what makes the ideology of capitalism 'a motley painting of everything that has ever been believed'.⁵¹³

The paranoiac pole of capitalism is thus first of all the domain of the state and other institutions, which provide beliefs that are local but never add up to a unitary belief-system. The state provides a framework for ideals of citizenship, family values, but also various forms of radical nationalisms. Through the codes enforced by the state apparatuses we identify ourselves as law-abiding citizens, owners of private property, etc. As emphasised by Jason Read, it is also necessary that we identify ourselves as workers and consumers, which is still vital for the reproduction of capitalism.⁵¹⁴ As such, the capitalist domain of meaning also encompasses motivational schemes for employees, start-up initiatives, ethical consumption, life-style codes, etc. Deleuze and Guattari point out the diversity of this domain, which seems odd as it is artificially added to the meaningless calculus of the market. These social codes are merely superimposed onto the axioms of decoded flows, which effectively organise social production by regarding workers as abstract quantities, and do so without any

⁵¹² *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁵¹⁴ As argued by Jason Read, capitalism, too, needs to reproduce its forms of life: 'Capitalism too must reproduce particular forms of subjectivity, particular forms of technological competence and political subjection, but it must do so while simultaneously breaking with the past. As Marx writes: "The advance of capitalist production develops a working class which by education [*Erziehung*], tradition, and habit [*Gewohnheit*] looks upon the requirements of that mode of production as self-evident natural laws." We might add to this that just as capital requires the subjectivity of the worker, it also requires the consumer, and other formations of subjectivity.' (Read, 'Age of Cynicism', p. 152)

concern of what they might believe in (as long as it does not interfere with their productivity). Finally, it is precisely these social codes that Oedipalised subjects of capitalism, trained by the family to desire repression, seek out and cling on to.

Deleuze and Guattari locate the dynamics of capitalism between the extreme poles of schizophrenia and paranoia. They assert that capitalist economy 'produces an awesome schizophrenic accumulation of energy or charge, against which it brings all its vast powers of repression to bear'.⁵¹⁵ On the one hand, the schizophrenic forces of decoding and deterritorialisation, which result from capitalist processes of production and consumption, melt all that is solid into air, and in doing so, they constantly incite fluid and dissipated flows of desire. The paranoiac forces of repression, on the other hand, seek to capture these flows in order to account for the extraction of the surplus value. This privatisation of profit, be it monetary or symbolic, is achieved through the mechanisms of reterritorialisation and recoding. While such mechanisms primarily rely on measurement and quantification, they also require individualising apparatuses, e.g. private property, which institute the individual as the seat for the attribution of profit. Schizoanalysis as conceived by Deleuze and Guattari is thus situated between these two counteracting tendencies: the forces of schizophrenia, which enable it in the first place and which schizoanalysis seeks to foster; and the counteracting forces of paranoia, whose recoding operations schizoanalysis seeks to subvert.

iii) Schizoanalysis as Immanent Ethics

The final section of this chapter will argue that Deleuze and Guattari's conception of schizoanalysis can be understood in terms of immanent ethics. Consequently, I will show that, as with the thought of Spinoza and Nietzsche, the central aim of this schizoanalytic approach is the proliferation of desiring-production, i.e. the immanent principle synthesising reality itself. This aim is, according to Deleuze and Guattari, achieved by overturning 'the theater of representation into the order of desiring-production'.⁵¹⁶ I will approach this overturning via the consideration of the negative and the positive task of schizoanalysis. Both of these tasks will be investigated in relation to the notion of the limit. In particular, I will demonstrate that the negative task

⁵¹⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 34.

⁵¹⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 271.

consists of the overcoming of paranoiac tendencies, which seek to safeguard limits, while the positive task consists of intensifying the schizophrenic tendencies, thus going to the limits of one's powers. Furthermore, I argue that the completion of these two tasks results in the restructuring of normalised (or 'Oedipalised') subjectivity and creation of new desires and values. Finally, I outline the parallels between schizoanalysis and the ethical approaches that Deleuze locates in Spinoza and Nietzsche.

I have explained in the previous section that Deleuze and Guattari explicitly link schizophrenia to the capitalist social formation. For them, it is 'our very own "malady," modern man's sickness'.⁵¹⁷ They maintain that '[s]chizophrenia as a process is desiring-production, but it is this production as it functions at the end, as *the limit* of social production determined by the conditions of capitalism'.⁵¹⁸ While a threat to every preceding formation, schizophrenia for the first time in history emerges under the determinate conditions of capitalism. In opposition to pre-capitalist formations, which feverishly policed its limits, enforced an unchanging order of things and warded off any unknown flows, the disruptive and demystifying functioning of capitalism brings out the molecular elements of schizophrenia that now linger at its ever-expanding limits. The idea of the limit is in fact of central importance for Deleuze and Guattari. I will consequently use it as a means of organising my argument. To understand what is at stake with this notion, let us first unpack another use that Deleuze and Guattari impart to the concept of BwO. In addition to its functions in relation to desiring-machines (as a non-productive stasis, a recording surface, and fluid state), they use the idea of BwO in relation to social organisation.

They propose that 'the body without organs is the limit of [social organisation], the ultimate residue of a deterritorialised [social organisation]'.⁵¹⁹ In their view, the BwO in this sense refers to the entirety of existence that at a given moment in time remains unorganised by social codes. As such, it consists of everything that lies beyond our understanding of ourselves and the world at that given time. Under capitalism this conceptual limit is being constantly expanded as capitalism relentlessly seeks to

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

⁵¹⁹ The actual term that Deleuze and Guattari use in this quote is that of *socius*, which is the concept they use to describe the grounding that legitimises social order under a given formation. Under capitalism *socius* corresponds to 'the body of capital', which consists of axioms that refer everything to its monetary value. I will avoid a more detailed discussion of this term here as it is not significant for my argument.

extract surplus values from what still lies beyond its limits. In this way, meanings and functions which accord with the logic of capital are constantly imposed on new things and phenomena, which ceaselessly expands our conceptual limits and upsets the distribution of values. A great example of this can be found with the 'torches of freedom', a late 1920s emancipatory movement in the US directed against the perception that smoking is inappropriate for women. This movement, which was orchestrated by advertising agencies, successfully established the right for women to freely smoke in public, while at the same time effectively doubling the market for cigarette companies. 'Freeing' women in this way from constraints of tradition (decoding and deterritorialising them) is coterminous with the co-optation of their newly acquired freedom in the form of a new market axiom. Similar disruption of established ways of living and redefinition of our conceptual limits might result from different scientific developments. A newly discovered use for a previously unemployed metal, for example, can completely restructure economic, political and cultural life of a country that is rich in this metal. As a result of such a scientific discovery, new utilisation of this metal, and the changes it brings about, expand our understanding of the world.

Since we can (at least hypothetically) desire everything that a given formation allows us to desire, both conceptions of BwOs (individual and social) effectively refer to the same limit. Our individual conceptual coordinates are thus situated within the conceptual limits of our given social formation. By now it should be clear that for Deleuze and Guattari there is nothing voluntary about the molar representations that constitute our ideas and beliefs. In their view, our subjectivities are organised by the BwO as the recording surface, which gives rise to intensities by means of synthesising proportions of attraction and repulsion, schizophrenia and paranoia. Insofar as our subjectivities are Oedipalised, they are structured through the reinforcement of our paranoid tendencies. This is achieved by means of social repression, which channels schizoid flow of desire through enforcing global and specific connections, exclusive disjunctions and transcendent conjunctions. As noted, Deleuze and Guattari maintain that these transcendent uses of syntheses of desire disfigure the functioning of the schizoid unconscious by covering it up with different meanings, comprehensions and causal explanations. This straight-jacketing of desire is recorded on the BwO in the form of a despotic signifier, a disfiguring anti-formation, which suspends the molecular polyvocality of code. Similarly to the BwO of social organisation articulated by social codes, the recordings on our BwO equally circumvent and prescribe our own conceptual limits.

Thus organised, Oedipal subjectivities are for Deleuze and Guattari the starting point of schizoanalysis. Deleuze and Guattari differentiate its main tasks into one negative (or 'destructive') task and two positive tasks. In my analysis I focus on the destructive task and the first positive task, which Holland groups under the banner of 'therapeutic transformation'.⁵²⁰ I will avoid discussing the second positive task, which he terms 'revolutionary transformation'. The latter is explicitly concerned with the functioning of political collectives. Since from the perspective of schizoanalysis every investment of desire is inevitably social, the distinction between ethics and politics in *Anti-Oedipus* remains inevitably blurred. As they too see our biological inclinations inseparable from the forces of culture that shape them, the same can be said for Nietzsche and Spinoza. The collective aspect of ethics is in fact particularly pronounced in the case of the latter as Spinoza advocates for a political project that will be able to organise society in accordance to adequate ideas of reason. Even though ethics is thus necessarily related to wider political and collective context, due to limited scope of this thesis, my investigation of immanent ethics remains focused on the ethical activity that can be undertaken individually.

The negative task of schizoanalysis is directed at the destruction of Oedipal formations in the unconscious, which underlie our beliefs and ideas. Deleuze and Guattari begin by proposing that this task 'goes by way of destruction—a whole scouring of the unconscious, a complete curettage'.⁵²¹ For them, the schizoanalytic destruction is akin to a procedure that seeks to remove an unwanted tissue from the unconscious. This tissue, or 'an internal secretion', as Deleuze refers to it elsewhere, is a matter of Oedipal structures or territorialities delimited by a despotic signifier.⁵²² It is these territorialities that provide the underlying grid to a set of illusive beliefs that give structure and purpose to our lives. These beliefs, our pieties, are mere archaisms, folkloric left-overs, whose illusory nature has been exposed by the demystifications of the market. When Deleuze and Guattari propose that 'we are still pious' their argument echoes not only Nietzsche's same-titled section from *The Gay Science*, but also his critique of nihilism.⁵²³ Like Deleuze and Guattari, Nietzsche sees beliefs and

⁵²⁰ Eugene W. Holland, *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 97.

⁵²¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 299.

⁵²² Gilles Deleuze, 'Letter To a Harsh Critic', in *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 10.

⁵²³ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 306.

values persisting (in form of ideas such as Truth, Being and Reality) long after the death of God.

Deleuze and Guattari consider psychoanalysis as a deeply pious enterprise. By believing that our adult desires are actually determined by our childhood relations to our parents (and convincing us of the same), psychoanalysis recodes our desires in a certain manner. In this way, it causes 'those who no longer believe in anything to continue believing' and reconstitutes 'a private territory for them'.⁵²⁴ As psychoanalysis propagates such beliefs, Deleuze and Guattari see it as the 'training ground of a new kind of priest, the director of bad conscience', thus again echoing Nietzsche.⁵²⁵ In fact, they explicitly equate bad conscience with the idea of Oedipus.⁵²⁶ This reactive affect for them arises from being persuaded by the psychoanalyst that we are guilty of desiring to sleep with our parents. As noted, this operation assumes that what is prohibited had to be desired and in this way traps desire in a false belief by recoding it. Even though the belief in the Oedipal law does not seem particularly relevant today, there is no lack of beliefs akin to it to adopt. 'You can believe in the Oedipus', Holland proposes,

but you can also believe you are guilty of not working hard enough, owing too much, or over-indulging yourself; you can believe in the superiority of your religion, nation, or sports-team – and all these beliefs are paranoid molar investments which contravene the molecular investments of desiring-production.⁵²⁷

For Deleuze and Guattari, subjectivities oedipalised by familial repression seek out beliefs as they allow them to consolidate their paranoid tendencies. What we are here calling a belief or a value can be related to Nietzsche's idea of a thing: it is a general category that 'legislates' over an entity or a phenomenon.⁵²⁸ A person should be a hard worker, who always pays their debts; or, conversely, a person should style their hair in a certain way, or buy only locally grown produce. Similarly, a country is only interesting or worthwhile if it is like my country, etc. Values and beliefs establish representational terrain for entities and phenomena, thus prescribing their limits and barriers. These limits are conceptual limits which are grounded on the fields of intensities marked on the BwO, which they are reflections of.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 322.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁶ See *Ibid.*, p. 215.

⁵²⁷ Holland, *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus*, p. 98.

⁵²⁸ See page x of this thesis.

Paranoid investments of the molar representation are intrinsically related to the notion of the limit. Lapoujade proposes that Deleuze and Guattari replace the notion of the object of desire with territoriality precisely due to this relation.⁵²⁹ Yet, he also adds that what desire invests is not a territory but instead the limit that constitutes a territory. According to Lapoujade,

[w]hat individuals cling to is the limit that they mark out, that is, the limit that territorialises them. 'From now on, it's my home, it's mine ...' They live off this limit, a limit they occupy permanently, which means that every libidinal investment is always immediately political. We can see this in paranoid investment, which makes the limit a jealously guarded, in principle impassable, frontier.⁵³⁰

In his view, paranoid investments operate as the guardians of limits, which are posed in terms of prohibition. These investments protect territories from the external intrusions that would compromise their unity or identity. Such paranoid policing can be aimed at keeping one's own body germ-free, patrolling the boundaries defining a couple, protecting the political party from ill-disposed infiltrations, or maintaining the unity of a nation or the purity of a race. Paranoia is equally manifested in trying to establish categorically whether something is good or bad, if someone is telling the truth or lying, or if a patient has successfully negotiated his Oedipal desires or not. These are the limits that are established by means of an exclusive disjunction (the logic of 'either, or'). As indicated by Lapoujade, maintaining these limits amounts to the preserving the territories that constitute a (more or less) stable Oedipalised subjectivity.

In opposition to psychoanalysis, which recodes desire by propagating a belief in Oedipus, schizoanalysis in its destructive task is concerned with undoing beliefs of all kinds. According to Deleuze and Guattari, schizoanalytic destruction must proceed

as quickly as possible, but it can also proceed only with great patience, great care, by successively undoing the representative territorialities and reterritorialisations through which a subject passes in his individual history. For there are several layers, several planes of resistance that come from within or are imposed from without.⁵³¹

⁵²⁹ Lapoujade, *Aberrant Movements*, p. 191.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 191–92.

⁵³¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 318.

Such destruction aims at removing the Oedipal secretions, our private territorialities, freeing molecular desire from constraints of molar representations. As a result, this negative task can be compared with what Deleuze terms active destruction in the thought of Nietzsche.⁵³² Like active destruction, which seeks to demolish reactive forces that underlie our mental representations (which inevitably amount to negative evaluations), schizoanalysis seeks to purge our unconscious of paranoid territorialities. Deleuze and Guattari maintain that attempts at undoing these Oedipal territorialities is met with by the resistance of paranoid forces of repulsion.

These forces come *from within* as they are immanent to the functioning of productive unconscious (in the form of primal repression which suspends completed processes of desiring-production). Yet, oedipalisation comes about when these innate paranoid forces are co-opted by forces of psychic and social repression, which propagate paranoia *from without*. These forms of repression jointly constitute the territorialities that mark out an individual subject. For Deleuze and Guattari, the exploration of these Oedipal territorialities seem to proceed by investigating their limits, which are policed by paranoid forces. The care and patience they suggest is linked to the long process of experimentation, which allows us to learn about our repulsions. Conversely, the swiftness concerns the moment of affective reversal, perhaps not unlike the Spinozist moment of joyful insight, corresponding to the moment of leaving, i.e. deterritorialising, the territory once invested.

Deleuze and Guattari further elucidate this process of experimentation leading to destruction of our private territorialities by proposing that

we must go back by way of old lands, study their nature, their density; we must seek to discover how the machinic indices are grouped on each of these lands that permit going beyond them.⁵³³

The groupings of machinic indices correspond to fields of intensities on the BwO; the lived feelings that underlie and precede our extensive states of consciousness. As noted, these intensities are produced through synthesis of relative proportions of attraction and repulsion generated by our desiring machines, and, respectively, our BwO. The discovering of machinic indices consists of a patient investigation of which productive connections are refused by our BwO and why this is the case. Deleuze

⁵³² See p. 108 of this thesis.

⁵³³ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 318.

and Guattari also propose that we should establish how these indices are grouped together as our repulsions might be randomly associated with other points of disjunction, which were not directly subject to repression but are blocked from establishing connections by proxy.

The functioning of these paranoid forces is evident with doing research. They are always at work with the topics, themes or field of knowledge to which we are habitually led to ignore, or are put off by them. My own long-time bias consisted of my complete unwillingness to engage with the field of 'analytic philosophy', a tendency that is not uncommon with 'theory' or 'continental' philosophy academics (the aversion goes, of course, both ways). There were several reasons for this antipathy, all of which are rather typical. I was baffled by the analytics' uncritical acceptance of principles that the continentals spend decades critiquing; I was turned off by their repeated and categorical dismissals of 'theory' as lacking in rigour; I resented the lack of opportunity for continental philosophy students within the predominantly analytic department; etc. In short, for a long time my BwO was stubbornly resisting productive connections with anything that was in some way or another associated with 'analytic' philosophy.

And yet, by paranoically investing the limit between 'continental' and 'analytic' philosophy (a thus staking an Oedipal territoriality for myself), my unconscious was systematically repressing desiring production, which has prevented me from potentially formulating interesting ideas. Similarly, the same kind of instinctive resistance is experienced every time we are faced with a statement that is utterly at odds with how our BwO is inscribed ('Trump is (not) a good president', 'our country should (not) welcome refugees', 'Spinoza is (not) worth reading', etc.). The response to such conflicting statements can be visceral, as they invite us to see the world organised in a very different way. It is precisely these limits that Deleuze and Guattari encourage us to systematically explore by relating them to our individual history. By learning about these limits we can become more confident in pushing against them, and perhaps eventually end up undoing the territorialities they delimit and the values they consequently give rise to. In going beyond these exclusive disjunctions, we might be able to scramble social codes and complicate their meaning (not unlike the schizo does). The demolition of 'the artifices that inject the unconscious with "beliefs" that are not even irrational, but on the contrary only too reasonable and consistent with

the established order' for Deleuze and Guattari enables us to escape the straight-jacket of molar representation.⁵³⁴

From the schizoanalytic perspective, the unconscious does not concern itself with beliefs. All it wants to do is synthesise desire. Instead of merely representing 'what a repressive apparatus gives it to represent', Deleuze and Guattari maintain that desire should be helped to resume its immanent auto-production.⁵³⁵ The undoing of molar representation, which traps and sabotages our machines, should be for them accompanied by figuring out what makes these machines produce. Correspondingly, they propose that the first positive task of schizoanalysis is

that of learning what a subject's desiring-machines are, how they work, with what syntheses, what bursts of energy in the machine, what constituent misfires, with what flows, what chains, and what becomings in each case.⁵³⁶

In addition to destroying the inevitably falsifying representations, the task of schizoanalysis as an immanent ethics is concerned with discovering the molecular order of unconscious that persists beneath them. This corresponds to re-discovering our partial objects, the molecular fragments functioning as the basic elements of desiring connectivity. We have noted that these molecular elements are characterised by positive dispersion, the radical lack of relatedness, which corresponds to the condition under which desire is able to circulate freely, i.e. in a schizophrenic manner.

Deleuze and Guattari propose that 'the desiring machines live [...] under the order of dispersion of molecular elements', the order which is neither organised nor unified by molar aggregates.⁵³⁷ For them, the functioning of machines can be revived only insofar as we manage to reach this level of in-organisation of partial objects. The latter form working parts of desiring machines but only 'in a state of dispersion such that one part is continually referring to a part from an entirely different machine, like [...] the wasp and the orchid'.⁵³⁸ According to the well-known example Deleuze and Guattari provide, orchids (by imitating female wasps) attract male wasps and trick them into transporting pollen, thus forming a productive relationship with the insect species that is from the perspective of biological evolution completely unrelated to

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*

them.⁵³⁹ The dispersion sought by the first positive task of schizoanalysis is characterised by absence of a despotic signifier, which allows for the production of unexpected desiring connections between diverse partial objects of this order.

The experimentation through which we should aim to establish what our desiring machines function with has strong resonances with the one that Deleuze finds with Spinoza. We have seen that Spinoza's ethical experimentation seeks to ascertain the affective relations that increase our power of acting by identifying the joys, as Deleuze puts it, 'that concern us'. These passive joys can be used as a 'spring-board' that allows us to come into *active* possession of our power of acting by forming common notions. Conversely, Deleuze and Guattari's experimentation seeks to resume the desiring-production that was blocked off by social repression. For them, this regeneration consists of the following:

undoing the blockage or the coincidence on which the repression properly speaking relies; transforming the apparent opposition of repulsion (the body without organs/the machines-partial objects) into a condition of real functioning; ensuring this functioning in the forms of attraction and production of intensities; thereafter integrating the failures in the attractive functioning, as well as enveloping the zero degree in the intensities produced; and thereby causing the desiring-machines to start up again.⁵⁴⁰

In their view, the first positive task should be to unknot the mechanism of primal repression from its co-optation by the forms of social repression.⁵⁴¹ In this way, it would do away with the paranoid forces that interrupt the desiring-production before the primal repression would do so. As noted, primal repression of the BwO suspends this desiring connection only when the process of production is completed, or, to put it in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's example, when nothing more can be added to the schizophrenic table. By undoing of coincidence of primal and social repression, schizoanalysis would thus enable the completion of the production process, which amounts to 'a condition of real functioning'. The completion of the process corresponds precisely to the production of the BwO as a sterile stasis, the anti-productive element which finally suspends desiring connections and dis-organises the organs. As it is only the completed processes that get recorded on the BwO, the finalisation of the desiring process would result in a new inscription in the form of a

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁵⁴⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 338.

⁵⁴¹ We should remind ourselves that both 'social' and 'psychic' repression are social in nature.

point of disjunction. The latter would be in term capable of attracting desiring machines, amending 'the failures in attractive functioning'.

Deleuze and Guattari connect the creation of a new recording on the BwO with the institution of a new territory. 'That is what the completion of the process is', they propose, 'not a promised and a pre-existing land, but a world created in the process of its tendency, its coming undone, its deterritorialisation'.⁵⁴² What is deterritorialized in the process of completion of schizophrenia is the territory that circumscribed and prescribed one's connective possibilities. By crossing its limits a new land is created, a new point of reference on the BwO, one which allows for new connections, and thus new ways of acting and thinking. Put differently, by means of schizophrenic process one is able to break out of the grid of exclusive disjunctions laid down by the current social order (either man or woman, good or bad, continental or analytic, etc.) and acquire new conceptual limits.

In opposition to the paranoid mode of investment, which invests limits establish by molar representation, schizophrenic mode of investment crosses over to the other side, the side of the radically dispersed molecular elements. As put by Lapoujade,

[t]he first mode invests the limit for itself (paranoia) in order to make the limit the law to which power must submit, its own powers as well as those of others; the second invests power for itself (schizo process) without taking into account the limits fixed by the law.⁵⁴³

Lapoujade's formulation allows us relate the distinction between paranoia and schizophrenia to the two types of hierarchies we have encountered with Nietzsche. The hierarchy established by paranoid forces is that of slaves: it is based on the established (reactive) values which are instituted to discipline the self-differentiating force of life, and keep it within set limits. This paranoid hierarchy evaluates entities and phenomena according to their distance or proximity to the criteria prescribed by molar representation (power is here an object of representation). Conversely, the schizoid hierarchy corresponds to that of the nobles as the schizo invests desiring production itself, and in this way, like the masters, goes to the limit of their power. It is for these reasons that Deleuze and Guattari refer to the schizo process also as the

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 322.

⁵⁴³ Lapoujade, *Aberrant Movements*, pp. 193–94.

affirmation of difference.⁵⁴⁴ Drawing on Lapoujade, we could say that the paranoid hierarchy

distributes the share of social power due to each person assumes the imperious aspect of the rule, law, or axiom—except, that is, when desire crosses over the limit, which frees it from divisions and attributions, when it is no longer a question of determining the share of power due to each person because, on the other side of the limit, there remains neither share nor self.⁵⁴⁵

As the schizo process carries us beyond the territories that demit our consciousness, Lapoujade suggests that it also suspends the obligations and duties that come with our private territorialities. The uncharted new lands that are inscribed on our BwO are no longer under the legislation of existing social order, and outside of a domain of any paranoid investment.

Since schizophrenics are constantly in the process of creating new lands and vistas, their subjectivities being reborn each moment, they take this nomadic process to the extreme. While Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge the incredible suffering and vertigo schizophrenics undergo, they still see them as some sort of tortured heroes. In their view, schizophrenics are in fact comparable to Nietzsche's irresponsible overman, and even Spinoza's joyful free man. For Deleuze and Guattari, a schizophrenic

produces himself as a free man, irresponsible, solitary, and joyous, finally able to say and do something simple in his own name, without asking permission; a desire lacking nothing, a flux that overcomes barriers and codes, a name that no longer designates any ego whatever. He has simply ceased being afraid of becoming mad.⁵⁴⁶

The schizophrenic freedom that Deleuze and Guattari are referring to indeed corresponds to the concept of freedom that we find with Deleuze's Spinoza. Like a free man, who actively produces his own affects, and is hence free from passively undergoing determinations caused by external bodies, the schizophrenic breaks through the conceptual limit of social formation and creates territories on his BwO,

⁵⁴⁴ Deleuze and Guattari in fact implicitly state that schizophrenia as a process amounts to Nietzschean affirmation of difference (see *Anti-Oedipus*, p.76). On the same page they also equate both concepts with the inclusive disjunction, the intensive journey on the BwO that proceeds through the logic of 'either, or, or, or', which characterises the perpetual nomadic movement of a schizo.

⁵⁴⁵ Lapoujade, *Aberrant Movements*, p. 195.

⁵⁴⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 131.

where he is no longer determined by any social code. Yet, since Spinoza's rational man is effectively freed from passions, his freedom thus consisting of the stabilisation of affective variations, the schizo is perhaps closer to Nietzsche's irresponsible man. Like the latter, who is by means of the test of eternal return freed from social obligations, schizophrenic process unburdens the schizo from responsibilities and duties laid down by the normative force of social values, rules and laws. Deleuze and Guattari further propose that schizo is solitary in his intensive journeys on the BwO. This is so because he or she traverses territories that are shared with no-one. This radically alienates him from the molar normality of Oedipalised subjectivities, from the perspective of which his behaviour seems completely incomprehensible (and thus 'mad and psychotic'). As the result of the intensive transformations, the schizophrenic finds himself transmuted in ways that produce him as fearless of the repercussions of his actions. Having deterritorialised the Oedipal anti-formations in the unconscious, he is no longer subject to the reactive affects of bad conscience and guilt. Finally, free from the paranoid policing of Oedipal territories established by social repression, the schizophrenic also moves beyond the conceptual co-ordinates of a stable subject as it becomes one with the productive schizophrenic process.

Needless to say, Deleuze and Guattari rightly acknowledge the dangers involved in schizoanalytic experimentation, which is why they advocate extreme caution. They clearly do not advocate a descent into psychotic madness as they are acutely aware that one can never completely and permanently reach schizophrenia as a process since this would mean the absolute dissolution of all identity. Accordingly, they do not want to do away with the molar representation. Rather, they seek to reach the point when the molar mental representations are subordinated to the molecular elements of the unconscious. Since these elements can be never accessed in themselves but only by means of molar representation, Deleuze and Guattari propose that the latter should be used to elaborate the former. Such experimental elaboration for them aim, on the one hand, at the gradual undoing of Oedipal recordings that, as they put it, underlie our 'values, morals, homelands, religions, and these private certitudes that our vanity and complacency bestow generously on us'.⁵⁴⁷ On the other hand, it aims at establishing what our desiring-machines are and what do they function with, and thus create new territories on the BwO. These new reference points would allow us to increase our capacity for desiring production. Furthermore, the newly created territories would allow us to scramble the social codes and thus, at least until they are

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 341.

reterritorialised and included within the ever-expanding limits of capitalism, undermine the possibilities for operations of paranoid powers.

Conclusion

By mapping the trajectory of thought from his work on Spinoza and Nietzsche to his co-authored work with Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, this thesis has examined the gradual development of Deleuze's ethics of immanence. From the innovative perspective of engaging with the illusions of consciousness, i.e. that of free will and value, I have shown how these different account of immanent ethics complement and inform one another, with the first two constituting the essential first steps along the path toward the fuller conception offered in *Anti-Oedipus*. In my conclusion I will reassess and substantiate this development of the main conceptual elements of Deleuze's ethics of immanence. Since I seek to analyse the conceptual conditions required for the ethics of immanence to become possible, my thesis in general, and, this conclusion in particular, can be regarded as an extended prolegomenon to the possibility of any future immanent ethics. Building on my analysis of its conditions of possibility, I will then speculate on the immanent ethics of the future, its tasks, challenges and obstacles.

To organise my discussion of the conceptual development of Deleuze's immanent ethics, I have mobilised the conception of two different plan(e)s outlined in the introduction. Drawing on Deleuze, I have differentiated between the plane of immanence, a horizontal field of forces where there is no superior aspect of self or being that is exempt from the influence of these forces, and plan of organisation, which presupposes an organising principle that orders this field from above. I have suggested that the illusions of consciousness cover up the plane of immanence and install us onto the plan of organisation. Correspondingly, I maintain that the task of immanent ethics consists precisely in overcoming the illusions of consciousness and through an attunement to the field of powers that articulate the plane of immanence. 'We do not live or think [...] in the same way on both planes', Deleuze rightly suggests.⁵⁴⁸ This claim allows me to further elaborate Deleuze's gradual development of the conceptual elements that characterise *life* and *thought* on both plan(e)s. By

⁵⁴⁸ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, p. 128.

tracing the conception of thinking and living on these two plan(e)s, I show how our understanding of immanent ethics as conceptualised in *Anti-Oedipus* can be substantially reinforced through the examination of the two initial stages which are made manifest in Deleuze's readings of Spinoza and Nietzsche respectively.

To begin with, let us trace the idea of the plane of immanence that emerges in the investigated texts. As we have seen, Deleuze first conceptualises the plane of immanence through his reading of Spinoza, where he articulates in terms of the self-actualising power of God. In Deleuze's reading, God expresses itself in the form of degrees of power, the intensities that constitute the plane of immanence, and which can be differentiated from one another only insofar as they are embodied in existing entities or finite modes. This plane of immanence consists of an immanent organising principle (power of acting), which is in itself dynamic and productive, and which exists everywhere in the same manner (the univocity of being). This conception of the plane of immanence that Deleuze works out in his engagement with Spinoza provides the conceptual model for the other texts in question. In Deleuze's work on Nietzsche, this plane of immanence takes the form of the will to power, which (when formulated in terms of Deleuze's 'physical' doctrine of eternal return) corresponds to an ever-fluctuating world of intensive differences. Finally, in *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari render this field of intensities in terms of two related concepts. Firstly, the plane of immanence is an ontological field which takes the form of the ever-differentiating sameness of productive desire. This for them corresponds to the 'Spinozism of the unconscious'. Secondly, Deleuze and Guattari conceptualise it as the BwO in its fluid state, i.e. as a field of intensities corresponding to the hyper-productivity of connections which characterises the state of schizophrenia. This, then, is what constitutes life on the plane of immanence: pure intensive power, which immanent ethics seeks to channel and wield.

The next conceptual element concerns the process of structuration which takes place on the plane of immanence, and which is productive of our subjectivities. I have termed this processes *habituation*. In his reading of Spinoza, Deleuze sees habituation as a matter of the formation of associative chains of affectively loaded mnemonic traces, which emerge out of encounters with other entities. Our images (ideas and valuations) of these entities, and actions related to them, are oriented by the sum of joyful and sad affects that we associate with them. In Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche, the notion of habituation is to a degree adopted from his account of Spinoza. By drawing on Nietzsche's original work, I have attempted to articulate this

notion more fully, but this was only possible to a certain degree.⁵⁴⁹ The idea of habituation gains its full conceptual force in *Anti-Oedipus*, where it is assembled from different theoretical sources. For Deleuze and Guattari, habituation is here a matter of chains of traces inscribed on the BwO. This inscription is composed from multiplicity of traces, which include that of finished processes of desiring-production, but also imprints of the despotic signifier, which suspends and interrupts this production. Consciousness here emerges as the awareness of the intensity synthesised from (anti-)productive relations to the present excitation and past productive and anti-productive traces associated with it.

The third conceptual element of immanent ethics, the peripheral status of consciousness, follows from the second. The trajectory of thought indicated by all three accounts finds its realisation in the conceptualisation of consciousness as a marginalised aspect of human being which can only be properly grasped when its immersion in the functioning of the unconscious is acknowledged. Deleuze maintains that for Spinoza consciousness is akin to dreaming 'with one's eyes open' as it exists only as a witness to the intensive variations of the productive unconscious. As such, consciousness is nothing but a reflection of the state of our unconscious forces. In his reading of Nietzsche, Deleuze again glosses the same point, asserting that consciousness is a mere reaction to the positive activity of the unconscious drives. As noted, he maintains that for Nietzsche the conscious self is 'the consciousness of an ego in relation to the self which is not itself conscious'. Lastly, Deleuze and Guattari develop this in taking 'subjectivity' to be a term that is best comprehended as denoting 'something of the order of a subject'. Consciousness is not a causally sufficient condition for action, its 'freedom' is an effect, produced only (to use the terminology of *Anti-Oedipus*) as a result of the third synthesis of unconscious.⁵⁵⁰

The inferiority of consciousness in relation to the unconscious (or its secondary nature) also provides an explanation for the structure of the illusion of free will. I suggest this illusion too should be seen as an element of immanent ethics as it, as I

⁵⁴⁹ I have attempted to reconstruct this notion by going back to Nietzsche's *The Twilight of the Idols*, which puts forward an account that could be fitted into Deleuze's systematic reading of Nietzsche. For Nietzsche, the mental representation, the causal interpretation of our feelings, are generated by being referred back to earlier states of the same kind and their explanations, which leads to a habituation to a particular causal explanation.

⁵⁵⁰ As such, consciousness is produced as the consumption of intensities generated through the synthesis of production and anti-production, and remains peripheral to the dynamic of desiring-machines which drive thought and action.

have shown, provides us with a privileged perspective for understanding the latter. I have argued that all three examined accounts account for this illusion in the same way, i.e., in accordance with the conception of this illusion that Deleuze finds in Spinoza. According to Deleuze's Spinoza, we human subjects think we are free since we are aware of our wants; but we remain oblivious to the network of causes that produced these wants. In this way, we confuse the awareness of effects that external bodies claim on our conative drive for the causes of our consciousness, attributing to the latter autonomous causal efficacy. This is faithfully echoed in his account of Nietzsche where confusion of effects for causes is seen as the root of our illusive freedom of will. As I have elaborated through recourse to his own texts, Nietzsche sees humans as instinctively driven to find causes to explain their conditions of existence.⁵⁵¹ Even though Deleuze and Guattari explain this illusion through Marx, its logic is that of confusing the awareness of effects for their causes. They propose that the taste of wheat gives no indication of how it was grown. Similarly, the contents of our thoughts do not reveal the processes that have produced them. Insofar as it is considered in itself, i.e. separated from its conditions of production, our consciousness is, not unlike commodified wheat, a fetish.

Insofar as we succumb to the temptation to take consciousness to be autonomous, we *think* on the plan of organisation. Examining how Deleuze develops his conception of thought on the plan of organisation will also allow us to elucidate his understanding of the life on this plane. According to Deleuze's account of Spinoza, conscious thought on the plan of organisation is characterised by passivity. Conscious self, taking itself to be empire within an empire, is passive to the extent that it is enslaved to imaginary causes of the variations of its conative drive (our own self-determined activity, others' malicious intents, anthropomorphic God, luck, karma etc.). Our ideas of how things should be (what is good or bad, beautiful or ugly, complete or incomplete) are taken to be freely formed, whereas they emerge from a multiplicity of social practices distributing joyful and sad affects. We have seen that, according to Deleuze, our normative models against which we judge particular entities, actions or events spring from our particular associative chain of traces. If our ideas of about what is of value are taken to be substantive, we succumb to the illusion of values, which corresponds to moral thinking. Thinking on the plan of organisation, therefore,

⁵⁵¹ According to him, we become conscious of our state only together with its explanations and motivations, thus mistaking effects (emerging ideas of causality) for the actual causes of this state (which initially generates these ideas).

assumes the moral perspective, which is every perspective that evaluates what exists from a standpoint that claims to be able to transcend the conditions of its own existence. The passivity of thinking on Spinoza's plan of organisation corresponds to the passivity of life, i.e. of our power of acting.⁵⁵² The latter is here exercised by random encounters with other modes. Enslaved in this way, passive life remains at mercy of these encounters.⁵⁵³

In his reading of Nietzsche, Deleuze retains the conception of moral evaluation that he conceptualises in Spinoza, but is, in the absence of body-mind parallelism, able to advance the relation between representative thought and the process of life. As noted, according to Deleuze, Nietzsche sees human subjectivity, after the triumph of slaves, as characterised by reactivity and negation. He maintains that, for Nietzsche, negation is the *ratio cognoscendi* of the will to power, its principle of knowing. Put differently, our conscious thought is inevitably an actualisation of the negative will to power, which can grasp the world only in terms of the established hierarchies of value. These hierarchical systems of representation (morality, religion, science, truth, reality etc.), and the causal explanations to which they habituate us, impose order on the ever-changing realm of becoming, i.e. the plane of immanence, and arrest (i.e. negate) it. Insofar as we measure beings, as Deleuze says, 'according to their limits, and according to their degree of proximity or distance from a principle', we think in a 'moral' manner.⁵⁵⁴ Through Nietzsche, Deleuze is also able to propose that, by imposing limits on life and organising it, representation effectively corrupts it and renders it reactive.⁵⁵⁵ Yet, if the critique of representation, and its relation to vital powers, is touched upon in Deleuze's account of Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari develop a full blown conceptualisation of it.

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari offer an advanced and highly layered account what it means to think on the plan of organisation. On such a conception, conscious thought is the product of unifying molecular desire into molar aggregates, which by means of syntheses articulate reality into representational forms (persons, things,

⁵⁵² Within Deleuze's account of Spinoza, life, or power of acting, is expressed in parallel under the attribute of thought and under the attribute of extension. As such, it belongs equally to the domain of the mind and to the domain of the body.

⁵⁵³ In the case of Spinoza, a mode is cut off from its power of acting, and thus remains passive, insofar as our conative drive only invests traces caused by the affecting body (to ward off its influence if it is inhibiting, or to prolong it if it is enhancing).

⁵⁵⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 37.

⁵⁵⁵ According to Deleuze, life is reactive when it is only capable of investing traces (as we saw, *ressentiment* arises out of blaming the affecting body for this powerlessness).

sexes, nations, etc.). A consciousness organised, or Oedipalised, in this way is structured by the molar investments which underlie it. These molar or paranoid investments, territorialities marked out by despotic signifier, manifest themselves in 'oughts', i.e. beliefs about how the world should be ordered (one should work hard, vote for a particular political party, be a vegetarian, etc.). It is by means of these beliefs that one, as Deleuze and Guattari like to put it, 'situates oneself socially'. Our conscious thought here reflects the functioning of paranoid forces that invest and police the limits that territorialise us.⁵⁵⁶ Yet, Deleuze and Guattari conceptualise also the reverse loop through which our representational consciousness 'straight-jackets' our unconscious disposition. This straight-jacketing (or social repression) proceeds as the production of desire is corrupted by meanings and ideas which constitute paranoid anti-formations in the unconscious. These unconscious aggregates in turn direct our thought and behaviour in a paranoid way (investing the limits of territories that define us, protecting them from potentially corrupting influence etc.). Breaking out of this self-reinforcing loop of Oedipal subjectivity and paranoid life is the main goal of schizoanalysis.

Having traced Deleuze's trajectory from subject as an empire within an empire to Oedipal consciousness, from passive to paranoid life, we can now examine the last and the most significant element of his immanent ethics. This element concerns the aim of an ethics of immanence. I have suggested that this aim can be generally understood as the overcoming of illusions of consciousness, which is achieved by activating the unconscious, and which amounts to installing oneself onto the plane of immanence. My thesis has shown that this overcoming, which removes what separates us from our powers of acting, takes different forms throughout in Deleuze's texts. In fact, I have demonstrated that this aim too undergoes a considerable development in the course of which Deleuze retains certain conceptual aspects and replaces or alters others.

The ethical approach to thinking and living immanently that Deleuze constructs through Spinoza is focused on grasping the eternal laws of composition that articulate the necessary unfolding of substance. If a finite mode is capable of doing so, it is free from passions that arise from encounters with other entities. This happens when this

⁵⁵⁶ Through the policing of borders, paranoiac investments are generative of *anti-productive* affects such as anxiety, guilt and bad conscience, which are, for Deleuze and Guattari, synonymous with the Oedipal condition

mode is capable of actively producing its own affects (i.e. being their immanent cause), which puts it in possession of its power of acting (i.e. it stabilises its power). This act of self-determination attunes a mode to a particular aspect of the *necessity* that unfolds the plane of immanence, and the eternal laws that structure this unfolding. The more adequate ideas one is capable of forming, the more one grasps that it not the autonomous subject but the laws of composition that effectively actualise encounters between bodies and give rise to selves and values, and the more one's existence is aligned with the plane of immanence. Yet, the eternal necessity of laws that await realisation, and of degrees of power that unfold existence in accordance with these laws, are, as I have argued, an element of transcendence that Deleuze is keen on discarding. I have suggested that his engagement with Nietzsche allows him to do just this.

In his account of Nietzsche, Deleuze is able to shift the aim of immanent ethics away from the notion of eternal necessity towards and into the direction of unrestrained creativity. As Nietzsche professes the unknowability of effective causality, which results in the epistemological impotence of consciousness, Deleuze resorts to the notion of eternal return, which he mobilises as an ethical test of creative possibility. The ordeal presented by this test serves as a way to intensify reactive states of thought and take them to their extreme forms. It transforms them: what one does one does eternally, there is no 'outside' to appeal to warrant it; one must live with one's actions as oneself entirely. As a force is here no longer separated from what it can do but is taken to its limits, Deleuze assumes that these extreme states lose their reactive nature. The self becomes what it does: this is the self as action, or self-differentiation (i.e. becoming), on the plane of immanence. This 'active destruction' of reactive forces corresponds to an unburdening from established values, laws, and categories, which delimit life and cut it off from its power of acting. Since there no higher court of appeal than the world of life itself to justify what one does or will do, life can finally become active and *create* its own values. Finally, Deleuze links this freeing from imposed responsibilities to the dissolution of the normalised subject, which anticipates the core concern of *Anti-Oedipus*.

While I have demonstrated that a substantial share of conceptual elements in *Anti-Oedipus* is taken up from Deleuze work on Spinoza, the ethical aim of schizoanalysis is clearly inspired by his work on Nietzsche. Schizoanalysis, which I have shown to be a form of immanent ethics, aims to increase the productivity of unconscious by undoing the repressive blockages that constitute our paranoid inclinations, and

underlie our Oedipal subjectivity. For Deleuze and Guattari, this is to be achieved through patient experimentation with our repulsions, an experimentation that ultimately aims at overcoming them. Through undoing of repressive blockages, and thus freeing life from the moulds that confine it, new territories are being created in the unconscious. This is reflected in new ways of thinking and feeling, ones that go beyond existing conceptual horizons. On the other hand, schizoanalysis seeks to discover what makes our desiring-machines tick, i.e. what makes them produce desire. By means of this two-fold task, the ultimate aim of schizoanalysis is to maximise desiring-production.

The upper limit of this productivity is the BwO in its perfectly fluid state, a state in which desire is not delimited by any kind of organisation. This state corresponds to a schizophrenic episode in which schizo is fully inter-connected with its environment, being at one with it, or rather, fully immanent to it in a condition of total absorption. This intensive state of hyper-connectivity amounts to the plane of immanence. On this plane, there is nothing but (to return to Deleuze's quote from the Introduction) 'individuating affective states of an anonymous force' that cannot be effectively attributed to an individual subject. The conscious self here emerges not as the possessor of the kind of 'pure' abstracted model of thought which typifies the self-awareness of the autonomous agent, but as an active doing which is realised concretely and fully in the act, not in any relation that might be said to exist 'outside' it. Experimental thought thus initially activates the life from which it springs, but life in its turn begins to permeate thought, hooking it up to its self-production. To think and to live on the plane of immanence then comes down to the same thing: life and thought are here aligned with one another. There is no separation between the thinking subject's mental representations and its environment. This unison of life and thought, one which I have shown to be already firmly in place in Deleuze's accounts of Spinoza and Nietzsche, thus re-merges in the impressive conceptual machinery of *Anti-Oedipus*. An appreciation of this unison of life and thought, in turn, is the precondition for any further elaboration of an immanent ethics.

In addition to offering an examination of the conceptual development of immanent ethics, my thesis has been also able to engage with the material circumstances of its emergence. Drawing on Deleuze's and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, I have examined the socio-historical conditions necessary for schizoanalysis as an immanent ethics to become possible. My contention is that their prophetic analysis of these conditions has only increased the relevance of this conception of ethics. The socio-historical

conditions in question are intrinsically related to the rise of the capitalist social formation. Deleuze and Guattari maintain that it is only as a result of the disruptive forces of capitalism that schizoid desiring-production becomes discernible. The forces of the capitalist market unsettle hierarchies of traditions, norms and values, and in this way, for the first time in human history, free desire from the objects prescribed by these hierarchies. I have noted that Deleuze and Guattari propose that these processes of the decoding and deterritorialisation of hierarchies of power are always coupled with immediate re-establishment of new hierarchies (recoding and reterritorialisation). Within the capitalist order, these hierarchies no longer appear natural or given, but are constituted artificially with the sole aim of extracting profits. As the spiral of capitalist production escalates out of control, it increasingly undermines social fabrics and Oedipal blockages: *all that is solid melts into air*. In this way, our world is becoming less hierarchically ordered and more schizophrenic. Put differently, it is approaching the limit that the plane of immanence presents on a social level, i.e. total chaos.

The more schizoid and unrestrained our existence becomes, the more violent and ferocious are the processes that seek to re-establish order. Amidst the increasing breakdown of social codes brought about by globalisation, the forces of paranoia intensify. Deleuze and Guattari equate the forces of paranoia, which, as noted, seek to unify, organise and control, with fascism. For them, fascism is not only linked to far-right political extremism, but is more generally linked to any attempts to impose order, unity or fixity. Today these paranoid attempts can be observed on different levels of social life. In fact, in accordance with Deleuze and Guattari's predictions, these paranoid projects seems to be multiplying. They are not only to be found in the rise of authoritarian politics (exemplified by the ethos of so-called 'populism'), which aims to enforce national autonomy and police its borders, but can also be observed in the entrenchments of political tribalisms, and the spread of culture wars. By effectively mapping the social terrain that is shaped under capitalism, I maintain that Deleuze and Guattari's prescient social analysis provides us with the coordinates for any present or future ethics of immanence. These coordinates situate our ethical activity between the increasingly opposing poles of schizophrenia and paranoia. While the first pole concerns schizoid desiring-production unchained by market abstractions, the second consist of the pressure to re-establish Oedipal blockages. Amidst these increasingly forceful rhythms of freeing and capturing of our flows of desire, the task of schizoanalysis remains to promote the former, and keep on undoing the latter.

These are, then, according to Deleuze and Guattari, the socio-historical vectors that articulate our ethical activity today. With these conceptual and socio-historical coordinates in mind, we can now turn to the speculations regarding any future elaboration of the ethics of immanence. Firstly, I suggest that, instead of taking the form of moral rules that are addressed to autonomous subjects and that hold them accountable for their actions, this ethics should be elaborated in terms of an *ethos*, that is, a particular way of *life*, a relationship to *life*, where the latter is understood in the manner intended by Deleuze.⁵⁵⁷ Forsaking the supposition of illusory autonomy that covers up the affective bonds that structure our existence, the starting point of a future immanent ethics is an individual that is constituted by, and thus completely caught up in, the affective relations to its world. Conversely, its corresponding ethical activity should be understood in terms of cultivating an *ethos*. In the place of a moral law-abiding autonomous subject, we thus get an embedded being that is ethically engaged in ongoing efforts to habituate a more empowered mode of existing.

The contours of this future immanent *ethos* are very clearly indicated by my investigation. We have seen that the cultivation of the immanent way of existing consists of doing away with feelings of guilt, bad conscience and resentment. All of these affective states, which are so ubiquitous in our emotional lives, are based on the illusory presupposition of an autonomous agent, but also involve an inhibition that decreases our powers of acting. As our societies from our births onwards inevitably condition us to feel responsible for (not) performing various socially (un)desirable behaviours, freeing oneself from such affective bonds should be expected to be a long and difficult process. Like Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Deleuze and Guattari, who all offer their own accounts of how to divest ourselves of these bonds that constitute and delimit us, every future account of immanent ethics would have to be able to articulate an ethical activity that aims at achieving this. This ethical activity should thus be able to effectively develop an *ethos* devoid of the said inhibiting (enslaved, reactive, or anti-productive) affective states.

⁵⁵⁷ I adopt the formulation of the ethics of immanence as an *ethos* from the anonymous online writer called FT. Orienting his discussion around the concepts of contrariety and contradiction, FT develops such an *ethos* through a lucid close reading of the seven principles for 'non-fascist' life, which Foucault offers in his preface to *Anti-Oedipus*. See FT, 'Notes on the Principles from Foucault's Preface to Deleuze & Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*', <www.patreon.com/fucktheory> [accessed 4 April 2020].

Since these affective states also include more long-lasting conditions such as anxiety or depression, both of which are the dominant, but also still escalating, mental health issues in Western societies right now, this ethical activity might have to take the form of a therapeutic practice. Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalysis, the materialist psychiatry with which they sought to replace psychoanalysis, and which I discussed from the perspective of ethics that can be undertaken individually, is an obvious step in this direction. Yet, while schizoanalysis made a significant impact on the anti-psychiatric movement in the 1970s, it was never applied on a wider scale. Moreover, the exploration of its potentials as a therapeutic practice have mostly ceased together with the decline of anti-psychiatry. And yet, the kind of therapy that is available to us today, which here in the UK draws mostly on behavioural and cognitive theories, can be subjected to the same criticisms that Deleuze and Guattari level against psychoanalysis. In the same way that psychoanalysis relegated the determination of our desires to the familial domain, behavioural and cognitive therapy make mental illness a private matter by tracing it to our personal psychology (i.e. our negative thought patterns). The therapy aligned with an ethics of immanence would have to adopt a wider, more all-inclusive approach. Instead of privatising anxiety and depression, such therapeutic practice would have to engage with the social and political structures that, by organising our daily encounters, effectively produce these illnesses. The need for such immanent psychotherapy is frequently acknowledged by Mark Fisher, who sees the conversion of depression into more empowering political affects as 'an urgent political project'.⁵⁵⁸

In addition to finding ways of treating these inhibiting affective states, any future immanent ethics would have to be able to habituate an *ethos* that would exclude certain potentially empowering yet still questionable affective tendencies. We can find a consideration of these tendencies, which seem enhancing, but eventually turn out to be destructive, in every philosophical project that I examined. Spinoza extensively analyses passive joys, like, for example, those that arise from the fleeting approval of others, or the petty joys we find in the misfortunes of someone who we are envious of. Nietzsche locates such compensatory pleasures in altruistic tendencies, which he sees as motivated by the pleasure that the do-gooders extract from their superiority over the weak benefactors of their supposedly selfless activities.

⁵⁵⁸ Mark Fisher, 'Capitalist Realism: Interviewed by Richard Capes (2011)', in *K-Punk: Collected and Unpublished Writings of Mark Fisher (2004-2016)*, ed. by Darren Ambrose (London: Repeater Books, 2018), pp. 637–662 (p. 645).

Deleuze and Guattari offer a comprehensive conceptualisation of what Foucault in his Preface to *Anti-Oedipus* refers to as a *non-fascist living*, an *ethos* that seeks to overcome the love of power, or, in their terms, paranoia, that exploits us.⁵⁵⁹ This non-fascist *ethos* is summarised by Foucault in the form of seven principles, which are not intended to oblige us to act in a morally correct manner, but to help us rid ourselves of the fascisizing elements that ultimately diminish our powers. Being able to offer a careful consideration of such indirectly inhibiting tendencies should be at the forefront of any forthcoming immanent ethics.

Next, I maintain that one of the key concerns of any future ethics of immanence should be the issue of immorality, the accusations of which were already forcefully levelled against Spinoza and Nietzsche. This issue concerns immanent ethics' insistence on the absence of transcendent rules. Without such constraining rules, critics suggest, we will fall into a lawless chaos in which we are ultimately not prohibited to take another man's life. The *impasse* that the immanent ethics confronts in relation to these moral arguments is evident from the fact that an immanent approach focuses precisely on critiquing the instances of transcendence as it is precisely the latter that separate us from our powers of acting. Removing these inhibiting blockages, which, as I have shown, are grounded in the illusory transcendence of consciousness, is the primary concern of the ethics of immanence. Yet, one should feel uneasy to consider every responsibility laid down by the said rules on the same level, seeing all of them as equally unfounded. While it might be easy to see the grounds for, e.g., throwing off the shackles of Protestant work strictures, which push one to exhaust one's powers in the service of an exploitative company, it might be a bit harder to grasp how exercising one's powers of acting takes precedence over the moral injunction against injuring another person.

The philosophical projects I examined attempt to negotiate the relation between exercising one's powers of acting and the wellbeing of others in different ways. Spinoza, for example, does not see physical aggression towards another as being inherently bad insofar as it is a manifestation of what our body can do, but rather sees it as irrational as it closes off the possibility for an enhancing connection with another human being.⁵⁶⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, conversely, insist that desire is 'innocently

⁵⁵⁹ Foucault, 'Preface', p. xiii. We should note that the non-fascist ethos elaborated by Foucault corresponds only to the negative (destructive) task of schizoanalysis.

⁵⁶⁰ See E4P59 S, Spinoza, *Ethics*, p. 351.

anoedipal', as it exists in the domain that precedes the idea of Oedipus or that of morality.⁵⁶¹ Yet, this should by no means lead us to assume that they suggest that we are justified to pursue our desires regardless of the cost to others. The question of violence against the other is most directly, but also most questionably addressed by Nietzsche. As we saw, the decline of humanity's vigour is for him largely linked to the rise of altruistic slave morality.

Perhaps the difficulties with Nietzsche's rancour against the inhibiting responsibilities that follow from transcendent moral laws are most starkly highlighted by the confessions of the serial killer Ted Bundy. In *Conversations with a Killer: The Bundy Tapes* documentary, Bundy suggest that he is 'in an enviable position of not having to feel any guilt' for his actions.⁵⁶² 'Guilt is this mechanism we use to control people', he continues, and adds, in a very Nietzschean language, that this mechanism is 'very unhealthy'.⁵⁶³ Due to the absence of the inhibitions based in guilt, which would prevent him from manifesting his powers, Bundy was able to brutally murder and mutilate over thirty women. My conviction is that a future ethics of immanence should be able to effectively engage with the relation between exercising and enhancing one's own powers and diminishing or annulling the vital powers of the other. Put differently, a future immanent ethics should be able to find a way to negotiate the difference between diverse kinds of responsibilities (like that of not injuring the other and that of participating in a destructive and exploitative activity) without appealing to transcendent rules.

We should note that one of the ways of avoiding the establishment of transcendent rules can be found precisely with the use of ethical principles, like the ones listed by Foucault in *Anti-Oedipus*. As indicated above, unlike normative rules, which set down what one should or should not do, ethical principles are optional and outline an *ethos*, or a way of living. Cultivating a way of living involves activities, practices and techniques that seek to align one's affective disposition with the given ethical principles.⁵⁶⁴ Developing an 'art of living counter to all forms of fascism', to continue

⁵⁶¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 366.

⁵⁶² Joe Berlinger (dir.), *Conversations with a Killer: The Bundy Tapes*, Netflix, 24 January 2019.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁴ Here we can finally return to the Foucault-related point that I have anticipated in the footnote of my introduction (see p. 7). As noted there, in an interview called 'Life as a Work of Art' Deleuze groups Foucault's late work on ethics, which analyses various techniques of self (i.e. practices that seek to produce a new form of subjectivity), under the banner of ethics as opposed to morality. I suggest that the reason for this inclusion lies with Foucault's use of

with Foucault's account, involves, for example, 'not becom[ing] enamoured of power'.⁵⁶⁵ While this principle on its own might sound like a platitude, *Anti-Oedipus*, as we saw, develops it in the most fascinating of ways. In brief, this principle warns us about the Oedipal pleasures that result from ordering the world in a durable and hierarchical way, policing this enforced organisation or being co-opted into participating in its reproduction. As pointed out by the brilliant anonymous writer FT, each principle listed by Foucault is deeply interrelated with principles, as the concepts critiqued by these principles (like hierarchy, truth, lack, and negation) 'make it easier to love power'.⁵⁶⁶ By cultivating the habits of thought that correspond to these principles, immanent ethics aims at altering our affective disposition.⁵⁶⁷ In opposition to traditional moral philosophy, which starts by setting limits by instituting transcendent laws, which are consequently used for judging actions and intentions, immanent principles begin in the middle. It is amidst the ideal and material forces that articulate our existence that the leaning to live in a more empowering way commences.

As a way of concluding, let us now consider an approach that immanent ethics would take in response to a specific situation. Since this is being written in the time of a coronavirus lockdown, I will offer a cursory consideration of the situation at hand. We can begin by noting that the measures intended to slow down the pandemic constitute a quintessentially paranoid situation in which everyone is ordered to stay within the limits of the delimited territory. Given the highly dangerous nature of COVID-19, these paranoid measures are, of course, justified and much needed. In the absence of transcendent rules, which could be used to guide our action in this situation, the

ethical principles, which he mobilises in his Preface to *Anti-Oedipus* as well as in his own work. Unlike morality, which corresponds to Foucault's idea of power-knowledge, ethical principles are not constraining rules, but practical means used to constitute a more empowered way of living outside the limits prescribed by power-knowledge.

⁵⁶⁵ Foucault, 'Preface', p. xiii.

⁵⁶⁶ FT, 'Notes on the Principles from Foucault's Preface to Deleuze & Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*'. There FT suggests that '[a]ll of these principles are related. Each one you work through gets you closer to understanding the others. I don't think you work through [these principles] once and you're done; I also don't think you work through them step by step like an intellectual fitness routine. I think you read them once. Then you read them again. Then you read them again. And between each reading, you try to live a life closer to what you've learned. I don't think that's the rhetorical or conceptual magic of Foucault, I think that's how ethical principles work in general; that's the difference between a principle and a rule'.

⁵⁶⁷ As I have suggested with regard to Deleuze's accounts of Spinoza and Nietzsche, these principles can be also used to immanently evaluate a mode of existence (see p. 74 of this thesis). This immanent evaluation consists of assessing one's thoughts or behaviour by relating them back to the mode of existence they express (the smallest gesture, Deleuze suggests, can reveal an enslaved, reactive or paranoid way of existing).

immanent approach begins by asking what we can do to creatively exploit the given situation in order to empower ourselves. In addition to the set of external limitations imposed by the lockdown, other variables to consider are also our own limitations, as well as our own strengths. In other words, our immanently shaped capacities to be affected outline a set of *enhancing* and *inhibiting* affects that we are capable of experiencing. To the extent that we are conscious of these capacities, we can begin by experimenting with the activities that are still available to us. These activities (linked to nutrition, recreation, personal relationships, artistic endeavours, cultural consumption, etc.) are to be used to maximise our capacities to affect, but also to further develop our capacities to affected.

In a sense, the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic can be compared to falling ill. While the former presents an external restriction, and the latter a restriction coming from within, they both impose limitations on our power of acting. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze suggests that an illness 'separates me from what I can do [...], it narrows my possibilities and condemns me to a diminished milieu to which I can do no more than adapt myself'.⁵⁶⁸ Like an illness, which hinders me in performing certain activities (studying, working out, etc.), the coronavirus lockdown narrows my potentials by instructing me to stay indoors. Yet, Deleuze also suggests that an illness also 'reveals to me a new capacity, it endows me with a new will that I can make my own, going to the limit of a strange power'.⁵⁶⁹ For him, a sickly body exhibits a new set of capacities, which we should learn to inventively make use of. My asthmatic body, for example, reveals itself in the odd and terrifying feeling that I experience in the brief interval following the end of an exhalation and before the next breath begins. Apart from perhaps *via* meditation, this startling experience is not available to a healthy, i.e. normal, body. My contention is that it is precisely these inexplicable emerging capacities that Deleuze encourages us to productively engage with (be it in the medium of art, science, politics etc.).⁵⁷⁰ Instead of blaming ourselves (guilt) or others (*ressentiment*) for our condition, we are urged to take this condition to the limit of what allows us to do. The COVID-19 pandemic presents us with a similar challenge

⁵⁶⁸ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 66.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁰ We should not forget that, in Deleuze's account of Nietzsche, the development of human consciousness is grounded in *ressentiment*, which is, for them, a condition that underlies our understanding of what an illness is. Since *ressentiment*, like illness, corresponds to an inability to rid oneself of a trace left by an encounter, for Deleuze 'sickness as such is a form of *ressentiment*' (*ibid.*, p. 114.). Development of human consciousness is thus 'a strange power' that emerges as a side-product of our originary sickness that is *ressentiment*.

that every future immanent ethics should be able to unfold: how to lean into the strangeness of a situation and effectively explore what lies beyond our sense of normality.

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