

Fear of Politics
Deleuze, Whitehead, and the Truth of Badiou

As Badiou makes clear on numerous occasions, Deleuze was quite right to develop philosophical concepts that entail ‘an embrace of singularities,’ and more precisely singularities that are inseparable from an ‘evental advent’ of the new, an evental rupturing with what is.¹ In the end, however, as is well-known and has been widely discussed, Badiou believes that ‘Deleuze has no way of thinking singularity’; or, to put it differently, Deleuze’s thought is incapable of rupturing with what is, but is rather a continual and monotonous folding and refolding of what is.² That Deleuze has ‘no way of thinking singularity’ is evidenced, for Badiou, by Deleuze’s continued adherence to empiricism, even the transcendental empiricism Deleuze develops in extending Hume’s project.³ For Badiou, by contrast, we need to set ‘aside every kind of speculative empiricism,’ including, no doubt, Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism, and move instead to Badiou’s own ‘theory of the pure multiple’ if we are to think singularities and the evental rupture with what is.⁴

In the following essay, it shall be argued that Badiou’s critique of Deleuze relies both upon a misunderstanding of Deleuze’s theory of the virtual and, more significantly, upon

¹ Alain Badiou, *Theoretical Writings*, edited and translated by Ray Brassier and Alberto Toscano (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), p. 67.

² See Sam Gillespie, “Placing the Void: Badiou on Spinoza,” *Agelaki* 6, no. 3 (2001): 63-77, where this criticism is made explicitly. Gillespie summarizes Badiou’s criticism of Deleuze by saying that Deleuze fails to develop a thought that thinks ‘above and beyond the immediacy of presentation.’ (p. 74). For Badiou’s charge that Deleuze’s writings are monotonous, see *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, translated by Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 15, where he ‘unhesitatingly’ characterizes Deleuze’s conceptual formulations as ‘monotonous.’

³ For more on Deleuze’s Humean project, see my essay, “Charting the Road of Inquiry: Deleuze’s Human Pragmatics and the Challenge of Badiou,” *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 44, no. 3 (2006), and my book, *Deleuze’s Hume: Culture, Criticism, and the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming).

⁴ *Theoretical Writings*, p. 77.

a theory of multiplicities (or theory of the pure multiple for Badiou) that sets forth an understanding of ‘events’ that Deleuze rejects, and rejects precisely because it forecloses upon the possibility of a thought of singularities that moves beyond the actualities of ‘what is.’ In the first section we will discuss Deleuze’s theory of multiplicity, paying particular attention to Deleuze’s notion that speech is the faculty that actualizes the linguistic multiplicity of ‘reciprocal connections between “phonemes”’.⁵ We will then turn to Badiou’s critique of Deleuze and will show that this critique ultimately relies upon a historical/ahistorical dichotomy Deleuze rejects. To clarify this point further we turn, in the next section, to compare Deleuze’s project with that of Bruno Latour. Latour explicitly rejects the historical/ahistorical dichotomy and in setting forth his arguments he explicitly relies upon Whitehead’s concept of the ‘event’ and Deleuze’s concept of the rhizome (or multiplicity). In the next section we will turn to discuss Whitehead’s concept of the event and will relate it to his cell-theory of actuality. This discussion will further advance our argument that Badiou’s arguments against Deleuze are ultimately based upon an ontology (namely, his theory of the pure multiple) that does not appreciate the historicity of human and nonhuman entities, and hence it fails to think singularities, whereas Deleuze, along with Whitehead and Latour, do base their political philosophies upon an ontology that affirms the historicity of all identities. With this discussion in place we turn, in the final section, to Deleuze’s concept of a social multiplicity. This concept is integrally related to Deleuze’s further concepts, ‘becoming-imperceptible’ and ‘becoming-revolutionary.’ With this latter concept, Deleuze’s project is able, contrary to what Badiou claims, to provide an understanding of philosophy that is inseparable from a thinking that facilitates the ‘rupture with what is.’

⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 193.

Speech and Event

The virtual/actual distinction plays a pivotal role in Deleuze's thought. The virtual, moreover, is doubly contrasted with the possible. The possible, for Deleuze, both resembles the actual that realizes this possibility, and the possible is only real as actualized. If the weatherman states that there is a possibility for rain tomorrow, then we will know what it means for this possibility to be actualized—namely, if it rains tomorrow. And if it rains, the possibility for rain becomes a reality, and a reality we can recognize precisely because it resembles the possibility it actualizes. The virtual, however, does not, for Deleuze, resemble the actual, and subsequently the virtual in no way predetermines the actuality that comes to be. The virtual is also fully real, according to Deleuze, even when it is not actualized, and including when it is actualized. 'The virtual,' as Deleuze puts it, 'is opposed not to the real but to the actual. The virtual is fully real in so far as it is virtual.'⁶ Deleuze offers as an example of a virtual that is 'fully real' the 'linguistic multiplicity, regarded as a virtual system of reciprocal connections between "phonemes" which is incarnated [i.e., actualized] in the actual terms and relations of diverse languages.'⁷ The phonemes that come to be actualized within the terms of various languages are not to be confused with the actual, meaningful terms, although the phonemes are no less real than these terms. The 'reciprocal connections between "phonemes"' can even become an object of study (in linguistics, for example). These phonemes also do not resemble the terms and languages that come to be actualized

⁶ *Difference and Repetition*, p. 208.

⁷ *Ibid.* 193.

by virtue of them; consequently, one cannot predict or predetermine the manner in which the virtual comes to be actualized. And it is just this point that is key for Deleuze. The traditional distinction between the possible and the actual undermines any effort to understand the conditions for the new since the new has already been identified as that which will come to be actualized. With the virtual, however, the actual that actualizes the virtual is not identified in advance but only as it is actualized.

Let us take the example of a linguistic multiplicity to clarify this relationship. As Deleuze makes clear, the linguistic multiplicity ‘renders possible speech as a faculty as well as the transcendent object of that speech, that “metalanguage” which cannot be spoken in the empirical usage of a given language, but must be spoken and can be spoken only in the poetic usage of speech coextensive with virtuality.’⁸ In other words, when a poet or writer is able to make a language stutter, as Deleuze puts it in his final book, what they do is encounter the linguistic multiplicity that is inseparable from the established uses of language, for even predictable, habitual uses of language are made possible by the reciprocal relations of phonemes.⁹ The poet in effect encounters the past as repetition, the repetition of past uses that has settled into an equilibrium state of predictability.¹⁰

Through the poetic usage of the faculty of speech, however, this equilibrium state can be sent into a stuttering, far from equilibrium state, and it is here where the virtuality of the multiplicity allows for new uses of language that were unpredicted and unpredictable.¹¹

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ See “He Stuttered,” in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, translated by Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

¹⁰ I am referring, as those familiar with Deleuze’s work will immediately recognize, to Deleuze’s theory of the three syntheses of time as laid out in *Difference and Repetition*.

¹¹ I am using the language of dynamic systems theory here, though Deleuze began to do so himself in his final writings. In *Essays Critical and Clinical*, for example, Deleuze will refer to language as ‘a

That which the poetic usage of language ‘which cannot be spoken in the empirical usage of a given language’ attempts to express is what Deleuze refers to as ‘the transcendent object,’ or the “metalanguage”.’ By referring to the sense expressed by the poetic usage as the ‘transcendent object’ Deleuze does not thereby endorse a philosophy of transcendence. A constant theme of Deleuze’s was to develop a philosophy of immanence that rejects any vestiges of transcendence. And on this point as well, Badiou agrees, noting that he is in agreement with Deleuze’s effort to critique ‘the thornier forms of transcendence.’¹² Ultimately, however, Badiou believes Deleuze’s attempt to ‘subvert’ what he calls ‘the “vertical” transcendence of the One’ by way of ‘the play of the closed and the open, which deploys multiplicity in the mobile interval between a set (inertia) and an effective multiplicity (line of flight), produces,’ Badiou concludes, ‘a “horizontal or virtual transcendence...’¹³ What is needed, Badiou believes, is ‘a form of writing subtracted from the poetics of natural language.’¹⁴ Rather than a virtual multiplicity that constitutes the ‘transcendent object’ that is vertically transcendent to the empirical usage of a language, but which manifests itself in the poetic usage of this language, Badiou proposes a form of writing—namely, a mathematical, logical form—that is wholly actual and without transcendence, or what he will call ‘the multiple-without-oneness.’¹⁵

At the core of Badiou’s criticism of Deleuze is the claim that Deleuze remains committed to a dialectic of the open and the closed. As Badiou puts it, ‘in his [Deleuze’s] thinking

homogeneous system in equilibrium’ in contrast to the stuttering, far-from-equilibrium conditions (p. 108). For more on the relation between dynamic systems theory and Deleuze, see Ronald Bogue, *Capitalism and Schizophrenia: A User’s Manual*, and my book, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos*.

¹² *Theoretical Writings*, 67.

¹³ *Ibid.* 79.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 80.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

the open is always open to something other than its own effectiveness, namely to the inorganic power of which it is a mobile actualization.’¹⁶ On Badiou’s interpretation, then, the poetic usage of speech is the active, mobile faculty and power that is an opening only by virtue of its relation to the closed, equilibrium state of established, empirical usage. The problem with Deleuze’s vitalist Bergsonian approach, according to Badiou, is that no matter how closed a multiplicity may be or become, a ‘vitalist multiplicity is obliged to signal equivocally toward the opening of which it is a mode.’¹⁷ In other words, as an opening relative to the habitual, empirical usage of speech, the poetic usage is nonetheless closed to the extent that the poetic usage draws the multiplicity into what Deleuze refers to as a plane of consistency. As a dutiful student of his master Spinoza, Badiou argues that Deleuze in the end subordinates the thinking of singularities, the thinking that entails a rupture with what is, to the horizontally transcendent One of which these singularities are modes. Badiou is straightforward on this point: ‘Deleuze has no way of thinking singularity other than by classifying the different ways in which singularity is not ontologically singular; in other words, by classifying the different modes of actualization.’¹⁸

To begin to assess Badiou’s criticisms of Deleuze’s project, it will be helpful to examine how Badiou believes Deleuze should have proceeded in his efforts to be done with transcendence and think singularities. As has already been indicated, the solution is to be found in mathematics, and more precisely Cantorian set theory. Crucial to Cantor’s theory, at least as it pertains to Badiou’s own work, is the distinction between belonging

¹⁶ Ibid. 72.

¹⁷ Ibid. 73.

¹⁸ Ibid. 79.

and inclusion. To be brief, according to Cantor there is a difference between the elements of a set and the set of all the subsets of this set, what Cantor calls the power set. For Cantor, the power set is greater than the set itself, for not only does it include all the elements of the subsets of the set, but it also includes the null set, or the subset that does not include any of the elements of the set. As Badiou defines belonging and inclusion in *Being and Event*, an element belongs to a set ‘if it is presented and counted as one by that situation,’ or by that set.¹⁹ An element is ‘included in a situation if it is a sub-multiple or a part of the latter. It is thus counted as one by the state of the situation.’²⁰ In an example to clarify this distinction, Badiou argues that ‘The “voter,” for example, is not the subject John Doe, [but] is rather the part that the separated structure of the State re-presents, according to its own one; that is, it is the set whose sole element is John Doe and not the multiple whose immediate-one is “John Doe.”’²¹ The function of the State, as Badiou understands it, is to resist the void that is inseparable from the power set, the void that cannot be presented in each and every representation. ‘The State,’ Badiou claims, is not founded upon the social bond [i.e., belonging], which it would express, but rather upon un-binding, which it prohibits.’²² The State’s task, therefore, in prohibiting this un-binding, is ‘the re-securing of the one over the multiple of parts (or parties),’²³ or it seeks to prohibit the errancy of the void and the rupture with what is that can occur when the void belongs to an evental site and cannot be counted as an element that is included in the situation.

¹⁹ *Being and Event*, translated by Oliver Feltham (New York and London: Continuum, 2005), 501.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 511.

²¹ *Ibid.* 107.

²² *Ibid.* 109.

²³ *Ibid.* 110.

When Badiou criticizes Deleuze for thinking singularities only insofar as they are modes of the One (i.e., virtual openness), Badiou in effect accuses Deleuze of re-securing, in his own way, the primacy ‘of the one over the multiple of parts.’ With Badiou’s theory of the pure multiple, however, Badiou argues that the pure multiple cannot be conceived of as parts of a larger whole or one, nor can it be subdivided into parts that are included in this multiple, for beneath the pure multiple is the void, or we have a pure multiple-without-oneness. The implications of this theory become clear as Badiou analyzes the historicity of events. In opposition to ‘natural or stable or normal multiplicities,’ Badiou argues that there are the ‘abnormal, the instable, the antinatural’ multiplicities, and Badiou will ‘term historical what is thus determined as the opposite of nature.’ Moreover, as Badiou adds, the ‘form-multiple of historicity...is that upon which the state’s metastructure has no hold,’ or it ‘is a point of subtraction from the state’s re-securing of the count.’²⁴ In other words, a natural, normal multiplicity consists of elements that are always present in each situation; an abnormal multiple, or what Badiou refers to as an ‘evental site,’ is one ‘such that none of its elements are presented in the situation.’²⁵ As Badiou reiterates this point, he claims that ‘it is enough for us to distinguish between situations in which there are evental sites and those in which there are not. For example, in a natural situation there is no such site.’²⁶

An example of a historical situation that includes an evental site would be, for Badiou, Hayden and the emergence of the classical style in music. As Badiou argues, Haydn’s music, relative to the Baroque situation within which his music appeared, is

²⁴ Ibid. 174.

²⁵ Ibid. 175.

²⁶ Ibid. 177.

absolutely detached, or unrelated to, all the rules of the [Baroque] situation. Hence the emergence of the classical style, with Haydn, concerns the musical situation and no other, a situation then governed by the predominance of the baroque style. It was an event for this situation [an event that] was not comprehensible from within the plenitude achieved by the baroque style; it really was a matter of something else.²⁷

Nothing in the situation of the Baroque, in other words, could count Haydn's music as part of its own project. Haydn's music was thus the void of this situation, or an evental site whose elements are not presented in the Baroque situation. This evental site, however, does become naturalized, Badiou recognizes, and when this occurs Haydn's music comes to be presented as an element within the Classical style, and, more importantly, it can also come to be interpreted as a natural, normal development of the musical situation of his day. As Badiou notes, 'any evental site can, in the end, undergo a state of normalization.'²⁸ When this happens, however, an event comes to be seen as a mode or fold of an already existent One (Nature) that counts these events as parts of its all-inclusive situation. And it was on this point, precisely, where Badiou disagrees strongly with Deleuze. Whereas Deleuze, on Badiou's reading, is influenced by Nietzsche in taking up the issue of the throw of the dice and the undecidability of events, Badiou argues that Deleuze stated 'extremely clearly, that the different casts of virtuals can be formally distinct, even while they remain the forms of a single and same cast.'²⁹ Each of the events that unfolds is thus, on Badiou's reading of Deleuze, merely a mode of the virtual One, and thus these events are only formally distinct and not ontologically distinct. Badiou, by contrast, argues for 'the absolute ontological separation of the event,

²⁷ Alain Badiou, *Ethics: an essay on the understanding of evil*, translated by Peter Hallward (New York and London: Verso, 2001), 68.

²⁸ *Being and Event*, 176.

²⁹ *Clamor of Being*, 75.

the fact that it occurs in the situation without being in anyway virtualizable,' and 'no count,' Badiou adds, 'can group the events, no virtual subjects them to the One.'³⁰

Deleuze, in the end, is too loyal to Spinoza, and in particular to what Badiou sees as Spinoza's 'most radical attempt ever in ontology ... to indistinguish belonging and inclusion.'³¹ By failing to think the difference between that which can be presented in a situation and the void (or null set) that leads to the excess of re-presentation (i.e., inclusion of the power set) over presentation, Deleuze ultimately naturalizes the historicity and singularity of creative events. Since all events, on Badiou's reading, are simply formally distinct modes of the virtuality of the One, the count of the one is thus secured and there is subsequently no place in Deleuze's thought for historical, evental sites whereby elements are presented in a situation that can in no way be counted as part of the situation. Deleuze, in short, fails to distinguish between the historical and the natural (or ahistorical). And yet this is not a failure, we shall argue, on Deleuze's part, but rather a move that leaves Deleuze better able to address key political and philosophical issues, including issues that were central concerns of Badiou. By comparing Deleuze's thought to recent work of Bruno Latour, we will begin to respond to Badiou's criticisms. It is to this that we now turn.

Beyond Belief

In *Politics of Nature* Bruno Latour notes that today we no longer see the Pope in opposition to other leaders; or, to state it differently, we generally come to see the Papal

³⁰ Ibid. 75, 76.

³¹ *Being and Event*, 113.

power as just another form of secular power. Similarly, Latour adopts as an hypothesis the view that ‘we have not yet secularized the two conjoined powers of nature and politics,’ and much of what Latour does in his work is an attempt to secularize the ‘conjoined powers of nature and politics.’³² Central to this project is the rejection of the very assumptions that formed the basis of Badiou’s critique of Deleuze—namely, the opposition between the natural that is ahistorical and the historical, which includes the political as well as the aesthetic (among others) for Badiou. A guiding tenet of Latour’s work is the notion that ‘there is a social history of things and a “thingy” history of humans.’³³ More to the point, for Latour it is not the case that there is an ahistorical, autonomous, independent reality that is unconstructed and merely awaiting discovery, on the one hand, and a historical set of human practices that continually constructs, deconstructs, and reconstructs the beliefs regarding the nature of this reality. Latour argues, essentially, that there is a false dilemma in assuming that *either* a fact is an autonomous reality that is in no way the result of human construction *or* it is nothing but a human construction. Latour’s path beyond this false dilemma is to assert that ‘the terms “construction” and “autonomous reality” are synonyms.’³⁴

The term Latour uses to express the synonymous nature of “construction” and “autonomous reality” is “factish,” combining both fact and fetish. A fact, traditionally understood, is autonomous and unconstructed. When Pasteur discovered the role microorganisms play in the process of fermentation he simply, on this view, came to recognize an autonomous fact that was already there and independent of the historical

³² *Politics of Nature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 31.

³³ *Pandora’s Hope* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 18.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 275.

events involved in Pasteur's efforts to locate these microorganisms. A fetish, by contrast, involves the projection of beliefs upon a mute, passive object. In both cases, according to Latour, what is maintained is the subject-object dichotomy. In the case of facts, the facts are the objects that are ultimately responsible for the success of Pasteur's experiments; and in the case of fetishes, subjects are the ones responsible for projecting beliefs onto objects. A factish, for Latour is a type of action that does 'not fall into the comminatory choice between fact and belief.'³⁵ Rather, a factish entails events; or, as Latour puts it, 'I never act; I am always slightly surprised by what I do. That which acts through me is also surprised by what I do, by the chance to mutate, to change, and to bifurcate...'³⁶ In a nod to Deleuze, Latour claims that factishes are 'rhizomelike,' or 'one should always be aware of factishes...[because] their consequences are unforeseen, the moral order fragile, the social one unstable.'³⁷

A factish is thus neither an independent reality that comes to be discovered after a successful scientific experiment, nor is it merely the projection of human beliefs onto an inert object. A factish involves both human and nonhuman actors, and scientific experiments, as events for Latour, involve relations between actors that returns more than any of the actors put into it singly. It is for this reason that Latour claims 'an experiment is an event which offers slightly more than its inputs...no one, and nothing at all, is in command, not even an anonymous field of force.'³⁸ Latour acknowledges the influence of Whitehead when he uses the term event, most notably the use Whitehead makes of the

³⁵ Ibid. 306.

³⁶ Ibid. 281

³⁷ Ibid. 288.

³⁸ Ibid. 298.

term to replace ‘the notion of discovery’ and the assumption it makes regarding the ahistorical nature of objects and the historicity of human endeavors. When Latour defines an experiment as an event, therefore, he intends precisely to argue that this ‘event has consequences for the historicity of all the ingredients, including nonhumans, that are the circumstances of that experiment.’³⁹ The similarities with Deleuze on this point are profound, though before we address them it is important first to see why Latour vehemently denies doing any form of postmodernism and/or social construction. In establishing this point, we will then see that Deleuze is similarly not to be classified among the postmodernists, and yet this is precisely the classification Badiou assumes in his critique of Deleuze.

Despite all the apparent differences between modernism and postmodernism, Latour argues that they have each ‘left belief, the untouchable center of their courageous enterprises, untouched.’⁴⁰ In particular, the modernists, on Latour’s reading, felt the task of philosophy and science was to track down which of our beliefs are justified true beliefs. To this end, science comes in armed with facts to hammer away at any beliefs that are not in line with the facts. With postmodernism, on the other hand, science itself comes to be seen as nothing but beliefs that construct a reality, or ‘construction and reality are the same thing; everything is just so much illusion, storytelling, and make believe...’⁴¹ And what we have then, ‘when science itself is transformed into a belief’ is ‘postmodern virtuality—the nadir, the absolute zero of politics, aesthetics, and metaphysics.’ ‘Virtuality,’ in short, is for Latour ‘what everything else turns into when

³⁹ Ibid. 306.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 275.

⁴¹ Ibid.

belief in belief has run amok.’⁴² For Latour, however, to argue that it is because factishes are constructed that they are so very real is quite different from the postmodernist who claims that ‘construction and reality are the same thing.’ The difference has to do with who or what is acting. In the case of factishes, as we saw, there is a ‘rhizomelike’ network of both human and nonhuman actors, and no one actor is in command, ‘not even an anonymous field of force.’ For the postmoderns, it is the power of belief that is in command, or the virtuality of the One as Badiou interprets Deleuze, and autonomous nature of reality is nothing but a mode of belief or virtuality.

If Badiou’s critique of Deleuze is correct, then it would seem that Latour would echo Badiou’s criticisms, at least on this point. As we unpack precisely what Latour is arguing for when he claims that it is ‘because it [a factish] is constructed that it is so very real,’ we will find that it bears much in common with Latour’s project, as Latour himself recognizes, and thus Badiou’s criticism will be seen to be directed at a ‘postmodern’ Deleuze that never was.⁴³ Key to understanding how ‘construction’ and ‘autonomous reality’ are synonymous is the notion of what Latour calls “historical realism.” Attendant to Latour’s understanding of historical realism is the concept of “relative existence,” by which Latour means that scientific entities can be said to be ‘existing somewhat, having a little reality, occupying a definitive place and time, having predecessors and successors.’⁴⁴ What this means is that reality is inseparable from the process whereby an increasing number of associations are accumulated over time. It is not all or nothing

⁴² Ibid. 287.

⁴³ See especially Isabelle Stengers’ magisterial work, *Penser avec Whitehead* (Paris: Seuil, 2002), where this claim is made on numerous occasions and where Stengers, for her part, borrows heavily from Deleuze.

⁴⁴ “On the Partial Existence of Existing and Nonexisting Objects,” in *Biographies of Scientific Objects*, edited by Lorraine Daston (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 253.

regarding the existence of entities. As Latour puts it, ‘An entity gains in reality if it is associated with many others that are viewed as collaborating with it. It loses in reality if, on the contrary, it has to shed associates or collaborators (humans and nonhumans).’⁴⁵ In the case of Pouchet’s theory of spontaneous generation, which was the dominant theory that preceded Pasteur’s theory, the relative existence of spontaneous generation in 1864 was high for it was associated with a number of human and nonhuman elements. Latour lists ‘commonsense experience, anti-Darwinism, republicanism, Protestant theology, natural history skills in observing egg development, geological theory of multiple creations, Rouen natural museum equipment [the lab where Pouchet worked],’⁴⁶ as among the associations that were inseparable from the relative existence of spontaneous generation at the time. By 1866, however, Pasteur’s theory of fermentation displaced Pouchet’s through an accumulation of a heterogeneous array of associations, an accumulation that has continued to this day such that Pasteur’s theory has become “black boxed” (to use Latour’s term), not only by being incorporated into the textbooks as a largely unquestioned fact, but also, and more importantly for Latour, it has become an autonomous, black boxed reality precisely *because of the construction of* a heterogeneous accumulation of human and nonhuman associations. ‘I live,’ admits Latour, ‘inside the Pasteurian network, every time I eat pasteurized yogurt, drink pasteurized milk, or swallow antibiotics.’⁴⁷

This heterogeneous network of human and nonhuman associations constitutes what we have seen Deleuze call a multiplicity. Furthermore, much as the linguistic multiplicity of

⁴⁵ Ibid. 257.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 263.

reciprocal relations between phonemes is the virtual system that allows for the actualization of diverse languages that bear no resemblance to this virtual system, so too the heterogeneous associations of human and nonhuman actors constitutes the virtual system that can then be actualized by the black boxed facts, and facts that bear no resemblance to the constitutive processes of the multiplicity. The non-resemblance of the virtual and the actual is essential, as we saw Deleuze argue, for an adequate account of novelty. The same is true for Latour, as well, in his argument that an effect is not to be understood as the logical, pre-determined result of a cause; to the contrary, as he puts it, ‘causality follows the events,’ events understood here as the accumulation of human and nonhuman associations with no one in command of the process. As this is put in *Laboratory Life*, “‘reality’ cannot be used to explain why a statement becomes a fact, since it is only after it has become a fact that the effect of reality is obtained.”⁴⁸ We could call this the reality-effect whereby the drawing of a number of associations and links between human and nonhuman elements enables the actualization of the factual reality that is then taken to be the cause of these relationships. Once actualized as a fact, or black boxed, the historical processes that draw together a heterogeneous multiplicity of associations, comes to be eclipsed by the actualized fact. This is Deleuze’s point as well. The reality of the virtual, although presupposed by, and inseparable from, the actual, comes to be eclipsed by the actualization of the actual. It is only through what Deleuze will call counter-actualization, or what I would call problematizing history, that the hidden reality of the virtual can become tapped, thereby problematizing the actual and allowing for its possible transformation. The same, again, is true for Latour’s use of

⁴⁸ Latour, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 180.

history in science studies. Rather than pursue a traditional causal analysis of historical events and attempt to tease out the causal factors in the observed events that are taken to be the effects of these causes, science studies seeks to show how the identification of a causal factor itself is the effect of relative existence. Latour thus offers a counter-causal analysis of scientific entities. In particular, by problematizing traditional understandings of science and the presuppositions it entails concerning the relation between belief and objects, it could be argued that Latour is attempting to move beyond belief. Rather than attempt to justify beliefs through scientific facts or unmask beliefs as mere fancy and fetish, Latour sees as ‘the role of the intellectual’ the task of ‘protect[ing] the diversity of ontological status against the threat of its transformation into facts and fetishes, beliefs and things.’⁴⁹ With Deleuze’s own commitment to counter-actualizing the actual so as to allow for the virtual multiplicities that are inseparable from ontological diversity, it would seem then that this is a task Deleuze adopted as his own as well.

Having compared Deleuze’s project with Latour’s, we can begin to see that Deleuze is not to be categorized among the postmodernists, at least as Latour defines them. Badiou explicitly identifies Deleuze as what Latour would call a postmodernist when he asserts that the virtual, for Deleuze, ‘is no better than the finality of which it is the inversion (it determines the destiny of everything, instead of being that to which everything is destined).’⁵⁰ The virtuality of the One, in short, is in command, determining ‘the destiny of everything.’ For Deleuze, however, much as for Latour, the multiplicities that come to be actualized are virtual not as a unity that commands and predetermines the destiny of

⁴⁹ *Pandora’s Hope*, 291.

⁵⁰ *Clamor of Being*, 53.

the actual; to the contrary, the virtual is nothing less than the reality of the multiplicities that are inseparable from the actualities (as phonemes are inseparable from the terms of a language). Rather than diluting the actual with the theory of the virtual, a theory Badiou claims is simply a ‘natural mysticism’ that encourages us to move out of this world,⁵¹ Deleuze’s theory calls for an ontological diversity and historicity that is inseparable from the actualities of this world, much as for Latour there is a relative existence and accumulation of human and nonhuman associations that is inseparable from a black boxed fact. Rather than being unable, as Badiou argues, to think singularities in a way that can result in creative engagements with the actualities of daily life, we claim that Deleuze’s philosophy does indeed engage effectively with the actualities of this world. To support this claim we turn then to discuss the political implications of Deleuze’s thought, beginning with his comments regarding the social multiplicity.

Adventure of Politics

Deleuze brings in the example of the social multiplicities in the same passage where he discusses the linguistic multiplicity. Here is what he says,

Take the social multiplicity: it determines sociability as a faculty, but also the transcendent object of sociability which cannot be lived within actual societies in which the multiplicity is incarnated, but must be and can be lived only in the element of social upheaval (in other words, freedom, which is always hidden among the remains of an old order and the first fruits of a new).⁵²

Much as the transcendent object of speech as a faculty ‘can be spoken only in the poetic usage of speech coextensive with virtuality,’ so too the transcendent object of sociability

⁵¹ *Theoretical Writings*, p. 80; Peter Hallward’s recent book, *Out of This World*, is critical of Deleuze for precisely this reason, as the title suggests.

⁵² *Difference and Repetition*, 193.

(freedom) ‘can be lived only in the element of social upheaval.’ As we discussed earlier in examining Badiou’s critique of Deleuze, the use of the term ‘transcendent object’ in reference to both the social and linguistic multiplicity may appear to support Badiou’s charge that the virtual ‘plays the role of transcendence’ in Deleuze’s thought.⁵³ The added fact that this transcendent object ‘cannot be lived within actual societies’ only seems to reinforce this view. However, when Deleuze says this transcendent object ‘cannot be lived within actual societies,’ or spoken in the ‘empirical usage of speech,’ this is not to imply that poets and revolutions are successful only when they turn away from the actual. To the contrary, the transcendent object is precisely the problematic multiplicity that is inseparable from the actual. This problematic is not to be identified with the actual for when it becomes identified as problematic the actual becomes thereby a transformed or problematized actual.

At this point we can turn to compare Deleuze’s efforts to develop, through his concepts of the virtual and multiplicity, a thought that thinks singularities with Whitehead’s efforts to understand the process whereby actual entities become. As with Deleuze’s emphasis upon multiplicity, Whitehead offers a ‘cell-theory of actuality,’⁵⁴ and for much the same reason. In the same way that Deleuze argues for multiplicities that are inseparable from the state of affairs that actualize them—for example, the multiplicity of reciprocal relations among phonemes or the social multiplicity that are each inseparable from the diverse languages and societies that actualize them—so too for Whitehead ‘each ultimate unit of fact is a cell-complex, not analyzable into components with equivalent

⁵³ *Theoretical Writings*, 79.

⁵⁴ *Process and Reality*, 256.

completeness of actuality.’⁵⁵ In other words, although facts are cell-complexes, or societies of actual entities as Whitehead will also understand them, these complexes cannot be analyzed and reduced to a complex of identifiable units or facts. This would be to understand facts in terms of more ultimate facts, which is precisely the traditional move in philosophy that Whitehead rejects; or, as Deleuze would put it, this would reduce multiplicities to the multiple, to a collection of units (*unités*). In contrast to Leibniz’s theory of monads, as Whitehead makes clear, Leibniz’s ‘monads change,’ whereas by Whitehead’s own theory ‘they merely become.’ That is, one cannot say of Whitehead’s actual entities that they are, and hence that they change from being in one state to being in another, for once the process is complete whereby the actual entities have become an identifiable, static fact, the process of becoming associated with actual entities has ended. As Whitehead puts it, ‘an actual entity has perished when it is complete,’ that is, when it has become a fact. For Leibniz, by contrast, not only do monads change rather than become, but each monad expresses the ultimate fact that is the pre-established harmony of the universe. And thus, in the end, Leibniz forecloses any possibility for novelty, which leads Deleuze, despite his admiration for Leibniz in many other respects, to this harsh conclusion: ‘he [Leibniz] assigns to philosophy the creation of new concepts provided that they do not overthrow “established sentiments.”’⁵⁶

As is well known among Whitehead scholars, Whitehead’s account of the creative advance, of process, involves two poles—the physical and mental pole. As the actual entities become complete, they acquire what Whitehead will call an ‘objective

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ *Logic of Sense*, 116.

immortality' in that they are objective but not in the temporal sense of actual entities that become. They are, instead, the physical or objective component the mental pole is then able to explore for possibilities (i.e., multiplicities) that are inseparable from the completeness of the objective pole. 'The mental functioning,' Whitehead argues, 'introduces into realization subjective forms conformal to relevant alternatives excluded from the completeness of physical realization.'⁵⁷ Among 'the societies of inorganic bodies,' when 'there is no reason to believe that in any important way the mental activities depart from the functionings which are strictly inherent in the objective datum of the first [objective] phase...[then] no novelty is introduced.'⁵⁸ The very essence of life, however, is for Whitehead the 'introduction of novelty.'⁵⁹ In particular, novelty occurs when there is a discord between the physical and mental poles. 'Progress,' Whitehead makes quite clear, 'is founded upon the experience of discordant feelings,' and as these discordant feelings become resolved through the attainment of perfection—namely, when the mental and physical poles conform to one another—then progress withers away unless new discordant feelings arise, prompting yet another process of attaining perfection. Whitehead refers to this process as adventure: 'To sustain civilization with the intensity of its first ardour requires more than learning. Adventure is essential, namely, the search for new perfections.'⁶⁰

Key to the adventure of ideas is the ability of the mental pole to access the nomadic, anti-social actual entities that have not been actualized within the complete physical

⁵⁷ *Adventure of Ideas*, 259.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 211.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 207.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 258.

realization of a social nexus, or, more simply, that have not been actualized as a facts. A nexus of actual entities that is complete ‘enjoys a history expressing its changing reactions to changing circumstances,’ much as Leibniz’s monads change; however, ‘an actual occasion has no such history. It never changes. It only becomes and perishes. Its perishing is its assumption of a new metaphysical function in the creative advance of the universe.’⁶¹ And what is crucial to this creative advance is precisely that there is no pre-established harmony, no pre-determining completeness, but rather there is order and chaos; or, as Deleuze understands this point, there is a multiplicity that cannot be reduced to a states of affairs and which yet allows for the possibility of creative transformations of, and moves beyond, these states of affairs. For Whitehead, then, the ‘societies in an environment will constitute its orderly element, and the non-social [nomadic] actual entities will constitute its element of chaos.’ The actual world, therefore, is neither ‘purely orderly’ nor ‘purely chaotic.’⁶² It is, as Deleuze and Guattari have argued, a chaosmos.⁶³

We can now return to our discussion of the importance of thinking singularities, or what Deleuze will call nomadic thinking in an essay he wrote on Nietzsche. In this essay, Deleuze claims that he found in Nietzsche’s philosophy a thought that ‘does not and will not allow itself to be codified.’⁶⁴ This nomadic thinking breaks free from the models and stereotypes that would otherwise predetermine our thought processes. It is a thinking that

⁶¹ Ibid. 204.

⁶² *Process and Reality*, 131.

⁶³ For more on this aspect of Deleuze, and Deleuze and Guattari, see my book, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

⁶⁴ Deleuze, “Nomad Thought,” in *The New Nietzsche*, edited by David B. Allison, (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1977), p. 142.

eludes what Deleuze and Guattari will later call the apparatus of capture—namely, the State and the thinking that is subservient to the predetermining, capturing identities of the state. Or, we could also say, such thinking eludes what we have seen Badiou refer to as the ‘re-securing count of the One.’ Deleuze and Guattari will refer to the form of philosophy and thought that does allow itself to be captured royal philosophy, and Leibniz would be an example of such a philosophy. Whitehead, however, would not be such an example; moreover, and as we have seen, Whitehead outright calls for nomadic actual entities, for chaos, as an indispensable condition for the creative advances of thought, civilization, and adventure which was such a central concern of Whitehead’s. As Whitehead makes clear, the universe is neither purely orderly nor purely chaotic, and what assures the successful balancing of social and nomadic actual entities, order and chaos, is God. In the realm wherein the physical and mental poles are in discord, and hence where novelty becomes possible, it is here where Whitehead ‘conceive[s] of the patience of God, tenderly saving the turmoil of the intermediate world by the completion of his own nature.’⁶⁵ God thus prevents chaos from gaining the upper hand and assures the successful territorializing of nomadic actual entities into societies, or, as Whitehead puts it, God ‘does not create the world, he saves it.’⁶⁶

God, however, is not for Whitehead a transcendent actuality that saves the world from beyond it. Whitehead quite explicitly argues the contrary point: ‘God is not to be treated as an exception to all metaphysical principles, invoked to save their collapse [into chaos].

⁶⁵ *Process and Reality*, 408.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

He is their chief exemplification.’⁶⁷ In particular, God is the chief exemplification of the process whereby discordant feelings become resolved through the attainment of perfection, or God is the chief exemplification of adventure. As Whitehead puts it, God ‘is the beginning and the end,’ the discordant beginning that ends with the attainment of perfection. It is ‘the completion of his own nature,’ therefore, that leads Whitehead to claim that God saves ‘the turmoil of the intermediate world,’ the world between the mental and physical poles. Before we impute a form of teleological thinking to Whitehead, however, it is important to note that for Whitehead, as well as for Deleuze who largely follows Whitehead on this point, the completion of God’s nature is not brought about by virtue of any end or standard outside God, but by the very nature of God as process. In the same vein Deleuze, as he defines multiplicity, will stress that it ‘has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overflows.’⁶⁸ Such growth, or process, as becoming thought from the perspective of the philosophy of immanence Deleuze seeks to develop, is complete in itself and without regard to anything outside itself. As Deleuze and Guattari will say of works of genius, they are complete in themselves and not by virtue of their relation to a transcendent standard, nor as the result of traversing the path from means (potentiality) to end (actuality). As they argue in *Anti-Oedipus*, “from the moment there is genius, there is something that belongs to no school, no period, something that achieves a breakthrough - art as a process without goal, *but that attains completion as such.*”⁶⁹ It is this breakthrough that Deleuze refers to as the ‘transcendent object’ in *Difference and Repetition*, and it is the ‘completion’ of this object that is inseparable from what

⁶⁷ Ibid. 405.

⁶⁸ *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 9.

⁶⁹ *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 370 (my emphasis).

Whitehead would refer to as the ‘creative advance,’ or what for Deleuze is the creative move beyond the actual by way of the virtual (e.g., social multiplicity, linguistic multiplicity, etc.).

Returning now to our earlier discussion of Latour, we can now begin to see the influential role Whitehead plays in his Latour’s thought. Latour acknowledges this debt, in *Pandora’s Hope*, when he claims that his use of the term ‘event’ is ‘borrowed from Whitehead to replace the notion of discovery and its very implausible philosophy of history (in which the object remains immobile while the human historicity of the discoverers receives all the attention.’⁷⁰ Latour is certainly right to find a kindred spirit in Whitehead, for Whitehead does indeed argue that an ‘event is a nexus of actual occasions inter-related in some determinate fashion on some extensive quantum,’ and Whitehead then gives as an example a molecule, which he claims ‘is a historic route of actual occasions; and such a route is an “event.”’⁷¹ The cell-theory of actuality, in other words, is applicable for Whitehead to both human and nonhuman entities, all of which have a history, a ‘historic route of actual occasions.’ Moreover, since societies for Whitehead, whether they be societies of humans or the societies that constitute grey stone (a favorite example of Whitehead’s), are inseparable from the nomadic actual entities that can then be taken up within the creative advance, the result for Whitehead is that identifiable facts and entities are always provisional. Inseparable from these facts is a society of ordered actual entities (cosmos) as well as the anti-social actual entities (chaos). This, as we have seen, is precisely how Deleuze understands the reality of the virtual, for it too is

⁷⁰ *Pandora’s Hope*, 306.

⁷¹ *Process and Reality*, 98.

inseparable from, and yet not to be confused with, the identifiable entities that become transformed as the nomadic singularities come to be actualized by new societies. And this actualization, in turn, is provisional, for there remains the element that eludes the capturing nets of ‘actualization.’ This was why Deleuze argues that the ‘transcendent object’ cannot be ‘lived within actual societies,’ for such societies are provisional and presuppose the reality that will transform them. On this point, Latour could not agree more, for he too argues that the social multiplicity, or the collective as he terms it in the *Politics of Nature*, is forever in the process of ‘establishing provisional cohesion that will have to be started all over again every single day.’⁷² To adopt Whitehead’s expression, we could say that this is the ‘adventure of politics.’ This adventure is resisted, however, as Latour points out, as a consequence of what we have been calling the fear of politics (or fear of adventure as we might now say). This resistance generally assumes, for Latour, two forms, two transcendences—namely, that of Reason and Populism. In the one we have the claims of experts who speak for the demos, and on the other ‘the whole [the demos]’ is obliged ‘to deal with itself without the benefit of guaranteed information.’ Since the demos is ‘deprived of knowledge and morality,’ as the long-standing habit assures us, they subsequently are thought to be in need of outside help, the help of those who claim to represent the truth or the people (or both). The help the demos needs is not of this type, Latour claims; rather,

The specific transcendence it [the demos] needs to bootstrap itself is not that of a lever coming from the outside, but much more like the kneading of a dough—except that the demos is at once the flour, the water, the baker, the leavening ferment, and the very act of kneading. Yes, a fermentation, the sort of turmoil that has always seemed so terrible to the powerful, and that has nonetheless always been transcendent enough to make the people move and be represented.⁷³

⁷² *Politics of Nature*, 147.

⁷³ *Pandora’s Hope*, 252.

In what Latour will refer to as the social world as association, there is no outside factor drawing together the human and nonhuman associations, or politics ought not to see the 'social world as prison,' as something to transcend, but instead politics, for Latour, is 'conceived as the progressive composition of the common world.'⁷⁴ This 'progressive composition,' as 'a fermentation,' a 'sort of turmoil,' is not strictly identifiable. As the transcendent object of speech is transcendent for Deleuze in the sense that it cannot be reduced to the actual empirical language from which it is inseparable, or the societies of actual entities Whitehead argues are not to be reduced to the identifiable facts which actualize these societies, so too the fermentation of politics is inseparable from the 'multiplicity of associations of humans and non-humans that the collective is precisely charged with collecting.'⁷⁵ But this collecting, and the provisional unity that comes to be identifiable as a result, is irreducible to the 'multiplicity of associations,' or to the social multiplicity. What is needed, Latour argues, so that the collective can grow, are 'two functions, dispersed everywhere; one allows it to catch hold of the multitudes without crushing them, and the other allows it to get them to speak in a single voice without scattering.'⁷⁶ The difficulty, however, is that the multiplicity of associations tends, as a result of the fear of politics, the fear of dispersion and scattering, to speak in a single voice only when the effectiveness of the social multiplicity as multiplicity has been crushed. To put it differently, the social multiplicity has a tendency to come to be identified with the voices that would speak for it, much as Whitehead argued that the philosophical tradition identified societies of actual entities with facts, and this move is

⁷⁴ *Politics of Nature*, 18.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 42.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 150.

itself, for both Latour and Whitehead, inseparable from the social multiplicity, and thus only a provisional unity that can become other.

At this point in our argument Badiou may very well protest against Latour's conception of the collective. Is not, Badiou might ask, Latour reducing politics to becoming simply a process of establishing public opinion and consensus? What would it mean to get the multitudes 'to speak in a single voice without scattering' if it is not an attempt to develop a politics of consensus. If it is such an attempt, then Badiou could not disagree enough. What such a politics entails, for Badiou, is a 'concession to the One [that] undoes the radicality of the multiple [i.e. multiple-without-oneness]...It opens the way for a doctrine of consensus, which is in effect the dominant ideology of contemporary parliamentary States.'⁷⁷ Badiou would also no doubt break with the historicism of Latour's project—or break with what he would perceive as the failure to distinguish between belonging (anti-natural, historical) and inclusion (natural, ahistorical)—for such historicism subordinates the real, for Badiou, to being 'a composite or complex unity.'⁷⁸ Put in other words, for Badiou it is the fear of the radicality of the multiple-without-oneness that is the fear of politics which prompts the re-securing of the count, and hence the historicism that forecloses the void that circulates throughout the presentation of the multiple by assuring that each thing that is presented is included within the unity of a historical situation. And this is just what Badiou admits to being 'the central idea of my ontology, i.e. that what

⁷⁷ *Metapolitics*, p. 18. Earlier Badiou argues that with public opinion 'What is overtly eradicated here is the militant identification of politics (which, for me, is nevertheless the only identification which can ally politics with thought),' (p. 13).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 42.

the State strives to foreclose through its power of counting is the void of the situation, while the event always reveals it...'⁷⁹

On Badiou's reading, then, Latour, and by association Whitehead, has simply repeated Deleuze's mistake—he has not thought the singularity necessary for the creativity of events to become effective, despite the stated moves to do just this. And yet Badiou is in other ways quite close to Latour in identifying politics proper with the multitude (social multiplicity). 'The mass movement,' Badiou states, 'being presented but not representable (by the State), verifies that the void roams around in presentation,' and it is 'politics [that] deals with the masses, because politics is unbound from the State, and diagonal to its parts.'⁸⁰ Badiou is also quite close to Deleuze as well, and in particular to Deleuze's claim that freedom is the transcendent object of the social multiplicity that 'cannot be lived in actual societies' but only in moments of 'social upheaval.' For Badiou as well, 'the word "democracy," taken in the philosophical sense, thinks a politics to the extent that, in the effectiveness of its emancipatory process, what it works towards is the impossibility, in the situation, of every non-egalitarian statement concerning this situation.'⁸¹ Politics as thought, or democracy 'taken in the philosophical sense,' is a thought of the singularity that cannot be included within a situation. In this case, the thought is of an emancipatory equality as a pure multiple-without-oneness (social multiplicity) that is presented but not included in the situation, and the thought that is prevented evades the re-securing count of the State. Moreover, for those subject who become subjected to the event of the truth of political equality, the result is a militant

⁷⁹ Ibid. 119.

⁸⁰ Ibid. 73.

⁸¹ Ibid. 93.

resistance to the inequalities of the situation. As Aristotle recognized, ‘Everywhere, those who seek equality revolt.’⁸² Such revolt is not, for Badiou, a mere reform of the situation, a transformation of what is; rather, it is ‘another politics,’ a politics that breaks with the politics that is.⁸³ Badiou refers to this as ‘the political event...[which] prescribes that all are virtual militants of the thought that proceeds on the basis of the event.’ We are, in shore, each ‘virtual militants,’ or subjects who may become subject to the Truth of the political event that renders impossible the thoughts of inequality in the situation.

In the current situation, Badiou argues that, ‘the egalitarian maxim is effectively incompatible with the errancy of statist excess,’ or, ‘the matrix of inequality consists precisely in the impossibility of measuring the superpower of the State.’⁸⁴ More precisely, it is the ‘blind power of unfettered Capital,’ Badiou argues, that ‘cannot be either measured or fixed at any point. All we know,’ Badiou adds, ‘is that it prevails absolutely over the subjective fate of collectives, regardless of who they are.’⁸⁵ To speak in favor of capitalist States, therefore, traditional liberalism is left convinced of the power of Capital as such, but such confidence is left with ‘total indecision about its consequences for people’s lives and the universal affirmation of collectives.’⁸⁶ What is needed for the militants subjected to the truth of the political event is to challenge this very indecision, to bring into clarity the ‘measurelessness in which this power is enveloped,’ and most especially the inequalities this power produces. In the tradition of

⁸² *Politics* 1301b26. Cited by Badiou, *ibid.* 100.

⁸³ As Badiou argues, ‘For every real figure of evil is presented, not as a fanatical non-opinion undermining being-together, but on the contrary as a politics aiming to ground authentic being-together. No “common sense” can counter it’ only another politics can do so.’ *Ibid.* 20.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 149.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

Marx, Badiou thus calls upon a militant politics that will set out ‘To produce the same, to count each one universally as one...[and] to work locally, in the gap opened up between politics and the State.’⁸⁷ Rather than succumbing to the measureless power of Capital and its tendency towards inequality, or the tendency of Capital ‘to accumulate in fewer and fewer hands’ as Marx puts it,⁸⁸ a radical, militant subject injects the thought of universal equality into the inequalities of the situation and thereby thinks the singularity that ruptures with ‘that which is.’ Deleuze, as we have seen, is likewise concerned with ‘injecting art into everyday life’ so as to facilitate a rupturing with what is, and most especially the dominance of Capital.

For Deleuze, the social multiplicity and its transcendent object that is lived only during times of social upheaval is neither a means to open a closed, stratified space, nor is it the means whereby territorializing forces capture and re-secure the count; quite to the contrary, the social upheaval is precisely the stuttering gap and rupture that undermines any attempt to be reduced to a dialectical relationship between the open and closed. As with Whitehead’s understanding of social and anti-social actual entities, it is not a matter of a dialectic between open and closed, for the very identity of the closed itself presupposes the process that is complete in itself (reality of the virtual for Deleuze; God for Whitehead), and this completion is not an identifiable fact or Truth, nor is it a void. It is, rather, the very stuttering of identity, and a stuttering that undermines the thought of

⁸⁷ Ibid. 150.

⁸⁸ *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, translated by Martin Milligan (New York: Prometheus Books, 1987), 41: ‘Accumulation, where private property prevails, is the concentration of capital in the hands of a few, it is in general an inevitable consequence if capitals are left to follow their natural course, and it is precisely through competition that the way is cleared for this natural destination of capital.’ Below we will discuss Deleuze’s criticism of competition as it has come to prevail in what he calls the ‘society of control.’

dialectic and means and ends. This is why Deleuze will claim that ‘the work of art has nothing to do with communication.’ Art is not the means to relate an identifiable sense or point to an audience whose task it is to decipher this sense. However, as art has become commoditized, it has increasingly become a means to prescribed ends. These ends, Deleuze claims, entail ‘Fast turnover [which] necessarily means selling people what they expect...[and hence] The conditions for literary creation, which emerge only unpredictability, with a slow turnover and progressive recognition, are fragile.’⁸⁹ Such creations, in fact, emerge imperceptibly. At this point Deleuze’s understanding of aesthetics merges with his concepts of becoming-imperceptible and, more importantly, becoming-revolutionary. It is to this subject that we now turn.

Becoming-imperceptible

In his short essay, “Mediators,” Deleuze argues that we face a choice ‘between creative forces and forces of domestication,’ and the latter forces, Deleuze makes quite clear, are firmly in control of capitalist markets: ‘Creative possibilities may be very different in different modes of expression, but they’re related to the extent that they must counter the introduction of a cultural space of markets and conformity—that is, a space of ‘producing for the market’—together.’⁹⁰ With capitalism, creative forces are no longer forces that are complete in themselves without a purpose or means-end relation; instead, they have increasingly become creative for the purpose of ‘producing for the market.’ In calling for the need to counter the ‘cultural space of markets and conformity,’ Deleuze is thus calling for a countering move to capitalism, or a revolutionary movement as we will see.

⁸⁹ “Mediators,” in *Incorporations* (New York: Zone Books, 1987), 287.

⁹⁰ “Mediators,” 290.

As for capitalism itself, Deleuze claims it as a system of immanent causation, meaning it does not rely upon an outside force to establish its ordered ends and purposes. These arise immanently, much as the provisional order of the collective, for Latour, arose without the need for ‘a lever coming from the outside,’⁹¹ or much as the adventures Whitehead discusses are saved by a God that does not transcend these adventures. In an essay detailing their affinity with Marxism, or why in fact they “remain Marxists,” Deleuze and Guattari argue that it is precisely because Marx offers an “analysis of capitalism as an immanent system that continually redraws its proper limits, and that always finds itself increasing by steps, for the limit is Capital itself.”⁹² Whenever a new market is discovered or opened, this market becomes incorporated into the Capitalist system itself, though a now expanded system (e.g. the expansion of capitalism into China and India where labor and the products of labor become commodities). These expanded limits are an effect of capitalism but are within capitalism itself as an effect in the cause.

A multiplicity is itself an immanent cause, and yet the immanent effects of this cause may or may not be creative. One of the key concepts Deleuze uses to address the manner in which multiplicities come to be actualized is assemblages. To clarify this point we can turn to the analysis of desire that Deleuze and Guattari offer in their two *Capitalism and*

⁹¹ *Pandora's Hope*, 252.

⁹² Gilles Deleuze, *Pourparlers* (Paris: Les Éditions des Minuit, 1990), p. 232. Translation mine. This same point was made several times in Deleuze's early work, *Anti-Oedipus*. To cite just one example, Deleuze and Guattari argue that “It is in fact essential that the limit of the decoded flows of desiring production be doubly exorcised, doubly displaced, once by the position of immanent limits that capitalism does not cease to reproduce on an ever expanding scale, and again by the marking out of an interior limit that reduces this social reproduction to restricted familial reproduction.” *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* translated by Robert Hurly (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), p. 304. The concept of “decoded flows” and “desiring production” will be clarified below as we discuss the concepts of multiplicity and assemblages.

Schizophrenia books. In *Anti-Oedipus*, for example, desire is from the start argued to be productive. This was Freud's great insight, at least as Deleuze and Guattari saw it, but the productions of desire came to be seen by Freud as predetermined by the Oedipal triangle of mommy-daddy-me – what Deleuze and Guattari call the “triangulation” of desire. For Deleuze and Guattari desire, far from being predetermined by identity, is understood to be the multiplicity that produces identities – “desiring-production is pure multiplicity, that is to say, an affirmation that is irreducible to any sort of unity.”⁹³ Desire is for Deleuze an assemblage then to the extent that it *both* entails the production of an identity (i.e., as immanent cause) *and* it entails the desiring-productions (what Deleuze calls ‘lines of flight’) that elude and transgress the limits set forth by an assemblage. This limit comes to be identified by Deleuze and Guattari as schizophrenia. There is thus a dual aspect to an assemblage, or two poles – there is what Deleuze will call the fascist and paranoiac pole that returns every production to an all-determining identity, and there is the schizophrenic (sometimes also called cancerous) pole of a desiring-production that fails to maintain the immanent limits necessary for proper functioning. Desiring-productions forever risk collapsing into the stranglehold of fascism wherein desire desires its own repression, or it risks exploding into a self-destructive chaos.

These same points apply to Deleuze's notion of the social multiplicity. As a multiplicity, a social multiplicity is ‘an affirmation that is irreducible to any sort of unity,’ and yet as an immanent, virtual system (recalling our earlier discussion), this system is inseparable from the identifiable limits that are the immanent effects of the social multiplicity, much as the limits of capitalism are the immanent effects of capitalism itself. Social

⁹³ *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 42.

multiplicities thus entail assemblages, and assemblages with identifiable limits and thresholds of what constitutes what Badiou would call being included as a part of the social, and they entail those processes that cannot be included, or ‘cannot,’ as Deleuze puts it, ‘be lived within actual societies in which the multiplicity is incarnated.’⁹⁴ As Badiou would state the point, this is the void of the situation, the event that can be presented but not included in any state of the situation. For Deleuze this void is the freedom or transcendent object that appears in moments of social upheaval. The difference between Deleuze and Badiou, however, is that while Badiou calls for the ‘absolute ontological separation of the event’⁹⁵ from the situation and the state of the situation, Deleuze claims there is no such gap or separation but rather social assemblages entail both that which can and cannot be included (to use Badiou’s term again). From the perspective of politics, therefore, it is not a matter, as it was for Badiou, of waiting upon militants who become subjected to the Truth that prescribes a course of action that founds ‘another politics’; to the contrary, for Deleuze and Guattari “every politics is simultaneously a macropolitics and a micropolitics.”⁹⁶ More to the point, macro and micropolitics cannot be reduced to being constituted upon the basis of the identity of either the subject or society—hence as social multiplicity it is neither One or multiple⁹⁷—but rather consists of a multiplicity of variations and flows – i.e., flows of desiring-production. Deleuze and Guattari are clear on this point:

⁹⁴ *Difference and Repetition*, 193

⁹⁵ *Clamor of Being*, 75.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 213.

⁹⁷ As Deleuze and Guattari define a rhizome, it ‘is reducible neither to the One nor the multiple. It is not the One that becomes Two or even directly three, four, five, etc. It is not multiple derived from the One or to which One is added ($n + 1$). It is not composed of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overflows.’ *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 8. Rhizome is used interchangeably with multiplicity. See *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 9, for instance: ‘The point is that a rhizome or multiplicity never allow itself...’

...in the end, the difference is not at all between the social and the individual (or interindividual), but between the molar realm of representations, individual or collective, and the molecular realm of beliefs and desires in which the distinction between the social and the individual loses all meaning since flows are neither attributable to individuals nor overcodable by collective signifiers.⁹⁸

This statement follows from the claim that

Desire is never separable from complex assemblages that necessarily tie into molecular levels, from microformations already shaping postures, attitudes, perceptions, expectations, semiotic systems, etc. Desire is never an undifferentiated instinctual energy.⁹⁹

Desire is an assemblage. As such the products and identities that are inseparable from desire are forever subject to the undermining effects of nomadic flows, lines of flight, that transgress these identities and cause a transformation of the assemblages. This is the creativity of desire, the possibility it has to transform assemblages, whether they be political, artistic, philosophical, etc., but this creativity also runs the risk of fascism, and the reason for this is simple. Since the molar, rigid segments maintain the identity of our desires and keep them in check, they thus prevent desire from exploding into chaos and disorder. As a result we all, at some level, have a potential, molecular desire for fascism: “Our security, the great molar organization that sustains us, the arborescences we cling to, the binary machines that give us a well-defined status, the resonances we enter into, the system of overcoding that dominates us – we desire all that.”¹⁰⁰ At the other pole with the capitalist system, and here Deleuze and Guattari’s interest in Marxism becomes most evident, we have a system of immanent causation and creativity that forever attempts to stave off its ultimate limit, which is the unlimited, unchecked transformation of

⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 219.

⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 215.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 219

everything into commodities. In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari identify this unchecked limit as schizophrenia, or the chaos that is the possibility of every assemblage. In both cases, whether fascism or capitalism, creativity, the creativity that avoids the two poles, is sundered. It is to the restoration of this creativity that Deleuze's micropolitics is directed.

Turning then to the politics of today, a common assumption that seems to be presupposed in many arguments is that competition is good, or that it leads to innovation and creativity. Milton Friedman, to take just one of many examples that could be chosen, argues that a free market economy is necessary to sustain political freedom. A free market economy, Friedman states, has two necessary conditions: "(a) that enterprises are private, so that *the ultimate contracting parties are individuals* and (b) that individuals are effectively free to enter or not to enter into any particular exchange, so that every transaction is strictly voluntary."¹⁰¹ In such a free market economy, a seller of goods must compete with other sellers, and it is this competition, as the general argument goes, that generates creativity and innovation. Friedman's assumption, in short, is that individuals function as an already constituted given, and it is the freedom of these individuals to enter into voluntary exchanges that gives rise to the creativity and innovation of capitalism.

This same argument can be found in Hume, who argues that 'where a number of neighboring states have a great intercourse of arts and commerce, their mutual jealousy keeps them from receiving too lightly the law from each other, in matters of taste and of

¹⁰¹ Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 9.

reasoning, and makes them examine every work of art with the greatest care and accuracy.’¹⁰² Hume’s point is that it is precisely this jealousy and competitive spirit between neighboring states that motivates the close scrutiny of one another’s works, which in turn inspires their efforts to a higher, more creative pitch. With Deleuze’s own emphasis on creativity, coupled with the influence of Hume on his work, it might seem that Deleuze would embrace the ‘free market’ as precisely the condition best suited to bring about the creativity Deleuze calls for. Deleuze’s point, however, and Hume’s as well (as Deleuze reads him¹⁰³) is that individuals are not the already constituted givens that propel the processes of competition that then lead to innovation and creativity. And on this point Deleuze is again quite at odds with Badiou, for Badiou will place the subject in a critical position. As he argues, ‘subjectivization [involves] the emergence of an operator that is consecutive to the interventional naming that decides the event.’¹⁰⁴ In other words, the subject plays the pivotal role, as ‘an operator,’ in relating the evental site of the void to the state of a situation. It was this role of the subject that, as we saw, Badiou found absent in Foucault’s work. For Deleuze, however, the subject neither functions as the starting point for the competitive processes of capitalism, nor does it function in Badiou’s sense as the operator that names the truth of an ‘irreducibly original, created, and fortuitous’ political event, a naming that initiates another politics. For Deleuze the subject is a multiplicity, is neither one or multiple, and is always already in the middle as an assemblage with constituted identities and with molecular flows of desires, beliefs, etc., that undermine and transform these identities. It is this subject, the

¹⁰² Hume, *Selected Essays*, 64.

¹⁰³ See my book, *Deleuze’s Hume: Culture, Criticism, and the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming) where this case is made.

¹⁰⁴ Badiou, “On a Finally Objectless Subject,” in *Who Comes After the Subject?*, edited by Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 27.

subject as multiplicity, that Deleuze affirms; and it is this subject that is inseparable from politics.

The relationship between the subject as a multiplicity and assemblage and politics becomes especially clear in Deleuze's (and Deleuze and Guattari's) discussions concerning what Guattari calls the "steamroller" of capitalism.¹⁰⁵ In order to guarantee a return on an investment a capitalist investor must predict the desires and choices of individuals, but if the system of capitalism can itself produce individuals with a homogenized set of predictable desires, choices, and beliefs, then the capitalist reduces their risk. The ideally constituted and assembled individual will be one who keeps coming back for more of the same. This gets to the heart of Deleuze and Guattari's aesthetic critique of capitalism and their call to instill art into everyday life. In *Difference and Repetition*, for example, Deleuze argues that

there is no other aesthetic problem than that of the insertion of art into everyday life. The more our daily life appears standardized, stereotyped and subject to an accelerated reproduction of objects of consumption, the more art must be injected into it in order to extract that little difference which plays simultaneously between other levels of repetition, and even in order to make the two extremes resonate – namely, the habitual series of consumption and the instinctual series of destruction and death.¹⁰⁶

The injection of art into everyday life is thus a form of revolt to the tendency of capitalism to create a "steamrolled" individual, an individual with homogenized, predictably segmented desires. And what this injection entails is "to make the two extremes resonate." These extremes are the two sides of any and every assemblage – on

¹⁰⁵ Felix Guattari, *Chaosmosis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 123-4.

¹⁰⁶ *Difference and Repetition*, p. 293.

the one side is the identifiable and predictable, the repetition of the same; and on the other is the chaos and unpredictability that results in destruction and death. The creative revolt to this situation as the insertion of art will bring these two sides together in such a way that they are able to resonate within an assemblage.

This aesthetic countermove to capitalism is not a reformation of capitalism. As Deleuze makes clear, a reformer calls for change but does not challenge the existing unities that are to be changed, whereas a revolutionary calls for a destructive break with the existing unities. A conservative or reactionary reformer, for example, calls for a return to a past unity that has been lost – for example, a return to the nuclear family, to traditional morals, to a true religious faith and practice, etc. A liberal and perhaps radical reformer calls for the realization of a future condition and unity that will be more true and pure (or fair) than the present state of affairs. But what about Marx and Marxism? An argument could be made that Marx too was a reformer, albeit a radical one, insofar as he called for the realization of a communism that would resolve and surpass the contradictions and alienation of the present capitalist system. Would Deleuze then, to the extent that he follows Marx, be a reformer rather than a revolutionary? The answer is a resounding “No.” Deleuze claimed, as we have seen, that the reason for his interest in Marxism was Marx’s analysis of capitalism as an immanent system, and a system that generates its own limits, limits that are necessary in order to ward off the immanent tendency of capitalism to undermine its very ability to function. Put simply, by continually creating and encouraging a multiplicity of desires – i.e., the tendency of capitalism to carve out niches that target individual consumers and encourage them to differentiate themselves from

other consumers with their purchases – capitalism forever pushes the envelope in its ability to produce a predictable consumer who continually returns to buy more of the same. Capitalism risks unleashing desire as multiplicity, a revolutionary desire that will undermine and transform the immanent system of capitalism itself. In *Anti-Oedipus* this unleashed desire, this multiplicity that cannot be normalized, homogenized, and reduced to unity is referred to as schizophrenia, and thus Deleuze and Guattari state, and in terms that echo Marx's revolutionary thought: "The schizophrenic deliberately seeks out the very limit of capitalism: he is its inherent tendency brought to fulfillment, its surplus product, its proletariat, and its exterminating angel."¹⁰⁷

Coupled to the capitalist tendency to forever expand the limits of what is produced 'for the market' is the emergence of what Deleuze will call the society of control. A society of control, in contrast to the disciplinary societies analyzed in many of Foucault's works, no longer functions "by enclosure but by continuous control and instantaneous communication."¹⁰⁸ Disciplinary societies operate on the principle of moulds and enclosures, such as schools, factories, and barracks where a set model is imposed (molded) upon those who are enclosed within the system. This molding requires the disciplinary techniques of the institutions, including methods of observation. A society of control, by contrast, operates by the principle of "constant modulation, like a casting that self-deforms and changes continuously, from one instant to another, or like a sieve where the mesh changes from one point to another."¹⁰⁹ In particular, the society of control operates through constantly testing and comparing information, and it uses this

¹⁰⁷ *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* p. 236.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* p. 242.

information both in setting forth targets and goals and earmarks for employees and then it uses instantaneous communication for the continuous monitoring of the progress one is making towards these goals. This set-up Deleuze refers to as a “corporation,” which, he points out, “never ceases to introduce an inexpiable rivalry as healthy emulation, as an excellent motivational force that opposes individuals from one another and which traverses the individuals, dividing them in themselves.”¹¹⁰ The popularity of game shows and reality shows only goes to show that many have come to desire this inexpiable rivalry and perhaps have come to believe that this motivation and competition is reality, and that reality is good and desirable because such competition brings the creative best out of people!

For Deleuze, however, the societies of control seek to ward off the creativity of multiplicities by putting this creativity in the service of ‘producing for the market,’ and it is this that we come to desire. Put in other terms, the society of control is an assemblage that resists the tendencies that could become revolutionary by constituting, at the molecular level, the very desires and beliefs that perpetuate the assemblage. We can now see the profound reason for Deleuze’s linkage of becoming-revolutionary with becoming-imperceptible. As Deleuze might put it, the societies of control allow for creativity, but only of a very limited kind. It is true that individuals and corporations in competition with one another will create and innovate in order to increase efficiency, productivity, and hence profits; and the individuals who implement or carry out such processes are paid according to their ‘individual’ efficiency, which is determined based on a continuous analysis of information (i.e., the “merit-based” pay system). Efficiency, productivity, and

¹¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 242-3.

speed then become not only what we come to be judged and paid for, but it also becomes what we desire. Moreover, with the constant return of information we are also continuously presented with our next target, our next aspiration, and with luck or another burst of “creativity” we can achieve these goals. In short, the societies of control utilize constant and rapid communications (memos, emails, advertisements, etc.) to inform people where they stand in the constantly shifting field of interpersonal relations, a field wherein the ‘inexpiable rivalry’ and competition. If one does not continuously work and express themselves in such a field of interpersonal relations, they will escape being monitored and become an unknown variable, or, as they are told, they will fall behind. The parents of a first grader are told that their child is behind (a judgment reached through continuous testing and monitoring and a comparison of the resultant information with similar results gathered from others in the class), and as a result they should be held back a year so that their self-esteem is not effected. This example could be multiplied many times and in countless other contexts.¹¹¹ The net result is that we come to desire the very systems that control and monitor us. We don’t want to be left behind.

We are now in a position to understand some of the claims Deleuze makes that bear upon the practical issues involved with becoming-revolutionary. First and most importantly, Deleuze argues, in typical Nietzschean fashion, that creativity occurs away from the

¹¹¹ To add just a few examples to indicate the pervasiveness of the control society Deleuze believes we are in, one can find, among churches, specialists dedicated to analyzing all the information deemed relevant regarding a congregation in order to communicate to the church leaders how they may best attract and retain parishioners (i.e., compete with other denominations). Politicians frequently rely on public polls as feedback to determine what policies are to be pursued and when. And finally, within academics an untenured professor must accumulate a portfolio documenting the relevant information by which they are to be judged relative to their tenured peers. The cliché, publish or perish, captures both the powerful motivating factors for publishing (fear of death) and, though not as explicitly, the competitive nature of the publishing field (other academics are competing with you for limited publication space).

marketplace, thus reiterating the view, cited earlier, that our creative efforts ought to counter the ‘cultural space of markets and conformity.’¹¹² Deleuze thus, in reference to the continuous communication and flow of information within societies of control, argues that “Perhaps speech, communication, are rotten. They are already penetrated by money...A turning away from speech is necessary. To create has always been something other than communicating. What is important would perhaps be to create voids of non-communication, interruptions, in order to escape the control.”¹¹³ And this same thought is expressed in an earlier essay:

So the problem is no longer getting people to express themselves, but providing little gaps of solitude and silence in which they might eventually find something to say. Repressive forces don’t stop people from expressing themselves, but rather force them to express themselves. What a relief to have nothing to say, the right to say nothing, because only then is there a chance of framing the rare, or even rarer, the thing that might be worth saying.¹¹⁴

To instill creativity into our lives, to become-revolutionary, does not then entail constant, unceasing communication and expression of ourselves. To the contrary, it involves breaking with the flow of communications, interrupting them, so that one might instill a question that has transformative (i.e., revolutionary) potential. Jane Jacobs, a well-known economic historian, has offered a similar argument regarding creativity. She argues that an economically successful city does not become successful because it is efficient and productive, but rather it is the reverse. She states unequivocally that “I do not mean that cities are economically valuable in spite of their inefficiency and impracticality but rather

¹¹² Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, “On the Flies of the Marketplace”: “Where solitude ceases the market place begins; and where the market place begins the noise of the great actors and the buzzing of the poisonous flies begins too...Little do the people comprehend the great – that is, the creating. But they have a mind for all showmen and actors of great things.” *The Portable Nietzsche*, edited and translated by Walter Kaufmann, p. 163.

¹¹³ *Pourparlers*, p. 238.

¹¹⁴ “Mediators,” p. 288-89.

because they are inefficient and impractical.”¹¹⁵ The reason for this, she goes on, is because the process of trial and error, the process of experimenting and trying things out, while not in itself very productive or efficient, and even at times it is quite inefficient, is nonetheless just what makes possible the creativity that can transform a city into an economically vibrant place. Which experiments will work is not predetermined, but discouraging experimentation altogether is, for Jacobs, bound to lead to the economic ruin of a city. Similarly for Deleuze, he too will repeatedly call for an experimentation with and pursuit of questions and problems wherein the consequences of such a pursuit are in no way known or predictable. In speaking of literature, Deleuze makes a comment that is quite relevant: “The conditions for literary creation, which emerge only unpredictably, with a slow turnover and progressive recognition, are fragile.”¹¹⁶ In other words, one cannot target and call for the efficient and timely production of creativity. It always emerges in an un-timely fashion, with conditions that are fragile precisely because they are inefficient and counter to many of the pressures of society that resist such conditions (i.e., the capitalist desire for predictable, efficient sources of revenue from “creative” work).

For Deleuze, then, the revolutionary potential to transform the current system involves a becoming-revolutionary of our desires. This requires taking a time out, an interruption, a self-imposed leave of absence from the continuous processes of control and communication. This is not in order to glorify a reclusive aestheticized existence as some have claimed Deleuze argues, but rather it is to encourage the conditions whereby the

¹¹⁵ Jane Jacobs, *Economy of Cities*, p. 86.

¹¹⁶ “Mediators,” p. 287.

questions that set revolutionary movements into effect can arise. In particular, by becoming-imperceptible within the voids that are not captured by the processes of the society of control, one is then able to affirm the social multiplicity that that is the creative, transformative force inseparable from social and political assemblages. The results of such experimental leaves of absence are not predetermined, just as one cannot predict or know what the next great creative work of art will be like, but one thing is certain for Deleuze – the current economic and social system of capitalist control presupposes the very conditions it seeks to avoid (i.e., schizophrenia), and it is precisely the reluctant, stuttering embrace of these conditions that will allow for the overcoming of the system. It is the fear of these conditions that is the fear of politics, and despite Badiou's claims to the contrary, it should be apparent by now that Deleuze was not afraid of politics.