

ARTICLE

Becoming-Other: Foucault, Deleuze, and the Political Nature of Thought

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ABSTRACT: In this paper I employ the notion of the ‘thought of the outside’ as developed by Michel Foucault, in order to defend the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze against the criticisms of ‘elitism,’ ‘aristocratism,’ and ‘political indifference’—famously leveled by Alain Badiou and Peter Hallward. First, I argue that their charges of a theophanic conception of Being, which ground the broader political claims, derive from a misunderstanding of Deleuze’s notion of univocity, as well as a failure to recognize the significance of the concept of multiplicity in Deleuze’s thinking. From here, I go on to discuss Deleuze’s articulation of the ‘dogmatic image of thought,’ which, insofar as it takes ‘recognition’ as its model, can only ever *think* what is already solidified and sedimented as true, in light of existing structures and institutions of power. Then, I examine Deleuze’s reading of Foucault and the notion of the ‘thought of the outside,’ showing the ‘outside’ as the unthought that lies at the heart of thinking itself, as both its condition and its impossibility. Insofar as it is essential to thinking itself, finally, I argue that the passage of thought to the outside is not an absolute *flight out of this world*, as Hallward claims, but rather, a return of the different that constitutes the Self for Deleuze. Thinking is an ongoing movement of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, or as Foucault says, death and life. Thinking, as Deleuze understands it, is essentially creative; it reconfigures the virtual, thereby literally changing the world. Thinking is therefore, according to Deleuze, thoroughly political.

Keywords: Outside, Badiou, Hallward, Deleuze, Foucault, Thought, Difference, Virtual, Actual, Self, Freedom, Power, Unthought, Subject, Eternal Return, Individuation

“I die daily.”—Saint Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verse 31.

This paper attempts two things: (1) To provide a response to a few of the criticisms that have been posed in the past decade and a half against Gilles Deleuze, namely that his philosophy is elitist and aristocratic, and anathema to any possibility of politics or ethics. Deleuze, these critics say, “contrary to the commonly accepted image,”¹ is *not* a thinker of true multiplicity;

¹ Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, trans. Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 10.

he is not the philosopher of “radical democracy,”² or the liberator of the “anarchic multiple of desires and errant drifts”³ that many fiery-eyed, would-be revolutionaries would have him to be. His thought, they say, is “highly elitist,”⁴ and “profoundly aristocratic.”⁵ It “exists in a hierarchized space,”⁶ and is “essentially indifferent to the politics of this world.”⁷ The response itself, (in light of the breadth of the criticisms), will be somewhat brief, and will treat the criticisms (primarily of Alain Badiou and Peter Hallward), in an almost monolithic way. On the one hand this is admittedly somewhat unfair, as each approach offers its own specific criticisms, worked out across a broad and unique space of analysis. Nevertheless, the criticisms amount, for purposes of this paper, to the same: that the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze is rooted in an ontology that rejects any serious notion of agency, and thus has nothing to offer in the world of genuine political crises and conditions. For Badiou and Hallward,⁸ this is tied directly to an excessively *monistic* interpretation of Deleuze’s ontology.

(2) In the pursuit of this first goal, I shall locate the *possibility* of the political in Deleuze’s philosophy in his conception of thought, which is closely tied to that of Michel Foucault’s concept of the “thought of the outside.” For Deleuze, thought itself is political; when thought is genuinely *thinking* (and most of the time it is not), its nature is disruptive and hostile to the established strata of power. I locate this reading almost entirely in Deleuze’s writings of the 1960s (i.e., prior to his more explicitly political engagement with Guattari). Thus, against those who would say that even Deleuze’s *politics* are not political enough, I will argue that, for Deleuze (and on Deleuze’s reading of Foucault as well), the very practice of thinking is itself, through and through, political; philosophy is by its very nature a revolutionary practice.

² Alan D. Schrift, “Nietzsche, Foucault, Deleuze, and the Subject of Radical Democracy,” *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 5, No. 2 (2000): 151-161. A version of this paper is also found in Chapters 2 and 3 of Schrift’s book, *Nietzsche’s French Legacy: A Genealogy of Poststructuralism* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

³ Badiou, *Deleuze*, 10.

⁴ Slavoj Žižek, *Organs Without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 18.

⁵ Badiou, *Deleuze*, 11.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Peter Hallward, *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* (New York: Verso, 2006), 162. Žižek makes almost exactly the same claim: “Deleuze ‘in himself’ is a highly elitist author, indifferent toward politics.” Žižek, *Organs Without Bodies*, 18.

⁸ Slavoj Žižek, for his part, will distinguish between a “good” Deleuze and a “bad” Deleuze, with the ‘good’ being Deleuze on his own, and the ‘bad’ being the Deleuze-Guattari assemblage.

1. Positioning the Problem

Prima facie, it would at least appear that this radically depoliticizing charge would be difficult to apply to Deleuze. Did he not co-author (with Félix Guattari) the one-thousand-plus-page,⁹ two-volume, *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*? What about the book on Kafka,¹⁰ (also with Guattari), where the two address the politically suffused concept of a *minor literature*, and one of the first places where Deleuze explores the notion of *assemblage*, “which replaces [in *A Thousand Plateaus*] the idea [from *Anti-Oedipus*] of desiring machines,” providing *the unity* of the former?¹¹ What about Foucault’s own attestation that the goal of *Anti-Oedipus* is the relentless pursuit of “the slightest traces of fascism in the body,” and that it is “the first book of ethics to be written in France in quite a long time”?¹² Or what about the countless other interviews, comments, essays, lectures, etc., too numerous to list,¹³ focused specifically on political questions and concerns? It is important to note that while many of these politically charged texts are sustained exclusively at the conceptual level, many are also responses to specific political situations and crises. Thus, while politics is perhaps¹⁴ not *central* to Deleuze’s project in the pervasive and obvious way that it is in Foucault’s, it seems at the very least, difficult if not impossible to successfully defend the charge that Deleuze’s thought is *indifferent to politics*.

Nevertheless, Deleuze’s more explicitly ontological works contain elements that, on the surface, might seem to commit him to determinism. For this reason it is at least possible to see why one might be tempted to read such a political or ethical indifference in Deleuze.

⁹ One thousand, one hundred, thirty-eight in the French, one thousand, sixty-four in the English translation.

¹⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

¹¹ In 1980, upon the release of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze gave an interview to Catherine Clément, in which she poses the question, “If there is no single field to act as a foundation, what is the unity of *A Thousand Plateaus*,” to which Deleuze replies, “I think it is the idea of an assemblage...” Gilles Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975-1995*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2007), 176-177.

¹² Michel Foucault, “Preface,” Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), xiii.

¹³ Here are a few, however. Gilles Deleuze, “Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari on *Anti-Oedipus*,” in *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 13-24; Deleuze, “On *A Thousand Plateaus*,” in *Negotiations*, 25-34; Deleuze, “Control and Becoming,” in *Negotiations*, 169-176; Deleuze, “Postscript on Control Societies,” in *Negotiations*, 177-182; Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, “Many Politics,” in *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 124-147; Deleuze, “Europe the Wrong Way,” in *Two Regimes of Madness*, 148-150; Deleuze, “Spoilers of Peace,” in *Two Regimes of Madness*, 161-163; Deleuze, “Open Letter to Negri’s Judges,” in *Two Regimes of Madness*, 169-172; Deleuze, “This Book is Literal Proof of Innocence,” in *Two Regimes of Madness*, 173-174; Deleuze, “The Indians of Palestine,” in *Two Regimes of Madness*, 194-200; Deleuze, “The Gulf War: A Despicable War,” in *Two Regimes of Madness*, 379-380.

¹⁴ I say *perhaps* here because, as I shall attempt to demonstrate, the question of the political *is* in fact central to the entirety of Deleuze’s project, in that the very goal of philosophy, according to Deleuze, is the *break with the doxa*, which is, through and through, a political concern.

Throughout his writings, one finds the repeated expression of Nietzschean *amor fati*,¹⁵ an affirmation of *necessity*,¹⁶ and an almost unrecognizable redefinition of *ethics*: “Either ethics makes no sense at all, or this is what it means and has nothing else to say: not to be unworthy of what happens to us.”¹⁷ The notion of the *subject* in Deleuze, from his early book on Hume¹⁸ through to his final essay,¹⁹ is almost always *dissolved* or *fractal*. Moreover, Deleuze’s understanding of Nietzsche’s *eternal return* can at times *sound* like a thoroughgoing determinism. For Deleuze it signifies the great game of being, or the *anarchic* rule of the game. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze calls it “the dicethrow;”²⁰ in *Difference and Repetition*, the “divine game,”²¹ which is synonymous with the “ideal game”²² of *The Logic of Sense*. In this ideal game, there are no fresh injections of chance, but rather, all the throws of the dice are “qualitatively distinct, but are the qualitative forms of a single cast which is ontologically one,”²³; each move invents its own set of rules, which are immanent to the multiplicity of being itself. There are, strictly speaking, no notions of *responsibility* or of winners and losers. Being is no longer required to justify itself before a tribunal, no longer a “theodicy, but a cosmody,”²⁴ where the creative play of being itself serves as its own justification. For reasons such as these, even Deleuze’s supporters can find themselves on the defensive regarding his notion of agency and freedom.²⁵ Yet, I cannot help but echo the assertion of Constantin Boundas: “I am convinced that Deleuze’s philosophy is a philosophy of freedom, just as committed to freedom as Sartre’s philosophy was.”²⁶ But like the Stoics, but also Spinoza, Leibniz, Nietzsche, Bergson—all of

¹⁵ See, for instance, Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 27; Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 149, 151.

¹⁶ “Necessity is affirmed of chance in exactly the sense that being is affirmed of becoming and unity is affirmed of multiplicity. It will be replied, in vain, that thrown to chance, the dice do not necessarily produce the winning combination, the double six which brings back the dicethrow. This is true, but only insofar as the player did not know how to *affirm* chance from the outset.” Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 26.

¹⁷ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 149.

¹⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume’s Theory of Human Nature*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

¹⁹ Gilles Deleuze, “Immanence: A Life,” in *Two Regimes of Madness*, 388-393.

²⁰ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 25-27.

²¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 116, 282-284. See also Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 22-29.

²² Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 60. Though in *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze explicitly claims, “It is not enough to oppose a ‘major’ game to the minor game of man, nor a divine game to the human game,” (59), and asserts that the game “cannot be played by either man or God,” (60), it is clear, based both upon the structure and the terminological conflation of the “ideal” and the “divine” in *Difference and Repetition* (282).

²³ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 59.

²⁴ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 25.

²⁵ See, for instance, Constantin V. Boundas, “Gilles Deleuze and the Problem of Freedom,” in ed. Eugene W. Holland, Daniel W. Smith, and Charles J. Stivale, *Gilles Deleuze: Image and Text* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009), 221-246. See also, in the same collection, Hélène Frichot, “On Finding Oneself Spinozist: Refuge, Beatitude, and the Any-Space-Whatever,” in ed. Holland, Smith, and Stivale, *Gilles Deleuze: Image and Text*, 247-263.

²⁶ Boundas, “Gilles Deleuze and the Problem of Freedom,” 222.

those thinkers that Badiou and Hallward point to as evidence of Deleuze's elitism, or his *theophanic* ontology—for Deleuze, the first step toward freedom lies in the full, unflinching awareness of just how *determined*, (i.e., constituted), one truly is. It lies in an exposure of the operative presuppositions governing the activity of one's thinking. Thus, the next few sections will look at Hallward's and Badiou's claims, before turning to Deleuze's critique of the *dogmatic image of thought*.

2. Unity and Multiplicity: Badiou and Hallward

We *could*, as we have done, simply rest upon the ubiquity of political concerns in Deleuze's writings as evidence against Hallward and Badiou. But as Jon Roffe notes, "In order to consider the strength of Badiou's presentation...it is not enough to simply cite the many passages in Deleuze's work that would seem to depart from it, a procedure that is necessary but not sufficient. What is required is the examination of the *consequences* of this central claim as it is unfolded alongside Deleuze's philosophy."²⁷ Put otherwise, to attempt to truly rescue Deleuze's thinking from the charges of his critics by simply pointing toward apparent counter-examples in the text would be to make things too easy on ourselves. Some of the most important critical work in philosophy is conducted by demonstrating the implicit commitments that a philosopher or philosophy may not, itself, recognize as its own, thereby revealing dangerous presuppositions and tendencies. With this in mind, let us briefly state the thrust of the criticisms of Hallward and Badiou, criticisms that the remainder of this paper will refute.

Hallward's book, *Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation*, is significant in that it: (1) is one in a small class of texts that genuinely attempts to provide a broad, overarching reading of Deleuze's project from beginning to end, guided by a single, basic emphasis, namely that Deleuze's is a philosophy of *creation*, with all the necessary *undoing* that a philosophy of creation entails; (2) attempts to read Deleuze *against* Deleuze, using his own concepts in order to build the case that the philosopher who was more critical of transcendence than any other contemporary philosopher, was in fact preoccupied with the lines of flight *out of this world*.²⁸ Hallward's point of departure, situating Deleuze in the camp of contemporaries such as Henry Corbin and Michel Henry, is that "the logic of Deleuze's work tends to proceed broadly in line with a *theophanic* conception of things, whereby every individual process or thing is conceived as a manifestation or expression of God or a conceptual equivalent of God (pure creative potential, force, energy, life...)." ²⁹ While admitting that "Deleuze certainly doesn't acknowledge any transcendent idea of God," Hallward argues that "in a number of important ways his work is consistent with the general logic of a cosmic pantheism, i.e., the notion that the universe and all it contains is a facet of a singular and absolute creative power."³⁰ With this in mind, Deleuze's philosophy "does not so much eliminate the question of transcendence as distribute it throughout creation as a whole," assigning "the task of self-

²⁷ Jon Roffe, *Badiou's Deleuze* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), 8.

²⁸ See also, Erinn Cunniff Gilson, "Peter Hallward: Out of this World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation," *Continental Philosophy Review* 42 (2009): 429-434.

²⁹ Hallward, *Out of this World*, 4.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

transcendence to its every creature."³¹ While on the one hand admitting that "a singular creative force *is* nothing other than the multiplication of singular creations," (a point that, I must admit, seems inconsistent with a robust *theophanic* ontology), he asserts, "you are only really an individual if God (or something like God) makes you so."³² By simply *equating* Deleuzian univocity with Spinozistic substance, Hallward attempts to obliterate any apparent differences between Deleuze and Spinoza (and apparently, Deleuze and Bergson as well).³³

He does this in three basic steps: (1) Defining, (echoing Spinoza, who defines the essence of God as *power*³⁴), Deleuze's sense of univocal being as "unconditional creativity."³⁵ Life's essence lies in its perpetually expressing its *self*, which is in reality an "indivisible flow,"³⁶ differentially along myriad lines and patterns of activity. For Spinoza, just as God's essence is *power*, the essence of each individual thing is precisely the degree to which it expresses God's *power*, or what Spinoza calls the *conatus* of each living thing, its striving to enhance. Likewise, as Hallward reads Deleuze, if the essence of univocal being is unlimited creativity, then the more each individual thing expresses this essence, the more *real* it will be; (2) Hallward then conceives Deleuze's virtual-actual distinction in a fundamentally ontological and unilaterally determinative way. The virtual is the *condition* of the actual (just as Bergson's *virtual past* is presupposed as the condition of the present moment),³⁷ there is a real ontological distinction between the two, and the actual, wholly determined *by* the virtual, in no way *determines* the virtual. The determination is wholly one-sided and creatures can in no way take part in creation: as a result, "the actual, though we habitually treat it as solid or substantial, is in reality ephemeral and illusory. The virtual alone is real;"³⁸ (3) The essence of philosophical life will therefore be the ongoing process of *deterritorialization*, which is to say, "a way of living and thinking that reverses the movement that created us."³⁹ Evolution has bred into us finite creatures the tendency to cognize *things*, (including our *selves*), precisely as *things*, that is, as individuals possessing something like a self-contained *identity*, (apple, tree, tiger, etc.). These *things*, however, (again, including ourselves) have only ephemeral being, and we finite creatures in fact *impede* the activity of *divine unlimited creativity* when we seek to assert and preserve any measure of our own autonomy. The truly philosophical mind, however, will recognize this ephemeral nature along with the *divinity* of unlimited creativity, and will thus seek to dissolve that self back into the oneness of univocal being: "If being is creation and if being becomes more creative the less its creations are obstructed by creatures, then the privilege of phi-

³¹ Ibid., 6.

³² Ibid., 5.

³³ For example, "Along with Spinoza, it is above all Bergson who guides Deleuze's thinking of this point." Hallward, *Out of this World*, 14.

³⁴ Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part I, Proposition 34.

³⁵ Hallward, *Out of this World*, 15.

³⁶ Ibid., 17.

³⁷ Ibid., 33.

³⁸ Ibid., 35.

³⁹ Ibid.

osophy is that it is the discipline most adequate to our expression of being as such."⁴⁰ This, in short, is Hallward's reading: Deleuze, at the end of the day, is a mystic, whose *ethics* consists of, (borrowing an expression from Keswick theology), *letting go and letting God*, in this case understood as unlimited creation. As such, it simply cannot take any interest whatsoever in the lives and sufferings of *beings*, who are, at the end of the day, nothing more than ephemeral expressions of *unlimited creativity*. Thus, it has nothing truly interesting to offer in the way of ethics and politics: "those of us who still seek to change our world and to empower its inhabitants will need to look for our inspiration elsewhere."⁴¹

For my purposes, Badiou's criticisms are not significantly different from those of Hallward.⁴² Citing Deleuze, "A single and same voice for the whole thousand-voiced multiple, a single and same Ocean for all the drops, a single clamor of Being⁴³ for all beings: on condition that each being, each drop and each voice has reached the state of excess—in other words, the difference which displaces and disguises them and, in turning upon its mobile cusp, causes them to return."⁴⁴ Again, in *Difference and Repetition*, Badiou cites the following passage, "What is important is that we can conceive of several formally distinct senses which none the less refer to being as if to a single designated entity, ontologically one."⁴⁵ Badiou removes the words "being as if to" from his own citation, so that we are left with, "refer to...a single designated entity, ontologically one."⁴⁶ (Leaving the words *as if* would weaken Badiou's case somewhat). Elsewhere, in *The Logic of Sense*, "Being is the unique event in which all events communicate with one another."⁴⁷ On the basis of passages such as these, and with little else in the way of argumentation, Badiou concludes, "Deleuze's fundamental problem is most certainly not to liberate the multiple but to submit thinking to a renewed concept of the One."⁴⁸ Noting that the concept of univocity is the guiding thread of the entirety of Deleuze's reading

⁴⁰ Ibid., 127.

⁴¹ Ibid., 164.

⁴² While it is true that in Badiou's published review of Deleuze's Leibniz book, Badiou claims that the central choice in the history of philosophy has always been the choice between the organic and the mathematical, and that Deleuze always chooses the organic, (an entirely different line of argumentation from anything that Hallward offers), nevertheless as Badiou articulates his most forceful criticisms in *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, I see little difference between the criticisms of Hallward and those of Badiou. Indeed, Hallward almost appears at times to be at pains to prove just how *different* they are: See Hallward, *Out of this World*, 81-82, 167n23. For the aforementioned review, see, Alain Badiou, "Gilles Deleuze, The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque," in *The Adventure of French Philosophy*, ed. Bruno Bosteels (New York: Verso, 2012), 241-267. For a reading of the Badiou-Deleuze relation that attempts to read Badiou's criticisms in light of Badiou's own project, see John Mullarkey, "Badiou and Deleuze," published on his academia.edu website: http://www.academia.edu/212618/Badiou_and_Deleuze, (accessed 05/25/2013).

⁴³ This phrase, *the clamor of Being*, is the subtitle of Badiou's book.

⁴⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 304.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 35.

⁴⁶ Badiou, *Deleuze*, 19.

⁴⁷ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p. 180.

⁴⁸ Badiou, *Deleuze*, 10.

of the history of philosophy (at best a partial truth), Badiou claims that the elucidation of the concept of univocity is the singular motivation of his analysis.

Proceeding, Badiou highlights two *theses* regarding Deleuzian univocity: "In the first place, univocity does not signify that being is numerically one, which is an empty assertion."⁴⁹ The One that Deleuze is after, Badiou argues, is not a *numerical* One, so much as a *substantial* One, and here again Badiou leans on Spinoza, offering a passage from *Difference and Repetition* as his evidence for this claim: "there are indeed forms of being, but contrary to what is suggested by the categories, these forms involve no division within being or plurality of ontological senses."⁵⁰ The second thesis that Badiou formulates: "In each form of Being, there are to be found 'individuating differences' that may well be named beings. But these differences, these beings, never have the fixedness or the power of distribution and classification that may be attributed, for example, to species or generalities, or even individuals..."⁵¹ For Badiou, the combination of these two theses entails that individual beings, on Deleuze's ontology, are nothing more than localized degrees of intensity, or "expressive modalities of the One,"⁵² such that there are no *real* numerical distinctions between beings, and the apparent diversity of the living is just that, apparent: "the equivocal status of beings, has no real status."⁵³ Relying heavily on Deleuze's use (in *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*) of the term *simulacrum*, Badiou will argue that the world of beings, for Deleuze, can only be a "theater of the simulacra of Being."⁵⁴ It is for this reason that Badiou characterizes Deleuze's thought as a latter day Neoplatonism. We can therefore see very close parallels with Hallward's diagnosis of the ephemeral nature of individual beings.

When we turn to the virtual and the actual in Badiou, we again find a similar parallel. Declaring, without argumentation or textual support, that the *virtual* marks the "principal name of Being in Deleuze's work,"⁵⁵ Badiou proceeds to argue that, in trying so desperately to sustain the doctrine of univocity, Deleuze is forced to push the real to its breaking point, relegating the actual itself to the sphere of *irreality*. That the virtual is, for Badiou, the "Being of beings"⁵⁶ entails that it is identical with the One of Deleuzian univocity, or what he calls "the dynamic agency of the One."⁵⁷ Badiou rightly notes the great pains Deleuze takes to distinguish the *virtual* from the *possible*. The possible, Deleuze claims, is little more than an ideal identity that merely doubles the real, and subsequently divests it conceptually of existence. The possible can thus serve no grounding or explanatory function (inasmuch as it resembles that which it is purported to explain). Thus, Deleuze claims, "the virtual is opposed not to the

⁴⁹ Ibid., 23.

⁵⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 303.

⁵¹ Badiou, *Deleuze*, 24.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 25.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 42.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 47.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 48.

real, but to the actual. *The virtual is fully real in so far as it is virtual.*⁵⁸ Thought requires a *formal* distinction between the virtual and the actual, in order to comprehend the process of *actualization* itself; and the *virtual*, Badiou claims, *just is* this process. However, the virtual is not to be understood as undetermined, but is, rather, “completely determined.”⁵⁹ Here Badiou cites Deleuze’s comparison of the virtual to a mathematical problem, and the actual to its corresponding solution. Just as the elements of the mathematical problem are *determined*, so too are the elements of the virtual. But the *problems*, (or virtualities), Badiou claims, relate not only to their solutions, but also to other problems. So while the problems of the virtual completely determine their own solutions they are also further *determined* by the network of problems in which they inhere. For this reason, “It follows that the sovereignty of the One is double,”⁶⁰ inasmuch as the virtual determines *itself* (like the theist’s God), but also determines completely the actual as well.

But the virtual, Badiou reminds us, though it is *determinative* of the actual, cannot be thought as *separate* from the object of which it is the genetic ground, as this would destroy the univocity that Deleuze’s ontology requires. Therefore, “every object,” Deleuze claims, “is double without it being the case that the two halves resemble one another, one being a virtual image and the other an actual image.”⁶¹ From here Badiou makes an unexplained leap from *Difference and Repetition* (1968) to *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1985). While, in principle, there is nothing *wrong* with comparing a Deleuzian concept in one text with its namesake in another text, (this can, after all, be a useful method of enrichment), nevertheless, it seems that it should be carefully prefaced with all the necessary caveats, namely that the terms are separated by nearly two decades and motivated by an entirely different set of questions. As stated, Badiou does not explain the leap. Nevertheless, the passage he cites here, where Deleuze articulates the Bergsonian *forking* structure of the present, is the following: “distinct and yet indiscernible, and all the more indiscernible because distinct, because we do not know which is one and which is the other. This is unequal exchange, or the point of indiscernibility, the mutual image.”⁶² On the basis of this passage, Badiou claims that ultimately, Deleuze can only maintain the univocity of Being by arguing for indiscernibility between the virtual and the actual. They *must* be thought of as formally separate, and yet they *cannot* be thought as separate - it is impossible. Furthermore, since Being must be conceived as univocal, it follows that the actual,

⁵⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 208.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 209.

⁶⁰ Badiou, *Deleuze*, 49.

⁶¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 209.

⁶² Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 81. In this passage, Deleuze is examining characteristics of what he calls the “crystal-image,” which is one of the types of what Deleuze calls the time-image, the moment in cinema where time is no longer subordinated to movement, but rather, conversely, movement is subordinated to time. The ‘indiscernibility’ that Badiou, by reference to Deleuze via Bergson, cites, is indeed a reference to Bergson’s forking structure of time, where the present is contemporaneous with its past, and the past is formed in the present. The indiscernibility then refers to certain directors and their affection for reflection and indiscernibility, (like Welles, Resnais, Godard, Fellini, etc.). While the concepts are without question related, nevertheless the unexplained leap from one use to the other seems problematic to say the least.

strictly speaking for Deleuze, must be unreal and nonobjective. This is because, as we know, the *virtual* is the name of the Being of beings in Deleuze, and the actual is the determination of the virtual.

Finally, on the basis of the Bergsonian forking structure of the present, Badiou equates the Deleuzian virtual with the Bergsonian *past*. Furthermore, "Philosophy merges with ontology, but ontology merges with the univocity of Being..."⁶³ To think philosophically, Badiou claims, is, for Deleuze, to think univocity, but this means to think *the One*, which is synonymous with the Foucaultian *outside*. Badiou rightly notes that, according to Deleuze, *thinking* is precisely the opening of oneself to the outside, coupled with the process of folding; this is what constitutes a subject. However, on Badiou's reading, given that the outside to which one opens oneself is nothing other than the *completely determined* and "immutable One,"⁶⁴ it follows that this subject is nothing more than "an enfolded selection of the past."⁶⁵ It is for this reason, explicitly, that Badiou rejects the Deleuzian system, stating, "all in all, if the only way to think a political revolution, an amorous encounter, an invention of the sciences, or a creation of art as distinct infinities...is by sacrificing immanence...and the univocity of Being, then I would sacrifice them."⁶⁶ If that were what were necessary, "in order to render eternal one of those rare fragments of truth that traverse here and there our bleak world,"⁶⁷ Badiou claims, it is a sacrifice worth making.

With that, we can begin to dissect these criticisms, starting with univocity and the *theophanic* One. I begin, first, by noting the following: the two *theses* regarding Deleuzian univocity that Badiou claims to have *abstracted* from Deleuze's thought, are not Badiou's abstractions at all. Rather, they are Deleuze's abstractions. Furthermore, they do not apply strictly to Deleuze's *own* understanding of univocity, but to the understandings of Duns Scotus and Spinoza respectively: "According to one, there are indeed forms of being, but contrary to what is suggested by the categories, these forms involve no division within being or plurality of ontological senses. According to the other, that of which being is said is repartitioned according to essentially mobile individuating differences which necessarily endow 'each one' with a plurality of modal significations."⁶⁸ Badiou even cites excerpts of this passage, but he cites them as though he were offering his own textual evidence for what he calls his abstracted theses regarding Deleuzian univocity. In fact they are two aspects of univocity that Deleuze attributes to other thinkers, namely John Duns Scotus and Spinoza. Interestingly, (perhaps even necessarily), Badiou does not cite what Deleuze says just a few sentences later: "All that Spinozism needed to do for the univocal to become an object of pure affirmation was to make substance turn around the modes—in other words, to realize univocity in the form of repetition in the eternal

⁶³ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 179.

⁶⁴ Badiou, *Deleuze*, 90.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 90-91.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁶⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 303.

return.”⁶⁹ In other words, these two theses *almost* get us to a thoroughgoing univocity, but not quite, and Spinoza is counted in this critique.

This poses a significant problem for the *monistic* charge against Deleuze, whether in its Badiouian or Hallwardian form. Both overlook the explicit criticism that Deleuze, despite all his affection for Spinoza, levels against him. It is true that Spinoza, (along with Scotus and Nietzsche), occupies a central place in Deleuze’s thought, as *one of* the great thinkers of univocity,⁷⁰ the philosopher who embraces an immanent conception of univocal being. While these two concepts, univocity and immanence, are conceptually distinct,⁷¹ in the hands of Spinoza as read by Deleuze, they are inseparable: “Univocal being becomes identical with unique, universal, and infinite substance: it is proposed as *Deus sive Natura*.”⁷² While John Duns Scotus (fearing the very pantheism into which Spinoza fearlessly leapt),⁷³ had affirmed the univocity of being, but only in an abstract and neutral way, Spinoza, on the contrary, posited the full identity of *God* and *being*, turning the whole of being into an object of pure affirmation, dare I say, *worship*.

However, according to Deleuze, Spinoza’s ontology does not go quite far enough in the direction of radical immanence. This is because a conceptual privileging of the identity of Substance, which serves as the ontological *ground* of its expressions (the modes) is left intact: “Substance is prior in nature to its affections,”⁷⁴ according to Spinoza. Substance, Spinoza says, is “that which is in itself and is conceived through itself; that is, that which does not need the concept of another thing, from which concept it must be formed.”⁷⁵ There is, in this sense, a definitional distinction between Substance and the modes, and as a result, an ontological priority of Substance *over* modes. Substance can be conceptualized on its own, apart from the modes, while the converse cannot be said of the modes themselves. For Deleuze, however, “substance must itself be said *of* the modes and only *of* the modes.”⁷⁶ Spinoza ultimately maintains an essential unity or identity of the one substance, which for Deleuze does not sufficiently free up *difference in itself*. This transition is made possible only by Nietzsche’s notion of eternal return. As Foucault says, “For Deleuze, the noncategorical univocity of being does not

⁶⁹ Ibid., 304.

⁷⁰ On this concept, see Daniel W. Smith, “The Doctrine of Univocity: Deleuze’s Ontology of Immanence,” in *Essays on Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 27-42. I am deeply indebted to Daniel W. Smith both personally and professionally; See also, Miguel de Beistegui, *Immanence: Deleuze and Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), esp. 27-39.

⁷¹ That this is the case is evident in the Spinoza/Duns Scotus divide. Duns Scotus affirms the univocity of being, distinguishing then between *infinite* and *finite* being, thus leaving intact the orthodoxy of the heterogeneity of God and Nature; Spinoza, on the contrary, affirms the univocity of being *by way of* abolishing the distinction between God and Nature.

⁷² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 40.

⁷³ For instance, “Furthermore, univocity in Scotus seems compromised by a concern to avoid pantheism,” Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 67. See also Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 39.

⁷⁴ Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part I, Proposition 1.

⁷⁵ Ibid., Definition 3.

⁷⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 40.

directly attach the multiple to unity itself (the universal neutrality of being, or the expressive force of substance); it puts being into play as that which is repetitively expressed as difference."⁷⁷ In place of Spinozistic Substance, Deleuze thus employs the concept of the *multiplicity*, which provides the organizational and systematizing operation of univocal being. However, this is done without *any* semblance of unified agency: "multiplicity must not designate a combination of the many and the one, but rather, an organization belonging to the many as such, which has no need whatsoever of unity in order to form a system."⁷⁸ Given Deleuze's critique of Spinozistic Substance, and the concept of the multiplicity with which he replaces it, it would appear that any criticism moving *from* a strict Deleuze-Spinoza alliance *to* an assertion of a *Deleuzian monism* that entails an *indifference to politics*, is difficult, if not impossible to defend.

The second piece of these criticisms that must be dismantled is the assertion of the unilateral determination of the actual by the virtual. Both Hallward and Badiou argue that the virtual, being the genetic ground of the actual, wholly determines the actuality of the actual; the *expressivity* runs only one way, with Badiou referring to it as the *inversion* of teleology.⁷⁹ But this is a drastically simple, indeed wrongheaded and reductionist way of describing a process that Deleuze spends a great deal of time articulating (two chapters of *Difference and Repetition*, as I see it). To characterize the relation between the virtual and the actual, Deleuze employs another conceptual distinction: the differentiation-differenciation distinction: "Whereas differentiation determines the virtual content of the Idea as problem, differenciation expresses the actualization of this virtual and the constitution of solutions (by local integrations)."⁸⁰ The Idea is, for Deleuze, the *material* of the virtual, the problematic multiplicity of differential relations, each of which is perpllicated, ultimately, with all others. What Deleuze calls *differenciation* is the perpetual restructuring and redetermination of the virtual. On the basis of these configurations, the virtual is *actualized*, and the actualization is analogous to *solving* the problem. This actualization is itself the result of a *process of differing*, which Deleuze also calls *differenciation*. "In this regard, four terms are synonymous: actualize, differenciate, integrate, and solve."⁸¹ We can already see that the binary system offered by Badiou and Hallward is in fact much more complicated than they would have us believe. To quote Roffe, "It is the differentiation—individuation—dramatization—explication structure that is fundamental in *Difference and Repetition*, not the virtual—actual."⁸²

But more importantly, their respective accounts overlook the very important notion of *reciprocal determination* in Deleuze's account. For what connects the virtual *to* the actual is what Deleuze calls the *singularity*: "On the one hand, complete determination carries out the

⁷⁷ Michel Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum," in ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley, et. al. *The Essential Works of Foucault: 1954-1984, Volume 2: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, series ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1998), 360.

⁷⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 182.

⁷⁹ Badiou, *Deleuze*, 52.

⁸⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 209.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁸² Roffe, *Badiou's Deleuze*, 148.

differentiation of singularities, but it bears only upon their existence and their distribution. The nature of these singular points is specified only by the form of the neighboring integral curves—in other words, by virtue of the actual or differentiated species and spaces.”⁸³ The singularity, for Deleuze, is the differential *element*, or *difference-in-itself*, known as the *intensity*, which he says is an *implicated multiplicity*;⁸⁴ an elemental imbalance or difference incapable of changing its quantity without thereby changing its nature. What is absolutely crucial for our rejection of Hallward’s and Badiou’s rendering of unilateral determination is precisely that, for Deleuze, the virtual *differentiates singularities*, but only with respect to their existence and distribution. In other words, the intensities borne by the virtual are themselves teeming with vitality, which is contrary to the unilaterally determinative (and deterministic) reading of the actual that Hallward and Badiou impose upon Deleuze. Here, “the actual is but a series of dead letters sent by the One,”⁸⁵ the actual is itself, on Deleuze’s understanding, vibrant and vital.

Nevertheless, we have yet to arrive at our promised possibility of Deleuzian agency. For this reason we turn to analyze Deleuze’s understanding of the ‘thought of the outside,’ in order to explain how it is - in a system that affirms *all of chance, all at once* - that one becomes a subject. To do this we must first look at Deleuze’s understanding of the *Dogmatic Image of Thought*.

3. The Dogmatic Image of Thought

Martin Heidegger writes, “Most thought-provoking is that we are still not thinking...”⁸⁶ Deleuze agrees, locating this incapacitation or sedimentation in a fundamentally *reactive* conception of the nature of thought itself, which in its various forms would seek to limit, restrain, confine, or constrain the activity of thinking. Despite its self-conception as the *presuppositionless* science, and even in its most seemingly radical and transformative moments, philosophy seems incapable of escaping the model of the circle: the presupposition that thought can only *recognize* what was already there in the beginning. Descartes, after doubting the veracity of all of his beliefs, relies upon the presuppositions of self and thought to buy it all back: “it is presumed that everyone knows, independently of concepts, what is meant by self, thinking, and being.”⁸⁷ Edmund Husserl rejects the traditional, puncti-linear model of time, only to reinstate it with his notion of the *primal impression*, which he calls the *source-point* of retention;⁸⁸ and Heidegger himself explicitly invokes a *pre-ontological* understanding of being, relying upon the notion of

⁸³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 210.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁸⁵ Roffe, *Badiou’s Deleuze*, 143.

⁸⁶ Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1968), 4.

⁸⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 129.

⁸⁸ See, Edmund Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893-1917)*, trans. John Barnett Brough (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992), 70.

the *circle* in his explication of Dasein.⁸⁹ The philosophical conception of thought is in fact founded upon a “pre-philosophical and natural Image of thought, borrowed from the pure element of common sense.”⁹⁰ That there is assumed a fundamental framework to the activity of thinking, a body of content that *everybody knows* has, according to Deleuze, perennially been the crippling stroke of philosophical endeavor, that which prevents thinking from fulfilling its transformative function: “We may call this image of thought a dogmatic, orthodox, or moral image.”⁹¹

The notion of a *dogmatic image of thought* marks Deleuze’s work from his first published book on Nietzsche,⁹² and it plays a central role in *Difference and Repetition*. The dogmatic image of thought consists of three key elements: common sense, good sense, and a method of thinking. “Common sense,” Deleuze says, is understood “under the double aspect of a *good will on the part of the thinker* and an *upright nature on the part of thought*.”⁹³ Thought has a natural affinity with *truth*, and the thinker naturally loves and desires truth, or, “All men by nature desire to know.”⁹⁴ It is for this reason that *everybody knows* what it means to think. The reciprocal component to common sense is *good sense*, “the capacity for thought,”⁹⁵ the presupposed ability that thought naturally possesses to *attain* truth. Thinking, it is held, is the *natural exercise* of the faculty of thought, which is understood to be the unity of all the other faculties, centralized in a single and unified *subject*.⁹⁶ Common sense dictates that the faculty of thought naturally desires truth, while good sense declares that it is essentially capable of attaining it. Thought, therefore, is “naturally sound,”⁹⁷ inherently pure, and morally upright.⁹⁸

Nevertheless, and in spite of the assumption of thought’s *natural affinity with truth*, philosophers almost without exception have held that *truth* is very difficult to attain, and most human beings are simply not up to the task. For Christianity, this is because human nature is *fallen* and corrupt. For Platonism, it is because our soul is constituted not only by reason, but also by spirit and appetites. For Descartes, it is because our will, being infinite, exceeds our judgment which is finite. If truth is understood as the natural object of thought, then its natural enemy is *error*. The thinker is led astray in her activity of thinking when she allows forces, external to the faculty of thought itself, “(body, passions, sensuous interests)”⁹⁹ to infiltrate the

⁸⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 195.

⁹⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 131.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² See Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 103-110.

⁹³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 131.

⁹⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book I, Part I.

⁹⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 132.

⁹⁶ Here it is worth noting that Descartes, in the second *Meditation*, explicitly clusters together doubting, understanding, affirming, denying, willing, wanting, refusing, imagining, and sensing, under the banner of ‘thinking.’

⁹⁷ Paul Patton, *Deleuze and the Political*, (New York: Routledge, 2000), 18.

⁹⁸ Here we should note that in Kant, this is made explicit, when in the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, he directly argues that morality is inseparable from rationality.

⁹⁹ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 103.

act of thinking and contaminate it with what is foreign to it. Error then, or the failure to reach or isolate the truth, is understood as “the effect, in thought as such, of external forces which are opposed to thought.”¹⁰⁰ What is therefore required in order to keep the activity of thinking on the *straight and narrow path* towards truth is an explicit and meticulously formulated *method*.

The method, Deleuze claims, is founded upon the model of recognition, understood as “the harmonious exercise of all the faculties upon a supposed same object: the same object may be seen, touched, remembered, imagined, or conceived.”¹⁰¹ Here we can think of Descartes’ famous wax example in the second *Meditation*, that “it is of course the same wax which I see, which I touch, which I picture in my imagination, in short the same wax which I thought it to be from the start.”¹⁰² Alternatively, we may consider one of the perennial objects of philosophical affection: the truths of mathematics; $7 + 5 = 12$, for example. What makes this proposition *true*, I recognize, is that *in virtue of the meanings of the terms involved*, the solution holds. Furthermore, it is undeniably certain to any other rational subject who, like myself, understands the meanings of the terms and symbols involved. Moreover, it would be true, *even if there were no rational subjects at all to recognize the meanings of the respective terms and symbols*. A question, on this model is akin to the kind of question posed to the schoolchild on an exam: “On what date did the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor?” “What is the square root of 144?” Etc. The *solution* to the question, the dogmatic image holds, is one that is indeed accessible - even if it is not currently known - to all who would embark faithfully upon the path to knowledge. As Paul Patton notes, knowledge in the model of recognition “is understood in terms of solutions to particular puzzles or problems which can be expressed in propositional form.”¹⁰³ In this mode philosophical argumentation proceeds by way of a series of *premises* (which the philosopher believes the reader will *recognize*, *prima facie*, to be true), to a conclusion, (which, given the recognition of the truth of the premises and the validity of the argument, is, in the end, equally *recognizable*). Recognition thus unites the presupposition of the *identity* of the object of knowledge (not only for *myself* but for all other rational subjects) and the *identity* of the subject (insofar as I adhere strictly to the established method of avoiding error); it unites common sense and good sense, “the two halves of the *doxa*.”¹⁰⁴

Deleuze’s criticisms of the dogmatic image of thought are not that it is *false* or *in error*, per se, since recognition has its uses. Rather, it is the case that - for Deleuze - *thinking* designates something larger. His criticisms are therefore as follows: (1) If the *beginning* of philosophy is indeed the *elimination of all presuppositions*,¹⁰⁵ (and Deleuze thinks that it is), the dogmatic image of thought, (insofar as it presupposes certain restrictions on the activity of thinking) fails to accomplish this. If, moreover, the task of philosophy is the overturning of the *doxa* (and Deleuze thinks that it is), then adhering to a philosophical *orthodoxy*, (however institutionalized, however traditional, it may be), is in fact antithetical to the practice of philosophy:

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 133.

¹⁰² Ibid. Here, Deleuze cites this passage from the second *Meditation*.

¹⁰³ Patton, *Deleuze and the Political*, 20.

¹⁰⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 134.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 129.

“The supposed three levels—a naturally upright thought, an in principle natural common sense, and a transcendental model of recognition—can constitute only an ideal orthodoxy. Philosophy is left without means to realize its project of breaking with *doxa*”;¹⁰⁶ (2) Recognition as the model of thinking fundamentally serves as a justification for systems of oppression currently in vogue. Throughout history the most horrific acts have almost always been founded upon the assertion of *everybody knows*. For instance, at various moments in time, *everybody knew* that people of African descent were naturally inferior to people of European descent; that Jews were parasitic greed-mongers; that women were naturally emotional creatures, incapable of thinking or behaving rationally; that non-human animals could not feel pain, and so forth. In the United States, *everybody knows* that the solution to gun violence is the expansion of accessibility to guns; that market competition is synonymous with democracy; that an Iraqi civilian’s life is worth less in the grand scheme of things than the life of an American; that America was founded upon the teachings of the Bible; that socialism is a failed experiment; etc. A great many atrocities and tyrannies have been perpetrated in history in the name of principles that *everybody knows*; (3) Finally, and most fundamentally, it ignores other modes and possibilities of thought, such as malevolence, madness, and stupidity. From the perspective of the dogmatic image of thought, madness and stupidity can only be conceived as empirical, inessential, and accidental states of the subject. They are understood as conditioned by forces *external* to thinking. Hence, “The sole effect of these forces in thought is then assimilated precisely to error, which is supposed in principle to include all the effects of factual external causes”¹⁰⁷; yet, schizophrenia *is* a way in which thought occurs; stupidity *is* a way in which thought (unfortunately, quite frequently) occurs. The dogmatic image is thus an account of thought, which deliberately and explicitly fails to take note of some of the most common types of thought, that is to say, of anything that undermines its already accepted understanding of what thought is: “Cowardice, cruelty, baseness and stupidity are not simply corporeal capacities or traits of character or society; they are structures of thought as such. The transcendental landscape comes to life: places for the tyrant, the slave and the imbecile must be found within it—without the place resembling the figure who occupies it...”¹⁰⁸ The transcendental must not *resemble* the empirical, for if it does, then, just as Philo explains in *Part IV* of Hume’s *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, it (the transcendental) is nothing more than an imagined *double* or *copy* of the empirical. This then also requires an explanation and therefore explains nothing at all. A truly philosophical conception of thinking must take into account “the real forces that *form* thought...”¹⁰⁹ the forces that make possible not only recognition, but also the myriad forms of what we call *error*: “The reduction of stupidity, malevolence and madness to the single figure of error must therefore be understood to occur in principle—whence the hybrid character of this weak concept which would not have a place within pure thought if thought were not diverted from without, and would not be occasioned by this outside if the outside

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 134.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 149.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 151.

¹⁰⁹ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 103.

were not within pure thought."¹¹⁰ The dogmatic image of thought, taking no notice of this *outside*, guides almost all of what we think and do, and for Deleuze, what is crucial is that *we do not recognize it*. This is why the Deleuzian disruption is so important to a theory of freedom. This brings us to the "thought of the outside," a notion inspired by Foucault.

4. The Thought of the Outside

Michel Foucault's 1966 essay, titled, "The Thought of the Outside," is dedicated to the writings of Maurice Blanchot. This essay has received little scholarly attention in the United States,¹¹¹ likely because the larger part of Foucault's work deals so extensively with archaeologies and genealogical analyses of institutions of power and knowledge. However, this essay is arguably one of the more significant among Foucault's work from a theoretical or programmatic perspective. For the shift away from the orthodoxy of Foucault's day, "a Hegelianism permeated with phenomenology and existentialism, centered on the theme of the unhappy consciousness,"¹¹² entailed a movement of the decentering of the subject, a movement for which Foucault found in Blanchot¹¹³ a primary source of inspiration: "Blanchot..." Foucault claims, represented, "First, an invitation to call into question the category of the subject, its supremacy, its foundational function. Second, the conviction that such an operation would be meaningless if it remained limited to speculation. Calling the subject in question meant that one would have to experience something leading to its actual destruction, its decomposition, its explosion, its conversion into something else."¹¹⁴ Thus, it seems likely, given Foucault's assertion of Blanchot's centrality to his thinking, that the essay on Blanchot is more than a mere literary foray for an intellectual whose work otherwise involves mostly analyses of an historical-philosophical (indeed, political) sort. Secondly, (and more importantly for our purposes),

¹¹⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 149.

¹¹¹ With a few exceptions; most notably, Leonard Lawlor's most recent book is oriented entirely around this theme. Leonard Lawlor, *Early Twentieth-Century Continental Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), esp. 174-202. If I am not mistaken, the original sub-title of Lawlor's book was to be, "Toward the Outside." I am deeply indebted to Leonard Lawlor for turning me on to this essay in the Fall, 2005 seminar at the University of Memphis, titled, "Recent Continental Philosophy." Another noteworthy example is in Miller's biography of Foucault, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, where, on p. 153, he writes that this essay in particular provides a key to understanding some of the more enigmatic passages of *The Order of Things*, which is without question one of the so-called 'canonical' texts of the Foucaultian faithful. See also, Gary Gutting, *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 17-18. The essay does not, however, figure prominently in many other scholarly works on Foucault, both American and internationally. For instance, Todd May, *The Philosophy of Foucault* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006); Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Béatrice Han, *Foucault's Critical Project: Between the Transcendental and the Historical*, trans. Edward Pile (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002); Rudi Visker, *Michel Foucault: Genealogy as Critique*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 1995).

¹¹² Michel Foucault, "Interview with Michel Foucault," in ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley, et. al. *The Essential Works of Foucault: 1954-1984, Volume 3: Power*, series ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 2000), 246.

¹¹³ Along with Georges Bataille and Friedrich Nietzsche.

¹¹⁴ Foucault, "Interview with Michel Foucault," 247.

Deleuze holds this essay in very high regard, seeing it as the linchpin that holds together the entirety of Foucault's work: "In truth, one thing haunts Foucault—thought. The question: 'What does thinking signify? What do we call thinking?' is the arrow first fired by Heidegger and then again by Foucault. He writes a history, but a history of thought as such."¹¹⁵ With this in mind, Deleuze's textual engagement with Foucault *begins* by connecting the early works (the 'archaeologies')¹¹⁶ to the 'middle' works (the 'genealogies')¹¹⁷ by way of Foucault's 1969 text *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Then from there, he builds to the concluding reading of *The Use of Pleasure* (1984), tying together the works from 1961-1976 with Foucault's final works of 1984 through an engagement with the question of *power*, which is inherently tied, for Deleuze, to the thought of the outside.¹¹⁸ Put more succinctly, this brief 1966 essay is seen by Deleuze as engendering the shift in Foucault's thought that takes place between the early works on power and knowledge and the final works on ethics. Let us look to Foucault's essay.

Central to the essay is the notion that to think the being of language opens the subject to a radical exteriority that threatens its own undoing. The title of the essay's first section is, "I Lie, I Speak," and the centrality of the *I* indicates the centrality of the Cartesian subject as the point of departure. The statement *I speak* is an ostensibly unproblematic statement. There is no content or object about which I might possibly be mistaken in my assertion; the subject, 'I,' acts merely as a place-holder for the act of speaking, so I cannot be wrong with respect to the speaker either. To say that I am speaking entails its own truth. "It is therefore true, undeniably true, that I am speaking when I say that I am speaking."¹¹⁹ Here we must hear the echoes of Descartes who, in the second *Meditation*, writes, "I conclude that this proposition, *I am, I exist*, must be true whenever I assert it or think it." While the Cartesian subject relies upon the interiority of thought, the expression of the Foucaultian subject is founded upon the *exteriorization* of language itself.

However these two subjectivities are not comparable or interchangeable. In the articulation of the phrase *I speak*, there is an implied recipient, and an implied referent or object—*I speak to you about x...* However, as Foucault notes, in the formulation *I speak*, the discourse that would serve as our object is absent. The assertion itself is isolated to its essential core, *speaking speaking*. But as a result, the being of language itself takes center stage, and the "slight and singular point" into which we had crystallized the *speaking of speaking* opens into the endless dissemination of possibility and referentiality, of which language is divested each time an *I* attempts to communicate a subjective meaning to a *you*. Foucault writes, "Any possibility of language dries up in the transitivity of its execution. The desert surrounds it."¹²⁰ The assertion: *I speak*, indeed points to a referent, but in its absence, this *referentiality* entails an infinite openness of the *I speak*. It points the subject to an *I-know-not-what*. The thought of this asser-

¹¹⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 116.

¹¹⁶ *The History of Madness in the Classical Age* (1961); *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963); *The Order of Things* (1966).

¹¹⁷ *Discipline and Punish* (1975); *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction* (1976).

¹¹⁸ The chapter on the thought of the outside is chapter 4 in a 5-chapter book.

¹¹⁹ Michel Foucault, "The Thought of the Outside," in *The Essential Works of Foucault: 1954-1984, Volume 2: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, 148.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

tion thus highlights a dimension of the being of language, wherein a *speaking about speaking* is laid bare and language is understood in its pure form, as “an unfolding of pure exteriority.”¹²¹ This understanding of language, wherein the communicative function of language is suspended, is a thought of the subject where the subject is no longer the *sovereign* bearer, responsible for the communicative enactment of meaning, but rather, the *nothing* or the *void* through which this infinite outpouring flows. Thus, while the Cartesian subject is a self-contained, self-identical *Cogito*, standing as the locus and guarantor of truth, the Foucaultian subject is here revealed as nothing more than its own disappearance: “... ‘I speak’ runs counter to ‘I think.’ ‘I think’ led to the indubitable certainty of the ‘I’ and its existence; ‘I speak,’ on the other hand, distances, disperses, effaces that existence and lets only its empty emplacement appear.”¹²²

The being of language only allows itself to be shown with the death of the subject, in all of its traditional and residual forms. This, however, requires a *new mode of thought*, “perhaps through a form of thought whose still vague possibility was sketched by Western culture in its margins. A thought that stands outside subjectivity, setting its limits as though from without, articulating its end, making its dispersion shine forth, taking in only its invincible absence...a thought that, in relation to the interiority of our philosophical reflection and the positivity of our knowledge, constitutes what in a phrase we might call ‘the thought of the outside.’”¹²³

The outside is conceived as an absolute outside, radically exterior to the interiority of the subject, and along with it, to any interiority at all. It has no interior *essence* or positive presence of its own that a sovereign subject might hope to master or possess within the domain of her own subjectivity, a self-contained *interiority* that I, in the self-contained interiority of my subjectivity, bear. Nor can I, strictly speaking, hope to *enter* the outside either. For to do so would entail two interiorities forbidden by the thought of the outside: (1) The interior nature of the outside itself, into which I will have presumably now passed; (2) The interiority of the I who has apparently maintained its integrity in the passage to the outside. The I is always “irremediably outside the outside.”¹²⁴ One can only experience the outside by *becoming-other*.

But insofar as one *suffers*—“in emptiness and destitution—the presence of the outside”¹²⁵ and its *irremediable* exteriority, the outside must, at least in a certain sense, be *within* the I. But this I cannot be the Cartesian or phenomenological subject, characterized by its pure interiority. Rather, the experience of the outside is precisely the constant experience of my own undoing, which opens the subject up to the relations of forces which engender it, as Deleuze says, the outside “within pure thought.”¹²⁶

This is why, for Foucault, the thought of the outside reveals the two-sided, infinite oscillation of death and origin: “The pure outside of the origin, if that is indeed what language is eager to greet, never solidifies into a penetrable and immobile positivity; and the perpetually

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid., 149.

¹²³ Ibid., 150.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 154.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 149.

rebegun outside of death, although carried toward the light by the essential forgetting of language, never sets the limit at which truth would finally begin to take shape."¹²⁷ To push thought to the outside is to bring oneself and one's subjectivity into explicit relation with the forces of thinking which constitute one's own subjectivity. It is to make possible, to welcome even, the constant death and rebirth of oneself, to welcome one's own undoing with the promise of *becoming-other*. "When language is revealed to be the reciprocal transparency of the origin and death, every single existence receives, through the simple assertion 'I speak,' the threatening promise of its own disappearance, its future appearance."¹²⁸

5. Folding: Back to the Inside

The second pole of this oscillation—rebirth—is what will ultimately be significant for Foucault, (and for Deleuze). This is the process whereby one finds the "full, positive power of the individual as such."¹²⁹ This emphasis, a preoccupation present at least as early as *Difference and Repetition*, is what is absolutely crucial. It is what Hallward misses and Badiou misunderstands about Deleuze's emphasis on the *thought of the outside*. The unfolding that opens the interiority of the subject to the outside is always coupled with a folding that bends and reshapes force back upon itself into a new self-relation: "the theme which has always haunted Foucault is that of the double. But the double is never a projection of the interior; on the contrary, it is an interiorization of the outside. It is not a doubling of the One, but a redoubling of the Other. It is not a reproduction of the Same, but a repetition of the Different. It is not the emanation of an 'I', but something that places in immanence an always other or a Non-self. It is never the other who is a double in the doubling process, it is a self that lives me as the double of the other."¹³⁰

Power for Foucault, (as for Deleuze), is purely relational—it is nothing more than relations between forces; as such it is never singular, but always essentially multiple. Moreover, "every relation between forces is a 'power relation'."¹³¹ Power therefore has no essentiality or substantiality by which it might be definable. It is not a badge of authority that some possess and others do not. Instead power, insofar as it is purely relational, "passes through the hands of the mastered no less than through the hands of the masters... A profound Nietzscheanism."¹³² Power produces its own truths, its own self-justifying discourses, its "strata," or "historical formations, positivities, or empiricities."¹³³

One's own subjectivity, (and hence, the corpus of the *everybody knows* with which one is inculcated), always begins as a constituted element in the nexus of these stratified formations. Therefore thought always seeks, however disruptive or revolutionary it may appear, to justify the strata themselves *within the context of these strata*. This is why, according to Deleuze, the

¹²⁷ Michel Foucault, "The Thought of the Outside," 168.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 258.

¹³⁰ Deleuze, *Foucault*, 98.

¹³¹ Deleuze, *Foucault*, 70.

¹³² Ibid., 71.

¹³³ Ibid., 47.

antiquated notion of *free will* is always merely a reactionary abstraction. Within the constituted system, one may of course be *free* to do what one *wills*, but the more interesting and relevant question, (almost always ignored in discussions of *liberty*), for Deleuze and for Foucault with regard to *freedom*, is *why one wills what one does*. For Deleuze and Foucault, one wills what one wills precisely because the system has constituted it to do so—our desires are not our own. “But the outside concerns force: if force is always in relation with other forces, forces necessarily refer to an irreducible outside which no longer has any form and is made up of distances that cannot be broken down through which one force acts upon another or is acted upon by another.”¹³⁴ The strata themselves are rigidified *forms*,¹³⁵ sedimented expressions of differential relations of forces. Thinking itself, when unleashed, is a force. But forces can act only upon other forces; thus if one would seek to change oneself or the world, one must first engage in thinking, and “thinking addresses itself to an outside that has no form. To think is to reach the non-stratified.”¹³⁶

But when thought pushes toward the direction of the unthought, it finds that the unthought is “not external to thought but lies at its very heart, as that impossibility of thinking which doubles or hollows out the outside.”¹³⁷ The unthought is the *condition* of thinking, because it is what *cannot be thought*, and hence it is what *demands* to be thought. Therefore, the recognition for the necessity of the passage of thought to the outside is always doubled back in a movement that folds force back onto itself, exposing “the floating and fluid character of individuality itself,”¹³⁸ opening a genuine Deleuzian space of *freedom*. What his critics often seem to lose sight of is a real grappling with what Deleuze calls the third synthesis of time, *the eternal return*. The return is the return of the Same, but the Same as the Different. The eternal return is the reason that being is not simply an undifferentiated chaotic abyss, a *chaosmos* rather than a *chaos*. And the eternal return is “said only of the theatrical world of the metamorphoses and masks of the Will to power, of the pure intensities of that Will which are like mobile individuating factors unwilling to allow themselves to be contained within the factitious limits of this or that individual, this or that Self.”¹³⁹ Will to power wills itself, but it wills itself as that “which is capable of transforming itself,”¹⁴⁰ as this is the mark of the highest degree of power. The will to power thus *wills* a differential Self, which is nothing more than an ongoing, infolding, process of individuation:

The great discovery of Nietzsche’s philosophy, which marks his break with Schopenhauer and goes under the name of will to power or the Dionysian world, is the following: no doubt the I and the Self must be replaced by an undifferentiated abyss, but this abyss is neither an impersonal nor an abstract Universal beyond individuation. On the contrary, it is the I and the self which are the abstract universals. They must be replaced, but in and by

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹³⁵ Deleuze uses this term throughout the *Foucault* book in opposition to *forces*.

¹³⁶ Deleuze, *Foucault*, 87.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹³⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 258.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

individuation, in the direction of individuating factors which consume them and which constitute the fluid world of Dionysus. What cannot be replaced is individuation itself. Beyond the self and the I we find not the impersonal but the individual and its factors, individuation and its fields, individuality and its pre-individual singularities.¹⁴¹

Thinking, therefore, is the only thing that can truly constitute a subject in the Deleuzian sense.

The last remaining question is, how? Given Deleuze's ontology as we have discussed it, the answer is not difficult to surmise. Specifically, for Deleuze, the practice of philosophy consists of the activity of formulating problems in the face of impossibilities, problems which Deleuze calls *Ideas*.¹⁴² The *solutions*, (or, shall we say, the *solvings*) to these problems constitute the Deleuzian actual. Ideas, we have seen, occupy the Deleuzian *virtual*.¹⁴³ Thinking, then, amounts to the very reconfiguration of the virtual itself, the genetic ground of the actual. To echo Spinoza (which Badiou and Hallward never miss an opportunity to do), we can note that, for Spinoza, thinking does not *determine* the body to action;¹⁴⁴ nevertheless, a *change* in thought is coupled by a change in body.¹⁴⁵ Likewise for Deleuze, thought only *thinks* when it is *forced* to think; this is but another way of saying that thinking only arises at the insistence of an *outside*, (not from the spontaneity of the Cartesian subject, which, as we have discussed it, is a reactionary illusion); thought is faced with impossibilities *at every turn*, on a nearly constant basis. Philosophical thinking, then, formulates Ideas in order to *think* these impossibilities. In so doing, it has a hand in the act of creation itself; it *becomes* a self, and in becoming a self, it changes the world. "It is Ideas which lead us from the fractured I to the dissolved Self. As we have seen, what swarms around the edges of the fracture are Ideas in the form of problems—in other words, in the form of multiplicities made up of differential relations and variations of relations, distinctive points and transformations of points."¹⁴⁶

Perhaps the best example one can provide of what Deleuze is describing can be found in the philosophical tradition itself, which Claire Colebrook refers to as "a virtual body beyond"¹⁴⁷ humanity itself. Over the course of millennia, philosophers have participated in the constitution and reconfiguration of this *virtual body* that Colebrook calls "the philosophical archive."¹⁴⁸ Each philosopher *inherits* a set of impossibilities, and attempts to formulate Ideas in order to *think* these impossibilities. Subsequent philosophers then participate in the reconfiguration of the virtual that they then inherit from their predecessors. Heraclitus, Plato, the Stoics, Lucretius, Duns Scotus, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Bergson, Husserl, Heidegger, Proust, Joyce, Sartre, Foucault... All are philosophers and artists who have contributed to this virtual body. Many in this cohort would seem irreconcilable with many of

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 258.

¹⁴² Ibid., 168.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 209.

¹⁴⁴ Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part III, Proposition 2.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., Part II, Proposition 7; Part V, Proposition 1.

¹⁴⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 259.

¹⁴⁷ Éric Alliez, Claire Colebrook, Peter Hallward, Nicholas Thoburn, Jeremy Gilbert (Chair), "Deleuzian Politics: A Roundtable Discussion," *New Formations* 68 (2009): 143-187, 164.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

the others; nevertheless, from this conflux of virtuality, Deleuze, faced with the *impossibility* of the failure of representational thinking, was able to create a differential system of Ideas, and it is a system that has, quite literally, *changed the world*.¹⁴⁹

Finally, the question that poses itself in light of this understanding of freedom is, *what are currently our impossibilities?* “What is our light and what is our language, that is to say, our ‘truth’ today? What powers must we confront, and what is our capacity for resistance, today when we can no longer be content to say that the old struggles are no longer worth anything? And do we not perhaps above all bear witness to and even participate in the ‘production of a new subjectivity’? Do not the changes in capitalism find an unexpected ‘encounter’ in the slow emergence of a new Self as a centre of resistance? Each time there is a social change, is there not a movement of subjective reconversion, with its ambiguities but also its potential?”¹⁵⁰ Or, put otherwise, how can *we*, become a *we*?

6. Conclusion: Thought as the Dice-Throw

This paper does not propose an answer to these questions. I have attempted to argue that Deleuze’s philosophy provides us with a unique and indispensable possibility to genuinely *begin* addressing the problems these questions pose. Hence, his thought is *anything but* “indifferent to politics,” and it is only by forcibly *overlooking* significant aspects of Deleuze’s philosophy that one can make such a charge.

What Hallward gets *right* is that Deleuze does indeed emphasize a *deterritorialization* as a model of thinking. What he gets *wrong*, however, is that this deterritorialization does not amount to the absolute *creative subtraction* that Hallward finds in Deleuze. It is a willingness to *become-other*, and in becoming-other, to return, not to dissolve into undifferentiated chaos, that drives the Deleuzian notion of the subject. Against Badiou, we can note a few things: (1) We have demonstrated herein that the virtual is determinative of the actual in only a qualified sense, differentiating the singularities, which then *differentiate* the actual itself—the unilateral determination heralded by Badiou and by Hallward is not nearly so simple; (2) We have also demonstrated that Deleuzian univocity is in no way analogous to the Neoplatonic One: being, for Deleuze, is a multiplicity that forcefully rejects the One-Many distinction and comprises the organization of the multiple as such, without any presumption, necessity, or even space for, *unity*; (3) Finally, we have shown that the *outside*, (as Badiou designates the virtual), is not exhaustively identical with the Bergsonian past; hence the *fold* of the outside that constitutes the subject is not simply a deterministic *selection* of the past—it is rather an oscillating process of thinking whereby the subject opens itself to the forces from which it is constituted, confronting the impossible unthought, and reconstituting itself in a character of fluidity that is capable of self-transformation. For Deleuze it is in the fold of the outside that freedom is found.

Deleuze famously claims, “To think is to create—there is no other creation—but to create is first of all to engender ‘thinking’ in thought.”¹⁵¹ To engender thinking in thought is to

¹⁴⁹ See, for example, Thomas Nail, *Returning to Revolution: Deleuze, Guattari, and Zapatismo* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

¹⁵⁰ Deleuze, *Foucault*, 115.

¹⁵¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 147.

call into question and actively disrupt the dogmatic image of thought, thereby embarking upon the destratification of sedimented values, or, *thinking*—“the power of a new politics which would overturn the image of thought.”¹⁵² Thinking reconfigures the virtual. It is in this way and for this reason that Deleuze refers to the activity of thinking as a *dice-throw*.¹⁵³ Each throw of the dice constitutes a *move* in the ideal game, the play of becoming. The throws, though qualitatively distinct, are forms of a *single cast*—*ontologically one*, which is just another way of denying any avatars of transcendent intervention into the game. If, therefore, the *freedom* or the *choice* one seeks is the classical notion of *spontaneous freedom of the will*, which, as Spinoza critiques, is contradictory in that it is at the same time *distinct* from nature and yet capable of *governing* it, one will not find such a freedom in Deleuze. Moreover, such *spontaneity* will always be, for Deleuze, a constituted illusory *ideal* that is unaware of the extent to which it is in fact determined by the stratified system itself. However, for Deleuze, when one truly undertakes the activity of thinking, one has the opportunity to *throw the dice*, meaning that one problematizes being in new ways—this activity is essentially disruptive—overturning the *doxa*, transforming the strata, and opening oneself to varying new relations of affirmation and experimentation—one ceases to simply be *reactive* and makes thought itself into an *activity*; one *creates*. And in so creating, one literally changes the world. Therefore, when Peter Hallward says, “But those of us who still seek to change our world and to empower its inhabitants will need to look for our inspiration elsewhere,”¹⁵⁴ we can only conclude that he means that *he*, Peter Hallward, finds Deleuze uninspiring, but this is, as Badiou says, nothing more than “a question of taste.”¹⁵⁵ And, as I hope I have made clear, I do not share his taste.

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¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 137.

¹⁵³ Deleuze, *Foucault*, 117.

¹⁵⁴ Hallward, *Out of this World*, 164.

¹⁵⁵ Badiou, *Deleuze*, 91.