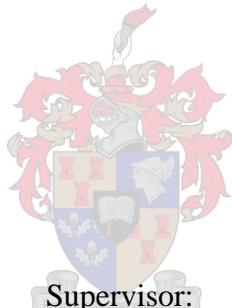


# **THE OTHER BEFORE US?: A DELEUZEAN CRITIQUE OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL INTERSUBJECTIVITY**

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy at the University of Stellenbosch



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December 2005

## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it at any university for a degree

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE:.....

The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards this research is hereby gratefully acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the National Research Foundation.

# SUMMARY

This study seeks to give a philosophical account of, and justification for the intuition that subjectivity is not a stable “Archimedean point” on the basis of which an intersubjective relation can be founded, but is instead profoundly affected by each different “Other” with which it enters into a relation.

As a preliminary to the positive philosophical account of how this might work in Part II of the thesis, there is an attempt to critique certain of the classical accounts of intersubjectivity found in phenomenology, in order to show that these positions cannot give a satisfactory account of the type of intersubjective relation which gives rise to the abovementioned intuition.

The thesis therefore starts off by examining the account of intersubjectivity in Husserl’s *Cartesian Meditations* (especially the Fifth Meditation). Husserl is there engaged in an attempt to overcome the charge of solipsism that might be levelled at phenomenology, since phenomenology is concerned with experience as, by definition, the experience of the subject. We try to show that Husserl cannot give a satisfactory account of the Other because he tries to derive it from the Subject, and hence reduces the Other to the Same.

We then turn to two other phenomenological thinkers – Merleau-Ponty and Levinas, both of whom are themselves critical of Husserl – to examine whether they provide a better account, but conclude that (although each represents a certain advance over Husserl), neither are able to provide a decisively better account, since each is still too caught up in phenomenology and its focus on *consciousness*.

In Part II of the thesis, we then turn to a non- (or even anti-) phenomenological thinker, namely Gilles Deleuze, to try and find an alternative theory that would be able to provide the account we seek. Our contention is that Deleuze, by seeking to give an account of the constitution of the subject itself, simultaneously provides an account of the constitution of the Other as arising at the same time as the Subject.

Crucial to this account is the inversion of priority between the poles of a relation and the relation itself. Deleuze argues that a relation is “external to its terms”, and precedes these terms. Hence, by returning to a level which precedes consciousness and the order of knowledge – that is, by returning to the level of the virtual multiplicities and singular events that underlie and precede the actualization of these events and multiplicities in distinct subjects and objects – we argue that Deleuze shows that, *contra* phenomenology, there is in fact no primordial separation between subject and Other. The contention is therefore that the problem of intersubjectivity as posed by phenomenology is a false one that can be eluded by means of Deleuze’s philosophy. This philosophy is not based on the subject, but instead shows the subject to be the product of an underlying network of relations.

Finally, we turn to Deleuze's appropriation of Nietzsche to trace out the transformation of "ethics" that result from adopting a position like that of Deleuze.

## OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie poog om 'n filosofiese beskrywing en verantwoording te gee vir die intuïsie dat subjektiwiteit nie 'n stabiele "Archimedes punt" is op basis waarvan die intersubjektiewe relasie gefundeer kan word nie, maar dat dit eerder op 'n diepgaande wyse beïnvloed word deur elke verskillende "Ander" waarmee dit in verhouding tree.

Tot voorbereiding vir die positiewe filosofiese uitleg van hoe hierdie relasie sou werk in Deel II van die tesis, word daar eers gepoog om 'n kritiek te lewer van sekere klassieke uiteensettings van intersubjektiwiteit soos gevind in die fenomenologie, om sodoende te wys dat hierdie posisies nie 'n voldoende verrekening kan gee van die tipe intersubjektiewe relasie wat aanleiding gee tot die bogenoemde intuïsie nie.

Die tesis begin dus deur 'n blik te werp op die uiteensetting van intersubjektiwiteit in Husserl se *Cartesian Meditations* (veral die Vyfde *Meditation*). Husserl probeer daar om die aantuiging te weerlê dat die fenomenologie lei tot solipsisme, aangesien lg. te make het met ervaring as, per definisie, die ervaring van die subjek. Ons probeer wys dat Husserl nie 'n toereikende teorie van die Ander kan gee nie, aangesien hy die Ander van die subjek probeer aflei, en dus die Ander reduseer tot die Selfde.

Dan word twee ander fenomenologiese denkers – Merleau-Ponty en Levinas, beide van wie ook krities staan teenoor Husserl – bespreek om te kyk of hul 'n beter teorie formuleer. Die slotsom word bereik dat (alhoewel elk 'n sekere mate van vooruitgang bo Husserl toon), nie een van hulle 'n beslissende beter verrekening kan gee nie, weens die invloed op elk van fenomenologie en die fokus daarvan op *bewussyn*.

In Deel II van die tesis, wend ons ons dan na 'n nie- (of selfs teen-) fenomenologiese denker, naamlik Gilles Deleuze, in die poging om 'n alternatiewe teorie te vind wat die tipe verrekening kan gee waarvoor ons soek. Die argument lui dan dat Deleuze, deur 'n uiteensetting te gee van die konstitusie van die subjek self, ook 'n teorie gee van die Ander wat tergelykertyd as die subjek tot stand kom.

Sentraal tot hierdie teorie is die inversie van die prioriteit tussen die pole van 'n relasie en die relasie self. Deleuze argumenteer dat 'n relasie "uitwendig" is tot die pole waartussen dit lê, en dié pole voorafgaan. Dus argumenteer ons dat, deur terug te keer na 'n vlak wat voorafgaan aan bewussyn en die orde van kennis – d.i., deur terug te keer na die vlak van virtuele veelvoudiges en singulêre gebeurtenisse wat hul eie aktualisasie in konkrete subjekte en objekte voorafgaan en onderskraag – wys Deleuze, teenoor fenomenologie, dat daar in feite geen primordiale skeiding tussen subjek en Ander lê nie. Daar word dan gestel dat die probleem van intersubjektiwiteit, soos gestel deur fenomenologie, 'n valse probleem is, en vermei kan word deur middle van Deleuze se filosofie. Hierdie filosofie is nie gebaseer op die subjek nie, maar wys dat die subjek reeds 'n produk van 'n onderliggende netwerk van relasies is.

Daar word afgesluit deur te kyk na Deleuze se appropriasie van Nietzsche om ‘n skets te gee van die transformasie van “etiek” wat volg uit ‘n teorie soos dié van Deleuze.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis set out to show the effects of Others on the Self – and there can be no clearer illustration of what it tries to say than the fact that it exists at all!

Which is a clumsy way of saying that without the love and support of many people for many years, I could not have completed – or even started – it.

The following people stand out especially:

Firstly, and most importantly, my parents, Jan and Nellie, from whom I’ve always received nothing but the purest love, the greatest support (in all possible ways) and infinite patience! This thesis is dedicated to them, not only for all these things, but also for all the time and effort they’ve put into enriching my life and awakening me to the finer things in life. And also to Pieter, my brother and closest friend, who has always been there and has added so much to my life.

A few friends spring to mind that have had a decisive influence, both on my life and on this thesis. Liezl – for the use of your office and computer, but much more, for all your love and friendship! Schalk – for wonderful and stimulating conversations about philosophy, life, the universe and everything. (And for both keeping me sane in the Netherlands, and enjoying it with me!). To my oldest friends, Albert and Ferdi – who knows where I would be without you!

Also, much thanks to all the staff at the University of Stellenbosch Department of Philosophy, for creating the immensely stimulating, welcoming and friendly environment that you have. It was a great privilege to study here. To Paul, my promoter – thank you for the amount of time and support you always gave, and especially when things got tough at the end! And not least, to Liesl van Kerwel – for your patience, your ready laugh and your incredible combination of efficiency and friendliness, thank you!

At least two other people deserve to be thanked: Dr. Kotzé, for getting me back on the road after I’d almost lost it, and Elva Zietsman, for finding funding, and then keeping the funders off my back!

And lastly, to Karlien, for making me happier than I’ve ever been before, your intellectual stimulation, your patience and willingness to play second fiddle to words and thoughts as I completed this, for proof-reading the thesis at short notice and in little time, and doing a wonderful job! ... for so much more ... and mostly, for your love – Thank you!

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## The Other Before Us?: A Deleuzean Critique of Phenomenology

### Introduction

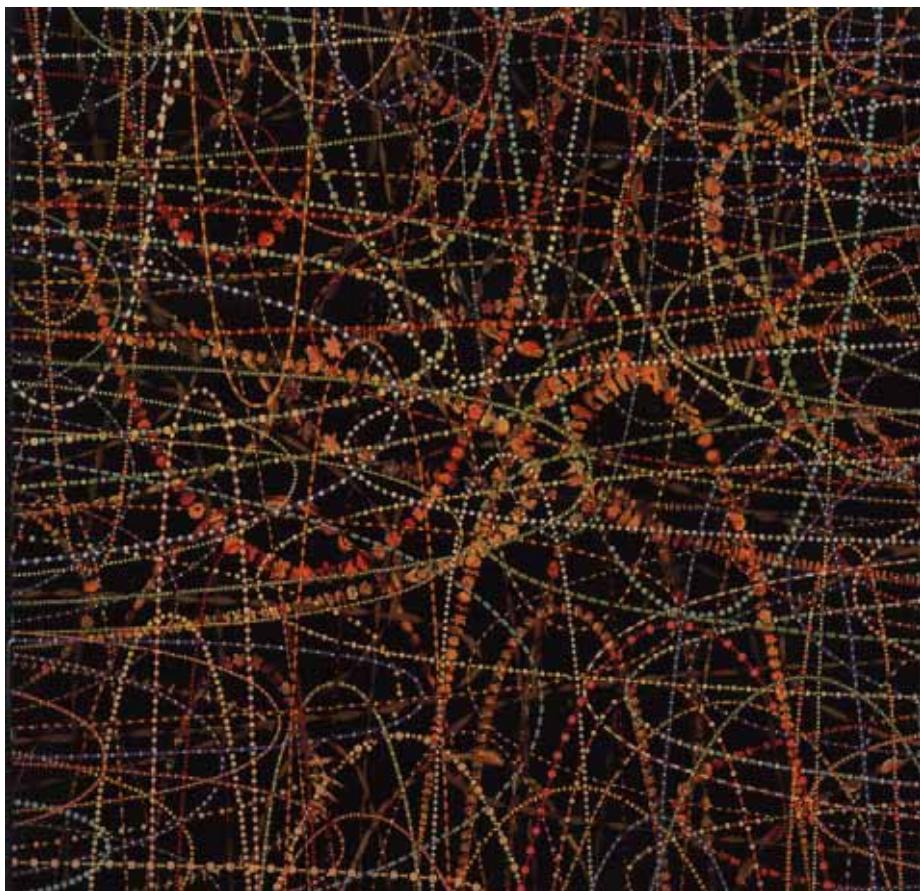
The genius of a philosophy must first be measured by the new distribution which it imposes on beings and concepts. (Deleuze 1990:6)

What we're interested in, you see, are modes of individuation beyond those of things, persons, or subjects ... maybe it's a mistake to believe in the existence of things, persons, or subjects (Deleuze 1995:26)

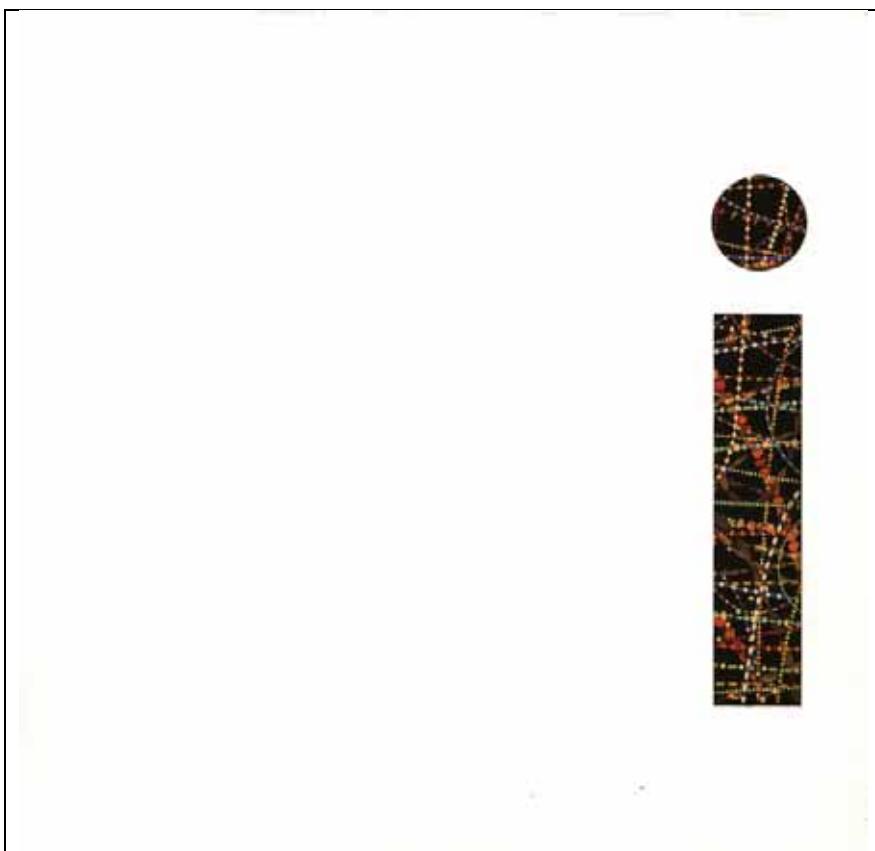
On the page facing this one, there are two images, both taken from an album by the Magnetic Fields which has only recently been released. However, it has seemed to me to be the best possible visual expression of the basic theory of subjectivity I have set out to explore in the thought of Gilles Deleuze as a preparation to a critique of the phenomenological theory of intersubjectivity (although I have found it necessary to prepare the critique first, in order to delineate the problem that I believe the philosophy of Deleuze may help to *evade*, that is, show to be a *false problem*, rather than to *solve*).

The top image (Fig. 1) shows the basic CD-booklet cover-inlay. On this cover, chains of objects (some are birds, some hands, some mere indeterminate blobs or shapes) arc across a chiasmic black background, seemingly at random and yet neatly organized into orderly chains. They intersect frequently and at many different loci and in many different configurations. Figure 2 shows the same cover, but now inside a pristine white cardboard slipcase which accompanied it, and on which the name (the identity) of the band is stamped. However, the title of the album does not appear *on* the cover. Instead, from the area of the slipcase which passes over the densely-populated black ground of the insert, the title has been neatly cut, neatly sectioning off also a portion of the crazy mixtures traversing the black surface of the insert, imposing a definite border on it and "defining" it: the name of the album (and the shape thus pushed over the free-flowing graphics beneath) is "i".

**Figure 1: Basic cover - "i" by The Magnetic Fields**



**Figure 2: Cover of "i" by The Magnetic Fields, with slipcase**



In late 2001, I was chiefly occupied by two problems, one of a personal nature, and the other of a more “professional” nature. The first can be summed up as my first real experience of the intractability and resistance of the world, and the accompanying intuition that I was not in control of my surroundings (which is a part of growing up) but also by the more dizzying realization that I was not as *integrated* a personality as I had supposed – that I was not the same person in relation to some people as I was to others, that I was not, let’s say, *self-enclosed*, or self-identical. Accompanying this intuition was a very strong feeling of an almost solipsistic inability to communicate with, or even fathom, many or most of the people whom I had thought I’d known – a feeling sharpened by a series of sudden and strong shocks.

At the time, the philosophies which I had been exposed to and had hitherto felt very strong personal affinities for - which were mainly the very strongly subject-centred philosophies of the (especially phenomenological) transcendental tradition - seemed incapable of accounting for this intuition. The theory of intersubjectivity in Husserl with which I was vaguely acquainted (and which seemed to be not so far removed from other phenomenological theories – even that of Levinas seemed to be merely an *inversion of*, and not an *escape from* this theory<sup>1</sup>) all seemed to be focused on overcoming the solipsistic element through an appeal to a transcendent unity (be it of the Subject *or* the Other) which I could not reconcile with experience.

At the same time, I was starting to think of a possible theme for the Masters thesis on which I was intent on embarking the following year. I then found what seemed to hold the faint promise of a solution to *both* these problems in a book called *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, by Gilles Deleuze (1983), an extended discussion of which will conclude this study.

The following study derives from these impulses – and while I’m sure that I’m certainly not the first postgraduate student (or post-adolescent) to approach a philosophy thesis from the depths of a “common-or-garden existential crisis”, they are impulses that I

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<sup>1</sup> We shall return to this point in slightly more detail at the start of Part II, but for now this statement should be understood in the sense that, whereas we shall try to show the problematic aspects of a theory of intersubjectivity which departs from the centrality of the subject, Peperzak describes one of “the core ideas” of Levinas’s work as being that “the Other is the center” (1996:ix). We shall argue that it is not sufficient to invert the priority assigned to each pole (that is, either the subject or the other) *within* a relation, but that – in a more radical way – the priority between the poles and the relation itself needs to be reversed, which we shall try to show happens in Deleuze.

thought important to clarify on account both of the Deleuzean claim that a thought cannot be understood in isolation from the problem to which it is addressed, and as an attempt to show the extent to which the philosophy of Deleuze can be put to work in concrete and individual contexts. Deleuze and Guattari believe that “meaning is use”<sup>2</sup> and to some extent it is not (or should not be) possible to show a purely theoretical understanding of their work – a competence in its *utilisation* should be to some extent requisite.

Which is not to say that the study which follows is in any way auto-biographical.

There are two parts to the study – the first attempts to perform what I should like to call an “immanent” critique<sup>3</sup> of, first, the reductive foundation of the subject in Husserl (and to a greater degree, but of lesser importance here) of Descartes. The basic contention in this first part is that Husserl (and Descartes), by abstracting the subject from a communal world of others in an attempt to rid themselves of any presuppositions, in fact fall prey to a *crucial* presupposition – namely, that the subject could be constituted *at all* and *in the same way* regardless of whether it inhabited an intersubjective world or not. It is this common basis that both Husserl and Descartes share which, on the one hand, does not allow them to accommodate the element of *mutual constitutability* which I shall argue Deleuze can and which seems, on a gut-feel level, to be a necessary component of subjectivity; on the other, this basis means that neither Descartes nor Husserl can account for the relation to the Other without falling back on the Subject as the Archimedes point of this relation: the effect of this is that the (phenomenological account of the) intersubjective relation fails for a number of reasons. Firstly, since it is based on a relation of analogy to the subject, it cannot account for that which might make the Other

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<sup>2</sup> This is certainly the view of Daniel W. Smith in his Introduction (“A Life of Pure Immanence”: Deleuze’s ‘Critique et Clinique’ Project”) to Deleuze (1998:xxii) and of Massumi (in Deleuze & Guattari 1987:xv) where he writes: “The question is not: is it true? But: does it work?”

<sup>3</sup> In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, while tracing the – as he contends – complex relationship between Nietzsche’s genealogy and Kant’s critique, Deleuze makes the following statement: “Kant’s genius, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, was to conceive of an immanent critique. Critique must not be a critique of reason by … any kind of external instance … we should not seek, in reason, errors which have come from elsewhere … but illusions coming from reason as such” (Deleuze 1983:91). Although we are not critiquing (primarily) reason in what follows, we have taken up this notion of “immanent critique” to mean a critique of a position *in terms of itself* – i.e. without reference or recourse to any external instance” or consideration, or at least, then, a critique which would itself be derived from, and acceptable to, *the position which is being critiqued*. To put it more concretely in this context: to derive a critique of Husserl in his own terms, and without explicitly drawing on another theoretical position.

*different* to the Subject – and that this is as solipsistic as not having any Others at all. Secondly, the fact that this relation is based on the Subject (which is a structure of knowledge) means that the intersubjective relation is always, too, considered – and treated – as a knowledge relation, which in turn means that the Other is always reduced to an Object (or, in the case of Sartre, which we shall not investigate here, the Subject is Objectified by the Gaze of the Other in a relationship which is merely the invert of the one under discussion).

The contention is further that it makes no difference that both Husserl and Descartes claim to be making no *ontological* assumptions about the existence of the world (or even, in Husserl’s words, entertaining the possibility of its non-existence) – what is in question here is not at all the existence of the world, it is the nature of the subject which is supposed to guarantee access to this world. We shall claim that the mere assumption that the subject would still be the same *even were the world not to exist* or (which is the same) *regardless of its existence or non-existence* makes it impossible to satisfactorily account for the intersubjective relation which has to be derived from the primordial subject in a *second* step. We have called this an “immanent critique” because the attempt was to formulate it in such a way – and by remaining as far as possible *within* phenomenological thought itself – that all the arguments developed within it would be acceptable, or at least not foreign, to the thinkers or traditions under discussion.

In the second part, we have tried to approach this critique from a different angle – we have tried to show how Deleuze develops a critique of phenomenology from the “Outside”, in the sense that he develops a critique of consciousness and reason in the transcendental tradition, not from the viewpoint of consciousness or reason itself (as Husserl or Kant do) but from the “external instance<sup>4</sup>” of the *will*; and in the sense that he – of his generation of French philosophers – has never been, or been seen to be, at all within the phenomenological movement in the same way that, say, Derrida was. This critique would have two components – equivalent to Nietzsche’s creative destruction, namely criticism of a previous theory, but equally (or more) important, the creation of a

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<sup>4</sup> Although in this case this “external instance” turns out to be the deepest internal principle of these phenomena!

new theory to take its place. In this regard, Deleuze himself has said that the success of any critique depends not so much on its critical power as on the ability of its concepts to replace the ones that have been critiqued (cf. Millett 1997:63n.3)

In the second part on Deleuze there is therefore an attempt to develop a new image of thought and concepts in parallel to an attempt to criticise the “image of thought” and concept of subjectivity/intersubjectivity in phenomenology. The concern with the analysis and construction of “images of thought” is a feature that runs throughout Deleuze’s *oeuvre*, from at least *Nietzsche and Philosophy*<sup>5</sup> (1983) to its later avatar as the “plane of immanence” in *What is Philosophy?* (Deleuze & Guattari 1994). The “image of thought” may be, briefly and in a preliminary fashion, characterised as the most basic conception of what it means to think, encompassing such elements as the role or function “thinking” is supposed to fulfil for the thinker (in other words, what thinking is conceived as being *for*), the *types* as well as the *form* of questions that are asked and hence also the types of answers that are seen as being useful. Deleuze and Guattari (1994:35-7) are adamant that the “image of thought”/“plane of immanence” is not *itself* a concept, but instead the background which *enables* the formation of concepts – in that sense, the image of thought or plane of immanence is the (itself pre-conceptual) framework which makes the formation of concepts possible. To try and state it in slightly more familiar (but reductive) terms – one aspect of the plane of immanence is that it constitutes the problematic to which concepts then constitute a response. We shall attempt to provide a fuller exposition of these notions in the context of Deleuze’s own critique of the “old” image of thought of transcendental philosophy, and his attempt to construct a “new” one.

Due partly to time-constraints and partly to issues of availability these critiques/constructions have been derived mostly from a few central works (especially *Logic of Sense* [1990], *Dialogues* [Deleuze & Parnet 2002<sup>6</sup>], *Empiricism and Subjectivity* [1991], *What is Philosophy?* [Deleuze & Guattari 1994], and *Nietzsche and Philosophy* [Deleuze 1983], as well as a number of Deleuze’s articles and essays) with glancing references to some more; some works are treated in passing through secondary sources;

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<sup>5</sup> First published in 1960.

<sup>6</sup> As regards Deleuze’s collaborations with Félix Guattari and Claire Parnet, we will only state that (however problematic and unsatisfactory this might in fact be) for the purposes of this study, we shall consider these works to belong to the same *oeuvre* (or, in Deleuzian terminology, the same “proper name” Deleuze) as the single-authored works.

some are passed over altogether (mostly – and unfortunately – because of issues of availability: books like *Bergsonism*, *Spinozism*<sup>7</sup>, etc.)

The important elements of this critique would be to lay out a new “image of thought” (or plane of immanence) which would not require the pivotal role played by the concept of the subject in transcendental philosophy. In order to do this, it would be necessary to first of all show in what the “old” image of thought consisted, and to demonstrate its overthrow. There is thus a discussion of the old image of thought as recognition and the emphasis on Being in Plato, as well as Deleuze’s celebrated “overturning of Platonism” in *Logic of Sense* (1990). Interspersed with this are attempts to clarify, point-for-point as far as possible, the elements of the new image of thought that Deleuze constructs. Crucial in this regard are the notions of becoming and the “between” in especially *Dialogues* (Deleuze & Parnet 2002), the opposition of “arboreal” to “rhizomatic” types of thought that we find both there and in the opening section of *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze & Guattari 1987), as well as the notions of immanence and actuality/virtuality as discussed in various texts.

The opposition of the “rhizome” to the “tree” (arboreal thought) is perhaps the most widely-known contribution of Deleuze and Guattari. The rhizome can be described briefly as a type of thought where meaning is distributed evenly across a system without being reducible to any “central” or “master” term, and which thus resists the establishment of hierarchies. In a rhizomatic system the attempt is therefore to construct a system of meaning without the need for metaphysical constructs or “master-signifiers” which transcend the actual and singular events under discussion (which therefore act as Universals in the scholastic sense), and in terms of which these events will attain their meaning. Instead, the meaning of terms (and in fact, the ability to isolate and *construct* nodular or singular terms in the first place!) are derived from the contingent and specific relationships which obtain “between” the terms. The attempt is therefore to derive a theory in which the relations between terms or nodes are secondary derivatives, but in

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<sup>7</sup> Several of these books were not available at all in the libraries or bookshops accessible to me, and some were only available in the original French or in German translations, in neither of which I feel confident enough to attempt academic work. It is perhaps a mark of Deleuze’s general neglect that of the twenty-odd co- or single-authored works and collections ascribable to Deleuze, the University of Stellenbosch’s main (J.S. Gericke) library had only eleven titles available for the duration of the current study, and one of these only in French!

fact prior to momentary moments of stability that arise from these relationships – momentary nodes like a “subject” and an “object”, for example. This type of thinking is “immanent”, since the attempt is made to explain such relations purely in terms of themselves, rather than through recourse to some “transcendent” principle of unity which confers identity “from above”, but which also acts reductively. This is then also the interest of empiricism (and what we shall later refer to as “nominalism”) as a method for Deleuze – the attempt to describe (but also to construct) singular events in terms purely of themselves, and without recourse to transcendent metaphysical structures<sup>8</sup>.

To put it even more bluntly – the attempt will be made to show the construction of the subject and the object on the basis of the prior relations that exist prior to and externally to these terms, rather than to try and construct the *relations* on the basis of prior and stable terms like the subject and the object, as (we shall argue) phenomenology does. The phenomenology of the *Cartesian Meditations* (Husserl 1969), we shall then also argue, stands in for an “arboreal” system of thought, which, on the contrary, works with a hierarchical and centralised structure, where certain terms (in phenomenology, for example, the Subject) anchor the knowledge-system, and other terms derive their meaning from this central structure which transcends (and thereby totalises) them. Here relations between terms are secondary to the terms themselves, and derived from them. In such a system, the stable nodes or terms are seen as primary and given, and everything else is derived from them. The obvious example that springs to mind is that of the Platonic universe<sup>9</sup>, and it is also – as we shall see – with an “overturning of Platonism” that Deleuze’s critique of “arboreal thought” starts, though we shall try and draw out the implications of that critique for phenomenology as instanced in the *Cartesian Meditation* (Husserl 1969).

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<sup>8</sup> Although we shall not have the time or occasion to discuss this here, one can also note in passing that the Deleuzoguattarian critique of psychoanalysis, a clear and brief – if somewhat overly-polemical – account of which can be found in Deleuze and Guattari (1987:26-38), is also directed against the way in which the Oedipus complex becomes such a reductive and metaphysical structure.

<sup>9</sup> In fact, the example Deleuze and Guattari use is that of a language. An arboreal approach to a language is one which sets up a central “standardized” language, with variants (dialects, slang, etc.) all of which are “less pure”. By contrast, a rhizomatic understanding of a language is one which realizes that “there is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages. There is no ideal speaker-listener, any more than there is a homogenous linguistic community” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:7).

Since Deleuze characterizes his own philosophy as a “transcendental empiricism” it is also crucial to examine its relationship to Hume, which is most comprehensively stated in *Empiricism and Subjectivity* (1991). Empiricism is here revealed to be the antidote to the transcendental image of thought precisely on the basis of the priorities assigned to the subject – in transcendental philosophy, the subject, the abstract and the universal are expected to account for all relations and (knowledge of) entities, and everything is constituted on the bedrock of the subject; in empiricism, it is precisely the “abstract which must be explained”<sup>10</sup> and the constitution of the *subject* (and its correlate, the object) is the crucial question. Empiricism also turns out to be the condition for the possibility of creativity, and the doctrine of the externality of relations to their terms<sup>11</sup> found there seems to invert the phenomenological contention that relations are secondary to and derived from pre-existent and separate poles (such as the subject and the other). Instead, if relations are now external to their terms, it is the principles of association that constitute relations that also *constitute the subject and the object at the same time!*

The analysis then moves to a discussion, first of the general characteristics of the plane of immanence, then of the concept, and finally onto an analysis of the concept of the other in especially *Logic of Sense*<sup>12</sup>, where Deleuze performs this analysis with reference to Michel Tournier’s rewrite of the Robinson Crusoe story<sup>13</sup>. Here, in a virtual thought-experiment where Robinson is deprived of Others, the *pre-existent status of the Other as perceptual structure, and the structure of a possible world* is revealed through an analysis of the effects of the Other on the subject, and the structure-Other is revealed as not only pre-existent to *both* the subject and the object, but also as a necessary condition for them both to appear in the first place. It is therefore possible to account for the constitutive effect of the other on the subject as a process of becoming that cannot be assimilated to *either* of them, but that occurs *between* them.

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<sup>10</sup> Or, as Deleuze and Guattari also put it in *What is Philosophy?*: “The first principle of philosophy is that Universals explain nothing but must themselves be explained” (1994:7).

<sup>11</sup> That is, that for example the relation between A and B is itself “something” worthy of description, and doesn’t just merely tell us something more about the terms A and/or B, or – to put it more strongly – that it only makes sense to speak of A and B in terms of the relationship between them, and not *vice versa!*

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Appendix 4 (“Michel Tournier and the World without Others”) to *Logic of Sense* (1990:301-321), but also the rehearsal of this analysis in *What is Philosophy?* (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:16-19)

<sup>13</sup> Tournier (1974)

The last (concluding) chapter then turns to *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (Deleuze 1983) to examine the details of the account of becoming and the constitution of “bodies” on the grounds of (or as functions of) *pre-existent relations of forces*. This book on Nietzsche also allows us to sketch out principles that can form the basis for an evaluation that could be ethical – though the hesitant tone here is indicative of the very transformed sense the notion of “ethics” or “morality” must necessarily have at the end of a discussion of Nietzsche! We shall argue that the meaning of ethics must shift, broadly from one which is concerned primarily (in phenomenology) with not “robbing” the other of his/her subjectivity, to a meaning whereby ethics is instead primarily concerned firstly with the ways in which a personality or a “style” (and no longer a subject) is *constituted* in the first place, which – as we aim to show – *requires* that the subject *first be de-subjectivised* (or “de-personalised”, or “singularised”, to give the Deleuzean terms we shall be using). Furthermore, since this double-movement (of simultaneous depersonalisation and constitution) is a reciprocal *relation* by which both “me” and “you” are constituted by (amongst many other things) *each other*, this means that it is no longer *either* “me” or “you” which (who) is primary, but rather, the *relation itself*.

This points to two of the possible meanings of the title to this study – on the one hand, the ability of the Other to express a possible world is at least partly a function of the different spatial position s/he occupies, of the fact that s/he can see where and what I cannot – that s/he, standing *before* me, can see and guarantee the unity of the world *behind* me; on the other hand, the structure-Other as having to precede (to exist *before*) me, and in fact to constitute the possibility of “me” being individuated as a subject at all, to become me ... or rather, to “me-become” since to be “me” then means to ceaselessly become by anticipating and evolving, and not to reach a place where I can finally “rest” and “be me”.

In conclusion, it was interesting to note how the contents of the Deleuzean philosophy filtered through into the writing of that part of this study. Boundas (1991:13) speaks of “series” (Hume-series, Bergson-series etc.) traversing Deleuze’s philosophy and it was often necessary to jump around between or juggle several different texts at once, to bring together disparate points and make them communicate. While I would not claim that the second part is (or was intended to be) a “rhizomatic” text, the effect of this

was very similar to the description of the grass which always grows between, or from the middle...<sup>14</sup> at some times, there were four or five different sections or paragraphs “open” and “under construction” at the same time; at (many) other places it was necessary to interpolate whole sections into the middle of other sections. At the same time, there was a definite process of “stealing” Deleuze – of course, the *contents* of his work, but also certain *stylistic* tics and phrases, which function very much like singularities in writing (“not at all...”). Then there were other things – things like the fatigue of working late nights, when, past a certain point, everything slowly became preternaturally lucid – as fatigue set in, as it “depersonalized” the writing practice, as things finally started to flow after hours of hiccupping fits and starts, as resistances melted ... something akin, perhaps, to another favourite affect Deleuze borrows from Henry Miller: the sense of “drunkenness on pure water ... Becoming [a]s loving without alcohol, drugs and madness, becoming-sober for a life that is richer and richer” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:53<sup>15</sup>)

And ... if I have dared to speak as “I” in this introduction – to speak in my own name – it is partly because of the feeling that a certain encounter has taken place, that the event of Deleuze’s thought has singularized me in a certain way ...

The text will now have to speak for itself.

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<sup>14</sup> An image Deleuze borrows from Henry Miller. Interesting, the passage from Miller which he is fond of citing in this regard (cf. Deleuze & Parnet 2002:x and 30 but also Deleuze & Guattari 1987:19) ends with the statement that this “in-between” growing of the grass is “a lesson in morality...” – a phrase which, in an exemplifying instance of what I am trying to describe above, forms a resonating intersection with Foucault’s (somewhat mischievous!) characterization of *Anti-Oedipus* as “a book of ethics, the first book of ethics to be written in France in quite a long time” (Goodchild 1997b:39). (I say “mischievous” because Foucault winkingly and parenthetically adds the rider “may its authors forgive me”! - 39)

<sup>15</sup> Cf. also *What is Philosophy?*: “Instead of being seized by [the question *what is philosophy?*] those who asked the question set it out and controlled it in passing. *They were not sober enough.*” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:1, my emphasis)

## **Part I**

### **Chapter 1: Uncovering the roots – some notes on subjectivity in Descartes and Husserl**

#### **1. Introduction**

Viewing the history of Western Metaphysics – understood as the genealogy of subjectivity – through a Heideggerian lens, Simon Critchley (1996:13)<sup>1</sup> points to the roots of the Latin *subjectum* and its relation to the Greek word *hypokeimenon*, meaning substrate or “that which lies under”. In this “classical” conception, the subject is analogous to the Aristotelian *hyle* (matter), understood as “that which persists through change .... It is matter that persists through the changes that form (*morphe*) imposes on it” (13). Although this is not exactly the same sense in which the term has come to be used in philosophical discourse<sup>2</sup>, it is significant to note the intimate etymological relationship that this concept has with notions of unchangingness and stability through time, and indeed, in Part 1 of the study which is to follow, we shall argue that the relationship of the ‘subject’ (especially as it has been understood in the phenomenological tradition) and notions of stability – the subject as foundational ‘rock’ upon which the world may be built – have become almost indivisible. However, we shall also, and more importantly, be arguing that the conflation of these two meanings indicates the cause of some of the dilemmas faced by theories based on such a (and again, particularly, phenomenological) theory of the subject, especially regarding the question of intersubjectivity.

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<sup>1</sup> David Carr, in a study which has been very useful in the work to follow, makes a similar point, in a somewhat more nuanced and detailed way. Cf. Carr (1999:15-18) However, a major difference to Critchley’s discussion is that Carr does not accept Heidegger’s characterization of the entire modern tradition as metaphysical, and throughout the book makes a powerful case, instead, for classifying especially Kant and Husserl into what he calls the “transcendental” tradition, which would not be metaphysical. For a slightly more detailed explanation, cf *infra* p.20-21.

<sup>2</sup> And it is worth pointing out how recent this usage is: Critchley, with reference to the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, notes that the modern use of ‘subject’ to denote the “conscious or thinking subject, [the] self or ego ... that to which representations are attributed or predicated” only dates from 1796, at least in English (Critchley 1996:14)

This classical usage has a further connotation for Critchley: in Aristotle “we can see that *hupokeimenon* [sic] has the meaning of a foundation, *as that upon which all other entities are based*, the grounding principle upon which all entities become intelligible” (Critchley 1996:13, my emphasis). From its outset then, in what is perhaps the explicit founding text of Western Metaphysics (Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*), the subject is conceived of as an Archimedean point, as the absolutely still centre-point or axis to which all other entities (and all Other entities) are related like spokes to the hub of a wheel, or planets to a sun<sup>3</sup>. The subject being understood in this broad sense, Critchley states that “metaphysics is always a metaphysics of the subject, insofar as philosophy has always sought to name the *subjectum*, the ultimate foundation or beginning point for an understanding of entities .... The possibility of the subject is the very possibility of philosophy” (Critchley 1996:15). It is therefore not surprising that, if there is a general feeling of crisis in philosophy – a feeling perhaps first articulated precisely by Heidegger’s announcement of its impending end – this crisis revolves around the status of an increasingly problematic subjectivity<sup>4</sup>.

Critchley further notes that what is particular to Modern philosophy (that is, after Descartes)

is that this metaphysical foundation is no longer claimed to reside in a form, substance, or deity outside of the human intellect but is rather found in the human being understood as subject; Heidegger writes, ‘Man has become the *subjectum*’.... The *human* subject – as self, ego, or conscious, thinking thing – becomes the ultimate foundation upon which entities are rendered intelligible (Critchley 1996:15)

As René Descartes is usually considered the father of Modern philosophy, it is with a consideration of the manner in which he derives this “subjective subject” (as it were) that we shall start this brief background-sketch of the notion of subjectivity that

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<sup>3</sup> One should also bear in mind here the *active, synthetic* role that the subjective imagination plays in Aristotle, as discussed in Kearney (1994:106-113 and especially page 111). Although Kearney is also quick to point out that the “synthetic” function here is not yet nearly as well-developed as in Kant (and certainly not yet a Husserlian “noesis”!) the significance of the subject’s constituting function will hopefully become clear when we discuss Deleuze’s appropriation of Bergson – with its implicit critique of phenomenology – below.

<sup>4</sup> For a fairly typical statement of this crisis, compare for example Olivier (2004:1-19, and especially 7-9).

culminates in Husserl, also – and especially – since Husserl himself explicitly evokes Descartes in the title and contents of his *Cartesian Meditations*, which will be a central text in the chapter to follow.

### 1.1 Descartes' *Cogito*

To keep within the context of a preparation for the discussion of Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations*, the text of Descartes' that we will be concerned with most here is the *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1968). Here, in the course of six meditations, Descartes proceeds to first apply the famous method of 'radical doubt' to rid himself of anything which is not absolutely apodictically given. Briefly described, he does this in the following manner and order: the first, and most dubious, 'knowledge' to be doubted is that concerning the objects given in perception by the (corporeal) senses. Of this, in turn, first to be doubted are external objects distantly perceived (i.e. separate objects in the external world), in a single sentence, the matter-of-fact brevity of which indicates that Descartes considers this act of doubting, at least, commonsensical and unproblematic (Descartes 1968:95)

From the existence of obviously external objects, Descartes then proceeds to more intimate objects – his own body through which he senses these external objects (or used to assume he does). He does not in fact make any sharp distinction between his own body and other "close" objects, nor does he treat the problem of self-reflexivity which arises when the body becomes the object of its own observations<sup>5</sup>, but nevertheless Descartes obviously considers the existence of his own body a far more difficult fact to doubt – he concedes that this could be considered a symptom of insanity! (Descartes 1968:96) – and spends far more energy arguing the point, in the famous passage of him sitting in his dressing-gown in front of the roaring fire, and through invoking the power of dreams (Descartes 1968:96-7). We do however see Descartes here making a distinction with crucial consequences for the rest of his argument. Or rather, he first *denies* here - and then, in a sort of double negation, denies the denial - a distinction which we will see

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<sup>5</sup> The essence of what David Carr will call "The Paradox of Subjectivity" (book-title – 1999) – when the subject becomes an object for itself. We shall return in more detail to Carr's complex and interesting discussion of this problem in Husserl below – cf. *infra* pp. 20 et passim.

marking a crucial point of departure for Husserl<sup>6</sup>. Thus, when he writes: “let us think that perhaps our hands and all our body are not as we see them” and carries on: “Nevertheless, we must at least admit that the things which appear to us in sleep are, as it were, pictures and paintings which can only be formed in the likeness of something real and true” (Descartes 1968:97), he thus denies the distinction which roughly marks the point where the *res extensa* of the body is delineated from the *res cogitans* of mental phenomena. Of course, as he presents it, he seems to be saying precisely the opposite, namely that these mental phenomena necessarily imply “real” existents to which they correspond, but precisely: the course of the argument serves to deny this<sup>7</sup>! And not unproblematically, because, having stated the case for a “natural” and inseparable relationship between consciousness and the contents thereof, he then has to resort to the rather literal *deus ex machina* of the “evil demon” to prove its contrary – which he has to do since his entire argument depends on it. The fact that he indeed considers these two “realms” as separate is at any rate already given away by the fact that Descartes implicitly treats as two separate acts of doubting the questioning of his body (conceived purely as a corporal object of the senses, and without consideration of the corporeality of the sense-organs themselves) and the contents of sense-perception, which follow each other in the logical progression of the argument. We are therefore faced here with a chasm which Descartes opens between extended objects on the one hand (which we are quite easily able to *doubt* by an act of will), and mental phenomena on the other, which will either be proven to be apodictically true (the *cogito*) or at least need external and divine intervention to make us suspect consciousness of being deceived. When modern philosophy is eventually rid of this divine apparatus, it will be no more than a logical progression for Husserl to radicalize the poles of this chasm, and make mental phenomena as sense-experiences equally indubitable, so that the extended side

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<sup>6</sup> This difference - to which we shall return in more detail - is that specific ideas as objects in (and not for) consciousness are still dubitable for Descartes (as opposed to the contentless *activity* of doubting), whereas Husserlian phenomenology is founded precisely on the conviction that these “experiences” (which are however no longer *objects*) are themselves indubitable. See further footnote 7 below.

<sup>7</sup> It is in this sense that Carr argues that the rationalists (under which he would certainly include Descartes) also follow the empiricist Locke’s “way of ideas” which see ideas as properties of the mind, conceived as a “thing”, and with no transcendence towards an outer world (Carr 1999:49). Carr describes a resistance to this “way” as one of the motivating impulses of what he calls the “transcendental tradition” comprising chiefly of Kant and Husserl. (49). Cf also (71-2).

(exteriority, the objective, the other) will be assumed to exist contingently only, whereas the mental (interiority, the subjective, the self) will become the primary guarantee of certainty, identity etc. Carr describes this as follows: “Husserl seems to want to put the experiences on one side, their objects on the other, in a neat division, and then deal exclusively with the former” (Carr 1999: 73).

It is certainly worthwhile to pause a while at this point and point out some further implications. The first is that, although as part of the rejection of all external *objects* of the senses he has doubted his own body, he nowhere explicitly *puts* into doubt the body as *agent* of perception, or as sensory apparatus, i.e. as a possible structure of knowledge. In other words, he does not explain where our ideas (now putatively devoid of any real “referent”) could come from, or reside, if there were no material, extended body (rather in the same way that the internet can never be truly “virtual”, tied as it is to certain necessary hardware). This is significant because, as we have seen, Descartes places the physicality (extendedness) of his own body on a par with other, further removed external objects, and as we shall shortly see, the entire edifice of the eventual *cogito* is built on the (unwarranted?) assumption that the body plays no part in anything that might be considered ‘thinking’, and therefore that it would be possible for a subject to exist in exactly the same way that it is now supposed to, even if the outside world did not. Should one be sensitive to this, it becomes possible to see a further significant elision at this point in Descartes’ text. Whereas he had just spent an entire page *explaining* in detail *how* it might be possible for him to be deceived about his perception of sitting in front of the fire, he expends merely a single subsidiary clause in *stating the need* to doubt also the body: “although these general things, viz. eyes, head, hands and the like, may be imaginary ...” (Descartes 1968:97), before going on to the consideration of *a priori* ideas, without ever explaining *how* he might be deceived as to his sensory impulses, should he have no body or sensory organs. Now, this is not in itself a logical flaw in the argument – after all, in the context of the thought-experiment constituted by radical doubt, we need not explain the non-existence of anything, merely entertain the possibility thereof – but it does point to the one assumption without which the *cogito* will not hold water, which is the assumption of a radical mind/body dualism, in which the mind has

*necessarily* to exist, and the body merely contingently. We shall return to this point shortly.

Finally, Descartes rids himself of the sciences, including the most cherished mathematical ones which seem to embody certain indubitable and *a priori* principles such as “two and three added together always make five, and a square never has more than four sides” (Descartes 1968:98). Again, he gives a long - and pious! - *explanation* of how this might be possible, which culminates finally in his famous positing of the “evil demon” which might have the power to deceive him even regarding these apparently evident truths (Descartes 1968:98-101). So ends then the First Meditation, in what Husserl will call an “utter poverty of knowledge”, having successfully doubted all that had once been seen as necessary and apparent.

The Second Meditation sees the turning of the tide, starting with the famous move of the *cogito*, whereby Descartes discovers the supposedly solid foundation from which he will derive all his other knowledge. But just before he makes the discovery that the very act of doubting (thinking) guarantees his existence, he poses a fateful question which revives the elision we have already seen above. Because, before he can define his existence as that of a thinking being, Descartes – who is nothing if not rigorous here – first has to pose the following question: “Myself, then, at least am I not something? But I have already denied that I have any senses or any body. I hesitate, however, for what follows from that? Am I so dependent on body and senses that I cannot exist without them?” (Descartes 1968:103). For Descartes, it appears to be obvious that the *cogito*, at least in the form that he will propose it, and everything which follows from it, can only follow from a *negative* answer to this (rhetorical) question. However, as we have seen above, this is precisely the possible non-existence of the “body and sense” that was least convincingly argued in the First Meditation. Nor, in all fairness, and for the same reasons, is it perhaps immediately apparent that Descartes really needs to pre-suppose the possible non-existence of the body in order to arrive at at least some form of the *cogito*.

However, it is a significant move on his part, because, considered from this perspective it is clear that far from being able to *derive* the mind/body dualism from the

*cogito*, as Descartes does later on<sup>8</sup>, it is in fact pre-supposed by the *cogito*. Further, since the argument for the separation of mind and body is the same as that which consigns the body to the same possible non-existence as the rest of the external world, this therefore becomes a crucial presupposition in what had precisely set out to be a new philosophy, free from presuppositions. And its effects reverberate throughout the edifice of the philosophy that is built on it – it infects the conception of the subject with the same presupposition, namely that it could exist in isolation, and radically separated both from its own and from other bodies, a point which, I hope to show, is by no means the only, or the best, way of conceiving the subject (which after all, is “born” or constituted in time, and not discovered all at once and already intact, as Descartes claims to do).

In fact, in much the same way as – we shall try to show below – Husserl’s unacknowledged presuppositions in the derivation of his subject as separate from the world lead to his difficulties in re-establishing intersubjectivity, so Descartes’ unacknowledged presupposition of the existence of the *cogito* as a mind radically separable from the body<sup>9</sup> leads to analogously tortuous, but perhaps unnecessary, efforts to explain how a synthesis across this chiasmic dualism would be possible, leading to his somewhat ridiculous notions regarding the pineal gland. However, this is not in itself a relevant point for the purposes of this study, save for the fact that, as we shall shortly see, it is precisely at this point that Husserl - although in a different way - also breaks from Descartes, and it is to Husserl that we now turn.

## 1.2 Husserl’s (response to the) *Cartesian Meditations*

Edmund Husserl presents his *Cartesian Meditations* (1969), perhaps his most succinct and accessible overview of his new ‘science’ of phenomenology, quite explicitly

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. For example Descartes (1968:179 - the Sixth Meditation, where Descartes briefly reviews the course of the argument up to then): “Thus, by considering that he who decides to doubt everything, cannot nevertheless doubt that he exists while he doubts, and that what reasons thus, in not being able to doubt itself and doubting nevertheless all the rest, is not what we call our body, but what we call our soul or thought”.

<sup>9</sup> That Descartes does in fact conceive of the *ego* in this way is quite clear from several passages, such as the following from the *Discourse on Method*: “the mind, by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body ... even if the body were not, it [i.e. the mind] would not cease to be *all that it is*” (1968:54, my emphasis), and in the *Meditations*: “the human mind... is a thinking thing and not extended in length, breadth and depth, and does not participate in anything that pertains to the body” (1968:132).

as an “Introduction to Phenomenology”, and as it was published fairly late in his career, it is most useful in gaining a general impression of Husserl’s basic position, a general impression which should be sufficient for the purposes of this study. In his editorial remarks to Husserl’s *Introduction to the Logical Investigations*, Eugen Fink divides Husserl’s writings into three phases. According to this scheme, the *Cartesian Meditations* would fall into the third and last phase, which according to Fink is characterized by the “fact … that the conception of philosophy has moved beyond that of a theory of knowledge … phenomenology comes to be seen primarily as an explication of the *existing* transcendental Ego” (Fink in Husserl 1975:14-5, my emphasis). Drawing on this hint from Fink, and the introductory explication of the origin of the word “subject”<sup>10</sup>, we hope to preliminarily forestall possible objections from those who might argue that we are about to draw untoward ontological inferences from discussions of a subject that is usually merely considered an epistemological structure, although this point will be argued in more detail below.

At first through the title *Cartesian Meditations*, but also quite explicitly through especially the early pages of the work, Husserl places his own work within the general framework of the Cartesian ‘project’, although in a very special way<sup>11</sup>. In fact, by the very nature of the Cartesian project, this relationship has to be ambiguous, if not outright paradoxical, because what is significant for Husserl about the Cartesian method is its steadfast refusal to accept any previously existing ‘knowledge’ as valid and hence, to “begin in absolute poverty, with an absolute lack of knowledge” (Husserl 1969:2) – the famous method of radical doubt. He is also very clear in pointing out right from the outset that while “one might almost call transcendental phenomenology a neo-Cartesianism… it is obliged – and precisely by its radical development of Cartesian motifs – to reject nearly all the well-known doctrinal content of the Cartesian philosophy” (1969:1). In other words, to remain true to the radical demands the Cartesian method makes, it is necessary to also jettison the work of Descartes himself, or at least, to re-embark with him on the same path and from the same point of departure, to see whether – and how far – it is still possible to follow him on it.

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<sup>10</sup> cf. pp. 12-13 above.

<sup>11</sup> In fact, Carr (1999:75-6) notes that throughout Husserl’s work, “his deep kinship with Descartes is never denied, and never absent”.

As it turns out, by making some slight adjustments, Husserl is initially able to follow Descartes for quite some distance. In fact, re-reading Descartes after Husserl's version, one might at first glance almost be tempted to term his philosophy a proto-phenomenology, rather than Husserl's a "neo-Cartesianism". However, it soon becomes apparent that these similarities are at best cosmetic, and already by §9 of the First Meditation, Husserl states that Descartes "stands on the threshold of the greatest of all discoveries – in a certain sense, has already made it – yet he does not grasp its proper sense, the sense namely of transcendental subjectivity, and so he does not pass through the gateway that leads into genuine transcendental philosophy" (1969:24-5). Leaving aside for the moment the question of whether this is really a regrettable state of affairs – a question which will be very much in the centre of our attention later on – let us then briefly examine first on what grounds Husserl makes this criticism, and then how he sets out to pass through the "gateway of transcendental philosophy" himself.

The criticism which Husserl here proceeds to make of Descartes seems to be addressed at much the same concern as that which we have addressed above, although Husserl approaches it from a very different perspective and with a very different agenda. Specifically, the criticism Husserl directs at Descartes is that the latter had strayed too far from the rigorous demand of self-evidence in the form of experience. Husserl notes that Descartes had succumbed instead both to an unhealthy hangover of scholasticism which "lies hidden, as unclarified prejudice, in Descartes's *Meditations*" (1969:24), and more importantly, arising from this "admiration of mathematical natural science", to "the prejudice that, under the name *cogito*, one is dealing with an apodictic 'axiom', which, in conjunction with other axioms and, perhaps, inductively grounded hypotheses, is to serve as the foundation for a deductively 'explanatory' world-science, a 'nomological' science, a science *ordine geometrico*" (24). Here Husserl is similarly (to our discussion above) talking about the "apparently insignificant but actually fateful change whereby the ego becomes a *substantia cogitans*, a separate human '*mens sive animus*'<sup>12</sup>" (24).

Husserl sees in this Descartes' 'discovery' of "transcendental realism", which he calls "an absurd position" (1969:24). Instead, he then argues, what Descartes should have

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<sup>12</sup> "And, in his own opinion, even a pure *intellectus*, allegedly thinkable as an *intellectus* without any imagination" (Husserl 1969: 24 n. 2; Husserl's own marginal comment).

done – and what he, Husserl, proposes to now do – is to “remain aloof from all that ... [and] remain true to the radicalness of our meditative self-examination and therefore to the principle of pure ‘intuition’ or evidence – that is to say, if we accept nothing here but what we find actually given (and, at first, quite immediately) in the field of the *ego cogito*, which has been opened up to us by epoché, and if accordingly we assert nothing we ourselves do not ‘see’” (Husserl 1969:24). Here, one perhaps hears the echoes of Husserl’s famous battle-cry “Back to the things themselves!”, and also, perhaps, already the birthing-cries of his well known subsequent adaptation of the Cartesian formula: “*cogito ergo sum*” will become “*ego cogito mea cogitationes*”. What this all comes down to, Husserl concludes, is that Descartes ultimately fails in his project because although “he stands on the threshold of the greatest of all discoveries ... he does not grasp its proper sense, the sense namely of transcendental subjectivity” (1969:24-5). Quite clearly then, the “transcendental subject” is, for Husserl, the key to the gateway of transcendental phenomenology, and it is to this we must turn next.

### 1.3. Phenomenology as “transcendental” and not “metaphysical”?

David Carr maintains that Husserl in fact uses two characterizations of the subject, which he terms the transcendental and the empirical, and which he says, quoting Husserl, constitute a “‘paradox of subjectivity: being a subject for the world and at the same time being an object in the world’” (Husserl in Carr1999:3). For Carr, especially Heidegger’s attempt to reduce the entire modern tradition to a “single theme and even a metaphysical doctrine” (1999:4) which would be that of a “metaphysics of the subject... unfolding inevitably and uniformly from Descartes’ *cogito* and culminating in the twentieth century in phenomenology and existentialism”<sup>13</sup> (1999:4-5), is based on a misrecognition of the importance of this paradox to Husserl (and Kant). In not recognizing this, Heidegger also “ignores the most important division in the modern

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<sup>13</sup> Although Carr doesn’t mention it explicitly, he would also seem to have in mind here Derrida’s criticisms of the so-called “metaphysics of presence”, when he goes on to mention that “Its central concepts are the ego, consciousness, self-consciousness, self-transparency, self-presence and self-determination” (1999:5).

period, that between the metaphysical and the transcendental traditions”<sup>14</sup> (Carr 1999:8). It is important to note Carr’s claim that, far from constructing such “metaphysics of the subject” themselves, Kant and Husserl pose their work as “radical critique[s] of such metaphysics” (Carr 1999:8), is based precisely on this paradox which prevents their theories from coagulating into monolithic and reductive metaphysical systems. These “two alternate views of the subject that correspond to different ways of conceiving and experiencing the relation between self and world” (Carr 1999:9) form the basis of what Carr calls the transcendental tradition.

The first point Carr makes in this regard is that the transcendental subject can only emerge through the phenomenological *epoché* (to which we shall return below), and in fact quotes Husserl in the *Cartesian Meditations*: “I am … at all times a transcendental Ego, but … I know about this only by executing phenomenological reduction” (Husserl in Carr 1999:85). The importance of the *epoché* lies in the distinction it introduces between phenomenological reflection and reflection in the “natural attitude”, and the distinction between these two modes of reflection rests precisely on their distinct ways of treating the existence of the world. In the natural attitude, Husserl says, “we stand on the footing of the world already given as existing” (in Carr 1999:85), and Carr continues: “I remain committed to the existence of the world” (85). In contradistinction to this, phenomenological reflection “is thus transcendental reflection in virtue of the way the *transcendence* of the world is treated; it is not simply given or taken for granted, but suspended in order to be thematized or reflected upon” (85).

The transcendental subject is thus in the final analysis the subject of *experiences* of the world, rather than of the world itself. True, Husserl focuses primarily on those experiences which are intentional (i.e. directed towards an object in the world) but Carr makes it clear that not all experiences are intentional, and that at any rate “[i]n

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<sup>14</sup> While there is no space here to enter into the details of Carr’s argument, the distinction can be briefly explained as follows: Carr characterizes metaphysics as the attempt at an ultimately all-embracing, perfectly coherent system, which can explain all *phenomena* treated as *existents*; whereas the transcendental tradition is the “ongoing critique of human *experience* and *knowledge* – including metaphysics” (Carr 1999:9; my emphasis). His basic argument is that, whereas this conception of metaphysics cannot tolerate what he calls the “paradox of subjectivity” (namely that the subject is both a subject *for* the world and an object *in* the world), the transcendental tradition “outlines not so much a single theory of the subject, much less a metaphysics of the subject, as two alternate views of the subject that correspond to different ways of conceiving and experiencing the relation between world and self” (Carr 1999:9).

perception, for example, which is a species of *Erfahrung*, I perceive some object... but I ‘experience’ or ‘live through’ (*ich erlebe*) the perception itself” (1999:70). Conversely, experience also includes those “kinds of sensations... [that] are related to no object” but are nevertheless “experiences in the sense that I [*sic*] live through them” (70). Again we see the gulf mentioned earlier which opens between mental phenomena and “physical” objects when Carr concludes that we must therefore “distinguish between the object *which* is intended [i.e. the transcendent, ‘outside’ object – J.H] and the object *as* intended [i.e. the mental experience – J.H.]” (Carr 1999:71).

The gain that Husserl hopes to show for this is that ontological questions are then neatly bracketed, because since the focus is on the experience as mental phenomenon, “[b]eing intended as existing (or as not existing) has no implication at all for the actual existence of the object” (Carr 1999:74). In the context of the argument here, this seems to entail an assumption on Husserl’s part that by his method of *epoché* (bracketing<sup>15</sup>) he has found a way to not *doubt* the world as Descartes had done, but to leave it *out of consideration*. The important difference here would seem to be that whereas doubting at least seems to imply the sort of judgment that would require us to imagine the *possible non-existence* of the world, Husserl seems to think that he need no longer make any judgment regarding this at all. Thus, when in §7 of the First *Cartesian Meditation* Husserl turns precisely to this question, he argues in the following way. Firstly he states the “obvious” existence of the world when taken in the “natural attitude”, but then presents Descartes’ dream argument in a slightly altered form to argue against any apodictic status for this “evidence”. Then, crucially, he follows it by saying: “We need not take the indicating of these possible and sometimes actual reversals of evidence [such as sensory illusions, dreams etc.] as a sufficient criticism of the evidence in question and see in it a full proof that, in spite of the continual experiencedness of the world, *a non-being of the world is conceivable.*” (Husserl 1969:17). Carr describes this as a claim that since phenomenology limits itself to the world merely *as* intended, and not *which* is intended, it

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<sup>15</sup> “Bracketing” in phenomenology refers to the practice of leaving out of certain *aspects* of the phenomenon under consideration, so as not to pre-judge certain features of that phenomenon – e.g. in the case discussed above, the ontological status of the world is “bracketed” (i.e. not considered) so that there is no need to make a judgment regarding the existence of the world which will prejudice or otherwise affect the exploration of the phenomenological *meaning* of the world. It is precisely the possibility of doing this that we are trying to contest here.

is “in no way committed to the extra-mental or extra-intentional existence of the world and is free to drop all reference to or claim about that existence” (Carr 1999:77) in the ‘bracketing’ of the phenomenological *epoché*, and again mentions that this is where Husserl sees himself as closest to Descartes. The crucial difference, however, is that Husserl “insists he is neither negating the world’s existence nor even doubting it, he is simply suspending it” (Carr 1999:78). Thus it is not immediately clear that our criticism of Descartes above applies *mutatis mutandis* to Husserl … if this should be true.

We have however yet to give an adequate account of the way in which Husserl derives his (conception of the) subject. In proceeding to this, we shall return to this question, and attempt to show that it is in fact not at all clear that Husserl can escape this assumption so easily, and that even if he does, he is still left with certain other problematic assumptions.

According to Husserl’s programmatic reading of Descartes, given in the introduction to the *Cartesian Meditations*, the essence of the Cartesian method involves<sup>16</sup> a two-fold turn towards the subject itself. Firstly, in the sense that for the thinker to be sure of anything, this knowledge “must arise as *his* wisdom, as his self-acquired tending to universality, a knowledge for which he can answer from the beginning, and at each step, by virtue of his own absolute insights” (Husserl 1969:2). The thinking subject itself therefore becomes the sole guarantor of the validity of his knowledge. In a note appended later, Husserl glosses this further by saying that even when science is conceived of as a communal activity, the claims of others are “for me at first only something they claim. If I am to accept it, I must justify it by a perfect insight on my own part” (1969:2 n. 2). In this sense, therefore, the turn towards the subject is clearly a proto-structural or methodological requirement, rather than a result of the actual enquiry.

The second sense in which the Cartesian Method turns towards the Subject is in the contents of what is thought. It is this second ‘turn’ which is constituted by the famous dictum “Cogito ergo sum”: “The meditator keeps only himself, qua pure ego of his

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<sup>16</sup> Although the wording (of the translation) of Husserl here is literally “gives rise to [this turn]”, and even Husserl seems to discuss these two turns both in terms of *results* of the Cartesian method, I hope to show that what he in fact shows is that only in one of the two senses given, can this turn really be seen as a *result* properly speaking of the Cartesian method, and that in the other sense, this turn is a *structural* feature of the method itself rather than a result. In the discussion which follows below I hope to show that the treatment of this structural function as a result is itself a result of an imbedded – and unacknowledged – prejudice on Husserl’s part, which will have crucial significance for the way this study is to progress.

*cogitationes*, as having an absolutely indubitable existence, as something that cannot be done away with, *something that would exist even though this world were non-existent*" (1969:3, my emphasis). Through the famed method of radical doubt *with* which the subject guarantees knowledge, this same subject is eventually left with the first principle only of its own existence. There are two preliminary remarks worth making about this conclusion, both of which will be extended in the course of the present study. The more obvious one would seem to be that here already the thinking subject is placed in an extrinsic relation to the subject-as-existent; the subject takes itself as object. The second point is the one indicated by the section of the above citation that we have emphasised: the subject as "something that would exist even though this world were non-existent". Here already, as he briefly describes this second turn, Husserl sketches out a consequence which forms a point of departure for the present study. This consequence is that "[t]hus reduced, the ego [Ego] [sic] carries on a kind of solipsistic philosophising" (Husserl 1969:3). Stated thus, the challenge for the Cartesian subject (and, as we hope to show, for the Husserlian, although in a differing sense) becomes that of, having achieved the radical indubitability of its own existence, how to (re-)build bridges towards the outside world and the other subjects which inhabit it – in other words, the design of a transcending step outside the subject.

In what follows we will try to show that the assumption which enables the possibility of a subject "that would exist even though this world is non-existent" is also that which causes the spectre of solipsism to arise, as it famously does in the Fifth *Cartesian Meditation*, where Husserl attempts, but never quite manages, to exorcise it. In a sense, the appeal (in Part II) to Deleuze's relationist model of subjectivity, and his (empiricist) theory of immanent multiplicities, with which this study will proceed, constitutes a challenge to the conception of subjectivity which enables this statement, and which necessitates much of the groping for a way of transcending the solipsism of the phenomenological monadic subject that will characterise Husserl's work on intersubjectivity.

#### 1.4 The ‘two-fold turn’ in Husserl

However, we are getting ahead of ourselves. At this point, we have followed Husserl only through his resumé of Descartes. It remains to be seen how far, and how, Husserl himself follows Descartes in this two-fold turn to the subject when he composes his own ‘Cartesian Meditations’. He seems to have already given a clue to this by saying that he intends to follow the Cartesian method (which would imply also following the first, ‘structural’, turn), and hence initially at least to reject the contents of Descartes’ treatise (which would, similarly, imply a rejection of the second, ‘contents’ turn, though of course he might return to it).

And certainly, he appears to start off in this direction. From §8 of the First Meditation, Husserl follows Descartes – though in his own distinctive way – in ‘turning towards the subject’ structurally, in the first sense described above. In this section, where the “phenomenological epoché” is extended from a bracketing (methodological and preliminary rejection) of, firstly, the existent sciences (§3-6), through that of the “existence of the world itself” (§7) to that of all other Egos (§8) as existent objects (*gegenstände*), Husserl argues that this methodological and systematic “reduction” does not leave us confronting nothing: “On the contrary we gain possession of something by it; and what we (or, to speak more precisely, what I, the one who is meditating) acquire by it is my pure living, with all the more subjective processes making this up .... The epoché can also be said to be the radical and universal method by which I apprehend myself purely: as Ego, and with my own pure consciousness life, in and by which the entire Objective world exists for me and is precisely as it is for me” (Husserl 1969:20-1). Husserl explicitly equates all this with the Cartesian *cogito*: “Descartes, as we know, indicated all that by the name *cogito*” (1969:21). So far, then, Husserl does seem to make the same structural turn towards the subject as that which he has described in Descartes.

At this stage, it therefore remains to be seen what Husserl makes of the second turn to the subject. Having established the apodictic certainty of the subject’s existence through its experience of itself, Husserl now confronts the problem of what contents this subject could be said to comprise, that we would be equally certain of. The problem, as stated by Husserl in the section heading of §9, is that of the “range covered by the

apodictic evidence of the ‘I am’” (Husserl 1969:22). For example, Husserl asks, can we be as certain that the past experience of the subject - which in part comprises the subject, as its memory - exists, as we are of the existence of the subject itself? (1969:22). Before we go on to consider how Husserl answers this question, a further preliminary point worth noting in passing is that it is here where Husserl first - if implicitly - opens up the breach between the being (the existent, *das seiende*) and that which would comprise its Being (its lived existence, *Sein*), the breach that would later, and more famously, be exploited by the early Heidegger<sup>17</sup>. Of more immediate relevance is that this section signals the shift to a discussion of what has been labeled above the “contents-based” turn to the subject.

However, Husserl does already state quite clearly in §9 that *what* the subject perceives of itself (as distinct from the fact *that* it perceives itself) has a no more apodictically certain existence than that of any other externally perceived physical object. The experience of physical objects external to the experiencer (which have been provisionally “suspended” already by the initial epoché) - while, for Husserl, certainly being the “experiencing of something itself” (1969:23) - is not apodictically certain. Again, the act of experiencing must be distinguished from that which is experienced. Whereas the experience is certainly of “something itself”, the physical thing which is experienced “has for the experiencer an open, infinite, indeterminately general horizon, comprising what is itself not strictly perceived – a horizon (this is implicit as a presumption) *that can be opened up by possible experiences*” (Husserl 1969:23, my emphasis<sup>18</sup>). The external experience of other physical objects is here used by Husserl as an illustration of what also happens when the experiencing Ego perceives itself (“Something similar is true about the apodic certainty characterizing transcendental experience of my transcendental I-am, with the indeterminate generality of the latter as having an open horizon” – Husserl 1969:23). Hence we find a clear – if clearly preliminary – statement of Husserl’s adaptation of the two-fold Cartesian turn to the

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<sup>17</sup> Cf., for example, Gelven (1970, especially 17-22).

<sup>18</sup> This phrase is emphasized, not for present purposes, but because it presents us with a vanishing point which will allow the intersection of those series going by the names of Husserl and phenomenology in general with that series called Deleuze, since it is precisely the role played by these “possible experiences” in opening up the horizons of the subject, and ultimately the subject itself, which is the theme of the article by Deleuze which lies at the heart of this study, namely “Michel Tournier and the World without Others” (Deleuze 1990:301-320).

subject: “Accordingly the actual being of the intrinsically first field of knowledge [that is, the subject’s apodictically evident experience of itself as experiencing - JH] is indeed assured absolutely, though not as yet what determines its being more particularly [that is, the subject as experienced - JH] and is still not itself given, but only presumed, during the living evidence of the I-am” (Husserl 1969:23). What we take this to mean, in essence, is that Husserl agrees with Descartes that we can *only* find apodic certainty in the subject-as-structure, but not as concerns the contents of this subject.

### 1.5 Turning Husserl around

*The enormous complexity of human life and infinite richness of nature, for Husserl, are to be founded on the a priori system of transcendental subjectivity. This is the underlying premise of his presuppositionless philosophy.*

(Kim 1976:4)

It is in §11 that we find Husserl - in spite of himself - making a little more explicit what we hope to show is in fact a small but crucial unacknowledged presupposition in his own meditations. It is ironic that it is this very assumption - to which the discussion below will lead us - that is needed by Husserl for his radical project of freeing himself from *all other* assumptions or prejudices. In the previous section (i.e. §10), Husserl had attributed Descartes’ failure to “pass through the gateway that leads into genuine transcendental philosophy<sup>19</sup>” (Husserl 1969:25) at least in part to the latter’s use of mathematics (and specifically geometry) as the ideal model for a science. Accordingly Descartes had, according to Husserl, strayed from the rigidity of his own method by using the first principle constituted by the *cogito* – illegitimately – as a quasi-geometric axiom (Husserl 1969:24). Accordingly, Descartes had proceeded to derive the rest of his system as a “deductively ‘explanatory’<sup>20</sup> world-science, a ‘nomological’ science, a science *ordine geometrico*, similar indeed to mathematical natural science” (Husserl 1969:24).

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<sup>19</sup> Leaving aside, for the moment, the very desirability of a transcendental philosophy in the first place! Carr raises the question of what we could hope to gain through it in a thoughtful manner: “The transcendental subject may be required by the method, but is the method itself required? That is, is phenomenology something we have, in any practical or theoretical sense, to do?” (1999:95).

<sup>20</sup> Carr once again notes that Husserl himself does not intend his new science as an “explanatory” science, but as an eidetic one, seeking merely to “describe” essences (1999:75 and 82).

In other words, Husserl takes Descartes to task for abandoning the “principle of pure ‘intuition’ or evidence” (Husserl 1969:24) in favour of building a deductive rational system, which therefore loses touch with the original experience of unprejudiced evidences that is, he maintains, our only sure way to apodictic certainty. As for Husserl, he proposes to evade this ‘difficulty’ in which Descartes had landed himself as follows: “We remain aloof from all that... if we accept nothing here but what we find actually given (and, at first, quite immediately) in the field of the *ego cogito*, which has been opened to us by epoché, and if accordingly we assert nothing we ourselves do not ‘see’<sup>21</sup>” (Husserl 1969:24).

It is therefore clear that Husserl himself intends to remain radically true to the strictures that his interpretation of the Cartesian method imposes on him, namely that of accepting no data as valid that is not the result of a pure and original evidence, and thus to allow no unexamined prejudices or other considerations to impinge on his knowledge. It is this firm resolution which leads him to say, in §11, that “If I keep purely what comes into view... by virtue of my free epoché with respect to the being of the experienced world, the momentous fact is that I, with my life, *remain untouched in my existential status, regardless of whether or not the world exists and regardless of what my eventual decision concerning its being or non-being might be*” (Husserl 1969:25, my emphasis).

The consequence of this, which Husserl wastes no time in pointing out, is that “This Ego, with his Ego-life, who necessarily remains for me, by virtue of this epoché, *is not a piece of the world*” (Husserl 1969:25). Now, what this means for Husserl is perhaps no more (and no less!) than simply the consideration that we cannot deduce anything about the existence of the world from the existence of the subject. Simultaneously however, and this is the crucial point, the statement – and not only the statement, but the entire thought-structure that underlies it – also works the other way. In other words,

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<sup>21</sup> Note the emphasis here, and throughout in Husserl, on visual metaphors. It is precisely this pre-occupation with vision – and with the phenomenological notion of vision as a light originating within the subject which is then turned onto the world – that Deleuze, following a tradition already dating back to the acephalic and ocular occultism of Bataille, will use as the fulcrum of his critique of the phenomenological consciousness. Deleuze, drawing also on Bergson and others, will posit an originary light in the world and the objects themselves, which pre-dates, and exists independently of, the consciousness of the subject. Cf. the influence of especially Bergson (for example Deleuze 1997:6 n. 1 and 1986:6-11) as well as the extended discussion of “faciality” in Deleuze and Guattari (1987:167-191), and the discussion of these themes in for example Martin (1996). Deleuze also discusses the problem of visibility in the work of Foucault throughout *Foucault* (Deleuze 1988).

Husserl at the same time makes the statement that we cannot use the putative existence (or non-existence) of the world as a way of giving any contents whatsoever to the subject.

What this statement therefore in effect amounts to is a statement of the radical independence of the subject and the world. To be sure, Husserl carefully qualifies and limits this statement, and one has to be careful here not to be too reductive of his position. For example, Husserl grants that in various sciences, such as anthropology, man (the subject) is certainly always placed within, or in relation to, a world, and “[t]he psychic life that psychology talks about has in fact always been, and still is, meant as psychic life in the world” (1969:25). But, “[a]pperceived in this ‘natural’ manner, I and all other men are themes of sciences that are Objective .... [and] phenomenological epoché (which the course of our purified Cartesian meditations demands of him who is philosophising) inhibits acceptance of the Objective world as existent, and thereby excludes this world completely from the field of judgment” (25). Here again we see an echo of the way in which Husserl has adapted Descartes’ two-fold turn to the subject – once again it is only the subject as structure (the subject as subject-position) that is admissible as apodictically certain, and not the contents that this subject may have (the subject as its own object).

However, there is a small but significant difference here: before, when Husserl had touched on this point - in regards to “the range covered by apodictic evidence of the ‘I-am’” (cf. above p.23, and Husserl 1969:22-3) - the question had been about the intrinsic relationship of the subject with itself, e.g. with its past experiences and this had been provisionally bracketed. Now, however, the question concerns the ex-trinsic relationships of the subject – with the world, other Ego’s etc., and blithely performing the same methodological reduction here is not as innocent as Husserl would maybe like to think, since in this case, the very attempt at getting rid of prejudices which this step entails, *itself sneaks an unexamined assumption into the proceedings!* For to claim that the (existence or non-existence) of the world has no influence on what we know about the subject is not itself a neutral statement – in fact, *it itself tells us something about the subject.* Worse still (for Husserl, at any rate) it does not merely tell us something negative about the subject (i.e. what we *cannot* say about it) but it tells us something *positive* about the subject, or at least about Husserl’s use of the concept, and this is: Husserl makes the *assumption* that the subject *is something that can exist separately from the world!* This is

– whether he likes it or not – precisely what Husserl is saying when he writes: “Just as the reduced Ego is not a piece of the world [!], so, conversely, neither the world nor any worldly Object is a piece of my Ego [double !!], to be found in my conscious life as a really inherent part of it, as a complex of data of sensation or a complex of acts” (1969:26). Because the judgment contained in that little phrase “really inherent part of it” is precisely that: a judgment, and moreover, one for which there is no real justification, whether it be correct or not.

To put it in a nutshell, Husserl is basing his conclusions about the being (the existence) of the subject - which is already apodictically certain for him - on an assumption about the Being (the mode of being) of the subject – *which is not (yet?) so*. The irony is of course that it is precisely his earnest desire to rid himself of “unexamined prejudices” which leads him to put aside the question of the world’s existence, but the (deconstructive) point is that it is only this assumption that one *can* put aside the world when speaking about the subject, that the subject *could* “exist even though this world were non-existent” (Husserl 1969:3) which allows him to perform this epoché.

Even should we ignore this, and grant Husserl that he is in fact making no judgments about the world’s possible existence, and hence about the subject’s possible relation to such a world, he cannot escape the really crucial point which leads to the difficulties in his theory of intersubjectivity that we shall try to point out below – as he himself admits, openly! To put it differently: even if the subject could be shown to be necessarily and intimately related to the world (and hence to other subjects), then Husserl would nevertheless claim that it is, in a very important sense, (logically) prior to this world. In the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl is quite explicit about this. By way of a rhetorical question, he asks: “But what if the world were, in the end, not at all the absolutely first basis for judgments and a being that is intrinsically prior to the world were the already presupposed basis for the existence of the world?” (1969:18). The meaning might remain more obscure, were it not for the implicit answers provided immediately by the next section heading (“The *ego cogito* as transcendental subjectivity”) and a marginal note appended by Husserl himself: “It is necessary to show that the reduction has apodictic significance, since it shows apodictically that the being of the transcendental Ego is antecedent to the being of the world” (Husserl 1969:18 n. 3). In

saying this, we are back to the conception of the subject cited in Critchley at the start of the chapter – that the subject is that which is logically prior to all other entities (including other subjects) and that these other entities derive their being from the centrality of the subject; the subject which is still not very far removed from the Aristotelian Substance “which is the substratum presupposed by all the others” (Ross 1995:24).

The question is of course whether this is the only way of conceiving of the subject, even if this conception should later be validated. Or, on the contrary, is it in fact possible that the subject is not only inseparably linked to the world, but is in fact an *irreducible* part of the world?

The importance of this is greater than the merely spiteful and furtive pleasure of catching Husserl in the act of being unfaithful to himself. Since the notion of subjectivity in which this assumption is lodged itself constitutes the supposedly solid cornerstone on which Husserl will proceed to build the entire edifice of his ‘science’, the discovery of a crack in the marble holds implications for everything that is built on it. Most specifically, in the present context, it holds implications for the way in which this subject will relate to the world, and hence, to other subjects, especially (as we shall see) since other subjects, for Husserl, are constituted by analogy to this originary one.

## **Chapter 2: Husserl and the Problem of Solipsism**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In Chapter One, we tried to show how Descartes, in striving for a presuppositionless philosophy, removes the subject from the world in the famous *Cogito* argument, and that this in fact constitutes a presupposition: namely, that the subject *can* in fact exist in separation from the world. Secondly, and more importantly, we tried to show that Husserl, in trying to re-trace Descartes' radical new beginning in his own *Cartesian Meditations*, is forced into a similar concession.

It would however be wrong to reduce Husserl's far more nuanced position to that of Descartes – not least because Husserl himself often seems at pains to avoid falling into precisely the paradox we have tried to show: that the very attempt to free his position of presuppositions is only enabled by presupposing that the subject is in fact able to exist in separation from the world (and by extension, from other subjects, which will be the crucial point in the chapter to follow). Both Descartes and Husserl claim to be involved in investigations concerning epistemological issues: in Descartes' case regarding the possibility of certain and objective knowledge; in that of Husserl, the relation of knowing and experiencing subject to the world as phenomenon.

In Descartes it is relatively easy to see that the distinction between epistemological and ontological claims soon collapses due to the fact that the first claim Descartes can find which (structurally) satisfies his criteria for certain knowledge, is the proof of his own existence, which then gives birth to a number of successive claims – most stating the *existence* of various entities.

However, Husserl seems to be quite aware of the dangers of thus conflating the epistemological and the ontological, and is constantly at pains to emphasise that he is *not* making *ontological* claims, but concentrating purely on our modes of *experiencing phenomena*, whether these phenomena in fact derive from really existing entities or not. In this sense, phenomenology can almost be said to be an autonomous discipline

occupying a sort of middle ground between psychology, epistemology and ontology<sup>1</sup>. Carr explains this as follows, starting first by differentiating phenomenology from psychology in that “its scope is wider than that of psychology” since the object of psychology “is empirical consciousness, and it treats this object in the manner of an empirical science, explaining facts and events” (Carr 1999:79). In contrast, phenomenology is concerned with “objects, indeed the whole world of objects for a consciousness, *treated strictly as they are intended by consciousness*” and in doing so “opens up and explores a new region of being” (79). Carr carries on to state that neither does “Husserl’s phenomenology represent any sort of epistemological ‘foundationalism’ in the sense of the modern tradition .... Husserl never claims that we know the world with any more certainty or accuracy after the phenomenological reduction than before it.” (Carr 1999:96). Instead, Carr notes that “in place of Descartes’ foundationalism [Husserl] proposes ‘the idea of a transcendental grounding of knowledge’... The [other regions of being] are neither swallowed up by the [‘region of pure consciousness’] nor do they simply stand alongside it as part of the world” (Carr 1999:82). Furthermore, the famous phenomenological *epoché* is constructed entirely in an effort to *avoid* allowing these phenomenological claims to mutate into, particularly, ontological claims. Carr does not question whether the above – which is what Husserl *claims* to be doing – in fact succeeds; he is concerned with *why* Husserl performs the *epoché*, and with *whether* we should do it, and to pursue this question, he is willing to grant Husserl the benefit of (a vaguely-hinted at!) doubt.<sup>2</sup> While we shall briefly touch on this question in the discussion below, it is of far more importance to what will follow to examine *whether* Husserl is in fact justified in claiming that he escapes making ontological commitments – a question regarding which there seems to be ground for genuine doubts!

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<sup>1</sup> For planting the hint about this sort of “middle-ground” of the region Husserl explores, we are indebted to the lectures of Prof. Dr. Boukema of the Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen. Any errors in the discussion that follows are however purely attributable to our own lapses of memory and/or comprehension! Merleau-Ponty, in a passage discussing the difference between scientific and phenomenological modes of viewing the body, similarly notes that the scientific world-view presupposes a view where everything in the world can be divided into “two modes of being, and two only: being in itself, which is that of objects ... and being for itself, which is that of consciousness” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:349) whereas, when the body withdraws from the *objective* world (by entering the transcendental realm opened up by the *epoché*), there is formed “between the pure subject and the object *a third genus of being*” (350; my emphasis).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. “[Husserl] insists he is neither negating the world’s existence nor even doubting it, he is simply suspending it .... To which the obvious response is, Perhaps so, but why *should* we do it?” (Carr 1999:78).

This - as we shall then try to show - would seem to be particularly true in the context in which we shall evaluate it below – namely in regard to the problem of solipsism, with which Husserl himself so desperately (and ultimately, we shall try to show, unsuccessfully) wrestled in the Fifth *Cartesian Meditation*. This is for two reasons, which we shall now briefly discuss. Firstly, one could argue - as several commentators, of which we shall look at Pivcevic (1970) below, do - that for all the effort devoted to the *epoché* as making the claim that ontological assertions are avoided actually amounts to little more than lip-service, and that Husserl cannot in fact help but do so. Secondly, that even if he hadn't, the fact that Husserl's method of transcendental phenomenology – and, as we shall argue, especially the model of the transcendental subject on which it relies – is still forced to predicate the (*knowledge* of the) world's existence on the subject. In other words, whether ontologically or epistemologically, Husserl is forced to assume the primacy of the subject, and can make sense of other entities only by relating (and subordinating) them to the centrality of what he freely calls the monadic subject. Leaving Descartes behind, we shall now briefly examine these two points, and then move on to a discussion of Husserl's struggle with the problem of solipsism and the model of intersubjectivity he proposes, before we try to show how the flaws and shortcomings of the latter are related to this assumed primacy of the subject.

Let us examine this further. As he sets out on his quest for a new start to philosophy that would be in line with Cartesian rigour, Husserl spends most of the First Meditation “mark[ing] out the determinate methodical [*sic*] course of a genuine philosophy, a radical philosophy that begins with what is intrinsically first” (Husserl 1969:8). What this entails most strongly for him – and this is one of the things he sees as setting himself apart from Descartes – is that “[he<sup>3</sup>], as someone beginning philosophically, since [he is] striving toward the presumptive end, genuine science, must neither make nor go on accepting any judgment as scientific *that [he has] not derived*

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<sup>3</sup> The bracketed “[he]” here substitutes for the first person “I” in the original, for ease of reading. However, the very use of the first person is by no means accidental or insignificant, as Husserl himself spends some time explaining (1969:19-21). In the same way, “my” use of “we” in this study is also intended to be read as more than a convention of academic discourse. We shall have cause to return to this point below, when we shall discuss the way Deleuze and Guattari analyse the “we” of their own writings, in the chapter to follow. Cf. *infra* p 155-6 and 162 n. 144.

*from evidence*, from ‘experiences’ in which the affairs and affair-complexes are present to [him] as ‘*they themselves*’.” (Husserl 1969:13, all emphases in original).

Husserl then analyses what he means by “evidence” in some detail, making subtle distinctions between different types of evidence in §6 of the First Meditation, precisely in order to pave the way for a phenomenological *epoché* that could serve the same methodological purpose as Descartes’ radical doubt, but which would not fall into the same trap of entailing ontological assertions. The only form of evidence, Husserl states, which can satisfy a “radical philosophy” is – as the heading to §6 reads – “an evidence that is apodictic and first in itself” (Husserl 1969:14). Now, apodicticity for Husserl implies far more than the certainty Descartes had found in his “clear and distinct intuitions”. Husserl obviously has Descartes in mind when he explains the difference in a passage which is worth quoting at length:

Any evidence is a grasping of something itself that is, or is thus, a grasping in the mode ‘it itself’, with full certainty of its being, a certainty that accordingly excludes every doubt. But it does not follow that full certainty excludes the conceivability that being could prove to be illusion – indeed, sensuous experience furnishes us with cases where that happens. Moreover, this open possibility of becoming doubtful, or of non-being, *in spite of evidence*, can always be recognized in advance by critical reflection on what the evidence in question does. An *apodictic* evidence, however, is not merely certainty of the affairs of affair-complexes (states-of-affairs) evident in it; rather it discloses itself, to a critical reflection, as having the signal peculiarity of being *at the same time the absolute unimaginableness* (inconceivability) of their *non-being*, and thus excluding in advance every doubt as ‘objectless’, empty. (Husserl 1969:15-6, all emphases in original)

What Husserl gains by saying this, is that it allows him to move away from the (transcendent) *contents* of evidences (i.e. *what* is experienced) to the (transcendental) *structure* of evidences (i.e. the experience itself), which now becomes the only legitimate subject of enquiry for a ‘radical philosophy’ that would be rigorous enough to lay claim to the status of a science<sup>4</sup>. In other words, while we may often be in doubt whether *what*

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<sup>4</sup> Compare Pivcevic: “The reduction that [Husserl] has in mind involves a suspension of *all* empirical existential considerations and of *all a priori* assumptions about entities external (transcendent) to experiences .... Its effect, according to Husserl, is to transform the consciousness in the sense of a ‘stream of experiences’, my own consciousness, into a *transcendental* consciousness.” (Pivcevic 1970:65, all emphases in original). And again: “The idea behind Husserl’s phenomenological reduction is that we

we are experiencing exists, we can be in no doubt *that* we are experiencing it, though, as Husserl puts it, these experiences may be “fulfilled” (i.e. be of a really-existing object) or “unfulfilled” (i.e. be deceptive). It is particularly significant, and helpful to our purposes, that the example Husserl chooses to illustrate this division, is precisely that of the “factual existence of the world”, and it is to his discussion of this that we now turn.

Husserl introduces the problem of the existence of the world since he sees as a possible objection to the above that “[m]ore than anything else the being of the world is obvious” (1969:17). This objection is based on the reasoning that it is only the assumed existence of the world which, not only *enables* science, but also *necessitates* it. If there was no world *of which* to make scientific judgments, what would after all be the point of trying to construct a rigorous science<sup>5</sup>? However, while Husserl is willing to concede that “however much this evidence [of the existence of the world] is prior in itself to all the <other> evidences of life ... and to all the evidences of all the world sciences ... we soon become doubtful about the extent to which, in this capacity, it can lay claim to being apodictic” in the sense described above (Husserl 1969:17). He is then very quick to point out that this lack of apodicticity is not (yet?) enough to provide a “full proof that ... a non-being of the world is conceivable” (17), but even on this point, Pivcevic - amongst others<sup>6</sup> - do not exonerate Husserl from making ontological commitments, or at least, when they grant that he doesn’t, do not seem convinced that he might not in fact need to! As Pivcevic puts it: “I am asked to set aside all existential empirical considerations, all existential assumptions about historical entities or events; but this itself is a historical decision taken by a historical being and it is difficult to see how this can be explained on a transcendental basis. It seems that we cannot after all put in brackets all existential considerations about the historical world” (1970:74). The argument he goes on to make

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should concentrate on what is immanently given in our own ‘stream of experiences’, treating them not as empirical events in a ‘natural world’ but as *intentional structures* to be clarified in a ‘phenomenological reflection’” (65).

<sup>5</sup> Again, Pivcevic puts the problem with which Husserl is engaging here succinctly: “Husserl’s *epoché* requires that we should *not* make [an assumption about the existence of the world], but if we are not allowed to make such an assumption then it becomes difficult to explain the *meaning* of [the results we obtain]” (1970:78).

<sup>6</sup> For example, compare Kim: “There is, in [Husserl’s] view, the apodictically certain possibility that the world may not exist at all” (1976:5), and then, of Husserl’s attempts to counter the isolating effects of the *epoché* in his last work: “[Husserl] tries to develop the phenomenology of the life-world in order to free subjectivity from the straitjacket of absolute subjectivity. *But the real world never reappears.*” (5, my emphasis)

after this statement amounts to placing Husserl before the dilemma that, either his transcendental *epoché* must be committed to some sort of ontological claim, and hence fails in precisely that for which it was designed, or else, to the extent that it succeeds, “has the effect of transforming [intentional] experiences into certain noetic-noematic structures in which both the acts and the noematic contents are completely dematerialised” (Pivcevic 1970:74). In other words, either phenomenology has something to say (but then what it says is committed to making ontological claims), or else it escapes making ontological claims, but has nothing else to say either, except about the phenomenologist’s own private world<sup>7</sup>. Carr comes to a somewhat similar conclusion – though in a different context, when he writes: “if the *rigor* of phenomenological analysis requires the apodictic givenness of the subjective to the phenomenologist, the only egological or solipsistic phenomenology can be rigorous. If, on the other hand, intersubjective phenomenology is to be regarded as equal in dignity, and thus presumably in rigor ... then the apodicticity of the primary given is no longer the standard of rigor” (Carr 1974:34-5).

Pivcevic states the implication of this clearly when he says: “Husserl’s biggest problem arising from the *epoché* is how to re-discover the real (historical) world once this world has been put in ‘brackets’” (Pivcevic 1970:74). And in fact, as we shall now see, Husserl himself is very aware of this problem, and devotes by far the largest section of the *Cartesian Meditations* to trying to solve it – ultimately unsuccessfully, as many commentators argue<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Although in a different and more generous context, Hutcheson also concedes that “the ‘problem of other minds’, as it is called, is a problem that Husserl *cannot* answer from the phenomenological standpoint .... Suppose that Husserl straightforwardly refuted solipsism in the fifth meditation. If that were so, then Husserl could not do it along strictly phenomenological lines” (Hutcheson 1980:145-6), since to do so, “Husserl would be committing himself to the existence of other subjects” (145), which he refuses to do. We shall return to Hutcheson’s discussion below.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Carr (1974:17 n. 12) where he states that “those who interpret Husserl’s project [in the Fifth *Cartesian Meditation*] as a denial of solipsism] usually judge that he has not succeeded”, while arguing that Husserl is not, however, in fact trying to dispel a traditionally Cartesian concept of solipsism. We shall return to Carr’s interesting discussion below, which might help Husserl escaping some of the criticisms we have made above, but only to land him on other, equally serious, difficulties. Cf. also Pivcevic: “It is true that Husserl made repeated efforts ... to show that his transcendental analysis does not lead to solipsistic conclusions. But as his existential critics, among others, have shown, he never succeeded in proving that this in fact is not so” (1970:82).

## 2.2 The Fifth Cartesian Meditation

### 2.2.1 Posing the question of solipsism?

Having explicated the basis of the phenomenological method purely in terms of the “transcendental ego”, which he had explicitly defined as ‘his own’ (1969:19-21), Husserl, in the Fifth and final<sup>9</sup> Meditation, now introduces the possible objection to his method posed by the specter of solipsism, in the following way: “When I, the meditating I, reduce myself to my absolute transcendental ego by phenomenological epoché do I not become *solus ipse*; and do I not remain that, as long as I carry on a consistent self-explication under the name phenomenology?” (Husserl 1969:89). Carr proposes that Husserl is here preparing to move from what he calls the ‘solipsistic level’ of phenomenology to a completely different, but equally important *level*, namely that of ‘intersubjective phenomenology’, which is “required, as the original ‘objection of solipsism’<sup>10</sup> suggested, if phenomenology is to be a full-fledged *transcendental philosophy*” (1974:31-2, emphasis in original). We shall return to Carr’s argument – which is that Husserl is *not* in fact answering to a traditionally Cartesian version of the solipsism-problem – later, but the fact is that (as Carr, and Hutcheson, freely admit<sup>11</sup>) most commentators, with some textual justification, have read Husserl as answering precisely this question, and it is to this discussion that we shall now turn, although we shall not be too concerned with the problem’s Cartesian history as such.

As both Carr and Hutcheson admit, Husserl himself lends credence to the belief that he is attempting a refutation of solipsism along the usual lines, through his formulation of the objection in §42 of the *Cartesian Meditations*. Speaking through an imaginary interlocutor, Husserl asks whether, since “[t]ranscendental reduction restricts me to the stream of my pure conscious processes and the unities constituted by their

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<sup>9</sup> Although Merleau-Ponty refers to a Sixth, unpublished, Meditation (1962:vii n. 2).

<sup>10</sup> Carr places quotation marks around this phrase, because he proposes that Husserl is not in fact trying to answer the (at least traditional formulation of the) solipsism problem at all. While we shall return to his discussion below, his description does provide a useful indication of the Fifth Meditation’s importance for Husserl.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. “As it is usually interpreted, the fifth meditation seems if anything to support a Cartesian reading of phenomenology, primarily because it addresses itself to the problem of solipsism” (1974:15, first emphasis added) and Hutcheson (1980:144ff).

actualities and potentialities”, is phenomenology not to “be branded therefore as transcendental solipsism?” (Husserl 1969:89). In other words, having “deprived [the experienced world] of its naïve acceptance” (1969:18), and so ‘rescued’ phenomenology from a “transcendental realism, an absurd position” (1969:24) such as that of Descartes, Husserl is now forced to ask: “Have we not therefore done transcendental realism an injustice?” (1969:89). He keeps reformulating the objection in a number of ways, of which perhaps the most suggestive is the following: “Accordingly can we avoid saying likewise: ‘The very question of actually transcendent knowledge – above all, that of the possibility of my going outside my ego and reaching other egos (who, after all, as others, are not actually in me but only consciously intended in me) – this question cannot be asked phenomenologically” (Husserl 1969:90).

This way of stating the problem raises several key issues. The first is that of what is meant by “transcendent knowledge”. Carr distinguishes between what he calls a ‘weak’ and a ‘strong’ sense of transcendence in this context. In the weak sense “[t]ranscendence is conceived as the irreducibility of what is meant to the particular act or acts in which it is meant .... Until the fifth meditation, all such acts, actual and possible, are conceived as *mine*” (Carr 1974:18, emphasis in original). Hutcheson, in glossing the same distinction, uses the example of a table to illustrate what Carr means here: “A table, for example, transcends my consciousness in that it is the same table I could see in further perceptions ... to identify this as a table of which I see the top is to identify it as something which has an underside which I do not see but which I *could* see if I moved” (Hutcheson 1980:151). This, then, is obviously the sense of “transcendence” as we have used it above, in this chapter so far. This is however not presented as a return to realism, as this transcendence is not dependent on the materiality of the table as such, but on the ability of consciousness to synthesise further possible acts of consciousness, which is the condition for identifying an object as, say, a table. Hence, the identity here is not a property of any putative table, the actual existence of which remains bracketed, but the result of an act (or rather, acts) of consciousness, working upon perceptions of the table as intended.

However, Carr (and Hutcheson) argue that it is precisely here (at the start of the Fifth Meditation) that Husserl moves to the second, ‘strong’ sense of transcendence – which mirrors the shift from the ‘solipsistic level’ of phenomenology to the

‘intersubjective phenomenology’ discussed earlier. At stake here, according to Carr, is the possibility of phenomenology (hitherto an explicitly *subjective* practice) becoming an objectively-grounded science, where objectivity is related to the possibility of intersubjective testing and validity. This then, in Carr’s view, is the true sense of Husserl’s treatment of the objection of solipsism. It is to elucidate the second, ‘strong’ sense of transcendence (and in contradistinction to the ‘weak’ sense) that he writes: “The objective is not only irreducible to any particular acts of mine; it is also not reducible to *all possible* acts of mine, my whole actual and possible stream of consciousness, because it is identically the same for others and their acts as well.” (Carr 1974:18). The objection of solipsism is here revealed for what it really is: if the criterion for objectivity is, as Carr states, that it must “be the same for others”, then we need to have some sort of access to the consciousnesses of others. While – to the satisfaction of Carr, Hutcheson, and not least, Husserl himself – it had been clearly shown through the first four meditations that phenomenology can deal with the first sense of transcendence, it is now up to the Fifth to show that it can deal with this second one.

Hutcheson goes on to develop an argument elaborating on this point, and aimed partly also at showing that Husserl is neither treating the ‘traditional’ solipsism problem, nor falling back into a realism. In doing so, he also seriously questions whether Husserlian phenomenology has the ability to answer the classical problem of solipsism. He notes that traditionally, the problem of solipsism (or other minds) has been formulated in two ways, which he labels the metaphysical version and the epistemological version. Metaphysical solipsism “is the thesis that only I and my ideas *exist*. Epistemological solipsism, on the other hand, is the thesis that one cannot *know* or *demonstrate* that anyone other than oneself exists” (Hutcheson 1980:145; my emphases). The two are distinct in the sense that one may deny the possibility of having *knowledge* of other minds, without thereby being committed to denying that others *exist*. However, for Hutcheson, *refuting either* refutes *both*, since “‘I know that p’ implies that ‘p’ is true” (1980:145). While one might be somewhat suspicious of this claim (at least in this formulation!) on logical grounds<sup>12</sup>, it nevertheless serves the purpose of bringing home

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<sup>12</sup> E.g. one could argue that you knew quite a bit about unicorns, actually – which does not, of course, mean that unicorns exist! One might also surmise that any critique of the logic of (especially St. Anselm’s

the point that “the ‘problem of other minds’, as it is called, is a problem that Husserl *cannot* answer from the phenomenological standpoint … for an answer to the solipsist in this way would constitute ontological commitment to the existence of other subjects” (Hutcheson 1980:145-6). Whether Husserl does not in fact do just that should by now be almost a moot point, but the significance of Hutcheson’s argument is that, like Carr, Hutcheson does not therefore consider Husserl to have failed in his response to the question of solipsism – rather, his readers have long attributed the wrong problem to him: “The [true] task which arises is to explain *how* the other exists *for him*, not *whether* the other exists as such” (Carr 1974:19). Or as Hutcheson himself states it: “Husserl’s problem is, in part, to determine the *meaning* of ‘other egos exist’ *rather than* to decide its truth or falsity” (1980:150). In other words, this is what Husserl was pointing out in the passage quoted above when he wrote about other egos being “intended in me”.

But why this special attention to other egos *per se*? After all, the fifth meditation is by far the longest of the five. The answer is precisely in the other side of the Husserl passage referred to immediately above: while others are “intended in me” they are also intended *as* “not actually being in me”. In other words, phenomenology has to do with the explication of sense (meaning), and the concept or phenomenon of an ‘other’ by its very *sense* implies *not* being merely a contents of the consciousness. As Husserl himself explains this point: others “surely are not a mere intending and intended *in me* … but, according to their sense, precisely *others*” (1969:89).

Furthermore, in Carr’s (and Hutcheson’s) readings - which see the move towards an intersubjective phenomenology as ultimately a play for objectivity - rests a further implication for the meaning of *alter ego*: it must itself be an intentional consciousness capable of experiencing the world *as ‘I’ do!* As Carr puts it: “Thus other egos seem to demand a treatment which goes beyond the consideration of them merely as intentional objects, for they are intentional subjects” (Carr 1974:17). Only if this can be shown to be so, can we guarantee the objectivity of phenomenology as a rigorous science. This in turn requires Husserl to show two things: first, that we can have access to other minds (as he calls it, other ‘streams of consciousness’); second – and this is the crucial point for the

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version of) the ontological proof for the existence of God would be equally devastating to a position such as this. However, as there is neither the space nor the need in the present study to subject this assertion of Hutcheson’s to rigorous examination, we shall make our peace with it here.

argument this chapter will attempt to prepare, and which will be developed especially in the chapter to follow – that those other minds experience the world *in exactly the same way* that ‘I’ do. In other words, the transcendental ego must not only be transcendent in the first, ‘weak’ sense (i.e. obtain in all ‘my’ experiences of the world) but also in the second, ‘strong’ sense – it must obtain for *all* others also.

What this comes down to is that, returning to Husserl’s text, we can now see him posing the question of solipsism in traditional terms *in* §42 and then *re-posing* the question in phenomenological terms in §43, by way of what may be read as an indirect admission of the point made by Hutcheson above, that the problem (in its traditional form – whether that be ‘epistemological’ or ‘metaphysical’) cannot be answered phenomenologically. Husserl himself had asked, in §42 whether the “very question of actually transcendent knowledge – above all that of the possibility of my going outside my ego and reaching other egos (who, after all, as others, are not actually in me but only consciously intended in me) – this question cannot be asked purely phenomenologically?” (Husserl 1969:90). By restating the problem in §43, Husserl seems to be conceding that the *traditional* question cannot be asked phenomenologically, and then recasts it in terms that *can* be approached phenomenologically, i.e. in terms of “*how* the other exists *for him*, not *whether* the other exists as such” as Carr has it (1974:19). The importance of §42 then becomes not that of stating the problem to be answered, but of emphasizing the importance of the problem to be stated. What Husserl does state very forcefully throughout this section, is precisely the extent to which the entire phenomenological enterprise will stand or fall on its ability *to make sense* of “others” (Husserl 1969:89-90).

However, even if all these cautionary remarks about misreading Husserl’s intentions through a too literal attention to some of his formulations in §42 – precisely that for which both Carr and Hutcheson reproach other commentators – are taken into account, a close analysis of §42 (and especially of the marginalia carefully preserved by an attentive editor) is still worth our while, for it reveals several worrying aspects of Husserl’s approach which – we will argue – eventually prevent him from giving a satisfactory account of the intersubjective relation.

In this section, Husserl immediately introduces the two key notions of the ‘*alter ego*’ and ‘harmonious experience’ (1969:90). However, even in these introductory comments, following on as they do from the preceding four meditations, we can see signs of the embarrassment which the question of intersubjectivity poses for Husserl, and also, of the *source* of this predicament. While the following might well at first look like pointless nitpicking – and an unfair reproach to Husserl’s extreme fastidiousness in formulation – we shall hope to show below that the issues raised are in fact significant, and unresolved.

Firstly, in a sentence acting as an unmistakable programmatic statement prefiguring the restatement of the problem of other subjects in terms of their phenomenological sense, Husserl writes: “we must discover in what intentionalities, syntheses, motivations, the sense ‘other ego’ becomes fashioned in me” (1969:90), but crucially, an editorial footnote comments that the “phrase rendered by ‘in me’ [is] crossed out” (90 n. 1). Similarly, in the succeeding sentence, which reads: “These experiences and their works are facts belonging to my phenomenological sphere” (90), we find the following editorial comment: “The word rendered as ‘belonging to my’ crossed out. Marginal comment: ‘The dangerous first person singular! This should be expanded terminologically’” (90 n. 2). Except that it never is – not even the crossed-out phrases are replaced, though clearly, for purely syntactical reasons, they need to be substituted in some way. These omissions lead to a much larger problem.

Because it is by no means clear that Husserl is not in fact *required* by the theory of transcendental subjectivity – and especially the assumptions about the primacy which this subject enjoys that we have tried to expose in Chapter One above – to fall into this “dangerous first person singular”. Secondly, it is difficult to see how, once having done so, it is possible to escape the sense of discomfort that Husserl so obviously feels when turning this theory onto the field of intersubjectivity – a discomfort which he signals both with the erasures and with the unusual length of the meditation dealing with it<sup>13</sup>.

It is precisely the tension expressed in these two points that we should like to point out and develop here briefly – viz. whether it is in fact possible to derive a

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<sup>13</sup> Although we grant quite happily that it may not be relevant, it is nonetheless interesting to note that the fifth meditation is all of 60 pages long, as compared to the 80 pages devoted to the first four meditations and the introduction combined!

satisfactory account of intersubjectivity (which can in turn form the basis for a satisfactory ethics) if one starts off with a *subject* derived in the first place by either *cutting it off* from its context or surroundings (as Descartes - and, as we have tried to show, to an extent Husserl also - does), or at least to use this subject as a logically-prior basis on which to found, or from which to ‘constitute’ the outside world, and especially other subjects within it. Or at least, though this shall not be the focus of the discussion to follow, whether it is possible to do this without in the end being forced to renounce all the gains the phenomenological *epoché* was supposed to deliver in the first place. In either of these two scenarios, the failure of Husserl’s phenomenological theory to provide a satisfactory account of intersubjectivity would thus seem – as he himself was well aware – to provide reasons for doubting (in retrospect, as it were) the very foundation of phenomenology in the theory of transcendental subjectivity, for the reasons we have discussed in Chapter One above. This would then point to the need for a new beginning, a new way of looking at subjectivity which would not only not be that of Husserl, but which could circumvent similar problems in similar subject-centred positions.

However, we are getting ahead of ourselves - it still remains to be shown that Husserl’s theory of intersubjectivity does, in fact, fail, and for the reasons we have proposed. Let us then turn to a brief review of the course of the argument in which this theory is set forward.

### 2.2.2 Answering the problem of intersubjectivity?

Re-reading the Fifth Meditation after Carr and Hutcheson, it becomes fairly easy to sub-divide it into several smaller sections, showing the rigour with which Husserl approaches the question of intersubjectivity. After the initial (false) objection raised in §42, §43-48 in fact show a return to the ground first covered in the First Meditation, which treated the initial phenomenological reduction. Now however, the reduction is re-examined in respect of a different perspective which will allow the objection of solipsism to be stated and approached in a legitimate phenomenological form. §49 is then used as a programmatic statement of the route to be followed in solving this problem, and the last sections, §50-60 is a step-by-step enactment of this programme.

Whereas the First Meditation had been concerned primarily with, on the one hand, differentiating the phenomenological epoché from Cartesian doubt, and on the other, with differentiating the resulting transcendental attitude of phenomenology from the ‘natural attitude’ of the empirical sciences, §43-48 now reviews this epoché in terms which (as Husserl readily admits) reveal its susceptibility to the charge of solipsism. In doing so, these sections are devoted to showing *why* the problem of solipsism arises, albeit in *phenomenological terms*, and secondly, with showing why it is an important problem to solve in terms of the phenomenological project. We may sum up the argument in these sections as follows.

The problem in Husserl’s view (rather than that of the imaginary interlocutor) is by this stage formulated in the following way: “In changeable harmonious multiplicities of experience I experience others as actually existing and, on the one hand, as world Objects – not as mere physical things belonging to Nature<sup>14</sup>, though indeed as such things in respect of one side of them .... On the other hand, I experience them as *subjects for this world* (emphasis in original), as experiencing it (*this same world that I experience* [my emphasis – JH]) and, in so doing, experiencing me too, *even as* [my emphasis – JH] I experience the world and others in it” (Husserl 1969:91). This points the way to what is really at stake – the founding of intersubjectivity *by which* the world can attain the sense of being “objective”. The Fifth Meditation is then cast in advance as having two separate moments or stages. First, Husserl will need a means of accounting for the experience of “the ‘thereness-for-me’ of others”, which will take the form of a “*transcendental theory of experiencing someone else*, a transcendental theory of so-called ‘empathy’” (Husserl 1969:92; emphasis in original). However, this is not to be seen as an end in itself as may have been suggested by the objection of solipsism, but as preparing the way for the far more important second stage, in that “it contributes to the founding of a *transcendental theory of the Objective world* and .... [its] thereness-for-everyone” (92; emphasis in original).

In §44, Husserl re-introduces the theme of the phenomenological epoché, but with the qualification that our attention is now to be focused on what “*inside the universal*

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<sup>14</sup> The significance of the distinction between “things” and “Objects” is that the latter are phenomena imbued with a *sense*, whether the former are not. The point of the ensuing discussion is precisely to show *whether* it is possible for phenomenology to have access to this sense, and *how*.

*transcendental sphere, [is] a peculiar kind of epoché* with respect to our theme” (Husserl 1969:93; emphasis in original). This involves that “we *disregard all constitutional effects of intentionality relating immediately or mediately to other subjectivity*”, leaving the ego with “*within himself a peculiar ownness [sic]*” (Husserl 1969:93; all emphases in original). This reduction is peculiar in that, while the usual abstraction of the “I” from others in the natural attitude “in no respect alters the world-sense, ‘experiencable by everyone’” *this* transcendental abstraction leaves only the essential structure of intentionality by which the transcendental ego *constitutes* the (sense of the) world, but “*with an exclusive ownness*” (Husserl 1969:93-4). In other words, what Husserl will presently call the ‘primordial’ experience of the world by the (first-person) ego is privileged over the experiences of all others<sup>15</sup>. In the special case where the experience is *of* an other, Husserl then concedes that he is faced with a seeming paradox: “How can my ego, within his peculiar ownness, constitute under the name, ‘experience of something other’, precisely something *other*”? (1969:94). This is complicated further by the fact that Husserl sees this constitution of the other as occurring by analogy of the (own) ego: “the other is a ‘mirroring’ of my own self and yet not a mirroring proper, an analogue of my own self and yet again not an analogue in the usual sense” (1969:94). Furthermore, this problem again occurs on the two planes of the problem: firstly, “the question concerns no matter what alter egos” and then, the Objective world, since it is only through the ability of these alter egos to *also* constitute the world as senseful (and in the same way as the primordial ego) that the idea of an “Objective world” in turn attains *its* sense (Husserl 1969:94).

These problems arise, says Husserl, as the result of the distinctive *epoché* which yields the Ego in his “peculiar ownness”. This is achieved by “freeing that horizon [of peculiar ownness] from everything that is at all alien” (Husserl 1969:95). This is done by analyzing the modes in which something alien appears, and then abstractively excluding it from the ego. The first mode of alien-ness is everything “*other-spiritual*” that may make an other appear similar to the Ego, including all the functions of subjectivity, cultural predicates etc. (Husserl 1969:95). The next feature to be thus excluded is the “*characteristic of belonging to the surrounding world*” (1969:95-6). Husserl by no means aims to exhaust the *epoché* here, and is merely sketching out the route such an *epoché*

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<sup>15</sup> In fact, part of what is thus bracketed is the other *as* a subject of experience.

would take, but is fairly clear about what such an *epoché* would produce, or rather, retain as the sphere of peculiar ownness of the Ego.

The first important thing that he notices is that the Ego retains a “*unitarily coherent stratum of the phenomenon world*” in a “continuously harmonious, continuing world-experience” (Husserl 1969:96). The conclusion to be drawn from this is that what had previously been named as an important characteristic of the pure phenomenological experience, namely “harmonious verification” (1969:91), remains intact even after this special epoché, and is therefore not dependent on the existence of anything alien or other. In fact, this “continuously harmonious” experience of the world is revealed as a founding *condition* for the experience of what is other to appear. This appears to be a strange conclusion to draw, or at least one that puts the argument which follows in danger of falling prey to a *petitio principii*, since we have already been told that the *ultimate* stake of the theory to be founded on this stratum is precisely that of the self-identity of the Objective world. Indeed it is sometimes tempting to lay this charge at Husserl’s door throughout the Fifth Meditation, but here Husserl – who is no doubt aware of the danger – side-steps it by again playing off the results of this *epoché* against similar processes in the natural attitude and sciences. Whereas the natural attitude and sciences take the existence of the natural world for granted, the “pure and simple” Nature that such an abstraction would leave them would be by definition Objective. However, in the transcendental sphere reduced to the “ownness” of the primordial Ego, “the sense ‘Objective’, which belongs to everything worldly – as constituted intersubjectively, as experienceable by everyone, and so forth – *vanishes completely*” (Husserl 1969:96).

Since part of what has been abstractively excluded includes all the (putative) subjective functions of others, “I then find my *animate organism* as *uniquely* singled out – namely as the only one of them that is not just a body but precisely an animate organism … the only Object ‘in’ which I ‘rule and govern’ *immediately*, governing particularly in each of its organs” (Husserl 1969:97; all emphases in original). This animate organism further has the characteristics that the Ego “ascribe *fields of sensation*” to it, that the Ego can act ‘through’ it, and that it is “reflexively related to itself” (97). It is this sense of the *own* body as the centre-piece of *perception* and of *action* that gives it the senses of “*my animate organism*”, “*my psyche*” and “*psychophysical unity*”. which gives

it a priority over “other men”, which as yet are only experienced as bodies, and not in the anthropomorphic sense of that word, rather just in the sense of things.

It is worthwhile dwelling on this argument in a bit more depth, since it is on precisely this point that some of the severest criticism of Husserl’s position from *within* the phenomenological movement has come, and their objections will also resonate with the alternative position from *without* that movement that we will attempt to formulate in the next chapter, when we turn to Deleuze in Part II. For now, however, we shall content ourselves with merely explicating Husserl’s argument in slightly more depth.

We have already noted the importance of perception and sensation in the stated *immediacy* of the Ego’s relation to its own physical organism. Husserl describes these processes quite concretely, if very sketchily. To elaborate the characteristics mentioned above briefly, we can say the following. By “ascribing fields of sensation”, Husserl means that purely physical sensations (he also explicitly describes these sensations as “tactual” and uses the examples of heat and cold) are immediately given, but must be given *to* the body, and not *through* the body to something like a ‘ghost in the machine’ lying behind it. This point is developed in specific reference to the organs, and in particular those of perception, ‘with’ which all perceptions are immediately related to consciousness. The distinction between sensation (which is a passive receptiveness, though still in the mode of intentionality) and perception (which is a “kinesthetically” active process of touching, seeing, etc.), also introduces the fact that the body is that which allows the Ego to “‘act’ somatically – immediately, and then meditately” (Husserl 1969:97). Husserl also says that it is “subject to my ‘I can’” (97). Lastly, the ‘own’ body is “reflexively related to itself” in that “I ‘can’ perceive one hand ‘by means’ of the other, and eye by means of a hand, and so forth – a procedure in which *the functioning organ must become an Object and the Object a functioning organ*” (Husserl 1969:97, emphasis in original)<sup>16</sup>. Note also how Husserl here tries to avoid falling into a (Cartesian) ‘mind-body’ dualism: in this passage, he is particularly careful to safely cottonwool in scare-quotes all the formulations that might suggest the latter, e.g. “Object ‘in’ which I ‘rule and govern’ immediately .... I perceive ‘with’ my hands ... I perceive also ‘with’ my

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<sup>16</sup> We shall have cause to return to this last point in our discussion of Merleau-Ponty’s criticism of Husserl in Section 2.3 below.

eyes” etc. (Husserl 1969:97). The intent seems quite clearly to combat any notion of a ‘ghost’ which is the active principle and acting ‘through’ the passive ‘machine’ of the body. Yet, as we shall see Merleau-Ponty argue in Section 2.3 below, though Husserl thus *posits* a primary unity between consciousness and body, the sequence of argumentation up to this point, and even at this relatively late point in his *oeuvre*<sup>17</sup>, seems to indicate that consciousness is still treated as having a primacy over its incarnation.

Of further importance is that, even when the Ego as “animate organism” is thus constituted as “utterly unique”, and hence has bracketed the existence of other *experiencing* bodies which are the structural requirements for an “objective” world, it is still left with “a kind of ‘world’”, and furthermore “my whole world-experiencing life and therefore including my actual and possible experience *of* what is other is wholly unaffected by screening off what *is* other” (Husserl 1969:98; last emphasis mine). Having thus shown how transcendental consciousness “owns” even experiences of otherness, and hence seems to immediately *recuperate* all possible otherness by having *already constituted* it as experience (“I myself constitute all this in my psyche and bear it intentionally within me” – Husserl 1969:99), we are one step closer to seeing why and how phenomenology is legitimately confronted with the spectre of solipsism.

§45 elaborates this points and notes that, broadening the scope from the particular (own) ego to that of the (absolute) transcendental ego, there is found an originary division of the experiential field into two spheres, that of ownness and that of the other, with the important attendant point that “every consciousness *of* what is other, every mode of appearance *of* it, belongs in the former sphere” (Husserl 1969:100). This distinction thus seems to be similar to the familiar Kantian one between a (transcendent but unknowable) noumenal realm and an immanent phenomenal one, but where the former can only be accessed in the form of the latter. Husserl then lays emphasis on the fact that thus, not only is the other (as experience) constituted *within* the sphere of ownness of the transcendental subject, but also *by means of* this ownness. It is here that he introduces the important term that points to, and keeps alive, the tension inherent in this recuperation of

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<sup>17</sup> Although Merleau-Ponty claims that Husserl’s unpublished writings, especially *Ideen II* and *III* present us with Husserl’s own attempt to wrestle with this. Cf. the essay entitled “The Philosopher and his Shadow” (Merleau-Ponty 1964:159-182).

otherness: the transcendental subject constitutes “the other in the mode: alter ego” (Husserl 1969:100).

Having thus analysed the process by which the ego experiences (or constitutes) other *bodies*, Husserl then turns, in §46, to prepare the way for a new but complementary consideration, that of the possibility of identifying these bodies as themselves *experiencing subjects*. First, he briefly recaps the process whereby any object whatsoever “moves” from being an “an undetermined object of empirical intuition” to being known as “what it is, in particular” (Husserl 1969:101). The “explication” that this process entails is said to be dependent on a “continuous intuitive synthesis of identification” whereby the object becomes constituted as self-identical in regard to the “particulars making up its ownness” (101). Throughout this brief discussion, the emphasis lies heavily on the *continuity* of the experience<sup>18</sup>. In other words, the process of experiencing and identification is here already rooted in temporality.

Husserl then applies this to the transcendental ego in particular. He notes that, when reflecting upon itself, the ego is given to itself *perceptually*, but also as “already given”, i.e. as having been there before becoming the explicit object of perception and/or reflection (Husserl 1969:101). The ego is thus constituted as certain already-realised actualities, but also “with an open infinite horizon of still undiscovered *internal features of my own*<sup>19</sup>” (101; emphasis in original). This is the initial sense of the title of this

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<sup>18</sup> It is important to note here that there are two distinct phases in Husserl’s thought: what most commentators refer to as the (early) “static phenomenology” and the (later) “genetic phenomenology”. *Cartesian Meditations*, while being a late work, lies somewhere on the cusp of the move from the one to the other (which is itself a late development in Husserl’s thought), and hence one may assume that Donohue’s account of Husserl’s own criticism of static phenomenology (that it assumes too passive a view of the role data plays, that it is “without open horizons” and “are not investigated in terms of the … flow of temporality”) do not hold here, as can be seen in the emphasis on continuity (Donohue 2003:171). She describes the basic tenet of “genetic phenomenology” as follows: “Each time we experience an object, we predicate something of it, which remains a part of the experience each consecutive time we encounter that object. In experiencing an object, I do not approach it each time as if for the first time; I come to it with the prior experiences still available to me” (169-70). The importance of this is that, taken in conjunction with the criticism mentioned, we should not therefore take Husserl to mean, above, that this continuous process is *eschatologically* continuous (i.e. only until a certain, ‘final’ understanding has been reached) but that it is *infinitely* continuous (i.e. that the meaning of the object is a vanishing-point which we may approach, but which keeps receding as we do – also because the object, while remaining *self-identical*, does not remain *unchanged* and hence acts as an “open-ended” horizon, its meaning changing continuously).

<sup>19</sup> From this, it should be apparent that “actualities” and “potentialities” do not - or at least, not primarily - refer to an Aristotelian actualization of form in matter (i.e. do not refer to physical attributes) but rather to the actualization *in consciousness* of the *awareness* of these features as phenomena. In other words, the emphasis lies on the *discovery* of hitherto unknown features, rather than on *new* features as such.

section: “Ownness as the sphere of the actualities and potentialities of the stream of subjective processes” (Husserl 1969:100), and again points to the shift to a genetic phenomenology, as discussed in footnote 18 above. It is these two elements that give rise to *continuous* self-experience as a “stream of subjective processes” (Husserl 1969:102). Firstly, the actualities are given in the form of recollections. This is significant, since up to now experience has been conceived of primarily in terms of the structures of perception that give rise to them, but now it becomes apparent that the continuous experience whereby the ego becomes constituted as self-identical “is *carried out largely in acts of consciousness that are not perceptions*” (Husserl 1969:102; emphasis in original). These recollections are firstly of actualities (in the form of the “I can”) and then in terms of potentialities (in the form of the “could have”). Ultimately, the importance of this is to introduce the notion of the “self-constitution of … life’s own processes, as temporal within an all-embracing time” (Husserl 1969:103). The ego is revealed as *temporal* – “I can look ahead or look back, I can penetrate and uncover the horizon of my own temporality” (1969:102), and at the same time, only accessible (or, better, *identifiable*) through this temporality.

In a by now familiar move, Husserl then extends this method by which the *own* (or the self) and its perceptions has been apprehended, to the apprehension of what is *transcendent* to this ego, in §47. As he puts it, it is now to be shown that “not only the constitutive perceiving but also the perceived existent belongs to my very-ownness” (Husserl 1969:104). These “existents” include what is relatively unproblematically part of the ego (the “habitualities” described in §46 above) but also, somewhat more surprisingly, “*transcendent objects*” (104; emphasis in original). By positing that the constitution of an object is “*itself concretely inseparable from [the constituted object itself]*”, Husserl can thus say that there is a “transcendent world” “within this ‘original sphere’” of the ego’s ownness, although this world would have no privileged status elevating it above “all the corresponding illusions, phantasies, ‘pure’ possibilities [etc.] … which offer themselves as ‘transcendent’” (Husserl 1969:104-5).

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Importantly, then, potentialities do not (here) refer to *future* possibilities – the focus in this section remains on the past and its recollection, which “contains” both actualities and potentialities.

Having thus followed a purely phenomenological path that has virtually forced him into conceding that, consistently followed, phenomenology appears to keep assimilating the transcendent (the other) to the immanence of the subject's constitutive consciousness, Husserl is now able to again re-formulate the initial objection of solipsism in a properly *phenomenological* way. The problem, as now elaborated in §48, is that the awareness of anything other “presupposes that *not all my own modes of consciousness are modes of my self-consciousness*” (Husserl 1969:105) whereas, as we have just followed his argument, he has shown that both the *sense* and the *existence* of the “transcendent world” *does* belong precisely to a “process of self-explication”. Husserl is, of course, far from content with this conclusion – both because it undermines the possibility of phenomenology as a rigorous and objectively-valid science (which, as we have seen above, is the major point at stake throughout this Meditation) and because he states it as an (intuitive?) “fact that the ego has … intentionalities with an existence-sense whereby *he wholly transcends his own being*” (Husserl 1969:105; emphasis in original). It is important to note here, in passing, that Husserl already states it as an *a priori* principle that these “other experiences [must be] united in harmonious systems”, although in some unspecified way in “contrast to self-experience and the system of its harmoniousness” (Husserl 1969:105.). He then proceeds to delineate the question by making a distinction between “immanent transcendency” (which is the transcendency as part of the “sphere of ownness” of the ego that he has been discussing in §43-47, and which he calls constitutionally primary) and “Objective transcendency”, which would be “proper” transcendency, in other words, independent of the ego (Husserl 1969:106). However, as opposed to the earlier discussion, part of the project seems to be to do away with the rigid Kantian distinction between a radically transcendent world as *unknowable* noumenon and phenomena as immanently constituted objects of knowledge<sup>20</sup>. For Husserl, even the “objectively transcendent” world is (or must become!) available as object of experience or knowledge – the following sections will be devoted to showing *that* this is so, and *how*. However, whereas the immanent transcendency is primarily a temporal process of constitution, and hence must be described *genetically* (i.e. how it

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<sup>20</sup> This is the shift, discussed above, that Carr sees as occurring from the ‘weak’ sense of transcendency to the ‘strong’ sense.

comes to be and develops), the objectively transcendent “is constantly there before me as already finished” and is so independently of whether I am actually experiencing it or not at any given moment, it will be subjected to a “static analysis”<sup>21</sup> (Husserl 1969:106).

In §49 Husserl proceeds to programmatically lay out the course this “static analysis” is to follow, and which he will then perform in the final sections of the Fifth Meditation. The first comment here, as we shall hope to show, is already crucial, when Husserl states that this “Objective world” is to be constituted “on the basis of my primordial ‘world’” (1969:106). After this reminder that the treatment of the question of solipsism is still to be understood as (merely) the first phase in a larger quest for the Objectivity of the world, Husserl then goes on to posit that when we break out of the sphere of ownness to what is foreign or alien, the first “other” object we have access to is in fact the (as yet undetermined, or “pure”) “other Ego”, and only *through* (and *after*) that, “an *Objective Nature* and a whole Objective world” (Husserl 1969:107; emphasis in original). In what may be viewed as an intermediary step, these Egos “do not remain isolated; on the contrary, an *Ego-community*, which includes me, become constituted” and it is only through this “communalized intentionality” (107) that the Objective world can in turn be constituted. As a final step, once this world has been constituted, the pure Egos then appear “with the sense ‘men’ or ‘psychophysical men as worldly objects’” (107), and hence also then only in regard to their specificity as individuals.

For Husserl this procedure solves the problem he has spent §43-48 explicating, since although, true to the phenomenological method<sup>22</sup>, “otherness” is still recuperated immediately to a sphere of “ownness”, the “communalization of intentionality” now allows him to posit a transcendental *intersubjectivity* with an *intersubjective* sphere of ownness, which then allows him to conceive of an Objective world which would simultaneously be *transcendent* (to the individual) and yet *intentionally owned* (which is the condition for access by phenomenological analysis).

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<sup>21</sup> We shall not discuss the difference between “static” and “genetic” phenomenology in any more detail here, except to note that this section makes it quite clear that they are to be conceived as *complementary* methods, and not *successive* stages in Husserl’s thought, whereby the latter would *replace* the former, although he only “added” the genetic element relatively late in his career. For a good discussion of these two methods, we refer the reader to Donohue (2003).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Husserl (1969:148) at the final survey of this process of argumentation: “The following is to be noted above all. At no point was the transcendental attitude, the attitude of phenomenological epoché, abandoned ... the alter ego [was] demonstrated precisely within the experiencing intentionality of my ego”.

Having tried to follow Husserl's construction of the *problem* in detail thus far, and followed him also in sketching out the path to follow, we now have enough material available to begin our critique of this position, since it is not the detail of this process with which we shall be concerned, but the *order* of argumentation, and along with this, the relative priority given to each step, for which the brief sketch given above will suffice. We can however point, in this regard, to a further formulation of this order which Husserl gives in his conclusion, which strengthens our belief that this *order* of argumentation is in fact crucial. In describing how the very schematic method that he has devoted the *Cartesian Meditations* to explicating must be developed and amended to become the “true and *genuine universal ontology* … grounded on an absolute foundation”, Husserl recapitulates the course this science will have to take, a course which mirrors the course his own meditations had taken, as follows: “In respect of order, the intrinsically first of the philosophical disciplines would be ‘solipsistically’ reduced ‘egology’, the egology of the primordially reduced ego. *Then only* would come intersubjective phenomenology, *which is founded on that discipline*” (Husserl 1969:155; all emphases mine).

Crucially, and quite explicitly then, intersubjectivity, for Husserl, will always be “founded upon” the ego, and all that is other will only be accessible through what is “owned”.

### 2.2.3 The Problem of Solipsism solved?

The problem we shall highlight is suggested by Husserl himself, when, near the end of the Fifth Meditation he states (or what, from the perspective we wish to develop henceforth, we may take to be an *admission*) that “The *illusion* of a solipsism is dissolved, *even though* the proposition that everything for me must derive its existential sense exclusively from me myself, from my sphere of consciousness retains its validity and fundamental importance” (Husserl 1969:150). But in what sense is this a satisfactory solution to the problem of solipsism? Is it not the “dissolution of solipsism” that is illusory here? To adumbrate our contention that this is precisely the case, we shall now embark on a brief conceptual analysis of the dimensions that the problem of solipsism involves.

Our contention is that this problem has (at least) three dimensions, which we shall here refer to as quantity, quality and communication<sup>23</sup>. The first of these, quantity, is perhaps the most commonly-recognised form of the problem, and may be expressed in the following disjunctions: the One or the Many, only Me or Others besides etc. In other words, it is numerically expressible as the attempt to prove that there is not only 1, but  $1 + x$  entities existent in the world. However, we should like to contend that the problem can (and must) also be expressed complementarily (and be supplemented by) in a *qualitative* way: the *Same* (rather than the One) and the Other; my-self and others-wise; Identity or Difference etc. Thirdly, for the problem of solipsism to have been truly overcome, the Other must be *accessible* to the ego – i.e. there must be the possibility of communication<sup>24</sup> (in the wide sense of any interchange of information) between the ego and the Other.

Although the question of quantity is probably held to be the paradigm test-case of whether a theory can successfully overcome solipsism, we would argue that it is in fact not that important a part of the problem at all – the ability to distinguish the world into several numerically distinct entities (which, without reference to their qualitative properties, need not yet be other subjects, though they may just as well be) is usually taken as a common-sense *factum*, and in fact, it might be argued that any serious doubt about their existence would qualify as a psychosis. And if Husserl, at the end of the Fifth

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<sup>23</sup> This is not a current distinction as far as we know – the most common classification of solipsism is that between, on the one hand, “metaphysical solipsism [as] the thesis that only I and my ideas exist” (Hutcheson 1980:145) or of “the self as the supposed totality of existence” (Rollins, cited in Cilliers & Gouws 2001:249 n. 13) and, on the other, “epistemological solipsism … [as] the thesis that one cannot know or demonstrate that anyone other than oneself exists” (Hutcheson 1980:145) or “the notion of the self and its states as the only object of real knowledge” (Rollins in Cilliers & Gouws 2001:249 n. 13). Rollins adds a third category of “ethical solipsism – an ethical doctrine favouring self-seeking or egoism” (2001:249n.13). However, these refer to different *types* of solipsistic positions, whereas our distinction above aims to clarify three *levels* which any proposed solution to these positions must address in order to be judged successful, and which are hence of more use for the current discussion.

<sup>24</sup> Prof. F.P. Cilliers suggested the element of communication, which is crucial as it is that which facilitates the contact between self and other. Cilliers and Gouws (2001) note that there is what may be termed a paradox here: in terms of the Freudian model they discuss, communication presupposed a negentropic differential of energy which is discharged in communication. Communication therefore presupposes a dissymmetry between the two poles of communication. However, it also presupposes the constitution of *self-identity* as differentiated from the world. In fact, they defend Freud’s early psychic model from a charge of solipsism by claiming that, far from having to ‘break through’ into an outside world, the problem for the subject, in Freud’s view, is to stop itself from being *overwhelmed* (i.e. losing itself) in the outer world. It is not a question of breaking down the barriers that separate the self from the world, but of constantly trying to *negotiate* and *maintain* those barriers – which are themselves the conditions *enabling* communication with the outside world. Cf. Cilliers and Gouws (2001:237-256).

Meditation, seems confident of having rescued phenomenology from solipsism, it appears to be this quantitative solipsism that he has in mind.

But as stated above, we would be inclined to view this level of the problem of solipsism as trivial. Of far more importance, in our view, is the *qualitative* problem relating to the possibility of apprehending other entities as *different* from us. To illustrate the importance of this level, one need perhaps look no further than the recent movie *Being John Malkovich* (dir. Spike Jonze, 1999). At a certain point in this movie, the character John Malkovich (played by the actor John Malkovich) manages to enter his own consciousness, and enters into a world where *all* the other people are *also* John Malkovich, and furthermore, can speak only the one word: “Malkovich”. In our view, it would be hard to argue that this is not in fact a completely solipsistic world regardless of the fact that there are many numerically *distinct* John Malkovches here, since there is no *qualitative differences* between any of the John Malkovches in this world.

What we have hoped to indicate in our treatment of the Fifth Meditation in Section 2.2.2 above, is that Husserlian intersubjectivity in fact amounts essentially (and irremediably) to the same type of solipsism, regardless of what Husserl himself might think, since it finds the “alter ego” *on*, or, as he explicitly argues, *by analogy with*<sup>25</sup> the ego-subject. There are a number of features of this theory worth looking at from the point of the view of the criticism we are hoping to develop.

In the first place, Husserl notes that, for all the attention phenomenology focuses on deriving its material from *experience* only, it is not *limited* to that which may be directly experienced. He then forthwith distinguishes between two types of appresentation whereby the unexperienced (or unexperiencable) of an object may be made “co-present” with the experience of that object. The first type concerns external experience, and seems to be rather contingent. This type of appresentation is what allows us to posit, for example, the reverse side of an object, while only directly experiencing the front, etc. This is contingent, in that, for Husserl, this appresentation relies on the fact that the reverse side is in principle experiencable in the same way as the front, and therefore verifiable (i.e. by simply walking around the object) (Husserl 1969:109). In this

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Husserl (1969:94, 111-2, 115, 122).

case, it is a question – in the appresentation, as much as in the experience – of drawing the object into the original sphere of ownness of the ego.

However, in the case where the object intended is precisely (an)other ego *as not* being included purely in the ego's original sphere of ownness, and, to the contrary, as having his/her *own* original sphere of ownness, the abovementioned first type of appresentation cannot obtain. Husserl therefore posits a second appresentation whereby the *interiority* of the other may become accessible. However, although he does this explicitly in an attempt to *prevent* the complete identity of the ego and the other (and hence, what we have called qualitative solipsism), the *way* he does this seems to make it (and we shall argue, *in principle*) impossible for him to escape such a solipsism altogether.

The first step towards the constitution of the alter ego is to add to the other (hitherto only intended as “body”) the sense “animate organism” (Husserl 1969:110). But, from the very beginning of the process of argumentation by which Husserl does this, he defines the playing-field in such a way that, “metaphysically” speaking some sort of identity between the ego and the other becomes inevitable and(/or?), which is no better, “epistemologically” speaking, the other is at best *only accessible/knowable to the extent* that it is identical to the ego<sup>26</sup> – the possibility of the other as qualitatively different is from the first (and *methodologically*) excluded.

Why do we contend this? Because Husserl throughout insists on the primacy of the ego, and the derivation of the alter ego *on the basis* of this ego. Here, for example, he writes that for another body to attain the sense of an animate organism, it “must have derived this sense by an *apperceptive transfer from my animate organism*” (Husserl 1969:110; emphasis in original), and again: “It is clear from the very beginning that only a similarity connecting ... that body over there with my body can serve as the motivational basis for the ‘*analogizing’ apprehension* of that body as another animate organism” (1969:111; emphasis in original). Husserl seems to be aware of the problem, and even after denying that this is “inference” by analogy (though without explaining how analogizing would function in any other way!), still feels pressed to pose the

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<sup>26</sup> For the distinction between “metaphysical” and “epistemological” solipsistic positions, Cf. footnote 23 above.

question (in the succeeding §51) of what then, given this foundational similarity, enables the animate organism of the other to be “another’s, rather than a second organism of my own?”<sup>27</sup> (Husserl 1969:113).

His own answer to this question rests on the distinction between the two types of appresentation discussed above: because the appresentation of the other body’s interiority cannot be actualized, it does not become part of the ego’s sphere of primordial ownness, and hence is not reducible to the ego. However, this again throws Husserl back onto the two horns of the dilemma he has been wrestling with throughout this Meditation (and which, we argue, are the inevitable products of the transcendental subjectivity at the heart of the phenomenological enterprise): either this is not true – in which case there is nothing which is qualitatively other, and he is reduced to a metaphysically solipsistic position; or there is qualitative otherness – but it remains in principle inaccessible to phenomenological investigation, in which case the latter is revealed as an epistemologically solipsistic position. The challenge facing Husserl is thus to overcome both these objections at once.

However, Husserl seems to focus primarily on the latter objection. In order to explain how this appresentation functions, he is forced into a position which leaves him exposed to both the first objection, and leads him to a position with very serious - and very sinister - implications. For Husserl, we appresent the other body as an “animate organism”, based “solely in its changing but incessantly *harmonious ‘behaviour’*” (Husserl 1969:114, emphasis in original). This is sinister, because it is quite easy to see that the idea of what is harmonious is both derived by analogizing the ego’s own “stream of subjective processes”<sup>28</sup>, and acts *normatively*. There are two places in which Husserl, albeit in passing, touches on the consequences of this normative element. In the same section in which he explicates this appresentation, he mentions that: “The organism

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<sup>27</sup> This is, in fact – and interestingly – a radicalization of the objection raised by Kant against Descartes’ mind-body dualism: otherwise identical (extended) substances or objects can, in the last analysis, always be distinguished on the basis of their (different) spatio-temporal positions. However, if *res cogitans* is non-spatial, “there can be no way to distinguish between two qualitatively similar disembodied minds” (Thomson 1993:45). The point above is in fact a criticism of Kant’s point – it is not enough (in the special context of intersubjectivity) for two similar things to be spatially distinct, *they also have to be qualitatively distinct*.

<sup>28</sup> Which Husserl had already argued is accessible only in “systems of harmonious verification”. Cf. §46 (1969:100-3)

becomes experienced as a *pseudo*-organism, precisely if there is something discordant about its behaviour” (Husserl 1969:114, my emphasis). In other words, to the extent that the behaviour of another body departs from *what the ego has constituted* as harmonious, the possibility of the other having (or becoming known as having) a subjectivity (of ‘it’ becoming a ‘he/she’) is denied. Husserl explicitly spells out this consequence some pages later when he writes, in the context of perception, that his theory presupposes “an identity of our appearance-systems”, and although this is not always the case, these are “*abnormalities*” where “the constituting of abnormality is possible only on the basis of an intrinsically antecedent normality” (Husserl 1969:125; emphasis in original). Again, the ethical implications of this statement, and of the assumptions which underlie it, are very worrisome: it implies nothing less than that anything or anyone (but precisely, what is in question here is the relation to the other as *anything*, or as *anyone!*) which does not conform to a normative model founded on and derived from the ego’s own subjectivity, *is therefore not to be considered as human*. This obviously lays the groundwork for many different kinds of discrimination, and is the main point at stake in examining the efficacy of Husserl’s treatment of intersubjectivity, and his solution to the problem of solipsism. It is only a theory which can *qualitatively* overcome solipsism which can found an ethics which can treat the other *as* other. In fact, Husserl makes this quite clear – “Relative to the brute, man is, constitutionally speaking, the normal case – just as I myself am the primal norm constitutionally for all other men” (Husserl 1969:126). The implication is obvious, and ominous: anything (or any “person”) which does not conform to the normalcy derived from the ego is to be constituted as a “brute” – non-human, animal etc. This must include the insane, radically other cultures, even women, etc.!

This is exacerbated by the rest of the argument. Husserl is still trying to deny the implications we have sketched out above, but having been forced into the alley of founding the sense of the alter ego on the ego of the subject in an “*assimilative perception*” (Husserl 1969:118), the only really intrinsic difference he can find between the ego and the other is that the ego is (irreducibly) “Here”, and the alter ego (irreducibly) “There”, but even then, is forced to concede that the other ego “must be appresented as *an ego now coexisting in the mode There*, ‘such as I should be if I were there’” (Husserl 1969:119)! This appresentation then occurs through “*empathy*” (1969:120), whereby

perceptions of the other's manipulation of his external body "whose type is familiar from my own organismal governing" is easily understood "from my own conduct under similar circumstances" (120)<sup>29</sup>. The "higher psychic sphere" is then appresented from these physical responses through a process of "empathy"<sup>30</sup> (120).

By now we should have produced enough evidence to show that Husserl can therefore not overcome a solipsism conceived qualitatively, and we have tried to briefly point out the ethical consequences this failure has. However, these are not the only grounds on which Husserl fails to overcome solipsism. In characteristically rigorous and honest fashion, it is once again Husserl himself who poses the crucial question: having (to his own satisfaction, if perhaps not to ours) removed the alter ego from the primordial sphere of the subject's "ownness" into a secondarily constituted "appresented" sphere of his/her<sup>31</sup> own, "are they not *separated* by an abyss I cannot actually cross, since crossing it would mean, after all, that I acquired an original (rather than appresenting) experience of someone else?" (Husserl 1969:121, emphasis in original). If this were to happen, the implication is that the otherness of the alter ego would again be immediately recuperated by the ego, and so Husserl again faces the same dilemma as before, but now with the added dimension of the (im)possibility of communication thrown in for good measure.

Again, Husserl denies that this is in fact so, but can again only do so on the basis of what appears to us to be an untenable position. He implies that the above criticism would only obtain were the ego to be the irreducible primary centre of the constitutional process – and then denies that this is so! But can he? Analysis of the argument would appear to show that he can only do this by what amounts to a *petitio principii*. For Husserl now posits a reciprocal and symmetrical process of *mutual* constitution between

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<sup>29</sup> One wonders what Husserl would make of people who describe dogs as "smiling"! Are dogs then transcendental subjects too? Or, as we would suggest, can *alter ego*'s not be accessed in any other way than we have access to dogs?

<sup>30</sup> Cf. also (1969:92, 135, 146-7).

<sup>31</sup> When not constrained by direct citation, we have tried to correct the gender bias in Husserl's use of the male pronoun, but in fact, though perhaps *unintended*, this usage may legitimately regarded as an inevitable consequence of the argument in which it is used, in the light of what we have tried to argue above: Husserl, having constituted the alter ego of which he writes "by analogizing transfer" from his own ego, *must*, if he is to be consistent, constitute this alter ego *as male*. Although one suspects that the "pure", transcendental ego has been bracketed out of all sexuality, his use of the external perception of physical manipulation (as discussed above) as a crucial step leading up to the empathizing appresentation of the "higher psychic sphere" means that gender can no longer be dispensed with. How is a man then to empathise with (and hence constitute as an alter ego and animate organism, rather than a mere body) a menstruating woman, for example?

the ego and the alter ego, based on a “co-perception” which means in essence that the “abyss” between self and other is raised by widening the scope to show both that the two egos have identical “appearance-systems” (as described above – cf. Husserl 1969:125) and founded ultimately on the fact that “the other Ego and I are looking at the same world” (Husserl 1969:124), which is founded in turn on the institution of a “temporal community” having “a *common time-form*” (1969:128; emphasis in original). In other words, Husserl denies that there is an irreducible gulf between the ego and the other, because the relation between them is founded not subjectively, but *intersubjectively* – and this intersubjectivity is founded on the basis of a common world perceived similarly. But, this “common” or Objective world has not yet been constituted! Throughout our discussion, following on from Carr (1974) and Hutcheson (1980), the emphasis in the *Cartesian Meditations* has been on examining the problem of intersubjectivity as a *preliminary* step towards constituting the Objective world; now however, we find that Husserl needs to posit the objectivity of the world *in order* to found intersubjectivity, *so that* he can then proceed to constitute the objective world<sup>32</sup>. This is clearly fallacious, and it leaves Husserl without a means of resolving the problem of communication without falling prey to at least one of the horns of the dilemma which we have been pointing out throughout this discussion. On a second level, then, Husserl does not – and cannot – resolve the problem of solipsism without being forced into devastating concessions regarding transcendental subjectivity and the phenomenological method as a whole.

### 2.3 Husserl only, or Phenomenology as a whole? The case of Merleau-Ponty

However, by focusing so closely on Husserl (and on only one work of his) we have perhaps run the risk of extrapolating one man’s contingent blind-spots to a sweeping condemnation of a theory. It remains to be examined, albeit briefly, whether the criticisms we have directed at Husserl above are in fact irreducibly inherent in phenomenology itself. We shall do this by looking at one of Husserl’s heirs who was

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<sup>32</sup> In §1 of the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl notes the role played by God in Descartes: “First God’s existence and veracity are deduced and then, *by means of them*, Objective Nature, the duality of finite substances” etc. It is well-known that Descartes uses this existence and veracity of God as a *guarantee* for his deductions – but is Husserl not merely using the “objective world” as a different place-holder, but which fulfills the same metaphysical purpose that God had for Descartes?

perhaps most critical of Husserl on precisely these same grounds, but who yet never quite abandoned the phenomenological method itself<sup>33</sup>.

The brunt of Merleau-Ponty's criticism derives from what he sees as at best an “anachronism” (in the sense of presupposing steps of an argument that have not yet been taken and in turn serving as foundation *for* those steps) and at worst a “methodological contradiction” (Levinas 1993:97) in Husserl’s thought, especially as regards the relationship between consciousness and the body. We have already noted the care with which Husserl couched the prepositions he uses in §44 in an apparent attempt to prevent his philosophy falling prey to accusations of a simplistic (Cartesian) mind-body dualism<sup>34</sup>. We pointed out there that one of the features setting the ego - as “animate organism” - apart from all other bodies in the world (at that stage of the argument) was that the “I ‘can’ perceive one hand ‘by means of the other’, and eye by means of a hand, and so forth – a procedure in which *the functioning organ must become an Object and the Object a functioning organ*” (Husserl 1969:97; emphasis in original).

Merleau-Ponty’s objection to this, as reported by Levinas, is that, as thought is *primordially* incarnated, when perception is thus turned reflexively on the body, “[c]onsciousness turns out to have already called upon what it is only just supposed to be constituting” (Levinas 1993:97). This is because “[t]he perception of things in their objectivity<sup>35</sup> implies … a movement of the sense organs and even of the hands and legs and the entire body: everything that is called life of the body as one’s own body, as flesh incarnating thought” (Levinas 1993:96-7). Later on, this is further explicated by saying that “[t]he original incarnation of thought … is prior, in Merleau-Ponty’s view, to the taking up of any theoretical or practical position” (Levinas 1993:97).

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<sup>33</sup> Foucault notes that a “fairly critical point” in French philosophy’s “movement from phenomenology to structuralism” was Merleau-Ponty’s “encounter with language” and especially through Saussure (Foucault 1998:436)

<sup>34</sup> Cf. p. 47-8 above, and Husserl (1969:97).

<sup>35</sup> i.e. as objects with sense, and not “Objectively” in Husserl’s sense of intersubjective verifiability – JH.

According to James Lyons, who discusses the same turn brought about<sup>36</sup> by Merleau-Ponty, it is on the very point of the primacy of the “I can” over the “I do” that Husserl betrays his own conception of consciousness as a “neutral, detached, probing eye” and opens up the way to “incarnational, bodily consciousness … a concrete, living, perceptual mode of being-in-the-world” (Lyons 1988:21). Both Levinas and Lyons are careful to point out that Merleau-Ponty himself, at any rate, did not consider himself to be *breaking away* from Husserl as such, but developing “hints” that Husserl himself had started to plant in especially his later work<sup>37</sup>. Nevertheless the criticism made here of Husserl’s theory of consciousness – and especially since it derives from his treatment of the intersubjective relation – is both trenchant, and crucial for the development of our own argument.

Basically, Merleau-Ponty’s criticism – or then, as he views it, his development of the unsaid in Husserl – revolves around three points which are all related to his emphasis on the “ontological and epistemological primacy of our perceptual experience” (McCleary 1964:xii). Firstly, while acknowledging the reflexivity whereby the perceptual apparatus becomes immediately both subject and object – the classic example he appropriates from Husserl is that of the right hand touching the left, where each hand both *touches* and *is touched*<sup>38</sup> – Merleau-Ponty implicitly denies the primacy which

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<sup>36</sup> Or at least, initiated by Merleau-Ponty, but not developed fully by him due to his early death. In fact, Lyons notes that phenomenology did not long follow the route sketched out by Merleau-Ponty, but rather quickly seems to have returned to the “pure” consciousness of Husserlian phenomenology as the latter “is supposed to be the proper one for the phenomenological philosopher” (Lyons 1988:23). It is for this reason that, apart from briefly treating Merleau-Ponty’s objections on this point here, we shall be reaching to the modern French thinker perhaps least indebted to phenomenology, Gilles Deleuze, to develop a positive critique and hopefully expose an alternative position in what is to follow. Deleuze himself appears to have based his few engagements with Merleau-Ponty mostly on his reading of *The Visible and the Invisible* (Ansell-Pearson 1999:229 n. 10) - which we shall not discuss in what follows - but Ansell-Pearson (1999), reading them both through the prism of their relationship to Henri Bergson, does much to bring them into dialogue with each other.

<sup>37</sup> Levinas writes: “The French philosopher’s [i.e. Merleau-Ponty’s] own quest doubtless permitted him to say the non-said (or at least the non-published) of Husserl’s thought” and mentions his close attention to Husserl’s unpublished *Ideas II* in particular (1993:98). Lyons discusses a late essay by Merleau-Ponty, in which the latter mentions several strong hints that “Husserl too was moving towards such a discovery” (1988:26) and that “This direction had at certain moments been foreshadowed by Husserl” (1988:27), referring each time to what Lyons calls the “lived body” and Merleau-Ponty “incarnational consciousness”.

<sup>38</sup> For the discussion of this example, taken from Husserl’s (then) unpublished *Ideen II/III*, cf. Merleau-Ponty (1964:166-8). The essay in which it appears is entitled “The Philosopher and his Shadow” and claims to be an exploration of that which is “unthought” or “unsaid” (but implicit, or under construction) in Husserl’s own (unpublished) later writings.

Husserl (in the *Cartesian Meditations*, and at least in the order of his argumentation<sup>39</sup>) assigns to the subject touching *him-/herself* over the act of touching another. Merleau-Ponty notes that in this double-touching “My right hand was present at the advent of my left hand’s active sense of touch. *It is in no different fashion that the other’s body becomes animate before me when I shake another man’s hand or just look at him*” (1964:168; my emphasis). And again: “when I shake his hand … his hand is substituted for my left hand .... My two hands ‘coexist’ or are ‘compresent’ [sic] because they are one single body’s hands. The other person appears through an extension of that compresence; *he and I are like organs of one single intercorporeity*” (Merleau-Ponty 1964:168; my emphasis). This is what Levinas means when he writes of Merleau-Ponty’s “anti-humanist or non-humanist tendency” to elevate structures of perception above especially consciousness, and so to sink the human into “an ontology of anonymous being” (Levinas 1993:99). Levinas notes further that here an “‘esthesiologial’ community is seen as founding intersubjectivity”, though “without having given rise to a reasoning by analogy” (Levinas 1993:100).

Two things can be noted in this regard. The first is that this objection is rooted deeply in the theory of incarnated thought (or the “lived body”, as Lyons calls it) which is central to Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy, and which seeks to challenge the relationship between consciousness and incarnation that we find in Husserl. Here, whereas it “is the Husserlian position that consciousness be enthroned … Merleau-Ponty would like to have the body, in at least some of its aspects, seated side by side on the throne”, as Lyons puts it (1988:23). One might perhaps even go further and argue that Merleau-Ponty in fact tries to *reverse* the Husserlian primacy of consciousness over the body and its perceptual apparatus. Secondly, we find that Merleau-Ponty is skeptical about the role played by (transcendental) consciousness in Husserl, at least as regards its ability to found an intersubjective relation - a consequence to which we shall return slightly later.

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<sup>39</sup>In fact, although in §54 he derives an “understanding of the other’s organism and specifically organismal conduct: … [including] as eyes functioning in seeing … [as corresponding] to the form whose type is familiar from my own organismal governing” (Husserl 1969:119-20), Husserl posits a radical spatial separation between the subject (as *here*) and the other (as irreducibly *there*), which leads him to seek the coexistence of the subject and the other as “primally instituted” in a “common time-form” (1969:128). For the detail of this argument, we refer the interested reader to Husserl’s text, (1969:117-123).

The reversal of the mind/body relationship is already suggested by some comments in Levinas. Whereas Husserl had devoted a sizable section of the First Meditation to distinguishing the (transcendental) phenomenological from the (scientific) natural attitude<sup>40</sup>, Merleau-Ponty now argues that, in the later and unpublished works of Husserl on which he focuses, Husserl was moving away from *both* the transcendental-phenomenological *and* the *scientific* natural attitude<sup>41</sup>, as both being already “too theoretical”, towards a *pre-reflective* natural attitude that is “prior to any thesis” and which would “give us not a representation of the world but the world itself” (Merleau-Ponty 1964:163). This pre-reflective attitude (actually it is not yet an “attitude”, which would bring it too close to phenomenological intentionality; rather, it is “my own body, life” Levinas 1993:98) is given through the sensibility of the body which, as perceptual apparatus, and as perceiving, is the primordial foundation for consciousness, rather than itself being *founded in* consciousness, as it appeared to be for (the published) Husserl<sup>42</sup>. The body is thus *localized*, “its power depends precisely on the fact that it has a place *from which* it sees” (Merleau-Ponty 1964:166), as opposed to the “neutral, detached, probing single eye that is implied in Husserl” (Lyons 1988:21). This leads Merleau-Ponty to say that “space itself is known through my body<sup>43</sup>” (1964:167).

What is referred to as ‘knowledge’ here, entails a completely different relationship to the world; different, that is, from the subject-object relationship of the theoretical attitude, although it is not to be taken as a *substitute* for such knowledge, but

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. *Cartesian Meditations* §4 (Husserl 1969:9-11) and §7-8 (17-21)

<sup>41</sup> Or perhaps this is a confusing formulation: we do not mean to imply that Merleau-Ponty sees Husserl as *abandoning* these positions; instead, what he seems to be saying is that neither of them is *primordial*: each is, as Levinas puts it, “a possibility, but already a derivative one, of that life” which is an “in-between, more primordial than either!” (Levinas 1993:98).

<sup>42</sup> How much of this is in fact a good reading of Husserl, and how much is being read *into* Husserl by Merleau-Ponty is an academic argument which is of no importance or interest to this study.

<sup>43</sup> Though working from the same McCleary edition of *Signs* that we have used, Levinas’ translator notes that he has modified McCleary’s translation of this passage – which Levinas cites – slightly, to read (we have italicized the crucial modification) “space *itself* knows itself through my body” (Levinas 1993:99; cf. also first endnote on p.166). Although this modification is not explained, one can surmise that it has to do with the “anti-humanism” which Levinas here emphasizes in Merleau-Ponty, which is itself related to the fact that *subjective consciousness* has not yet arisen when this occurs; hence, if knowledge is to be related to a subject, then space itself must assume that pole. Also, and perhaps more importantly, in the context of phenomenology, the reflexive “itself” is important since it removes intentionality (which is a function of consciousness) from the scene – space here is thus no longer in the “intentional structure of the noetic-noematic” (Levinas 1993:99).

rather as *antecedent*, and laying the foundation *from which* the subject-object relationship can arise, and hence gives rise to theoretical knowledge. Without this immersion in the world as a “particular point of view, or from some experience of the world”, and not as “the outcome or meeting-point of numerous causal agencies”, “the symbols of science would be meaningless” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:viii). Merleau-Ponty is equally concerned to distinguish this primordial experience from the “idealist return to consciousness” of especially Descartes and Kant (1962:ix), and even goes so far as to argue against interiority as such: “there is no man, man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself” (1962:xi). This is all argued in the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Perception*, and it is *perception*, Merleau-Ponty will consistently argue henceforth, that precedes – and forms the conditions for – consciousness.

Merleau-Ponty is explicitly engaged in this exposition of *situated* and *incarnated perception* to counter the claims of the transcendental consciousness, which, he states “knows nothing of the problem of Other minds, or of that of the world, because it insists that with the first glimmer of consciousness there appears in me theoretically the power of reaching some universal truth, and that the other person, *being equally without thisness, location or body*, the Alter and the Ego are one and the same in the true world *which is the unifier of minds*” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:xii; all emphases mine)<sup>44</sup>. Merleau-Ponty is here making explicit the same point towards which we have been trying to lead throughout these first two chapters, namely that the claim to *transcendentality* by consciousness (of which we have tried to describe a prime and paradigm example in Husserl) is *in principle* incapable of giving an answer to these problems, and that the only solution to this is to try and devise a theory capable of dealing with the *body* of the *individual* in its world and its *specificity*. Even Merleau-Ponty who, even through the passages most critical of Husserl always remains equally loyal<sup>45</sup>, finds the need to try and

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. Also *Signs*, “The Philosopher and his Shadow” (Merleau-Ponty’s homage/critique of Husserl), where he discusses this relationship between the *constitution* of objectivity and carnality in somewhat more detail, noting that, for example, “Logical objectivity derives from carnal intersubjectivity on the condition that it has been forgotten as carnal intersubjectivity .... These relationships are found again at each stage of constitution” (1964:173). For the whole discussion, see especially pp. 172-181.

<sup>45</sup> Again, we point to the fact, already mentioned above, that Merleau-Ponty sees himself as merely following hints left by Husserl himself in his own unpublished and late works, towards solving the problem of the foundation of consciousness which, again, Husserl himself had identified in that last of his published

do phenomenology differently, by placing the emphasis on carnality and perception, rather than consciousness and intentionality.

McCleary describes the project of *Phenomenology of Perception* as a move from what he calls, quoting Merleau-Ponty, “‘a world, that is ... an indefinite and open multiplicity in which relations are relation of reciprocal implication’ ... to that of ‘a universe, that is, of a finished, explicit totality in which the relations are those of reciprocal determination” (McCleary 1964:xiii, emphases in original). Here the ‘world’ is still mysterious and pre-objective, and hence ‘open’, whereas the ‘universe’ is this world constituted as meaningful – and hence ‘closed’ or ‘determined’ – by consciousness. Again, in McCleary’s view, Merleau-Ponty is concerned with explaining<sup>46</sup> both how we pass from the former to the latter, and – more importantly – how the (pre-reflective *perception of*) the former *founds* the (*experience in reflection of*) the latter. For Merleau-Ponty, this explanation is necessitated by the experience of the profound paradox that “we can simultaneously constitute the meaning-structures of experience and find that it is always already constituted in terms of meanings we have not bestowed on it” (McCleary 1964:xiv).

The answer is offered quite unambiguously as lying in incarnation. Although Lyons notes that Merleau-Ponty never went so far as to say that body is “fully constitutive of meaning” (Lyons 1988:25; my emphasis), and seems to read him as arguing more for an equalization of the status of consciousness and incarnation than for the privileging of the latter over the former, even he admits that “it is really on the question of whether consciousness is embodied that our fate swings” (Lyons 1988:24). The way in which this primordial incarnation always already gives rise to a form of ‘knowledge’ is that “‘perception already stylizes’” (Merleau-Ponty in McCleary 1964:xx) in the sense that it provides a “scheme for organizing action in space” (Lyons 1988:24). Lyons goes on to gloss this by saying that the body “adopts quite specific ‘corporeal attitudes’ toward what are usually thought of as ‘sensory qualities’ .... In [Merleau-

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work as “The Crisis of the European Sciences”. Apart from the references already provided, cf. also McCleary (1964:xi).

<sup>46</sup> Although Merleau-Ponty says that “[i]t is a matter of describing, not of explaining or analyzing” (1962:viii).

Ponty's] words, the world for us is 'lived before being conceived'" (Lyons 1988:24). For McCleary, this means that Merleau-Ponty's philosophy is thus "inseparably a phenomenology of expression as well" (McCleary 1964:xx), in the sense that "the body's hidden motor power" already gives a pre-theoretical, pre-conscious expression of its relation to the "indirect, symbolic texture of the invisible reality which constitutes it" (McCleary 1964:xxii). It is this immediate (=unmediated), pre-objective relationship that we have to the world that shifts us from being-in-the-world (but separated from it as neutral subjects) to a deeper, more primordial level of being "*au monde*, at-the-world (or to-the-world)" in Lyons' words (1988:21).

In this primordial world, as yet undetermined, we are embodied, not in the 'I' to which Husserl spends some time in reducing us as the transcendental subject, but always already "as one dimension of that primordial, all-comprehending Being of 'many foci' which Merleau-Ponty describes as being coming to be through the fundamental 'We' of the evolving human community" (McCleary 1964:xviii). Far from starting with an admittedly solipsistic "egology" and *then* moving towards intersubjectivity (as we have seen in Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations*), Merleau-Ponty thus *starts* from a primordial community, solely on the basis of which (and through which!) the individual consciousness must arise. This "primordial 'We' [*On*<sup>47</sup>]" is pre-reflective, and a function of pure perception: Merleau-Ponty says that, "communication at this level is no problem and becomes doubtful only if I forget the perceptual field in order to reduce myself to what reflection will make of me" (1964:175).

Since this primordial community is thus however still pre-conscious, Merleau-Ponty must find another way of *describing* (and not of *founding*, as Husserl had to) these communal relations. In the essay on Husserl (in *Signs*) from which the above citation is taken, he gives a cursory answer, as being - as often for Merleau-Ponty - a function of the body's incarnation, and especially its incarnation *as a* (and not *in a!*) *perceptual structure*. Thus "the compresence [sic] of my 'consciousness' and my 'body' is prolonged into the

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<sup>47</sup> It is worth pointing out in this context that the French "*on*" is an impersonal pronoun (or even indicates passive verb-forms), which functions in much the same way as the English "one" as in "One could suppose that ...", and even in French functions with first-person singular verb-forms. It is therefore a strange, but illuminating, quirk that it is most often rendered as "we" in English, e.g. "*On parle français ici*" = "We speak French", rather than the perhaps more correct "French spoken here".

compresence of my self [sic] and the other person, [in] that the ‘I am able to’ and the ‘the other person exists’ belong here and now to the same world” (Merleau-Ponty 1964:175). This is also for Merleau-Ponty what Husserl’s ‘empathy’ had come to mean by the end of the latter’s career. If Merleau-Ponty does not spend much more time on the topic here, it is because he had by then already written an entire treatise on the subject, and it is to his discussion of this mechanism in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962) that we now turn. Here, Merleau-Ponty again first reprises the embarrassment to which a phenomenology which is reliant solely on a transcendental, constituting consciousness succumbs when it turns its attention to trying to account for transcendence and other subjects. His formulation is worth quoting for the succinct and clear way in which it states the paradox into which such a phenomenology falls: “In so far as I constitute the world, I cannot conceive another consciousness, for it too would have to constitute the world and, at least as regards this other view of the world, I should not be the constituting agent. Even if I succeeded in thinking of it as constituting the world, it would be I who would be constituting the consciousness as such, and once more I should be the sole constituting agent” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:350).

He then turns away from this position to the pre-objective world in which “*I have* the world as an incomplete individual, through the agency of my body as the potentiality of this world, and I have the positing of objects through that of my body, or conversely the positing of my body through that of objects ... because my body is a movement towards the world, and the world my body’s point of support” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:350). When extending this analysis towards the existence of other people, Merleau-Ponty notes that it is tempting to suppose that “If my consciousness has a body, why should other bodies not ‘have’ consciousness?” (1962:351), but then notes that if we take ‘body’ simply to imply the “molecular edifices” of, e.g., physiology, it becomes quite impossible to conceive of the relationship such a body could have to consciousness, and this, he says, will lead us back into the most crass Cartesian dualism (1962:351). Instead, Merleau-Ponty calls on us to recognize that this “chemical structure” or “agglomeration of tissues” of the sciences is already merely an “impoverishment” of what Lyons (1988 - throughout) calls the “lived body”, and Merleau-Ponty here calls the “body-for-us, the body of human experience” (1962:351), which ultimately boils down to the body

conceived as perceptual apparatus and as an “attitude” to the world, as already discussed above.

‘Consciousness’ must similarly be reconceived, “no longer as a constituting consciousness and, as it were, a pure being-for-itself, but as a *perceptual* consciousness, as the subject of a pattern of behaviour, as being in the world or existence” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:351; my emphasis). Once we can think of the body and consciousness in these terms, Merleau-Ponty says, we do not seek to discover the other at the level of Descartes’ “thinking *about* seeing” (in Merleau-Ponty 1962:351; my emphasis), but at the level of perception *itself*, where we “find at work in my organs of perception a thought older than myself of which those organs are merely the trace” (1962:351-2). Thus, the first step towards the other, for Merleau-Ponty, is through the *perception* of the other as him/herself *having a physical perceptual apparatus*. Further than this we have “only the trace of a consciousness which evades me in its actuality” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:352).

In fact, in what may well be an implicit criticism of precisely the Husserlian argument that we have been following, Merleau-Ponty then notes that if we were to attempt to move beyond this physicality towards positing a consciousness that would lie behind it, through a “reasoning by analogy”, we can only do this “if the emotional expressions of others are compared and identified with mine, and precise correlations recognized between my physical behaviour and my ‘psychic events’” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:352). However, doing this “presupposes what it is called on to explain” (352), exactly the point we made above by pointing out what we have labeled a *petitio principii* in the *Cartesian Meditations*. Merleau-Ponty will again propose a closer examination of perception as a way of moving beyond the need for such reasoning by analogy.

It is perception that is this thought that “is older than myself” and is the pre-conscious “thought” of the body, which he has already argued is primary to, and the condition for, intellectual thought, since the body itself always already assumes (in both the active and the passive sense of the word!) a response to, and hence interpretation of, the world. The example Merleau-Ponty gives of this is that of a baby which immediately knows that its mouth is “an apparatus to bite with” upon seeing “my jaw … from the outside”; even though it has perhaps not yet seen its own face in a mirror, or even have

teeth, the baby perceives the similarity of its own facial features, and (Merleau-Ponty emphasizes “immediately”) can perceive that its own jaw is “capable of the same intentions” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:352). Even so, Merleau-Ponty warns that though this might furnish us with a “clue in the methodical attempt to know others … but they do not teach me the experience of other people” (352)

We are here returned to the same structure of the double-touching with which we started this discussion. It is crucial to note that the baby in this example does not learn its own capacity for biting (which here no doubt functions as a type of perception) by merely *observing* the adult bite, say, an apple. In fact, part of the purpose of the example is to show that “the perception of others is anterior to, and the condition for, such observations” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:352). It is only when the baby is itself *bitten* that its own capacity *to bite* is awakened. As Merleau-Ponty puts it: “‘Biting’ has immediately, for it, an intersubjective significance. It perceives its intentions in its body, and my body with its own, and thereby my intentions in its own body” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:352).

It is argued that intersubjectivity is possible only on the condition that the ‘common ground’ upon which it must be established be moved *outside* the subject. For Merleau-Ponty, this can be done by realizing that perceptions are never independent of each other, but that “they slip into each other and are brought together finally in the thing” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:353). This in turn is itself made possible by the identical *perceptual apparatuses* in which both the self and the other are incarnated, and which therefore give rise to perceptions that may themselves become *objects* of perception.

However, while thus side-stepping some of the more sinister reductive tendencies of a Husserlian phenomenology based on a constitutive transcendental consciousness, it remains unclear that Merleau-Ponty in turn can solve the problems faced by the former position – a qualm that he himself was honest enough to raise. Carrying on from the basic premises discussed above, Merleau-Ponty then goes on to analyse in more detail how this physicality facilitates the encounter with the other. Crucial here again is the more existential side of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology, when he lays emphasis on the fact that a person does not only *exist* in the world, but *acts* in it – which again reminds us of the distinction Lyons had pointed out between being in-the-world and at-the-world (*au monde* – cf. Lyons 1988:21). The body of the self is experienced “as the power of

adopting certain forms of behaviour and a certain world” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:353-4). When observing the other’s body – with its similar structure – *acting* in the world, we discover “in that other body a miraculous prolongation of my own intentions, a familiar way of dealing with the world” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:354). So far, so Husserlian. But, Merleau-Ponty then warns, this makes only for being able to conceive of the other as another “living being, but not yet another man” (354).

We have not yet reached the other as person, because here we are still dependent on *external* manifestations which may be related to internal states that correlate *loosely*<sup>48</sup>, but can never *co-incide* completely, and this for phenomenological reasons, including for example the causes of these states or the significance they have for us. Thus, you and I may both show the same manifestations of anger, and indeed may both in fact be equally angry, but yet, what we are angry *about* may (and Merleau-Ponty is close to saying, inevitably *will*) be different. Worryingly, having been rigorous enough to recognize this, he proposes no direct solution.

In fact, for all his effort at moving away from a primordial subjectivity, Merleau-Ponty eventually *does* conclude that from the viewpoint of a *universal* subjectivity, solipsism is “quite insurmountable”(!) and precisely because the parameters have been set up so that this universal (transcendental) subject functions as “an insatiable being who appropriates everything that he meets”, since it can only come into contact with *anything whatsoever* through perception, but the act of perception *immediately appropriates* that which is perceived to *my* perceptual field (Merleau-Ponty 1962:358). The closest that he comes to trying to extricate himself from this is by returning to the *empirical* field where “the other person and myself, each as an empirical being, are on a footing of equality, without my enjoying any special privilege” (358).

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<sup>48</sup> Merleau-Ponty is moving on two levels here, or at least, there are two axes across which this correlation would have to occur, both of which are problematic for him. Firstly, there is the obvious axis – in the context of intersubjectivity – according to which the interior experience (e.g. emotions, thoughts etc.) of the other would have to be correlated to ‘mine’, which is the problem Husserl, for example, tries to solve through an appeal to “empathy”. If Merleau-Ponty seems less sure about the efficacy of a similar solution, it is precisely because he takes into account (or rather, calls into question) the second axis of correlation, which Husserl takes for granted, namely that of the correlation between *interior* experience and *exterior* manifestation of that experience, even within a single subject. So, if he calls into doubt here the “co-incidence” of external manifestations, it is to be understood both as saying that, e.g. two different people smiling do not necessarily feel the same, but also that, when the *same* person smiles identically twice, it is not to be taken forthwith as being the expression of identical feelings. Put like this it seems dreadfully obvious – and yet, how long it has taken philosophers to recognize this!

In a sense, this relationship between the transcendental “world of persons” (what we have seen described as a “universe”<sup>49</sup>) and the empirical (and pre-reflective) “world of Nature” (Merleau-Ponty 1964:178) is the central theme of the extended essay Merleau-Ponty devotes to Husserl in *Signs*, and it is the pre-reflective world which forms the ‘shadow’ haunting the philosopher that is referred to by the title: “The Philosopher and His Shadow”<sup>50</sup>. Here he states that “the ultimate task of phenomenology as philosophy of consciousness is to understand its relationship to non-philosophy” (Merleau-Ponty 1964:178), where, in other words, the task of consciousness is to understand that which is in principle *inaccessible* to consciousness, but which forms the indispensable background without which consciousness would not be able to arise or function. As early as *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty had seen that “[p]henomenology is accessible only through a phenomenological method” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:viii), even if, as Lyons argues – and we have tried to show – this lands him in the situation where “[t]he foundation of reflexive thought, of reflection itself, is itself irreflexive” (Lyons 1988:22). Lyons then goes on to note – somewhat ironically – that while Merleau-Ponty does propose a solution, this solution is that “one accept the mystery or ambiguity involved”! (Lyons 1988:22).

Ultimately then, the choice which phenomenology leaves us appears to be a simple one: either a consciousness which is present to us, but in which the other ‘as such’ can never appear; or otherwise a primordial relationship to the other, but then only in the form of an “inhuman” and pre-reflective, anonymous ‘We’, where *we* (or ‘I’) cannot appear, except as the moment of the destruction of this world. The only way out seems to lie, for the two thinkers discussed, in positing the objectivity and coherence of the external world as the *object* of perception or experience, which then acts as a unifying factor from outside – in other words, the self-identity of the external world takes on an almost quasi-theological role as guarantor of the identity of that which is subsumed in it,

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. p 67 above, and McCleary (1964:xiii).

<sup>50</sup> In order to better understand this metaphor it is necessary to mention that Merleau-Ponty’s other main work, which we cannot treat here, *The Visible and the Invisible*, deals with exactly this theme of how the invisible conditions the visible, and forms the condition *for* that which is visible to appear: cf. McCleary: “To see, for Merleau-Ponty, is to have at a distance, to be present at a world both hidden and revealed – a ‘chiaroscuro’ world whose being becomes visible only in terms of its invisibility” (1964:xviii-xix). This seems to be very close to the Deleuze’s analysis of visibility that Martin discusses in “The Eye of the Outside” (1996).

or if you will, a quasi-Platonic regulating identity – which, though perhaps a valid common-sense intuition, is by no means to be taken immediately as philosophically evident, as we shall try to show in the next chapter.

In the next Part of this study, we shall turn our attention to a radical departure from phenomenology, in order to examine whether there is a way, not of *solving* this dilemma, but *evading* it – of showing that it in fact arises only as a *false dilemma*, because of what we have tried to show are the necessary presuppositions of phenomenology, which in turn necessitate the construction of a *transcending* step towards the other, the building of bridges across the chasm separating the subject and the other. What, however, if phenomenology had *itself created* this chasm through its own inaugurating step of the *epoché*, and its obsession with the transcendental subject? What if there *were* no dilemma between having such a chasm to cross or else to be caught in an inhuman miasma of communality; what if the ‘subject’ was *itself* a product or function of relations? What, in other words, if the hierarchy which privileges nodes above the relations between them could be overturned, and the nodes come to be seen as themselves secondary functions of the primary relations between them? Such will be the questions we shall try to answer in the examination of the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, to which we shall now turn in Part II of our study.

## **Part II**

### **Chapter 3: Deleuze and (the Event of) Subjectivity**

I think I've found a theory of the Other, by defining it as neither an object nor a subject (an other subject) but the expression of a possible world. (Deleuze 1995:147)

#### 3.1 Introduction: Beyond Levinas, or Otherwise than phenomenology?

We concluded our previous chapter with a brief look at Merleau-Ponty, as a phenomenologist who had tried to wrestle with some of the problems lifted out of Husserl's philosophy. We saw there that Merleau-Ponty, by arguing for the primacy of incarnation, seeks to posit a certain primordial and pre-reflective 'communal We' founded in perception and not consciousness, which is the 'hidden' base from which the reflecting subject comes into being.

However, Levinas, in his discussion of Merleau-Ponty, notes that even here, as elsewhere "[i]n the phenomenological theory of intersubjectivity it is always the *knowledge* of the alter ego that breaks egological isolation" (Levinas 1993:101; emphasis in original). Though he calls the bodily perception of Merleau-Ponty a "‘gnosis’ of touching, or seeing", he notes that the sociality which this finds "does not break the order of consciousness any more than knowledge [*savoir*], which, cleaving to the *known* [*su*], immediately coincides with whatever might have been foreign to it" (Levinas 1993:101). In this rather sweeping condemnation, Levinas appears to come close to the position that we have tried to articulate in the preceding chapter, whereby the foundations of phenomenology leave it *a priori* incapable of reaching a satisfactory solution to the problem of intersubjectivity.

Levinas then launches into a brief explanation of his own position, which is that an ethical relation between the self and the Other cannot be founded by the structure of mutual perception (the double-touching), and the radical proximity of Merleau-Ponty's handshake which precedes the subject-object relation. Instead, Levinas argues that this ethical relationship needs, precisely, a "*radical separation*" which breaks the order of

knowledge, and which is situated in the “nakedness” of the other’s face (Levinas 1993:102), which arrests me with an appeal – precisely, an always Other appeal – since it is *not* accessible to consciousness: i.e. *breaks* the order of knowledge.

This is a reference to the account of the “face-to-face relation with the Other” (Bernasconi 2000:62) as first articulated in *Totality and Infinity*, and which is briefly summarised by Bernasconi as entailing three claims, which we will list here and then comment on in greater length below. The first is that “the face-to-face is not a relation, if that means that it forms a totality” (62), and this is because the “terms of the face-to-face absolve themselves from the relation insofar as they are both absolute within it” (62). Secondly, “the face of the Other is accessible only ‘starting from an I’... [and in] consequence cannot be made the subject matter of impersonal reason” (62). Lastly, this relation is ethical and asymmetrical – or better, ethical *because* it is asymmetrical: “The Other puts me in question in such a way as to call the I into question” (62).

As regards the first claim, Peperzak (1996:x) notes that in *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas presents a critique of the “entire history of European philosophy, from Parmenides to Heidegger” precisely because this tradition is “marked by a striving for totalization, in which the universe is reduced to an originary and ultimate unity by way of panoramic overviews and dialectical syntheses”. In terms reminiscent of Levinas’s criticism of Merleau-Ponty above, Peperzak describes Levinas’s project as criticizing this totalizing thought in the name of a “truthful thought [that] respects the nonsynthesizable ‘separation’ that characterizes the relations between the Other and me” (x). This separation is nonsynthesizable because it is based on “the irreducible non-identity of the Same ... and the Other” where the “Same is clearly connected to the traditional subject, the Ego or the Consciousness of modern philosophy” and the ego indeed *does* experience the world as a totality. However, in the face-to-face, the ego is confronted with the Other who “is associated with the Infinite” and “*the infinite* names the Other’s ungraspable or incomprehensible character” (x), and thus at the same time causes a break to appear in the totality of the ego’s constituted world. Bernasconi expresses this by saying that because the Other as absolute (and infinite) transcends, exceeds and overflows the “starting-point” of the I, it calls “the I into question” (2000:62).

However, already this first point is far from uncontroversial, as Bernasconi is at pains to point out in his article, which is a thorough review of various points of criticism raised against Levinas. Focusing mainly on Derrida's criticisms in "Violence and Metaphysics" of 1964, the crux of this criticism departs precisely from Levinas's relationship to Husserl's Fifth *Meditation* as expressed in *Totality and Infinity*. In a similar vein to our discussion in Part I above, Bernasconi sums up Levinas's main objection to Husserl as raising the "question of whether Husserl avoids conceiving the Other as simply a reduplication of the ego. Can the I as accounted for by Husserl ever be surprised by the alter ego?" (Bernasconi 2000:69). For Levinas, this is because Husserl's "constitution of the Other is only a variation of the constitution of the object", because it is still constituted through a mere modification of intentionality, in other words, *by* and *in* the subject himself. In this sense, then, Husserl's Other is still *relative* to (and in a sense, *dependent on*) the subject. Bernasconi notes that Levinas thus seems to read "*alter*" as a mere modification of *ego*, and it is this which is unacceptable for Levinas, who is seeking a theory of the *Absolute* Other (Bernasconi 2000:72), which would not be relative to the ego. This would also explain why Levinas characterizes the face-to-face as a "relation without relation" (in Bernasconi 2000:62).

In short, Levinas seems to want to be able to say<sup>1</sup> "a is other" as a complete statement, rather than having to say "a is other *than* x" (Bernasconi 2000:63). Levinas finds such a conception of an Absolute Other in the notion of the Infinite in Descartes' *Third Meditation*. There, the Infinite "is not an object which I can constitute: God is a thought I cannot think or contain ... [which] exceeds me" (Bernasconi 2000:69). This is in turn the "asymmetry" which Bernasconi had described as the third characteristic of the face-to-face – and also the source of Derrida's primary criticism of this theory. Where Levinas had tried to contest the totalizing nature of a symmetrical relation founded *only* on the primacy of the ego by positing an *asymmetrical* non-relation between *two simultaneous Absolutes* (the ego and the Other), where the Other would in fact be the

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<sup>1</sup> An important theme in Bernasconi's article – and Levinas's philosophy – is of the appropriate *language* for speaking of the Other. Cf. also Peperzak (1996:xi): In *Totality and Infinity* "Levinas struggles to develop a non-ontological language in order to express the beyond of being" which is the realm opened by the Other, which "transcends all phenomenality and beingness".

“Most High<sup>2</sup>”, Derrida wants to argue that this asymmetry is in fact only possible on the basis of a prior and transcendental *symmetry*.

For Derrida, this strange symmetry is produced by a “doubling of empirical symmetry” which reveals the “transcendental symmetry of two empirical asymmetries” (Bernasconi 2000:70). What this means is that, even as the Other is other to me, I am also the Other for the other<sup>3</sup>. For Derrida this is important, because this latter insight is for him the consequence of recognising the Other as him/herself *an ego*. In short, Derrida wants to *reinstate* Husserl’s *alter ego*. However, Bernasconi reads this as an attempt, not to safeguard Husserl from Levinas’s criticism, but as a better way *of saying what Levinas wants to say*: “Derrida’s surprising contention is that Husserl’s phrase ‘alter ego’ says alterity better than Levinas’s appeal to the ‘Absolute Other’” (Bernasconi 2000:72). By focusing on the absoluteness of alterity, and jettisoning the ego, Levinas has made a serious mistake, in Derrida’s view, because (bearing in mind that the ego is identified with the Same), the “Other cannot be the Other of the Same except by being itself the same, *that is, an ego*” (Bernasconi 2000:72, my emphasis). This is the condition for the transcendental symmetry that Derrida sees as subtending this relation, but the charge is serious, not as a matter of descriptive accuracy, but for *ethical* reasons.

It is instructive to see why this is so for Derrida, because of the light it sheds on what the criteria are for a relation to be judged “ethical” in this context. Derrida’s statement of the ethical problem here could not be clearer: “To refuse to see in [the Other] an ego in this sense is, within the ethical order, the very gesture of all violence. If the other was not recognized as ego, its entire alterity would collapse” (Derrida in Bernasconi 2000:72). The *alter ego* need therefore not be the same as or identical to *my ego*, but is should be recognised to be *self-identical* or the same as itself (since the ego had earlier been equated with the Same) according to Derrida, and *as an ego*. It is only the status of the Other as an ego that enables the *transcendental symmetry* (i.e. symmetry

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Peperzak in Levinas (1996:34), where he notes that one of the problematic questions Levinas asks himself in *Totality and Infinity* is that of how it is possible that the “alterity of ‘the Other’ (*l’Autre*) “is understood as alterity of the human Other (*Autrui*) and as alterity of the Most High (*du Trés Haut*)”.

<sup>3</sup> Further on in the same article, Bernasconi (2000:79) notes that Ricoeur’s criticism of Levinas turns on much the same point, as Ricoeur sees the relation of the ego and the Other to be constituted by two “dialectically complementary” movements – one “from the ego to the alter ego” (the “genealogical dimension” of constitution, where the ego is primary) and another “from the Other toward me” (the “ethical dimension” where the priority lies with the Other).

of the structure of the relation seen as a whole) which, as Derrida argues, in turn allows the *empirical* asymmetry (i.e. the asymmetry in the specific face-to-face encounter, and as experienced by “me”) to become an *ethical* encounter. By doing this, Derrida seems to contest Levinas’s attempt to escape all forms of totalization, because, as Derrida writes, “appealing to Hegel” (Bernasconi 2000:70), this transcendental symmetry is the result of a “doubling of empirical symmetry” (70), and “[w]here have these movements been better described than in [Hegel’s] the *Phenomenology of Spirit*? ” (Derrida, in Bernasconi 2000:70).

In terms of our current study, however, this account enables us to state why we are not proceeding with Levinas as a way out of the impasse in which the phenomenological theory has landed itself. In our Introduction we mentioned that Levinas didn’t seem to really escape the phenomenological theory, but merely to invert its terms. In Bernasconi’s words, the “relation to the Other is not just a modification of intentionality, but a *reversal* of it” (2000:69, my emphasis). While Bernasconi no doubt intends this formulation to be a statement of the radicality of Levinas’s break with phenomenology, it in fact reveals the extent to which Levinas remains *inside it*. It will be our contention in what follows that what is necessary to truly break with this position is not just to invert the priority of poles *within* a relation, but to undermine the priority assigned *to* the poles *over the relation itself*. Levinas himself still seems to see the Same (ego) and the Other as primary (although now with the Other rather than the ego in the centre) and the (non)relation between them as secondary – or at least, Derrida’s point seems to be that he should have!

Furthermore, Derrida advocates this precisely because he views the self-identity (and the *recognition* and maintenance) of this self-identity of the Other as the benchmark of ethics, even if the infinite claim of the Other exceeds the ego’s ability to meet it, and thus causes a break in the “totality” of the ego-centric world, and hence in the identity of the ego, *as an empirical asymmetry*. However, it seems that viewed as a transcendently *ethical* relation, Derrida is sceptical about Levinas’s ability (or indeed, the impulse of trying to!) escape this Hegelian symmetry.

It should be noted however, that Derrida does not seem to be advocating a straight return to Husserl’s theory – while the Other should be considered as an ego, it is no

longer an ego *constituted by me*, even (or especially) through empathy. The Other may be an ego, but even as such it is not an object of *knowledge* – as we have already seen Levinas say in relation to Merleau-Ponty above. Bernasconi notes that Levinas himself later returns to Husserl and rediscovers precisely this insight there<sup>4</sup>, when he asks whether, even for Husserl, empathy “far from presenting itself as a form of knowledge, is not the *non-constituted event* of substitution and of proximity, such that this event is already presupposed by ‘knowledge of the Other’” (Bernasconi 2000:74). This should be seen as a gain, since there is no longer a demand that “I” be able to *constitute* the subjectivity of the Other (i.e. as an “ego”), but – we shall argue – this is not a definitive break, since there is still a demand that the Other be *seen* or *recognized* (and by “me”) as an ego, at least in Derrida’s eyes, drawing on the Hegelian tradition. Even more, what is gained here is the recognition that the Other cannot be an object of knowledge, and the goal of the Levinasian philosophy seems in part to be that of accounting for the effect that the encounter with such an object that (precisely by being also a *subject*) “transcends” the ability of the ego to give *meaning* to it.

While our contention is thus that Levinas cannot escape the phenomenological impasse, he does seem to sense or intuit an important question, which - we will see below - also informs Deleuze’s project. Our contention there will be that Deleuze’s attempt to address this same problem succeeds better *because* it does not start from phenomenology, while we have tried to show above that Levinas cannot succeed because of his starting-point in phenomenology. It is, however, worthwhile to linger a little longer on how Levinas lays out this question, and perhaps instructive to examine how he approaches it (and fails to resolve it) as an introduction to the discussion of Deleuze which follows it.

Already soon after the publication of *Totality and Infinity*, in an article published in 1964 and called “Meaning and Sense” (1996:34-64), Levinas starts to work for such a philosophy that would approach the Other, but not in the mode of *knowledge*. Here again, Levinas is using especially Merleau-Ponty as a point of departure<sup>5</sup> – in the double sense of *starting* with him, but also of *moving away* from him. Through the latter’s eyes,

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<sup>4</sup> Perhaps under the very influence of Merleau-Ponty. The text by Levinas which Bernasconi quotes is a Preface Levinas had written for a dissertation on Merleau-Ponty.

<sup>5</sup> This happens explicitly in the text, but Peperzak, in an editorial note, also states specifically that the “essay was written under the influence of Merleau-Ponty’s book *Signes* (1960), in which the cultural horizons of phenomena are emphasized” (Peperzak, in Levinas 1996:34).

Levinas sees what he discusses as the three main “contemporary philosoph[ies] of meaning” (Hegelianism, Bergsonism and phenomenology) as being united by a common “antiplatonism” (Levinas 1996:42). This antiplatonism is manifested, for Levinas, in the idea that “[b]eing as a whole - meaning - shines forth … in diverse ways in the diverse artists of the same cultures and is diversely expressed in the diverse cultures” (42), instead of the Platonic idea that meaning is “an entity fixed for eternity” (42). These three philosophies are thus united by seeing meaning as united with the “becoming which suggests it” (42). In other words, being is expressed in diverse ways, *and united with each* of these expressions, instead of lying somewhere “behind” them: “All the expression which Being received and receives in history would be true, for truth would be inseparable from its historical expression; and without its expression, thought does not think anything” (42).

Levinas then shows briefly why particularly phenomenology and Bergson can no longer accept the Platonic position. His argument for this can be encapsulated in the statement that, for both of these positions, “a meaning cannot be separated from access leading to it” (1996:44). In phenomenology (especially that of Merleau-Ponty himself) this is because of the awareness of the “transcendental function of the whole concrete density of our corporeal, technical, social, and political existence” (43) in the constitution of knowledge. In Bergson’s case, Platonism is unacceptable, because “he [Bergson] situates the intelligible in the prolongation of the whole concrete existence of the individual” (44), so that meaning and truth become functions that are inseparable from a very specific history and life, that would be *absolutely true* for that individual, but not for anyone else with an even slightly different history. In short, then, what Levinas sees as the basic proposition of the dominant modern “philosophies of meaning” is that of a pluralism or “multivocality of meanings”, which he explicitly links to the “death of God” (43-4). In turn, this focus on becoming is, says Levinas, often presented as a recognition that being cannot be conceived as a static and “fixed creation” that could claim to be the final arbiter or cast a “final judgment” in matters of truth – instead, the “essence” of being is now envisioned as a “way of being” (46). There is no longer a “totality in being, but only totalities” (47) that would all be equivalent.

For Levinas, however, there seems to be no question that the “univocal meaning of being” should be established<sup>6</sup>, and the rest of the essay is chiefly taken up by brief reviews of previous attempts to do this, and then by Levinas’s own somewhat different attempt to do so. The first such (failed) attempt that Levinas discusses is “materialism”<sup>7</sup> and the “economic” meaning. Here the pretension is that the multiplicity of meanings are a function of the “play of cultural meaning” (the Marxist “superstructure”<sup>8</sup>), which can be countered simply by not celebrating, “but working” being (Levinas 1996:44), by “creating a scientific or algorithmic terminology” in a technological culture (the Marxist “base”? ). The world would now “acquire a fixed, privileged meaning … in function of man’s needs” (44). However, in Levinas’s opinion, this does not resolve the problem, since “every human need is from the first already interpreted culturally” (45), and hence can not escape this maze of pluralistic meanings.

The second attempt Levinas discusses is not one of *overcoming* this multivocality, but of *accepting it*. This is the atheistic philosophy of the “death of God” (47), where God is the principle of a “sense that orients” (47) all the different meanings. Here God is also posited as that which is “other” [sic] since it “signifies *of itself*” (47, original emphasis) – hence without mediation. The modern philosophy of the death of God does not “think that sense can do without God”, and so, with God, the possibility of a “univocity of being” also disappears.

At this stage, however, an important terminological substitution has been performed by Levinas – that of sense<sup>9</sup> for meaning. This happens shortly after Levinas has described the new interpretation of the “essence” of being as the *way* of being, and his translators here note that “essence” is used in the “active and ‘transitive’ sense of the word” (Levinas 1996:176 n. 36). Sense is also immediately identified as an “orientation”, in the sense of an attitude<sup>10</sup>, and specifically here, of a *willingness*. Levinas follows

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Levinas (1996:46): “this ideal of unity … which constitutes the force of Truth and the hope of an understanding among men.”

<sup>7</sup> The most specific term Levinas uses here, though the reference to Marxism seems thinly-veiled.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Levinas (1996:45).

<sup>9</sup> As we will also see in Deleuze’s “logic of sense” below, it is important to bear in mind that “*sens*” in French translates into English as analogous to “meaning”, but also as “direction”.

<sup>10</sup> It should perhaps be borne in mind that Levinas is here drawing heavily on Merleau-Ponty, and that therefore “attitude” should perhaps *also* be interpreted quite literally as a *bodily* attitude, *as well as* a “frame of mind” – Levinas is here slowly preparing the ground for the introduction of the “face-to-face”

Merleau-Ponty by agreeing that, e.g. for “a Frenchman there does exist the possibility of learning Chinese and passing from one culture into another, without the intermediary of an *Esperanto*” (Levinas 1996:46) – in other words, Levinas grants Merleau-Ponty (who here stands for the atheist position) that there is a certain equivalence between cultures that can interpenetrate “laterally”, without the need for mediation or arbitration by a quasi-Platonic principle. For Merleau-Ponty, says Levinas, “the unity of being at any moment would only consist in the fact that men understand each other” (46).

But Levinas then proceeds to criticise Merleau-Ponty for not taking the consideration that what enables this later interpenetration (in the sense of making it *desirable* rather than of making it *possible*) is precisely a certain orientation that, for example, “prefer[s] speech to war” (1996:46). Again, Levinas states that dialogue and mutual understanding cannot guarantee the univocity of being, since it is dependent on this orientation which is by no means universal, and it is this realization which ultimately leads to the absurdity and atheism of what seems to be existentialism.

However, this idea of sense as orientation opens up the solution that Levinas himself is busy preparing. Though he does not believe that this orientation can be described “starting with th[e] still economic idea of God” (1996:48). Instead, the attempt to re-discover the univocity of being requires just such an orientation (such a *unique* sense) but one which can escape the economy of “knowing and meaning” (48). “Knowledge” – and here Levinas seemingly has in mind the entire Western philosophical tradition – is economical in the sense that it “wants to absorb every Other into the Same and to neutralize alterity”. This is the same process of “recuperation” that we have tried to describe in Part I above.

The crucial question for Levinas then becomes that of whether we must then “renounce knowing and meaning in order to find sense … in order that being find again a unity of sense?” (1996:48). It seems clear that Levinas does not want to accept this, for the “blind orientation” that this would leave us with, would belong to the “instinctual rather than the human order”, and would therefore require that “the person betrays his vocation of being a person” (49). The project at hand therefore becomes that of trying to

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which perhaps has a similarly ambivalent meaning: namely, both as a “frame of mind”, but also one requiring, or causing, a very particular bodily orientation of openness.

discover a univocal or unique sense that could provide a single orientation with regards to being that would, on the one hand, not rely on knowledge or meaning, but on the other hand, would still be *human*. He then proceeds to lay down the conditions that such a theory of sense would have to meet: “It can be posited only as a movement going outside of the identical toward an Other which is absolutely other” (49), even if it still “begins in an identical, a Same, an Ego” (49). The form that this orientation must then take would be that of a “Work”.

Levinas starts off his sketch of what the “Work” in question would be by briefly rejecting a Bergsonian and a Hegelian interpretation. In terms of the former, he notes that “it is not a ‘sense of history’ which dominates the ego” since this “irresistible orientation”, by in a sense pre-determining the movement towards the other, would render it “senseless”; instead, the orientation towards the Other must be free (1996:49). In apparent reference to Hegel, Levinas warns that the Work must not be conceived through “the famous negativity [which] transforms a foreign world into a world whose alterity is converted into my idea” (49). It is important for Levinas to distinguish his own notion of the “Work” from these two theories specifically, because of the role time plays in his own conception. In terms of time, Hegel and Bergson both lay emphasis on the weight of the history, or in other words, as an orientation that arrives out of a *continuity* with the *past* – Levinas is going to orient his conception of the “Work” towards the *future*, and as precisely as a *discontinuity* which breaks the “economic” order which always seeks the “return of the movement to its origin” and which would “reabsorb the work in calculations of deficits and recompensations, in bookkeeping operations” (49).

For Levinas, instead, the movement of sense as an absolute orientation toward the Other must be that of a “radical generosity”, which moreover, must be met with an “*ingratitude* of the Other”, so as not to be recompensed by gratitude. On the other hand, however, this movement must not be a “nihilistic” squandering either. Instead, the Work *must be* for some outcome, for some recognition, but an outcome which is deferred indefinitely, into a Future which *remains future*: the Agent must “renounce being the contemporary of its outcome” (Levinas 1996:50). This is the “time of the other”, which is *always yet to come*, and which must be awaited patiently, as an “eschatology without hope for oneself”, as an “action for a world to come” (50).

At the same time, this action which is for a future, because it is not for the “present time” (conceived as a time *in which I would be present*), but takes place in and for the “time of the Other”, is also an action which goes “beyond oneself” (Levinas 1996:50). Importantly, this requires the “epiphany of the Other” (50). The *epiphany* of the Other is what breaks the world of meaning, the totality of the ego – it creates the disruption, the breaking of the self-enclosed world constituted as a totality by the ego with its continuous history, and hence allows the ego to transcend itself.

In turn, the notion of “epiphany” as the mode of appearance of the Other is important here. Once again, Levinas seems to distinguish between “orders” namely the economic order of needs. Here the ego experiences a plenitude of self-identification, a harmonious experience of the world as a totality. In terms of this, the Other in its manifestation is produced “in conformity with the way every meaning is produced” (Levinas 1996:52). “He” is given “in the concreteness of the totality in which he is immanent” (52-3), so that the encounter with the Other, in this order, is still just a hermeneutic situation in which the Other can be understood and known “as a text by its context” (52). In other words, in the “economic” order, the Other is manifested as merely one element among others<sup>11</sup> and assumes a meaning *in relation* to the other elements with which it forms a totality.

In contrast to this, when the Other is experienced as an “epiphany”, it “is not included in the totality of being expressed … He is neither a cultural signification nor a simple given” (Levinas 1996:52). In other words, the Other as epiphany, “involves a signifyingness of its own” (53), that is, without reference to anything else. This is because (and why) the Other breaks up the totality of the economic world, and even more radically, “overwhelm[s] the very egoism of the I” (54). Specifically, by breaking up the totality of a world which is constituted by the ego, it is “intentionality” which is overwhelmed (55) and thus consciousness which is “called into question” (54). This epiphany of course occurs through the *face*, which, for Levinas, precisely in the very blankness which refuses *meaning*, *signifies* “an irrecusable order, a command, which puts a stop to the availability of consciousness” (55). It is blank because it is meaningless; it is

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Bernasconi (2000:69): Levinas criticizes Husserl, because “the Husserlian constitution of the Other is only a variation of the constitution of the object”. In the passage being discussed above, the target is not Husserl, but Merleau-Ponty – the general thrust is that *phenomenology* still falls into the economic order.

meaningless because it refuses intentionality; and it refuses intentionality because it comes from outside, and from on high, like the idea of the Infinite (in Descartes). Furthermore, even though it comes “from on high”, by its very “nudity”, it signifies a distress, to which the ego feels an infinite responsibility (53-4). It is this experience of being stopped dead in our tracks by coming face-to-face with the Other as a “visitation” of an infinite need *that comes from outside* (and which therefore is not determined locally by a cultural subject) that for Levinas provides the “unique orientation of sense” that he has been looking for: “in the relationship with a face, in the ethical relationship, there is delineated the straightforwardness of an orientation, of a sense” (55).

In a lecture delivered towards the end of his career<sup>12</sup>, Levinas (1996:150-159) explicitly returns to the same problematic, but this time with the emphasis much more on the role played by transcendence. Again, Levinas starts by outlining what he sees as knowledge: it “is a relation of the *Same* with the *Other* in which the Other is reduced to the Same and divested of its strangeness, in which thinking relates itself to the other but the other is no longer other as such; the other is already appropriated … already *mine*” (1996:151). This is defined as *immanence* – but for our purposes it is necessary to gloss this characterization as knowledge which is immanent *to the subject/ego*, for reasons we shall return to at the end of this section. In this sense of immanence as knowledge which is *adequate to what is known*, Husserlian phenomenology (which is, for Levinas, the culmination of traditional philosophy) is very much a “phenomenology of immanence” (152) since the “cogitatum [i.e. what is thought about] is present to cogitation [i.e. the thought itself], the *noema* [i.e. that which is intended] equals the *noesis* [the intention itself]” (153). In Husserl’s phenomenology, then - no less than in Hegel - there is always a perfect adequation between what is thought about, and the thought itself. Later in the same essay, the equation between the order of knowledge and immanence is made even more explicit when Levinas speaks of “*knowledge*, the manifestation whose essence consists in establishing – or in re-establishing – the order of *immanence*” (156). This is the “economic” sphere which we have seen above, and which is, for Levinas, unable to give an account of the other *as Other* – in other words, because knowledge is so fully immanent to the ego, it is unable to ever “transcend” towards knowledge of the Other.

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<sup>12</sup> “Transcendence and Intelligibility” delivered as a lecture in 1983, and published in 1984.

Once again, the question for Levinas becomes that of whether there is some form of *intelligibility* that would not be that of *knowledge* or of consciousness. In a similar vein to the previous essay discussed above, what Levinas wants is “a thinking which does not bring all transcendence back to immanence and does not compromise transcendence in understanding it” (155). It is worthwhile quoting at length the passage in which Levinas once again sets out the conditions that such a “thinking” would have to meet:

What is needed is a thought which is no longer constructed as a relation of thinking to what is thought about, in the domination of thinking to what is thought about; what is needed is a thought which is not restricted ... to the adequation where the visible must be equal to the intentional aim (*la visée*), to which the visible would have to respond in the intuition of truth; what is needed is a thought for which the very metaphor of vision and aim (*visée*) is no longer legitimate. (Levinas 1996:155)

Immediately after posing these demands, Levinas admits that it is an “impossible demand!” (155), except by invoking the Cartesian “idea of the infinite in us” (155), which is now quite explicitly tied to the idea of God, and of religious revelation<sup>13</sup> (156-8). God here is that idea *par excellence* which cannot be constituted by consciousness, but which precisely *exceeds* consciousness. It can therefore not be “immanent”, or reduced to the idea that consciousness has of it, and therefore breaks open consciousness from the outside, because it transcends it. It is an *affection* in the sense of being “affected” by God, and can only be patiently (and passively) waited for – because it cannot be the product of the mind, it cannot be the result of a willed *action* by the subject, but one is dependent upon being “struck by God” (157-9). Ultimately, then, it turns out that the thinking for which Levinas has been searching was nothing less (or more!) than theology, or better, *religion* – the practise which follows from theology.

We are now in a position to take key aspects of Levinas’s position as we understand it, and to try and show what it is about this theory that we find unsatisfactory, and why we shall therefore turn to the thought of Gilles Deleuze in an attempt to derive more satisfactory answers to the same questions. In the first place, it is important to note that the project on which Levinas had embarked seems in many respects one to which Deleuze would be very sympathetic, at least to the extent that both of these thinkers are

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<sup>13</sup> One is reminded of Peperzak’s comment that, in Levinas, “‘The Other’ is in the first place the other human being I encounter; in a later development it also stands for God” (Peperzak 1996:x).

concerned with undermining (or escaping from) the seeming hegemony that the idea of consciousness has held over the traditional conception of what it means to think. However, the relation of each to phenomenology has a telling influence on the way in which each approaches this “task” of conceiving of a new way of “thinking”. Specifically, while it seems from the above that Levinas seeks for a type of thinking that can *transcend* or go *beyond* consciousness – that is, to break the totality of a consciousness that is assumed to already be constituted, we shall try to show how Deleuze is concerned to try and penetrate to a type of thought that *pre-figures* consciousness, and on the *basis of which* consciousness has to be constituted.

This has a further consequence for the way in which each evaluates the notions of immanence and transcendence. Levinas, as we have seen, sees the economic order of knowledge as a type of immanence *to a subject*, which must be escaped from by a form of *transcendence* towards the Other, and must do this in order to be faithful to the “univocity” (or unique sense) of being. Deleuze, on the contrary, will describe conscious thought with its structures of recognition and its operations of judgment (and here he will, similarly to Levinas, be talking about an entire tradition of thought from Plato, through Kant, to phenomenology) as relying too much on *transcendence*, where transcendence is what allows the erections of hierarchies and principles according to which judgment takes place. As we shall see, when Deleuze thus tries to escape from the oppressiveness of this type of philosophizing, it will be by penetrating *deeper* into thought – that is, by trying to come up with an image of thought that is *pure immanence*. However, what we shall try to show is that this is possible for Deleuze because immanence is no longer immanent *to or in* a subject – instead, the “subject” is *already immanent* in a pre-existent field of virtualities. What we shall also try to show is that the “freedom” which Levinas had also stated as a condition for a satisfactory theory of sense<sup>14</sup> is not achieved by *transcendence* but precisely by a return of the subject to its immanence – to the network of relations and virtualities from which it had been “cut out” in the first place<sup>15</sup>. Ironically, it is the same Bergson whom Levinas himself had praised for being “an essential step in the movement

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Levinas (1996:49): “Is it not then possible to conceive of an orientation – a sense – in being which would unite univocity and freedom?”

<sup>15</sup> We refer the reader again to Fig. 1 & 2 in the Introduction, for a preliminary visualization of what we mean by this last formulation.

which puts in question the framework of a spirituality borrowed from knowledge and therefore from the privileged and primary signification of presence" (Levinas 1996:154), before rejecting him again for re-introducing "knowledge behind duration" (155) which will play a significant part in Deleuze's project.

Perhaps these differences are most clearly shown by returning to a part of what we have discussed above – namely the section on the atheism of the modern philosophy of "the death of God". There, Levinas had argued that "we do not think that sense can do without God, nor that the idea of being or of the being of entities could be substituted for him, so as to bring meanings to the unity of sense without which there is no sense" (1996:48). This statement had apparently left him with only two options, either – as he himself then set out to do – to resuscitate God and hence to embark on the project which ultimately led him to replace philosophy with the "theology of the transcendent" (159), or to succumb to the "ambivalence ... disorientation ... ambiguity ... [of] a nonpolarized ether" (48). While noting that there is indeed "a certain philosophical style which is satisfied" with the latter state of affairs, it is clear that Levinas himself does not see the acceptance of atheism as consonant with a theory of sense. However, as we shall try to show, Deleuze, while very much accepting the implications of the death of God, and seeking precisely a philosophy that asks for a return to just such an "unpolarized ether" and of immanence (although always so that a *new type* of subject can arise from it again) nevertheless believes that a theory or "logic of sense" is possible, without, furthermore, requiring a transcendent "God".

This is important also because of the ethical consequences it has, and specifically because of the transformed sense that ethics would acquire in such a philosophy – in other words, what the criteria would be for an action or a theory to be considered ethical. Firstly, in the passage by Levinas from which we have quoted above, Levinas had also presented as another way of escaping the economic order of meaning, the *refusal* of meaning as such, so that what is left, is a "blind orientation represent[ing] the instinctual rather than human order" (1996:49). Again, it is clear that this is not an acceptable way for Levinas, but that he does want to preserve the human. Yet, can it not be said that the attempt to thus preserve the "human" (which, after all, may be just such a "cultural meaning" as had already been rejected by Levinas for leading to the pluralism he is

struggling against) is not just another way of inscribing “the end in the beginning” (49), of always returning thought (and “being”) to the same. Would ethics as first philosophy (and as the quest for freedom) not be more about finding the Other *in the Same*, before finding the Other *of the Same*? Of course, this question does not arise if – as in phenomenology – it is only the constitution of the Other which is in question, with the *existence* of the subject/ego being taken for granted. However, the question *does* arise when – as we shall argue, Deleuze does – the *constitution of the ego* is first put into question. This is, perhaps, the sense in which Deleuze’s ethics will be Nietzschean – because he will not be content to always return to the tedious Same which is “human ... *all too human*”. The difference here will be between an ego that is still identified with (and based on) the Same and self-identity, and a theory of personality which is founded on difference – which we will hope to show in Deleuze.

But this is not to say that Deleuze’s ethics *can* only account for the constitution of the ego, and can have nothing to say about the relation to the Other – in fact the contention will be that, because the focus lies on the constitution of an ego from out of a pre-existent field, and because the other is constituted *at the same time and in the same movement as the ego*, these two constitutions cannot be separated. It is no longer a question of *first* constituting the ego, and then a relation to the Other – instead, there is one process which occurs *inbetween*, and as a result of which *both* the ego and the Other simultaneously arise as functions of the *relation* that precedes them. In a far more radical step, then, we shall argue that Deleuze does not merely invert the priority between ego and Other, but between ego/Other as *poles*, on the one hand, and the relation itself, on the other, where a network of relations is now primary, and the ego and Other both appear (and must keep re-appearing) as secondary functions of these relations, all at once.

One way of showing in a preliminary way the novelty of this conception and its implications for ethics, is to contrast it briefly with the criterium for ethics which we had briefly identified in Derrida above. There, we have seen that Derrida (in Bernasconi 2000:72) had described as the “gesture of all violence” the refusal of recognising the self-identity of the Other *as an ego* – to be violent (hence unethical) was to *refuse* to recognise the Other as an ego. In the Levinas essay discussed above, we had seen how Levinas tries to engage with this demand without falling back into a “knowledge-relation” with the

Other, namely, by distinguishing between knowledge of the Other as manifestation, and the orientation towards the Other as epiphany or visitation which “breaks” with the economic order of knowledge (1996:52-5).

But does this not involve an uncomfortable contradiction, or at the very least, miss the point? Does a theory which demands that the Other be recognized or seen as an ego *by me* not miss the essential point of what this recognition must necessarily entail to be valid – that is, in a phrase, not to *see* the Other as ego, but to allow the Other as ego *to see*? Looked at from this way, there are certain worrying features of Levinas’s theory which can be lifted out briefly. Firstly, for a theory which seems to place the premium on the assumption by the ego of “infinite responsibility” for the Other, and places the emphasis on the absolute claim that the Other makes on the ego, Levinas himself makes quite a few demands of the Other. In a striking passage on the “Work”, for example, he notes that for the “Work” to found an ethical orientation or relation to the Other, “it requires and *ingratitude* from the Other” (Levinas 1996:49). There seems to be no good reason not to take this statement completely literally. Secondly, if it is the “nudity” (53) and the “abstraction” (54) of the Other which lays this infinite responsibility on us, does this not to a large extent *require* the Other to also keep silent, *not* to communicate with us? Levinas’s point is perhaps that even if the Other *does* speak, the claim which is signified in his face *exceeds* what he can say to us – but is this not itself the violence of which Derrida spoke above, the process of robbing the Other of his voice … or at least, of an ear which is open to this voice?

This at least seems to be the possible value of a theory like that of Deleuze – by placing the focus on a field which both precedes and lies outside the subject and the Other, by placing the value of each *inbetween* them, we shall try to show that Deleuze takes into account also and especially the Other as a *speaking<sup>16</sup>* and a *seeing* subject – this is the force of the central analysis of the role of the Other, which should be regarded as the central text in this Part, and which we shall be leading up to throughout of the next

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<sup>16</sup> As regards speaking, Deleuze said of Foucault that “You were the first to teach us something quite basic: the indignity of speaking for others” (Deleuze 1995:87). This is moreover discussed in the context of the critique of representation which we shall also treat below, and “representation” should thus also be understood in this sense of “representing someone else” by speaking for them, by *taking responsibility* for them.

part on Deleuze: the essay on “Michel Tournier and the World without Others” (Deleuze 1990:301-321).

Such a theory will hopefully have two further points to recommend itself. Firstly, whereas Levinas – by invoking a transcendent God – has to resign himself to a passive patience for the messianic arrival or visitation of this God, a central term in Deleuze’s ethics will be *activity*: what is ethically desirable, in crude terms, will be that which *increases powers of acting*, of being active – whereas Levinas calls strongly for passiveness, for patience, for “an eschatology without hope” (Levinas 1996:50). Deleuze would say that Levinas’s theory is a “sad” one – what he himself is striving for is a “joyful thinking”, an atheistic “gay science”. We shall try to show how Deleuze tries to construct such a thinking, which would also be a *practise*.

Then also, Levinas’s theory is in the last instance one of *inadequacy* – Bernasconi states this as follows: “The Other puts me in question in such a way that I find myself responsible for the Other, *for whom I can never do enough*” (2000:62, my emphasis) and Levinas himself states, in just one of a number of such statements, that the relation with the Other, “empties me of myself, and empties me without end” (Levinas 1996:52). But, again approaching this from the Nietzschean perspective which informs Deleuze’s ethics, one could ask if this were not a form of “bad conscience”? One would have to ask *who* could come up with this theory? And if it is not better, *healthier* – and more practical – to come up with an ethics which is not “[a]n impossible demand!” (Levinas 1996:155), but which allows one “not to be unworthy of what happens to us” (Deleuze 1990:149). Strikingly, this statement of the meaning of ethics comes from a chapter on “the event” in a book called the *Logic of Sense*. Once again, the focus on the event will serve to show something of the simultaneous proximity and divergence between Deleuze and Levinas: Bernasconi notes that Levinas himself had come to see (and rehabilitate Husserl’s) notion of empathy, not as a form of knowledge, but as “the *non-constituted event* ... [which] is already presupposed by ‘knowledge of the Other’” (2000:74, emphasis in original). It is precisely with the theory of such a “non-constituted event” which would form and be presupposed by any knowledge (or any subject-object/Other relation) that we shall start our exposition of Deleuze’s alternative theory. First, however, we shall situate Deleuze in terms of two other positions that were also discussed previously, namely that

of the relation to Hegel (which Derrida had criticised Levinas for neglecting – in Bernasconi 2000:70) and that of the relation to Plato, an antipathy towards which Levinas had identified as the common feature of the main contemporary philosophies.

### 3.2 Deleuze and the Hegelian tradition

It is precisely the relation of Deleuze to the Hegelian tradition which forms the subject of a very gentle (but insidiously critical) essay by Jean-Luc Nancy (1996). It is on the question of the image of thought (and the sources of that ‘thought’) that Nancy distinguishes ‘his’ tradition from that of Deleuze. The distance between the two traditions is, for Nancy, very much a function of the relation of each to Hegel. He says that Deleuze “never turned to Hegel” and thus “was never tied to a dialectical continuity woven at once from the logic of a process ... and from the structure of a subject” (Nancy 1996:108) whereas Nancy himself “would say rather that everything is played out in connection with Hegel” (1996:113).

Nancy further gives a number of points on which ‘his’ tradition and that of Deleuze diverge. Firstly, Deleuze designs a philosophy that is “not that of being” (Nancy 1996:112) – rather, it is “a virtual philosophy, in the sense in which we use this word today when we speak ... of virtual reality or image – designating a universe entirely formed from images ... that leave no place for the opposition between the real and image” (1996:110). This is, on the one hand, because it lacks the principle of “recognition”<sup>17</sup>, and on the other, because “Deleuze does not attempt to speak about the real as an exterior referent ... he effectuates a philosophical real” (Nancy 1996:110). In other words, Deleuze’s philosophy, again, does not appeal to a reality *outside thought* – a reality which exists as an *object* for the *subject* in a relationship of *knowledge*, a relation which is subject to “truth” as a principle of recognition (or judgment). For Nancy this is a “universe” – with the connotations that term has of the infinite, openness etc. – rather than the (bounded and total) “world”<sup>18</sup> with which ‘his’ tradition is concerned (Nancy 1996:110). At the same time, he contrasts Deleuze’s philosophy of *distribution* to the

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. the discussion of “recognition” on pp. 109-110 and further, below.

<sup>18</sup> We have already, of course, encountered this distinction in Merleau-Ponty.

*genetic* philosophy of the Hegelian tradition (Nancy 1996:108-9). This latter tradition proceeds (develops) genetically from “being, which is to say origin and end” (1996:112), through the “slowness inherent in discourse” (1996:111) towards death (1996:112), whereas that of Deleuze’s is one of “speed” (1996:111), a “heterogeneous dimension, that of a plane or a network, which was neither being nor process, but rather composed of points, distributions, referrals, spaces” (Nancy 1996:108). Deleuze develops a philosophy of absolute speed, which traverses a field all at once, rather than patiently moving from one pole to another, e.g. from subject *to* object – as Nancy notes, what Deleuze is concerned with is always that which is *inbetween* these poles, a philosophy which grows from the middle<sup>19</sup>. Though Nancy admits that it is impossible to ignore, or keep from taking something from Deleuze’s tradition, he does appear to see their two traditions as being irreducibly separated, or rather, at cross-purposes. He ends up describing their relative positions as follows: “It appears inescapably as if there are two massifs, two continents, two tectonic plates of philosophy. Being or chaos, genesis or distribution, death or the passage across. The one slides over the other or against it, the one folds on the other – without passage from one to the other, without a synthesis of the two” (Nancy 1996:113).

For Nancy this failure of communication between the two traditions is a function of that same difference in priority which forms the basis of our own use of Deleuze to address what we have tried to describe as an unwarranted presupposition in the phenomenological-transcendental tradition, i.e. that which can now be described as the attempt to use primordially unified “Being” as the basis on which to found difference, whereas Deleuze’s philosophy posits a primordial difference<sup>20</sup> (what Nancy here calls chaos) which forms the ground from out of which identity (*including* being and subjectivity) can *arise*. Nancy formulates this difference as follows: the rift (or “fold”) separating the two philosophical traditions is that “between sense as composition of a passage across a ground of chaos [i.e. Deleuze], and sense as the underlying tautology of what being there is [i.e. Hegelian-Heideggerian philosophy]” (1996:112).

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<sup>19</sup> The elaboration of this “inbetween” forms one of the main themes of *Dialogues II* (Deleuze & Parnet 2002), and we shall pay more detailed attention to it below.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. pp. 176-8 below for an explanation of the “ontology of difference” that Deleuze takes from Bergson.

In a sense then, Nancy stages the relation of ‘his’ tradition to that of Deleuze as an encounter between strangers, touching perhaps, but across an ultimately irreducible distance which prevents communication. Intended in this analogy is the similarity to the theory of intersubjectivity as a bridge-building exercise across a gulf between two *pre-existent poles* which necessitates a (secondary) relation to be established – a relation which ultimately *cannot* be established, except, as Nancy admits, as a “tautology” (1996:112). However, again it is only *because* of the *prior* assumption that each position can be reduced to an independently existing *pole* which *then* must communicate, rather than as a *virtual* entity which is only actualized by *being brought into relation* (a pure ‘becoming’ which is not becoming *something*, but is continually *inbetween*, which escapes the verb ‘to be’” in favor of the *incorporeal event of becoming*) that the gulf opens up in the first place!

Before going further, however, it is necessary to introduce and gloss some of the terms introduced above by Nancy. This is a somewhat difficult enterprise, both because of the incredible number of new terms and concepts that Deleuze introduces throughout his career and because where concepts recur throughout Deleuze’s work, they often function slightly differently in different contexts. No doubt Deleuze would argue that that is partly because they are, each time, addressing different problems, but the real clue to this practice lies in the verb used in the previous sentence: Deleuze’s concepts are intended to *function* and not to *mean*. This is a large part of the “philosophical real” which Nancy speaks of Deleuze invoking, and connected to Deleuze’s critique of representation that we shall turn to later. Concepts - for Deleuze - do not *signify*, they *effectuate*; a good concept does not *describe*, but instead *makes something happen*. In the context of Deleuze’s practice as a writer, this often means that with new concepts, the explicit descriptions given of them are less important or illuminating than the way they are *used* in the text<sup>21</sup>. Nevertheless, it is possible to give sketches of Deleuze’s concepts, though these should be seen as preliminary and to be subject to qualification and slippages in each new context<sup>22</sup>. This is not – as might be thought – mere sloppiness on

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<sup>21</sup> This last point is driven home particularly well by Massumi (1987), as well as Smith (1998:xxi-xxiv, 178 n. 46).

<sup>22</sup> In this regard, it should be noted that even the most explicit attempt to provide precisely such a Deleuzean glossary – that by Bonta and Protevi (2004) – limits itself to glossing the terminology used in

the part of Deleuze, but intimately related to what a concept *is* for Deleuze. As he and Guattari write in the section of concepts in *What is Philosophy?*: “the concept’s components are neither constants nor variables but pure and simple *variations* ordered according to their neighbourhood .... A concept is a heterogenesis – that is to say, an ordering of its components by zones of neighbourhood<sup>23</sup>” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:20).

We shall thus attempt to give a brief introduction of some of the terms Nancy introduces, and to situate them in a preliminary fashion in terms of the project Deleuze develops. However, many of these terms will have to await a fuller development until later.

In terms of Nancy’s discussion above, the first important set of terms that need to be explained and related to each other (and, in light of the thesis we shall hope to develop here, to explain Deleuzean terms must involve relating them to each other!) are those of speed and the virtual.

Typical of the focus on the “inbetween” in Deleuze and Guattari, speed is never stable, but the important factor of “speed” is always the changes that it undergoes (acceleration or deceleration), and more than that, the importance of “speed” (whether fast or slow) is the qualitative *change* which it marks in that which “has” it (although speed cannot, of course, be separated from that which has speed!). In this regard, Bonta and Protevi (2004:147) notes that “speed can be opposed to movement as the intensive to the extensive”, where, in turn, “intensive” is defined as the immanent relational characteristics of a system, which – at reaching a certain critical threshold – cause a qualitative change in the system. A good example of this is the boiling-point of a liquid (Bonta & Protevi 2004:101). It is *immanent* in that it measures relations in (and unique to) the specific system, whereas “extensive” properties are measured according to fixed, external measures (101), e.g. the *temperature* of any liquid at 100°C would be the same (= an *extensive* property), but only for water would this be its *boiling-point* (= *intensive*

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one text only, namely *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze & Guattari 1987), and even there quite frequently note that terms are used slightly differently in each “plateau” *within* that book.

<sup>23</sup> About the word “neighbourhood” (which translates the French word “voisinage”), the translators, Tomlinson and Burchell, note that it “has the general sense of ‘neighbourhood’ but also its mathematical sense, as in ‘neighbourhood of a point,’ which in a linear set (for example, the points of a straight line) is an open segment containing this point” (in Deleuze & Guattari 1994:ix)

property). This intensive threshold may be either a speeding up or a slowing down, just as water can change by either boiling or freezing<sup>24</sup>.

The *speed* of a system is then such an *intensive* characteristic of the system, where speed is measured by the qualitative change which it causes in the system, whereas *movement* is (merely) an extensive property (Bonta & Protevi 2004:146-7). Furthermore, speed itself has nothing to do with the measurement of movement as such: “a movement may be very fast, but that does not give it speed; a speed may be very slow, or even immobile, yet it is still speed” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:381).

In one sense then, speed is also absolute (since it marks the crossing of a threshold) whereas movement is relative, and in this sense the processes necessary for experimentation and becoming, for depersonalization (singularization) and deterritorialisation<sup>25</sup>, are processes of absolute speed. This is also a good place to preempt an easy misunderstanding of what “deterritorialisation” means – it is not (merely) *moving* from one territory to another, where “territory” is a “striated” space, i.e. organized around fixed points and mapped into zones. Instead, deterritorialisation means the undoing of the relation of territoriality to the land as such: it is the construction of a “smooth” space – i.e. one without any organization or fixed points. Sedentary (or static, or State-ic) space is typically striated, where, e.g. the city forms the centre of a territory with “distant borders”, and there is always only movement, as almost an unfortunate, but definitely secondary necessity between the “fixed abodes” that form the primary

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<sup>24</sup> As Bonta and Protevi also point out however, speed and slowness are thus treated similarly (as types of speed) only where speed is opposed to movement (2004:146). In the course of an earlier discussion (that of the opposition of nomadic science to the science of the State), speed is opposed to slowness, such that slowness is constrained by laws (e.g. gravity) and the acceleration or deceleration of an object in accordance to laws is then a function of a decrease or increase of slowness. Here, in opposition to slowness, speed as “rapidity, celerity, applies only to movement that deviates to the minimum extent and therefore assumes a vertical motion” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:371; cf. also Bonta & Protevi 2004:146). In this latter quote – though no explicit attention is drawn to it – Deleuze and Guattari also seem to have in mind the Lucretian/Epicurean notion of the *clinamen*, which is the smallest possible deviation in the free-fall of “atoms” that sets off the chain of mixtures of bodies which compose the Epicurean universe. This is a theme which Deleuze had written about as early as 1961. Cf. Deleuze (1990:266-279, and especially 269-70).

<sup>25</sup> Of these three terms, the first two – depersonalization and singularisation – will be very important in this study and cannot be glossed adequately here, but will be discussed at length later on. As regards deterritorialization: for now, we will merely give Bonta & Protevi’s most pithy formulation. They say that “[i]n plain language, deterritorialization is the process of leaving home, of altering your habits, of learning new tricks” (Bonta & Protevi 2004:78). For now, until we return to the first two terms, this will also serve to give the general sense of what they mean.

orientation-points. In contrast, nomads inhabit a smooth space where movement (or rather, *speed*) is primary.

This is also why Deleuze can say that the nomad can have absolute *speed* but without *moving* (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:381) and, about himself: “If I stick where I am, if I don’t travel around, like everyone else I make my inner journeys that I can only measure by my emotions, and express very obliquely and circuitously in what I write” (Deleuze 1995:11). The notion of “expressing” in the last quote is important, because while extensive movements are representable, intensive speeds are not, and can only be *expressed*, since their measures are immanent in the sense described above. It is also in this sense that Spinoza, with his theory of one substance that exists in infinite modifications introduces “Expressionism in[to] Philosophy” (book-title). Spinoza is important in this regard, because his theory of one substance that is known through the two attributes of thought or extension (as well as existing, of course, through infinite unknown other attributes) brings home the sense in which both concepts and bodies are modified and thus “have speed”.

It is also in the course of a short analysis of Spinoza’s *Ethics* that Deleuze mentions that speeds, although always absolute relative to movement, can also be relative to *each other*, and gives a fairly clear statement of what he means by “speed” in argumentation: “Speeds can be absolute and yet have a greater or lesser magnitude. The magnitude of an absolute speed is measured in precise terms by the distance it covers at one stroke, that is, by the number of intermediaries it envelops, surveys, or implies” (Deleuze 1998:150). In other words, what is normally called a “dense” text – one that draws together or implies a number of positions in one passage, or ideally, a single statement or “slogan” – is a text of absolute speed, although it often functions by “leaps, lacunae, and cuts” (150). It is at the same time the “flash of lightning” that Nietzsche was striving for with his aphoristic form, and is often the inspiration behind the plethora of new terms and neo-logisms<sup>26</sup> that Deleuze introduces (most often in the collaborative works with Guattari).

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<sup>26</sup> I am indebted to Sjoerd van Tuinen for suggesting that “neo-logism” isn’t just a new *word*, but a new way of organizing the “*logos*” i.e. for effecting precisely the type of transformation of the whole conceptual field that we have seen is the effect of speed.

The above points to one sense in which speed traverses a field “all at once” – it is not a piecemeal change to one aspect of a body that modifies it in degree (this would be an extensive change), but an intensive threshold is something which changes the whole character or quality of the entire body “all at once”, and because the whole “field” (whether it be conceptual or physical) is only constituted by a mixture of bodies (in fact, precisely by the way in which bodies are cut up and distributed across it), a qualitative change in a body immediately ripples through the whole field. “Immediately” should indeed here be understood as all at once – like an electric current being switched on in a circuit-board, its effects are visible everywhere all at once. Another way of putting it, would perhaps be as follows: if speed is normally defined as distance covered over time taken, then absolute speed is here *infinite* distance covered in *zero* time.

What makes absolute speeds nevertheless relative to each other is the speed with which each effects its transformation – i.e. how quickly a given process depersonalises one, deterritorialises one. For example, ageing gracefully (in the sense of not trying to hang onto a faded youth, but becoming someone different<sup>27</sup>) is certainly a process of depersonalisation, but a very slow one which functions with almost infinite gradations; a very rapid absolute speed is attained by taking drugs, for example, or drinking. In this sense processes of depersonalisation can also be *too* fast. In his ABC primer<sup>28</sup>, Deleuze briefly discusses both alcoholism and his perceived advocacy of drugs. Regarding the first, he notes that what the alcoholic is after is always the *penultimate* drink: “the last in his power, versus the last beyond his power which would cause him to collapse” (Deleuze & Parnet 2000:3 of 70, “B for ‘Boire/Boisson’”). The point is that it is this penultimate drink which allows the drinker to *carry on* drinking the next day – the *last*

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<sup>27</sup> In a 8-hour long television interview with Deleuze conducted by Claire Parnet and filmed in 1989, a 63-year old Deleuze speaks very charmingly about ageing, and about drinking. About age, Deleuze says, amongst other things, that “the worst is when someone says, ‘no, you’re not so old,’... Deleuze says, I complain, I say, oh, I’m old, that is, I invoke the forces of old age, but then somebody tries to cheer me up by saying ‘no, you’re not so old.’ So, says Deleuze, I smack him with my cane” (Deleuze & Parnet 2000:39 of 70, “M for Malady”) Later he says that “when he hears the elderly complaining, these are old people who don’t want to be old or not as old as they are” (39 of 70). Instead, he believes that for himself, “old age hones his perceptions of things that he had never seen before ... to which he had never been sensitive” (39 of 70).

We have not otherwise used much material from this interview set, mainly because no official transcript exists in English, and we have had to rely on the fairly complete but by no means verbatim or exhaustive transcript prepared by Charles J. Stivale and posted on the internet.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Footnote 29 above.

drink, by destroying the drinker, also destroys the drinking. In what Stivale calls a “quite moving” response to the question of his apparent advocacy of drug abuse, Deleuze notes that he never told people to take drugs, that this was in fact a “point of honour” with him, and that he always felt very badly for people “who would take drugs to the point of collapse, or drinking [*sic*] to the point of falling into some ‘wild’ state” (9-10 of 70, “D as in Desire”). This point is echoed in a few other places, such as in “Letter to a Harsh Critic”, where Deleuze points out that, while the effects he is striving for *can* be achieved by drugs, the point of his philosophy was precisely to try and find a way of obtaining “similar effects by different means” (1995:11).

But the sense in which speeds can be relative to each other is also a function of the *number of different states* that it gives access to. This is the experimental aspect of Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy, and, as Massumi states it, the object of this experimentation (of constructing a “plateau” as a “pitch of intensity that is not automatically dissipated in a climax” – 1987:xiv) is also to create “a fabric of intensive states between which any number of connecting routes could exist” (xiv). Thus, the speed of a system is not only measured by the quality and rate of its transformations, but also the “richness” of its interactions – how many different states it can lead to, the number of “becomings” it can give rise to.

This characterisation of speed as the intensive threshold across which an entity passes when it becomes something else, leads us back to the other crucial term with which we saw Nancy characterise Deleuze’s philosophy above – namely, as a “virtual philosophy”. Bonta and Protevi makes the link between the intensive and the virtual quite explicit. For Deleuze, concrete and stable bodies are “actual … entities whose extensive properties and fixed qualities are the objects of representational thought” (Bonta & Protevi 2004:101). These are the objects of thought of “State philosophy” or “commonsense”, which, as we shall see later, are the types of thought to which Deleuze opposes his whole philosophy. Instead, what thought has to do – for Deleuze – is to penetrate to the “virtual multiplicities” that “gave rise to” these entities, and are simultaneously “occlude[d]” by them (101). These virtual multiplicities are themselves unthought or unactualised as “entities” since they provide the pure field of potentiality from *out of which* thought and actualisation in existence is possible. They can therefore not be *objects*

of thought, since they operate precisely at the level where *neither the object nor the subject* (or any type of identity) has been constituted yet. It is in fact only by “binding” these virtual multiplicities (by “uni-fying” them) that identities can arise.

These virtual multiplicities provide the “space” in which change and experimentation becomes possible – they provide the raw material for becoming something different. It is on this point, as we have seen above, that Nancy (as Hegelian) diverges from Deleuze. Once again it is a question of priority: Nancy, as the Hegelian, posits an originary unity, Being, which then produces difference by negation from itself. For Deleuze, on the contrary, it is “Being” which must arise from out of this original “chaos” of virtual possibilities – this is what Nancy means by an “originary difference”.

This position also has implications for the role thought is to play in each tradition. For Nancy, as we have seen, his own tradition strives for a genetic account of the “underlying tautology of what being there is” (1996:112), which we take to mean the attempt to reach an understanding of how an original identical Being has generated difference so that this difference can ultimately be recouped into a new understanding which restores Being to itself. For Deleuze, on the other hand, the challenge is precisely to *break* with the oppressive identity of being (or, conversely, the oppressive being of identity) to re-discover the original chaos of the virtual underneath, so that this energy, these potentialities can be put to work in a completely novel way. Furthermore, these virtualities cannot be *conceived or represented* but only actualised – the importance of thought as activity, as *experimentation* lies in this factor. As Deleuze and Guattari write: “The multiple *must be made*” (1987:6, emphasis in original).

This in turn is the importance of intensive properties, of becoming – far from shoring up identity or trying to re-discover a primordial and “lost” being, the project of experimentation is one of trying to throw off or *lose* identity, in other words of trying to reach and to pass intensive thresholds which will undo the entity’s (the constituted organism’s) *organization*, in order to discover different ways of re-organising. Much of what is to follow will be concerned with how and why this is to be done.

The problem is no longer that of “transcending” the self towards the other, or of trying to obtain “knowledge” of a transcendent other, never mind that of trying to conceive of an other as itself a “subject” – but of trying to penetrate beneath the level at

which the order of the object and the subject *have already been constituted* to the virtual field which *precedes* this level and makes it possible, and to try and keep returning there, by continually undoing the constructions that arise from it. The (also ethical) problem in Deleuze therefore shifts from that of trying to discover the other as subject, to that of *trying to unmake the subject itself*, in order to discover *that which is already “other” (different) in the subject*.

Before we proceed, we shall try to briefly recap what we have tried to show is the problem with “a phenomenology of signification based on the subject” in the specific context of the development of a theory of intersubjectivity.

As one would expect – and as implied in Levinas’s position above - if the problem of *intersubjectivity*, especially when developed in a context where it is derived from a prior theory of *subjectivity* (and, precisely, a theory which *posits* subjectivity as prior to intersubjectivity!) becomes a problem of *knowledge* – i.e. if the notion of “the subject” is usually invoked as a function of a relation of *knowledge*, then several consequences follow from this: firstly, the problem of intersubjectivity becomes a problem of the *knowledge* of “other minds”, and not their existence. This in turn means that, as long as the problem remains in this paradigm, intersubjectivity conceived as knowledge is always related back to the *subject*, which is its prime term, the centre of the circle, rather than to the “other”, whereas, had it been considered under the aspect of *existence*, that existence would have been a property of the “other”. One could also perhaps state what we are trying to say here in the following formula: intersubjectivity as *knowledge* may be *of* the other, but *for* the subject – i.e. is related back to the *subject*, and becomes a *property* of the *subject*. In other words, as we have tried to argue up to here, intersubjectivity conceived as knowledge of a central subject can never be the basis for real access to the “other” – which is supposed to be the point of any such theory! Attendant to this is the ethical problem that any theory of knowledge so conceived must inevitably lead to the reduction of the “other” to *object* – i.e. as the non-subject pole of the knowing relation. Preliminarily then, we can say that a theory – such as we shall now try to trace in this chapter – which can avoid this pitfall must therefore first of all rest on a *different conception of knowledge*: a theory of knowledge, in other words, which is not based on a pre-existent subjectivity, from which it is then supposed to form a bridge

towards an “other” only apprehended in a secondary process, but one which *precedes* subjectivity – i.e. a theory of knowledge which allows *both the subject and the “other”*<sup>29</sup> to come into being *in the same movement or moment!*

In a last formulation, then, a theory of knowledge which provides the ground for the existence of the subject, rather than a theory of knowledge *based* in a primordially existent subject<sup>30</sup>. We shall try to show that this theory of knowledge can be found in what has been described as the “transcendental empiricism” of Gilles Deleuze.

It is also in this connection that Foucault, in an interview, explains the turn to Nietzsche in recent French thought<sup>31</sup>. Again, for Foucault, Deleuze was crucial in this respect, and he explicitly links Deleuze’s turn to Nietzsche with his interest in Hume and Empiricism. Crucially, Foucault mentions that Deleuze “was interested in empiricism, in Hume, and again in the question: is the theory of the subject we have in phenomenology a satisfactory one? He could *elude* this question by means of the slant of Hume’s empiricism” (Foucault 1998:438, my emphasis). It perhaps seems funny to thus, in the same breath, talk of Deleuze as “being interested” in, and “eluding” the same question! Deleuze himself (speaking of Foucault’s remarks on him!) seems at first glance to have disavowed this type of interpretation<sup>32</sup>, yet this is also somewhat disingenuous. The way to understand this little bit of equivocation is to try and gain a wider perspective on the project on which Deleuze was just embarking at the start of the Sixties<sup>33</sup>. In short, Deleuze tries to escape phenomenology (in his own terminology, find a “line of flight” out of it) but without, however, having to *pass through* it. In the same way, we shall argue by the end of this chapter, a tour through the philosophy of Deleuze does not so

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<sup>29</sup> Though perhaps it shall be found that these terms are no longer sufficient or even useful.

<sup>30</sup> In a footnote to *Logic of Sense*, this analysis is confirmed when Deleuze notes that “Sartre’s theory in *Being and Nothingness* is the first great theory of the Other, because it transcends the alternative: is the Other an object ... or rather a subject[?]”. However, Deleuze goes on to note that this theory ultimately fails because Sartre, by introducing the “look”, “fell back into the categories of object and subject” (1990:366 n. 12). Cf. also again the statement we have used as the epigraph to this chapter: “I think I’ve found a theory of the Other, by defining it as neither an object nor a subject (an other subject) but the expression of a possible world”. (Deleuze 1995:147). This “possible world” also refers us back to the element of the “virtual” mentioned by Nancy above.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Foucault (1998:433-458) “Structuralism and Post-Structuralism”.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Deleuze “Breaking Things Open” (1995:88): “I’ve never worried about going beyond metaphysics or the death of philosophy, and I never made a big thing about giving up Totality, Unity, the Subject”.

<sup>33</sup> Which is the period to which Foucault refers – he is talking about Deleuze’s book *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, which was first published in 1960.

much allow one to *solve* the problem of intersubjectivity as posed in phenomenology<sup>34</sup>, as to *evade* – or *flee* from – it.

If we now turn to what Deleuze himself has to say on these matters, we shall start to attain a somewhat clearer picture of what this means. It is interesting – given the road we have traveled thus far – that, in the introduction to the “symposium” devoted to Deleuze in Volume 14 no. 2 of *Theory, Culture and Society*, Philip Goodchild (1997a:2) still characterizes Deleuze’s thought as “a kind of transcendental philosophy”. The first article to follow that is the last which Deleuze wrote before his suicide<sup>35</sup> in 1995<sup>36</sup> and it is precisely with an elaboration of the concept of a “transcendental field” that the essay opens. Already and immediately in the initial description, we start to get both a clearer idea of the “neutrality” that Foucault referred to, and of Deleuze’s relation to phenomenology (or, at least “transcendental philosophy”). Let us briefly follow Deleuze in setting out these features. For him a transcendental field “is distinct from experience in that it neither refers to an object nor belongs to a subject .... It therefore appears as a pure a-subjective current of consciousness, an impersonal pre-reflexive consciousness, a qualitative duration of consciousness without self ... [it is] a question of transcendental empiricism, in opposition to everything that constitutes the world of subject and object” (Deleuze 1997:3). In what follows it will take us a while to explicate all the positions implicated in this fairly dense passage, but one can already note in passing the line being steered between a purely mechanistic materialism (which would arguably have no place

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<sup>34</sup> Although we cannot treat them in any detail, it is perhaps in this way that Deleuze is furthest removed from the other great so-called “French Post-Structuralists” with whom he is roughly contemporaneous: the likes of Derrida, Lyotard, Levinas and even Foucault, while all acknowledging certain impasses or aporias in phenomenology have tried to address them to some extent from *within*, or at least *departing from* phenomenology – at least to the extent that Heidegger can be considered a phenomenologist. This point was indicated, for example, during a study-trip to the Netherlands, where Derrida is described as a “post-phenomenologist”.

<sup>35</sup> Regarding Deleuze’s suicide, it should be noted that Deleuze had suffered from pulmonary disease since the ‘60’s, and by the mid-90’s, was confined to an oxygen tent, and unable to write. One is reminded in this regard of Hume’s essay “On Suicide”, which is a defense of the right to suicide, or at least, a sketch of the conditions under which it is permissible: “If upon account of age and infirmities, I may lawfully resign any office, and employ my time altogether in fencing against these calumnies, and alleviating as much as possible the miseries of my future life; why may I not cut short these miseries at once by an action that is no more prejudicial to society?” (Hume 1996:323).

<sup>36</sup> A biographical detail which is relevant, both since the article is entitled “Immanence: a Life” and is in part a meditation on what “a” life is by a man contemplating the end of his own, and because it thus stands at the other end (the culmination?) of a career the relative beginning of which Foucault’s remarks referred to, back in 1968, and thus can be read as the marker of a certain thematic consistency in Deleuze’s career.

for *subjective* consciousness) and the type of omnipotent subjective consciousness one finds in phenomenology (or even the split subject found in psychoanalysis<sup>37</sup>). In short, a line steered between classic materialistic Spinozism<sup>38</sup> on the one hand, and the idealism of such thinkers as Kant, Hegel and the phenomenologists on the other. The enemy turns out to be *rationalism*; the path to be taken: transcendental *empiricism* (Deleuze 1997:3<sup>39</sup>). In the terms we have used at the start of this chapter, the difference between these two positions can be taken – again – as one of priority. In rationalism, the subject is assumed and its rationality used as a route to knowledge; in empiricism, the process (or better, *event*) of cognition is that which *gives rise to* the subject in the first place!

This is because the elements of empiricism that Deleuze emphasizes seems to be, first of all, the classical empiricist tradition of assimilating ideas (concepts) and impressions (sensations), so that – as in Hume – they are distinguished merely *quantitatively* but are not *qualitatively* different<sup>40</sup>: “The difference betwixt [impressions and ideas] consists in the degree of force and liveliness with which they strike upon the mind, and make their way into our thought or consciousness. Those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence, we may name *impressions* ... By *ideas* I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning” (Hume 1927:9 – *Treatise of Human Nature* Book I Part I). This in turn leads on to the second feature of empiricism that seems to make it attractive to Deleuze, which is that empiricism (in Whitehead’s characterization) enables one “to find the conditions under which something new is produced (*creativity*)” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:vii). This in turn is related to what may be seen as a type of nominalism<sup>41</sup> in empiricism which allows it to be a “*pure* thought of

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<sup>37</sup> In regards to this, it should be noted that Deleuze is probably better-known in connection with his (and Guattari’s) critique of psychoanalysis in especially *Anti-Oedipus* (Deleuze & Guattari:1983). However, we shall not be treating the psycho-analytic conception of consciousness here, nor its critique by Deleuze and Guattari.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. “Even the Spinozist conception of the passage or quantity of power invokes consciousness” (Deleuze 1997:3).

<sup>39</sup> Cf. also Boundas (in Deleuze 1991:3) and various passages in Deleuze and Parnet (2002), for example vi-vii and 54-59.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. also Boundas’s citation of Descombes (in Deleuze 1991:3) – “for Deleuze, philosophy is either dialectical or empiricist, ‘according to whether the difference between concept and intuition... is taken to a be conceptual or a non-conceptual difference’.”

<sup>41</sup> This often seems to be the meaning of Deleuze’s use of “immanence”, but we have sometimes used “nominalism”, because “immanence” is sometimes used in distinction to transcendent (i.e. surpassing to the exterior), and sometimes to transcendental (universal). We have tried to retain “immanence” for the first use, and to use “nominalism” to indicate the second.

*pure difference*" (Derrida in Deleuze 1991:3). We say nominalism because what Derrida here refers to is stated in different terms by Deleuze when, again referring to Whitehead, he formulates the other valuable aspect of empiricism as the recognition that "the abstract does not explain, but must itself be explained" (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:vii), whereas, in "rationalist philosophies... [o]ne starts with abstractions such as the One, the Whole, the Subject, and one looks for the process by which they are embodied in a world *which they make conform to their requirements*" (vii, my emphasis)<sup>42</sup>.

To reach this point – a point we must return to (just as Deleuze had started with Hume and then returned to empiricism by the end of his career) before we can proceed beyond it to its significance for the intersubjective relation - it is necessary to trace the trajectory (he would no doubt prefer the phrase "line of flight") of Deleuze's thought from the very beginning, however; and the brief biographical portrait Deleuze himself has provided of the impulse behind his work serves to emphasise the point – often addressed by translators of his work – that "flight" [*fuite*] is to be read in the sense of "fleeing" and not "flying"<sup>43</sup>.

He provides this portrait in the opening article published in *Negotiations*, entitled "Letter to a Harsh Critic"<sup>44</sup> (Deleuze 1995). Here Deleuze characterizes his generation as "more or less bludgeoned to death with the history of philosophy" (1995:5). In the course of explaining how he himself survived this "blatantly Oedipal" (Deleuze 1995:5) and "repressive" regime, Deleuze gives two very telling – almost programmatic – descriptions of his own work. The second of these is a description of his reading practice, which, though formulated in very different language, gives a good indication of how

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<sup>42</sup> The diagnosis – if one can phrase it like that! – of Deleuze's philosophy as a "nominalism" is confirmed several times in glancing references in secondary literature. For example: Nancy states that Deleuze's "is a philosophy of nomination ... Perhaps no other philosophy makes such use of proper names .... Naming is ... rather a material gesture: the movement to displace a mass, a charge, a trace, so as to index it differently". Cf. also Martin (1996:23-27), where he discusses Deleuze's relation to the (Foucauldian thesis of the) separation between the "order of representations" (i.e. words, concepts; Descartes' *ratio cognoscendi* etc) and the "order of things" (objects, entities, Descartes' *ratio essendi* etc.) which is explicitly described as a continuation and radicalization of medieval nominalism (Martin 1996:23).

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Massumi in Deleuze & Guattari (1987:xvi)

<sup>44</sup> An early translation of this paper appeared in 1977, with the more literally translated title of "I Have Nothing to Admit". This version of the paper can be accessed at [http://bush.cs.tamu.edu/~erich/misc/nothing\\_to\\_admit](http://bush.cs.tamu.edu/~erich/misc/nothing_to_admit)

close Deleuze could be to deconstruction<sup>45</sup>, but it is the first part – which provides an idea of Deleuze’s philosophical appetites - that is of interest to us. He says that it was his discovery (or invention!) of a “secret link between Lucretius, Hume, Spinoza, and Nietzsche, constituted by their critique of negativity, their cultivation of joy, the hatred of interiority, the externality of forces and relations, the denunciation of power” (Deleuze 1995:6) which enabled him to carry on doing philosophy. The break from “doing philosophy of history” in favour of starting to do *philosophy itself* (i.e. to say “simple things in your own way, in affects, intensities, experiences, experiments” and “speaking for yourself, in your own name” – Deleuze 1995:6) is described as involving “the harshest exercise in depersonalization, by opening [oneself] up to the multiplicities everywhere within [oneself], to the intensities running through [one]” which “doesn’t at all come with seeing yourself as an ego or a person or a subject” (Deleuze 1995:6). It is this very movement which caused Derrida, in his eulogy of Deleuze, to call the latter the member of his (their) generation who did philosophy “the most gaily, the most innocently”<sup>46</sup>. Let us then take a closer look at this “innocent philosophy”<sup>47</sup>.

### 3.3 Charting a Different Course (or, a Course of Difference)!

In “The Trick of Singularity”, Nick Millett refers to an article published by Deleuze in a book called *Who Comes After the Subject?*, in which Deleuze writes that “It is not enough to criticize a concept, a concept only dies once it has been rendered superfluous by the construction of other concepts” (Millett 1997:63 n. 3) and comments that critique and construction needs to be in balance for the success of either. Having attempted to give an immanent critique of phenomenology, we thus turn now to the second aspect, in trying to show that Deleuze does construct a viable alternative theory, or “image of thought”, to that of the transcendental philosophy that he has discarded. We

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<sup>45</sup> Elsewhere, Deleuze describes his relationship to deconstruction thus: “I know what it is, and I admire it, but it has nothing to do with my method. I don’t really do textual commentary. For me, a text is nothing but a cog in a larger extra-textual practice” (Deleuze 2004:260). However, this seems to be rather a narrow view of deconstruction – if one takes into account the deconstructive problematisation of the context and of performativity (for example, cf. Derrida (1988).

<sup>46</sup> Jacques Derrida “I Shall Have to Wander all Alone” [www.usc.edu/dept/comp-lit/tympanum/1/derrida1.html](http://www.usc.edu/dept/comp-lit/tympanum/1/derrida1.html).

<sup>47</sup> Cf. also the reference to “innocence” in Deleuze (1983:21-3) and below, p. 188.

shall, however, try to develop this alternative theory in parallel with Deleuze's critique, in order to remain faithful to his admonition that any philosophy is only meaningful in relation to *problems*.

Paul Patton (1996) describes part of Deleuze's project (in, for Patton, especially *What is Philosophy?*<sup>48</sup> and *Difference and Repetition*<sup>49</sup>, although Deleuze already dedicates a longish section of *Nietzsche and Philosophy*<sup>50</sup> to this) as precisely the construction of a “new image of thought: the image thought gives itself of what it means to think” (Deleuze & Guattari in Patton 1996:6). Specifically, the image of thought which Deleuze (sometimes with Guattari, sometimes on his own) tries to *construct*<sup>51</sup> is one that maintains a “rigorous distinction between knowledge, understood as the recognition of truths or the solution of problems, and thinking understood as the creation of concepts or the determination of problems” (Patton 1996:6). The use of “recognition” here is not accidental – earlier, Patton had noted that the “image of thought” *against* which Deleuze's philosophy is directed (i.e. that of *knowledge*) is “a dogmatic image of thought which takes recognition as its model” (1996:3). Implicit in this dogmatic model – or rather, its apotheosis – is the totalizing closed systems of the Hegelian dialectic (Patton 1996:6). In this connection one can of course also note the Hegelian connotation of the notion of recognition, as well as - in passing - the further relation that the idea of “recognition” has with intersubjectivity conceived as the encounter with the “stranger”<sup>52</sup> which (who?) demands, precisely, recognition.

Deleuze starts off *Dialogues* with an enquiry into what those “dialogues” might mean, what it would mean for a text (or rather, “meaning”) to become constituted

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<sup>48</sup> Deleuze and Guattari (1994)

<sup>49</sup> Deleuze (1994)

<sup>50</sup> Deleuze (1983:103-110)

<sup>51</sup> We emphasise “construct” in line with Jean-Clet Martin's characterization of Deleuze's thought – later in the same volume – as a “constructivism” (Martin 1996:19). Martin makes this remark in the context of a discussion of the role the concept of a “surface” plays in Deleuze's thought, where he also states the following as “one of the most important requirements of Deleuze's philosophy: on a surface nothing is hidden, but not everything is visible. And this is why philosophy does not have to interpret towards a hidden essence; it is not disclosure but the construction of a moving image” (Martin 1996:19). One can also see the reference to “disclosure” as an implicit reference to the philosophy of truth of especially Heidegger. In fact, in *What is Philosophy*, Deleuze and Guattari themselves frequently refer to their “image” of philosophy as “constructivism” (e.g. Deleuze & Guattari 1994:7, 22, 35, etc.).

<sup>52</sup> At this point we would like to once again express our thanks to Prof. Dr. Machiel Karskens of the Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, whose course on the “Vreemdelingen probleem”, attended in 2001, first introduced us to Husserl's *Fifth Meditation*, and also afforded the first tentative opportunity of employing Deleuze in this problematic.

“between” people. In the first place he is here addressing the interview-format (which he has rejected<sup>53</sup>), although of course his famous collaborations with Félix Guattari are also very much present in the discussion, especially later. Of his way of working with Guattari, Deleuze says: “we do not work together, we work between the two” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:17). On the literal level this means that they never “discussed” things – Deleuze professes to a horror of philosophy as “discussion”<sup>54</sup> – but wrote and re-wrote for and to each other<sup>55</sup>. However, this correspondence “between” the two writers is only a component, or even a special case of the concept of the “between” that Deleuze develops here. For a start, Deleuze here makes clear that a “between” *does not presuppose poles* “between which” the between would be, just as “becoming” (which *is* to be “between”) has “no terminus from which you set out, none which you arrive at, or which you ought to arrive at .... For as someone becomes, what he is becoming changes as much as he does himself” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:2). To be “between” is not the process of becoming *something different*, but rather of becoming differently. Rather, “between” leads one to the multiplicity, where “what counts are not the terms or the elements” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:viii).

Of interest at this stage is the role that the idea of “recognition” plays here. Since “being between” does not imply two poles, it is not contradictory for Deleuze to say - even and especially while he is talking about what it means to collaborate, to work “between” - that “When you work you are necessarily in absolute solitude” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:6). This solitude is still “between”, Deleuze says, because it is “an extremely populous solitude. Populated ... with *encounters*” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:6, my emphasis). Furthermore, this encounter “is perhaps the same thing as a becoming” (6), in the sense that it, too, is always “between”. The metaphor – or, rather, what Deleuze and Guattari would later call the “plane of immanence”<sup>56</sup> or “image of thought” – here, as

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. Deleuze’s “Preface to the English-Language Edition” of *Dialogues*: “the first plan for a conversation between two people, in which one asked questions and the other replied, no longer had any value” (in Deleuze & Parnet 2002 ix-x).

<sup>54</sup> Cf. *What is Philosophy?*: “philosophers have very little time for discussion. Every philosopher runs away when he or she hears someone say, ‘Let’s discuss this’ ... Philosophy has a horror of discussions” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:28-9)

<sup>55</sup> Cf. *Negotiations*: “On Anti-Oedipus” (Deleuze 1995:14)

<sup>56</sup> Parnet writes: “trees are not a metaphor at all, but an image of thought, a functioning, a whole apparatus that is planted in thought in order to make it go in a straight line and produce the famous correct ideas”

elsewhere, is the rhizome, as opposed to the tree; it is also geography rather than history<sup>57</sup>: in Nancy's terms, a distribution of points that co-exist all across a generalized cartography, rather than a historical (linear) genesis proceeding from an origin to an end. Deleuze and Guattari (rather reluctantly) provide "certain approximate characteristics" of the rhizome, the first two of which serve usefully to illustrate this type of thought. Firstly, the rhizome is ruled by "[p]rinciples of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be" (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:7). In fact, this phrase expresses the first *two* characteristics of the rhizome, inasmuch as the rhizome must both connect "richly" (that is, make as many connections as possible, which means that it is not linear) and that it must connect to "anything *other*" – i.e. be heterogeneous. It does not close up into an identity, but always opens itself up by "decentering" (8) – the rhizome grows at its edges, but at the same time grows from the middle. It forms nodes, but the nodes of a rhizome (its points of stability) do not define the rhizome. Instead, the rhizome is defined by the connections *between* these nodes, by the way they encounter each other.

In fact, the double sense in which Deleuze's work (with Guattari) was an encounter – i.e. double in that it happened "between" the two of them, but also *within* each of them – is very neatly expressed in the wonderful opening lines to "Introduction: Rhizome" (and hence the opening lines to *A Thousand Plateaus*): "The two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus* together. Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd" (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:3)<sup>58</sup>.

For Deleuze, this is the condition for a conversation that would be productive, that could flow, that would not force him into a blind corner where he has nothing to say – that writing would always be an encounter, whether that encounter be with "people" or with "movements, ideas, events, entities" (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:6), as long as that encounter is "between the two, outside the two" (7). Deleuze terms this "encounter" a

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(Deleuze & Parnet 2002:25) On the "plane of immanence" Cf. *What is Philosophy* (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:35-60) and below pp.151-4.

<sup>57</sup> In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze & Guattari will even replace the Nietzschean genealogy with a "geology of morals" (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:39-74 and Deleuze & Guattari 1994:44).

<sup>58</sup> Compare also "Letter to a Harsh critic", in regard to *Anti-Oedipus*: "[People] try to disentangle inseparable elements and identify who did what. But since each of us [i.e. Deleuze and Guattari], like anyone else, is already various people, it gets rather crowded" (Deleuze 1995:7).

“theft” and expressed the hope that he and Guattari had so “stolen” each other, and notes that the type of theft is always a “double-theft” – it radically transforms *both parties*.

The rather famous illustration Deleuze gives of what he means here, is that of the evolution of the symbiotic relation between a certain type of wasp and an orchid, which is “a double-capture since ‘what’ each becomes changes no less than ‘that which’ becomes. The wasp becomes part of the orchid’s reproductive apparatus at the same time as the orchid becomes the sexual organ of the wasp. One and the same becoming” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:2)<sup>59</sup>. To simplify somewhat - and probably do violence to the careful logical and grammatical analyses in *Logic of Sense* - the point can be stated as being that becoming is no longer the attribute of a term (the wasp, the orchid) that precedes it, but that the wasp and the orchid (or, rather, the “wasp-orchid” assemblage) are/(is) attributes of a “single bloc of becoming”.

This example acts as an illustration on a second level since Deleuze “steals” this example from Rémy Chauvin. It is again a double-movement, since Deleuze uses it differently to Chauvin, and hence transforms his thought by means of it, but at the same time transforms the (possibility for) meaning that it had in the original work. The same could be said of Deleuze’s treatment of other philosophers, and in fact, while he does not make this point here, he does famously conceive of his relation to other philosophers as “taking an author from behind and giving him a child that would be his own offspring, yet monstrous … the author had to actually say all that I had him saying. But the child was bound to be monstrous too, because it resulted from all sorts of shifting, slipping, dislocations, and hidden emissions” (Deleuze 1995:6). The unstated point even here is that this again had the double-element of both allowing the development of Deleuze’s own thought, and allowing him to “rescue” certain classical philosophers from that history with which he says his generation was “bludgeoned”. Again, the contrast between “recognition” and “encounter” is implicit – Deleuze characterizes the academic history of philosophy in which he was trained as “repressive” (1995:5), because it demanded that one “recognized” these philosophers according to a normative framework within which their work had been received. In Deleuze’s own words this attitude said: “‘You can’t seriously consider what you yourself think until you’ve read this and that, and that on

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. also Deleuze and Guattari (1987:10).

this, and this on that” (Deleuze 1995:5). It was only by “stealing” their ideas through the “buggery” that he describes that he could end up staging *productive encounters* with them.

It is this type of reading that informs Deleuze’s reading of Plato, which is at the same time his celebrated “overturning of Platonism”

### 3.4 Deleuze contra Plato

Both the ideas of “recognition” and the “stranger” resonate with Deleuze’s critique of Platonism, developed in at least three different places<sup>60</sup> along more or less similar lines - though addressed to different problems each time - and spanning his career. Of these, perhaps the briefest introduction is “Plato, the Greeks” (Deleuze 1998:136-7), which is emblematic of the way Deleuze assimilates the concept of “recognition” to that of the “doctrine of judgment”, which becomes the dominant paradigm, and also becomes the ethical component of this paradigm<sup>61</sup>. Here Deleuze, appearing to follow Nietzsche’s critique of metaphysical thinking in for example *Twilight of the Idols*<sup>62</sup>, states that the “poisoned gift of Platonism is to have introduced transcendence into philosophy … [as] the triumph of the judgment of God” (1998:137). He alludes to Penelope testing her suitors with Odysseus’ bow in the *Odyssey*<sup>63</sup> when he explains that “Every thing or every being lays claims to certain qualities. It is a question of judging the well-foundedness or legitimacy of these claims” (Deleuze 1998:136). This, for Plato, leads to the institution of the vertical (= transcendent) into philosophy as that

<sup>60</sup> Cf. the appendix to *Logic of Sense* entitled “Plato and the Simulacrum” (Deleuze 1990:253-266), which is already a revised version of a paper which originally appeared in 1967, and is an exemplary “deconstructive” reading of Plato, the opening discussion of *What is Philosophy?* (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:2-10) and a brief essay entitled “Plato, the Greeks” in *Essays Critical and Clinical* (1998:136-7).

<sup>61</sup> As made clear in the essay antecedent to this one in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, namely “To Have Done with Judgment” (Deleuze 1998:126-135).

<sup>62</sup> Nietzsche (1990). cf. especially 46-51.

<sup>63</sup> This is not strictly true: while Deleuze *does* call Platonism “the philosophical *Odyssey*” (1998:136), it is Foucault who, in “Theatricum Philosophicum”, makes the connection to Penelope explicit (Foucault 1998:345). The reference here is to Penelope, the wife of Odysseus, who – because of his long absence and thus presumed death – was inundated with suitors. Penelope developed several strategies for keeping them at bay, but eventually was forced to organize a contest for choosing a new husband. The determining factor in the contest was to see which of the suitors could draw Odysseus’ legendary bow. Unannounced and secretly (for fear of being murdered) Odysseus had in the meantime returned, and participating in the event in disguise, was the only person able to draw the bow, thus being revealed as the “true” husband to Penelope.

which enables the creation of a hierarchy<sup>64</sup> – judgment is always “from on high”. The Platonic Idea is thus “that which possesses a quality first-hand... it then follows to determine, after certain tests, which things possess that quality secondhand, thirdhand [etc.] ... Such is the doctrine of judgment” (Deleuze 1998:136). It is this construction of hierarchical systems that institutes (and *constitute*) the so-called “arboreal” thought against which the famous first “plateau” (“Introduction: Rhizome”) of *A Thousand Plateaus* is directed (cf. Deleuze & Guattari 1987:3-25). Here the “tree” is the “image of thought”, against which the “image” of the rhizome is invoked: “The tree and root inspire a sad image of thought that is forever imitating the multiple on the basis of a centered or segmented higher unity” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:16).

Crucial to this “doctrine of judgment” is not the process of *selection between rivals* as such, but the “image of thought” *with which* this selection is accomplished. In Platonism, this principle of selection is inextricably bound up with the vertical, the transcendent and the doctrine of “participation” in the absolute – an extrinsic relation in which the particular, the singular is always subservient or secondary to the universal. It is in regard to this reading of Platonism that Foucault (1998:343) can state: “Overturn Platonism: What philosophy has not tried?”, displacing the well-known characterization of Western Philosophy from ‘a series of footnotes to Plato’ to the (admittedly “useless”) possibility of defining philosophy as any attempt to “reverse Platonism” (Foucault 1998:343) – an attempt which would, moreover, start with Plato himself! (Foucault 1998:344).

In the appendix to *Logic of Sense* to which Foucault is referring<sup>65</sup>, Deleuze performs (or “rehearses” perhaps, if one wants to stay within Foucault’s “theatrical” idiom!) a text-book deconstruction on Plato, showing that Plato himself bears the seeds of his own “overturning” within his own *oeuvre*. While we shall not be focusing in detail on this argument, it is perhaps useful to state its features briefly, because of Platonism’s status as the foundation of the “image of thought” to which Deleuze opposes his own

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<sup>64</sup> Though it is not the hierarchy as such which is the problem, but that there is a *good* and a *bad* way of hierarchising - especially in Nietzsche - which corresponds to *selection* (master morality, good/bad, action, affirmation etc.) and *judgment* (slave morality, good/evil, reaction, negation etc.) respectively. Cf. Deleuze (1983:60-1).

<sup>65</sup> An article originally published in 1967, but republished as the first appendix to *Logic of Sense* under the title “Plato and the Simulacrum” (Deleuze 1990:253-266).

philosophical practice, and for the importance of the concept of the “simulacrum” which is introduced there for the “virtual philosophy” of difference which Deleuze (with Guattari) opposes to this classic conception.

These two images of thought - which are the “rhizomatic” and the “arboreal” models of *A Thousand Plateaus* - are summarized neatly by Parnet in her signed contribution to *Dialogues*. The tree has the following characteristics:

“there is a point of origin, seed or centre; it is a binary machine or principle of dichotomy ... it is an axis of rotation which organizes things in a circle, and the circles around the centre; it is a structure, a system of points and positions which fix all of the possible within a grid, a hierarchical system or transmission of orders ... a future and a past, roots and a peak, a whole history, an evolution, a development” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:25).

Furthermore, arboreal thought functions through the autonomy of the (Kantian self-legislating) “Ratio as tribunal, as universal State” which can be summarized in the injunction: “‘have correct ideas!’”<sup>66</sup> (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:23). In contrast to this, for rhizomatic thinking, “future and past don’t have much meaning, what counts is the present-becoming: geography [*sic*] and not history, the middle and not the beginning or the end, grass which is in the middle and which grows from the middle, and not trees with a top and roots” (2002:23).

In brief, then, turning to Deleuze’s critique of the origin of this “image of thought” in Plato, Deleuze argues that Plato does not distinguish only between the Idea and the copy, but the Idea *itself* is never in play at all. Instead, it is not a question of dividing “a genus into species, but, more profoundly, to select lineages: to distinguish pretenders; to distinguish the pure from the impure, the authentic from the inauthentic” (Deleuze 1990:254). The notion of “lineages” here is important in the context of the extended discussion of the production of sense through the intersection of series of events, which forms the bulk of *Logic of Sense*<sup>67</sup>, and had immediately preceded this

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<sup>66</sup> This plays on a pun by the film director Jean-Luc Godard, cited earlier by Deleuze, which is lost in English translation. Translated, Deleuze articulates his own position, which is contrary to that cited above, as: “no correct ideas, just ideas” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:9). The original French is: “pas d’idées juste, justes des idées”.

<sup>67</sup> Indicative of this is that *Logic of Sense* is not divided into chapters, but into thirty-four “Series”, with the implicit claim that the meaning of the book (its “sense”) is of course not contained in any one of these series, but constituted, precisely, *between* them, in the way they intersect and interpenetrate.

discussion. Drawing on “Neo-Platonic”<sup>68</sup> interpretations, Deleuze sees three levels in Plato, which he calls the “Unparticipated”, the “Participated” and the “participants”, and explains the relationship between them in the following way: “the foundation, the object aspired to, and the pretender; the father, the daughter and the fiancé. The foundation is that which possesses something in a primary way; it relinquishes it to be participated in, giving it to the suitor, who possesses only secondarily and insofar as he has been able to pass the test of the foundation … Justice, the quality of being just, and the just men” (Deleuze 1990:255).

What this entails – and this is the crux of the deconstruction – is that one (or, more specifically, Plato) is no longer concerned with distinguishing primarily between the Idea and the Copy, but rather, between *good copies* (Icons), which are “well-founded pretenders, guaranteed by resemblance” and *bad copies*, which are like “false pretenders, built upon a dissimilarity, implying an essential perversion or a deviation (Deleuze 1990:256). He is quick to point out that resemblance is not “an external relation. It goes less from one thing to another than from one thing to an Idea” (1990:257). It is this similarity which lends legitimacy to the “claim” of the “suitor”, which founds this claim well; and the lack of it which leads to the dismissal of the simulacrum as a “bad copy”.

The notion of resemblance is crucial, and gives rise to a further distinction between image and resemblance, and in turn divides the Platonic philosophy into two possible “images of thought” – one (the actual Platonic one, or that which Plato ultimately *rules*<sup>69</sup> in favour of) which is organized hierarchically in terms of the dyads of “Essence-Appearance or Model-Copy” (Deleuze 1990:262), presided over by the principle of “resemblance” or the “Similar”; the other (the “reversal of Platonism”) which is organized rhizomatically around the notion of the simulacrum, which is “an image without resemblance” (1990:257) *and* without an original! In a wonderfully clear analogy, Deleuze uses the Christian catechism to explain what he means here: “God made man in his image and resemblance. Through sin, however, man lost the resemblance while maintaining the image” (Deleuze 1990:257). As he himself notes, this

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<sup>68</sup> Deleuze does not explicitly refer to Plotinus, but the distinction of *three* levels, with the highest one being “beyond Being” (the unparticipated), from which follows the World of Forms (the participated) and then the particulars (the participants) definitely seems to point at Plotinus’ three-tiered and hierarchised conception of reality. Cf. Armstrong (1965:178-183).

<sup>69</sup> We italicize this word to draw attention to its juridical flavour!

illustration has the further advantage of implying the moral or “demonic” aspect of the simulacrum.

This difference, Deleuze makes clear, has both extreme epistemological and ontological implications. Firstly, alongside the usual Platonic distinction between “knowledge” (which is of the model or Idea) and is “used” by the philosopher, and “opinion” (*doxa*), which is that by which the “good copy” is “produced” and which can at least be *right*, it introduces a third type of knowledge, “an art of *encounter* which is outside knowledge and opinion” (Deleuze 1990:258, my emphasis). This is the mode of *thought* of the simulacrum, which is a “becoming-mad, or a becoming unlimited” (Deleuze 1990:258), a *delirious*<sup>70</sup> flow of forces which are always in flux, becoming, and never the Same. It turns out that what is at stake for “Platonism in its will to bring about the triumph of icons over simulacra” (1990:259) is the guarantee of stability, Identity, Being (the universal) over becoming, flux etc. (the particular).

It is here that Deleuze can now give a preliminary sketch of the foundational role that Platonism plays in constructing the image of thought and the “entire domain that philosophy will later recognize as its own: the domain of representation filled by copies-icons, and designated not by an extrinsic relation to an object, but by an intrinsic relation to the model or foundation” (Deleuze 1990:259). This image of thought, as indicated above, also has an equally (or more!) important ontological dimension. For Deleuze, the selection between copies-icons (representation) or simulacra (nomadic thought) rests on the choice between two distinct and fundamentally different “readings of the world”, and here Deleuze gives a short but very serviceable definition of the differences between a philosophy based on identity and one founded on difference (1990:261).

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<sup>70</sup> Deleuze does not explicitly invoke the notion of *délire* here, but that seems to be what he is referring to. Regarding *délire*, see for example Joughin’s comments (in Deleuze 1995:187 n. 3): “Jean-Jacques Lecercle [characterizes] Deleuzoguattarian thought as a ‘philosophy of *délire*’ [and] argues that the term is untranslatable”. In the same footnote Martin Joughin (the translator) glosses *délire* as follows: “meanings, images, and so on float in a dream-logic … for Deleuze and Guattari solid ‘reason’ and free-floating *délire* are simply converse articulations of a single transformational ‘logic of sense’ that is no more anchored in a central fixed signifier … than in any supposedly fixed system of reference” (Deleuze 1995:186-7n3). Deleuze also makes the following interesting point in relation to experimentation with drugs (for advocating which he was sometimes blamed): “effects produced in some particular way (through homosexuality, drugs, and so on) *can always be produced by other means* .... What’s to stop me talking about drugs without being an addict .... Drugs can produce *délire* so why can’t I get into a *délire* about drugs?” (Deleuze 1995:11-2). For the rest of our discussion, we shall refer instead to “nomadic thought” which has a much broader application through Deleuze’s *oeuvre*.

The initial versions of the two statements in which Deleuze gives these differing “readings” seem designed to be read at first glance as merely two formulations of more-or-less the same point, with a mere shift of emphasis separating them, and certainly this would be consonant with Deleuze and Guattari’s later conception of the Plane of Immanence which is “laid out” on the same chaos, and forms the “abstract machine” “out of which” concepts are cut<sup>71</sup> - but that the difference between the two formulations does not appear to be all that large, does not therefore make this difference any less decisive or crucial. These two formulations are, then: on the one hand “only that which resembles differs” and, on the other “only differences can resemble each other” (Deleuze 1990:261). Deleuze is very quick to spell out the consequences which follows from adopting one of these views rather than the other: the first formulation is that of a theory of representation which “posits the world as icon” and “invites us to think difference from the standpoint of a previous similitude<sup>72</sup> or identity” (Deleuze 1990:261). (Compare our description of Husserl’s theory of intersubjectivity in the first part of the current study when we claimed that Husserl approaches the Other from out of a prior identity).

The second formulation is that against which Platonism is directed, and is also (therefore) the one which can form the condition for the overthrow of Platonism. This formulation and the image of thought which corresponds to it “invites us to think similitude and even identity as the product of a deep disparity” (Deleuze 1990:261). Here the world itself is seen as a phantasm, as simulacrum – and the simulacrum has no identity in itself, but is always the product of the intersection of “at least two divergent series”, the “internal difference” between which creates the “constitutive disparity” of the simulacrum (Deleuze 1990:261). Again Deleuze notes that “it matters little whether the original disparity, upon which the disparity is built, it [sic] great or small” (261). Whereas

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<sup>71</sup> Cf. the discussion of the Plane of Immanence in *What is Philosophy?* (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:35-60), e.g. “Concepts are concrete assemblages, like the configurations of a machine, but the plane is the abstract machine of which these assemblages are the working parts ... The plane is like a desert that concepts populate without dividing up” (1994:36). In this sense the plane of immanence certainly seems to be related to Nietzsche’s “spider-web” of language which is always a certain way of imposing a certain grid of enabling metaphors on a world that is not as anthropomorphic as these metaphors inevitably suggest. Cf. the incomplete essay “On Truth and Lies in the Nonmoral Sense” in Nietzsche (1979: 79-91).

<sup>72</sup> Similarity. The point here is that theories or representation posit a primordial identity between entities, with differences being seen as secondary *deviations* from the model. A simplistic but good example is the practice of definition by “genus and difference”, where the definition of, e.g. “man” as a “rational animal” starts from the general similarities that define the genus “animal”, which is then secondarily qualified by the derived “difference” of “rationality”.

the Similar is thus the enabling principle of the Icon and of the system of representation, it is the Disparate which is that of the simulacrum.

Here Deleuze is finally in a position to effect the “reversal” of Platonism – for him this would mean to “make the simulacra rise and to affirm their rights among icons and copies” (Deleuze 1990:262). However, this does not mean displacing the status of the simulacra *in relation* to icons and copies and the disjunction between “Essence-Appearance or Model-Copy” – i.e. it does not amount to showing that simulacra are “like” copies<sup>73</sup>. Instead, it requires the displacement of *this distinction* itself: “This distinction operates completely within the world of representations. Rather, it has to do with the subversion of this world ... [The simulacrum] harbours a positive power which denies *the original and copy, the model and the reproduction*. At least two divergent series are internalized in the simulacrum – neither can be assigned as the original, neither as the copy” (Deleuze 1990:262, emphasis in original).

Deleuze then proceeds, in a Nietzschean manner, to diagnose modernity in terms of the triumph of the simulacrum, whereby even the “Same and the Similar” are now simulated (Deleuze 1990:265). However, this does not lead to an “anything-goes” wild and viral proliferation of simulacra: the simulacra turn out to be nothing else than Nietzsche’s “Eternal Return” – which in turn acts as a principle of selection<sup>74</sup>: “What is selected are all the procedures opposed to selection; what is excluded , what is *made not to return*, is that which presupposes the Same and the Similar” (Deleuze 1990:265). If this is an apparently paradoxical formulation, it should be read in the same way as Nietzsche’s “nihilism turning on itself” or as a double-bind. In “Plato, the Greeks”, this is described as “no longer concern[ing] claims as acts of transcendence, but the manner in which an existing being is filled with immanence” (Deleuze 1998:137). According to Williams, this amounts to the claim that “Selection is then not between true and false pretenders but between simulacra and only simulacra... simulacra are selected with respect to the relation of a given actual situation to the expression of pure differences,

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<sup>73</sup> It is worth noting here – since Deleuze himself alludes to it – that the point is a similar one to that made by Nietzsche in the fable of “How the ‘Real World’ at last Became a Myth” (1990:51) – “6. We have abolished the real world: what world is left? The apparent world perhaps? ... But no! *with the real world we have also abolished the apparent world!*” (emphasis in original).

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Deleuze (1983:68-71) and pp. 192-3 below.

with a view to *maximizing their number and intensity* (connect) and in line with the need not to perpetuate the illusion of fixed identities and values (forget)<sup>75</sup>" (Williams 2003:82.

In *What is Philosophy?* (Deleuze & Guattari 1994) - and precisely in the course of answering the question posed by that title in a preliminary way - Deleuze (and Guattari) once again returns to this reading of Plato, specifically in the context of Plato's dialogues with the Sophists, in which the argument is precisely about who should be *judged* to be the "true friend" of wisdom. Deleuze and Guattari first of all note that the Greek philosopher has to be distinguished from the sage precisely because of this relation of "friend to" (rather than "formal *possessor of*") wisdom (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:3). Again, the central project of philosophy (as conceived by Plato, but also subsequently) is seen to be ability to judge between different rivals, or claims, to a position.

Here, however, the discussion is leading up to the exposition of a *new* image of thought – the constructivism of empiricism which sees philosophy as the creation of concepts on a plane of immanence and as the function of a specifically determined problem. Here the principle of judgment which chooses between "right and wrong", "true and false" is no longer applicable – in that regard, Deleuze and Guattari can say of one of their examples (Descartes's *cogito*) that "there is no point in wondering whether Descartes was right or wrong" (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:27). Instead, because the concept is *created* there are no pre-existent, transcendent principles with which to *judge* it – *evaluation* (assessment) of concepts can only occur immanently "as a function of their problem and their plane" (1994:27).

At stake here is not only the construction of new *concepts*, but of a whole new *plane* (= image of thought) on which (and with which) to construct these concepts. This is necessary because, as Millett writes, "the critique of a concept [or a plane, or a problem] depends on the construction of another [one] for its success" (Millett 1997:53). We shall follow Deleuze's critique of the modern "image of thought" further along the lines of the components, which he invents for the "new image of thought" that he intends to erect in its place.

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<sup>75</sup> On the importance of forgetting, see for example Nietzsche's "Second Essay" in *The Genealogy of Morals*.

### 3.5 The Logic of Sense

In the concluding section on Levinas above, we noted that Deleuze is just as concerned as Levinas with constructing a theory of *sense*. In his review discussion of the works in which Deleuze is chiefly concerned with this, Michel Foucault (1998:343-368) makes what might be read as a similar point about the order of knowledge to that of Levinas with which we started the current chapter - at least, to the extent that knowledge depends on meaning - and also in explicit relation to Merleau-Ponty (among others). This essay – “Theatrum Philosophicum” – is an extended and insightful discussion of two major works<sup>76</sup> by his close friend Gilles Deleuze, which Foucault sees as being the first steps towards a philosophy that would – again, for the first time – be able to give a satisfactory account of the *event* (Foucault 1998:350-1). It is in the context of a brief review of previous attempts at such a philosophy of the event, that Foucault makes some significant remarks for the course of our present investigations.

Foucault identifies three such attempts, of which the first two (neopositivism or the philosophy of history) do not concern us, but only the third: namely that of phenomenology. Though Foucault does not go all the way back to the founders of phenomenology (i.e. Husserl, Heidegger etc.) he does see the course subsequent phenomenology (that of his and Deleuze's French contemporaries) had taken as a choice between what he calls “the cat whose good sense precedes the smile” (i.e. Sartre, who had set the “bare event” to the side “and then submitted it to the active processes of meaning”) or else “the common sense of the smile that anticipates the cat”<sup>77</sup> (Foucault 1998:351). The latter, Foucault says, is performed in the work of Merleau-Ponty, where the event “had assumed a domain of primal significations which always existed as a disposition of the world around the self ... indicating in advance where the event might occur and its possible form” (Foucault 1998:351). Against this, Foucault says, part of Deleuze's project is the formulation of a “logic of neutral meanings (rather than a phenomenology of signification based on the subject)” (1998:352). We shall argue that

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<sup>76</sup> *The Logic of Sense* (Deleuze 1990) and *Difference and Repetition* (Deleuze 1994). While the former will be a central text for us in the discussion to follow, we shall rely mainly on Williams (2003) for our use of the latter book.

<sup>77</sup> The metaphor of the cat refers, of course, to the Cheshire Cat in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, an extended reading of whose work forms an important part of *Logic of Sense*.

this theory, by falling *outside* the subject, or, better, *between the ego and the Other*, allows Deleuze to derive a theory which escapes the pitfalls we have tried to indicate lies in wait for Levinas's philosophy.

*Logic of Sense* (Deleuze 1990) constitutes Deleuze's first sustained attempt to describe (and design) a new image of thought, which not only, as stated by Foucault above, seeks to give a comprehensive theory of the event, but would be *based* on the event – in other words, a completely *immanent* theory that would require no recourse to either *transcendent* or *substantive* elements that are by their very nature different to the event itself. The attempt is to derive a theory of the event purely in terms of itself – in pure immanence. In terms of grammar, Deleuze calls for a philosophy that would be of the *verb* and the *infinitive* (to become) rather than the subject, the attribute ... and the noun (being), both because it is only the former that captures the crucial dynamism (the becoming) of the event which the stable latter terms do not<sup>78</sup>; but more importantly, because the verb (for Deleuze) is not *attributed* to anything, whereas, it is a pure event and therefore the very principle of immanence, whereas the noun is always attributed. It is this strange reversal of “common sense”<sup>79</sup> which is the object of Deleuze's study – in fact, as we shall see, much of his critique of the traditional “image of thought” will be directed precisely against its “common sense”. Deleuze starts this work by elaborating this “double” procedure of becoming, with reference to Lewis Carroll's Alice's misadventures in Wonderland. Here, becoming “eludes the present, ... does not tolerate

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<sup>78</sup> As an example, one could look at Deleuze and Guattari's later controversial notion of the schizophrenic – in several interviews, Deleuze expresses his exasperation that some readers persist in reading his concept of schizophrenia as the call for *noun* (the *schizophrenic*) when what he consistently calls for is a *verb* (the *process of schizophrenising*). Deleuze argues that the schizophrenic (as entity, as noun) is always (only?) produced when the process of schizophrenising is *interrupted*, or stopped. (For example, Deleuze 1995:23-4).

<sup>79</sup> As so often with Deleuze, “common sense” should be read as having at least two meanings – firstly, the everyday use of being “reasonable”, of thinking like everyone else, of having common assumptions. For Deleuze, this is stifling and prevents the formation of new thoughts, new ways of seeing and interpreting the world. There is also a “common sense” approach to philosophy which he criticizes – one of the elements of this approach, for example, is the assumption that philosophers strive purely and primarily for the truth for its own sake. Deleuze, from a Nietzschean background is often concerned to show, instead, the “type” of person and interest that lies behind a philosophical position. “Common sense” has a further, more technical sense, which is related to the Kantian notion of the *Sensus communis* or the transcendental unity of apperception which makes harmonious experience possible – Deleuze's approach, against this, is related more closely to Rimbaud's call “[t]o attain the unknown by disorganizing *all the sense* ... a long, boundless, and systematized *disorganization of all the senses*” (in Deleuze 1998:33, all emphases and elision in original). This principle is later brought into fruition as the Deleuzoguattarian concepts of “schizoanalysis” and the “Body without Organs”.

the separation or the distinction of before and after, or of past and future. It pertains to the essence of becoming to move and to pull in both directions at once” (Deleuze 1990:1). In the example he uses (that of Alice eating the cakes that make her grow and shrink), Deleuze analyses the double (and paradoxical) nature of this – but also of all! – becoming: When Alice becomes bigger, she *simultaneously* and by virtue of that process *also becomes smaller!* In other words, if we can manage to conceive of the *event of becoming-larger itself* rather than that *which she becomes* (i.e. larger) – and this becoming is then “between” what she *was* and what she *is now* – she both becomes *larger than she was* and *smaller than she will become!* The opposition here is between the paradox of the event (pure becoming) which “moves in both directions at once” (Deleuze 1990:2), and the “good sense” of the being of “a particular subject having a particular largeness or a particular smallness at a particular moment” (Deleuze 1990:1), and which – if it does *change* – does so only in a way which always presupposes “pauses and rests, the fixing of presents” (1), and which has “a determinable sense or direction”<sup>80</sup> (Deleuze 1990:1).

Bergson is strangely absent (at least by name) in *Logic of Sense*<sup>81</sup>, but here Deleuze obviously has in mind the sort of point that he developed again in the opening discussion of *Cinema I*, in explicit relation to Bergson. Briefly, Bergson’s famous critique of the modern notion of time is directed against the assimilation of time to space: for Bergson, the greatest contribution of Newton and his contemporaries, which had enabled modern mechanical physics to break from the Greek model that had been the reigning paradigm until then, had been their introduction of movement into science (through Newton and others’ introduction of acceleration into physics and their treatment thereof with infinitesimal calculus), but this fundamental insight had then immediately been lost when Newtonian mechanics was formalized as “radically unchanging instants, points, lines, solids. Matter and motions … had been spatialised by the ruling paradigm” (Gunter 1993:137). For Bergson this meant that modern physics (and indeed, psychology) treats time as *divisible* and, conversely, as constituted by the mere addition

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<sup>80</sup> Deleuze here also plays on the ambiguity of the French word *sens*, which (amongst other things) means both “sense” and “direction”, as well as being related to “sensation”.

<sup>81</sup> Instead of Bergson’s two conceptions of time as *Durée* and *Duration*, Deleuze makes constant reference to the Stoic notions of *Chronos* (linear time) and *Aion* (the time of events and of the eternal return) throughout *Logic of Sense*.

of “segments of time” (instants), one to the other. Against this, Bergson argues that this cannot be so: as Deleuze renders this “first thesis of movement” - movement being a function of time, and a species of change - Bergson notes that “space covered is past, movement is present, the act of covering. The space covered is divisible, indeed infinitely divisible, whilst movement is indivisible, or *cannot be divided without changing qualitatively each time it is divided*” (Deleuze 1986:1, my emphasis).

If, then – as Bergson claims is the case with classical mechanics, and Deleuze with Platonic-Aristotelian philosophy – the attempt is to reconstitute movement through the addition of “positions in space or instants in time: that is, immobile sections”, onto which is superimposed “the abstract idea of a succession”, one misses “the movement in two ways. On the one hand, you can bring two instants or positions together to infinity; but movement will always occur *between*<sup>82</sup> the two … On the other hand, however much you divide and subdivide time, movement will always occur in a concrete duration [*durée*]; thus each movement will have its own qualitative duration” (Deleuze 1986:1, my emphasis). This is because, as Gunter notes, an instant “has no breadth – any more than does a spatial point. Nor does it have the slightest dynamism. It is a mathematical, static, knife-edge, cleanly severing past from future. A series of such knife-edges, no matter how many, scarcely conveys experienced change” (Gunter 1993:135). Deleuze sees Bergson’s “first thesis” as making a distinction between “two irreducible formulas: ‘real movement → concrete duration’, and ‘immobile sections + abstract time’” (Deleuze 1986:1). It should be clear from the direction in which our discussion is moving that it is very much the first of these formulae that fits the image of thought which Deleuze is attempting to construct, and the second which fits that which he is critiquing.

This in turn leads to what Deleuze sees as Bergson’s second thesis, which is what is at stake for our current discussion, as it is directly related to the choice between an

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<sup>82</sup> We italicize “between” here both because of the role it has already played in our discussion above, but also because, as Parnet notes, it is precisely through this focus on the “between” that Deleuze’s critique of the modern (metaphysical) image of thought and his attempt to construct a new image differs from what might be seen as a similar project in Heidegger’s *Destruktion* of Western Metaphysics: “In everything you have written there is the theme of an image of thought which would impede thinking, which would impede the exercise of thought. Nevertheless, you are not Heideggerian. You love the grass rather than the trees and the forest. You do not say that we are not yet thinking, and that there is a future of thought which plunges into the most immemorial past, and that, between the two, everything would be hidden from view. *Future and past don’t have much meaning, what counts is the present-becoming ... the middle and not the beginning or the end*” (Parnet in Deleuze & Parnet 2002:23, my emphasis)

“image of thought” that privileges static beings and nouns, or one which selects the fluid and dynamic becoming of events and verbs. Here the contrast is no longer between movement and instants, but between two types of instants (in other words, between *types of illusion*), what Deleuze terms “privileged instants” and “any-instant-whatevers” (Deleuze 1986:3). The latter illusion is – for Deleuze – that of modern thought, but it is with the first of these (that of “privileged instants” which is the illusion of antiquity – Deleuze 1986:3-4) that we shall be concerned here.

In antiquity, Deleuze notes, movement referred to “intelligible elements, Forms or Ideas which are themselves eternal and immobile” (1986:4). Movement, then, “will thus be the regulated transition from one form to another, that is, an order of *poses* or privileged instants” (Deleuze 1986:4). In an essay entitled “On Four Poetic Formulas That Might Summarize the Kantian Philosophy” (in *Essays Critical and Clinical* – Deleuze 1998:27-35), Deleuze briefly describes the reversal which Kant had brought about from ancient to modern philosophy: relating Kant’s conception of time to Hamlet’s statement that “the time is out of joint”, Deleuze sees Kant as breaking decisively with the circular “hinged” view of time in antiquity towards a “unilinear and rectilinear” time (Deleuze 1998:27-8). However, it is not so much this that is the decisive break as the inversion of the relation of priority between movement and time: the ancients had described “the subordination of time to precise cardinal points, through which the periodic movements it measures pass” (Deleuze 1998:27). The great reversal in Kant is that “movement is now subordinate to time” (Deleuze 1998:27). Deleuze obviously views this as a step forward (he speaks in this regard of the “emancipation” of time – 1998:28), but the objection above still holds: movement becomes the “description of a space” and time “imposes the succession of its determination on every possible movement” (Deleuze 1998:28). If there is an advance here, it is that “it is not succession that defines time, but time that defines the parts of movement as successive inasmuch as they are determined within it” (Deleuze 1998:28) – however, Deleuze makes it clear that to complete and consummate this Kantian discovery<sup>83</sup>, “time can no longer be defined by succession ... [and] will have to find completely new determinations” (Deleuze 1998:29).

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<sup>83</sup> Deleuze often seems to speak of Kant with mixed feelings – the point is usually that Kant was the first to point philosophy in a vital new direction ... but then shrank back from pushing his radical insights through

It seems pretty clear – to get back to our discussion – that it is with this critique in the back of his mind that Deleuze approaches his exposition of becoming and the event in *Logic of Sense*<sup>84</sup>: especially to the extent that the philosophy he develops there is (as noted by Foucault and explicitly acknowledged by Deleuze<sup>85</sup>) an attempt to “overturn Platonism”. Deleuze quotes a passage from Plato’s *Philebus*, where the latter explicitly contrasts being to becoming(-mad): ““the younger becoming older than the older, the older becoming younger than the younger – *but they can never finally become so; if they did they would no longer be becoming, but would be so*” (Plato in Deleuze 1990:2; my emphasis). Drawing on the work already done in an earlier article in which he had first tackled the task of “overturning Platonism”, and reworked as an appendix to *Logic of Sense*<sup>86</sup>, Deleuze then notes that the distinction Plato makes here “is not the distinction between the Model and the copy, but rather between copies and simulacra” (1990:2). He then carries on – following Plato – to link this with language, which is often the focus of attention in *Logic of Sense*: corresponding to each image of thought, there are “two languages and two sorts of ‘names’, one designating the pauses and rests which receive the action of the Idea, the other expressing the movements or rebel becomings” (Deleuze 1990:2). This is because the open-ended character of becoming (as opposed to the finality and stasis of being) creates the need for a conception of an “infinite identity” – not only because the object which is becoming is ‘never yet’ that which it is *in the process of becoming*, but (also) because this paradox of pure becoming moves in two directions at once, eluding the present *both* towards the past and towards the future (Deleuze 1990:2).

Inasmuch as contesting Platonism (and the image of thought to which it gives rise) involves the construction of concepts for such an infinite identity, it will also require a new use of language, and in particular, of names. We are now moving closer to the “logic of neutral meanings (rather than a phenomenology of signification based on the subject)” of which we had Foucault (1998:352), speak above and also of the first

to their logical conclusions. Cf. the third section of *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (Deleuze 1983, especially pp. 89-94)

<sup>84</sup> Deleuze’s book on Bergson (*Bergsonism*) was published in French in 1966; the first major article on this aspect of Plato in late 1966 (according to the Bibliography in *Deleuze: a Critical Reader*) or 1967 (according to the acknowledgements in the front of *Logic of Sense*) and *Logic of Sense* in 1969.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Foucault (1998:343 *et passim*) and Deleuze (1990:253 *et passim*).

<sup>86</sup> The earlier article was published in 1967 as “Reversing Platonism”, and republished as “Plato and the Simulacrum”, the first of five appendices to *Logic of Sense* (1990:253-266).

breaches with the “order of knowledge” which we have seen is the “image of thought” underlying the phenomenological theory of intersubjectivity. This problem of identity and of naming is one that would exercise Deleuze throughout his career, and is probably what first lent him the (somewhat useless) classification as a “post-structuralist”: his first book (on Hume – Deleuze 1991) is concerned with the problem of identity; his last published article (“Immanence: A Life...” – Deleuze 1997) is still a meditation, in part, on what it means to speak in one’s own name.

At this stage in the argument in *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze explicitly connects the order of knowledge to a certain use and type of naming: “the proper or singular name is guaranteed by the permanence of *savoir* [knowledge]. The latter is embodied in *general* names designating pauses and rests ... But when substantives and adjectives begin to dissolve, when the names of pause and rest are carried away by the verbs of pure becoming and slide into the language of events, all identity disappears from the self” (Deleuze 1990:3; my emphasis). We emphasise “general” in that quote to serve as a reminder that the image of thought (i.e. “transcendental empiricism”) that Deleuze is trying to construct is opposed to any theory of universals (in the scholastic sense) because empiricism holds that (in Whitehead’s formulation that Deleuze refers to a number of times, more or less obliquely, throughout his *oeuvre*) “the abstract explains nothing, but must itself be explained; and the aim is not to rediscover the eternal or the universal”<sup>87</sup> (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:vii). In *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze notes that the “neutral” sense after which he is, is “altogether indifferent to both particular and general, singular and universal, personal and impersonal” (Deleuze 1990:19).

“Sense” becomes something different from the *signification* by which the proper name operates. Deleuze spends some time in analyzing the different levels of the proposition in order to position sense accurately. For him, sense is the “fourth dimension” of the proposition, distinct from the traditional types of signification, denotation and manifestation (Deleuze 1990:12-20). Significantly, as we shall see, what Deleuze pays attention to when thus addressing the proposition and language is not the *terms* that are used and how they are used, but the *relations* that are expressed in propositions.

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<sup>87</sup> In a further formulation in *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari write that “The first principle of philosophy is that Universals explain nothing but must themselves be explained” (1994:7).

Moreover, he is concerned with showing the logical priority (i.e. hierarchy) between these types of relations. These first three relations that can be distinguished *within*<sup>88</sup> the proposition, can be defined briefly in the following ways: firstly, denotation is the “relation of the proposition to an external state of affairs (*datum*)” (Deleuze 1990:12). This is the representational function of the proposition, and is evaluated in terms of truth or falsity, according to whether it is fulfilled or unfulfilled or not by the state of affairs which it depicts, or whether it has led to the selection of the correct corresponding image (1990:12-3). The function of denotation in a proposition is performed by “designators” such as “this, that, it, here, there, yesterday, now, etc.” (1990:13), which function as place-holders for *particular* things, which are *individuated* by the proposition, but also – and especially – by proper names, which have a “special importance since they alone form properly material singularities” (1990:13). The typical form of this type of relation is “this is (not) that” (Deleuze 1990:12).

The second relation is that of manifestation, which “concerns the relation of the proposition to the person who speaks and expresses himself” (Deleuze 1990:13). Here it is not a question of association of ideas, but of “causal inferences” either as *desire* (where the object is related to the speaker with or through an “internal causality”) or as *belief* (where the object is *anticipated* as the product of an “external causality”) (1990:13). The typical terms here are “you, tomorrow, always, elsewhere, everywhere etc.”, but here the correlative to the proper name as the “privileged indicator” is the “I”, which constitutes “the domain of the *personal*, which functions as the principle of all possible denotation” (1990:13). The logical criteria for these relations in the proposition is “no longer the true and the false, but veracity and illusion”<sup>89</sup> (1990:14).

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<sup>88</sup> Their status as being “within” propositions is – we shall see – important, since what makes sense as “events-effects” different from them and gives it its special importance is that which passes *between* the proposition and the mixtures of bodies that is represented therein: it inheres in the proposition without being a part of, or reducible to, the proposition.

<sup>89</sup> Reading Foucault’s *Theatricum Philosophicum*, one can already see that these are two dimensions with which Deleuze will be increasingly uncomfortable through *Logic of Sense*. If, as Foucault contends, Deleuze discovers that the attempt to overturn Plato “begins with Plato himself” (Foucault 1998:343-4), then this is because of the displacement Deleuze introduces into Plato, which is that of the principle of division between legitimate (authentic) copies and false (illegitimate) simulacra, and no longer between the Idea and its copies. This principle functions (in Plato) “not at all by discovering a law of the true and the false (*truth is not opposed to error but to false appearances*) but by looking above these *manifestations* to a model” (Foucault 1998:344-5; my emphasis). Crucial to note, however, is that *both* these ways of “judging” the proposition still remains very much within Plato, as two different ways of effecting *the same*

Deleuze then proceeds to link the way this principle functions explicitly to the Cartesian cogito, in relation to the famous wax metaphor: Descartes “shows how the I, the Cogito, grounds the judgment of denotation by which the wax is identified” (Deleuze 1990:14). The point here is also that denotation (which is the order of knowledge conceived as the ability to “judge” true and false) is therefore *dependent* on manifestation, and hence on a strong principle of subjective identity (the “I”). In terms of our discussion thus far, it can thus be seen why the erection of the Platonic image of thought as judgment will also have to be dependent on a strong principle of identity, and hence must depart from a solid, defined subjectivity at its centre, upon which it must base any edifice of knowledge which it is to erect thereafter, in a manner which we’ve shown is the case in the phenomenological theory, which – so is our contention, and (implicitly, at least) that of Deleuze – is the culmination of that tradition.

The third definition is that of signification (or demonstration), where the word is related to “*universal or general concepts*” (Deleuze 1990:14; emphasis in original), or, in other words, which relate the proposition to *other* propositions (14). Deleuze here explicitly evokes the structuralist notion of the signifier<sup>90</sup>, and his examples of these “essentially linguistic signifiers” are terms such as “therefore” and those of implication. Propositions are here classified as syllogistically demonstrative (premises or conclusions), but also “in the physical sense of probabilities or in the moral sense as promises and commitments (1990:14). The criterium for this relation is “no longer the truth … but rather the *condition of truth*, the aggregate of conditions under which the proposition ‘would be’ true” (1990:14, emphasis in original), for example, a promise “would be true” once it has actually been *kept*.

These are then what Deleuze calls the three “ordinary dimensions” of the proposition (Deleuze 1990:20). In a few pages he then briefly sets out the various priorities amongst these different relations<sup>91</sup>, but also points out that they function in a

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process, i.e. that of selection – to overturn Plato, “we should welcome the cunning assembly that simulates and clamors at the door. And what will enter … *will be the event*” (Foucault 1998:345, my emphasis)

<sup>90</sup> In comparing this to denotations as a “direct process”, he seems to be assimilating the distinction between signification and denotation to the distinction between an (ostensive) referential system of language and one based on difference, such as structuralism. Another way of conceiving this distinction might be as that between “*what* a proposition means” and “*how* it means what it means”.

<sup>91</sup> E.g. Manifestation is primary in “speech (*parole*)”, whereas signification would be primary in “language (*langue*)” (Deleuze 1990:15).

circle, each element of which is dependent on and refers to another element. Then he takes each element in turn, in order to examine whether it can serve as the basis of sense, and concludes that none of the three can fulfill this function without falling into contradiction (Deleuze 1990:16-19). Instead, sense is defined as “*the expressed of the proposition*” (1990:19, emphasis in original), but this, of course, does not really advance the problem: *how* is this sense expressed? In appealing to empiricism as the “inspiration” behind the “logic of sense” that he is trying to elaborate, Deleuze briefly states what might be considered the conditions under which sense must be expressed – empiricism is the preferred (indeed the “only”) method which is of use, because it alone knows how to “transcend the experiential dimensions of the visible without falling into Ideas, and how to track down, invoke, and perhaps produce a *phantom at the limit of a lengthened or unfolded experience*” (Deleuze 1990:20, my emphasis).

Deleuze is here preparing a return to the “incorporeal events-effects” that he had earlier credited the Stoics with discovering. The Stoics had, according to Deleuze, conceived of the event in a radically new way as a result of conceiving of causal reality in a new way. For the Stoics (according to Deleuze), there is a radical distinction between bodies (or mixtures of bodies, or ‘states of affairs’<sup>92</sup>) *all of which act as causes on each other*, and secondly, “*effects* [which] are not bodies, but properly speaking, ‘incorporeal’ entities” (Deleuze 1990:4) that “subsist or inhere (having this minimum of being which is appropriate to that which is not a thing, a nonexisting entity)” (Deleuze 1990:5). Here already, Deleuze had started to sketch the differing relations these two types of entities had to language: these effects are infinitives, and hence expressible (only) in verbs. (Deleuze 1990:5). To conceive of the event in this way, for Deleuze, is very different from treating something as a *property* to be *attributed* to a body. In a famous example, Deleuze notes that to talk of the “green of a tree” (which is still to speak of a state of affairs - “mixtures deep inside bodies”) is “something entirely different” from talking of

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<sup>92</sup> This term is perhaps introduced in an attempt to implicitly echo, not Wittgenstein’s “states of affairs”, but Hume’s “matters of fact”, which Hume then contrasts with “relations of ideas” (Hume 1927:115-117, *Enquiry Concerning Human Nature*, Section II, Part I). It should of course be remembered however that for Hume, ideas are not Platonic Ideas or in any way qualitatively different from sensory perception, but are precisely (phantasmic?) echoes of (sensory perceptions of) objects (Hume 1927:9-10, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Part I, Section I).

“green” as an incorporeal effect, an event which the tree comes to inhabit, and *which precedes it*<sup>93</sup>: “the tree ‘greens’” (Deleuze 1990:6).

Also, bodies are three-dimensional, have “thickness” and “depths”, whereas effects-events “play only on the surface” (Deleuze 1990:6). The contrast is thus between depth and surface (between the tree which delves deeply into the earth with its roots, and the rhizome – the lawn – which spreads everywhere over and along its surface) and events are at the surface, as is (and *as*) sense, not least because (in Stoic thought, but in Stoic thought *inasmuch as* it is the first philosophy to overturn Platonism by recognizing the power of the simulacrum, of incorporeal effect and events) “Everything happens at the boundary between things and propositions” (Deleuze 1990:8).

For Deleuze – and here he is really just re-approaching from another angle his real concern in *Logic of Sense*, which is the re-introduction of the phantasmal, the virtual, the simulacrum into thinking, from whence it had been ostensibly banished by Plato’s thought – “we may not even say that sense exists either in things or in the mind; it has neither physical nor mental existence” (Deleuze 1990:20). Sense then has a complex relationship with the proposition that expresses it: “on the one hand, it does not exist outside the proposition which expresses it”, which is to say that sense does not ‘exist’, but “inheres or subsists” (Deleuze 1990:21); and yet it is “distinct” from this proposition. It is attributed, but to the *thing* or the “state of affairs” and not the proposition (1990:21). This is why the sense of the proposition – and Deleuze is already moving towards his central argument, which has to do with the centrality of the *event* – is not a predicate (because a predicate is attributed to the *subject of a proposition*)! Instead, “the attribute of the thing is the verb” (Deleuze 1990:21) – the event. In continuation with the work he had already done on the status of the event in Stoic philosophy, the logic of sense must be a logic of “surface effects”.

To summarise briefly, then, sense “is expressed [but] does not exist outside its proposition” (Deleuze 1990:21). In fact, it does not “exist”, properly speaking, at all, but “subsists or inheres”. However, it does not at all “merge” with the proposition, since it

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<sup>93</sup> In another example that Deleuze returns to a number of times throughout his *oeuvre*, Joe Bousquet writes: “My wound existed before me, I was born to inhabit it” (in Deleuze 1990:148; cf. also Deleuze 1997:7).

has an “objective [*objectité*<sup>94</sup>] which is quite distinct” (Deleuze 1990:21). In fact, here the meaning of the contention that, as far as events are concerned “everything happens at the boundary between things and propositions” (Deleuze 1990:8) becomes a little clearer: while sense does not exist separately from propositions, and is attributed, “it is not at all the attribute of the proposition – it is rather the attribute of the thing or state of affairs” (Deleuze 1990:21). If it were the former, it would be attributed to the “subject of the proposition” as a *predicate* (“green”); instead, it is attributed to the *thing*, and hence as *verb* (“to green”), which, as we have seen, is the (linguistic) mode of the event. Sense is therefore that which mediates between the thing and the proposition in which something is *said* of the thing ... but “mediate” is still misleading: rather, sense is that which *passes between the thing and the proposition, without belonging to either!* It is this which allows it to be “indifferent” not only to the particular and the universal etc (Deleuze 1990:19), but also to the order of knowledge conceived as the relation between subject and object.

This “between”-ness is emphasized when, after having stated that sense is not the subject of the proposition, Deleuze notes that, on the other hand, it “does not merge at all with the physical state of affairs, nor with the quality or relation of this state” (Deleuze 1990:21). Thus, in conclusion, the character of sense turns out to be “the coexistence of two sides without thickness, such that we pass from one to the other by following their length .... It is in this sense that it is an ‘event’: *on the condition that the event is not confused with its spatio-temporal realization in a state of affairs ... the event is sense itself*” (Deleuze 1990:22, emphasis in original).

### 3.6 The critique of phenomenology

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<sup>94</sup> In a translator’s note to *What is Philosophy?*, Burchell and Tomlinson note that “*objectité*” is a term used by Sartre, and glossed by his translator, Hazel Barnes, as “the quality or state of being an object” (Deleuze & Guattari:1994:3 n\*). In Sartre, the term is translated as “objectness”. Burchell and Tomlinson propose the translation “objectality”.

Deleuze returns to the discussion of sense as a fourth dimension of the proposition (but also as that dimension of the proposition which *escapes* the proposition and links it to the “state of affairs”) at a later stage of *Logic of Sense*, in a chapter<sup>95</sup> called “of Double Causality”, and specifically in a context where he is leading up to a passage of a fairly sustained critique of phenomenology and the transcendental tradition. As implied in that title, he returns to the cause (mixture-of-bodies) and effect (incorporeal-event) distinction of the Stoics that he had earlier examined. The “double causality” that he refers to is a result of these two levels: “the event is subject to a double causality, referring on one hand to mixtures of bodies which are its cause and, on the other, to other events which are its cause” (Deleuze 1990:94). This two-fold nature of event as effect, or at least, the two planes across which sense (as an event-effect) must thus be distributed, or again, with which it must be articulated, creates an irreducible paradox and ambiguity in the heart of the event (sense). It is both *itself produced*, and at the same time *must produce* “the other dimensions of the proposition (signification, manifestation, and denotation)” (Deleuze 1990:94-5). Having shown “that sense is essentially *produced*” (1990:95, emphasis in original) in the interval or “meeting-point” between mixtures of bodies (causes) and propositions (event-effects) as “the difference between sense and the denoted states of affairs, but also the difference from the propositions which express it” (95) - though the point is that they never *meet*, but can only communicate through the sense *that is produced* Deleuze now notes that the “immanent relation” that the cause has with the effect is such that it “turns the product, the moment that it is produced, into something productive” (1990:94). Thus, in its capacity as *effect*, sense is “never originary, but is always caused and derived”, but in its capacity as *quasi-cause*, “it creates the paths which it traces and causes to bifurcate” (1990:94). In terms of the discussion of the proposition, then, sense is “genetic” in the sense that it “must engender” the other dimensions of the

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<sup>95</sup> Deleuze seems to be uncomfortable with the notion of “chapters” – not only was *A Thousand Plateaus* divided into “plateaus” (in explicit distinction to chapters), but *Logic of Sense* is divided into “series”. In a general sense, this is a result of the very problematising of “closed monadic nodes” that we are investigating, and in both the abovementioned cases, the idea is to have the form of the books concerned follow their contents. In terms of *Logic of Sense*, one of the major theses of the book is that sense is generated through the intersection and folding of different series into each other: sense occurs *between* these series. The book is therefore not constructed of separate chapters, each of which would have the “last word” about a certain theme – instead, the “series” communicate across fissures and through surprising points of contact, “weaving together” the sense of the book. (This does not make it any easier to read for the first time!)

proposition (Deleuze 1990:94-5), but at the same time must be understood in relation to the *fulfillment* of these dimensions, i.e. not only to the dimension of denotation, but also to the state of affairs *which is denoted*; not only to manifestation as such but also to “states of the subject” *which are manifested*; not only to the function of signification, but also to the “concepts, properties, and classes” *that are being signified* (Deleuze 1990:95). Once again, then, sense is that which is both *of the proposition*, *and* that which allows the transcendence of the proposition towards a material world outside it<sup>96</sup>.

Deleuze is here chiefly concerned with this productive role of sense, as he is here busy creating the context for the critique of phenomenology which is to follow, and which will turn precisely around the inability of phenomenology to account for the *production* (and *productiveness*) of sense without falling back into consciousness, which begs the question (as we have tried to show in Part 1, in a far less elegant way than Deleuze does!). For Deleuze, modern philosophy (or rather, transcendental philosophy) sees itself (falsely) as having to decide (to ad-judge, as it were) between two irreducible poles, one of which must be chosen in a fateful decision and to the exclusion of the other. Thus, having taken the great step forward of ridding philosophy of the “Essences and the divine Being of the old metaphysics” (Deleuze 1990:105), transcendental philosophy now “imposes” the following alternative on thought: “either an undifferentiated ground, a groundlessness, formless nonbeing, or an abyss without differences and without properties, *or* a supremely individuated Being and an intensely personalized Form. Without this Being or this Form, you will have only chaos ...” (Deleuze 1990:106) Having landed itself in this dichotomy, transcendental philosophy had then “reached an agreement” with the old metaphysics “to think about *those determinable singularities only which are already imprisoned inside a supreme Self or a superior I'* (Deleuze 1990:106, emphases in original). Deleuze’s point is that transcendental philosophy’s choice of “the finite synthetic form of the Person rather than

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<sup>96</sup> Compare here Boundas’s description of the relationship between “relations” and the constitution of the subject in empiricism (to which we return below) as a fairly clear articulation of the doubled and paradoxical nature of this simultaneously “genetic” and “ontological” moment : “Relations are the effect of the principles of human nature and the latter ... *constitute the subject at the same time that they constitute relations*” (Boundas 1991:6-7, my emphasis).

the infinite analytic being of the individual”<sup>97</sup> has not really advanced beyond the crucial problem, because “in both cases [i.e., that of transcendental philosophy as well as of metaphysic], we are faced with the alternative between undifferentiated groundlessness and imprisoned singularities” (Deleuze 1990:106), where *both* the “Person”<sup>98</sup> and the “individual”<sup>99</sup> still belong to the latter option. In short, then, transcendental philosophy represents an advance over metaphysics in that it replaces Essence with sense, but it does not carry this discovery through satisfactorily because its reliance on the Ego, the Self, the I and all the other figures of *consciousness* leaves it unable to account for the paradoxical nature of sense as both productive *and produced* without falling into a vicious circle (Deleuze 1990:105). Since it installs the figure of a (unidirectional) common sense and rectilinear time, it always has to assign a position of *priority* over the condition and the conditioned, while missing the *double causality* of the “lived-present” of the Event which allows them to be seen as a “*nomadic distribution*” (1990:102, emphasis in original) across a plane. Earlier, Deleuze had stated that “[t]o reverse Platonism is first and foremost to remove essences and to substitute events in their place, as jets of singularities” (Deleuze 1990:53). Transcendental philosophy had accomplished the former, but it is up to Deleuze to accomplish the latter. Let us follow Deleuze briefly then, in tracing the failure of phenomenology to account for the constitution of a viable transcendental field.

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<sup>97</sup> Earlier he had characterized this shift – and it *is* an advance for Deleuze – as the discovery of a sense in “the form of an impassive neutrality, which had broken away from Aristotelianism” and “in the form of a genetic productivity by transcendental philosophy which had broken away from metaphysics” (Deleuze 1990:105). His immediately succeeding analysis of the failure of the Kantian I to satisfactorily account for the constitution of the transcendental field, and even Sartre’s failure because of the latter’s retention of consciousness, makes it clear that the latter “break” is only an *apparent* and not really a decisive one (Deleuze 1990:105).

<sup>98</sup> I.e. the Kantian subject as the “synthetic unity of apperception” (Deleuze 1990:105) which conditions the given, and which according to Deleuze is tautological since the “error of all efforts to determine the transcendental as consciousness is that they think of the transcendental in the image of, and in the resemblance to, that which it is supposed to ground” (105), thus repeating the “vicious circle” we have seen before in phenomenology.

<sup>99</sup> The “individual” to which Deleuze refers here is the subject of classical metaphysics which takes the form of “a Being [*sic*] infinitely and completely determined by its concept and and which thereby possesses the entire originary reality … [and] is necessarily individuated, since it relegates to nonbeing or to the bottomless abyss every predicate or property which expresses nothing real, and delegates to its creatures, that is, to finite individualities, the task of receiving derived predicates which express only limited realities” (Deleuze 1990:106).

Deleuze rejects what he had earlier put forward as the first contender for such a “rigorous science of surface effects” (Deleuze 1990:20-1), namely Husserlian phenomenology, for its inability to contend with *both* of these (admittedly paradoxical and contradictory) levels.. Deleuze does give credit to Husserl for discovering this role of surface, through his notion of the “perceptual noema” (Deleuze 1990:20), which entails the discovery that sense does not exist outside the proposition (1990:21). Such a perceptual noema is defined as “an impassive and incorporeal entity, without physical or mental existence, neither acting nor being acted upon – a pure result or pure ‘appearance’” (1990:20), which would seem to exactly the kind of concept that Deleuze is looking for here. Thus sense is an “event” which is separate from the object which it presents in expressions – e.g. “morning star” has a different sense to “evening star”, even if it shares the same *denotatum* (Deleuze 1990:20). In Deleuze’s example, the objective tree can “burn, be the object or subject of actions, and enter into mixtures. This is not the case, however, for the noema ‘tree’” (1990:20).

However, in posing the question of phenomenology’s fitness for this mantle of “rigorous science of surface effects” (Deleuze 1990:21), and while not yet giving an answer, Deleuze seems to rhetorically presume a negative answer. He returns to an examination of phenomenological logic later in *Logic of Sense*, and here explicitly rejects Husserl’s theory out of hand, because, while “the nucleus has indeed been determined as *attribute* … the attribute is understood as *predicate* and not as verb, that is, as concept and not as event” (Deleuze 1990:97). In other words, for Husserl - and this is preparing the ground for a critique of transcendental theories in general - “sense is inseparable from a type of generality” (Deleuze 1990:97). And this is, from Deleuze’s empiricist perspective, problematic, since it is, for him, precisely the genesis of these principles of generality that must be explained: to paraphrase once again the crucial insight he borrows from Whitehead – the general explains nothing; it is the general which must itself be explained! In his critique of Husserl, Deleuze explicitly assimilates this “generality” to the notion of “common sense” that we had encountered before, but which is now however also linked with the “common sense” which, in Kant, is the principle of the “transcendental unity of apperception” (Deleuze 1990:97): precisely that which effected the so-called Copernican revolution by which Kant placed the unitary Subject at the

centre of his world as the fulcrum by which sense is generated. Deleuze here expresses the profound discomfort which Foucault spoke of<sup>100</sup>, but credits Kant and Husserl with feeling the same discomfort<sup>101</sup>: he speaks of the “powerlessness of this philosophy to break with the form of common sense, which was clearly present in Kant, [and] is also present in Husserl” (Deleuze 1990:97-8), though theirs is also a “philosophy which knows full well that it would not be philosophy at all” if it did not break with common sense as “*urdoxa*” (Deleuze 1990:98). This *urdoxa* is what allows Husserl to miss an account of the genesis of sense “on the basis of a necessarily ‘paradoxical’ instance, which, properly speaking, would be ‘non-identifiable’ (lacking its own *identity* and its own *origin*)” (Deleuze 1990:97, my emphasis).

Deleuze expands on what makes this failure significant by drawing on an article by Sartre, in which the latter had laid out the conditions for “this bestowal of sense, on the basis of the immanent quasi-cause and the static genesis which ensues for other dimensions of the proposition” (Deleuze 1990:98). Essentially, Sartre had proposed that this bestowal of sense can occur only within “an impersonal transcendental field, not having the form of a synthetic personal consciousness or a subjective identity – with the subject, *on the contrary, always being constituted*” (Deleuze 1990:98-9, my emphasis)<sup>102</sup>. The footnote in which Deleuze then criticizes Sartre in turn, is equally revealing: Deleuze acknowledges the importance of the “idea of an ‘impersonal or pre-personal’ transcendental field, producing the I and the Ego” but then notes that Sartre himself had not succeeded in constructing such a field since, for Sartre, “the impersonal transcendental field is still determined as the field of a *consciousness*” (Deleuze 1990:343-4 n. 5).

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<sup>100</sup> Foucault (1998:438).

<sup>101</sup> Williams speaks of “Deleuze’s bitterness at what he sees as Kant’s missed opportunity in not pushing through his replacement of error by illusion” (Williams 2003:119) in the context of an examination of Chapter 3 of Deleuze’s *Difference and Repetition*, which, according to Williams, aims to show that “Philosophy always runs the risk of re-enforcing common sense and good sense. At worst, philosophy may adopt this as its true task” (2003:112).

<sup>102</sup>The very next sentence in this section sums up succinctly the *petitio principii* which we have tried to show in the first part of this study: “The foundation can never resemble what it founds” (Deleuze 1990:99).

Although Deleuze is also sensitive to the fact that Husserl replaces the “I in the Kantian manner” with Leibnizian “centers of individuation and individual systems, monads, and points of view” – which are also glossed as the replacement of the personal by the individual, and the general by the universal – this does not provide a satisfactory way out of this problem. (Deleuze 1990:99) Instead of the “neutrality and genetic power with respect to modes” (Deleuze 1990:102) of which Foucault spoke and which are for Deleuze the two dimensions of sense necessitated by the “double causality” of which it is a function, the phenomenological account can only provide a “false genesis” and a “pseudo-neutrality” (Deleuze 1990:102).

The roots of this critique are already found in Deleuze’s book on Hume (*Empiricism and Subjectivity* – Deleuze 1991), first published in 1953, and both from the Foucault interview already cited above, and from Boundas’ introduction to that book (Boundas 1991), it is clear that already here, at the start of his career, Deleuze is preparing for the critique of phenomenological subjectivity that finds its full articulation in *Logic of Sense*, and for the positive theory that he derives there, and further into his career. We shall now turn briefly to an exposition of his positions in *Empiricism and Subjectivity*.

### 3.7 The role of Hume

Valentine Moulard, in a footnote to an essay that already aims to defend Deleuze from Alain Badiou’s contention that Deleuze falls into the same mistakes for which Deleuze had criticized phenomenology, succinctly sums up that this critique of phenomenology derives from the fact that it “treats the sensible as objects that are already constituted” by a transcendental consciousness, which is also treated as primordial and hence fails “to capture the non-totalisable pre-individual intensities that constitute the real” (Moulard 2004:297 n. 4). According to Moulard, Badiou criticizes Deleuze for relying on a “renewed conception of Heidegger’s ontological difference … [betraying] an appeal to the transcendence of ‘the whole’, ‘the One’”, and precisely for escaping from phenomenology only to fall prey to empiricism (Moulard 2004:288). This latter point of criticism, Moulard contends, rests on the contention that empiricism – *no less than*

phenomenology – “treats the sensible as objects that are already constituted” (Moulard 2004:297n4) and thus again becomes liable “to phenomenological recuperation” (2004:288). In short, according to Moulard, Badiou contends that by simply *reversing* Platonism (and one can read for Platonism also “any transcendental philosophy”), Deleuze “fails to effectively break free from the Master” (Moulard 2004:288). Moulard goes on to defend Deleuze by arguing that Badiou’s criticisms are a result of not recognizing the radicality of Deleuze’s position, and that the latter should, in fact be read *aesthetically*, as a *modern artist* (Moulard 2004:289).

For Moulard, Deleuze – like Badiou – opposes modernity to Platonism, especially in his reading of reminiscence in Plato and Proust. Here again, this opposition turns on the relative priority assigned to the subjective as against the pre-personal/impersonal ground against and from which this subjectivity must appear. Thus, although ‘Plato’s reminiscence has its point of departure in sensuous qualities or sensible relations grasped in their becoming’, this becoming is never more than a striving “to imitate the Idea, which is always presupposed even when it is only discovered afterwards” (Moulard 2004:289). The following sentence is the crucial one: “Thus in Plato, the intellect always precedes sensibility, and the work of dialectic consists precisely in returning to the original unity that got lost in the degenerate world of becoming” (Moulard 2004:289).

In contrast to this, the impressions on which Proust bases his reminiscences (according to Deleuze<sup>103</sup>) “radically precede the essence they yield”, or, in other words, these reminiscences are of a “pure past that was never present” (Moulard 2004:290). In Proust, “the qualitative becoming is no longer inscribed in states of things or of the world, but in a state of mind” (Moulard 2004:290). This analysis turns on a crucial re-interpretation of the role played in reminiscence and the constitution of essences by time – in a similar manner to the “double causality” which we have seen above is the condition for the construction of sense (paradoxical because at the same time sense is constituted as *constructive*). Time here becomes subject because it “constitutes the self at the same time as it must be extracted from it” (Moulard 2004:290). Moulard notes that to say “Time has become subject” here has a very different meaning to the “Kantian/Phenomenological

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<sup>103</sup> Deleuze had written a book on Proust in 1964.

claim that subjectivity is time” – it “is not some homogenous, transcendentally posited Kantian form that escapes sensibility and conditions it externally. Rather ... [it] precedes any presupposed transcendental consciousness” (Moulard 2004:290, my emphasis).

This form of time is Aion, the circular time to which Deleuze had also paid considerable attention in *Logic of Sense*. There, Chronos (to which Aion is opposed) “is the present which alone exists. It makes of the past and future its two oriented dimensions, so that one goes always from the past to the future” (Deleuze 1990:77). In short, Chronos is the time of “good sense” and as such functions only in (already constituted!) “individual worlds or systems” (Deleuze 1990:77), or “partial worlds or partial systems” – which is, as we shall see, the same thing, since a system can only be created by distinguishing itself as a “figure” from a chaotic “ground”: it is the process which allows this to happen which is the constant focus of Deleuze’s attention! In contrast to Chronos, Aion is the “past-future, which in an infinite subdivision of the abstract moment endlessly decomposes itself in both directions at once and forever sidesteps the present” (Deleuze 1990:77). As opposed to Chronos, again, “which ‘regularises’ in an individual system each singular point which it takes in” (1990:77), Aion “leaps from one *pre-individual singularity to another* and recovers them all, each one of them within the others” (Deleuze 1990:77) The last phrase in that last citation gives a clue to the Spinozistic conception of a single monistic substance (consisting, however, of infinite and infinitely distinguishable modes) that underlies this conception whereby Aion, too, is taken to be the time of a “Universe which is taken to be the system of all systems, or the abnormal set<sup>104</sup>” (Deleuze 1990:77), whereas Chronos is taken to be the time of the “partial systems” comprising this Universe. Of greater importance than Spinoza to this passage on time is, however, (and of course) Bergson, but also Hume.

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<sup>104</sup> This is an allusion to Frege’s (also known as Russell’s) paradox, to which Deleuze makes glancing references throughout *Logic of Sense*. Briefly put, this paradox occurs in set theory where hierarchies of sets are considered. In its typical form, it can be stated as follows: some sets are not members of themselves (e.g. the set of all teacups is not itself a tea-cup, and therefore not a member of itself) and some sets are members of themselves (e.g. the set of all non-teacups is itself not a tea-cup, and therefore a member of itself). The paradox occurs at the next level: a set of all sets that are not members of themselves is itself a member of that set if, by definition it is *not* a member of that set, and vice versa.  
<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/russell-paradox/>.

Earlier we had seen that Aion is the time of the eternal return – Deleuze uses Bergson (and Hume) to show how Aion can be *at the same time* “past-future” – it can do so because Aion is the time of the Event, that is, of the “lived present” which moves both into the past and the future at the same time. Williams notes that the essential part of this process is repetition, and that it occurs in three so-called “passive syntheses of time” (of which we shall only be concerned here with the first). According to Williams, “by showing that repetition underlies the illusion of fixed identities, including consciousness, Deleuze can criticize the founding role given to the well-defined subject and self in the history of philosophy” (Williams 2003:85). Integral to this critique is the ability to show that repetition does not have to be “for someone” but can be “for itself”, i.e. that it does not have to refer to a subject – as is clear from Moulard’s argument above, it is as a function of this repetition that the subject arises, and then, in Williams’ words as the function of a certain “expectancy” (2003:86). The essence here is the “lived present”, which we have already seen in our brief analysis of Bergson above – here Williams glosses it as “the passive synthesis of time where the past is synthesized , or contracted, in the present as a behaviour towards the future” (Williams 2003:87). It is *passive* because it is not a function of the subject – the subject arises *as* this contraction. And if it relies on the Bergsonian conception of time, where the past is never lost, and where there is no possibility of two *identical* experiences, because at the very least the second would already have the added characteristic of being *repeated* (of being *second*), then Williams notes that it is also – in Hume’s sense – habit.

In fact, there is a second way of defending Deleuze against the criticisms raised by Badiou than the one taken by Moulard, and that is to point out – as Boundas does in his thorough “Translator’s Introduction” (1991) to *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, where he gives a more extended treatment of this point, that for Deleuze “a definition which does not first problematize the nature and status of experience, is of little value” (Boundas 1991:6). This is as much as to acknowledge the *validity* of Badiou’s criticism, but to note that it does not apply to Deleuze’s appropriation of empiricism – in fact, it is also to claim that, as Moulard states it, Badiou fails to see the “radical novelty” of Deleuze’s project

(Moulard 2004:288)<sup>105</sup>. In other words, although he is not explicitly referring to Badiou, Boundas' point could be read as stating that Deleuze's (re-)definition of empiricism is precisely designed *not* to fall into the type of trap of which Badiou is wary: for Deleuze, "empiricism will be the theory of the externality of relations, and conversely, all theories which entail the derivation of relations from the nature of things would be resolutely nonempiricist" (Boundas 1991:6). In a by now familiar move, the importance for Deleuze of this empiricist focus on relations (in relation to Hume) is that "Relations are the effects of the principles of human nature and the latter ... *constitute the subject at the same time that they constitute relations*" (Boundas 1991:6-7, my emphasis). It is this process by which the subject is constituted with which Deleuze is primarily concerned, and as already noted by Foucault, it is as an attempt to do this in a non-phenomenological manner that Deleuze appropriates and uses Hume and empiricism. This appropriation has several significant aspects.

In the 1989 Preface to the English translation of his first book (*Empiricism and Subjectivity* - Deleuze 1991 - the French edition of which was first published in 1953), Deleuze - who at the time must already have been engaged in writing his last book with Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (Deleuze & Guattari 1994), in which they address the creation of concepts - takes the opportunity to list briefly the three concepts for which, he believes, Hume will be remembered. The first of these is the concept of belief, with which Hume replaces knowledge. This in turn, for Deleuze, means that belief is no longer contrasted to *error*, but to *illusion*. Important here is the formulation: "Illegitimate beliefs perhaps inevitably surround thought like a *cloud of illusions*" (Deleuze 1991:ix; my emphasis). We shall return to this below, but the use of "clouds" here leads us to the essay "The Actual and the Virtual"<sup>106</sup>, in which Deleuze similarly writes: "Every actual surrounds itself with a cloud of virtual images" (in Deleuze & Parnet 2002:149). If this does indeed suggest an equivalence between, on the one hand "thought" and the "actual", and – on the other – "illusion" and the "virtual", it is perhaps a rather strange equivalence

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<sup>105</sup> See also the other article by Moulard (2002), which is more directly concerned with Deleuze's "superior" or "transcendental" empiricism.

<sup>106</sup> Presumably the last of Deleuze's published essays. If in fact – as we shall try to do – this link can be shown, it will be not least significant in forming two convenient bookends around Deleuze's *oeuvre* (*Empiricism and Subjectivity* being his *first* major work) which can act as a binding principle of consistency.

to make: The first remark is drawn from a book devoted to Hume, and the second is a discussion of overtly Bergsonian concepts, and it might be argued that few philosophers would seem to be as inimical to each other as Hume (with his strictly atomistic theory of perception and time<sup>107</sup>) and Bergson (whose entire philosophy of *duration* seems to be directed precisely at correcting this tendency towards dividing time up into segments).

However, Boundas (1991:5), in his Introduction, notes that Deleuze and Bergson “join hands in their demand that consciousness be constituted” and that Hume’s empiricism is precisely an attempt to give an answer to the similar question of “How can the mind become a subject?” (1991:15). On the other hand Deleuze and Hume, in turn, can contribute to the Bergsonian project for an “elemental world” because of two enabling premises that they share. The first of these is the principle of difference which holds that the given “is a collection of ideas separable because different and different because separable. This principle of difference requires that the mind be neither Subject nor Mirror of Nature” (Boundas 1991:7) The second is the principle of the serialization of different elements (Boundas 1991:7-8) – this occurs in the “passive synthesis of time” which Deleuze sees as operating in *both* Bergson and Hume (Deleuze 1991:92-3)<sup>108</sup>.

The third of the three concepts described by Deleuze in his “Preface” (the second of which shall not interest us here), provide the initial clue as to how Deleuze can be *Humean* and *Bergsonian*, and often at the same time. Here Deleuze writes: “[Hume] created the first great logic of *relation* [emphasis – GD], showing in it that all relations ... are external to their terms. As a result, he constituted a multifarious world of experience based upon the principle of the exteriority of relations. *We start with atomic parts, but these atomic parts have transitions, passages, ‘tendencies’, which circulate from one to another.* [my emphasis – JH]” (Deleuze 1991:x). Here we can see how Deleuze will be able to combine Hume and Bergson in a philosophy founded on exteriority – as opposed to the interiority of the phenomenological tradition – and the Bergsonian notions of extensity and intensity. (Incidentally, this is also why it should not be seen as strange that

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<sup>107</sup> At least, this seems to be the standard interpretation of Hume (Cf. a textbook like Thomson 1993:190) and to be sure it seems evident from Hume’s writings themselves – e.g. “every distinct impression ... is a distinct existence, and is different, and distinguishable, and separable from every other perception, either contemporary or successive” (Hume 1927:87-8).

<sup>108</sup> cf. also Williams (2003:86-90) on Hume, Bergson and the passive synthesis of time in *Difference and Repetition*.

Deleuze can characterize his entire philosophy as Spinozist, while simultaneously claiming that Hume is everywhere present in it.).

For our purposes here, the importance of this link can be seen immediately when the above citation carries on to read: “These tendencies give rise to *habits*. Isn’t this the answer to the question ‘what are we?’ We are habits, nothing but habits – the habit of saying ‘I.’” (Deleuze 1991:x). In this manner we can see the re-establishment – but it is, we shall argue, a *displaced* re-establishment – of the link between knowledge and intersubjectivity that has been noted and critiqued by Levinas above, and which, indeed, is already implied in the title “Empiricism and Subjectivity”. Subjective being for Deleuze, then - we can posit as an initial hypothesis - will be the function of a certain epistemological function which would correspond with *empiricism*, though an empiricism departing from Hume both in the sense of *starting with him*, and *moving away from him*. So far, so traditional: it is most often as a “subject of knowledge” that the “subject” is considered. Most importantly, however, once the *exteriority of relations to their terms* has been posited, it is no longer *knowledge which belongs to the subject*, but rather, *the subject which belongs to knowledge*. In other words, what we shall try to show is how this concept of subjectivity does not posit the subject as one node of a relation, of which the other nodes would be “objects” or even “Others”, but that instead the subject itself is to be considered as nothing more than these “*transitions, passages, ‘tendencies’, which circulate from one to another*”, where, furthermore, the “one” and “another” are not to be considered as things/objects/others, but as *events*. In the terms of *Dialogues*, the subject is a “becoming”, which is as much as to say that it is always “between” (Boundas 1991:7)<sup>109</sup>

Firstly, in playing off Deleuze’s fascination with empiricism against his dislike of the “scholastic tactics of phenomenology which enshrine common and good sense” (Boundas 1991:4<sup>110</sup>), Boundas notes again the role Bergson plays in augmenting Hume’s empiricism in this regard: “Bergson breaks with the philosophic tradition which had assigned light to the mind and conceived consciousness as a searchlight summoning

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<sup>109</sup> Later in *Dialogues*, Deleuze makes this link to Hume and empiricism even more explicit. Cf. Deleuze and Parnet (2002:54-9).

<sup>110</sup> As also noticed by Foucault (1998:438).

things up from their essential darkness” (Boundas 1991:5). While phenomenology “remained faithful to this tradition”, the contribution of Bergson had been to reconceive of consciousness as the “opaque blade” or screen which allows the light *arriving* and *arising* from *objects themselves* to become visible. This amounts to Bergson’s (and this is how Deleuze enlists him in his own project) demand that “consciousness be constituted” (Boundas 1991:5). It is this demand of Bergson’s which lies behind Deleuze’s whole project that we are busy describing.

Boundas’s main concern (understandably, in terms of the book he is introducing, namely *Empiricism and Subjectivity*) is to show the role Hume’s empiricism plays in Deleuze’s theory of subjectivity, which is itself an attempt to break out of phenomenology. In his introduction, Boundas is concerned to show that Deleuze’s theory continually distinguishes between two concepts, but always in order to show how the one lays the groundwork for the other. These two concepts are, respectively, the mind defined as a “collection of atoms [=ideas] in motion … moving images without a frame to restrict their movement” (Boundas 1991:7) and what Boundas will come to call the “structure-Subject” which is a (*secondary*) “effect of the principles of human nature … [that] constitute the subject at the same time as that they constitute relations” (Boundas 1991:6-7). According to Boundas, especially in *Empiricism and Subjectivity* – but also throughout his *oeuvre* – it is this constitution of the subject that Deleuze is determined to examine, and which leads him to choose empiricism as a “critical but nontranscendental philosophy” (Boundas 1991:8). In this sense, for Boundas, an entire “Hume-series” (which is not necessarily identified by being always explicitly associated with *Hume*, but by this problematic that Deleuze adopts from *Hume*) running through the whole of Deleuze’s *euvre* is “coordinated by the question ‘how does the mind become subject?’” (Boundas 1991:14).

Boundas’s formulation of what is at stake in this choice links into our current examination in a fairly obvious way: “Transcendental philosophy, says Deleuze, beginning with a methodologically reduced field from which it derives its certainty, asks how there can be a given, or how a subject can give itself the given. But Hume’s empiricism asks how a subject can be constituted inside the given. The subject here is a

task which must be fulfilled” (Boundas 1991:8; all emphases mine). One only has to note that in our present case we are dealing with a special case of “the given” (namely “the other”) to see that Deleuze chooses Hume over phenomenology on the basis of a similar type of criticism to that which we have tried to develop in the first part of this study.

Similarly, of crucial importance to our current investigations are the reasons Boundas provides to explain what exactly it is about empiricism that makes it suitable for this role. In the first place, this suitability is due to empiricism’s ability to act as a foundation *without* having to rely on a primordial *identity* and the universality of a “transcendental field” such as that provided by the foundational Cartesian or phenomenological subject. Instead, Boundas quotes Derrida to the effect that empiricism is the “dream of a purely *heterological* thought at its source” (Boundas 1991:3). Secondly, there is the principle that “Every relation is external to its terms” (Deleuze 1991:99). For Hume (and for Deleuze), this means that one cannot *derive* relations from their terms – in the example of Hume, “Contiguous or distant objects do not in the least explain that distance and contiguity are *relations*” (Deleuze 1991:99). Instead, “relations are the *effect* of the principles of association<sup>111</sup>” (Deleuze 1991:100) and it is on the basis of these relations that the collection of ideas of the mind are combined into the system of the subject. The important point for the current study is what implication this has for the relation with the other, where the terms are no longer ideas, but entities – of what would this relation (or rather, these relations) be the effect? The answer, we shall try to show, lies in the consistency of the plane of immanence, on which the pre-personal “jets of singularities” are captured (personalized, subjectified) by the *mutual* constitution of the subject-object, on the basis of a prior relation established by the distribution of concepts on the plane of immanence.

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<sup>111</sup> Hume’s principles of association are intended to explain how one idea or impression can evoke another, and all three are forms of mental habits. The three identified by Hume are “contiguity” (i.e. something like “proximity” either in time or space – according to this principle, impression a often evokes impression b because they usually occur close together in time or space), resemblance (things which physically resemble each other) and, famously, causality.

### 3.8 Transcendental fields and singularities

Returning now to where we left the critique of phenomenology in *Logic of Sense*, we find Deleuze, at this point, neatly recapping the critique he has performed thus far. He has shown that the transcendental field which is required for the actualization of sense cannot be determined as consciousness, since consciousness already *requires* that field for its *own constitution!* However, this does not mean that we are condemned to a “schizophrenic abyss” – there is, in Deleuze’s opinion, another way in which such a transcendental field can be constructed *without* recourse to a general or generalisable *identity* that would found it: this way is found in the “idea of singularities, and thus of anti-generalities, which are however impersonal and pre-individual” (Deleuze 1990:99).

Thus, what should be (and is, in Deleuze’s *oeuvre*) sought after is “an impersonal and pre-individual transcendental field” (Deleuze 1990:102). That which is not personal or individual is, for Deleuze, *a singularity*, what he also quotes Lawrence Ferlinghetti as calling the “fourth person singular” (Deleuze 1990:103). Singularities are not themselves individual or personal, but “preside over the genesis of individuals and persons” (1990:103) and as such are “distributed in a ‘potential’ which admits neither Self nor I, but which produces them by actualizing or realizing itself” (103). This, for Deleuze, allows a theory of singularities to displace and refuse the dichotomy which had led both metaphysics and transcendental philosophy to oppose respectively the analytically constituted individual or the synthetically constituted person to an “undifferentiated abyss”. The condition for the correct constitution of the transcendental field (which forms the ground for making sense of the world) is then to have the world “teaming [*sic*] with anonymous and nomadic, impersonal and pre-individual singularities” (Deleuze 1990:103).

By the end of this section of *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze has formulated five principal characteristics of “such a world”, which he then proceeds to summarise. The last three points can be briefly stated, as we shall be focusing on and spending some time on the first two. These three points are, then, that singularities haunt the surface (as effects) and not as causes that occur in the depths of mixtures of bodies: “Everything happens at the

surface in a crystal which develops only at the edges”<sup>112</sup> (Deleuze 1990:103). The second (fourth) point is related to this, in that it situates *sense* at the surface, since the surface is the locus of *contact* and signs can only become imbued with sense when they “enter into the surface organization which assures the resonance of *two series*” (1990:104, my emphasis). Here the ambiguity of the polyvalent French term *sens* is not explored so much in the direction (or sense) of “direction”, but of the related English ambiguity of *sensibility* – sense (as meaning) is therefore dependent on sense (sensibility – which in turn requires contact with *another series* … and which in turn requires a surface at which this contact can occur). The last characteristic of this world of singularities is that it has a *problematic* status. A “problem” is defined as a topological mapping whereby singularities are distributed without any direction (Deleuze 1990:104). A problem is not there to be *solved* either – instead, a problem marks out the field on which a *question* can become sensible<sup>113</sup>. That does not mean that a problem *can’t* be solved, but rather that a problem does not *vanish* when solved – it subsists in the solution, and form the necessary ground against which the solution is alone sensible<sup>114</sup>.

The first point - which is that “singularities-events correspond to *heterogenous* series which are organized into a system which is … metastable” (Deleuze 1990:103, my emphasis) - we shall merely mention here, as we shall be discussing it in somewhat more detail just below. The important characteristic of this point, to which we shall return, is however the distinction which Deleuze makes between “Potential energy [as] the energy of the pure event” and “forms of actualization correspond[ing] to the realization of the event” (Deleuze 1990:103). We find here the signs of the philosophy of virtuality and actuality which haunted Deleuze throughout his *oeuvre*, and to which we shall return below.

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<sup>112</sup> He then goes on to a discussion of the roles played by membranes, which seem to owe much to Derrida’s discussions of invagination and the role of the membrane in *Tympan*. We shall not be concerned with the details of this argument.

<sup>113</sup> Compare: “solutions do not suppress problems, but on the contrary discover in them the subsisting conditions without which they would have no sense” (Deleuze 1990:56), and, in *What is Philosophy?*: “All concepts are connected to problems without which they would have no meaning and which can themselves only be isolated or understood as their solution emerges” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:16).

<sup>114</sup> This also brings to mind a typical formulation of Baudrillard’s, which occurs in various forms throughout his work: “It is not enough for [x] to die; it still has to *disappear*”! In a similar vein, Millett quotes Deleuze (significantly, in an essay published in a volume entitled *Who comes after the Subject?*) that “it is not enough to criticize a concept, a concept only dies once it has been rendered superfluous by the creation of other concepts” (Millett 1997:63 n. 3).

The second characteristic is that a “paradoxical element traverses” these heterogeneous series, and – paradoxically! – functions as a principle of “auto-unification” which “makes [the series] resonate, enveloping the corresponding singular points in a single aleatory point” (Deleuze 1990:103). Somewhat later, Deleuze explains this idea a little more fully with reference to his reading of Leibniz’s notion of “incompossible worlds”, where he notes that “incompossible worlds, despite their incompossibility, have something in common – something objectively in common – which represents the ambiguous sign of the genetic element in relation to which several worlds appear as the solution for one and the same problem (every throw, the result of a single cast)” (Deleuze 1990:114)<sup>115</sup>. The crucial thing is to understand that Deleuze is still speaking at the level of *pre-individual* singularities, of the pure event – when all *potential* events are still equally co-present as *virtuality*. Thus (in Deleuze’s more concrete example) there is an “objectively indeterminate Adam” that *both* eats *and* does not eat the apple. It is only when Adam has become constituted as person by the *actualization* of certain determinations that he *either* eats the apple *or* does not. At the same time – and this is perhaps as good an illustration as any of the paradoxical nature of sense which we have been discussing above – one can see here the double nature of the process of determination<sup>116</sup>: it is the act of eating the apple which here “individualises” Adam as a determined subject, but the determination of his subjectivity is the condition for Adam to eat the apple. Meanwhile, the world in which Adam does eat the apple and the (incompossible) world in which Adam does not eat the apple are joined together by *other* singularities that do not *belong* to Adam (i.e. they are not *predicates* of a subject=Adam) but which do inhabit Adam ... and which allow us to speak of “Adam” – that is, “an Adam positively defined *solely* through a few singularities which can be combined and can complement each other in a very different fashion in different worlds (to be the first man, to live in a garden [etc.])” (Deleuze 1990:114).

In the last essay published before his suicide in 1995, entitled “Immanence: A Life...” (Deleuze 1997), it is precisely to the question of a transcendental field, and the

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<sup>115</sup> As seems almost *de rigueur* for French thinkers of his generation, Deleuze also uses a Jorge Luis Borges short-story to further illustrate the point: “A stranger knocks at [Fang’s] door. Fang makes up his mind to kill him. Naturally there are various possible outcomes ... In Ts’ui Pen’s work, all possible solutions occur” (Deleuze 1990:114).

<sup>116</sup> What Deleuze and Guattari will later call “double-capture” in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987:424-73).

singularities that constitute it, that Deleuze turns: the essay is organized around a discussion of the indefinite article (“A”) of the pre-personal singularity and the virtual, as against the definite article (“The”), which is the index of the individualized and constituted (i.e. actual) subject. Here, at the end of his career, it becomes misleading to speak of an opposition to “transcendental” philosophy – since Deleuze now characterizes his own philosophy as transcendental: but now a “transcendental *empiricism*”. Both these terms are crucial – *transcendental* empiricism distinguishes Deleuze’s theory from a “simple empiricism” which would rely simply on the element of “sensation [as] only a break in the current of absolute consciousness” (Deleuze 1997:3). Instead, following Boundas, we have seen how, in Deleuze’s reading of empiricism, it is precisely experience which must first of all, and thematically, be problematised<sup>117</sup>. Here, the notions of the “between” as thematised in *Dialogues* (Deleuze & Parnet 2002) and of sense as arising from the contact at the surface which both brings together and separates two “heterogeneous series” (in *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze 1990), as well as the affirmation of becoming that formed the central theme of the critique of Platonism, are brought together by stating that that which is “wild and powerful” in *transcendental* empiricism is “however close together two sensations may be, the passage from one to the other as becoming, as increase or reduction of power (*puissance*) (virtual quality)<sup>118</sup>” (Deleuze 1997:3).

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<sup>117</sup> In this regard, Deleuze would seem to have a similar relation to Hume as Kant did – viz., agreeing that experience is a necessary condition for knowledge (or sense), but asking instead how and under what conditions *experience* itself is possible (although, *contra* Kant, Deleuze seems to argue in *Empiricism and Subjectivity* that it is already these conditions that exercise *Hume himself*). And indeed, Williams, for example, makes no bones about the fact that, in *Difference and Repetition*, at least, Deleuze is very much engaged in a Kant-like critical philosophy, though in a very different way to Kant. (Cf. Williams 2003:86 and 90 on Deleuze’s search for “transcendental conditions” and also “In terms of classical arguments from the history of philosophy, Deleuze provides transcendental deductions, that is, arguments that deduce the form of appearance by asking what the conditions have to be for something to appear”, Williams 2003:17) Cf. also the remarks on the relations of the philosopher to the history of philosophy in *What is Philosophy?*, (where Kant is amongst those historical figures explicitly named) and where Deleuze and Guattari ask: “What is the best way to follow the great philosophers? Is it to repeat what they said or *to do what they did*, that is, create concepts for problems that necessarily change?” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:28).

<sup>118</sup> This is in fact an incredibly dense passage, alluding to, amongst other things, the “typology of forces” set out in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (Deleuze 1983), which is itself based on the Spinozist perspective developed in *Spinoza: Expressionism in Philosophy* – neither of which works we will discuss here. The parenthetical reference to “virtual quality” also ropes in the work on Bergson, to which we will be paying some attention below.

On the other hand, the element of *empiricism* is crucial, since it is empiricism which provides the means for dealing with the “immediate data” of the transcendental field conceived as “a pure a-subjective current of consciousness, an impersonal pre-reflexive consciousness, a qualitative duration of consciousness without self” (Deleuze 1997:3). Here, with three mentions of “consciousness”, it might at first seem as if Deleuze is falling into the same trap that he had already criticized Sartre for being unable to avoid. However, Deleuze quickly makes it clear that what he here refers to is little more than a place-holder for something else, and has no relation with the classic transcendental conceptions of consciousness. Even Sartre’s theory of a “pre-personal consciousness” had been rejected because it could not do “without points of view or centers of individuation” (Deleuze 1990:344n.6), and as we have seen – and which will be the major theme of Deleuze’s essay – “singularization” (“a” virtual) is not at all the same as, and even opposed to, “individuation” (“the” actual). On the contrary, in the transcendental field as constituted by transcendental empiricism, consciousness “becomes a fact only if a subject is produced at the same time as the object, all *three* of them being outside the field (*hors champ*<sup>119</sup>) and appearing as transcendent<sup>120</sup>” (Deleuze 1997:3). The count of “three” in that passage should alert us that consciousness is not to be equated with the subject, but is something separate<sup>121</sup>, and even so, consciousness as something determinate is not what Deleuze means here when he is invoking consciousness as in the descriptions immediately above. Instead, what he has in mind is a virtual consciousness which “crosses the transcendental field at an infinite speed which is everywhere diffuse” (Deleuze 1997:3). Here he explicitly cites Bergson<sup>122</sup> in a passage which Boundas has also already alluded to above<sup>123</sup> and states the relationship between

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<sup>119</sup> “*Hors champ*” here might also function as a pun: to be *hors champ* is also to be “outside the field” in the sense that an athlete is not “in the field” if s/he does not participate in a race, and thus not “in (under) consideration”.

<sup>120</sup> Note that the “transcendent” has nothing to do with the “transcendental”! This is made clear in the very next paragraph: “The transcendent is not the transcendental. Without consciousness the transcendental field would be defined as a pure plane of immanence”.

<sup>121</sup> Moulard states that, against the “famous Husserlian proposition that ‘consciousness is *of* something’, Deleuze insists that Consciousness *is* something” in *Logic of Sense* (Moulard 2002:342 n. 4).

<sup>122</sup> The Bergson citation (from *Matter and Memory*) runs as follows: “as though we reflected back to surfaces the light which emanates from them, the light which, had it passed on unopposed, would never have been revealed” (Bergson, in Deleuze 1997:6 n. 1).

<sup>123</sup> When he described Bergsonian consciousness as replacing the old metaphor of consciousness as a “searchlight” with another luminary metaphor of consciousness functioning like “an opaque blade without

these three elements as follows: consciousness “expresses itself as fact only by reflecting itself onto a subject which refers it to objects” (Deleuze 1997:3). Here the earlier criticism of Sartre is recast implicitly – the transcendental field cannot be defined by its consciousness, but not because there *is no* consciousness, but because what consciousness does inhere in it (is “coextensive with it”), is not yet *actualized* – and thus “withdraws from all revelation” (Deleuze 1997:3)..

### 3.9 Planes of Immanence

From this brief rehash of the transcendental field, Deleuze moves to a discussion of the plane of immanence, which had already been described in detail in *What is Philosophy?* (Deleuze & Guattari 1994). The first point to be made about this is that pure immanence is “not in something, not *to* something; it does not depend on an object and does not belong to a subject” (Deleuze 1997:4), since for immanence to be immanent *to* something would require that it be related to “a Something that is a unity superior to everything” (Deleuze 1997:3). Instead, the “plane of immanence is no more defined by a subject or an object capable of containing it than the transcendental field is defined by consciousness” (Deleuze 1997:3).

If we recall, the transcendental field cannot be defined by consciousness because consciousness must already pre-suppose the transcendental field; similarly, “the plane of immanence must be defined as prephilosophical” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:40) in relation to concepts – it is not itself “a concept, nor the concept of all concepts”<sup>124</sup> (1994:35), but it is nevertheless “strictly correlated” with the concept. In their characterization of philosophy as “constructivism”, Deleuze and Guattari see concepts and planes of immanence as the “two qualitatively different complementary aspects” of a philosophy that proceeds always by “the creation of concepts and the laying out of a plane” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:36). The laying out of the plane is also correlated to (or rather, *is*) “the image of thought, the image thought gives itself of what it means to think,

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which light [i.e. consciousness] would go on diffusing itself forever, never reflected and never revealed” (Boundas 1991:5). Cf. also: “Consciousness ceases to be a light cast upon objects in order to become a pure phosphorescence of things in themselves” (Deleuze 1990:311).

<sup>124</sup> In their earlier discussion of the concept, Deleuze and Guattari note that there can be no “concept possessing every component, since this would be chaos pure and simple” (1994:15).

to make use of thought, to find one's bearings in thought" (1994:37), and concepts are distributed or articulated on this plane like nomadic tribes populating a desert – inhabiting it without splitting it up (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:36, 41). The plane of immanence can also be characterized as the "plane of consistency" and as such "is like a section of chaos and acts like a sieve<sup>125</sup>", which slows down the "infinite speed" with which determinations take shape and vanish in chaos (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:42, and also 43) – it is not that chaos is indeterminate, but rather that determinations take shape and decompose with such speed that it is impossible to form connections between them (1994:42). We do not say "*successive* determinations", because the point of "*infinite* speed" is that these determinations are so unstable that one cannot even form the relation of "*succeeding*" – one can say, perhaps, that all possible determinations are *co-present* ... but that would be to neglect the fact that *none* of these determinations are present – or at least, they are (yet) only *virtual*. It is the laying-out of the plane that creates the necessary consistency for them to be actualized, just as (in the Bergsonian metaphor we have encountered before) it is the relative opacity of a surface which is the necessary condition for light to become visible. The challenge is to maintain a balance between the consistency which is needed to think at all, but "without losing the infinite into which thought plunges" (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:42) – i.e. to not be lost in the dizzying and delirious abyss of infinite speed and movement, but at the same time not to become stagnant and absolutely still. It is the tension between the fluidity and the consistency of the plane of immanence (and of the concept) which "make up 'the slow beings' that we are" (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:36).

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<sup>125</sup> Deleuze and Guattari give two further evocative images of the relation between the plane of immanence and the concepts which populate it, which shed further light on how the plane of immanence is to be conceived. According to one which refers the reader back to the analyses of the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (viz. *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*) "Concepts are concrete assemblages, like the configurations of a machine, but the plane is the abstract machine of which these assemblages are the working parts" (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:36) and even better: "Concepts are like multiple waves, rising and falling, but the plane of immanence is the single wave that rolls them up and unrolls them" (1994:36). Another way of stating this relationship would be that the plane is the complete set of *possible* (virtual) elements that are available for any theory, without yet having received any determination – in this sense, a plane of immanence would correspond to something like Foucault's "episteme". The plane is *complete* without being *exhaustive*. The concepts which are erected on this plane are then specific, determinate configurations in which certain of these elements are actualized (assembled) in certain ways or arrangements (assemblages). The plane of immanence is, to a certain extent, the *limiting* factor which determines what assemblages are available for construction, but in another way, is also the condition for creativity, since it always contains further *not-yet actualized*, *virtual* elements which can transform already constructed assemblages.

While the discussion in *What is Philosophy?* is focused on the relation of the plane of immanence to the concepts that inhabit it, in “Immanence: A Life...” (Deleuze 1997) the question is of course far more to do with the relation of life to immanence. In this regard, Deleuze might almost be (in fact, probably is!) betraying a certain inclination towards Bergsonian vitalism in the following powerful description: “Pure immanence is A LIFE, and nothing else. It is not immanence to life, but the immanence which is in nothing is itself a life. A life is the immanence of immanence, absolute immanence” (Deleuze 1997:4). “A life” turns out to be the ultimate ground and substrate of all the entities that (can or will) be constituted: “The transcendental field is defined by a plane of immanence, and the plane of immanence by a life” (1997:4). What stops this from becoming the concession “to the transcendence of the One” that Badiou decried, is the singular (!) character of *a* life, which is not at all the same thing as *the* life of an individual/ a person.

Deleuze then adduces several examples to show this distinction, the most extended of which is the treatment of an episode in Dickens’ *Our Mutual Friend*, where *the individual* life of “a good-for-nothing, universally scorned rogue”, on his deathbed - and in a moment where he is poised on the knife’s-edge between living and dying - gives “way to *a* life that is impersonal but *singular* nevertheless” (Deleuze 1997:4, my emphases). At this moment, Deleuze notes, the “haecceity which now singularizes rather than individuates ... is neutral and beyond good and evil since only the subject which incarnated it in the midst of things rendered it good or bad” (Deleuze 1997:4-5). In the case of very young children, Deleuze also notes that although they often do not (yet) have very much *individuality*, but all have *singularities*: “a smile, a gesture, a grimace – events which are not subjective characteristics” (1997:5). This is the *event*, which is *neutral when considered in itself* (as *a singularity*), and only receives a value when it is *determined in* (predicated *to*) a subject, since the open virtuality of the event is then limited in a specific way.

The relation between singularisation and individuation seems very much to be that between virtuality and actualization: “events or singularities ... actualize themselves in subjects and objects” (Deleuze 1997:5). Furthermore, singularities are indeterminate and indefinite – although they lose their indetermination as they are distributed across

(on) a particular transcendental field, and from there become empirically determined as *this* or *that* (the) individual. Ultimately, what Deleuze is trying to show here is that “Transcendence is always a product of immanence” (Deleuze 1997:5).

In the final paragraph of this marvelously compact essay, Deleuze proceeds to link the distinction between singularity and individual (and the transition from the former to the latter) explicitly with the notions of the actualization of the virtual – “A life contains only virtuals” (Deleuze 1997:5). Linking back further with the analyses of *Logic of Sense* (Deleuze 1990), these singularities or virtualities are composed of events, and the “immanent event actualizes itself in a state of things” (Deleuze 1997:5). Pure events are thus always singular and virtual in relation to a plane of immanence; as soon as a particular transcendental field is instituted on that plane, these virtual events are (or, at least, can be) actualized and individualized (1997:6), and the plane itself “is actualized in an Object and Subject to which it attributes itself” (1997:5).

### 3.10 The Actual and the Virtual

We are now at long last in a position to understand the “encounters” of which we had Deleuze speaking earlier in *Dialogues* (Deleuze & Parnet 2002). There, Deleuze had spoken of style in writing as the correlate of charm, which is the source of life (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:5), and gives life a “non-personal power, above individuals” (2002:6)<sup>126</sup>. In turn, this allows writing to be directed to something *other than itself* – in other words, precisely towards life (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:6), as opposed to “neurotic” writing which is personalized and “in which writing takes itself as its own end” (6) This is also the meaning of the “populousness” of the solitude which is, for Deleuze the requisite for writing (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:6), and the sense in which, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, he and Guattari had written that even before there were the two of them, each of them “was already several” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:3). Writing (and living) thus means opening oneself up to the virtualities that can (do) inhabit one – to be singularized in a different way ... to stop *being one*. Elsewhere, he had described his working relationship with

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<sup>126</sup> In language (written or spoken) the correlate is a certain “stammering” or stuttering, which entails “speaking in one’s own language like a foreigner” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:5). Cf. Deleuze and Parnet (2002:4-5) and Deleuze (1998:107-114): “He Stuttered”.

Guattari<sup>127</sup> in precisely these terms: “we understood and complemented, *depersonalized and singularized* – in short, loved – one another” (Deleuze 1995:7), and also that they “were rather like two streams ... We’re not at all sure we’re persons: a draft, a wind, a day, a time of day, a stream, a place, a battle, an illness all have nonpersonal individuality” (Deleuze 1995:141). That this process – what Deleuze also calls stealing (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:7) or a “theft of thought” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:17) – was necessary for writing the kind of philosophy that Deleuze wrote with Guattari is emphasized when Millett, drawing on Deleuze’s characterization of philosophy as the theory of multiplicities<sup>128</sup>, and that it is not enough to talk about it, that one must still *do* the multiple, notes that “Singularization is *by* intensities or singularities, and *of* events; in a world of formed individualities singularization would mean a depersonalization<sup>129</sup>” (Millett 1997:54).

It should now be clear that these conditions therefore necessitate (and allow!) the adoption of a first-person plural (“We”) authorial voice – which would however not speak *for* the first *person*, but which would (precisely) speak as a “fourth person singular”, a singularity. Millett gives a very lucid description of what this entails – writing with singularities is to “articulate a thought robbed of the organizing principle of the individual” (Millett 1997:54). In a paradoxical manner, the anonymity which can only come about through this depersonalization (and which Deleuze describes as a prerequisite for being able to write as he does<sup>130</sup>) goes hand-in-hand with being able to assume a “proper name” and for being able to “write in one’s own name” – the paradox is only apparent, however, because the proper name then no longer refers to the *person* of the author, but to the singularities (forces, intensities) that this depersonalization allows to *flow through* the author. In this regard, Deleuze points to examples like “Pythagoras’s

<sup>127</sup> He also talks about Foucault in this way, e.g. “Take Foucault himself: you weren’t aware of him as a person exactly. Even in trivial situations, say when he came into a room, it was more like a changed atmosphere, a sort of event ... That didn’t in the least rule out warmth or make you feel uncomfortable, but it wasn’t like a person. It was a set of intensities.” (Deleuze 1995:115).

<sup>128</sup> Deleuze and Parnet (2002:148).

<sup>129</sup> This notion of “depersonalization” is crucial for a nomadic way of writing which can enact the multiple, and informs the Deleuzian notion of *délire*, as well as all the specific becomings (woman-becoming, animal-becoming ...) that are treated in, for example, *A Thousand Plateaus*.

<sup>130</sup> “Letter to a Harsh Critic” in *Negotiations* (Deleuze 1995:3-12) is for a large part a refusal to adopt the “star-status” which Michel Cressole (the “harsh critic”) wants to force on Deleuze. Cf. also again the passage on solitude in *Dialogues* (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:7).

theorem, Cartesian coordinates, Hamiltonian number ... Platonic Idea or Descartes's cogito" (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:23). If this seems a strange list, especially in the light of the critiques that have been rehearsed above, it is to be noted that Deleuze *does* respect all the thinkers that he writes on<sup>131</sup>, at the least for being *creators* of concepts, and what he is describing here are the conditions for *creativity*<sup>132</sup>. In this regard, Deleuze also notes – in a passage worth quoting at length – that “speaking for yourself, in your own name ... doesn't at all come with seeing yourself as an ego or a person or a subject. Individuals find a real name for themselves, rather, only through the harshest exercise in depersonalization, by opening themselves up to the multiplicities everywhere within them, to the intensities running through them” (Deleuze 1995:6-7).

To try and clarify a little better what we have been referring to as the “virtual and the actual” thus far, we now turn briefly to Deleuze's essay by that name which was only published posthumously as an addendum to *Dialogues* (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:148-152). Here Deleuze starts off by restating the claim (which had also formed the basis for his choice of multiplicities) that “Philosophy is the theory of multiplicities” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:148). In many ways this essay returns to much the same territory as “Immanence: A Life...” (Deleuze 1997), but with a different focus. If transcendence is formed on the basis of the plane of immanence, by the actualization and individuation of virtual singularities into determined Subjects and Objects, as we have seen above, then Deleuze is concerned to show that when the plane of immanence has been constituted, “purely actual objects do not exist” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:148). Although not stated explicitly, it should be understood that the balance between the determined and the infinite (or infinite speed and consistency) to which we have pointed above, could not allow the constitution of purely actual objects. Instead, the necessary fluidity of the plane and of the determinations that arise on it are facilitated by the fact that “Every actual surrounds itself with a cloud of virtual images” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:148). Again, the infinite speed with which (in *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze & Guattari 1994) different determinations arise and decompose is here used as the definition of the virtual –

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<sup>131</sup> He writes that what he “most detested was Hegelianism and dialectics” (Deleuze 1995:6), and indeed, the absence of even a direct attack on Hegel in his *oeuvre* is striking!

<sup>132</sup> One is reminded again of the Preface to *Dialogues* (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:vii) where Deleuze notes that he chooses empiricism as being able to account for “the creation of something new, for *creativity*” – this does not mean that only empiricism can itself be *creative*, however.

images<sup>133</sup> are “called virtual in so far as their emission and absorption, creation and destruction, occur in a period of time shorter than the shortest continuous period imaginable” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:148). To complicate matters further, Deleuze seems to have in mind here what almost amounts to a fractal model of the generation of virtual images, given that not only do *actual* objects emit and surround themselves with clouds of virtual images, but so, in turn, do the virtual images themselves! One is also again reminded here of the story of Fang and Ts’ui Pen which was cited in *Logic of Sense*<sup>134</sup>.

This potentially infinite fractal arrangement of virtual images would seem to “delimit a continuum” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:149), were it not for the “singularities which cut it up and divide it out on the plane of immanence” (149). The virtual is related to the actual, but is not at all the same – it is what in *Logic of Sense* was described as the way in which the virtual “haunts” its actualization that allow the transcendental field to be constituted as a plane of immanence by singularities; it is to the extent that the virtual is absent from the actual itself that the plane is denuded of singularities and *individuated* instead: “The actualization of the virtual is singularity whereas the actual itself is individuality constituted” (149-150).

Ultimately, the plane of immanence contains (or *should* contain – Deleuze is concerned with selecting a *right* way of constituting it<sup>135</sup>!) “both actualization as the relationship of the virtual with other terms, and even the actual as a term with which the virtual is exchanged” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:152, my emphasis). Or rather, the *well-insitituted*<sup>136</sup> plane has both these elements – it turns out that the presence of the virtual defines the “plane of immanence” (which is also the “image of thought”) of “transcendental empiricism” and its absence defines that of traditional

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<sup>133</sup> This entire essay seems to be inspired to a large extent by Bergson – but there seems to be an equally strong allusion to certain Epicurean doctrines (Deleuze frequently lists the best-known Epicurean, Lucretius, author of *On the Nature of the Universe*, as one of his decisive early influences) such as the theory of perception which holds that all objects continually emit jets of particles (organised as literal images or husks of the object), which, upon striking the intellect, give rise to the perception of the object.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. p.148n117 above.

<sup>135</sup> Or at least, Deleuze and Guattari (1994:58-60) pose the question of whether some planes are better than others. They do not provide a firm answer, but we can deduce the answer – as well as the criteria for such an answer - from the following paean: “Spinoza is the Christ of philosophers ... he showed, drew up, and thought the ‘best’ plane of immanence – that is, the purest, *the one that does not hand itself over to the transcendent or restore any transcendent [sic], the one that inspires the fewest illusions, bad feelings, and erroneous perceptions*” (1994:60).

<sup>136</sup> “Instituted” rather than “constituted” because the plane of immanence is the basis *on which* concepts etc. are “constituted”. Cf. Deleuze & Guattari (1994:41).

(phenomenological) transcendental philosophy: “Actuals imply already constituted individuals ... whereas the relationship of the actual and the virtual forms an acting individuation or a highly specific and remarkable singularization which needs to be determined case by case” (Deleuze & Parnet 2002:152). This “case by case” is what we have referred to above as the “nominalism” of “transcendental empiricism” and points to the emphasis on the particular that lies behind the entire theory outlined so far, as well as the critique of sweeping and homogenizing structures like that of the Oedipus complex in a work like *Anti-Oedipus* (Deleuze & Guattari 1983). In fact, it is *immanence itself*.

### 3.11 The Other as concept

In fact, when Deleuze and Guattari turn to their discussion of the concept in *What is Philosophy?* (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:15-34), they do so precisely by means of the analysis of several “case-studies” of different concepts, such as the Cartesian *cogito*, which we shall not discuss again here. However, the first such concept which they describe is precisely that of the Other. Their analysis here is a virtually unchanged (though very summary) rehearsal of the theory of the Other developed in an article first published as “A Theory of the Other” in 1967, and republished as an appendix to *Logic of Sense*, entitled “Michel Tournier and the World without Others” (Deleuze 1990:301-321).

The first interesting feature of the later discussion in *What is Philosophy?* is not only how well this theory has stood the test of time (at least, obviously in the opinion of Deleuze and Guattari) but also its context within that later work – here, the exposition of the concept of the “Other” not only serves as *an* illustrative example of a concept<sup>137</sup>, but is given specifically as an example with which to answer the question: “On what conditions is a concept first, not absolutely but in relation to another?” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:16). The way the concept of the other is posed is therefore first of all as a question of relation and priority, and the crucial link to our current investigations is made explicit in the formulation of this question: “is *another person [autrui]* necessarily second in relation to a self?” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:16) Before proceeding to investigate this

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<sup>137</sup> Although Deleuze and Guattari (1994:19) do say that “readers may start with whatever example they like”.

analysis of the *other*, we shall first briefly follow Deleuze and Guattari in tracing the outlines of the notion of *concept* of which the “other” is here an instantiation. Specifically, the question about “being first” is itself an example, given to clarify the claim that “There are no simple concepts” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:15). Concepts are composed of components, but can never have merely one component: every concept is always already at least doubled, for example – even in those philosophies that “begin” with a single concept (and Deleuze and Guattari believe that “it is not obvious that philosophy must have a beginning” – 1994:15), this concept is already doubled because it is attended on by a second concept of *what it means to begin, to be unitary* etc. On the other hand, there can be no universals, or “concepts containing every component, since this would be chaos pure and simple” (1994:15).

Instead, concepts are always a certain “matter of articulation, of cutting and cross-cutting”<sup>138</sup>, and concepts are thus made of components, and though they *do* totalize, they always form only “fragmentary wholes” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:16). The way this whole is composed is a function of the *problem* for which it is designed (1994:16), and with which it maintains an intimate relation such that neither the problem nor the concept (which is designed as a solution to this problem) can be understood or evaluated at all without reference to the other. After discussing the concept of the other, Deleuze and Guattari give three more characteristics of the concept: firstly, “every concept relates back to other concepts”, and concepts can indeed become components of other concepts and *vice versa*<sup>139</sup> (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:19). This is the *becoming* of the concept (1994:19). Secondly, though distinct and heterogeneous, the components of a concept are not *separable* – they have “thresholds of indiscernibility” or “zones of neighbourhood” where “something passes from one to the other” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:19). This defines the “endoconsistency” of the concept – but it also allows it to link with other concepts, since components do not only share these zones with fellow-components of the *same* concept, but also with those of other concepts (“exoconsistency”) (Deleuze &

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<sup>138</sup> Once again, one recalls the statement in *Logic of Sense* that “the genius of a philosophy must first be measured by the new distribution which it imposes on beings and concepts” (Deleuze 1990:6).

<sup>139</sup> Deleuze and Guattari (1994:19) give the example of the “Other” which is a concept that has the Face as a component, but where “Face” is itself a concept (though not to be confused with the concept of “Faciality” in *A Thousand Plateaus*)

Guattari 1994:20). It is along the “joints” formed by these “zones and bridges” that concepts are *articulated* (1994:20).

As an example of this, Deleuze and Guattari discuss perhaps one of the most famous “concepts” in philosophy, namely Descartes’ *cogito* or “I” (1994:247). According to them, this concept has “three components – doubting, thinking, being” and could be described or stated as follows: “Myself who doubts, I think, I am, I am a thinking thing” (24). These elements are organized around a central point (“I”), which unifies them – i.e. is the principle of “endoconsistency” of this specific concept - but within this unity have “zones of neighbourhood”, the first of which is “between doubting and thinking (myself who doubts, I cannot doubt that I think)” and the second between “thinking and being (in order to think it is necessary to be)” (25). Of course, each of these components could in turn be *treated* as concepts themselves – for example, in Descartes “thinking” includes sensations, intellectual operations, emotions etc. and these could then again be treated as concepts, and so on. The concept of thought, for example, would have, as a component, different ideas, including the “idea of infinity” – which is also a component of *another* concept, namely that of God. In that way, then, Descartes’ concept of the self is related to his concept of God (26).

The third point is of the most interest in the current context – following on from the characteristics of endo-/exoconsistency, “each concept will therefore be considered as the point of coincidence, condensation, or accumulation of its own components” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:20), and that because of all the features that we have tried to explain above. Firstly, “each component … is a pure and simple singularity – ‘a’ possible world, ‘a’ face, ‘some’ words”, etc. (1994:20). Secondly, “the concept is an incorporeal” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:21). It “speaks the event” in all the senses derived from the *Logic of Sense* analyses.

Lastly, Deleuze and Guattari note both that the concept is “self-referential” in that it “posits itself and its object at the same time as it is created” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:22), and that this way of “constructing” the concept “unites the relative and the absolute” (22). It is able to do this because “as a whole [the concept] is absolute, but insofar as it is fragmentary it is relative” (1994:21), or, to put it another way, inasmuch as the plane of immanence is filled, concepts that are all linked by zones of indiscernibility,

it is a whole, and therefore infinite; insofar as each concept is partial and (only) *related* “to its own components, to other concepts, to the plane” , it is relative (1994:21). In this unification of the absolute and the relative, we can see perhaps the construction of the “magic formula” that Deleuze and Guattari professed to seek in *A Thousand Plateaus*: “PLURALISM = MONISM” (1987:20).

### 3.12 The Concept of the Other.

What we have been engaged in so far is to try and lay out the “image of thought” or the plane of immanence on which Deleuze constructs his concept of the Other. We can therefore now turn to a description of this concept itself. Deleuze develops this concept in a reading of Michel Tournier<sup>140</sup>,’s novel *Friday, or the Other Island*, which is a retelling of the Robinson Crusoe story. In Deleuze’s reading, Tournier’s novel is an extended examination of the thesis of an insular “man without Others on an island” (Deleuze 1990:304). As such, it gives rise to the possibility of examining the concept of the Other through the *effects* the Other has when absent and when present (Deleuze 1990:304). Through this, one could then say what the Other is. As we shall see, on the basis of these effects, and what they enable, the concept of the “Other” is not merely one concept amongst others, but acquires a certain privilege in mapping of the transcendental field of Deleuze’s philosophy.

Of course, the original novel *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe had been as much of a quasi-philosophical “instrument of research” (Deleuze 1990:302) as that of Tournier could hope to be. However, as we have seen, the construction of a concept is inseparable from the problem which engenders it, and in Deleuze’s opinion, Defoe’s problem had been poorly posed, since he had related Robinson’s stranding to the *origin* or genesis of civilization. Defoe’s question is thus “How does civilization *begin*?”, when the better – and more interesting – question is: given the complete absence of “Others”, how would Robinson *end up*? (Deleuze 1990:302-3) Moreover, Defoe had “twice falsified” his experiment, first by allowing Robinson to salvage so many things from the wreck, and

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<sup>140</sup> Deleuze and Tournier were friends when they studied philosophy together at the Sorbonne. (<http://www.egs.edu/resources/deleuze.html>) Tournier also refers to this friendship in his autobiography *The Wind Spirit*.

then by leading him straight back to “reproduc[ing] an economic world similar to our own” (1990:303), when, not least because Robinson’s sexuality has been completely eliminated, what he should have done (and what Tournier does) is to lead “an asexual Robinson to *ends quite different and divergent* from ours, in a fantastic world which has itself deviated” (Deleuze 1990:303). The deviation of the world is also essential, because, as Tournier shows, the island is “as much the hero as Robinson or Friday” and “Robinson’s subjective series is inseparable from the series of the states of the island” (Deleuze 1990:302).

If we now turn to the effects of the Other as presented by Tournier and examined by Deleuze, we start recognizing the elements of the plane of immanence that we have laid out. It turns out that the Other is the condition for the virtuality of the world – around the Other “there is the organization of a marginal world” (Deleuze 1990:305). Deleuze then gives a brief account of the foregrounding of a figure over a ground which happens when attention is focused on that figure, and then dissolves again when the attention is diverted. In an apparently quasi-Berkeleyan way, it is the Other which maintains this world while our attention is thus diverted (Deleuze 1990:305). However, this is not the essential point – it is not the continued existence of the *first* object which is in question at all, but the reaction to the *second* object (i.e. that *to which* our attention is diverted, not that *from which*) which is crucial. Deleuze contends that we are not overcome by surprise by this object because of a certain *expectancy* which has been created in us by the Other: the Other, by creating around the *first* object a “margin” had made it possible to feel “the preexistence of objects yet to come, and of an entire field of virtualities and potentialities which I already knew were capable of being actualized” (Deleuze 1990:305). In this regard, Boundas notes that Deleuze subscribes “to Bergson’s characterization of conscious perception as the object perceived, *minus* the aspects of it which do not interest the perceiver” (Boundas 1991:5) – it is in the fact that the Other is also a (differently situated) perceiver, with different interests, that these aspects which are subtracted are retained, and it is these aspects (through the form of the Other) that facilitate virtuality.

In fact, Deleuze talks of this experience of the *second* object in a fairly concrete way – for him the Other is the condition of “not running up against things (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:19) and of “bump[ing] against something unseen” like someone in a

darkened and unfamiliar room (Deleuze 1990:305). It is doubtful that these descriptions should be taken as anything less than purely literal - it is the Other who guarantees the organization of the world, the completeness of the object of which I<sup>141</sup> can only ever observe a part, e.g. “As for objects behind my back, I sense them coming together and forming a world, precisely because they are visible to, and are seen by, Others” (Deleuze 1990:305). The Other is “the sweetness of contiguities and resemblances<sup>142</sup>”, thus of familiarity, of harmony and coherence, etc. (1990:305-6) – the Other, at least in one aspect, cause all the disparate “things” around one to come together into a “world”, precisely because it turns these things into “objects”. If this sounds idyllic, then it is because, although Deleuze does acknowledge the meanness of Others, for him this meanness pales beside the “meanness of things were there no Other” (1990:306). This “other island” in which the Other would be absent is a “a harsh and black world, without potentialities or virtualities: the category of the possible has collapsed” (Deleuze 1990:306).

The concept of the Other has two components: firstly, it is the “structure-Other” (or “*a priori* Other”), and then it is the concrete Other – who is always that someone actualizing this structure in a field (Deleuze 1990:318). Again, Tournier’s novel explores both by showing their disappearance – in the first stage, the *structure* is still in place, but empty (there are no “Others” to fill it out), though without being any less demanding (Deleuze 1990:313). Robinsons’ response is that of the *neurotic*: he is driven back into “an unrecognized personal past, into the snares of memory and the pains of hallucination” (1990:313). In the second stage, the structure too starts to crumble, and in this process in which Robinson becomes “elemental” can be seen the frenzy of psychosis (1990:314-5). The structure of the Other that had “pacified depth” and “render[ed] it livable” has given way and allowed the “aggressive return of an abyss that can no longer be conjured away”

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<sup>141</sup> It is significant, perhaps, that here, where Deleuze’s thought tends the closest to that of Husserl, he tends to slip into the first person singular – although this “I” that he uses functions much more like an impersonal avatar (the “first-person point of view” of a video-game, for example) than the personal pronoun “I” which Husserl uses, and which seems to refer to the person writing the book.

<sup>142</sup> At least, this is so in Tournier’s novel – Deleuze is by no means implying that the Other only makes the world more “pleasant”. The other example he uses both here and in *What is Philosophy?* seems calculated to show this: “There is, at some moment, a calm and restful world. Suddenly a frightened face looms up that looks at something out of the [perceptual] field. The other person appears here as neither subject nor object but as something that is very different: a possible world, the possibility of a frightening world” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:17).

(Deleuze 1990:315). By the time the boy Friday arrives, he can no longer function as an Other to Robinson, since the structure is no longer available for actualization (1990:316).

Up to here, the analysis is as close as Deleuze is ever likely to get to that of Husserl in the *Fifth Meditation*, but the concept of the Other which Deleuze derives from this comparative analysis of the effects of the presence and the absence of the Other departs radically from transcendental philosophy. The latter had traditionally made the error of “reduc[ing] the Other sometimes to a particular object, and sometimes to another subject” (Deleuze 1990:307), whereas it is in fact “neither an object in the field of my perception nor a subject who perceives me: *the Other is initially a structure of the perceptual field, without which the entire field could not function as it does*” (307, my emphasis). The Other is neither perceiver nor perceived but the structure which makes perception of an *object* by a *subject* possible – it is “the structure of the possible” (Deleuze 1990:307) as such! Hence it is “no longer the ego, but the Other as structure which renders perception possible” (Deleuze 1990:309), and in *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari spell the implications of this out explicitly: “the other person is not anyone – *neither subject nor object*” (1994:16, my emphasis) – whereas in phenomenology, intersubjectivity had been a special problem precisely because one had to account for an object that was *also* a subject!

This is however not the only way in which the Other functions in relation to perception: not only does it institute the possible and virtuality, but it also creates a movement from the past into the future – it makes time pass. The world with which the Other confronts me is only a “possible world” (that is, for *me*) or at least, “not yet”, and if the example of the Other expressing a “frightening” possible world is used twice, it is because there is something inherently frightening about the possibility that the Other expresses: the possible world “cannot be developed without the one preceding it passing away ... If the Other is a possible world, I am a past world” (Deleuze 1990:310). This is the *temporal dimension* of the *expectancy/anticipation* made possible by the Other.

In both *Empiricism and Subjectivity* (Deleuze 1991) and *Difference and Repetition* (cf. Williams 2003), however, expectation (or anticipation) is not related to the Other, but to the contractions of the “first passive synthesis of time”, which is the

condition for the constitution of the *subject*<sup>143</sup>. Here we have arrived at the crux of the great divide which now separates this theory of the Other from the phenomenological theory. For example, in *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, Deleuze writes that “to speak of the subject now is to speak of duration, custom, habit, and *anticipation*. Anticipation is habit, and habit is anticipation … It is not necessary to force the texts in order to find in the habit-anticipation most of the characteristics of the Bergsonian *durée* or memory. Habit is the constitutive root of the subject, *and the subject, at root, is the synthesis of time* – the synthesis of the present and the past in the light of the future” (Deleuze 1991:92-3, my emphases)<sup>144</sup>. Far from the subject having somehow to account for the Other as an object that would also be a subject, the Other has now become (at least in part) the condition for the *constitution of the subject in the first place*. Thus, if Tournier’s novel ends with “Robinson becoming elemental on his isle” (Deleuze 1990:302) and thoroughly “dehumanized”, that is as a result of being deprived of the effects of Others upon him.

The same is true of the “object” and not just inasmuch as the existence (and the constitution) of an object would seem to correlate to or require a subject. In *Logic of Sense* Deleuze is quite clear – “The Other presides over the organization of the world into objects … These objects exist only through the possibilities with which Others filled up the world” (Deleuze 1990:312). It is the Other which allows the capture and individuation of free singularities into persons as “subjects” and into things as “objects”. Whether this is good or bad is still moot, but the critique of phenomenology is clear: if Husserl had needed the other in order to invest his philosophy with objectivity, then this now appears premature – part of what Deleuze is concerned to show, is that the role of the Other is to first of all institute the *object* and, at the same time, its correlate: the *subject*. It is not at all the case that the subject must deal with the Other as both subject and object, but rather that the Other is the condition for the constitution (individuation) of the transcendental field into subject and object in the first place!

We return to the question in *What is Philosophy?* about whether the Other is always second to a self – Deleuze and Guattari answer that it is so only “to the extent that

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<sup>143</sup> In addition to the citations below, see for example also Boundas: “Subjects anticipate and invent; in fact, they anticipate because they invent … The anticipatory and inventive subject will dot Deleuze’s writings” (1991:14).

<sup>144</sup> In this regard, see also Williams (2003:86-90).

its concept is that of an other – *a subject that presents itself as an object* – which is special in relation to the self” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:16, my emphasis). But when this “special” relation is put into question – when one asks how a subject and an object are constituted in the first place – then the solution too is reversed: now “There are several subjects because there is the other person, not the reverse” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:16). As Boundas sums it up with specific reference to Deleuze’s appropriation of Hume, but from the perspective of a wider perspective on this appropriation in the context of Deleuze’s *oeuvre* as a whole: “Transcendental philosophy, says Deleuze, beginning with a methodologically reduced field from which it derives essential certainty, asks how there can be a given, or how a subject can give itself the given. But Hume’s empiricism asks how a subject can be constituted inside the given” (Boundas 1991:8).

### 3.13. Conclusion

The consequences that flow from this are precisely those that made empiricism, as the theory of the concrete particular, attractive to Deleuze, namely, as he puts it in *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, “The fact that there is no theoretical subjectivity, and there cannot be one, becomes the fundamental claim of empiricism. And, if we examine it closely, it is merely another way of saying that the subject is constituted within the given. If the subject is constituted within the given, then, in fact, there is only a practical subject” (Deleuze 1991:104). This refers us back to what we have called the nominalist quality of this philosophy – it also means that the subject is always constituted *anew* within any new given: the subject must *ceaselessly become*. Conceived in this way, it is not either *being* a subject or *being* as elemental (chaotic, delirious, psychotic, *schizophrenic*) which is problematic – it is failing to always be *between* (becoming). It is to BOTH de- AND *re-personalize* yourself in accordance with the given, it is to be able to anticipate and adapt. If the dehumanization of Robinson leads through neurosis and psychosis to a final perversion, then it is because Robinson can no longer adapt to a world which would again contain an Other (Friday) – that is why he cannot leave the island at the end. In the vocabulary of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, it is not enough to deterritorialize – each deterritorialization must be accompanied by a concomitant *re-*

territorialization; pure deterritorialization is the schizophrenic as mental patient *on account of the failure of the process of reterritorialization*. At the same time, it is always necessary to deterritorialize - Deleuze interprets Nietzsche's illness in a complementary way: it is not from excessive deterritorialization that Nietzsche became ill, but from the failure to deterritorialize himself from his suffering anymore, and *hence* not be able to reterritorialize himself anymore. Furthermore, in the terms of "Letter to a Harsh Critic" there are two *ways* of being depersonalized – through love and through subjection (Deleuze 1995:7). In terms of the (Spinozistic-Nietzschean) typology of forces developed in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (Deleuze 1983), the first would be an *active* force ("that which allows you to affirm your own power, to will etc") and the latter would be a *reactive* force ("that which separates us from what we can do").

Before concluding this study, we will now turn to an extended analysis of those concepts and that book, which will hopefully attempt to not only put the themes discussed above in a slightly more concrete light, but will also sketch the outlines for a conception that will at least point in the direction of some *ethical criteria* ... however far "ethics" might then appear to be removed from a "morality" ...

## **Chapter 4: Conclusion**

### **4.1 Deleuze-Nietzsche**

In order to sketch (or map) out the theory then, finally, of who the subject might (come to) be in Deleuze's philosophy – a map which will also provide us with the tools for an ethics in Deleuze's philosophy – it is necessary to find and follow yet another series which Deleuze constructs throughout his *oeuvre*, which we can label the Nietzsche series and that runs through his work from (at least) *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (Deleuze 1983, first published in 1962) until (at least) *Foucault* (Deleuze 1988, first published in 1986). The relations between these two books are in fact crucial and very interesting – they also bookend Deleuze's career in a sense: the former was his “breakthrough” book, the latter one of his last “proper”, solo, books and in it he returns to and restates (re-affirmingly), or at least draws on, many of the same positions that he had developed in the former book. (This is not surprising if one considers that it was the Nietzsche book which directly led to the formation of the famous friendship between Deleuze and Foucault and which Foucault “stole” from Deleuze<sup>1</sup>. In *Foucault* Deleuze is, in a sense, returning the favour. However, we shall be mostly focusing on the Nietzsche book here).

On a surface-level, the importance of the discovery of Nietzsche for Deleuze appears to have been that it necessitated the adoption of a different style of “doing” philosophy, in the specific sense that before Nietzsche, Deleuze had been trying to displace the philosophical tradition: in the terms used in Chapter 3 above, he had been trying to “singularize” or “depersonalize” the impressively and oppressively, monolithic and monumental figures like Plato, Kant and Bergson, trying to “force” something productive out of them (cf. Deleuze 1995:6). By his own admission, this strategy of “buggery” came to an end when “Nietzsche extricated [him] from all that” (Deleuze 1995:6). Again, in the terms used above, it seems that reading Nietzsche required (for the first time?) that Deleuze de-personalise/singularize *himself* – in such a way that he acquired a “perverse taste... for saying simple things in [his] own way, in affects, intensities, experiences, experiments” (Deleuze 1995:6). Here – following on from the

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<sup>1</sup> Foucault acknowledges this shared kinship through Nietzsche at (1998:438).

analyses in the previous chapter - we can see in action the typically Deleuzean strategy of re-approaching an (apparently) *identical* problematic (for example, that of singularization versus personalization) from an entirely different perspective: or rather, to once again translate into the Deleuzean idiom, produce the same concept into a different series, within which it function differently, enters into different zones of indiscernibility ... where the difference at the heart of the concept itself is revealed.

Deleuze is here again talking about speaking “in your own name, because it doesn’t at all come with seeing yourself as an ego or a person or a subject” (Deleuze 1995:6), but if one chooses to follow the bifurcation that flees down the Nietzsche-line indicated, one can again see the whole field from a different perspective, and other things can become “visible” and different statements can be “articulated”<sup>2</sup>... which is the point of depersonalization. Similarly, especially in *Foucault* Deleuze will once again be concerned with the relationship between knowledge and the formation of the subject, though this relationship will be distributed in a different way – the assumption is of course that the *plane on which they are distributed* will remain the same<sup>3</sup>.

We have tried to show above that the plane of immanence on which the points of a conceptual system is distributed is, or is a function of, the image of thought which underlies it. We now return briefly to this plane as it figures in Deleuze’s thought (or rather, again, as it *makes this thought possible*), though now approached from a different perspective, cut up in different ways according to a different division of conceptual points that we want to distribute on it – specifically from the perspective of the role which the thought of Nietzsche plays in its construction, and indeed, it is in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* that we start to find the first articulation of what is to be called sometimes “transcendental” and sometimes “superior empiricism” (e.g. Deleuze 1983:50). To grasp anew (and differently) the importance of this “empirical” method (and why Nietzsche is

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<sup>2</sup> We will not pause with these terms here, but the “stratification” of forces which leads to the constructions of certain visibilities, and the articulation of forces into “diagrams” of the sayable – the famous (and ironic) “Words and Things” of the French title of Foucault’s *The Order of Things* – as well as the relations between them (which is simultaneously caused by and the genetic principle of Power and Knowledge respectively), is analysed as an important conceptual structure in *Foucault* (Deleuze 1988)

<sup>3</sup> *Foucault* brings the Nietzsche-series into contact with what might be called the Leibniz-series (the next book Deleuze wrote after *Foucault* was *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*) and here Deleuze develops his Nietzschean concepts in the direction of the concept of the “fold” which he develops there. Since this again opens up a whole new field (and re-distribution) of concepts, we shall not be concerned with *Foucault*.

called an empiricist) it is necessary to first briefly sketch out one of the main polemical uses to which Nietzsche puts his thought – according to Deleuze – and that is as an antidote to the critique on which Kant had first embarked.

The contention here is that Kant's critique was doomed from the start because he does not in fact manage to even identify the proper objects of critique – in fact, at best he compromises, at worst he merely re-instates that which he had been supposed to critique. As Deleuze puts it, when describing Kant's project through Nietzsche's eyes: "There has never been a more conciliatory or respectful total critique ... a conception which saw critique as a force which should be brought to bear on all claims to knowledge and truth, but not on knowledge and truth themselves; a force which should be brought to bear on all claims to morality, but not on morality itself" (Deleuze 1983:89) and "the only object of Kant's critique is justification, it begins by believing in what it critiques" (Deleuze 1983:90). In order to carry through this critique, on the other hand, "Nietzsche does not criticize false claims to truth but truth in itself and as an ideal" (Deleuze 1983:95). One might well ask, of course, whether Deleuze (and/or Nietzsche) is not here being unfair – for a start, *critique* (in Kant's sense) is not necessarily the type of *critical* exercise that Deleuze seems to call for here: i.e. as used by Kant it is not so much the question: "is x possible?" but "how is x possible?" Is it legitimate to berate Kant for posing badly a question he was not asking? Is it, in fact, legitimate to take Kant to task for asking a different type of question to what *he should have asked*?

These last few questions are, however, not so much – as they may appear – questions *about* Deleuze's argument as a *part* (or even the point!) of his argument: the Nietzschean point is precisely that Kant (and even more so the dialectical tradition which "comes from the original Kantian form of critique" [Deleuze 1983:89] and which is in fact the main polemical target throughout the book for reasons that we shall try to indicate briefly below) *does not pose the right questions, does not even have the right form of the question* and hence cannot penetrate to the "roots" or origin of knowledge – what is needed is a *genetic* principle. We shall not examine this argument in full here, but Deleuze's analysis of the reasons for this failure of Kant's critique – and the reasons for

the success of Nietzsche's genealogy<sup>4</sup> – will return us to the crux of the conception of subjectivity/ intersubjectivity that we have been trying to sketch out here.

Of the five points that Deleuze sketches out whereby Nietzsche differs from Kant, it is the first point that is apposite to our discussion, and again relates it back to a different perspective on points that we have already discussed. According to Deleuze, Nietzsche's critique is concerned with "Genetic and plastic principles that give an account of the sense and value of beliefs, interpretations and evaluations rather than [Kant's] transcendental principles which are simple conditions for so-called facts" (Deleuze 1983:93). This in turn means that, whereas the Kantian "tribunal of reason" presides over the "distribution of domains and the allocation of established values", the Nietzschean genealogist is engaged instead in a process where "judging is evaluating and interpreting, it is *creating* values. The problem of judging becomes that of justice and hierarchy" (Deleuze 1983:94, my emphasis). For reasons that we will clarify below, this "art of interpretation" is not undertaken from the standpoint of "the realised man, nor any sublimated form of man, spirit, reason or self-consciousness" (Deleuze 1983:94). Instead, the "critical instance is the will to power, the critical instance is that of the will to power" (1983:94) with the final consequence that the "aim of critique is not the ends of man or of reason but in the end the Overman, the overcome, overtaken man. The point of critique is not justification but a different way of feeling: another sensibility" (1983:94). Deleuze here most explicitly acknowledges the influence of Spinoza (cf. 1983:62 - "It is difficult to deny a Spinozist inspiration here") since, in the first place, "the will to power is manifested as the capacity for being affected, as the determinate capacity for being affected" (Deleuze 1983:63). The importance of this appeal to Spinoza is that it allows Deleuze to cast his analysis of "forces" in terms other than those of an esoteric dynamism of occult qualities, since in Spinoza it is the *body* which is affected, which in turn gives

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<sup>4</sup> Deleuze will later replace the idea of "genealogy" with a "geology" (e.g. Deleuze & Guattari 1987:39-74 and Deleuze & Guattari 1994:44) or what are described as "strata" and "diagrams" in *Foucault* (Deleuze 1988), presumably because the genealogical method is too diachronic for his ends, whereas the geological/diagrammatic method is intended to give an "all-at-once" synchronic distribution of points etc. However, we contend that for the purposes that we use it in the current study, it is legitimate to still treat genealogy as a properly Deleuzean method.

meaning to Nietzsche's contention that "Body am I entirely, and nothing more; and soul is only the name of something in the body" (*Thus Spake Zarathustra*<sup>5</sup>)

As we shall soon see, it is once again on the question of constitution that Deleuze-Nietzsche's critique of Kant rests: if Kant is doomed to failure, it is again at least in part because he tries to construct a static account on the basis of *already-constituted* "givens" such as "consciousness", "reason" and the like; once again the question is being displaced towards a *genetic* (that is – *dynamic*) account of the very *constitution* of these structures – here framed in terms of the "forces" that combine to form them, and the type of "power" that manifests itself in this constitution. The crucial point in this regard is that for the will to play the role of such a genetic principle, it must itself be *multiple*, or internally differentiated.

This conception of Nietzsche's critique puts in play almost all the elements that we will need to enact the final statement of the (positive and negative) critique that we have been developing here – of course, most of them still need to be developed. The obvious place to start – and as we have indicated above, the point which Nietzsche berates Kant for *not* starting from – is that of the question which will designate the problem against which the critique is to undertaken. In this regard Deleuze develops what he calls the "method of dramatization"<sup>6</sup> – the question is no longer, for example "what is truth?" or "what has a legitimate claim to truth?"<sup>7</sup> but instead "who is seeking truth? In other words: what does the one who seeks the truth want? What is his type, his will to power?" (Deleuze 1983:94-5, my emphasis). The "who" here should however by no means be taken as a "personalist" reference – in his "Preface to the English Translation" Deleuze makes this abundantly clear, and that "The one that ... does not refer to an individual, to a person, but rather to an event, that is, to the forces in their various

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<sup>5</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche. 1891. *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (Translated by Martin Common). Accessed at: <http://eserver.org/philosophy/nietzsche-zarathustra.txt>, 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Deleuze gives an extended account and defence of this "method of dramatization" – where he applies it not only to Nietzsche, but also very much to his reading of Plato (where, as we have tried to show in Chapter 3 above, the simulacra as "rivals" are also very much "dramatizations" of certain forms) – in a seminar conducted in 1967 before the French Society of Philosophy entitled "The Method of Dramatization" and which has only recently been published in English, in a collection called *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953-1974* (Deleuze 2004: 94-116). Much to my regret, this incredibly important resource only became available to me in late July 2005, and I have been able to make much less use of it than I would have liked.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. also – and especially – Deleuze (1983:75-78).

relationships in a proposition or a phenomenon, and to the genetic relationship which determines these forces (power)" (Deleuze 1983:xi). In terms of the idiom developed in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, what Nietzsche (and Deleuze) is after here is a "typology" of forces as modes of existence, and the "who" (or rather "which one"<sup>8</sup>) that is asked after is always a type<sup>9</sup>. The distinction is important, not only (in a weak sense) because it allows Deleuze to safe-guard Nietzsche from (in any case, easily-disproven) allegations of anti-Semitism – the Judaic priest becomes a "type" and not tied to the figure of the Jewish people – but in the current context it is crucial because it is precisely the notion of the "type" that both underlies the conception of man ... and of the Overman.

In fact, although Deleuze stages the encounter with Kant only much later, we are now moving closer to the central analysis which is conducted throughout the book. It is the importance of the "method of dramatization" with its aim of the identification of a "type" which brings us back finally to the importance of the method of "superior empiricism" which is the means by which this type is defined and evaluated. This is in turn possible because if types are already "modes of existence", then so too "evaluations, 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" (Deleuze 1983:1). As soon, therefore, as the problem of the "value of values, of the evaluation from which their values arises" is made into the central problem of the critique... then the problem becomes one of the *creation* of values (1983:1). And we have already seen – in Chapter 3 above – that Deleuze turns to empiricism precisely because it is the way of thinking *par excellence* which allows for creativity. What is at stake in the critique is a genetic principle – which can also account therefore for the *genesis of consciousness as one particular mode of being amongst others* – and it is in the will to power in Nietzsche that Deleuze finds it.

But it is not enough to point to the creativity of empiricism – which Deleuze associates with immanence in the sense of resisting *both* the transcendent and the transcendental – to account for its appropriation here. Deleuze explicitly equates

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<sup>8</sup> In a "translator's note" regarding the translation of the form of the question, Tomlinson notes that "Deleuze suggested translating *qui?* as 'which (one)?' since 'it is never a person that is being asked after'" (Deleuze 1983:207 n.3\*).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. the Preface: "What is the mode of existence of the person who utters any given proposition, what mode of existence is needed in order to be able to utter it?" (Deleuze 1983:x).

empiricism and pluralism (Deleuze 1983:4) and states that “Pluralism is the properly philosophical way of thinking” because “There is no event, no phenomenon, word or thought which does not have a multiple sense” (4). These senses are the functions of the differing *combinations* of forces that “take possession” of it – it is in this sense that a typical formulation that recurs throughout the book states that any phenomenon or event has as many sense as there are forces capable of taking possession of it. But it is not only in the temporal sense that any phenomenon can be inhabited by different forces (*now* this force, *now that one*). At any given moment, any phenomenon or event is the expression of *at least two forces*, and is therefore multiple.

Interpreted thus, the break with Schopenhauer appears as the result of still being too close to Kant on this crucial issue: “Nietzsche’s break with Schopenhauer rests on one precise point; it is a matter of knowing whether the will is unitary or multiple” (Deleuze 1983:7). Thus, although Schopenhauer too criticizes the central role of a self-identical rationality in Kant, for Schopenhauer the *Will* is still self-identical, and “the consciousness of the identity of the will in all its manifestation leads the will to deny itself<sup>10</sup>” (Deleuze 1983:7). Of interest also in the context of the current study is the equally brief little denunciation of “egoism” that follows: egoism is a bad interpretation of the will, because “in order for there to be egoism it is necessary for there to be an ego” (Deleuze 1983:7). Interestingly, these two brief critiques find their place in the course of a discussion of Nietzsche’s dismissal of *atomism* – and here can perhaps be found also the most succinct statement of the central thesis of this current study: the problem for atomism is “can the basic notion of atom accommodate the essential relation which is attempted to it? The concept only becomes coherent if one thinks of force instead of atom” (Deleuze 1983:6). The contention here is further that if, in the physical realm, atomism is a “bad interpretation of force”, then, in the psychic realm (though these distinctions will soon be problematised) “egoism is a bad interpretation of will” (1983:7) – precisely because the will is the genetic principle of a *relation* of forces that will

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<sup>10</sup> This is not the only score on which Nietzsche criticizes Schopenhauer’s conception of the Will, and this second criticism is just as apposite as the first: “Nietzsche always attacks principles for being too general in relation to what they condition ... He likes to oppose the will to power to the Schopenhauerian will to live, if only because of the extreme generality of the latter. If, on the contrary, the will to power is a good principle, if it reconciles empiricism with principles, if it constitutes a superior empiricism, this is because it is an essentially *plastic* principle that is now wider than what it conditions, that changes itself with the conditioned and determines itself in each case along with what it determines” (Deleuze 1983:50).

*constitute* the quasi-atomistic nodes or poles of these relations. To understand why this is so, we must first see how Deleuze-Nietzsche conceives of *forces*, and then return to that aspect of forces that is called *will*. And to understand some of what he says there, it is necessary to make a short detour through the (Bergsonian) “ontology of difference” that subtends it.

#### 4.2 Ontology of Difference – Bergson

If we now, therefore, move to Bergson, it is not so much for the somewhat superficial reasons that Bergson and Nietzsche are often associated together as “vitalists”, nor that the essay “Bergson, 1859-1941” (Deleuze 2004:22-31) that we now turn to was written chronologically in close proximity to *Nietzsche and Philosophy*<sup>11</sup> (although it is for those reasons too – or rather, it is that there are good reasons for both those reasons!) but also because the similarities between the treatment of both these thinkers by Deleuze shows something of the extent to which we are moving here within the latter’s thought, and because it serves to cast light on many of the other themes already touched.

Deleuze introduces his discussion of what he views as the four chief concepts which Bergson introduced into philosophy (viz. “*duration*, *memory*, *élan vital*, and *intuition*”, Deleuze 2004:22) with an account of the last of these, since for him, in fact, it is not so much these concepts that were Bergson’s chief contribution, but a new way of formulating certain *problems*, and it is the concept of intuition which sheds<sup>12</sup> the most light on these new formulations (22). The importance of intuition is that “in it and through it something is presented, is given in person, instead of being inferred from something else and concluded” (Deleuze 2004:23). Later, in a direct quotation from Bergson, Deleuze makes explicit the link (and influence) on the theory of immanence and empiricism that we have tried to show: “An empiricism worthy of the name ... would measure out for the object a concept appropriate to only that object, a concept of which

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<sup>11</sup> The former was first published in 1956, the latter in 1960.

<sup>12</sup> Or, to re-formulate this in line with the theory of visibility that Deleuze appropriates from Bergson: which allows the new light shed by these formulations to become visible!

one could barely say that it was still a concept because it would apply only to that thing” (Bergson<sup>13</sup> in Deleuze 2004:25).

This is important because it is necessitated by – and points to – a completely new way of posing the question of being in particular. Science (and here Deleuze-Bergson means any *subject-object* based system of thought, since the characterization of science is as that which introduces *mediation* and *distance* into knowledge) cannot give us this type of direct knowledge because it poses the question of being badly, in at least two ways, such that “being is a bad concept to the extent that it serves to oppose everything there is to nothingness, or the thing itself to everything that it is not” (Deleuze 2004:25). This misses the essence of being, because it treats being as something that can be *abstracted from* things – and so turned into something universal, transcendent. In opposition to this, Bergson believes that philosophy as intuition (read: empiricism), by having an immediate access to the *thing itself* (instead of some abstraction), allows us – much more importantly – access also to “the difference of the thing, that which makes its being, that which makes it this rather than that, this rather than something else” (Deleuze 2004:24). Deleuze notes that Bergson often uses the word “nuance” for this difference (Deleuze 2004:25).

That would already serve as a first indication of what the “ontology of difference” would mean for Deleuze, but there is far more that is of great use in this conception, which itself goes much deeper. In defining the being of something as its difference to *other things*, we are still left with “a purely exterior relation” (Deleuze 2004:25) associated with the stasis of space, when intuition was supposed to allow us to penetrate into the heart of the thing and discover its *duration*<sup>14</sup> in/as time (in Bergson’s thought, at least – Deleuze 2004:25). And, in fact, the notion of duration turns out to be crucial in facilitating this penetration, because what Bergson discovers in duration is an *internal* difference: “duration is that which differs or that which changes nature, quality, heterogeneity, what differs from itself”! (Deleuze 2004:26).

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<sup>13</sup> The original citation is from *The Creative Mind* of 1934, Section VI.

<sup>14</sup> The notion of duration of course also resonates with the brief critique of atomism described on pp.176-7 above, since duration was originally introduced in the context of a critique of the “spatialization” of time: i.e. the “standard view” of time as composed of discrete (atomistic) units, whereas – Bergson proposes – the essential in time is precisely its *duration*: i.e. that which *passes between* “instants of time”. Cf. Gunter (1993:135-137).

What this discovery of an internal difference in duration implies further, then, is that while between two *things* – to the extent that we can compare them (as is done in science) – there can always only be a difference in *degree* (since we can only *compare* things on the grounds of what makes them *similar*), when philosophy as intuition/empiricism turns to the examination of internal difference (which alone can be a *true* difference, or a difference in *nature*) what we find is always that “what differs in nature is never a thing, but a tendency” (Deleuze 2004:26). Therefore, to summarise the argument in somewhat truncated form: to describe something in terms of its duration is to describe it in terms of its *difference from itself*; and in order to describe something’s being in terms of this difference, it is necessary to locate this difference “*in one and the same thing* between the two tendencies that encounter one another in it” (Deleuze 2004:26). In Bergson, these “two tendencies” are “relaxation and contraction”, but – while these will go on to play a crucial role in Deleuze’s later philosophy (notably *Difference and Repetition* - but already that title should be becoming more clear ...) – we will now return to the work on Nietzsche, where Deleuze draws on the same basic framework, but gives these tendencies different names, namely “becoming-reactive” and “becoming-active” (in relation to forces), or “affirmation” and “negation” (in relation to the “differential element” of forces – power).

#### 4.3 Forces and (Will to) Power

Deleuze starts off his account of the two types of forces in Nietzsche very much in the context of a critique of consciousness. We have already noted in passing that what will be at stake in Nietzsche is a new sensibility, and that this must be allied to a new interpretation of the body, along Spinozistic lines. We are now in a position to start clarifying why this must be so. First of all, Deleuze – again drawing specifically on Spinoza – starts by denying any possibility of a dualism between forces and bodies: forces do not “inhabit” or (merely) “possess” them (or, vice versa, bodies do not “possess forces”) – instead “all reality is already a quantity of force. There are [sic] nothing but quantities of force in mutual ‘relations of tension’” (Deleuze 1983:40). From this emphasis on the *relations of forces*, at least two things immediately follow: firstly, as a

*relation*, any “body is a multiple phenomenon, its unity is that of a multiple phenomenon” (Deleuze 1983:40); secondly, as a relation of *forces*, this multiple phenomenon must be *hierarchical* (40) – i.e. a force exists in terms of how it *exerts* itself, and therefore “either obeys or commands” (40). The consequence is that what “defines a body<sup>15</sup> is this relation between dominant and dominated forces” (Deleuze 1983:40). Lastly, we can see here that forces are what give contents to the “tendencies” that we had identified in Bergson. By positing that all forces are therefore *relative* (to other forces) – by denying that there can be such a thing as an “absolute force<sup>16</sup>,” – we can see how supposed “paradoxes”, such as the hoary old chestnut of what would happen if an irresistible force should come into contact with an immovable object, disappear: viewed from this perspective, there is in fact no paradox, just a consequence of a badly-posed problem, a misconception of the nature of force (which can at best be irresistible *in relation to the specific resistance that it is currently overcoming*, just as an object can only be immovable *in relation to the specific force which it is currently resisting ...*).

This distinction (between being dominated and dominant) points to the determining characteristics of the two essential types of forces: superior/dominant forces are *active* and inferior-dominated forces are *reactive*<sup>17</sup>. Deleuze is quick to spell out the consequences of this view of the relation of forces – it must mean that “inferior forces do

<sup>15</sup> Already here Deleuze notes that this counts for *any body whatsoever*, regardless of whether it is “chemical, biological, social or political” (Deleuze 1983:40). Later, in relation to the will to power, he cites a passage from Nietzsche which re-iterates this: “The fact is that the will to power rules even in the inorganic world, or rather that there is no inorganic world” (Nietzsche in Deleuze 1983:63).

<sup>16</sup> “The measure of forces and their qualification does *not* depend on absolute quantity but rather on relative accomplishment” (Deleuze 1983:61).

<sup>17</sup> We can note a certain correspondence between action/reaction in Deleuze-Nietzsche and Spinoza’s distinction between action and passion. Spinoza defines this latter distinction as follows: “I say that we act or are active when something takes place within us or outside of us whose adequate cause we are, that is ... when from our nature anything follows in us or outside us which can be clearly and distinctly understood through that alone. On the other hand, I say we suffer or are passive when something takes place in us or follows from our nature of which we are only the partial cause” (Spinoza 1910:84, Part III, Def. ii). This connection with Spinoza also allows us to get a clearer view of how these types of forces are associated with affects (emotions) since Spinoza defines pleasure as a “transition from a less [*sic*] state of perfection to a greater” (1910:128, Part III, Def. of the Emotions, ii) and pain as the contrary movement (1910:128-9, Part III, Def. of the Emotions, iii). Of interest is that Spinoza too is at pains to point out that he is talking about the *transition* (the becoming, the tendency) and not the *attainment* of this “greater state of perfection” – which here means ever greater self-determination.

Deleuze merely briefly notes Nietzsche’s kinship with Spinoza on these points (1983:62), and then points out that Nietzsche criticized Spinoza, however, for not “being able to elevate himself to the conception of a will to power. He confused power with simple force and conceived of force in a reactive way” (Deleuze 1983:206, n.18) since the *conatus essendi* is defined as the *conservation* of force (cf. *Ethics* Part III, prop. vi: “Everything in so far as it is itself endeavours to persist in its own being” – Spinoza 1910:91).

not, by obeying *cease to be forces* distinct from those which command” (1983:40). This means, on the one hand, that this distinction between active and reactive forces must be conceived *quantitatively* (i.e. active forces dominate by virtue of greater quantity) but also by *quality* (since dominated forces do not cease being forces when dominated, they must exert themselves in *some other way* than active forces).

However, it turns out that the quality of a force *depends on* quantity, although it cannot be *reduced* to quantity (Deleuze 1983:43). This is already a consequence of the *hierarchical* component of the genealogical conception of force, whereby two forces can never be equalized (since two forces which would be equalized would cease to be forces, and the body which is constituted as a consequence of the *tension* between these forces would decompose)<sup>18</sup>. In other words, for Deleuze-Nietzsche, the *qualities* of active and reactive forces “are nothing but the corresponding difference in quantity between two forces whose relationship is presupposed” (Deleuze 1983:43). This becomes the *evaluative* aspect of genealogical critique – since the quality of a force is therefore always directly dependent on the specific (and relatively unique) relations into which it enters in any given and specific mixture, and since a force only *exists* in and *as* this relation, the task of genealogy is to make an *immanent* analysis of each specific body in terms of the unique *differences* (in measurable *quantity*) that compose that body. The demand for a purely immanent analysis is further realised when we note that *which* forces enter into

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<sup>18</sup> This, in fact, forms the basis of Nietzsche’s critique of science – as reconstructed by Deleuze: though Deleuze does note that Nietzsche was not particularly interested in or knowledgeable about science, he criticises especially the science of the day (especially) for always trying to *equalize* quantities – e.g. in the law of the conservation of energy, where potential energy is used to cancel out, or equalize, potential energy; but also in thermodynamics which explains everything in terms of the *eventual* equalization of energy/force. (Deleuze 1983:44-6). Again, we can see the parallels between this critique of science and that of Bergson, which had similarly objected to science’s tendency to equalize phenomena (i.e. to treat of them *insofar they are the same*) and therefore miss the essential – which is the *difference* of the thing. In this sense, Deleuze-Nietzsche’s genealogical “superior empiricism” can also be seen as an attempt to describe Bergson’s intuition.

It should however perhaps be borne in mind that neither Nietzsche nor Bergson (at least in Deleuze’s account) are criticizing science *as science* – that is, as a certain way of dealing with phenomena in terms of their outer relations, and for technological reasons etc. They are certainly valid as technological interpretations of the universe. Instead, what these “critiques” of science amount to, is to point out that this is not *all* that there is to these phenomena – and that this form of science cannot offer access to precisely that which is crucial and unique to *each particular phenomenon*. To gain this “knowledge”, to penetrate to the *life* or *uniqueness* of phenomena, another method is needed – Bergson’s “intuition” or Nietzsche’s “genealogical” or “typological” method.

any relation is not itself the product of any transcendental principle, but the pure product of pure *chance*<sup>19</sup>.

Already we can see how this account can start to help clarifying the initial problem which we posed in this study (namely, how to account for the intuitive feeling that one becomes a different person in relation to different people). If a “body” can also be conceived of as “social or political” (Deleuze 1983:40) then even a face-to-face encounter can be conceived of as a “body”; and if the quality of each “force” in such a relation-as-body can only be conceived of as the function of the *differential of quantity* between the component forces, then it creates a very powerful account of how the relation can influence (or, more strongly – *constitute*) the quality of each person in such a relationship. In this sense the reliance on *chance* may seem problematic (as does the focus on *internal differentiation*) and weakens the usefulness of the account for this purpose, since the situation of intersubjectivity is obviously in many cases the object of a choice (and in fact, the *use* of such a theory would be to enable a principle which would allow one to *choose* which encounters to pursue and which to avoid). Deleuze claims to develop a “principle of selection” out of Nietzsche himself, to which we shall return below<sup>20</sup>.

The above theory of forces in differential relations is then also what allows Nietzsche’s “method of dramatization” to escape the condemnation of the use of “method” in the “dogmatic image of thought” (Deleuze 1983:103). There the focus on method had been dismissed for two closely-related reasons: firstly because it assumes

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<sup>19</sup> Deleuze gives a lengthy analysis of chance and *amor fati* in Nietzsche, which we shall not enter into further here. However, it is perhaps interesting to point out the relationship this conception (i.e. of bodies coming into being as the products of relations that are themselves formed by pure chance) has with the conception of the *clinamen* in Epicurean physics. This is traditionally described as follows: a never-ending stream of atoms “normally fall in a straight line downwards … But every now and then, quite arbitrarily, without any possible reason, some of the atoms swerve slightly, slant aside from their straight downwards fall. Then, of course, they collide with other atoms, and from the first collision and all the counter-collisions and entanglements to which it gives rise, a world and all its contents comes into being” (Armstrong 1965:135). Deleuze, in an appendix to *Logic of Sense* which discusses Epicureanism and Lucretius, gives a significantly different interpretation – he notes that the name “clinamen” is not etymologically related to “indeterminate [cause]” but rather to “unassignable”. That is to say that the Epicureans introduce it not to *do away* with the notion of cause, but rather to point to something very different: “the irreducible plurality of causes or of causal series, and the impossibility of bringing causes together into a whole” (Deleuze 1990:269–70). In short, it is also this type of reading which Deleuze threads throughout *Nietzsche and Philosophy* in his account of the dice-throw which, by being affirmed, simultaneously “affirms chance and the necessity of chance” (Deleuze 1983:194).

<sup>20</sup> cf. pp. 192–3 below.

that “time and place matter little if we apply method: it enables us to enter the domain of ‘that which is valid for all times and places’” (Deleuze 1983:103) which is an example of the (nihilistic) drive to equalization that Nietzsche had also decried in science; secondly – and this is a consequence of this attempt at equalization – truth is conceived as “an abstract universal [and] we are never referred to the real forces that *form* thought” (Deleuze 1983:103). Deleuze-Nietzsche’s superior (or genealogical) empiricism, on the other hand, can function as a method without falling into this dogmatism, firstly because of this focus on the singular and immanent without the need for transcendent principles, and secondly (which is again also a consequence of the first reason) because “truth is not the element of thought. The element of thought is *sense* and *value*” (Deleuze 1983:104, my emphasis).

We still have to qualify what is meant here by “thought”, which cannot be reduced to rationality or even knowledge for Deleuze-Nietzsche, and also returns us to the critique of consciousness with which, we earlier noted in passing, the section on the active and reactive opened. There, anticipating the distinguishing relation of dominated/dominating, Deleuze had somewhat cursorily (that is, without much explanation or justification) noted that for Nietzsche, “consciousness is always the relation of an inferior to a superior to which he is subordinated or into which he is ‘incorporated’” (Deleuze 1983:39). This is because (and this is one of two points where Deleuze compares Nietzsche and Freud<sup>21</sup>) “Nietzsche thinks that consciousness is the region of the ego affected by the external world” (Deleuze 1983:39). As such it is not alone as a reactive force, but is joined by things as diverse as memory, habit, nutrition,

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<sup>21</sup> The other occasion is that of the discussion of the reactive use of memory in *The Genealogy of Morals* (e.g. the man who “cannot ‘have done’ with anything”, Deleuze 1983:114). Here Deleuze spots a precursor of Freud’s “topical hypothesis” whereby at the surface there is a consciousness which receives direct but momentary impressions from objects, and below that an unconscious which bears and maintains (remembers) the traces of past excitations. The *distinction* between unconsciousness and consciousness is in fact that between memory and the ability to forget; inbetween these two there is a skin or membrane which has to be tough enough to *separate* the two, but at the same time facilitate (one-way) *communication* between them – one-way, because the functionality of consciousness is guaranteed by its ability to “forget”, to pass on and then forget impressions. (Deleuze 1983:112-4) This appears to be a similar structure to that discussed by Cilliers & Gouws (2001), where they lay emphasis on this simultaneous function as barrier and passage. The point Nietzsche is making is that if, on the one hand, this barrier becomes too porous (that is, if traces invade consciousness), or on the other hand, and perhaps even worse, if it becomes too impassable (that is, if consciousness cannot be actively purged of impressions by assigning them to the subconscious as traces), then that is the general form of sickness, and of *ressentiment* – the inability to have done with anything, to leave it behind one.

reproduction, conservation and adaptation<sup>22</sup> (1983:41). Conversely, active forces are *in principle* unknowable, because they are of the body and unconscious. This is also partly why Deleuze will attack the principle of representation wherever he will find it (e.g. Deleuze 1983:81) – representation is essentially reactive since it measures the contents of consciousness (an already-constituted subject) against an already-constituted truth (an external object) without an account of how either of these were constituted ... or *who* constituted them. Hence Nietzsche will not only call for the Overman as “another sensibility” (Deleuze 1983:64-5, and also 163) but for a critique carried out by “a thought which thinks *against* reason”<sup>23</sup> (1983:93). In turn, what such a thought will aim to achieve is the project of the “transmutation of all values” (Deleuze 1983:171ff) which Nietzsche announced towards the end of his career but never completed. The radicality of this project must be understood to call not just for a *reversal* or “change of values, but a change in the element from which the value of values derives” (Deleuze 1983:171). Related back to our current discussion, this means that only once this element has been changed or transformed, can “all values *known or knowable up to the present*” (1983:171, emphasis in original) truly be said to have been transformed.

We have already sketched out the theory of forces that gives rise to the *interpretation of forces in terms of sense*. We have not, however, yet determined what principle (which must be immanent) drives these forces – or, in other words, from where do forces *obtain their force*? What is this “element from which the value of values derives”? Another way of posing this question is to ask what will form the object of interpretation as the activity that will discover the *value* of forces and mixtures. The answer in all these cases is the Will.

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<sup>22</sup> As regards these two, Deleuze notes that Nietzsche “criticizes Darwin for interpreting evolution and chance in an entirely reactive way. He admires Lamarck because Lamarck foretold the existence of a truly active *plastic force*, primary in relation to adaptations: a force of metamorphosis” (Deleuze 1983:42).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Moulard (1994), who states that “to understand Deleuze’s ‘transcendental empiricism’... we must read Deleuze as a modern artist” (288-9), and then explains further that, “when I say that Deleuze must be read as a modern artist, I mean that we must see that his philosophy actually effects *the junction between art and philosophy*, which for him essentially informs *thought*” (Moulard 2004:297, my emphases)

#### 4.4 The Will to Power

We have now seen that forces can be divided into *active* and *reactive*, and that these two qualities are functions of the essential and irreducible differential aspect of their relative quantities, that is, according to whether they command or obey. However, we still need a principle to account for the fact *that* one has the force to dominate. To approach this principle *according to which* one force is dominant or reactive, and another reactive or dominated, we have to make a brief detour through the notion of the “eternal return” (as “cosmological and physical doctrine” rather than the more important conception as an ethical “principle of selection” to rival and replace the Kantian Categorical Imperative, cf. Deleuze 1983:68-72). Here Deleuze is first of all concerned to combat what he sees as an easy – and common - misinterpretation, namely that the eternal return would be the “return of the same” (Deleuze 1983:48). Again, the Bergsonian notions of difference and duration that we have tried to sketch out above are crucial in combating this misinterpretation. In Bergson, we had seen that duration and difference must accompany each other, in that duration is the return of that which differs *to the extent that it differs from itself*. Instead, “identity in the eternal return does not describe the nature of that which returns but, on the contrary, the fact of returning for that which differs” (Deleuze 1983:48). The eternal return is therefore conceived as a *synthesis* which unites “time and its dimensions, … diversity and its reproduction” (1983:48). It is what makes time pass, and therefore the element of becoming, which synthesizes being and becoming. Perhaps a too simplistic but nevertheless illuminating illustration of the type of conception that Deleuze has in mind here is that of a novelist: a great author may *create* something wonderfully new with his first novel – the eternal return would not be that writer rewriting the same (type of) novel over and over again, but producing something *equally wonderfully new* each time<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> This example is a loaded one, because as we shall see, it is – to a significant degree – precisely the issue of the *novel* (the new) and creativity which is at stake here! In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari in fact give a very similar conception of a truly philosophical (which for them means in the first place “creative”) relationship to the history or tradition of philosophy: “What is the best way to follow the great philosophers? Is it to repeat what they said or *to do what they did*, that is, create concepts for problems that necessarily change?” (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:28, emphasis in original).

But if the eternal return is the physical doctrine of this synthesis, to account for it (to derive its sense and value) we still need to be able to see it as “the expression of a principle which serves as an explanation of diversity and its reproduction, of difference and its repetition” (Deleuze 1983:49). Thus, if the eternal return *is* this synthesis, then the *principle* of this synthesis is the will to power. It can serve as this principle because of its essential relation to forces – the will to power is “the genealogical element of force, both differential and genetic” (Deleuze 1983:50). As such it is also the “principle of the synthesis of forces” (1983:50). It is for this reason that it is absurd to interpret the will to power as a will that “wants” power – power is “not what the will wants, but on the contrary, the one that wants in the will”! (Deleuze 1983:xi)<sup>25</sup>. Will to power can never be separated from the forces (and, as always, forces in determinate *relations*) that it determines and is determined by (that is, it cannot be abstracted metaphysically) but neither is it identical to forces: it is “added to force, but as the differential element, as the internal element of its production” and this determination is double since will to power is “both the genetic element of force and the principle of the synthesis of forces” (Deleuze 1983:50-1). Therefore, while chance accounts for the fact *that* forces enter into relations, will to power is what determines *how* these forces are determined in relations. This is why, if forces are what is *interpreted* (and as *sense*) by genealogical empiricism, then will to power is the element of *evaluation* (as *the value of values*); and where forces can be divided into the two types of active and reactive, then will to power has two essential modes: *affirmative* and *negative* (Deleuze 1983:51).

These latter two articulations form two distinct planes, which are nevertheless linked. On the one hand the active/reactive axis belongs to force and as such must be kept distinct from the affirmation/negation axis that determines will to power; on the other, “there is a deep affinity, a complicity, but never a confusion, between action and affirmation, between reaction and negation” (Deleuze 1983:54). This complicity brings us finally back to the “tendencies” of which Bergson spoke – the complicity between types of will to power and types of force means that force, for example, no longer has static “attributes” of action or reaction, but tendencies: “Affirmation is not action but the

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<sup>25</sup> In fact, Deleuze makes clear that this is *itself* a reactive or nihilistic interpretation of the will to power. Cf. Deleuze (1983:84).

power of becoming active, *becoming active* personified. Negation is not simple reaction but a *becoming reactive*" (Deleuze 1983:54, emphases in original). We can now distinguish between two levels of the genealogical method: "To interpret is to determine the force which gives sense to a thing. To evaluate is to determine the will to power which gives value to a thing" (1983:54).

The concept of the will to power is thus supposed to serve as an evaluative tool with which to examine the differential relations of active and reactive forces which "are not in a relation of succession but in one of coexistence in the origin itself" (Deleuze 1983:55). It turns out that the differential element of forces (the will that each has an affinity to) is expressed in the relation each force has to this originary difference. We can now start to see why reaction, negation and nihilism enter into an unholy alliance – their essential relation to this difference is to try and negate it, to reduce it to the same, ultimately to get rid of this difference itself... and since the will is nothing other *than* this difference, this ends up as nothing less than the ultimate form of nihilism, wherein the will *itself* is denied - which is where Nietzsche sees Schopenhauer, Buddhism and the figure of Christ himself (as opposed to Paulian Christianity) as examples of nihilism in its most pure form, leading. In this regard it is important to realize that, just as forces do not cease being forces even when dominated, so nihilism does not cease being a form of will, even if "it means primarily a will to annihilation, a will to nothingness" (Deleuze 1983:147ff.).

On the contrary, "only active force asserts itself, it affirms its difference and makes its difference an object of enjoyment and affirmation" (Deleuze 1983:55-6). Similarly, with the will to power: "What a will wants is to affirm its difference. In its essential relation with the 'other' a will makes its difference an object of affirmation"<sup>26</sup> (Deleuze 1983:9). Nihilism, by contrast, is the will turning against itself, trying to negate itself<sup>27</sup>. The expression of this type of the will occurs as the triumph of reactive forces.

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<sup>26</sup> We can note in passing the difference with the transcendental theories of intersubjectivity, with its emphasis on discovering the *identity* to (or at least similarity with) the "other".

<sup>27</sup> Cf. the three forms of nihilism Deleuze-Nietzsche analyses as *negative nihilism* ("the value of nil taken on by life, the fiction of higher values which gives it this value and the will to nothingness which is expressed in these higher values" – Deleuze 1983:147); *reactive nihilism* ("this is no longer the devaluation of life in the name of higher values but rather the devaluation of higher values themselves" – 1983:148) and *passive nihilism* ("the exhausted life which prefers to not will, to fade away passively" – 1983:151) ... or

Deleuze is very clear in pointing out that reactive forces can never triumph by becoming stronger than active forces – instead, the triumph of reactive forces is achieved by making active forces *become reactive*: by “*separat[ing] active force from what it can do*” (Deleuze 1983:57, emphasis in original). This is in turn accomplished by making life *blameworthy* – either by blaming someone else (*ressentiment*) or by internalizing the blame (bad conscience).

The classic analysis of the process of “becoming-reactive” to which Deleuze refers is provided by Nietzsche in the analyses of the revenge of “slave morality” (= reactive forces) over “master morality” (=active forces) in *The Genealogy of Morals*. Deleuze gives an admirably succinct logical analysis of this process, with reference to the “syllogism of the bleating lamb” (Deleuze 1983:122). In Nietzsche, this syllogism – which is that whereby slaves or reactive forces assign values to phenomena - is stated as follows: “These birds of prey are evil; and whoever is least like a bird of prey, but rather its opposite, a lamb – would he not be good?” (Nietzsche in Deleuze 1983:212n. 12). However, Deleuze’s paraphrase gives a clearer idea of the logical structure of this argument, which Deleuze calls a paralogism: “You are evil; I am the opposite of what you are; therefore I am good” (Deleuze 1983:122). As Deleuze points out, this is a fallacious argument, since it is assumed that “one and the same force is effectively held back in the virtuous lamb but given free reign in the evil bird of prey [and hence, s]ince the strong could prevent themselves from acting, the weak could act if they did not prevent themselves” (123). This is the origin of *ressentiment*, which is effected through accusation, where “reactive forces ‘project’ an abstract and neutralized image of force; such a force separated from its effects will be *blameworthy* if it acts, *deserving*, on the contrary, if it does not” (123). Forces are separated from what they can do by the extent to which the active “type” *internalizes* this accusation (128), that is, by the extent to which the blame arriving as an external expression of *ressentiment* by another is, turned by the active type itself onto itself. This is to say that force is separated from what it can do to the extent that *ressentiment* (of the other) is turned into the “bad conscience” (of the self).

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Platonism/Judaism/Christianity, then Kant/Hegelianism/the Free-thinkers, and lastly Schopenhauer/Christ/Buddhism.

This is why guilt, bad conscience and *ressentiment* – the *act or need to blame in itself*, and not *what is blamed* – is fundamentally a function of reactive forces and nihilism; affirmation and activity, on the other hand, is always *innocent*: “Existence affirmed and appreciated, force not separated, the will not divided in two – this is the first approximation of innocence”<sup>28</sup> (Deleuze 1983:23). This innocence is also *irresponsible* – because it is innocent, but also because it is not reactive: it no longer has to *answer for* anything or *to* anyone *else* (Deleuze 1983:21). This “else” is important, because it points to the reactive nature of the type of “responsibility” Deleuze sees Nietzsche as wanting to escape. Here “to react” or to “respond” is always to refuse the initiative, to passively act in accordance with a prior act or status quo (i.e. never to “speak first” as it were, but always to wait for someone else, and then to respond; never to act positively, but always to react to a force or action initiated by someone else). In this sense then, to be “irresponsible”, or innocent, is to be able to take the initiative, to be able to act or “speak” without first waiting for someone else. This is brought out explicitly later, when Deleuze discusses the master and the slave as moral “types”, where a type is the outcome of the question “who can say” a certain phrase or “formula”. Specifically, the two “formulae” under discussion here, are, firstly “I am good, therefore you are evil” (the formula of the master), and the second “You are evil therefore I am good” (Deleuze 1983:119). Deleuze’s question is now: “who is it that *begins* by saying: ‘I am good’?” (119). Deleuze here emphasizes “begins” because that is what is important for an orientation towards the future, rather than a captivity to the past: to *begin*, rather than to *continue*. He then states quite clearly that the one who *begins* – that is, the master “who says: ‘I am good’, [and] does not wait to be called good” (Deleuze 1983:119, my emphasis) – is “certainly not the one who compares himself to others, nor the one who compares his actions and his works to superior and transcendent values” (119).

There is also an important temporal dimension – since a *reaction* is always tied (and to an extent determined by) a past or present impulse, it is always tied to the *past or present itself*, that is, to the *status quo*. In order to detach itself from the weight of this past, it is precisely this “irresponsibility” which is required, since it alone opens up a way

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<sup>28</sup> One is reminded again of Derrida’s (no doubt, knowing!) characterization of Deleuze’s own thought as the “most innocent” of his generation. Cf. p. 108 above.

of contracting the past in such a way that it can be projected into the *future* as an open-ended possibility.

#### 4.5 The Form of Man – Becoming-Reactive

For Deleuze-Nietzsche, this is in fact the *form of man* – this becoming-reactive of forces. Having already established that we are talking about *bodies*, and hence in the first place always about *affects* of the body (sensibility), Deleuze can state that “all sensibility is only a becoming of forces” (1983:63), which is itself, as we have seen, an expression of the type of will that is expressed in this becoming. If the great enemy is nihilism, which takes the form of this becoming-reactive of active forces, the crucial question is whether there are “no other ways of becoming?” (Deleuze 1983:64) – that is, a becoming-active of reactive forces. The answer is two-fold: on the one hand, the apparently pessimistic answer is that “the fact remains that we do not feel, experience or know any becoming but becoming-reactive” (Deleuze 1983:64); on the other hand, this is precisely the problem that Nietzsche’s philosophy poses – “we would need another sensibility, another way of feeling” (Deleuze 1983:65). There is only one way to achieve this – man must be overcome in favour of “another becoming, another sensibility: the Overman” (65). What this in turn requires – as Deleuze and Guattari especially will argue throughout their collaborative work – is *experimentation*.

This return us to the conception of becoming that we find in Deleuze (of an “inbetween” that is not subordinated to the poles “between” which it occurs, which is not a mere passage between privileged instants of stasis) and we can see that what is called for here is not to become *different*, but to become differently – a different *way* of becoming, not a different *terminus* of becoming. Deleuze is quite explicit on this point: “what constitutes man and his world is not only a particular type of force, but a mode of becoming of forces in general, not reactive forces in general, but the becoming-reactive of all forces” (Deleuze 1983:167). This becoming is very much associated with the subordination of becoming to stasis, to a *goal*, which it would serve, and which in turns requires “the opposite quality, which in becoming passes into its opposite” (Deleuze 1983:167). Deleuze here uses the example of the waning of an original active force in

aging, or in the inevitability of becoming-sick ... but the real target is obvious: the Hegelian dialectic (cf. Deleuze 1983:168), since it is the dialectic which subordinates the becoming of forces to their *telos* or end, and it conceives of this process of becoming of forces itself in terms of their eventual *equalization* – which we have seen is the very nature of nihilism itself!

We also see here again the importance of a theory of *positive*, originary and open-ended difference such as that of Bergson – it is that which allows Nietzsche to formulate a theory that is almost point-for-point an antidote to the (Hegelian) dialectic: “Nietzsche’s ‘yes’ is opposed to the dialectical ‘no’; affirmation to dialectical negation; difference to dialectical contradiction; joy, enjoyment, to dialectical labour; lightness, dance, to dialectical responsibilities” (Deleuze 1983:168). Formulated in this way – as an antidote to the dialectic – which Deleuze makes sure to return to at the end of almost each new concept he discusses, we can also see the background to the critique of consciousness that runs throughout the book. It is not accidental that Deleuze-Nietzsche links the concepts of negation, consciousness, memory (as the inability to “have done with anything”, which has as one of its avatars the *conscience*) and sadness: we already find these concepts in the Hegelian “unhappy consciousness<sup>29</sup>” (Deleuze 1983:159). Deleuze summarises Nietzsche’s (often polemical) attack on the dialectic as based on three points: “it misinterprets sense because it does not know the nature of the forces which concretely appropriate phenomena; it misinterprets essence because it does not know the real element from which forces, their qualities and their relations derive [which is the will to power]; it misinterprets change and transformation because it is content to work with permutations of abstract and unreal terms” (Deleuze 1983:158). The consequence is that the “discovery dear to the dialectic is the unhappy consciousness, the deepening, the resolution and glorification of the unhappy consciousness and its resources. *It is reactive forces that express themselves in opposition, the will to nothingness that expresses itself in the labour of the negative.* The dialectic is the natural ideology of *ressentiment* and bad faith” (Deleuze 1983:159, emphasis in original).

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<sup>29</sup> Although Tomlinson does not note the fact in his translation, nor does Deleuze explicitly make the connection here, the French word “*conscience*” translates both the English words “consciousness” and “conscience”. Similarly, “bad” and “unhappy” are etymologically related in French “*mal*” (bad = *mal*, and unhappy = *Malheur*), so that “unhappy consciousness” and “bad conscience” are far more closely related in French than in English.

But while the above statements come from a critique of especially Hegel, the same is true of any *consciousness-based* theory (and the system of “knowledge”) as such. In order to understand why this is so, it is important to re-iterate once again that nihilism is not not-will, but remains *will*, as is affirmation. In fact, affirmation and negation are not to be conceived or contrasted as two types of will, but must be understood as *relations of the will to the will as such*. In Spinozist terms, one can perhaps say that negation and affirmation are to be conceived as two different *aspects* under which the will can be considered, in analogy to the way in which (monistic) substance can be conceived either under the aspect (attribute) of matter or of mind, though they cannot therefore be separated, or constitute two *substances*<sup>30</sup>. In fact Deleuze uses a distinction from scholastic logic to state the difference in relation to the will that we find in negation and affirmation. According to this, “nihilism, the will to nothingness, is not only a will to power, a quality of the will to power, but the *ratio cognoscendi of the will to power in general*” (Deleuze 1983:172). Tomlinson, in a translator’s note, glosses this as “the being of a thing in the mode of object known” (in Deleuze 1983:219, n. 21). This is because knowledge is essentially tied to the negative or the reactive (knowledge as representation that “abstracts” essences conceived as identities and by negating differences, the dialectic that is driven by negation, all the sad types of thought that conceive of things in terms of *ends* and not *becomings*...).

In contrast to this, “the other side of the will to power, the unknown side, the other quality of the will to power, the unknown quality, is affirmation. And affirmation, in turn, is not merely a will to power, a quality of the will to power, it is the *ratio essendi of the will to power in general*” (Deleuze 1983:173). Once again, Tomlinson glosses this scholastic term, this time as “the essence or ‘formal reason’ of a thing” (in Deleuze 1983:219, n. 23). While this does not in itself serve to clarify the matter terribly, it will perhaps help if we emphasise that “unknown” is never used here in the sense of ‘*still*’ or ‘*as yet unknown*’<sup>31</sup>, but as ‘*in principle unknowable*’. In other words, what is called for is a

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<sup>30</sup> For this relation in Spinoza, cf. *Ethics* Part II Prop. VII, Note: “thinking substance and extended substance are one and the same thing, which is now comprehended through this and now through that attribute” (Spinoza 1910:41-2)

<sup>31</sup> Although Deleuze does spend some time on the succession of animals in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (the camel, then the lion, then the child) in which he sees Nietzsche as advocating a turning of nihilism against itself (Deleuze 1983:189-192), which seems to imply that it is only when nihilism has developed into its

“thought … [which] goes beyond all the laws of our *knowledge*” (Deleuze 1983:173), or, to put it yet another way, “*creation [must take] the place of knowledge itself*” (173)

It is therefore not accidental that it is another *sensibility* that is called for, and that Deleuze opposes an irrational *thought* to the rationality of a (conscious) subject in Kant: “In irrationalism we are concerned only with thought, only with thinking. What is opposed to reason is thought itself; what is opposed to the reason is thought itself; what is opposed to the reasonable being is the thinker himself” (Deleuze 1983:93). Why is the “thinker himself” opposed to the “reasonable being”? Because the reasonable being is *constituted on the basis of a selection of forces and will which constitutes the thinker as a type of becoming*. Before leaving Nietzsche it is therefore important to say something about the principle whereby<sup>32</sup> this selection is to be made, the principle of *will* which replaces the Kantian categorical imperative (which is a principle of *reason*) – this principle is once again the eternal return, considered this time, not as a physical doctrine, but as such a *thought*.

#### 4.6 The Eternal Return as Principle of Selection

What would this thought that is not knowledge<sup>33</sup> be? Deleuze calls it a selection (which is the object of interpretation) and it operates by a principle which is also a “rule as the Kantian one” (Deleuze 1983:68) - i.e. the categorical imperative. And this principle has a formulation which is every bit as simple as any of those in which Kant tries to set out his imperative: “*whatever you will, will it in such a way that you also will its eternal return*” (Deleuze 1983:68). This selection is two-fold: in the first place it functions as

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fullblown form (is “fully known”) that it can be transmuted. On this reading the profound pessimism of Schopenhauer would become a sort of pre-condition for Nietzsche’s thought of the Overman. However, one could argue that in terms of the analysis of the reading above, this last interpretation would be a bad one, since it would see Nietzsche’s thought as an *end* which would be the fulfillment of a whole historical process: it would still “smell offensively Hegelian”!

<sup>32</sup> “Whereby” here should not just be understood as “according to” but (also) in the sense that the (thought of the) eternal return is *itself* the selecting instance!

<sup>33</sup> That is, not knowledge in the sense in which knowledge is always that of an object by a subject, since Deleuze is here trying to penetrate to a *pre-subjective* plane – that is, to try and understand or explain the very process which *precedes* and *enables* the constitution of the subject, and hence of the subject-object relation.

(merely) a thought which “eliminates” all “the little compensations, the little pleasures, the little joys and everything that is granted once, only once” (Deleuze 1983:68-9).

But this is still only the superficial meaning of the eternal return – it can only eliminate *some* reactive forces, but it cannot yet bring about a transmutation, it cannot yet bring about the becoming-active of reactive forces. Deleuze admits that Nietzsche’s discussion of this second selection is obscure and incomplete (Deleuze 1983:69), but then – again drawing on the foundation of difference and its alliance with repetition – tries to reconstruct Nietzsche’s idea: since repetition can never be the repetition of the same, but requires difference as its principle (since difference is required to effect the synthesis that makes time *pass*), and since negation and reaction are radically opposed to a true conception of difference, “reactive forces will not return [and] ... ‘Nihilism [is] vanquished by itself’ thanks to the eternal return” (Deleuze 1983:71) – “It is no longer a question of selective thought but of selective being; for the eternal return is being and being is selection” (Deleuze 1983:71). This finally gives sense to the contention that an interpretation, does not *give rise to*, but *is*, an interpretation – it means that affirmation, before being a (conscious) thought, is a way of being. But since being is – we hope to have shown – based on primary selections of becoming, this in turn amounts to the *selection of relations*. It is a question therefore, of being able to analyse relations in the ways that Nietzsche-Deleuze proposes above, and to submit them to the test of the eternal return. And this implies the double-movement: since we are always already constituted by relations, we always have to first deterritorialise (depersonalize) ourselves from these relations – only then will the eternal return dictate their return, or non-return. The challenge is to make relations not *endure*, but to make them *repeat* – and to do this, we must be depersonalized, singularized, experiment, become delirious, drunk on pure water – only once we have thus stepped from these relations, can they start to *repeat*...

#### 4.7 Final words

In conclusion, let us summarize again the course this study has taken.

The central problem of Part I of this thesis can be stated simply as being that of *intersubjectivity*. However, part of the implicit contention of this thesis - and the reason

for its organization as split into two parts - is that there are at least two ways of posing this problem. Traditionally this question has been posed in the first way, as that of the *constitution of the Other by the Self*. Here we have taken the phenomenological theory of intersubjectivity - as found in Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* (1969) in particular - as our test case. There, especially in the Fifth Meditation, Husserl asks the question of whether the phenomenological method, which is concerned with experience in the mode of intentionality (that is, of experiences *as experienced or intended* by the subject) can provide a theory of the Other which would not reduce the Other to the Same. In other words, at stake is the constitution of the Other *as itself a subject* and not as merely an object *for me*. The constitution of subjectivity itself has two components: firstly, another subject must itself be a *subject of knowledge* (i.e. be itself capable of phenomenological constitution), and secondly – which is the more important point for our argument – must be a subject in the sense of having an *identity*, of being *self-identical*. This is the principle of the “transcendental unity of apperception” on which Husserl insists, as does Derrida in his criticism of Levinas.

This question is important because the problem of solipsism is an important preliminary question for the possibility of an ethical theory. We have argued that the problem of solipsism cannot solely be posed as a problem of the existence of *other* people (i.e. quantitatively – myself plus *n* others), but also as the problem of the knowledge of other people as *different* from me (i.e. *qualitatively*). In other words, on the one hand it is necessary to constitute the Other *as a subject*, but on the other, it is necessary to be able to constitute the Other's subjectivity as being *different* from that of the Self. It is only by posing the problem in the latter way that the ethical component of the problem becomes apparent, or rather, where the underlying assumptions of the ethical *criteria* that a phenomenological theory of intersubjectivity has to satisfy, are revealed. To state this plainly – if the problem is posed as that of having to be able to constitute the Other as a subject, then the ethical component of this theory is that any theory of the Other must be one which respects the Other's subjectivity by allowing him or her<sup>34</sup> to *Maintain* his subjectivity. Conversely, a theory would be *unethical* precisely to the extent that it *robs* the Other of his subjectivity.

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<sup>34</sup> For the use of the male pronoun in Husserl's theory, cf. p. 59-60 above, and especially p. 60 n. 31.

In our critique of this theory, we have then tried to show that such a theory can ultimately not be derived from a phenomenological basis, since it always (in principle) starts out from an *already-constituted* consciousness, and can only derive a theory of the Other *from* this basis, through a process of “analogical transfer” where the Other is known through *analogy to the Self*. While it is therefore perhaps possible for phenomenology to derive a theory which accounts for *other* people, it cannot derive a theory which accounts for *different* people, since the Other can therefore only be constituted (or known) inasmuch as he is *the same as me*, and must remain unconstituted and inaccessible precisely to the extent that he *differs* from me. Moreover, since it is only *as a subject* that the Other can have an ethical claim on me, and as it is only as a subject *analogous to me* that the Other can be constituted as a subject, it becomes impossible for Husserl’s phenomenology to really found an ethical relationship which would respect the Other *as different*. Moreover, we would argue that, for the same reasons, *any* philosophy which is based on the consciousness of the subject (any transcendental philosophy) will have similar problems in accounting for the step whereby this consciousness has to be transcended towards the Other.

We then turned to Levinas to examine whether his theory, which seems to be precisely an attempt to situate the basis for an intersubjective (and ethical) theory *not* on the *subject* but on the Other, can escape the consequences of the phenomenological reliance on the subject. Levinas tries to do so by positing an asymmetrical relation to the Other, where the priority lies with the Other, and not with the Self. However, it seems that Levinas himself is caught in a Catch-22 situation: firstly, following Derrida’s criticisms, it seems likely that, to the extent that Levinas *does* escape these consequences, he is not entitled to do so. In this regards, Derrida suggests that, in fact, Levinas needs to fall back onto Husserl, or at least requires Husserl’s theory as a basis for his own – in Derrida’s view, the empirical asymmetry of Levinas’s concrete relation between a self and an Other is only possible on the basis of a prior (transcendental) *symmetry* which enables this relation, and for Derrida, the basis for this symmetry is precisely that found in Husserl’s *alter ego*<sup>35</sup>. Secondly, it becomes difficult for Levinas to ascribe subjectivity to the Other (or to give the Other concrete contents) without recourse to a theory of

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<sup>35</sup> For this account of Derrida’s criticism, see Bernasconi (2000:63-74).

analogy, or to establish the *relation* between the (now transcendent and privileged) Infinite Other and the finite Self. Lastly, while Levinas does see the ethical relation with the Other as breaking with the subject-object relation, this is considered as the breaking down of a prior (thus, already-constituted) subjectivity.

On the basis of these critiques we have thus tried to show that it is not possible to derive a satisfactory theory of intersubjectivity (or at least, the basis for a satisfactory *ethical relation*) starting from phenomenology, because the problem is badly posed; or rather, that the problem, as posed by phenomenology, is a false problem. This can be seen already in the term “*intersubjectivity*”, where the implication is that the relation to be constituted must be a *secondary* relation obtaining between two primary and already-constituted poles. Stated like this, it can then be argued that, Levinas and Husserl’s theories do not differ significantly from each other in this crucial respect. In fact, while it is true that for Husserl the subject is prior *relative to the Other*, and in Levinas the Other is prior *relative to the Self*, in both of them, the *terms or poles of the relation are prior to the relation itself*. In other words, in both of them, the terms of the relation are already fixed, and the relation is then derived as a secondary *property or predicate* of these terms.

The implication of this, we have tried to show in Part II of this thesis, is that the problem itself needs to be posed in a completely different way, and on a more basic level, where it is not the secondary constitution of the relation on the basis of the terms that need to be accounted for, but that the order needs to be reversed, in that it is the *constitution of the terms (subject or object) on the basis of a prior relation* which needs to be accounted for. In other words, what was at stake was not the reversal in priority between two poles of a relation, but a reversal in priority between the poles, on the one hand, and on the other, the relation, considered in itself as “external to its terms”, and also as *preceding and enabling* these terms. We have then tried to show that such a theory of relations can be found in the philosophy of Deleuze.

There are several ways in which this problem can now be stated. One of these ways, which is also the main question that gave rise to the study undertaken in this thesis, would be: How can one account for the constitutive account of *the Other on the self*? In plainer words, how does one give a philosophical account of the fact that the subject (or the self) does not remain a model of “rock-like”, stable identity in various relationships,

but instead continually “becomes someone different” when faced with different Others? However, after the critique of phenomenology undertaken in Part I, it became clear that this formulation was still misleading, implying – as it does – that there is *already* an Other which would play a role in the constitution of the subject (the self). Instead, one of the consequences of the theory we have tried to sketch in Part II is that, since the relation is prior to the terms between which it obtains, *both* terms (that is, self and Other) *arise at the same time*. The process of the constitution of the self and the Other can therefore no longer be separated.

At the same time, the very mutuality of this process of constitution means that the distinction between self-constitution and the constitution of the Other collapses: self-constitution *itself* becomes ethical, since the Other is constituted and implicated in the exact same movement whereby the self is constituted. The ethical criteria for such a theory then becomes that of a principle of selection of *relations* so that *both* poles can attain optimum potency, or what Deleuze calls “active force” – that is, agency or power to act. To see what is meant by “agency” here, it is important to bear in mind that this process of constitution is never “once and for all”, but must continually be re-enacted (*repeated*), and continually re-enacted *differently*, since it is the product of a complex of relations which themselves never remain constant (not least because that which is constituted from them feeds back into these relations!). In other words, identity or selfhood is precisely *not stable* or *self-identical*, but – drawing on Hume – Deleuze shows that identity is habit, that is, must be continually repeated. However, since repetition is radically contextualised, both in terms of a history which also contains the previous repetitions, and in terms of being related to a set of relations that are necessarily always changing, to reach the same *outcome* (i.e to repeat *the same* – a noun), it is always necessary to repeat differently (an adverb). It is this principle which Deleuze also claims to discover in Nietzsche. In this sense, then identity and repetition is based, not on the same, but on a primordial difference – in fact, identity as the repetition of the same is only possible on the basis of a primordial difference.

At the same time, identity is not only based on an internal difference, but also on an external difference. In other words, since identity is the repetition of the same which can only be repeated differently, what this identity *is*, is not some eternal or stable

essence which ensures that it remains the same as itself – rather, borrowing an insight from Bergson, Deleuze argues that the identity of an entity can only be described in terms of that by which it *differs* from everything else. However, the distinction between this “internal” and “external” difference only holds if one falls once again into the trap of seeing the self as self-enclosed and enduring – given that identity is now a matter of repetition, to say that the identity of an entity is “that by which it differs from everything else” is *also* to say that its identity is that by which it differs from what it itself *was*. This is to consider the subject as a *becoming* and not a *being*, and is thus related to the Nietzschean conception of a creative and dynamic force which is affirmative to the extent that it affirms its difference. Once again, this affirmation only proceeds by repetition, which is why the “eternal return” is employed as the principle of selection by Deleuze – only that which can be repeated eternally is positive; if something can be effected only once, and exhausts itself in that effectuation, it ossifies, and hence cannot be re-enacted differently in a different situation (set of relations). It can therefore not be suited to any new set of circumstances. In terms of an ethical relation to the other, one can state this quite concretely (if somewhat simplistically): a decision that is made regarding one person in a certain situation may well be the correct decision for *that* specific situation (“correct” in terms of enabling optimal activity for both parties) but cannot be re-enacted in completely the same way in a next situation, and regarding another person. For the “*correctness*” of the action to be repeated, the action must be repeated in a similar way as a *response* to the new situation; and since the situation is new, it cannot be the same *action*, although the *response* is repeated. Because this theory calls for a recognition of the *novelty* of each new situation, there is no way of intellectually planning or anticipating these responses in advance, which is why Deleuze often calls for experimentation.

However, this call for experimentation and the attempt to come to terms with the inexhaustible novelty of each new situation means that the self must be able to draw on as-yet unutilised resources in order to meet these demands – in other words, the self is more than it *is*. This seemingly paradoxical statement is explained through recourse to the “virtual” elements that underlie (and exceed) all actualized entities. Deleuze’s philosophy is one which tries to give an account of a chaotic world of virtual and pre-personal

singularities which are only later selectively actualized into determined and bounded forms (such as a subject) but which means that any *actual* subject, at any time, draws on only a limited number of the virtual possibilities that *could* constitute it. It is the existence of these other virtual events (and that the subject is therefore never exhaustively all that it can be) which allows the “room to move in” which is necessary for experimentation. This of course also implies that the subject no longer has a single fixed essence which constitutes it, but must be continually constructed from a number of different, singular “events” – the subject is a multiplicity.

Deleuze’s theory of the event is crucial in this regard – subjectivity for him is not an essence or a substance (a “thing”), and the elements that provide the subject with his/her specific characteristics are not predicates that are attributed to a subject. Instead, as we have already implied through our terminology above, subjectivity (and all the characteristics which lends each subject its *distinctive* identity) must be *enacted*: subjectivity is a performance, an action, a *verb* (not a noun or an adjective) – an event. It is the event which gives any multiplicity its *sense* (in the two-fold sense of its *distinctive significance*, and of its *tendency*), or rather, which causes the *change* (the difference) which we have seen is necessary for identity. It is the event which effects singularization – where singularization is related to the term “singularity”, and also has the meanings both of being *distinct*, and of being the smallest possible element of change. It is therefore the event (as that which effects change) which introduces the difference which, we have shown, is a necessary element for the repetition which, in turn, is the necessary element enabling the construction of an identity.

The further significance of sense and of the event, is that both of them occur in the *inbetween* of a multiplicity. This notion of the inbetween is a crucial *leitmotiv* in Deleuze’s philosophy – the “inbetween” is the space of a becoming, which is always between what something was, and what it will be. However, in Deleuze, it is this becoming itself which is emphasized, and not the end-product of the becoming (an end-product which is, in any case, only ever present as a virtual projection and is itself subject to the same becoming as that which it is the product of). Furthermore, it is the fact that “everything happens” in the inbetween which allows the *double* movement which we will return to below. The effects of a true becoming extends in two directions – both towards

the past and towards the future. In Deleuze's example of Alice's growing, *while* Alice is growing (as she is becoming, is inbetween what she was and will become) she becomes *simultaneously* larger *and* smaller: larger than she was, and smaller than she will be (Deleuze 1990:1). It is becoming, and the inbetween which also makes time pass through the present from the past and towards the future, and of course, it is time which is the element of change or becoming. Time as the present is also a useful example of the way in which the inbetween functions in Deleuze – the present is the *point* where the past and the present come together, but as a *point* occupies no “space” itself: it is something like a vanishing point. It is, however, the point where the past appears (where it is constituted *as* past) and from which the present departs – in this sense, time (like everything else in Deleuze) grows “from the middle”.

Sense and the event, too, function in a similar way. Sense never belongs to *either* a (physical) state of affairs (a mixture of bodies) *or* a set of (linguistic or cognitive) propositions – instead, drawing on Stoic logic, it is that vanishing point where these two series meet, and which allows the transfer of the one into the other. Similarly, the pure event itself, as a verb, is never the property of a body (or mixture of bodies) or a multiplicity – it is the threshold where one multiplicity (or mixture of bodies) is transformed into another multiplicity. It is also the *cause* of this transformation. (It is in this sense, as we shall see below, that the Other, for Deleuze, is both an *event*, and the condition for the world becoming imbued with *sense*). One could use the example of a cut. In its pure form, this event is not assigned to or determined in any specific body, and is purely virtual: “to cut”. In other words, there is not yet an object *which is* cut. However, this virtual event can be actualized – but always in a specific, determinate way which does not exhaust its potentiality of all the different ways in which it could have been actualized – in a specific body. I can cut my finger with the bread-knife; this is the same event as a duelist being cut with a rapier, but *actualized* differently. “To cut” is the event which marks the transition of my finger from a state of being “uncut” to being “cut”. However, this event - the becoming-cut which lies *between* the uncut and the cut finger - can never be captured in itself. One moment there is a knife on the skin, the next there is a gash on the skin – *inbetween* lies the event, no matter how finely time is divided. It is this event – the cut, which is the singularity marking where the division lies

between a state of affairs that includes a cut finger (a multiplicity which now also includes bleeding, pain, cursing etc.), and that which doesn't. Moreover, it is only in the light of a now-cut finger that this same finger receives the sense of "previously uncut". Once again, it is the event which generates the sense, and both by passing through the middle, the inbetween.

In turn, this theory of virtual events implies that there must a "resource" of undetermined, virtual events which *precedes* their actualization or determination in concrete and determinate arrangement or multiplicities. Deleuze's philosophy becomes, to a large extent, the search for precisely such a "transcendental field" of virtual multiplicities which would underlie their concrete actualizations, and provide the "raw material" *from which* these multiplicities can be constructed. To provide a very crude example which cannot be taken too literally – a car can only be in one gear at any time, but (in most cars) this can be any one of five or six different gears (which would all be *virtually* present all the time while the car is *actually* in, say, third gear). In other words, while it *happens* that the car is in third gear it *might as well* have been in any other. This example is hopefully helpful in at least two ways. Firstly, because Deleuze (Deleuze & Guattari 1994:36) himself describes the relationship between a virtual and actual multiplicity as that between an "abstract machine" (the virtual) and a specific "configuration" (the actual) of that machine. Secondly, this is perhaps a good example, because it highlights the importance of *selection* – while it is true that at any given moment the car might be in *any one* of its gears, this does not mean that it is not *better* to be in one gear rather than another, and this is determined by the relations in which that gear is to the other gears, and to the car as a whole, to the state of the road etc. For example, accelerating away from a traffic light, second gear is a better gear to change into after first gear than any other; stopping from full speed at the next traffic light, it is not third gear that would optimally follow from fourth gear, but a jump straight down to first. To show how this relates to the principle of repetition – jumping straight from first to fourth gear, for example, would stall the car, and render the repetition of gear-selection superfluous. To be able to repeat the act of (sensibly) changing gears, it is necessary to keep selecting *appropriate* gears.

It is the determination (or finite actualization) of these events which *forms* or constitutes the subject. It is therefore not the subject which *performs* these selections – the subject is the *product* of these selections. Only modes of subjectivity which are capable of repeating (which means of *renewing themselves*) will return and hence will be *selected* from these virtual multiplicities. These virtual multiplicities are described as having “absolute speed” – they contain everything all at once, or at least, since all existence is becoming and hence dynamic, it is not that these multiplicities *contain* all possible multiplicities all at once, but that all possible multiplicities arise and decompose (and hence succeed each other) so fast (instantly) that they are all simultaneously present. The subject (and in fact, *any* entity, for Deleuze) is, however, always a *finite* actualization of (or a “selection” in the sense of a sample from) these virtual multiplicities, and is constituted by a *slowing down* of the absolute speed with which virtual multiplicities are composed and decomposed.

This “transcendental field” is described by Deleuze as a “plane of immanence”, where immanence is primarily taken to mean the characteristic of uniqueness. As opposed to a system based on transcendence, like Plato’s with its “transcendent Ideas”, where something is what it is *to the extent that it can be reduced to something else*, a system based on immanence tries to describe an entity in terms of what it is *in itself*, that is, without recourse to any transcendent principles. Furthermore, the notion of “immanence” shows another important point of contrast with phenomenology: where phenomenology *does* try to give acknowledgement to the immanent, immanence is always *in the subject*, because whatever phenomenology is concerned with is always a product of the subject’s foundational consciousness; for Deleuze, on the contrary, it is the subject which is “in immanence”, because the subject is itself the *product of immanence*, of the “plane of immanence” (the virtual transcendental field).

Because, on the level of the plane of immanence, events only exist virtually, and hence do not primordially belong to a specific subject, and can thus be actualized in a number of different ways (by a number of different “people”), multiplicities are also not *closed*, but already at the level of its construction, the subject is related to other “subjects” that might also be constructed through the actualization of one or more of these events. However, this also means that what is at stake in the construction of

subjectivity is always a double movement, since there is a tendency for the subject to stabilize or ossify – the constructive process of actualization must therefore be complemented by a simultaneous movement of what Deleuze calls “depersonalization” or “singularization”, whereby the subject must throw off its previous constructions, in order to have access to other virtual elements that had been occluded by those elements that had been actualized hitherto. In other words, quite contrary to the phenomenological account which places the premium on the *maintenance* of a stable identity, what is sought after now is a way of continually *losing* already-attained levels of identity and subjectivity – so that *new* forms of identity can arise.

And it is precisely the Other which plays an important role in this second movement of depersonalization. By *perceiving* the World differently (from a different perspective, but also as a different *experience* or interpretation of the world), the Other breaks through the world as I experience it, and because I am constructed through interaction with the world, breaks through “me” too – by disturbing or disrupting the world of the subject, the subject itself is also undone. As described thus far in this paragraph, this theory might remind one a lot of that of Levinas. It is therefore necessary to point out that the formulation used above, namely that it is the Other which plays this role is a misleading one. Firstly, Deleuze is not here talking about a *concrete* Other, but the Other as *structure* – not a real person in front of us, but the possibility of a different perception, a different *sensibility*. (Of course, one of the clearest reminders of this possibility is a concrete person standing before us!).

More important however – and this, we have tried to argue, is the definitive break with phenomenology – is that *neither* of these processes (of construction or depersonalization) can be ascribed to the agency of *an* agent, since what is under discussion here is precisely the conditions under which such an agent could *arise* in the first place. At this level, also – the level of “pure” virtual singularities not yet captured into the form of the subject – one can not yet even distinguish between the self and the other, and hence cannot yet ascribe agency to *either* of them. Of course, there have also already been *prior* distinctions, but it is precisely these that are being put into question and that must be *re-constructed*. To try and give an example: in a domestic squabble, a man and wife might be constructed as “other” to each other; half-an-hour later, at the

political rally each attends, they become (in that new situation, to the extent that they share each other's political enthusiasms) re-constructed as the same, as belonging to one subjectivity. Stopping in for dinner at the wife's sister's home on the way back once again requires a new construction of these roles, which shift with the dynamics of each new situation or set of relations. This is why Deleuze calls his philosophy a "transcendental empiricism" – not primarily because it relies on sensory experience, but because it is a philosophy which tries to provide "transcendental" conditions, but for describing each situation or set of relations as a unique occurrence, without recourse to abstract, transcendent "universals", i.e., which is immanent.

However, it *is* also empiricist in the sense that what Deleuze is trying to describe is a new form of *sensibility*, or feeling. For Deleuze, the new type of thinking he is trying to describe cannot be that of "knowledge" as the notion of knowledge requires that a subject and object must *already* be constituted, and a subject-object relation also implies that the subject and object must be constituted as *separate* from each other, thereby *opening up* – as we have tried to argue in Part I – the gap between the subject and the Other which phenomenology must both *try* to leap (to transcend) and *cannot*. In respect of this, an earlier working-title of this thesis had been "Closing the Gap (between subject and Other)" – the idea being that Deleuze's philosophy would find a way of bridging, or "filling" this gap between subject and Other. However, as our research progressed, it seemed more that Deleuze's philosophy could be used to construct a theory that would not seek to *repair the breach* (as it were) between subject and Other, but would seek instead to return to a level where this *gap had not yet appeared*. In other words, what Deleuze's philosophy seemed to reveal, is that the gap between subject and Other was not a primordial one which had to be bridged in a secondary step, but that, instead at a level *before* the constitution of the subject and the Other as such, there was a primordial level where the subject and the Other had *not yet become separated from each other*, were still in *feeling* with each other.

*Contra* phenomenology then, it has been the project of this thesis to show that the solution to the problem of intersubjectivity was not to try and overcome it by constructing ever more sophisticated systems of knowledge that would eventually (somehow) provide access to the Other, but rather, to return to another type of thinking – sensibility – that

would *precede* thinking, and would prevent the arrival of intersubjectivity as a *problem* in the first place. To put it in another way – the solution lay not in the design of a method of *transcendence* (of building a bridge across a yawning chasm), but of revealing the relations that were *already immanent* (to reveal that this chasm only opens *later*, on the basis of a richly-connected inbetween that precedes it).

The title finally chosen for this study – “The Other before Us?” – was intended to reflect several aspects of this contention. Firstly, the question mark was supposed to indicate that (in fact) the title should be understood as saying the *reverse* of what it states: it is the burden of phenomenology to move from subject to the Other (from “me and you” to “us”); it was our contention that Deleuze *starts with* “us”, which is then (later) divided into “me and you” (subject and Other). Secondly, that the constitution of the subject is profoundly affected (or even *enabled*) by the presence of specific Others – it is only *when* (and *because*) the Other is “before me” that I *am* “a me”, and *what* me I am, is equally influenced by *which* Other happens to be in front of me. Lastly, this was intended to be seen as having an *ethical* dimension – or at least, since the ethics it could give rise to were not spelled out here, as *pointing* to an ethical dimension – since the constitution of subject and Other occurs *simultaneously*, and mutually. The process whereby the Other “constitutes me” is therefore the very process whereby the Other is itself constituted. Here we are not talking about *two* symmetrical processes as in Levinas, where Derrida and Ricoeur<sup>36</sup>, for example have highlighted the need for one which proceeds from me to the Other, and another which proceeds from the Other to me. We are talking about *one* process (or event) which has a double-movement in both directions as it has its origin *inbetween* the (soon-to-be) subject and Other, since it is the relation which *precedes them both*.

We conclude with the passage in which Brian Massumi - in his Translator’s introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus* - gives the following guide-lines to the appropriate criteria for reading Deleuze’s work:

“The best way of all to approach the book is to read it as a challenge: to pry open the vacant spaces that would enable you to build *your life and those of the people around you* into an intensity that would leave afterimages of its dynamism that could be injected into still other lives, creating a fabric of heightened states

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<sup>36</sup> For Derrida, see Bernasconi (2000:70), and for Ricoeur, see Bernasconi (2000:79).

between which any number, the greatest number, of connecting routes would exist. [...]

The question is not: is it true? But: does it work? What new thoughts does it make it possible to think? What new emotions does it make it possible to feel? What new sensations and perceptions does it open in the body?"

(Massumi 1987:xv, my emphasis)

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<sup>1</sup> Dialogues *II* does not imply a Dialogues I – instead, it denotes a second edition of *Dialogues*, with the important addition of the essay "The Actual and the Virtual"

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